

Arts, Sciences & Engineering

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**A Comprehensive Review of  
Student Experiences of Racial and Ethnic  
Diversity within the College**

Information Accurate as of June 23, 2017



UNIVERSITY *of*  
ROCHESTER

# Executive Summary

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This report examines the undergraduate student experience of racial and ethnic diversity within the College, in keeping with the findings of the Presidential Commission on Race and Diversity, which recommended in 2016 that each School “develop an effective system to collect and analyze data regarding all dimensions of race and diversity.” The report analyzes internal College data on its student body and from a recently completed survey on racial climate on campus to evaluate variations in academic outcomes by race and ethnicity, both within the College and as compared to a select group of peer institutions. These data provide a comprehensive snapshot of current student experiences, including historical trends in matriculation and graduation rates. The report also discusses current and future programming to support under-represented minority, low-income and first-generation students within the College.

## Key findings include the following:

- Increasing numbers of under-represented minority and international students over the past 10 years, which comprise roughly 35% of the undergraduate student population in the College.
- Significant improvements in international student retention and 6-year graduation rates, which has contributed to increases in the overall College graduation rate.
- Small-scale improvements in under-represented minority 6-year graduation rates have not closed a gap with the overall College graduation rate. This gap is larger than similar gaps at peer institutions, perhaps reflecting the stronger overlap of low-income and first generation status among the College’s under-represented minority students.
- Notable successes in improving graduation rates for under-represented minority students participating in special programs administered by the Kearns Center and Office of Minority Student Affairs.

Survey results suggesting significant awareness of incidents of bias, harassment and discrimination by under-represented minority and other College students. These incidents are reportedly occurring between students, not faculty and staff, and are rarely reported to the College by the witnessing student. These findings are consistent with a comparison group of private and public universities utilizing the same climate survey.

Survey results reporting student willingness to interact with students of other racial and ethnic groups, and a feeling of efficacy around having difficult discussions on race.

The report ends with several recommendations on future activities to continue to improve the racial climate on campus. These include the establishment of a working group to conduct regular data collection and analysis of the experiences and academic outcomes for under-represented minority students, expansion of existing programs to promote success among this population of students, training on promoting diversity and cultural competence, and continued support for the College’s new bias-related reporting system.

# Introduction

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The College in Arts, Sciences & Engineering is a vibrant community of scholars engaged in learning, teaching, research, community outreach, and co-curricular activities. The College works to ensure that this research, teaching and learning enterprise is robust and available to all students, and that it is not constrained by barriers or biases based on race, ethnicity, income, and other demographics. This effort derives from a sense of social responsibility and a deeply held conviction that diversity among our faculty, staff and students immeasurably enriches the intellectual environment within the College. In this atmosphere, students from all backgrounds can comfortably work and study together, feel supported in the pursuit of their interests and goals, and can learn from and about one another. In the end, College graduates should look back on their experiences as among the most intellectually and socially fulfilling in their lives.

This report examines one important aspect of this experience – the student experience of racial and ethnic diversity within the College. In doing so, it continues a tradition of reporting on the racial climate and diversity within the College (see Appendix A for additional information). However, it also responds to the Presidential Commission on Race and Diversity, which recommended in 2016 that each School “develop an effective system to collect and analyze data regarding all dimensions of race and diversity.” In regards to students, the Commission desired that each School “collect data annually, using quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the academic and social climate and employ best practices to address chronic or emergent problems that these data reveal.” This included analyzing disparities in academic outcomes between under-represented minorities and other students, including relevant systems of support that promoted academic success. This report provides current and historical data on the undergraduate experience of race and diversity with the College. In particular, it reviews recent data to assess new and continuing academic and co-curricular needs for College students. The focus is primarily on variations in academic outcomes by race and ethnicity, both within the College and as compared to a select group of peer institutions. In all cases, the data are organized around the federal definition for “under-represented minorities” (URM).<sup>1</sup> The report also contains data on low-income and first generation students when available. Academic outcomes for international students are described in the sections on enrollment and academic outcomes, recognizing the importance of this population to overall diversity on campus.

A substantial proportion of the data for this report derives from internal College statistics on its student body and from a recently completed survey on racial climate on campus.<sup>2</sup> These quantitative data provide a comprehensive snapshot of current student experiences, including historical trends in matriculation and graduation rates. Supplementing these data are various types of qualitative data, much based on student comments provided during monthly College Diversity Roundtable meetings. In addition, in the late fall of 2015 and spring 2016, a number of Town Hall

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<sup>1</sup> The federal definition of under-represented minority (URM) includes students from the following groups: Black, Hispanic, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native.

<sup>2</sup> The College conducts professional surveys of undergraduates on multiple topics at regular intervals. These include previous surveys on campus climate completed in 2010 and 2012.

meetings and focus groups specifically addressed student experiences concerning the campus racial climate.<sup>3</sup>

This report combines these data into one multi-faceted analysis of diversity and race among College undergraduates over the past decade. [The document addresses the following: \(1\) enrollment figures, highlighting the current diversity of the student body, \(2\) academic outcomes for URM and related student groups, \(3\) student experiences comprising the racial climate for students, \(4\) current initiatives relating to race and diversity, and \(5\) recommendations for next steps.](#) It was completed by Beth Olivares, Dean for Diversity, and Alan Czaplicki, Associate Dean of the College, at the request of Peter Lennie, Dean of the Faculty of AS&E, and Richard Feldman, Dean of the College.

## I. Enrollment

The College's enrollments over time clearly demonstrate what one can see when walking across campus: the student body is very different today than it was a decade ago. In Fall 2016, URM and international students combined made up about 34% of the College's total undergraduate population and 35% of the entering first year cohort. In Fall 2005, this figure was 12.5% for the total undergraduate population and 14% for the entering first year cohort. Significantly, this has occurred during a period in which overall College undergraduate enrollments have increased by approximately 25%, leading to a substantial increase in the number of students of under-represented minority and international backgrounds on campus.

The percentage of URM students in each entering cohort has averaged 11.1% from Fall 2005 to Fall 2016, with a high of 13.9% in Fall 2015. Combined with the growth in overall enrollment, this has resulted in URM cohorts that have grown from roughly 100 students to 150-175 students per year. Total URM enrollment within the College has followed this upward trajectory, with URM students growing from 9.6% of the undergraduate student body in Fall 2005 to 12% in Fall 2016. This has resulted in approximately 300 more URM students on campus. Within this group, Hispanic students make up half the URM population (51%), while Black students represent another 46%. (The remaining 3% are students who are either Native American or Pacific Islander.)

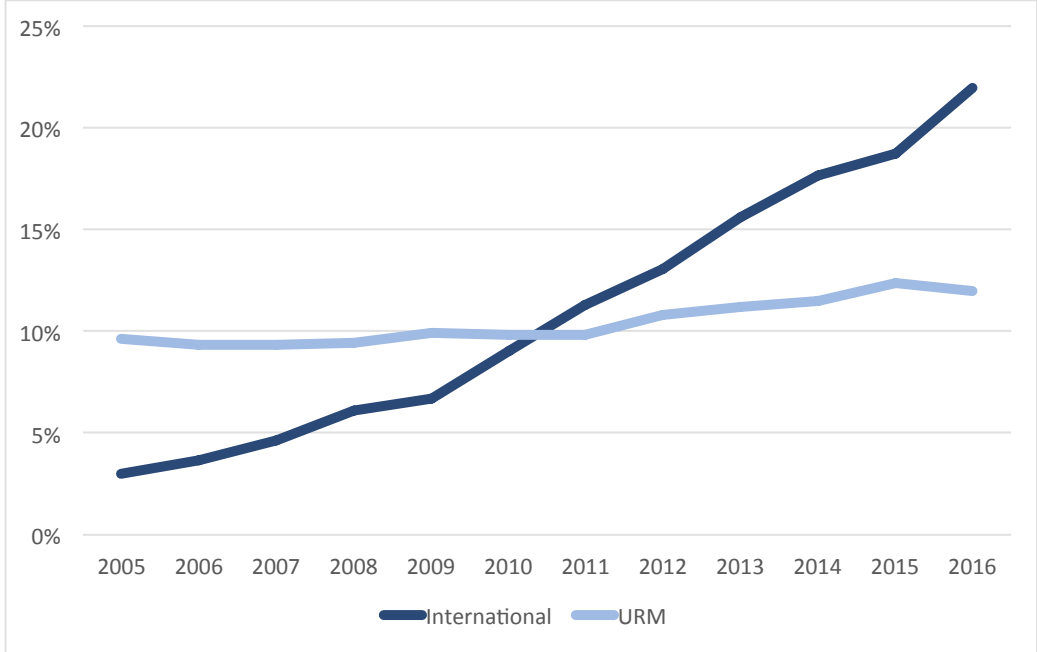
Comparatively, these figures fall within the range of a peer set of schools that are competitive with the College for admissions.<sup>4</sup> Total URM enrollments within the peer set averaged 11.7% in Fall 2005, with a range from 7% to 16%; in Fall 2015, this average increased to 14.4%, with a range of 10% to 18.5% across the peer group. Nationally, total URM enrollment for all four-year post-secondary institutions was 21% in Fall 2005, and this figure grew to 26.5% in Fall 2015.

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<sup>3</sup> The Town Hall meetings and Focus Groups are part of the Commission on Race & Diversity.

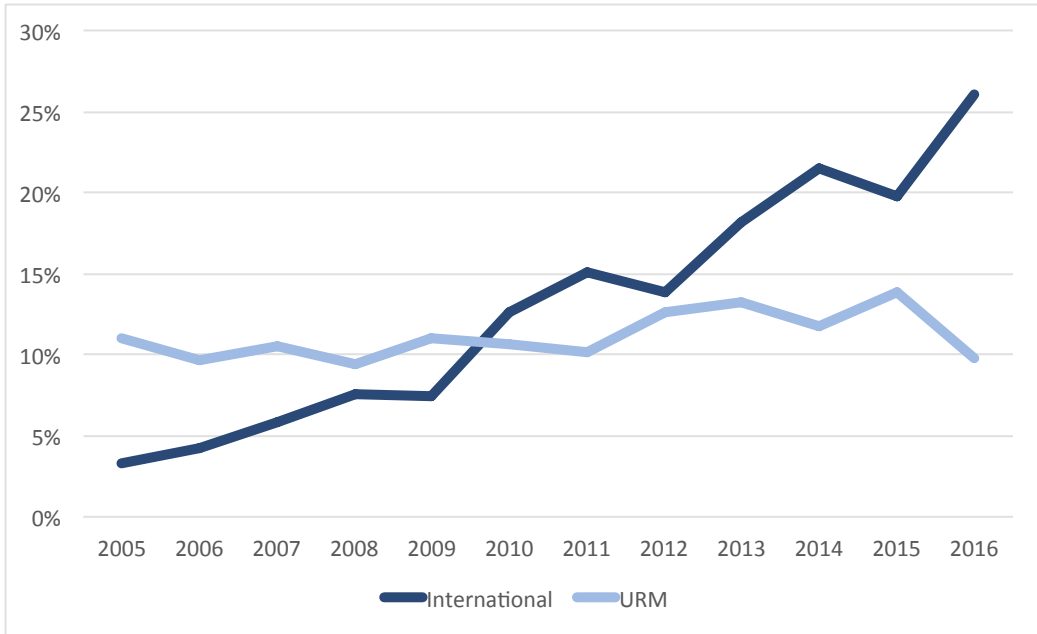
<sup>4</sup> The comparison set includes Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Brown University, Carnegie Mellon University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Emory University, Northeastern University, Tufts University. The latest figures on this comparison set are from Fall 2015.

**Figure 1.** College total enrollment trends by ethnicity, by percentage.



The enrollment of international students has grown at an even more rapid pace than that of URM students, from less than 100 total international students a decade ago to roughly 1,000 international students currently. This reflects an increase in the percentage of international students in the student body from 3% in Fall 2005 to 22% in Fall 2016 (Figure 1). This change is mirrored in the incoming cohort figures. International students made up just over 3% of incoming first year students in Fall 2005, and this has grown to 26% in the Fall 2016 cohort, for an increase of over 200 international students per entering cohort (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** College entering cohort enrollment trends by ethnicity, by percentage.



In 2005, the College total international student enrollment was below the average for the peer set (6.6%) and close to the national average (4.5%). By 2015, our international enrollment exceeded that of the peer set (14.5%) and greatly exceeded the national average (6.1%).

Overall, URM enrollments for the College mirror trends among our peer set, and these institutions have generally had a lower percentage of URM students than the full spectrum of four-year institutions. Within this institutional set, however, there has been, and will continue to be, steady increases, especially with growth in the number of college-aged Hispanic students. International students have made up an increased proportion of the study body, particularly at research universities, which is reflected in the figures above for the College and the peer set. For the College, a substantial percentage of these international students have been from China (roughly 50%), but there are also growing numbers of students from Korea, India, and Vietnam.

## II. Academic outcomes – Retention and Graduation Rates

There are two primary measures of a university's success in educating undergraduates – retention rates by semester and the 6-year graduation rate. The six-year graduation rate is defined as the percentage of first-time, first-year students (a “cohort”) graduating from the same school within six years. Retention rates refer to the continuation of students in their studies, and these are typically measured by determining the number of students within a cohort who continue to be enrolled at the beginning of their second, third and four years (i.e. third, fifth, and seventh semesters). While graduation rates show the ultimate outcome of the educational experience, retention rates are used to track student progress through the curriculum and also provide evidence on the timing and causes of students leaving their education early. Academic problems can contribute to student attrition and lower retention rates, but various other factors outside the control of the College can also result in a student's desire to leave. These can include financial and family issues, geographical (city) preference, attachment to certain institutions, changes in academic plans, and/or the desire to be closer to or further from home.

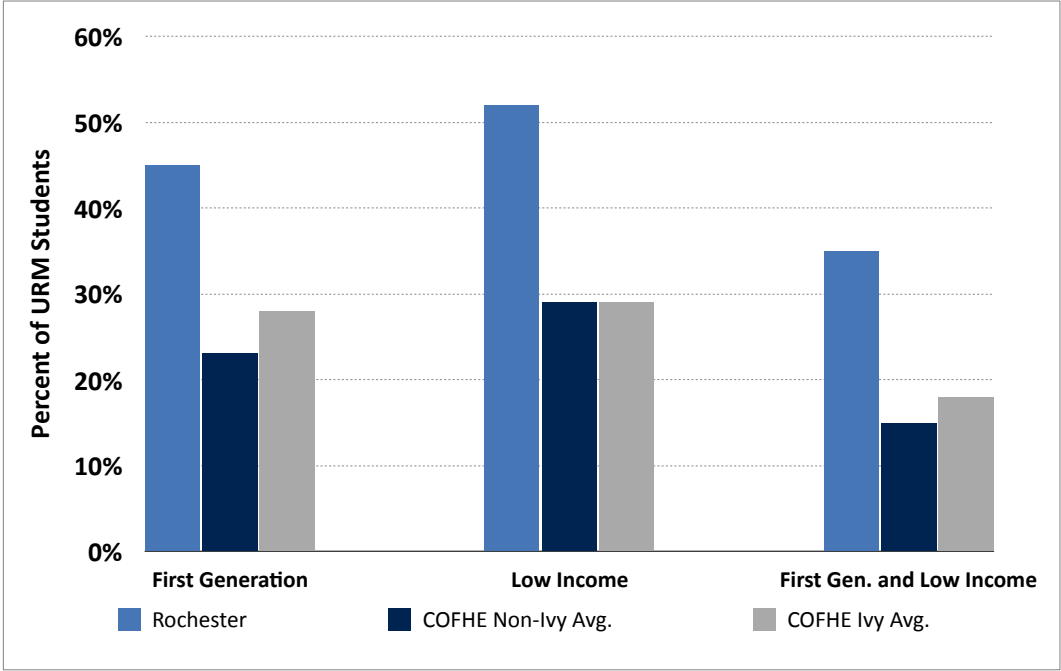
A student's background and social circumstances are a primary factor in understanding the causes behind academic problems. As shown later in this section, URM students are more likely to leave the College before graduating than their counterparts. It is not clear with available data, however, how much of this gap in retention and graduation rates is directly associated with the student's race and ethnicity, versus other characteristics. Status as a first generation or low-income student can give rise to many factors that undermine academic success, and many URM students are first generation students and come from low-income families. This makes it hard to assert that a particular outcome is primarily (or exclusively) associated with a specific racial or ethnic status. This is an especially important matter for the College, because, as shown in Figure 3, the fraction of URM students who are low-income and first generation is roughly double the percentage than for other COFHE non-Ivy schools.<sup>5</sup> This overlap likely generates increased barriers in transitioning to a higher education environment and in succeeding academically. It is also quite likely that this distinctive characteristic

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<sup>5</sup> The COFHE non-Ivy institutions are California Institute of Technology, Duke University, Georgetown University, Johns Hopkins University, MIT, Northwestern University, Rice University, Stanford University, University of Chicago, University of Rochester, Vanderbilt University, and Washington Univ. in St. Louis. Data for the admissions peer set is not yet available for this analysis, although the results are expected to be similar.

of the URM population as a whole contributes to more significant gaps in retention and graduation rates than in peer institutions. (See the discussion later in this section, especially Table 2, for more details.) Given this, the College plans to focus on better understanding the relative contributions of URM, first generation and low-income status on retention and graduation rates in the future.

Figure 3. Overlaps between URM, first-generation, and low income students, Fall 2015.



Given this context (and caveat), the rest of the section will explore retention and graduation data for URM and international students. The data in Table 1 below highlight differences for URM students in relation to their counterparts. Retention for URM students entering their third term is high and similar to non-URM rates. The 10-year average of third semester retention for URM students is 2.5% below non-URM students, but has improved to an average of less than 1% below non-URM students in the past 5 years. In subsequent semesters, loss of URM students increases cumulatively and more significantly with 10-year averages of 5.05% in the fifth semester and 6.86% in the seventh semester. However, there is a similar pattern of improvement in recent years for these rates, with the most notable improvement in retention for the seventh semester. While these data illustrate a clear pattern that eventually manifests in differences in graduation rates between URM and non-URM students, recent positive trends in the rates strongly suggest that these differences will decline.

**Table 1. Retention in Second, Third and Fourth Year (Terms 3, 5, and 7), by ethnicity.**

Cohort	Term 3			Term 5			Term 7		
	Non-URM	URM	Difference	Non-URM	URM	Difference	Non-URM	URM	Difference
2005	93.60%	90.00%	3.60%	89.80%	80.90%	8.90%	87.10%	80.00%	7.10%
2006	96.60%	89.70%	6.90%	92.40%	83.50%	8.90%	90.20%	76.30%	13.90%
2007	95.10%	91.50%	3.60%	91.20%	89.40%	1.80%	90.30%	81.90%	8.40%
2008	96.10%	94.80%	1.30%	91.90%	88.50%	3.40%	89.70%	84.40%	5.30%
2009	95.80%	89.70%	6.10%	93.40%	87.90%	5.50%	91.60%	85.00%	6.60%
2010	95.70%	93.70%	2.00%	92.50%	87.30%	5.20%	91.00%	84.10%	6.90%
2011	96.20%	97.40%	-1.20%	92.60%	88.00%	4.60%	89.90%	83.80%	6.10%
2012	96.20%	92.90%	3.30%	93.50%	86.50%	7.00%	91.60%	85.90%	5.70%
2013	96.50%	95.40%	1.10%	92.00%	89.70%	2.30%	90.30%	88.60%	1.70%
2014	96.00%	94.80%	1.20%	91.90%	89.00%	2.90%			
2015	96.30%	96.60%	-0.30%						
Average	95.83%	93.32%	2.51%	92.12%	87.07%	5.05%	90.19%	83.33%	6.86%
Average (2011-2015)	96.24%	95.42%	0.82%	92.50%	88.30%	4.20%	90.60%	86.10%	4.50%

**Figure 4. Retention in Second, Third and Fourth Year (Terms 3, 5, 7), by ethnicity and international status.**

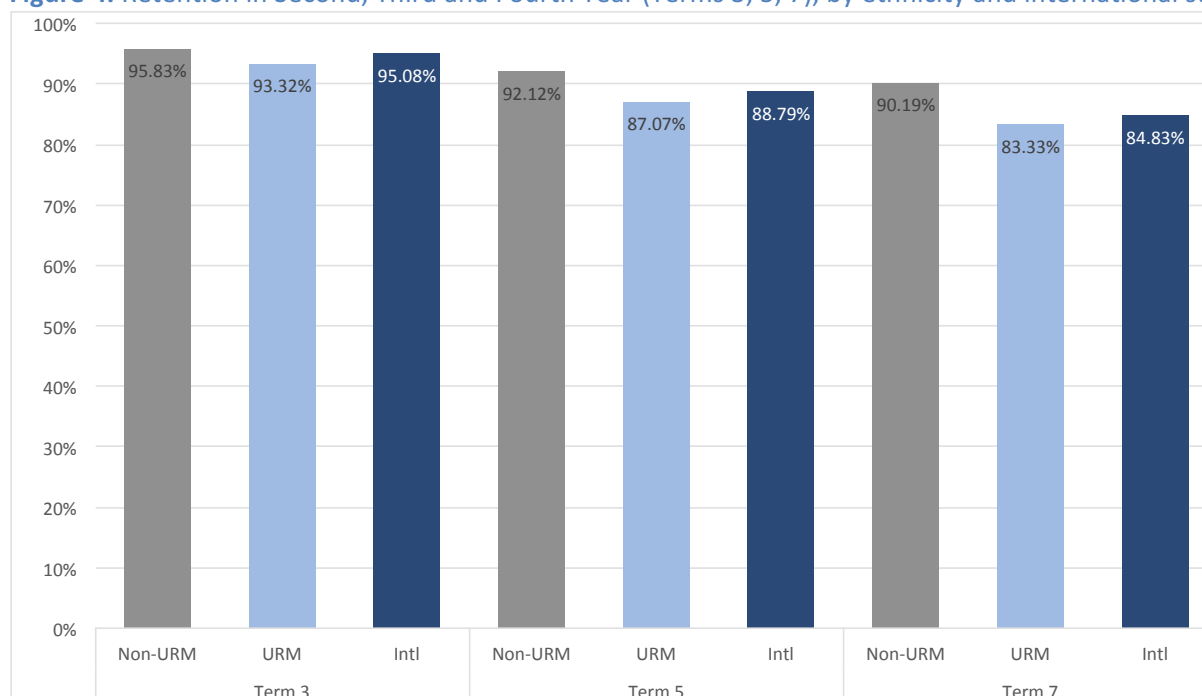


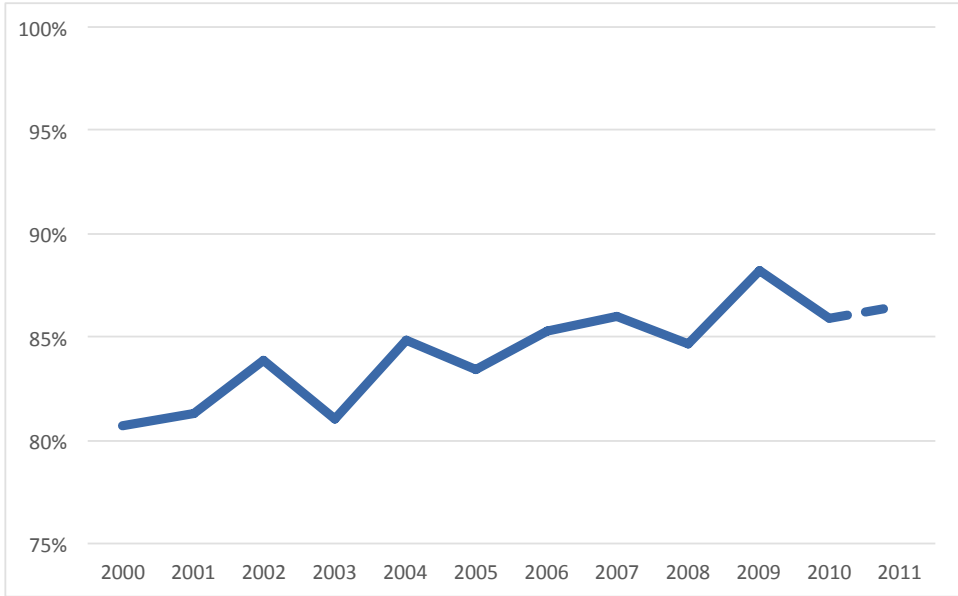
Figure 4 shows that from Fall 2005 to Fall 2015, international students have comparable average retention rates to non-URM and URM students in the third semester, and decrease slightly in relation to non-URM students in the fifth semester. The seventh semester average retention rate for international students shows another significant drop in retention (5%). This is a case in which



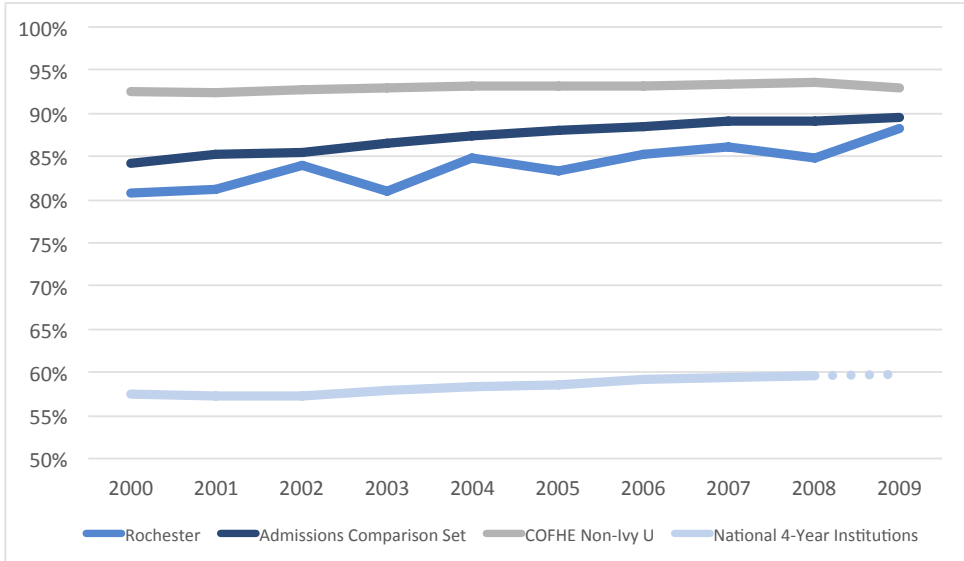
averages obscure a generally upward trend within this seventh semester rate. Over the past several academic years, the seventh semester retention has been closer to the non-URM rate of 90%, an improvement over rates of 80%-85% between Fall 2005-2010. We expect that this improvement will yield increases in 6-year graduation rates in the coming years.

The 6-year graduation rate for the College has improved substantially over the past 15 years. There has been an up-and-down pattern to this progress, with a high point of 88.2% for the 2009 cohort (Figure 5). This rate compares favorably to the admissions peer set, and there is a small, but significant, gap with 6-year graduation rates for COFHE non-Ivy institutions. The comparison groups include other elite institutions, which can be seen in the 6-year graduation rate for all four-year, postsecondary institutions. This rate is about 60% for the most recent cohorts, or roughly 25% lower than the College rate (Figure 6).

**Figure 5. Six-year Graduation Rate for College students.**

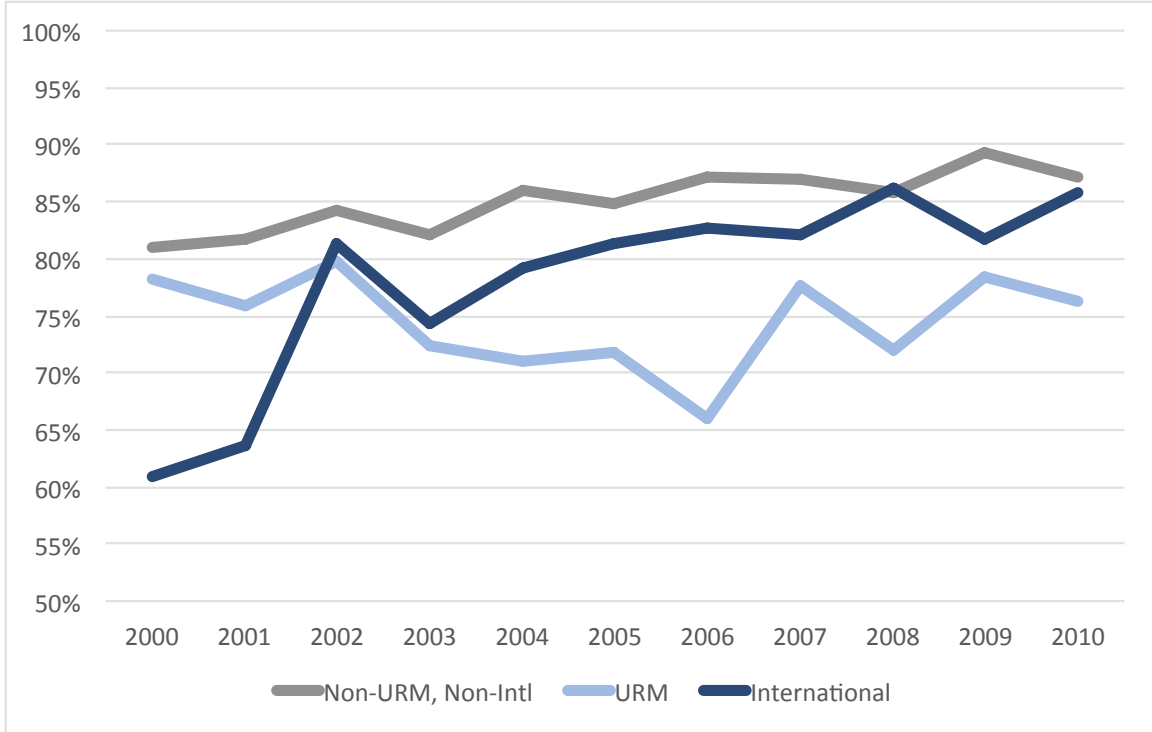


**Figure 6. Six-year Graduation Rate for all students.**



There are significant component variations within this overall trend. First, the 6-year graduation rate for women is on average roughly 4-5 percentage points higher than for men. Second, international student graduation rates have improved dramatically over this period, approximating the 6-year graduation rate for non-URM students in the 2006-2010 cohorts. Importantly, this has occurred during a period of significant growth in this population, from 23 students in 2000 to 149 students in 2010. (The 2016 cohort has 348 international students.)

**Figure 7. 6-year Graduation Rate for College students, by Selected Populations.**



Third, the 6-year graduation rates of URM students continue to lag behind those of other students. URM rates have continued to fluctuate between 70-80% while steadily increasing for the student population as a whole. The 10-year average rate for Black students (76.5%) is slightly higher than for Hispanic students (72.5%).<sup>6</sup>

Table 2 provides comparative data on the 6-year graduation rate for the 2000-2009 cohorts, showing percentages for all students, non-URM students and URM students. It also includes annual data on overall and URM graduation rates for selected peer institutions. Peer institutions have a substantially smaller gap between URM and non-URM graduate rates than does the College. The gap varies from year to year but has averaged about 5.5% since the 2000 cohort. With the current size of the URM population (142 students in Fall 2016), closing this gap would require the graduation of an additional 8-10 URM students per year.

<sup>6</sup>The size of the URM cohort may influence graduation outcomes in the future. URM cohort sizes from 2000-2009 were fairly stable, ranging from 76-100 students, but since 2010 URM cohorts have increased roughly 50% to a range of 124-189 students. The greater range of personal experiences and academic preparedness found in a larger body of students, combined with potential strains on support services, is an issue that the College will have to monitor.

**Table 2. Six-year graduation rates by entering cohort, College and Admissions Peer Set<sup>7</sup>**

Cohort year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Overall College	81	81	84	81	85	83	85	86	85	88
Non-URM <sup>8</sup>	81	82	84	82	86	85	87	87	86	89
URM <sup>9</sup>	78	76	80	72	71	72	66	78	72	79
<b>Difference between overall and URM rates</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>
Overall Peer Set	84	85	86	87	87	88	88	89	89	90
URM Peer Set	81	80	79	82	83	84	84	84	85	87
<b>Peer set difference between overall and URM rates</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
Difference between UR and peer set gaps between all and URM rates	0	0	2	4	10	7	15	3	9	6

Growth of the gap stems from lack of improvement in URM graduation rates while non-URM graduation rates were improving. URM graduation rates have not increased since 2000, while non-URM rates have increased roughly 6-7% over the same period. (International student rates have jumped about 20%.) Among the peer universities, URM graduation rates have improved commensurately with the overall graduation rates.

In summary, the College faces challenges in improving its 6-year graduation rate for URM students. Various programs have been developed over the past decade to assist this population of students, and some of their activities (and related positive outcomes) will be discussed in subsequent sections. Nevertheless, the complications caused by multiple statuses as URM, low-income and/or first generation are significant. In the meantime, the College can point to considerable success with retention and graduation rates for international students, which have had a small, but substantial, impact on 6-year graduation rates for the entire undergraduate student population.

### III. Racial Climate in the College: A Descriptive analysis of the 2016 Climate Survey

The success of students in the College depends in large part on an environment conducive to learning. Many things play a part in creating that environment. Given the wide-ranging diversity of students in the College, some of the tensions so evident in society at large with respect to race, socio-economic status, gender, and other identities will necessarily be reflected in the campus culture.<sup>10</sup> Yet it is the institution's responsibility to provide an environment in which these tensions can be examined and learned from, rather than simply replicated. As part of an institution-wide self-

<sup>7</sup> The peer comparison is based on internal data for the College and data collected from the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS), the federal repository of educational data, for other institutions. The peer set includes: Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Brown University, Carnegie Mellon University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Emory University, Northeastern University, Tufts University.

<sup>8</sup> Includes students identifying as 2+ races, Asian, International, White and Unknown.

<sup>9</sup> Includes students identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native, Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian.

<sup>10</sup> A series of vignettes representing a range of student experiences and identities can be found in Appendix B. These vignettes were drawn from a variety of qualitative and quantitative data sources.

analysis of race and diversity specifically, AS&E (which includes the College) and the Eastman School of Music (ESM) contracted with the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA to conduct a campus climate survey during the Spring 2016 semester.<sup>11</sup>

The Diverse Learning Environments survey conducted by HERI is a rich source of data from a broad range of students who hold many different perspectives on campus climate. The survey asked these students about experienced or observed bias, discrimination and harassment, the extent and character of their interactions with people of other races, the extent to which they made use of academic resources, their academic and social experiences, and their assessment of their own abilities. This report examines the responses of URM students as compared to non-URM students in the College.<sup>12</sup> There were 1658 College students who completed the survey, which is roughly 30% of the undergraduate population. In general, the respondents were fairly representative of the College's student body as a whole, with slightly more survey responses by URM students (3%), by females (9%) and by freshman (6%). There were no major differences in responses by division of major or intended major (i.e. humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering).

### Witnessing and/or experiencing bias, harassment, and discrimination<sup>13</sup>

Overall, the survey results show that undergraduate students believe that discriminatory behavior exists on campus, regardless of ethnic or racial background. In addition, the results suggest that students often do not report these experiences with bias, harassment, or discrimination to College authorities. This is possibly related to the source of these experiences, since students of all ethnic and racial backgrounds report that they are more likely to have these experiences with fellow students, rather than with faculty or staff in the College. This suggests that the College's future emphasis should be to find ways to positively influence student social dynamics around campus life, and this could include more outlets for students to communicate around these issues.

More specifically, the survey asked students whether they had personally experienced discrimination based on various identity characteristics including race/ethnicity, religion, gender, ability level, political views, sexual orientation, citizenship status, and socioeconomic status.<sup>14</sup> The primary differences in reported discrimination were around race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender. URM students reported significantly more experiences of discrimination based on race/ethnicity than non-URM students (40% to 16%), and URM students were also twice as likely to report experiencing discrimination due to their socioeconomic status (22%) as non-URM students (12.3%). Female students reported experiences of gender discrimination at four times the rate as male students (roughly 30% to 7%).

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<sup>11</sup> Details on the instrument and demographics of undergraduate respondents can be found in Appendix C. Campus leaders may obtain access to the primary data set through contacting the College dean's office.

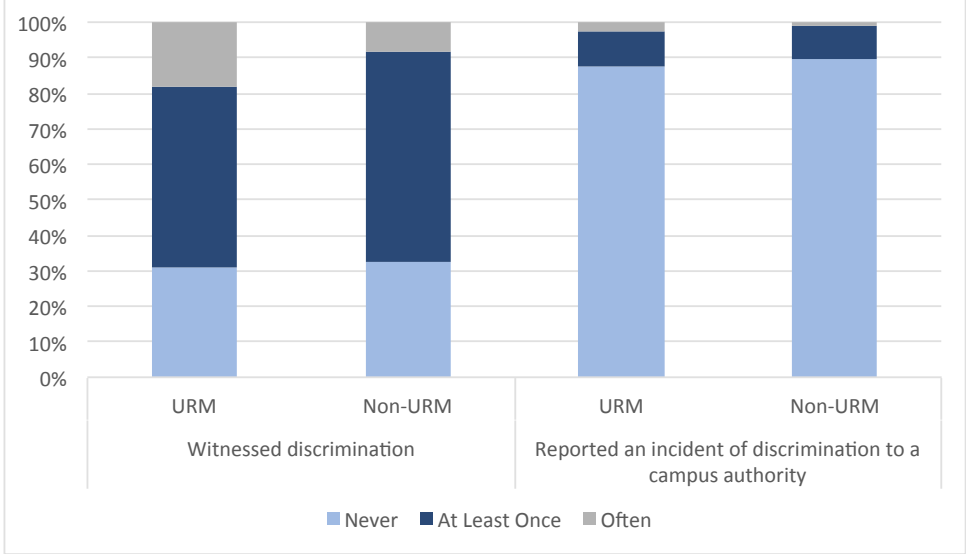
<sup>12</sup> Per federal definitions, students who identified themselves as Black, Latino, and Native American were categorized as URM, and those who identified as White, Asian and/or two or more ethnicities (i.e. multiracial), were categorized as non-minority.

<sup>13</sup> The survey did not define the terms *bias*, *discrimination* or *harassment*; thus, the results rely solely on students' internal definitions of those terms, which might vary widely.

<sup>14</sup> Fewer than ten percent of respondents indicated having experienced discrimination based on religion, ability level, sexual orientation, or citizenship status. URM and non-URM students reported discrimination based on their political beliefs at approximately the same level (12-14%).

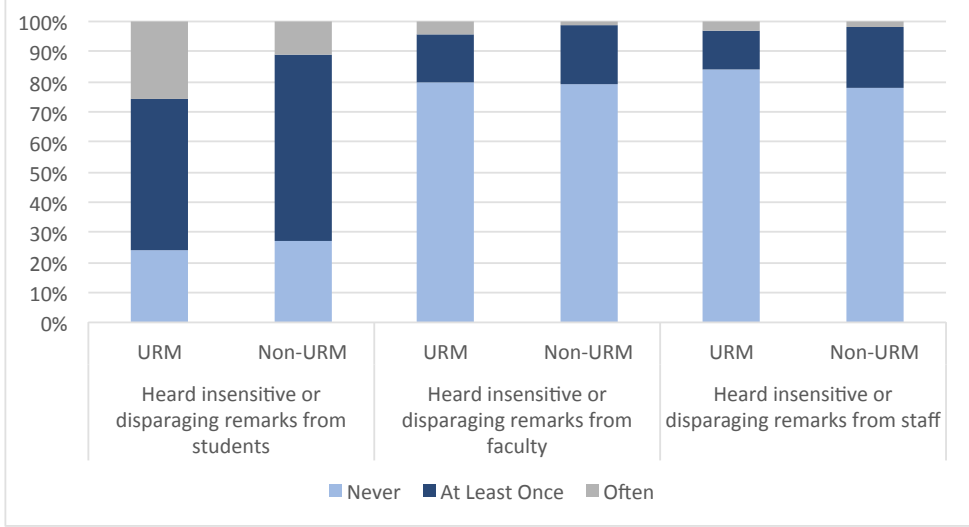
Students were also asked if they had witnessed other individuals experiencing discrimination. The percentage of respondents indicating that they had witnessed *any* discrimination or harassment on campus is high, with the percentage of students reporting having witnessed discrimination “often” a small subset of this figure. Interestingly, however, few students indicated that they had approached College officials to report these experiences, as shown in the figure below. Between 80-90% of URM and non-URM students never reported an incident of discrimination to campus authorities, suggesting a significant gap between student experiences and the College’s ability to respond to these events (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Witnessing vs. Reporting Perceived Discrimination by College Undergraduates, by Ethnicity.**



The survey results also provide clear direction on the source of biased or disparaging behavior in the College. Vast majorities of URM and non-URM students said that they had never heard insensitive or disparaging remarks from faculty or staff, with most of their experience with bias resulting from interactions from students (Figure 9). This finding is consistent with the results of earlier surveys of campus climate.

**Figure 9. Frequency and Sources of Disparaging Remarks for College Undergraduates, by Ethnicity.**



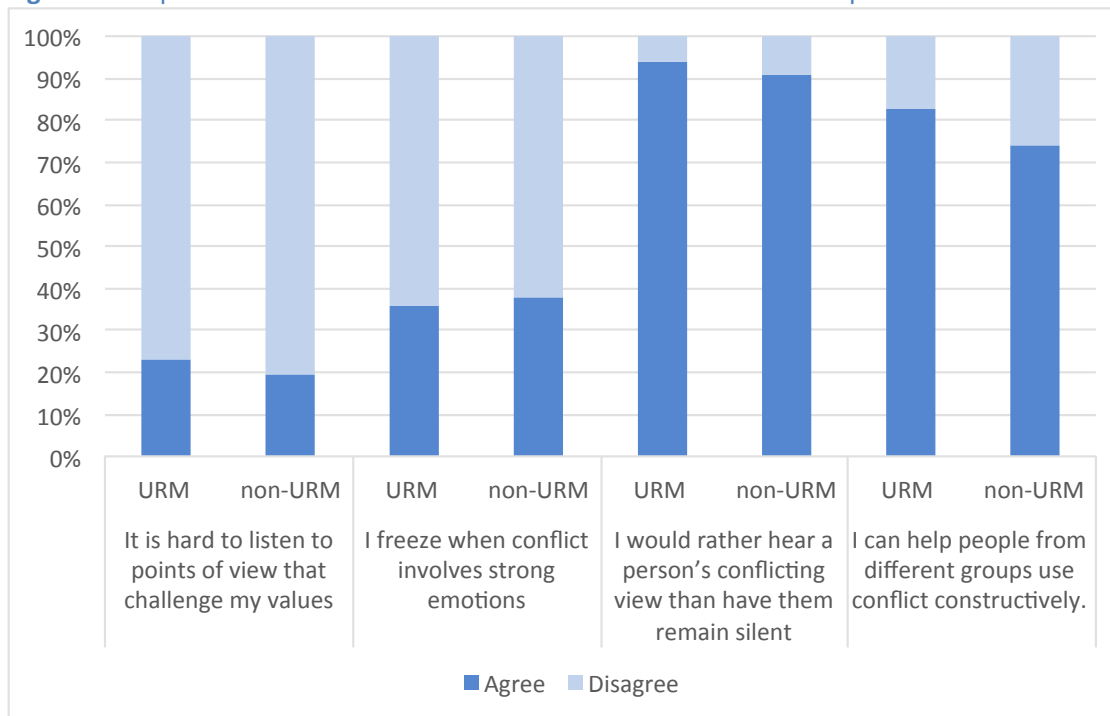
## Inter-racial experiences on campus

Students in the College express a strong general willingness to interact with students of other races and ethnicities and to engage in difficult conversations about race and diversity. However, there is some evidence to suggest that these conversations remain stressful for students of all backgrounds. The survey data are limited in speaking to how well these attitudes translate into action among students, but there is some evidence that College students, and especially URM students, have made efforts to show respect and learn about the experiences of other racial and ethnic groups on campus.

In particular, survey results indicate that students have a general willingness to have their ideas challenged, and that they would rather a person express conflicting views than remain silent (Figure 10). A substantial number of URM and non-URM students extend this desire for openness to a belief that they can mediate conflict between groups through these conversations. Partially mitigating this view, however, is the finding that over one-third of URM and non-URM students reported “freezing” when experiencing an interaction with “strong emotion.” In addition, a non-trivial percentage of students also reported either having tense and guarded interactions with members of another racial/ethnic group often or very often. Roughly 30% of URM students reported having these interactions, while the figure was 17% for non-URM students.

In combination, these results express continued student optimism in the power of openly expressing and discussing different viewpoints to improve the campus climate, but continued barriers and frustrations in bringing such conversations to fruition.

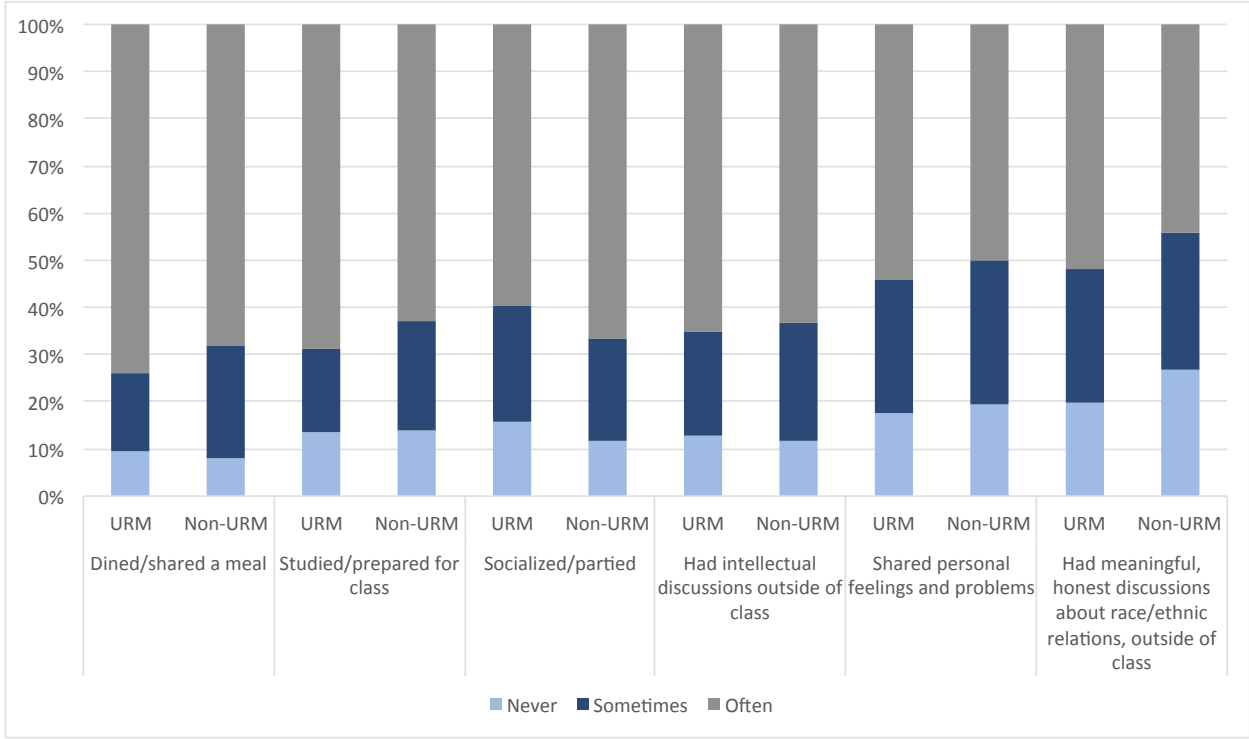
**Figure 10.** Experiences with Students from Different Racial Ethnic Groups



From the survey results, it seems likely that there are ample opportunities for students to engage in these discussions. Roughly two-thirds of College students, regardless of race/ethnicity, indicated that they interacted outside of class with students from different racial groups either often or very often (Figure 11). A significant majority of students (greater than 85%) also reported having meals, socializing, or studying with students of other races, with large numbers of student replying that they had these interactions “often.” Slightly smaller numbers of URM and non-URM students reported having more sustained interactions (either sharing personal feelings/problems or discussing issues of race/ethnicity) with members of another racial or ethnic group.

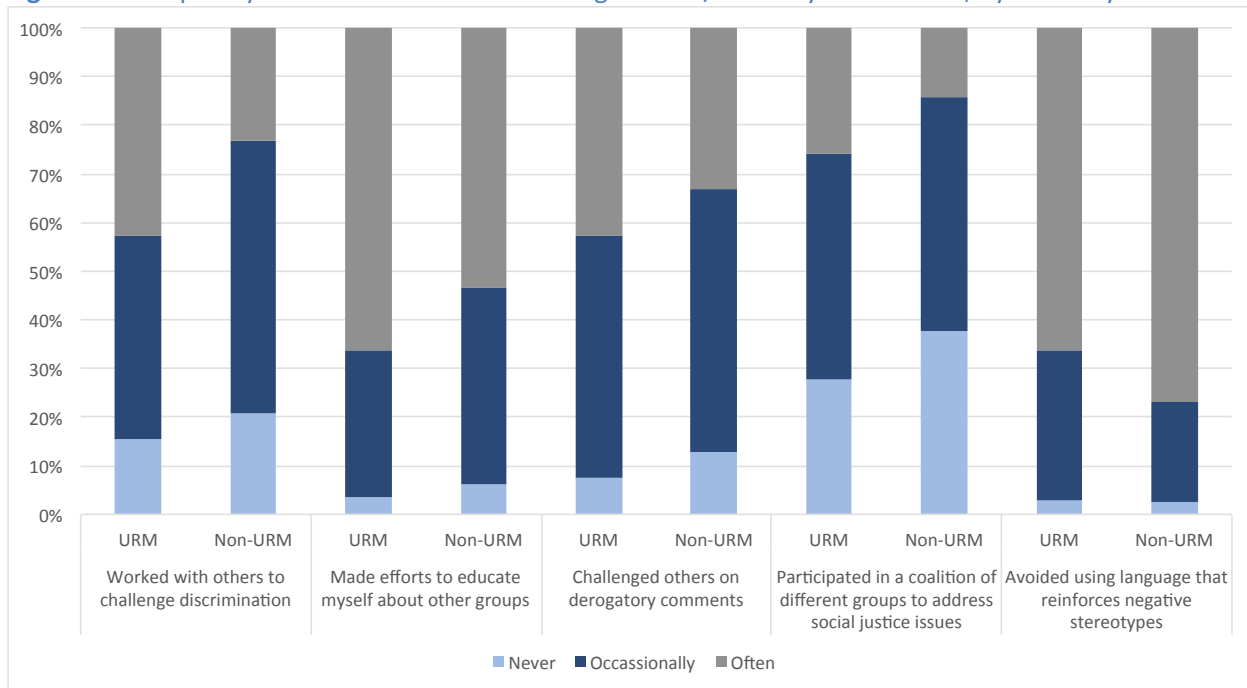
These results suggest robust and largely positive interactions between students of different ethnic groups. However, there are some problems of interpretation resulting from the fact that student responses may be based on interactions between Black and Hispanic students, or White and Asian students (i.e. within URM and non-URM categories of the survey). As a result, it remains difficult to determine the frequency of cross-racial interactions between URM and non-URM populations. This isn’t necessarily a cause for alarm, given the generally high numbers in the survey, but an issue for further investigation.

**Figure 11.** Frequency of Interactions with Other Racial/Ethnic Groups, by Ethnicity.



Finally, these responses on inter-racial interactions are partially reinforced by data on activities related to race and ethnicity issues. URM and non-URM students report high levels of commitment to behaving in ways that are not offensive to other groups and that expand their knowledge of different ethnic and racial groups (Figure 12). URM students report more substantial engagement with group activities around racial issues, including around social injustice. Thus, results suggest a high level of general tolerance of different races and ethnicities among all students, with more intense commitment to social causes found among URM students.

**Figure 12. Frequency of Student Activities Relating to Race/Ethnicity in Past Year, by Ethnicity.**



## Comparisons to Other Institutions

The results in the College compare favorably with those from other colleges and universities participating in the survey, which includes a small collection of public and private four-year universities.<sup>15</sup> There was no measure on which there was a large difference between the responses in the College and the average of responses at other institutions, but there were several areas in which there were interesting small differences. College students were slightly more likely than the comparison groups to have had positive cross-racial interactions on campus and to have engaged with diverse peers in a variety of curricular, co-curricular, and social settings. They were slightly less likely than the comparison group to have experienced harassment. While these variations are not large enough to be statistically significant, they do suggest that the College is at minimum on par with its peers in promoting tolerance and diversity on campus.

## IV. Analysis

The enrollment, retention and graduation data presented in this report highlight the College’s success with international students and its continuing efforts to improve academic outcomes for URM students. Progress has been made with the latter group of students, but challenges still remain to reduce the gap between URM and non-URM graduation rates. This section focuses on the potential causes behind this gap and why this gap is larger in the College than in peer institutions.

<sup>15</sup> The University of Delaware, SUNY-Stony Brook, Clemson University, University of California-Irvine, Virginia Commonwealth University, and DePaul University were among the participating institutions.



## Why Students May Not Succeed in the College

Two factors are important predictors of poor outcomes in the College. The first indicator is failure in a course during the first semester, and the second, often related, indicator is a cumulative GPA of lower than 2.0 (a “C” average) in the first semester. The most recent data (through Spring 2010) on these indicators suggest that students failing a course in their first semester have 6-year graduation rates that are roughly one-half of the graduation rate for all students. Outcomes also worsen for those students who have a GPA lower than 2.0 in their first semester, with 6-year graduation rates that are roughly 40% of the overall student population. As one would expect, students experiencing both of these problems graduate at even lower rates. Within each cohort, there are roughly 90-100 students (8-9% of the cohort) facing at least one of these problems, suggesting that the College could gain as much as 4-5% in its overall 6-year graduation rate if successful in improving performance in the first semester.

These two indicators are potentially related to a range of underlying factors including level of academic preparation, involvement in co-curricular and student life activities, access to social networks and support services, integration into campus norms and expectations, and issues with family life and other “external” demands on the student’s time and effort. In other words, these indicators provide insight into a student’s general skills and abilities to pursue college-level academic subjects, but also a student’s broader social and cultural capital (and attendant ability to adapt to campus culture).<sup>16</sup>

In practice, these early indicators highlight problems that tend to manifest later as retention issues, particularly in the third and fourth years. The end of the second year (and beginning of the third year) is the time when students officially declare their major, while the beginning of the fourth year is often when students most acutely realize that their progression through their major may not be going according to plan. This may result in students deciding to change their majors and/or temporarily or permanently stopping their education “to figure things out.” Some students return to the College after taking a hiatus, especially those actively seeking assistance from advisors in various College units, but a significant proportion do not return.

For those changing their major, the outcomes are not automatically negative. The Rochester Curriculum actively encourages exploration, even later in a student’s academic career. However, for a non-trivial number of students, late major changes reflect serious underlying issues. These include chronic poor performance in courses resulting from academic unpreparedness, an unwelcome departmental or classroom atmosphere, a lack of role models, and/or a lack of supportive resources. In addition, certain “logistical” issues may intrude for students wanting to switch a major, such as the need to fit multiple courses into a compressed time frame, lack of availability of key courses, or limits on financial aid eligibility. These become significant challenges for students to overcome, and can result in students failing to graduate within a six-year time frame.

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<sup>16</sup> Social capital is defined as the strength and extent of interpersonal ties with other individuals. Cultural capital is the knowledge of the social norms and expectations within a certain context. Used in a university context, these forms of capital signify the familiarity of students with the cultural and social environment of the campus, their ability to develop skills to successfully negotiate this environment, and their knowledge of and access to services and other opportunities.

## Graduation and Retention Issues Among URM Students

As illustrated above, URM students graduate at levels significantly (8-10%) below their non-URM counterparts. While this gap is not distinctive to the College, the College gap is larger than at peer institutions. This section outlines one general reason behind the gap for all universities (cultural adjustment) and then focuses on two areas in which there may be some special characteristics of the URM population in the College that result in a disproportional impact of these factors over peer institutions.

In general, URM students often have trouble adjusting to the culture of a higher education environment. As with first-generation and low-income students, URM students may have a limited frame of reference around academic expectations and value systems. This can result in a feeling of isolation and alienation, and may also lead to culture shock when encountering students of different backgrounds. In some situations, this feeling could expand into a more sustained crisis of confidence and the development of a feeling that one doesn't belong and has been admitted by accident or error (the "imposter syndrome").

There is no reason to believe that cultural adjustment is a more significant problem in the College than at peer institutions. However, student comments made during the 2015 student protest, the follow-up town halls, and in other venues suggest that URM students are concerned about cultural adjustment and social isolation and its effects. Moreover, in the 2016 Climate survey, over 70% of URM students reported that they were "often" or "very often" the only person of their race or ethnicity in a "situation" on campus, which might include classes, meetings, social events, groups, or other interactions.<sup>17</sup> Survey responses also support the idea that URM students have a stronger racial identity than non-URM students, and that they are three times as likely than non-URM students to actively think about their race while on campus. This may cause problems with adapting to the College environment insofar as URM students code this racial/ethnic identity as "different" (in a negative sense) from this environment.

Social isolation can also limit URM students' willingness and awareness of academic and co-curricular possibilities on campus. The Kearns Center has recently determined that URM students are half as likely as their peers to study abroad, one-third as likely to pursue undergraduate research, and almost half as likely to participate in unpaid internships (Kearns Center data, 2015). These figures suggest that URM students are not fully taking advantage of opportunities within the College, and this is particularly distressing given the new emphasis on experiential learning in the College and at peer institutions.

Two additional factors may increase difficulties for URM students in the College. First, the College does appear to be distinctive from its peers in the larger overlap between URM students and low-

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<sup>17</sup> Feelings of isolation may also be reinforced by students' experiences around campus. Course demographics highlight that URM students comprise roughly 10-13% of overall enrollments, which means most courses include only a small number of URM students. Similarly, Black and Hispanic faculty and staff are still under-represented on campus, with over 85% of the staff being categorized as white. This reduces the number of role models of their own race or ethnicity for URM students, limiting their sense of a shared experience with successful professionals on campus. In fact, a significant number of Black and Hispanic staff are building and food service workers, which students (not just URM students, but more generally) have identified as a matter of concern, and a social justice issue, on campus.

income and/or first generation students. As shown earlier (Figure 3), URM students in the College overlap with these other groups at almost twice the rate than at peer institutions. For the undergraduate population in Fall 2015, this means that 45% of URM students are also first generation and roughly 50% of these students are low-income. More than one-third of URM students have both characteristics.

The College is collecting and organizing data to better understand how these overlapping statuses potentially increase barriers to academic success, but several issues are already clear from the College's experience with low-income and first generation students. These students are more likely to experience academic difficulties for a variety of reasons, including: less rigorous academic preparation than their peers; difficulty with the transition to college level studies and the campus culture; lack of confidence, resilience, and sense of belonging, especially with a poor start to their academic career; complicated family lives; difficulty in navigating the bureaucratic element of University life; and personal and family financial issues that result in long hours at work outside classes. Research shows that low-income and first-generation students often experience problems that arise from feeling like they live simultaneously in two vastly different worlds, while being fully accepted in neither.<sup>18</sup>

College data on the two indicators above (failing a class in the first semester, less than 2.0 GPA in first semester) show that URM students are twice as likely as non-URM students to have one or both of these problems in their first semester. This means that an average of 30 students, or roughly 25% of the entering URM cohort, will face these problems.<sup>19</sup> These students may experience these outcomes because of challenges associated with their racial and ethnic status. However, it is also likely that part of this disproportional effect versus non-URM students is related to the overlapping disadvantages caused by low-income and first-generation status. This is an issue that the College will continue to examine, especially since there is great potential to improve URM retention and graduation rates with targeted interventions in this early stage of a URM student's academic career. (See Section V for current programming in this area.)

Second, the College's strength in STEM fields, and the strong focus of applicants on majors in the natural sciences and engineering, may shape differences in URM completion rates in the College versus peer institutions. In general, many College students start their undergraduate experience intending to complete majors within the natural sciences and engineering, with a small, but significant number, shifting their interests to the social sciences and humanities later in their academic career. URM students follow this pattern, but with a higher percentage of students leaving the natural sciences and engineering than the rest of the student body. Preliminary evidence suggests that URM students facing difficulties in STEM majors tend to switch their major at a later date than non-URM students. This slows down academic progress for these URM students and often causes more financial hardship, which can result in more students leaving the College before completing a degree.

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<sup>18</sup> Harper, S. R., & Harris III, F. (Eds.). 2010. *College Men and Masculinities: Theory, Research, and Implications for Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

<sup>19</sup> URM students make up about 30% of the total number of students in each cohort facing these issues in their first semester.

## V. Current Initiatives

The College has established several programs to assist URM students, and these programs often provide support for low-income and first-generation students as well. The focus of these programs is to overcome the issues raised above, specifically reduced familiarity with the college experience and (often related) problems with academic preparedness.<sup>20</sup>

The Early Connection Opportunity (ECO) program is a pre-freshman summer academic program overseen by the Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA). It is designed to introduce students to the distinctive Rochester Curriculum, and to help students acquire the skills, attitudes, and social connections necessary to become successful UR students. Approximately 70 entering freshmen attend the 4-week summer program each year. Of these students, about 30 are part of the Higher Education Opportunities Program (HEOP), a program partially funded by New York State for students from low-income families in the state. The students in this program receive substantial need-based financial assistance, student-centered counseling/advising, tutorial support, and participate in numerous co-curricular activities. The HEOP program attracts students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

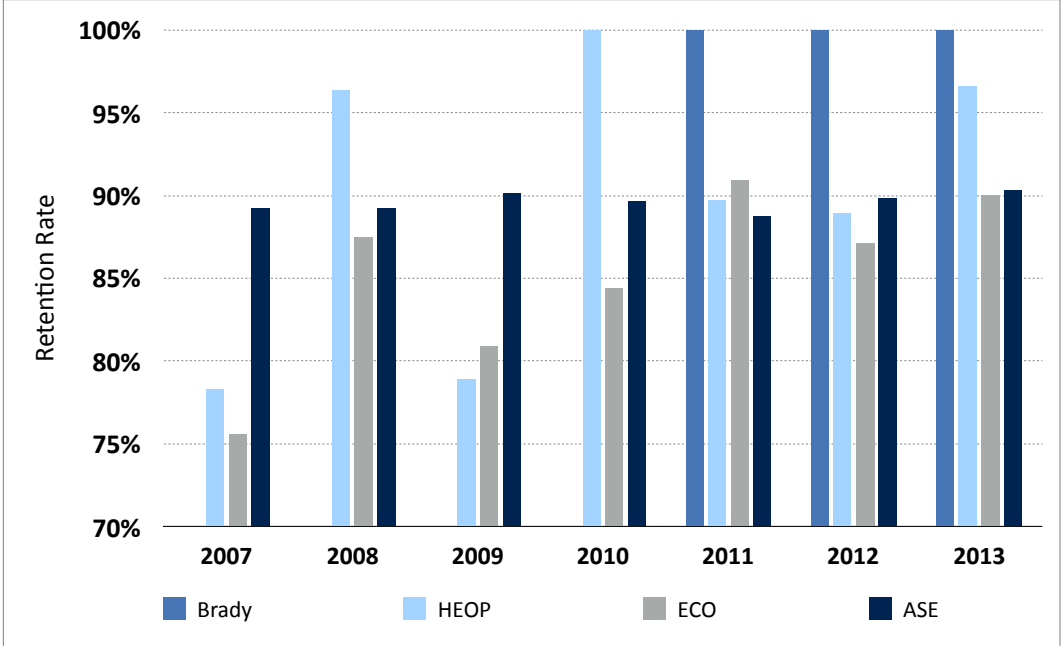
In 2011, Elizabeth Bruno, an alum from the class of 1989, established the Brady Scholars Support Fund to provide additional support to students who are the most under-resourced, disadvantaged students in ECO but are not served by HEOP. Each summer six students are identified from the ECO cohort to be Brady Scholars. The goal of this program is to ensure that supported students have access to all the opportunities available to students in the College. To achieve this, the Brady Student Support Fund provides enhanced financial aid for all four years of undergraduate study. Depending on the student, this support might: eliminate work study or summer income expectations; cover room, board, or tuition for summer sessions; assist with study abroad expenses; and/or provide small grants for the purchase of books or other supplies essential for academic success. Students also receive enhanced advising and counseling services through ECO, OMSA and the Kearns Center.

There is substantial evidence to suggest that these programs have been successful in increasing retention and graduation rates for participating students. The retention rates for the seventh semester have shown gradual improvement for ECO students as compared to the College undergraduate population. HEOP student retention rates have exceeded rates for College's undergraduate population in three of the past six years for which data is available. The Brady Scholars program is relatively recent, but shows the most promise in overcoming barriers to academic success. Fully 100% of these students have been retained into the seventh over the past three years (Figure 13).

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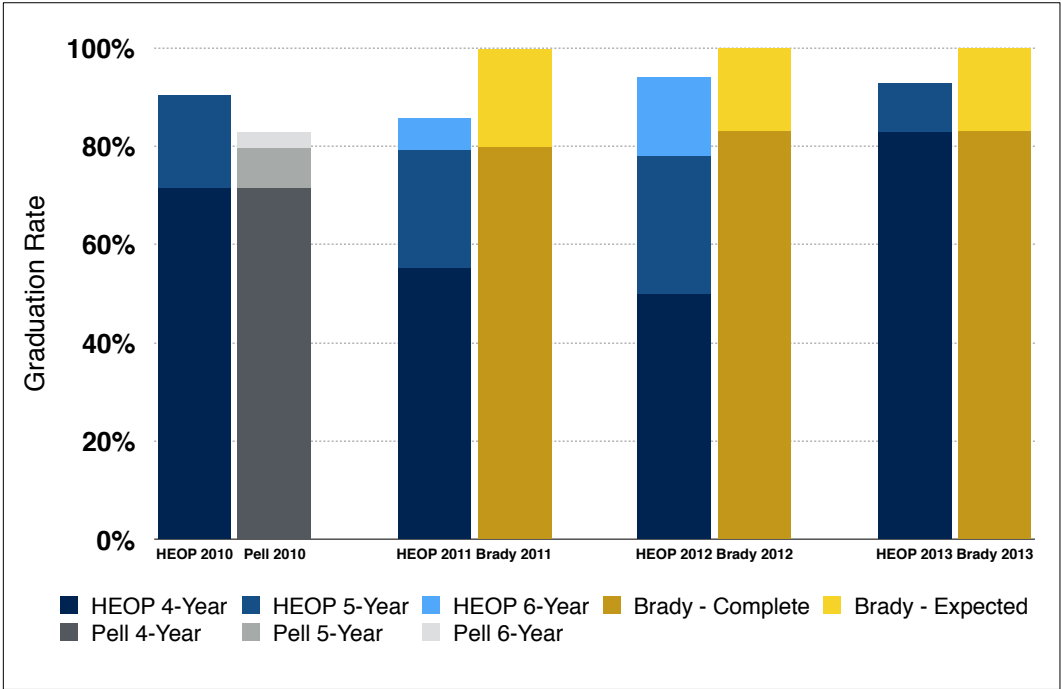
<sup>20</sup> A more expansive description of a wide range of student support programs is available in Appendix D.

**Figure 13: Term 7 Retention Rates for Special Programs with URM students**



This success extends into 6-year graduation rates for these students. Figure 14 shows outcomes for the HEOP and Brady Scholar programs, which have graduated students at the same rate or higher than the College undergraduate rate of roughly 86%.

**Figure 14: 6-Year Projected Graduation Rates for HEOP and Brady Scholars Programs**



In the summer of 2016, the David T. Kearns Center officially became the academic home to first-generation college students. Center staff have developed a series of one-credit courses on adjusting to College life, and provide enriched advising and support to students who are the first in their

families to attend college. Over two thirds of the members of the Class of 2020 who identify as first-generation were connected to the Center in the 2016-2017 academic year. Additional resources are being made available for study groups, textbook lending, and networking for these students.

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, part of the Kearns Center, works to prepare low-income, first-generation and underrepresented minority undergraduates for graduate level study. The overarching goal of this national program is to increase the diversity of the nation's professoriate. Over the course of its 25-year history at UR, the McNair Program has launched the academic careers of almost 500 students, over 350 of whom have already earned graduate degrees. This program demonstrates the potential of students from these demographic groups to achieve academic success at the highest levels.

In addition to co-curricular programming, the College has also made recent efforts to improve student life for URM students. First, the College has recently renovated student life and student support spaces with the goal of further strengthening the sense of community among students. The renovation of Douglass Commons and the creation of the Burgett Intercultural Center have resulted in an expansion of gathering spaces and programming to engage all students, including URM and international students. In addition to shared student spaces, the College recently identified additional space for the Office of Minority Student Affairs. This area, adjacent to the OMSA suite, has been renovated for student use and will serve as a computer/study room and a lounge.

In particular, the Burgett Intercultural Center is expected to benefit URM students. The Center promotes cultural awareness and engagement, educates on issues of identity, culture, and diversity, and provides opportunities for collaboration among students, staff, and faculty. It also works closely with offices across campus to develop resources that complement and supplement curricular offerings, explore the intersections of identity, build intercultural competence, and promote and encourage cultural understanding and appreciation among the campus constituents.

Second, the College has recently instituted a new Bias Incident Reporting system, which will provide a way to more systematically track and respond to racial bias, harassment and discrimination on campus. This system is also a means to document the types of experiences that some students feel lead to a hostile environment. As evidenced in the 2016 Climate Survey data presented above, this is particularly important around URM students' interactions with their peers, since acts of bias or discrimination most often occur in these types of interactions. It is expected that creating this clear, formal mechanism for reporting will increase the efficacy and responsiveness of the College to such situations.<sup>21</sup>

Third, the *We're Better than THAT* campaign engages students, staff and faculty in a wide variety of efforts to acknowledge their own biases, and work on a community that actively practices anti-racism. Members of the campaign have developed and delivered multiple workshops on bias and anti-racism, and are working across departments to enact policy and procedure revisions that will help the community to become ever better.

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<sup>21</sup> The College's online complaint system has been operative for a number of years, but students have not likely viewed it as an appropriate channel for non-academic issues.

In sum, we expect that these efforts will continue to strengthen the positive trajectory in academic and career outcomes for URM students.

## VI. Recommendations

This report provides insight into academic outcomes for URM and international students, and it gives some perspective on the racial climate for undergraduates within the College. The report also highlights the need to better understand and separate the effects of race/ethnicity, low-income and first-generation status for College undergraduates. It is only with this understanding that the College can continue to move forward in improving academic outcomes for the entire student body.

To facilitate this deeper understanding, the College proposes to establish a working group to continue to explore the experiences and academic outcomes (e.g. graduation rates) of URM students as related to low-income and first generation students more broadly. The working group would also conduct a review of student services, including the impact of admissions and financial aid practices, on URM, low-income and first generation students. This group would be led by the Dean for Diversity in AS&E and would report regularly to the Dean's Office on the best approaches to support these populations of students.

Given the usefulness of the 2016 climate survey data to understanding the experience of URM students, the College also proposes to continue the analysis and dissemination of this data and to deploy the survey every three years.

As noted in the report, the ECO, HEOP, Kearns and Brady Scholars programs have provided needed support for a substantial number of URM, first-generation, and/or low-income students. The College will continue to pursue the support and resources needed to expand these programs, with the goal of increasing the overall number of URM students receiving increased financial support and enhanced advising and counseling services. These services have proven important for improved retention and graduation rates for current program participants.

URM students also benefit from a welcoming and diverse campus environment in their transition to higher education. For this reason, the diversity of the faculty and staff, and their awareness and sensitivity to diversity issues, will continue to be a focus of College training efforts. These include providing staff hiring managers training and assistance with diversity considerations in hiring, and developing and implementing training on race and other dimensions of diversity for all College academic and support staff and faculty. This could occur through AS&E's faculty diversity officers, the AS&E and College Dean's Office, and/or Human Resources.

The great majority of students report inter-racial interactions and say that they welcome conversations in which their own values are challenged, even if they find such conversations stressful. The Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center promotes and supports these kinds of interactions, as do other College offices and programs. Continuing to support and develop these activities is critical, as is promoting We're Better than THAT: the university's anti-racism campaign.

The College should strongly encourage--and support--the development of student-led initiatives to address issues of bias on campus. Students overwhelmingly report that their interactions with peers are the main source of these incidents, and it is important that the College continue to develop and maintain robust communications with the student body as a whole regarding the Bias Related Incident Report, so that the community is aware of any patterns of behavior that emerge. In sum, we believe it is our responsibility to model appropriate behavior in difficult conversations; provide a safe environment in which students can explore identity and their place in the world; make a regular practice of reviewing and revising policies and procedures to ensure that groups of students are not disproportionately affected by them; and insofar as possible, ensure equitable outcomes in measures such as retention, graduation and participation in other academic and co-curricular endeavors.



## Appendix A: History of Student Activism and Diversity Reporting in the College

The College and university have been the subject of multiple diversity reports since the mid-60's. Starting with the Gifford Report, through the Eaves Report, the 1999 sit-in, the Residential College Commission on Diversity, and up through the fall 2015 protest and demands made of President Seligman, the organization has from time to time undertaken serious self-study leading to recommendations for improving the climate and experiences of minority faculty and students. Most of these recommendations have in fact come to fruition.

While they are in the College for only a short period of time--four to six years--undergraduates' impact on our community is profound. College students' engagement with the governance of campus life takes multiple forms, and there is a long history of activism around racial justice and access issues. From the demonstrations organized by the Black Students Union in the 1960s, through the 1999 sit-in at the President's office, to the more recent protest in the fall of 2015, College students have been and remain serious about their central role in the improvement of campus life. The most recent protest is a product both of our specific time, where large-scale racial injustices occur almost daily in the US, and the overwhelming desire of our students to see the institution embody *Meliora*—and become ever better.<sup>22</sup>

Student activism has generated a wide variety of positive changes around race and diversity in the College, both in academics and student life. In the last decade, these changes have included:

- a consistent focus on enrolling and retaining undergraduate and graduate students of color;
- the perseverance of the College Diversity Roundtable;
- the expansion of and improvements to the Early Connection Opportunity (ECO) program;
- the expansion of the David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity in Arts, Sciences and Engineering;
- the establishment of the Douglass Leadership House on the fraternity quadrangle;
- the creation of the Burgett Intercultural Center;
- the One Community Program during orientation;
- the “We’re Better Than That” anti-racism campaign;
- and the institution’s focus on improving the diversity of our faculty.

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<sup>22</sup> See the Race and Diversity Commission’s report for more information.

## Appendix B:

### The Complexity of Student Experiences: A Series of Vignettes

Survey responses can demonstrate that various percentages of students reported various things, and yet those seeking to assign definitive meaning to the data are left not knowing what combinations of experiences individual students have had, or what motivates their thinking and actions. During the Town Hall meetings in spring 2016, the administration and campus community learned about some student experiences,<sup>23</sup> but many students, minority and majority alike, did not participate in or speak during these events. Based on survey data, we have developed composites that illustrate the student experience in all its complexity and messiness.

**Student A, “Michael”** is an African American male STEM major in his junior year who denies having experienced discrimination/bias directly on any basis; he has witnessed but not reported it. Throughout his three years here, he has heard other students make derogatory remarks about Black people, both in academic and social settings. He interprets these as just par for the course, and has not gotten too upset about them. Michael is not an active member of a campus affinity group based on race or gender; he is an athlete, and involved in several academic groups. He works an on-campus job to help pay his tuition. The YikYak posts, and the way a couple of his close friends were impacted by their overt racism, did have a substantial impact on him. He did not seek out counseling, did not file a bias related incident or CARE report, and did not attend the march or the Town Hall meetings. He spent a lot of time in his residence hall among his friends (a multi-cultural and multi-racial mix of men and women) discussing why racism is so prevalent in the US and here at UR. These conversations have left him wanting to know more. He enjoys engaging in debate, and often takes the less widely held position, but becomes frustrated when his peers become defensive or unwilling to take the conversation into what he considers uncomfortable territory.

Michael has never had an assigned reading or discussion in class that addressed issues of racial or other kinds of diversity; he would like to do so, but does not know if he has space in his schedule for courses that would include them. His professors are mainly white males, and while he likes them and believes he is being well-educated, he feels the need for more faculty of color as role models. He believes it would be cool to have faculty members who look like him, or who maybe come from a similar, lower middle class background, and are willing to talk about it. This student thinks that the university is basically doing a good job with diversity, but that the world at large is truly messed up on this topic. For this student, issues of race and ethnicity are not primary; he spends much more time concerned with his coursework, family dynamics, working and paying his bills, and planning for his future than he does worried about race. He understands that his race and gender both put him in danger, but he tries not to think about it too much; he is not much swayed by the rhetoric of his activist peers who think he should take a more active role in demanding campus change.

**Student B, “Mary”** is a white female, sophomore, intended humanities major. She reports having experienced gender discrimination, and witnessing several discriminatory acts based on race (both

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<sup>23</sup> The transcripts of these meetings, as well as the larger report of the Commission on Race and Diversity, can be found at: <https://www.rochester.edu/president/commission-on-race-and-diversity/>

in person and on-line). She has taken several courses with assigned readings and discussions about issues of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. These conversations have sometimes been terrific and sometimes frustrating; she believes that some faculty members aren't as comfortable with the material, or with presenting the material to a diverse group of students, as she would like them to be. She enjoys engaging in debates on hot topics, but acknowledges that she gets uncomfortable when articulating her thoughts, and she sometimes silences herself for fear of saying the wrong thing. She is concerned about male aggression towards women.

Mary is mostly unconcerned about issues of faculty diversity—in fact, it is not something about which she had thought before the protest. She believes the level of student diversity in the College is terrific. She has made many friends from other cultures. When she has heard others make disparaging remarks about others, she has both challenged these comments and remained silent, in roughly equal proportions. She needs to feel safe, and comfortable enough with the group to call someone out, and this is not always the case. She would like support/training in this area. She participated in the protest march and supports her friends in their demands for more diversity and inclusion on campus, because she was horrified at the racist YikYak posts and other events on campus, which she views as almost prehistoric. For this student, gender issues are primary, with race/ethnicity now a close second.

**Student C, “Maria”** is a Hispanic female, social science student in her fourth year. She had some academic difficulty during her first year, but has developed into a strong student. She has continuing financial difficulty, which leads to much worry and many hours of work. Maria reports having experienced discrimination often as a student here, and though she has not reported it officially, she has spoken to an adviser in OMSA, as well as the adviser to SALSA, of which she has been a member all four years; she is currently on its e-board. Some of her academic difficulty early on was the result of her full immersion in the cultural life of campus, and her need to work, to the detriment of her studies. She speaks with an accent, and has heard numerous comments on it; for example, students ask where she's from and do not believe her when she says Pennsylvania.

Twice, faculty members have commented about her writing; in fact, one suggested her work was not her own because it was “too good to have been written by someone with an accent” like hers. This was unnerving and made her very angry; but she did not make a formal complaint. Doing so she feels would be risky to her academic future, and casts her as a victim, a stance she refuses to take. She talks to her parents at least once a day, and helps her younger siblings with their lives—her younger sister is applying to college this year as well. She also sends money home. The daily experiences of her mom and sisters are very much forefront in her mind; when they are having a hard time, she feels it deeply. She believes that she is discriminated against because she is Hispanic and has an accent, because she is a woman, and because she is poor. She has friends and family members who are undocumented, and their constant vulnerability to discrimination and the threat of deportation is deeply worrisome. It is always in the back of her mind, a sense of foreboding and fear. The conversations she has with others about race are exhausting to her, and she does not believe it should be her responsibility to educate others about racial sensitivity or inclusion. In her mind, the university is not doing its part with respect to making the campus and community more accessible, ensuring negative consequences for those who engage in racist behavior, or ensuring her

safety. Race, class and gender are primary to this student's understanding of the world and her place in it.

**Student D, "Mark"** is a white male first year student. He is the first person in his family to attend college. His parents own their own business, a diner beloved in his home community. He received financial aid, and his parents are proud to be able to pay his tuition bill, so that he does not have to work while at school. He did very well in high school without much effort; good grades and friendships alike have come easy to him. He worked in the family business throughout high school, and plans to do so on breaks throughout college. He is planning to major in economics and business, so he can help his parents as they age. He appreciates what he sees as the sacrifices that they continue to make on his behalf. Mark denies having witnessed actual discrimination, though this is a very complicated topic for him. He is interested in joining a fraternity; he is involved in intramural sports, and has friends of different races. His work ethic is impeccable; he spends a lot of time studying. He also enjoys partying, and has occasionally said or done something that his female friends tell him is demeaning. Mark has recently been told on social media that some of his views on race and sexuality are troubling. He has gotten into sparring matches on Facebook that go on long into the night. He genuinely wants to understand other points of view, but his beliefs are very deeply held, and he is perceived by others as aggressive. This troubles him a little. Also troubling is the fact that A's no longer come so easily to him; in his first semester, he earned two C's, the first of his life. He has never sought academic help before and truthfully is embarrassed to do so; he did not share his grades with his parents. Sometimes in class he is shocked at how smart his peers seem to be. He saw the protest but did not attend; he read some of the reports on the Town Hall meetings in the Campus Times, but did not feel compelled to attend them. He would have been too nervous to do so. He thinks that the protesters are focused on the wrong things. He is unsettled in his second semester; his worldview and understanding of his ability to navigate the world has been shaken. This survey annoys him; it illustrates the fact that the administration pays more attention to race than he is comfortable with. Before attending college, Mark did not ever deal with issues of race or gender diversity, and they are not primary in his identity formation or experience here, except in ways that make him uncomfortable.

By listening to the complexity of our students' experience, we understand that race is not always primary to the identity or lived experiences, even of URM students, but it is often a factor in the ways they interact. No student group is monolithic in beliefs or values; what one student believes is critical another may dismiss as trivial. Even across their own experiences, student values change; the majority of our students range in age from 18-22, prime years for the development of an adult identity. A student who as a freshman was unconcerned about inequality has a very good chance of becoming an activist sophomore, and vice versa. A challenge for the College is to provide safe conditions for these shifting identities.

Michael, Mary, Maria and Mark all interact with each other—perhaps in the athletic center, perhaps in a campus group, in a residence hall or program; perhaps they are drawn together by a mutual love of a musical group; perhaps they are friends on Facebook or follow each other on Twitter or Instagram. *That* they interact is critically important to the development of each. *How* they interact determines much of the campus climate. It is the College's responsibility to ensure that they all have the necessary tools to both learn from these interactions, and to engage in them respectfully.

However, as students themselves determine the culture of the living environment, it is also up to students to determine how best to address these issues. The College can reflect survey results back to the students; student leaders need to work with and challenge their peers to develop a supportive and safe community.

## Appendix C: HERI Diverse Learning Environments: Survey Instrument and Respondent Demographics

### Survey Instrument

The Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey was distributed to AS&E and Eastman undergraduate and graduate students during the first two weeks of February 2016 through a secure link; it captured student perceptions regarding the institutional climate; campus practices as experienced with faculty, staff, and peers; and student learning outcomes. The survey included 52 questions with 425 fields due to branching,<sup>24</sup> as well as three additional modules: Classroom Climate; Transition to the Major; and Intergroup Relations. Two open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide additional information as desired.

The responses of UR students ( $N=2,324$ , including ESM undergrad and graduate students) were compared by HERI to the comparison groups ( $N=15,392$ ) comprising students from nine public and private universities (Comparison Group 1) and fifteen four-year institutions (Comparison Group 2). Six two-year institutions also completed the survey in 2016; however, these institutions are not part of Rochester's comparison groups. See Table C1 for College respondents' demographics.

**Table C1. Demographics of College Undergraduate Student Respondents**

2016 Campus Climate Survey Summary					
Group	Survey Respondents		AS&E Undergraduates		Difference
URM	253	15.3%	664	12.2%	3.1%
non URM	1405	84.7%	4790	87.8%	-3.1%
International	232	14.0%	1212	22.2%	-8.2%
male	718	43.3%	2835	52.0%	-8.7%
female	940	56.7%	2619	48.0%	8.7%
freshman	512	30.9%	1359	24.9%	6.0%
sophomore	404	24.4%	1326	24.3%	0.1%
junior	387	23.3%	1368	25.1%	-1.7%
senior	352	21.2%	1297	23.8%	-2.6%
Humanities	124	7.5%	313	5.7%	1.7%
Social Sciences	448	27.0%	1411	25.9%	1.1%
Natural Sciences	480	29.0%	1623	29.8%	-0.8%
Engineering	498	30.0%	1721	31.6%	-1.5%
Total	1658		5454		
Response Rate	30.4%				

<sup>24</sup> "Branching" provides respondents who give certain answers to receive a further set of probing questions.

## Appendix D: Support Services for Students in the College

The following describes programs, efforts, and offices that provide an array of support services to students, and work on building an inclusive community. No one office is responsible for or supports all URM students; likewise, no one office is responsible for or provides support for all low-income students. Although the Kearns Center just recently began reaching out to all first-generation students in the Class of 2020, it has not had this role in the past, and details about implementation are still being worked out. While not 100% comprehensive, this summary describes many of the ways in which the College supports its URM students.

### Pre-enrollment experiences:

- The **Early Connection Opportunity Program (ECO)** is a pre-freshman summer academic program designed to introduce students to the distinctive Rochester Curriculum, and to help students acquire the skills, attitudes, and social connections necessary to become successful UR students. The program is mandatory for all freshmen supported by the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) and other first-year students who are identified as academically at-risk, and is designed to provide students with the necessary tools to make a successful transition from high school to college. In addition, each summer six students are identified from the ECO cohort to be **Brady Scholars**. The Brady Student Support Fund provides enhanced financial aid for all four years of undergraduate study, ensuring that supported students have access to all the opportunities available to students in the College.
- Coordinated by the Office of Admissions, the university is currently in its third year of partnership with **Posse DC**. The Posse Foundation identifies talented and highly deserving students in the DC, Maryland, and northern Virginia (DMV) area for success at Rochester. Over one thousand applications are received for the Rochester Posse annually and 20-22 students are offered a chance to meet with admissions staff, selected faculty, and other university staff in a highly interactive interview process. The Posse is then selected from this group and offered enrollment under an early decision agreement. Each Posse has a mentor who helps to guide them through the transition from high school to college. Outcome data for Posse students are not yet available, but the College expects similar positive effects as with ECO, HEOP and Brady Scholars.
- **Multicultural Visitation Program (MVP)** through the Office of Admissions brings together approximately 75-90 high school seniors from diverse backgrounds and allows them to experience Rochester on a more personal level. Admission to MVP is a competitive process that considers academic and personal qualities. Program highlights include experiencing living and dining on campus; staying overnight in a residence hall with a student host; learning about various opportunities for research, student services, our advising program, athletics, and more; participating in discussions with current students about the college experience; and interacting with students, faculty, staff, and administrators.
- **First-generation luncheon** during orientation provides a warm welcome for students (and their family members) who are the first in their families to attend college. The **First One** campaign identifies staff and faculty who understand the experiences of first-generation college



students and celebrates our students who identify as such. The first-generation student committee works to develop programming throughout the year for students, and to provide outreach to family members on various aspects of college experience.

The College offers a wide variety of programs and services designed to ease all students' transition to college life and to strengthen their academic performance via **tutoring, study groups, and advising**.

- Professional advisors in the **College Center for Advising Services (CCAS)** provide undergraduates with guidance and help to resolve academic issues.
- Students may also seek assistance from the **Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)**, which supports undergraduate students with course-specific collaborative workshops and study groups, study skills support, disability support, and the College Tutoring Program.
- The **Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA)** provides counseling, disseminates information, initiates programs and serves as a liaison with other departments and divisions of the university to enhance the environment in which underrepresented minority students live and learn. Within OMSA, the **Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP)** provides comprehensive and structured educational and financial support services to over 100 students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Support includes substantial need-based financial assistance, student-centered advising, tutorial support, and numerous co-curricular activities. While HEOP students enter the University academically and financially disadvantaged, and are often the first in their family to attend college, the vast majority graduate. The most recent five-year cohort graduation rate for HEOP students within the past funding cycle is 90%. Services for students who participated in ECO extend throughout the first year via the Early Connection Opportunity Scholars Program (ESP). ESP is designed to assist first-year students through continued advising and mentoring, as well as academic and social programming.
- The **David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity in Arts, Sciences and Engineering** at UR works to expand the educational pipeline through the doctoral degree for low-income, first-generation college, and underrepresented minority students. The Center supports students from middle school through doctoral study, providing intensive academic interventions geared towards ensuring that students are successful in their current level of study, while also preparing for the next one. The Center has recently been identified as the academic home for first-generation college students, and provides tailored academic advising and other support to these students.
- **Kearns Scholars Seminar** is a non-credit bearing course designed to provide first year low-income and first-generation college students a safe space to discuss shared experiences. Topics include: being low-income at a prestigious university, academic resiliency and sense of belonging, first-generation student experiences, and stress management.
- The Kearns Center provides **small, graduate student-led study groups** in introductory level science courses that are essential for successful completion of STEM majors. In the first year of study, low-income and first-generation students often require the additional academic assistance and cohort building provided by the study group program. With a strong foundation in entry-level courses, participants are retained and graduate at higher rates. The Center's



**academic advising model** was developed specifically to address the unique complexities of the lives of low-income and first-generation students.

- Some students need to take **summer courses** to be on track in their major, to make up credits, or to complete coursework that is a prerequisite for moving forward in a program of study; such students often require more than four or five years to graduate. Funding opportunities for summer class enrollment, particularly in mathematics, have recently been provided by OMSA, the Kearns Center and the Deans' Office, with a goal of increasing the six-year graduation rate.
- Hajim staff members identify students in the most at-risk populations (first generation, low-income, and underrepresented minority) and coordinate support for these students under the "**STEM-Gems**" initiative. Throughout freshman year, STEM-Gems are provided academic advising and enrichment by a network of University offices. To reinforce these resources available to students, each Hajim School academic department designates faculty, undergraduate coordinators, and students to serve as STEM-Gems advisers. These focused efforts are beginning to see results: the first-to-second year retention of URM students in Hajim has increased substantially.
- The College has over the past several years dedicated efforts to increase the number of underrepresented minority students who **study abroad**. These efforts have resulted in a 41% increase in the number of students studying abroad between 2011 and 2014 (from 44 to 62). In 2013-14, the latest year for which comprehensive data are available, between 13-14% of our students who studied abroad are underrepresented minority students. In fact, Education Abroad and the Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA) are co-located in part to help facilitate this growth over time.
- The **Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program's** goal is to increase the numbers of low-income, first-generation college and underrepresented minority students who pursue Ph.D. degrees. Each McNair Scholar completes a mentored research experience and attends seminars from sophomore through senior year; they meet and network with faculty, prepare for the General Record Exam, learn about life in the academy, and apply to graduate schools. Since the program's inception in 1992, over 80% of our graduates have enrolled in graduate school, and over 100 have already earned doctoral degrees. More than a dozen are currently faculty members at colleges and universities across the country, in fields such as math, computer science, psychology, education and political science.

Student response to campus climate surveys completed in 2010, 2012 and 2016 have all highlighted the on-going need for social and co-curricular support for all students, with specific needs being identified by URM students.

- Students are supported through **Wilson Commons Student Activities** in their desire for connections via identity or interest. Our support of approximately 260 student-led organizations and committees exemplifies our commitment to providing experiential learning opportunities for students and creating a vibrant, diverse and inclusive campus community. More than 10% of our student organizations are culturally focused on and promote diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness. A total of **44 Students Association-recognized student organizations have a diversity-related mission**.

- The **Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center (BIC)** works with students, staff and faculty to foster a collaborative environment that celebrates the range of cultures represented on campus while also providing opportunities for education and dialogue on different topics. In Fall 2016, the BIC moved into the new student life space in the Frederick Douglass Building.
- The **One Community** orientation program through the Burgett Intercultural Center engages students in a panel discussion followed by small group and peer facilitated discussions that explore the way the University of Rochester community is shaped by our intersecting identities. The One Community Program was awarded one of three Presidential Diversity Awards in 2016. As part of our promise to our students that we would gather members of the community to have difficult conversations, the BIC holds numerous **dialogues** in response to the race-relations tensions in the U.S. and on campus, as well as in response to international disasters.
- The mission of the **Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)** through OMSA is to facilitate the development of leadership skills, promote excellence, individuality and group cohesiveness among current and emerging leaders affiliated with OMSA. The skills gained enable students to take on a more active leadership role in their organizations, better navigate university/College resources, and engage in a wide range of co-curricular activities, both on and off campus.

Through conversations at the College Diversity Roundtable, feedback from the various campus climate surveys, and discussions with students, we understand that providing our students, regardless of ethnicity or background, **opportunities to make connections with each other across and within groups** is deeply important to their well-being and growth.

- The **Kearns Center's** vertical mentoring model provides students at each point in the educational pipeline with many opportunities to interact in meaningful ways with individuals from similar backgrounds who are both ahead of and behind them on the path to academic success. That is, high school students are able to work with both middle school and college students, as well as graduate students and faculty members, all of whom are invested in their success. In particular, connecting minority and first-generation college students with similar backgrounds allows them to envision themselves as successful academics and researchers, whether they are in high school, college or graduate school.
- The renovations of the **sanctuary at the Interfaith Chapel** in summer 2015 removed the pews and created a more flexible space, so that the sanctuary is now a "sacred space" for many more religious traditions including Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish. In summer 2014 we installed ablution stations for men and women in the Chapel so that Muslim students could perform the ritual ablutions necessary before their daily prayers. Additional ablution stations and a meditation/prayer space are also now open in the renovated Frederick Douglass Building.
- The Communal Principles Project (CPP) is an initiative of the College coordinated by the Office of the Dean of Students. This project aims to promote the communal principles of **fairness, freedom, honesty, inclusion, respect, and responsibility**, which are woven into the fabric that make up our community of engaged, lifelong learners. One of the six principles is highlighted annually. Students are invited to apply for mini grants to develop a program or activity that exemplifies the spirit and purpose of inclusion to our community. "Communal Principles Day" celebrates all of the College's Communal Principles, and introduces the next year's principle.

- The Burgett Intercultural Center (BIC) coordinates **LGBTQ Issue and Awareness** programs, events, and dialogues, including a Transgender Panel. Moving forward the BIC will be revamping a Safe Zone Training program for students, allowing for student leadership development and LGBTQ training and awareness for their peers.
- The BIC offers **Intercultural Workshops and Classes** on communication and competence. Multiple **intersectional discussion groups** are offered and organized through the Burgett Intercultural Center and other offices: Graduate Students of Color, Non-traditional Undergrads at UR, Queer Students of Color, Surviving Crisis Abroad, UR DREAMers, UR Trans Support Network, and the Women of Color Circle.

Our understanding of student needs extends to the continuing requirement that **College administration remain attentive to the community** it creates at every level: continuing successful mechanisms (and instituting others) for listening to student concerns, being open to student, staff and faculty critique, following up on the concerns underlying demands for the creation and sustenance of safe spaces for URM students, and ensuring that diversity considerations are part of all staff hiring and training. Several current efforts have been successful in this domain.

- The **College Diversity Roundtable (CDR)**, appointed by the Dean of the College, is charged with establishing an educational forum/exchange by which diversity, in all its complexity and multi-faceted dimensions, can be supported and affirmed. The CDR consists of students, staff, and faculty and is a student-centered forum where current events and campus climate are discussed. Some initiatives that have emerged from the CDR recently include the One Community Program, and the Bias-Related Incident Reporting System that. All three Campus Climate Surveys (2008, 2010, and 2016) were administered by members of the CDR.
- The **Bias-Related Incident Report** is a means to document racist, sexist, and otherwise troubling comments, incidents or events to which our students are exposed. Bias-Related Incidents received by the CARE network are forwarded to the director of the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center (BIC) for follow up. The director of the BIC reaches out to students named in the report and/or the UR community member who submitted the report. If anonymous, the report is documented. If the Report describes a high level concern or crisis, the director convenes the Bias-Related Incident Executive Team<sup>25</sup> to coordinate a response and/or communicate with the AS&E community. All reports are compiled and reviewed regularly for trends and to identify the need for educational programming. The Bias-Related Incident Team provide aggregate details of reports received to the AS&E and UR communities on a least an annual basis.
- The **Student Support Network (SSN)** consists of a comprehensive array of campus offices and departments. Its purpose is to identify students and issues that may need attention, support, or other intervention. The SSN meets formally on a regular basis. Its members hold themselves to the very highest ethical standards, sharing information confidentially among University staff and faculty on a “need-to-know” basis only.

Finally, but importantly, the College is committed to **educational outreach** into the local community, and especially to ensuring that local K-12 students understand that college is for them.

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<sup>25</sup> The Bias-Related Incident Team includes: Richard Feldman, Dean of the College; Matthew Burns, Dean of Students; Beth Olivares, Dean for Diversity Initiatives; Norman Burnett, Assistant Dean and Director, Office of Minority Student Affairs; and Jessica Guzman-Rea, Director, Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center.

- **The Upward Bound programs** in the Kearns Center support high school students in a year round effort to graduate high school and gain admission to college. They are designed to help first generation and/or low-income students who are enrolled in the Rochester City School District. Activities take place after school, on weekends and during the summer. Students apply in the spring of their eighth or ninth grade year and remain in the program until they graduate from college. The results are exciting. These students have graduated at a rate of 95%, compared to the overall RCSD high school graduation rate which is currently 43%. Equally as impressive is the college-going rate of these students. Ninety-three percent of the Kearns Center Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math/Science high school graduates enrolled in college.
- The STEM Specialist at the Kearns Center works with faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students to design, plan and implement innovative **hands-on curriculum for our pre-college students**. This includes the ability to design and teach courses during the academic year and the summer. Additionally, she works with STEM departments in the college to implement our study groups in chemistry and biology while also coordinating support for physics students. During the academic year, workshops consist of unique and authentic curriculum design that is developed with the input of faculty and staff, whose goal is to increase the interest and success of students in STEM from high school into college.
- **The College Prep Centers (CPCs)** at East High School and Vanguard Collegiate High School are a partnership of the Kearns Center and the RCSD. The CPCs work to challenge students to see themselves as potential college students, and have access to accurate and relevant information about the process of preparing for and successfully enrolling in college with appropriate financial aid and scholarship assistance.
- Office of Admissions has multiple efforts aimed at increasing the diversity of the undergraduate population, in addition to national outreach and recruitment. **The Rochester Promise Scholarship** is a tuition-free scholarship program available to Rochester City School District graduates and guarantees at least \$100,000 in sponsored scholarships to attend the College in Arts, Sciences, and Engineering. Renewing the program for RCSD high school classes of 2014 and beyond, high-performing public school students in Rochester will attend the University tuition free with tuition assistance that - when added to government, university, or other grants for which they are eligible - equals full tuition up to four years of enrollment.
  - Since 2008, Rochester has participated in the **Say Yes to Education** program, which offers comprehensive tuition scholarship programs to high school graduates from the Syracuse and Buffalo city school districts, and most recently, Guilford County, NC. High school graduates in Say Yes communities who are Say Yes Scholars with annual family incomes at or below \$100,000 — and who gain admission to the University of Rochester — are typically eligible to receive scholarships covering the full cost of tuition.
  - In partnership with the National Hispanic Institute, the University hosts **the Lorenzo de Zavala Youth Legislative Session**, a nine-day extensive leadership program each July and brings approximately 130 youth in 10th and 11th grades from across the United States and Latin America to campus. The university is proud to offer the Lorenzo de Zavala scholarship as an incentive for students to bring to our campus the skills they gained through participation in the legislative session.

- Since 2011, in partnership with Sigma Phi Epsilon, the 19th Ward Community Association, and the Rochester City School District, the University of Rochester has hosted and supported the **Annual Spelling Bee and Campus Discovery Search** which features students in grades 3 through 7 in schools 16, 19 and 44. In addition to the Spelling Bee, students participate in a campus-wide scavenger hunt, which incorporates a history of the campus and buildings.
- The Office of Admissions, the Financial Aid Office, and Pre-College Programs combine efforts to present the **Pre-College Experience (PCE)**. This event is for students in grades 7–11 from Rochester, Buffalo, and Syracuse schools. In this free program, participants may choose to attend an assortment of workshops on topics such as the college admissions process, financial aid, the college essay, mini-class offerings available through Pre-College Programs, and summer program offerings.
- In partnership with twelve area colleges, the UR is a member of **Rochester Area Colleges (RAC)** and participates in numerous programs and events focusing on outreach to high schools in the Rochester, Syracuse and Finger Lakes regions. Programs include mini-college fairs at high schools, a Counselor Enrichment Program for the school counselors and Spring Panel Presentations on academic preparation and college transition at each RCSD high school.

**Rochester Center for Community Leadership (RCCL):** RCCL is dedicated to supporting partnerships between our campus and the local, national, and international community. We help create these bridges through a number of initiatives, including: career-building experiences (jobs, internships, and fellowships), volunteer opportunities, leadership training and community-engaged learning. A new Citation in Community Engaged Learning was approved this past academic year that will identify this activity on students' transcripts.