

Diversity & Inclusion



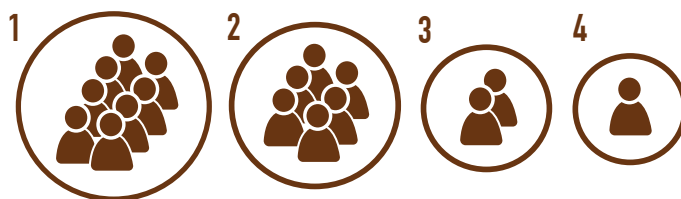
BGSU | Office of
Academic Assessment
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Process

A group of 4 Student Learning Analysts (SLAs) comprised of undergraduate students from a variety of class standings and majors explored the topic of diversity and inclusion based on areas from the National Survey of Student Engagement.

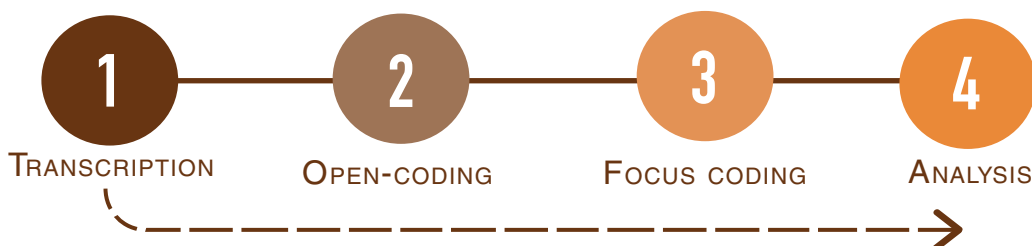
4 Focus Groups

17 PARTICIPANTS
16 UNDERGRADUATES
1 GRADUATE



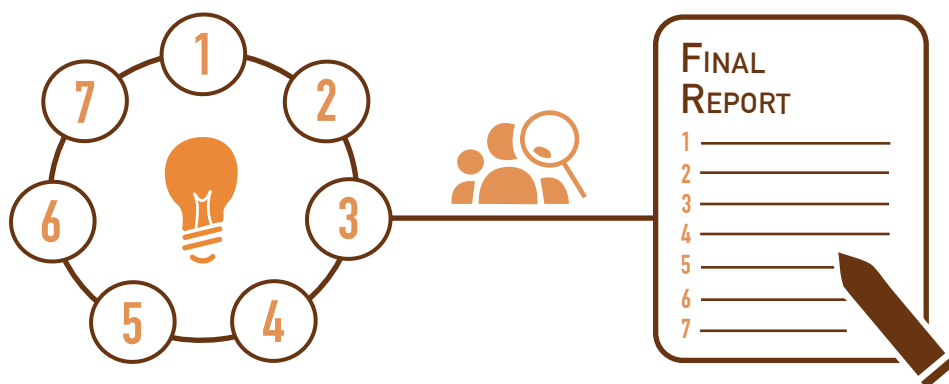
8 QUESTIONS
WERE ASKED.

25MINS - 65MINS



Results

The SLAs created a final report explaining the major themes found from the focus groups.



7 Major Themes

1 STUDENT DEFINITIONS & FEEDBACK

- DIVERSITY
- INCLUSION
- BGSU DEFINITION
- "BELONG. STAND OUT. GO FAR."

2 COURSE CONTENT

- MAJOR COURSES
- BGP COURSES
- HONORS CURRICULUM

3 OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

- FAMILY INFLUENCES
- INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO BGSU
- INVOLVEMENT AT BGSU

4 UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- DIFFICULT DIALOGUE
- STUDENT EXPECTATIONS REGARDING CLASSROOM GROUND RULES
- INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS

5 INCLUSION & EXCLUSION AT BGSU

- IN-CLASS EXPERIENCES
- STUDENT LIFE

6 UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

- AWARENESS
- UNIVERSITY IMPROVEMENTS

7 STUDENT REFLECTIONS

- IDENTITIES
- DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
- LEARNING

"people of different backgrounds"
"ethnicity"

"they're coming together and they're sharing a space" "race"

"different ideologies, ideas and perspectives"

"a shared space"

"different experiences" "gender identity"

DIVERSITY

"coming together in one place and exchanging their differences."

"just different"

"different viewpoints, beliefs, races, gender identities"

"that element of like inclusion and positivity"

"a very positive connotation" "Political beliefs"

"sexual orientation" "differences that are labeled based upon a society standing"

"YOU FIRST MUST BE DIVERSE IN ORDER TO BE INCLUSIVE."

"everybody feels comfortable and safe"

"Making sure everyone's apart of what they want to be apart of." despite differences"

"aware that there are people with differences" "feel welcome"

"giving other people the same amount of resources that they need to succeed as somebody else"

"comfortable"

INCLUSION

"apart of the like the group rather than like feeling excluded"

"make sure everybody feels safe, regardless of"

"having the adequate resources to be able to succeed" gender, race, or background"

"Inclusion is really like what we really need"

"everybody coming together"

"safe"

"accepting that other people are different"

Diversity and Inclusion Executive Summary

A group of Student Learning Analysts (SLAs), comprised of undergraduate students from a wide variety of class standings and majors, explored the topic of diversity and inclusion in the classroom through a learning lens, based on areas of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The SLAs collaborated to develop questions for the focus group protocol and then tabled in the Bowen-Thompson Student Union to recruit participants. Four focus groups were facilitated by the SLAs with a total of sixteen participants. Afterwards, the SLAs transcribed the focus groups and then went through a three-step coding process. These steps included: 1) open coding, 2) focused coding, and 3) an analysis of the focused coding to identify major themes. After combining the codes from each SLA, a master code was created and findings were brought to light. Seven major themes emerged with subthemes, including a compilation of student definitions of diversity and inclusion, feedback on BGSU's working definition of diversity, and feedback on BGSU's new campaign "Belong. Stand Out. Go Far." Selected quotes were extracted to provide tangible examples.

1. Student Definitions and Feedback: Participants were asked to describe and provide their thoughts on the following:
 - a. Diversity Definition: Diversity viewed as a shared space; the representation of different identities.
 - b. Inclusion Definition: Importance of treating people with different identities not as equal, but fairly, and feeling accepted and safe.
 - c. Feedback to Given BGSU Definition: Thoughts of intersectionality and respect.
 - d. Feedback to "Belong. Stand Out. Go Far.": Reactions and awareness to University tagline.

One participant discussed their understanding of the new BGSU campaign: *I just think that people need to learn about each other to have people actually belong, and then once people feel like they are safe and comfortable, they will be able to like stand out more and like go somewhere because if you're not comfortable you're just going to stay in your little bubble...like especially me, I was...I had like a ton of anxiety the first year and then once I found...once I found groups where I felt like I belonged in, I actually did more stuff and like went out of my comfort zone and like went far. (T3, L224-229)*

2. Course Content: Participants discussed that their level of exposure to diversity and inclusion ideas depended on the courses they encountered.
 - a. Major Courses: Included the students' academic programs and their specific course requirements.
 - b. BGP Courses: General education courses that are required across all colleges and programs.
 - c. Honors Curriculum: Additional courses and events that work to increase students' critical thinking.

A participant described that the content within their major courses impacted their perception of diversity and inclusion principles: *So, I'm a Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) major, so I'm required to take a lot of classes on diversity...The coolest part of each [of my] classes was definitely learning from my fellow students, um, because they get to share their backgrounds and their experiences and then we get to share like our experiences and stuff and, um, it really makes the subject matter that we're learning about tangible, because like we learn the stats and we learn, um, the quote/unquote norm, but that doesn't fit everybody. So, um, I really like the discussion portion of those classes because you really get to learn, like, what's happening in real life, because these are real families, these are real experiences.... (T2, L225-235)*

3. Outside the Classroom: Participants explained that their knowledge and exposure to diversity and inclusion is not only found in the traditional classroom setting.
 - a. Family Influences: Parental figures played a role in students' understanding of diversity and inclusion.
 - b. Involvement Prior to BGSU: Included experiences in middle and high school, exchange programs, and volunteering.
 - c. Involvement at BGSU: Included student organizations and experiences that exposed them to new ideas, identities, and cultures.

One participant gave an example: *...My mom, she's a principal at an elementary school, and she tells her kids that there's a difference between what's fair and what's equal. And a lot of people would think that, um, it's good that, that were all treated the same exact way, but that's not really how it is, because we all come from different places, and different backgrounds, and have different beliefs and everything. (T1, L68-72)*

4. University Classroom Environment: The participants made several points about how being in a diverse and inclusive learning environment is indispensable in the effort to create a conducive learning atmosphere to engage one's mind.
 - a. Difficult Dialogue: A foundation for discussing diversity and inclusion ideas.
 - b. Student Expectations Regarding Classroom Ground Rules: Expectations that students both entered BGSU with and developed over their academic career.
 - c. Instructional Strategies and Tools: What instructors use to effectively educate and relate with their students.

A participant highlighted specific methods instructors have used to make students feel welcomed: *I always think about, like when I see professors making an effort to include like students who aren't White, middle class America, or upper class America, um, I've seen that in a couple of my classes, mostly through activities, or like, presentations, not putting people on the spot, but like, especially my honors professors, I think, are pretty good at making us think about a lot of different world ideas and expanding us, opening our minds to different cultures that we may not be exposed to. (T1, L100-105)*

5. Inclusion and Exclusion at BGSU: Instances where students felt their identities were included and excluded.
 - a. In-Class Experiences: Includes instructors, faculty, and peers in the classroom.
 - b. Student Life: Includes social spaces on campus.

One student gave an example in which they have felt excluded due to their marginalized sexual identity: *...I have had people uh like speak for me...I identify as bisexual—I've had people, um, explain what that was to me, and uh... like, try to, um, speaking for someone else is certainly not the right way to go. I am a strong believer in, uh, passing the mic instead of speaking for someone. (T2, L136-141)*

6. University Resources: Students can come to learn about diversity and inclusion at BGSU through campus resources and support services.
 - a. Awareness: Participants' understanding of the different student support offices on campus.
 - b. University Improvements: What can be done to improve campus resources and the BGSU experience.

A participant discussed ideas for university improvements: *...I think the university has a lot of diversity events... but there's never any actual discussion about it so like there's...Black History Month and we celebrate Black History Month, but we never have like discussions on like police brutality... So, we talk about it and... like we love our diversity but we never talk about the issues within diversity or like the issues of diverse students or minority students so it's just always [a] celebration [of] them. It's never like really getting [into] the hard stuff so...that's like my biggest thing. (T1, L561-567)*

7. Student Reflections: Participants were continuously reflecting on their identities, experiences, and learning while making connections to diversity and inclusion.
 - a. Reflection on Identities: Participants discussed their personal identities and how they relate to the conversation of diversity and inclusion.
 - b. Reflection on Diversity and Inclusion: Participants reflected about their experiences with diversity and inclusion aspects.
 - c. Reflection on Learning: Participants reflected on their experiences in the classroom and their own learning and the relation of these ideas to diversity and inclusion.

One participant reflected on their experiences before attending BGSU: *It makes me more empathetic... care about people more. And I think about the shoes that they're in. Because like, before I came to BG, I didn't, you know, I knew that people were different than me, but I grew up in a little farm town, and I wasn't exposed to that in like my classes or like in my school, and now I just, now I am constantly thinking about, you know, people that are different than me, and how they experience life different from me, and I just put myself more in their shoes, or I try to. (T1, L282-287)*

For a copy of the full report, please contact Dr. Jessica Turos, Associate Director, Office of Academic Assessment at jmturos@bgsu.edu.