

The background of the slide features a large, stylized orange with two green leaves. The orange is rendered in a soft, painterly style with warm tones of orange and yellow. The leaves are a vibrant green with visible veins. The overall composition is simple and visually appealing, providing a warm and inviting backdrop for the text.

Context Matters: Campus Climate and College Adjustment among Students of Color

Tabbye M. Chavous, PhD
Professor of Psychology and Education
Director, National Center for Institutional Diversity
University of Michigan
CCAS Annual Meeting
November 7, 2019

Game Plan



1. **Common language/framing** around campus racial climate, especially *compositional, behavioral, and psychological* dimensions
2. **Center** experiences and voices of students of color
 - *Snapshots* of data from MI and national studies
3. **Prime** our thinking for discussion:
 - What was familiar? What do need to learn more about? What types of “data” would be useful?
 - How do these dimensions of climate show up in *your* campus/community spaces?
 - Which strategies could/do you use to help to improve students’ climate experiences and adjustment?

Is the Game Rigged before it Starts?



- U.S. educational system is one of the most unequal in the industrialized world
 - District/school differences in funding, teacher quality, curriculum, class sizes
 - Tracking effects, curriculum differentiation
- Accounts for racial and SES differences in educational achievement

Why focus on campus climate?



- College context also matters for college attainment and success
- Pre-college educational inequalities not enough to explain racial/ethnic and SES disparities in college success
 - The *social, psychological, and structural* dimensions of college contexts can also influence how students' experience and engage in their academic and social environments on campus
 - Amenable to change on and by college campuses

Why focus on campus racial climate?



- Approaches to supporting minoritized students will be incomplete if they do not center issues of context, how campus contexts impact students
 - Movement away from single emphasis on changing students, or on providing structures/programs to help students navigate or “fit into” campus
- Experiencing positive campus racial climate an important adjustment outcome in itself
- Experiencing negative campus racial climate an educational (and mental health) inequality

The contemporary context of campus racial climate

- Race has long been salient to the experiences of Students of Color in higher education

Anti-Immigration Posters Found On Penn State Main Campus

February 13, 2017 3:46 PM By Steve Tawa

Filed Under: [Penn State](#), [Pennsylvania](#), [Steve Tawa](#)



Education

American University is dealing with a racist incident on its campus. It is not alone.

FOLLOW US ON



DIVERSITY

Racial Incidents at 3 Campuses

Minority students report heightened tensions at St. Olaf, American and Baylor.

By [Scott Jaschik](#) // May 1, 2017

UT Town Hall Addresses Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Muslim Campus Posters

BY [DANIELLE LOPEZ](#) IN [40 ACRES](#) ON FEBRUARY 23, 2017 AT 2:45 PM | NO COMMENTS

Anti-immigrant chalkings appear during UMD's first 'Social Justice Day'

By [Mitchell Wellman](#), [University of Virginia](#) 9:58 pm EDT April 18, 2017

30 shares



SHARE



TWEET



EMAIL

"Deport Dreamers," "Wall, wall, wall,..." and "#Trump2020" were just some of the messages that appeared today etched in chalk on the University of Maryland sidewalk.

Grade Point

JOB:



Racially offensive fliers found at the University of Michigan: 'Why White Women Shouldn't Date Black Men'

What is Campus (Racial) Climate?



- ▶ **Campus racial climate:** “part of the institutional context that includes members’ attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and expectations around issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity...” (Hurtado, S., Griffin, K. A., Arellano, L., & Cuellar, M., 2008)
- ▶ **Campus climate:** "current attitudes, behaviors and standards of faculty, staff, administrators and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities and potential." (Rankin, S., & Reason, R., 2008)



Dimensions of Climate

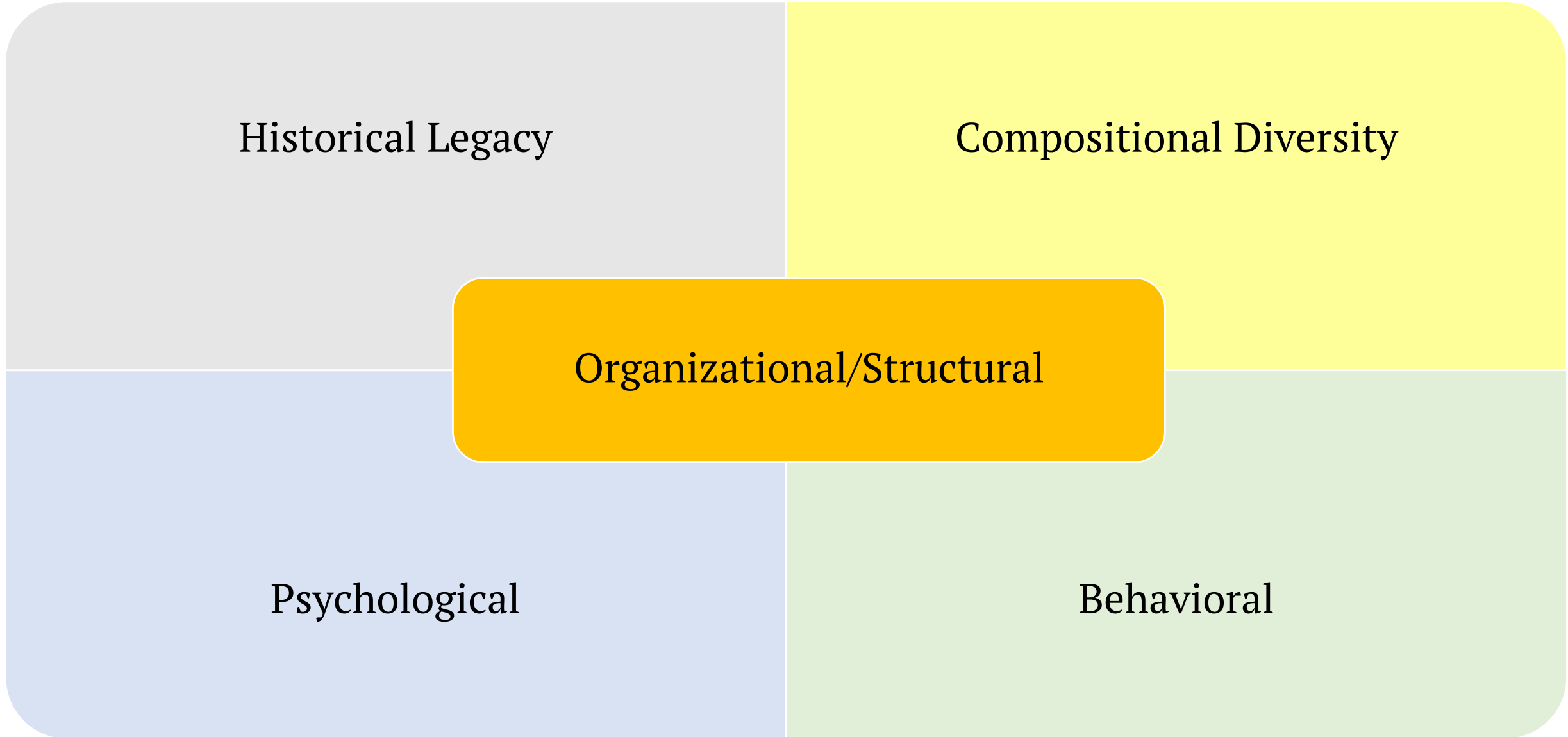
Historical Legacy

Compositional Diversity

Organizational/Structural

Psychological

Behavioral



Dimensions of Climate

Historical Legacy

of exclusion/inclusion

<https://diversity.umich.edu/about/history/>

Compositional Diversity

Organizational/Structural

Psychological

Behavioral

Dimensions of Climate

Historical Legacy

Compositional Diversity

Physical presence of minoritized/
underrepresented groups

Organizational/Structural

Embedded in the institutional mission
or reward structure; equity indicators;
resources allocated

Psychological

Behavioral

Dimensions of Climate

Historical Legacy

Compositional Diversity

Organizational/Structural

Psychological Climate

How do people feel?

Perceptions of conflict, feeling singled-out, isolated
Feelings of belonging, being valued
Perceptions of institutional support

Behavioral Climate

How do people treat each other?

Interactions between different groups;
Participation in training or setting behavioral norms;
Bias, discrimination, microaggressions, stereotypes



Disentangling what we can change



Climate as Malleable

- What can we shift in the *climate*? (demographic diversity, hostile behavior, exclusionary reputation)

See Griffin (2018)



“Micro-climates”

- Students’ campus settings (classroom, dept, social contexts) as micro-climates
- While each are part of the university, each can be a location for more immediate change

See Holmes et al. (2016)

Campus Climate Experiences and Student/Academic Identity

CLIMATE EXPERIENCES

Behavioral Climate

- Intergroup experiences
- Harassment
- Discrimination, Microaggressions

Psychological Climate

- Intergroup association norms
- Equal status among groups
- Diversity values

Compositional Diversity

- Solo/Token Status

ACADEMIC IDENTITY

Affective

- Sense of belonging
- Efficacy, competence
- Ability beliefs, mindset

Cognitive

- Interest, curiosity
- Conscientiousness

Behavioral

- Academic efforts & involvement

STUDENT BACKGROUND

- Academic preparation
- Socioeconomic background
- Racial/ethnic/cultural identity
- Gender identity
- Motivation (Interests, beliefs)

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS

Teaching and Mentoring

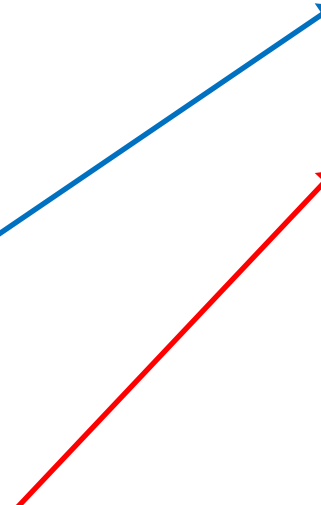
- High expectations, critical feedback
- Regular monitoring/advising
- Modeling (academic, professional)

Co-Curricular Programs

- Academic & prof development
- Supportive peer networks
- Access to institutional resources

ACHIEVEMENT

- Academic performance
- Persistence
- Career interests & outcomes



Campus Climate and Student Identity



Academic Identity

- how students think about themselves as learners and members of their academic settings, how they develop connections to and engage in their academic/disciplinary contexts

Why is academic identity important?

- Developing and maintaining a strong, positive academic identity linked to sustained engagement and persistence for all students

What Is Academic Identity?



- **Cognitive Engagement**
 - Interest, curiosity
 - Intrinsic motivation
 - Conscientiousness
- **Affective Engagement**
 - Sense of belonging with academic and campus setting
 - Identification with the discipline or subject matter
 - Self-efficacy/confidence
 - Beliefs about ability, mindset
- **Behavioral Engagement**
 - Focused participation and efforts to develop valued academic skills; conscientiousness behaviors
 - Academic involvement (curricular and co-curricular activities)

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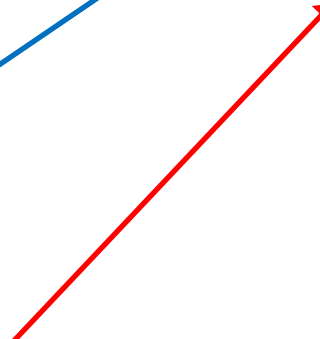
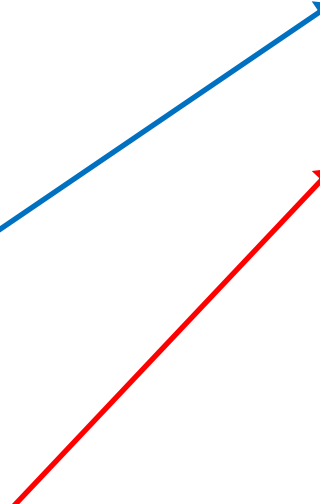
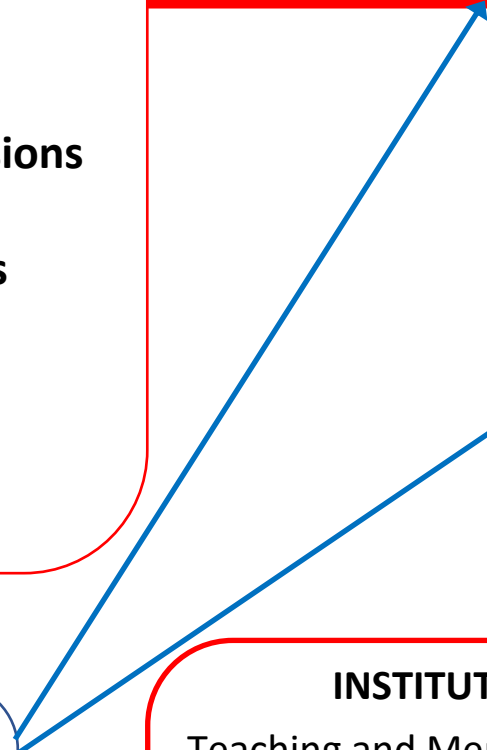
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ACHIEVEMENT

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- Persistence
- Career interests & outcomes



Campus Climate Experiences and College Adjustment

CLIMATE EXPERIENCES

Behavioral Climate

- Intergroup experiences
- Harassment
- Discrimination & Microaggressions

Psychological Climate

- Intergroup association norms
- Equal status among groups
- Diversity values

Compositional Diversity

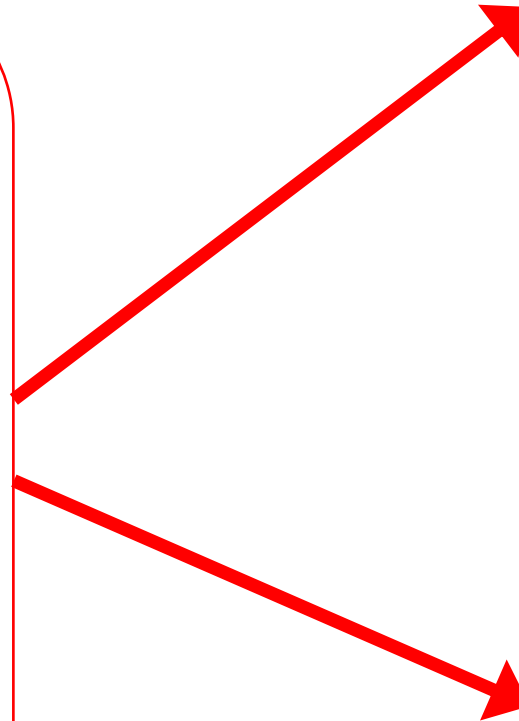
- Solo/Token Status

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

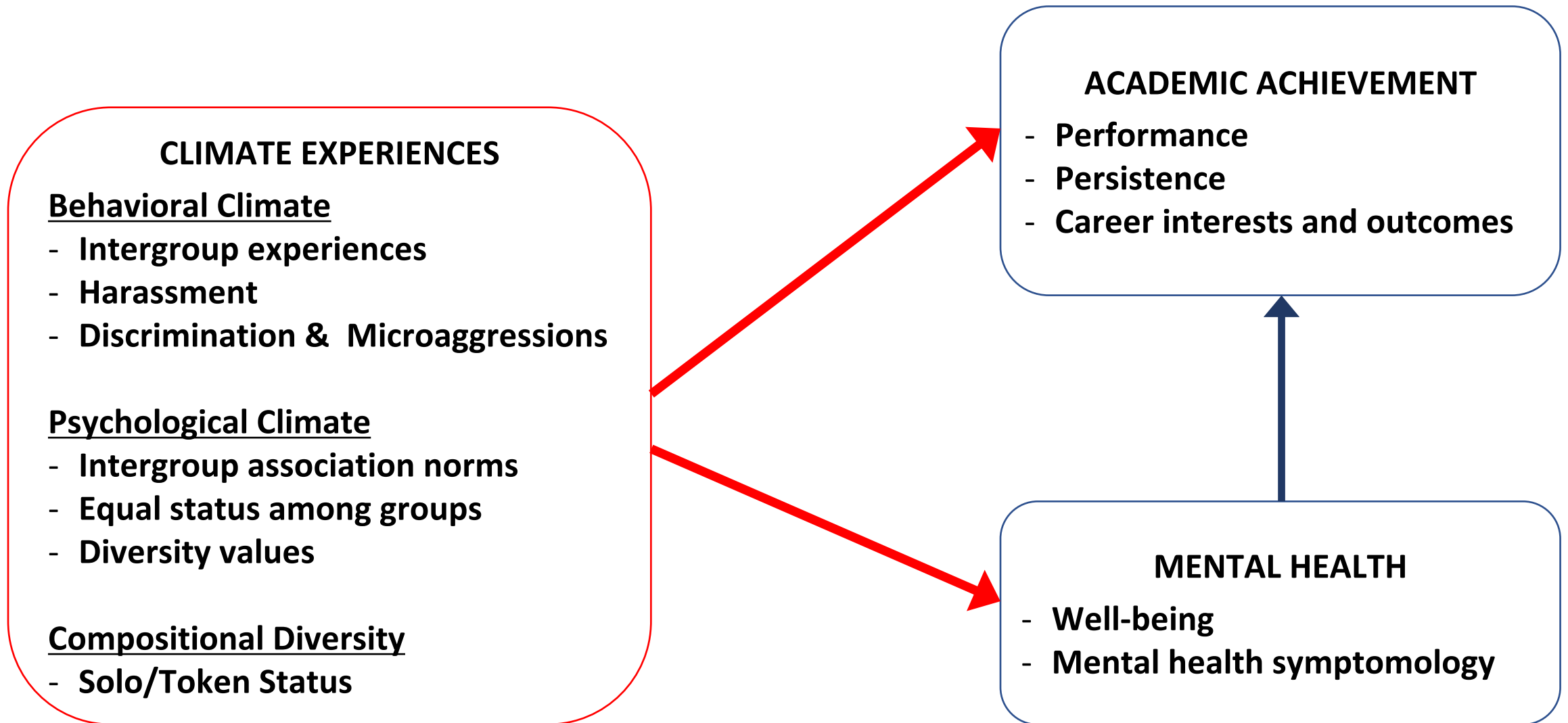
- Performance
- Persistence
- Career interests and outcomes

MENTAL HEALTH

- Well-being
- Mental health symptomology



Campus Climate Experiences and College Adjustment



Recent *National Academies of Sciences* findings

Our research framework aligns with two recent National Academies reports:

- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. *Supporting Students' College Success: The Role of Assessment of Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Competencies*.
 - Academic identity dimensions align with "intrapersonal competencies and attributes" shown to predict academic success
 - Emphasis on role of college context in promoting or inhibiting competencies
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2016. *Barriers and Opportunities for 2-Year and 4-Year STEM Degrees: Systemic Change to Support Students' Diverse Pathways*.
 - Culture of STEM related to challenges in achieving equitable STEM participation among historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, e.g.:
 - Lack of intercultural knowledge
 - Stereotypes of ability based in race, gender, social class
 - Implicit beliefs about ability or growth capacity
 - Leads to climates that inhibit academic identity (sense of belonging, self-efficacy, etc.)

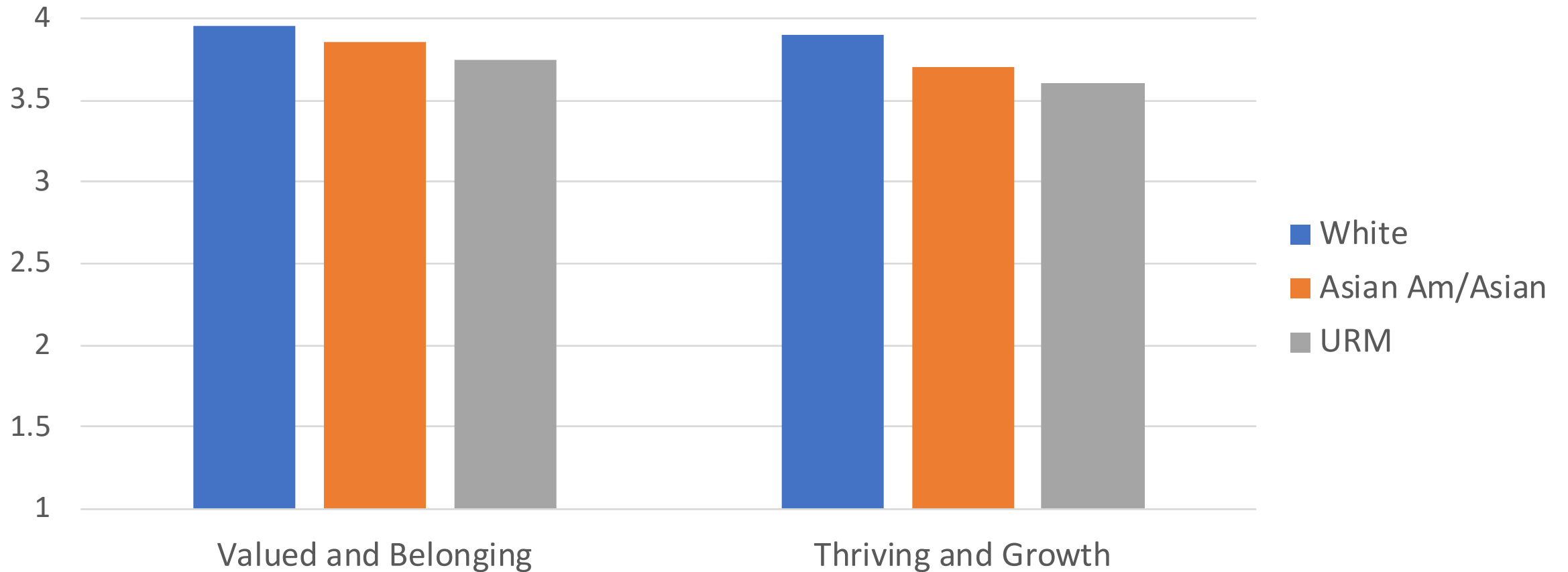


Climate Experiences of Students of Color:
*What do we know, and why does it matter for
student adjustment?
As an educational equity issue?*

U-M DEI Climate Study (2016)

URM undergraduates report feeling less valued & belonging, thriving & growing on campus (psychological)

Undergraduates



Note: Graduate Students demonstrated a similar pattern in responses.

*Did you **feel discriminated against** in the past 12 months? (behavioral)*



1:6 students overall said yes.

Students of color were *more likely* than white students to say yes

- African American/Black-- 519% more likely
- Hispanic/Latino/a-- 132% more likely
- Asian American/Asian students-- 86% more likely

Also:

- LGBTQ+ students-- 123% more likely than heterosexual students
- Students with a disability-- 287% more likely than w/o disability
- First-generation students-- 86% more likely than non-first-gen students

Multi-university Studies

20 diverse universities across US (including U-M)

Healthy Minds Study: Campus Climate and Mental Health among Students of Color and Immigrant Students

N=10555 Students of Color

- N=1480 African American/Black
- N=4304 Asian/Asian American or Pacific Islander
- N=2092 Latinx
- N=55 Native American
- N=401 Middle Eastern or North African (MENA)
- N=2223 Multiracial (diverse identities)

N=14571 White

National survey sampling approach

University of Michigan M-Cubed Grant Award

PI Team: Daniel Eisenberg, Sara Abelson, Robert Sellers, Tabbye Chavous

Multi-university Studies

5 large Michigan public universities (including U-M)

College Academic & Social Identity Study (CASIS) (*undergraduates*)

N=2072 students of color

- 40% Black/African American
- 27% Latinx
- 3% Native American
- 20% Asian/Asian American
- 10% Multiracial

3 cohorts; 5 year longitudinal study:
survey, daily diary, interviews

Alliance for Grad Education for the Professoriate (AGEP) (*PhD students*)

N=507 URM PhD students

- 40% Black/African American
- 45% Latinx, 10% Multiracial

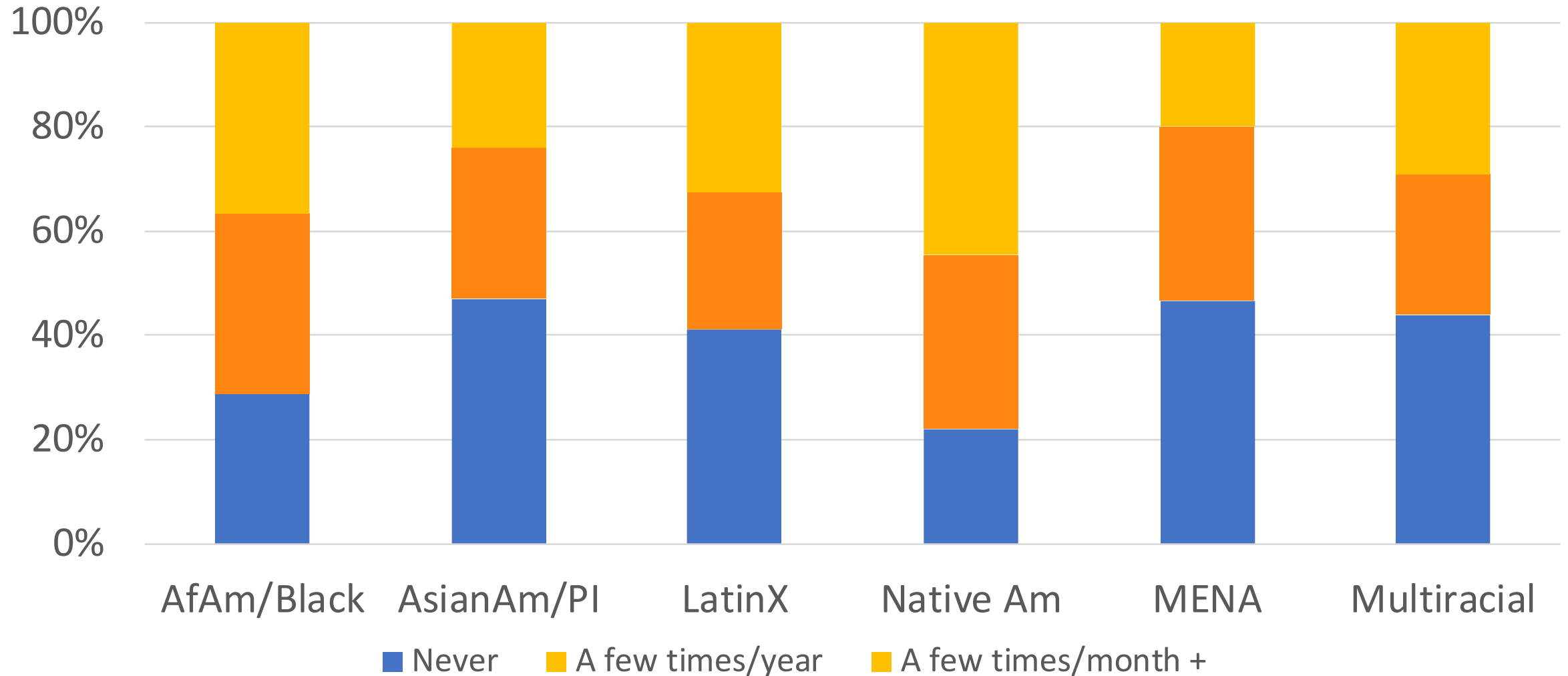
N=589 non-URM students

- 20% Asian American, 5% Multiracial (non-URM)
- 75% White

2 cohorts; 2 year longitudinal study:
survey, interviews

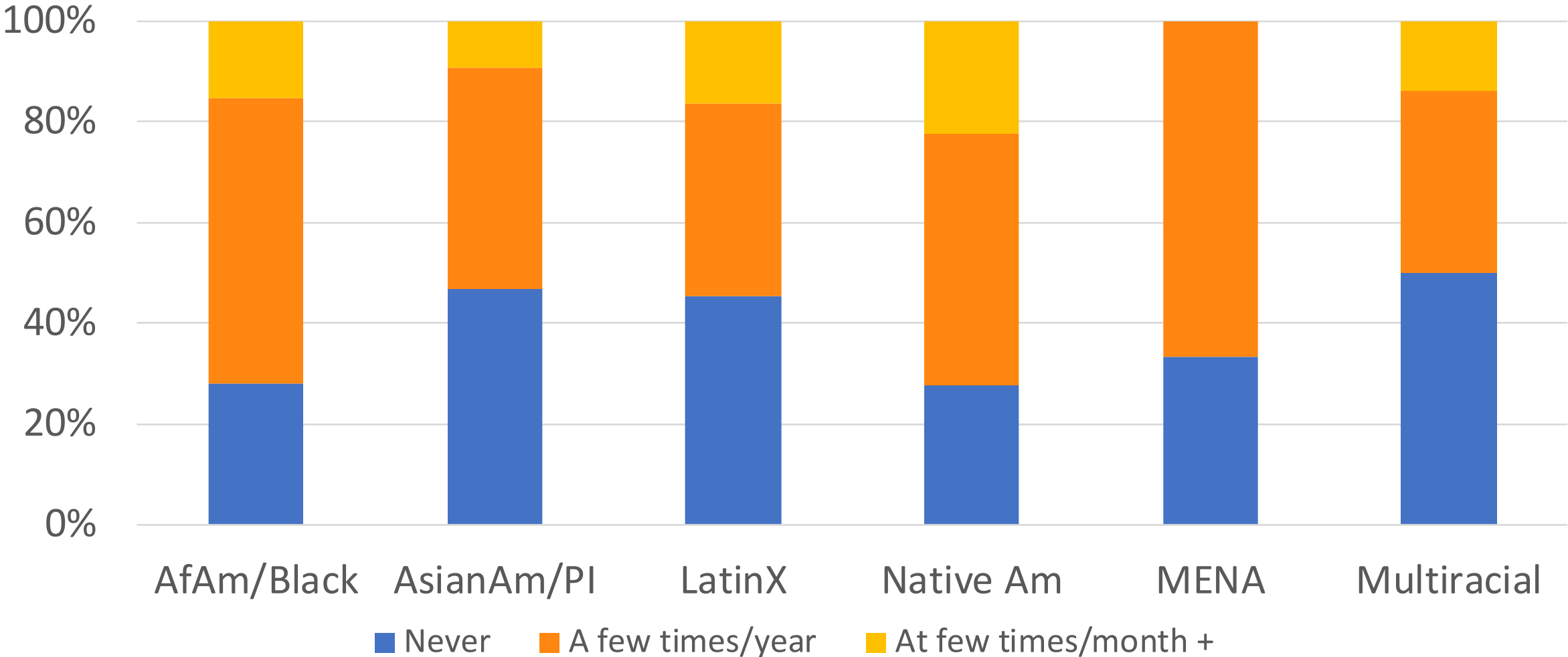
Daily Racial/Ethnic Microaggressions on Campus (Behavioral Climate)

Overhearing or being told an offensive joke or comment



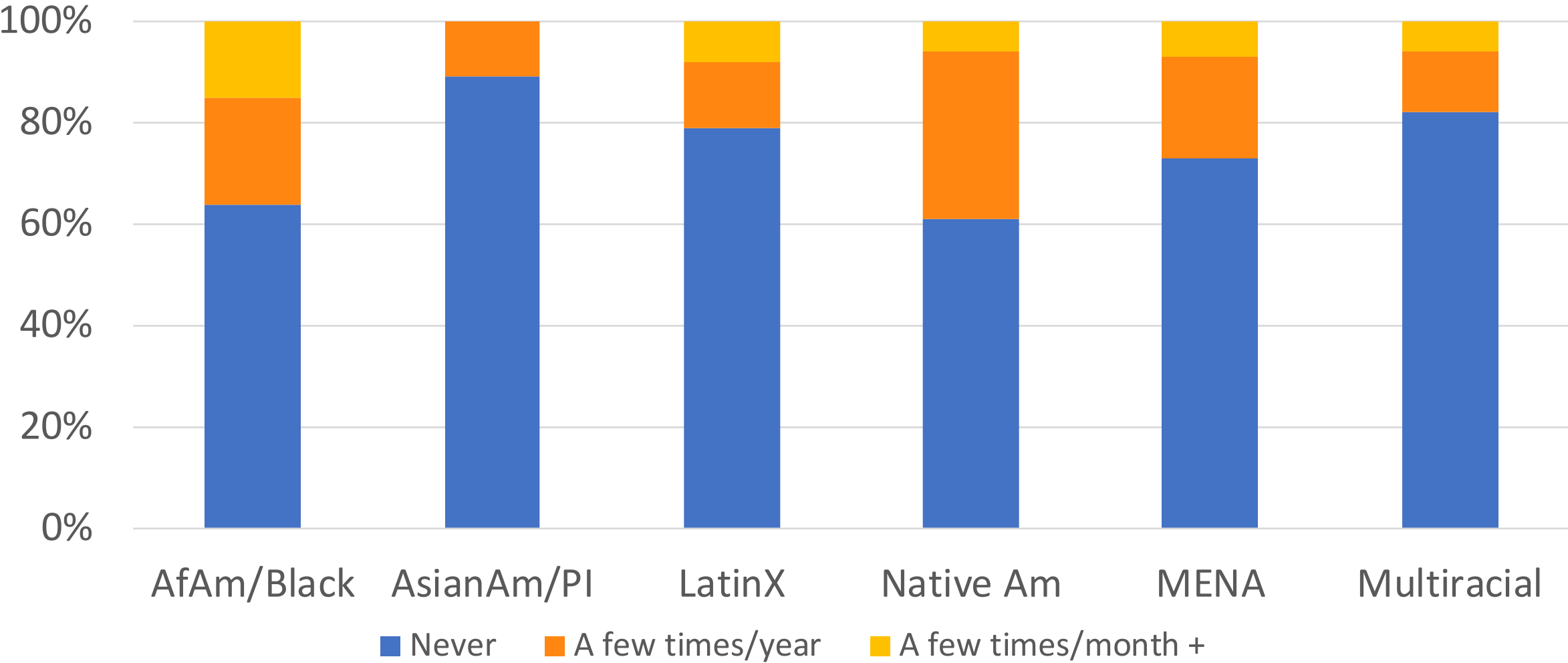
Daily Racial/Ethnic Microaggressions on Campus (Behavioral Climate)

Being treated rudely or disrespectfully



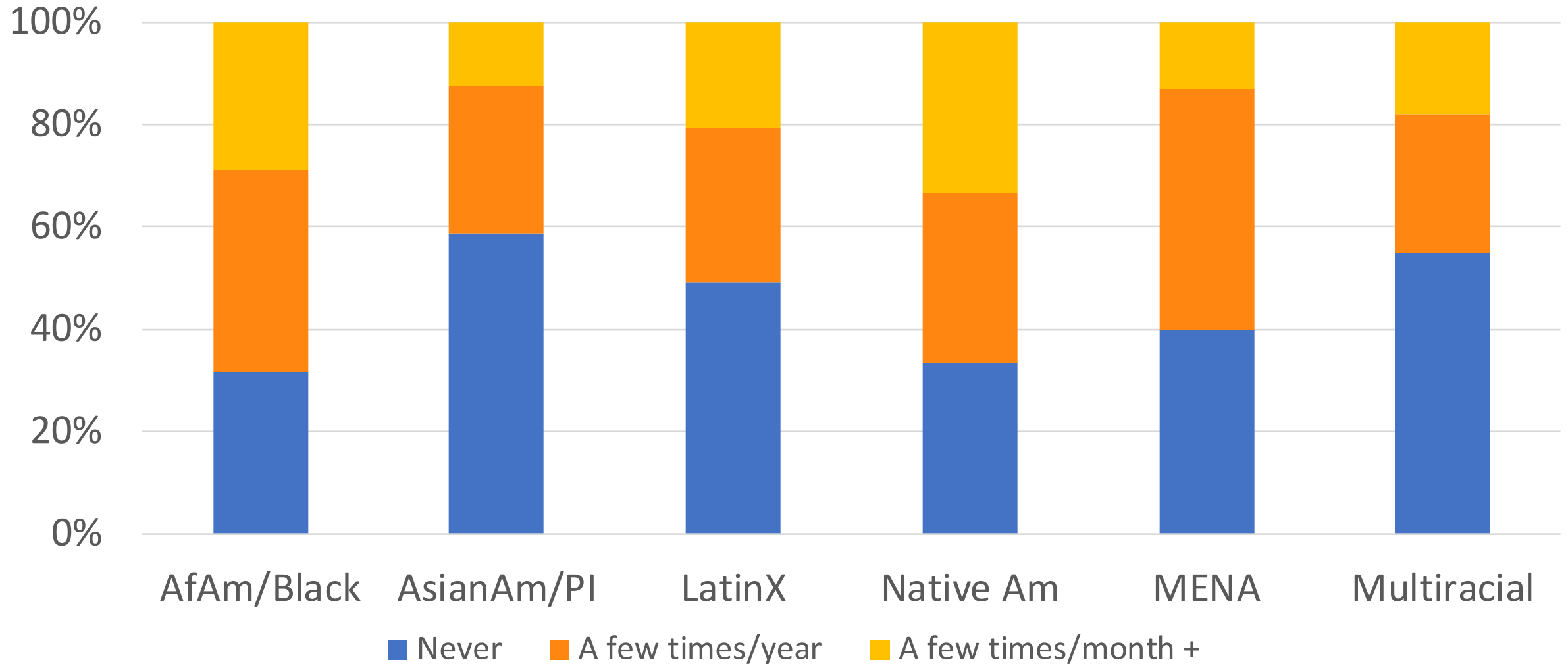
Daily Racial/Ethnic Microaggressions on Campus (Behavioral Climate)

Others acting as if they were afraid or intimidated



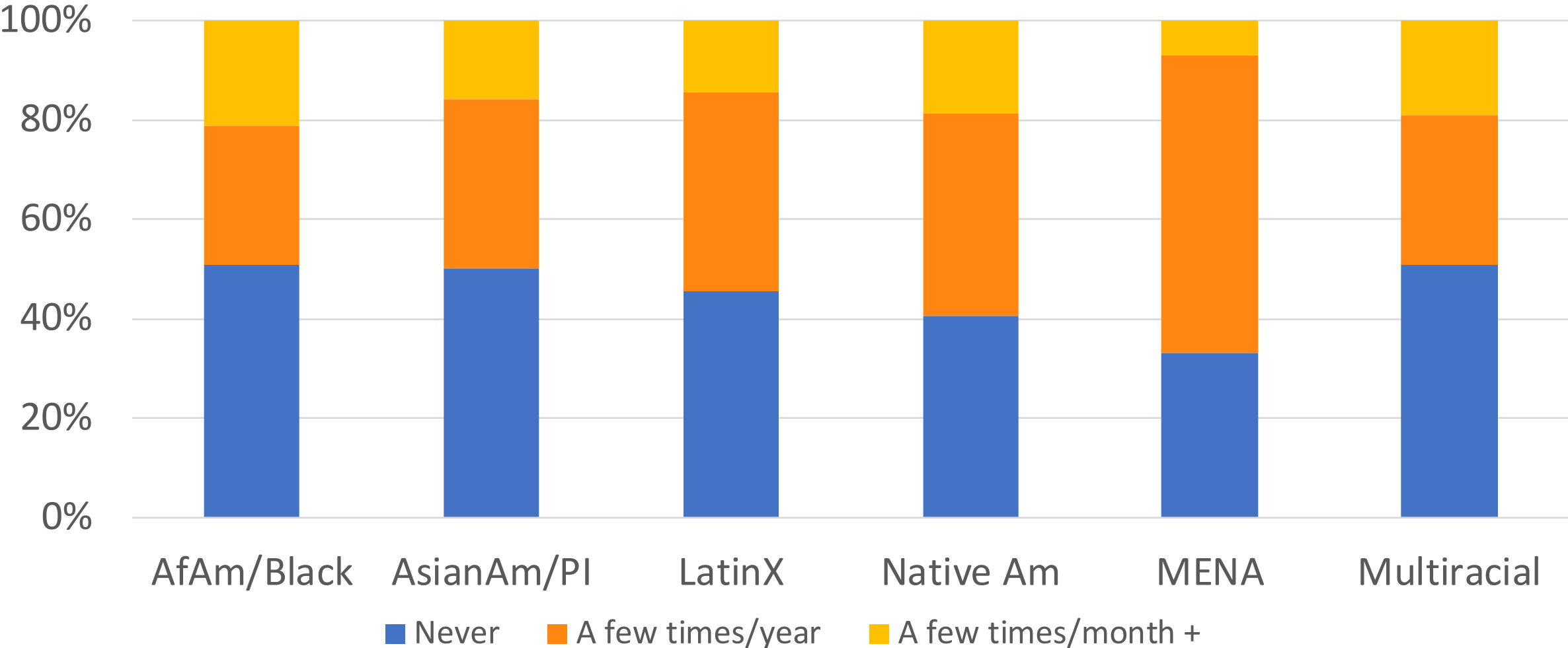
Daily Racial/Ethnic Microaggressions on Campus (Behavioral Climate)

Being treated as if you were "stupid", being "talked down to"



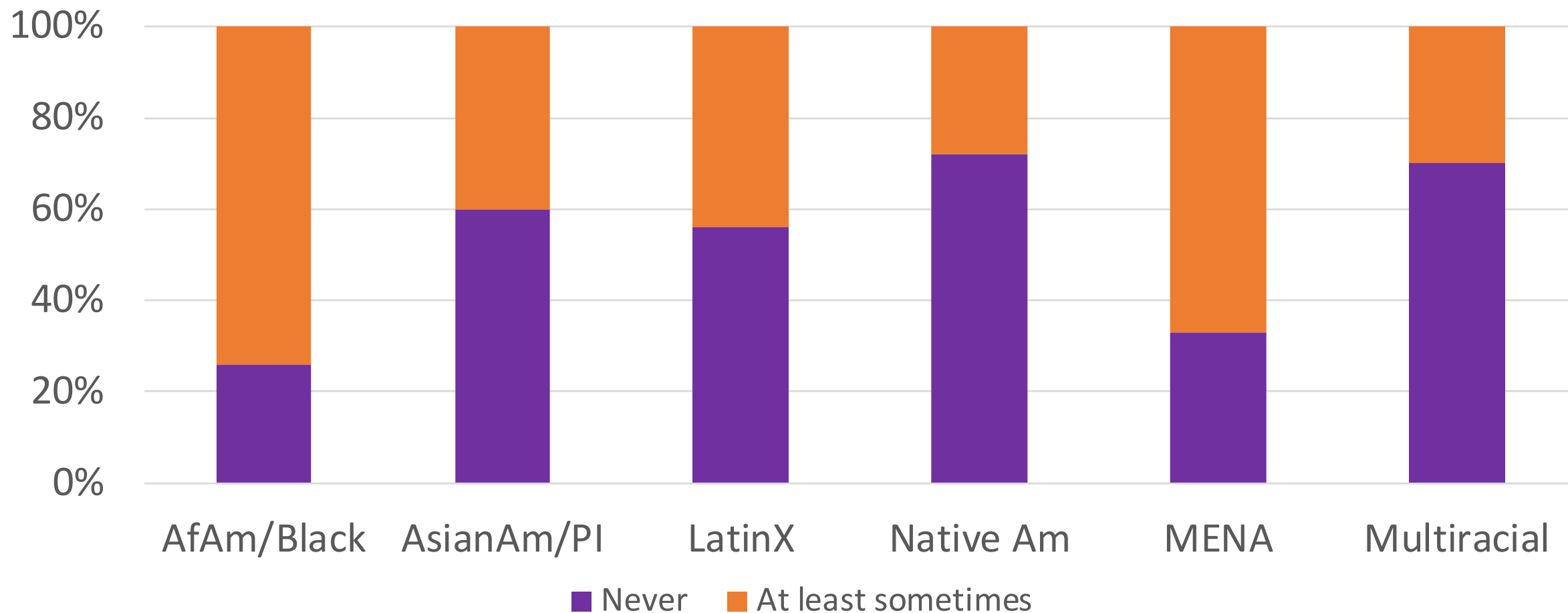
Daily Racial/Ethnic Microaggressions on Campus (Behavioral Climate)

Your ideas or opinions ignored, minimized, or devalued



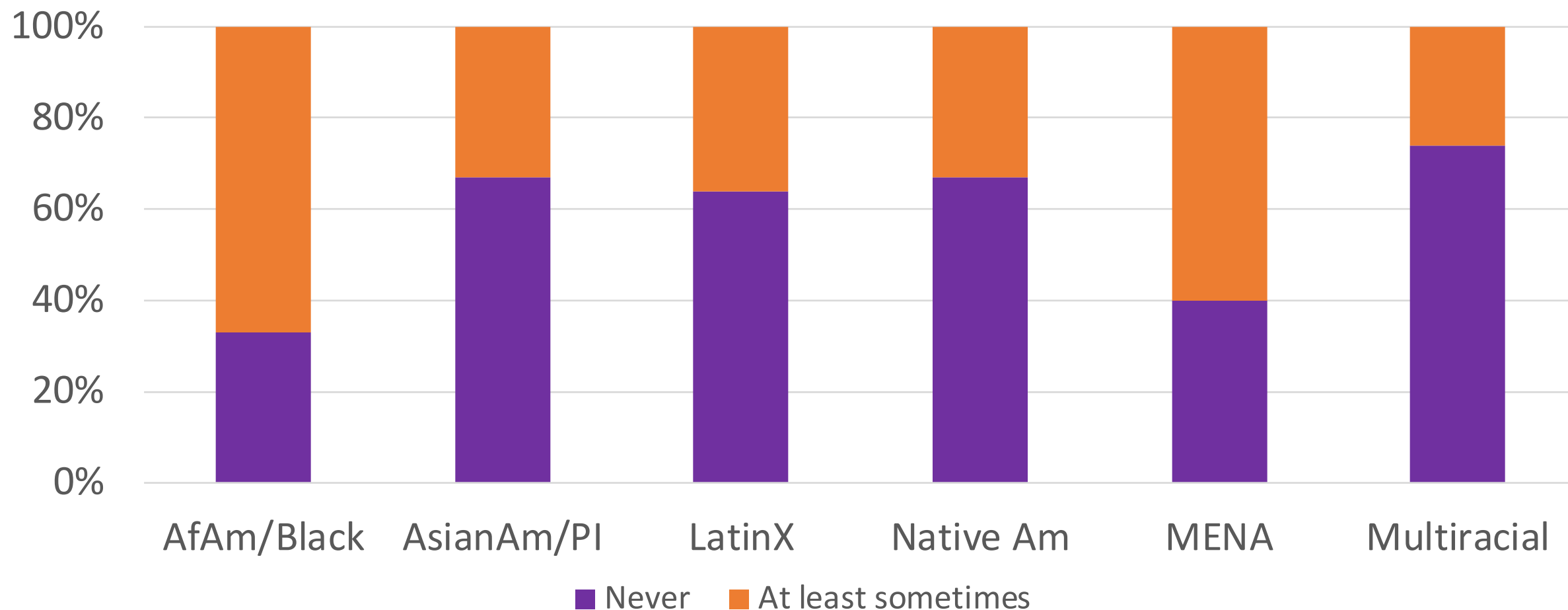
Classroom Stereotype Concerns (Psychological and Compositional Climate)

Did you feel that others were taking your opinion as speaking for all members of your racial/ethnic group?

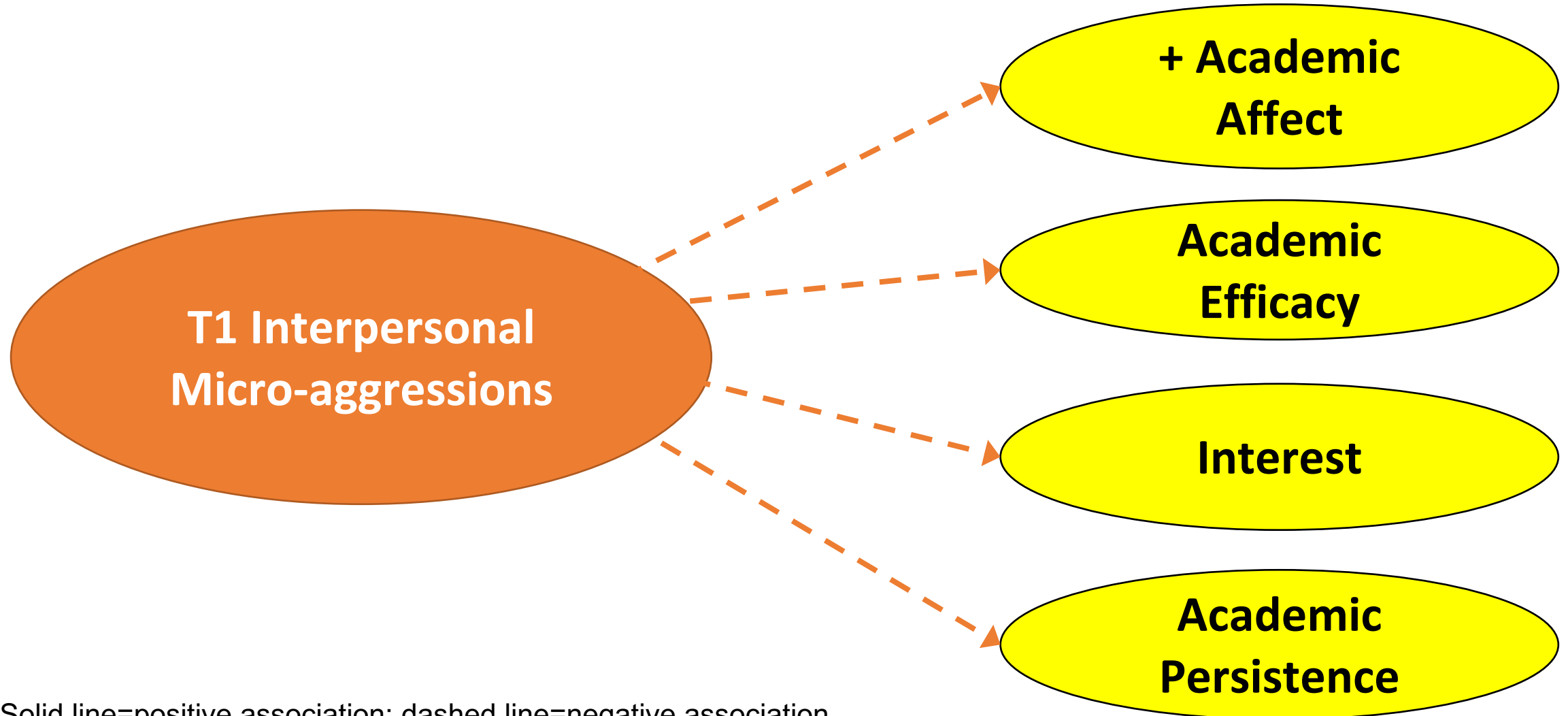


Classroom Stereotype Concerns (Psychological and Compositional Climate)

Did fears of representing your group negatively discourage you from participating in class?



Microaggressions and Academic Identity Outcomes for Black/African American Undergraduate Students over 1st Year* (CASIS)



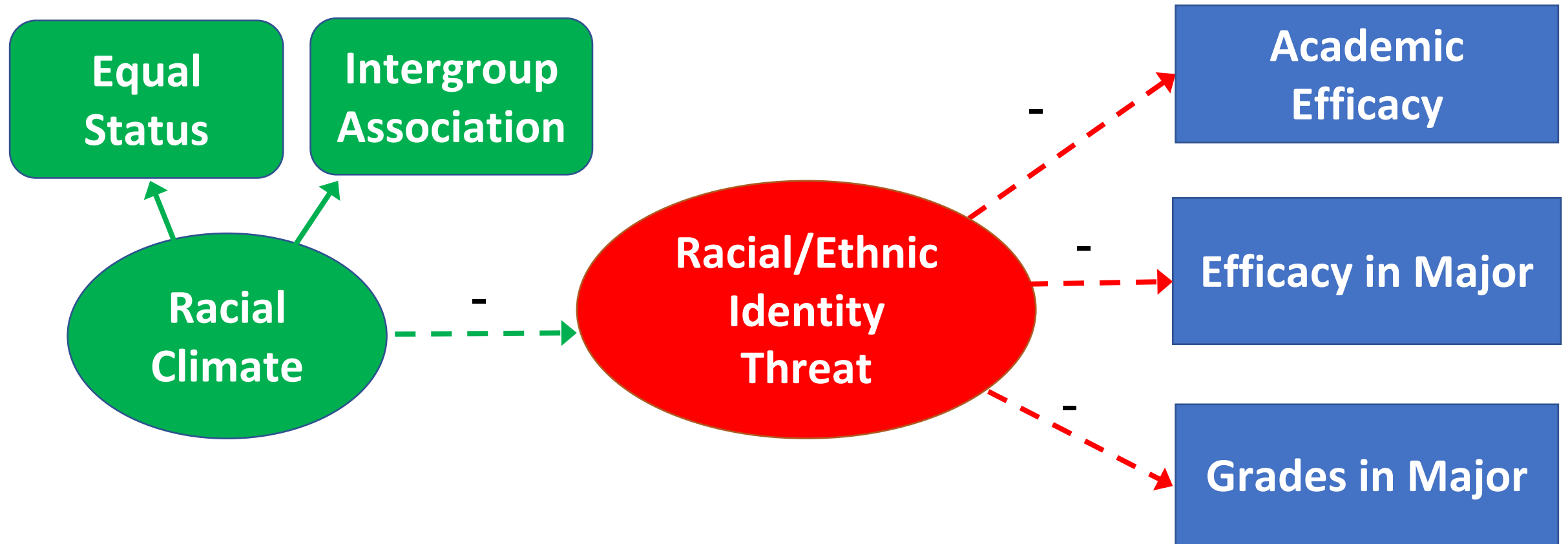
Solid line=positive association; dashed line=negative association
*Controlling for cohort, pre-college GPA,, gender, family education

Mediational model for URM undergraduates (CASIS)

Psych & Behavioral Climate

Sense of Belonging

Academic Outcomes



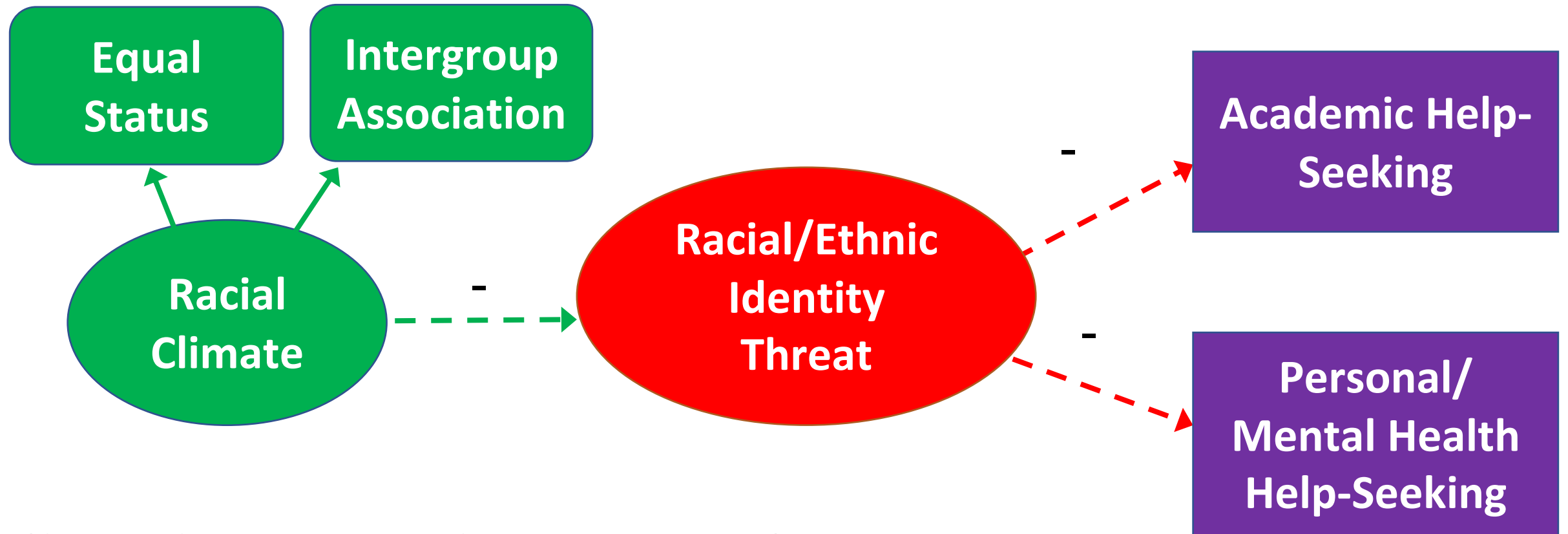
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Mediational model for URM undergraduates (CASIS)

Psych & Behavioral Climate

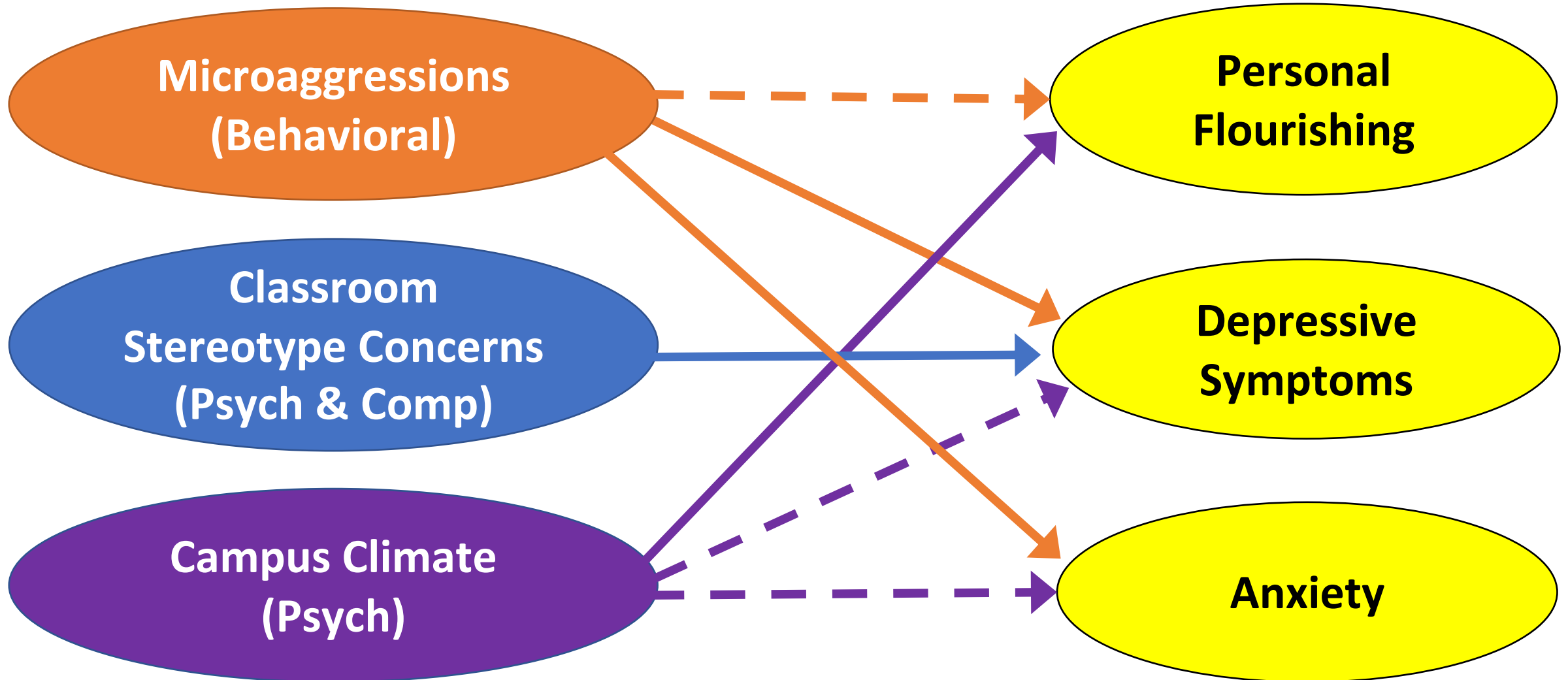
Sense of Belonging

Help-Seeking



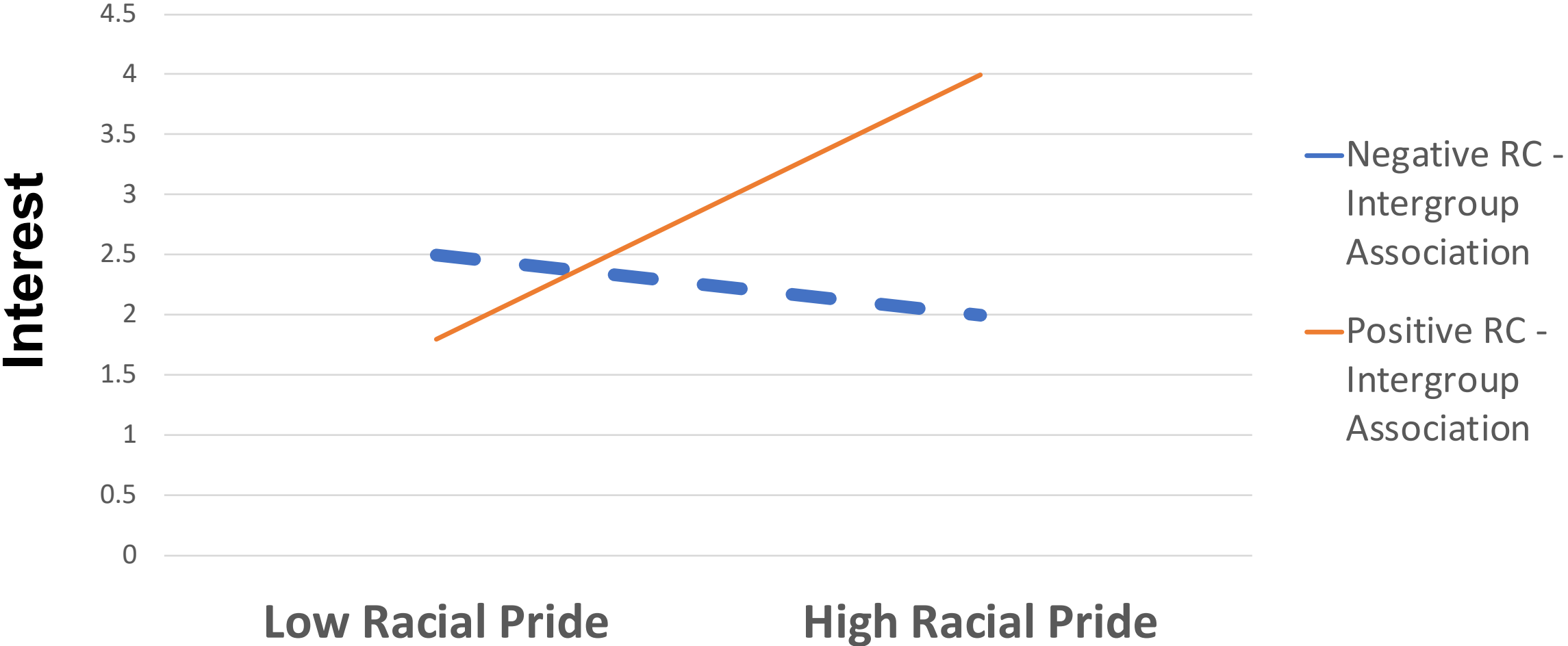
*Controlling for cohort, pre-college GPA, gender, immigration/generation status

Predictive Models (Healthy Minds Study): Climate & Mental Health Outcomes among Students of Color*

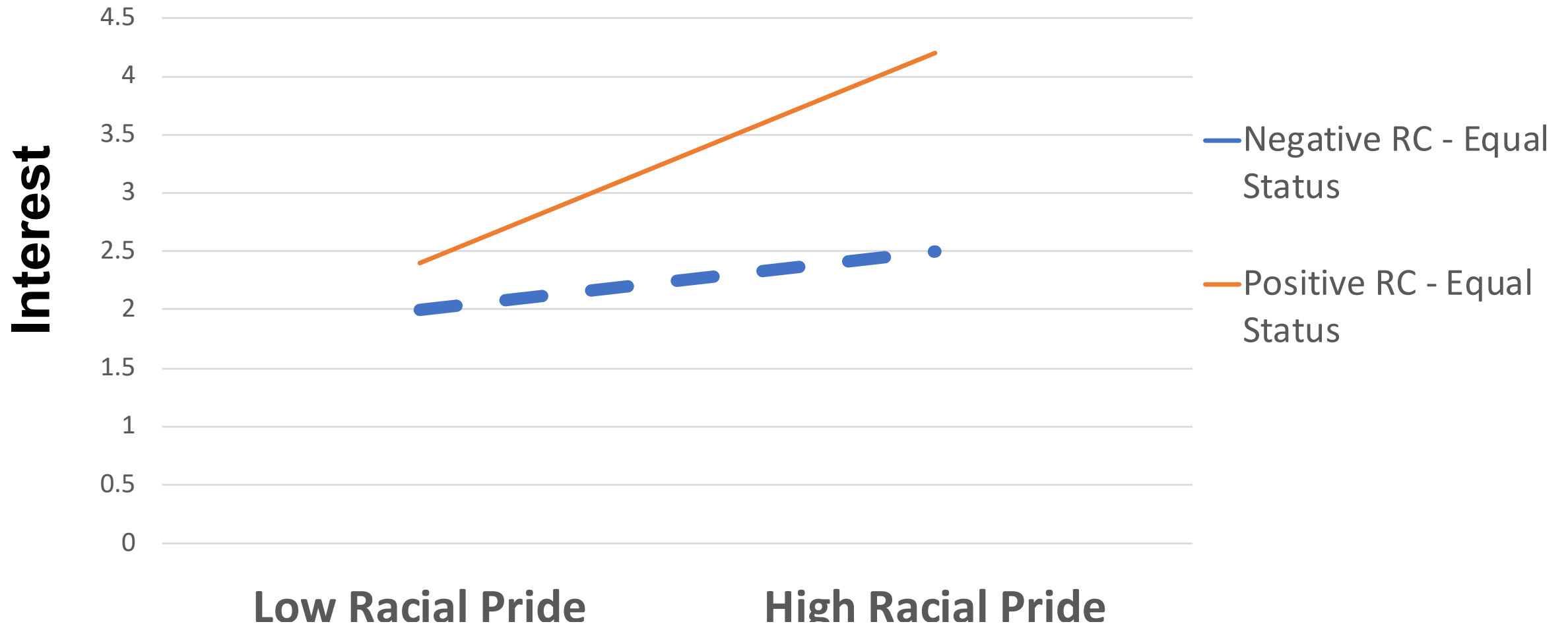


*Solid line=positive association; dashed line=negative association

Racial Climate, Racial Identity, and Academic Interest among Undergraduate Black/Af Am Students over 1st Year (CASIS)



Racial Climate, Racial Identity, and Academic Interest among Undergraduate Black/Af Am Students (CASIS)





*What Does Campus Racial
Climate Look Like in Students'
Daily Lived Experiences?*

Voices from Students

- Drawn from Chavous NSF datasets (CASIS, AGEF)
- undergraduate and graduate students

Compositional: 

Behavioral: 

Psychological: 



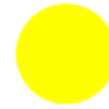
Compositional Diversity



Who is present and absent?

Compositional Diversity

recruitment brochures



I don't really know how they define diversity at this school when I am going into my fourth year of college and I haven't had more than one Black professor and there has never been more than three Black students in any of my classes. I'm usually the only one and that's uncomfortable. Even though I have Black friends, White friends and Asian friends, it still feels like [diversity is a] false advertisement—like a lot of the pamphlets that I was getting from the school were very “diverse.”

Compositional Diversity

few/no underrepresented faculty



It concerns me that the my department is lacking in faculty diversity. As an African-American student, it would be helpful to have the opportunity to be mentored by an African-American professor in my own department instead of having to search through other departments for a mentor who shares my identity.



Behavioral Climate



How am I treated here? How are people treated here?
How do people treat each other?

Behavioral Climate

avoiding eye contact



I feel that professors will often give preferential, unconscious treatment to White students.

This is particularly noticeable when I (a Black male) am the only person of color in a series of 4 classes and each of these 4 different professors will never make eye contact with me and also teach to the side of the room where I am not located.

I...try to befriend other White students and using them as a proxy near me in class so that the teacher will look in my direction and possibly encourage my participation.

Behavioral Climate ●

assumption of homogeneity by professor

So when class was dismissed, everyone was walking out and me and [this classmate] were the only two left...And [the professor] said something like, 'Guys, don't do that, again.' And we're like, 'What are you talking about?' He's like, 'You know, Black person next to a Black person. Next time sit next to somebody you don't know.' I'm like, 'We don't know each other.' It just like [he] assumed because we were two Black [students]. He didn't assume that all the White people that sat next to each other knew each other.


Behavioral Climate

overlooked for mentoring



The faculty itself is comprised of majority male, and [my] field is considered a "male dominated" field. Women are not valued, mentored, and are often overlooked. There is a greater sense of comradery between the male faculty and the male students. In my experience, faculty have spoken negatively about immigrant students because they felt that they were teaching them only for them to return to their native countries, which would not benefit the United States [professional society] whatsoever...As a black student (not African American), I am totally overlooked and treated like I don't even exist...

Behavioral Climate



peer exclusion, multiple identities

I joined a “Women in Engineering” organization and I thought we’d have a common thread, like we’re all girls here. We should be able to have good dialogue, talk about our experiences as engineers and things like that. But that wasn’t enough...it didn’t even matter that I was a girl and I was having the same experiences as you. You’re still treating me like, “She’s ratchet or she’s not from the same place as me,” type of thing. It wasn’t enough for me to be in engineering and a woman in that group versus NSBE [National Society for Black Engineers]...where I felt like being Black was enough for everybody to link.”



Psychological Climate ●

How do people feel here? What conditions are “normal” here?

Psychological Climate



feeling pressure to serve as a model

I feel like in certain situations – you have to be a model...and not a person. I feel like being an African-American on campus you have to not only – like prove academically that you are worthy but socially as a person, like a person that people can respect.

I would say sometimes I feel as though I have to work harder.

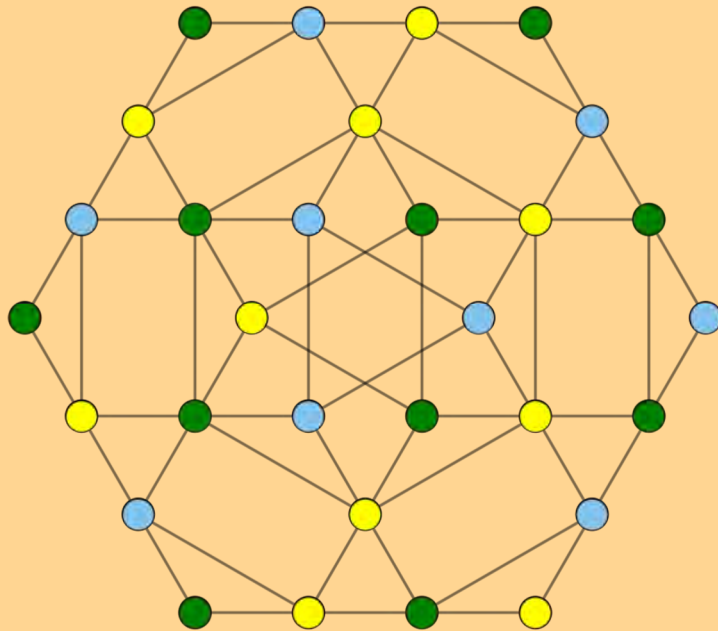
Psychological Climate

feeling stereotyped



Most of the time, I feel like stereotyped. If I'm taking an exam, or even if I'm just sitting in class, I can't focus.


I just always feel like because I'm Black people just have this – they have a perception about you. They have this perception about you and it just gives me so much stress and anxiety so it's impacted my academics negatively.



Multidimensional Experiences



Compositional & Psychological



lack of racial diversity can feel exclusionary

As someone who is Latina, it is disconcerting that there are only 2 other graduate students in my department who also identify as Hispanic/Latinx. Generally, the majority of the graduate students within my department identify as White and many students within the department come from families where parents/siblings are also in academia (e.g. many of my fellow graduate students have parents who have PhD's)... Because I come from a different background and have different experiences than most of my peers, the department sometimes feels exclusionary.

Psychological & Compositional *feeling out of place*



As an African American...Just having that situation where you're the only person who looks a certain way or talks a certain way—it has caused me to feel like I have to be a model in the classroom for people even though I know that's something that's internalized. I shouldn't need to be the model Black student, instead I should just be able to be [student's name] in the classroom.

All three dimensions



The department, both faculty and students, are not very welcoming of students of color. Although the department has quite a few international students, comments have been made about the way they talk and that they are here taking jobs. There is also little faculty diversity within the department—it is dominated by white men and nothing has really been done to recruit more faculty of color. The departmental community is also not very welcoming of female students. They are not treated equally in the department and are often treated like outsiders. It is not a very comfortable situation. No real effort is ever made to address these issues.

Take home points:



- Negative campus climate experiences prevalent in campus lives of many Students of Color
- Students can have similar and distinct climate experiences across (and within) racial/ethnic groups
- Experiences occur in students' day-to-day classroom, academic, and social contexts
- Academic identity is one mechanism through which climate can impact academic adjustment over time
- Climate experiences can also impact mental well-being and health, thus support or undermine optimal thriving

Take home points:



- Students' racial and cultural identities can serve as assets; positive racial climates congruent with students' identities can boost their academic identity
- Approaches to supporting students should avoid “colorblind” approaches in favor of approaches that affirm and encourage connection of student identity to academic contexts

Questions to consider moving forward:



- What was familiar? What was new?
What do you need or want to learn more about regarding campus climate and links to student outcomes?
- How do behavioral climate, psychological climate, and compositional diversity climate show up in your campus spaces?
 - *Classrooms? Labs? Other department/unit spaces? Campus events? Residential spaces? Social/peer spaces? Faculty/mentor/advisor interactions? Conferences? Where else?*

Toward Strategies for Shifting Climate

- How might thinking about links b/w students' campus climate experiences and adjustment shape your campus practices and strategies?
- What are campus practices that are/could be implemented [*at levels of faculty, administrators, staff, students, families, etc.*] that could contribute to students' positive adjustment through improving their experiences of:
 - Behavioral climate?
 - Psychological climate?
 - Compositional climate?



Toward Strategies for Shifting Climate

- How do/can your efforts or practices reinforce and affirm students' identities?
- What are examples that you can share with others of:
 - effective efforts in working to enhance climate?
 - challenges experienced?
 - ways you supported students' resilience as they navigated challenging campus climates?



Toward a resilient campus climate



- Why it is worth it to work on changing/improving campus racial climate?
 - Unfortunately, our society (and campuses) will continue to be challenged with societal bias and biased behavior at institutional and interpersonal levels, BUT
 - Positive campus climates can create social norms that decrease the occurrence of such behaviors (e.g., fewer microaggressions and discrimination behaviors)
 - AND experiencing a positive campus climate can help mitigate the negative academic and psychological impacts of experiencing such behaviors
 - In contrast, negative climates can exacerbate the deleterious impacts of experiencing bias-based interactions and behaviors.
- As such, a positive racial climate is a resilient climate

Enhancing Campus Climate & Student Success: Next Steps



Leadership teams must seek to learn more:

- ⇒ Conferences like this!
- ⇒ Read relevant research-based and effective practice resources
- ⇒ Share/talk to others within and outside your institution; tap into professional and informal networks and organizations

Try a strategy; assess the impact

- include student perspectives and voice

⇒ **REMEMBER: *Campus climate work is equity work; which means it is never “done” – be ambitious, visionary, persistent, and patient!***

Acknowledgements



- **Student participants**
- **National Center for Institutional Diversity**, University of Michigan, <https://lsa.umich.edu/ncid>
- **National Science Foundation**
 - College and Academic Identities Study, NSF Grant #1008327
 - Alliance for Grad Education for the Professoriate, NSF Grant #1305932
- **Center for the Study of Black Youth in Context**, University of Michigan, <https://lsa.umich.edu/csbyc>
 - *Achievement in Context* Research Lab Group
- **Healthy Minds Network** (<https://healthymindsnetwork.org/research/hms/>) and MCubed study project team (co-PI: Daniel Eisenberg, Sara Abelson, Robert Sellers)



THANK YOU!

Questions?

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