



Illinois Equity in Attainment EQUITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2022

Strategy Evaluation Plan

STRATEGY 1: Reduce the number of students requiring remedial coursework

Morton College aims to reduce the number of students requiring remedial coursework in line with the college's strategic plan. A barrier to college enrollment and college-level success is student preparedness for college-level Math and English. The district has a high percentage of students needing remedial math courses prior to entering college-level math. Our main reason for this strategy was that institutional data demonstrated that many of Morton College's least-prepared students never made it to a credit-bearing class or dropped out before ever earning a certificate or degree. The goal is to give all students entering Morton College the opportunity to earn college credentials in a reasonable amount of time.

MATH

One intended outcome is to reduce the overall number of students requiring remedial coursework. In 2020-2021, 43% of new students placed into developmental math, which is down from 67% in 2016-2017 and 53% in 2019-2020. In 2021-2022 the percentage dropped further to 35% of new students placing into developmental math. This success is the result of multiple initiatives such as college-readiness options at the high school, dual-credit offerings, and multiple-measures math placement. Morton College offers several dual credit/dual enrollment offerings for high school students including college algebra, statistics, calculus III, and differential equations. In addition, the high school has adopted Morton's developmental math modular sequence as a course for high school seniors that if successfully completed allows students to place directly into college-level courses. The statewide multiple measures initiative has also helped students place directly into a college-level course. Placement is now based on other factors such as GPA (Grade Point Average), SAT/ACT scores, high school level course completion and grades instead of just relying on placement tests.

For those who still test into the remedial courses, our goal is to reduce the amount of time it takes for them to earn a college credential. There are several strategies in place to reduce the amount of time it takes for a student to complete college level coursework. One strategy is our co-requisite model, that pairs the highest level of developmental mathematics with a college-level math course. Initial data analysis of the co-requisite

model is showing positive results. The overall success of MAT 097/105 students in MAT 105 is lower than non-co-requisite students at 70% and 76%, respectively. In MAT 102, the 096/102 co-requisite students had equal overall success compared to non-co-requisite students with success rates of 70%. This parity in success rates is an achievement since the co-requisite students were assessed to have lower math ability. Another strategy is our math bootcamp. Students attend a two-week math bootcamp as a refresher on math skills. After successful completion, students can enroll in the co-requisite course or a college-level course. These strategies provide students with an accelerated path to college-level courses.

There are several other initiatives within developmental mathematics education on the horizon. The mathematics faculty have launched a new emporium model delivery format for most of the developmental mathematics courses. This opportunity is possible because of a Department of Education grant. Students work on a self-paced, computer-based modular course with instructional support. In addition, the math boot camps have been expanded from a summer only initiative to a two-week quick start at the beginning of the semester with a late start mathematics course available for enrollment upon successful completion of the boot camp. With this model, students will be able to complete bootcamp and a credit bearing course with co-requisite support within one semester. Initial data indicates we need to do more work with the math boot camp. Roughly 84% of students successfully complete the math boot camp. However, very few students enroll in the next math course. For example, 21 students completed the CMP 002 math boot camp. This course is equivalent to a traditional Algebra II course. Of the 21 students, only 10% enrolled in a math course in Fall 2022. We are reviewing our process on getting students enrolled in their next math course. In addition, we are looking at ways to include topics like grit and mindset.

ENGLISH

The developmental English department has also developed several initiatives to reduce the number of students requiring remedial coursework. Each year the percent of students needing English remediation is about 50%. Multiple measures were implemented for placement within the English courses as well. Students are now able to place in English courses using GPA, SAT/ACT, and previous coursework in addition to placement testing. The English department offers a co-requisite model where students take a credit bearing course alongside the developmental prerequisite. Class sizes are limited to 10 students in the prerequisite sections. Upon successful completion, students will complete both the developmental coursework and credit-bearing course in one semester. The success of ENG 088/101 students in ENG 101 has improved overtime. In the most recent academic year 2021-22, the co-requisite students reached a success rate equal to the non-co-requisite students. In 2021-22 67% of co-requisite students earned a C or better in ENG 101, compared to 68% of non-corequisite students. This parity in success rates is an achievement since the co-requisite students were assessed to have lower initial reading and writing ability. Another strategy with developmental English is the Academic English Support (AES) program formerly Intensive English Program (IEP). AES is a program for improving English skills that meet more often than

most classes so that students build college level English skills more quickly. AES focuses on teaching the language needed to succeed in college level classes and is designed for non-native English speakers.

The English department is also planning other initiatives for the near future. In Spring 2023, Morton College will offer ENG 101 as a dual enrollment course for high school students. We are hoping to expand our English dual credit and dual enrollment offerings for students. The English department is exploring a Stretch model which would allow students to take the credit-bearing English course over two semesters instead one. In addition, the English department is exploring a DevEd Studio model where students would take credit-bearing English course with a one credit-hour writer's workshop.

Morton College has a much higher Latinx student enrollment, 84.4%, than the nation's average, 23.6%, or the Illinois community college average, 18.9%. Therefore, we are uniquely situated in that our student success rate can be linked back to equity due to the population we serve.

The key stakeholders for these initiatives were the faculty in the math and English departments, support staff, and their administrators. We also formed a Morton Cluster Math Articulation Group with instructors and administrators from our feeder high schools and elementary schools that met at Morton College to discuss all the initiatives put forth. The group met quarterly. In addition, we formed an AES steering committee to help support our non-native English speakers. Course enrollment, success, and retention data inform our strategy. We are also planning to survey students who participate in the bootcamp, emporium classes, AES, and other initiatives about their experiences.

STRATEGY 2: Evaluate cost to eliminate unnecessary fees and maintain college affordability

Morton College proudly remains one of the most affordable community colleges in the state of IL. The college has not raised tuition and fees since the fall of 2020 and has no intention in raising them in the next academic year. Remaining affordable is pivotal to our community's access to higher education. A closer look at the colleges fees was necessary to determine if the fees were unnecessarily placing a burden on students, preventing enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Late fees in the amount of \$50 are incurred by students who register late during any given semester. While an amount of \$50 might not seem to be a financial burden, for a student that decides to register late, it can be a deterrent rather than an incentive to register early. Late fees were completely removed during COVID pandemic to assist students facing financial challenges.

In an effort to remove financial barriers, in the Spring of 2020, the college developed and executed the Panther Balance Forgiveness Grant. The purpose of the grant is to remove financial insecurities by forgiving previous balances and allow students to enroll in the upcoming semester. The grants provide financial support to allow students to focus on their academics, continue their education and complete their degree or

credentials. Since the inception of the program, the college has forgiven a total of \$71,335.

STRATEGY 3: Invest in Student Support Services (Academic Advising and Mentoring)

Academic Advising

Many of our efforts regarding student support in the past 1-2 years have been focused on accessibility to resources and services and generating best practices for virtual services. While it has not always proven to be a mild task, Morton College quickly adapted to the many changes within and aside from higher education, due to COVID 19. We have taken large strides toward elevating our services to continuously meet the needs of an ever-evolving world that has been deemed fairly unpredictable in current times. As part of our evaluation plan to help determine impact, we thought the most appropriate metrics are the implementation of programs, an increase or decrease of graduation and persistence rates, and participation in programs and utilization of services.

One of the largest implementations of 21-22 with Academic Advising's programming was the change in the case load structure. In prior years, case load was divided between 1st year and 2nd year/Transfer students, with a scattering of program-based populations. This forced students to break ties with their Academic Advisors in the middle of their programs, which causes an inevitable break in communication and relationship building among advisors and students. However, case load has now been developed to create a more comprehensive approach to building a relationship with students from beginning to end by being strictly program-based from start-to-finish.

It's early to measure the impact this will have, as it is still a new effort, but since the new case load has been implemented, we have received zero change-of-advisor requests, as opposed to the average seven we typically received within one semester. Students seem to respond positively to the idea that the advisor has an expertise in the program they oversee and the comfort in knowing they'll have that consistency through the duration of their academic careers. We believe this is key to establishing a mentorship relationship, as it is more ongoing and consistent. However, the Advising office has seen a high of 12,061 documented interactions with students in 21-22 AY, which is the highest we've recorded yet.

Another implementation for Strategy #3 was the overhaul of the "Academic Advising" role, to encompass more of the retention efforts that we strategized as an institution. This led us to change their title to Student Success Coach and to revise/update the job description, which emphasized the importance of retaining current students, while helping them navigate, as seamlessly as possible, through their academic journey. With more focus on retention, Success Coaches began to participate in "withdrawal save" campaigns, escalation and intervention procedures, and amplified outreach efforts through diverse channels.

Student Support Services now has additional services to provide, with a special emphasis on Social-Emotional Support. According to the Illinois General Assembly's Higher Education (110 ILCS 58/) Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act, this is intended to address gaps in mental health services on college campuses across Illinois, including both 2-year and 4-year institutions. With this Act in mind, Morton College was approved for a GEERs grant that allowed us to offer and employ an additional Mental Health Counselor on our campus, which has increased our counseling offerings by 100%.

In addition to more Mental Health resources, we have also reformed our "ADA" (Americans with Disabilities Act) office to reflect a more inclusive environment by changing the name and title to "Office of Student Accommodations." With making this change, we kept in mind the idea that not everyone identifies the issues they may face as a disability or identify as a disabled person and part of our mission is to ensure our students are fully enabled to the best of our ability. We have also increased the Accommodations Office's presence on campus to create awareness of the progressive culture we're building around this topic/office.

As a department and institution, we have leveraged our technology methodologies to help ensure that we meet the growing needs of student support systems. We have continued our use of virtual meetings via Zoom, which has still accounted for about 34% of Success Coach – Student interaction, since returning to campus full-time. We have also updated our CRM (Customer Relationship Management) this year to automatically assign students to the appropriate Success Coach upon matriculation into a program, which eliminates 4 integral steps, thus making this about 80% more efficient. We have optimized our outreach by utilizing CRM Advise, powered through Ellucian. Ellucian CRM Advise gives you clear, role-based views of the information you need, helping you identify and assist at-risk students more effectively and efficiently using a variety of media.



Satisfaction with Student Services

As part of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), students were asked “how satisfied are you with the services?” Morton College saw an increase in student satisfaction for all services from 2014 to 2018 and again to 2022, to differing degrees (Figure 1). Academic Advising was one of the highest rated services with 89% of students being ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ satisfied. Advising has shown consistent improvement overtime. The data also suggests there is still room for improvement. When you look at Latino students separate from non-Latino students, there is a discrepancy in their satisfaction. Non-Latino students are generally less satisfied with student services, including academic advising.

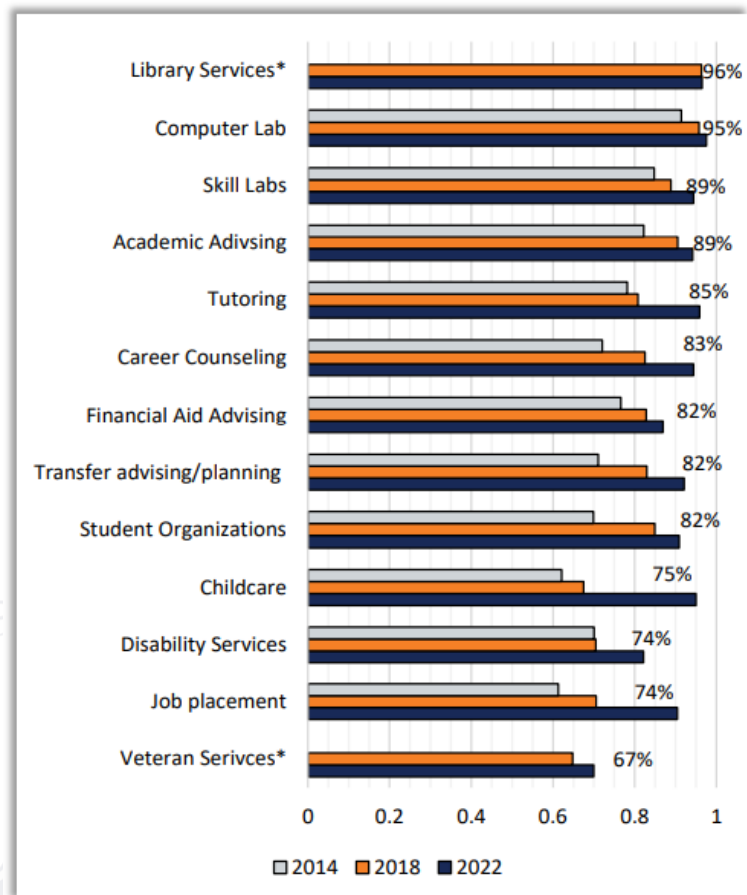


Figure 1: Average levels of student satisfaction with each service 2014-2022.

The above figure illustrates the percentage of student responses indicating they were somewhat or very satisfied during the academic year.

() indicates data was not collected in 2014.*

One Stop Student Services Center

Morton College is completely committed to student success and the largest investment in student services is the recent One Stop Student Services Center. In 2016-2017 plans and financial commitments began for the development of a one stop center with the intention to revolutionize the way in which students are served. The college recognized students were not having the best experience being bounced from one student services area to the next with a lack of direction and guidance. This experience led to students'

frustration, not returning or not enrolling at the college. The college committed to eliminating the frustration and prioritizing student service. A transformational chapter in Morton College's storied history began in September 2022 when the much-anticipated curtain unveiled the One Stop Student Services Center. The center officially opened its doors to provide a one-of-a-kind experience for students. The guiding principles for the center are the following:

- Students are the top priority
 - Be a student-ready college
 - Don't limit ourselves to college-ready students
- Improve the visibility, accessibility and flexibility of institutional services to help students
- Prioritization of student self-service
- Eliminate physical lines
- Eliminate the 'bouncing from dept to dept' student experience
- Create physical environment to cultivate collaboration, human connections, open communication and innovation

The center, located on the first floor of Building C, is the one-stop place to go for Academic Advising, Student Accommodations Services, Admissions and Records, Cashiers (for tuition payments), Counseling and Financial Aid. All areas that were previously in different buildings are housed under one roof.

Funding for the Center came with no tuition increase for the 2022-23 academic year.

The Center is infused with Apple technology to provide a modern experience. Fall Semester hours of operation are from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday.

The Center offers students a welcoming and vibrant experience in a central location where current and prospective students will be able to get help from Morton College's trained staff. It also provides a high level of service and support, and is an opportunity to modernize the way Morton College serves and communicates with students.

STRATEGY 4: Recruit and Retain Diverse Staff and Faculty

Morton College wants to increase the number of diverse staff and faculty it hires and retain that talent. Morton College recognizes the importance of having a diverse staff. Morton College has a much higher Latinx student enrollment, 84.4%, than the nation's average, 23.6%, or the Illinois community college average, 18.9%. Fall 2022, only 13% of full-time faculty and 15% of part-time faculty identified as Latinx.

59% of full-time faculty identify as White

44% of part-time faculty identify as White

46% of administrators identify as White, followed by 31% Latinx, 12% Black, and 12% unknown.

Therefore, we recognize the importance of having staff and faculty that reflect the demographics of our students.

Targeted Initiatives

Job postings - are inclusive of Morton's EEOC position. Morton College is committed to equal employment opportunity for all employees and to providing employees with a work environment free of discrimination and harassment. All employment decisions are based on business needs, job requirements and individual qualifications, without regard to race, color, religion, or belief, national, social or ethnic origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or other applicable legal protected characteristics.

Job advertisement – Morton College HR department is intentionally targeting diverse websites inclusive of African Americans, Latinx, Asian and all other underrepresented groups.

Job Fairs – HR is making a conscious effort to attend more diversity job fairs. Morton is considering having an Open House, Spring 2023, targeting underrepresented candidates.

Search Committees/Training – HR has met with the Deans to express the need for diverse hiring, October 2022. HR has proposed training all search committee members. The training will advise efforts and goals. The training will help to make committee members aware and better understand diversity, equity and inclusion. 1. Understand challenges experienced by underrepresented individuals in higher education. Addresses why it's important to contribute to meeting challenges 2. Understand the differences stemming from ethnic, socioeconomic, racial, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and cultural backgrounds and the obstacles people from these backgrounds face in higher education. 3. Diversity from either personal experience or education about the experiences of those with identities different from one's own. 4. Ensure that committees are familiar with demographic data relevant in higher education. Examples of these programs include continued work with ILEA, a proposed advisory committee and membership to NIXLA Accelerator DEI Training.

HR Involvement – HR reviewing resumes. What percentage are minorities? Did they make the initial screening, if not, why not? If the diverse candidate made the initial screening and not the first/final interview, why not?

One initiative created to help with the goal of hiring and retaining diverse staff and faculty was to create a Morton College Diversity Group. This group met on several occasions to discuss our overarching goal and to brainstorm on ways to increase diverse staff hires. The group was comprised of several faculty members and administrative staff. Although we have not yet implemented a formal policy on diverse hiring, two of our recent faculty hires have been from a diverse background.

Another initiative to help retain faculty was the creation of the New Faculty Mentoring group. This group is comprised of all tenure-track faculty at the College. Two senior-

level, tenured faculty lead the group and assist the newer faculty with the tenure process, mentoring, and other topics. We are exploring ways to focus on diverse hires within the New Faculty Mentoring group.

In spring 2022, as part of the CCSSE and CCFSSSE surveys discussed in more detail below, students and faculty were asked whether they agree “At this college, there is an adequate amount of diversity among instructors and staff members”. Over 75% of those polled (both students and faculty) indicated they agree (strongly, moderately, or slightly) that there is an adequate amount of diversity among faculty and staff. Students that identify as Hispanic or Latino make up the single largest demographic at Morton College; these students overwhelmingly agreed (80%), with 26% strongly agreeing, 30% moderately agreeing, and 24% slightly agreeing. These results suggest Morton College is on the right track towards increasing diversity; we aim to continue improving.

Moving forward, we plan for the diversity group to continue to meet, develop policy and strategies, and track diverse hires and retention at Morton College.

STRATEGY 5: Create an Inclusive Campus Climate

The Human Resources and Institutional Research Offices will be deploying a survey in Fall 2022 to assess campus climate. The PACE Survey developed and administered by NC State University will be used. This contractor also conducted our campus climate surveys in 2012-13 and 2017-18.

In Spring 2022, Morton College participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE). This year there was a separate pilot survey administered containing questions on Race/Ethnicity. The purpose was to understand student and faculty experiences with racism, inclusion, and belonging. 300 students and 52 faculty responded to the race/ethnicity questions.

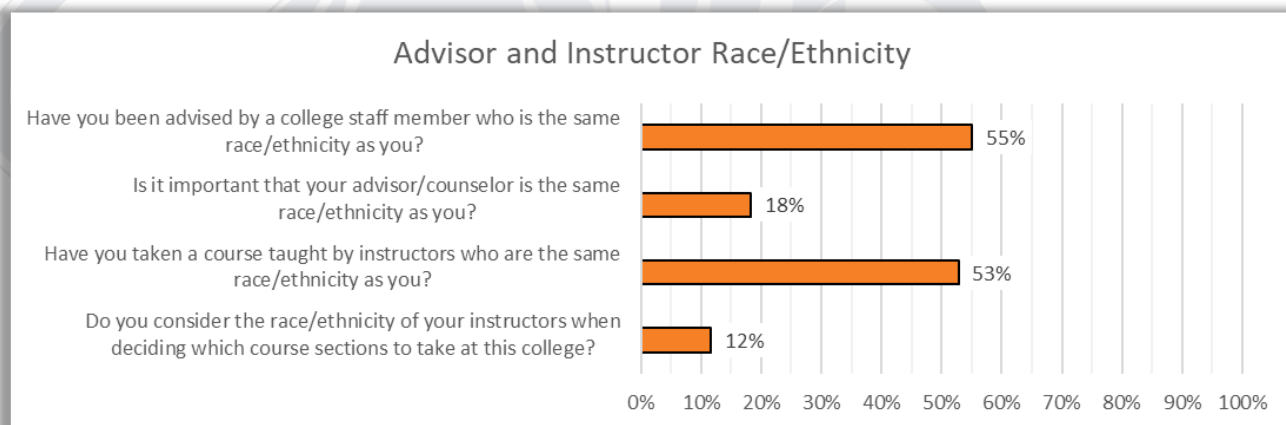
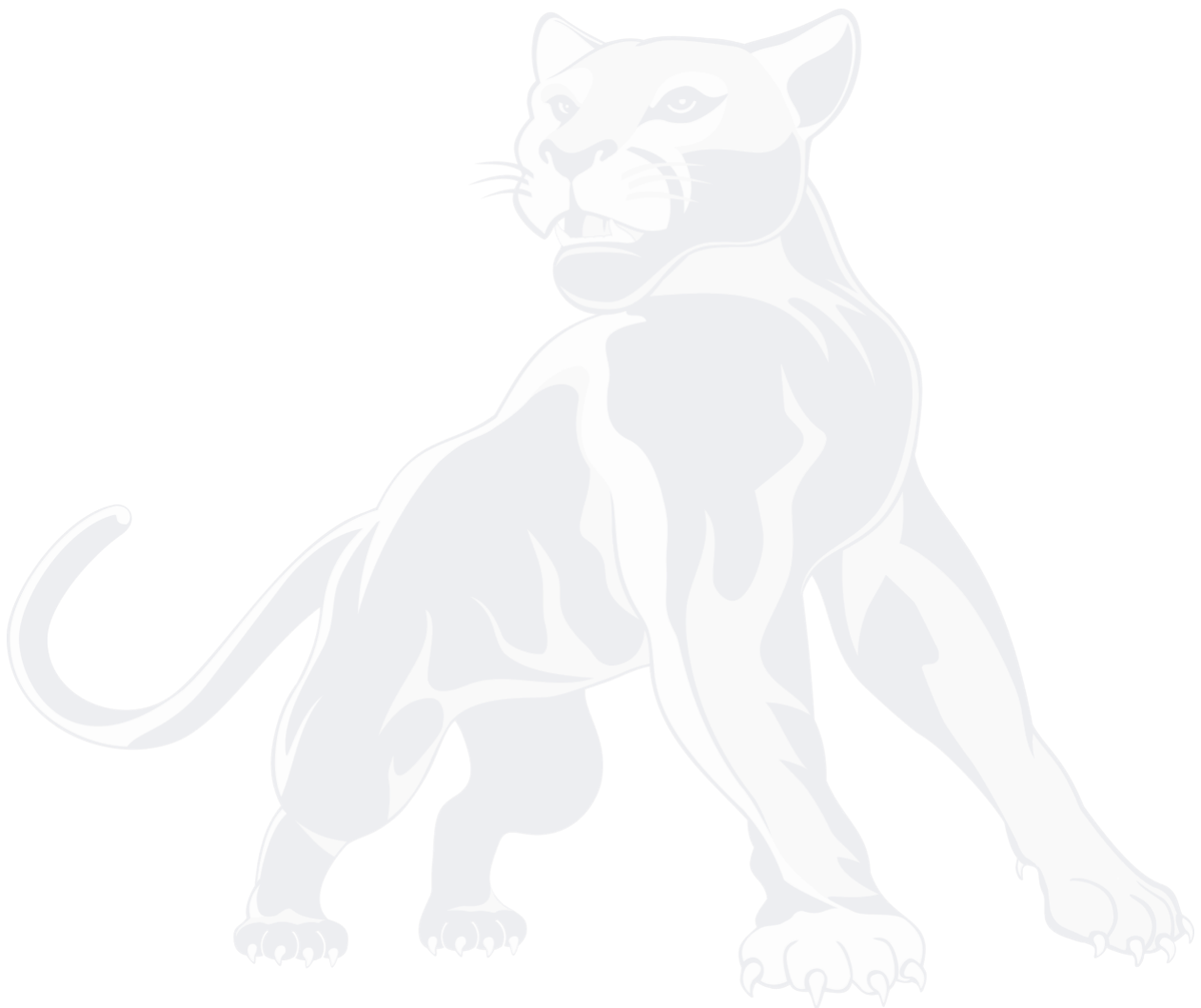


Figure 2: Student responses to four key diversity questions. This figure shows the percentage of student responses in the affirmative to the three questions about staff and faculty diversity at Morton College

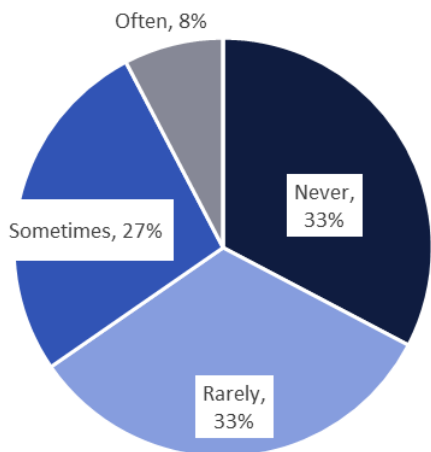
The majority of students who responded indicated they had been advised by someone of the same race/ethnicity as them and took at least one class with an instructor who is

the same race/ethnicity (Figure 2). However, students also said the race/ethnicity of a counselor or faculty member is not important to them (Figure 2). Even for students who are interacting less often with faculty and staff of the same race/ethnicity, they report feeling cared for. Overall 90% of students polled and 90% of faculty agreed that there is currently a culture of caring at this college. 84% of students said they felt like they belonged at Morton College. This suggests Morton College is making strong progress toward creating this campus climate of inclusivity.

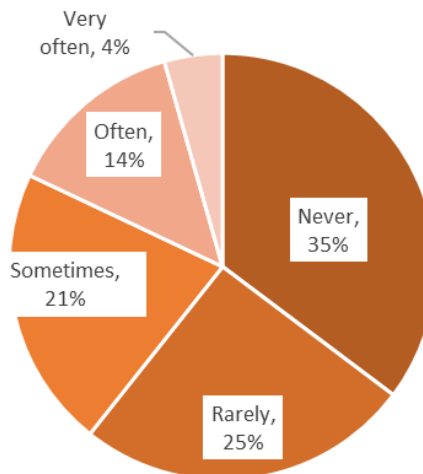


During the current academic year, how often have you witnessed racism in your community outside of this college?

Faculty Responses

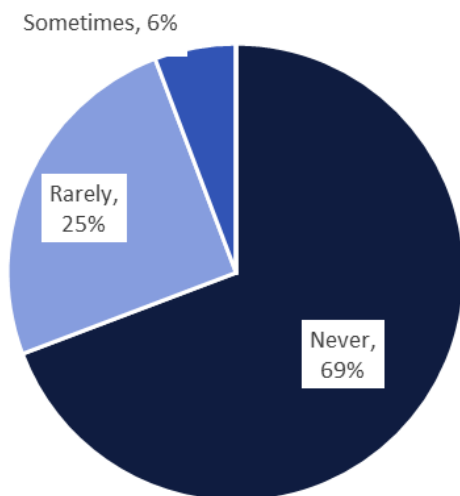


Student Responses

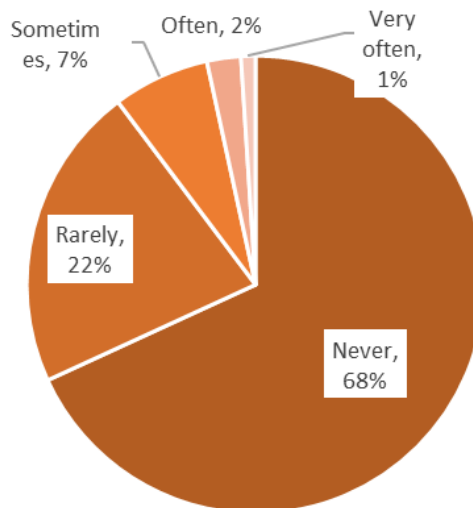


During the current academic year at this college, how often have you witnessed racism?

Faculty Responses



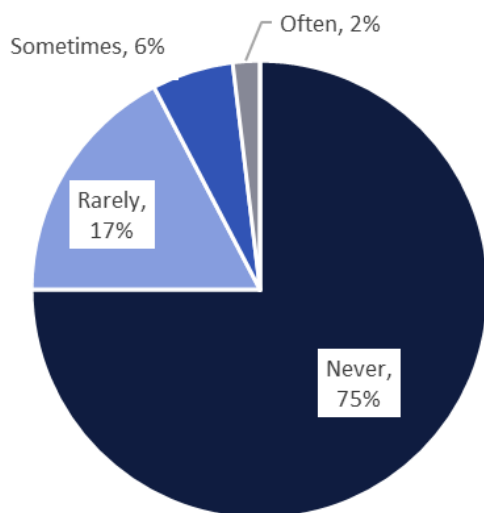
Student Responses



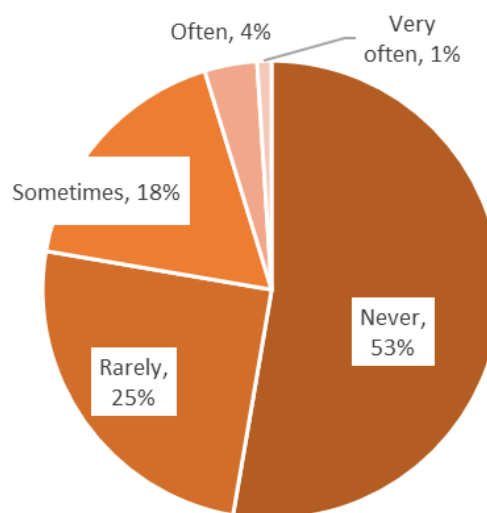
In total, 67% of faculty and 65% of students indicated they witnessed racism in their communities outside of Morton College. In contrast, the majority of both faculty (69%) and students (68%) indicated that they never witnessed racism at Morton College, indicating that Morton is promoting a good, inclusive culture.

During the current academic year, how often has racism been directed toward you in your community outside of this college?

Faculty Responses

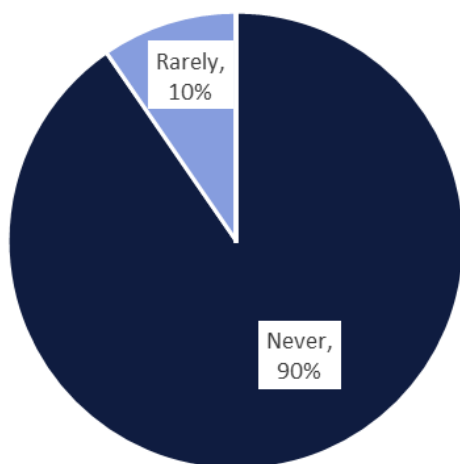


Student Responses

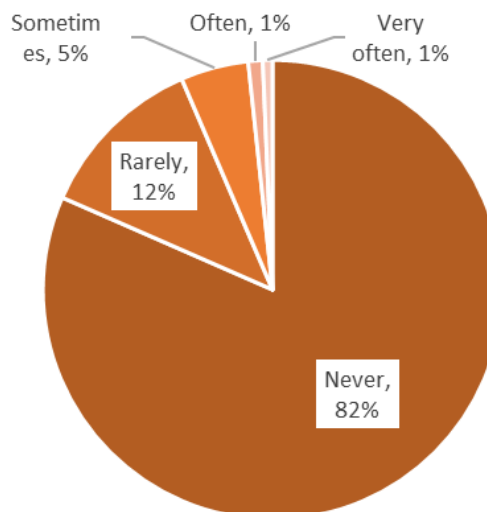


During the current academic year at this college, how often has racism been directed toward you?

Faculty Responses



Student Responses



In the community, 47% of students indicated that they experienced racism directed at them. The prevalence is much lower on campus. The vast majority of both faculty and students have indicated that they never have experienced racism directed towards them at Morton College.

In response to the racism that does exist on campus, many faculty and staff are standing up to it. 50% of students report witnessing their instructor or staff “taking a stance against racism”. 46% of faculty members say they have personally taken a stance against racism on behalf of students.

Plans are underway to reallocate a percentage of unused professional development funds from both staff and faculty budgets aimed at equity and diversity programming.

Reflection & Next Step

1. Expand our dual credit and dual enrollment offerings. Morton College will continue to offer and expand its offerings of dual credit and dual enrollment courses for our high school students. Under a recently awarded grant, Morton will expand its college bridge program that will offer dual enrollment courses and provide support services to the students that need it most.
2. Improve the math boot camp. Data shows that students are successfully completing the math boot camp but are not enrolling in the next math course. The college is looking for ways to improve the boot camp so that students feel confident in enrolling in that next course.
3. Invest more resources in the math emporium model. Morton College has seen promising results with the recently launched math emporium model. The math department is looking for additional ways to enhance this program including peer tutors and additional support.
4. Improve relationships with our English counterparts at the high school. The math department has a strong relationship with math faculty at the high school and middle school levels. The math department hosts the high school and middle school faculty every other month at the college to discuss curriculum, placement, etc. The college is hoping to create a similar relationship and articulation group for English faculty at the college and high school.
5. Revise the current Academic English Support (AES) program. The existing structure requires students to take 12 credit hours at a time. The course offerings recently moved to an a la carte structure where students could take 4 credit hours instead of 12 credit hours. This was more popular among students, but enrollment suffered. The team is now exploring the possibility of a co-requisite model where students will take a higher-level English course with the additional English supports as needed.
6. The academic team is looking to expand the embedded and peer tutoring programs. The team recognizes the need for additional academic support needed for some populations of students at the college.
7. The Diversity group will continue to meet, develop policies and strategies, and track diverse hires and retention at the College.