

UNIVERSITY STUDENT

COMMUNITY PULSE



CASE STUDY

The Coven conducted a two-part research study

In partnership with a large public university to identify opportunities related to academic and extra-curricular programming that engages all students and fosters belonging.



COMMUNITY PULSE SURVEY

We began by conducting a survey of more than 240 current students and recent alumni.



CO-CREATION SESSIONS

We then conducted three virtual co-creation sessions with 13 BIPOC-identifying students from the school.



1

FACULTY & SPEAKERS SHOULD EMBRACE DIVERSITY & CULTURAL COMPETENCY

BIPOC students are half (51%) as likely as their white counterparts to report seeing school leadership, faculty, and staff participate in DEI efforts.

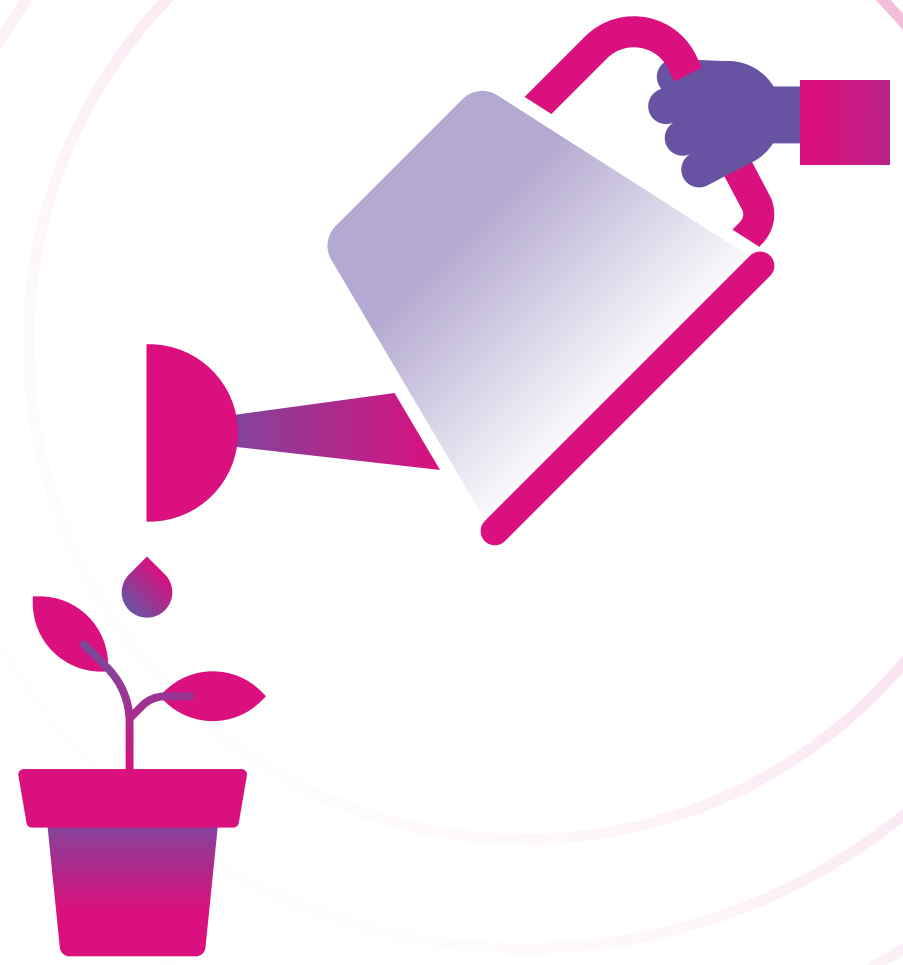
Students see professors, in-classroom guest speakers, event panelists, and topical content as opportunities to infuse a greater variety of perspectives and lived experiences into their academic experience.

2

SELECT PROGRAMS MAKE A NOTABLE IMPACT

BIPOC students applaud offerings that actively address broken systems and illuminate new paths forward that work for all.

For example, the mentorship program is a shining star, with students repeatedly praising it for connecting them with high quality mentors and exciting professional opportunities. Our survey shows BIPOC students are slightly more likely than white-identifying students to have participated in school events in the past, and the research points to a clear opportunity to better align events with the interests of students from BIPOC and other historically underrepresented groups.



3

NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO SIGNAL BELONGING

BIPOC students are 1.5x more likely to report feeling like "the only one" in classes.

Students emphasize the importance of infusing representation into classroom curriculum and materials, making it an ongoing and authentic part of their day-to-day classroom experience. Being invited into dialogue also signals belonging: students want to be included in conversations with, for, and about programming and DEI efforts.



4

ALIENATION EXISTS & SHOULD BE ADDRESSED

One-quarter (25%) of BIPOC students polled say they sometimes, often, or constantly have to edit or hide their identity during sponsored events at the school.

Participants were vocal about the challenges they face at the school, citing the discomfort and unease some feel about simply showing up as their true, whole selves. Although a majority of students feel they almost never need to edit or hide their identity in the classroom, BIPOC students are more likely to say they do this daily or weekly when compared to all students.



5

MAKE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION MANDATORY CURRICULUM

Students are begging for DEI classroom content to be substantial, culturally aware, and mandatory.

Students vocalized the importance of learning more about topics like Black media and reporting on communities of color, and would ideally learn about them from professors and faculty of color. Furthermore, our research illuminated that talking about - and framing - diversity as "on trend" undermines its importance. For BIPOC students, issues of race, equity, and diversity are inescapable parts of their everyday lives.

