

# Racial Microaggressions on University Campuses: Preparing a Survey Study of UConn



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# Racial Campus Climate Study @ Illinois

## STUDENTS OF COLOR NEEDED!



**Who:** Students who self-identify as Asian American, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American/American Indian

**What:** We would like to invite you to take part in a survey about racial campus climate experiences among students of color. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. Your participation is strictly confidential.

**When & Where:** The online survey will start at the end of September. You will receive an email with a link to the survey.

**Why:** Your participation will help us assess the campus climate experience for students of color in order to address these issues and make the university more inclusive. Receiving your feedback is very important to us!

### **INCENTIVE**

*To express our appreciation, all participants who take part in this survey will have the opportunity for their name to be entered in a drawing to win CASH PRIZES (1 - \$200, 10 - \$50)!*

For more information about this project, please contact Stacy Harwood at [sharwood@illinois.edu](mailto:sharwood@illinois.edu), Ruby Mendenhall at [rubymen@illinois.edu](mailto:rubymen@illinois.edu) or Margaret Browne Huntt at [mbrowne@illinois.edu](mailto:mbrowne@illinois.edu).

- On-line survey
- 2011-2012
- Quantitative and qualitative questions
- 4,800 responses
- 45% response rate

# Racial Campus Climate Study @ Illinois



- 43% experienced physical or emotional harassment because of race on campus
- 60% experienced racism on campus
- 63% feel excluded because of race
- 81% believe campus is informally segregated

# Campus Locations where Students of Color Report Feeling Uncomfortable Because of their Race



Rank	Locations	#Responses
1	Fraternity/Sorority Certified Housing	731
2	Green Street	402
3	On the Bus/Transportation	344
4	Classrooms and Labs	324
5	Residence Halls	299
6	Academic Departments	299
7	Libraries	228
8	The Quads (Engineering, South, Main)	211
9	The Illini Union	204
10	Financial Aid Office	181
11	Memorial Stadium	161
12	Admissions office	152
13	Instructor's office	151
14	Assembly hall	138
15	McKinley Health Center	135

# Microaggressions in the Classroom



	% Yes
<b>I have had stereotypes made about me in the classroom because of my race.</b>	51
<b>I have had my contributions minimized in the classroom because of my race.</b>	27
<b>I have been made to feel the way I speak is inferior in the classroom because of my race.</b>	27
<b>I have experienced not being taken seriously in my classes because of my race.</b>	25

# Racial Microaggressions



“brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color”

Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal and Esquilin, 2007

# Types of Racial Microaggressions



## ● Racial assaults

- typically are conscious actions meant to demean a person through deliberate and overt racial discrimination, which can be verbal or nonverbal.

## ● Racial insults

- actions or comments that insult persons of color, by signaling that the person of color is considered inferior to a White counterpart, less intelligent, a second-class citizen, and given to behavior and criminality inscribed upon race. Often unconscious.

## ● Racial invalidations

- actions or comments that negate or ostracize the experiences of a person of color. Often unconscious.

## ● Environmental Racial Microaggressions

- racial assaults, insults and invalidations which are manifested on systemic levels.



## Racial assault, insult or invalidation?



“My Native perspectives are often not granted validity or even a chance for discussion because they assume my ideas stem from my heritage and not scientific insights... when the value of life or the environment is discussed my Native beliefs are often viewed as primitive.”

## Racial assault, insult or invalidation?



“My friends and I were called sand n-word. It happened outside of a fraternity house...This happened my first semester, at nighttime. I was enraged. I did nothing but just walked away because I didn't want to start anything.”

## Racial assault, insult or invalidation?



“In the classroom setting, someone behind me was discussing how they did not feel that African Americans deserves to be here, and that we only got in because the school has to let ‘them’ in.”

# Racial Microaggression



- “In an online class, classmates spent a lot of time trying to convince me that “the N-word” was once an OK word to use and not an insult. This was in spring of 2010. I tried to explain that it was always insulting... It was very frustrating that they could not hear my point of view and really wanted me to be OK with this. The instructor did not get involved in the conversation.”

# Racial Microaggression



- “I took a course on British colonialism and when I tried to share my very relevant views as a member of the South Asian diaspora I was belittled by the professor for using my personal experience in an academic setting.”
- “My first semester on campus, I was the only black girl in one of my classes. When working in groups with my white peers....I was ignored. They did not value or consider my opinions, responses or input. They made it very clear by not including me in the group discussions... At times, I felt like the white professor was in on the mocking and humiliating as well. She heard and saw the way she mistreated me by not including me...but never said a word.”

# Repercussions



- Research at institutions around the United States consistently demonstrates that students of color at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) feel alienated as a result of hostilities and discrimination in social and academic settings (Allen 1992).
- The experience of PWIs as unwelcoming and unsupportive for students of color has been associated with adverse outcomes: poor academic performance, greater stress, and poor mental health problems (Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart, 2008).

# Objectives



- To conduct a similar study amongst UConn students in order to:
  - To give a greater voice to students of color
  - Analyze the statistical and ethnographic data to identify trends, patterns and recurrent issues that need institutional attention
  - Bring these data to individual departments, centers, and university offices to demonstrate the need for intervention
  - Provide departments, centers, and university offices with recommendations to improve and monitor the experience for all students

# For more information



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- Eleanor Ouimet, [eleanor.ouimet@uconn.edu](mailto:eleanor.ouimet@uconn.edu)

## Copies of our reports:

- <http://www.racialmicroaggressions.illinois.edu/>

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