Climate survey results

JEDI activity in the Department of Marine Sciences at UConn

ACH committee - Penny Vlahos (chair), Samantha Siedlecki, David Lund in collaboration with Kate Capshaw (Associate Dean for DEI for CLAS) and Edith Barrett (Associate dean CLAS, a social scientist at UConn)

DMS Goals for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Survey

- Characterize personal experience in DMS including feelings of acceptance/support regardless of race/gender/orientation

- Characterize perceptions of departmental openness and efforts to improve diversity (e.g. passive acceptance or active support)

- Determine if DMS supports recruitment of minorities/people of color and understand whether department has been pro-active in past efforts

- Determine if departmental procedures and contacts for addressing diversity/inclusion issues are adequate and accessible

- Offer an opportunity to make suggestions for improvement in the overall climate of DMS
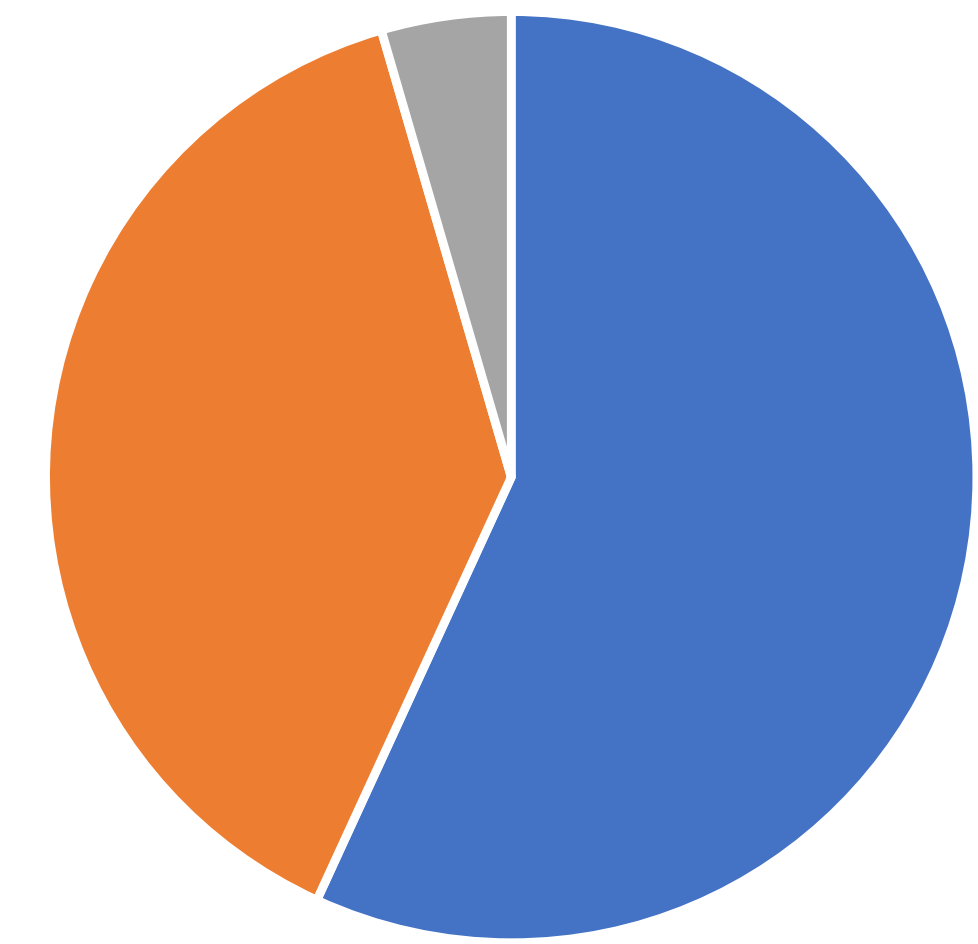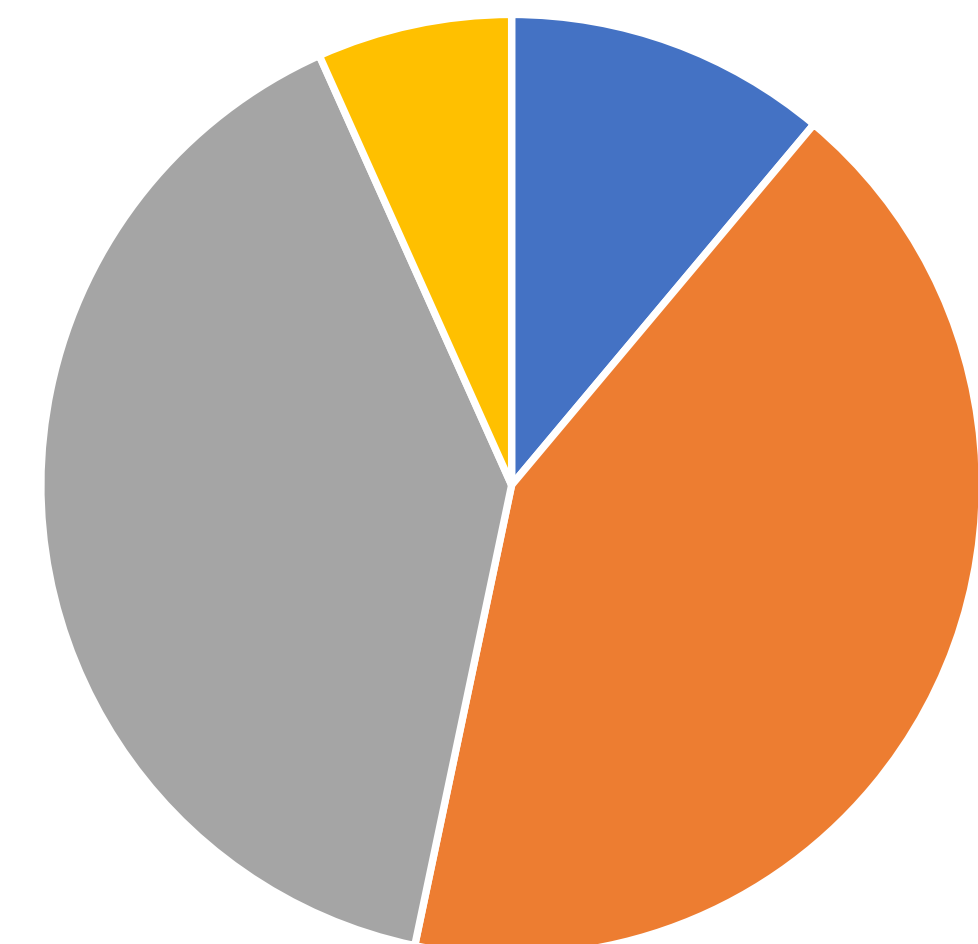
Who was surveyed? and How?

Position
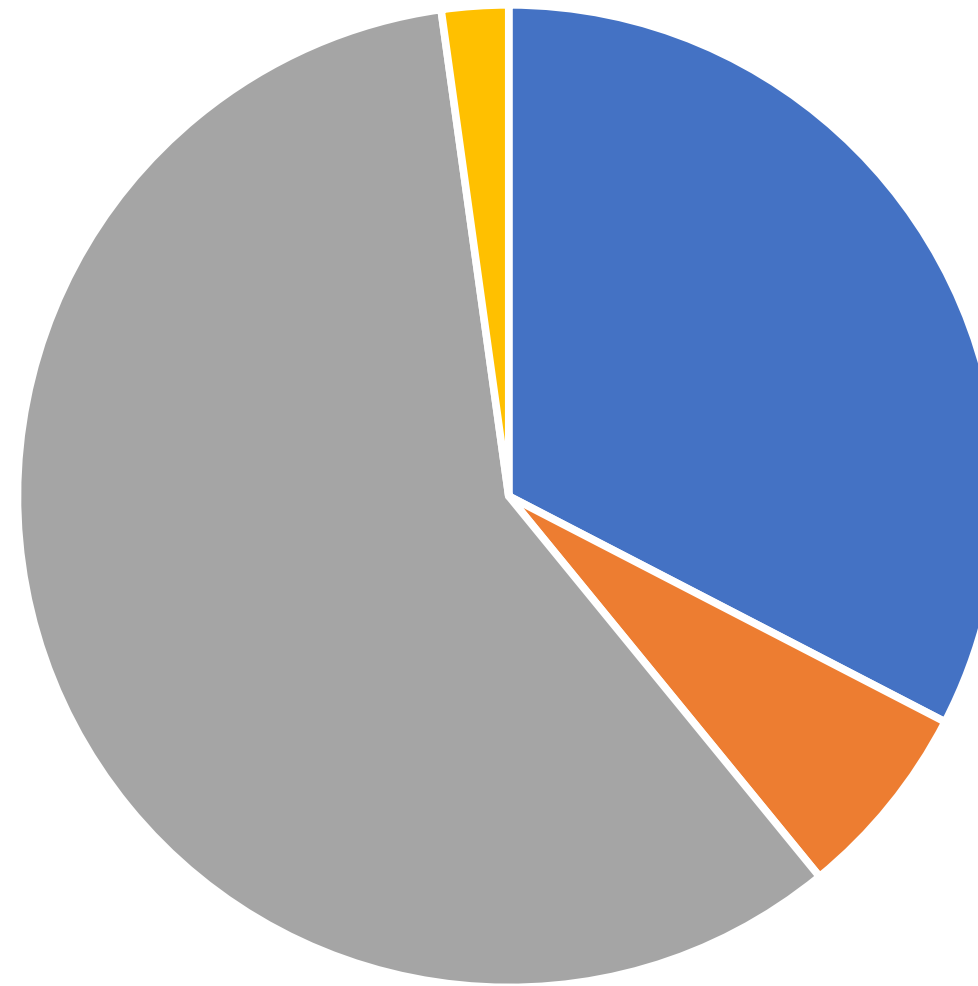
- ■ Faculty ■ Staff ■ Graduate Student ■ Post-doctoral Scholar

Gender

- ■ Female ■ Male ■ Prefer not to say

Racial and Ethnic Background

- ■ African American/Black ■ Asian/Pacific Islander
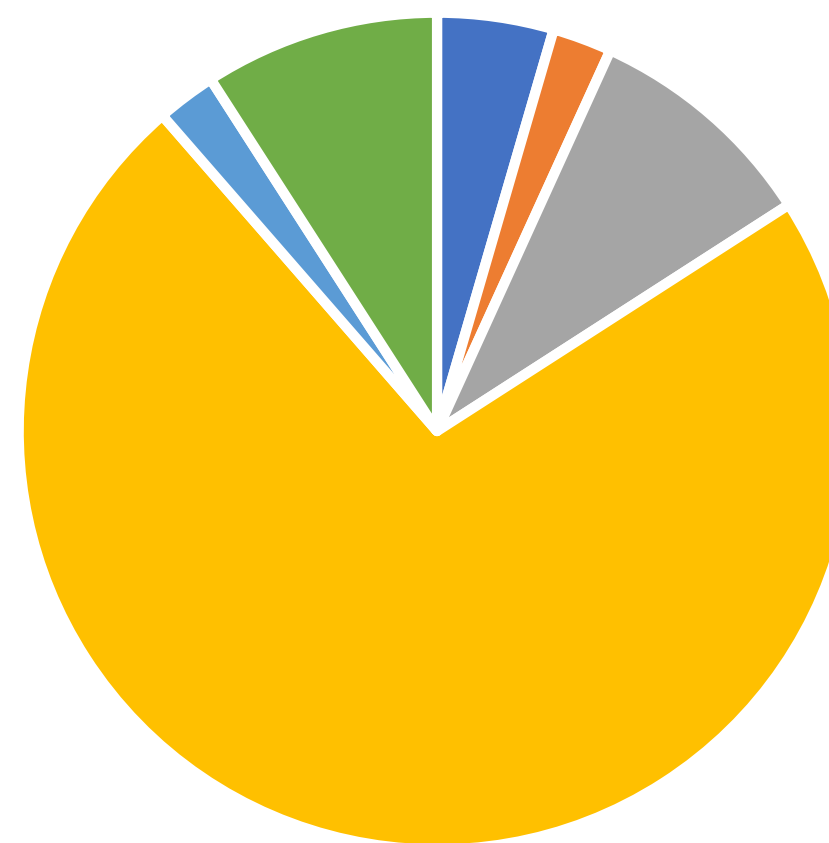- ■ Chicano/Latinx/Hispanic ■ White
- ■ Other, please specify ■ Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself a member of the lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual community?

- ■ Yes ■ No ■ No, but I identify as an ally ■ Prefer not to say

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Intention

Q2 from survey, parts a-j

- In general, responders were very supportive of the intentions behind JEDI activities (e.g. valuing diverse contributions, helping students understand these values, discussing controversial topics or social justice issues with students, and supporting students in their pursuit of social change)

Importance of integrating the these values and actions into the undergraduate experience DMS students

Legend:
- support social change
- recognize racism
- discussions of controversy
- discussions of social justice
- understand value of diversity of sexuality
- understand the value of diversity of gender identity
- Help recognize contributions from women
- Enhance knowledge of diverse contribution of Marine Science
- Help students understand the value of diversity
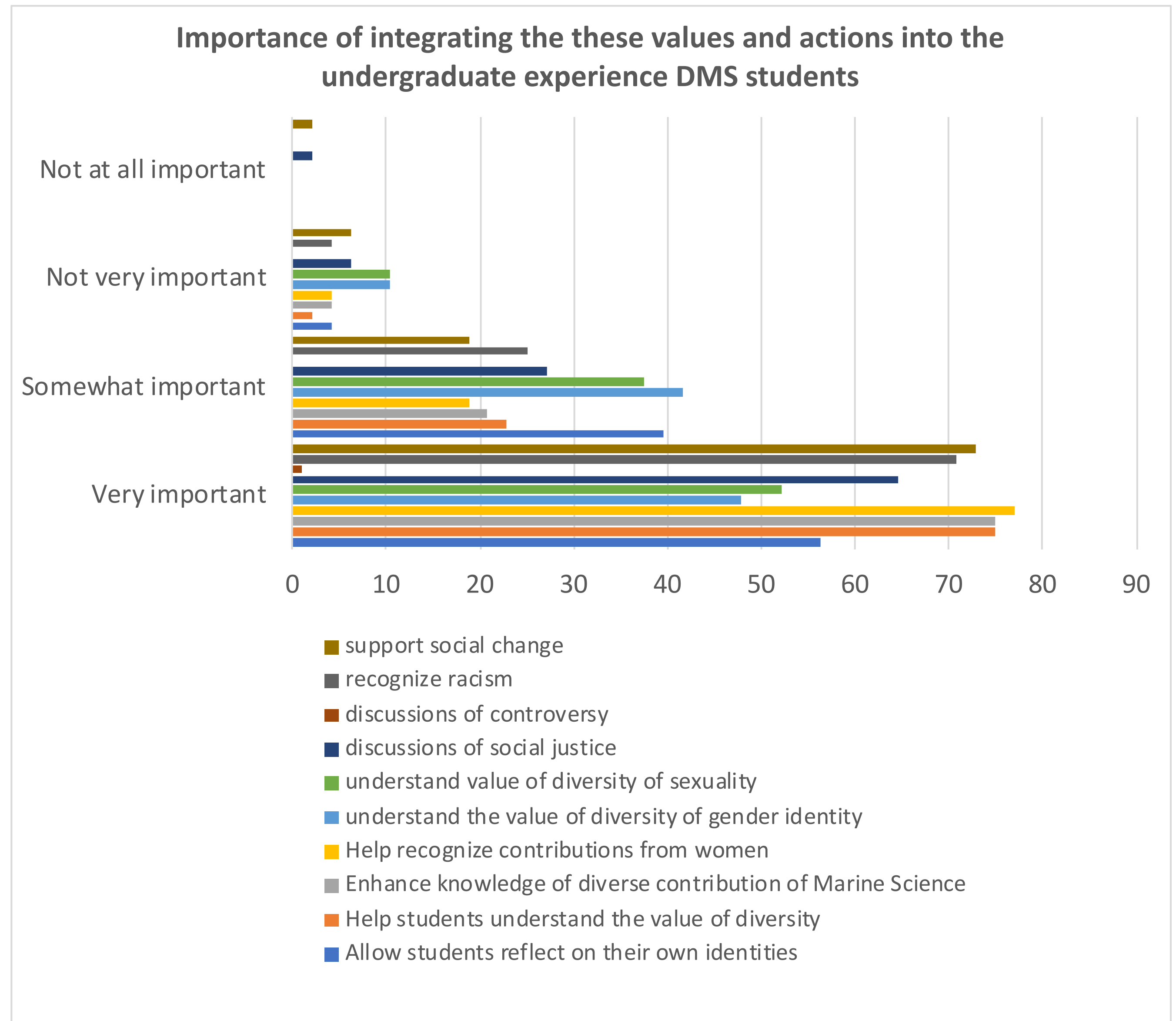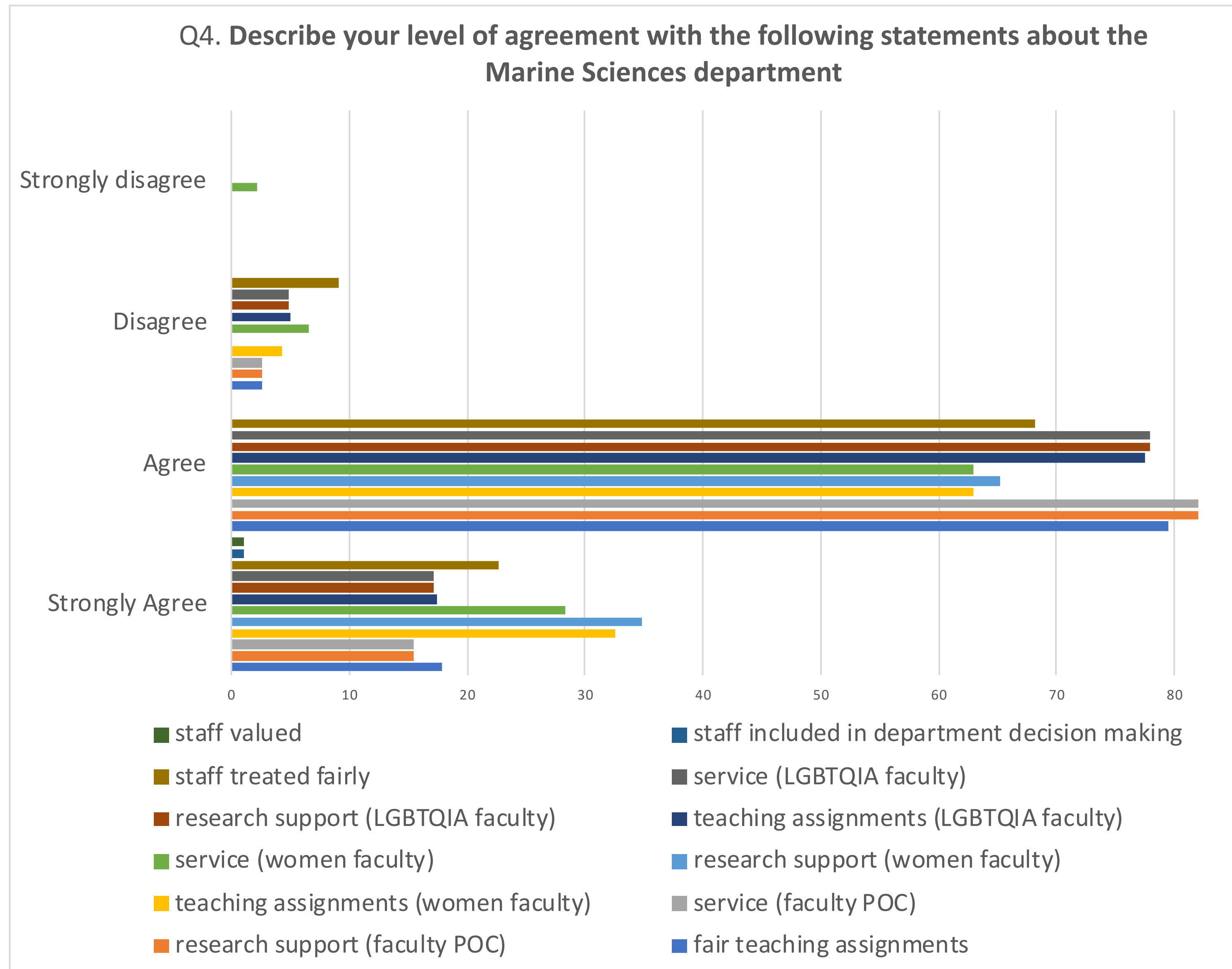- Allow students reflect on their own identities

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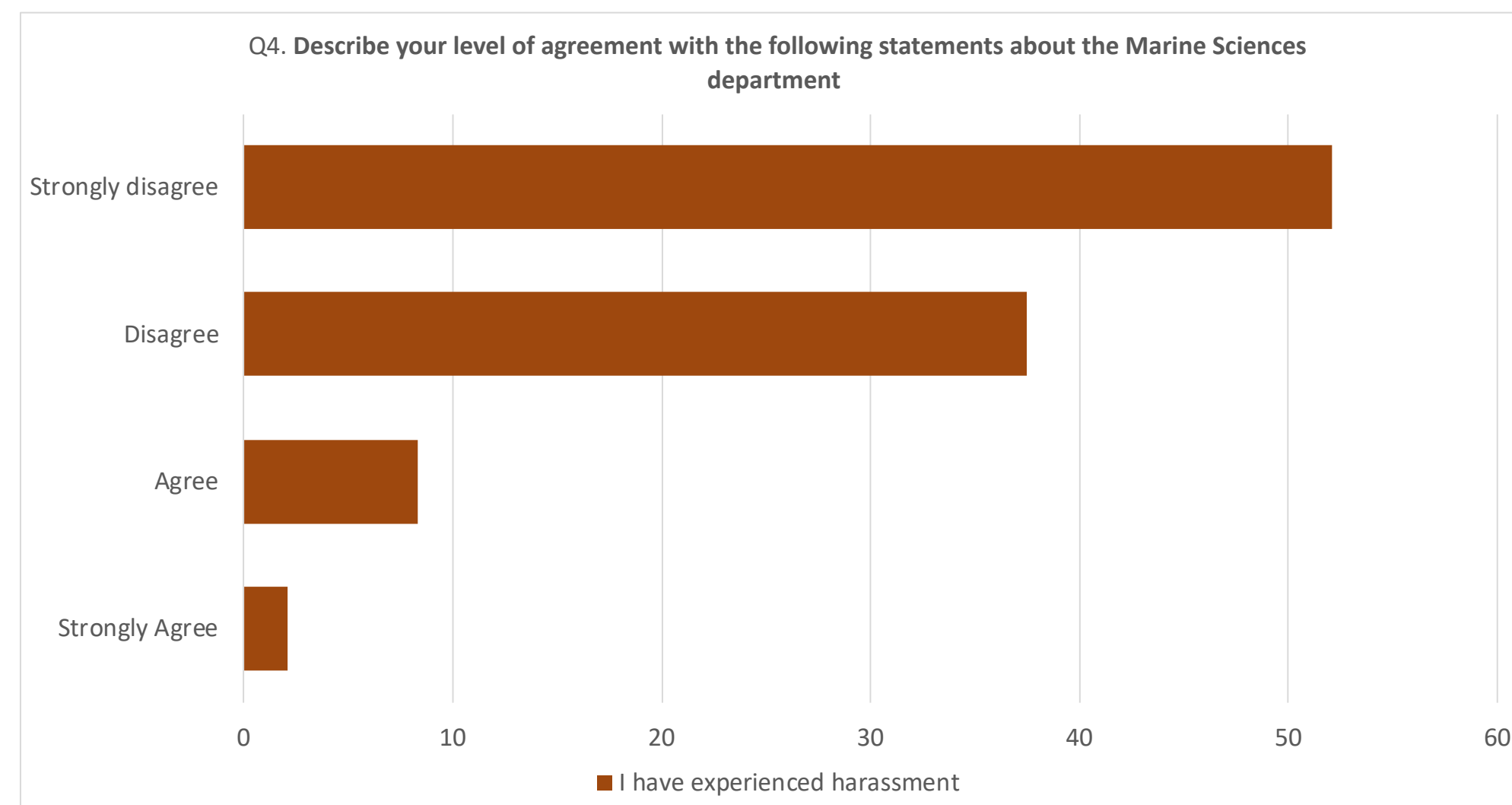
Perception

Q4 from survey, parts a-l

- The majority of responders feel they are treated fairly in terms of teaching, service, research or work assignments.

- Comments in the survey suggested they would have preferred an N/A as some of the options don't currently apply in DMS

Q4. **Describe your level of agreement with the following statements about the Marine Sciences department**

Perception

Q4 from survey, parts m- v

- Most responders feel positive about the diversity and feel welcome and included in the department. They also would describe DMS as having a collegial atmosphere that is open to change

- A small percentage report experiencing harassment

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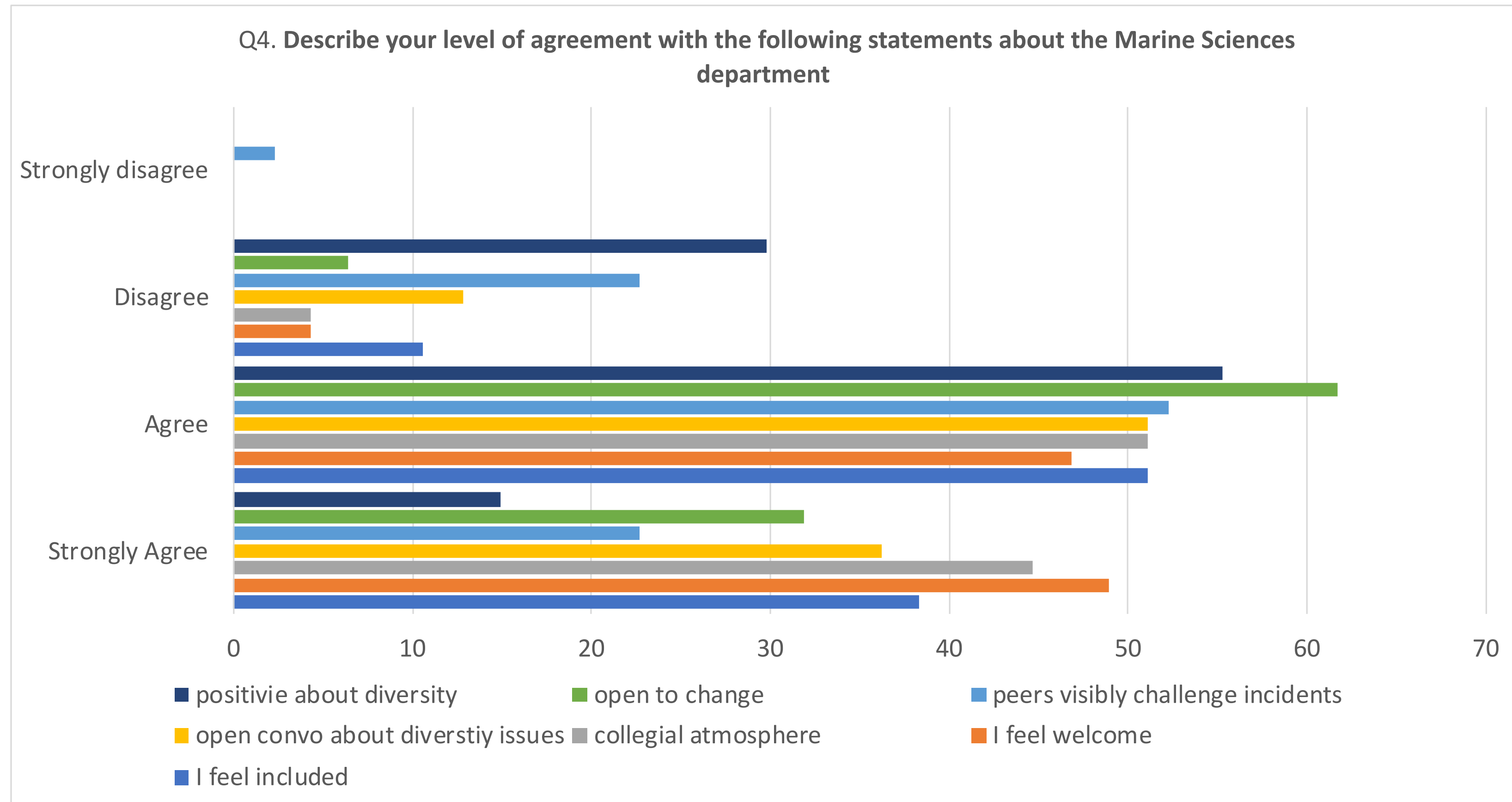- Offer an opportunity to make suggestions for improvement in the overall climate of DMS

Values of DMS
Q5

- Strong agreement from participants in the UConn commitment to diversity, rejection of bigotry, and social tendency of the department

Q5. Tell us how much you agree with the following statements.

Legend:
- e. My mentors visibly challenge any incidents of racism, sexism or other forms of discrimination
- b. I enjoy being in the presence of others belonging to different social groups
- a. I interact socially with people I work with
- c. I support UConn's commitment to diversity
- d. I reject bigotry in all forms
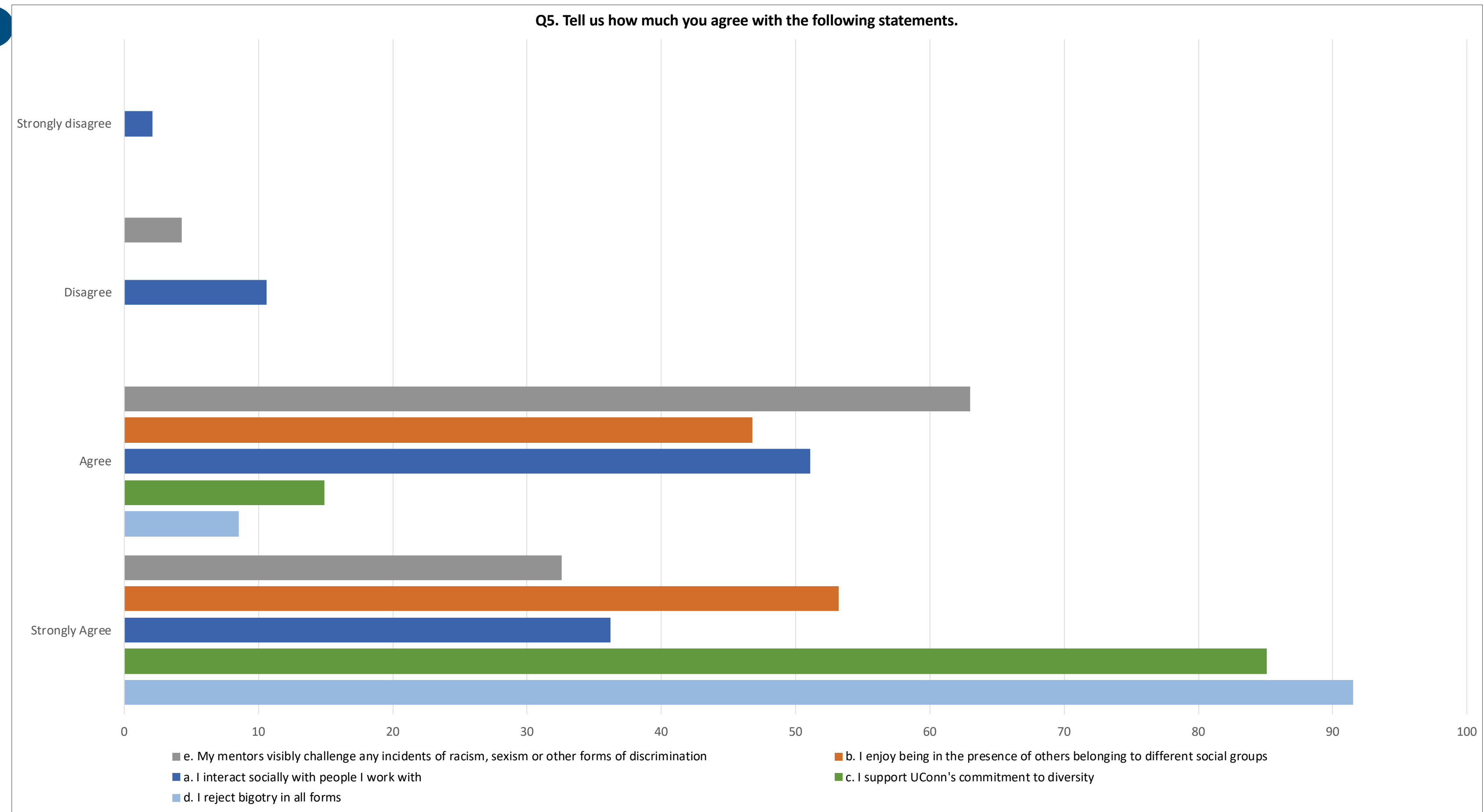
DMS activities

Q1

- Over the past two years, a minority of respondents have collaborated with the local community on either teaching or research

- In addition, few had taught a course with others outside of CLAS, or conducted research with racial minority groups, or discussed racial/social justice issues within existing courses
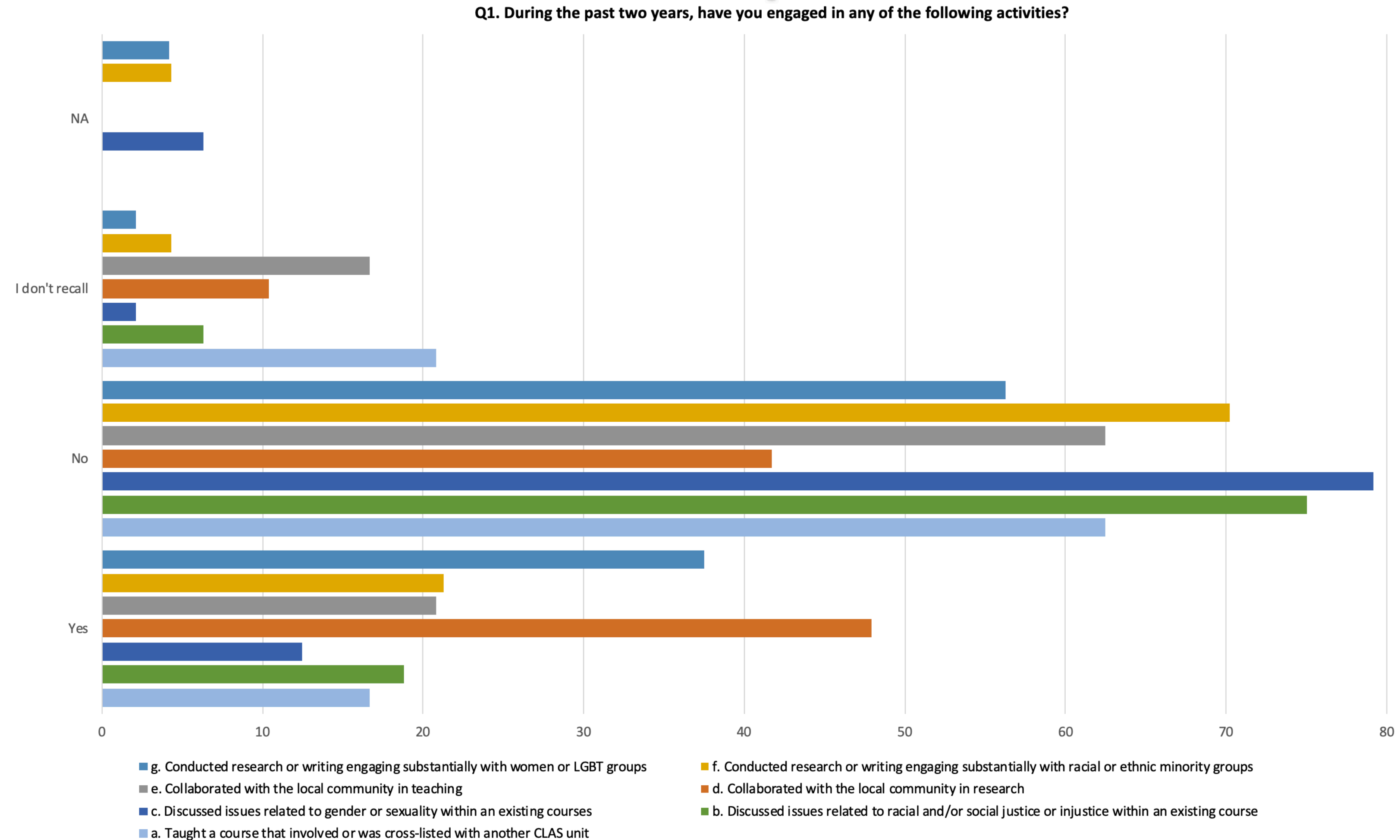
Q1. During the past two years, have you engaged in any of the following activities?

- g. Conducted research or writing engaging substantially with women or LGBT groups
- f. Conducted research or writing engaging substantially with racial or ethnic minority groups
- e. Collaborated with the local community in teaching
- d. Collaborated with the local community in research
- c. Discussed issues related to gender or sexuality within an existing courses
- b. Discussed issues related to racial and/or social justice or injustice within an existing course
- a. Taught a course that involved or was cross-listed with another CLAS unit
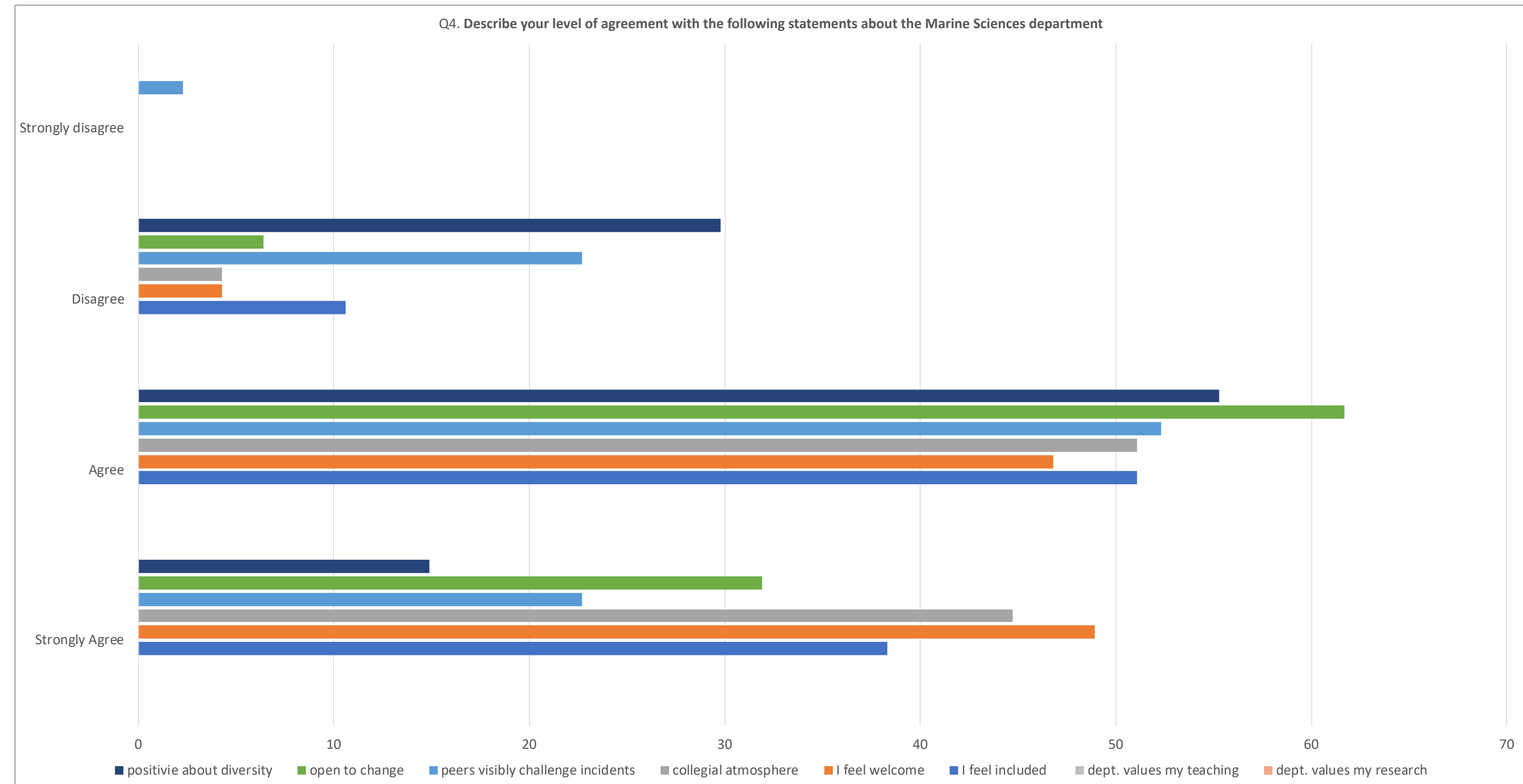
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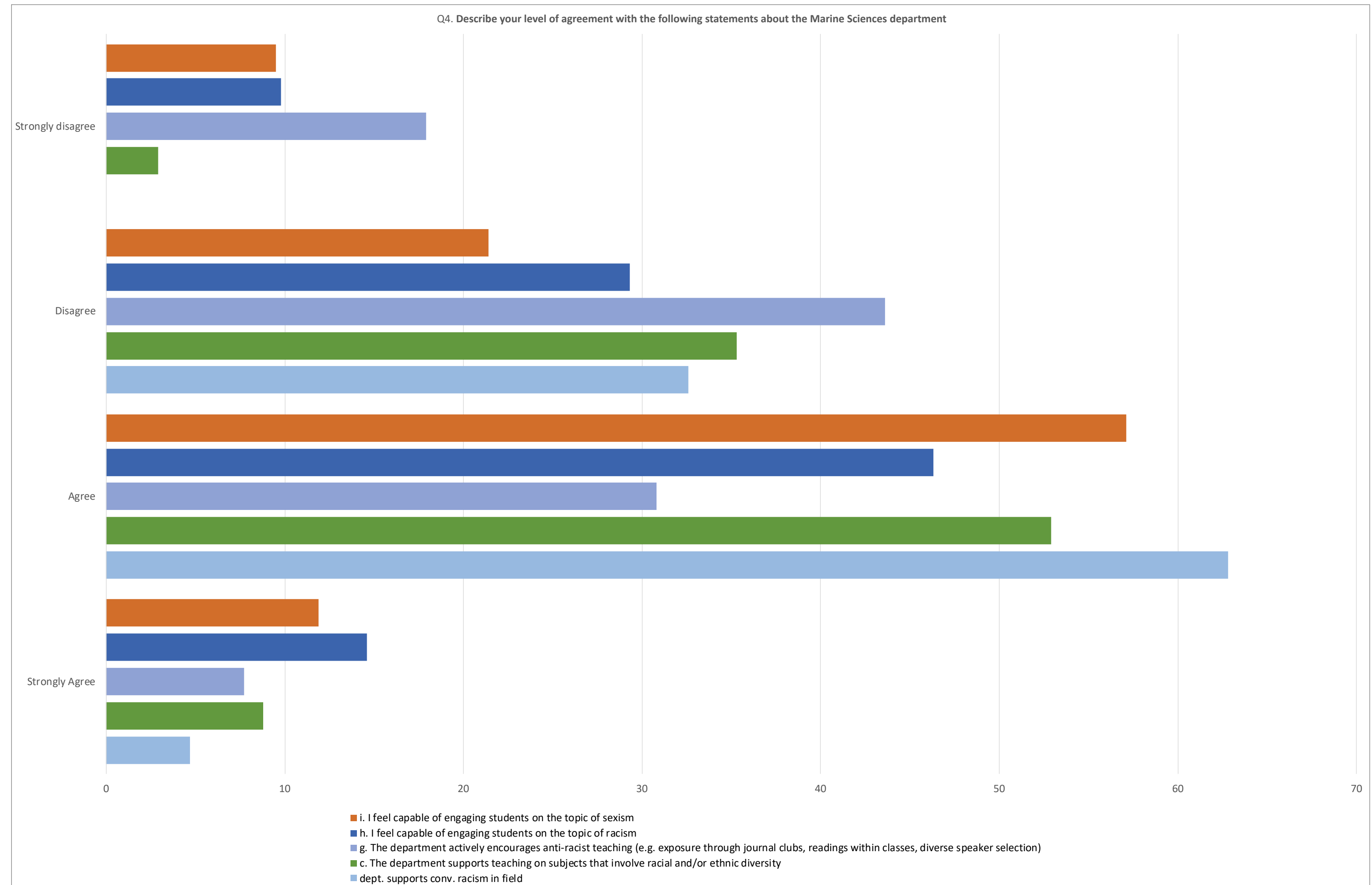
Support

Q3 from survey, parts a-v

- In general, participants feel positive about the atmosphere, included, valued, and that the department is open to change.

- There are some who feel strongly that their peers don't visibly challenge incidents, and disagree with statements about the current state of diversity within DMS

- Teaching is more unappreciated than research

Q4. Describe your level of agreement with the following statements about the Marine Sciences department

Legend: positivie about diversity | open to change | peers visibly challenge incidents | collegial atmosphere | I feel welcome | I feel included | dept. values my teaching | dept. values my research
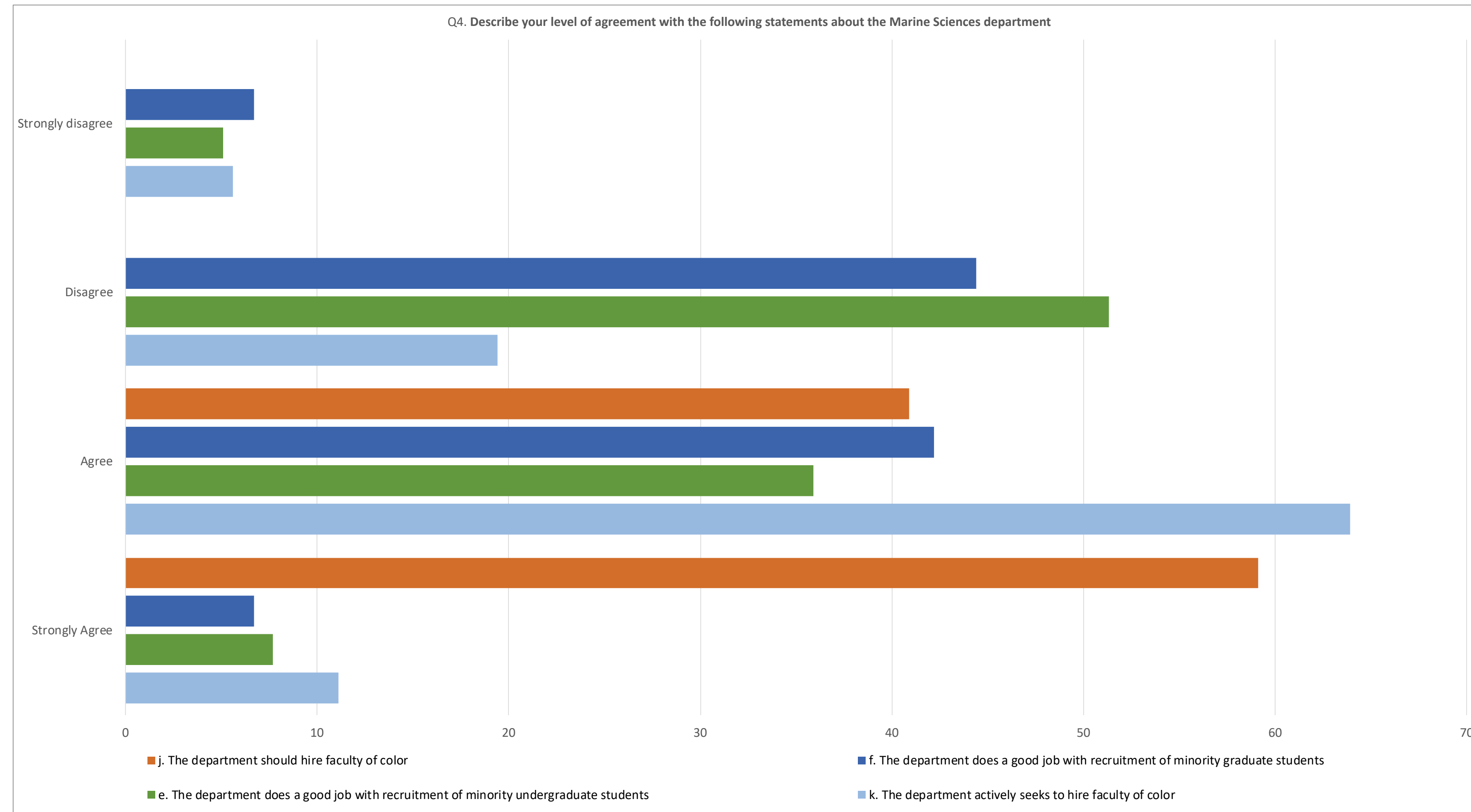
Support

Q3 from survey, parts a-v

- In general, participants agree that the department supports teaching and engagement with students about racism, equity, and justice

- There are some who feel strongly that does little to support conversations surrounding racism in the field

- Overall it seems the active support of these values could be made stronger within DMS

Q4. Describe your level of agreement with the following statements about the Marine Sciences department

Legend:
- i. I feel capable of engaging students on the topic of sexism
- h. I feel capable of engaging students on the topic of racism
- g. The department actively encourages anti-racist teaching (e.g. exposure through journal clubs, readings within classes, diverse speaker selection)
- c. The department supports teaching on subjects that involve racial and/or ethnic diversity
- dept. supports conv. racism in field

Recruitment

Q3 from survey, parts a-v

- In general, participants agree that the department should hire faculty of color and seeks to do so.

- Most respondents feel the department could do a better job recruiting students from minority groups

- Overall it seems the recruitment activities at all levels should be a focus moving forward

Q4. Describe your level of agreement with the following statements about the Marine Sciences department

Legend:
- j. The department should hire faculty of color
- f. The department does a good job with recruitment of minority graduate students
- e. The department does a good job with recruitment of minority undergraduate students
- k. The department actively seeks to hire faculty of color

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What are our strengths?

Written in by responders

- "Gender balance";"The department has, I believe the greatest proportion of female faculty out of all STEM departments"

- "the staff and faculty are very welcoming and kind overall."

- "People from all over the world and everyone is polite and accepting."

Suggestions - Recruitment

Written in by responders

- "Advertise themselves to colleges that are located in areas in which the majority are students of color, and provide financial support for application if necessary"

- "give talks to minority undergraduqate groups in STEM at UCONN and other universities to place the department on their radar

- "Increase advertisement of the campus….Reaching out to public high schools just to say "we're here," is a first step, for all students. You can't expect diversity when you're fishing in such a small pond."

- "Recruit more students of color into the department. It seems that there are not many and I wonder if advertising a Project O type of day for Main Campus students might not provide an avenue to interest more students into the department. For the graduate side, by insisting that all graduate students have a sponsor from the department in order to be considered by the very nature of humans who tend to select people based on their similarities leads to a bias against people different than the makeup of the department."

- "Perhaps faculty should be incentivized to take some risks in taking students who may be academically risky. But if UConn is serious about that, it must increase its support for such purpose. DMS is in a tough position because the great majority of students are on grant support, so risk tasking is not in the best interests of the PI. "

- "collaborate with Center for Academic Programs on main campus."

- "Change how the current acceptance program is and be more involved in the Groton/New London communities"

- "provide scholarships directed exclusively at minorities, establish programs that include high school or middle school students and specifically target students of color, work on public education about how STEM graduate school works"

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Suggestions - Supportive Environment

Written in by responders

- "Advertise themselves as a welcoming place, in which currently we have 50/50 gender balance both on faculty and graduate students"

- "Support events that celebrate the success of women, faculty of color, and LGBTQIA members."

- "Ensure we create a supportive environment for them to thrive in by including social justice topics throughout our department's activities"

- "High lighting scientists of color in the field and purposely discussing issues of diversity within STEM and marine sciences specifically. Making the efforts knowns and that is a priority to DMS is essential for people to feel like they belong."

- "implicit bias training; hiring faculty/research staff from underrepresented groups; provide extra support (time, money) to receive training/mentorship from leaders in the field (especially BIPOC)"

- "Facilitating conversations like having a sit down discussion (virtually) to discuss racial and sexist issues... maybe make it mandatory for faculty."

Suggestions - Supportive Environment

Written in by responders

- "It should also evaluate how racial biases may be negatively affecting students, both inside and outside the classroom, and provide resources to help students report incidents and deal with such problems."

- "Perhaps designate a mentor among the faculty or staff, who should be the go-to person and specifically responsible for this mission and associated tasks."

- "implicit bias training; hiring faculty/research staff from underrepresented groups; provide extra support (time, money) to receive training/mentorship from leaders in the field (especially BIPOC)"

- "A comprehensive course for graduate students on racism and other forms of discrimination would be helpful.

- "Some of the older male faculty members are kind but hold onto ideals that perpetuate traditional gender roles whether they know it or not. This can affect job assignments and trickles down to employees as loses in opportunity."

- "Better representation and education about the contribution made by minorities to our field"