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AMST 101

Demographic Categories 100% UNC Chapel Hill Freshman

In order to demonstrate the diversity of the freshman class of Chapel Hill's identities, interests, and experiences, five freshmen were chosen through a snowball selection process. In order to account for base-level factors of UNC Chapel Hill's demographics, certain boundaries regarding factors that must be present were put in place before selection. The demographic categories selected are as follows: race, sex, how the student is paying for school, the student's most worn shoes, and whether or not the student feels safe walking alone at night.

The first demographic category chosen is race. According to data gathered from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System for fall enrollment, the three most prominent races at UNC Chapel Hill are White, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino; their respective percentages being 57.1%, 11.3%, and 8.69% (DataUsa, 2021). With the selection of five participants, 3 will be White, 1 will be Asian, and 1 will be Hispanic or Latino. In order to accurately visualize the freshman class, the races of the participants need to be representative of UNC Chapel Hill's overall distribution. However with only five participants it is difficult to do so, which is why only the three most prominent races of students are represented.

The second demographic category chosen is sex. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a gender distribution of 40% male students and 60% female students (USN, 2022). To accommodate for this distribution 3 of the participants will be female, and 2 will be male. In

order to accurately represent the freshman class, it is important to include sex as a demographic. Tracking the sex demographic of UNC can also be beneficial in helping construct an understanding of how sex affects the experiences of participants.

The third demographic category of interest is how the student is paying for school. Each participant was asked, as this factor is telling about each participant's individual experience. How a student is paying for school is affected by the student's or their family's income level. By determining how students are paying for school, the demographics of the participants can be telling about the differences in income level of students. Understanding the different income levels of students allows for understanding of how class shapes UNC, or more accurately, how income level shapes students choices.

The fourth demographic category chosen is the type of shoes most worn by the participant. Based on the functionality of different shoe types, the participants' different choices can tell about the differences in their day-to-day lives in comparison to the other participants. For example, if someone wears loafers or other business shoes, they likely are in a professional setting more often than other students. Whereas students wearing tennis shoes are likely more engaged in physical activity.

The fifth demographic category of interest is whether or not the student feels safe walking home alone at night. Based on how different participants identified with this category, the category is telling about how the students identity shapes their experience. Specifically, this category gives insight into how sex, a part of identity, affects social factors. As a result, these social factors determine the experience of participants; the fear they feel when alone at night and their ability to participate in certain activities.

By determining a general basis for who should be chosen to participate with the first two categories, then expanding with more individualistic categories, the demographics of the participants help to investigate the diversity of our identities, interests, and experiences - as well as how these aspects are affected by one another.

Visualization



Participant 1

Race: White/Caucasian
 Sex: Female
 Paying for School: Parents
 Most Worn Shoes: high-top Converse
 Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night: No.



Participant 2

Race: White/Caucasian
 Sex: Male
 Paying for School: Military, Scholarships, Parents
 Most Worn Shoes: black Vans
 Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night: Yes.



Participant 3

Race: Hispanic
 Sex: Female
 Paying for School: Scholarships
 Most Worn Shoes: White Air Forces
 Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night: No.



Participant 4

Race: White/Caucasian
 Sex: Male
 Paying for School: Parents
 Most Worn Shoes: Nike Running
 Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night: Yes.



Participant 5

Race: Chinese
 Sex: Female
 Paying for School: Military
 Most Worn Shoes: New Balances
 Feel Safe Walking Alone at Night: No.

KEY

- caucasian/white
- hispanic
- asian
- female
- male
- parents pay
- military GI bill
- scholarships
- doesn't feel safe walking alone at night

Discussion

The freshman class of UNC Chapel Hill is extremely diverse. Although it is easy to find people with similarities, finding two people who are exactly the same is impossible. In Currituck, North Carolina, where I grew up, it was as if every person in my highschool shared essentially the same demographic identity and experiences, and could only be distinguished through our

differing interests. Through this project, I have realized that the community I find myself situated in has changed drastically. Every participant is someone I share a friend group with, and finding diversity among the demographic categories was easy. However, if this project had been conducted before coming to Chapel Hill, it would be much more difficult. Miranda Joseph, in his explanation of community, examines how the term has been connected to exclusionary, racist, sexist, and often violent implications (Joseph, 2023). In comparison to my group of friends now, my friend group at home seems exclusory. The demographic categories would be widely shared, as our identities, experiences, and interests are much more similar having grown up in the same small town. I differ widely from each participant, yet I am still able to find community with them. “Community concerns boundaries between us and them that are naturalized through reference to place or race or culture or identity; capital, on the other hand, would seem to denature, crossing all borders and making everything and everyone equivalent” (Joseph, 2023). Community is not created through exclusive concepts such as race and sex. Instead, shared experiences and interests help us to develop a sense of community with people of different identities.

Although "region" is commonly thought of as a specific area of land, I believe the communities we create can also be understood as regions. Zagarell states, “... much creative and scholarly work formulates “region” as a site where local and large-scale continuity and change intermingle...” (Zagarell, 3). As we evolve as people, our communities do not dissipate as we create new friendships, instead they evolve and grow with us. As a result, communities are sites of continuity, where old relationships continue to grow, and change, where new relationships take root. In my own personal community I can see continuity through my highschool community where the interests, races, and sex of my friends mirrored my own. I can see change

in the growth of my community to include new friends who differ from me in their race, sex, interests, income levels, and experiences.

Although UNC Chapel Hill is diverse and prides itself on being inclusive, no university is perfect. The results of my demographics and questions show areas where UNC is exclusive and in need of work. The results of my demographics and questions posed show that females seem to feel unsafe walking home alone at night, while males feel safe. This indicates that in a sense, females are excluded at UNC Chapel Hill - excluded from safety. When imposing demographics, I tried to make the races as close to the percentages enrolled as possible. However, this led to the realization that many races are excluded at Chapel Hill. Data USA reports, “The enrolled student population at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is 57.1% White, 11.3% Asian, 8.69% Hispanic or Latino, 8.67% Black or African American, 4.86% Two or More Races, 0.351% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.0695% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders (Data USA, 2022)”. Although UNC prides itself on being an inclusive school, the amount of enrolled white students to any other race is disproportionate; leading races other than white to be excluded at UNC. Although the structure of the university itself presents more exclusive race enrollment, student activity tends to be inclusive. Looking around Davis library, essentially every study group is more inclusive than the percentages presented online.

The communities we create are regions where the past and present thrive in unison. Diversity is essential for a community to prosper. While diversity enriches our lives with new perspectives and experiences, community provides us with a sense of belonging and support. By investing in community as a non-exclusionary concept, we are able to develop relationships that extend past face-value and support us on deeper internal levels.

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