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Demographics of Active Sociology Majors 2016-17

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At the request of the school of Social and Behavioral Sciences, demographic information for students majoring in Sociology were compared to students in other academic programs (non-sociology). The purpose of this analysis is to help inform equity funding for a coordinator in Sociology to support the z-degree program. The z-degree program allows for students to complete an associate's degree in Sociology at zero-cost for required instructional materials through open education resources.

Given the impact of this program on student cost, financial need was examined to assess whether students in sociology are more likely to receive financial aid and would therefore benefit from zero-cost sociology degree. Additionally, two groups that have been identified as being disproportionately impacted with regard to overall degree/certificate completion are Latinx and African-American/Black students (2015 Equity Data for 2008-09 Cohort). Representation of these groups among sociology majors were also examined to assess whether this program would help reduce disproportionate impact in degree completion.

Specifically, this research is intended to address the following research questions:

- What is the proportion of students receiving financial aid among Sociology majors?
- Is there a higher representation of disproportionately impacted racial/ethnic groups (Latinx and African-American/Black) in Sociology majors?

Method

To conduct the analyses, 320 enrollment files were obtained for the 2016-17 full year to identify active students. These data were merged with the program history data report from Informer to identify active Sociology majors. The analysis was limited to credit students who were enrolled in any term in 2016-17 and had an active academic program on file. Sociology majors were identified as those students who have at least one active program in Sociology. In addition, demographic data and financial aid data from informer were merged with program history data for actively enrolled students.

Results

Proportions of students receiving financial aid data were compared between sociology and non-sociology students (presented in Figure 1). Overall, Sociology major students received financial aid at a higher rate (57% vs. 45%). Latinx and African-American/Black students received financial aid at a higher rate than Asian and White students. Further, Latinx sociology students and African-American/Black sociology students received financial aid at a higher rate than their non-sociology counterparts (64% vs. 58% and 68% vs. 60%).

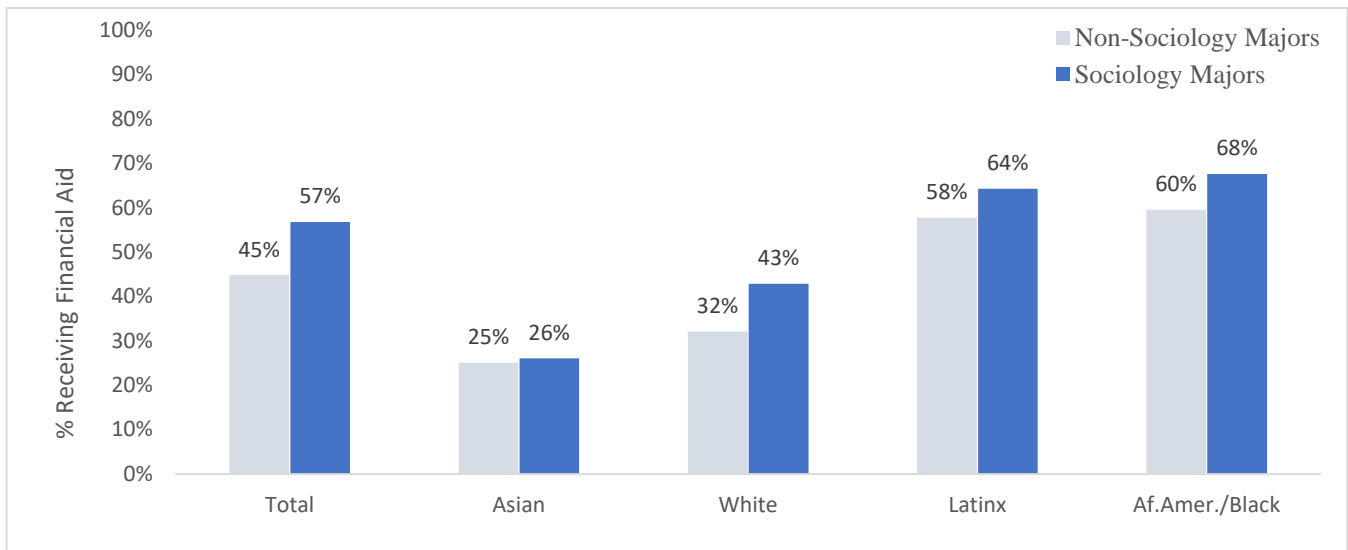


Figure 1 Financial Aid among Sociology vs. non-Sociology majors by Race

Race/ethnicity information indicated that Latinx students represented 49%, and African American/Black students represented 6.2% of all actively enrolled students in 2016-17 (n= 22,085). These students were disaggregated on whether they had at least one active Sociology program (n=324) compared to students with a non-Sociology program (n=21,586). Proportions of racial representation were compared across the two groups (Non-Sociology vs. Sociology majors) (presented in Figures 2 and 3).

Latinx students represent 59% of Sociology majors (vs. 48% in non-Sociology majors) and African-American/Black students represent 11% of Sociology majors (vs. 7% in non-Sociology majors).

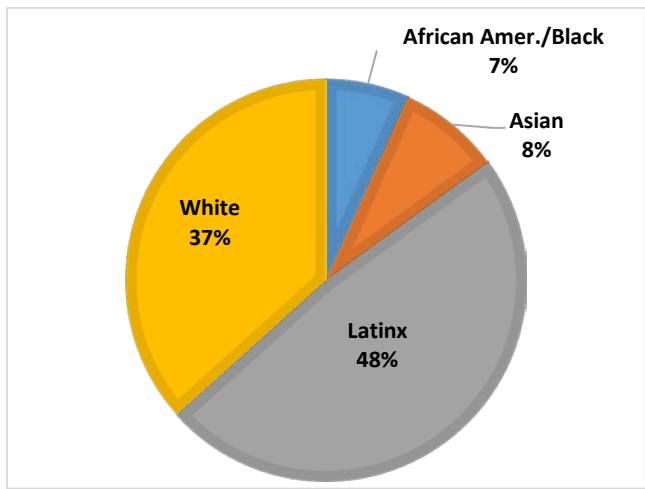


Figure 2 Race among non-Sociology majors* *Rates were not calculated for group sizes < 10 for Sociology majors (i.e. Pac.Isle, Native American, Other-Non-white, Filipino and Unknown).

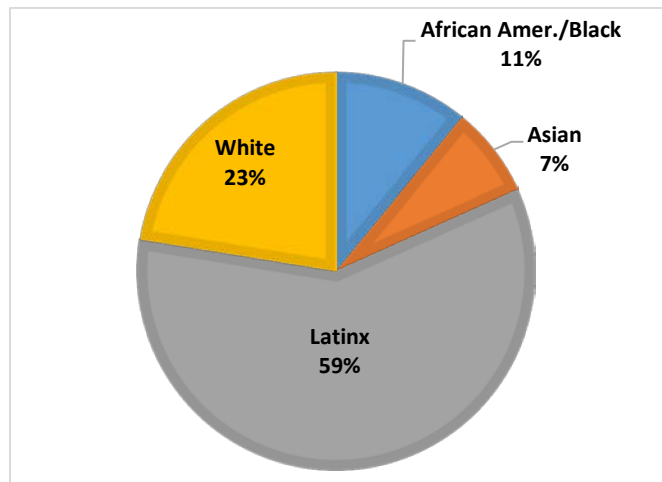


Figure 3 Race among Sociology majors

Recommendations

Upon review of the demographic data analysis results for Sociology majors compared to non-Sociology majors, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Explore funding opportunities through Student Equity for Sociology's Z-degree.

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness office located in BONH-224, or contact Preeta Saxena, Senior Research Analyst at 661.362.3072, or Daylene Meuschke, Dean of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.5329.