



Student Experience in the Research University 2017 Disability Topics

The Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) is a consortium of research institutions in the Association of American Universities who administer a common survey in an effort to generate knowledge and help further the goals of higher education in general and at the member institutions specifically. The SERU survey is a comprehensive survey of all undergraduate students at Texas A&M University (TAMU) intended to give faculty, students and administration in-depth insights into the undergraduate experience. SERU was most recently administered at TAMU in the spring, 2017. A total of 6,655 undergraduates completed the survey, representing 14% of the overall undergraduate population. Respondents with disabilities were asked about their own experiences. In addition, all respondents were asked a variety of questions about their knowledge of and experience with students with disabilities.

Of the respondents, 2% indicated they had physical disabilities that affected how they accessed campus facilities; 10% revealed they had learning disabilities that affected how they read, studies, and did coursework; and 10% indicated psychological disabilities that affected how they learned or interacted with others. Overall, about 1,100 students indicated one or more disabilities. Of the respondents who indicated a disability of any kind, 26% of them received an accommodation. In Spring 2017, 2,027 students (both undergraduate and graduate) were registered with Disability Services. Learning disabilities and ADHD are the most common diagnosis categories (<http://disability.tamu.edu/Statistics>).

Figures 1-4 show student agreement with several questions about the campus environment related to students with disabilities. The figures show the percentages of students who strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed with the statement.

Figure 1: Students with a disability like mine are respected on this campus

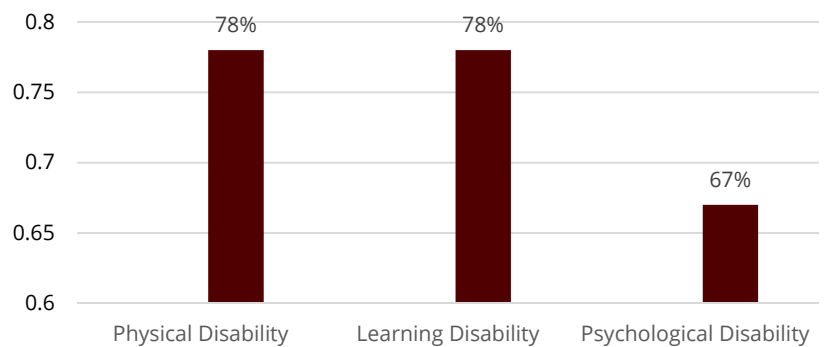


Figure 1: Students with psychological disabilities indicate that they might feel slightly less respected than students with physical or learning disabilities.





Figure 2 indicates that students with disabilities feel similar to students without disabilities in terms of the climate, although students with psychological disabilities may be less comfortable.

Figure 2: Overall, I feel comfortable with the climate for diversity and inclusion at TAMU

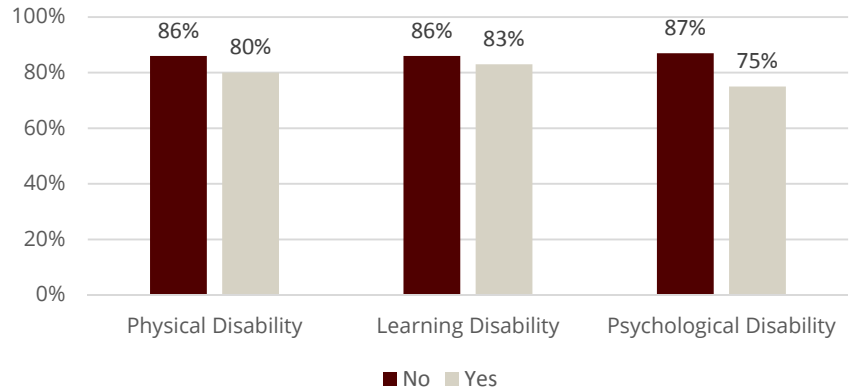


Figure 3 shows some similarity between students with disabilities and those without on Texas A&M being welcoming, although students with psychological disabilities may feel slightly less welcome.

Figure 3: Texas A&M is a welcoming campus

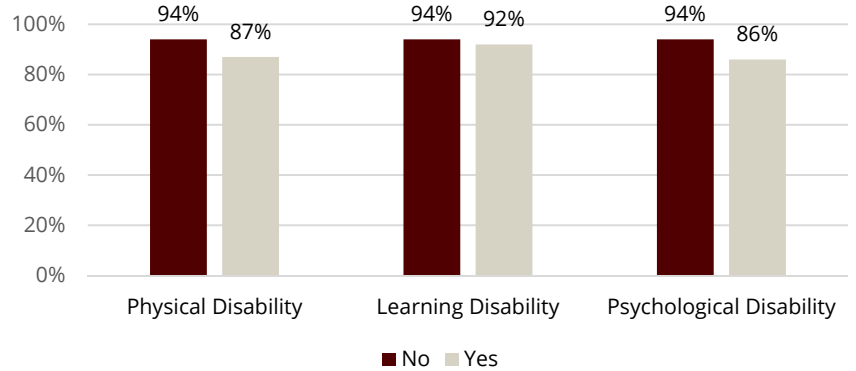
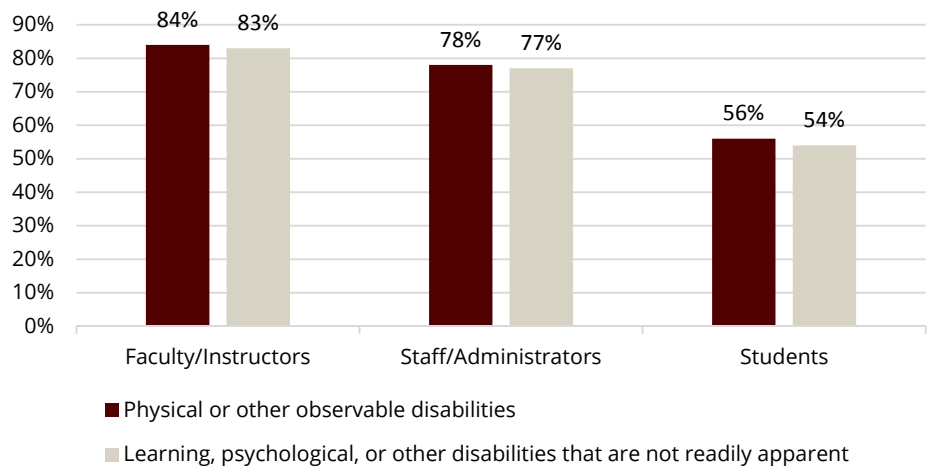


Figure 4 indicates that about half of the respondents have heard students making stereotypical remarks about students with disabilities, but are less likely to hear faculty and staff make negative statements.

Figure 4: In this academic year, I have NEVER heard <role> express negative or stereotypical views about <disability type>:





When all survey respondents were asked how often they gained deeper understanding of other perspectives through conversations with fellow students who had a physical or other observable disabilities, 25% said very often, often, or somewhat often (the other responses were occasionally, rarely, and never). When asked the same question related to students with learning, psychological, or other disabilities, 27% of the respondents indicated very often, often, or somewhat often. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the gains all respondents reported related to understanding visible and unseen disabilities.

Figure 5: Gains in understanding and awareness of physical/observable disabilities

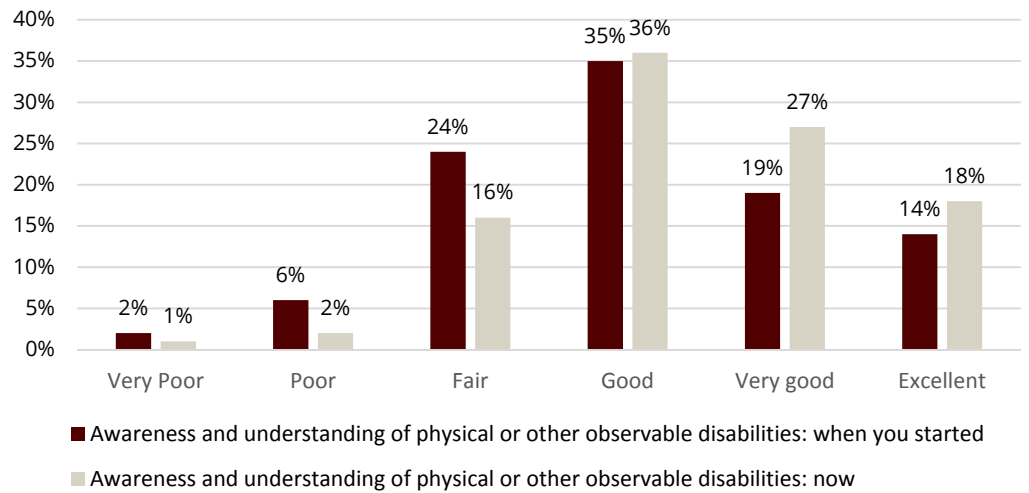


Figure 5 shows that students perceive gains in their knowledge about physical disabilities while at Texas A&M.

Figure 6: Gains in understanding and awareness of learning/psychological/unseen disabilities

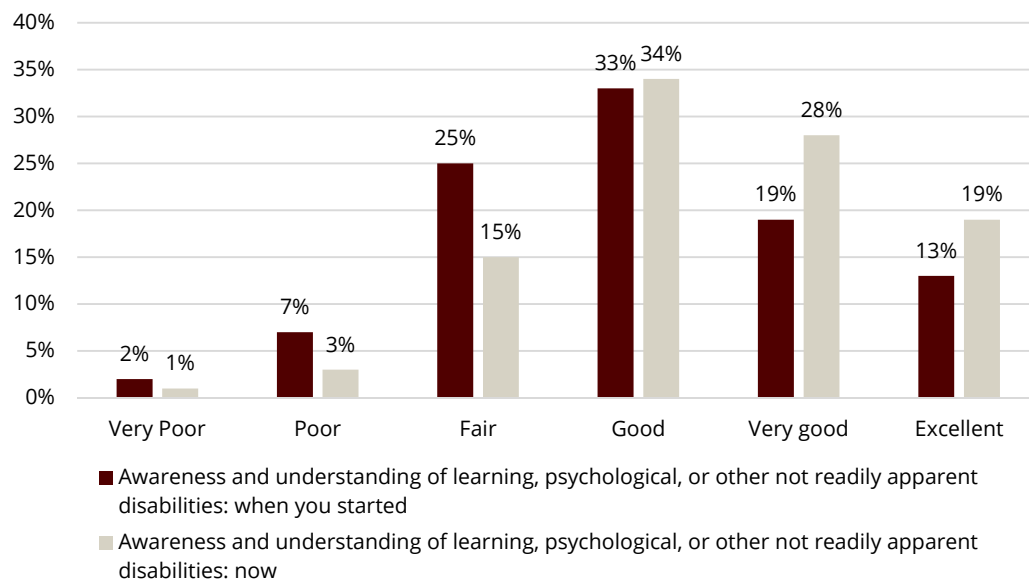


Figure 6 indicates that students perceive a gain in understanding learning/psychological/not readily apparent disabilities while at Texas A&M.



Conclusion

The majority of respondents with disabilities at Texas A&M generally feel welcome, respected, and comfortable with the climate. At the same time, some students, particularly those with psychological disabilities may be having negative experiences impacting their time at Texas A&M. While students were not likely to hear faculty and staff make negative remarks about students with disabilities, almost half of the respondents heard other students making stereotypical or negative remarks about disabilities. Respondents reported gains in their understanding and awareness about disabilities since being at Texas A&M.

The Department of Disability Services at Texas A&M provides accommodations and resources for students with disabilities, as well as information and resources for faculty and the general population. For more information about Disability Services, see <http://disability.tamu.edu/>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Contact the Department of Student Life Studies at
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