

Experiences of
Othering among
Yorkville
University
Students:
Exploring a
Community of
Belonging



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Research Team

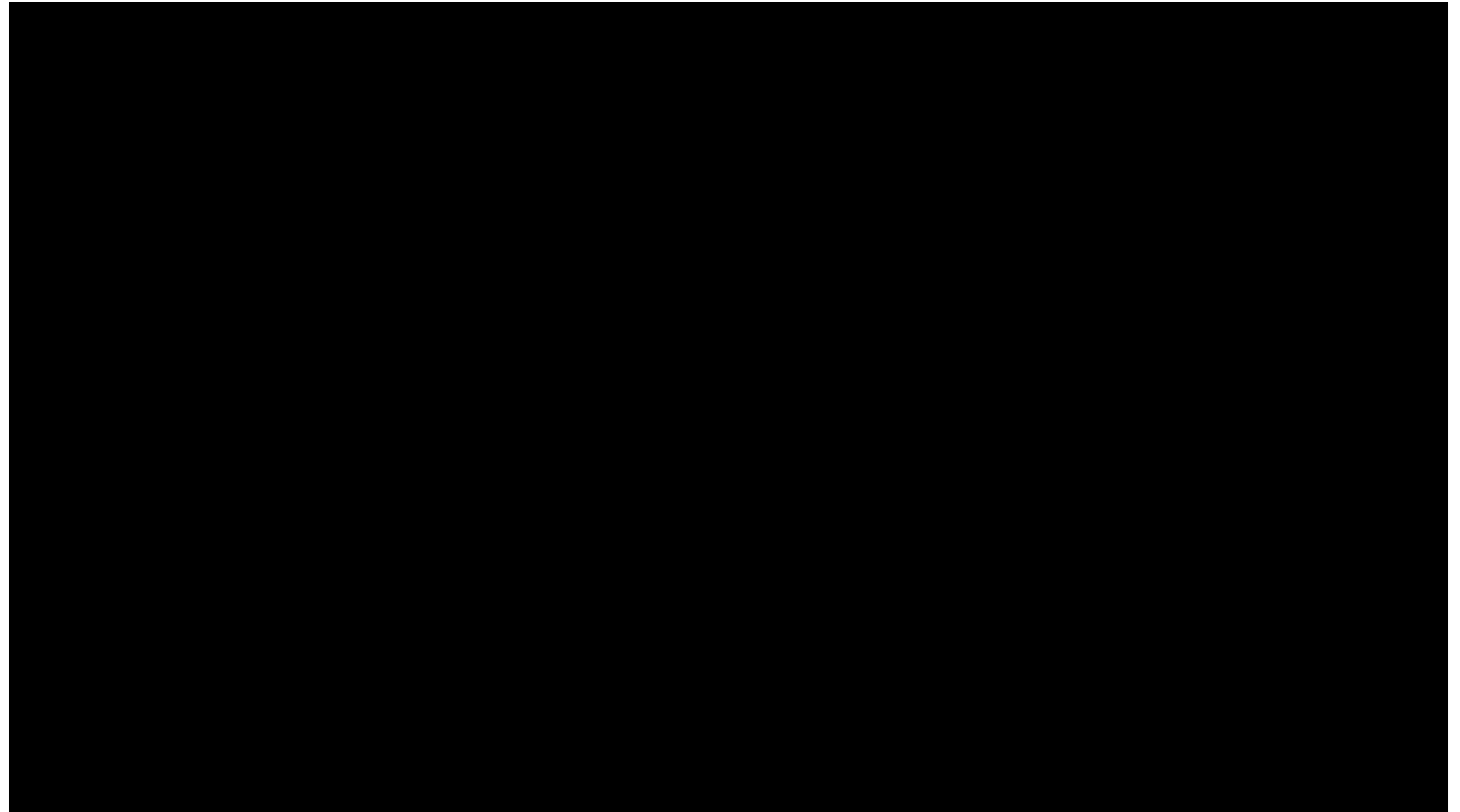
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How it all started...

- What comes to your mind when you hear the word “othering”?
- “Othering” and “otherness” are terms used to describe a mentality of *us versus others*, whereby people tend to view others as dissimilar and separated from them.
- Feeling “othered” refers to an experience of feeling devalued, objectified, simplified, or marginalized based on individual and demographic characteristics, e.g. race, ethnicity, gender expression, religion, disability, etc.

Purpose

- To enable exploration of the interrelation between cultural demographic categories of students at YU and their experience of diversity, equity, inclusion and othering (DEIO)
- To initiate further understanding of students' experiences on campus and in the communities served by the institution.
- To identify what works well along with the opportunities for improvement
- To provide university leaders, including the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director, with current data points regarding the culture and campus climate
- To assist with development of planned continuous improvement initiatives.

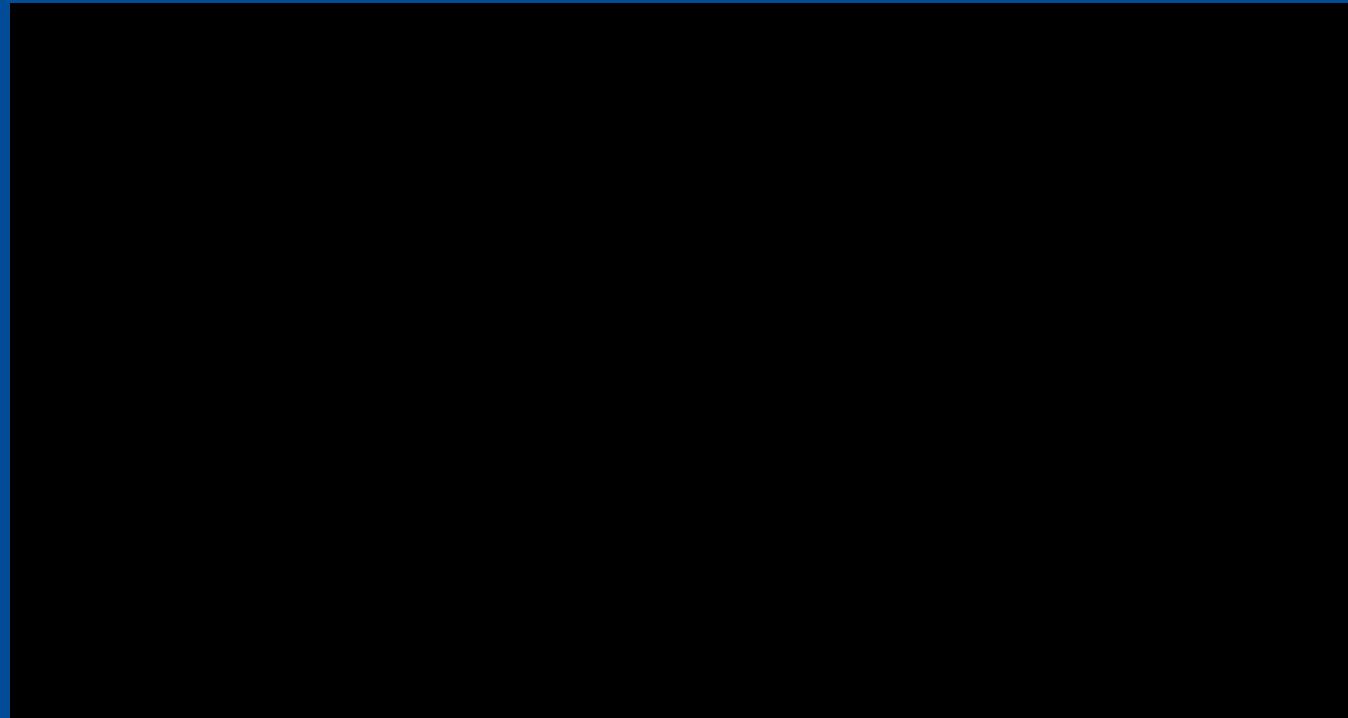
Methodology

- Survey
 - To collect demographics of students not captured at admission
 - To explore intersectionality of identities based on categories such as gender expression, religion/spirituality, income level etc.
 - To quantify data related to experiences of DEIO
- Semi-structured 30-minute qualitative interviews to explore Yorkville University students' experiences of diversity, equity, inclusion and othering
 - Purposive sampling, small target group
 - Parallel analysis of quantitative and qualitative data
 - Deductive and inductive analysis of themes

Research funding

- Received a CAN\$10,000 grant for a mixed methods research study from the Bluenotes Explorance Community
- Received a CAN\$10,000 Support for Scholarly Activity Funding from Yorkville University

Quantitative Survey Participants and Results In-Process ...



Descriptive Statistics

About our participants ...

Survey Participants: numbers and locations

- Total number of respondents: 726
- Number of participants after data cleaning: 429
- 43 countries of birth
- Youngest participant(s) by age: 18
- Most senior participant(s) by age: 76



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Descriptive Statistics

About our participants ...

Survey Participants: where they study

- Participants attending on-campus classes: 11
- Participants attending online classes: 391
- Participants attending via both: 21



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Descriptive Statistics

About our participants ...

Survey Participants: Gender/Gender Identity

- Female: 332
- Male: 82
- Non-binary/non-conforming: 19
- Two-spirited: 4
- Cisgender: 46
- Transgender: 8
- Other: 6



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Descriptive Statistics

About our participants ...

Survey Participants: Employment and Education

- Employed full-time: 164
- Employed part-time: 122
- Self-employed: 52
- Not employed: 45
- Retired: 7
- Homemaker: 26
- Student: 149
- Unable to work: 7
- Technical/community college degree: 57
- Some college: 18
- Bachelor's degree: 307
- Post-graduate degree: 86
- Professional certification: 98



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Overall Student Sentiment

From the students' perspective, YU is heading in the right direction with regards to providing the support services and making the necessary adjustments to curriculum, staff and policies to embrace diversity, ensure equity and inclusion and reduce incidences of othering.

Students feel valued and welcomed in the YU community overall, rating their experiences $\geq 3.3/5$.

There is an expressed need for the fostering of one or more communities or groups where they can feel that belong at YU (rating $< 3/5$).



Areas of Othering



Categories

- Age
- Racial or ethnic identity
- Religion / Spirituality
- Family status (caregiving responsibilities)
- Sexual orientation
- Sex
- Social class / Socioeconomic status
- English proficiency / accent
- Dis/ability status
- Political orientation
- Gender identity or gender expression
- Marital status
- National origin / Citizenship
- Height or weight
- Indigenous Identity



Student interaction with a YU Faculty member with whom you identified culturally (in terms of same cultural background, race, ethnicity, gender expression/identity, etc.)?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	246	57.5
	No	182	42.5
	Total	428	100.0
Missing	System	1	
Total		429	

Level of Satisfaction with Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

Student Satisfaction that..	Mean	SD
Curriculum and course offerings reflect the lives, perceptions and contributions of people from underrepresented backgrounds	1.96	.897
Cross-cultural communication skills / cultural sensitivity of professors	1.74	.783
Mental health resources for students	2.11	.951
Racial and ethnic diversity of the Yorkville University campus (faculty, staff and students)	1.79	.812

Top 5 Othering Categories

Othering Category	1 or more incident
Racial or ethnic identity	63
Age	62
Religion / Spirituality	51
Family status (caregiving responsibilities)	49
Sexual orientation	45



Felt othered by	#
Other Students	111
Instructors	79
Course Leads	50
University Admin	48
Staff Members	46
Program Staff	35

Participants felt othered by...

Student Responses to Othering Experiences

Student Responses to Othering Experiences (N=371)	#
I talked with a friend/family member	159
I engaged less in YU course	74
I did nothing	74
I reached out to Program Advisor	31
I had a private conversation with YU community member who I felt othered by via email	27
I reached out to Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office	22

Qualitative Interview Questions and Analysis In-Process ...

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Qualitative Interview Questions

- For you, what are the most important aspects of your background or identity?
- Are there any aspects of your background or identity that make a difference to your experiences of feeling welcomed within YU?
- Are there any aspects of your background or identity that make a difference to your experiences of feeling othered within YU?



Qualitative Interview Questions (cont.)

- Often, students look for help from many different sources, including university counsellors, teachers, or other personnel. In the past, what kind of help have you sought for your experiences of feeling othered (if any?)
- Has anything prevented you from getting the help you need?
- Can you think of any factors that make academic life easier or more difficult for you because of your cultural background?
- Can you think of any opportunities or barriers and limitations people with similar cultural backgrounds face when studying at Yorkville University?

- What kinds of help do you think would be most useful to you at this time to rectify and eliminate these experiences of “othering”?
- If you had a magic wand and were in position to make changes for the institution, where money and resources were not limited, what would you do to improve or change something related to inclusion?
- Can you think of any experience, during your interactions with YU staff or students, where you felt welcomed? Are you comfortable sharing that experience with us?

Qualitative Interview Questions (Cont.)



Emerging themes

- Understanding of intersectionality of cultural identities
- Personal experience of othering and witnessing of othering towards others
- Othering and belonging happens in- and out of YU
- Othering by peers with little intervention by instructors
- Awareness of accommodations available
- Sense of community with peers in social media outside of YU
- Community-building starts from within us – individual initiatives



Currently

- Still collecting data from the online survey
- Still conducting qualitative interviews

Questions?



**Thank
you!**



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