

Fostering Diversity in Sustainability at BU

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Goals of the Project

- Contribute to BU's efforts to ensure "every undergraduate [is] touched in some way" by sustainability and climate education (as outlined in section VII of BU's Climate Action Plan).
- Investigating why students choose to take sustainability classes at BU
- Investigating if there are overlaps between factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and student experience in these classes
 - Investigating if some groups of students decide not to take these classes at all

Accomplishments this semester

- ❖ Collaboration with BU AS&IR to administer survey
- ❖ Administered the survey to a sample of 5000 students
- ❖ Received a response rate of about 5%, with high interest in our focus groups (about 25% of respondents)
- ❖ Student organization engagement with the focus groups for next semester

Survey respondents: race and gender

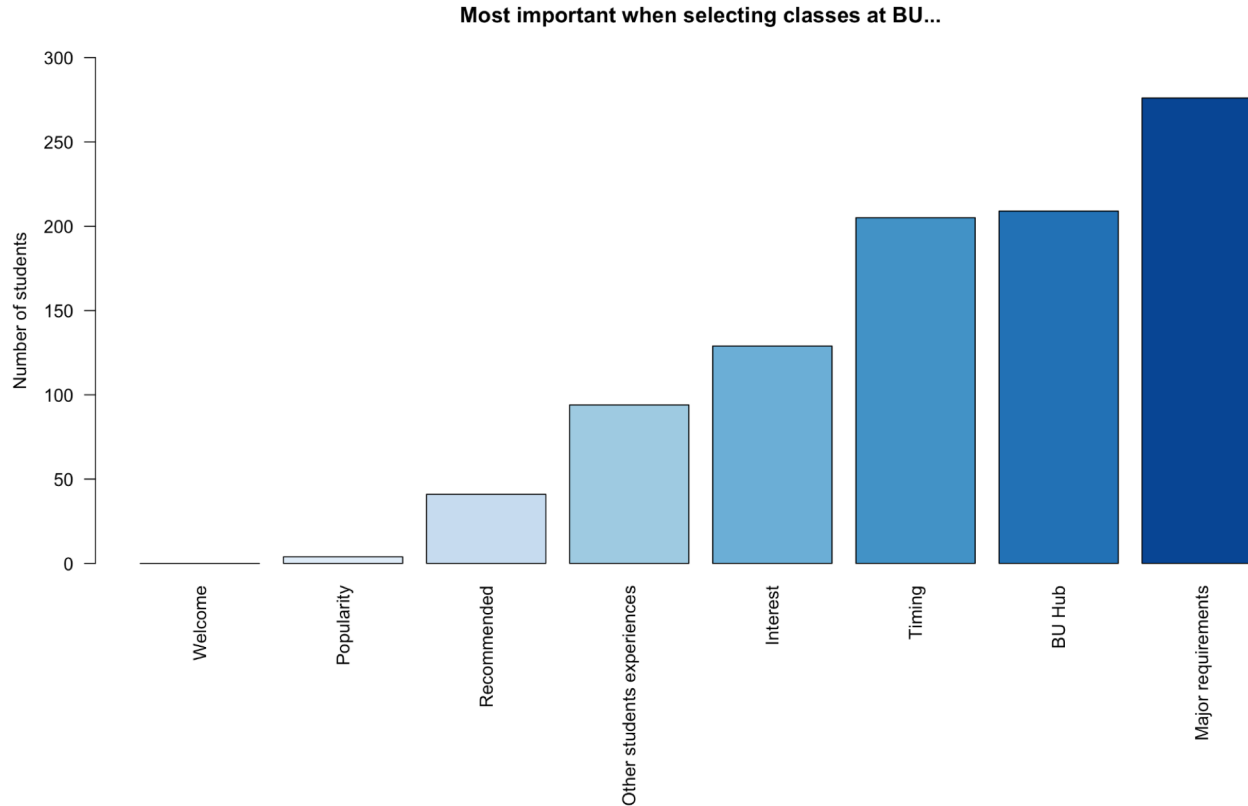
American Indian or Alaska Native	1
Asian	98
Black or African American	8
Mixed race/other	22
White	139
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
Total	268

Agender	2
Female	189
Male	69
Non-binary	13
Total	273

Many more females responded to our survey, which is a common bias in social survey research

*Not all respondents reported their race or gender

Why do students take any given course at BU?



This figure shows reasons across all respondents for selecting any course at BU.

Reasons are similar for selecting all courses and selecting sustainability-specific courses

Our question:

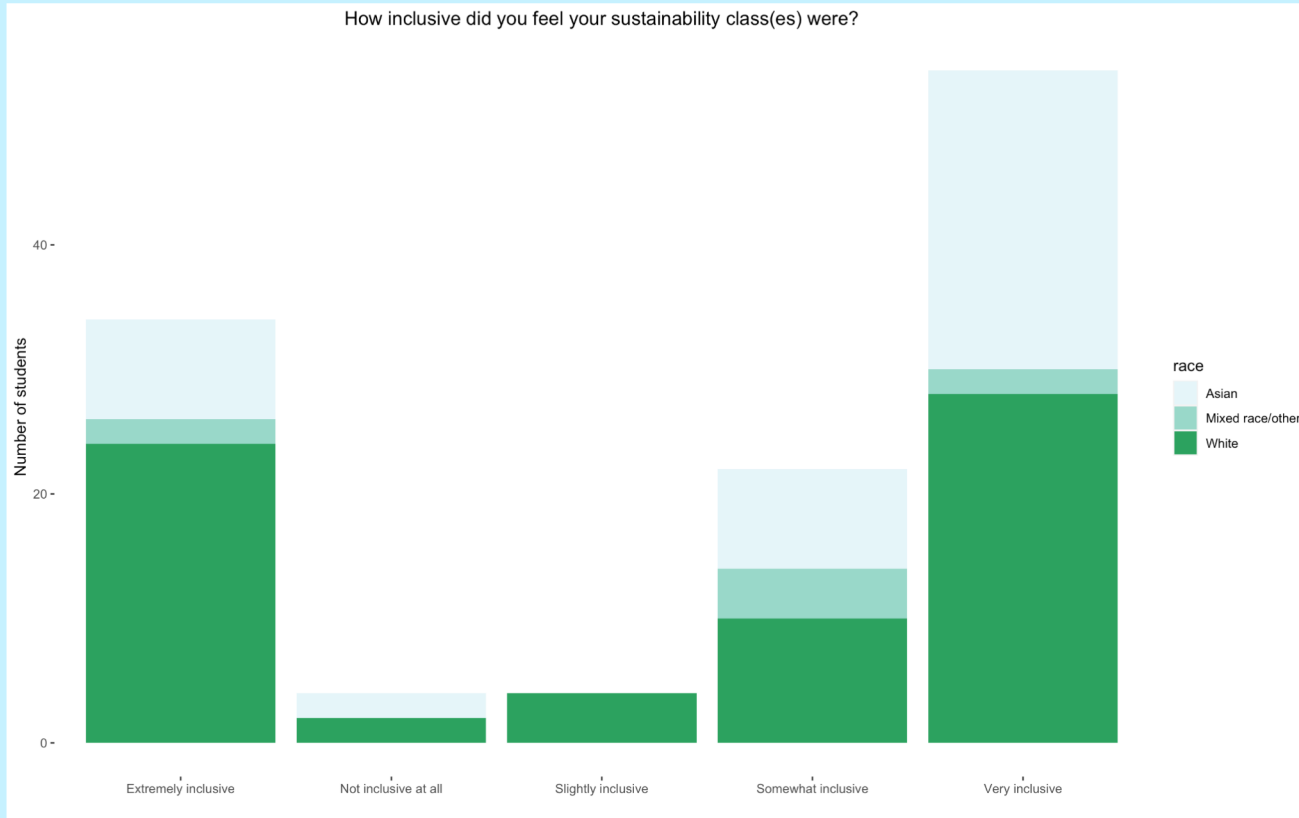
Have you taken at least one sustainability class at BU?

BU defines a sustainability class as a class where the primary and explicit focus of the class is on the interdependence of ecological and social or economic systems, or a major sustainability challenge such as climate change. You can see a list of some of BU's sustainability courses

here: <https://www.bu.edu/sustainability/academics-research/academics/>

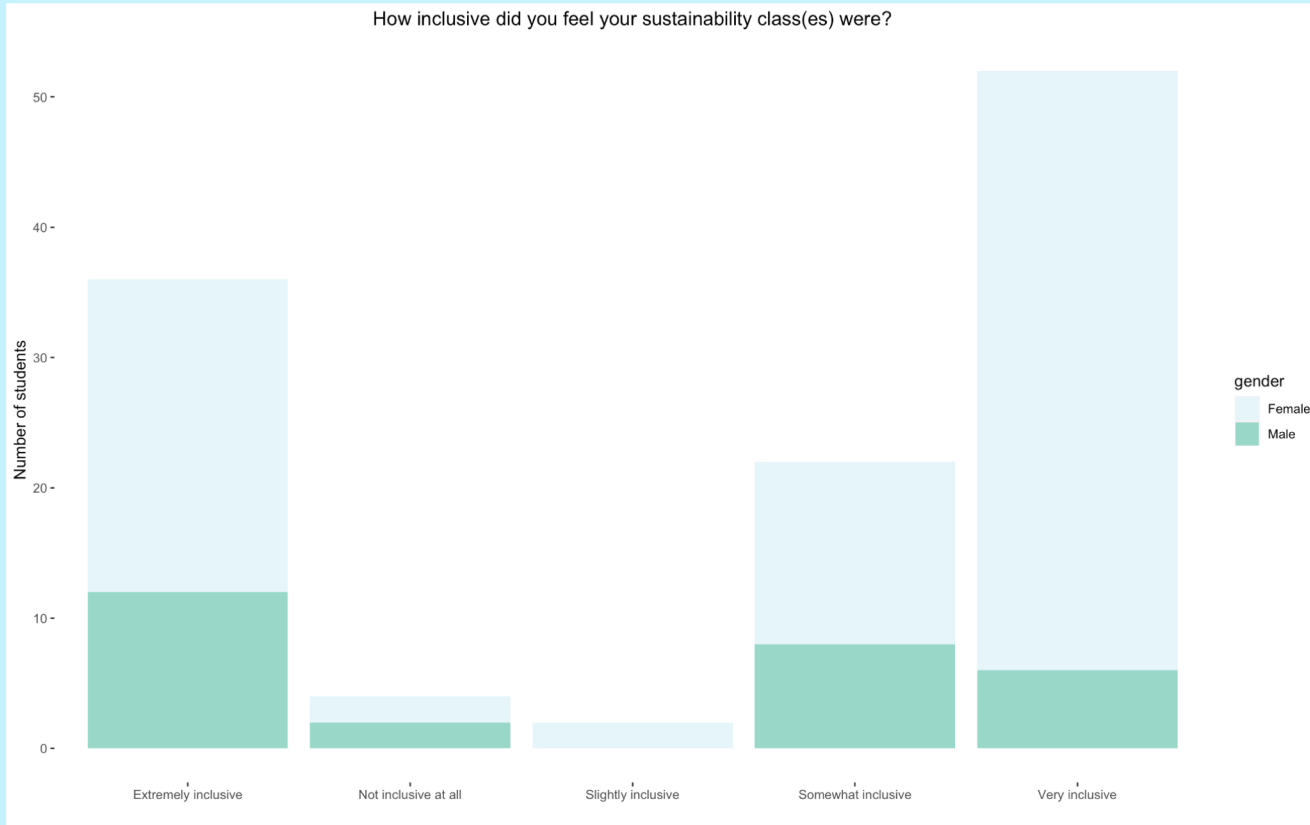
62 respondents (~21%) had taken at least one sustainability course at BU

How inclusive do students feel sustainability courses are... across racial identities?



No African American or Black students that responded to our survey took any sustainability courses at BU

How inclusive do students feel sustainability courses are... across gender identities?



Keep in mind that this is total number, not percentages, and that our demographics are not representative of BU's entire student population

Next Steps

- **Summer 2022:**
 - Hopes to submit paperwork to IRB for focus groups, get this approved
 - Recruit a graduate student to help run focus groups
 - Train to run focus groups
- **Fall 2022:**
 - Hold focus groups
 - Synthesize this data
 - Begin to create our action plan for the university, with input from student organizations on campus