Fostering Students' Sense of Belonging for A deeper Institutional Engagement
"2024 Report"

Prepared by

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Executive Summary

Meaningful engagement with diversity is an important means of actively preparing college graduates to participate in rapidly changing societies. During the academic years 2023-2024, the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness administered two surveys to assess EIC students' sense of belonging and active participation in EIC's life as a student-centered college (**See the College Mission Statement**). The results from EIC's Students' Satisfaction (2023/2024) and Campus Climate Surveys (2023/2024) were used to answer the following questions:

What factors influence students' perceptions of their sense of belonging at Eastern International College?

Accordingly, the OAIE used the collected data to answer the research question and identify some institutional practices that improve students' sense of belonging. The report addresses the impact of senior leadership, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, community services, and communication with second language learners on EIC students' institutional sense of belonging. The results show a positive statistically significant correlation between students' sense of belonging and their perceptions of the marginalized groups' retention rate on Campus, their perception of their institutional senior leadership demonstration of diversity commitments, their interaction with students from a different sexual orientation, their interaction with students whose first language is not English, their interaction with students from different religious backgrounds, the received remarks from community members and their participation in community services through their institution or program. Implications of these relationships are discussed with their pedagogical and institutional best practices.

Introduction

Higher education sectors ingrain educational and social history, in which equity matters underpin and formulate policies and practices (Bennett & Burke, 2017). Broader inclusion in higher education is prioritized for the contributions toward a more functional economy and societal stability (Adam, 2003). Rights-based arguments are prevalent nationally and internationally regarding the liberal humanist universal norm that plays a vital role in shaping educational core values. This approach, though, fosters inclusion for discrete categories of identity for specific groups, such as cultural diversities, people with disabilities, and sexualities (Whitburn & Thomas, 2021).

Inclusive Education and Sense of Belonging

Inclusive teaching means a change to value and respect diversity, allowing society to improve human development and growth. It offers individuals more opportunities to train and develop and invites them to be more committed to their societies. Creating an inclusive education is a fundamental universal goal and aspiration in higher education. The significant impact of diversity and inclusion is placed on the facilitation process of an open creative environment that deepens the exploration and development of new ideas and institutional practices. In this vein, Higher Education offers opportunities for collaboration among peers, professors, and industry professionals, facilitating the exchange of ideas and the development of novel approaches and solutions. Technology could play the core catalyst, enhancing collaboration in the process by securing opportunities to communicate and facilitate data flow for decision-making.

Inclusive education began to gain research attention during the late 1980s, focusing on students who are different from the majority. However, the concept has recently developed to encompass the focus on identity factors such as gender, race, class, and ability/ disability (Messiou, 2017). Opertti et al. (2014), in their typology, presented four main perspectives on the temporary educational approaches to inclusive education: Human rights (1948- present), Equity groups (2000- Present), and Changing Education Systems (2005- Present). Nevertheless, Flavey et al. (1995) operationally defined inclusive education as the pedagogical approach through which all educational environment participants are embraced and evaluated. It assumes that the coexistence of living and learning is the way to benefit all contributors. To this end, fostering participants' sense of belonging paves the way for the pertinent use of institutional use of inclusivity.

A sense of belonging is one of the fundamental human needs. Maslow (1954) defined it as a critical factor in human well-being. In the book "Toward a Psychology of Being," Maslow presents the importance of the sense of belonging toward human existence as it was placed in the third level of human needs after Physiological needs: "Food, drinks, Oxygen, rest, elimination, sex, temperature regulation" and safety need "Protection, Familiarity." Sense of belonging includes "receiving and giving love," "affection," "trust," and "acceptance." It presents the individuals' affiliation and membership in specific group activities. For Maslow, a sense of belonging comes before esteem needs "self-esteem, self-respect, and sense of competence," Cognitive needs "knowledge, curiosity, and exploration," aesthetic needs "beauty, symmetry, balance, form, and order," and Self- actualization "realizing full potential, and becoming what one expects to become" (Maslow, 1968). To this point, a sense of belonging is the feeling of being a part of something greater than oneself, one's culture, and organizational affiliation. It entails more than a need for social contact as it reflects and reshapes individuals' identities.

Sense of belonging is the experience individuals bring to the communicative scene to feel integral in the environment (Vavvara et al., 2015; Chang, 2005). Research shows that a higher sense of belonging in the academic setting is a cornerstone of academic success and persistence during college-level courses. Sense of belonging is considered a fundamental human need for individuals to belong, respect, and value other community members (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bosetti et al., 2008; Sedgwick & Yonge, 2008). It was analyzed from various perspectives in the higher education context: The evolution of the context took different angles, from psychological to sociological and physical to behavioral aspects (Tinto, 1975; Andres, Andruske, & Hawkey, 1996). Spady (1970) focused his research on integrating a sense of belonging as an educational concept into higher education. The research used Durkheim's social causations theory and created a model in which a sense of belonging was strategically impeded in the educational setting (Spady, 1971). However, by 1975, Tinto developed the Spady Model to meet unforeseen student body changes (Attinasi, 1989). The factors that impact an individual's sense of belonging are the social structure, students' success, students' agency, and the living structure (Sedgwick & Yonge, 2008; Giddens, 1984). However, leadership practice drives these factors' impact to understand better the "Sense of belonging" in an institutional setting.

Leadership is influential in a healthy institutional life that fosters individuals' sense of belonging. Leadership research explains leadership success that supports members' sense of belonging in all aspects of institutional involvement. It is a powerful motivator in higher education settings that provides institutional members with behavioral and emotional support by developing emotional ties shaping the individual communicative trend (Thau et al., 2007; McArthur, J. 2022). Thus, students' sense of belonging is shaped by the individual's experiences and the institutional leadership approach across academic and nonacademic units.

Sense of Belonging and Intersectionality

Institutions could offer critical tools to enable intersectional approaches that respond to injustices (Collins, 2017). Intersectionality is rooted in Critical Race Theory and Black Feminism (Crenshaw, 1989). It is framed by social justice; therefore, it can be employed to investigate inequality and inequity in a given community. The concept of intersectionality proposes that examining the interconnections of identity factors and social categories, such as race, gender, ethnicity, and ability/ Disability, can reveal the unconscious biases and the accompanying structures of discrimination unique to individual privileges and supremacies. Intersectionality as a method offers a critical epistemology enabling the nuances of the analysis of interesting identity factors that provoke privileges and injustice (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). Grenshaw (2017) stated that intersectionality is an approach through which the discovery of power dynamics and communal collisions could be identified, and the impeded intersections will be highlighted. In light of this, a sense of belonging is shaped by the institutional understanding of the impact of intersectionality and the effectiveness of the utilized design approach that might invigorate its use among individuals.

Findings

Variables and Statistical Analyses

Regression, Pearson Correlation, One-way ANOVA, and T-test statistical analyses were used to examine the influence of each predictor variable on the dependent variable (**See Table 1**).

Table 1: *Dependent and Predictor variables*

Dependent variable	Predictor variables
Sense of Belonging	● Retention of Marginalized Groups ● Communicating with Senior Leadership ● Sexual Orientation ● Interacting with Second Language Learners ● Communicating With Different Religious Affiliation ● Engaging With Community Services

Finding 1: A statistically significant correlation exists between students' sense of belonging and their perceptions of the historically marginalized groups' retention, R (186) =. 699, p<.05. An increase in students' perceptions of their sense of belonging is associated with the increase in their perceptions of their historically marginalized students' retention ".095" (The slope coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable), 95.0% Confidence Interval (CI) is between .566 and .772. This slope coefficient is statistically significant, p < .05 (**See Table 2- Figure 1**).

Table 2: *Correlation between Students' Perception of their Sense of Belonging and their Perceptions of Historically Marginalized Groups' Retention in their Institution*

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.699[a]	.489	.486	.591	.489	175.930	1	184	<.001	2.050

a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional support agreement level - Retention of historically marginalized students is an institutional priority.

b. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.481	.232		6.376	<.001	1.023	1.939
	Institutional support agreement level - Recruitment of historically marginalized students, faculty, and staff is an institutional priority.	.664	.055	.665	12.113	<.001	.556	.772

a. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Figure 1: *Students' perceptions of Their Sense of belonging and their Perceptions of Historically Marginalized Groups' Retention in their Institution*

Histogram
Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution
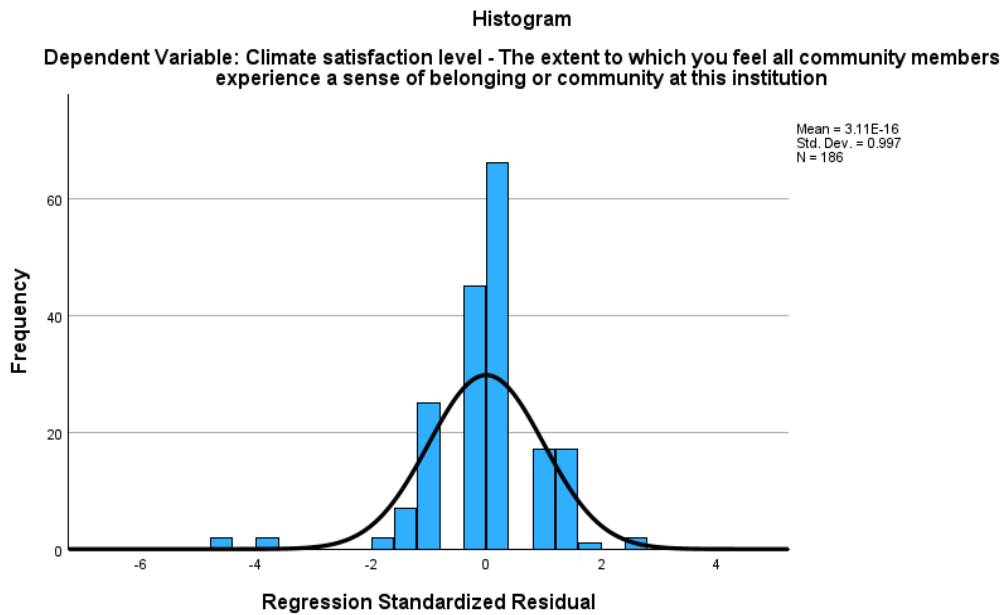
Finding 2: A statistically significant correlation exists between students' sense of belonging and their perception of the institutional leadership demonstrations of Diversity commitments, R (183) =. 621, p<.05. An increase in students' perceptions of their sense of belonging is associated with the increase in their perceptions of their college senior leadership demonstration of institutional diversity commitments ".095" (The slope coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable), 95.0% Confidence Interval (CI) is between .507 and .738. This slope coefficient is statistically significant, p < .05 (**See Table 3- Figure 2**).

Table 3: *Correlation between Students' Perception of their Sense of Belonging and their Perceptions of their Institutional Senior Leadership in terms of Diversity Commitments*

Model Summary[b]

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
					Change Statistics					
1	.621[a]	.385	.382	.649	.385	113.403	1	181	<.001	2.042

a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional support agreement level - Senior leadership demonstrates a commitment to diversity and equity on this campus.
b. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.622	.249		6.511	<.001	1.130	2.113
	Institutional support agreement level - Senior leadership demonstrates a commitment to diversity and equity on this campus.	.623	.058	.621	10.649	<.001	.507	.738

a. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Figure 2: *Students' perceptions of Their Sense of belonging and their Perceptions of their Institutional Senior Leadership in terms of Diversity Commitments*
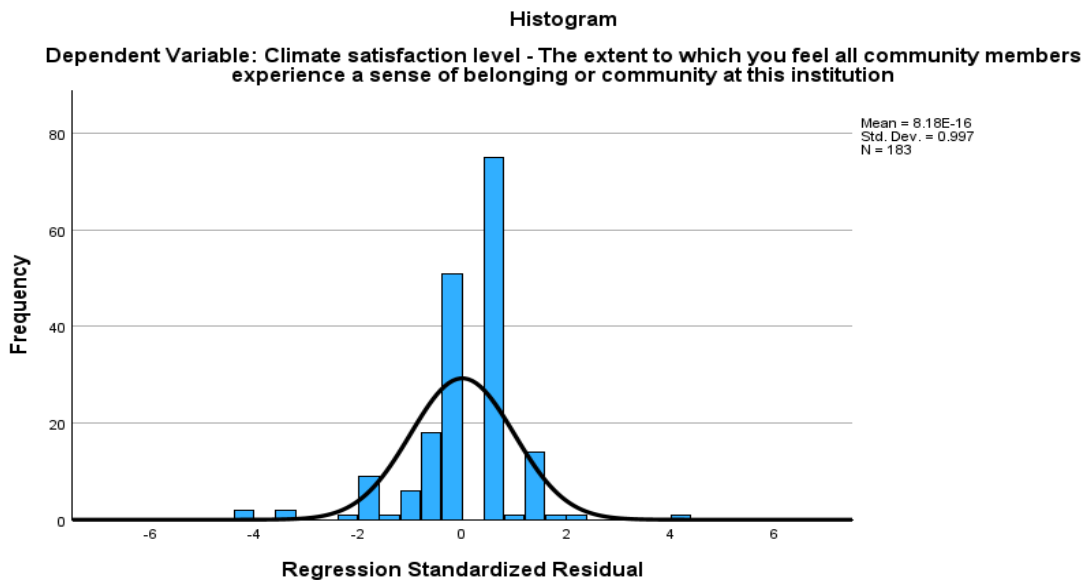
Finding 3: A statistically significant correlation exists between students' sense of belonging and their perceptions of their comfort level of interacting with people with different sexual orientations, R (184) =. 211, p<.05. An increase in students' perceptions of their sense of belonging is associated with the increase in their perceptions regarding their level of comfort while interacting with people with different sexual orientations ".095" (The slope coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the

independent variable), 95.0% Confidence Interval (CI) is between .061 and .321 This slope coefficient is statistically significant, p < .05 (**See Table 4, Figure 3**).

Table 4: *Correlation between Students' perceptions of their sense of belonging and their comfort level with interacting with people of different sexual orientations.*

Model Summary^b

	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
	.044	.039	.808	.044	8.463	1	182	.004	2.054

a. Predictors: (Constant), Level of comfort with - People who have a sexual orientation other than your own

b. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.359	.305		11.032	<.001	2.759	3.960
	Level of comfort with - People who have a sexual orientation other than your own	.191	.066	.211	2.909	.004	.061	.321

a. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Figure 3: *Students' perceptions of Their Sense of belonging and their comfort level of interacting with people with different sexual orientations*

Histogram

Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Mean = -9.19E-16
Std. Dev. = 0.997
N = 184
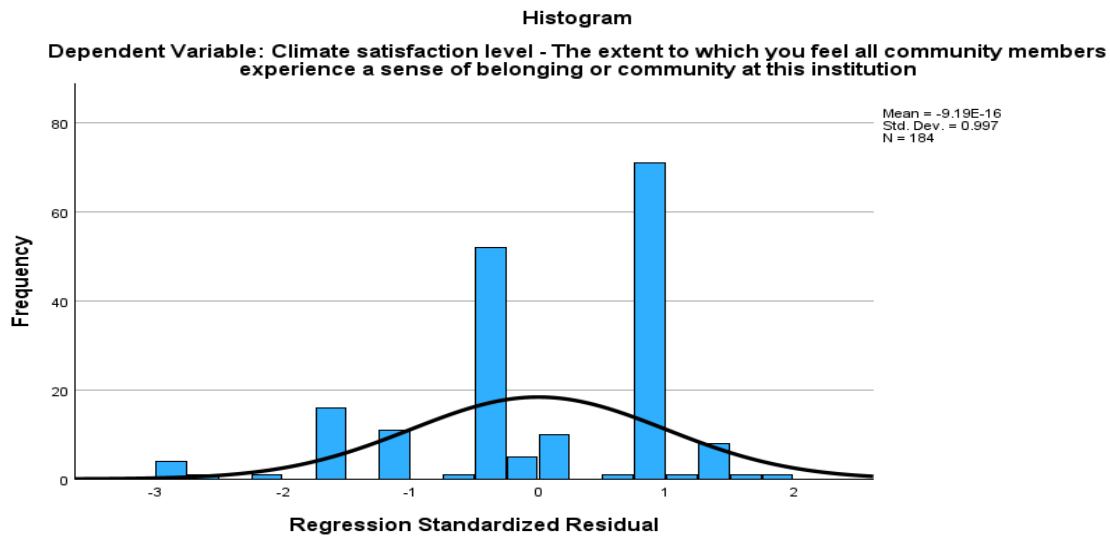
Finding 4: A statistically significant correlation exists between students' sense of belonging and their perceptions of interacting with people whose first language is not English, R (184) =. 233, p<.05. An increase in students' perceptions of their sense of belonging is associated with the increase in their perceptions regarding their level of comfort of interacting with people whose first language is different ".095" (The slope coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable), 95.0% Confidence Interval (CI) is between .108 and .446 This slope coefficient is statistically significant, p < .05 **(See Table 5, Figure 4).**

Table 5: *Correlation between Students' Perception of their Sense of Belonging and the perceptions of their comfort level of interacting with people whose first language is not English*
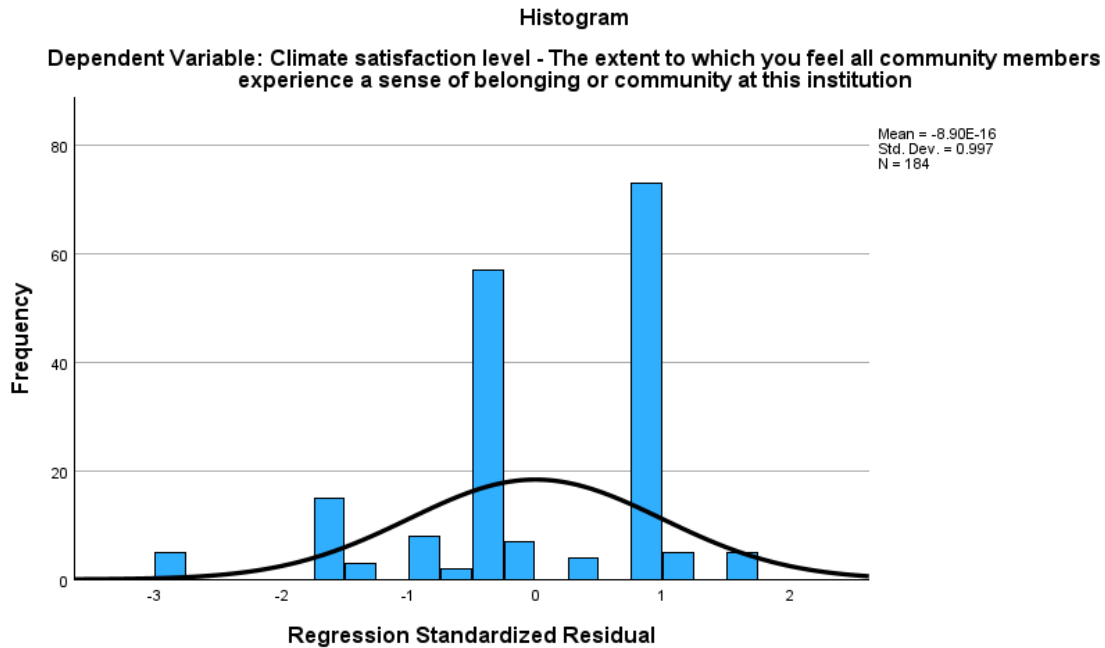
Model Summary[b]

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.233[a]	.054	.049	.790	.054	10.430	1	182	.001	2.073

a. Predictors: (Constant), Level of comfort with - People for whom English is not their native language

b. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Coefficientsᵃ

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.941	.408		7.210	<.001	2.136	3.746
Level of comfort with - People for whom English is not their native language	.277	.086	.233	3.230	.001	.108	.447

Figure 4: *Students' perceptions of Their Sense of belonging and the perceptions of their comfort level of interacting with people whose first language is not English*

Histogram

Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Mean = -8.90E-16
Std. Dev. = 0.997
N = 184

Finding 5: A statistically significant correlation exists between students' sense of belonging and their perceptions of interacting with people from different religious backgrounds, $R(179) =. 238$, $p<.05$. An increase in students' perceptions of their sense of belonging is associated with the increase in their perceptions regarding their level of comfort of interacting with people from different religious backgrounds ".095" (The slope coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable), 95.0% Confidence Interval (CI) is between .112 and .449 This slope coefficient is statistically significant, $p < .05$ **(See Table 6, Figure 5).**
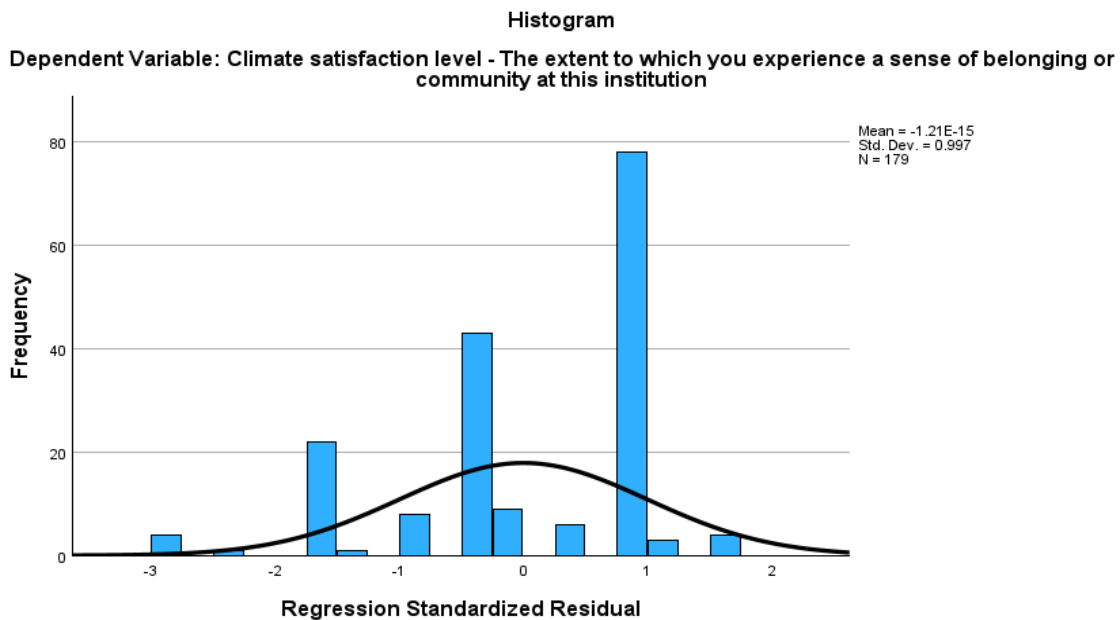
Table 6: *Correlation between Students' Perception of their Sense of Belonging and the perceptions of their comfort level of interacting with people whose religious background is different*

Model Summaryb

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.238a	.057	.051	.822	.057	10.620	1	177	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Level of comfort with - People from a religious background other than your own

b. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Figure 5: *Students' perceptions of Their Sense of belonging and the perceptions of their comfort level of interacting with people whose religious backgrounds are different*

Histogram

Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Mean = -1.21E-15
Std. Dev. = 0.997
N = 179

Finding 6: A statistically significant correlation exists between students' sense of belonging and their perceptions of community service activities through their institution, R (182) =. 326, p<.05. An increase in students' perceptions of their sense of belonging is associated with the increase in their perceptions regarding community service participation ".095" (The slope coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable), 95.0% Confidence Interval (CI) is between .096 and .238. This slope coefficient is statistically significant, p < .05 **(See Table 7, Figure 6).**

Table 7: *Correlation between Students' Perception of their Sense of Belonging and the perceptions of their perception of community services through their institution*

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.326[a]	.106	.102	.796	.106	21.447	1	180	<.001	2.066

a. Predictors: (Constant), Influence on support for diversity and equity – Performed community service

b. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level – The extent to which you experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	3.788	.111		34.022	<.001	3.568	4.008
Influence on support for diversity and equity – Performed community service	.167	.036	.326	4.631	<.001	.096	.238

a. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level – The extent to which you experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Figure 6: *Students' perceptions of Their Sense of belonging and the perceptions of their perception of community services through their institution*

Histogram

Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Mean = -2.95E-16
Std. Dev. = 0.997
N = 182
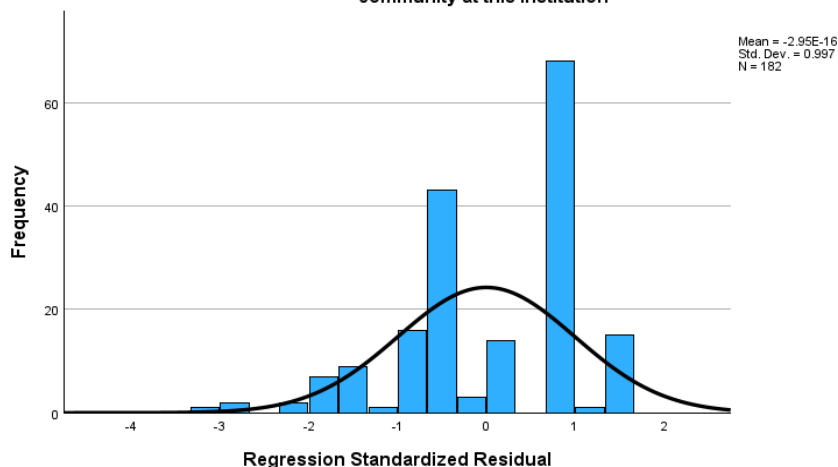
Finding 7: A statistically significant correlation exists between students' sense of belonging and hearing remarks from their colleagues, R (183) =. 073, p<.05. An increase in students' perceptions of their sense of belonging is associated with the increase in their perceptions regarding the received remarks ".095" (The slope coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable), 95.0% Confidence Interval (CI) is between 4.190 and 4.429. This slope coefficient is statistically significant, p < .05 **(See Table 8, Figure 7).**

Table 8: *Correlation between Students' Perception of their Sense of Belonging and the perceptions of the remarks from other students*

Model Summary^b

| Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	PRESS	Durbin-Watson
					Change Statistics						
1	.270^a	.073	.068	.792	.073	14.270	1	181	<.001	116.775	2.162

a. Predictors: (Constant), RECODE - How often was source of remark a member of the following groups - Students
b. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Correlations Zero-order	Partial	Part
1 (Constant)	4.310	.061		71.175	<.001	4.190	4.429			
RECODE - How often was source of remark a member of the following groups - Students	-.893	.236	-.270	-3.778	<.001	-1.360	-.427	-.270	-.270	-.270

a. Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution

Figure 7: *Correlation between Students' Perception of their Sense of Belonging and the perceptions of the remarks from other students*

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Climate satisfaction level - The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution
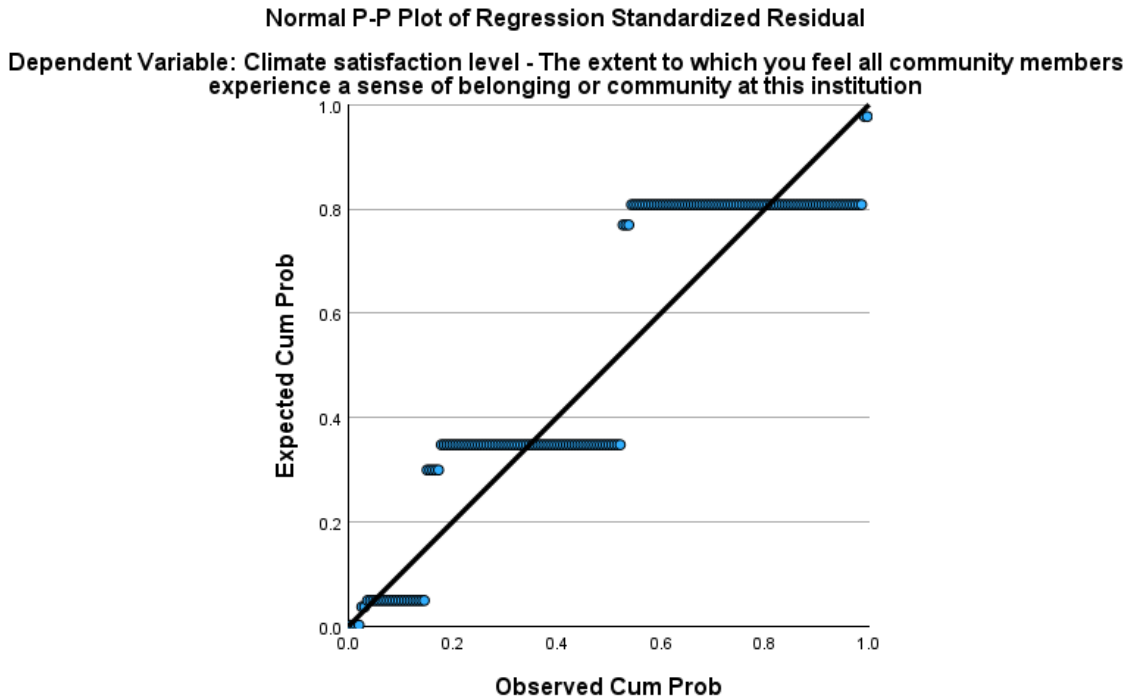
Discussion

The collected data brought some interesting findings to students' sense of institutional belonging. The research question sought to determine the factors influencing students' sense of belonging at EIC. There is a statistically significant correlation between students' sense of belonging and their perceptions of the marginalized groups' retention rate on Campus, their perception of their institutional senior leadership demonstrating diversity commitments, and their interaction with students from a different sexual orientation. The research's findings are significant and crucial for understanding the dynamics of students' sense of belonging ins. A statistically significant correlation has been found between students' sense of belonging and their interaction with students whose first language is not English. This finding, along with the correlation between students' sense of belonging, interaction with students from different religious backgrounds, and participation in community services through their institution, adds valuable insights to the existing literature in the field.

Pedagogical and Institutional Recommendations

      This research's statistical findings indicate that various institutional practices could foster students' sense of belonging. The results show the impact of students' perceptions of the marginalized groups' retention rate, institutional senior leadership demonstration of diversity commitments, interaction with students from a different sexual orientation, interaction with students whose first language is not English, interaction with students from different religious backgrounds, interaction with people from other countries such as the international students, and participation in community services through their institution. Educators should consider the aforementioned factors in their teaching. In this context, empathy and compassion frame the manipulation of these factors to increase institutional effectiveness (Kotzee, 2017). Compassion and empathy are two fundamental principles of educational social justice. They are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of curricula and teaching practices educational practices amid the current progressive environments (Darling Hammond & Oak, 2019).

A call to action

      All EIC community members:

- Identify concrete ways through which they can teach inclusively.
- Assess the efficacy of ideas through peer and student feedback.
- Reflect on what worked and what did not.
- Tweak and try again.
- Continue this cycle of continuous data-driven improvement towards inclusive teaching to foster EIC students' sense of belonging.

Inclusive Pedagogy and Universal Design for Learning

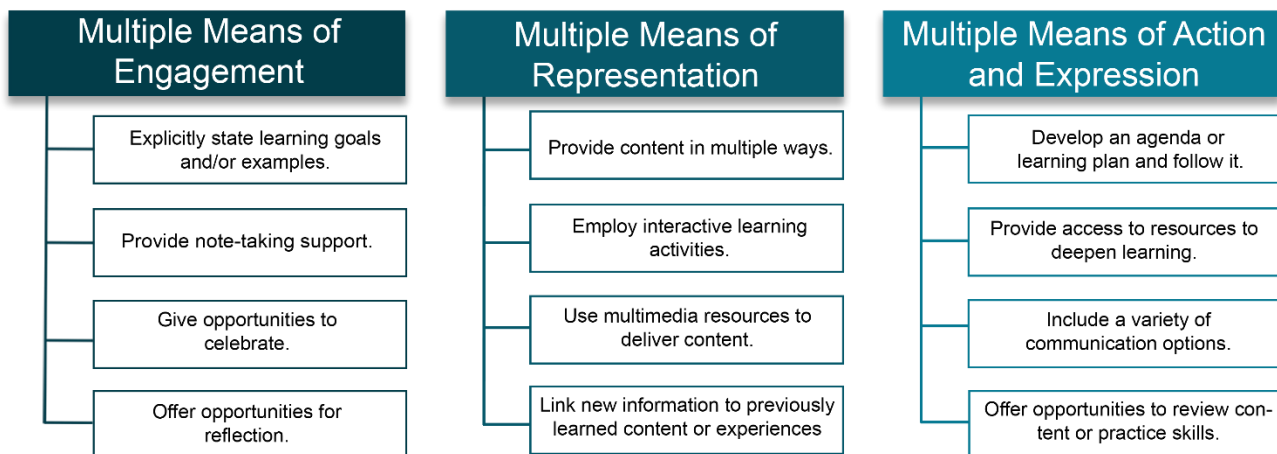   Harnessing students' diversity and sense of belonging positively impacts their learning diversity. Inclusive Pedagogy and Universal Design for Learning framework offer practical tools to deepen institutional learning diversity. Inclusive pedagogy aims to make learning accessible and welcoming to all students from all backgrounds. The term is used in the context of different racial, gender, cultural, ability/ disability, and

socioeconomic backgrounds. Across all these different backgrounds, the Inclusive Pedagogy offers a critique of what is called the deficit approach. The deficit approach assumes that marginalized students need to put in extra effort and get additional support based on their needs to excel academically and socially in their institutions. (Hockings, 2018; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Zaky, 2024). As Florian and Black Hawkins (2011) stated, inclusive pedagogy is directed by the shift in pedagogical thinking, which addresses all learners' needs by enriching the learning and teaching environments. Therefore, all learners could actively participate and discover their potential.

The central concept of Inclusive Pedagogy is belonging. Research shows that a sense of belonging promotes students' engagement and fosters their learning capacities. Promoting a sense of belonging requires selecting the class discussions, topics, assignments, and activities with students' diverse minds, Teaching students with respect, and encouraging them to engage with each other rigorously following the class and institutional guidelines to enhance those students' sense of belonging not only in class but also out of the class settings. Professors also need to humble themselves and solicit their students' feedback. These actions signal professors' tendencies to support their students' belonging, which impacts learning performance and academic growth (Terrell & Strayhorn, 2018; Zaky, 2022).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a broadly inclusive framework. The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) popularized the concept in the 1990s and became widely disseminated. UDL encourages educators to provide multiple means of engagement, "the why of learning," multiple means of content representation, "the what of learning," and multiple means of actions, "the how of learning" (**See figure 1**). Sheryl and Burgstahler (2015) stated that UDL maximizes students' learning by providing various opportunities to address their needs. It also provides educators with the tools to realize their students' needs through the discovery journey those educators experience. Therefore, the UDL approach encourages educators to plan their curriculum and pedagogy to accommodate their students' diversity and proclivities (Sean & Kattie, 2019).

Figure 8: *Universal Design of Learning (Adapted from CAST, 1990)*

Multiple Means of Engagement	Multiple Means of Representation	Multiple Means of Action and Expression
Explicitly state learning goals and/or examples.	Provide content in multiple ways.	Develop an agenda or learning plan and follow it.
Provide note-taking support.	Employ interactive learning activities.	Provide access to resources to deepen learning.
Give opportunities to celebrate.	Use multimedia resources to deliver content.	Include a variety of communication options.
Offer opportunities for reflection.	Link new information to previously learned content or experiences	Offer opportunities to review content or practice skills.

Strategies for Inclusive Teaching/Training

Educators can use the following strategies to foster their students' sense of belonging consistent with the Universal Design for Learning "UDL" framework.

A- **Creating Community Agreement**: In teaching environments, setting expectations for mutually respectful communication early in the term provides participants with opportunities to realize the topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion among staff, faculty, students, and leaders. The shared expectations help ensure a productive discourse. It is helpful to address the definition of "good participation" as listening to alternate views and seeking to understand these differences (Brookfield, 2015). Research shows that people feel connected to their community when allowed to develop their expectations and consequences (Davis, 2007). Educators could start sharing a set of ground rules for students and team members to reflect on and facilitate discussions about the expectations. The work facilitator should ensure everyone is heard and comfortable with the expectations. Creating a community agreement with the team members can reduce instances of disrespect during interactions (Nilson, 2010). To create the community agreement, educators could consider the following steps:

1-On the first day of class, ask members about the behaviors that might bother them, interfere with their learning abilities, and hinder their productivity. The facilitator could ask the participants to prepare a list that should be shared by the end of the meeting.
2-Note-Taking: Take notes during the discussions to record the participants' contributions and create a set of expectations for the agreement that might be incorporated with the participants' shared list. The results could be shared in the next session. This practice sends a positive message to the audience that the facilitator is collecting the data carefully and that their contributions matter.
3-Second meeting: The facilitator shares the first draft of the community agreement with the participants and asks them to make their final modifications or if the list includes all the norms they think should be inserted.
4-Finalized Norm List: Once the list is finalized, the facilitator should use the available venues to publish the final version of the community norms, such as on the department website, the class learning management System "LMS," or the bulletin boards.
5-The facilitator should visit the community agreement norms to ensure that the community abides by them and that they serve the participants well.
6-Community agreement norms samples:
      -We speak using the "I" language
      -We criticize ideas, not people
      -We will back our opinions and arguments with facts and reasoning
      -We will listen carefully to each other without interruptions
      -We will give undivided attention to the persons who are on the floor
      -We will remember that the people in the group may differ in perspectives, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, genders, and ethnicity and, therefore, will be careful about making insensitive or careless comments/ remarks.

B-**Manage Hot Moments**: Hot moments are defined as the instances in class or department meetings when reactions are strong and feelings are high (Faculty Focus, 2016) in response to one participant's verbal or physical reactions. Educators or facilitators might expect something other than these reactions or discussion content. In this respect, educators or facilitators should address the issue, or they might take time to revisit it

in case of a discomforting experience (Warren, 2016). To this point, educators could tackle the following steps to manage the hot moments:

1-Begin by asking questions: The facilitator could start by asking questions to clarify. For example, "What I hear you saying is—. Is that correct?" and "Can you provide us with some information on how you came to that conclusion?"

2-Remind team Member of Community Agreements: Creating a community agreement at the start of each course is essential. Consequently, the facilitator should remind the participants of the community agreement to deepen the group's practice.

3-Depersonalize remarks: Invite the group to respond to the content. The facilitator could share alternate experiences and offer similar opinions in different words, which motivates participation (Brookfield, 2015).

4-With Strong Emotions: The facilitators should ignore the hot moments and move on. It is essential to remind the participants of the community agreements, depersonalize the remarks, and consider a few moments of silence. Allowing a cooling-off period before revisiting the discussion will help all participants reframe the arguments. The facilitator could ask the participants to write their thoughts, emotions, and reactions to actively reflect and evaluate their decisions- metacognitive skills development (Faculty Focus, 2016).

5-Inflammatory comments of reactions: If the members of the group get into a disagreement, the facilitator could consider the following:

  -Take a moment to decide whether to address the issue with the whole group or a person after the class or meeting.

  -Acknowledge the disagreement and let members know the steps you will take. For example, the facilitator could say, "It sounds like you both have passionate thoughts about this topic. Let us schedule time after class or the meeting to discuss them." Alternatively, "It seems like there are diverse viewpoints about this topic. Let us plan to discuss it in more detail during our next meeting" (Warren, 2016). Before the next meeting, the facilitator thinks about the ideas and feelings about the interaction and the topic. Then, plan how best to address the situation with the group members.

  -Interrupt the action and ask members to reflect on their thoughts and emotions for a set period before discussing as a group (Faculty Focus, 2016).

  -Look to clarify everyone's viewpoint ahead of the discussions' inception.

Closing Remarks

Institutional realization of diversity, inclusion, and equity discourse helps to anticipate students' desires and expectations. Students' perceptions regarding what fosters their sense of belonging and inclusion in EIC's institutional life might not provide a practical tool but increase the understanding level of those students' perspectives and perceived needs in terms of their sense of belonging and active participation. Monitoring the evolving ideas about the learning, teaching, and hiring process is essential to deepening the diversity and inclusion used in the institution. The member's representation and cross-institutional collaboration are critical aspects in fostering diversity and keeping a sustainable sense of belonging across the entire institution. Higher education needs to make room for different ideas and more types of people in institutions to be more relevant. Therefore, higher education institutions ought to change the physical curricular and pedagogical approaches to foster diversity and inclusion efforts. This practice, consequently, strengthens lifelong learning and critical thinking competencies. Strategic leadership, therefore, is the tool to achieve the required institutional change toward more diverse and supportive teaching and learning environments. To develop inclusive institutions that acknowledge and integrate diversity, the design should be geared toward and accessible to all types of students and their abilities.

To this end, the proximity between students and administrators fosters an inclusive community environment. Inclusion is different according to context, people, and culture. "No size fits all" is necessary to continually meet the institution's needs for more inclusivity and diversity practice. Moreover, institutional progressive assessment is pivotal for fostering inclusion and diversity. It is the catalyst for reviewing the offered curriculum differently by considering what might promote inclusion, equity, and participation in student life and institutional growth.

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