

Student Success & Housing Access in NYC-Based Catholic Higher Education Institutions

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Introduction & Methodology

How does access or lack of access to on-campus housing affect marginalized students' success and wellbeing at Catholic, NYC-based higher education institutions?

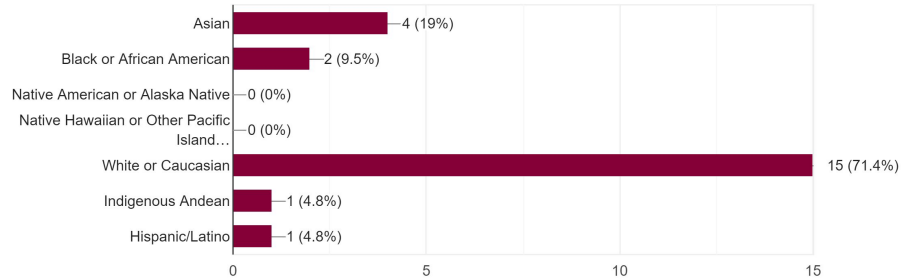
Methods: Survey & Focus Groups

- 21 Survey Respondents
 - 5 St. John's University; 16 Fordham University
- 5 Focus Group participants over 2 sessions
 - Conducted only with Fordham University students

Survey Demographics

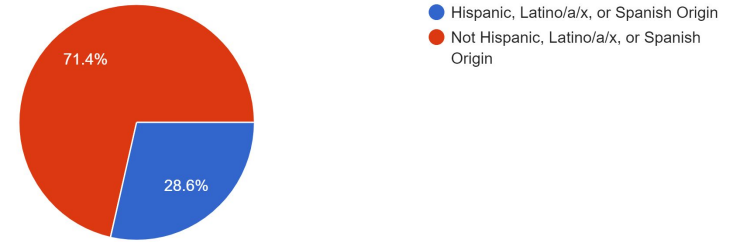
Please select the choice that most closely describes your racial identity.

21 responses



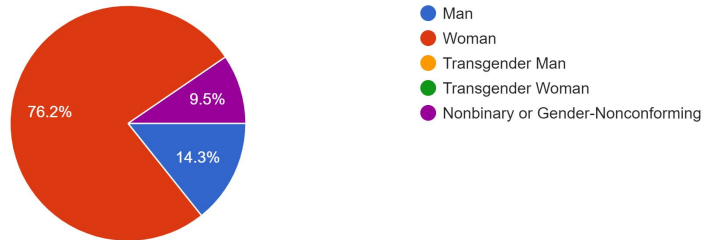
Please select the choice that most closely describes your ethnic identity.

21 responses



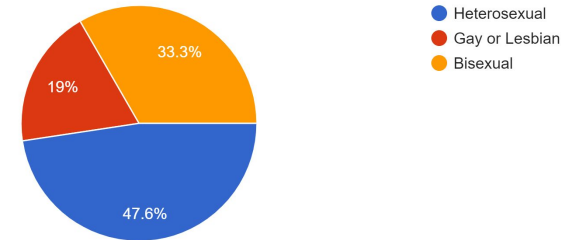
Please select the choice that most closely describes your gender identity.

21 responses



Please select the choice that most closely describes your sexual orientation.

21 responses



Survey Findings

Incurred financial hardship: 11 students said “yes” or “somewhat”

Took out loans: 12 “yes”

For students who moved off campus: over 91% said cost of housing factored into decision

Felt safe in housing: 5 students said “no” or “somewhat;” 3 of these students said their marginalized identity factored into this

Felt their housing community was diverse: 15 (over 75%) “no” or “somewhat”

Felt like they were part of a community: 14 “no” or “somewhat”

For commuters, inclusion was hit or miss

Focus Group Findings

Overarching themes: experiences were not necessarily bad, but housing was not diverse and did not serve many students' specific needs

Acknowledgement that a big part of the dorm experience is about making friends and social connections

Most felt that that the experience was uniquely valuable, but prohibitively expensive for some

Some housing policies seen as harmful were normalized through humor, though students recognized injustices in their university's housing systems; however, many students also reported being unaware of many housing policies

Being an RA provides more access to affordable housing, but those opportunities are often not made known to commuter students, which has a higher proportion of BIPOC students

Discussion

Many LGBTQ college students are unaware of sex- or gender-related housing policies at US universities (Nguyen et. al. 2020)

Transgender women are at greatest risk for being denied access to university housing or bathrooms (Seelman 2014)

Higher education institutions with supportive environments for marginalized students (LGBTQ students, students of color) can give students space to further develop and embrace their identities; the opposite is true in institutions without supportive environments (Duran 2018)

Universities, especially Catholic universities, can update and publicize housing policies and opportunities to better reach marginalized students by eliminating barriers to their participation in housing, which many housed students agree is invaluable.

Moving Forward

This limited study is meant to serve as a jumping-off point for Catholic universities in urban settings to re-examine how their housing costs and policies include or exclude LGBTQ students, BIPOC students, or students of low-income backgrounds:

1. Take LGBTQ and BIPOC student voices into serious account when setting housing policies
2. Take real, tangible steps to make on-campus housing possible for more LGBTQ, particularly trans, and low-income BIPOC students
3. Advertise housing policies and opportunities appropriately