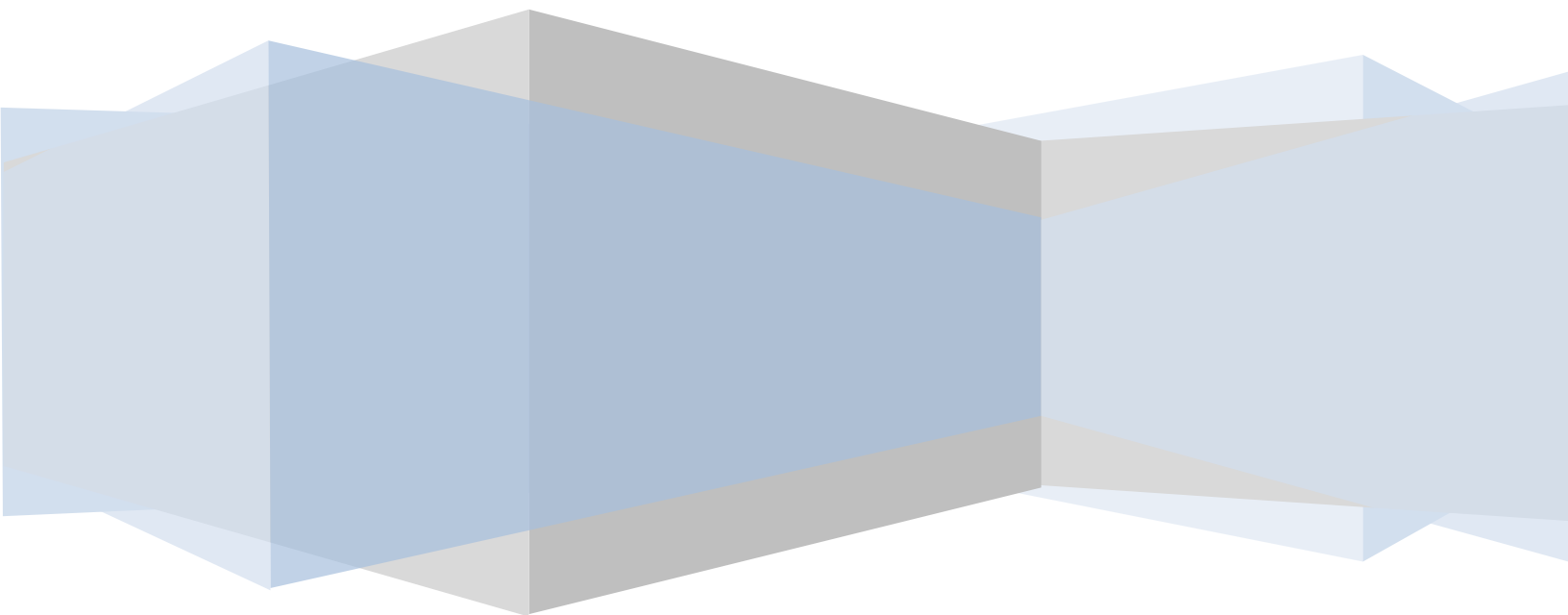


Wesleyan College  
in Collaboration with the Interactivity Foundation

# Diversity and Inclusion Discussions (DID)

Fall 2017 Student Participant Feedback

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## **Summary description of assessment results**

The Diversity and Inclusion Discussions (DID), a joint project between Wesleyan College and the Interactivity Foundation, provided an opportunity for students to use the IF process to discuss issues they see as relevant to diversity and inclusion. At the conclusion of the program, a diverse group of 22 participating students provided feedback on their experience in the DID program. Over half of the sample participated in at least two of the three sessions; they noted a variety of reasons for wanting to take part, including the need to increase and improve communication on campus, along with concerns about personal experiences related to diversity and inclusion.

Based on their responses, we know that DID participants gave this program strong ratings across the board (4.18-4.91 on a 5-point scale) in areas assessing self-perceived benefits related to teamwork, oral communication, civic engagement, creative thinking, global learning, and intercultural knowledge. Specifically, 95% of DID participants strongly agreed that their participation improved their ability to talk with others and obtain important information. Likewise, 91% strongly agreed believed that their participation empowered them to use their voice for public action and 82% strongly agreed that it provided insight on issues with which they did not have direct experience. In fact, all students who participated in this program agreed that other institutions would benefit from a similar program, and that they would be likely to recommend participation to other students on Wesleyan's campus. These findings are encouraging support for DID as a program that colleges and similar institutions can use to engage students in meaningful dialogue on diversity and inclusion.

Students participated in the Diversity and Inclusion Discussions (DID) across three sessions held during the Fall 2017 semester. The data in this report represents responses from 22 students who attended any of the sessions; these data were collected using paper surveys in November 2017.

### Year in College

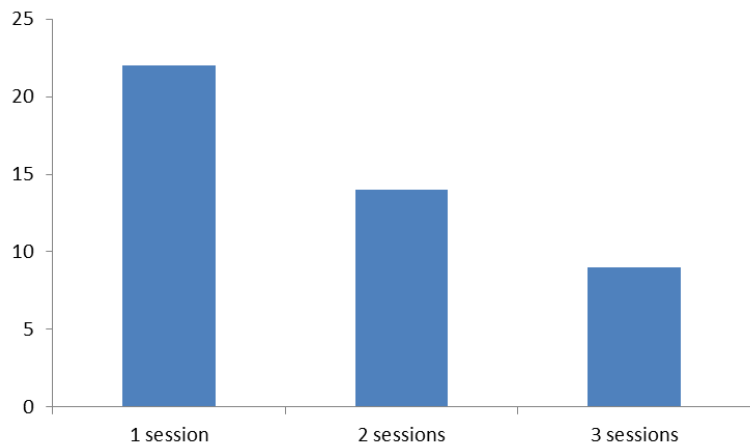
Most students who took part were seniors (N = 10; 45%), with the remaining students being juniors (N = 5; 23%), sophomores (N = 4; 18%), or first years (N = 3; 14%).

### Race/Ethnicity

Participants' self-reported race and ethnicity included Asian (N = 2; 9%), black or African American (N = 11; 50%), white (N = 3; 14%), and Pacific Islander (N = 1; 5%). Four students (18%) identified as biracial or multiracial. Two students (9%) reported Hispanic or Latina ethnicity, either alone or in combination with a racial designation.

### Sessions attended

The level of participation across sessions varied, but was fairly evenly divided. Of the 22 DID participants, 14 continued on to participate in at least two sessions, while another 9 participated in all three sessions.



### Concerns

DID participants provided written responses regarding their reasons for attending, with many offering multiple reasons. See the end of the report for the full set of responses.

- The most prominent theme was that of communication. This included the desire to learn how to better communicate with others and frustration with a lack of communication between various campus constituents.
- Specific personal experiences and concerns related to race, international/domestic student status, and disability comprised another major theme.
- Several students offered reasons relating to campus life, including available social activities, facilities, or the size of incoming classes.
- Another common theme was that of sisterhood, in terms of a lack of sisterhood, concerns about overall inclusion or the class names.

### General comments

Participants were given space to comment on any aspect of their experience with the program. Responses were overwhelmingly positive; some offered thanks, while others provided constructive feedback for future sessions. See the end of the report for the full set of responses.

Students were asked to rate their experience using a Likert scale from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. These items were initially envisioned within six subscales, which are shown below. The overall set of 24 items showed strong internal reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = .93), with subscales varying in this regard<sup>1</sup>. Three subscales (creative thinking, global learning, and intercultural knowledge) meet the desired standards for this type of reliability. Future users of this scale (particularly with more participants) may want to adjust some items within subscales, along with looking at factor loadings.

Subscale	Item	Mean	Std. Dev. <sup>2</sup>	Likert response percentages <sup>3</sup>				
				1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Participation in the DID process...</b>							
Teamwork ( $\alpha = .56$ )	encouraged me to build on and promote others’ ideas.	4.77	.52	0	0	4.55	13.64	81.82
	gave me the ability to motivate others in their discussion.	4.64	.71	0	0	13.64	9.09	77.27
	allowed me to be part of a cohesive team environment.	4.68	.63	0	0	9.19	13.64	77.27
	provided a deeper understanding of others’ commitment to change.	4.77	.52	0	0	4.55	13.64	81.82
Oral communication ( $\alpha = .64$ )	allowed me to become a more active listener.	4.73	.63	0	0	9.09	9.09	81.82
	provided an understanding of when/what/how in communicating important information to others.	4.68	.55	0	0	4.55	22.73	72.73
	improved my ability to talk with others and obtain important information.	4.91	.42	0	0	4.54	0	95.45
	improved my ability to achieve consensus in difficult situations.	4.36	.98	0	9.09	9.09	18.18	63.64
Civic engagement ( $\alpha = .44$ )	gave me a better understanding of campus issues.	4.77	.52	0	0	4.55	13.64	81.82
	increased my feelings of engagement with my community.	4.64	.57	0	0	4.55	27.27	68.18
	empowered me to use my voice for public action.	4.91	.29	0	0	0	9.09	90.91
	incorporated multiple perspectives on complex issues.	4.45	.99	0	9.09	9.09	9.09	72.72

<sup>1</sup> Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is a measure of how a set of items tend to be related. If someone responds with a “5” to one item, a high alpha indicates they are likely to also give other items within that scale or subset a “5” when they are phrased in a similar direction.

<sup>2</sup> Standard deviation is a measure of spread around the mean. The smaller the standard deviation, the closer all responses were grouped together, and vice versa.

<sup>3</sup> Responses may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

Creative thinking ( $\alpha = .79$ )	encouraged me to take risks.	4.18	1.30	9.09	4.55	9.09	13.64	63.64
	allowed me to discuss questions and topics that I had not previously thought about.	4.55	1.16	9.09	0	0	9.09	81.82
	encouraged me to embrace contradictions.	4.55	.66	0	0	9.09	27.27	63.64
	allowed me to come away with a plan of action.	4.27	1.14	4.55	4.55	13.64	13.64	63.64
Global learning ( $\alpha = .81$ )	helped me understand my personal responsibility to others.	4.50	.72	0	0	13.64	22.73	63.64
	increased my awareness of related issues outside of the discussions.	4.55	1.08	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.55	81.82
	increased my understanding and value of cultural diversity.	4.72	.62	0	0	9.09	9.09	81.82
	increased feelings of personal responsibility to different groups on campus.	4.59	.72	0	0	13.64	13.64	72.72
Intercultural knowledge ( $\alpha = .81$ )	provided insight on issues with which I did not have direct experience.	4.77	.52	0	0	4.55	13.64	81.82
	allowed me to consider the perspectives of others without applying judgment.	4.59	.72	0	0	13.64	13.64	72.73
	encouraged me to complicate an initial response I had to a topic, idea, or perspective.	4.41	1.03	4.55	0	13.64	13.64	68.18
	allowed me to show genuine empathy in my problem-solving.	4.59	.65	0	0	9.09	22.73	68.18
	would be a beneficial experience for students at other colleges and institutions.	4.91	.29	0	0	0	9.09	90.91

The following item asked students to consider their view of the DID program, both before and after participation. Responses were made on a Likert scale from 1 = “strongly negative” to 5 = “strongly positive”. Although initial perceptions were already positive, a t-test showed a significant improvement on self-reported perceptions of the program,  $t(21) = 2.66, p = .01$ . The question on initial view represents a retrospective judgment (i.e., we asked both at the end of the semester), so that should be taken into account when presenting this as a change in perception.

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Likert response percentages				
			1	2	3	4	5
What best describes your initial view of the DID program?	4.32	.97	0	9.09	9.09	22.73	59.09
What best describes your current view of the DID program?	4.86	.34	0	0	0	13.64	86.36

The following item asked about students’ likelihood of recommending this program. Responses were made on a Likert scale from 1 = “not at all likely” to 5 “Extremely likely”.

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Likert response percentages				
			1	2	3	4	5
How likely are you to recommend participation in the DID program to other students at Wesleyan?	4.77	.42	0	0	0	22.73	77.27

## Qualitative responses

Each bullet point represents a single student's responses. Multiple responses are shown separated by a semicolon.

What diversity concerns prompted you to take part in the DID process?

- SGA
- sisterhood; minorities on campus; faculty diversity
- not enough diversity on campus; lack of communication
- Diversity concerns of general dissatisfaction related to WesCo advertising "diversity but not doing anything towards "inclusion."
- I wanted to hear solutions to my dissatisfaction with the methods of handling issues/problems on campus via the school's staff/administration.
- All
- Lack of representation in faculty. Not many people who look like me in faculty; The false pretenses I was given of Wesleyan vs. the reality
- My friends were having problems with staff.
- Disability; overall inclusion
- Lack of disability services
- Achieving true diversity and inclusion; Also looking for solutions and not just complaining
- Lack of sisterhood; the gap between international students and local students
- Racism on campus and my experiences with it on campus; I noticed the decreased number of first years.
- Lack of things around campus (ex: fixing up living places, having more social aspect on campus to get everyone involved).
- Really everything attracted me to voice my opinions
- Campus life
- Participation in DID last year; Class names
- Lack of communication, cliques, and wanting to hear others' concerns
- Wanted to hear other people's concerns
- [Another student] invited me.
- Variety not diversity

General comments about your experience:

- These DID meetings were amazing and I loved hearing everyone's perspectives and view of Wesleyan as well as concerns that I may have overlooked or been oblivious to.
- I already had people who said they wanted to be facilitators.
- Great discussions; I don't know if the training for the facilitators cover this, but training them on how to stop the same person from dominating every conversation would be very helpful.
- I am so appreciative of this program for the purpose of providing an outlet as well as a foundation of knowledge of information and how to solve problems including initiating

solutions to them and developing a stronger argument for the course. This has brought hope into my heart for the future class to come and what they have to offer.

- I enjoy the conversation and appreciate the fact that the platform was offered, however, I did notice that some participants speak from hypothetical point of view and did not acknowledge the fact that some things are subjective and dependent upon an individual's personal experiences.
- I hope Wesleyan listens to the cries of their students.
- I really liked this. I'm a really quiet person, but my group was so respectful and thoughtful and encouraged me to participate. Great discussion!
- I am always recommending this to everyone I know. I think it's an awesome place to gauge other students' opinions on topics, not only that I care about but topics that mean something to others around me.
- It was hard to hear at times due to the tiny room, and the other group being too loud.
- It was eye opening; definitely more students should participate.
- Great
- I enjoyed facilitating!
- I would love to be a facilitator next year.
- Great facilitation!
- Great job Ms. Tonya and Dr. Doherty. This is great!



## Survey Materials

Thank you for your participation in the DID program! To help us better shape the future of the program, we'd appreciate your honest feedback on the items below.

Year (circle one): First Year    Sophomore    Junior    Senior    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Race/ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

How many of this semester's DID sessions did you attend? \_\_\_\_\_

What diversity concerns prompted you to take part in the DID process?

For the items in this section, indicate your response to the items below using the Likert scale shown here:

- 1 – Strongly disagree
- 2 – Somewhat disagree
- 3 – Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 – Somewhat agree
- 5 – Strongly agree

Participation in the DID process...

- \_\_\_ encouraged me to build on and promote others' ideas.
- \_\_\_ allowed me to become a more active listener.
- \_\_\_ gave me a better understanding of campus issues.
- \_\_\_ encouraged me to take risks.
- \_\_\_ helped me understand my personal responsibility to others.
- \_\_\_ allowed me to consider the perspectives of others without applying judgment.
- \_\_\_ gave me the ability to motivate others in their discussion.
- \_\_\_ provided an understanding of when/what/how in communicating important information to others.
- \_\_\_ increased my feelings of engagement with my community.
- \_\_\_ allowed me to discuss questions and topics that I had not previously thought about.
- \_\_\_ increased my awareness of related issues outside of the discussions.
- \_\_\_ provided insight on issues with which I did not have direct experience.
- \_\_\_ allowed me to be part of a cohesive team environment.
- \_\_\_ improved my ability to talk with others and obtain important information.
- \_\_\_ empowered me to use my voice for public action.
- \_\_\_ encouraged me to embrace contradictions.
- \_\_\_ increased my understanding and value of cultural diversity.
- \_\_\_ encouraged me to complicate an initial response I had to a topic, idea, or perspective.
- \_\_\_ provided a deeper understanding of others' commitment to change.
- \_\_\_ improved my ability to achieve consensus in difficult situations.
- \_\_\_ incorporated multiple perspectives on complex issues.
- \_\_\_ allowed me to come away with a plan of action.
- \_\_\_ increased feelings of personal responsibility to different groups on campus.
- \_\_\_ allowed me to show genuine empathy in my problem-solving.
- \_\_\_ would be a beneficial experience for students at other colleges and institutions.

For the following, please indicate your response:

What best describes your initial view of the DID program? (circle one)

Strongly negative	Somewhat negative	Neither negative nor negative	Somewhat positive	Strongly positive
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What best describes your current view of the DID program? (circle one)

Strongly negative	Somewhat negative	Neither negative nor negative	Somewhat positive	Strongly positive
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How likely are you to recommend participation in the DID program to other students at Wesleyan College? (circle one)

Not at all likely	Somewhat likely	Moderately likely	Very likely	Extremely likely
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General comments about your experience: