



Council on Racial Equity and Justice

Fall 2022 Updates

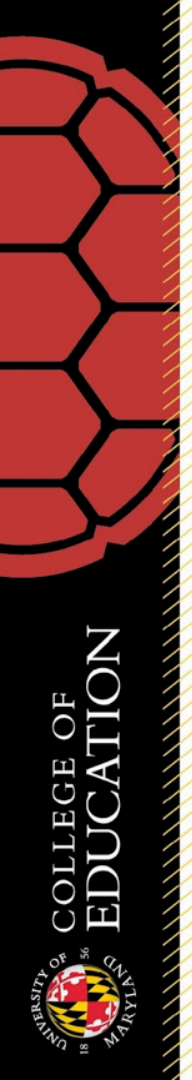


COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION



In These Slides...

-
- COREJ's Goals
 - COREJ Timeline
 - Student Experience Study Overview & Findings
 - COREJ Recommendations



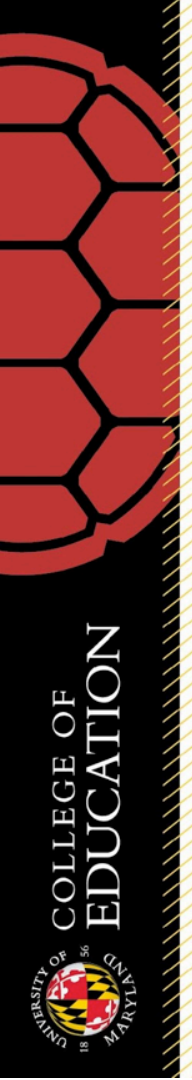
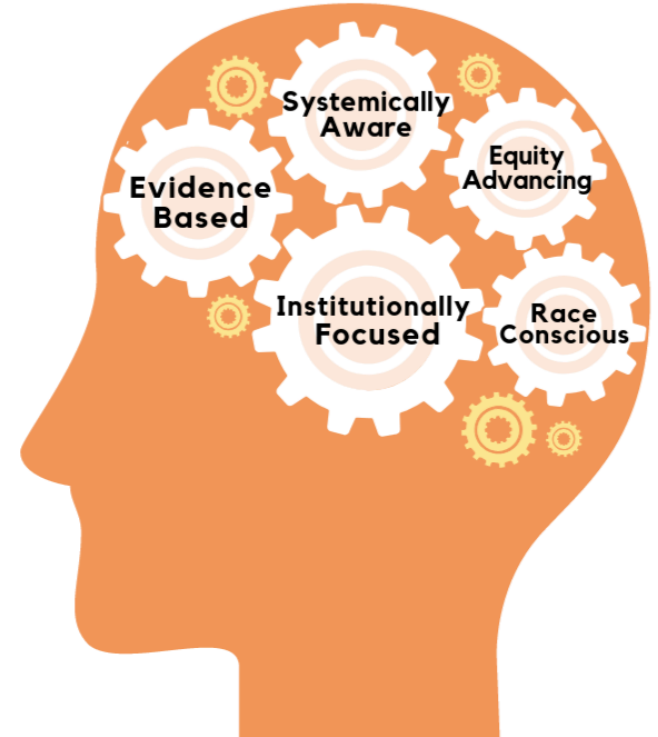
COREJ + CHSE

The mission of the Council on Racial Equity and Justice (COREJ; pronounced 'courage') is ***to elevate research and amplify faculty, staff, and student voices on matters of structural and systemic racism, white supremacy, anti-Blackness, and interlocking systems of oppression and power*** within the College of Education (COE).



COREJ: the Mission, Work, & Goals

COREJ has been working on a multi-step equity audit guided by the principles of equity mindedness since December 2020.



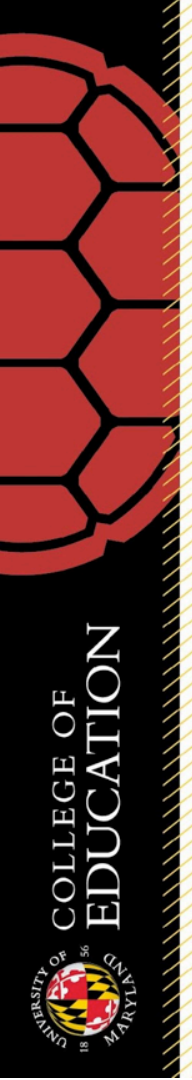
COREJ: What We've Been Up To

- **Fall '20:** COREJ was Founded
- **Spring '21:** Planned & began the student phase of a three- part equity audit (Student Experience, Faculty Experience, Curriculum)
- **Summer & Fall '21:** Completed data gathering and recommendations from the Student Experience phase of the Equity Audit; began IRB for study
- **Spring '22:** Completed IRB and data collection for Student Experience study
- **Summer '22:** Began initial data analysis and recommendations from Student Experience Study



COREJ: Why Are We Here?

- **Fall '22:** Continue data analysis and recommendations, begin work based on recommendations in collaboration with other stakeholders including the Dean's office, Leadership Council, Faculty of Color group, and departments



We Encourage You to Consider...

What anti-racist or anti-oppressive COE or department policies and practices are you currently aware of or involved with that are building towards our College-wide initiatives?

Are there any policies and/or practices that you think could use some work? We would love to hear from you! (contact info on final slide)

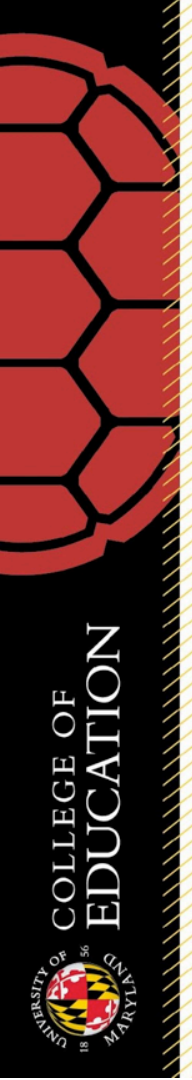


The (First) COREJ Study

In the '20-'21 and 21-'22 academic years, we worked in three subcommittees to perform an equity audit of the experiences of Students of Color in the COE across three dimensions (**student life, academic life, access to entry**)

The Conclusion:

We need to know more about the experiences of Students of Color in the College of Education in order to make a plan.



Study Overview: Purpose and RQs

Purpose

To explore and amplify student voices on matters of structural and systemic racism, white supremacy, anti-Blackness and the intersecting issues of oppression and power within the COE.

Research Questions

1. How have the racial and/or cultural identities of Students of Color intersected with their ability to succeed in our COE?
2. Where in the COE do Students of Color experience supports and/or barriers to their academic success?
3. What are the in and out of classroom experiences of Students of Color in the COE?

Study Overview: Data

Climate Survey (CS)

- 6 demographic questions
- 11 multiple response or Likert-style questions
 - Each question had an open-response opportunity to share a story or comment

Individual Interviews/ Focus Groups (I/FG)

- Semi-structured
- 1 hour (interviews), 90 minutes (focus groups)
- Conducted virtually via Zoom
- 8 guiding questions

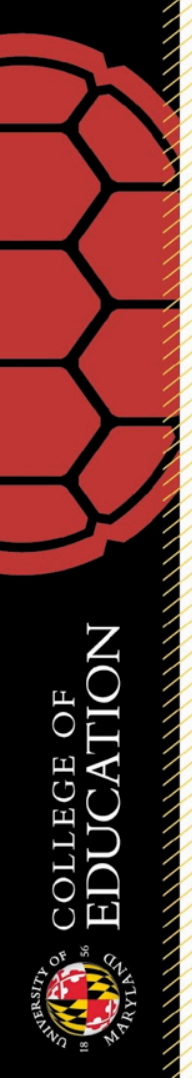
Study Overview: Survey Participant Summary

24 climate surveys completed

- 4 undergraduate
- 20 graduate
- 11 CHSE
- 10 TLPL
- 2 HDQM
- 1 department not shared

Demographically...

- 19 women, 4 men, 1 did not respond
- 9 identified as Black, 3 identified as Latiné, 8 identified as Asian (summary), 4 identified as multiracial*



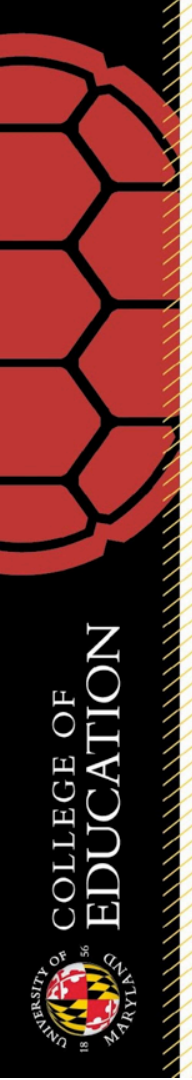
Study Overview: Interview Participant Summary

19 students interviewed or participated in a focus group

- 1 undergraduate
- 18 graduate
- 11 CHSE
- 7 TLPL
- 1 HDQM

Demographically...

- 17 identified as women, 2 identified as men
- 8 identified as Black, 7 identified as Asian, 4 identified as Latiné



Study Overview: Findings

RQ 1: How have the racial and/or cultural identities of Students of Color intersected with their ability to succeed in our COE?

What's Working

- When students of Color have strong communities of Color, they thrive
- Faculty and particularly advisors of Color provide:
 - Inspirational models
 - Academic agenda supports
 - Advocacy

Areas for Improvement

- When students of Color do not have strong communities of Color in the College, they flounder
- Students experience microaggressions and racialized traumatic events in College spaces
 - They feel like faculty often don't know how to respond to these events
 - They feel like there is a lack of accountability
- Not all students feel like faculty and/or advisors care about them and their academic or personal selves



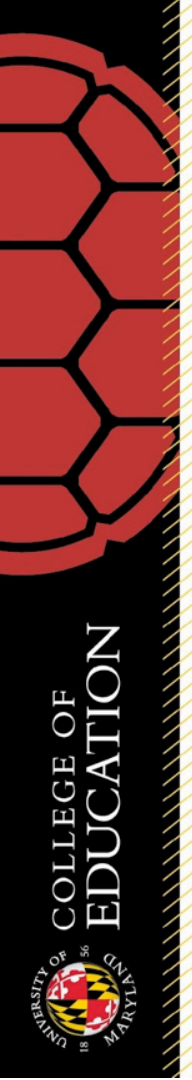
Study Overview: Evidence

RQ 1: How have the racial and/or cultural identities of Students of Color intersected with their ability to succeed in our COE?

(Black Woman Grad Student): ***Having faculty and other students of Color to navigate this with has been the most important thing for me in this program. Um, like, like THE most important thing for me in this program.***

...

(Asian Woman Grad Student): ***Just endorsing what (Black Woman Grad Student) said (laughs) Like, add a plus one.***

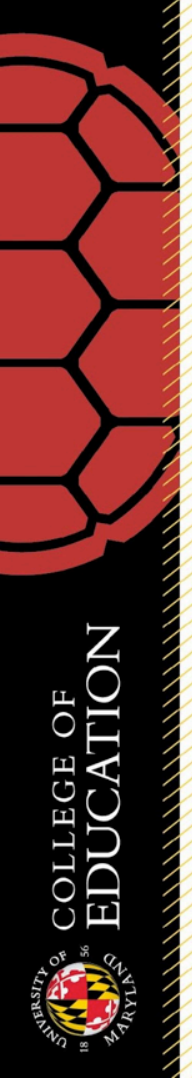


Study Overview: Evidence

RQ 1: How have the racial and/or cultural identities of Students of Color intersected with their ability to succeed in our COE?

“(A fellow student) commented on my physical features, told me I didn't know anything and I should shut up, and like verbally berated a professor and me and then another student that tried to stick up for me and stop him from doing it...(the rest of the semester) I felt very anxious speaking... And like, no one would talk about it because everyone was uncomfortable that the two Black kids had a contentious moment.”

-Black Woman Graduate Student



Study Overview: Evidence

RQ 1: How have the racial and/or cultural identities of Students of Color intersected with their ability to succeed in our COE?

Students appreciate cohort diversity...

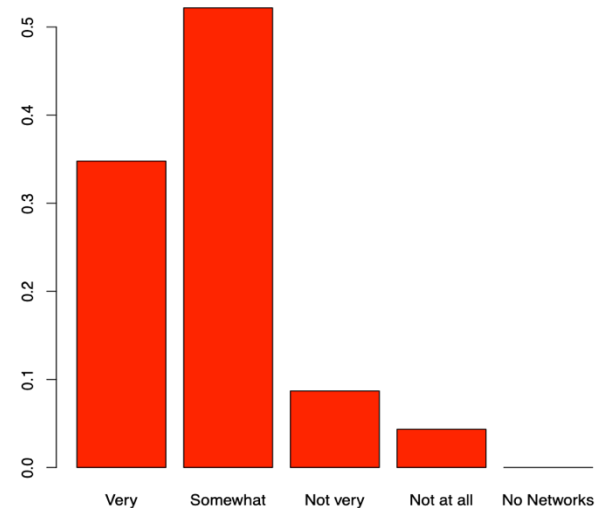
“My cohort is all women, but of the 13 of us, there are 2 lesbians, 2 black women, two Asian women, and four Latina women. I’ve never been in a space that was so diverse.”

(Black Woman Graduate Student)

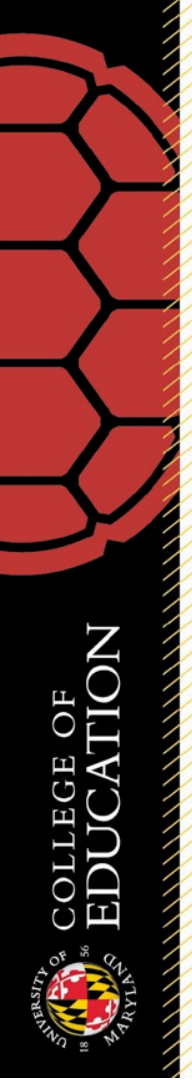
...while also recognizing that there is great diversity within broader categorical identities:

“I think that because I am undocumented I have a niche view, and although students of color do understand my experience to a certain point, those who are citizens still have that privilege.”

(Latina Woman Graduate Student)



How racially diverse are your social networks in the COE? (friend groups, study groups, work settings, clubs/organizations?) (Q19)



Study Overview: Evidence

RQ 1: How have the racial and/or cultural identities of Students of Color intersected with their ability to succeed in our COE?

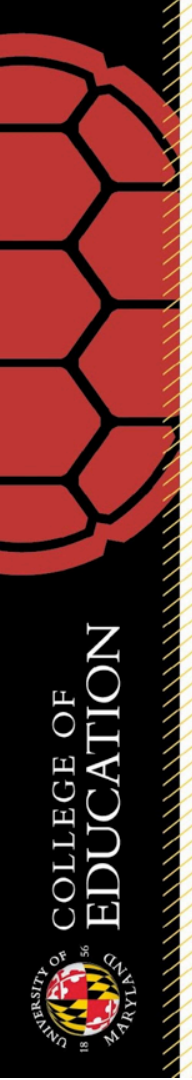
9% of survey respondents reported that they had experienced microaggressions in their advising relationships (Q17).

One shared, ***“She is very dismissive of my ideas, but receptive to a white advisee's ideas who repeated my initial idea to the professor”***

(Black Woman Graduate Student).

Another shared, ***“It is often implied, when I seek advice about experiencing harmful dynamics with others, that I am at fault/my reactions are the problem rather than systemic issues being the problem...My advisor is the one who minimized my concerns about being microaggressed by a student applicant.”***

(Asian Woman Graduate Student)



Pause and Reflect (Quickwrite)

RQ 1: How have the racial and/or cultural identities of Students of Color intersected with their ability to succeed in our COE?

Based on what you just heard about and from our students, ***what are a couple of action-oriented steps the College or your Department could take to help students of Color succeed in our COE?***



Study Overview: Findings

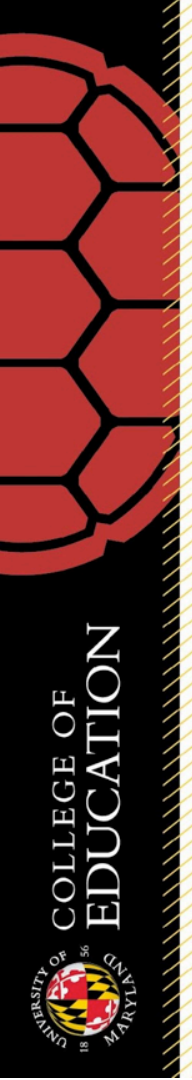
RQ 2: Where in the COE do Students of Color experience supports and/or barriers to their academic success?

What's Working

- Students who have close relationships with *either* faculty members of Color *and/or* other students of Color have more positive experiences
- Faculty of Color are cited as important role models
- Students are self-selecting peer mentors
- Scholarship affirmation and/or support navigating academia from advisors and other faculty
- Students want care as *whole people*

Areas for Improvement

- Students who have close relationships with *neither* faculty members of Color *nor* other students of Color have more negative experiences
- Faculty of Color are overburdened and students either do not receive or avoid asking for help
- The experience reports of Master's students is less positive than for doctoral students
- (Respect for) critical scholarship in course spaces



Study Overview: Findings

RQ 2: Where in the COE do Students of Color experience supports and/or barriers to their academic success?

“I mean, seeing, again, seeing really dope Black women who are doing, doing the dang thing. Is just really is important. And the fact that they're warm and welcoming and they're not unapproachable is extremely helpful. Extremely helpful and encouraging.”

-Black Woman Graduate Student



Study Overview: Findings

RQ 2: Where in the COE do Students of Color experience supports and/or barriers to their academic success?

"I'm just not sure how community oriented the College of Ed always feels? I think sometimes it also just feels as though our faculty don't have time for us... especially because we're told so often that they just have so much work and that they have so many different aspects of their jobs that they need to attend to...so it's like, we understand why it happens, and understand why it feels like our faculty don't have time for us, but that still does affect our experience of the Program. And when I do get that face to face time with my faculty members it does feel really good, and it does feel very, you know, engaging and I look forward to that. But it's just very few and far between. And that's something that I think could be more intentionally built into the program or just like, the College in general."

-Latino Male Graduate Student

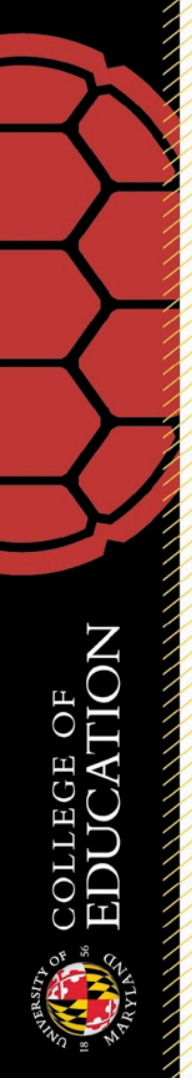


Study Overview: Findings

RQ 2: Where in the COE do Students of Color experience supports and/or barriers to their academic success?

“I think we talk about race, equity, and inclusion in almost every class I take. I come from an [field] background, where studies that we read about and are prepared for are primarily experimental and decontextualized, so it was a pleasant surprise to come into an education program, where we talk about race and identity in substantive ways that I have always wondered about.”

-Asian Male Graduate Student

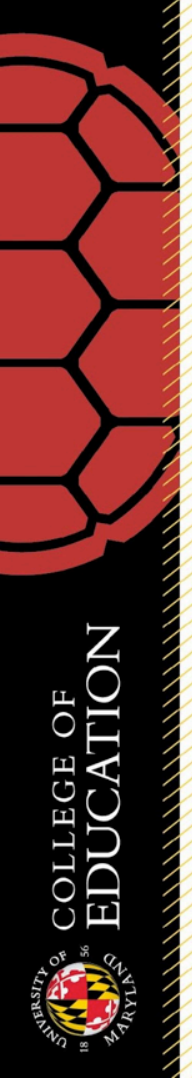


Study Overview: Findings

RQ 2: Where in the COE do Students of Color experience supports and/or barriers to their academic success?

“My classmate repl[ied] - ‘I’m not sure I’d be able to [act] the way you think is respectful’ in response to a comment about my experiencing colonial attitudes at a conference. [I was also] asked, with great curiosity and without any precedent, ‘Where are you from?’ at my practicum.”

-Latina Woman Graduate Student



Pause and Reflect (Quickwrite)

RQ 2: Where in the COE do Students of Color experience supports and/or barriers to their academic success?

Based on what you just heard about and from our students, ***what are a couple of action-oriented steps the College or your Department could take to increase supports and remove barriers to the academic success of students of Color***



Study Overview: Findings

RQ 3: What are the in and out of classroom experiences of Students of Color in the COE?

What's Working

- Critical coursework is engaging
- Student committee involvement and other spaces for students to participate in the College
- Scholastic affirmation in coursework, College, and advising spaces

Areas for Improvement

- Students lose trust in and actively disengage from coursework and advising when microaggressions and harm are experienced
- Some students feel “bamboozled” by the emphasis on DEI in preview experiences that is not reflected once they matriculate
- Students perceive pervasive whiteness across faculty, regardless of race
- Students would like more spaces to engage with other students and faculty of Color

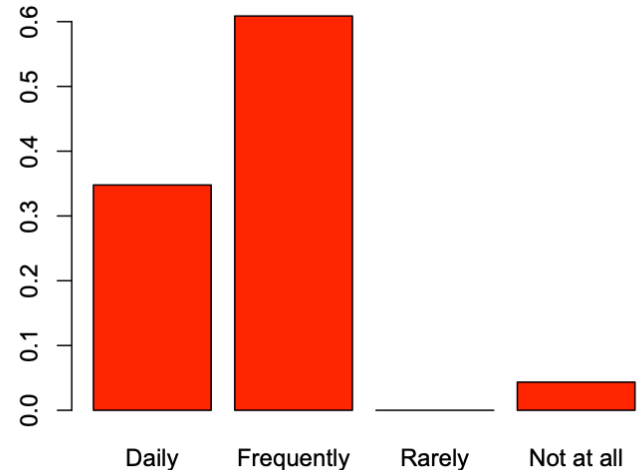


Study Overview: Findings

RQ 3: What are the in and out of classroom experiences of Students of Color in the COE?

"I think I'm more motivated to do more of the readings, because I see more people like myself reflected in the readings. And so that has been helpful. And I feel like that's also why I wanted to go to a program like [program name] because the focus on social justice and equity is there."

-Latina Woman Grad. Student



To what extent do your courses and course assignments this semester (such as readings) include conversations about race, equity, and inclusion?



Study Overview: Findings

RQ 3: What are the in and out of classroom experiences of Students of Color in the COE?

“Thinking about even the graduate student lounge, I don't go in there because every time that I go in there it's mostly white folks and I don't feel welcomed... Whenever I see like the initiatives and the programming that they do and they post it on Instagram? Again, mostly white students...I just think I'd like to see more initiatives on behalf of the College of Education (to facilitate) some of those networking, getting to know each other on the more like social level groups. Not just academic. I get it, like we're here for academics, but...I think in order to even establish some of those academic networks and more professional based activities it's important just to get to know each other on a more like, who are you level and then kind of going from there.”

-Asian Woman Graduate Student



Study Overview: Findings

RQ 3: What are the in and out of classroom experiences of Students of Color in the COE?

“Last week, I left (course) buzzing with energy and new life after our discussion in class. We spent the entire class discussing intersectionality. The professor does a great job at redirecting people when they say something that could unintentionally be perceived incorrectly.”

-Black Woman Graduate Student



Study Overview: Findings

RQ 3: What are the in and out of classroom experiences of Students of Color in the COE?

“(The first year) was really hard, it was, it was a very competitive environment, it very much felt like education research has to look a very specific way, and that specific way was very much entrenched in white norms. And it didn't, it didn't feel like a safe or welcoming environment, and that was really hard. And I, I wasn't the only person that felt this way, but a lot of us felt like maybe we don't belong here, and this is really hard, and we don't know what we're doing, and this doesn't align with my epistemology and I'm getting explicit and implicit messages that the work that I want to do isn't real education research, right?”

-Asian Woman Graduate Student



COREJ Recommendations

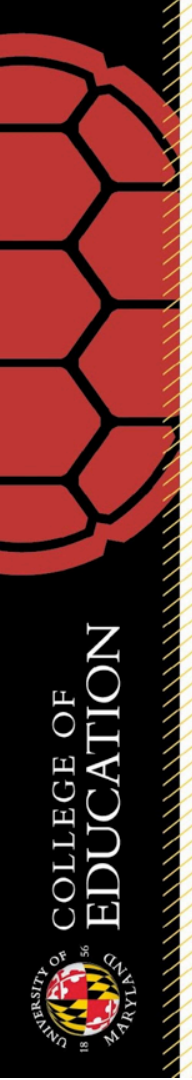
As a result of this study, we have created a set of recommendations to help build on the supports and address the challenges that surfaced in these surveys and interviews.

If you have thoughts about the recommendations on the following slides, we would love to hear from you! (See contact information on final slide)



COREJ Recommendations

1. Create community of Color spaces
 - a. Create College-wide affinity spaces for students of Color
 - b. Implement semesterly lunches with faculty & staff of Color for students of Color
 - c. Create situational mentoring (i.e. connect faculty of Color groups with student of Color groups; formalized peer mentoring)
2. Support staff and faculty professional development
 - a. Institutionalize difficult dialogues
 - b. Invest in professional development about microaggressions, micro-assaults, anti-racism (at group & institutional level)

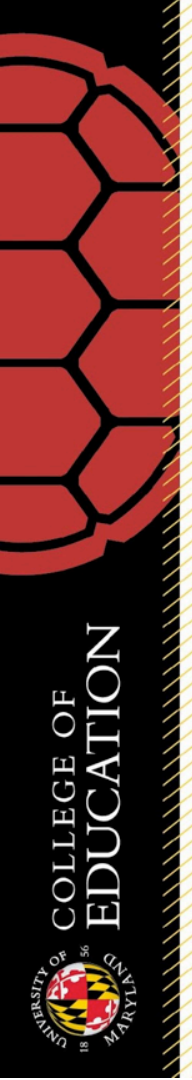


Recommendation 1

Create community of Color spaces

“I, like, most of my friends in the college of ed are like Women of Color. And, and like we, like part of the reason that community is also important is like, we know, like we can talk amongst ourselves of like, who is safe to go to? And like, who isn't? Or get feedback of like, does this happen to you when you interact with this person? Or like not? And I think that that has made navigating the College of Ed and navigating at least my department like a lot easier.”

-Black Woman Graduate Student



Recommendation 2

Support staff and faculty professional development

“And some of those difficult moments have been due to like, racial dynamics in the classroom where...I think faculty aren't always sure how to like, facilitate or navigate.”

-Asian Woman Graduate Student

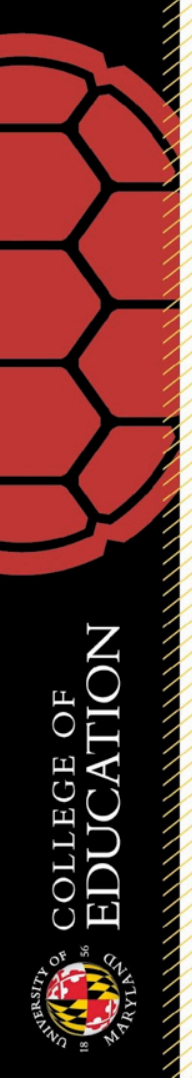


Recommendation 2

Support staff and faculty professional development

“When we presented that to the department, there were there was an opportunity for faculty members to go into breakout rooms, and it was like a choose your own breakout room kind of thing, and so we noticed that when we opened them, almost all of the white professors, particularly the white women professors, all went into the same breakout room. And then when they came back they said we don't want to name white supremacy in this statement because it might make people feel defensive and they might disengage from it and we don't want to make anybody feel bad.”

-Latina Woman Graduate Student



COREJ Recommendations

-
3. Interrupt pervasive whiteness in the college
 - a. Examine course enrollment & student evaluations and stop requiring courses that perpetuate violence, and/or incentivize/promote critical coursework (long term culture to support faculty of color from large classes and advising loads)
 - b. Invite students into the rooms where decisions are made, and intentionally allow for their voices to be heard
 - c. Incentivize faculty and staff to participate in PD, conduct syllabi reviews, observations, etc.
 4. Market an anti-bias policy
 - a. Language should be in all syllabi/advertised
 - b. Cultivate environment where students of color seek help with racial injustices



Recommendation 3

Interrupt pervasive whiteness in the college

“I feel like it's gonna be hard to be engaged in this class moving forward. Because it feels like the values haven't lined up with like the things that we've been talking about. And so now I'm kind of just like, what are your values and are you actually really thinking about these issues in a critical way? Or is this more of a performance. And I feel like that's my issue a lot of times with faculty, like, do you genuinely care about these issues? Or is it just a performance.”

-Latina Woman Graduate Student



Recommendation 4

Market an anti-bias policy

“We were in [Black Woman Faculty’s] class and told her about [racist encounter with a white male faculty member], and she said, ‘oh yeah he’s a known racist.’ And I was like ‘oh so this is not surprising.’ And she was like ‘absolutely not’... [and nothing else happened]. ...And it made me angry because it's like, people really know that this man is like this, and he still has tenure. He still has his power.

-Black Woman Graduate Student

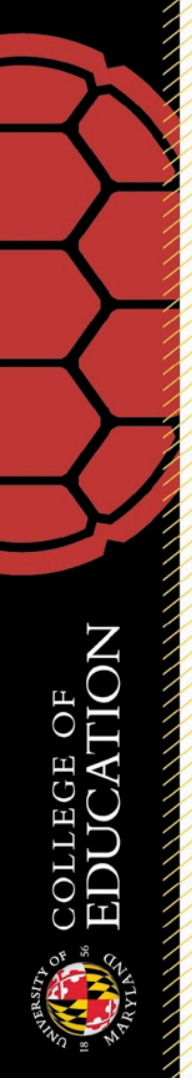


Recommendations Update

COREJ is currently collaborating with the Faculty of Color group and the Dean's office to work towards part of Recommendation 1: Creating Community of Color spaces.

Our first step towards this recommendation is to implement a lunch series for faculty and students of Color in the Spring 2023 semester.

Please be on the lookout for more information; we would love for you to attend!



Questions?

If you have questions or comments about COREJ or this study, or want to collaborate with COREJ:

- Dr. Bridget T. Kelly (btkelly1@umd.edu)
- Dr. Olivia Williams (omurphy1@umd.edu)
- education.umd.edu/council-on-racial-equity-and-justice-corej

