

Campus Climate Data from ISU Surveys

Background

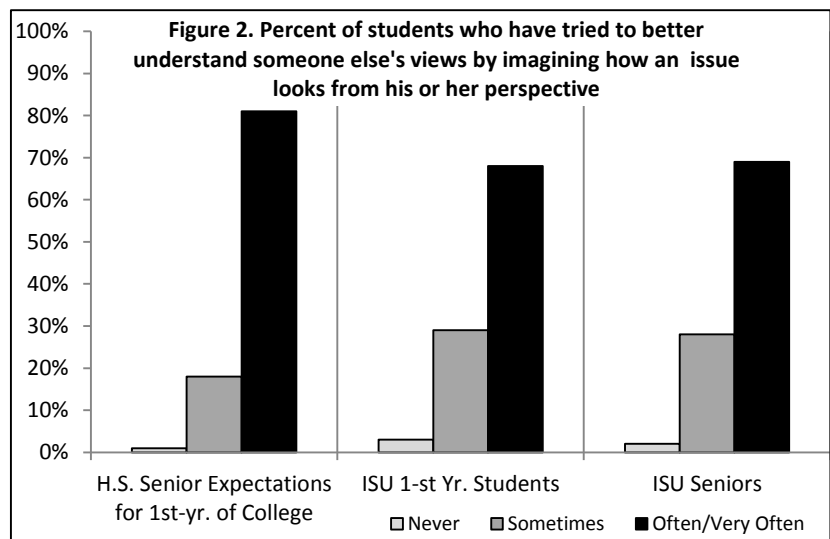
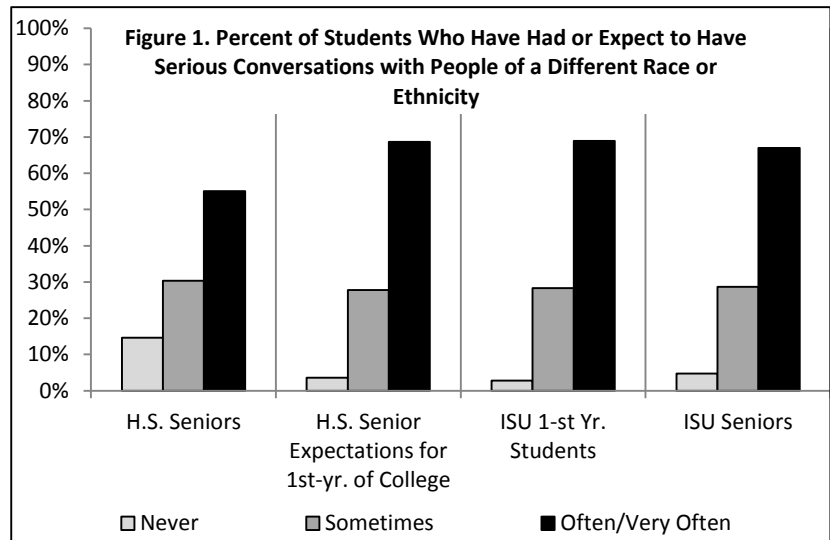
Results included in this report are based on data from the following surveys¹:

Survey	Target Population/Sample	Last Administration at ISU
NSSE: National Survey of Student Engagement	First-year and senior students	Spring 2013
BCSSE: Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement	Pre-college students	Summer 2012
FSSE: Faculty Survey of Student Engagement	Faculty	Spring 2013
FOE: Foundations of Excellence survey	Faculty, staff, & first-time ISU students ²	Spring 2012

Pre-College Expectations

Before entering college, ISU students expect to engage in more frequent conversations and interactions with people from other races and ethnicities, political opinions, religious beliefs, and personal values than they did in high school. For the most part, this is what happens. As the example in figure 1 shows, ISU student pre-college expectations for engaging in serious conversations with people from different backgrounds are largely consistent with frequencies reported by ISU first-year and senior students. This finding is consistent with a majority of universities that participate in NSSE.³

An area where ISU pre-college student expectations are slightly higher than what ISU first-year and senior students report is understanding another's point of view by imagining an issue from their perspective, as shown in figure 2.



¹ The NSSE, FSSE, and BCSSE are developed and coordinated through the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. The FOE survey is developed and coordinated through the John Gardner Institute for Excellence in Higher Education.

² The FOE survey was administered to both first-year and new transfer students. Both groups matriculated as first-time students to ISU. 66% of respondents were first-year and 33% transfer students.

³ NSSE. (2014). *Bringing the Institution Into Focus: Annual Results 2014*. Bloomington, IN: IU Center for Postsecondary Research.

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*Table 2. How **important** is it to you that your college or university provides...opportunities to interact with students from different economic, social, and racial and ethnic backgrounds? (BCSSE question 18c; high school seniors only)*

1-6 scale, with 1=Not Important and 6=Very Important	#	%
1-2	83	4%
3-4	735	37%
5-6	1,186	59%
Total	2,004	100%

ISU students not only *expect* to have more interactions with people who come from different backgrounds, but also feel it is *important* that ISU provides opportunities for them to interact with people from different backgrounds, as shown in Table 2.

NSSE Data National Comparisons

The NSSE asks a series of questions about student interactions with people who come from different backgrounds (racial/ethnic, religious, economic, etc.), institutional emphasis on diversity, and contributions to knowledge and understanding of people from different backgrounds. For the purposes of this report, eight questions from the NSSE were utilized (2c, 2e, 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 14d, and 17h). These questions, along with ISU and national survey results, are presented at the end of this report in the NSSE 2013 comparisons.

There were no significant differences between ISU first-year students and all first-year students who completed the NSSE in 2013 for the eight questions examined in this report.

For seniors, significant differences were found in eight of the three questions. These are displayed in table 3.

Table 3. Significant Differences between ISU Seniors and All Senior Students who Completed the NSSE in Spring 2013

Question	Results
NSSE Question 8a: During the current school year, about how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups? People of a race or ethnicity different than your own?	ISU significantly <i>lower</i>
NSSE Question 14d. How much does your institution emphasize the following? Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	ISU significantly <i>higher</i>
NSSE Question 17h. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)	ISU significantly <i>higher</i>

According to NSSE, “collaborating with others in mastering difficult material and developing interpersonal and social competence prepare students to deal with complex, unscripted problems they will encounter during and after college. Two Engagement Indicators make up this theme: *Collaborative Learning* and *Discussions with Diverse Others*.”⁴ Questions related to Discussions with Diverse Others engagement indicator are:

Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often" had discussions with

- 8a. People from a race or ethnicity other than your own.
- 8b. People from an economic background other than your own.
- 8c. People with religious beliefs other than your own.
- 8d. People with political views other than your own.

⁴ See NSSE Engagement Indicators report, available from UAS.

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Data related to the *Discussions with Diverse Others* indicators are included in the data tables at the end of this report. Based on the type of benchmark comparison, there were significant differences between ISU and other benchmark groups (all NSSE 2013 institutions, Great Lakes institutions, and institutions from the same Carnegie Class).

Foundations of Excellence: First-Year Student Experiences

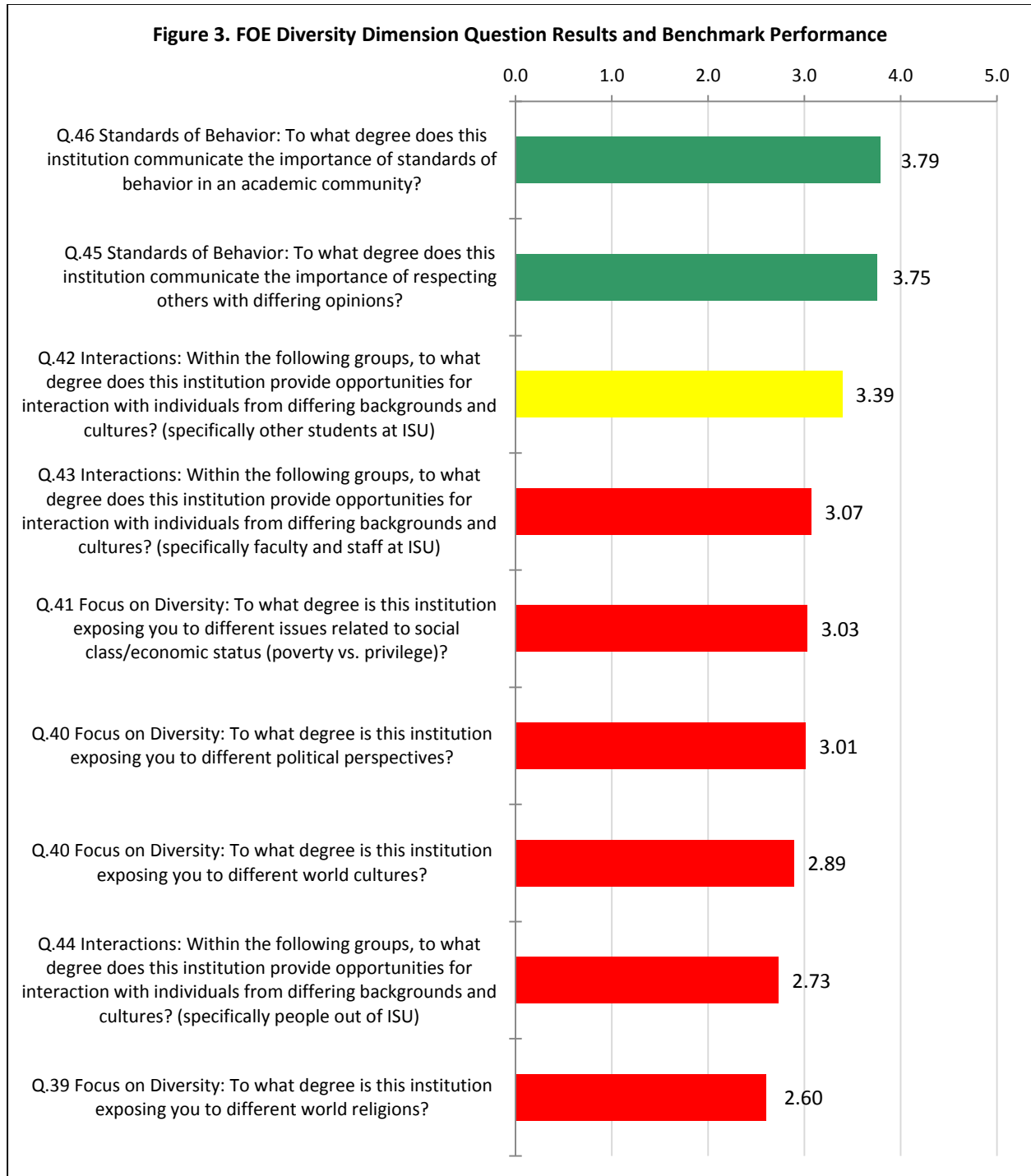
In spring 2012, ISU participated in the Foundations of Excellence (FOE) self-study process. Part of the process involved a survey of first-year students at ISU. The FOE results are similar to NSSE in that they illustrate that, in general, ISU students report moderate interactions with people from backgrounds different from their own, as shown in Table 4.

<i>Table 4. To what degree is (ISU) exposing you to different... (FOE survey questions 38-41)</i>								
Response	38. World Cultures		39. World Religions		40. Political Perspectives		41. Issues related to social class or economic status (poverty v. privilege)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Not at all/Slightly	183	37%	227	46%	157	32%	154	32%
Moderately	164	33%	167	34%	163	33%	161	33%
High/Very High	144	29%	94	19%	170	35%	170	35%
Total	491	100%	488	100%	490	100%	485	100%

The FOE self-study process utilizes a 1-5 scale that evaluates an institution’s performance, from “least effective (1)” to “most effective (5).” Figure 3 illustrates ISU’s performance on the FOE benchmarks for the diversity dimension.

Comparisons can also be made among various dimensions in the FOE process. As figure 4 illustrates, the two diversity factors (interaction and exposure) were the only two dimension factor areas that fell .25 below the effective performance benchmark of 3.5. This result is consistent with how ISU seniors responded to question 8a. on the NSSE survey (During the current school year, about how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups? People of a race or ethnicity different than your own?); ISU seniors reported significantly lower discussions with people of a different race or ethnicity than national NSSE respondents (see table 3 on the previous page).

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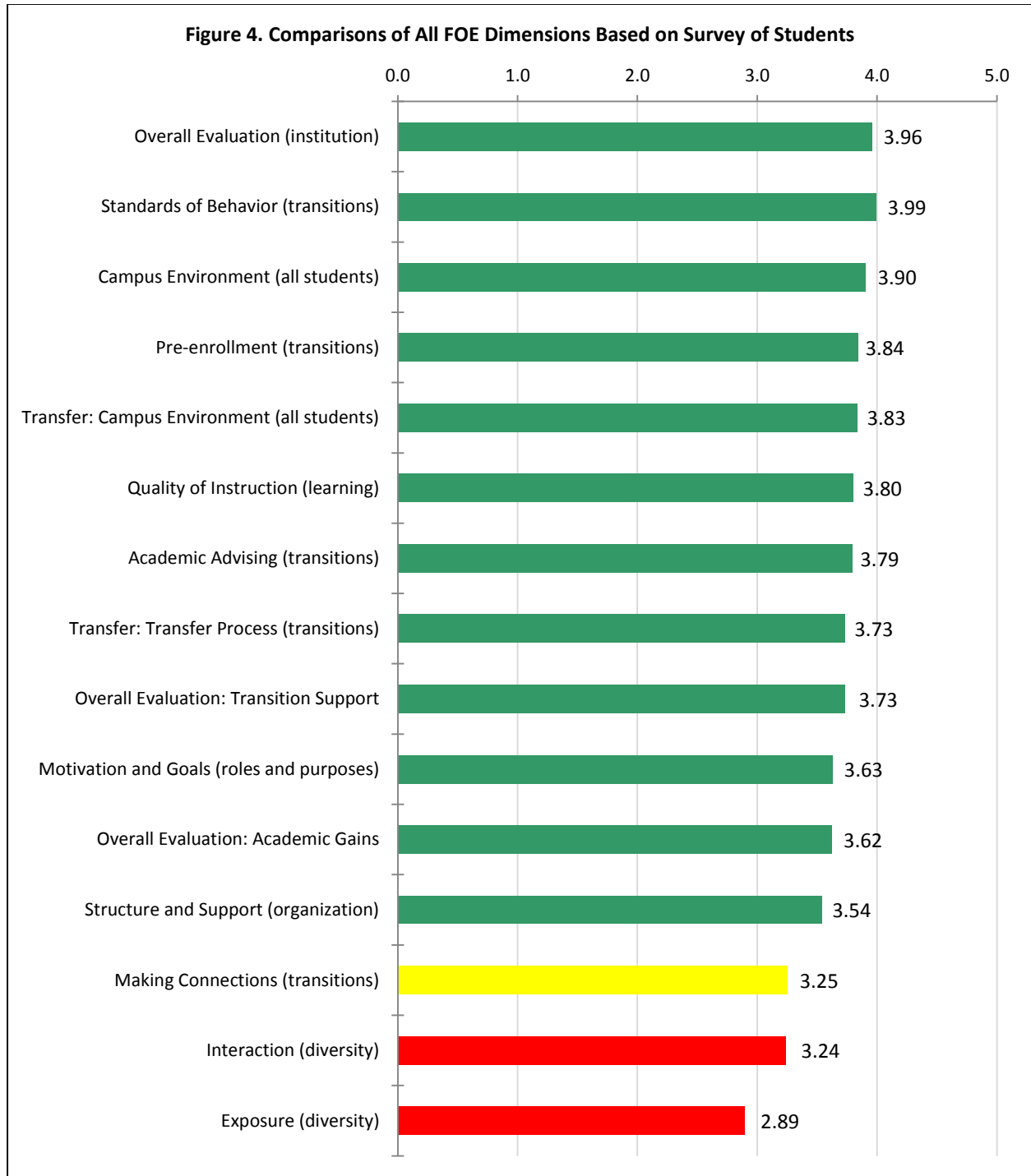


Green - Institution has a higher mean than the goal (3.5)

Yellow - Institution is within .25 of the goal (3.5)

Red - Institution has a lower mean than the goal (3.5) by more than .25

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ISU Student and Faculty & Staff Comparisons

This report utilizes results from two surveys in regard to faculty and staff perceptions about campus climate:

1. FSSE – **faculty only**. NSSE and FSSE responses to similar questions are compared in a report. As of 2014, faculty questions generally center around the importance of and opportunities for student engagement with diverse experiences. The FSSE also asks faculty to think about a specific undergraduate course they teach, while the NSSE generally asks students to respond in terms of more broad, institution-level experiences.
2. FOE Survey – **faculty and staff**. Some questions between the faculty and the student surveys are similar, but are not compiled and compared in a report.

NSSE and FSSE Results

Using NSSE and FSSE results, Table 5 compares faculty importance placed on increasing institutional emphasis on encouraging contact among people from different backgrounds with how much students feel ISU emphasizes this contact.

<i>Table 5. Faculty Importance Placed on Increasing ISU’s Emphasis on Encouraging Contact Among Students from Different Backgrounds and Student Perceptions About Emphasis Placed</i>					
	ISU Faculty (Upper and Lower Division)			ISU Students (First-Year and Senior Students)	
	FSSE question 2d. How important is it to you that your institution increase its emphasis...encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)?			NSSE question 14d. How much does your institution emphasize encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)?	
FSSE Response	#	%	NSSE Response	#	%
Not important	11	5%	Very Little	63	10%
Somewhat important	35	17%	Some	210	34%
Important/Very important	157	77%	Quite a Bit/Very Much	350	57%
<i>Total</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>623</i>	<i>100%</i>

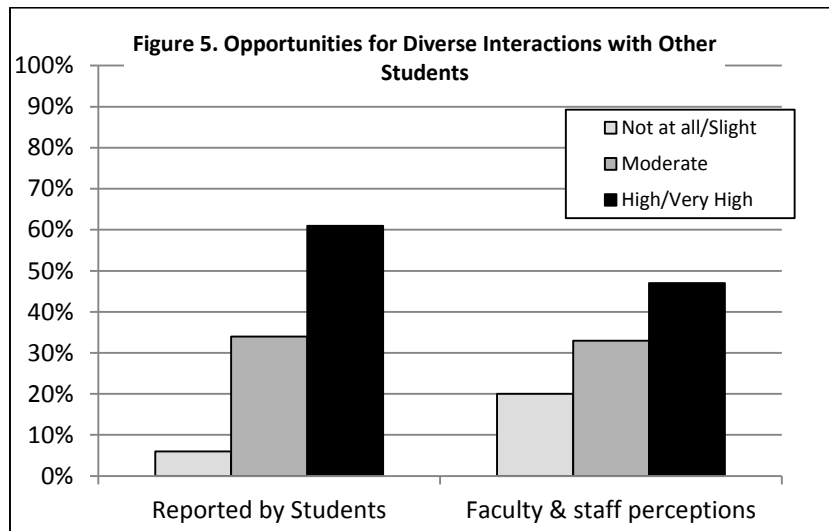
While reporting high levels of *importance*, most faculty report lower amounts of *opportunities* for students in their courses to engage in discussions with students from different backgrounds, as shown in the attached data tables. However, this may be the result of different wording with the questions. Faculty are asked to respond in terms of a course they teach, while students are asked to respond in terms of broad, institution-level experiences. The FSSE and NSSE questions also use different response categories [importance (FSSE) versus frequency (NSSE), for example].

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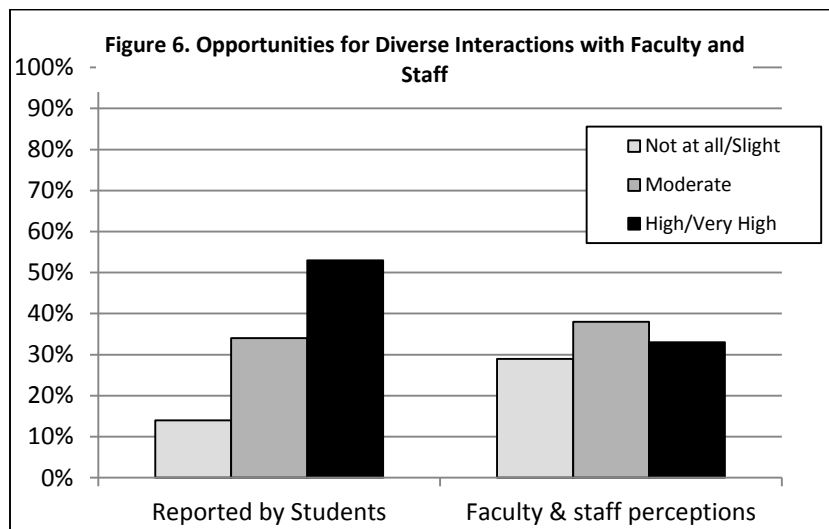
FOE Results

Student responses to the FOE survey can be compared to faculty and staff responses. In some areas, the answers were similar. Students and faculty both largely agree, for example, that ISU places a high importance on respecting others with differing opinions, with 91% of students and 88% of faculty and staff at least moderately agreeing.

Faculty and staff tend to underestimate the amount of *opportunities* students have to engage in diverse interactions. In Figure 5, for example, students *report* higher levels of *opportunities* interactions with students from different backgrounds than faculty and staff *perceive*. Because the FOE results were not compared with national results, student reports of *opportunities* for interactions or actual interactions with other students from different backgrounds could still be lower than other institutions (as reported in table 3, page 2).



In figure 6, students again report higher levels of *opportunities* for diverse interactions with faculty and staff than faculty and staff perceive.



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Summary

Reports of Interacting with Other Groups by Timing. Entering ISU students express a desire to engage in diverse experiences, and expect that college will provide more opportunities to engage in diverse experiences. ISU first-year and senior students report higher levels of interactions with people from different backgrounds than pre-college ISU students. These interactions are fairly consistent with pre-college ISU expectations (figure 1).

Campus Culture and Diversity. In general, students feel that ISU places a moderate to high emphasis on diversity and provides a moderate level of opportunities for students to engage in diverse experiences. NSSE question 14d (see table 3) and FOE questions 45 and 46 (see figure 3) show that students feel ISU places a high emphasis on encouraging interactions among diverse groups and articulates values of respect for different opinions. This is positive, as institutional value statements and standards can have an impact on creating a positive campus climate.⁵ There is some evidence to suggest, however, that institutional values and standards may not translate into actual behavior among students in terms of interacting with other students from different backgrounds (see table 3, NSSE question 8a). Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that faculty and staff feel that ISU should increase its emphasis on encouraging interactions among diverse groups (see table 5, page 6, and figures 5 and 6, page 7).

There are limitations to interpreting student responses in this report. The results do not take into account the subjective nature of how students assess the opportunities, frequency, impacts, and perceived benefits of interacting with people from diverse groups⁶. Additionally, this analysis provides data at the aggregate level. While respondents to all of the surveys reported moderate to high levels of respect for diversity, and moderate levels of interactions and opportunities, further analyses that examine the data by demographic categories could reveal wide variability between groups not revealed by these surveys.⁷

Faculty and Staff Perceptions. Survey data imply that student engagement with diverse people and experiences seem to occur mostly with other students. This may be the result of survey question wording. Or, being a predominately residential campus, ISU students may be more likely to spend more time with other students than with faculty and staff. There is some evidence to suggest that faculty and staff may underestimate the number of *opportunities* for interactions and exposure to diversity, as implied in figures 5 and 6. Students do report lower levels of diversity interactions and exposure in some areas, particularly in the FOE survey, where diverse interactions and exposure to diversity were the rated as the lowest-scoring dimensions by students (see figure 4). So, faculty and staff may be perceptive about students' lack of diverse interactions or opportunities for diverse interactions, even if they may slightly underestimate actual student behavior and opportunities.

An additional limitation of the FSSE is that faculty are asked about classroom-level experiences (and specifically, their course), while the NSSE questions focus on broad, institutional experiences. A limitation to both the FSSE and the FOE survey is that they fail to take into account the influence of departmental or unit perspectives. For many faculty and staff, however, the department or unit is their main orientation with campus life. Assessing a climate for diversity should take departmental culture and climate into consideration.⁸

⁵ Alger, J.R., et al. (2000). *Does Diversity Make a Difference?* Washington, DC: American Council on Education and American Association of University Professors.

⁶ For more information about this topic, see Shaw, E. (2005). *Research the Educational Benefits of Diversity (Research Report No. 2005-4)*. New York: College Board.

⁷ For more information about this topic, see Miller, B., & Sujitparapitaya, S. (2010). *Campus Climate in the Twenty-First Century: Estimating Perceptions of Discrimination at a Racially-Mixed Institution*. In *New Directions for Institutional Research* (No. 154). San Francisco: Wiley; and Ancis, J.R., Sedlacek, W.E., & Mohr, J.J. (2000). Student Perceptions of Campus Cultural Climate by Race. *J. of Counseling & Development* (78), pp. 180-185.

⁸ For more information about this topic, see Mayhew, M.J., Grunwald, H.E., & Dey, E.L. (2006). Breaking the Silence: Achieving a Positive Campus Climate for Diversity from the Staff Perspective. *Research in Higher Education* (47), 63-88.