

# Microaggressions **OUCH!** When a Mosquito Bite Turns into an Infection

Presented by:

Caitlyn LoMonte, MA

Agustina Marconi, MD, MPH

Reonda Washington, MPH, CHES

# Microaggressions

- Color of Drinking survey and data
- Campus climate and health impacts
- What can we do?
- Questions, thoughts, concerns, reactions?

# Color of Drinking (2018)



## Goals

- Examine the impacts of UW–Madison’s alcohol culture on undergraduate students of color.
- Study internal and external effects to self students of color endured from the UW–Madison alcohol culture including microaggressions.

# Color of Drinking completion

## Color of Drinking 1 (March 2015 – May 2015)

- Census of undergraduate students of color only
- 10.8% completion rate
- No incentives were given
- Microaggressions were asked in context of a secondhand consequence of alcohol

# Color of Drinking completion

## Color of Drinking 2 (November 2017 – January 2018)

- Census of undergraduate students of color
- Sample of white undergraduate students
- 25.2% completion rate for students of color
- 16.7% completion rate for white students
- All participant received an \$5 Amazon gift card
- Went through IRB, SoC experience with all microaggressions were asked to give context of alcohol-related microaggressions

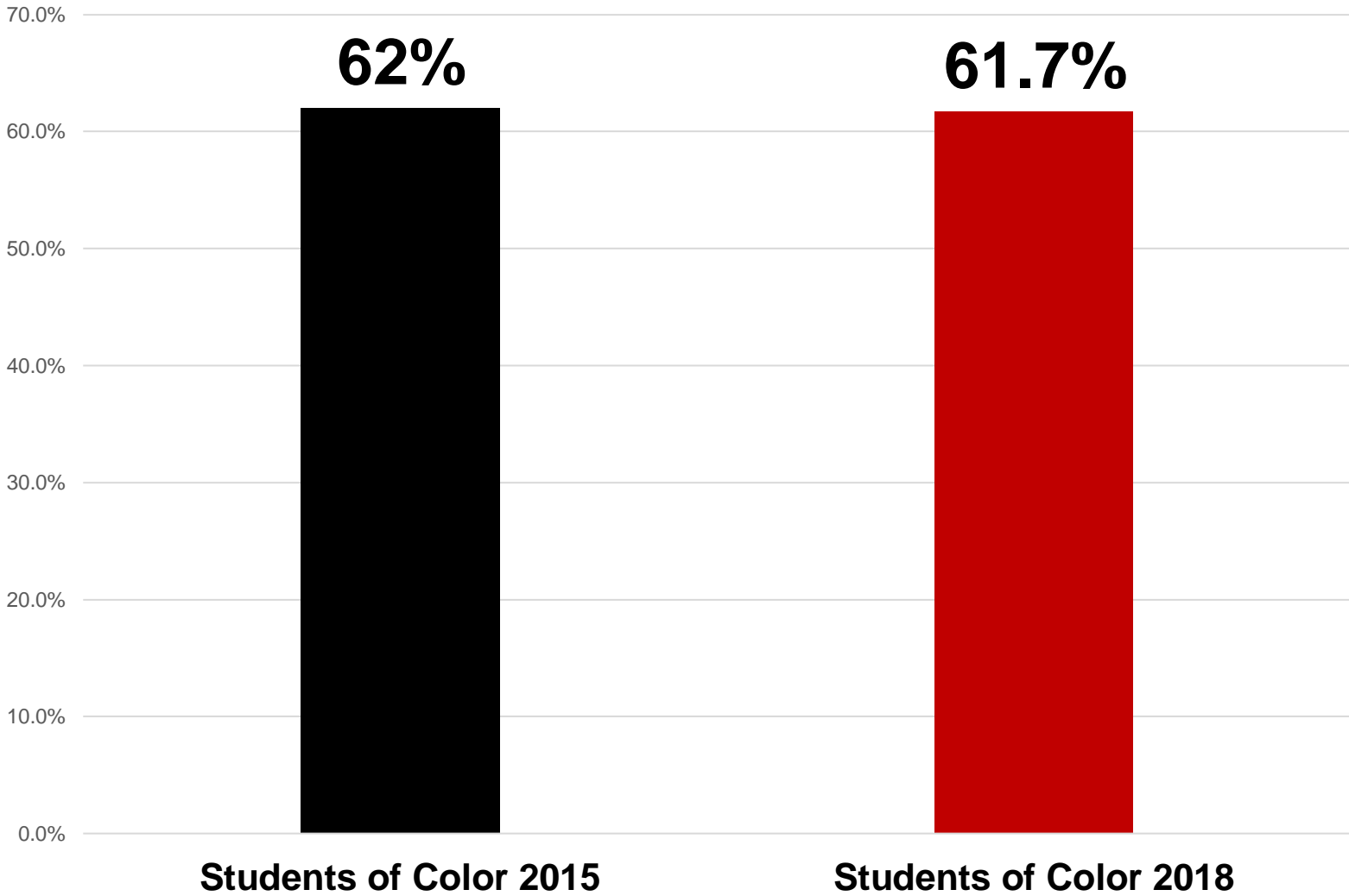
# Microaggressions

*For this survey, microaggressions were defined as:*

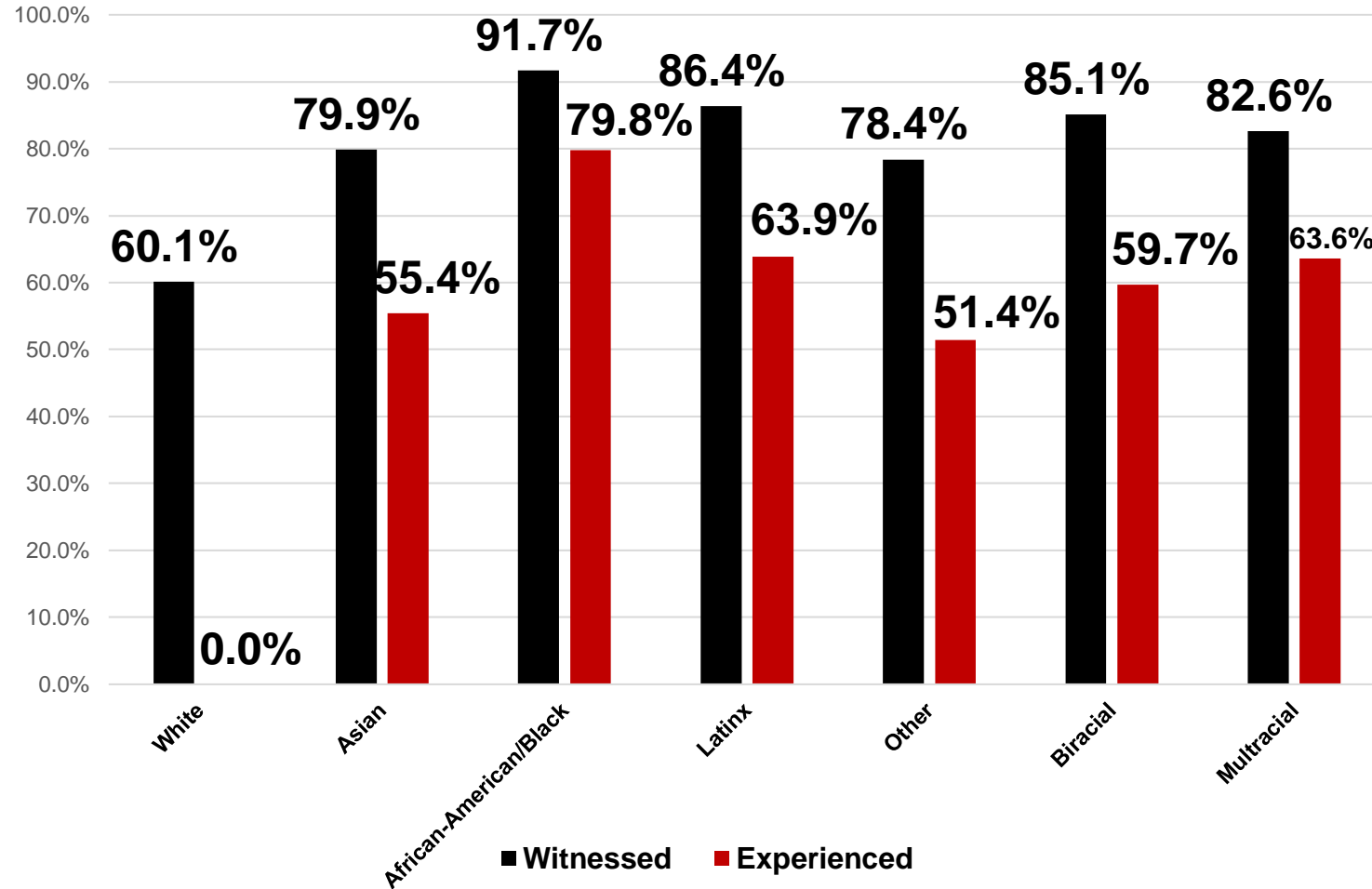
Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color.

*(Sue et al, 2007)*

# Have you experienced microaggressions at UW–Madison?

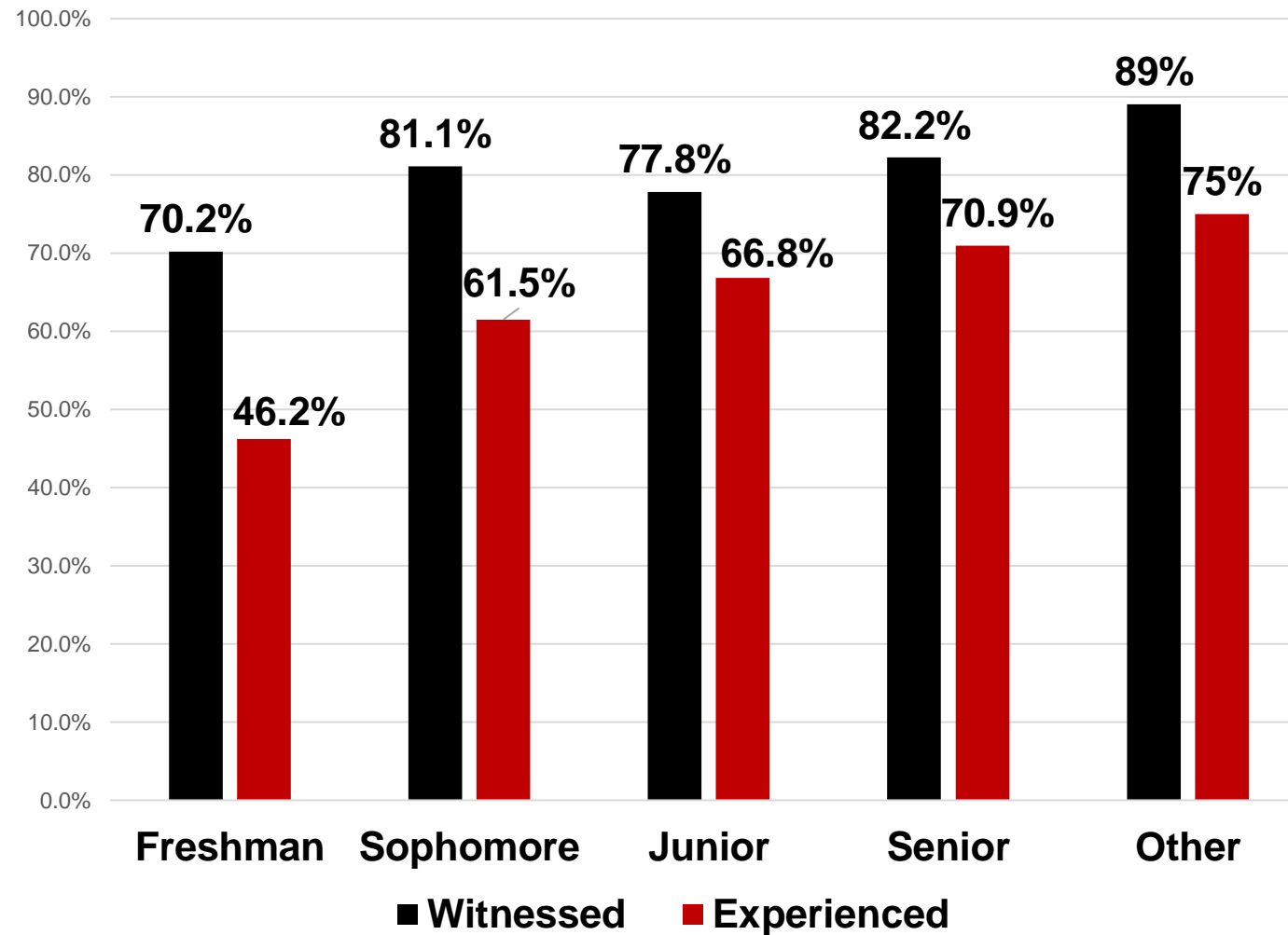


# Witnessed and experienced microaggressions by race



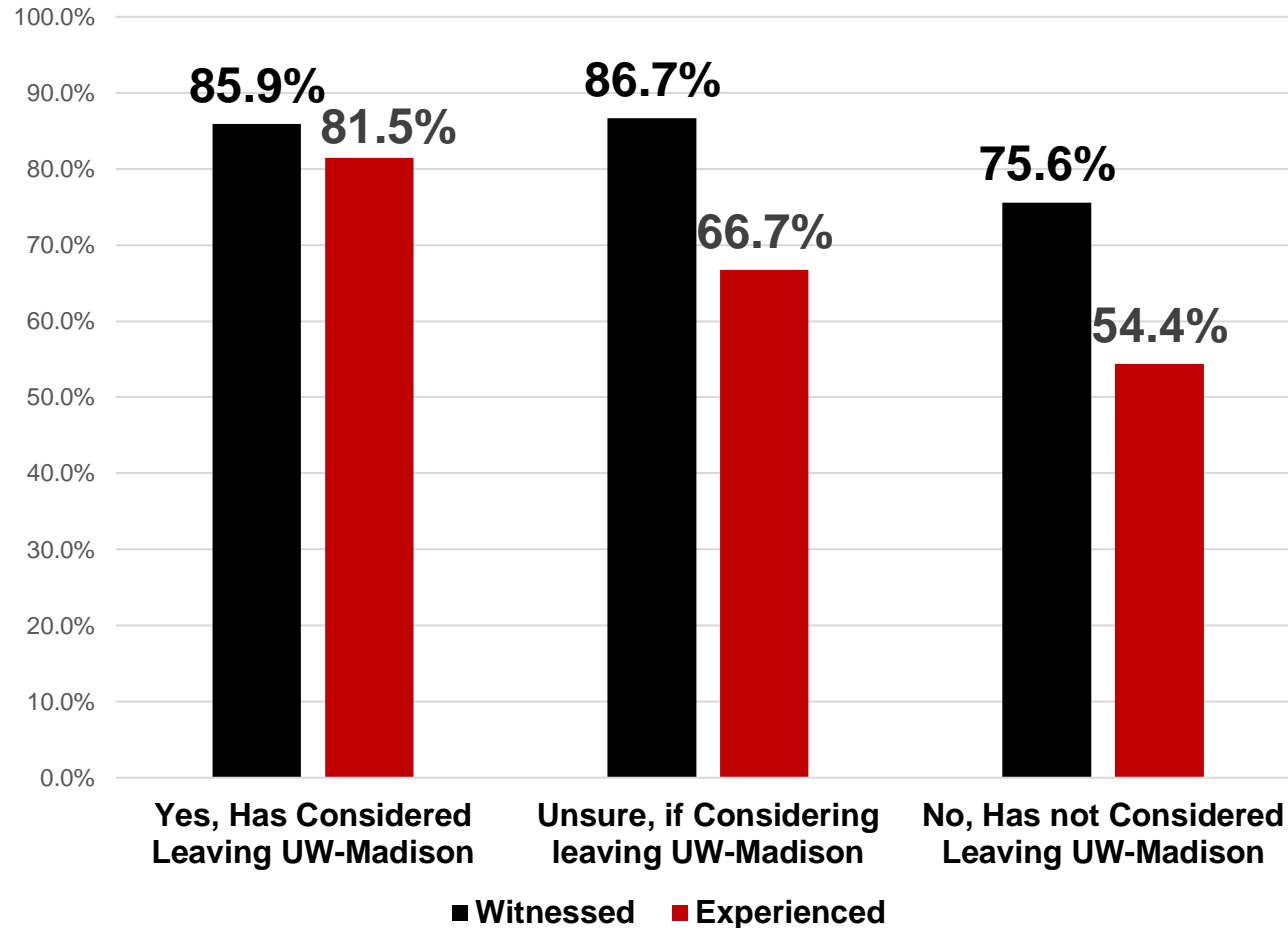


# Witnessing and experiencing microaggressions by year in school



2018 Color of Drinking

## Witnessed and experienced microaggressions, considering leaving UW–Madison



## ***In their own words***

### **Harassment based on student's race, ethnicity, or assumed race and ethnicity**

*“Students who ask to touch my hair, students who touch/pull my hair without asking, probing questions about how my hair works and if it’s real, constant comments at every small change in my hair, “your hair isn’t cool/pretty anymore” after removing weave, casual use of racial slurs from friends and acquaintances, “you’re very articulate,” “you’re pretty cool!” in comparison to other black people, “you all are so amazing” referring to groups of black women in STEM, multiple people referring to me by the name of the other black woman in my dorm (who looks nothing like me), “it was tough for black women, but it was hard for ALL WOMEN back then,” and more I’m sure aren’t coming to mind.”*



## ***In their own words***

### **Classroom interactions**

*“Professors mostly; one has commented on how articulate I am. Another professor accused me of plagiarism (when I didn’t) because she didn’t think I had the capabilities to write well.”*

*“I sometimes find in my classrooms that people often chose to ignore me or turn to a different person when given time to discuss certain topics. I have to go out of my way to talk to others, but even then, I can sense some individuals do not feel comfortable talking to me.”*

## ***In their own words***

### **Alcohol-related microaggressions**

*“I have been frequently confused with other south Asian students who do not look like me by intoxicated people. One time a very drunk white guy (college student) told me he rules Saudi Arabia (where I am not from) and used the n word. I’ve heard lots of white students use the n word. I’ve frequently heard people complain about their TA’s accents. I’ve been harassed by presumable straight white men because I am queer.”*

*“Touching my hair, describing how I smell (coconut oil smell=Pina coladas apparently to drunk people), making remarks about who I am with based on their race, judging my opinions on an issue due to my race, list goes on to be honest.”*

## ***In their own words***

### **Stereotypes about race ethnicity or assumed race and ethnicity**

*“Always asked about where I’m from, get remarks and threats made at me because of being Mexican, had people make fun of me right in front of me because I’m Mexican, been asked if I’m an illegal immigrant or if anyone in my family is, have been told that I’m going to be deported.”*

# Takeaways

- African American students report experiencing and witnessing microaggressions three times more than other racial groups.
- Undergraduate students of color are more likely to experience microaggressions the longer they are at UW–Madison.
- Students of color who were considering leaving UW–Madison had a higher likelihood of experiencing microaggressions.



# Campus Climate and Health Impacts

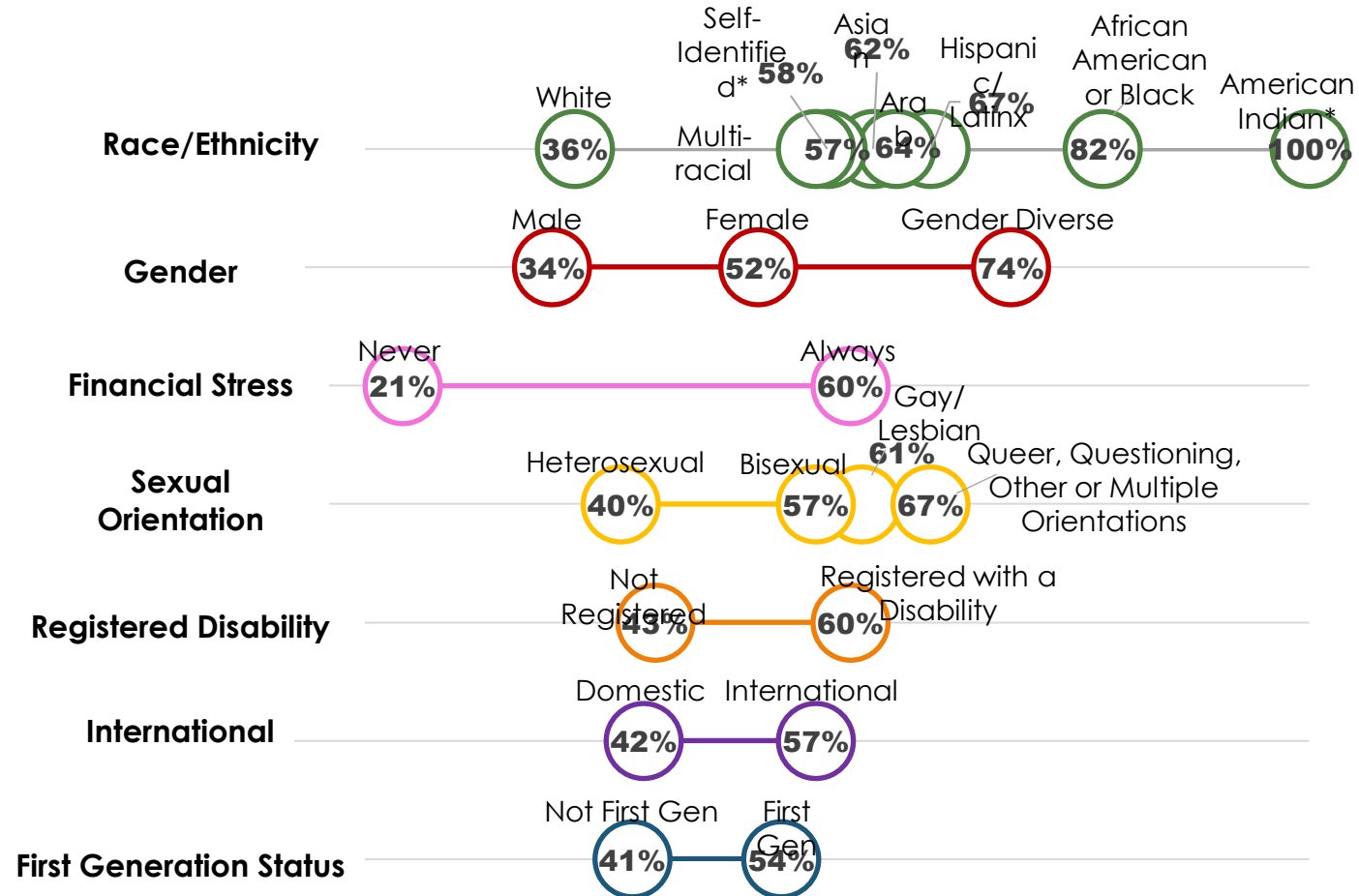


# Data sources

<b>Survey Name</b>	<b>Semester, Year Conducted</b>	<b>Population Surveyed</b>
<b>Campus Climate Survey</b>	<b>Fall 2016</b>	8641 graduate/undergraduate students
<b>Color of Drinking</b>	<b>Winter 2017-2018</b>	1129 (25.2%) Undergraduate students of color 333 (16.7%) Undergraduate white student sample
<b>Association of American Universities (AAU) Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault Climate Survey</b>	<b>Spring 2019</b>	7000 (16%) graduate/undergraduate
<b>Healthy Minds Survey</b>	<b>Spring 2019</b>	6039 (13%) graduate/undergraduate
<b>American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA)</b>	<b>2020-Spring 2021</b>	1487 (11.8%) sample of graduate and undergraduates

## 44% of all students were discriminated against in the past year

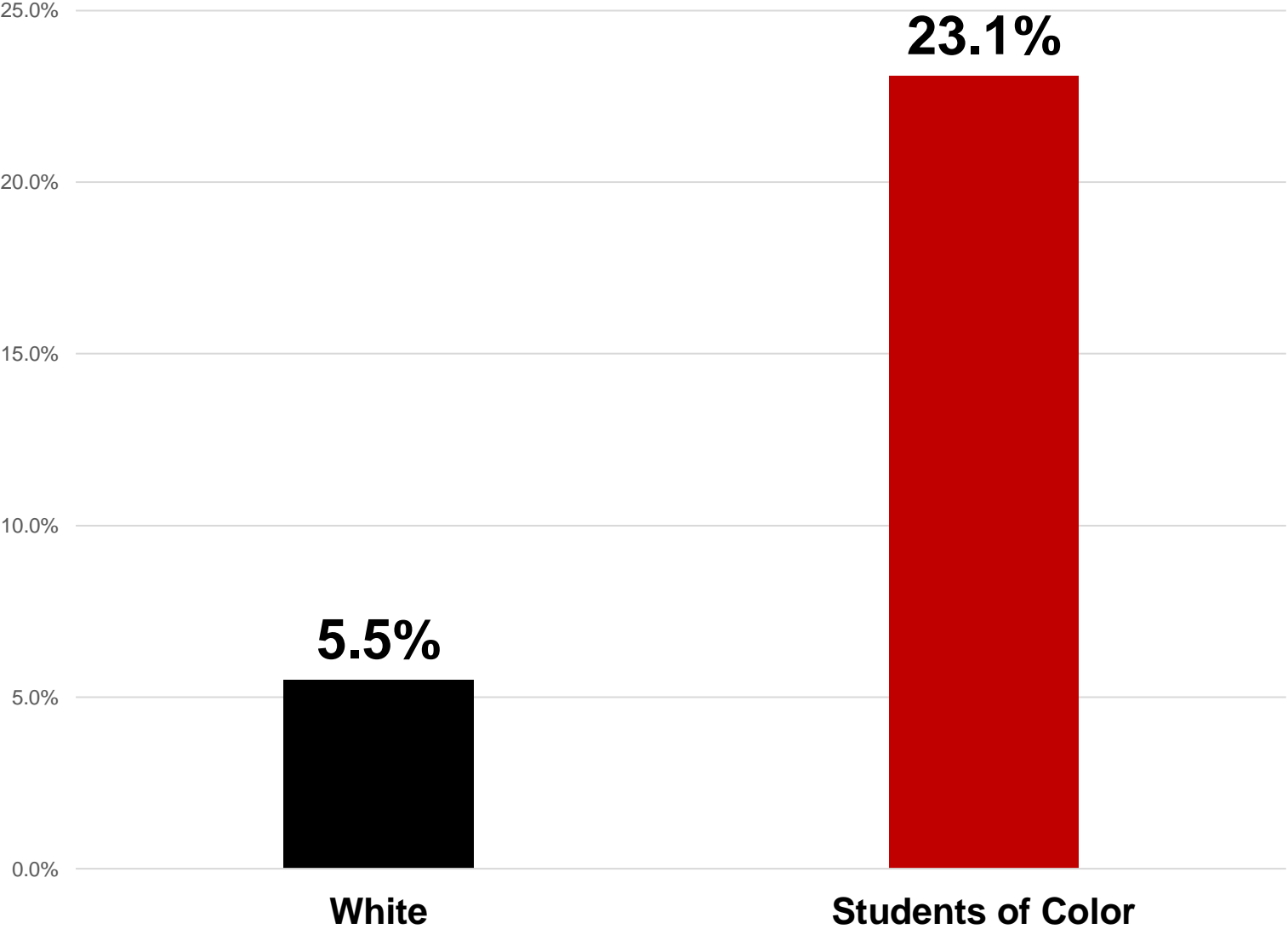
*American Indian or Alaskan Native, African American or Black, and gender diverse students experienced the highest rates of discrimination on campus*



\* Small sample size. Caution against generalization.

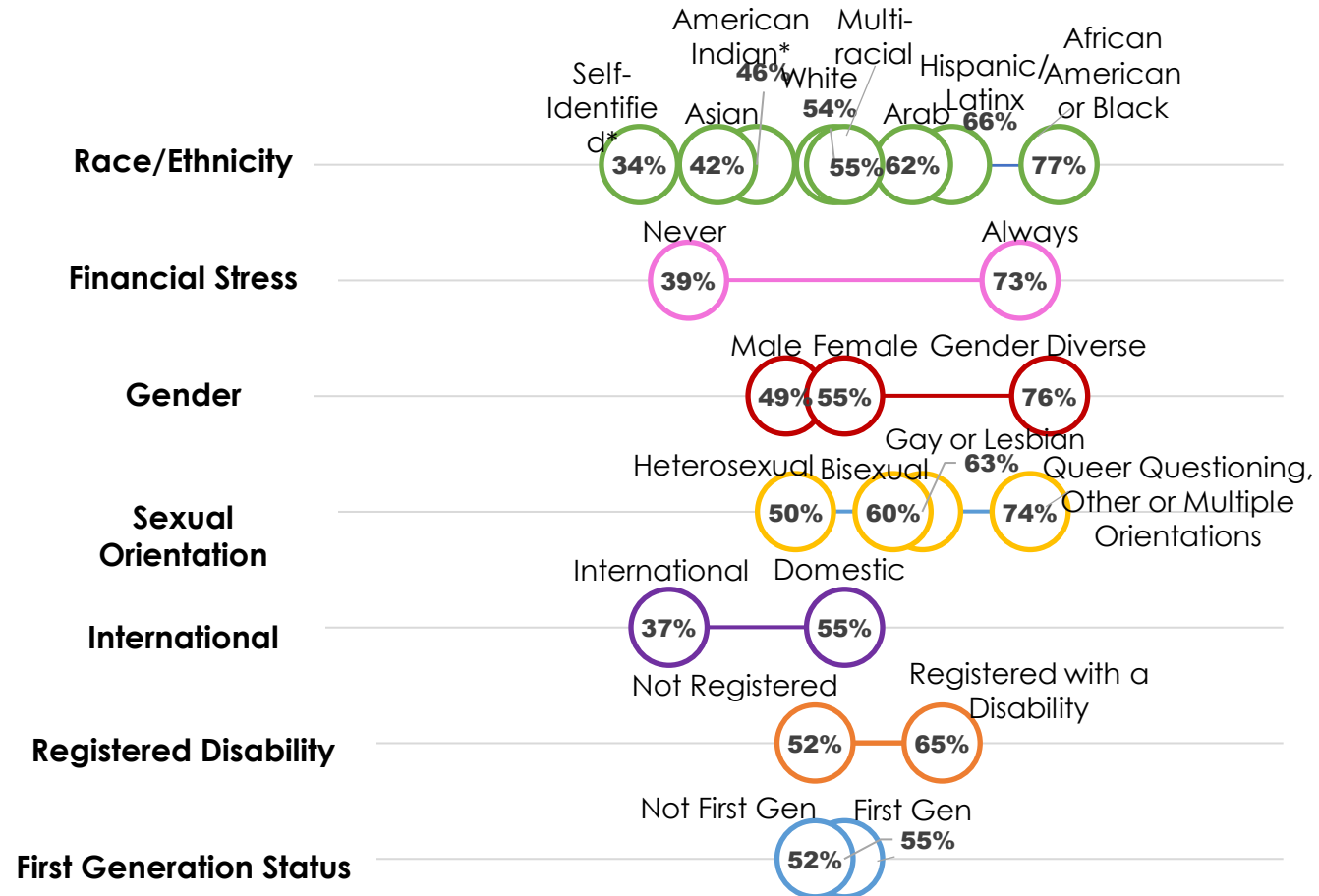


# Students who report experiencing discrimination



## 53% of all students felt the campus environment negatively impacts health

Students who identify as African American or Black, gender diverse, or queer, questioning, other, or multiple sexual orientations were most likely to feel that the campus environment negatively impacts health.



\* Small sample size. Caution against generalization.

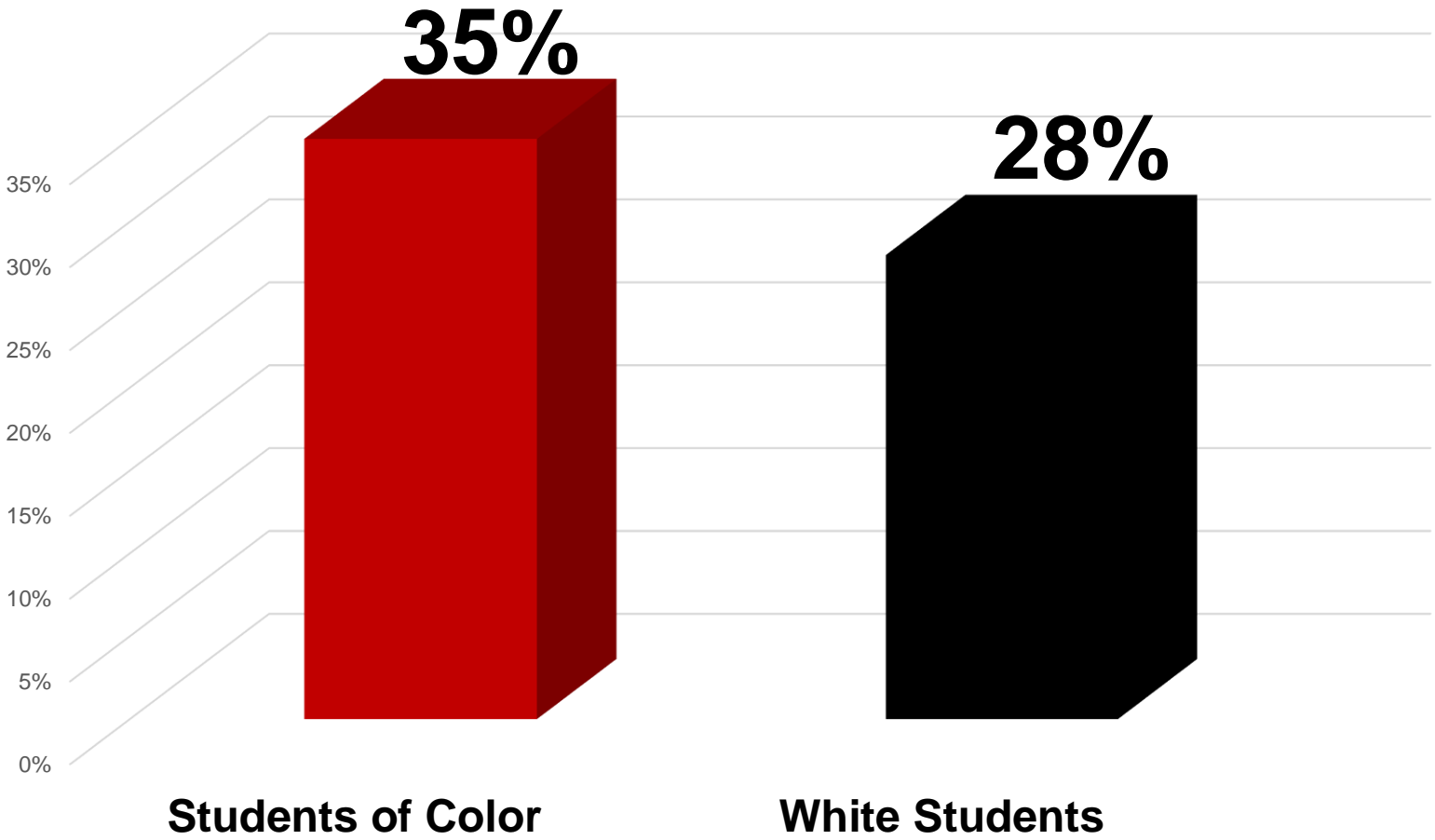


**23%** of students observed conduct or communications directed toward a person or group of people that created an exclusionary intimidating, offensive and/or hostile working, learning or living environment

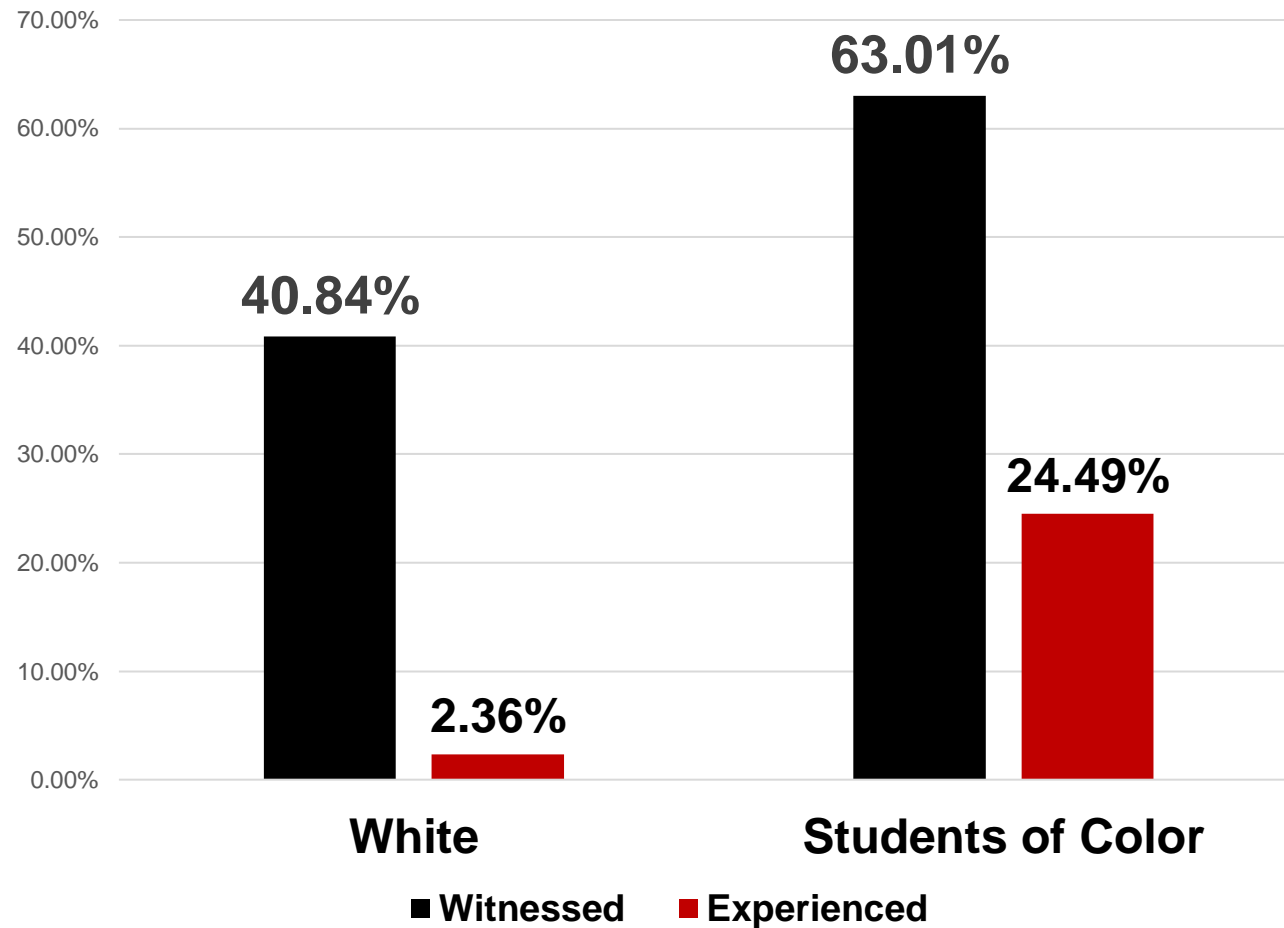
**Disparities for students with marginalized identities:**

- **55%** who self-identified racially reported observing this
- **47%** of students who identify as African American or Black
- **42%** of students who identify as Gender Diverse
- **39%** of students who identify as Hispanic/Latinx
- **37%** of students with a registered disability
- **36%** of students who identify as LGBTQ+
- **34%** of students who identify as multiracial

# Have you experienced or witnessed hostile, harassing, or intimidating behavior?



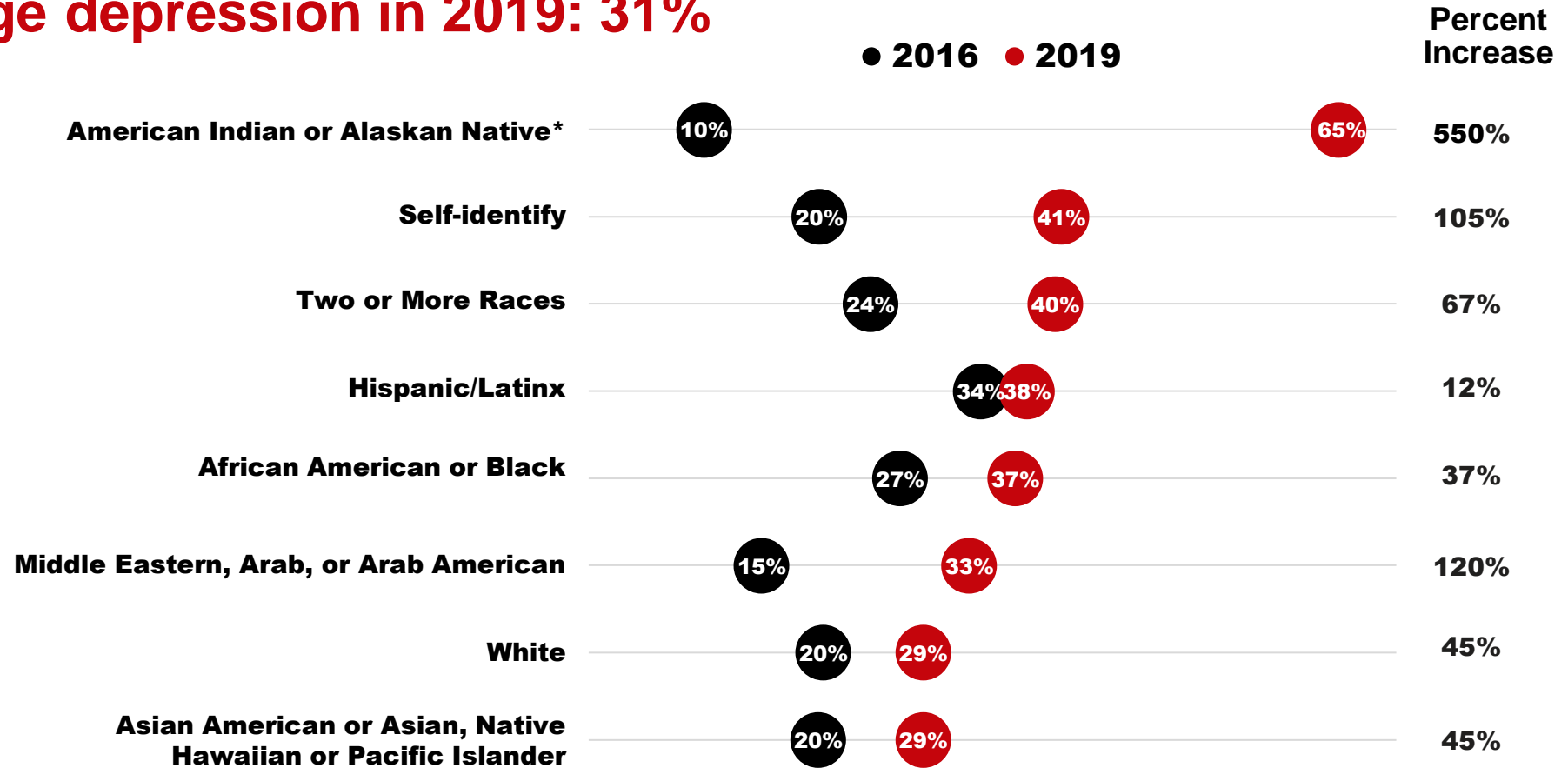
## Students who reported witnessing and experiencing any discriminatory or hostile behavior due to race/ethnicity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic





# Depression is highest in racially marginalized populations

Average depression in 2019: 31%



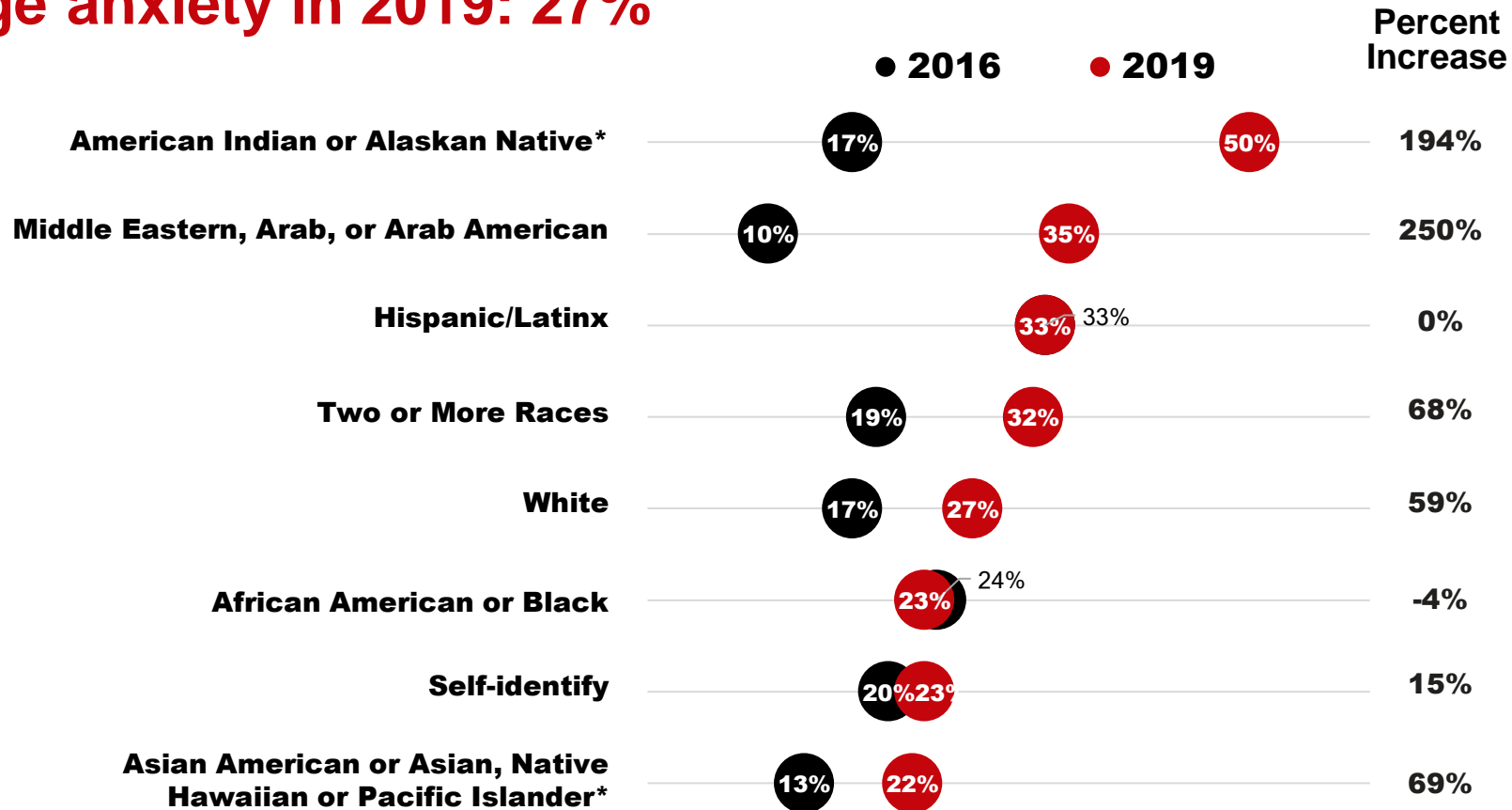
\* Relatively small sample size (2016 n = 15; 2019 n = 17)





# Anxiety is highest in racially marginalized populations

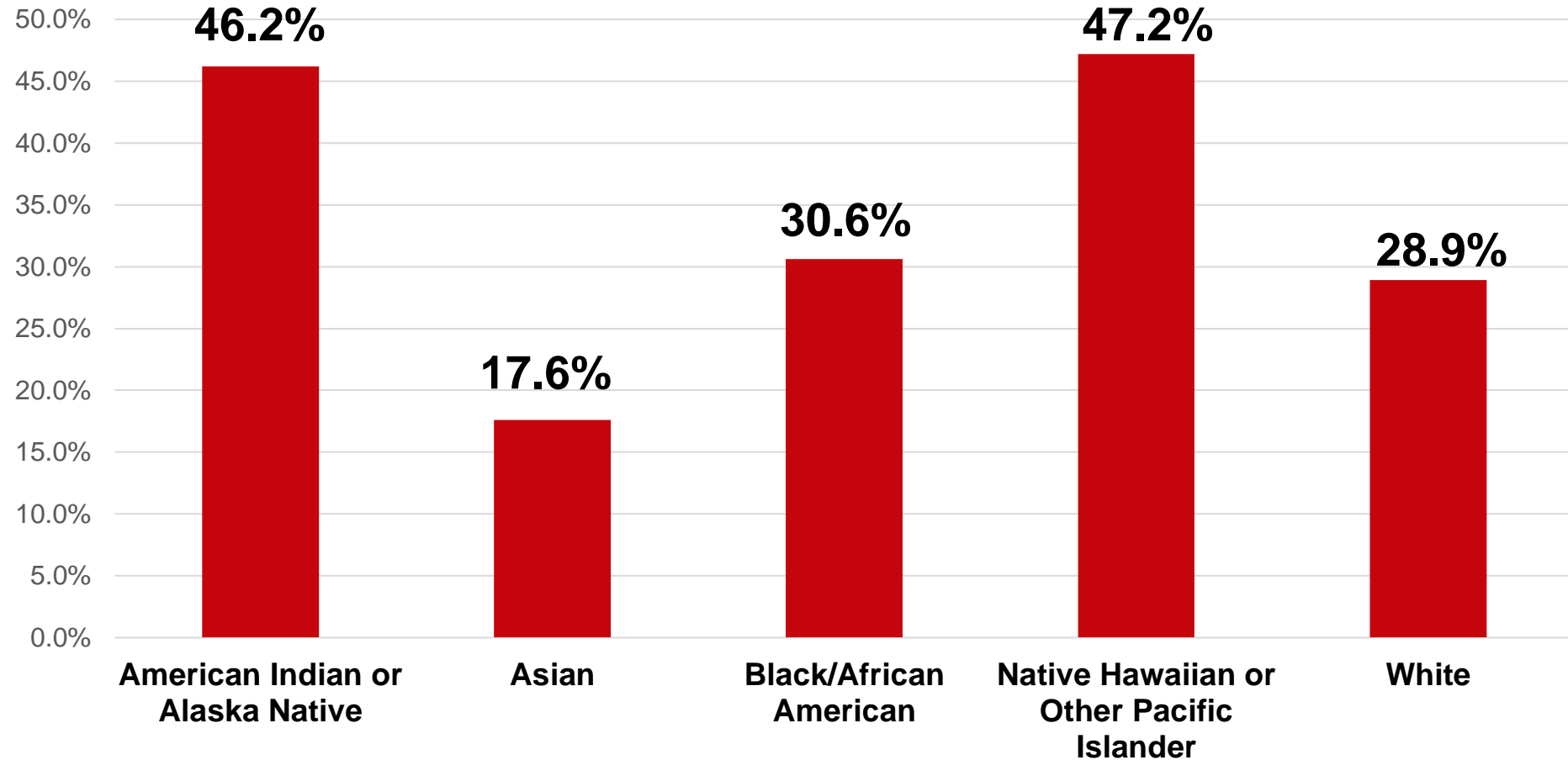
Average anxiety in 2019: 27%

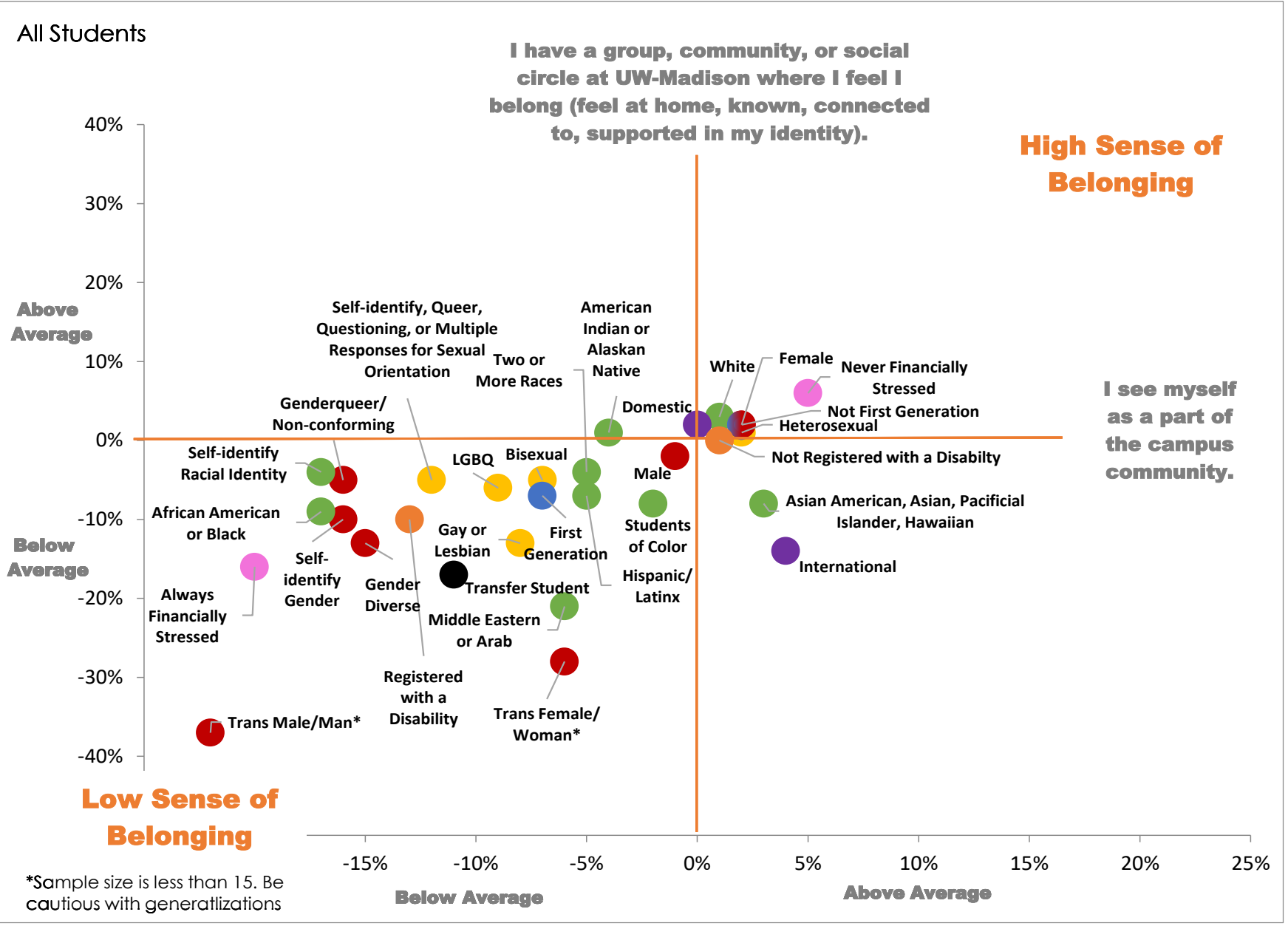


\* Relatively small sample size (2016 n = 15; 2019 n = 17)

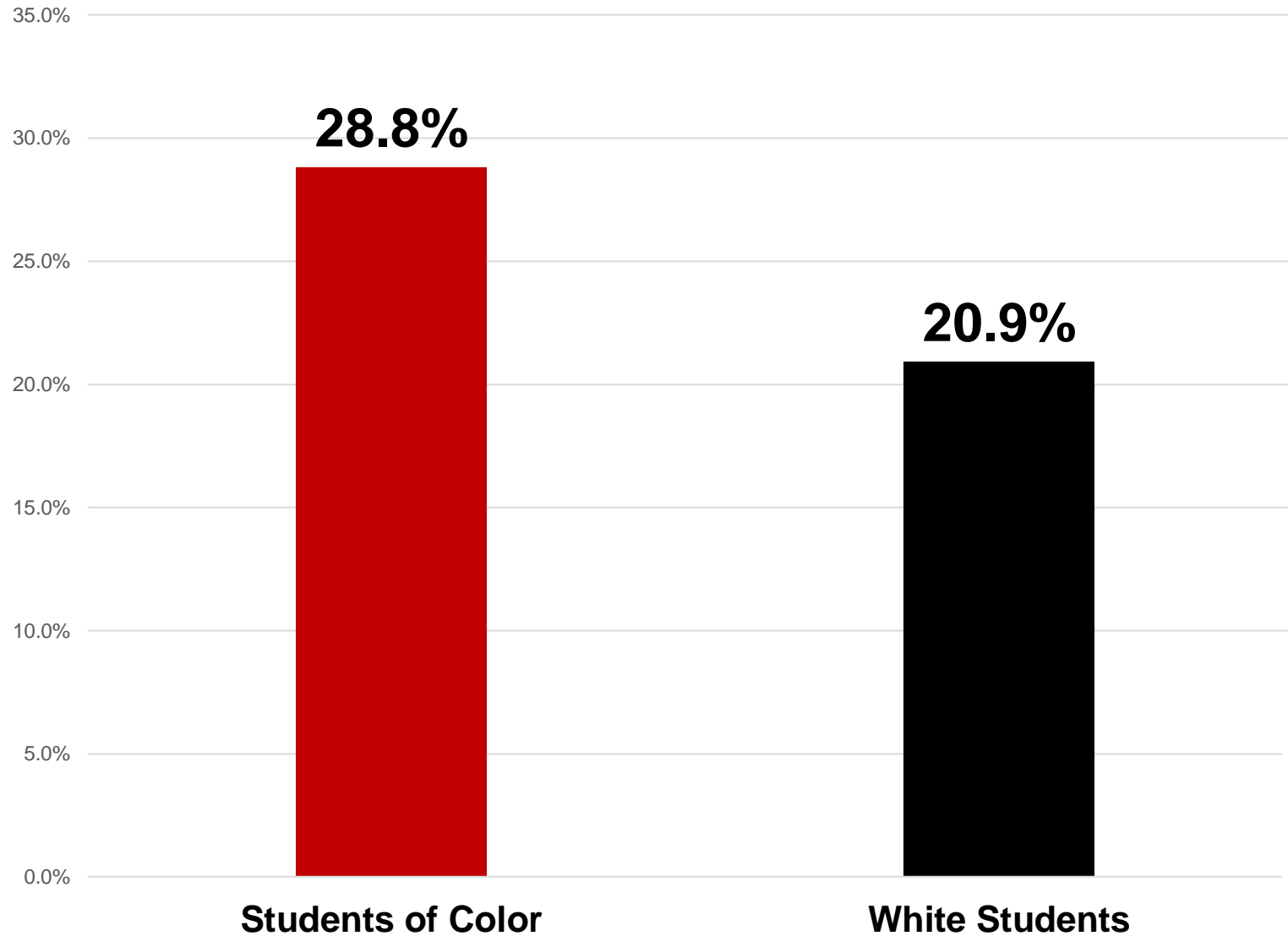


# Female undergraduate victimization: rates by race (nonconsensual penetration or sexual touching involving physical force)





# Students who have considered leaving UW-Madison



2018 Color of Drinking

# Reasons for Considering Leaving

## Students of color

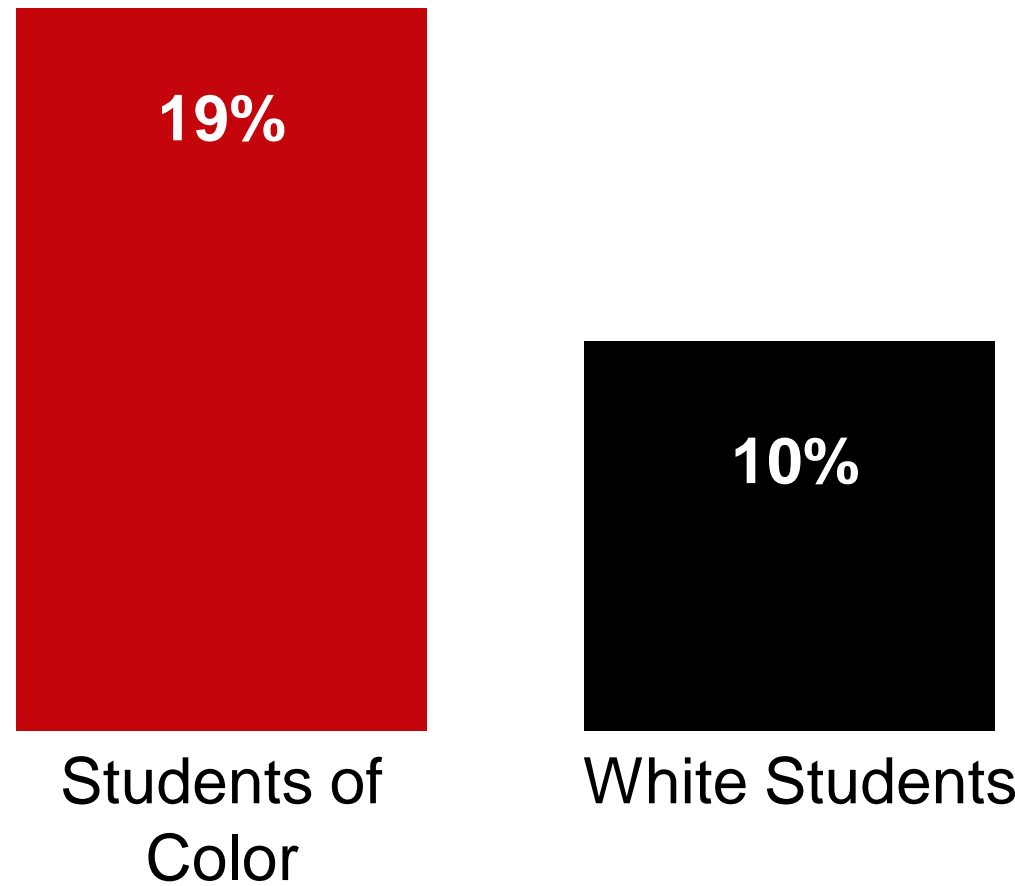
- 55% Racial climate
- 45% Mental health
- 40% Academic reasons
- 25% Financial reasons
- 23% Interpersonal reasons
- 20% Alcohol climate

## White students

- 40% Academic reasons
- 38% Mental health
- 33% Interpersonal reasons
- 30% Alcohol climate
- 24% Other reasons
- 19% Financial reasons



## Students seriously considered leaving UW–Madison



# Reasons for Leaving

## Students of Color

- 58% Campus climate and culture
- 37% Personal reasons
- 30% Unsafe or hostile environment
- 29% Financial concerns
- 26% Relations with other students
- 23% Academics too difficult
- 22% Managing demands of schoolwork
- 16% Too much of a party atmosphere
- 15% Difficulty managing demands of school and activism
- 15% Other academic issue

## White Students

- 40% Personal reasons
- 36% Financial concerns
- 27% Academics too difficult
- 27% Campus climate and culture
- 26% Difficulty managing demands of school and activism
- 24% Other academic issue
- 22% University is too big
- 18% Relations with other students
- 17% Career change options
- 17% Too much of a party atmosphere

# Summary

UW–Madison students of color report experiencing high rates of:

- Microaggressions
- Other discriminatory behavior
- Hate and bias issues

Studies show the racism is a health outcome that impacts the health of people of color. UW–Madison local data shows the same trend with:

- Mental health
- Sexual victimization
- Sense of belonging





**What Can We Do?**



# How to intervene

- Notice the event
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Interrupt
- Recognize behaviors as hurtful, problematic, harmful, or inappropriate
- Assume responsibility
- Feel like you can and should be involved
- Know how to help
- Understand different strategies for intervention and your comfort with each
- Take action

# Intervention Methods: The 5 Ds

## **Direct**

Directly address or challenge inappropriate behavior in a safe way.

## **Distract**

Direct attention away from the inappropriate behavior. Add another factor to help physically remove yourself and others from a situation.

## **Delegate**

Bring in your community to assist. Involve someone else, presumably with more social power.

## **Delay**

Check in after the situation or event. This can be helpful for people who need time and space to process.

## **Document**

Record, take notes, or capture the event with intentions to only share with the person being harmed should they need/want the information.



**Questions, thoughts,  
concerns, or reactions?**

# Contact Information

## **Caitlyn LoMonte, MA**

Director, Office of Inclusion Education

[caitlyn.lomonte@wisc.edu](mailto:caitlyn.lomonte@wisc.edu)

## **Agustina Marconi, MD, MPH**

Epidemiologist, University Health Services

[agustina.marconi@wisc.edu](mailto:agustina.marconi@wisc.edu)

## **Reonda Washington, MPH, CHES**

Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist, University Health Services

Inclusion Education Assessment Specialist, Office of Inclusion Education

[reonda.washington@wisc.edu](mailto:reonda.washington@wisc.edu)