

# Home and Homebuilding: Queer and Trans People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions



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## ABSTRACT

This research documents the violence towards Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC) in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). Through interviews with QTPOC, this research reveals the institutional and neoliberal violence they face in the University, but also the ways they navigate, survive, and build homes within the institution. This research provides insight into understanding how to further the goals of equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education. Additionally, this research expands on how arguments regarding safe spaces for QTPOC in PWIs are vital to homebuilding. Lastly, this research offers new insights and critical self reflection regarding decolonizing methodologies with QTPOC populations.

## METHODS

I conducted interviews with QTPOC students, staff, and faculty who attends/have attended Predominately White Institutions in the U.S. Midwest.

### SAMPLE GENERAL QUESTIONS ASKED:

- Can you tell me how you identify and when you came to identify with these identities?
- Why did you choose to attend/work at your current institution?
- Do you feel included with the institution? Are there certain parts of the institution that can be changed?
- Does language play a huge role in your life? How has this affected you?
- What is your relationship like with your family and parents?
- How would you describe your friend groups? Have they impacted you and in what ways?
- Have you done work around the institution for equity, diversity, inclusion?
- Do you feel supported by the university(professors, peers, mentors, advisors, and administrations)

### FOR STUDENTS:

- Do you feel that you have a community on campus?
- Where and what is home to you?
- Are there services (classes, counseling services, student services, etc.) at your campus that are available for you and do you utilize them?
- Being a STUDENT, what has been the most helpful in continuing your education? Have you consider leaving the university?

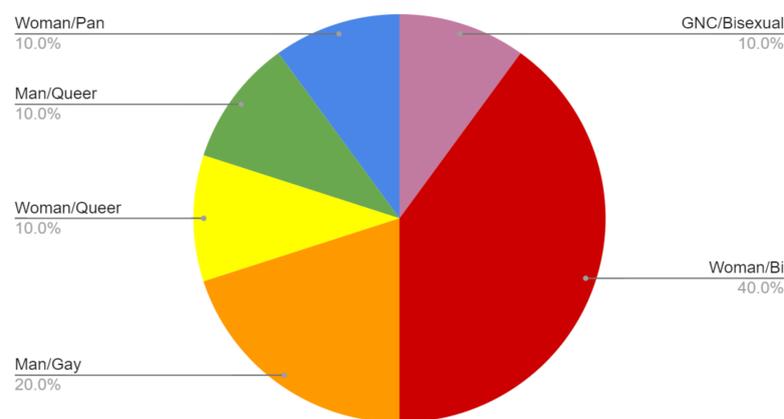
### FOR STAFF AND FACULTY:

- Being a STAFF/FACULTY, what has been the most helpful in continuing your work?
- Have you consider leaving the university?
- Have you felt your institution created more damage than good when it comes to your identities?

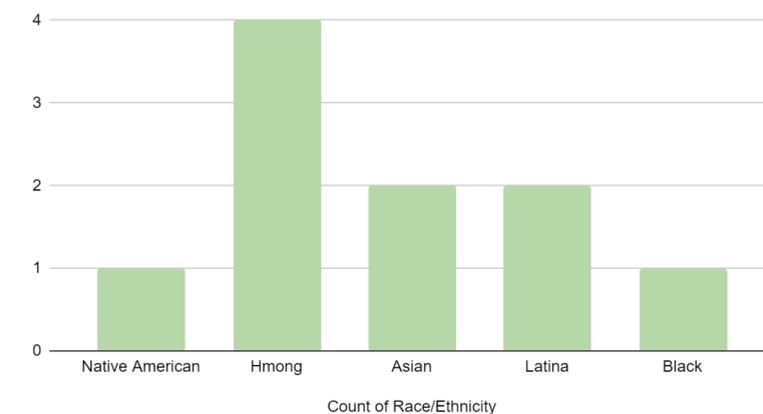
## PARTICIPANTS

- Total participants: 10
  - Faculty and staff: 4
  - Students: 6
- All who participated are above the age of 18
- All had pseudonyms

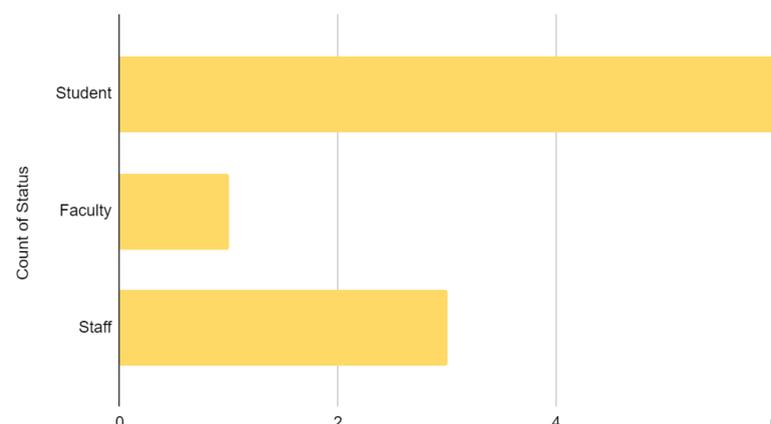
Count of Gender/Sexuality



Count of Race/Ethnicity



Count of Status



## RESULTS

5 Major findings from the research:

1. **Internalized Racism:** All participants shared experiences of passive aggressiveness in the PWI as a form of racism. Participants revealed the damaging effects of Respectable Diversity Work which leads to ineffective change and lost of self identity.
2. **Lack of Support:** Staff and Faculty shared experiences of little to no institutional support on their work, causing damage to mental health. They report performing extra diversity work along with their own required work duties, which results in loss of relationships with students.
3. **Burnout:** Students shared experiences of organizing work to try to support staff and faculty, however many experienced burnout. This kind of work hinders their role as a student and leads to academic difficulties.
4. **No Organic Community Building:** All participants depended on each other when they were burnt out. However, many also shared how this often led to toxic relationships because the university forces People of Color together which does not enable organic relationship building with each another.
5. **Home and Homebuilding:** All participants expressed individual self care/healing rooted in their cultural beliefs. When there was genuine relationships between Student, Staff, and Faculty, all had mentioned how it became a mentor relationship for everyone. Students described mentorship as a form of positive parenting. Staff and Faculty described mentorship as breaking down the power structure imposed by the university.

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