Campus Climate 2020

Bill Altermatt, Institutional Research & Assessment

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Executive Summary

This report uses responses to a 2019 survey of all enrolled students to examine how six groups of students – Black, Hispanic, Asian, first-generation, female, and non-heterosexual – differ from students who do not belong to each group on areas related to well-being, sense of community, sources of stress, and interactions with students who are in different groups. Perhaps the most threatening campus climate event – feeling personally insulted or threatened due to one's group identity during interactions with students from other groups – was significantly more likely among Black, Hispanic, first-generation, and non-heterosexual students (Figure 22). Black, Hispanic, and first-generation students 1) felt more out of place (Figure 1), 2) felt more stress from concerns over personal finances (Figure 13), and 3) were less likely to agree that students at Carleton treated one another with respect (Figure 18). First-generation, Hispanic, female, and non-heterosexual students 1) more frequently felt "very sad" (Figure 4) and 2) "so depressed it was difficult to function" (Figure 5), and 3) were less likely to agree that Carleton would take reports of sexual assault seriously (Figure 20).

Many of these gaps are cause for concern because they reflect not only a difference between groups but also a large percentage of responses using the most severe response option. For example, one out of three first-generation students reported feeling "so depressed it was difficult to function" "very often," compared to just one out of nine non-first-generation students (Figure 5). Likewise, 51% of first-generation students and 50% of Black students reported that concerns about finances were "very stressful," compared to just 13-15% of students who were not first-generation or Black.

Another concerning pattern is when a gap at Carleton is significantly greater than the gap at peer schools. The largest such difference occurred for Black students on the variable "How often do you feel out of place" (Figure 1). Whereas 43% of Black students at peer institutions felt out of place "often" or "very often" (vs. 32% of non-Black students) the rate was 63% (vs. 26% of non-Black students) at Carleton. Another Carleton-Peer difference occurred for first-generation students reporting how often they felt so depressed it was difficult to function. Although the percentage of non-first-generation students who said this happened "often" or "very often" was 20% at Carleton and 19% at peers, the rate was 51% for first-generation students at Carleton but only 35% for first-generation students at peer institutions.

Although the focus of this report is on deficits, there were four variables where Carleton stood out positively in comparison with peers. In comparison to students at peer institutions, Carleton students were 1) more likely to feel like part of the community (Figure 17); 2) more likely to say that students treat one another with respect (Figure 18); 3) less likely to stay up all night to finish an academic assignment or to prepare for an exam (Figure 3); and 4) (for female students only) more likely to feel safe on campus (Figure 16).

Two student variables that might be interesting to pursue in later analyses of campus climate are political ideology and religious affiliation. Student surveys regularly identify Carleton students as liberal and non-religious, and it is possible that students who are outside of those groups may experience a less welcoming campus climate. A theme in

student comments from recent senior surveys, both by liberal and conservative seniors, is a concern with hostility toward politically conservative voices in class.

Data Source: 2019 Enrolled Student Survey

The Enrolled Student Survey was administered to all enrolled students - first-year through senior - in 2019. It was administered at Carleton and at nine other elite national liberal arts colleges that Carleton considers peers, including Amherst, Bowdoin, Middlebury, Pomona, Oberlin, Swarthmore, Trinity, Wesleyan, and Williams. In 2019, 742 Carleton students completed the survey, which was typical among peers. Some of the sections on the ESS relevant to concerns with campus climate are sections related to students' feelings about well-being, community, stress, and interactions with other students.

Table 1 shows the number of observations used for subsequent analyses. The numbers vary slightly from question to question because respondents might choose not to answer particular questions, so the values in the table below are the mean number of respondents. For example, in Table 1, the top row indicates that 62 respondents from Carleton indicated that they were Asian, and 606 indicated that they were not, which equates to 9% of the sample indicating they were Asian.

Table 1: Average Number of Observations, by Institution and Demographic Variable

Demographic	Institution	No	Yes
Asian	Carleton	610	62
Asian	Peer	4245	463
Black	Carleton	656	16
Black	Peer	4451	256
Female	Carleton	308	364
Female	Peer	2037	2671
FG	Carleton	608	51
FG	Peer	3890	681
Hispanic	Carleton	626	46
Hispanic	Peer	4227	481
nonHetero	Carleton	409	248
nonHetero	Peer	2960	1137

Note on Interpreting Plots

In the plots that follow, demographic categories are considered independently of one another; for each category (e.g., first-generation), students with a trait are contrasted against students who do not have that single trait. However, the traits that are displayed in each plot below were also analyzed using multiple regression, and each trait that is displayed for a particular question was significantly related to that question even after the other traits were considered. For example, Figure 1 shows that Black, first-generation, and Hispanic students were more likely to feel out of place. This means that even after

statistically controlling for first-generation status, which is more likely for Black and Hispanic students, students in those ethnic groups still feel more out of place than students who are not in those ethnic groups.

Most of the figures below have a part A and B. In the "A" figures below, on each colored line, the small circle on one end of the line indicates the value for students who do not have the characteristic in question, and the tip of the arrowhead on the other end of the line indicates the value for students who do have the characteristic. Only differences that were statistically significant at $p < .05$ and had a magnitude of at least 0.25 points on a 4-point scale are reported. The length of the arrow reflects the magnitude of the difference, and that magnitude is printed above or below the arrowhead. When students at peer institutions showed a difference that significantly differed from Carleton, their difference is printed in red. The "B" figures show the distribution of survey responses for Carleton students only, which provides a more concrete interpretation of the differences described in the "A" figures.

"How Often" Well-Being Variables

The outcome variables in this section are concerned with how often students reported feeling out of place, overwhelmed, sad, depressed, and how often they reported staying up all night to finish an assignment or prepare for an exam.

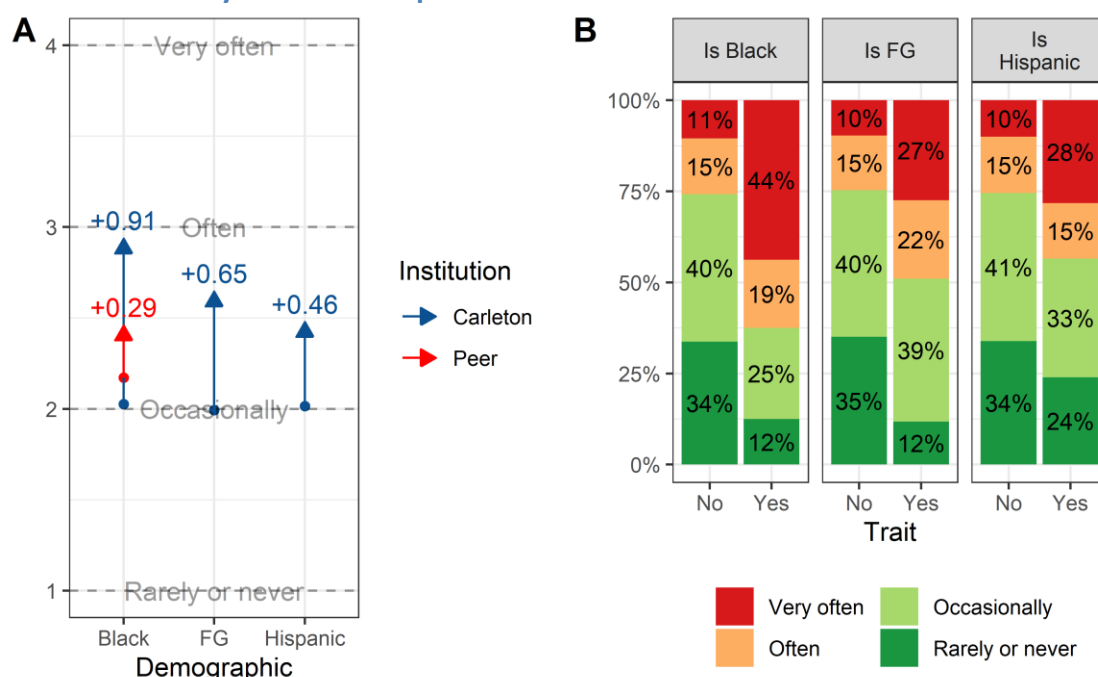### How often have you felt out of place?

Figure 1: How often have you felt out of place?

Figure 1A show the gaps for three groups – Black students, first-generation (FG) students, and Hispanic students – in the question of how often they felt out of place. Figure 1A shows that the average Black student at Carleton "often" feels out of place, compared to the

average non-Black student who only "occasionally" feels out of place. Furthermore, this difference between Black and non-Black students at Carleton (0.91 points on a 4-point scale) is significantly larger than it is at peer institutions (0.29 points on a 4-point scale). Black students at peer institutions report feeling out of place about halfway between "occasionally" and "often." There were also large gaps between First-Generation and non-First-Generation students and between Hispanic and non-Hispanic students in the degree to which they felt out of place. Figure 1B shows that 44% of Black students felt out of place "very often", a rate 4 times higher than for students who were not Black.

How often have you felt overwhelmed by all you had to do?
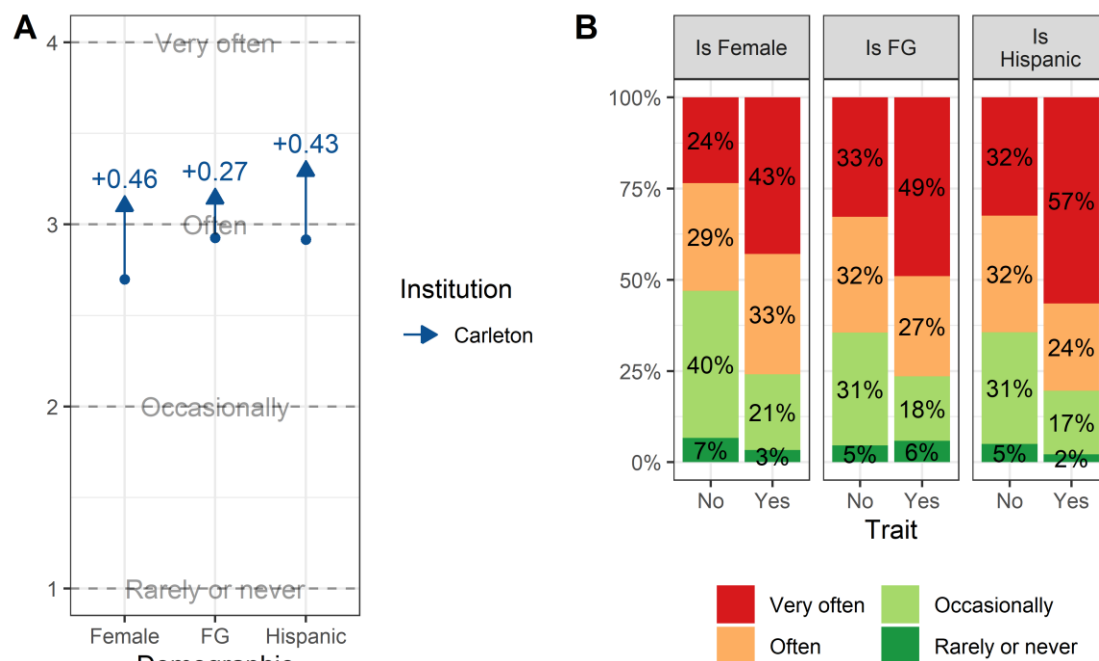
Figure 2: How often have you felt overwhelmed by all you had to do?

Figure 2A shows that the largest gap in feeling overwhelmed was by gender, with female students feeling more overwhelmed than male students by 0.46 points. Figure 2B shows that 76% of female students reported feeling overwhelmed either "often" or "very often," compared to just 53% of male students. The second largest gap was for Hispanic students. Whereas 81% of Hispanic students "often" or "very often" felt overwhelmed by all they had to do, that statistic was only 64% for non-Hispanic students. The third group who felt overwhelmed more often was First Generation students.

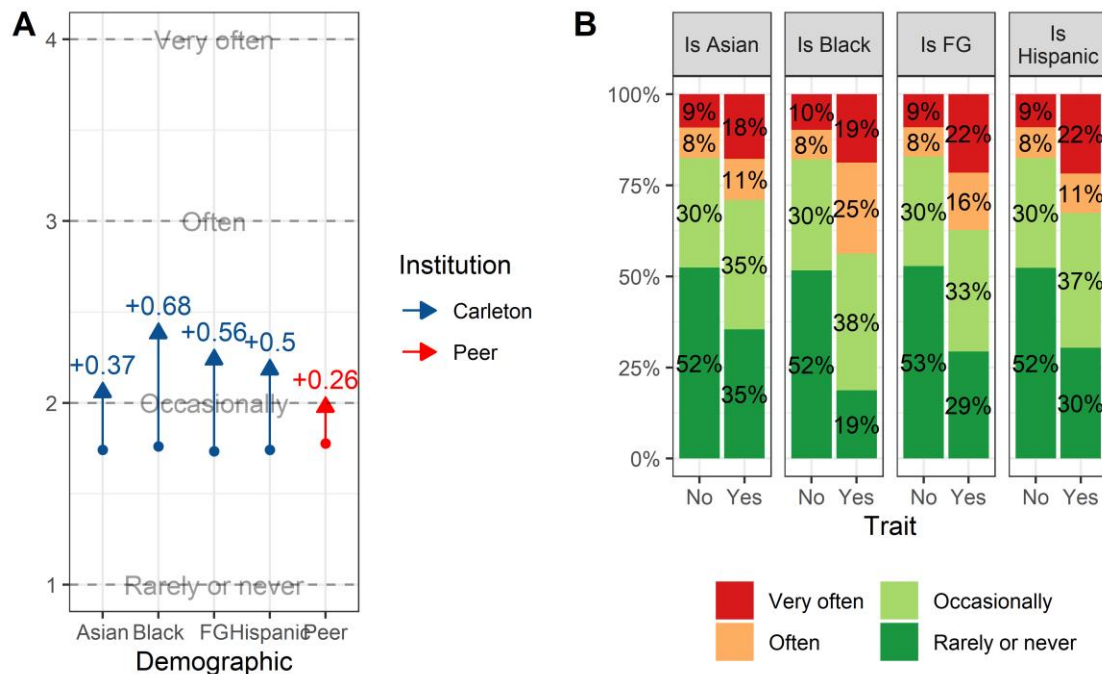**How often have you stayed up all night to finish an assignment or prepare for an exam?**

Figure 3: How often have you stayed up all night to finish an assignment or prepare for an exam?

Figure 3A shows a new demographic category: Peer, printed in red on the far right. That arrow indicates that, taken together as a group, students at peer institutions reported more frequently staying up all night to finish an assignment or study for an exam than students at Carleton. Within Carleton, groups who reported more frequently staying up all night were Black, First-Generation, Hispanic, and Asian students.

Figure 4: How often have you felt very sad?

Figure 4 shows that four groups show similar gaps in feeling sad more often than others: Hispanic students, non-heterosexual students, first-generation students, and female students. The gap between female and male students at Carleton (0.46 points) was significantly larger than the gap at peer institutions (0.3 points). It is also worth noting that the average levels reported in Figure 4A show that the average first-generation and Hispanic student "often" feels sad, compared to students not in those groups who only "occasionally" feel very sad.

How often have you felt so depressed it was difficult to function?
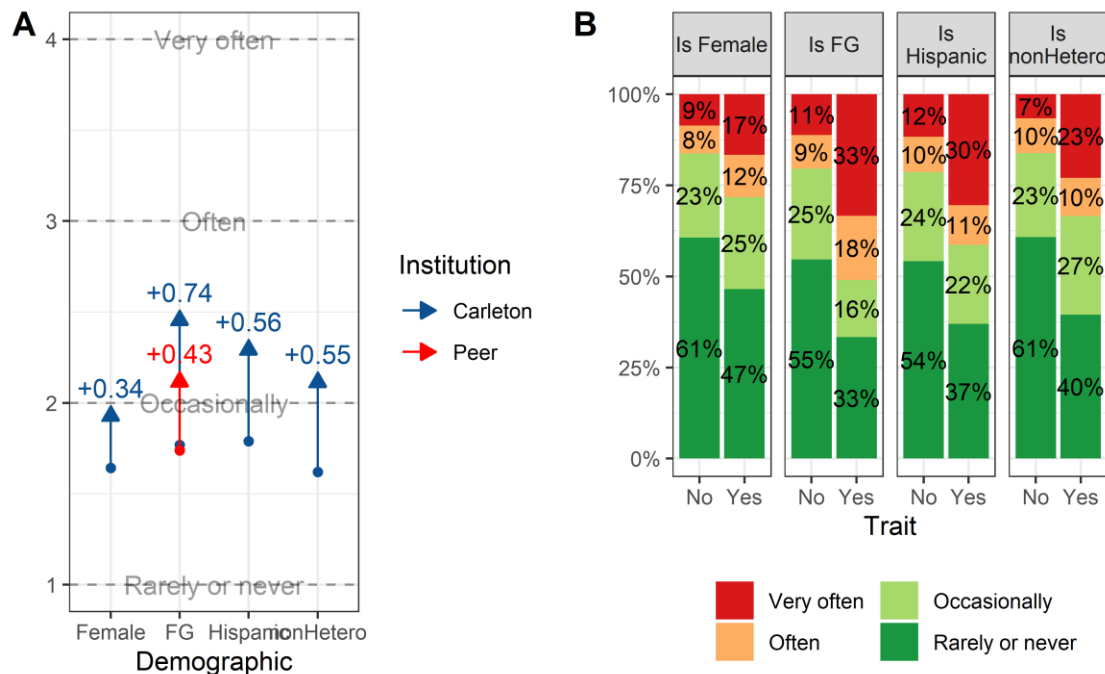
Figure 5: How often have you felt so depressed it was difficult to function?

Figure 5 shows that first-generation students, Hispanic students, non-heterosexual students, and female students more frequently reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to function. For first-generation students, the gap was larger at Carleton (0.74 points) than it was at peer institutions (0.43 points).

Summary of the Gaps for the "How Often" Well-Being Variables

Figure 6 below summarizes the results of items asking how often students experienced events related to well-being by showing just the magnitude of the differences between each group and students not in the group. The red bars in the plot below represent the value for students at peer institutions and are displayed only when those were significantly different from the values at Carleton.
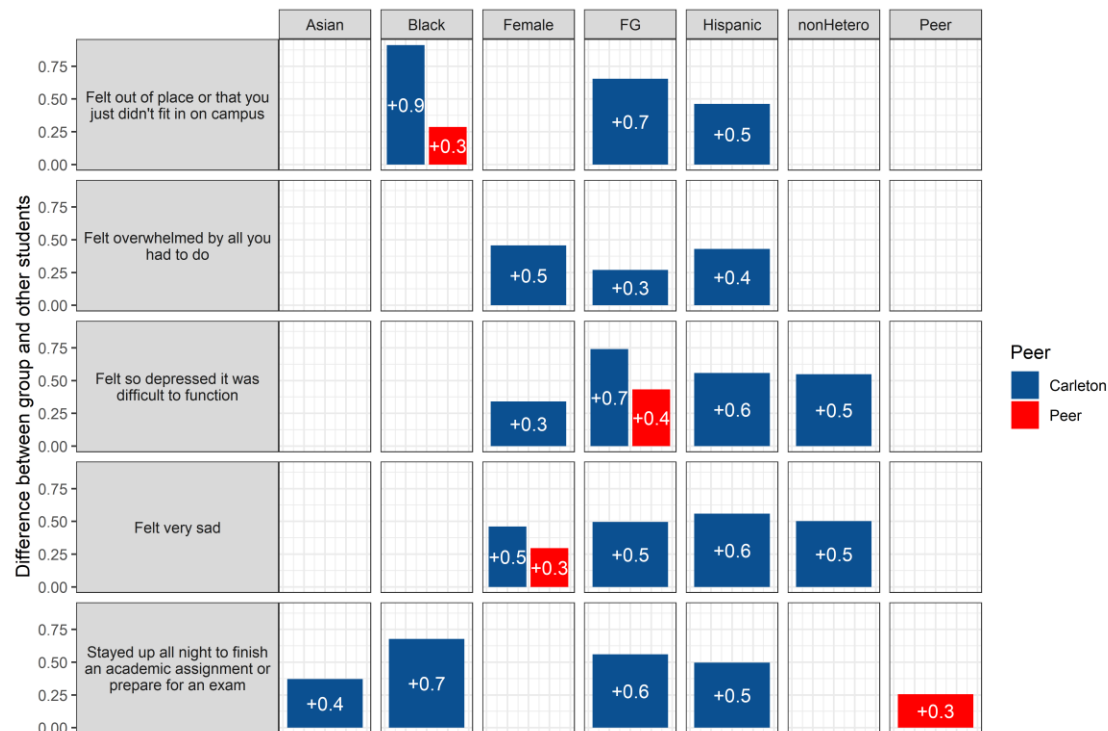

Figure 6: Summary of Demographic Differences for Well-Being Variables

Figure 6 permits a focus on groups rather than outcomes by scanning down the column for a particular group. For example, Black students were more likely to feel out of place and to stay up all night to finish an assignment or study. The pattern for first-generation and Hispanic students was very similar. This is not because of large overlap between the groups. Of the 51 first-generation students, 18 (35%) were Hispanic. Furthermore, the effects reported above were all statistically significant as independent effects in a multiple regression with each of the groups as separate variables.

Three More Well-Being Variables: Sleep, Friends, and Balance

Sleep: On how many of the past seven days did you get enough sleep so that you felt rested when you woke up?
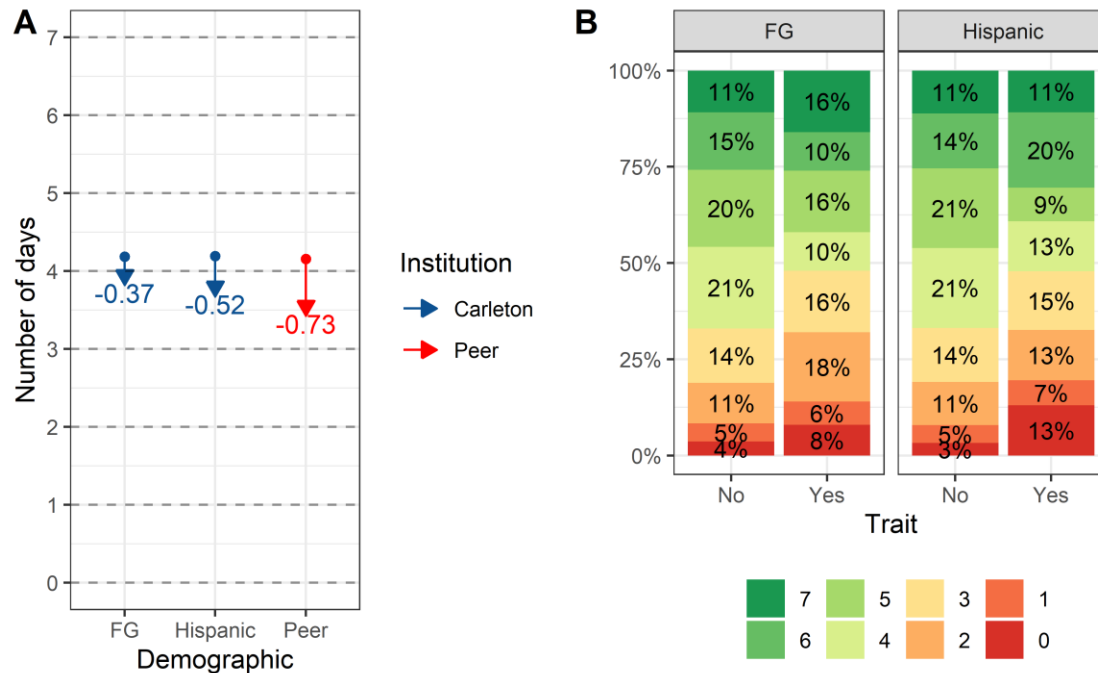

Figure 7: On how many of the past seven days did you get enough sleep so that you felt rested when you woke up?

Figure 7 is on a different scale from the previous variables, with the response variable ranging from 0 to 7 days. First-generation and Hispanic students reported getting enough sleep to feel rested less frequently than students who were not first-generation or Hispanic. In addition, Figure 7A shows that students at peer institutions reported getting enough sleep to feel rested 0.73 days less frequently than students at Carleton. Figure 7B shows that only half of first-generation or Hispanic students got 4-7 days of satisfactory sleep, compared to two-thirds of other students.
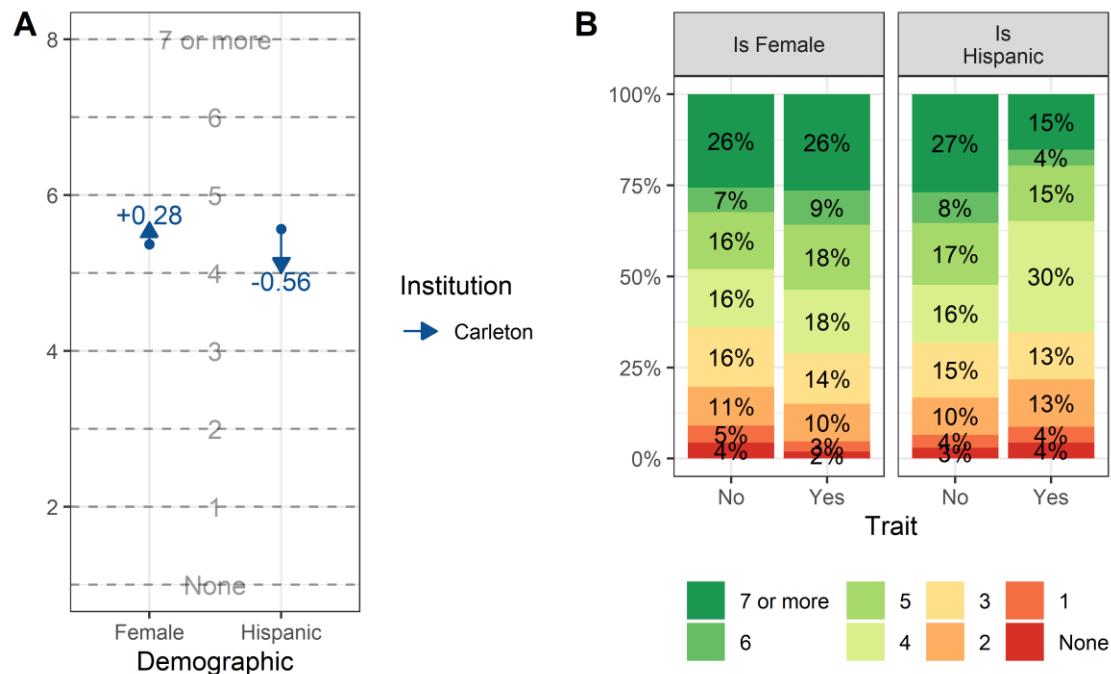
Number of Friends

Figure 8: How many close friends do you have (meaning people that you feel at ease with, can talk to about private matters, and can call on for help)?

Figure 8A indicates that female students tend to have more friends than male students, but Hispanic students tend to have fewer friends than non-Hispanic students. Figure 8B shows that only 29% of female students have 3 or fewer friends, compared to 36% of male students. For Hispanic and non-Hispanic students, the greatest difference occurs at the high end: only 19% of Hispanic students report having 6 or more friends, compared to 35% of non-Hispanic students.

Balance: How satisfied are you with your ability to balance academics and other aspects of your life?
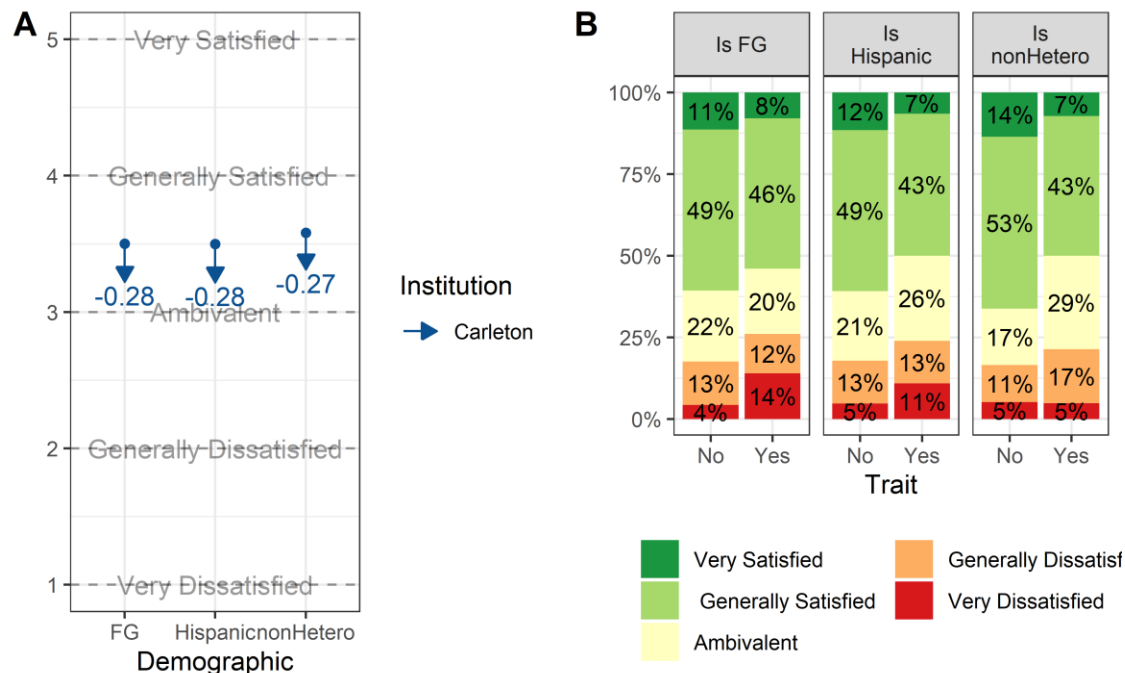

Figure 9: How satisfied are you with your ability to balance academics and other aspects of your life?

Figure 9A shows that first-generation, Hispanic, and non-heterosexual students are less satisfied with their ability to balance academics and other aspects of their lives. All three groups show similar declines of approximately 0.3 points on a 5-point scale. Figure 9B shows that 1/4 to 1/5 of students in these three groups were either Generally dissatisfied or Very dissatisfied, compared to 1/6 of other students. While 2/3 of students in other groups report being Generally or Very satisfied with balance, only half of students in these groups were.

Sources of Stress

Five questions asked students about their level of stress from various sources: balancing multiple commitments, academic workload, personal relationships, finances, and future plans.

Balancing Multiple Commitments as Source of Stress

Figure 9, above, showed that first-generation, Hispanic, and non-heterosexual students reported less *satisfaction* with the balance between their academic and personal lives. Figure 10, below, focuses on balancing multiple commitments as a source of *stress*.
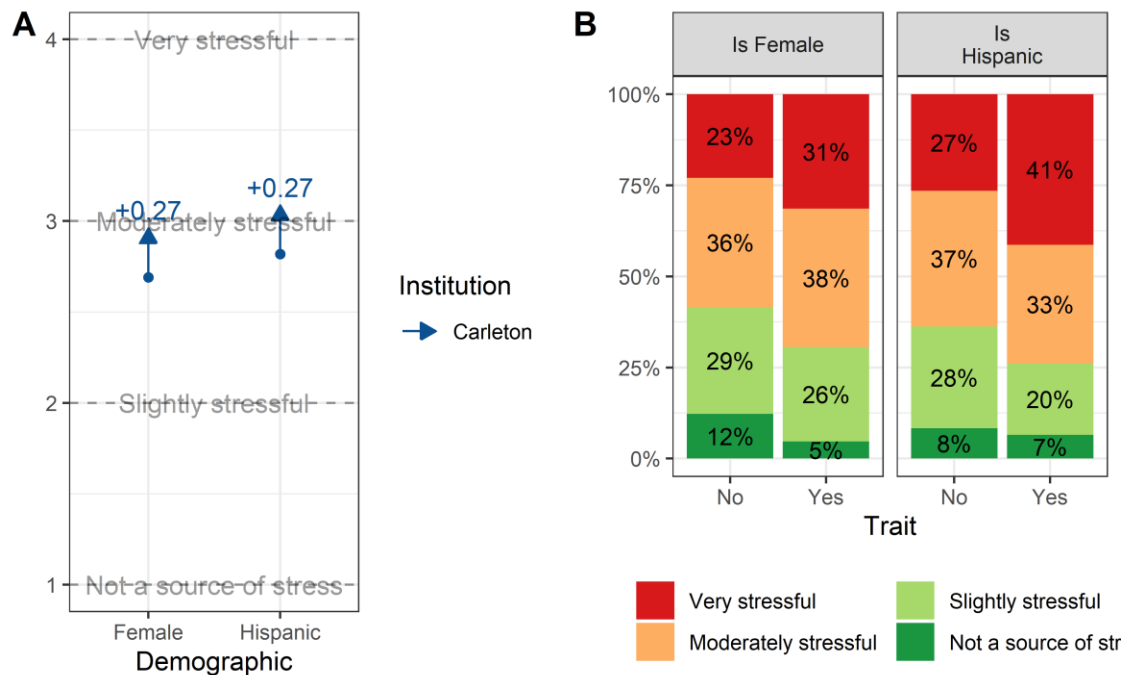
Figure 10: How has balancing multiple commitments (academic, extracurricular, personal) affected you as a source of stress?

Only two groups showed significant gaps for balancing multiple commitments as a source of stress: female students and Hispanic students. Whereas 41% of Hispanic students reported balancing multiple commitments as "very stressful", the rate for non-Hispanic students was only 27%. For female students, the relative rates were 31% to 23%.
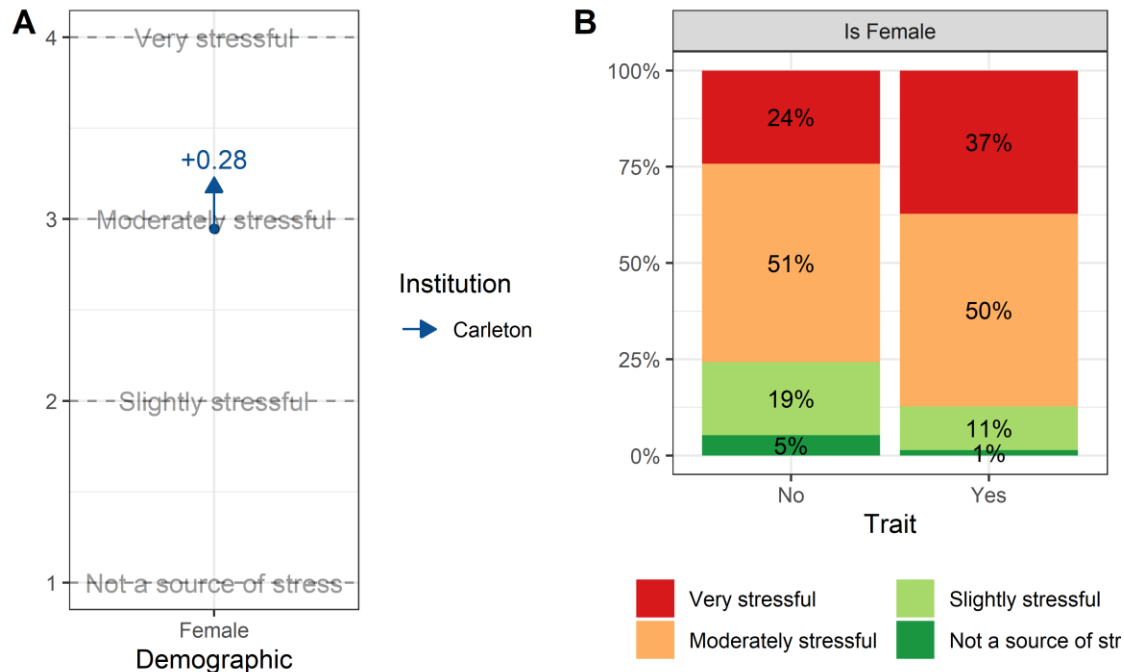
Academic Workload as Source of Stress

Figure 11: How has managing the workload for your courses affected you as a source of stress?

Figure 11 shows only one group that was significantly higher in stress from academic workload: female students. Whereas about 1/3 of female students reported that their academic workload was "Very stressful", the rate for male students was closer to 1/4. About 1/5 of male students reported that academic workload was either slightly stressful or not a source of stress, whereas the rate for female students was only 1/8.

Difficulties with Family / Partner / Friend Relationships as Source of Stress
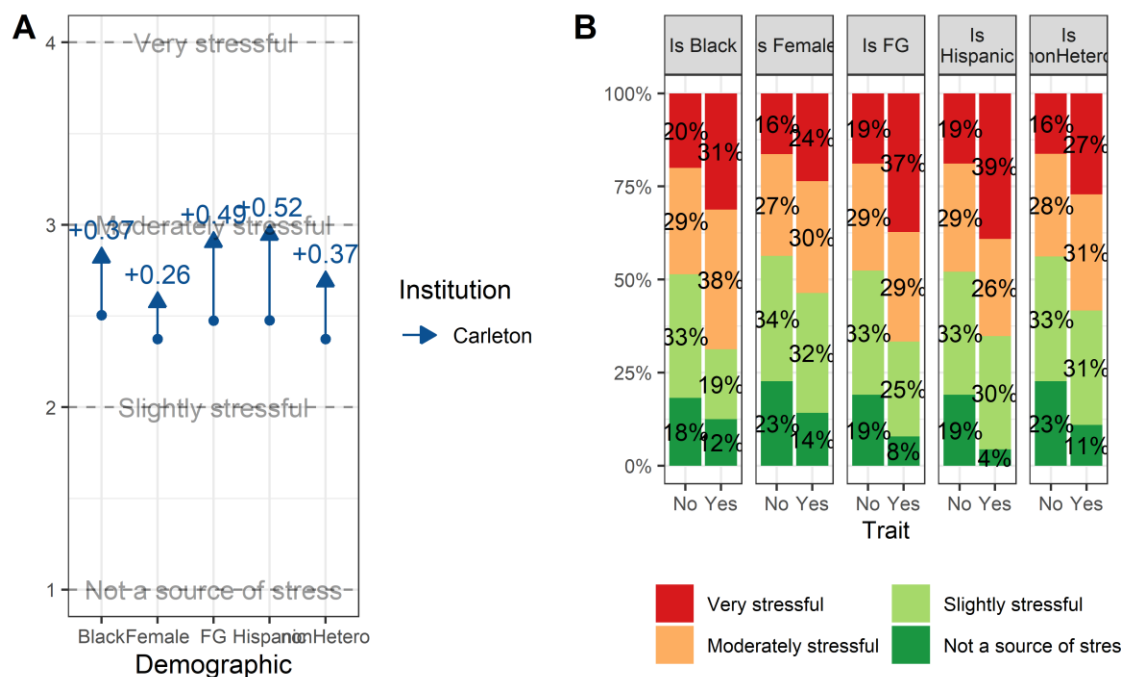

Figure 12: How have personal difficulties with family, intimate relationships, or friends affected you as a source of stress?

Figure 12 shows five groups with elevated levels of stress from personal relationships. The greatest gap is for Hispanic students, 2/5 of whom identified difficulties with family, partner, or friend relationships as "very stressful", compared to only 1/5 of students who were not Hispanic. First-generation students showed a similar ratio.

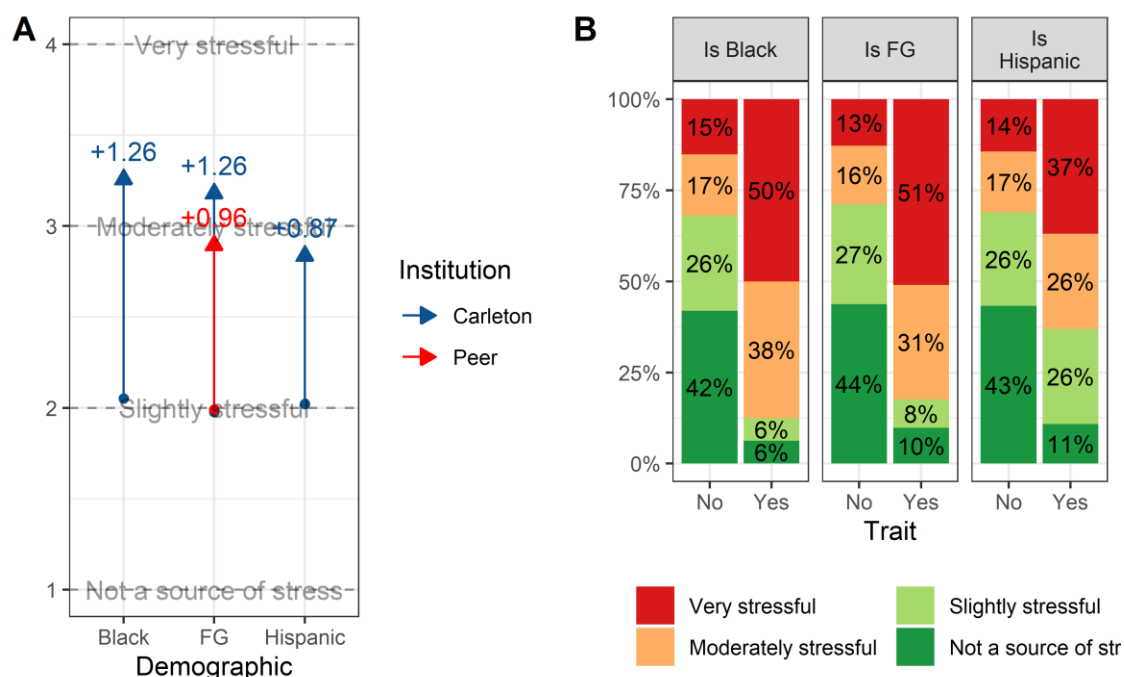**Finances as Source of Stress**

Figure 13: How have concerns about your finances affected you as a source of stress?

Figure 13 shows one of the largest gaps in this report. *Half* of students who were Black or First Generation identified concerns over finances as "very stressful," compared to just 1 out of every 7 students who were neither Black nor First Generation. 3/8 of Hispanic students reported concerns over finances as "very stressful", compared to 1 out of 7 students who were not Hispanic. In addition, the gap for first-generation students at Carleton (mean difference of 1.26) was *wider* than the gap at peer institutions (mean difference of 0.96, see Figure 13A).
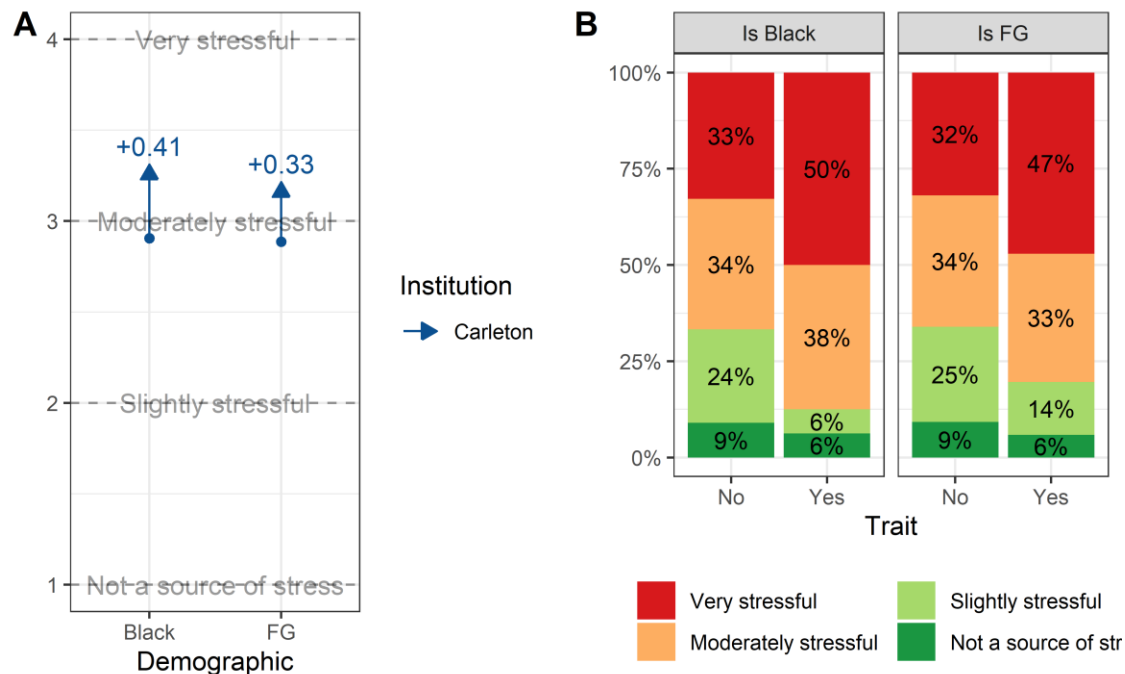
Future Plans as Source of Stress

Figure 14: How have concerns about your future plans affected you as a source of stress?

Figure 14 shows higher levels of stress for Black and first-generation students concerning their future plans, compared to students who are not members of those groups. Whereas approximately half of Black and first-generation students reported that concerns about future plans were "very stressful," the rate for students not in those groups was about 1/3.

Summary of the Gaps in Sources of Stress

Figure 15 below summarizes the results of items asking about sources of stress by showing just the magnitude of the differences between each group and students not in the group. The red bars in the plot below represent the value for students at peer institutions and are displayed only when those were significantly different from the values at Carleton.
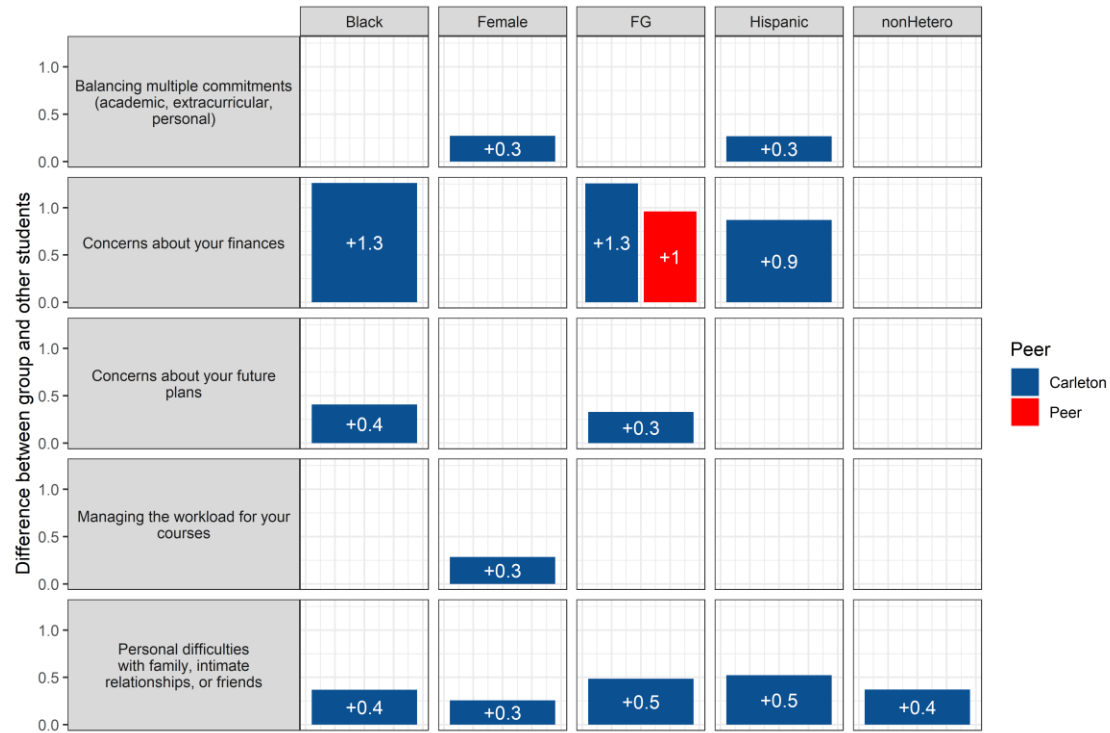
Figure 15: Summary of Sources of Stress Variables

Community

The items in this section are concerned with students' feelings of safety, belonging, mutual respect, and confidence in community administration.
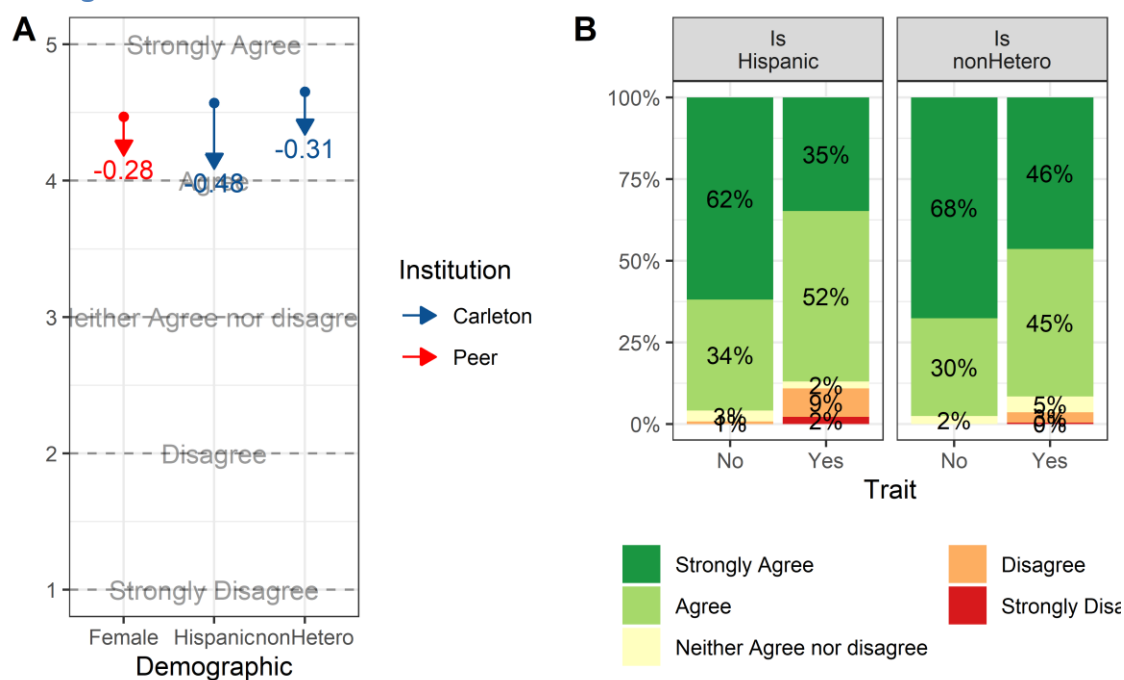
Feeling Safe

Figure 16: I feel safe on this campus.

Figure 16A shows that all groups on campus generally feel safe, with average responses ranging between "Agree" and "Strongly Agree". Female students at peer institutions feel significantly less safe than female students at Carleton. Two groups who feel less safe at Carleton are Hispanic students (87% agreed or strongly agreed with feeling safe, compared to 96% of non-Hispanic students) and non-heterosexual students (for whom the respective percentages are 91% vs. 98%).

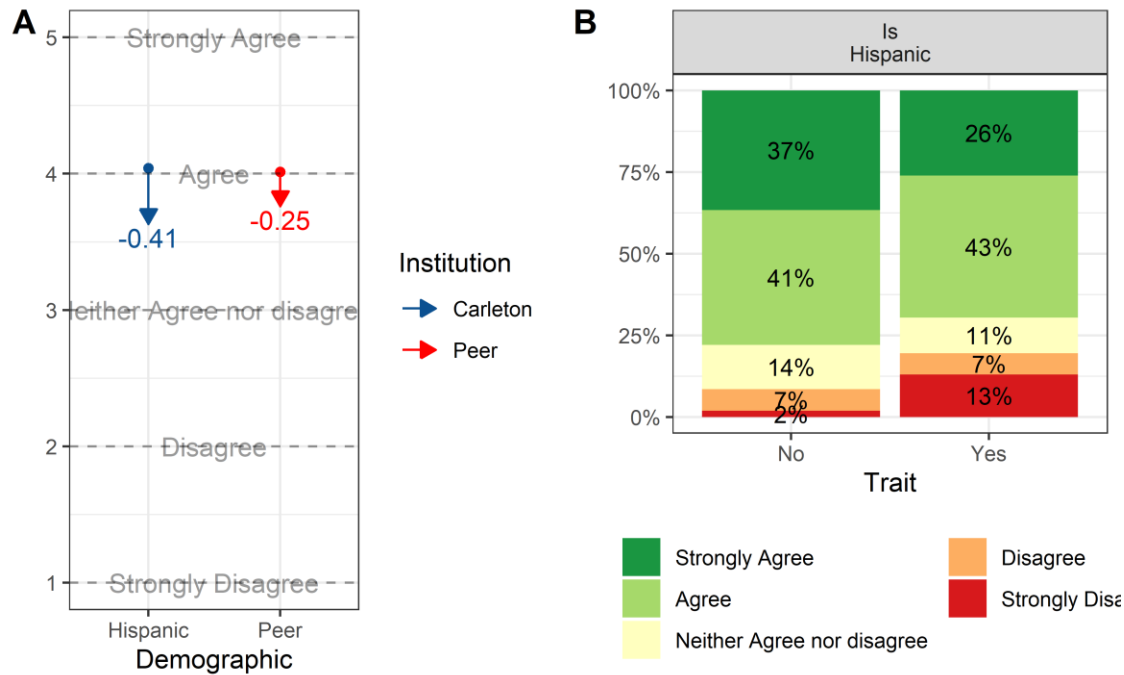**Feeling Like Part of the Community**

Figure 17: I feel like part of the community at Carleton

Figure 17A shows that students at peer colleges, as a group, feel less a part of the community (by 0.25 points on a 5-point scale) than students at Carleton. The only group at Carleton who felt significantly less like they are part of the community was Hispanic students. Figure 17B shows that 20% of Hispanic students disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were part of the community, compared to only 9% of non-Hispanic students.
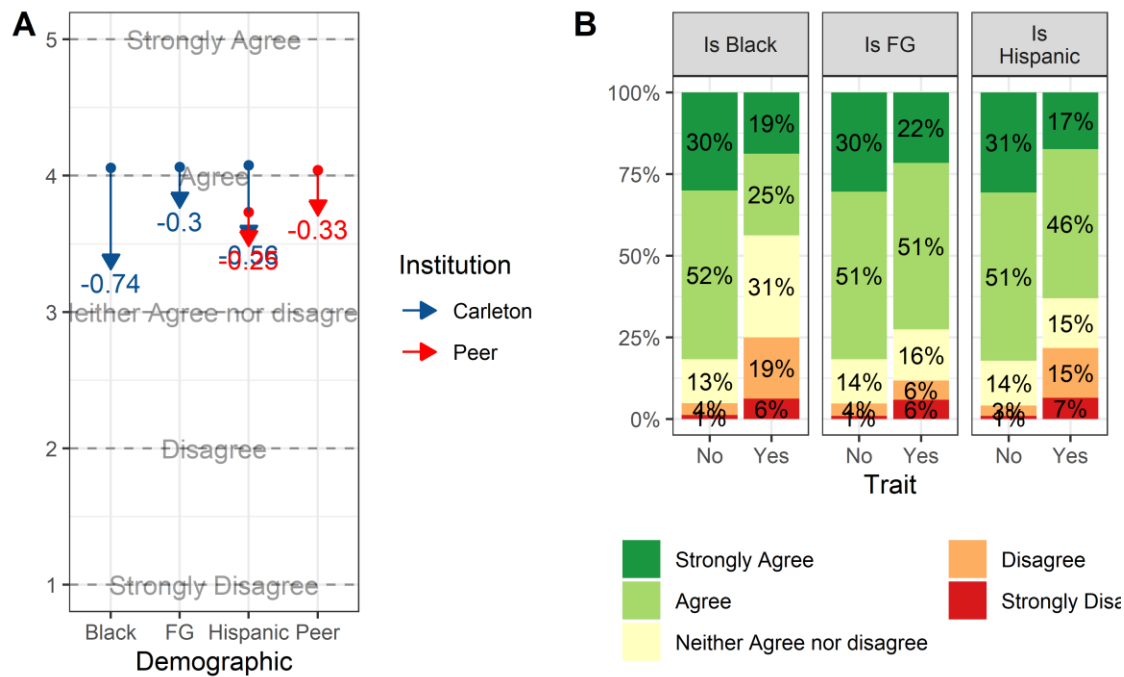
Students Treating One Another with Respect

Figure 18: Students at Carleton treat one another with respect

Figure 18A shows that students at peer institutions report less respect between students (by 0.33 points) than students at Carleton. Three groups at Carleton who report less respect between students are Black students, first generation students, and Hispanic students. Hispanic students showed a larger gap at Carleton than at peer schools, but because of gap between Carleton and peer schools in overall level of respect, the level of disrespect perceived by Hispanic students at Carleton is approximately the same as that by Hispanic students at peer schools. Figure 18B shows that 1 out of 4 Black students report disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that students treat each other with respect, compared to a rate of 1 out of 20 for students who are not Black. For Hispanic students, the relative ratios were 22% vs. 4%, and for first-generation students they were 12% vs. 5%.

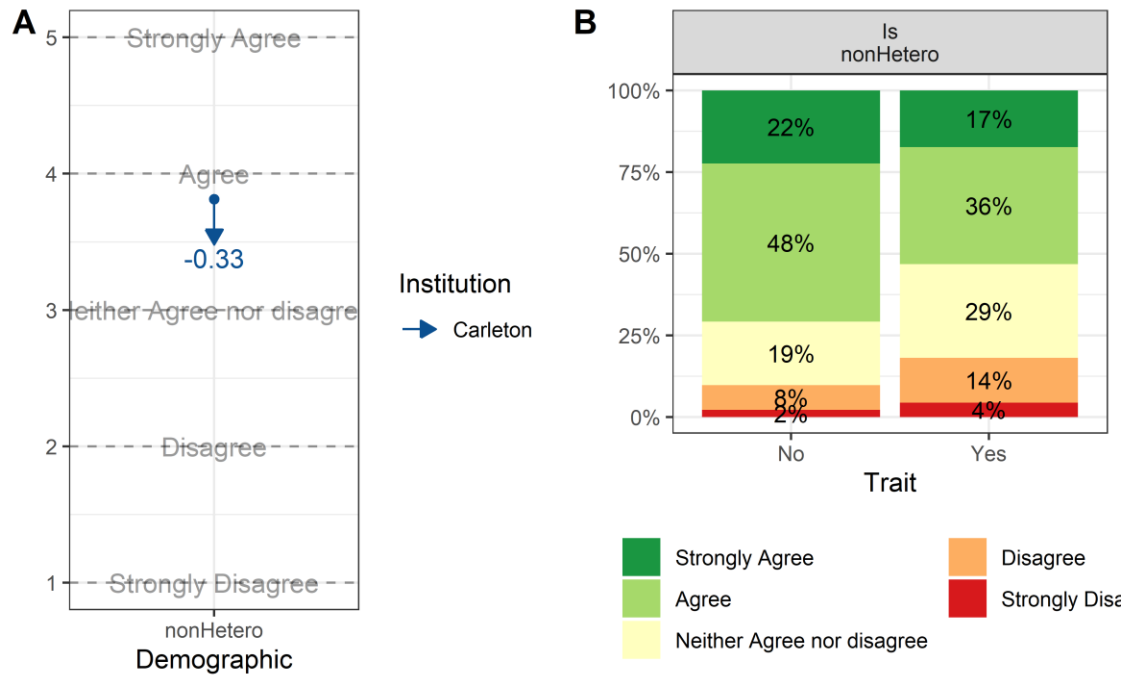## Administrators Concerned about Welfare

Figure 19: Administrators at Carleton are genuinely concerned about my welfare

Figure 19 shows only one group who reported significantly less perceived concern by administrators for their welfare: non-heterosexual students. Whereas 53% of non-heterosexual students agreed or strongly agreed that administrators at Carleton were genuinely concerned about their welfare, the rate among heterosexual students was 70%.

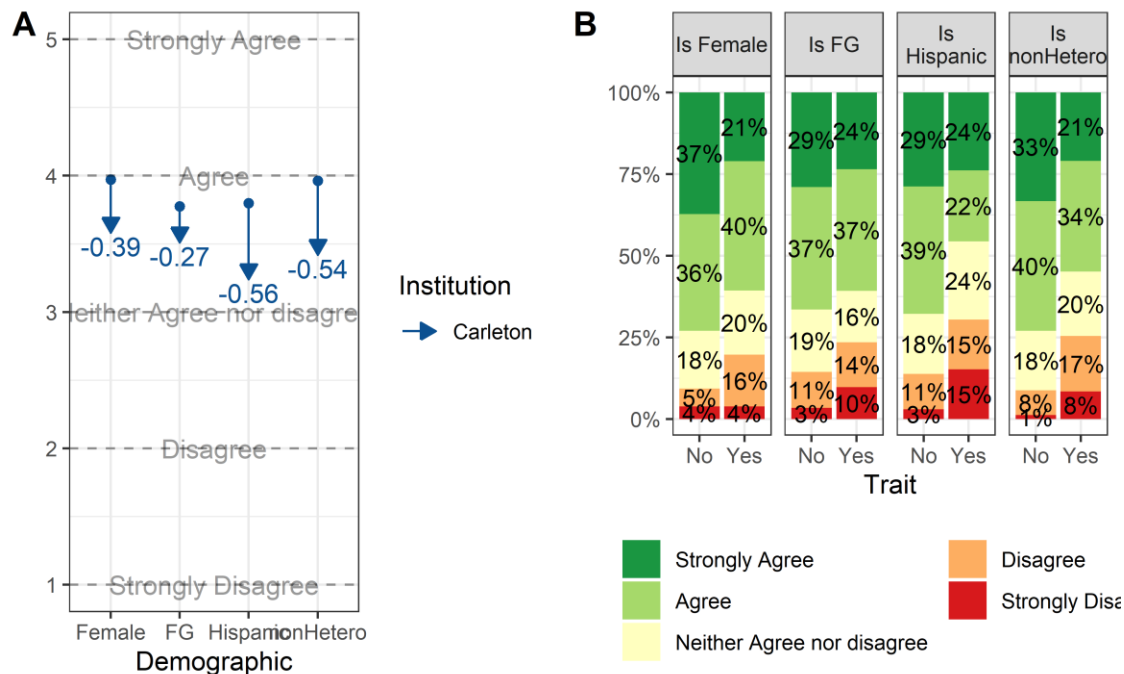## Taking Reports of Sexual Assault Seriously

Figure 20: Carleton would take any reports of sexual assault seriously

Figure 20 shows that there are 4 groups who have less confidence that Carleton would take reports of sexual assault seriously. The largest gaps are for Hispanic and non-heterosexual students. Whereas 30% of Hispanic students disagreed or strongly disagreed that Carleton would take reports of sexual assault seriously, the rate was only 14% among non-Hispanic students. Among non-heterosexual students, 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed, compared to 9% of heterosexual students. Significant gaps were also observed for female students (20% vs. 9%) and first-generation students (24% vs. 14%).

Summary of the Gaps in the Sense of Community Items

Figure 21 below summarizes the results of items asking about sense of community by showing just the magnitude of the differences between each group and students not in the group. The red bars in the plot below represent the value for students at peer institutions and are displayed only when those were significantly different from the values at Carleton.
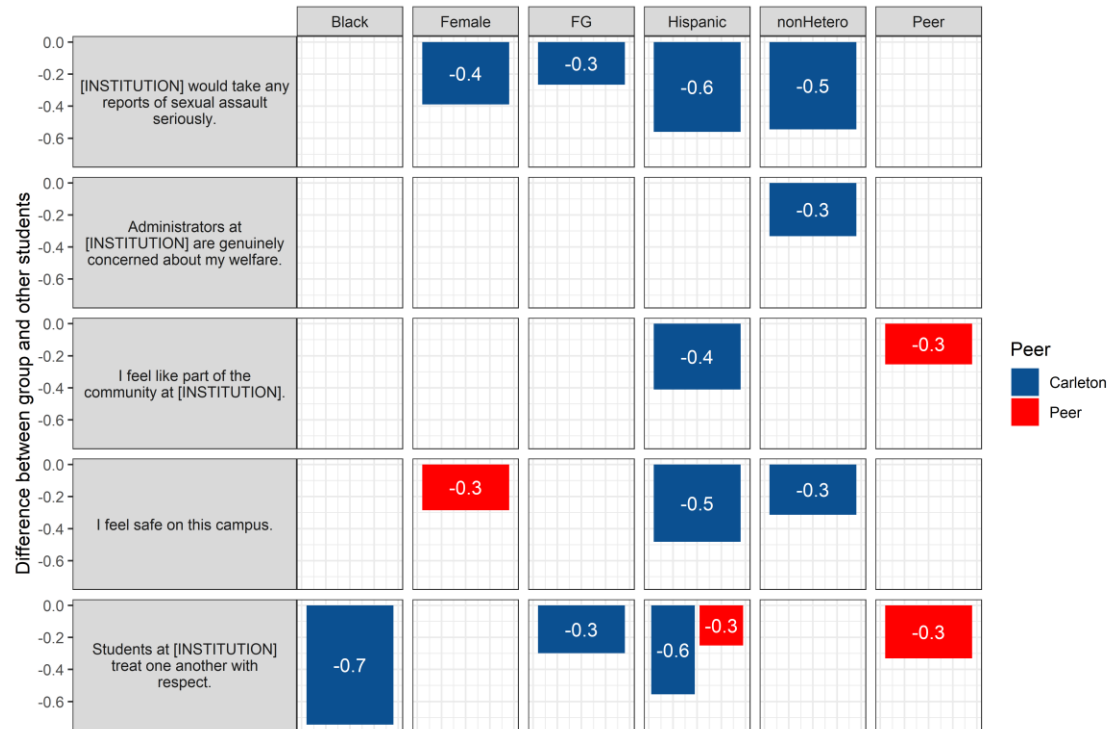
Figure 21: Summary of Sense of Community Variables

Interactions Between Groups

During this academic year, how often have you had the following interactions with students differing from you in race, national origin, sexual orientation, political views) at Carleton?

Felt insulted or threatened based on your social identity (e.g., sex, race, national origin, sexual orientation, or values)
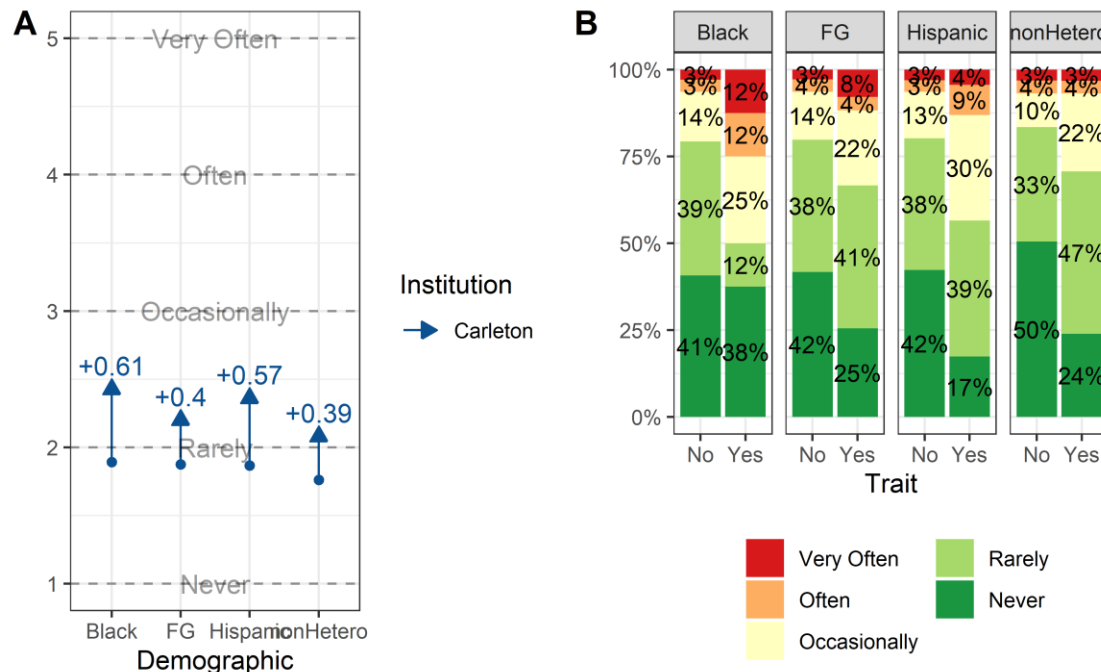

Figure 22: How often have you felt insulted or threatened based on your social identity (e.g., sex, race, national origin, sexual orientation, or values) during interactions with students differing from you in race, national origin, etc.?

Figure 22A identifies four groups at elevated risk of feeling insulted or threatened during an interaction with students who differed from them in race, national origin, etc. because of their social identity: Black students, first generation students, Hispanic students, and non-heterosexual students. Figure 22B shows that, for students *not* in those groups, about 80% reported that this happened "rarely" or "never". By contrast, only 50% of Black students, 56% of Hispanic students, 66% of first-generation students, and 71% of non-heterosexual students could say the same. The percentage of students saying that this happened "often" or "very often" was only 6-7% outside of those groups, compared to 24% of Black students, 13% of Hispanic students, and 12% of first generation students.

Witnessed someone else being insulted or threatened based on some aspect of that individual's social identity
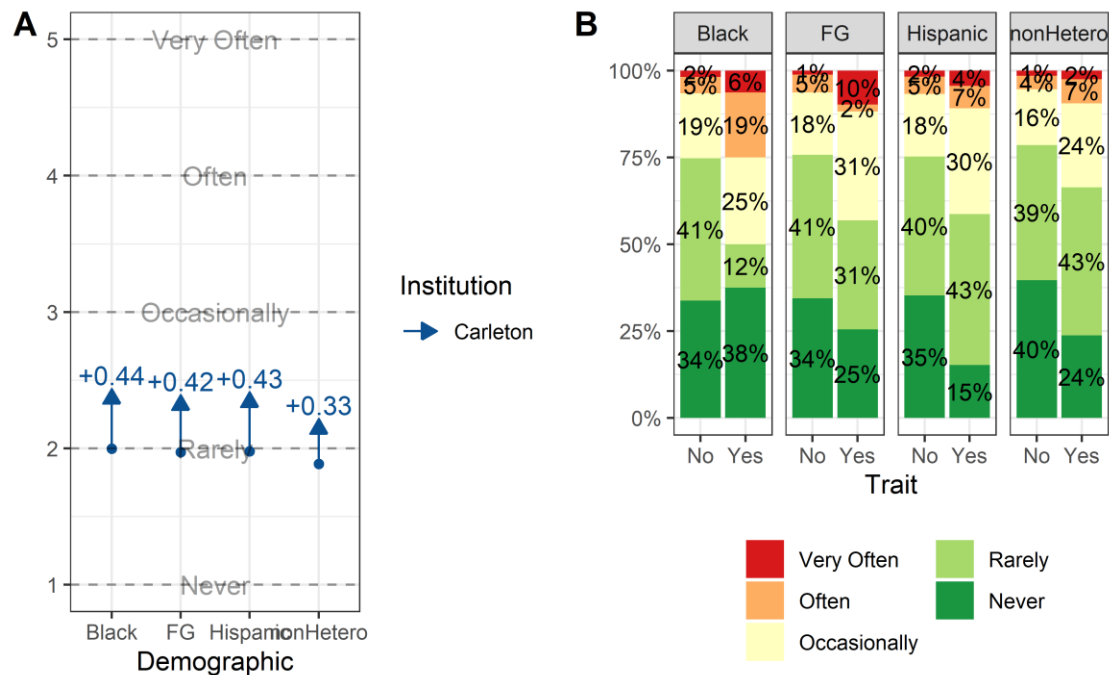

Figure 23: How often have you witnessed someone else being insulted or threatened based on some aspect of that individual's social identity during interactions with students differing from you in race, national origin, etc.?

Figure 23A shows a similar pattern for witnessing someone else being insulted or threatened as Figure 22A did for experiencing it personally. Whereas around 75% of students who are not in any of the groups Black, first-generation, Hispanic, or non-heterosexual report witnessing this "rarely" or "never", that rate was only 50% for Black students, 56% for first-generation students, 58% of Hispanic students, and 67% of non-heterosexual students.

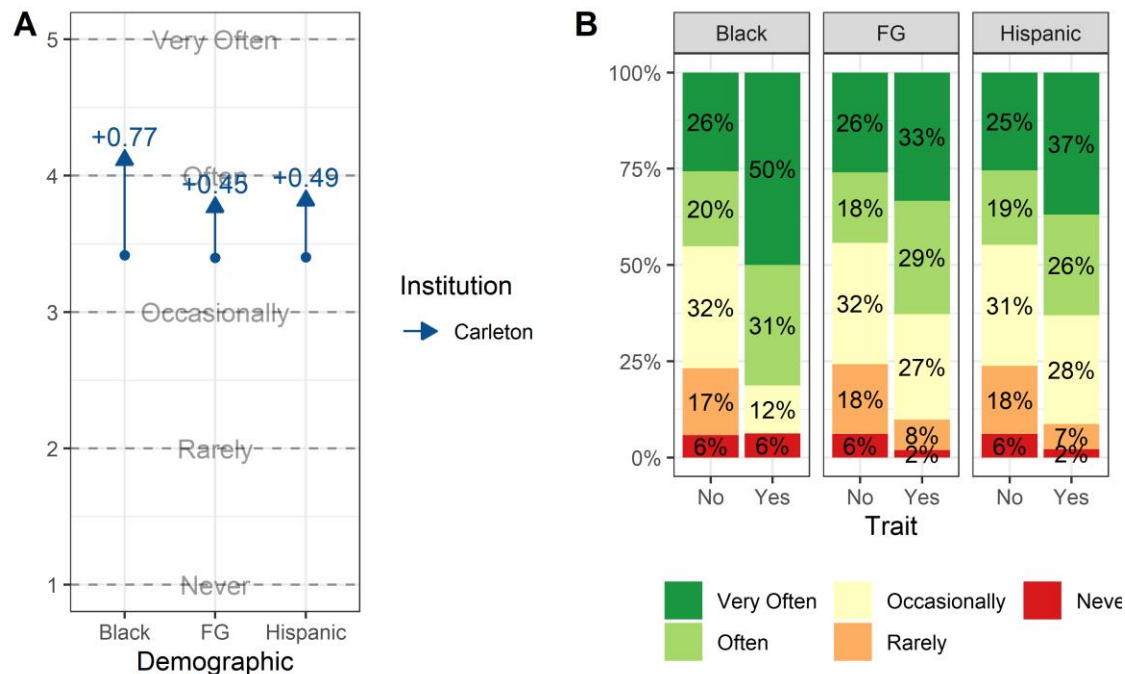**Had meaningful and honest discussions about inter-group relations**

Figure 24: How often have you had meaningful and honest discussions about inter-group relations during interactions with students differing from you in race, national origin, etc.?

Figure 24A shows that Black, First-Generation, and Hispanic students were each more likely to report having meaningful and honest discussions about inter-group relations with students than students not in those groups. Figure 24B shows that typically, about 45% of students not in those groups reported "often" or "very often" having discussions about inter-group relations, compared to 81% of Black students, 62% of first-generation students, and 63% of Hispanic students.

Summary of the Gaps in Variables Regarding Interactions between Groups
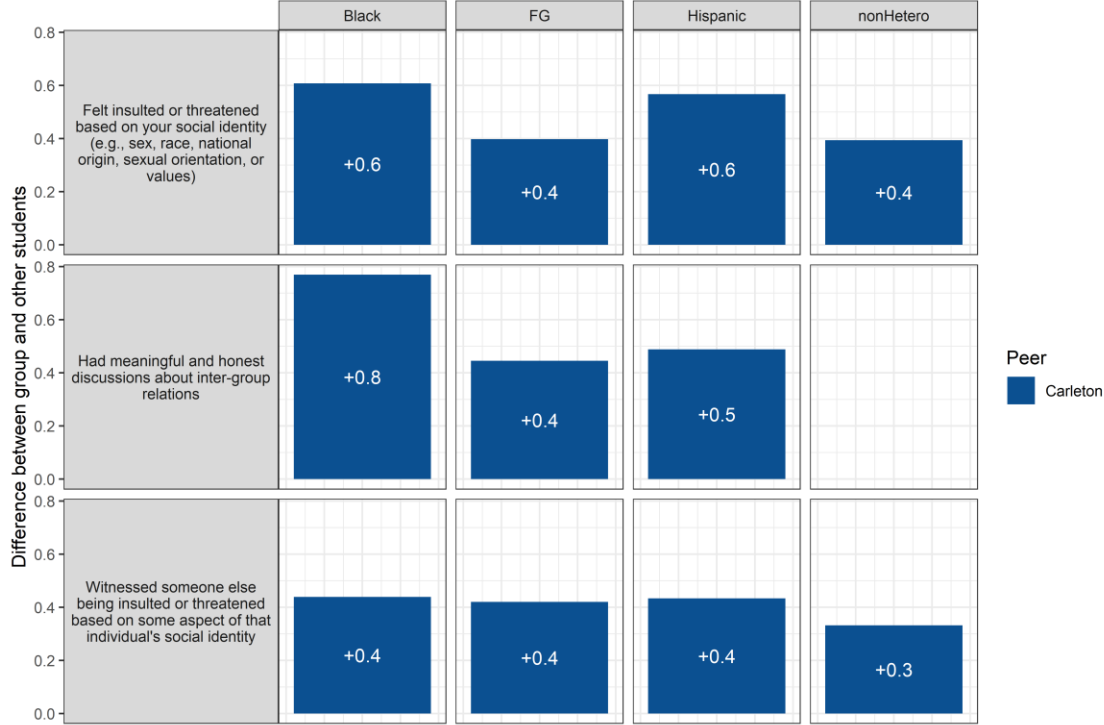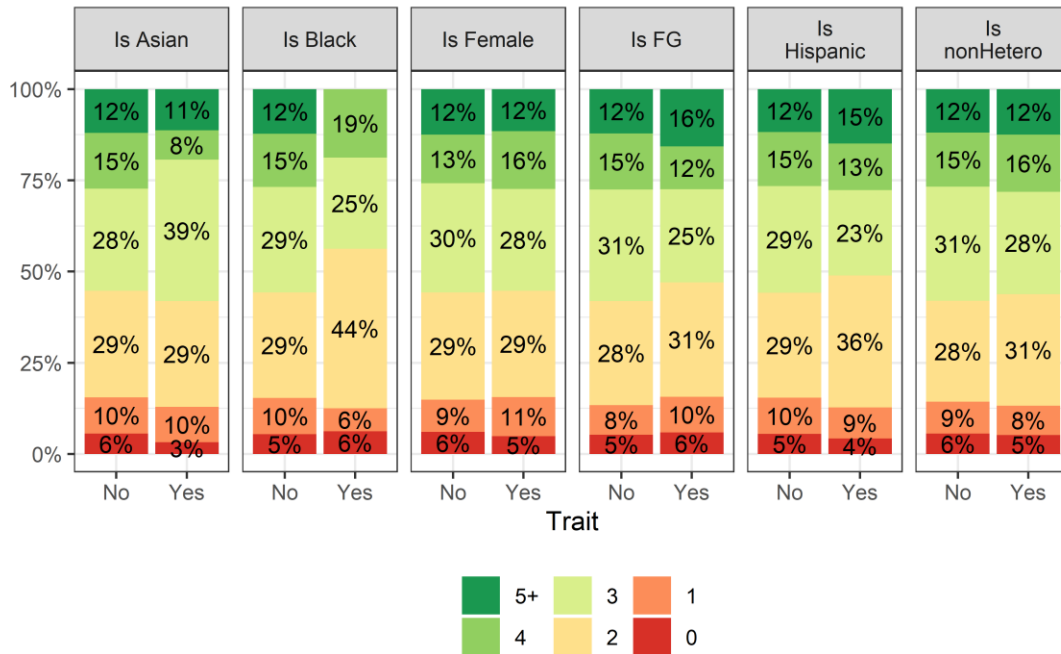

Figure 25: Summary of Interactions between Groups Variables

Relationships with Faculty

How many faculty members know you well enough to provide a letter of recommendation in support of an application for a job, internship, fellowship, or advanced degree work?

None of the differences below were statistically significant at *p* < .05.

Is there at least one faculty member at Carleton who has taken a personal interest in your success?

None of the differences below were statistically significant at *p* < .05.

Is Asian		Is Black		Is Female		Is FG		Is Hispanic		Is nonHetero	
No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Trait

No   Yes

#D73027	#FC8D59	#FEE08B
#D9EF8B	#91CF60	#1A9850