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# GRADUATE STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2021 FINAL REPORT

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Conducted and compiled by the 2020-2021 W&M Graduate Council



April 15, 2022

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# Introduction

The Graduate Student Life Satisfaction Survey was designed for three primary purposes. First, we wanted to understand why graduate students use or do not use various campus resources. Second, we wanted to understand how graduate students perceive their relationship with William & Mary. Do students feel connected to the greater campus community? Do students desire to be more connected with the campus community or are they happy now? Finally, we wanted to understand how graduate students perceive the campus climate as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Graduate Council aims to improve graduate student life through events and advocacy. By understanding how students use campus resources, we can direct our work conversations with the people who provide these resources to improve graduate student accessibility. Similarly, by understanding how students perceive the campus climate, we can direct our diversity, inclusion, and engagement efforts to the areas of greatest need. Finally, social connection between the graduate schools is a primary goal of the Graduate Council. The data on engagement allows us to understand which events are most likely to be successful and it helps us figure out which populations require the greatest outreach.

In that light, we found 8 primary takeaways from the survey, listed below:

1. The resources used by graduate students largely varies by school, but the SWEM library, recreational center, and health/wellness center were the most commonly used non-academic resources.
2. The majority of students do not associate with members outside of their school, but would find such gatherings useful in creating a greater sense of community.
3. The perceptions of W&M being a diverse, inclusive, and equitable campus are wide ranging and vary by school.
4. Graduate students are largely dissatisfied with the levels of diversity at W&M.
5. Graduate students seem to be fairly confident in the ability of their school's leadership to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
6. The majority of discriminatory acts that were observed by graduate students were perpetrated by peers.
7. Graduate students that reported discriminatory acts to campus administration were overwhelmingly dissatisfied with the manner in which they were handled.
8. Graduate students that did not report discriminatory acts to campus administration largely did not do so due to little/no confidence in administration's ability to address the issue, the incident already being reported by other students, not finding the incident important enough to report, and being afraid of retaliation.

Below is an *executive summary* of the results including number of participants, number from each school, number of students from each year, etc.

Total number of responses: 625

[Incomplete responses included]

Number of students per school:

A&S: 61

Ed: 66

Law: 142

Business: 96

VIMS: 33

[398 people answered this question]

20 live on campus, 157 are never campus

Less than 100 people (55-77 range) are on campus unrelated to academics

55/340 respondents are in an online learning program

289/359 are in a three year program or shorter (70 in a longer)

153/355 are first year students (27/103/40/18/14 have been at W&M for 1/2/3/4/5+ years)

16/351 are W&M faculty or staff members

151/354 primary income is a scholarship/fellowship/stipend

149/361 are on campus zero days, 89 are on campus 7 or fewer days a month

204/290 live less than 15 minutes from campus

33/370 attended W&M as an undergraduate

234/349 are under 30 (75 between 30-40; 26 are 40-50; 14 50+

255/352 have 0 dependents (36 are dependents; 61 have dependents)

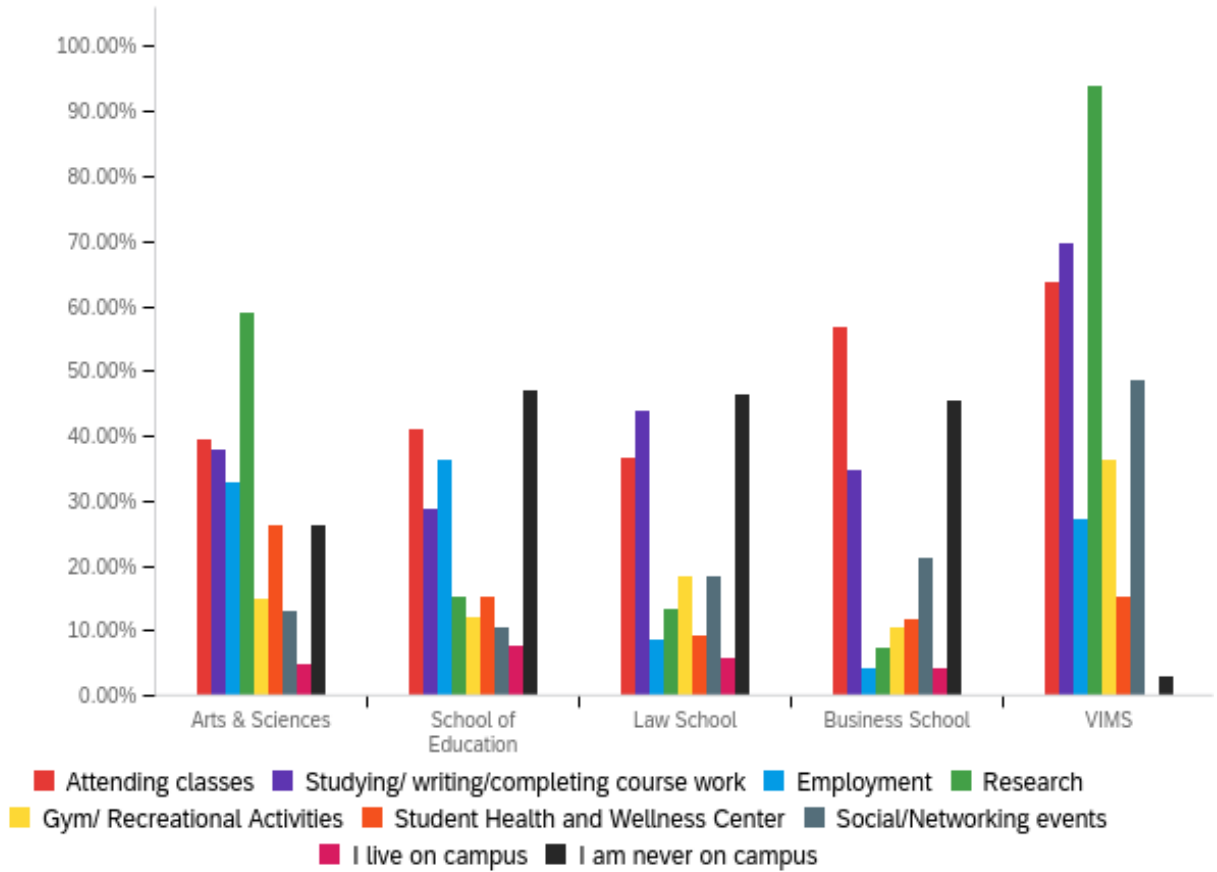
210/343 are female (132 male; 1 nonbinary)

20/357 are international students

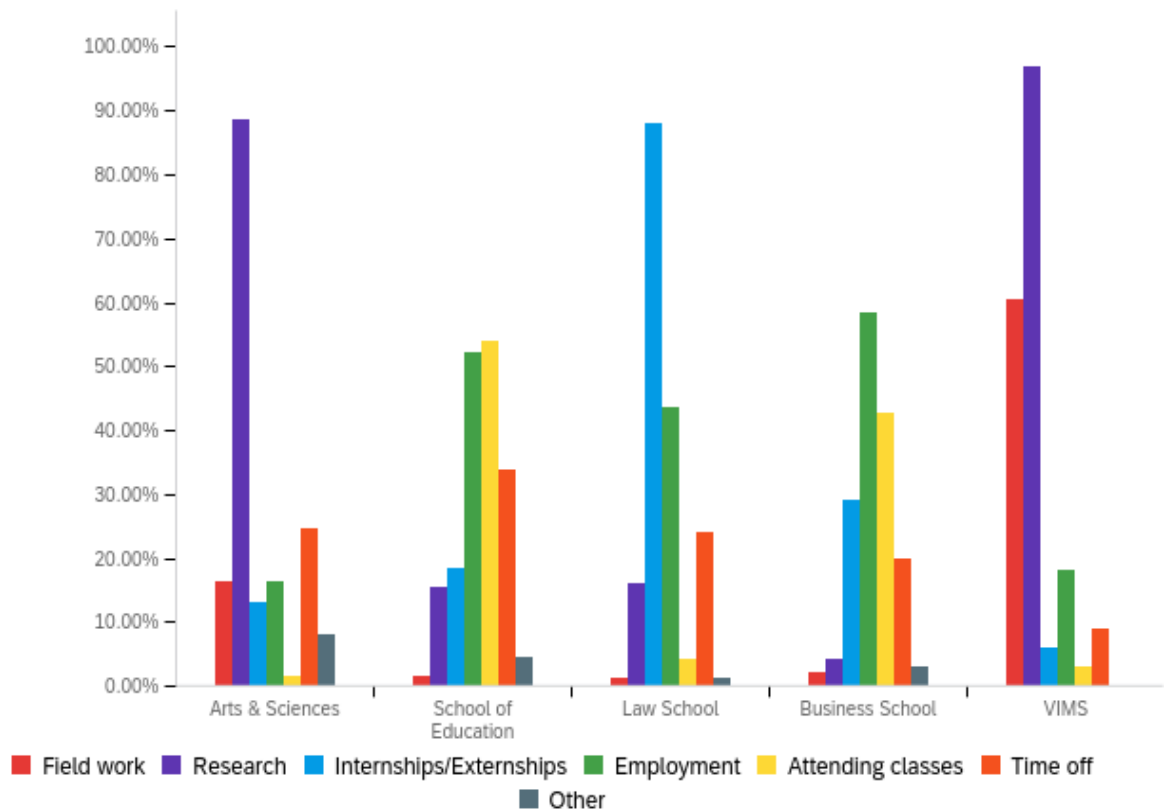
# Resources

Participants were asked several questions concerning resources, both virtual and on campus. These resources are utilized in different capacities by the students of the various graduate schools in interesting ways. “Select All That Apply” multiple choice questions were asked in this section, so students could pick as many resources/activities that applied to them. This led to *non-mutually exclusive* data on resource usage.

Arts and sciences students (58%) as well as VIMS students (94%) were most likely to respond that they were engaged in research while on campus. For two of the schools, the School of Education (47%) and the Law School (46%), the most common response was that they were never on campus. The Business School was the only school that indicated attending class as the most common reason to be on campus at 57%.

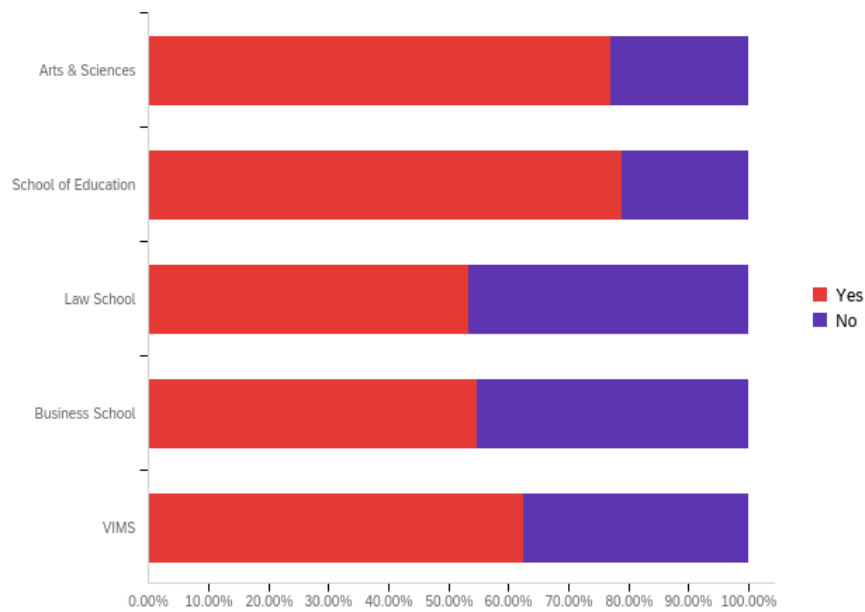


Students across schools were also engaged in various activities during the summer months. 89% of Arts and Sciences students as well as 97% of VIMS students were engaged in research during this time. 88% of Law students were participating in internships or externships. 58% of Business students marked that they would be employed. Students from the School of Education were almost equally split between two summer activities, with 54% of respondents stating that they would be attending classes and 52% saying they would be engaged in employment.

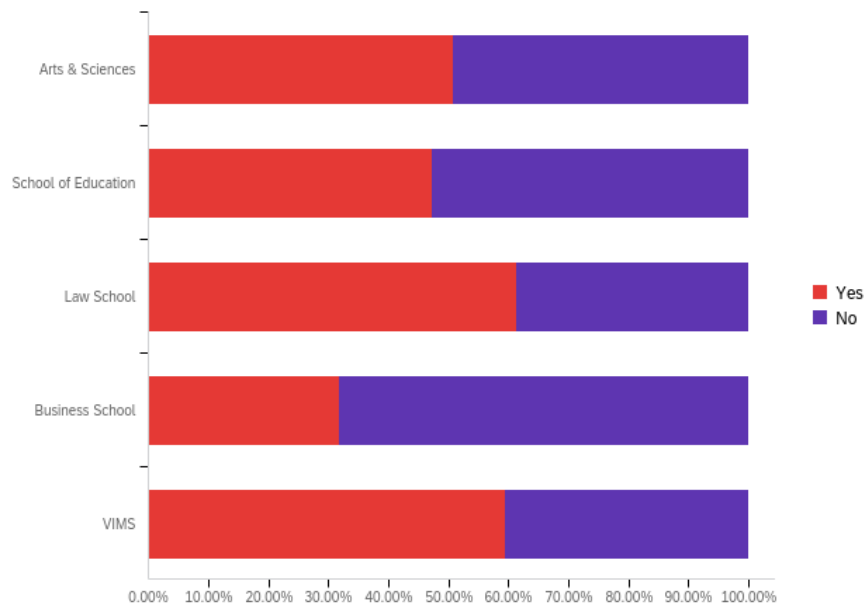


Students across schools were likely to utilize SWEM and the associated resources. Business students and School of Education students were the only groups to have a majority of respondents state that they would not utilize the Gym or Recreation Fields. Arts & Sciences students, Law Students, and VIMS students had a majority of respondents state that they would use the Student Health Center. The only school to have a majority of students state that they would visit the Wellness Center was the School of Arts & Sciences; all other schools overwhelmingly marked no. WATA public transportation was almost universally marked 'no' with graduate students stating they would not use this resource. Dining halls and cafes also were not a resource graduate students across schools would use. VIMS students and Arts & Science students did have a majority of respondents state that they would be interested in using Academic or Research Labs.

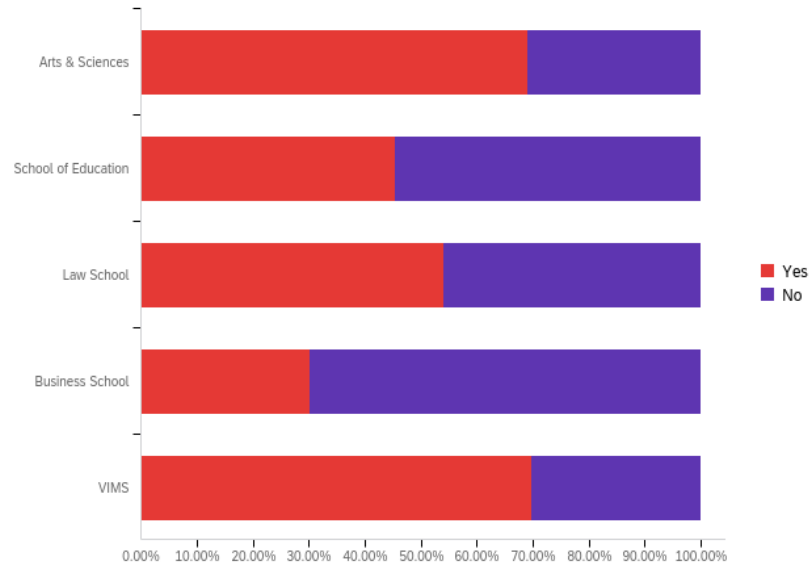
Swem Library and associated resources (Multimedia Center, Maker Space, etc.)



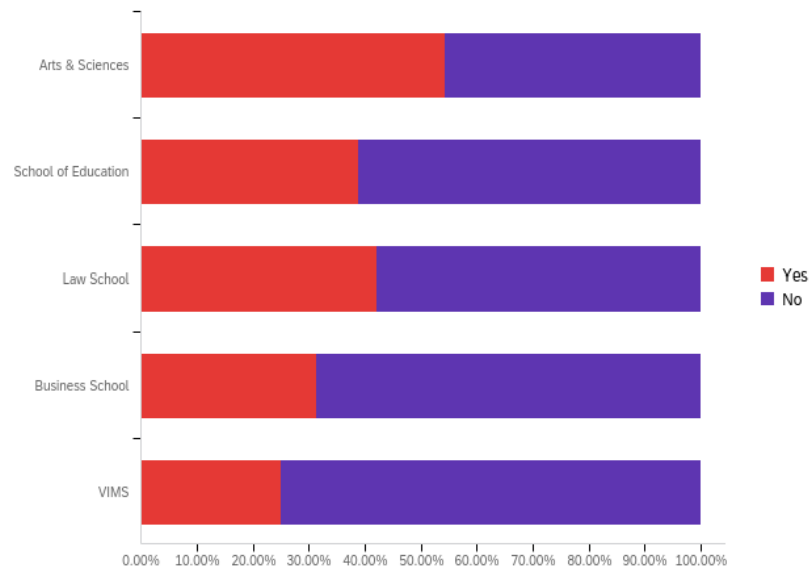
Gym/ Recreation Fields



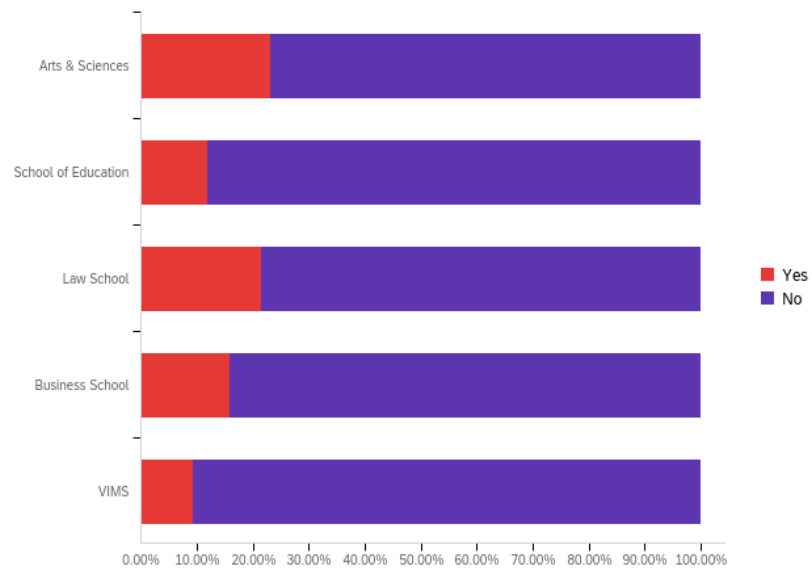
### Student Health Center



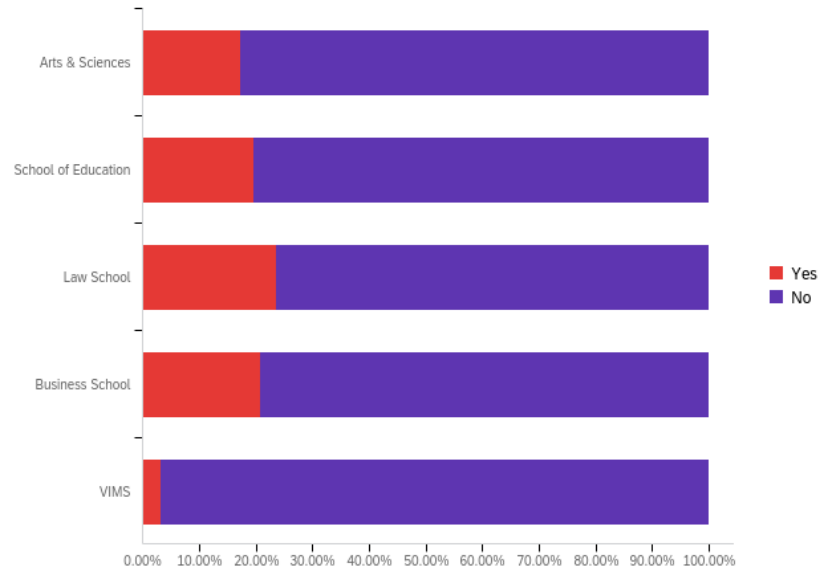
### Wellness Center



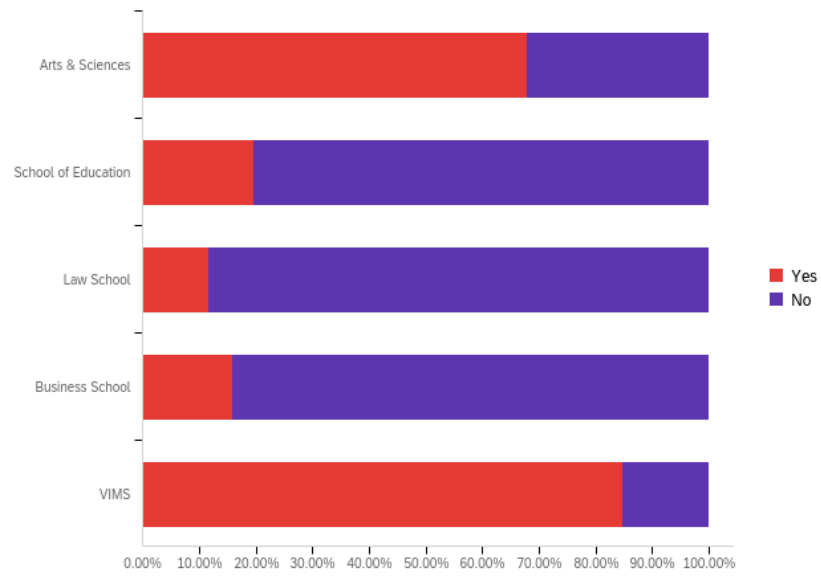
### WATA Public Transportation



### Dining Halls/Cafes



### Academic/Research Labs





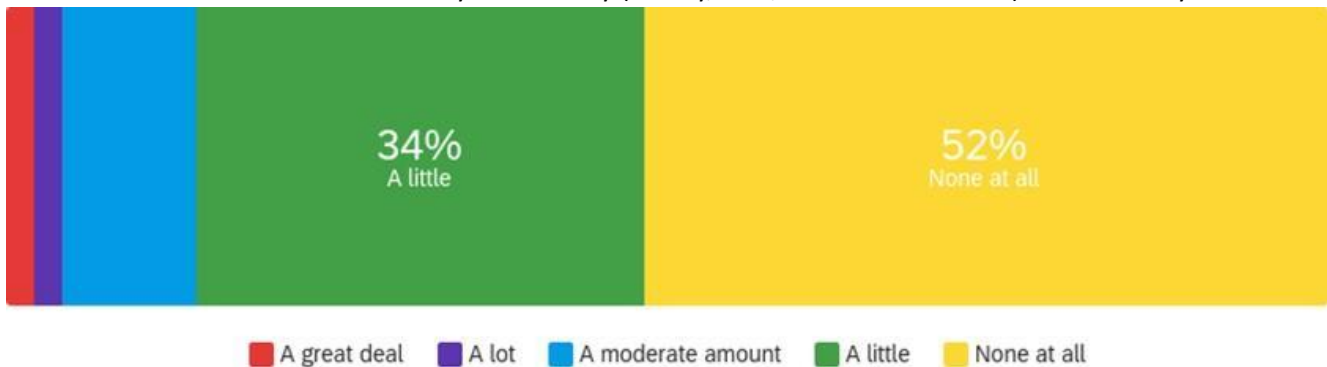
# Engagement

The majority of grad students who took this survey indicated that a sense of community within William & Mary is important to them, and that they would like to meet grad students outside their program and other members of the William & Mary community more often. 76% say they would have attended a graduate mixer in the first month at William & Mary. However, 52% of respondents selected “none at all” when asked if they meet members of the William & Mary community outside their school.

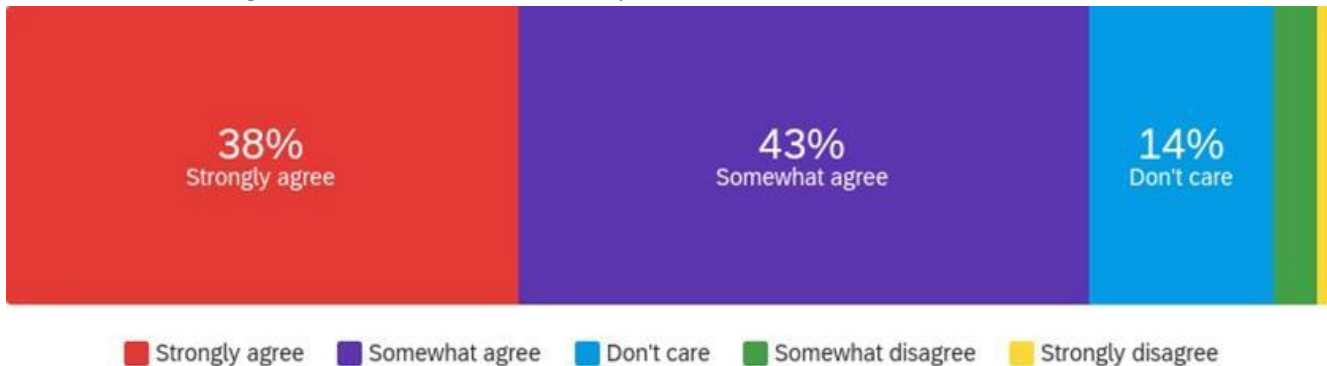
This does make sense in light of the pandemic. Most of the respondents were first year students, and haven’t been given the opportunity to interact with many other students. This provides an opportunity for engagement going forward. However, more than half of respondents also said they never attend events outside their school, so this could be a barrier for attendance.

That being said, grad students are most likely to attend events for grad students only, rather than with undergraduates. 73% prefer communications about campus activities through email listservs (including grad council emails). The responses for types of events most likely to attend varied by school, but social and academic events seemed to be overall the most popular. See graphics below for a more comprehensive breakdown of answers to engagement questions.

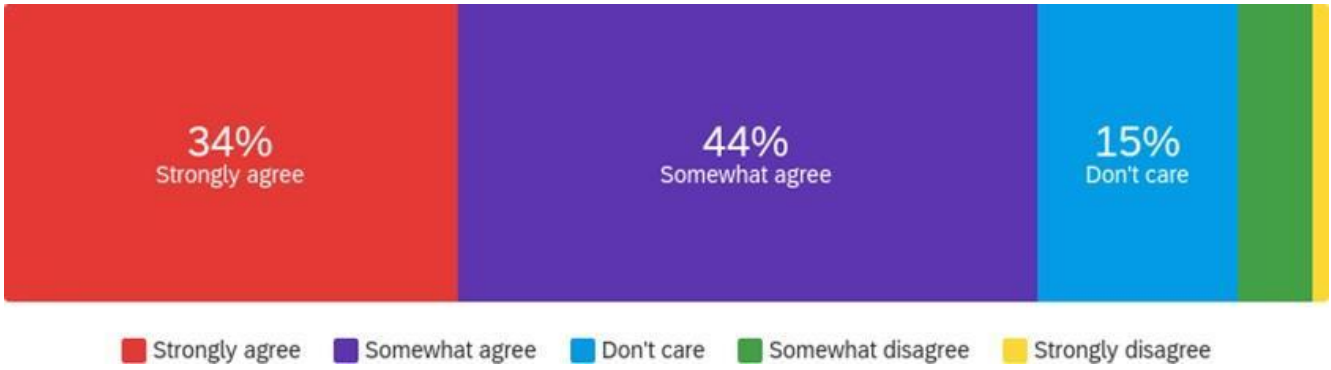
I meet members of the William & Mary Community (faculty, staff, and other students) outside of my school:



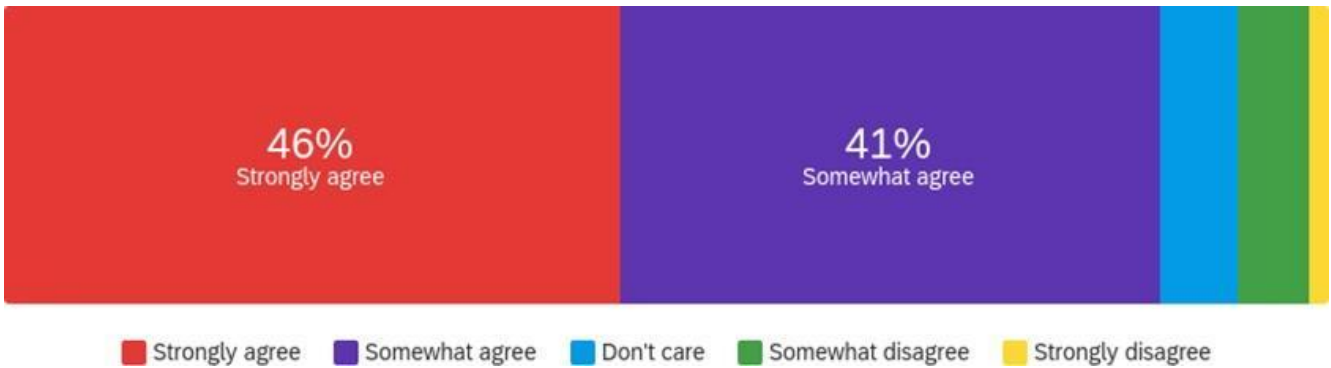
I would like to meet graduate students outside of my school more often:



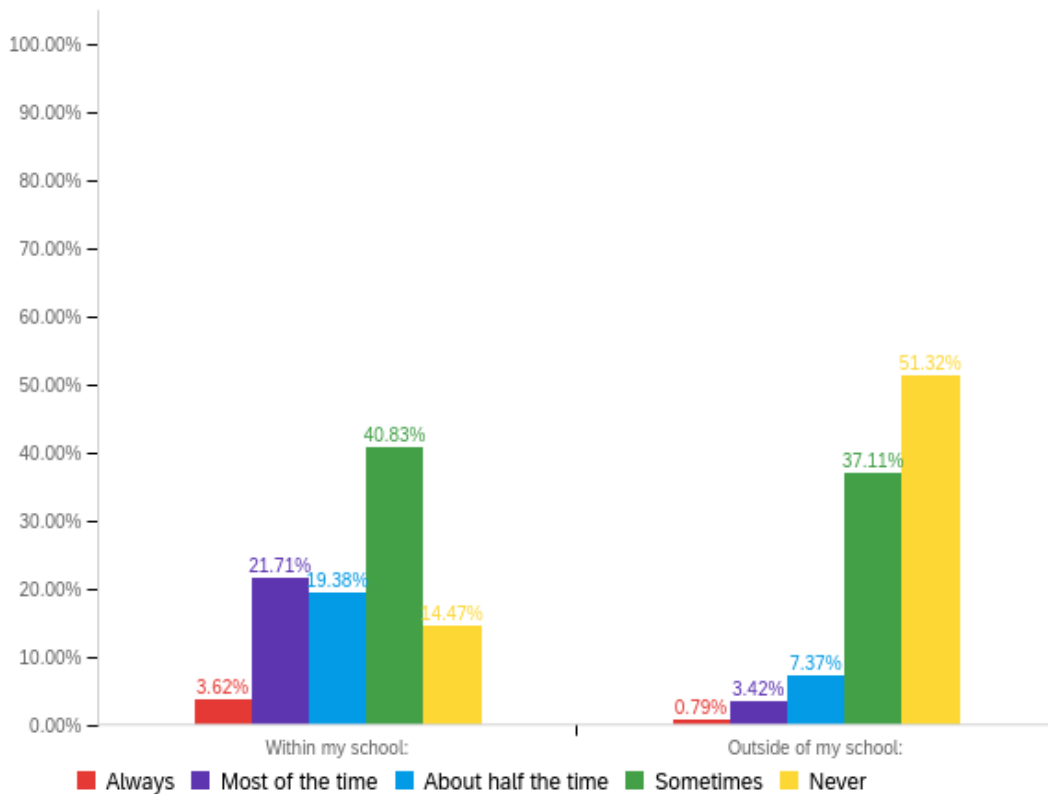
I would like to meet members of the William & Mary community outside of my school more often:



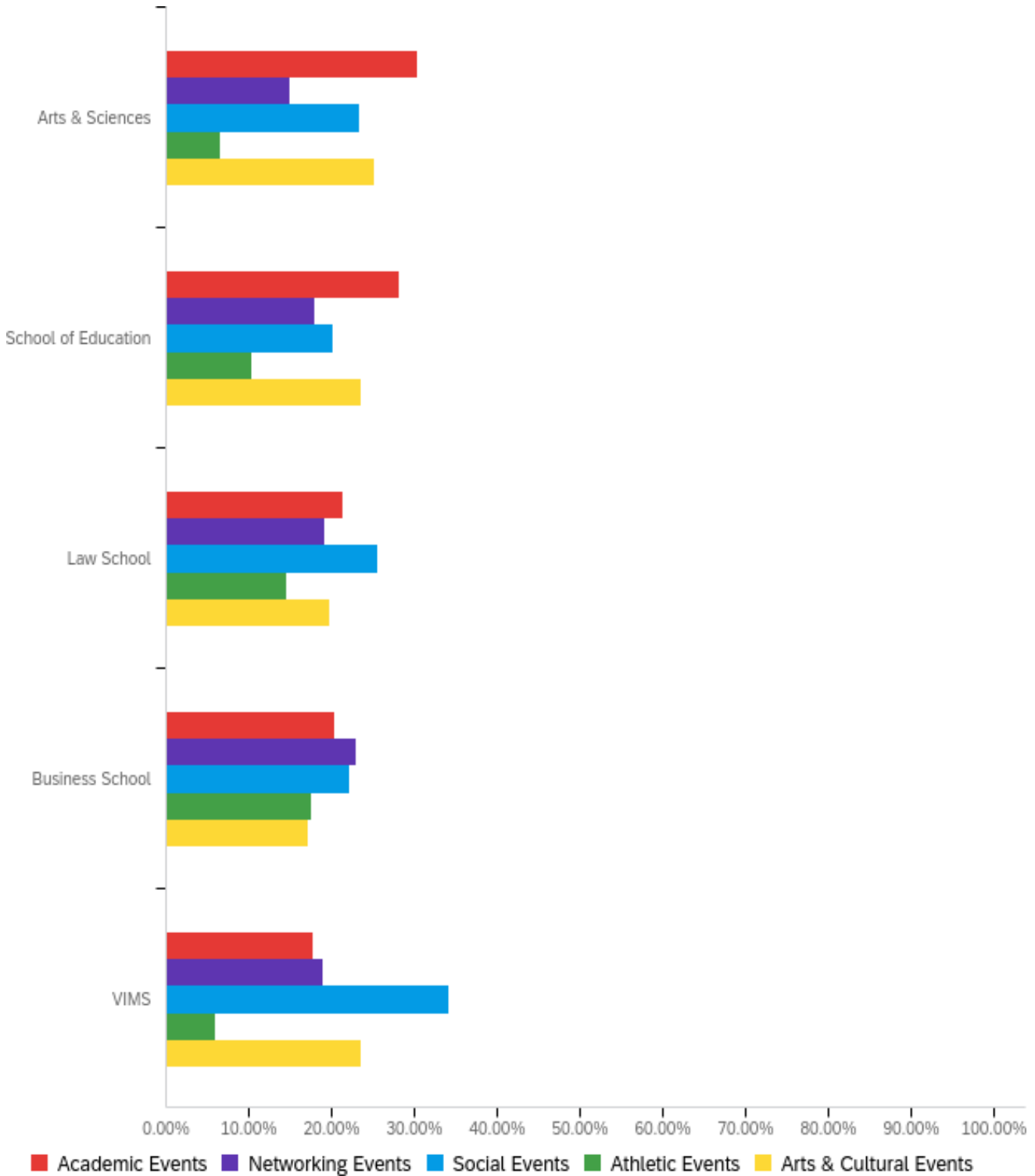
A sense of community within William & Mary is important to my graduate school experience:



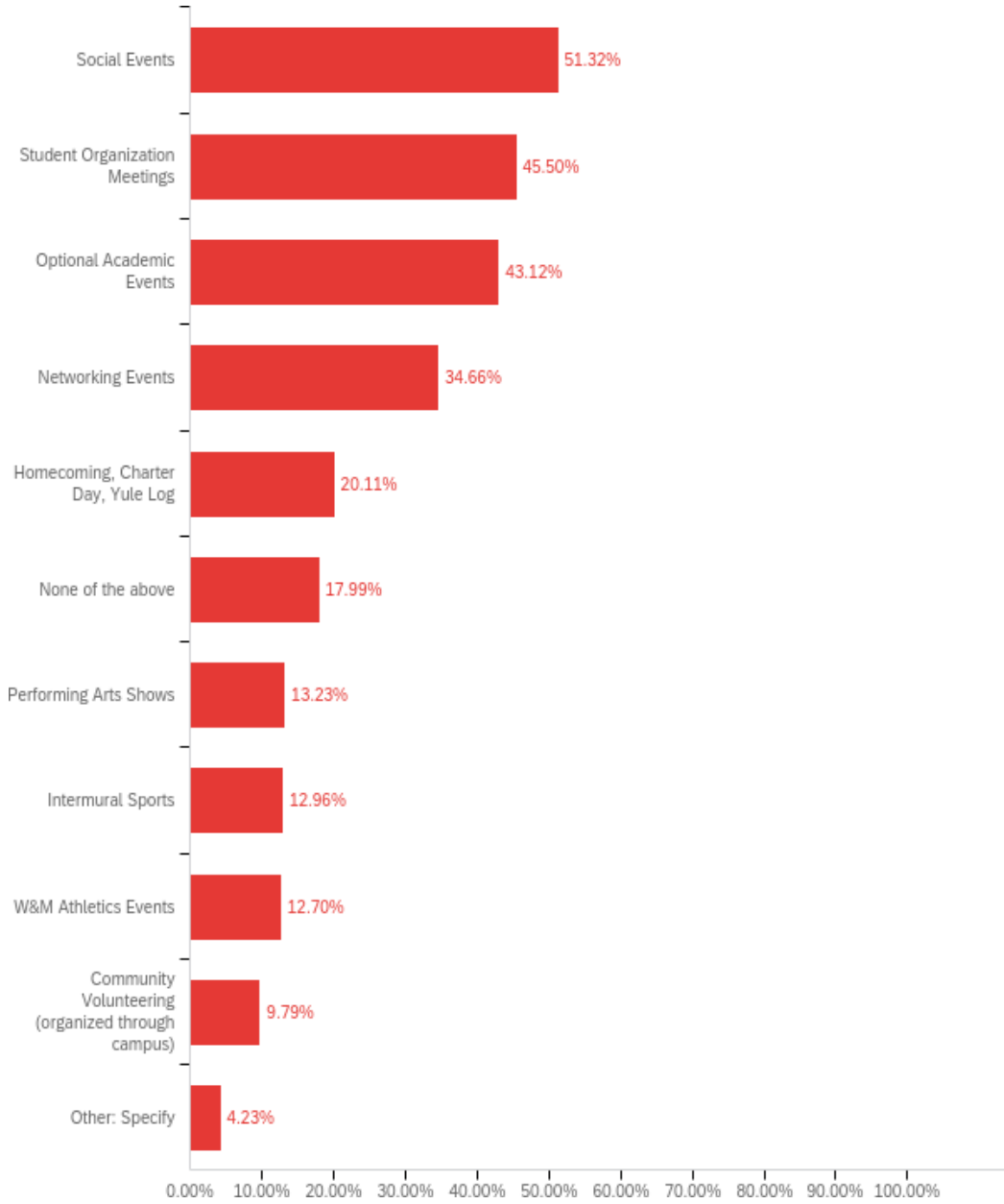
I attend non-mandatory events:



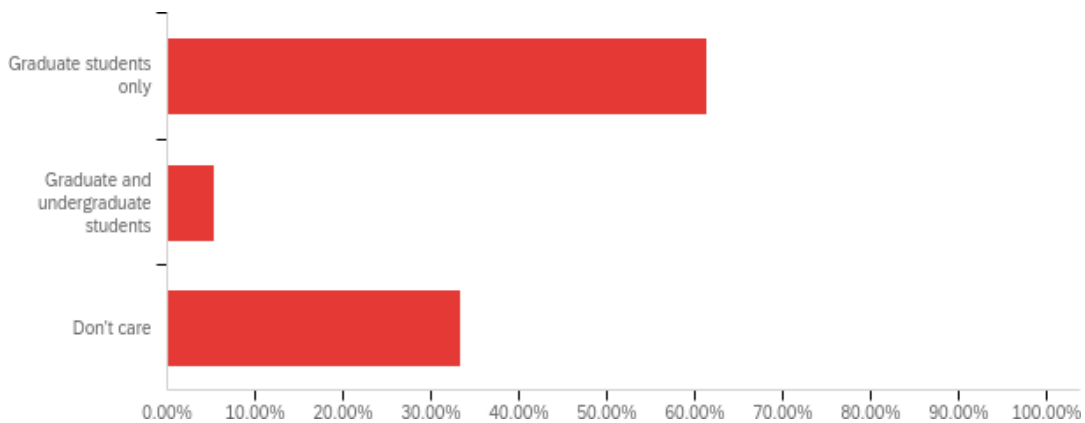
I am most likely to attend events that are:



I have participated in the following activities:



I am most likely to attend events that are for:



# Climate

## **Preface**

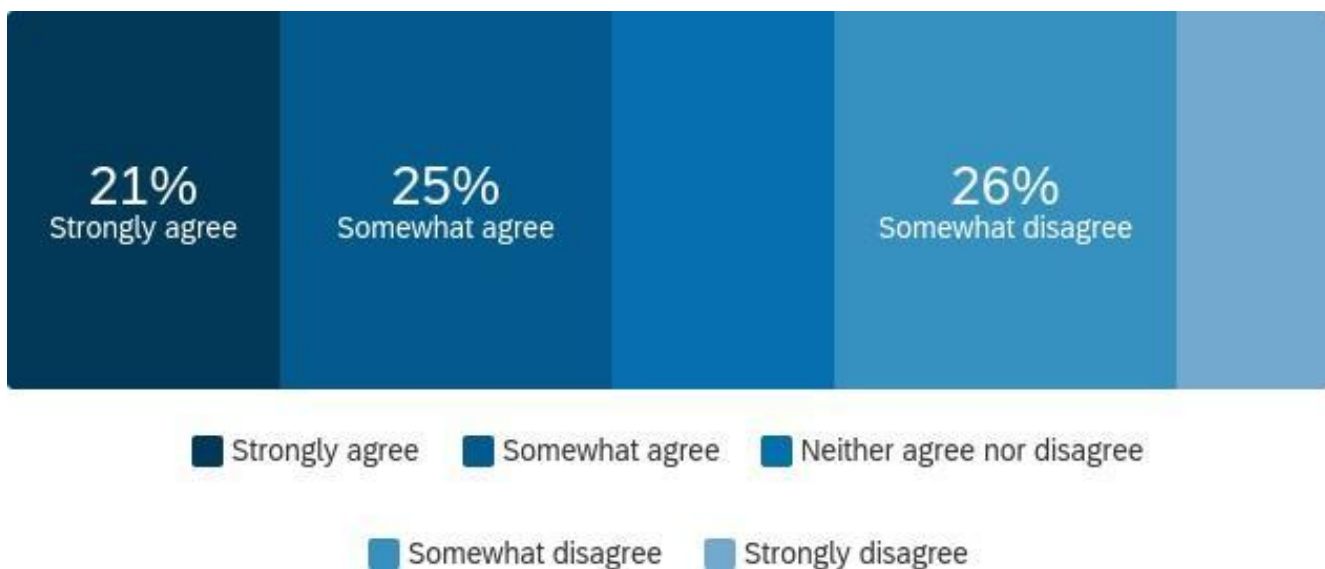
Participants were asked a series of questions concerning the overall climate of W&M. The first half of this section consisted of questions asking about perceptions of and satisfaction with diversity, equity, and inclusion at W&M. This section further asked participants about their sense of belonging at W&M and their confidence in the administration leadership of both W&M overall and their individual schools.

The second half of this section asked about incidents of discrimination that have occurred on campus. Seven specific forms of discrimination were addressed, and for each form of discrimination participants were asked whether or not they had ever witnessed an act of that form of discrimination take place, the nature of any incidents witnessed, and whether or not they chose to report the incident to campus authorities. If the participant had chosen to report the incident, they were asked about their satisfaction with how the incident was handled; if not, they were asked why they chose not to report.

Several questions were split along school demographics in post-analysis, to reveal trends in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) experiences by school.

## **Part One: DE&I**

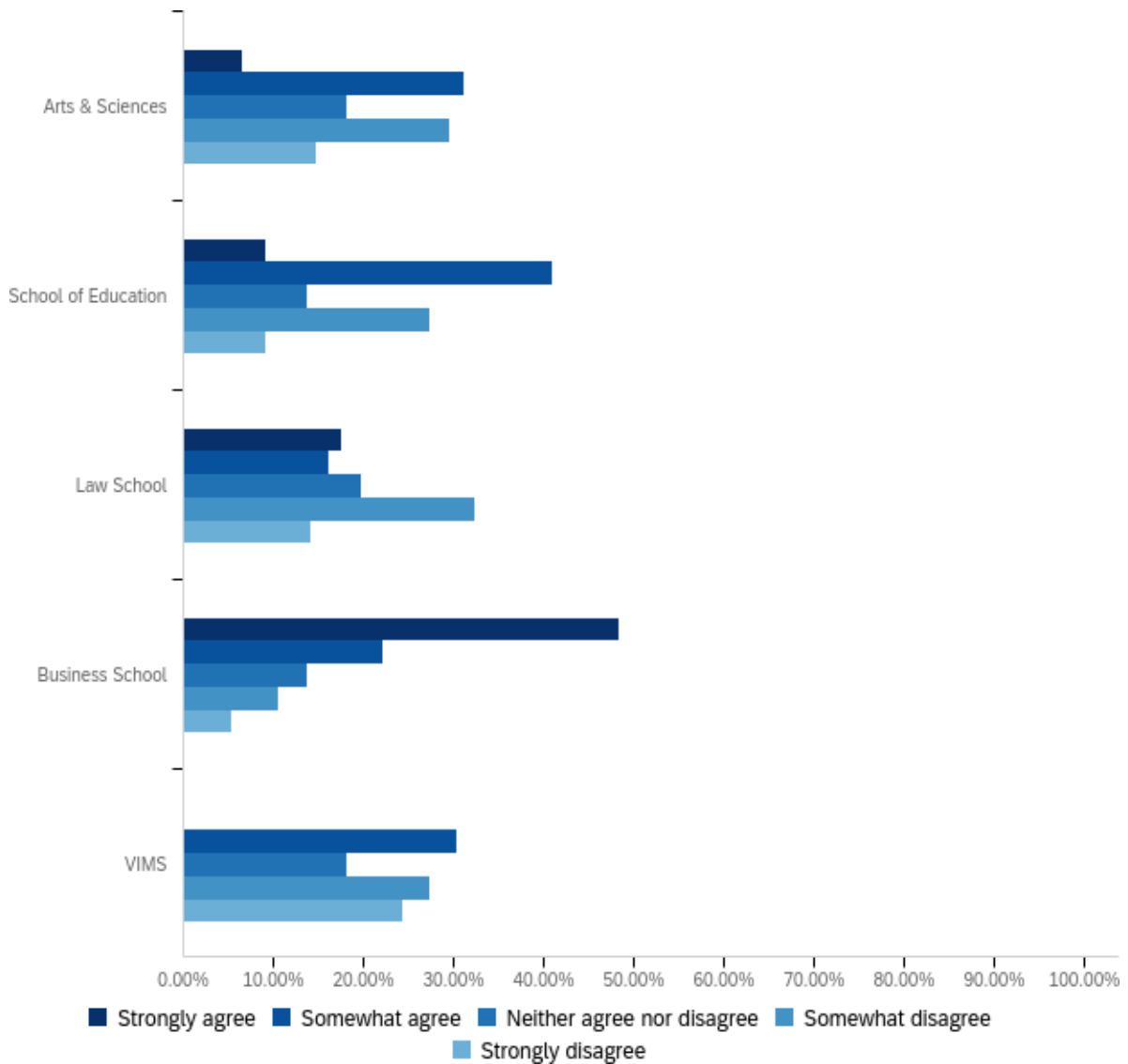
**Q26 - Overall, I believe that William & Mary is a diverse community.**



In asking “I believe” questions we aimed to survey participants’ **perceptions** of the qualities of the W&M community. **46%** of participants, a little less than half, somewhat or strongly **agreed** with the statement that W&M is a diverse community. Alternatively, **38%** of participants somewhat or strongly **disagreed** with this statement, with the remainder being neutral.

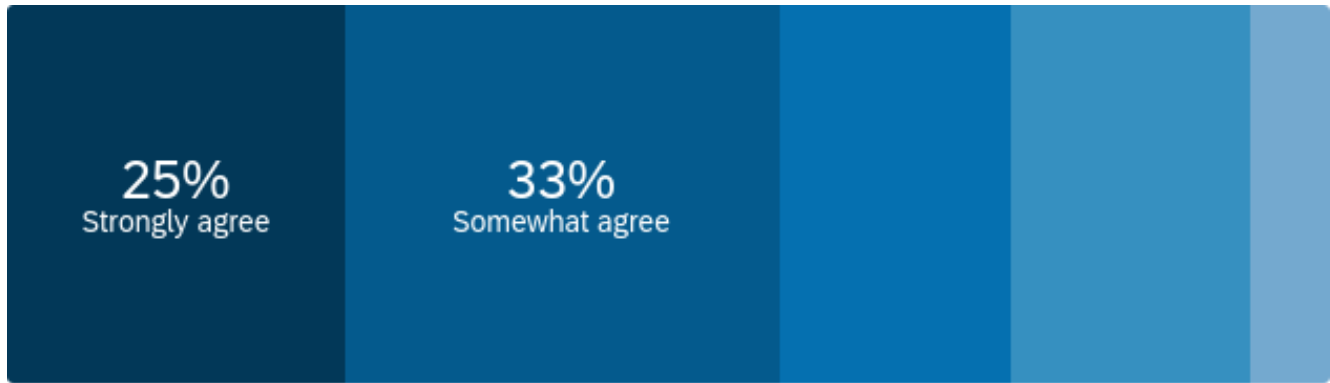
Organizing the responses by School reveals that the above trend does not hold universally.

Whereas there is a strong perception of diversity in the Business School and School of Education, there is more of a balanced perception of the level of diversity in the School of Arts & Sciences, the Law School, and VIMS, with about as many people agreeing that W&M is a diverse community as those that disagree.



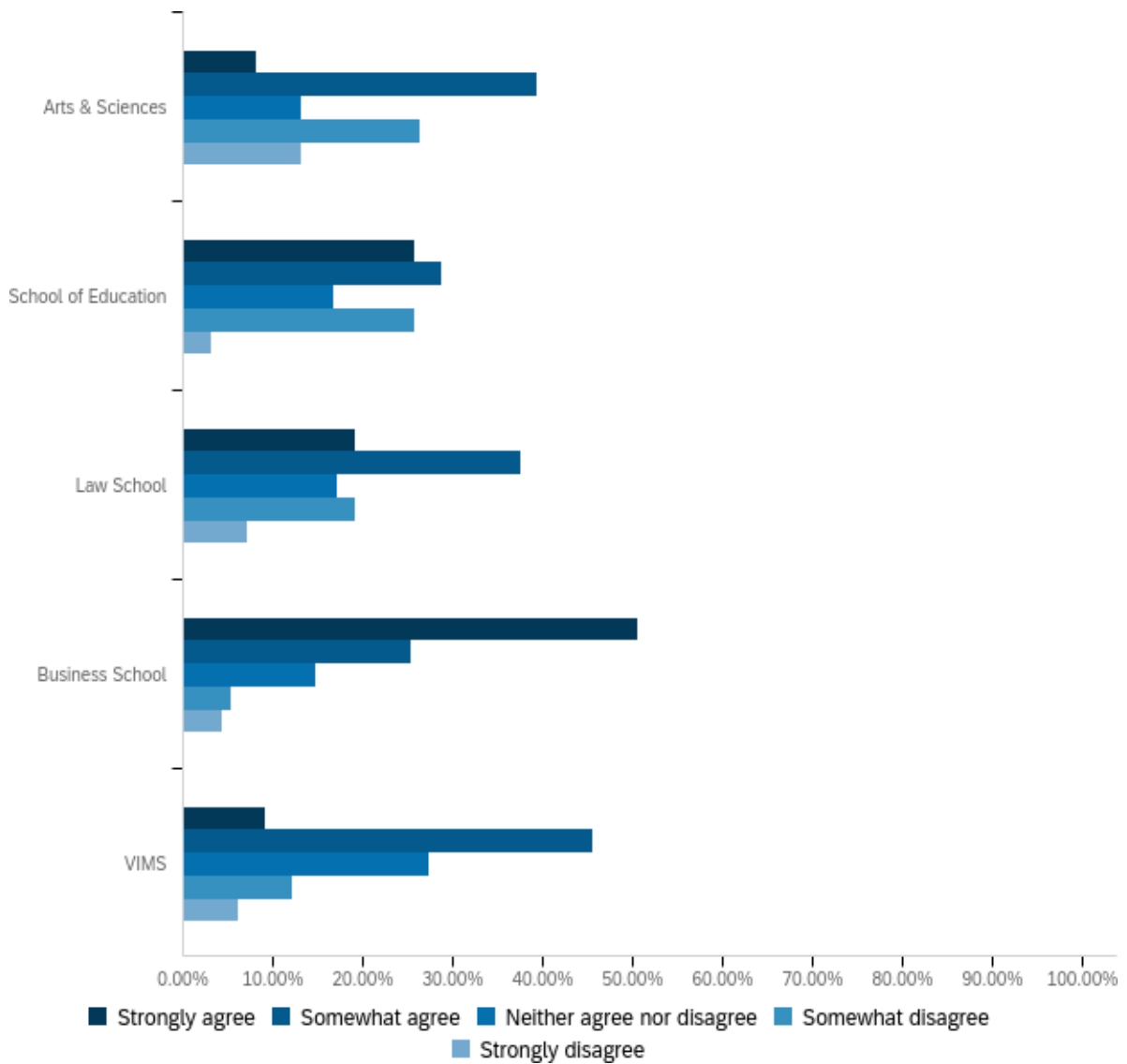
Similar trends were observed for the following two questions which asked about participants' belief that W&M is an **Inclusive** and **Equitable** community, respectively. A majority of participants overall agreed to some degree that W&M was both an Inclusive (**68%**) and Equitable (**50%**) community. However, when divided by school it is clear that this perception is also dependent on school; Business and VIMS lean strongly towards the 'agree' side in terms of W&M's **inclusivity**, while A&S, Law, and Education are more balanced between agreement and disagreement. For the **equity** of W&M, Business and Law lean towards agreement, Education and VIMS are balanced, and A&S actually leans mostly towards disagreement.

**Q27 - Overall, I believe that William & Mary is an inclusive community.**



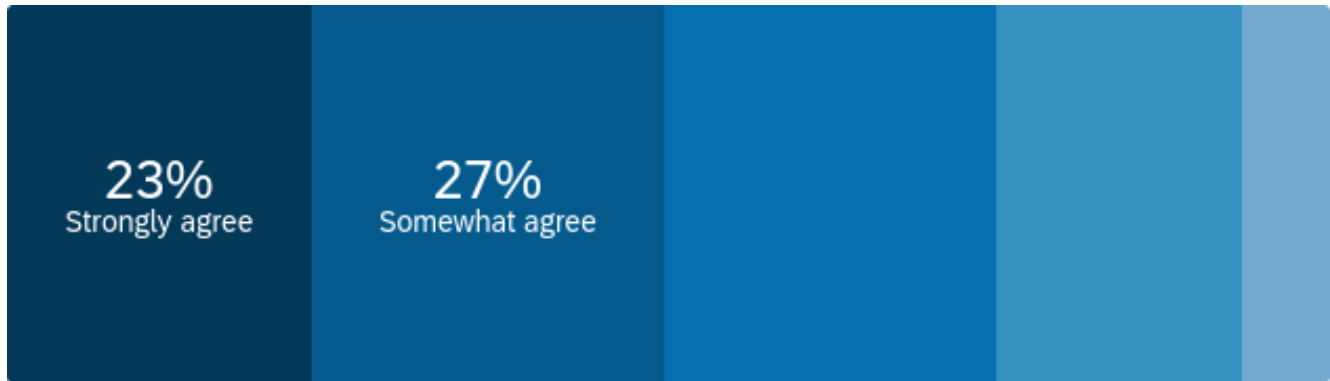
■ Strongly agree   
 ■ Somewhat agree   
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree

■ Somewhat disagree   
 ■ Strongly disagree



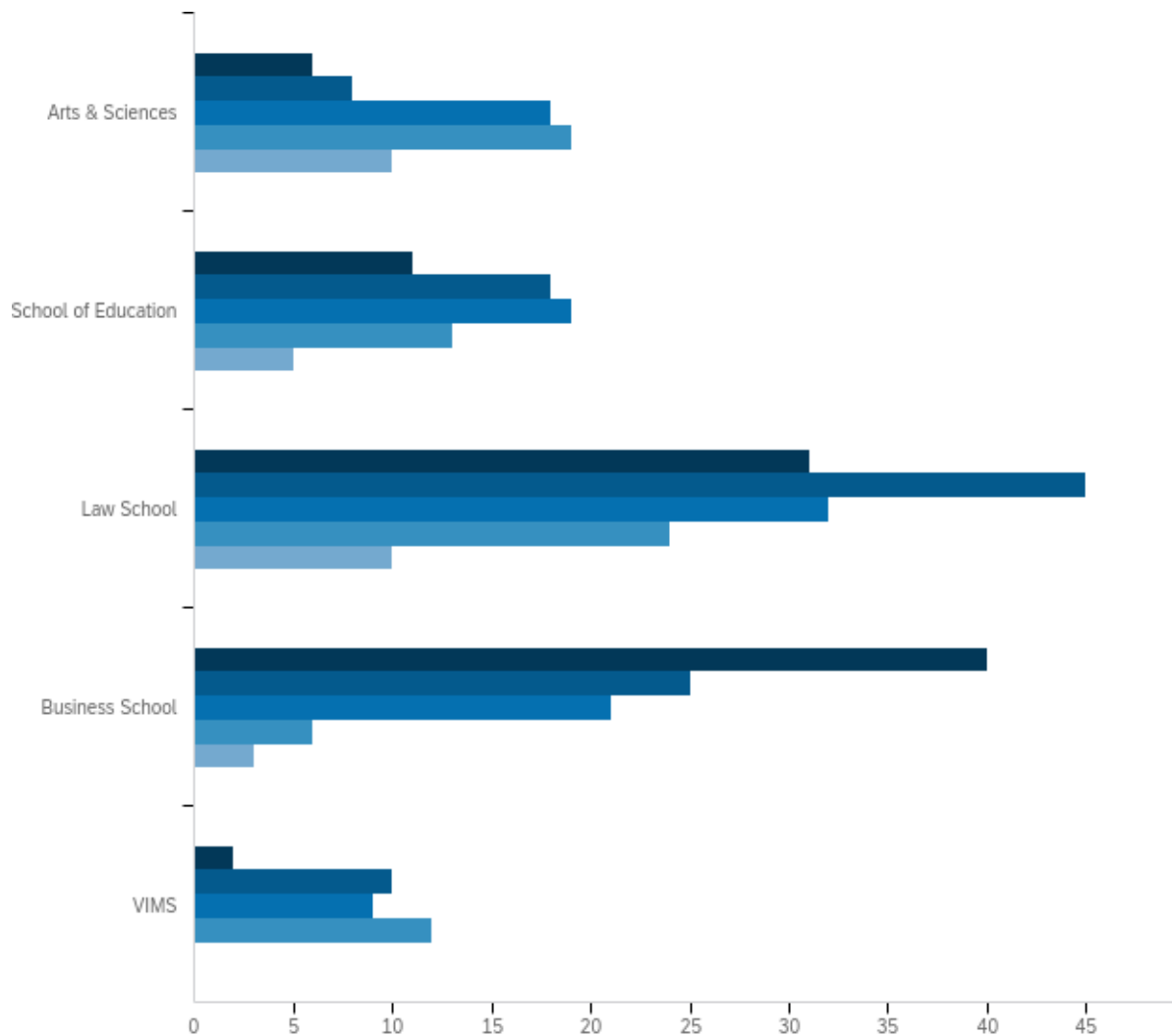
■ Strongly agree   
 ■ Somewhat agree   
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree   
 ■ Somewhat disagree   
 ■ Strongly disagree

Q28 - Overall, I believe that William & Mary is an equitable community.



Strongly agree   Somewhat agree   Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree   Strongly disagree



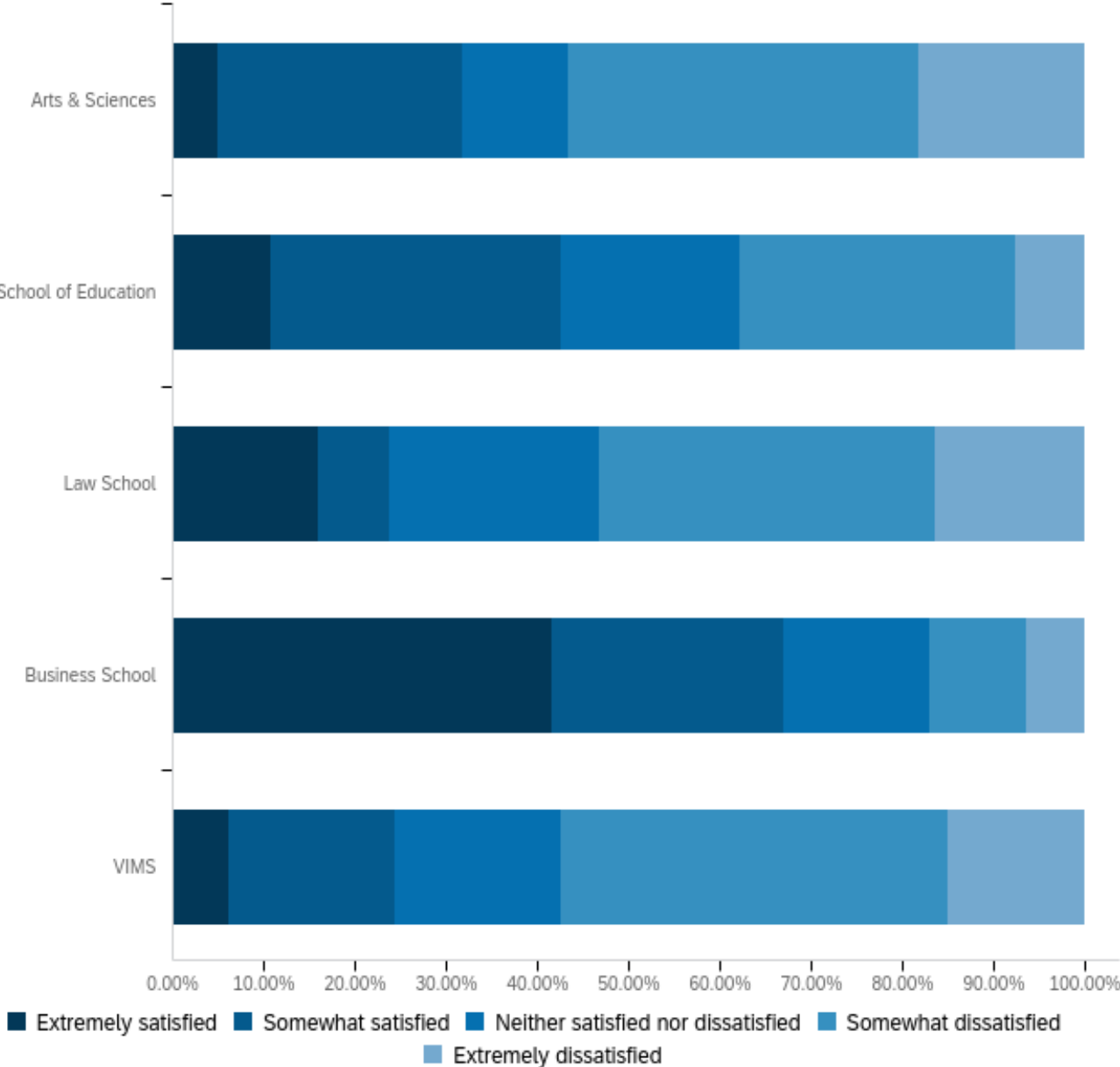
Strongly agree   Somewhat agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Somewhat disagree   Strongly disagree



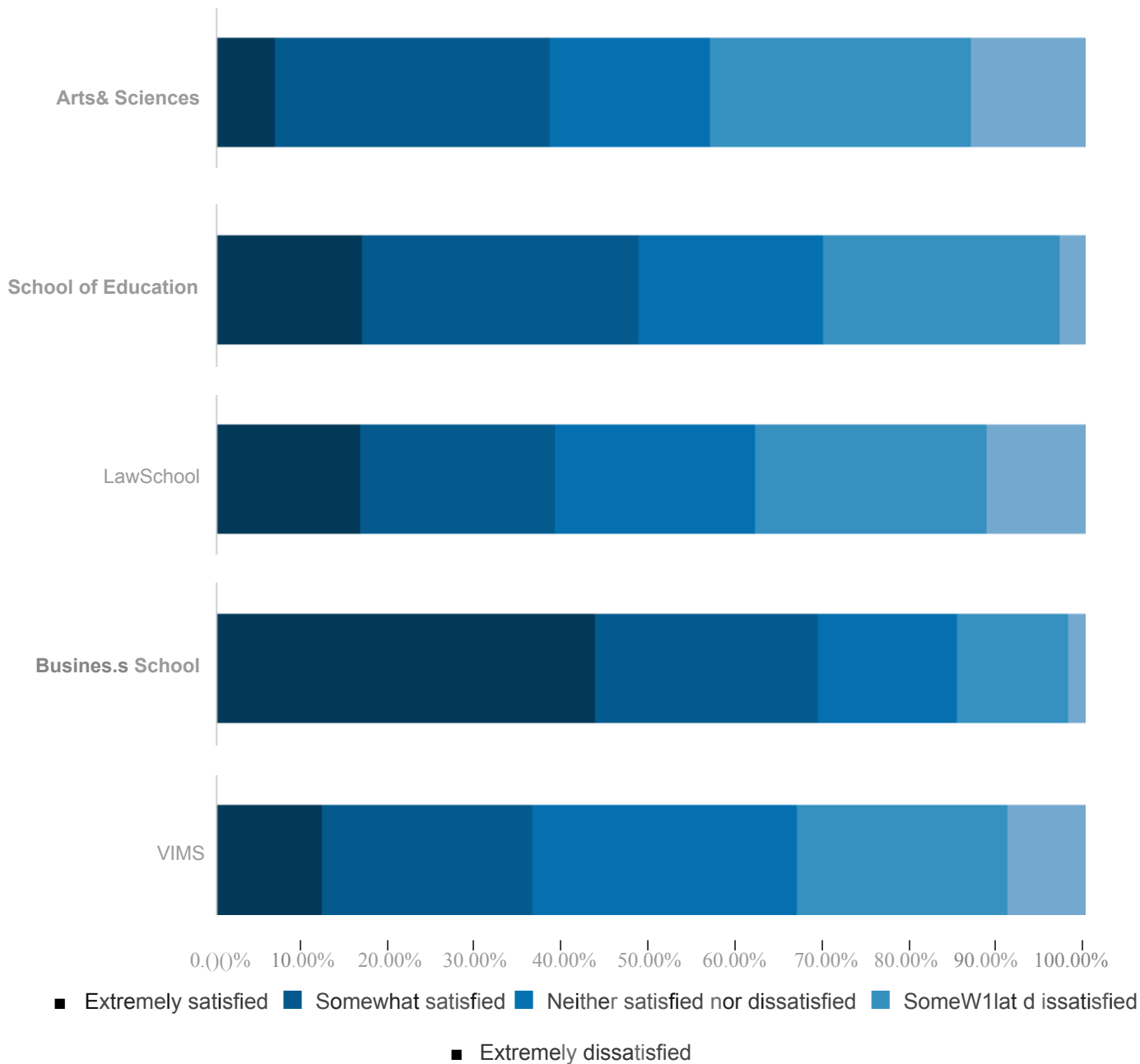
The next question is three-part, asking about the participant’s **satisfaction** with the level of **diversity, inclusivity, and equity** present at W&M. Note that this question differs slightly from the previous three questions; while an individual may not *perceive* W&M as particularly diverse, for example, they may very well be *satisfied* with the level of diversity present (or not present). It is important to ask both of these questions separately to gain an understanding of not only the perceived *presence* of diversity, inclusivity and equity on campus, but also the subjective *satisfaction* of students on campus.

**Q29 - Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

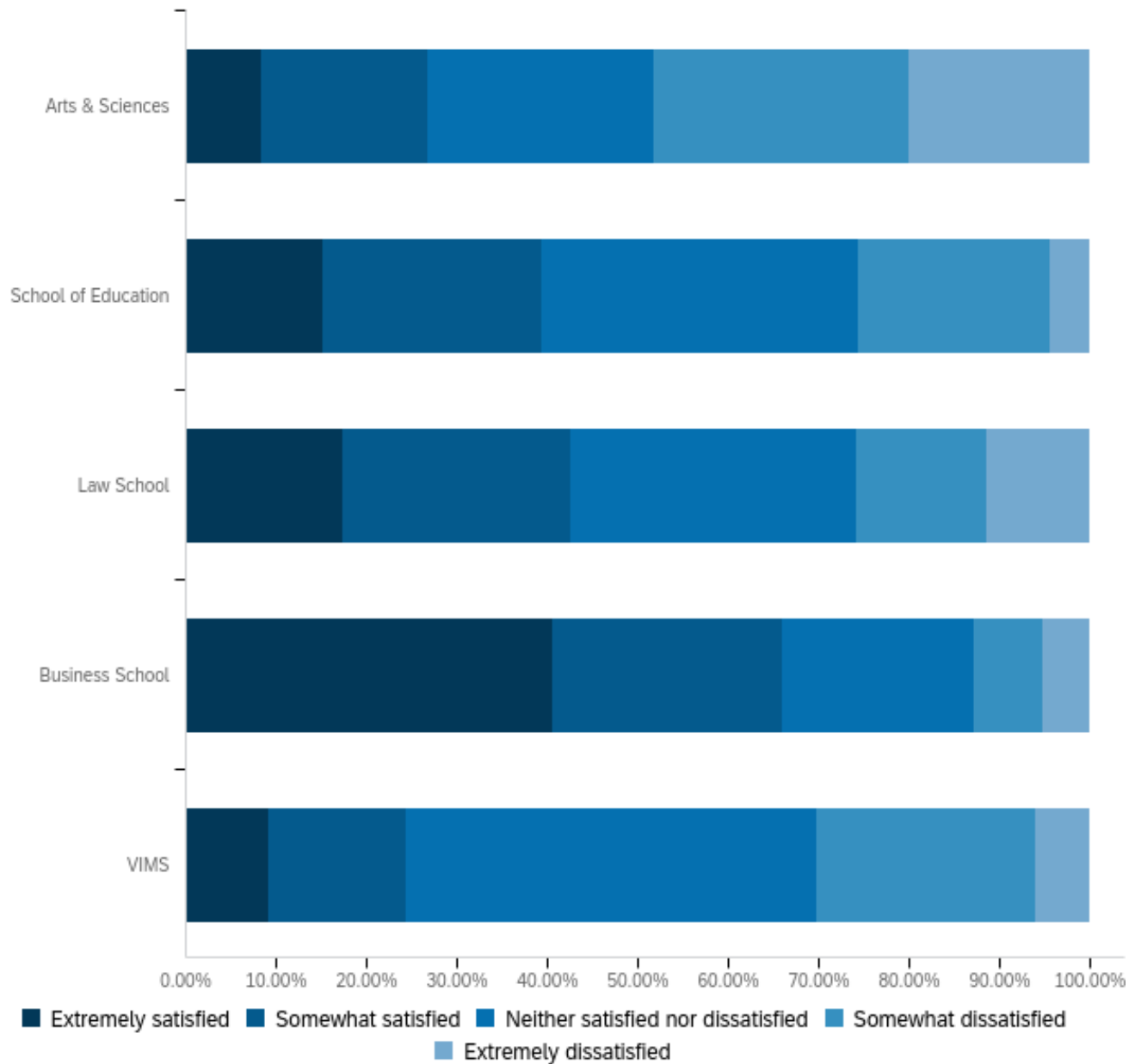
I am satisfied with the level of diversity at William & Mary



I am satisfied with the level of inclusivity at William & Mary



## I am satisfied with the level of equity at William & Mary

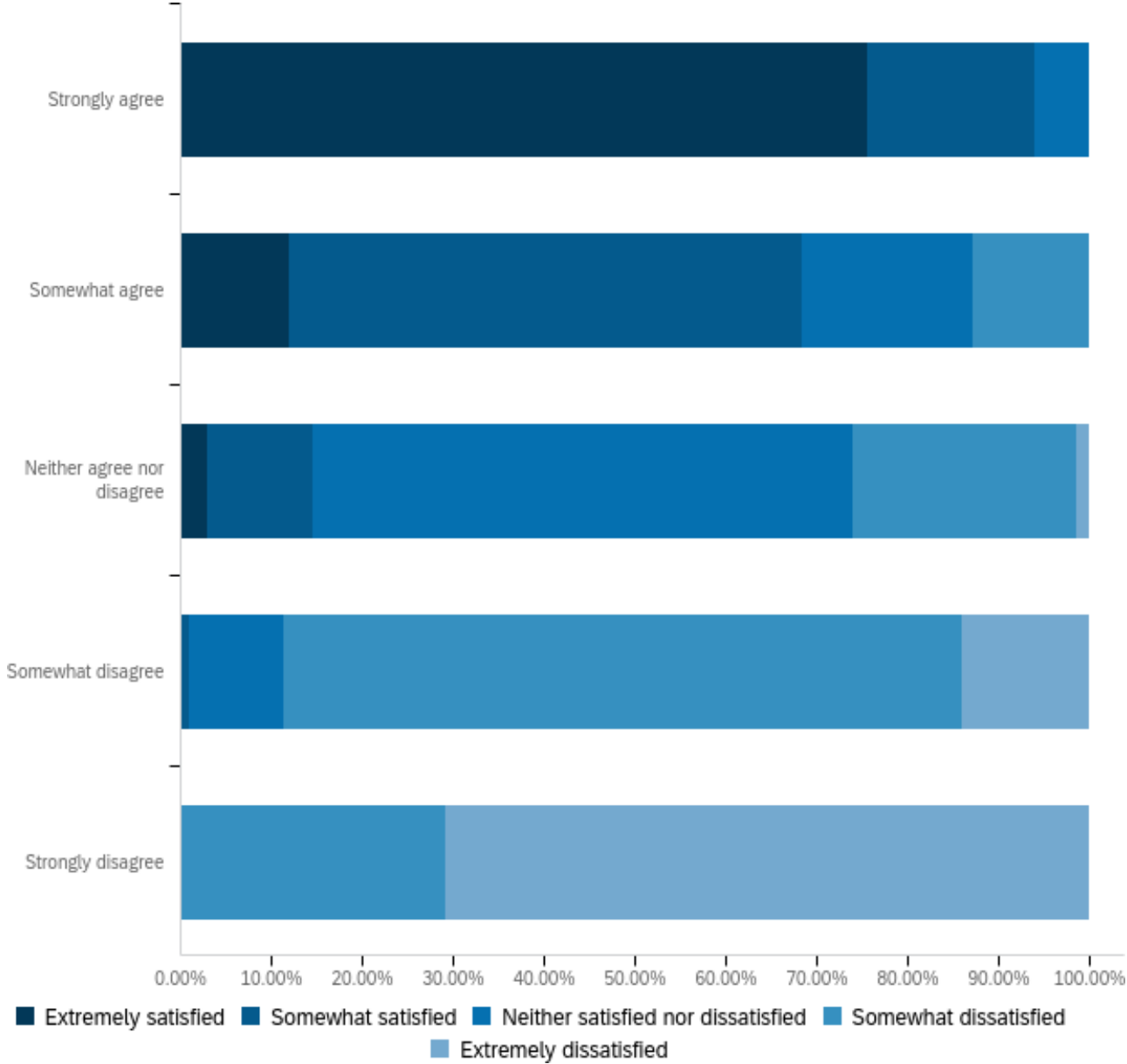


The results, divided by school, are very similar to the previous three questions. Students from the Business school are overwhelmingly satisfied with the levels of DE&I present at W&M. The majority of A&S, Law, and VIMS students in contrast are dissatisfied with the level of diversity on campus; Education is balanced. Regarding the level of inclusivity on campus, students from A&S, Education, Law and Vims are all split roughly evenly between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. A&S students are less than satisfied with the level of equity present at W&M; Education, Law and VIMS are roughly evenly split on the level of equity in contrast.

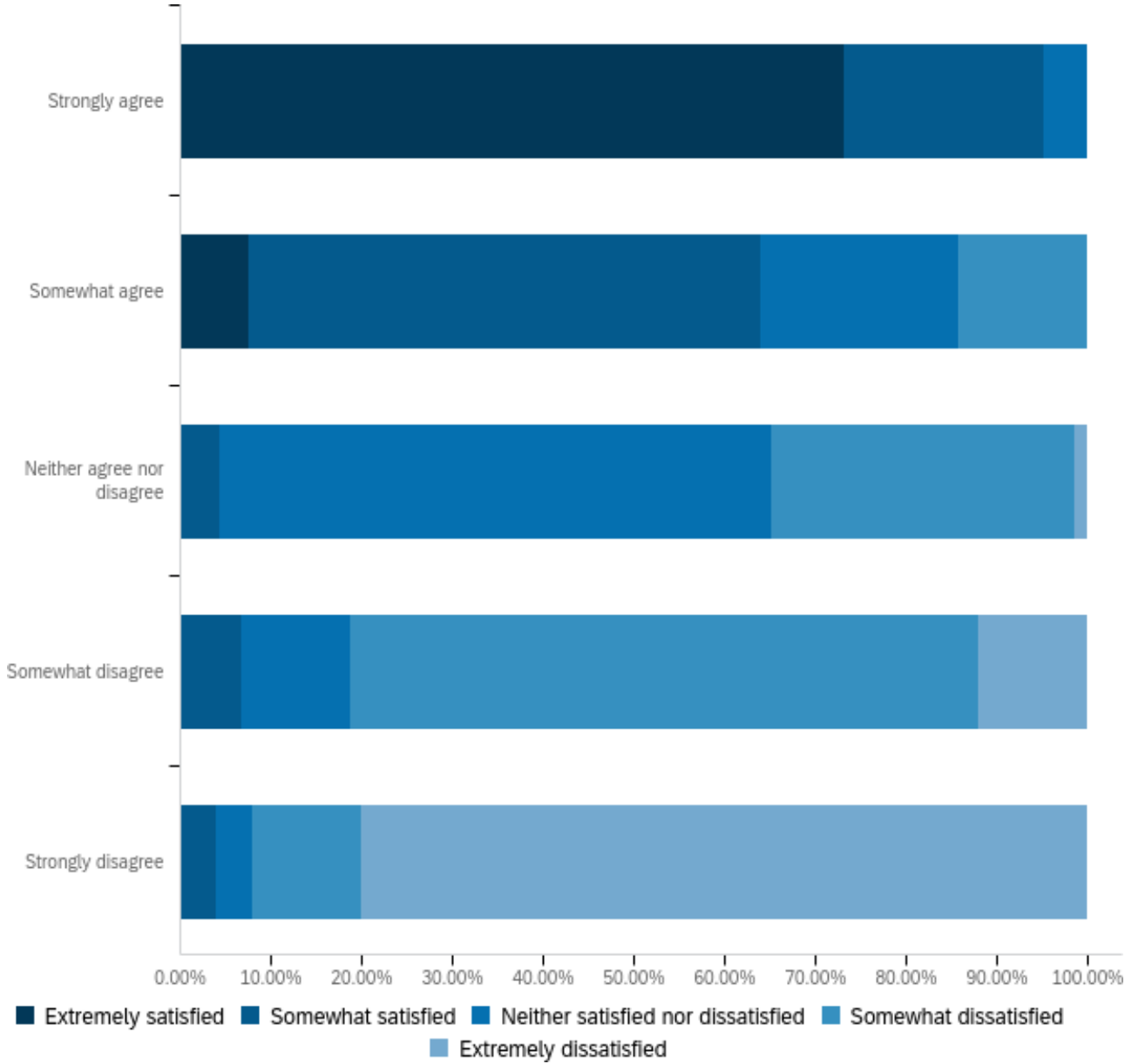
The following three charts illustrate that, for the most part, the extent to which participants agreed (or disagreed) that W&M is a Diverse/Equitable/Inclusive community was correlated with their satisfaction with the level of Diversity/Equity/Inclusivity present on campus. While this is a seemingly logical, perhaps unsurprising result, it is interesting to note that it is not a direct correlation; there were in fact participants who, for example, expressed

they were “Extremely Satisfied” with the level of diversity present at W&M despite neither agreeing nor disagreeing that W&M is, in fact, a diverse community:

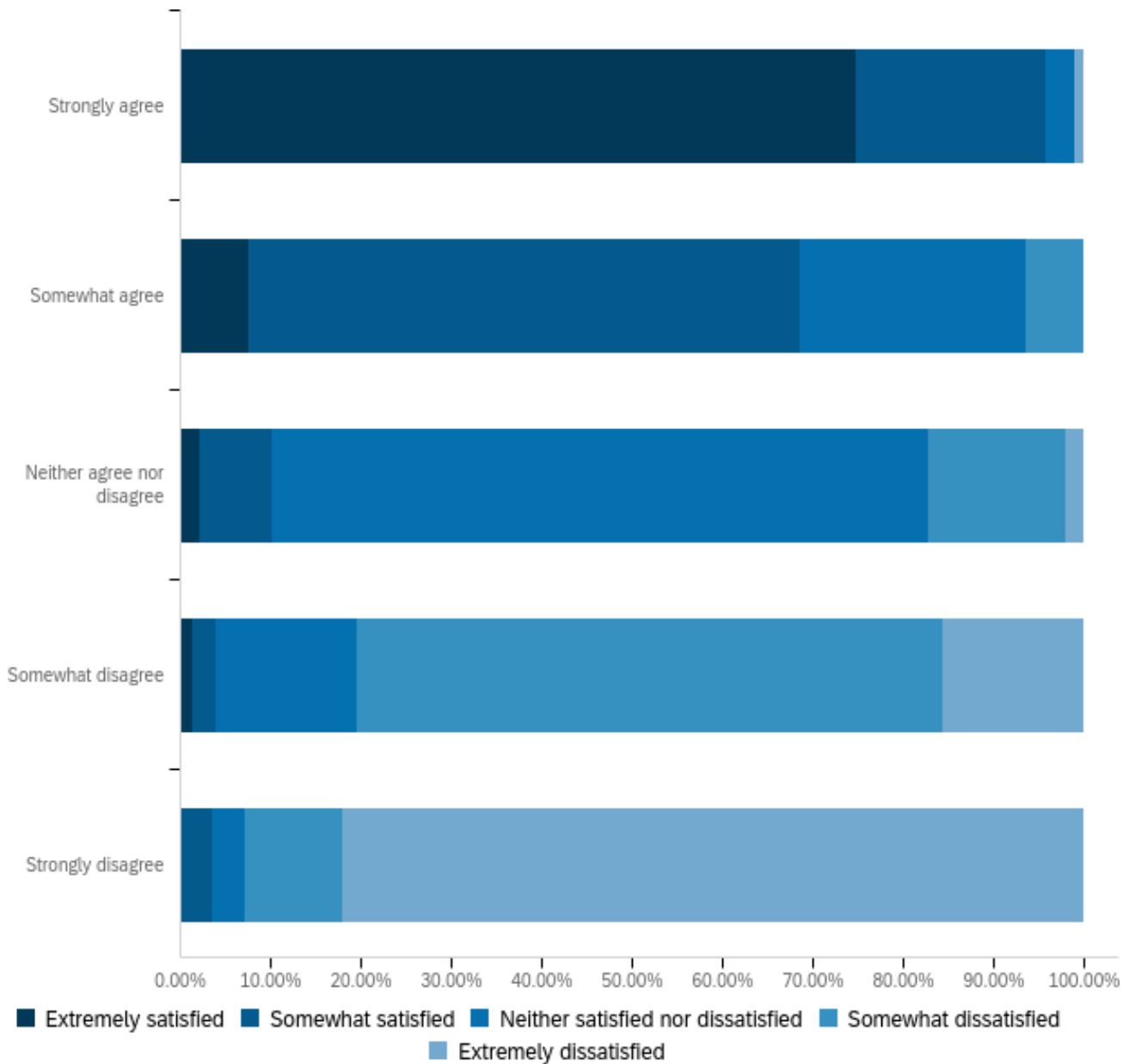
### I am satisfied with the level of diversity at William & Mary



I am satisfied with the level of inclusivity at William & Mary

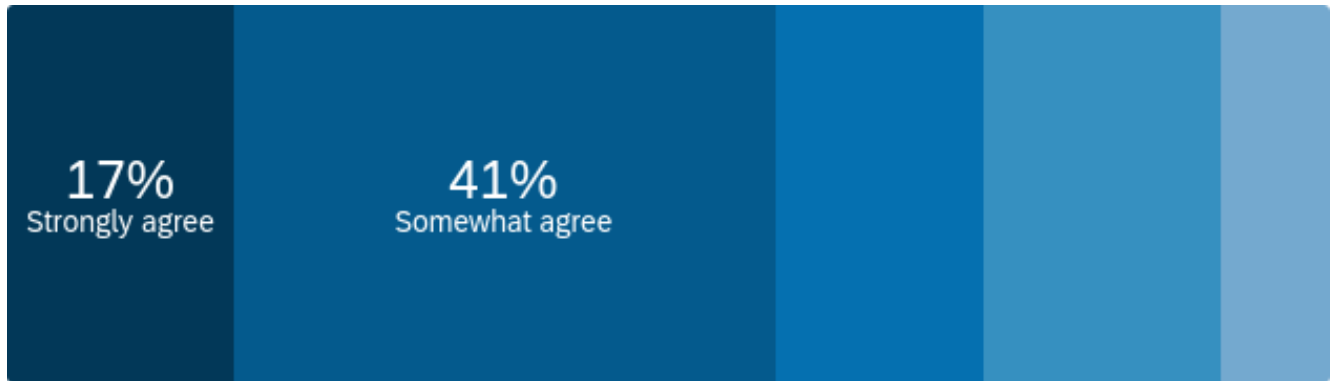


## I am satisfied with the level of equity at William & Mary



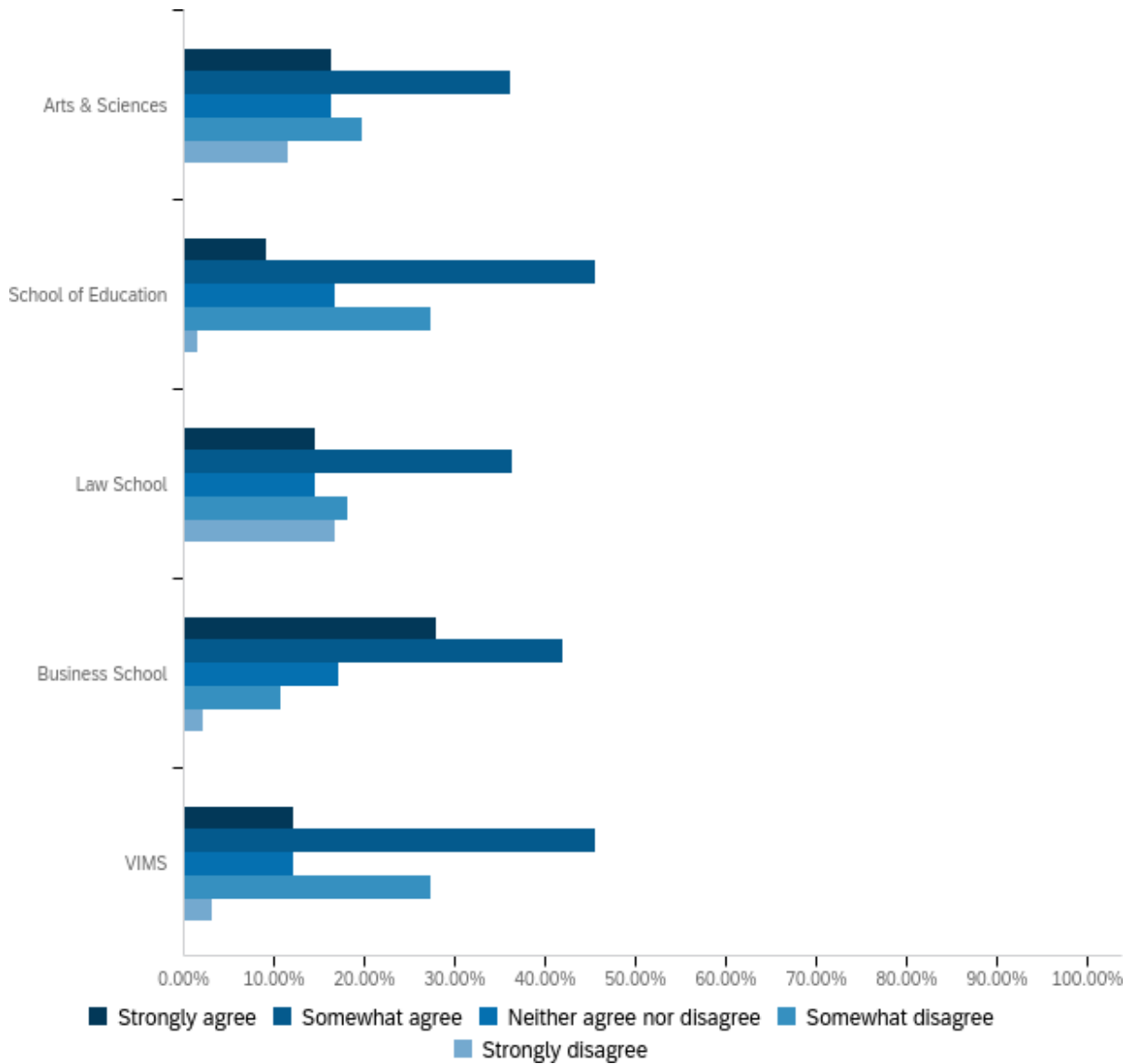
A majority of all participants (**58%**) agreed to some extent with the statement that they feel a sense of belonging at W&M. Split by school, this trend actually appears to hold; for each school, the most-selected answer was ‘Somewhat Agree’. However, the next largest portion of answers from both Education and VIMS was “Somewhat Disagree”, perhaps signaling a sense of disconnection associated with the disconnected campuses of these two schools. However, Law students did not follow this trend, despite also being physically disconnected from main campus, suggesting that the Law school may do a better job at associating themselves with the W&M identity more than VIMS or Education.

Q30 - I feel a sense of belonging at William & Mary.



Strongly agree   Somewhat agree   Neither agree nor disagree

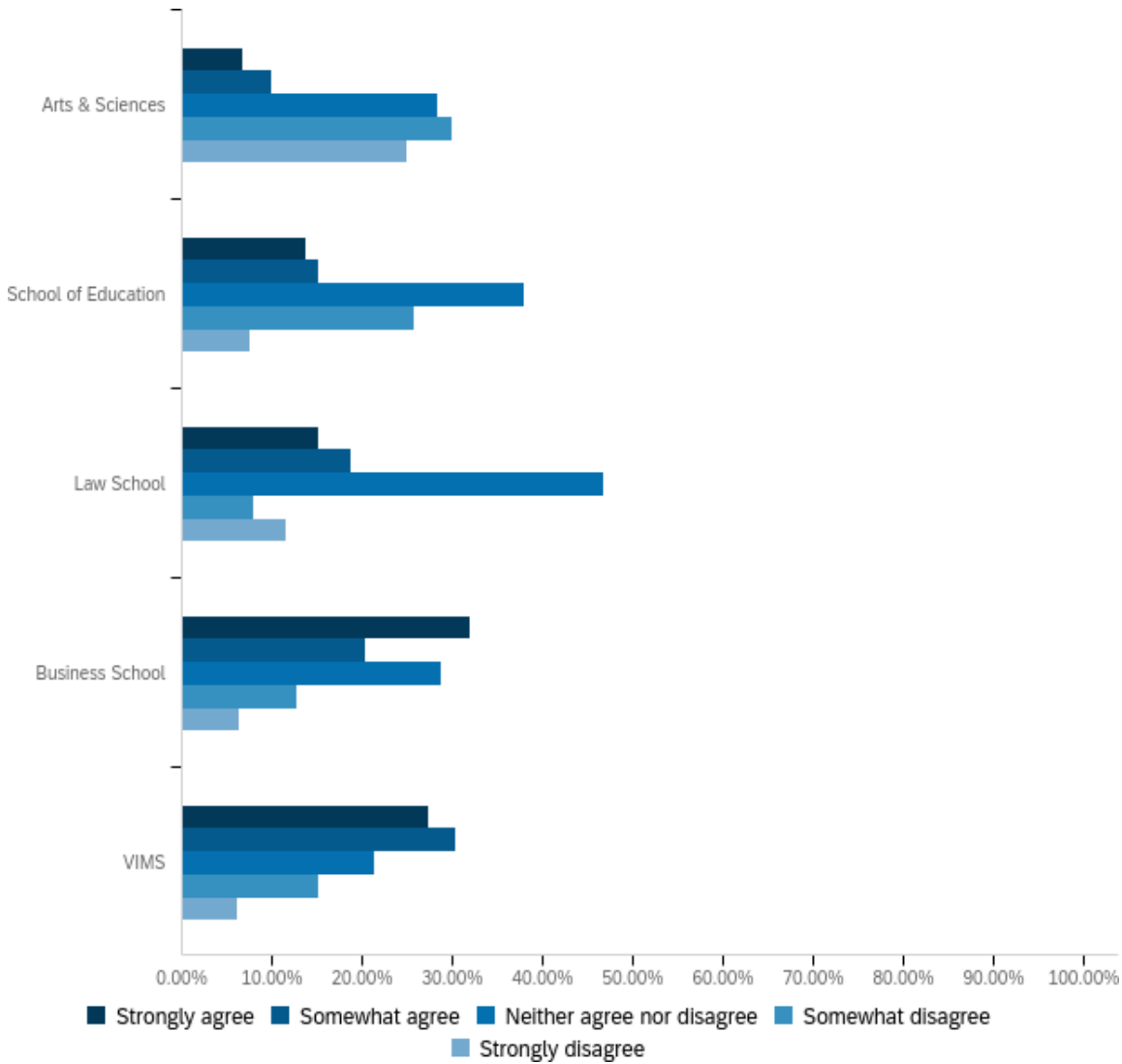
Somewhat disagree   Strongly disagree



Strongly agree   Somewhat agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Somewhat disagree   Strongly disagree

Question 31 was a school-specific question, highlighting the problem of **program inequality** experienced at some schools. While some schools, like the Law school, only have one or two degree programs, others like A&S and Education have over a dozen different, sometimes isolated degree programs. This fact seems reflected in the responses when broken down by school: Business and VIMS both largely *agreed* that programs within their school were treated equally, Law was mostly *neutral* on the subject, and Education and especially A&S expressed strong *disagreement*, suggesting that some programs in A&S and Education may not receive the same support or coverage from the school administration compared to other programs.

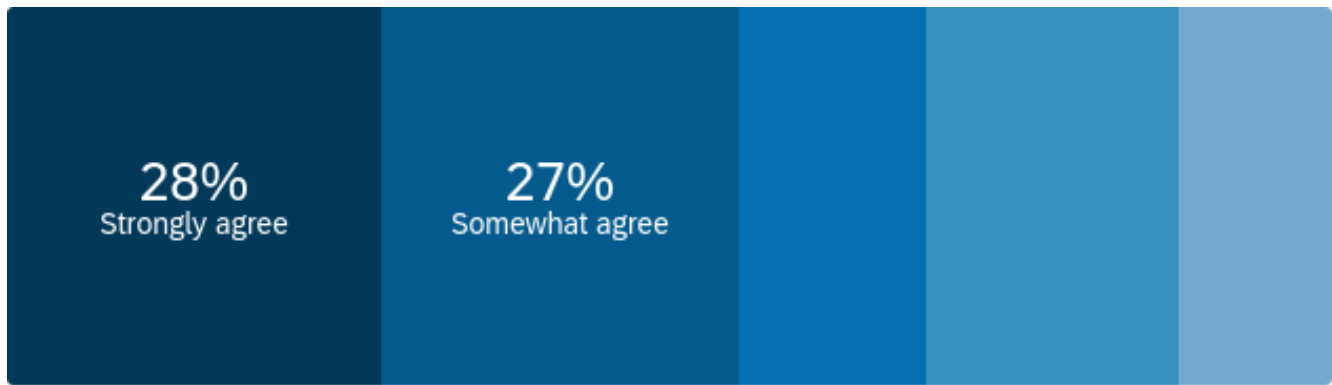
**Q31 - I feel that each program is treated equitably within my school.**



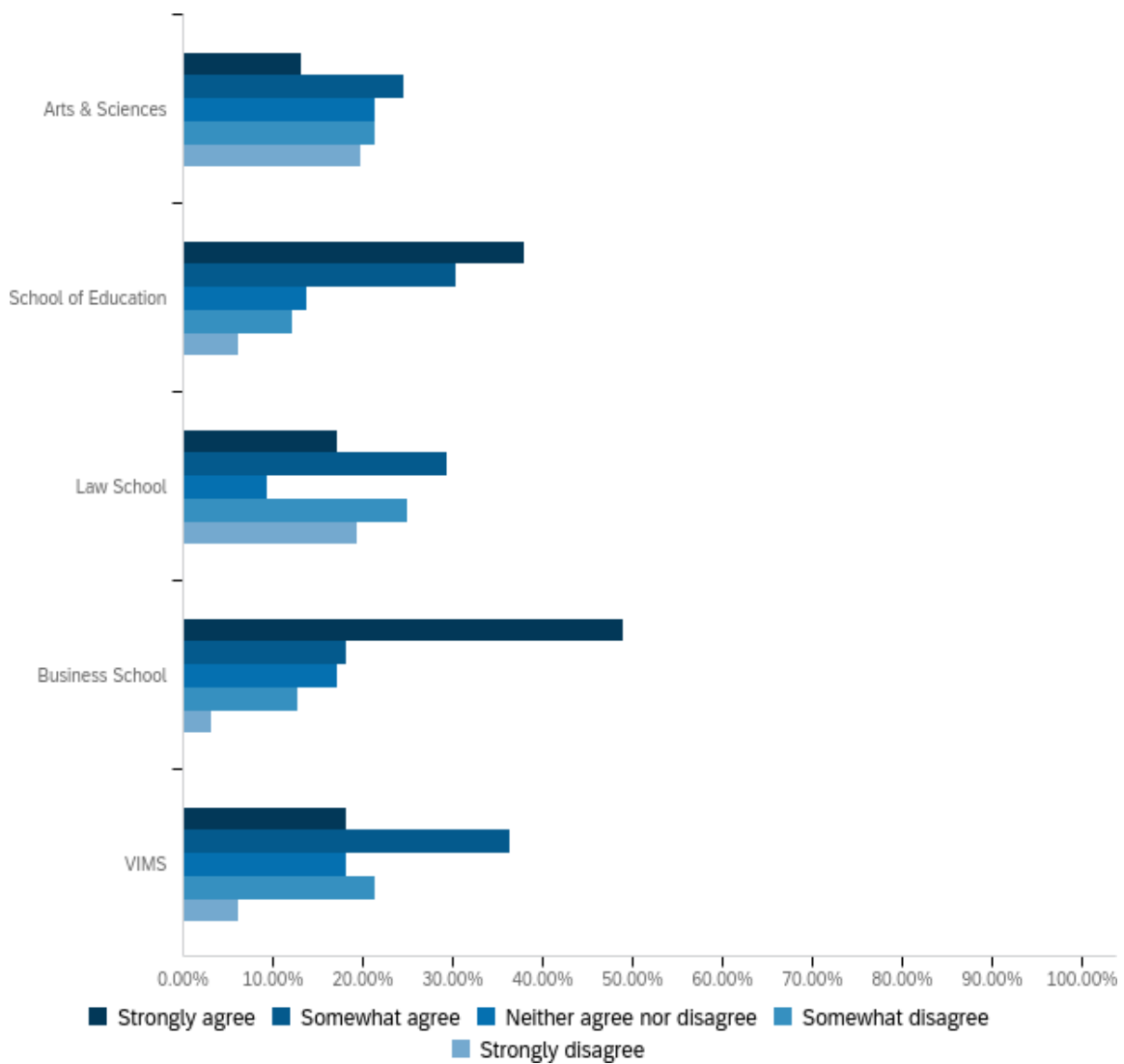
The final two questions in this section asked participants about their confidence in the leadership of the administration, both at the individual school level as well as at the top W&M level, in addressing DE&I issues. An overall majority (**55%**) of participants were confident in their own school’s leadership, while a slight minority (**49%**) was confident in the overall W&M leadership. Business and Education expressed the most confidence in both their school’s and the W&M administration’s leadership, while participants from Law were roughly evenly split on the issue in both cases. A&S was also evenly split between agreement and disagreement when it came to their school’s leadership but leaned strongly toward *disagreeing* on the capability of the overall W&M leadership. VIMS expressed moderate confidence in their school’s leadership and was about evenly split on the overall W&M leadership.



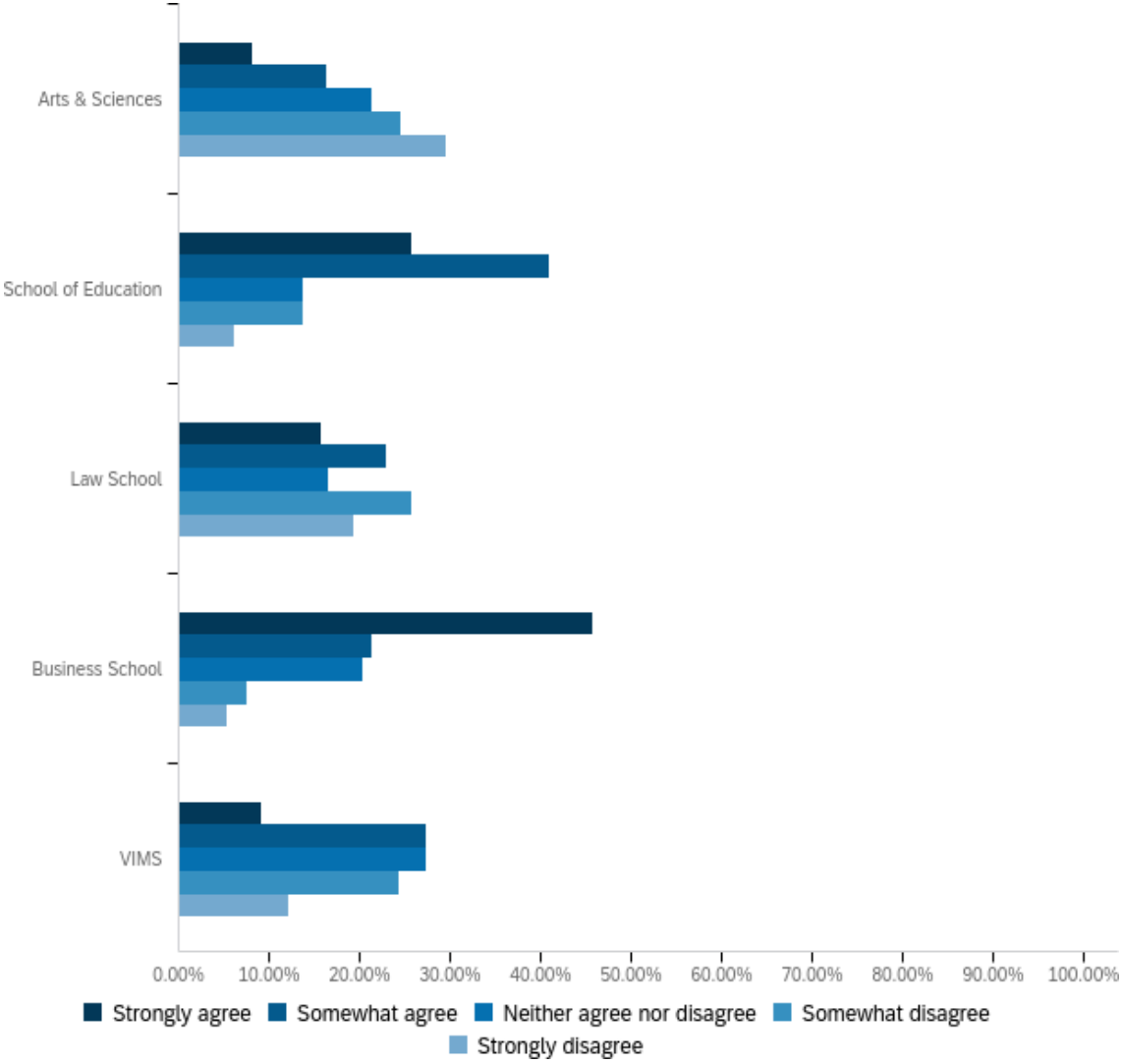
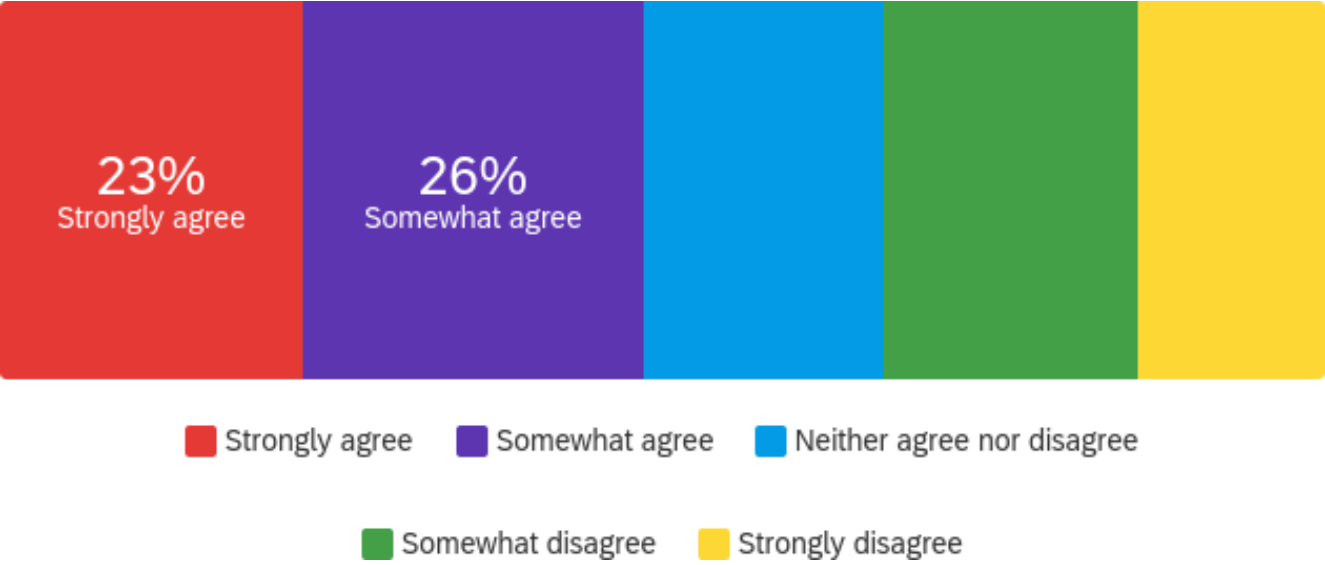
**Q32 - I have confidence in the leadership of my School (Mason School of Business, Law School, etc.) to address issues concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion.**



Strongly agree
  Somewhat agree
  Neither agree nor disagree
  Somewhat disagree
  Strongly disagree



**Q33 - I have confidence in the William & Mary leadership to address issues concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion.**



## **Part 2: Incidents of Discrimination**

The second half of the Climate section asked participants about incidents of discrimination that have taken place on campus. Seven areas of discrimination were addressed: **Race, Sexual Orientation, Gender, Neurodiversity, Familial Status, Religious Affiliation, and Socioeconomic Status**. Participants were also allowed to specify an 'Other' option and were prompted to fill in a free form textbox for the type of discrimination not covered by the seven given options.

If a participant indicated that they had witnessed an act of discrimination at W&M (participants were allowed to select more than one), they were directed to answer a series of questions about the witnessed incident. The same questions were asked for each form of discrimination:

- 1) **What was the nature of the incident of discrimination?**
- 2) **Who/What perpetrated the incident?**
- 3) **How satisfied were you with how the incident was handled if you reported the incident to the administration?**
- 4) **Why did you not report the incident if you chose not to?**

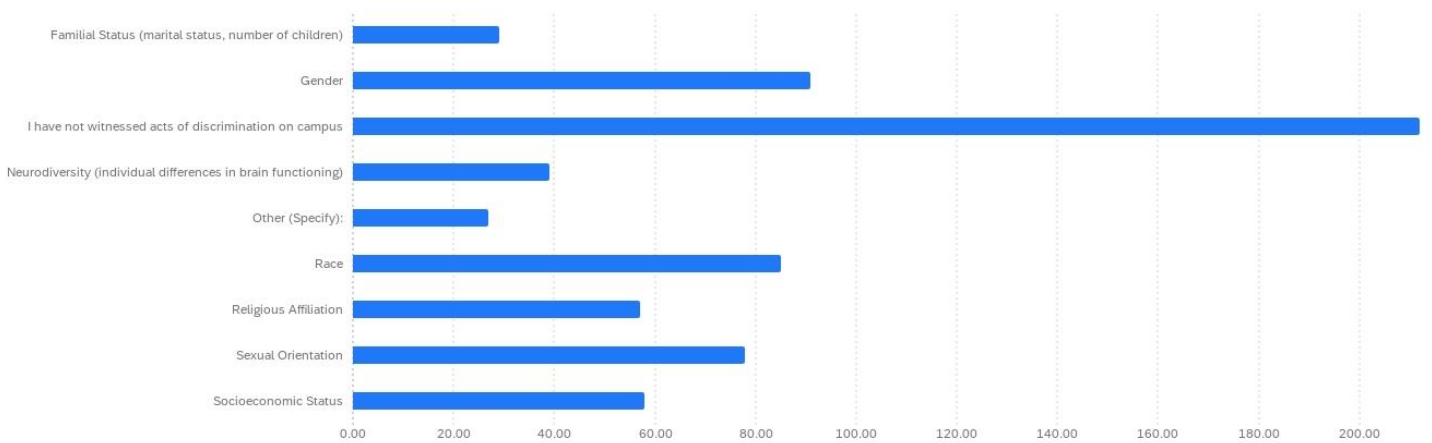
Finally, participants were given the option to provide details of the incident in a free-fill text box, though with the following disclaimer:

***“Would you like to share more about the specific incident? (Optional) The Graduate Council invites you to add any additional information that you would like to share about your experiences at William & Mary. We will not take direct action regarding the answers to this question. If you would like to report this incident to William & Mary, please click here for a list of available reporting mechanisms, including Care reports; Title IX reports; and Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation reports. If you do not want to report the incident but seek mental health assistance for you or a colleague, please call the Counseling Center at (757) 221-3620 for urgent help, a triage appointment, or a consultation. The Counseling Center’s emergency services are available after 5pm and on weekends at (757) 221-3620.”***

Below follows a (long) comprehensive summary of the collected responses to these questions, for each form of discrimination addressed. A few overall insights are provided at the end of this section.

## [Overall Responses]

Q34 - I have witnessed acts of discrimination based on \_\_\_ take place on campus. (select all that apply)

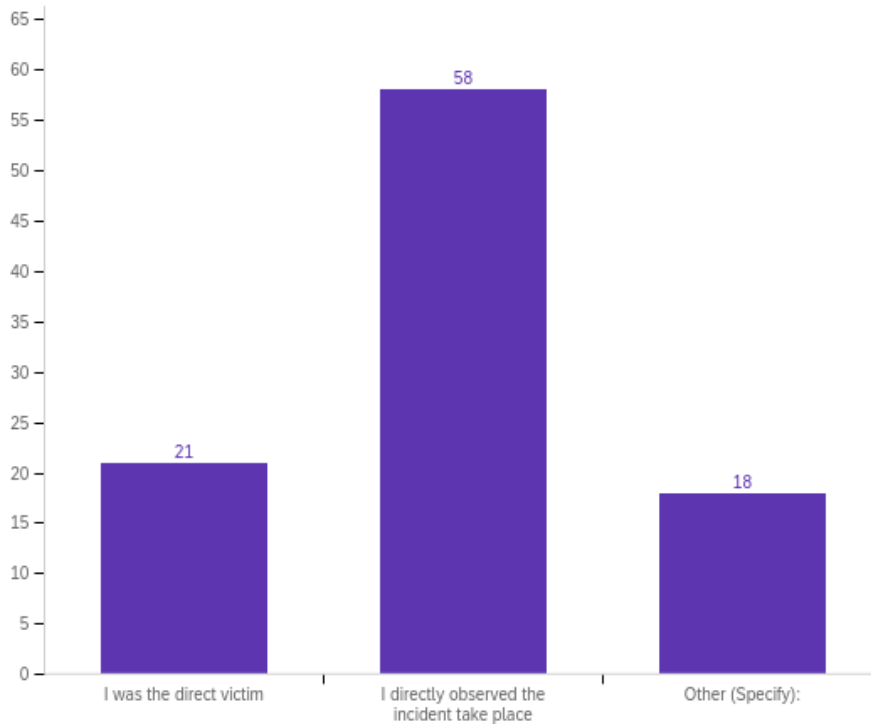


A Word Cloud was assembled for the forms of discrimination submitted in the 'Other' category:

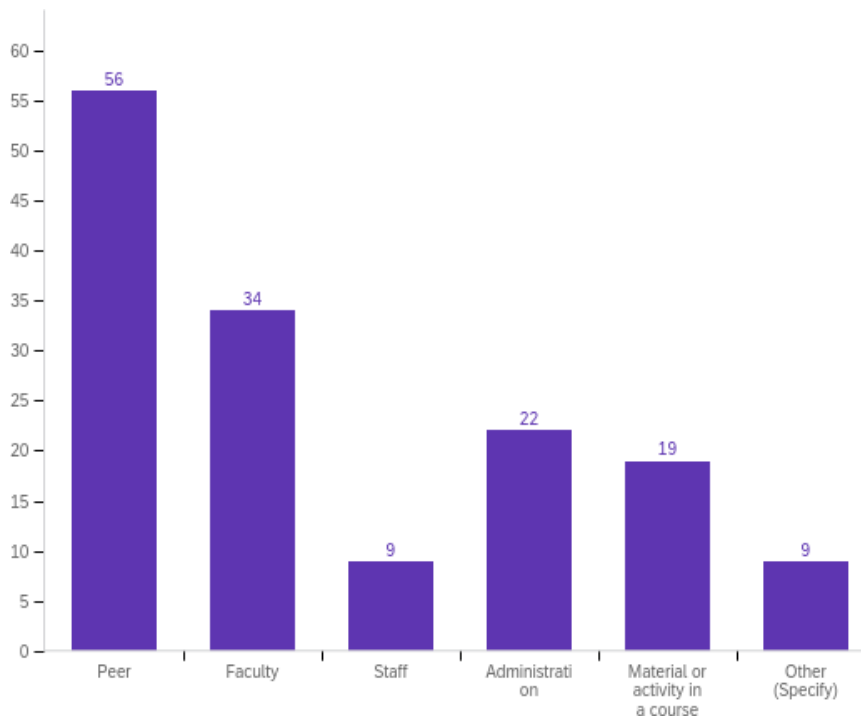


[Race]

Q35 - What was the nature of this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Race?  
(Select all that apply)



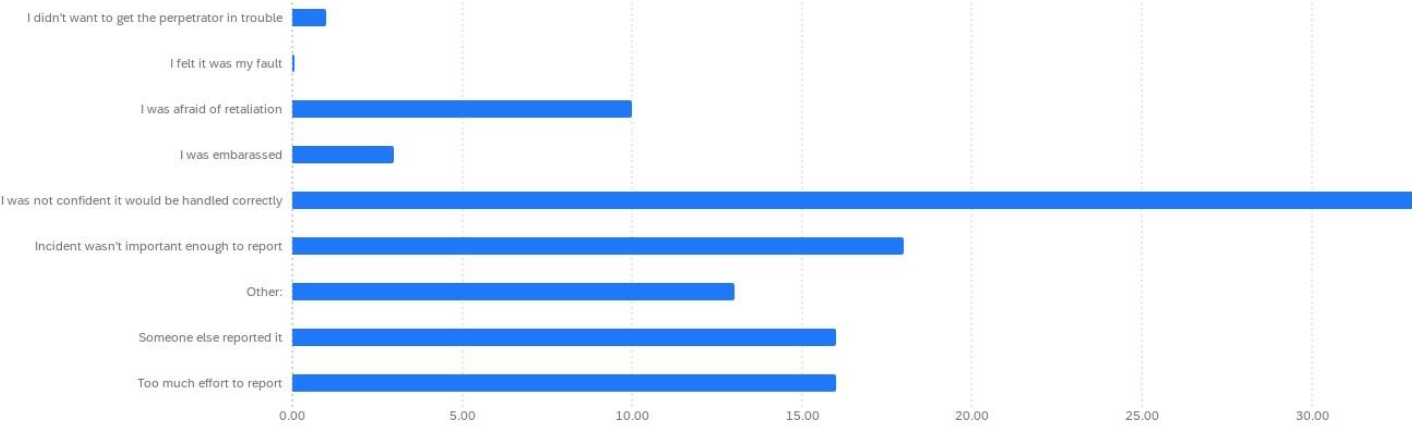
Q36 - Who/what perpetrated this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Race?  
(Select all that apply)



**Q37 - If you reported any of these incidents to the campus administration, were you satisfied with how the incident report was handled?**

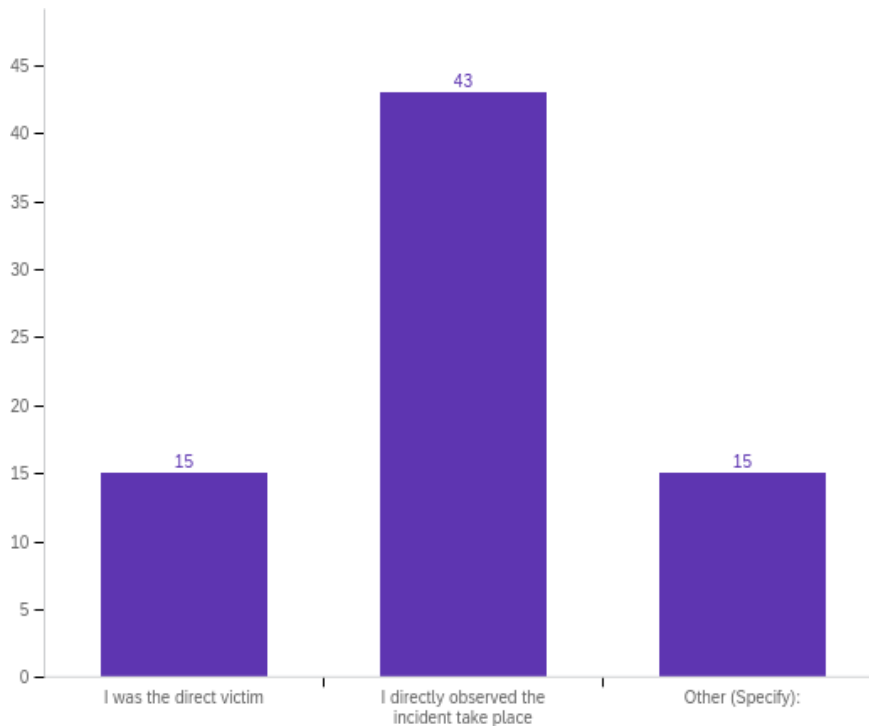


**Q38 - If you did NOT report any of these incidents, why not? (Select any that apply)**

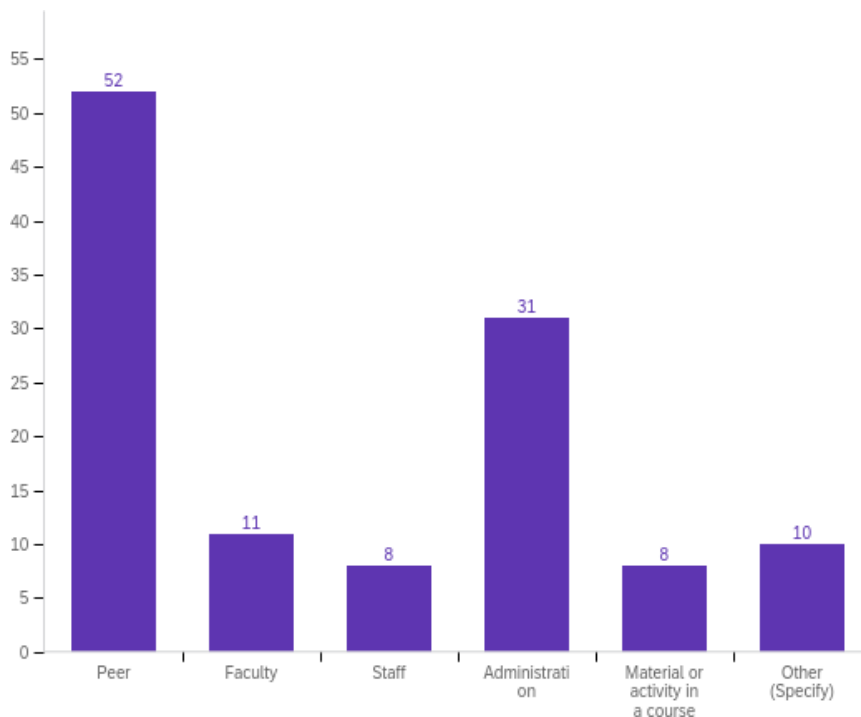


[Sexual Orientation]

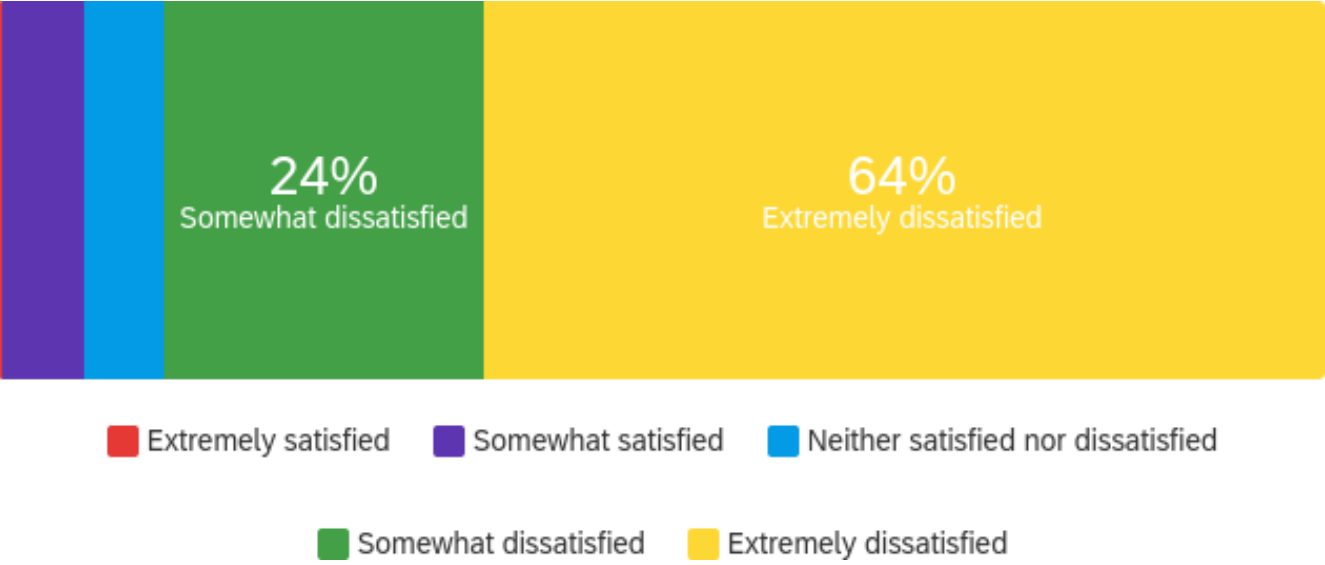
Q40 - What was the nature of this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Sexual Orientation? (Select all that apply)



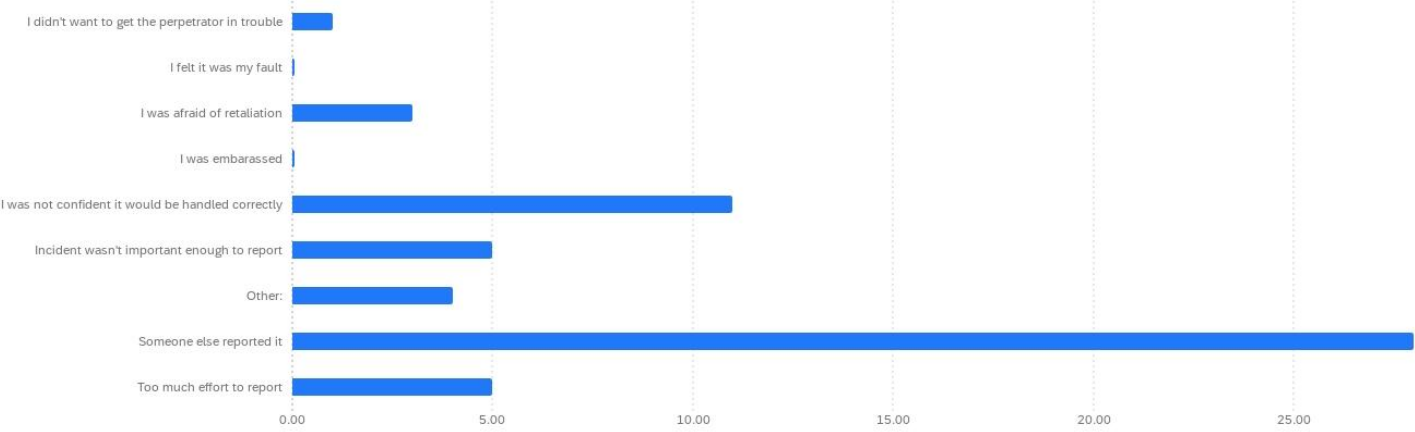
Q41 - Who/what perpetrated this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Sexual Orientation? (Select all that apply)



**Q42 - If you reported any of these incidents to the campus administration, were you satisfied with how the incident report was handled?**



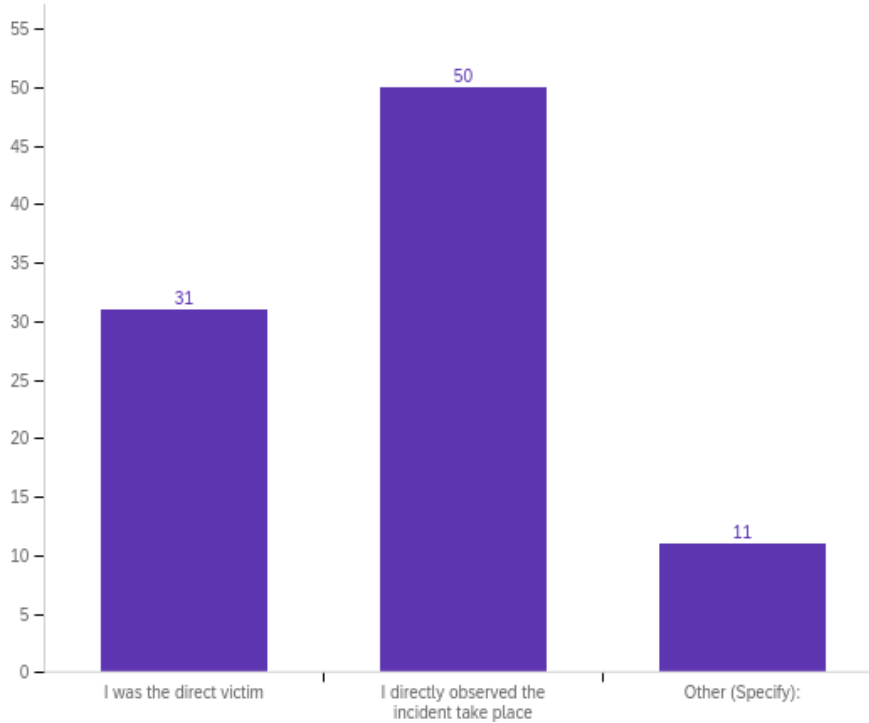
**Q43 - If you did NOT report any of these incidents, why not? (Select any that apply)**



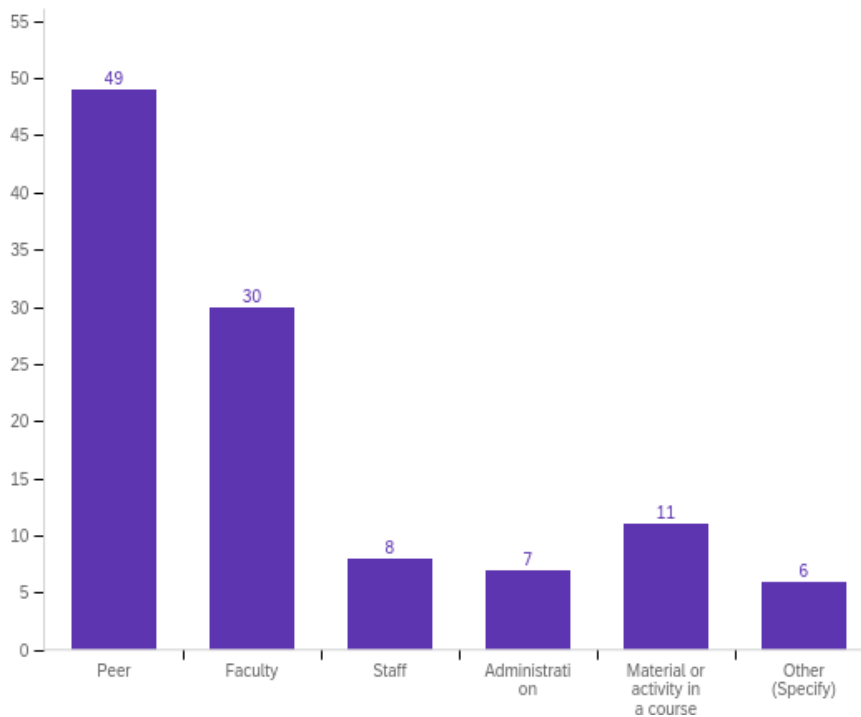


[Gender]

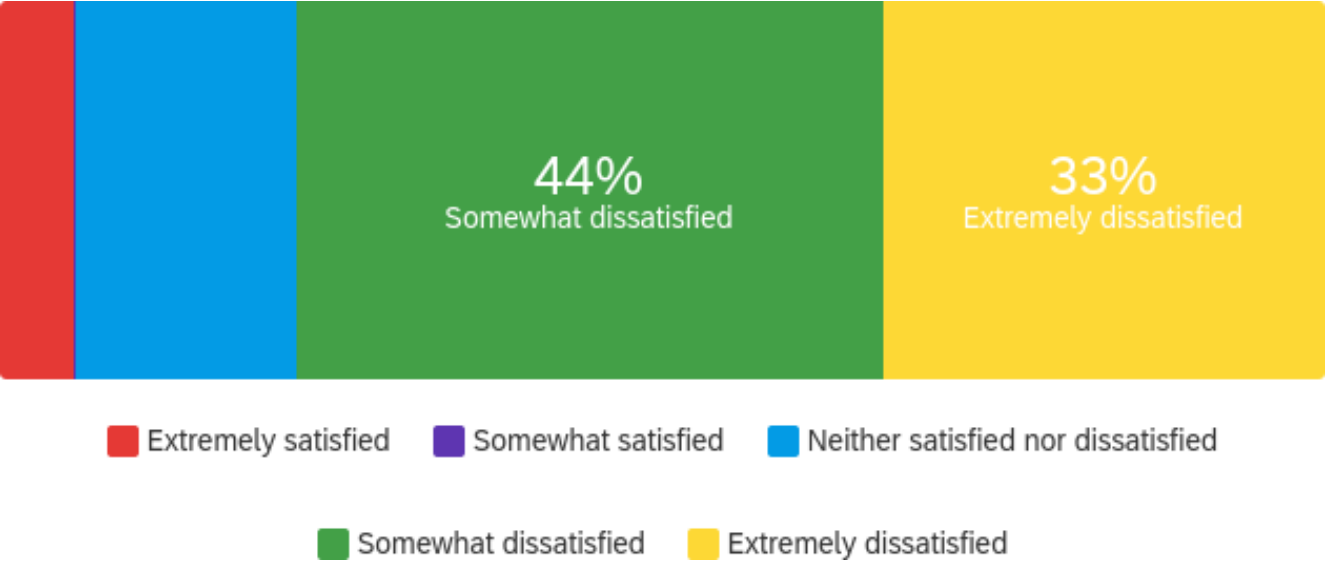
Q45 - What was the nature of this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Gender?  
(Select all that apply)



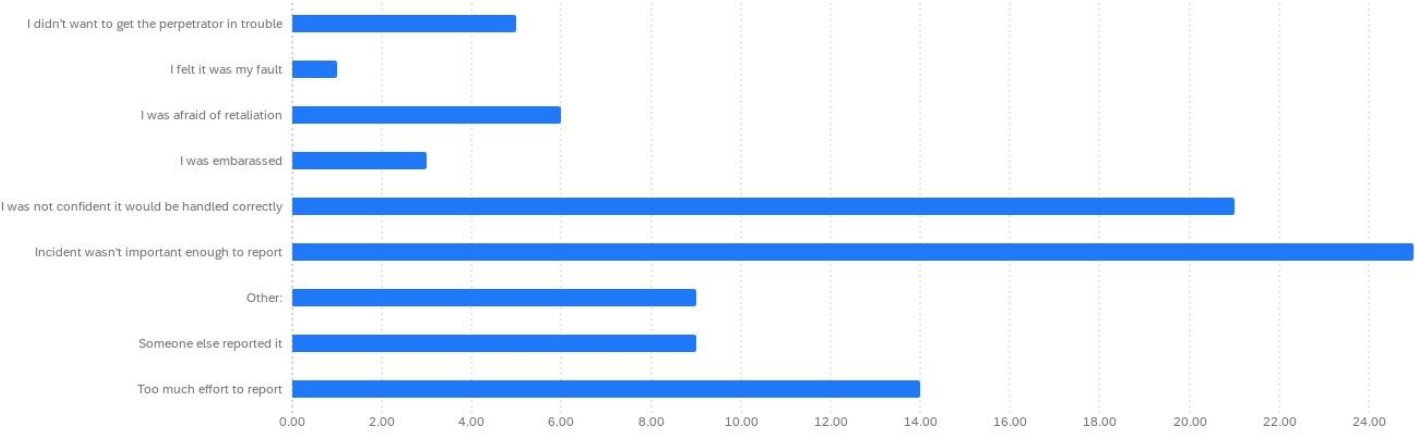
Q46 - Who/what perpetrated this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Gender?  
(Select all that apply)



**Q47 - If you reported any of these incidents to the campus administration, were you satisfied with how the incident report was handled?**

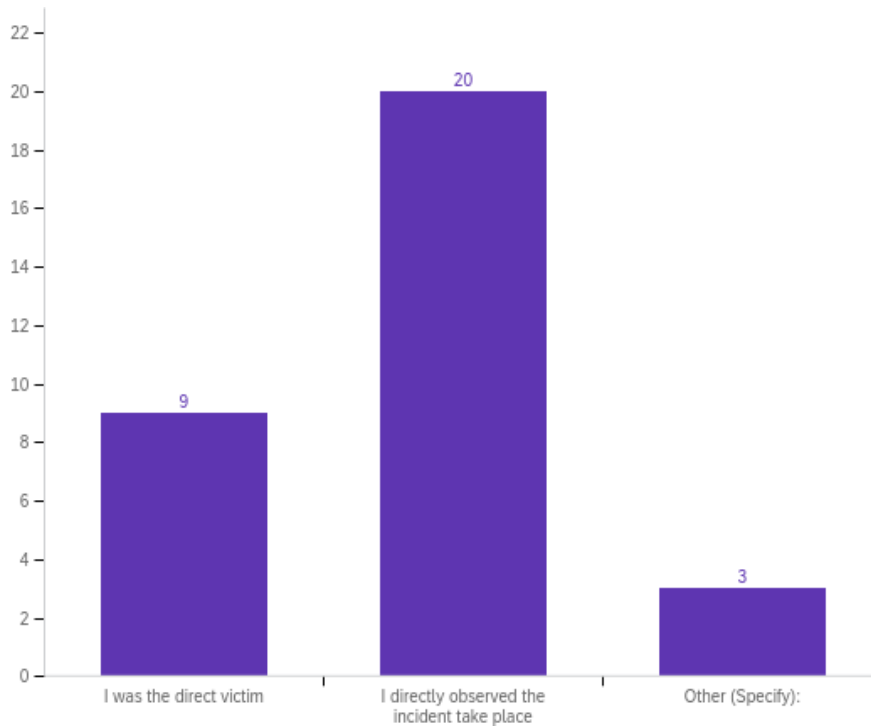


**Q48 - If you did NOT report any of these incidents, why not? (Select any that apply)**

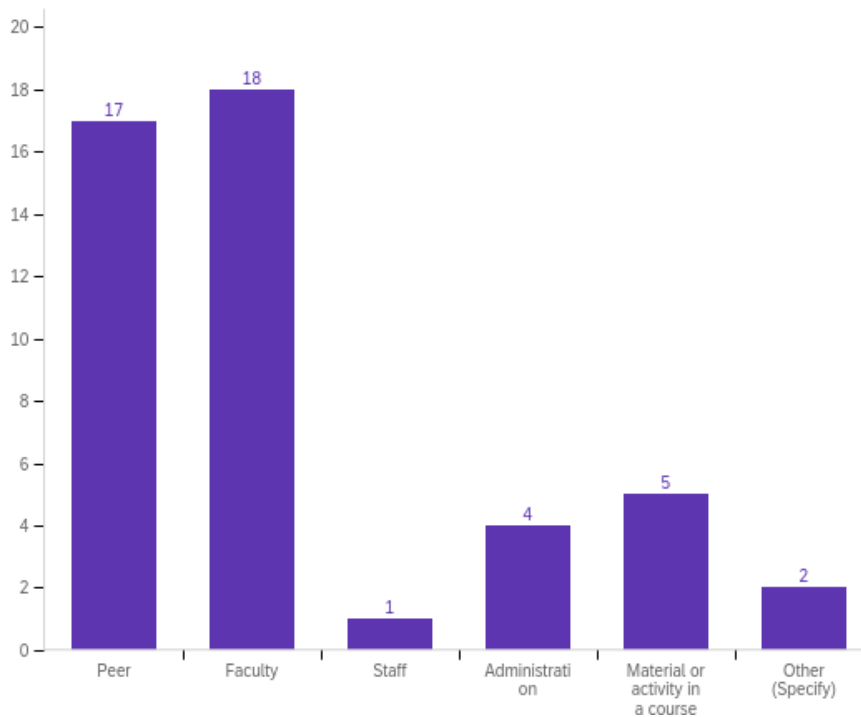


**[Neurodiversity]**

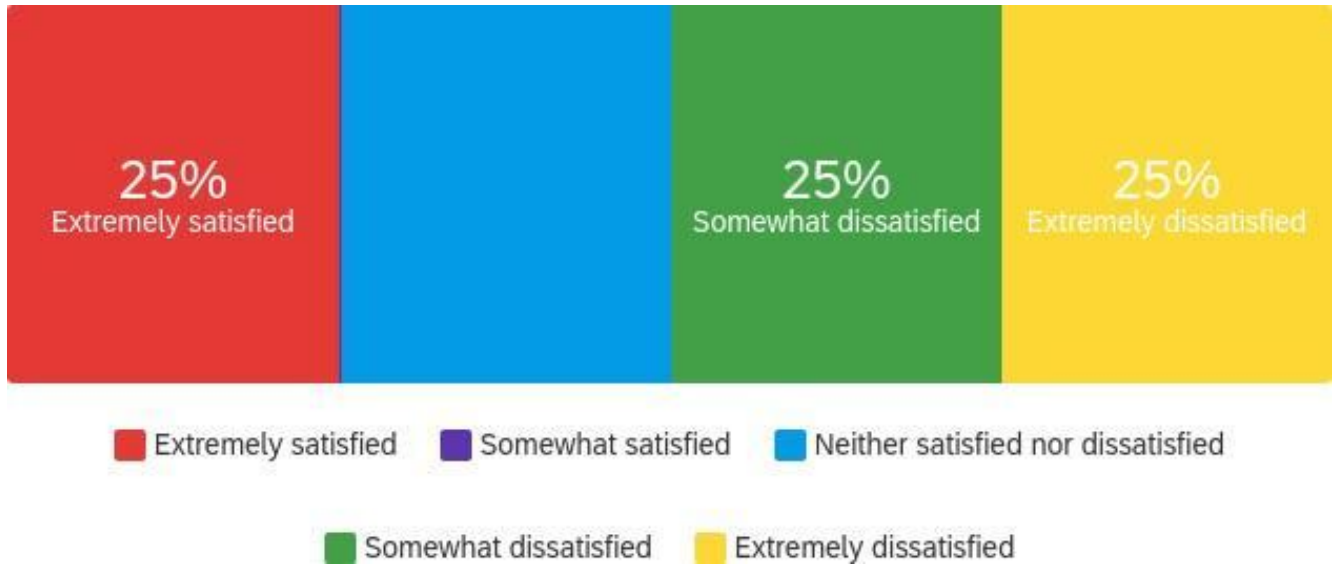
**Q50 - What was the nature of this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Neurodiversity? (Select all that apply)**



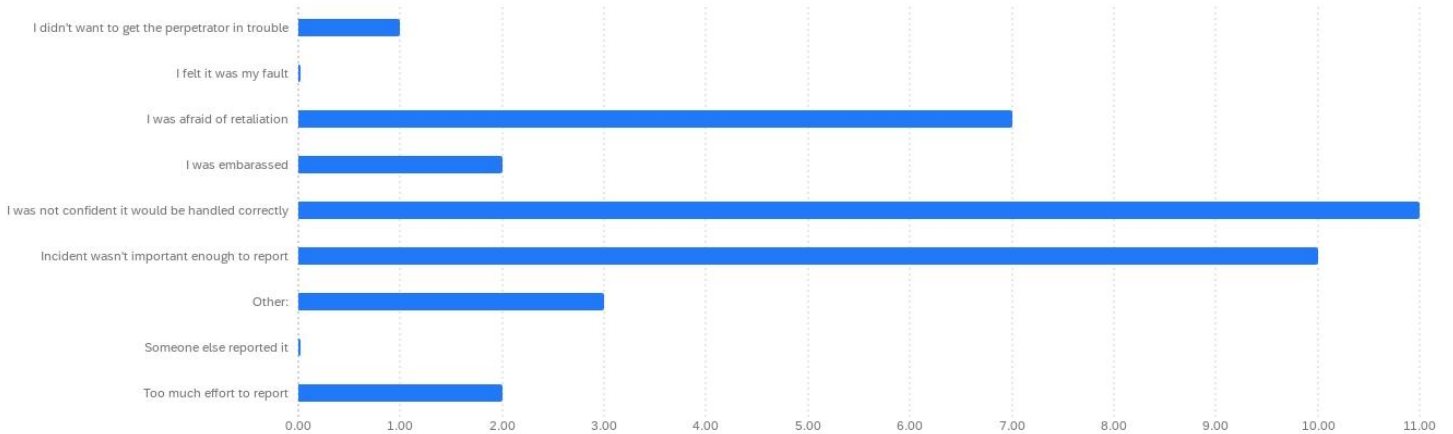
**Q51 - Who/what perpetrated this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Neurodiversity? (Select all that apply)**



**Q52 - If you reported any of these incidents to the campus administration, were you satisfied with how the incident report was handled?**

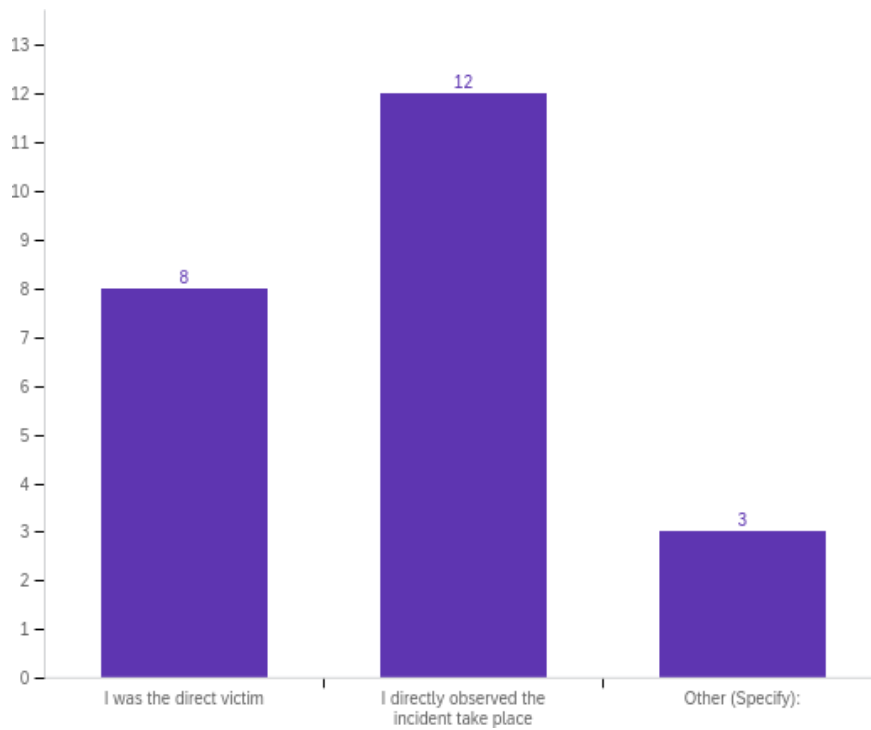


**Q53 - If you did NOT report any of these incidents, why not? (Select any that apply)**

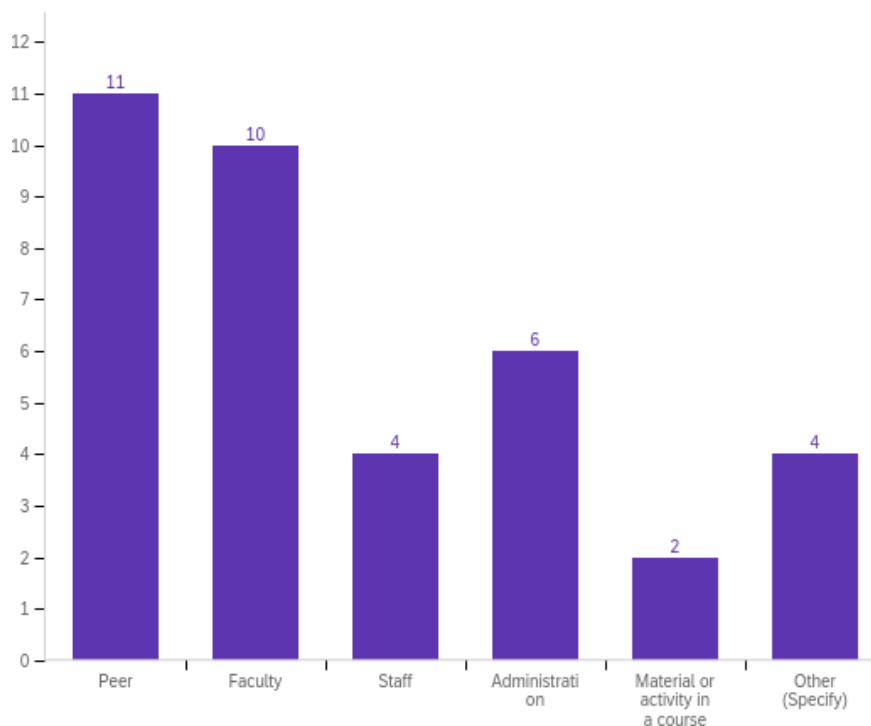


**[Familial Status]**

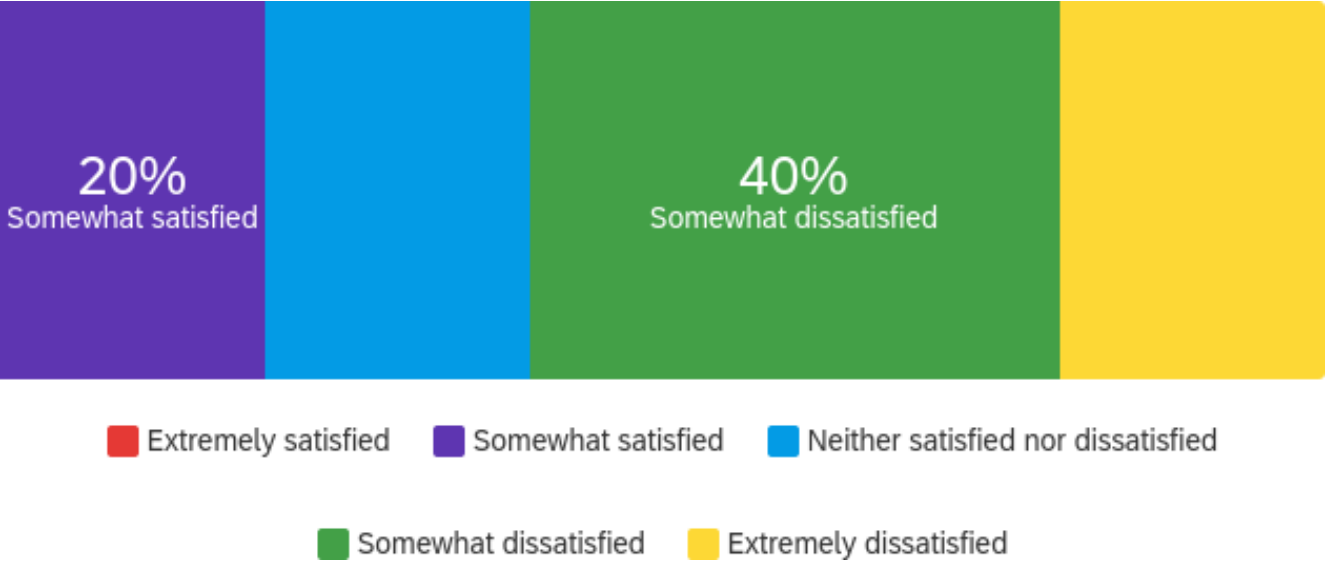
**Q55 - What was the nature of this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Familial Status? (Select all that apply)**



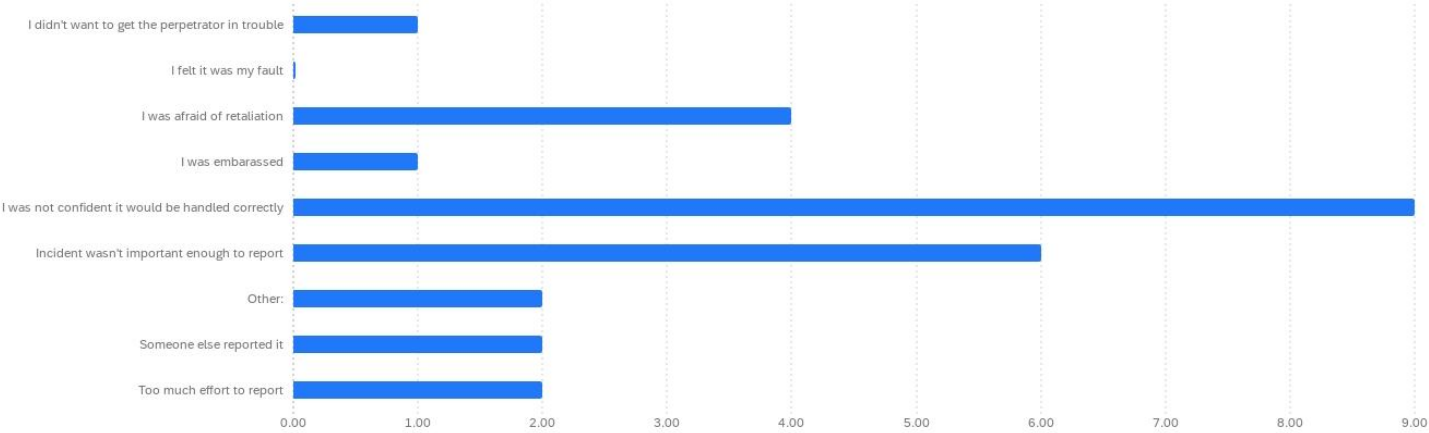
**Q56 - Who/what perpetrated this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Familial Status? (Select all that apply)**



**Q57 - If you reported any of these incidents to the campus administration, were you satisfied with how the incident report was handled?**

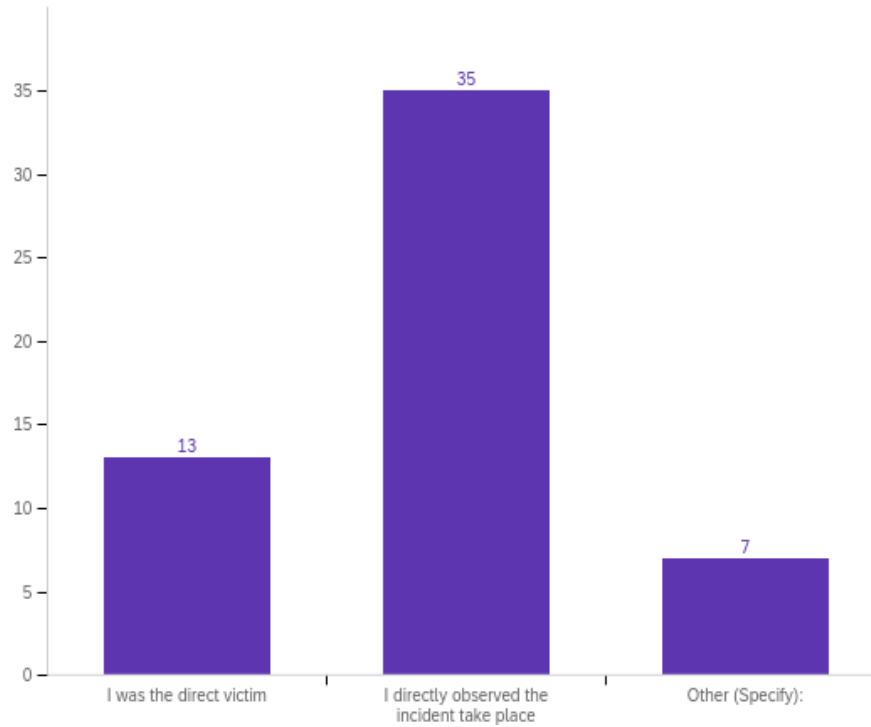


**Q58 - If you did NOT report any of these incidents, why not? (Select any that apply)**

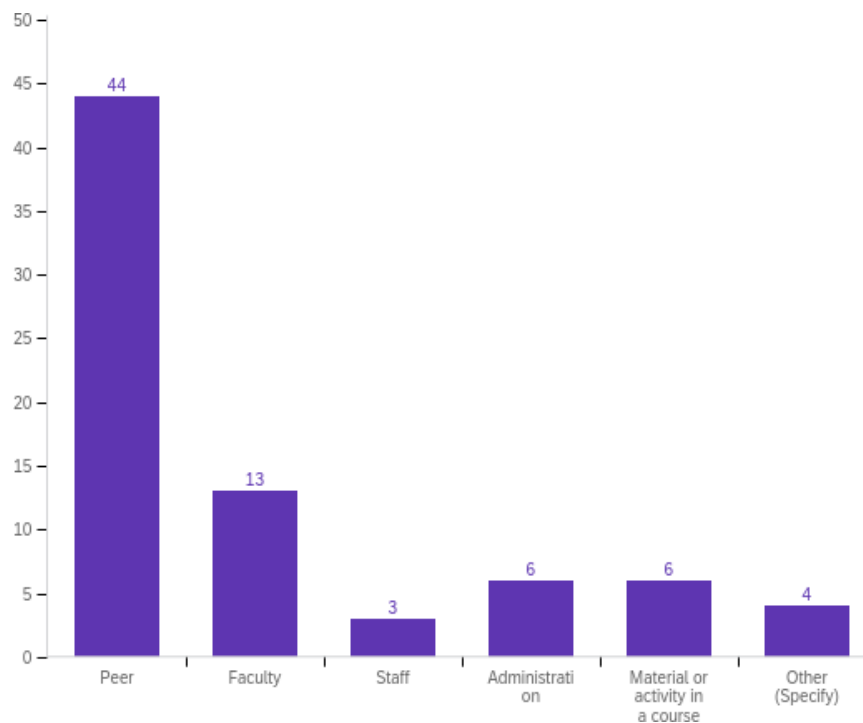


## [Religious Affiliation]

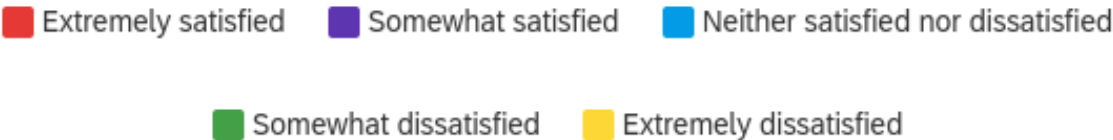
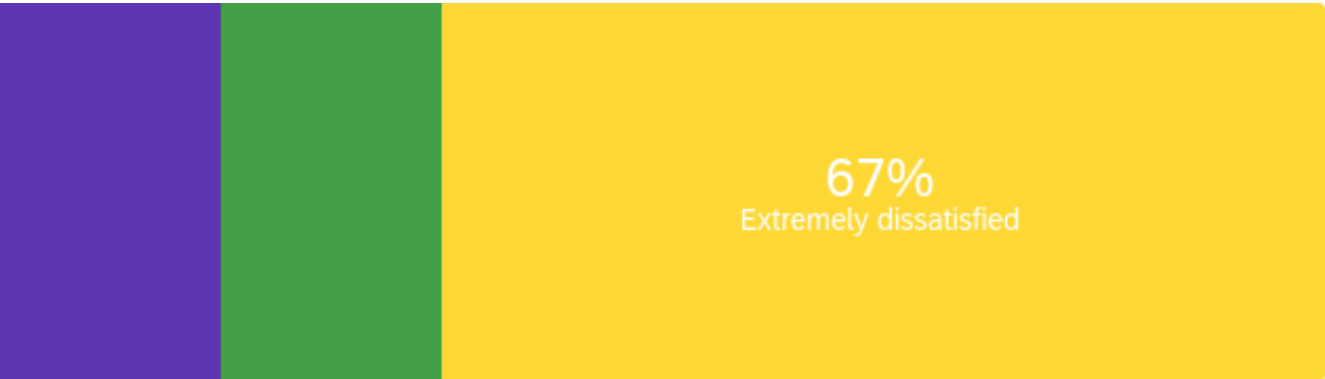
**Q60 - What was the nature of this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Religious Affiliation? (Select all that apply)**



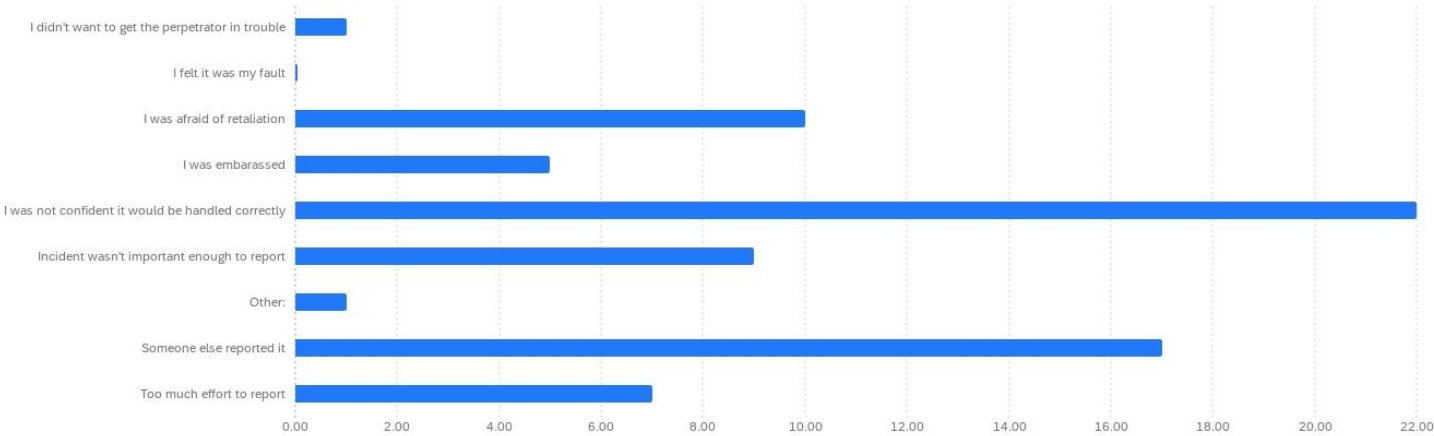
**Q61 - Who/what perpetrated this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Religious Affiliation? (Select all that apply)**



**Q62 - If you reported any of these incidents to the campus administration, were you satisfied with how the incident report was handled?**



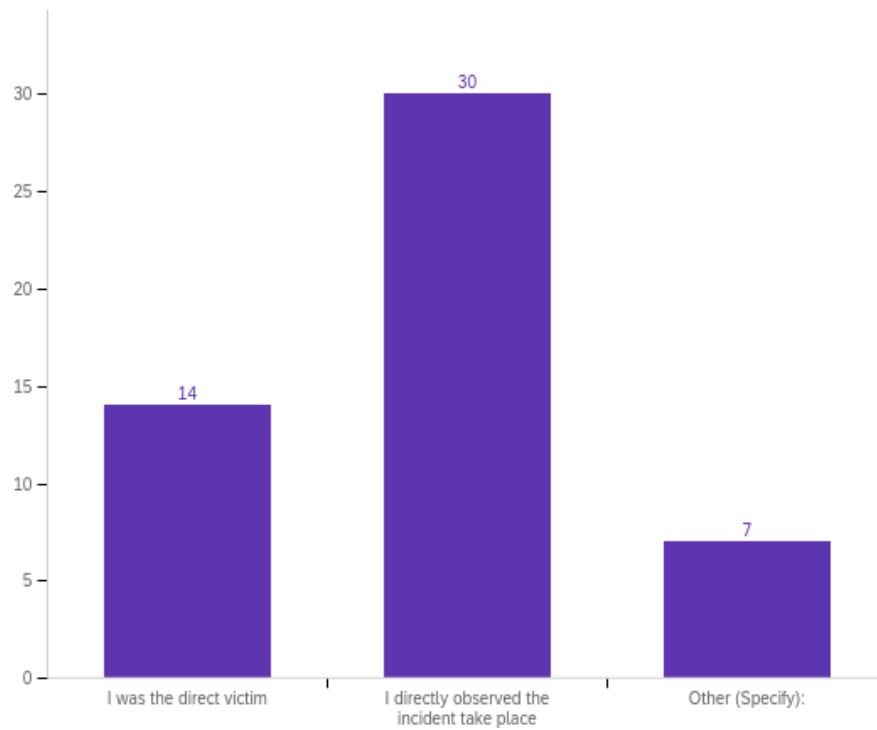
**Q63 - If you did NOT report any of these incidents, why not? (Select any that apply)**



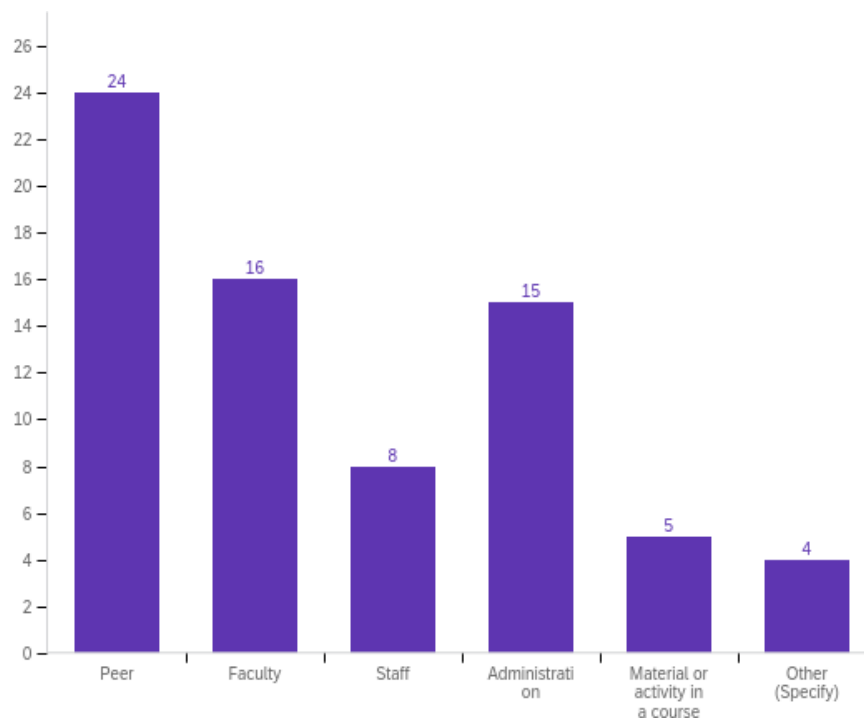


[Socioeconomic Status]

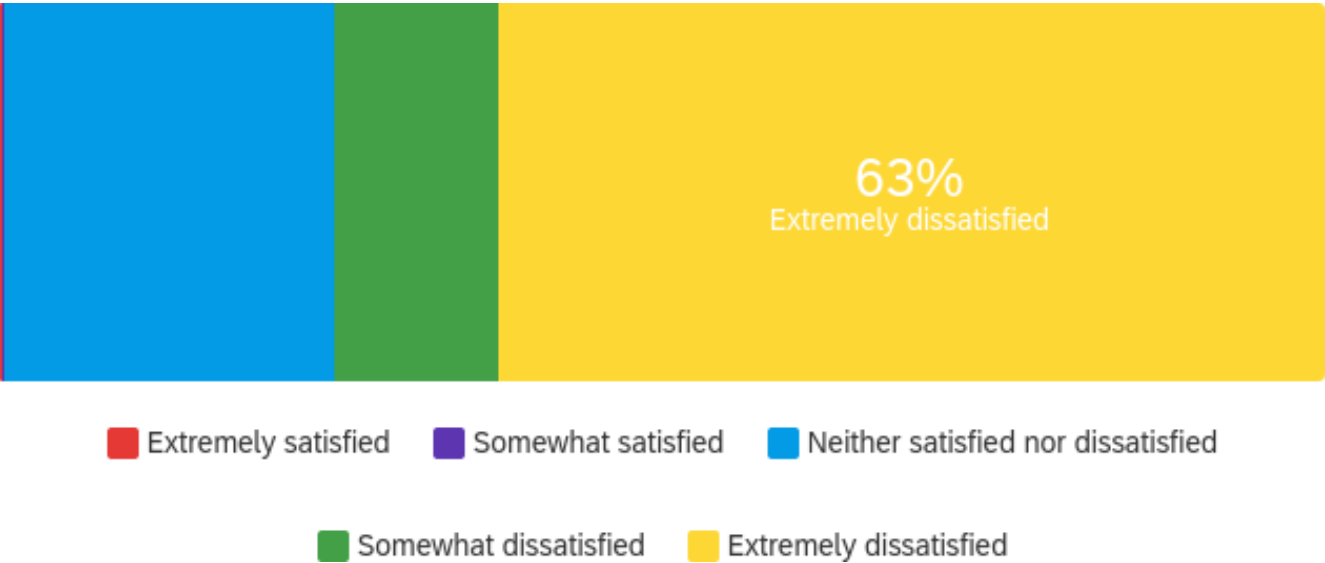
Q65 - What was the nature of this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Socioeconomic Status? (Select all that apply)



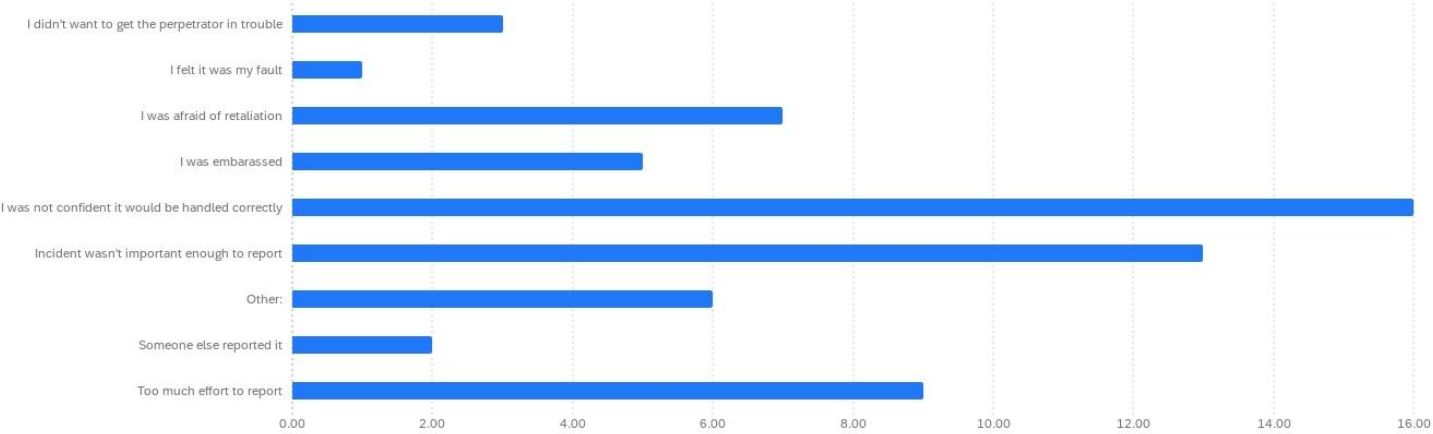
Q66 - Who/what perpetrated this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on Socioeconomic Status? (Select all that apply)



**Q67 - If you reported any of these incidents to the campus administration, were you satisfied with how the incident report was handled?**

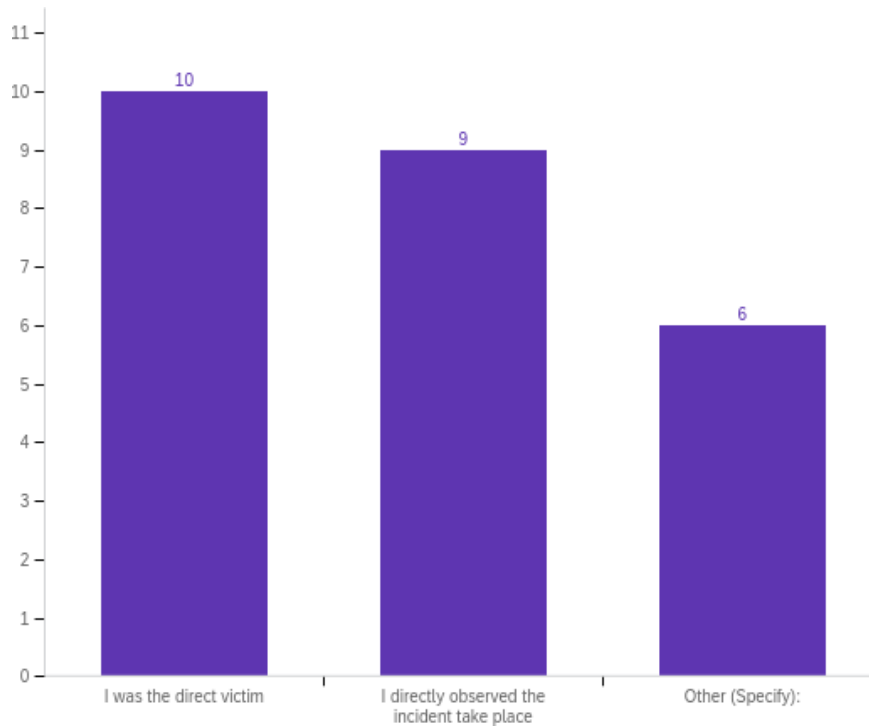


**Q68 - If you did NOT report any of these incidents, why not? (Select any that apply)**

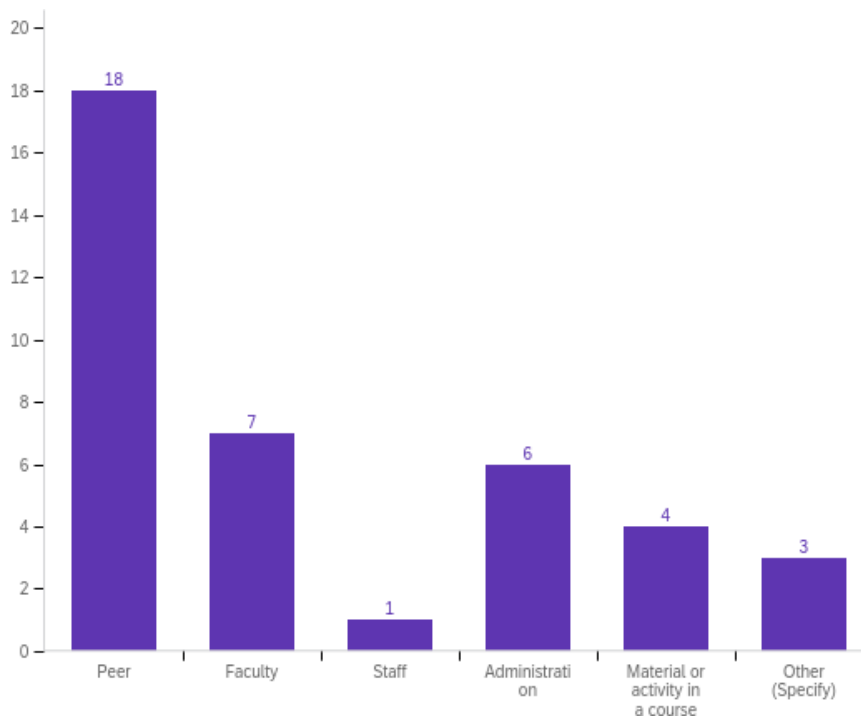


[Other]

Q70 - What was the nature of this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on 'Other'?  
(Select all that apply)



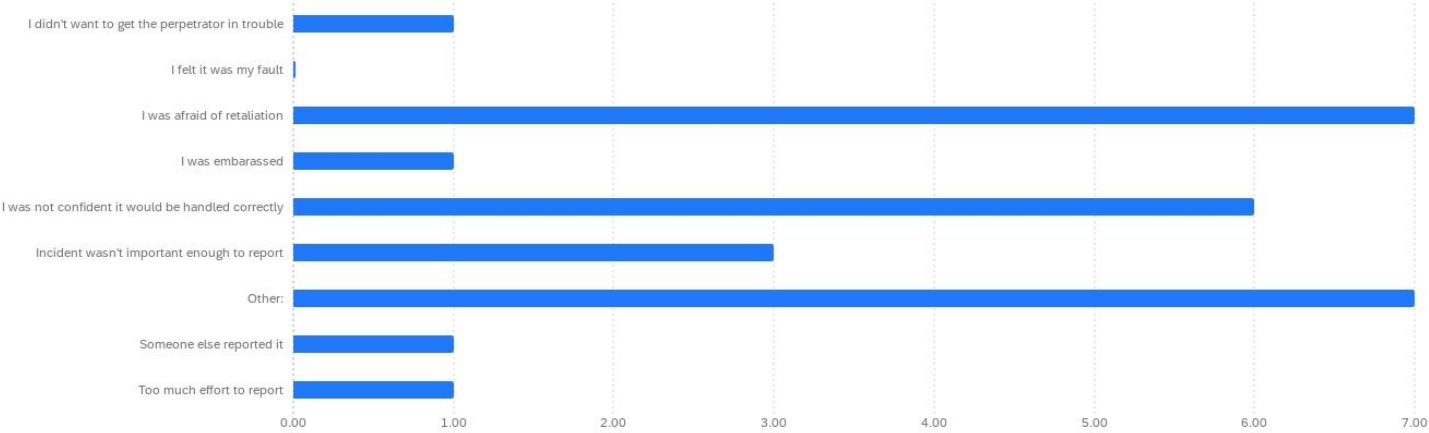
Q71 - Who/what perpetrated this (these) incident(s) of discrimination based on 'Other'?  
(Select all that apply)



**Q72 - If you reported any of these incidents to the campus administration, were you satisfied with how the incident report was handled?**



**Q73 - If you did NOT report any of these incidents, why not? (Select any that apply)**



## Overall insights:

### [General]

- Of the **394** students who chose to answer the question, **212 (53.8%)** said they had **not** ever witnessed an act of discrimination take place on campus. Thus, **182 (46.2%)** students selected that they had witnessed *at least one* incident of discrimination take place on campus during their time at W&M.
- Incidents of **gender discrimination** were the most prevalent type of discrimination experienced on campus, followed closely by **racial discrimination** and then **discrimination based on sexual orientation**.
- The additional types of discrimination listed and identified through the free-fill '**Other**' option of Question 34 shed light on the inherent biases present in this survey, which will be rectified in next year's Graduate Student Life Satisfaction Survey. Specifically, it has been noted that the categories of **discrimination based on political view** and **discrimination based on physical disabilities** should be included in the next climate survey.

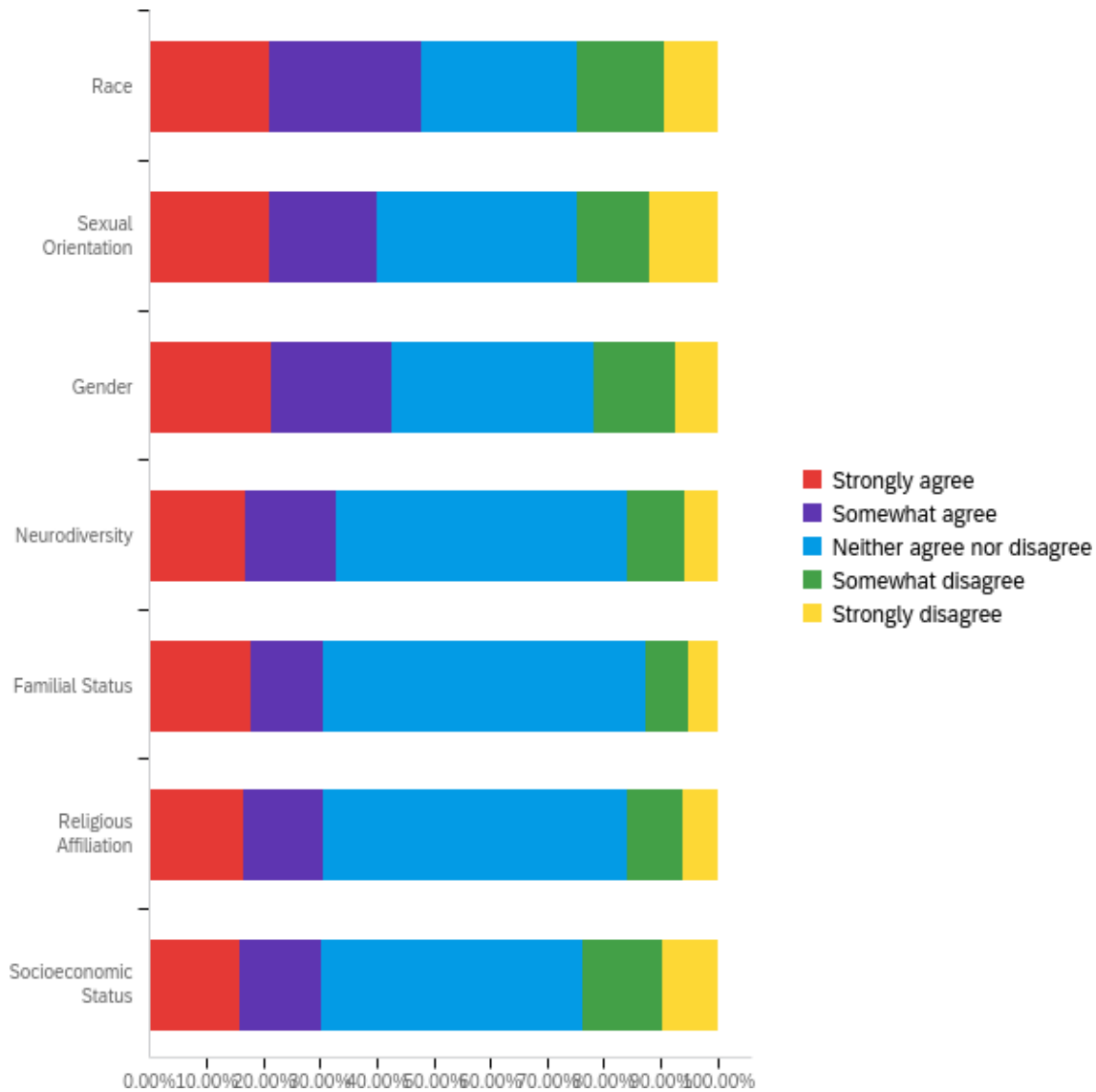
### [Category specific]

- In general, more incidents of discrimination in this survey were reported by a direct **bystander/observer** than a **direct victim** of the incident. **This possibly indicates that bystanders tend to process events more clearly or accurately in hindsight than direct victims, who may have otherwise not recognized when they were being discriminated against. The opposite may be equally true; an outside observer may have mistaken an interaction between two people as discriminatory, while from the supposed victim's perspective the interaction was not viewed as such.**
- In all cases **peers** were by and large the most common perpetrators of discriminatory acts, followed closely by **faculty**
  - Interestingly, acts of discrimination based on **neurodiversity** were *most* linked to **faculty**, and the second greatest perpetrator of discrimination based on **sexual orientation** was reported to be **administration**, not faculty.
- Most victims who reported their incident to campus administration were not satisfied with how the incident was handled – *At least 60%* of incident reporters in all but one category were **Somewhat to Extremely Dissatisfied** with how the admin handled the incident
  - The outlier again was for incidents of discrimination based on **neurodiversity**, where there was an even split between **satisfaction** and **dissatisfaction** with how reported incidents were handled by admin.
- In terms of the reasons for why students chose *not* to report incidents of discrimination, the most common reason cited was **not being confident that it would be handled correctly**, followed closely by the reason that the **incident was not important enough to report**. A few outliers are worth pointing out:
  - The most common reason that people did not report an incident of discrimination based on **sexual orientation** was because **someone else reported it**.
  - Similarly, the second most common reason for people not reporting an incident of discrimination based on **religious affiliation** was because **someone else reported it**.
  - For incidents of discrimination falling into the '**Other**' category, the most common reason for not reporting these incidents of discrimination was because of **fear of retaliation**.

The final portion of the Climate section asked respondents three overall sentiment questions about W&M. The first question (Q75) asked another “**I believe**” question, polling how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed that the statement that **the W&M administration has been successfully addressing the seven categories of discrimination** addressed in the previous section. Interestingly, disregarding the majority **neutral** sentiment response for each type of discrimination, there were overall **slightly more** students who **strongly or somewhat agreed** that W&M admin has been successfully addressing issues of discrimination than those who **somewhat or strongly disagreed**, for all seven categories.

Finally, respondents were asked to **rate**, on a scale from **1 to 10**, how likely they would recommend both their **school**, and **William and Mary as a whole**, to family, friends and colleagues. Averaged over all responses, all schools received well above a 50% recommend rate, with the lowest being the **Law School** with a **6.87** and the highest beings **VIMS** with an **8.3**. William and Mary as a college overall received an average **7.21**.

**Q75 - I believe the William & Mary administration has been successfully addressing issues of discrimination based on \_\_\_\_.**



Q77 - I would recommend my school to friends, family, and colleagues



Q78 - I would recommend William & Mary to friends, family, and colleagues

