

Missouri College Students of Color and Sense of Belonging

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance misuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition is comprised of 24 public and private colleges and universities in the state. To measure progress and obtain data needed for the implementation of programs, PIP created the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) survey. Among the 6,705 Missouri college students from the 24 colleges and universities who responded to the 2022 MACHB survey, 20% identified as a Student of Color. This brief will focus on the experiences Students of Color have at Missouri colleges and universities and their feeling of sense of belonging on campus.

Background on Categorization of Racial/Ethnic Groups

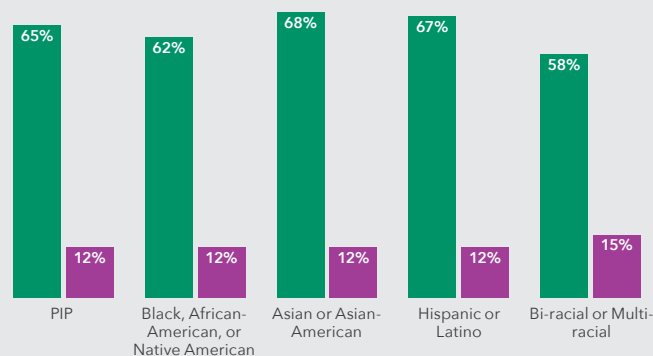
In the 2022 MACHB survey, students are asked to self-report their racial/ethnic background. The question is 'select all that apply,' meaning students may be counted in multiple race categories. In order to look at broad comparisons between students of different racial backgrounds, 'Students of Color' in this brief is comprised of students who selected at least one of the following options: Black/African-American/Native African, Asian/Asian-American, Hispanic/LatinX, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Arab or Non-Arab North African/Middle-Eastern, Bi-racial/Multi-racial, Native Caribbean/Afro-Caribbean Islander, and Other. 0.5% of students comprised the "Other" category, given, however, that students in the 'Other' race category may have very different experiences from one another and experience sense of belonging at very different rates, this brief will not include this 'Other' race category.

Sense of Belonging & Students of Color

Missouri College students are asked to respond to the following statement on the MACHB, 'I feel a sense

of belonging to the campus community' on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The percentage of students who reported a lack of sense of belonging decreased by 4% from 2021 to 2022 (16% to 12%) while 23% of students felt they could neither agree nor disagree with having a sense of belonging. Students of Color lack of sense of belonging was 14% in 2022, not changing from 2021

Chart 1: Sense of Belonging



The data reflects that Missouri campuses are generally doing a better job at making students of color feel like they have a sense of belonging. There is also an opportunity for improvement in aiding Black, African-American, Native African, and especially Bi-racial or Multi-racial students to increase their sense of belonging.

How Belonging Changes Through Year in School

A further breakdown by what year in college Missouri students of color are in shows there is a decrease in sense of belonging as the years go on, among many students of color. That stays consistent until their senior year in college for most.

spaces. This can lead to not only a low sense of belonging but a low retention rate among Students of Color. It is important to make Students of Color feel welcome on campus more than just during freshman welcome week or acknowledged only during graduation. This can be done by creating common spaces of shared identities to come together and celebrate one another, or policies that support the

Table 1: Sense of Belonging

Year in school	PIP Student of Color Average		Black, African-American, or Native African		Asian or Asian-American		Hispanic or Latino		Bi-racial or Multi-racial	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Freshman	11%	67%	15%	64%	5.8%	75%	11%	65%	14%	65%
Sophomore	15%	61%	17%	59%	13%	63%	8.5%	74%	8.9%	63%
Junior	15%	60%	10%	62%	19%	62%	14%	65%	23%	43%
Senior	15%	64%	8.5%	64%	14%	66%	12%	70%	17%	55%

Many factors could be at play to affect Students of Color's sense of belonging through the years, but this shows that it is not consistent among all Students of Color and something that should always be considered.

feeling of safety on campus in minority groups. A way to involve Missouri college faculty in fostering a sense of belonging is through opportunities for leadership roles, internships, and other collegiate activities.

Lack of Sense of Belonging and Retention

Students with a lack of sense of belonging already have lower retention rates, and higher thoughts of transferring. The average thoughts of transferring for Missouri college students is 25% and 31% for Missouri college Students of Color. The same difference is seen in the average student's thought of discontinuing education at 21% and 24% for students of color. For the reported reasons for leaving school 27% of Students of Color say it's because they don't feel as if they belong on campus, demonstrating the importance of a sense of belonging on Missouri campuses.

Resources

Below are resources that can help you make students of color feel more included.

- insidehighered.com/news/2020/01/02/minority-students-sense-place-higher-two-year-four-year-institutions
- timeshighereducation.com/campus/how-create-sense-belonging-black-students-majority-white-academy
- education.virginia.edu/news/qa-how-help-college-students-feel-they-belong

Conclusion

Students of Color are often the minority on Missouri college campuses since they are primarily white

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