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Generation Peace: Peace Education to Unify a Globalized Society

Jocelyn Coombs

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Bridgewater State University

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Generation Peace: Peace Education to Unify a Globalized Society

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to discuss how Peace Education may build on the objectives of Global and Diversity Education, and how it may enhance these objectives in higher education. Through a qualitative study of survey data and analysis of curriculum and diversity programs at Bridgewater State University, I examine connections between the diversity-oriented campus environment and student attitudes towards diversity. I use responses from a fifty-question survey distributed to over 300 students at BSU to analyze student attitudes towards diversity, individualism, and political engagement. While students enjoy meeting people from diverse backgrounds, a significant percent of respondents do not wish to express their opinions on more specific attitudes towards diversity and individualism. Findings reveal that while BSU strongly promotes diversity and globalism through its core curriculum and programs on campus, there is a disconnect between the values of the university and the attitudes of its students.

Introduction

Global competency, global literacy, and global citizenship are interchangeable terms used to describe the knowledge of world religions, cultures and issues, and the skills and attitudes necessary to engage responsibly and effectively in a global environment (Banks 2004). Previous studies show that global and diversity-oriented courses greatly improve students' global competencies and prepare them to become global citizens. Today's generation is the most ethnically and racially diverse one that America has ever known (Miller 2013), and must possess these skills in order to succeed in an increasingly globalized society.

While the expectations to be globally competent are rising, the stresses on individual identity have never been higher. Students are encouraged to pursue entrepreneurial success and be attractive to potential employers by being flexible and able to navigate short term and fast paced environments, constantly reminded of the competition against them. The emphasis on developing a global identity while being taught an "every man for himself" attitude is contradicting and potentially detrimental to the ultimate goals of Diversity and Global Education.

Peace Education is a method of teaching that promotes diversity and global education in a comprehensive, holistic way. It is an approach that takes the traditional system of teaching history through a perspective of war and conflict, and flips it to view historical events through a sense of unity and connectedness. This perspective is a method to prevent or resolve conflict rather than accept it. The Integrative Theory of Peace maintains that "all human states of being, including peace, are shaped by our worldview- our view of reality, human nature, purpose of life and human relationships" (Danesh 2006:55). Peace Education addresses the same critical social issues that Diversity and Global Education does, but takes it to a holistic level of approaching topics from a unity-based worldview. Global education teaches students to embrace people from

other races, cultures and countries, but the issue with this perspective is the word “other.” No matter how comprehensive Diversity Education is, it is still taught from a perspective that frames our understandings as “us” and “them.” This perspective ultimately leads to the categorization and ranking of groups of people, and prevents us from seeing all of humanity as one interconnected force. The call for Peace Education tends to surface during times of significant social, economic, or political disorder, only to remain generally unacknowledged and unutilized during times of relative stability. During these times, such as the Civil Rights Movement, people from across diverse backgrounds unified for common purposes, setting aside individual differences to seek justice for all. Peace Education was looked to as a resource then, and is gaining more notice today in the global age. If a unity-based worldview can be developed during times of stability, it may allow students to embrace a true global identity and move towards a more peaceful society.

I learned of Peace Education while conducting a study on diversity-integrated curriculum and its affect on students’ growth and development as global citizens. Using the same data set as in the current study, I examined relationships between student attitudes towards diversity, interest in local or national issues through various news sources, and motivations towards social responsibility. For this study, I revisit the data from the original survey in order to view it within the framework of Peace Education. I investigate how Bridgewater State University integrates Diversity and Global Education by examining the freshman orientation program, the Core Curriculum, and campus offices that provide global, multicultural, and diversity-related resources.

The student body at BSU is moderately diverse, with 81% White, 8% Black/African America and 5% Hispanic/Latino being the most represented ethnicities. 96% of students are

from Massachusetts, with only 4% being out of state students. 58% of students are female and 42% are male (College Board). The racial demographics of BSU are extremely similar to the racial demographics of Massachusetts according to the most recent U.S. census report (83.7% White, 7.9% Black/African American, 10.1% Hispanic/Latino) (U.S. Census Bureau 2014). About 130 international students attend BSU each year. Although students at BSU are immersed in a moderately diverse environment, engagement in diversity and global studies is crucial for students preparing to live in a global society. In recent years, the university has attempted to integrate diversity and global citizenship into campus life. Through an examination of BSU's comprehensive approach to diversity and global studies, and an analysis of student attitudes towards diversity, individualism, and political engagement, I will discuss how Peace Education may build on the objectives of Global and Diversity Education, and how it may enhance these objectives in higher education.

Literature Review

HISTORY OF PEACE EDUCATION

Peace education began in the 1950s, presented as the “science of peace,” to oppose the science of war that had brought so much devastation in the previous decade (Harris and Howlett 2013). Individual actions evolved into grass roots movements, and peace studies soon sprouted up in academia. During the Vietnam War, universities and colleges devoted courses and even entire departments to peace studies as the model wove through the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, and student radicalism. Galtung et al. (2002) outlines three generations of peace approaches to discuss trends in public attitudes before, during, and after times of conflict. The first generation is defined as the time before and leading up to the Second World War.

During this time, peace was expressed as “a reaction against war,” where, “people demanded peace through governmental cooperation, transcending nations and states” (*xvii*). Following the Second World War the second generation of peace transitioned into “a reaction against governments” when people began doubting the government’s interest in pursuing peace, and thus beginning public demand for research and education for peace (*xv*). Finally, the third generation of peace emerged after the Cold War, as a “reaction against simplistic peace approaches,” as society realized how deep roots within all institutional structures and social constructions affect peace approaches and development (*xvi*). All three of these generations did not develop independently, but remained connected as they evolved from one to another.

Rapid progression of peace studies took place in the midst of escalating nuclear weapons protests in the 1980s, where people found hope and empowerment through practicing peace education. In 1986 there were over 100 peace studies programs in the United States (Harris and Howlett 2013) and by 2008 more than 400 universities and colleges across the world were offering undergraduate and graduate degrees, courses and certificates (Jenkins 2013). Between 1985 and 2000, an initial four established graduate programs had grown to 80 programs in the U.S. and 130 globally (Windmueller et al. 2009).

In 2008, an international group of experts and institutions led by the Centre for International Health, University of Tromsø, Norway, used a European Commission Leonardo da Vinci grant to develop an online learning course aimed to enhance the activities and professional responsibility of health workers in violence prevention and sustainable peace building. The project was named Medical Peace Work (MPW) and drew on the concepts of health as a bridge for peace, as well as on other relevant concepts and disciplines such as global health, violence prevention, health and human rights, and medicine and war (Sambunjak and Melf 2008). This

expansion of peace education into the medical field is evidence of how peace studies can be integrated into any academic discipline, as well as the existence of the desire and motivation to create courses and programs in these areas for the purpose of promoting peace.

Dr. Elise Boulding was an extremely influential actor in the peace education movement. Along with her husband, Kenneth, the two helped create academic peace programs at Dartmouth and Colorado University, and played a part in the creation of international organizations that promoted cross cultural connections in the creation of peace (Howlett and Harris 2010). Greatly influenced and inspired by Quaker faith, Elise Boulding integrated the faith's values into her mission for peace. A popular testimony representing the beliefs that the Quakers live by is SPICE: simplicity, peace, integrity/truth, community, and equality (Stephenson 2012).

Expressing innovative and futuristic concepts and ideals,

[Boulding] conceptualized peace education as something that could occur anywhere, not just in the classroom and not as a separate discipline, but as a way of helping children grow up to be peacemakers, and empowering people for making choices that would lead to a more peaceful world" (Stephenson 2012:116).

If Peace Education and its history were integrated into elementary, middle, and secondary school systems, children could begin to understand the importance of unity and accept it as a necessary way of life, preparing them to become educated and responsible students and citizens as they get older. As students in college are experiencing higher levels of diversity (Miller 2013), and are at an age to become politically active, peace studies in higher education may be utilized to teach more advanced levels of peace and conflict comprehension. From understanding the history of Peace Education and its role in events like the Civil Rights Movement, we can consider how teaching a unity-based worldview may allow students in higher education to better face problems in the global era. Past historical events stirred students to promote unity as a way to combat oppression and injustice, but these values cannot arise only in times of social turmoil.

Peace Education is gaining more notice yet again today, but this time it should appear as it was meant to 60 years ago: as a means to prevent societal conflict and disparity.

PEACE EDUCATION TO PREVENT DISPARITY AND FOSTER HEALING

Peace Education has appeared across the world as a potential solution to addressing and resolving conflict or the lasting effects of it. In Western societies, Peace Education may be used as a tool to address persistent inequality issues and prevent further disconnect and supremacy. Following its traditional goals, the “modern” peace movement asserts that the eradication of racism, gender inequality, economic disparity, and environmental hazards lay the framework for building peace upon an equal and just society (Harris and Howlett 2013). To achieve this, students must be guided to approach global issues through the eyes of a global citizen. By bringing the perspective of peace to established and esteemed disciplines in higher education, students may adopt this fundamental concept and become agents of change for social responsibility and consciousness (Moshe Grodofsky 2012).

“History is generally thought of as the story of the rise and fall of empires, a chronicle of reigns, wars, battles, and military and political revolutions,” says Boulding (2000:13), “In short, the history of power – who tames whom, who controls whom.” This way of teaching perpetuates the belief that war and conflict is inevitable. Removing perspectives and details from the records in order to justify and even glorify the actions of a group or nation dismisses the pain and turmoil others have endured for the sake of an empire, turning the demolition of cultures and peoples into historical milestones in someone else’s history books. Internalized conflict-based perspectives can develop into large-scale acts of violence, but can also preserve social disparities and lead society to perceive inequality as a natural occurrence.

Because globalization is blurring the lines of man-made national borders, the standards for social justice and human rights across nations are exposed and arguments for their defense are rising. People are more aware of issues in society as a whole, and those who understand their role in this global society, and respect and value diversity, can be considered global citizens (Brown and Morgan 2008). In addition to knowledge and awareness of global issues, the identity of a global citizen must also include a readiness to take action against social injustice. While Brown and Morgan (2008) acknowledge a relationship between global knowledge and activism, more important is ensuring that education translates into action. Danesh (2006:57) asserts that “peace education is the only route to true civilization and true civilization is both peaceful and peace creating.” Danesh says that curriculums must integrate all aspects of society in which peace plays a role. These aspects include psychological roots, social and political causes, and moral and ethical values. Without acknowledging these factors, “achievement of peace remains an aspiration rather than an established reality” (Danesh 2006:62). Synott (2005:13) also calls for educators to “regard peace education as the most important agency for the achievement of peace and the overcoming of conflict and violence.” Knowledge is power, but students need more than facts and figures to become active participants in society. Peace studies now exist in numerous universities across the U.S. and around the world. Examination of active peace study programs with peace-oriented academic projects reveal the benefits that a peace-integrated curriculum can offer to individuals and society.

Developed in 2000, a peace education studies program has been implemented in 112 primary and secondary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The program was developed shortly after the end of a civil war in a society with a history of authoritarian rule. The curriculum is integrated into a wide range of disciplines including education, law, sociology, psychology and

history and based on three principles: (1) unity, not conflict, is the main force in human relationships; (2) worldview is the main framework within which all human individual and group behavior takes shape; and (3) peace is the main outcome of a unity-based worldview (Danesh 2006:158). This approach incorporates learning and discussion of theory reinforced by hands-on problem solving experiences. An evaluation of this fully integrated peace studies program shows that students, teachers, and staff have witnessed positive change in student cooperation and attitudes. In this case, the most notable change in students is reported as being their collaboration during planned peace events (Danesh 2006). This particular program suggests that developing unified relationships and fostering a culture of peace occurs best when implemented in areas of education beyond the classroom

Unfortunately, not much research on evaluations of integrated Peace programs exist. Forms of Peace and Conflict studies have been implemented around the world but do not follow a specific standard. Using core elements and values of Peace Education, schools develop various curriculums and programs designed to teach topics and perspectives of peace. Because these programs typically exist in countries where conflict is prevalent or has been in the past, it is unclear of how successful Peace Education could be as a preventative measure in Western societies. Western societies might not be experiencing the same types of conflict that Bosnia and Herzegovina are, but social inequalities are persistent, and must be addressed in an active, comprehensive manner. If societies recovering from conflict, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, can foster healing and peace through such comprehensive programs, it is likely that relatively stable societies could overcome social disparity and discrimination by developing unity-based perspectives.

CONNECTION AND INDIVIDUALISM

Peace Education asserts that once unity is established as the fundamental perspective, conflicts can be prevented or easily resolved. By incorporating preventative measures to foster peace and unity, rather than trying to reverse harm caused by conflict and inequality, society can live in “the law of unity, which refers to the fact of the oneness of humanity in its diverse expressions” (Danesh 2006:69). That is, peace exists when all forms of diversity are expressed and celebrated, as they are understood as parts of one humanity. Unfortunately, Hargreaves (2003:1) says, “too many educational systems promote exaggerated and self-absorbed senses of national identity.” Being conditioned to identify as one race, one nationality, one individual, etc., is contradicting to the goals of global citizenship. Categorizing one’s self and others as independent entities, completely separate from global society as a whole, can indirectly lead to the ranking of groups and the formation of social hierarchies. Such propagated expectations of identity can be difficult to dismiss in favor of true global citizenship, but Coy and Hancock (2010) suggest that the concepts of peace and conflict studies can be found within the core approach of liberal arts education. Recognizing the ideals of democracy as the foundation for liberal arts, the need for citizens to have the ability and willingness to consider different points of view is essential for a fair and just society. In both liberal arts and conflict resolution education, cultural awareness and intersection have become major points of attention. “In an increasingly globalized world, contemporary liberal arts education sees respect for diversity as a cross-cutting principle, necessarily integrated into all disciplines and fields of study, and also at the heart of the democratic experiment” (Coy and Hancock 2010:210).

The need for the education system to adapt to our rapidly changing society has never been greater. Students are encouraged to pursue entrepreneurial success for profit and self-

interest rather than committing to a long-term profession or community. In a continually evolving technological and global society, demands to be flexible have molded today's generations to fit into the short-term working world, rather than the previous long-term, commitment-focused one. Today, the average American college graduate will change jobs eleven times, and their skill base three times (Elliott and Lemert 2009). Instead of instilling creativity and resourcefulness in students to foster social integration and global citizenship, school systems have become increasingly standardized by striving for uniformity through test scores and achievement targets. The conflicting messages to strive for an independent identity while also conforming to a national one are detrimental to the achievement of peace. Some scholars argue that globalization and cosmopolitan identity damage community and cultural relationships. "Globalisation, because of the risk it brings of soulless standardization, can lead to fragmentation and a reduced sense of belonging to a wider community" (Michel 2001:47). This fragmentation occurs when economic markets are more important than social and cultural relationships, allowing globalization to advance nationalism and parochialism. When students learn in an environment that promotes equality, empathy, and understanding of global culture, the progression of globalization can act as a societal unifier. Discussing peace in the context of globalization, Nagler and Pilisuk (2011:31) explain,

To work for peace is to build *sukha*, liberation, wellness in a world at peace with nature, between genders, generations, and among races—where the excluded are included but not by force and where classes, nations, and states serve neither direct nor structural violence. In such a world they would all pull together for better livelihood for all. That would be true globalization, unlike the present abusive reduction of that term to represent only state and corporate elites in a handful of countries.

Global competency, global literacy, and global citizenship are interchangeable terms used to describe a crucial skill for today's youth to possess as society becomes increasingly cosmopolitan. Banks (2004) asserts that education must endorse citizenship on a global scale in

order for students to function in a society in which ethnic, cultural and religious groups are increasingly seeking and attaining recognition and inclusion. Multicultural citizenship, he explains, is vital in the modern world because while it recognizes and legitimizes national identifications, adopting a global identification is essential to understanding the importance of world problems and the necessity of finding solutions as a global community.

In the millennium, the identity of a global citizen is expected, but the implications of global connectedness can be misleading. While globalization promotes unity through shared identity, the modern society appears consumed by competition and individualism. Elliott and Lemert (2009) call it, “the age of new individualism,” and connect growing individualistic ideals with neoliberal globalization through the preoccupation of privatization. In the same way that privatization is taking place in the capitalist economy, privatization is taking place in individual identities, which “propels individuals into shutting others and the wider world out of their emotional lives,” and sets the stage “for a unique cultural constellation of anguish, anxiety, fear, disappointment and dread” (Elliot and Lemert 2009:9). These emotional consequences stem from attempts to shape personal identity to the forces of the global market. The pressure to join cosmopolitan society while simultaneously setting oneself apart from the masses through entrepreneurial success is contradictory and psychologically damaging to today’s generations.

The type of individualism instilled in today’s generations is the kind that supports competitiveness and an “every man for himself” attitude. Many scholars throughout history have asserted that this is a natural characteristic and that selfishness is connected to the instinct to survive. Arguing the opposite of this view, McTaggart (2011) cites numerous scientific studies that demonstrate the power of connection. McTaggart (2011: 70) begins her discussion with the claim that, “Deep connection rather than competition is the quality most essential to human

nature; we were never meant to live a life of isolation and self-serving survival.” Pointing to cases such as the practice of shunning in Amish tradition, the mental and physical health consequences experienced by individuals who are literally or perceivably detached from others are astounding. One study led by epidemiologist, Leonard Syme, found that people who are “culturally mobile,” meaning they have moved geographically from one socially cultural environment to one that was significantly different, are put at higher risk for developing cardiovascular disease. Upon further investigation, no other risk factors, including smoking, diet and high blood pressure, were found to have more of an influence on an individual’s likelihood of developing the disease than did cultural mobility. According to McTaggart, these findings strongly suggest that experiencing upheaval from one’s social environment to another where there exists no sense of belonging significantly affects one’s physical health. Cacioppo and Hawkley (2003) studied two groups, one of young adults and one of older adults, with comparable health habits including diet, exercise, tobacco use, and caffeine, soda and alcohol consumption. The study revealed that it is not these habits, but level of loneliness that correlate with health outcomes. “Social isolation, which is heightened by living alone and recent relocations,” the study concludes, “is a major risk factor for broad-based morbidity and mortality, even after statistically controlling for known biological risk factors, social status, and baseline measures of health” (Cacioppo and Hakley 2003:S50).

Social connection is extremely important for the maintenance of personal and societal health, but are globalization’s conflicting messages altering the positive effects of cultural ties? Nagler and Pilisuk (2011) discuss how, since 1989, war and conflict have become wars between cultures and ethnicities rather than wars between nations states. “National wars are becoming less frequent while cultural and ethnic wars are multiplying... Violent conflicts involving

peoples who believe they are fighting for the survival of their way of life are more personal and inhumane than wars for economic or political advantage fought by nation states” (Nagler and Pilisuk 2011:72). Because of our inherent desire for social connection, associations with social groups such as ethnicities, “create a consciousness of kind that separates us from those who are different” (Nagler and Pilisuk 2011:72). Through socialization, we learn to accept those who are culturally similar to ourselves but also develop the ethnocentric views that psychologically place our standards above those of other peoples. When individuals in a group feel secure, the group is more likely to have stronger cohesiveness, providing security and order. These groups are more likely to tolerate and appreciate cultural differences in their own communities and the world, and can live beyond the psychological restrictions of ethnocentrism. On the other hand, when a group’s identity is threatened or perceived as such, “cultural identification serves a negative function: the promotion of their group values, norms and patterns of thought at the expense of those other groups” (Nagler and Pilisuk 2011:74). From this perspective, the innate desire to bond with people can be constructive or destructive, either allowing or preventing society from moving beyond injustices of the past towards a positive future.

By allowing social hierarchies to continue to develop, we are impeding our own ability to solve these world-wide crises. “The different processes of socialization of humans in diverse societies assign values and power to individuals, groups and genders in various ways,” Synott (2005:10) explains, “The identity notions of the ‘self,’ ‘other,’ ‘we’ or ‘the enemy’ are always learned.” The concepts addressed in Peace Education include identifying these social and cultural constructs and understanding “the commonality of essential goodness across difference cultures and societies” (10). As we learned through the history of Peace Education, diverse groups of people in the past have been able to come together for common causes. If society could

maintain this perspective of unity during all times, recognizing differences as something to celebrate instead of rank, then maybe the multitude of cultures, beliefs, abilities, experiences, etc. demonstrated by the human race could be utilized to solve the issues affecting the entire world together.

Methodology

This study aims to investigate the benefits that Global and Diversity Education has on student awareness and engagement in global and diversity issues, and how Peace Education may add to or enhance student development as global citizens. Through an examination of diversity-oriented programs, curriculum, and offices, this study examines the comprehensive diversity education offered at Bridgewater State University as well as student attitudes towards diversity, individualism, and political engagement from a fifty-question survey. In order to understand BSU student attitudes towards diversity, it is important to examine how the university promotes diversity education in the classroom and in the campus community. For this study, I analyze three types of diversity-oriented education models at BSU. These include the freshman orientation BEAR program, the BSU Core Curriculum, and three offices on campus that provide diversity-related resources to students. We can expect that if the university is successfully promoting diversity and multiculturalism, this will be reflected in student attitudes expressed in the survey.

The freshman orientation program is analyzed based on the 2013 Facilitator's Guide, which is the handbook used by orientation leaders during the June and July summer orientation sessions (2013 Facilitator's Guide). This guide details the goals of the program and outlines four diversity-oriented sessions that all incoming freshman students are guided through. The BSU

Core Curriculum is found on the BSU website and outlines a set of required foundational courses meant to introduce students to all major academic disciplines. For the purpose of this study, I will be discussing the objectives of the Global Culture, Multiculturalism, Social/Behavioral, and Humanities requirements.

Finally, three offices on campus that promote global and diversity education are: The Office of Institutional Diversity; The Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, Disability Compliance, and Title IX Coordinator; and the Minnock Center for International Engagement. While there are other offices on campus that address diversity, the goals demonstrated and the resources provided by these institutes are the most relevant to this study. These offices are analyzed based on the information provided on their web pages connected to the BSU website. It is important to note that the Core Curriculum and diversity offices websites can be accessed only with a valid BSU password.

As part of a research seminar, I helped distribute a fifty-question survey to 334 undergraduate students enrolled in Intro to Sociology courses in the Fall of 2013 at Bridgewater State University. Surveys were completed during regular class meeting times over the course of five weeks and took about twenty minutes to complete. Students were asked to voluntarily complete the survey and informed consent was collected. The survey is an adapted version of the Tisch College National Civic and Political Engagement of Young People Survey. Students responded on a Likert-type scale indicating strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. For the purposes of this study, I will examine the following prompts:

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

1. I enjoy meeting people who come from backgrounds very different from my own.

2. I actively seek out and maintain relationships with individuals very different from me.
3. I find it difficult to relate to people from a different race or culture.
4. Individuals are responsible for their own misfortunes.
5. I plan to participate in political activities in the future.

These prompts add to my discussion of global studies and Peace Education as they investigate student attitudes towards diversity, individualism, and political engagement.

As the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in America, students in higher education today should be able to work with each other towards common goals, and have friendships with one another regardless of differing backgrounds. While global education teaches students to recognize and embrace differences, Peace Education emphasizes the necessary understanding of a shared sense of unity and connectedness. It is absolutely vital for students to be educated on global peoples and cultures, however, the current framework of the education system emphasizing individualistic attitudes and identities.

Prompts 1 through 3 provide a sense of how students feel about diversity in general, as well as their attitudes towards active engagement with diverse individuals. Prompt 1 is framed as a broad generalization of feelings towards diverse people, while 2 and 3 indicate if students personally engage in diverse relationships, and to what level they can relate to people who are different from them. By examining opinions towards individual responsibility for misfortunes, Prompt 4 will allow us to understand how individualistic the attitudes of respondents are. Societal pressures to adopt highly individualized identities are increasing, but it is essential that students be able to interact and collaborate with students of all cultures and backgrounds. Finally, Prompt 5 inquires about students' future plans for involvement in political activities. As a democratic society, working together as one united people is essential for the wellbeing of all

citizens. The political engagement prompt was selected because it relates to one of the goals of global and diversity education, which is responsible citizenship.

The university is located in a suburban area with a large commuter population. The largest bachelor's degree program is the school of Education followed by Business/Marketing and Psychology. 48.3% of respondents are commuters living in various off-campus settings and 51.7% are residents. Females represent 65.7% of respondents and 34.3% are male. 90.5% of respondents are between the ages of 18 and 21, and 50.2% are freshman. 74.9% report being white, 8.2% report being black/African-American, 3.9% are Hispanic/Latino, and 3.6% report being two races.

There were various constraints when conducting the research and readers are advised to be aware of these limitations. Although the course surveyed is one that is available for enrollment to all students, the survey was not opened to all students in the university. The study is also limited in its ability to be generalizable to college students in the rest of the United States. The college is a liberal-arts university situated in a liberal state. Most students are originally from Massachusetts or New England and their views and backgrounds cannot be generalized to other parts of the country. Because the survey took place during class time, students were required to finish in the 20-25 minute window given. This time constraint may have resulted in a number of surveys not being completed, especially by students for whom English is a second language.

In the following sections we will investigate student attitudes on diversity, individualism, and political engagement, and how the current diversity-oriented curriculum and programs at Bridgewater State University may have an affect on these attitudes.

Findings and Discussion

BEAR Program

The BEAR Program is the portion of summer freshman orientation that focuses on diversity at BSU. BEAR stands for “Be Educated, Aware and Respectful. Some of the goals of the program are:

- To provide participants with new information.
- To give participants the opportunity to think about new ideas and attitudes in an environment of respectful discussion.
- To understand what diversity is and the role it plays in our college community.
- To learn what diversity in experience, background and thought may exist among the orientation group.
- To discuss the concept of respect and how behaviors show respect to others in a college setting.
- To learn about the people in the Bridgewater State University community and, specifically, about what each student in the orientation group may have in common.
- To model examples of civil discussion around challenging issues.

These goals are achieved through the facilitation sessions outlined below. It is important to note that freshman students who cannot attend any of the June or July sessions must attend an orientation session in August that does not include the BEAR program. Also, transfer students attend a separate orientation over winter break and do not experience the program either.

Defining Diversity

The objective of the “Defining Diversity” facilitation is “to establish common understanding of the word ‘diversity’ as defined beyond just race or culture.” In this session, orientation leaders (OLs) guide students through a discussion using the following questions:

1. How are we different?
 - Here, the guidebook notes that OLs should make sure the following are covered:
 - Ethnic/racial/cultural diversity
 - Differences in ability, gender, and sexual orientation
 - Social and economic diversity
 - Differences in political, religious, and other beliefs
2. What is diversity?
3. What are the positive aspects to having a diverse community? Are there any challenges associated with it?
4. Would you consider the community you grew up in “diverse?”
5. How do you think you can become more diverse? How do you think that will impact your transition to BSU?

The “Defining Diversity” session is guided as an open discussion among the incoming freshman students. The discussion immediately addresses a variety of differences beyond race and culture, before transitioning into the question of “what is diversity,” where students are able to express their understanding of diversity and experiences with it. It seems that this facilitation sets the tone for the rest of the orientation session, as well as for what students can expect once they enter BSU as official students. It addresses the potential challenges that may exist in a diverse community, but concludes by asking students how they can personally become more diverse, implying a standard of engagement that the university expects students to demonstrate.

Social Barometer

The objective of the “Social Barometer” is “to model civil discussion around social and campus issues” and “enable students to see common perspectives as well as divergent opinion through expression of rationale for choosing positions on issues.” For the “Social Barometer,” a series of prompts are read by the OLs, and the students must respond by physically moving to a corner of the room that represents “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree.”

In this session, as well as “Defining Diversity,” students can choose to vocally contribute to the discussion or not. However, the “Social Barometer” facilitation goes a little deeper by requiring students to participate in each prompt by at least standing in the area that reflects their opinion.

There are six statements that the program requires OLs to read which include:

1. Attending a Multicultural event of a culture, race or belief that does not represent me personally would make me uncomfortable.
2. I would provide illegal immigrants that are admitted to college financial aid.

In addition, if time allows, five optional prompts are provided which include:

1. I would vote for the reduction of welfare because I think everybody should earn their own living pay.
2. Gays and lesbians should have equal marriage rights to straight couples.
3. Men have more opportunities for career advancement than women.

This activity is followed by a debrief discussion during which OLs may ask students about any issues that came up during the exercise, anything they found surprising, or any feelings they had if they felt they expressed an opinion that set them apart from the rest of the group. This facilitation includes discussion of more specific issues of diversity, and challenges students to think about diversity in the context of more realistic examples. The activity allows students to reflect on their own perspectives and understand the viewpoints of their peers.

Dialogue is essential for engaged citizenship, as it allows all perspectives to be recognized and understood. Because prompts are relatable to situations that students may encounter on the BSU campus, students learn the appropriate way to approach challenging topics and how to have civil discussions with their peers by expressing their opinions and acknowledging the opinions of others in a respectable way.

Cross the Line

The “Cross the Line” facilitation is the final diversity-oriented activity and is designed to “illustrate common characteristics and life experiences among members of the group, to offer supportive discussion opportunity for those who feel isolated or unique in their backgrounds,” and “to illustrate aspects of diversity in the orientation group.” During this exercise, students stand along a line while OLs read a series of prompts selected from the guidebook. As each statement is read, students step forward if the statement describes them. There is no talking during this exercise. Some of the prompts related to diversity are:

Cross the line if:

- You are a woman
- You are African American or Black, You are Latino, Chicano, or Mexican American, You are Jewish (read as separate prompts)
- You have a visible or non-visible disability or live with an illness
- You, a member of your family, or friend is gay, lesbian, or bisexual
- You come from a wealthy family
- You believe you have been the victim of discrimination
- You have ever teased or made fun of someone
- Bridgewater State University was not your first choice
- You are uncomfortable with this exercise
- You are a student
- You chose not to cross the line at any point during this exercise

Following the exercise, debrief questions given by the OLs include asking how students felt about the exercise, what issues came up for students, how students felt if at one point they were the only one who crossed the line, and what does the exercise say about the diversity of the group. This exercise is powerful because all prompt address diversity to some degree, with the overarching theme of the activity being the differences and commonalities among the students. Defining characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic class are topics that all participants reflect on whether they cross the line or not. Issues of

discrimination and bullying are also addressed, placing students in the role of the victim and/or aggressor. The statement that requires participants to cross the line if they are a student is clearly meant to provide at least one prompt in which everyone crosses the line, reminding them that there is always a commonality to be found.

This exercise is important because students are thinking and moving as individuals and as a group simultaneously. Though it is not specifically outlined in the objectives, this facilitation simulates reality, how people move through their lives as individuals but part of a bigger community.

The BEAR program guides students through a series of activities that force them to face challenging perspectives on diversity. The university expects its students to demonstrate a certain level of diversity acceptance and engagement once they are a part of the BSU campus, and these sessions communicate this expectation. Before even taking a course at BSU, freshman students are introduced to the campus climate and experience the diversity of the student body first-hand through these intensive, comprehensive sessions with their future peers. This program is implemented at BSU in hopes that its students will demonstrate these perspectives and communication skills through being active and responsible members of the campus community. In the following sections, we will discuss how BSU continues to promote diversity for its students once they are official members of the university.

Integrated Curriculum

One of the most effective ways BSU establishes itself as a diversity-oriented campus is by maintaining a Core Curriculum, which requires students to demonstrate global and multicultural competencies by completing designated courses (Core Curriculum).

The Core Curriculum features a skills-centered, outcomes based distribution model of general education that allows students a wide choice of courses and the flexibility to integrate the requirements of their major with the broader, liberal education **that is required of responsible, educated citizens of the 21st century**. Students who complete the BSU Core Curriculum will learn a significant body of factual knowledge as well as gaining an understanding of the intellectual foundations, conceptual frameworks, and methodologies of the major academic disciplines (emphasis mine).

Students must complete all courses in the Core Curriculum, regardless of major, in order to graduate. Students may take these courses at any point in their college career with no deadline other than graduation to complete them. One of the four main areas of the Core is called the “Core Distribution Requirements.” Within this area, required courses include Global Culture (2 courses), Multiculturalism (1 course), Social/Behavioral Sciences (2 courses), and Humanities (3 courses). Courses may fulfill a combination of these distributions simultaneously, for example, the Sociology course, SOCI-104: Global Social Problems, fulfills the Social/Behavioral Science, Global Culture, and Multiculturalism requirement, determined by the topics covered in the course.

According to the Core, “Global Culture is defined here as any culture other than that of the United States of America. Native American cultures are included in the Global Culture category.” Any course which fulfills the Global Cultural distribution must meet the following learning outcome: “Appreciate the language(s), arts, history commerce, politics, religion, and/or philosophies of culture(s) other than those of the United States of America, and understand the similarities and differences among those cultures.”

In order to fulfill a Multicultural requirement, a course must teach students to, “understand issues and perspectives on human similarities and differences such as (dis)abilities, age, religion, race, class, ethnicity, gender, and/or sexual orientation” as well as, “understand the role of power and privilege in shaping human conditions.”

Social/Behavioral Science outcomes state that students will “know and understand the intellectual foundations, conceptual frameworks and methodologies of the behavioral/social sciences” and courses under this category typically include Anthropology, Criminal Justice, Economics, Political Science, and Sociology. Humanities states the same learning outcomes, with History and Foreign Language courses typically fulfilling the requirements.

By examining the frameworks and learning objectives of these requirements, we can better understand the type of global and diversity education that students at BSU receive. Students have a great range of options when selecting courses that fulfill these requirements, but all must successfully demonstrate the learning outcomes as stated in order to pass the courses. It is expected that by the time students graduate, they will have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate through an increasingly global society.

Diversity/Global Programs

It is essential that understanding and discussion of diversity does not remain isolated in the classroom, but that it translates into active real world applications. In addition to a diverse, globalized curriculum, Bridgewater State University also maintains various departments dedicated to promoting global and diversity education, including the Office of Institutional Diversity (OID). In its mission statement, the Office of Institutional Diversity explains:

The OID partners with many constituents across campus as they create, implement, and assess diversity-oriented efforts at BSU. As a result of these combined efforts, **BSU is emerging as a leader in higher education by providing comprehensive and effective diversity-oriented policies and practices** (emphasis mine).

Some of the diversity resources provided on the BSU campus include the Center for Multicultural Affairs, the Community Service Center, GLBTA Pride Center, Disability Resources, and the Institute for Social Justice (Office of Institutional Diversity). BSU has these

resources in place to promote the integration and celebration of diversity beyond the classrooms.

Another office that is separate from OID is the Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, Disability Compliance, and Title IX Coordinator. The purpose of this office is to eliminate all discrimination within the university community. Some of its goals include:

- To build an environment where equity and diversity are truly valued beyond verbal commitments and mere tolerance.
- To create a campus climate where the principles of affirmative action, equal opportunity and diversity are an integral part of campus life.
- To develop a learning, working and living environment for students, employees and other members of the University Community which values the diverse backgrounds of all people

By implementing resources that fit the needs of a diverse student body and relate to the diversity-related issues being taught in the classroom, students can make connections between theoretical discussion and real world application. Students may use these resources to connect with diverse individuals and engage in activities to further promote equality on campus and beyond (Office of Affirmative Action).

In addition to addressing issues of diversity within the local student body, the university has expanded its mission to the global community as well. In 2010, the Minnock Center for International Engagement was created “in response to the university’s increasing demand for international opportunities.” The Office of Global Studies, Study Abroad, and International Student and Scholar Services, are three offices under the direction of the Minnock Center. The Office of Global Studies focuses on promoting global-integrated curriculum as well as offering extra-curricular opportunities for students to engage in global experiences.

Working closely with the five area studies programs on campus -- African, Asian, Canadian, Latin American and Caribbean, and Middle East-- Global Studies is focused on **internationalizing the curriculum**, fostering a wide range of scholarly, cultural, and extra-curricular experiences for our students, expanding faculty exchanges with partnered institutions, and encouraging joint research and community service opportunities between our faculty and their counterparts abroad. **The goal of Global Studies is to create a learning environment on campus that increases global awareness and enhances cross-cultural communication and understanding** (emphasis mine).

Promoting a global environment on campus allows students to prepare for the global environment that is modern society. Having campus resources such as the Minnock Center provides students with extra opportunities to understand global culture and engage with diverse individuals on another level. These services integrate an expectation of multicultural competency into campus life, strategically socializing students to embrace global differences (Minnock Center).

The Office of Institutional Diversity, Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, Disability Compliance, and Title IX, and the Minnock Center for International Engagement are three very good examples of how Bridgewater State University is providing students with a diversity and globally-oriented education beyond the classroom.

The university emphasizes the importance of “responsible, educated citizens,” and preparing students for life in the 21st century. It asserts and upholds these values through the BEAR program, the Core Curriculum, and through established diversity and international programs available to all students on campus. It is clear that Bridgewater State University is taking comprehensive measures to ensure students are obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for life in a diverse and global society in the classroom and in campus lifestyle. Although resources such as OID are readily available, it is up to the students to take advantage of them. Considering the objectives of the mandatory BEAR program and Core Curriculum, do

students take their education further by seizing opportunities to actively connect with students from diverse backgrounds?

Student Attitudes

We have examined how Bridgewater State University teaches and promotes diversity and global education within and beyond the classroom, but do these initiatives successfully influence students' perspectives on diversity? Diversity education must go beyond teaching basic tolerance, and BSU seems to offer a comprehensive approach to teaching and understanding diversity and individualism. Bridgewater appears to have all the ingredients necessary to foster the development of multiculturally-minded, global citizens. In the following sections we will investigate student attitudes on diversity, individualism, and political engagement. These findings may provide insight into the effectiveness of the BEAR program, the Core Curriculum, and the diversity-oriented offices on campus.

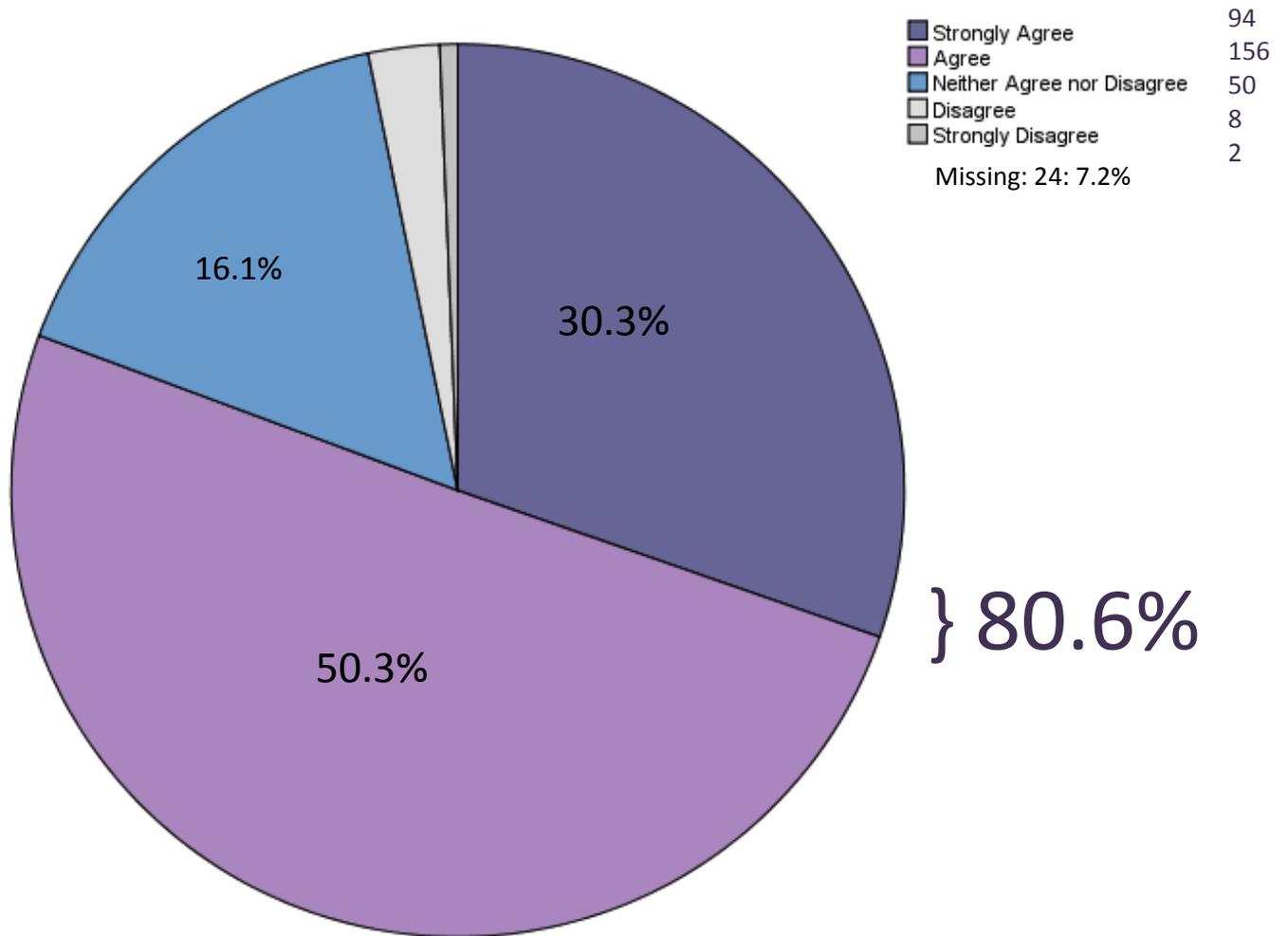
Prompts Examined:

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

1. I enjoy meeting people who come from backgrounds very different from my own.
2. I actively seek out and maintain relationships with individuals very different from me.
3. I find it difficult to relate to people from a different race or culture.
4. Individuals are responsible for their own misfortunes.
5. I plan to participate in political activities in the future.

The following figures provide a visual representation of responses to these survey prompts. Frequency distributions are provided alongside the color legend to the right of each pie chart.

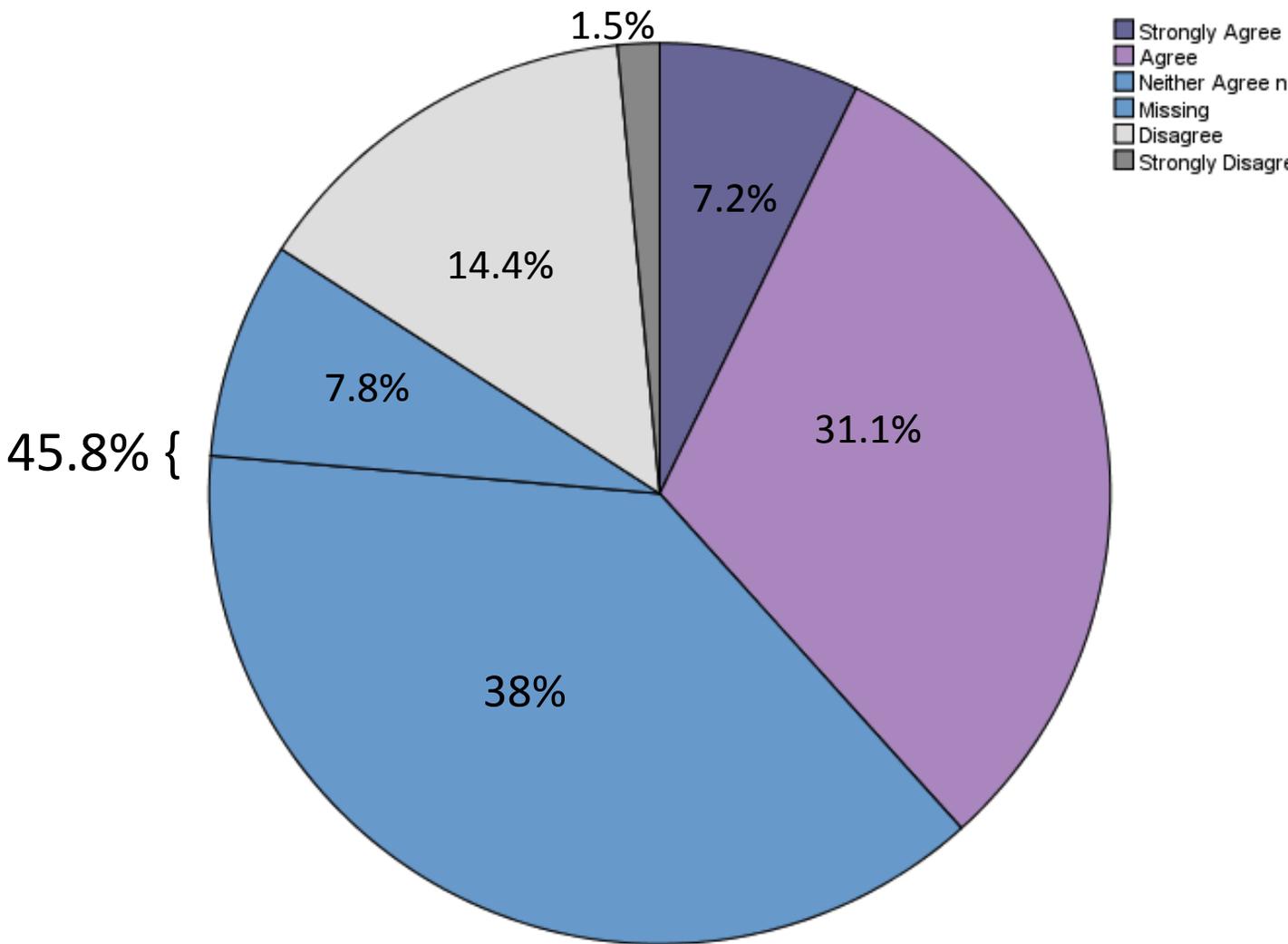
Figure 1: *I enjoy meeting people who come from backgrounds very different from my own.*



From this figure, we can see that 80.6% of respondents agree to some level that they enjoy meeting people from very different backgrounds. Only about 3% of students disagree with this statement to some extent. This prompt shows us that a large majority of students do express positive attitudes towards diversity.

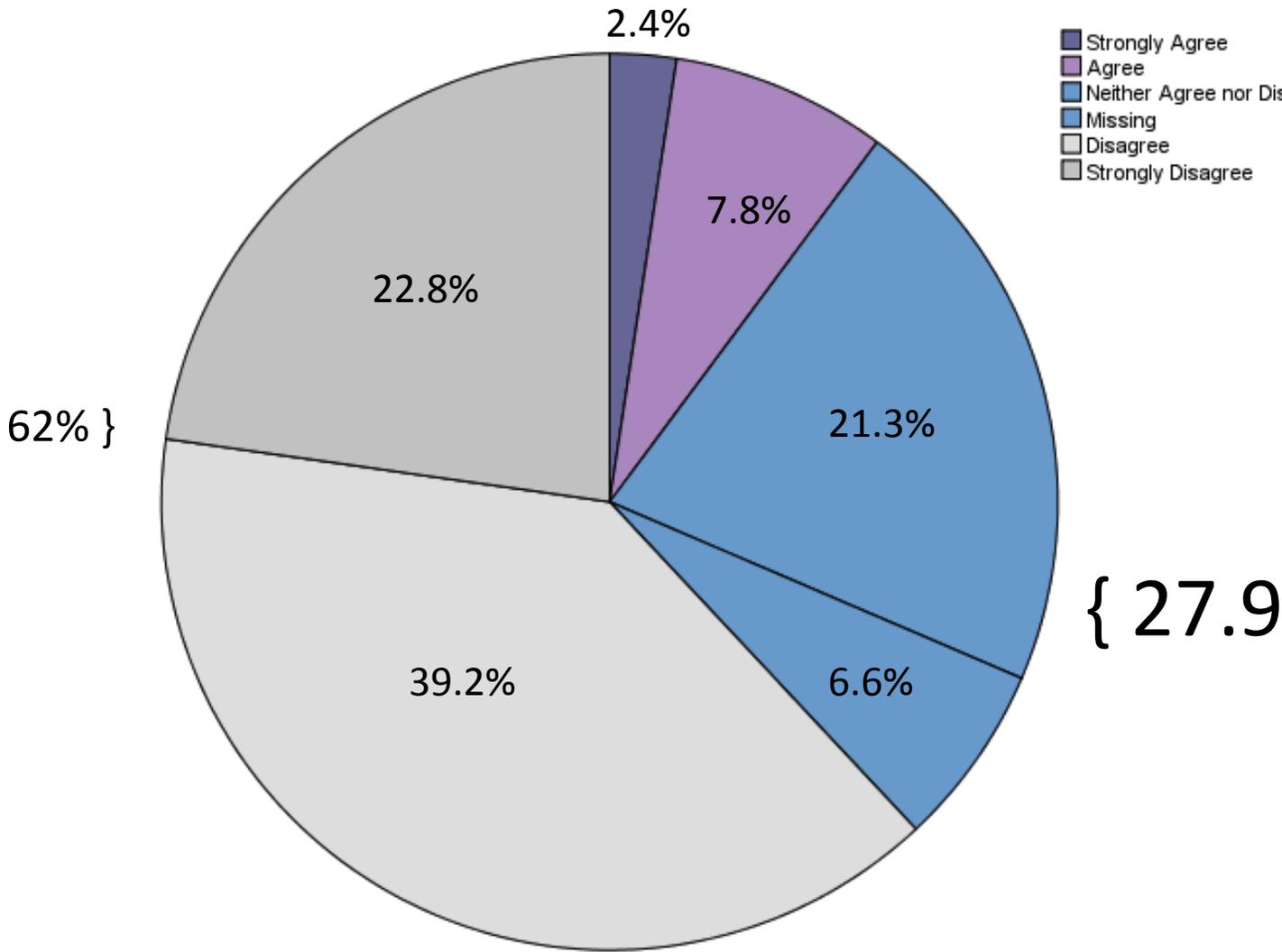
In Figure 2 we see that while 80.6% of students enjoy meeting people from very different backgrounds, only 38.3% of respondents agree to some extent that they seek out and maintain relationships with very different people. Interestingly, while only 3.2% of students disagree that they enjoy meeting people who are different from them, 15.9% disagree that they seek out and maintain relationships with people who are different from them.

Figure 2: *I actively seek out and maintain relationships with individuals very different from me.*



For this prompt, 38% of students surveyed selected the neutral response of “neither agree nor disagree,” compared to only 16.1% in the previous statement. This table includes the percentage of survey participants who skipped this question, revealing that 45.8% of students elected to not express an opinion on this prompt by either selecting a neutral response or by not providing an answer. These results are rather alarming and somewhat disturbing. Despite having access to a multitude of diversity resources on campus, and experiencing a type of diversity training during orientation, low percentages of students demonstrate active engagement with diverse peers.

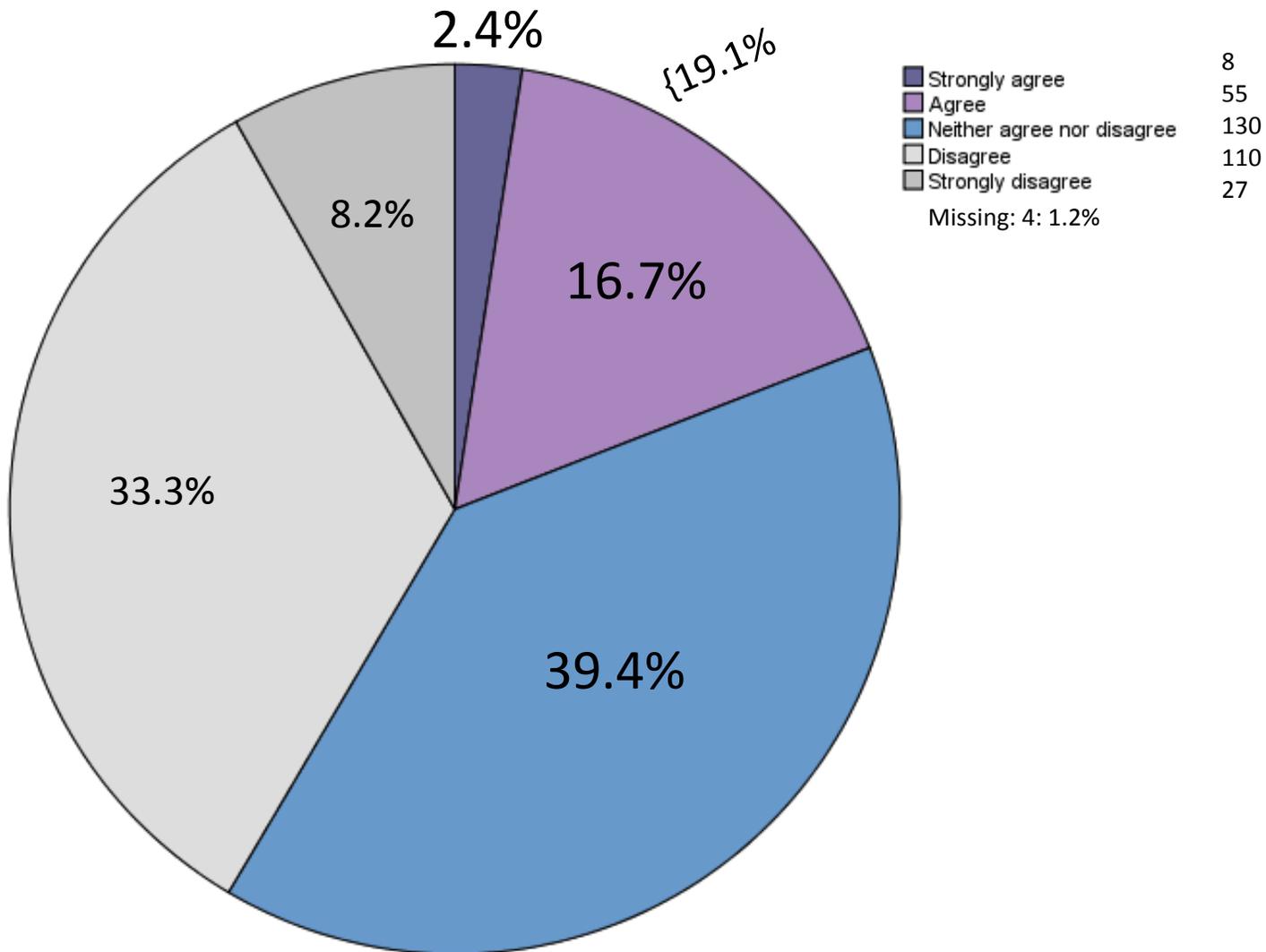
Figure 3: *I find it difficult to relate to people from a different race or culture.*



In Figure 3, we see that the majority of students (62%) disagree that they find it difficult to relate to people from a different race or culture. While this is a somewhat more hopeful statistic that shows the slight majority of students feel they can relate to diverse people, 10.2% do report feeling that it is difficult to relate to people from a different race or culture. Over one quarter (27.9%) of students elected to not express an opinion on this topic, which is less than the previous prompt but still a significant percentage. These three prompts reveal a trend that suggests that while students understand they should be open to diversity, they are not personally

engaging with people who are different from them. It is unclear what the true opinions are of those who wished to answer neutrally or skip the questions, but the avoidance of these topics is an indicator of disconnect between the missions of the university and the actions of its students.

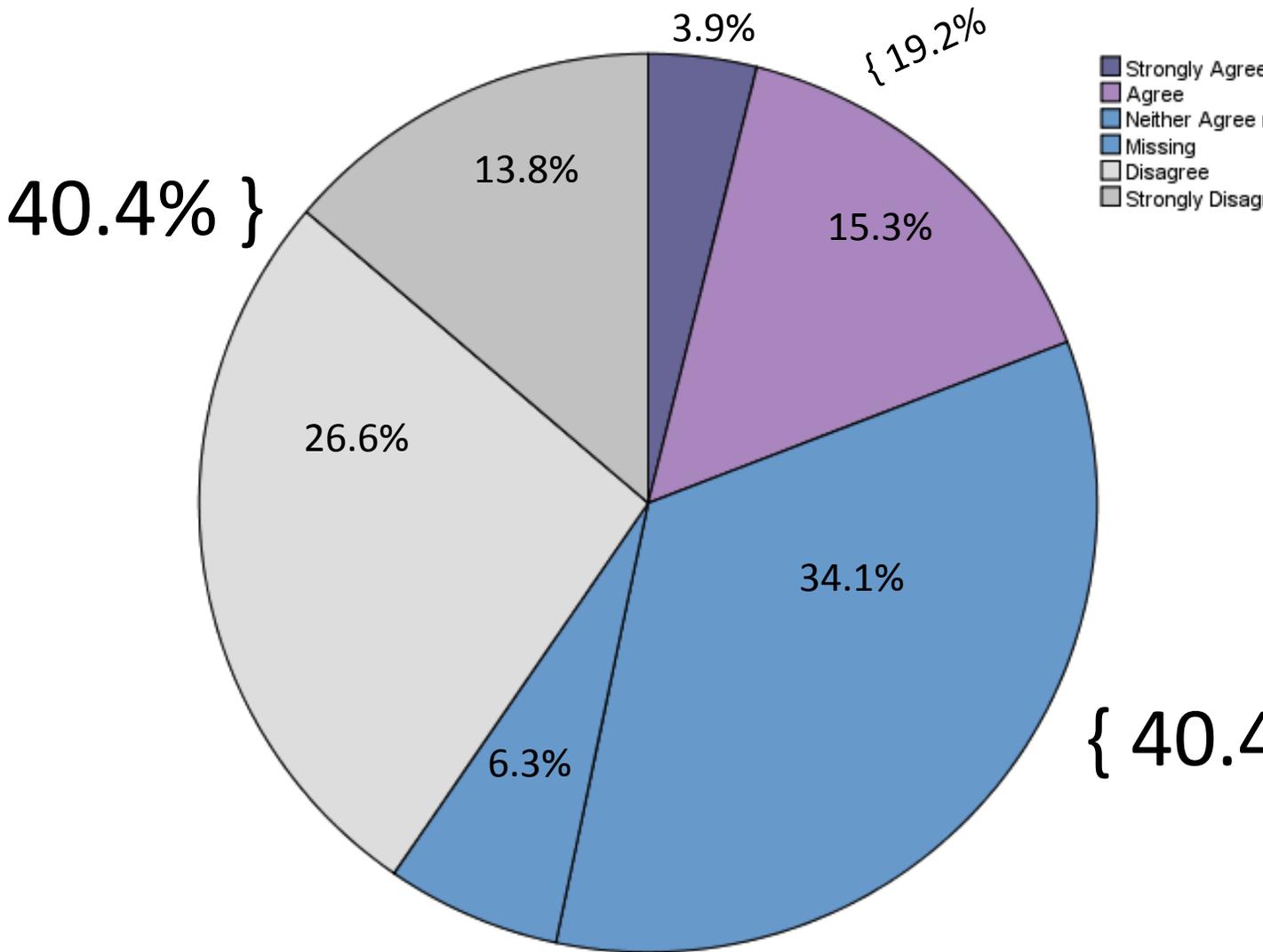
Figure 4: *Individuals are responsible for their own misfortunes.*



For the statement (Figure 4), 41.5% of students disagree to some extent that individuals are responsible for their own misfortunes, 19.1% agree or strongly agree, and again, a large percentage of 39.4% neither agree nor disagree. Clearly, there are mixed feelings about this

prompt, again revealing that students do not want to position themselves on either side of the discussion. This prompt is interesting because it frames the question in a way that removes the respondent from the statement. It is interesting to consider how results may have differed if the question were framed as “I am responsible for my own misfortunes.” It is also interesting to note that although roughly 7% of students skipped each of the diversity questions, only 1.2% (four students) skipped this one.

Figure 5: *I plan to participate in political activities in the future.*



The final prompt examines students' plans to participate in political activities in the future. "Political activities" is not defined in the survey and is up for interpretation by respondents. A very low percentage of students agree or strongly agree that they will be participating in political activities in the future (19.2%), and an alarming percentage of students (40.4%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. Similar to the other prompts, 40.4% elected to not express an opinion on the topic. The fact that less than 20% of respondents agree that they will be participating *some type* of "political activities" in the future (meaning 80.8% do not agree) suggests that they are not demonstrating the type of educated or responsible citizenship that Bridgewater State University feels is required of students of the 21st century.

For these prompts, I was curious to see if the students' class year would indicate positive growth and development in attitudes towards diversity and political engagement, and possibly a negative relationship between class year and individualism. Because the freshman at the time of the survey had recently completed the BEAR program during orientation, the possibility of freshman students reporting *more* positive attitudes towards diversity than upperclassmen was also considered. A Pearson Chi-square analysis revealed that there is no statistically significant correlation between class year and any of these prompts. The percentage breakdown for class year are very similar across the board, and resemble the over all trend of the data as shown in the previous figures.

Something to consider in these results is the nature of the Intro to Sociology course and the types of students who may be enrolled in it. The survey was distributed very early in the fall semester, therefore many of the freshman respondents were unlikely to have had an opportunity to utilize any campus resources, and all respondents were unlikely to have yet been influenced by

the topics taught in the course. The Intro to Sociology course fulfills one Social/Behavioral Science, and one Multiculturalism requirement. The upperclassman who had not yet taken their one Multicultural requirement, or one of two Social/Behavioral Sciences, suggests that these students have little interest in these types of courses, or are majoring in a subject that is unlikely to have courses that fulfill these requirements. Regardless of these considerations, these findings suggest that objectives of the BEAR program, Core Curriculum, and diversity-oriented offices on campus are not reflected in student attitudes, and do not influence students as they progress through their college career.

Conclusion

Bridgewater State University prides itself on being a diversity-oriented campus and promotes diversity through the BEAR freshman orientation program, the Core Curriculum, and diversity initiatives through the Office of Institutional Diversity, The Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, Disability Compliance, and Title IX Coordinator, and the Minnock Center for International Engagement. The values and objectives of these programs demonstrate strong and impressive attempts by the university to connect what students learn in the classroom to their overall lifestyle on campus.

Diversity and Global education is vital for all people living in today's globalized society, and BSU is an example of an institution that is promoting diversity across many areas of campus life. Examining the diversity-oriented components of BSU helps us understand the type of comprehensive education students are receiving, however, student attitudes towards diversity, individualism, and political engagement appear very disconnected from the missions and values of the university.

I feel that Peace Education may speak to these issues, because the main difference between Diversity and Global Education and Peace Education is that Peace Education approaches these diversity topics from the perspective of unity. Peace Education approaches the same topics as Diversity and Global Education, but from a unity-based worldview. Bridgewater State University is “thinking global,” but students must be able to address global issues through a sense of connectedness with all of humankind. Poverty, environmental issues, terrorism, and human rights violations are all examples of crises that, through globalization, have become realized as world-wide interconnected issues. As previously discussed, human connection is intrinsic to our nature. “The different processes of socialization of humans in diverse societies assign values and power to individuals, groups and genders in various ways,” Synott (2005:10) explains, “The identity notions of the ‘self,’ ‘other,’ ‘we’ or ‘the enemy’ are always learned.” The concepts addressed in Peace Education include identifying these social and cultural constructs and understanding “the commonality of essential goodness across difference cultures and societies” (10). By allowing social hierarchies to continue to develop, we are impeding our own ability to solve these world-wide crises.

Peace Education teaches the understanding and celebration of differences just as Diversity Education does, but Peace Education teaches in a way that does not ultimately lead to the categorization and ranking of groups of people. By learning from a unity-based worldview, students may comprehend the importance of understanding, embracing, and engaging in diversity better than if they learn these values without the key element of perspective. By developing a unity perspective, students can truly become global citizens as they work together to solve the problems that all societies and cultures in the world are facing.

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