



**Smeal College of Business
Penn State University
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Audit Report
September 2022**

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Executive Summary

In August 2021, Smeal College of Business (Smeal) issued an RFP and in January 2022 engaged Compass Consulting Services LLC (Compass) to conduct a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Audit of the College. The Audit's goal is to help Smeal understand the underlying factors leading to people's sense of belonging or lack thereof. This report provides a summary report of data collected from interviews, focus groups and surveys along with the major themes related to Smeal's DEI strengths and challenges.

Compass conducted 23 strategic interviews during the months of March and April 2022 with 5 faculty, 3 staff, 14 administrators and 1 student (undergraduate). Compass conducted 16 focus groups with 50 participants during April 2022 with 9 faculty, staff and administrator (FSA) groups, 6 student groups and 1 meeting with DEI Task Force members.

Using the information and themes that emerged from these meetings, Compass designed and implemented electronic surveys for both the FSA, and students. The FSA survey was completed by 164 individuals for a 20% response rate (60 faculty, 85 staff, 8 administrators). The Student survey was completed by 417 students for a 6% response rate (299 undergraduate, 118 graduate students).

This report provides a review of the current state of DEI, an identification of what has been done, what has worked well and the lessons learned thus far. It summarizes participants' expectations for what they think Smeal should/could be doing to enhance DEI. Finally, the report identifies 8 thematic areas for future planning and closes with recommendations.

Introduction

In January, 2022 Smeal College of Business (Smeal) engaged Compass Consulting Services LLC (Compass) to conduct a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Audit of the College. Smeal's objectives are to understand the underlying factors leading to people's sense of belonging or lack thereof at the College that will help the DEI Task Force as it continues working to build a welcoming culture for every member of the Smeal community.

This audit is a result of the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from the faculty, staff and administrators (FSA), and all students whether in online or traditional classroom programs. The report includes a review of the current state of DEI, an identification of what has been done, what has worked well and the lessons learned thus far. It identifies major themes for Smeal's consideration then closes with recommendations for the next phase of the work.



To ensure the confidentiality of participants, interview and focus group notes, and raw survey data remain confidential. The data provided in this report will be within the context of major themes to protect participant identity.

Methodology

Smeal's DEI Task Force suggested specific FSA and students for individual strategic interviews. The Task Force also identified the focus groups by categories based on demographics. In total, Smeal invited 52 individuals to strategic interviews and all remaining FSA and students were encouraged to participate in focus groups.

Strategic Interviews

Compass conducted 23 strategic interviews based on responses from the 52 invitations. As a follow up to those who had not scheduled interviews, Compass sent 2 email requests and made 2 rounds of follow up calls to encourage participation. These interviews took place during March and April with 14 administrators, 5 faculty, 3 staff and 1 student. These virtual conversations took approximately 60 minutes to complete.

Focus Groups

Using responses and themes from the strategic interviews, Compass adapted the interview questions for use with focus groups. Students and FSA who had not participated in interviews were invited to participate in focus groups. Compass sent 3 email requests to this audience. Compass conducted 16 focus groups during April with 50 participants: 9 FSA groups (33 participants), 6 student groups (9 participants), and 1 DEI Task Force group (8 participants). Attendance ranged from 1-12 participants per group. In cases where only 1 person attended a focus group, Compass used the focus group questions and proceeded with interviewing the individual. These virtual group conversations took approximately 90 minutes to complete.

Following are lists of focus group categories: (See next page)



Focus Groups with Participants

1. DEI Task Force
2. Faculty Associate Professor
3. Faculty Full Professor
4. Faculty Non-Tenure Track
5. Faculty International
6. Faculty Women
7. Graduate General
8. Graduate International
9. Staff General Non-Supervisory
10. Staff General Supervisory
(Directors/Managers)
11. Staff Women Non-Supervisory
12. Staff Women Supervisory
(Directors/Managers)
13. Students LGBTQ+
14. Students Women Identified
15. Undergraduate AAPI
16. Undergraduate Leaders

Focus Groups Cancelled Due to Lack of Participants

1. Faculty Assistant Professor
2. Faculty BIPOC*/AAPI*
3. Graduate AAPI
4. Graduate BIPOC
5. Staff BIPOC/AAPI/International
6. Undergraduate BIPOC
7. Undergraduate General
8. Undergraduate International

*BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

*AAPI: Asian American and Pacific Islander

23 Interviews

- 14 Faculty
- 5 Staff
- 3 Administrators
- 1 Student

16 Focus Groups

- 9 FSA (33 part.)
- 6 Student (9 part.)
- 1 DEI Task Force (8 part.)



Electronic Surveys

Two electronic surveys were developed, one for students and another for FSA, using themes that emerged from the interviews and focus groups. The student survey contained 71 questions while the FSA survey had 78 questions. Each survey consisted of multiple choice (Likert Scale), rating scales, open-ended and demographic questions.

Smeal asked that the survey be completed by the end of the semester while students and faculty were still on campus. The surveys were administered between late April and mid-May, 2022. Compass worked with the Office of Diversity Enhancement to notify and incentivize student participation. Students were given the opportunity to enter a daily drawing when they completed the survey. Compass sent 10 reminders to students and 6 reminders to FSA over the course of 15 days to encourage participation. These engagement efforts resulted in 164 FSA surveys completed by 60 faculty, 85 staff and 8 administrators with 11 participants not disclosing their roles. This yielded a response rate of 20%. For students, 417 surveys were completed by 299 undergraduates and 118 graduate students for a 6% response rate. Student surveys included 1,229 open-ended comments while the FSA contained 272.

The surveys were designed to gauge the opinions of stakeholders. The data was analyzed for FSA as a whole and students as whole. Compass collected some demographic information, however, to protect confidentiality the data was not analyzed according to demographic dimensions. Compass included demographic questions on both surveys related to long-term personal or familial ties to Penn State (legacies) to further explore topics that had arisen in interviews and focus groups. The data in the report represents the view points of the participants. The Smeal community has a relatively low number of People of Color and other diverse identities. The representation of diversity in the survey participants is higher than the actual diversity at Smeal.

164 FSA Surveys

- 60 Faculty
- 85 Staff
- 8 Administrator

417 Student Surveys

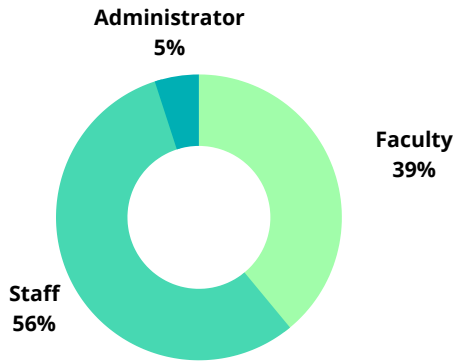
- 118 Graduate
- 299 Undergraduate



Participant Demographics (survey)

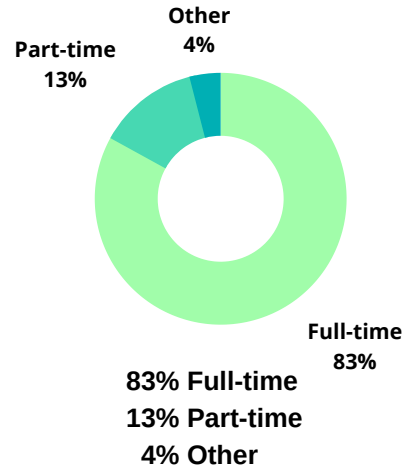
Faculty, Staff and Administrators

Role



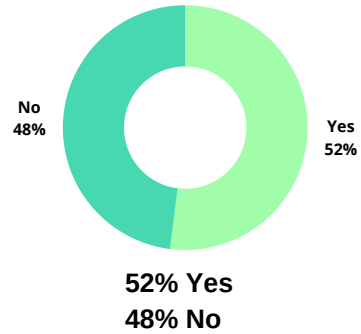
39% Faculty
56% Staff
5% Administrator

Employment Status



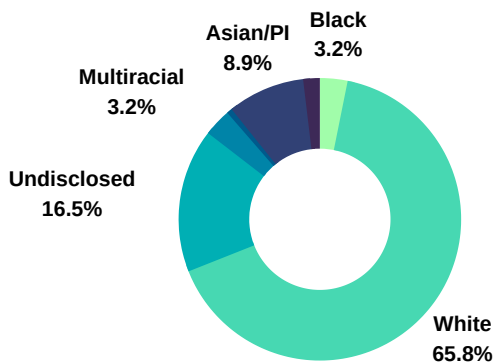
83% Full-time
13% Part-time
4% Other

Graduate of PSU



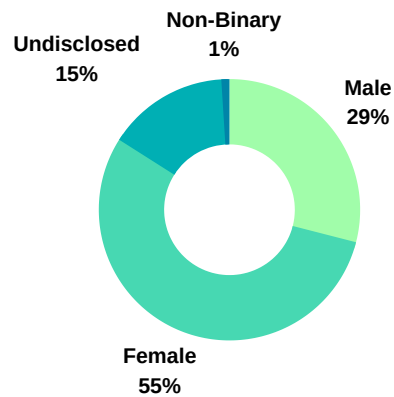
52% Yes
48% No

Race/Ethnicity



65.82% White/Caucasian
16.46% Prefer Not To Say
8.86% Asian/Pacific Islander
3.16% Black/African American
3.16% Multiracial/Biracial
1.90% Not Listed
0.63% Hispanic/Latino/LatinX

Gender Identity

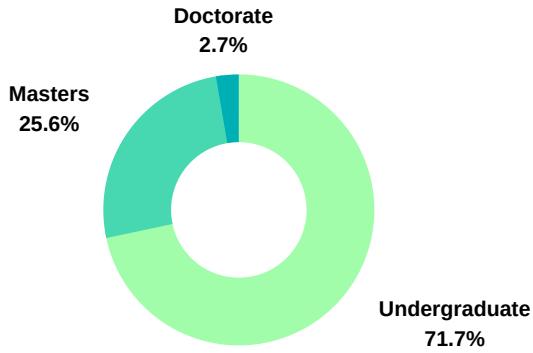


29% Male
55% Female
15% Prefer Not to Say
1% Non-Binary



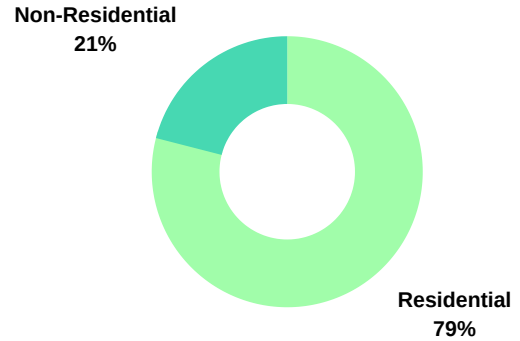
Participant Demographics (survey) Students

Degree Level



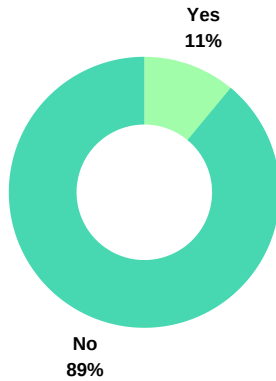
71.7% Undergraduate
25.6% Masters
2.7% Doctoral

Program Type



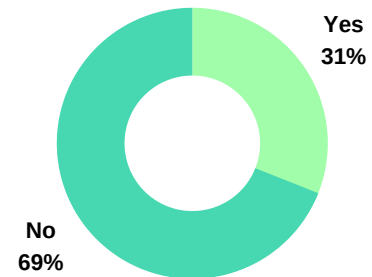
79% Residential
21% Non-Residential

Transfer Status



11% Yes
89% No

Legacy Status*



31% Yes
69% No

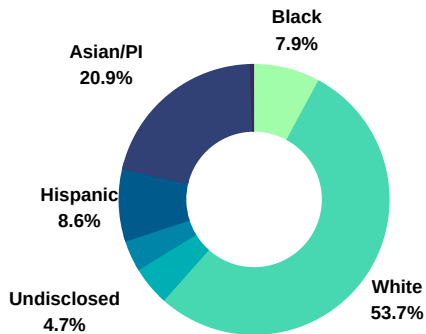
*parent or other relative
is a PSU alumni



Participant Demographics (survey)

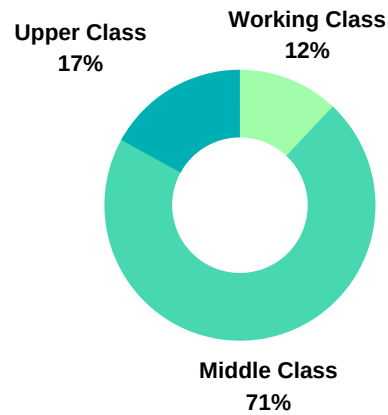
Students

Race/Ethnicity



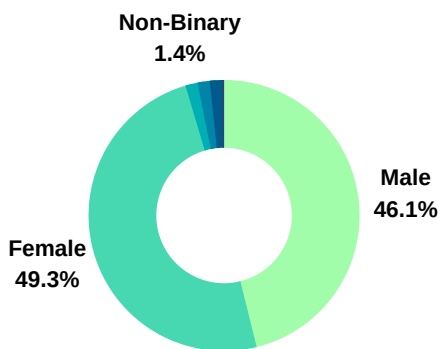
53.70% White/Caucasian
20.90% Asian/Pacific Islander
8.60% Hispanic/Latino/LatinX
7.90% Black/African American
4.70% Prefer Not To Say
3.70% Multiracial/Biracial
0.50% Not Listed

Socioeconomic Status



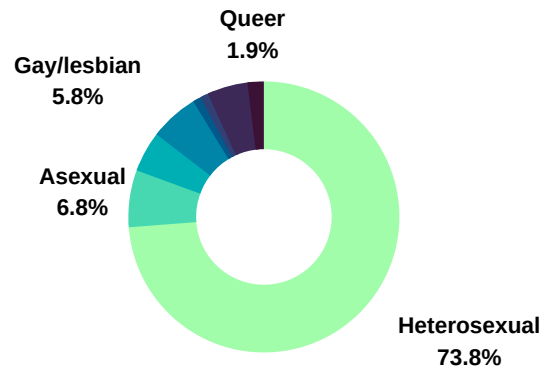
12% Working Class
71% Middle Class
17% Upper Class

Gender Identity



46.13% Male
49.27% Female
1.45% Non-Binary
1.45% Transgender
1.45% Prefer Not To Say
0.25% Pangender

Sexual Identity*



7% Asexual
5% Bisexual
6% Gay/Lesbian
76% Heterosexual
1% Pansexual
1% Polysexual
2% Queer
5% Prefer Not To Say

*Some student selected more than one option resulting in skewed percentages



Participant Perceptions of Smeal's Rationale for Focusing on DEI

Many participants believe the existence of the Office of Diversity Enhancement is evidence of the College's commitment to DEI on some level. There is strong sentiment that Smeal is in the early stages on the path to achieving a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for all. When asked why Smeal is focusing on DEI responses varied.

Responses included themes such as:

- It is imperative to prepare students for diverse workplace and business environments, especially given the economic benefits to businesses that create strong DEI cultures
- It is a response to pressure at Penn State and desire to comply with university directives
- National events have raised awareness about DEI
- Smeal does not know where it is on DEI and knows it needs to figure it out
- Smeal genuinely desires change
- Smeal is checking the box
- Smeal wants to be a leading institution on DEI
- Smeal wants to look good



The Current State of DEI at Smeal

Smeal's FSA and students who participated in the interviews, focus groups and surveys express a general appreciation for DEI; they are, in a broad sense, open to people who are different from themselves. Most said that DEI conversations are initiated by the Office of Diversity Enhancement. They indicate that DEI is not discussed frequently in other venues across the College, however, some recognize an increased interest in and deeper engagement with DEI over the past few years.

Some participants perceive that many FSAs and students share a strong connection to the Penn State and the Smeal identities. This sentiment appears to be primarily held by white stakeholders, especially those who are legacy members of the Penn State community.

A closer look at the data reveals more specific aspects of the current state of DEI at Smeal. When asked about the current state of diversity, participants indicate the following:

- Gender is the most recognized dimension of diversity among the FSA, with an acknowledgement of the increasing number of women in positions
- International individuals are the second most recognized diverse group by the FSA
- LGBTQ+ awareness appears to be low within Smeal; it appears to be focused on more across Penn State
- Other aspects of diversity mentioned by participants (FSA and Students) include religion, sexual orientation, mental and physical disabilities, veteran status, adult learners, socioeconomic status and diversity of thought
- Staff is predominantly female while faculty is majority male
- The college is predominantly white and disproportionately male in leadership, the faculty and students
- The idea of diversity at Smeal is mostly tied to ideas about Blacks and whites

Participants delved further into how DEI plays out or is experienced in the College and indicated the following:

- A general sense persists that tenured faculty is more highly valued than non-tenure track faculty, and staff – that non-tenure track and staff's knowledge, expertise and opinions do not count as much as the tenured faculty's
- Elitist attitudes and comments are still common and tend to be made by
 - faculty towards staff and students
 - men towards women
 - those with Ph.D.s towards those without a doctorate degree
- Penn State's bureaucracy slows down DEI progress at the College
- Penn State's location in rural Pennsylvania presents a challenge for increasing diversity



Lessons Learned

Many participants indicate that Smeal is learning as it goes, though there are still many who feel the college has not learned much.

The themes that emerged include:

- Intersectionality is now recognized and understood by some
- More action is needed
- People get hurt when DEI efforts are not carefully and intentionally thought through
- Problems with DEI affect recruitment and retention of students and FSA
- Several people have not learned anything yet and do not think they need to
- Smeal has learned that DEI is much more than numbers
- Smeal understands that it needs to do more to support Black and Brown students
- The College recognizes that People of Color and others with diverse identities face challenges when they enroll or are employed here
- There is a long way to go
- There is more resistance to addressing DEI than some expected



What Participants Think Should Be Happening with DEI

Interview and focus group participants offered numerous ideas for what Smeal should be doing to improve DEI. Many participants have already given the topic considerable thought and have come to expect the college to do these things:

- Bring more diverse speakers to campus
- Continue to actively engage more FSA in DEI efforts so they can more effectively support all students
- Create a strategic plan with metrics for success in order to embed DEI principles into the fabric of the College
- DEI accountability systems designed for all faculty
- DEI competencies integrated into evaluations and advancement protocols for FSA
- DEI fully integrated into College policies and procedures
- Discuss DEI in terms everyone can understand and apply
- Improve efforts to identify and meet the needs of diverse students
- Increase messaging and communication on DEI related activities
- Increase number of common spaces that encourage FSA and students to gather and form relationships
- Intensify recruitment and retention strategies to increase diversity of FSA and students
- Make LGBTQ+ an important part of the DEI work
- More efforts to actively engage all students in DEI to create a more inclusive student experience
- Orientations for FSA and students must include DEI components
- Provide larger scholarships for Black and Brown students to help with tuition, room and board and other academic expenses
- Provide support and resources that help the leadership team, including the Dean, to better champion DEI
- Specific DEI-focused courses offered to students
- Specific DEI strategies for each stakeholder group at Smeal
- Student organizations collaborate with each other to address DEI
- Trainings and professional development on DEI topics must be mandatory for FSA
- Trainings and support for faculty to integrate DEI into course curriculum
- Trainings for faculty to address unconscious bias and other topics that increase the capacity of the faculty to better support diverse students



The DEI Dream Question: Unlimited Resources With No Boundaries

Participants were asked what they would implement to assist with DEI, that is not currently in place, if they had unlimited resources with no boundaries. This is often referred to as the dream question because it frees participants to think of innovative ways to address DEI.

The responses listed below include some overlap with the previous question but are included here due to the frequency with which they were offered.

- Create safe spaces for everyone to talk about DEI
- Create student ambassador program to train students to support peers and promote DEI efforts
- Develop outreach to K-12 youth to build a pipeline of potential students
- Eliminate exclusive practices that hinder all voices from being heard and all people from being valued
- Expand data collection and reporting related to DEI efforts
- Expand supportive services for students of color
- Expand immigration support services for FSA and students to include more help with immigration documentation and other concerns
- Facilitate the creation of networks for people of color, including FSA and students
- Increase diversity of FSA and students, including gender, racial and sexual orientation
- Increase scholarships and decrease tuition prices
- Increase supports to successfully recruit and improve the graduation rate for Black and Brown Ph.D. students
- Invite more diverse speakers to campus to encourage diversity of thought
- Partner with outside organizations to address DEI at Smeal
- Provide additional resources to the Office of Diversity Enhancement to support expansion and other goals
- Provide coaching and training for faculty and staff to support their work with students
- Provide mental health support for students struggling with DEI issues
- Provide opportunities for the local community to participate in DEI offerings at the College
- Provide support and resources that help the leadership team, including the Dean, to better champion DEI
- Specific DEI-focused courses integrated into curriculum and DEI topics integrated into existing courses as appropriate



Findings: Emerging Major Themes

In the following pages, findings are organized by thematic areas to assist Smeal as it begins to consider next steps. The themes are listed in alphabetical order, not by order of importance.

Theme 1: Communication and Marketing Concerns

Theme 2: Gaps in Policies and Procedures

Theme 3: Lack of Inclusion

Theme 4: Lack of Integration of DEI in Curriculum

Theme 5: Limited Representation of Diverse FSA and Students

Theme 6: Need for Additional Programming and Training

Theme 7: Need for Increased Commitment and Resources

Theme 8: Need to Better Understand the Student Experience

Theme 9: Vision and Goals Require Greater Clarity

Theme 1: Communication and Marketing Concerns

- Some marketing materials provide an inaccurate representation of actual demographics of diversity in the College
- Some people feel that there is a lack of communication about DEI efforts throughout the College which decreases awareness of the importance of the work

Theme 2: Gaps in Policies and Procedures

- Administration does not consistently hold people accountable when DEI-related incidents occur, leading to a sense of isolation and exclusion for those who believe they have been wronged
- FSA appear to allow what they perceive to be free speech rights to actively inhibit full inclusion by every member of the Smeal community
- Lack of clear protocols to handle complaints and incidents leads to confusion and underreporting
- Lack of consistent procedures that promote and ensure all students have access to information and resources needed to fully benefit from all the College has to offer
- Pay equity is still an issue
- Students and FSA lack awareness of process for reporting DEI-related incidents



Theme 3: Lack of Inclusion

One of the themes that emerged is that the campus is not inclusive. Many seem to think that the typical student is usually white, middle to upper class, the son or daughter of college educated parents (often PSU), who has no responsibilities other than being a student. Students such as these appear to fit easily into the flow of life at Smeal and often do not encounter real or perceived barriers to their sense of belonging.

Diverse students and FSAs often face the challenge of trying to be included. Their diverse identities sometimes lead to a feeling of exclusion and a diminished Smeal experience, be it academic, extracurricular, professional, and/or with connections to the College and others.

Both FSA and students identify ways in which their diversity results in feelings of exclusion:

- Both FSAs and students consistently say “there is more work to do”
- Disabled people report accessibility to some spaces on campus is a problem
- Disabled people report a general lack of acknowledgement of their concerns
- International members of the community have needs that many FSA are unaware of
 - Documentation is important and time-consuming matter
 - Lack of understanding of other needs
- LGBTQ+ students feel lack of acknowledgement and awareness
 - Lack of understanding of their needs
 - Negative attitudes and comments by faculty and others around the use of personal pronouns is an issue
- People report a lack of acknowledgement for issues related to mental health
- Religion is widely misunderstood
 - Many students unaware of the importance of religion to others
 - Religion-based dietary restrictions have been negatively referred to by FSA
 - Some students for whom religion is an important part of their identity feel they cannot express their faith or bring their full selves to school for fear of retaliation
- Socioeconomic factors limit inclusion for those who carry a heavy load with school, work, and home responsibilities compared with students who are able to focus solely on school
- Some Asian and International students report persistent maltreatment and general lack of acknowledgement by faculty and fellow students
- Some FSAs and students feel they are tokens for the College to promote diversity
- Some students of color express feeling isolated and alienated from the College
- Some students need more academic support



- Some women feel underrepresented across the College
 - Feel men receive more acknowledgement and recognition
 - Indicate persistence of sexism
 - Report they are expected to do more service work (ie: taking notes, getting coffee) than men
- Transfer students from Commonwealth campuses, specifically students of color, need intentional support to become acclimated and to feel like they belong
 - Help with financial aid
 - Information about access to academic resources, such as advising and tutoring

Participants offer the following observations:

- Psychological safety should not be presumed; it requires more deliberate attention
- Student support services can be improved by being more responsive to the needs and experiences of diverse students
- The contributions and perspectives of all FSA need to be valued and recognized, regardless of identity, job title or education level
- The FSA require more cultural competency in order to be able to establish meaningful connections with diverse students
- The importance of DEI and building a welcoming culture could be better emphasized at new student and employee orientation
- The Smeal community in general does not equally value the presence of diverse students

The charts on the following page demonstrate the need for increased efforts to create inclusive environments. When asked if they feel that their personal identity or culture is misunderstood by others at Smeal, nearly one quarter to one third of participants report feeling misunderstood. These results point to a need for further investigation into when, where and how individuals feel misunderstood at Smeal.



Smeal Community Member	Student Respondents Feel Misunderstood by	Smeal Community Member	FSA Respondents Feel Misunderstood by
Faculty	26%	Faculty	27%
Staff	16%	Staff	25%
Administrators	25%	Administrators	27%
Fellow Students	36%	Students	22%

Theme 4: Lack of Integration of DEI in Curriculum

- Limited awareness of offerings of specific DEI-focused courses
- Not all faculty choose to integrate DEI into their course curriculum
- There is a perception that DEI has not been effectively integrated into the College's curriculum

Theme 5: Limited Representation of Diverse FSA and Students

- Current recruitment efforts for diverse students, particularly Black and Brown students, are limited and do not yield large numbers of students
- Lack of financial support to cover all academic expenses hinders full participation for some Black and Brown students (books, internships and experiential learning opportunities)
- Lack of promotion/open support for accommodations for people with physical and mental disabilities
- Limited amount of scholarship funds impacts efforts to recruit Black and Brown students
- More support is needed at Smeal for FSA and students' immigration processes
- Perception that lack of pay equity exists for women and People of Color
- Smeal's efforts to recruit and retain African Americans and other People of Color have achieved limited success
- Some female FSAs report gender bias: workloads are unbalanced, with women expected to do more service work than men (ie: taking notes, getting coffee)
- Some female FSAs report that white males still receive preferential treatment and that women continue to be subjected to microaggressions by men
- Some non-tenure track faculty report inequitable treatment compared to tenured faculty
- Some people believe the College's failure to balance GPA with other admissions factors limits Black and Brown acceptance to Smeal



Theme 6: Need for Additional Programming and Training

- Agreement among participants that everyone at Smeal should learn how to properly handle DEI conflicts and misunderstandings when they arise
- Agreement among participants that everyone at Smeal would benefit from ongoing DEI training and/or professional development
- DEI programming and events are seen as one-off opportunities to learn while ongoing training and coaching services are lacking
- DEI programming and events attract the same individuals
- General fear of saying the wrong thing and offending others results in some people avoiding interactions, conversations or other situations
- FSA generally lack cultural competence with people with diverse identities across the College - in classrooms, interactions with students, interactions between and among FSAs
- FSA report difficulty finding time to participate in DEI events, trainings, and other efforts
- Some participants feel that many FSA lack motivation to participate in DEI events
- The impact of unconscious bias needs to be continuously examined
- Use of technical DEI terms is not understood by many of the participants

Theme 7: Need for Increased Commitment and Resources

- Data collection and reporting on DEI progress is lacking
- DEI competence and skills are not valued traits across the FSA
- DEI work is perceived as being led by Office of Diversity Enhancement, and not by the College's top administrators
- FSA as a whole do not actively champion DEI efforts. There is a need to increase support of DEI efforts, especially amongst the faculty
- Increased financial and other resources are needed to impact the entire College
- Office of Diversity Enhancement lacks sufficient human resources to adequately address DEI across the entire College

Theme 8: Need to Better Understand the Student Experience

- FSA's lack of cultural competence and interactions with diverse students (in and outside of class) diminishes the student experience, involvement and success at Smeal
- Many diverse students are reluctant to share their unique perspectives in class
- Many diverse students report that they are expected to represent or educate others about their identity, which for some interferes with their learning and/or comfort levels in class
- Many student organizations pay little attention to DEI and have not collaborated with each other to address DEI topics
- There are limited common spaces that encourage interactions among students and FSA



Theme 9: Vision and Goals Lack Clarity

- Lack of a comprehensive, focused DEI effort across the College
- Lack of definitions for DEI terms
- People acknowledge progress is being made, and that much more needs to be done
- Some participants deny that any issues with DEI exist at Smeal



Recommendations

Compass offers the following recommendations to support the College's pursuit of a diverse, equitable and inclusive community:

- Develop a strategic plan for DEI with metrics, timelines and responsible parties. Include a communications plan to ensure strategies will be in place to update the community as the strategic plan is implemented.
- Enhance efforts to gather FSA and student input for DEI events, trainings and other programming.
- Expand DEI programming and training during the strategic planning process to continue building momentum and capturing the interest of the Smeal community.
- Identify a consultant to facilitate the strategic planning process.
- Identify resources to extend the reach of the Office of Diversity Enhancement across the College.
- Maximize opportunities to improve the recruitment and retention rates of Black and Brown FSA and students.
- Strengthen efforts to address DEI through existing communication mediums, including updates on progress in establishing a strategic plan.



Conclusion

It has been our pleasure to work with the Smeal College as it strives to achieve a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. We encourage the College to continue engaging faculty, staff, administrators and students as it develops strategies in the coming months and years. Compass Consulting Services looks forward to continuing to identify ways to work with Smeal to support this important effort.



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