

# 2020 PHSA Student Experiences Survey Results

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# Survey Methodology

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- Every student (n=651) received a unique link via email on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Students who had not completed the survey received regular reminders via email
- Survey was advertised through posters and FSPH newsletters throughout the survey period
- The survey closed on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- A total of n=384 students opened the survey
- **A total of n=316 students completed the survey**
  - **48% response rate**

# Response rate: Department & degree

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Dept:	BIOS	EPI	EHS	CHS	HPM
N (%)	50 (56.8%)	61 (51.7%)	37 (51.4%)	94 (50.5%)	73 (40.1%)

Degree:	MPH	MS	PhD/DrPH	eMPH
N (%)	160 (61.8%)	49 (47.6%)	85 (40.7%)	22 (28.6%)

# Sample Characteristics: Gender, Race/Ethnicity & Sexual Orientation

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Gender:	Woman	Man
N (%)	230 (73%)	74 (23%)

Race/ Ethnicity:	Asian	White	Latinx/ Hispanic	Black	Middle Eastern	Multiracial
N (%)	121 (38%)	97 (31%)	66 (21%)	21 (7%)	13 (5%)	12 (4%)

Sexual Orientation:	Heterosexual	Bisexual	Queer	Asexual	Gay	Questioning/ Unsure
N (%)	242 (77%)	21 (7%)	10 (3%)	9 (3%)	8 (3%)	5 (2%)

\*Respondents could choose multiple options, so cells may not add to 100%

\*\*Cell sizes n<5 were masked for anonymity

# Themes

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- Mixed method survey of qualitative and quantitative questions
- Recommendations for each theme were based on data, especially qualitative responses

## Primary Themes

1. Students feel connected at FSPH
2. Students of color face significant barriers
3. Faculty lack diversity and awareness of EDI issues
4. Students have concerns regarding academic progress
5. Students desire collaboration and research
6. Students worry about funding availability and distribution
7. Building upon success in career services

## Secondary Themes

1. Students need access to more resources
2. Improvements for disability accommodations
3. Students feel their feedback is not valued
4. Students would like more breadth of courses
5. Faculty can improve teaching & communication
6. Doctoral students need dedicated space
7. eMPH students are isolated from others

# Primary Themes

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AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# Theme #1: Students feel connected at FSPH

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- 81% of students feel supported by their peers
- Peers are the most commonly used resource for seeking information about funding
- 85% of students report that FSPH has a welcoming and inclusive environment
- 97% of students agree or strongly agree that diversity and inclusion are important to them
- 69% have ever attended a social event hosted by FSPH
- Over half of students report being interested in attending potlucks/picnics, end-of-year banquets, and hikes and other outdoor activities

# Theme #1: Recommendations

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1. FSPH should continue to support opportunities for students to connect both on and off campus.
2. FSPH should continue to host potlucks/picnics, end of year banquets, hikes and other outdoor activities.
3. FSPH should create and maintain a calendar of social events for each quarter to increase participation among students.



# Theme #2:

## Students of color face significant barriers

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- 12% of students are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the climate of equity, diversity, and inclusion at FSPH
  - 43% of Black students are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the climate of equity, diversity, and inclusion
- 45% of students disagree or strongly disagree that all students have equal opportunities at FSPH
  - 62% of Black students disagree or strongly disagree that all students have equal opportunities
- 43% of Black and Latinx students experience significant stress related to marginalized identities
- 41% of students rate the quality of training available for students on EDI issues as fair or poor
- 17% of students disagree or strongly disagree that all FSPH students are respected regardless of their race
  - 30% of Black and Middle Eastern students disagree or strongly disagree that all FSPH students are respected regardless of their race
- 12% of students had experienced negative treatment at FSPH due to their race
  - 20% of Black students experienced negative treatment at FSPH due to their race

# Theme #2:

## Recommendations

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1. FSPH should require all faculty, staff, and students to take a regular (e.g. annual) course on diversity, equity, and inclusion and demonstrate the ability to address marginalization in the classroom and around FSPH.
2. FSPH should cultivate awareness of the personal nature of structural barriers within public health in discussions in the classroom and beyond.
3. FSPH should create a focus group or task force of students of color to address the ongoing stress experienced at FSPH and commit to alleviating this strain.

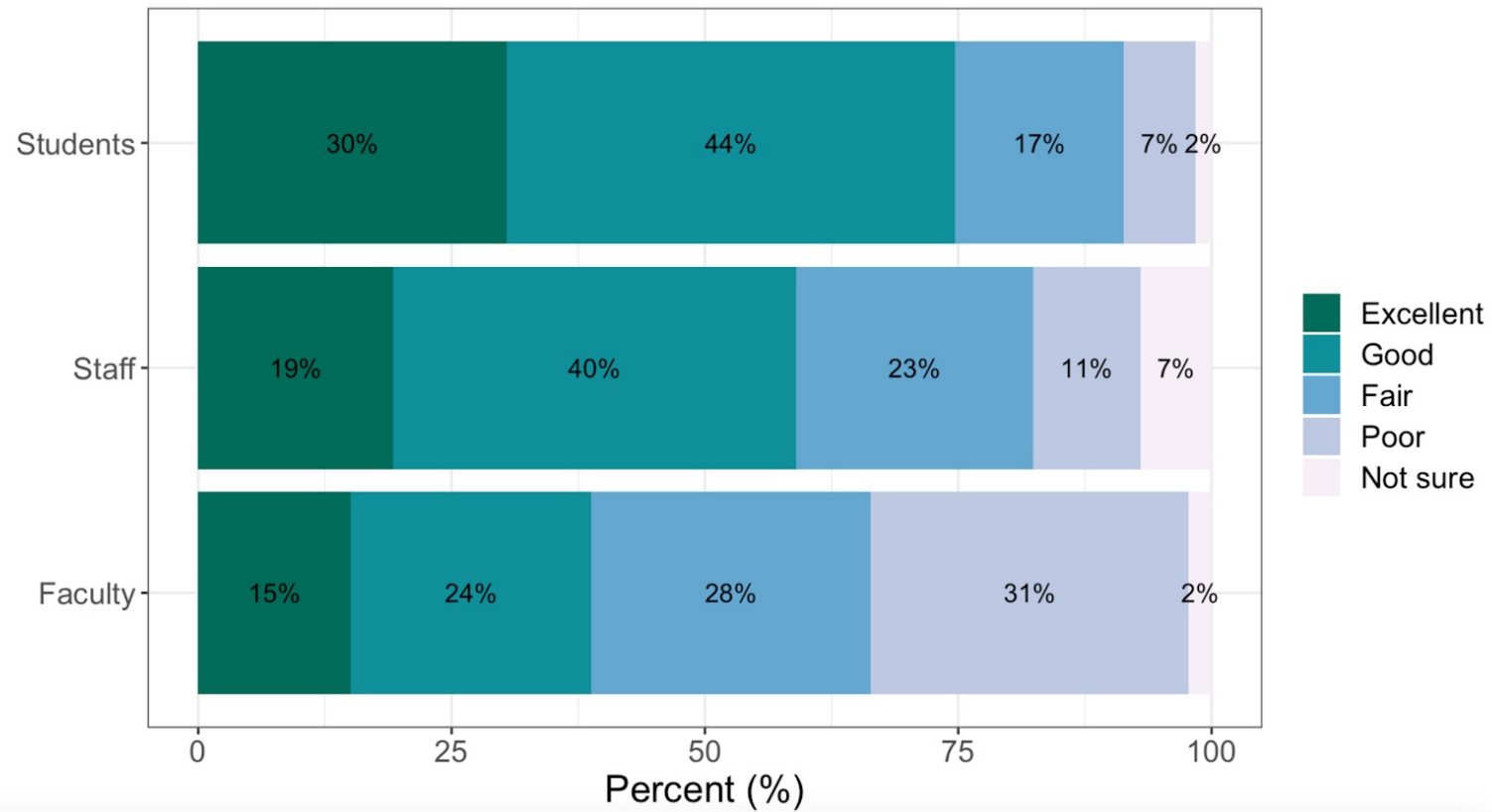
# Theme #3:

## Faculty lack diversity and awareness of EDI issues

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- 59% of students rate the quality of diversity in faculty as fair or poor
- 81% of students believe that faculty should complete training on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion
- 24% of students disagree or strongly disagree that FSPH faculty hold values of diversity and inclusion
- 22% of students disagree or strongly disagree that they feel safe expressing views and/or opinions in the classroom
- 28% of students disagree or strongly disagree that inclusive teaching methods are used at FSPH
  - 37% of students disagree or strongly disagree that inclusive pedagogy is incorporated in courses at FSPH
- 12% of students had experienced negative treatment at FSPH due to their race
  - Of students who experienced negative treatment due to their race, 64% identify faculty as the source of the negative treatment
  - Many students report that when they experience negative treatment by other students, faculty do not intervene or support them
- Several students mentioned a lack of diversity in materials used in class in terms of race and perspective
- 23% of students disagree or strongly disagree that all students are respected regardless of accent or language ability

# Attitudes about diversity at FSPH



# Theme #3:

## Recommendations

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1. FSPH should require faculty to participate in classroom facilitation workshops to ensure they can facilitate difficult conversations and demonstrate the ability to address marginalization in the classroom.
2. FSPH should immediately prioritize hiring diverse faculty and include students in the search process.
3. When students report negative treatment by faculty, accountability measures should be clearly taken, even for tenured faculty.
4. Faculty should consider the race and perspective of the author when compiling materials for courses, and aim to incorporate diversity within curricula.
5. Faculty should ensure they are not prioritizing native English speakers over non-native English speakers.

# Theme #4:

## Students have concerns regarding academic progress

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- 38% of students are concerned or very concerned about their academic progress
  - Especially true for MPH students: 43% concerned or very concerned
- Areas of concern:
  - Students are not sure which classes meet graduation requirement
  - Students struggle to enroll in required classes due to scheduling conflicts caused by classes being offered at the same time
  - MPH students are concerned about the impact of PH 200 on their academic progress because they did not cover all relevant public health principles, so they are not prepared for advanced coursework
- Although 79% of students agreed that their advisor advocates for them and supports them in completing their degree, some students stated that their advisor was unhelpful in guiding them towards graduation
- While students report high satisfaction with their SAOs, about 15% report that they do not know if their SAO is available, knowledgeable, or concerned for their wellbeing
  - Nearly 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would approach their SAO with questions about their academic progress

# Theme #4:

## Recommendations

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1. SAOs and academic advisors should prioritize meeting with each student every quarter to ensure that students are making progress toward graduation and gainful employment.
2. FSPH should clearly communicate how the topics missed in PH 200 will be covered for the cohort of MPH students, and how other classes may be modified to ensure that students have adequate understanding of public health principles and concepts.

# Theme #5: Students desire collaboration and research

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- Nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  of students were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the opportunities to collaborate with students from other departments
  - 65% of PhD students disagreed that they had adequate opportunities to collaborate with students outside their department
- Students noted that they lack space for collaboration in FSPH
- Only 27% of students were very satisfied or satisfied by the availability of research opportunities at FSPH



# Theme #5:

## Recommendations

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1. FSPH should make classroom and conference room reservations more accessible to all students so that they can have dedicated spaces to collaborate with other students.
2. FSPH should consider improvements to existing departmental lounges to make them more conducive for student use and collaboration.
3. FSPH should designate regular times with dedicated space for FSPH students to collaborate.
4. FSPH faculty advisors should regularly determine whether their students are interested in research and connect students with potential faculty and student collaborators.

## Theme #6:

# Students worry about funding availability & distribution

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- 54% of students disagree or strongly disagree that the cost of attending FSPH is manageable
  - 71% of MPH students, 70% of Latinx students, 67% of Black students disagree or strongly disagree
- 13% of students report that they received no financial support for attending FSPH
- While 26% of students report using loans to attend FSPH, 43% of Black students and 45% of Latinx students report relying on loans
- Nearly half of students spend more than \$1400 per month on rent & utilities
  - This amount represents 67% of take-home pay for a 50% GSR or 63% of take-home pay for a 50% TA
- 53% of students report they faced significant stress due to finances
- Over half of students report that their advisor is either not aware or not supportive of their financial wellbeing
- Students would like to learn more about financial literacy and managing expenses during graduate school, starting before they arrive
- MPH students reported not knowing how their professional fees are used
- MPH students struggle to find sufficient funding for their required internships
  - 12% of MPH students had no funding for their internship
  - 43% of MPH students were not satisfied with the experience of finding funding for their internships

# Theme #6:

## Recommendations

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1. FSPH should critically analyze the portions of the student body who rely on loans to attend FSPH, especially Black and Latinx students.
2. FSPH should clarify how MPH professional fees are used in each department.
3. FSPH should create and maintain a list of GSR and TA positions as well as scholarships that are available to students, ideally separated into MPH vs. Ph.D. opportunities, etc.
4. FSPH should offer more resources for financial wellness, such as workshops, both for current and incoming students to prepare for the transition to graduate school/Los Angeles.
5. FSPH should provide more funding to MPH students for their internships and work to connect students with outside funding or internship sites that provide funding.
6. Academic advisors should prioritize asking their students about their financial wellbeing and help them navigate resources available on campus for funding.

# Theme #7:

## Building upon success in career services

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- 86% of students have utilized the FSPH Career and Professional Development office
- 60% of students report utilizing online services
- 78% of students who used services report being satisfied or very satisfied with the resource
- Students offered several reasons they did not use or did not benefit from resources:
  - They cannot attend workshops or events due to scheduling conflicts
  - The resources are very broad and not useful for their specific field or preferred type of employment
- Students also reported a lack of diversity within Career and Professional Development staff
  - Importantly, students reported a lack of acknowledgement by Career Services staff of privilege and racism in hiring and in workplaces
- Students requested workshops for hard skills such as public speaking or data analysis software
- Students requested more connection to employment opportunities such as through FSPH alumni

# Theme #7:

## Recommendations

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1. Career and Professional Development Office should vary the times of workshops throughout the day **and** post recordings of all workshops online so that students can access them anytime.
2. CaPD Office should offer workshops or job panels for specific segments of the student body by degree, department, and type of employment (public/private/nonprofit sectors).
3. CaPD Office should acknowledge privilege in hiring. They should create workshops specifically for how students with marginalized identities can compete in the job search process and handle microaggressions and racism in the workplace.
4. FSPH should prioritize diversity in hiring CaPD staff, so that staff are qualified to speak on issues of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
5. CaPD Office should offer workshops in skills that will make students more marketable such as public speaking and advertise existing opportunities to learn hard skills like data analysis software on campus (e.g. UCLA Library sessions).

# Secondary Themes

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AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# Theme #1:

## Students need access to more resources

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- 2/3 of students report significant or very significant stress due to balancing multiple commitments (especially eMPH, 77% and MPH, 73%)
  - 58% due to managing course workload (especially MS, 71%), 64% due to concerns for future plans (especially MPH, 74%), and 36% due to mental health (especially MPH, 42%)
- Over half of students do not know what resources are available to address managing workload for courses or balancing multiple commitments
  - Students request workshops offered by FSPH for these stressors
- While students are aware of CAPS as a mental health resource, they state that CAPS is inaccessible due to availability of appointments and location on campus
  - Students request resources located in FSPH, indicating a potential lack of knowledge of the existing satellite clinic within the Center for Health Sciences

# Theme #1: Recommendations

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1. FSPH should provide resources within FSPH for mental health, and advertise the CAPS satellite location currently offered within FSPH.
2. FSPH should offer workshops on time management and balancing responsibilities as a graduate student, particularly for MPH students.



# Theme #2:

## Improvements for accommodations

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- Students who receive disability accommodations report several concerns with the accommodations offered and the processes of receiving accommodations
- Students report not knowing about accommodations available
- Students are not sure what accommodations are available for pregnant and parenting students
- Students report that faculty and TAs lack sufficient training on how to provide accommodations and students sometimes struggle to advocate for themselves to faculty and TAs
- FSPH is physically inaccessible for some students with mobility issues, particularly regarding elevators, doorways, and within classrooms (e.g. those with stairs)
- Students noted the lack of sink available within lactation rooms

# Theme #2:

## Recommendations

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1. FSPH should advertise accommodations more widely for students.
2. FSPH should clarify the process for applying for accommodations, keeping in mind the privilege and financial resources required to obtain a medical diagnosis for disabilities.
3. FSPH should record lectures of all class sessions and make available to all students, rather than requiring students to manage recordings on their own.
4. FSPH should provide faculty and TAs with sufficient training on how to provide accommodations.
5. FSPH should put a sink in or near the lactation rooms for cleaning pumping equipment.

# Theme #3:

## Students feel their feedback is not valued

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- Students report that their feedback is not valued by FSPH and is often ignored by faculty
- Students report that town halls for search committees (e.g. FSPH Dean, EDI Manager) are not timed conveniently
- Students do not know how their feedback is being incorporated by FSPH
- MPH students particularly report that their feedback regarding PH 200 was ignored

# Theme #3:

## Recommendations

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1. FSPH should clarify how they use student feedback in making changes.
2. FSPH should create a focus group or task force of both faculty and students to re-think the curriculum and assignments for PH 200, emphasizing the role of student feedback in the process.
3. FSPH should acknowledge the value of the feedback students provide about PH 200 and facilitate ongoing ways for students to provide feedback at PH 200 evolves.

# Theme #4:

## Students would like more breadth of courses

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- Half of students were not satisfied with the breadth of educational classes offered
  - 63% of CHS and 57% of EHS students were not satisfied with the breadth of classes available
- Students specifically requested more classes covering marginalized identities including race and gender, either new classes with that focus or emphasizing these communities within existing classes
- Students requested more classes and/or emphasis on the Los Angeles community within coursework, particularly among MPH students who will be interning within LA
- Students requested more advanced biostatistical classes such as structural equation modeling
- Doctoral students requested classes on writing grants and manuscripts

# Theme #4:

## Recommendations

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1. FSPH should survey students on classes that they would be interested in taking. These areas should be considered when hiring additional faculty.
2. FSPH should offer more courses relating to marginalized populations and the Los Angeles community.
3. Faculty should incorporate marginalized communities and the demography and needs of the Los Angeles community within existing courses.
4. FSPH should offer more courses on advanced biostatistical methods and/or guide interested students to existing courses in and outside of FSPH.
5. FSPH should offer courses and/or workshops related to grant and manuscript writing, including ones tailored to doctoral students.

# Theme #5:

## Faculty can improve teaching/communication

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- Overall, students are satisfied with professor knowledge of content, fairness of grading, and class size
- Over 10% of students are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with professor delivery of course content
- About 30% of students are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with faculty availability
- Students reported some helpful & unhelpful practices by faculty
  - It is helpful when faculty are person-centered, demonstrate interpersonal skills such as active listening and empathy, take an interest in students and guide them toward resources and opportunities
  - It is not helpful when faculty use outdated slides or no visual aids, are unresponsive and unavailable, are condescending toward students and ignore students' perspectives
- Nearly 30% of students reported that their advisor does not serve as a mentor

# Theme #5: Recommendations

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1. FSPH should require faculty to attend annual pedagogy workshops on how to use effective visual aids and inclusive teaching methods.
2. FSPH should prioritize teaching style and interpersonal skills when hiring new faculty and maintain and enforce high expectations for all faculty in these areas.



## Theme #6:

# Doctoral students need dedicated space & collaboration

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- 37% of doctoral students disagree or strongly disagree that they have adequate dedicated space to write their dissertations
  - 57% of CHS doctoral students and 60% of HPM doctoral students do not have adequate space
- 25% of doctoral students are not aware of the research other doctoral students are doing in their own department
- 66% of doctoral students disagree or strongly disagree that they have adequate opportunities to collaborate with doctoral students in other departments

# Theme #6:

## Recommendations

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1. FSPH should prioritize reallocating space in the building to ensure that all doctoral students have space to write their dissertations. This space should be as private as possible and have access to cellular service.
2. FSPH should create a webpage for the doctoral students on each department website, listing their research interests and contact information.
3. FSPH should facilitate research collaboration of doctoral students within each department through regular (e.g. annual) sessions to discuss current research projects.

# Theme #7: eMPH/MPH-HP students are isolated

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- eMPH/HPM-HP students report feeling isolated from the rest of FSPH
- eMPH/HPM-HP students demonstrate interest in connecting with other MPH students and providing career advice and/or facilitating internship placement at their workplaces

# Theme #7:

## Recommendations

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1. FSPH should provide ways for academic and social connection between eMPH/HPM-HP and MPH students.
2. FSPH should hold some events, particularly social events, outside of regular business hours and considering eMPH/HPM-HP course schedules to allow those students to attend.
3. FSPH should provide opportunities for interested eMPH/HPM-HP students to act as professional mentors for MPH students and facilitate networking for MPH students.
4. FSPH should provide an avenue for eMPH/HPM-HP students to register their workplaces as internship sites for MPH students.

# Next Steps

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- Present to FSPH Student Affairs Staff
- Present to the FSPH Deans
- These results will be disseminated to students, faculty, and staff via listservs
- Meet with Deans and Student Affairs staff in the coming weeks to discuss implementation of recommendations
- Meet with Student Affairs Staff in Fall to see what has been implemented so far
- Next survey in Winter 2021

# Thank you!

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