




Beyond Demographics: Incorporating Equitable and Inclusive Language about Student Identities in Surveys

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Agenda

- ESDAR committee description
- Examples of *small* changes
- Examples of *moderate* changes
- Examples of **BIG** changes
- Lessons learned & embracing continuous improvement
- Let's hear from the audience!

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Equity in Survey Design, Administration, Analysis, and Reporting

- Part of National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) project
- Formed in spring of 2022, included NSSE researchers, staff, and graduate students
- Wanted to make progress on goal of interim co-directors to enhance attention to equity across several areas, including:
 - inclusive language to document student identities
 - survey questions that affirm students' identities
 - disaggregating data to unmask group differences
 - using critical quantitative methodologies

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Equity in Survey Design, Administration, Analysis, and Reporting

- Conducted systematic review of all survey items (core, modules, consortia) and 2021 Institutional Reports (descriptive/explanatory text, technical explanations, footnotes, endnotes)
 - At least 2 reviewers per report
- ANY concerns about possible issues of ambiguity, dated language, inconsistent uses of terms (especially identity-based) were noted
 - Created spreadsheet to compile all comments
 - Initial review by member of research team
 - Then discussed by group as a whole

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Equity in Survey Design, Administration, Analysis, and Reporting

- Issues were classified as short-term, long-term, or conceptual:
 - *Short-term*: Changing introductory language in reports for the current year (2022)
 - *Long-term*: Changing **survey items** for the following administration year (2023)
 - *Conceptual*: Changing policies on reporting for small subgroups (2023+)
- Survey item revisions took place during summer/early fall of 2022 to be in place for early spring 2023 administration

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Small Changes—Big Impact

During the current school year, about how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups?

Previous Items:	2023 Items:
• People of a race or ethnicity other than your own	• People of races or ethnicities other than your own
• People from an economic background other than your own	• People from economic backgrounds other than your own
• People with a sexual orientation other than your own	• People with religious beliefs other than your own
• People from a country other than your own	• People with political views other than your own
	• People with sexual orientations other than your own
	• People from countries other than your own

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Small Changes—Big Impact

Thinking about academic advising, how much have people and resources at your institution done the following?

Previous Items:

- Respected your identity and culture

2023 Items:

- Respected your identities and cultures

New item:

What is the 5-digit ZIP code of your home address during your last year of high school?

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Small Changes—Big Impact

Previous Items:

- What is the highest level of education completed by either of your parents (or those who raised you)?

Response options:

- Did not finish high school, High school diploma or G.E.D.
- Attended college but did not complete degree
- Associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)
- Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
- Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
- Doctoral or professional degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)

2023 Items:

What is the highest level of education completed by your parent(s), guardian(s), or those who raised you?

Response options:

- Did not finish high school, High school diploma or G.E.D.
- Attended college but did not complete degree
- Associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)
- Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
- Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
- Doctoral or professional degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)
- I prefer not to respond

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Moderate Changes—Bigger Impact: Race/Ethnicity

2022 Item

How would you describe yourself? (Select all that apply.)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latina/o
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Another race or ethnicity
- Prefer not to respond

2023 Item

How would you describe yourself? (Select all that apply.)

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latina/o, Latine, or Latinx
- Indigenous, American Indian, Native American, or Alaska Native
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Another race or ethnicity
- Prefer not to respond

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Big Changes—A Wild Ride: Greek Life

2022 Item

Are you a member of a social fraternity or sorority?

- Yes
- No

2023 Item

To which of the following social or service Greek letter organizations do you belong? (Select all that apply.)

- Interfraternity Conference (IFC)
- National Panhellenic Council (NPC)
- National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC, Divine 9)
- United Greek Council (UGC) or Multicultural Greek Council (MGC)
- Independent Greek Council (IGC)
- Another Greek letter organization, please specify
- None, I am not a member of a Greek letter organization

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Big Changes—A Wild Ride: Sexual Orientation

Before

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- Straight (heterosexual)
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Queer
- Questioning or unsure
- Another sexual orientation, please specify:
- I prefer not to respond

After

How would you describe your sexual orientation? (Select all that apply.)

- Straight or heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Queer
- Pansexual or polysexual
- Ace, gray, or asexual
- Demisexual
- Questioning or unsure
- Another sexual orientation, please specify:
- I prefer not to respond [EXCLUSIVE OPTION]

Options ordered in terms of expected size of group

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Big Changes—A Wild Ride: Gender Identity

Before

What is your gender identity?

- Woman
- Man
- Another gender identity, please specify:
- I prefer not to respond

After

How would you describe your gender identity? (Select all that apply.)

- Woman
- Man
- Gender or gender neutral
- Transgender
- Genderqueer, non-binary, or gender non-conforming
- Genderfluid
- Two-spirit
- Cisgender
- Trans/Transgender
- Questioning or unsure
- Another gender identity, please specify:
- I prefer not to respond [EXCLUSIVE OPTION]

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Lessons We've Learned

- Takes time to make changes – started process in spring 2022 for data collected in spring 2023
- Expect pushback/complications along the way
- Identity demographics can be very controversial!
- Being inclusive and create extra space (i.e., "I prefer not to respond")
- Varying use of terms across different campuses (i.e., new Greek item "other" write-ins)
- Continuous reviews of "other" write-ins

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Room to Grow

Short-term:

- ❖ The 2023 administration also tested a religious identity item with small subset of respondents
- ❖ Keep working on revising words on survey items to ensure consistency (i.e., "foreign" to "international student status"; adding reference lists of Greek organizations)
- ❖ The Global Learning Topical Module on hiatus for NSSE 2023 & 2024; currently working on updating/revising with considerations for post-pandemic and diversity, equity, and inclusion

Long-term:

- Looking forward to continuous improvement of survey and generating more ideas for changes to the reports
- Interested in broader suggestions for a better integration of equity and inclusion in the NSSE Conceptual Framework, and other public-facing resources, presentations, and publications

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Let's Chat!

- How do you use demographic data on your own campus? IPEDS, FAFSA, admissions, LMS, etc...
- Do these assessments use equitable and inclusive language?
- What attempts, if any, have been made to address changes to language?
- What issues do you/would you face in making changes to this type of data?
- How would you define a "successful" update to a demographic item?
- How do we prioritize changes?
- How do we balance updates vs. need for continuity?

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Final thoughts and questions?

Thanks for joining us!

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