

# **REDI Committee Survey Report 2023**

## **Introduction**

The Respect Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) committee in the Department of Cellular and Physiological Sciences distributed a survey to all department members in early 2023 (undergraduate and graduate students, postdocs, staff, faculty). The purpose of this survey was to gather feedback from department members related to their knowledge and engagement with REDI committee activities. Department members were also asked to share their preferences regarding the frequency and type of future REDI activities.

The survey link was distributed widely and repeatedly via email to department members. In the end, we received 51 total responses. This corresponds to 8 undergraduate students, 9 graduate students, postdocs and research associates, 12 staff, and 22 faculty. Based on the survey analysis conducted by the REDI committee, several themes emerged. Also appended are all comments made by department members (Appendix A) and diagrams showing the most common responses for each question for different department members (Appendix B).

## **Themes & Action Plans**

### **Theme 1. REDI activities support an overall increase in knowledge and engagement with equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)-related topics.**

*Summary.* Survey responses across all department members indicated that the majority of department members strongly agree / agree with the statement that “The CPS REDI committee is supporting an increase in my knowledge of, and engagement with, EDI practices and initiatives.”. This corresponds to 88% undergraduate students, 55% graduate students, postdocs and research associates, 75% staff, and 77% faculty. While this reflects an overall positive assessment of REDI committee activities related to EDI, text responses raised important future considerations.

First, two comments from undergraduate students indicated a lack of awareness about REDI committee activities. This suggests that more work is needed to introduce the REDI committee to this group, to increase awareness of its goals and activities. Second, two faculty members expressed a desire for a more in-depth and open discussion of EDI-related matters in the department and the role of the REDI committee in leading change in this area. This suggests that more discussion is needed to develop a common understanding of EDI barriers and mitigation measures in the department, and greater awareness of UBC/Faculty policies on these topics. More discussion is also

needed to define the role of the REDI committee as the department applies an EDI lens to all its research, teaching, and administrative activities.

**Action plans;** (1) Develop ways to increase contact with, and outreach to, undergraduate students. (2) Develop a forum to discuss EDI-related barriers and mitigation measures that align with department and UBC values. (3) Request an annual REDI budget to enable actions (1) and (2).

## **Theme 2. Department members prefer to lead EDI-related activities relevant to their career group.**

**Summary.** When asked “In order of priority, which activities would be most effective at enhancing your knowledge and/or promoting engagement with REDI initiatives?”, across all groups - except faculty - department members indicated a preference for the option “Department member-organized and -led EDI projects and initiatives”. This corresponds to 38% undergraduate students, 33% graduate students, postdocs and research associates, and 33% staff.

Faculty indicated a preference for ‘EDI experts’ when asked which activities would be most effective at enhancing their knowledge and/or promoting engagement with EDI initiatives. The second most popular option, across all groups except faculty, was Faculty of Medicine REDI office seminars. Faculty chose department member-led initiatives as their second choice.

**Action Plans.** (1) In light of the preference expressed by many department groups to lead EDI projects and initiatives, it will be important for the REDI committee and the department to engage and support department members as they plan and lead EDI-related activities that will benefit the department as a whole and/or address concerns specific to department groups. (2) To meet faculty preferences, it will be important for the department and the REDI committee to develop a plan for identifying and inviting speakers to discuss EDI-related matters. (3) Request an annual REDI budget to enable actions (1) and (2).

## **Theme 3. Department members prefer the department promotes greater equity, diversity, and/or inclusion in the working and learning environment via tailored career development opportunities and resources to support inclusion.**

**Summary.** For the staff and undergraduate members of the department, when asked which steps can be taken by the department to promote greater equity, diversity, and/or inclusion in their working and learning environment, there was a preference for tailored career development opportunities and resources to support inclusion (e.g., mentorship

opportunities). Faculty similarly expressed a preference for resources to support inclusion. While graduate students ranked tailored career development opportunities first, their second choice was for the department to advocate for consideration of systemic barriers faced by individuals prior to, or after, employment at UBC.

**Action Plans.** (1) The preference expressed by multiple department groups for tailored career development opportunities suggests that it will be important for the department and the REDI committee to develop a plan to identify EDI-related career barriers, and increase career development opportunities for diverse groups within the department. (2) It will also be important for the department and the REDI committee to develop resources to support inclusion, such as mentorship opportunities, for department members. Because these programs exist elsewhere within UBC, there are existing templates for how this can work. For both (1) and (2) feedback from different department groups will help in identifying which career development opportunities and resources to support inclusion will be most beneficial. (3) The department should develop ways of finding out more about barriers faced by department members, and develop an approach to advocating on behalf of these members to address systemic inequalities faced by individuals before, during, and after their time at UBC.

#### **Theme 4. Department members prefer to receive EDI-related news via email or newsletter.**

**Summary.** All department members were aligned in their preference for receiving EDI-related news via email (#1 preference) or newsletter (#2 preference). From department members who commented, there was a general preference for a monthly update.

**Action Plans.** (1) The department and the REDI committee should meet department member preferences and identify additional way(s) to deliver updates to department members to ensure REDI's activities are communicated to the broadest audience possible. (2) To distribute EDI-related news and updates properly, the department should develop an effective way of reaching the majority of department members.

#### **Theme 5. There are differences between department members in experiences of EDI-related barriers and preferences related to resolving these barriers.**

**Summary.** When asked 'I have faced, or witnessed, barriers to equity, diversity and/or inclusion in my interactions with the department.' we observed significant differences between department members at different career stages in their answers. For the staff group, 17% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement whereas 58% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. For graduate students and faculty, 33% and 32%

(respectively) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement whereas 45% from each group disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. In contrast, 63% of undergraduate students agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, and 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This suggests there are differences between department groups in their experience of barriers to equity, diversity, and/or inclusion. While the reasonably low response rate among undergraduate and graduate students provides one potential explanation for this discrepancy in experience of EDI-related barriers, the early career stage of these individuals and their vulnerability to barriers means that their feedback must be considered very carefully.

There were also minor differences between the department groups in their preference for how to communicate EDI-related barriers within the department. Staff preferred to communicate concerns to the Faculty of Medicine (#1 preference) and their union (#2 preference). Graduate and undergraduate students and faculty preferred to communicate concerns to the REDI committee (#1 preference) and the Faculty of Medicine (#2 preference).

**Action Plans.** (1) The REDI committee will develop a simple guide (*e.g.* flowchart) for the website to help department members identify the appropriate UBC reporting system to share their experience of EDI-related barriers (*e.g.* Faculty of Medicine, Learner Mistreatment tool). (2) The REDI committee will support action related to general EDI-related concerns such as department spaces, teaching strategies, department events, and research. (3) The REDI committee will collaborate with relevant department committees (*e.g.* teaching, research) to create interventions aimed at aligning our activities with best EDI practices (see footnotes for a selection of resources<sup>1</sup>, additional resources on REDI website). (4) REDI will create opportunities for department members to cooperatively reimagine their research and teaching activities in line with best EDI practices (*e.g.* written resources, workshops, retreats).

### **Concluding remarks**

The 2023 REDI (Respect Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) committee survey played a crucial role in gauging the perspectives of department members on various aspects. A consensus emerged among the respondents, indicating that the initiatives undertaken by the REDI committee had a positive impact on enhancing their understanding and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fnesc.ca/first-peoples-principles-of-learning/>  
<https://www.liberatorydesign.com>  
<https://sites.google.com/view/etec-531reimaginemaking/home?authuser=0>  
<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jpeer/vol10/iss2/1/>  
<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Full-Report-2020.pdf>  
<https://udlguidelines.cast.org>  
<https://met.ubc.ca/about/edid/edid-resources/>

involvement in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)-related matters. Despite this overall positive sentiment, survey feedback revealed significant opportunities for improvement within the department. By addressing these action items, the department will enhance its ability to support its members as they integrate equity, diversity, and inclusion practices into all their teaching, research, and administrative activities.

## APPENDIX A (comments)

### Overall comments

Q1. The CPS REDI committee is supporting an increase in my knowledge of, and engagement with, EDI practices and activities.

#### *Staff comments*

None.

#### *Faculty comments*

-I appreciate the REDI committee's efforts to provide awareness of bias through workshops and meetings, however, there is quite a bit of confusion on how we should approach EDI in our department, particularly in hiring. There appears to be quite a bit on confusion on whether our approach is restricted towards recognizing and reducing implicit bias as much as possible, or to take an active role in selecting new hires based on group (race, gender identity, other). These topics have come up repeatedly in faculty meeting with no clarity provided by the REDI committee. I think the REDI committee should inform our department on our rights and responsibilities according to the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Employee Equity Act, which seem to state that we do not have the legal right to consider race, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity in hiring, although we should remove any barriers for diversity access. From my understanding, the university has acquired special-case dispensation to side-step these acts for some hires, such as those associated with CRCs. In these cases, preselection of candidates at higher levels protects our department's search committee from partaking in the diversity-based selection. Since much discussion during faculty meetings on hires has been directed toward increasing diversity in our faculty, please provide clear guidance on our legal limits and responsibilities in this area. Also, if we are able to make diversity selections in hires, the REDI committee should clearly state our department's diversity goals so we will know when they are achieved, and that they are not open-ended.

- So far, all initiatives have been relevant and well planned

- I have appreciated the opportunities for training on a general level. Perhaps a subset of the department could be invited for further in-depth training periodically, as well as brainstorming or opportunity to suggest future REDI directions for the department, based on who is interested. This will create a cohort of resource persons, preferably at all levels of the department.

#### *Grad student comments*

None.

*Undergrad comments*

- Throughout the two years in CAPS program, I didn't know CPS has a REDI committee. I've never received any email about this committee or any activity they organize or anything.
- I did not know this committee actually existed as an undergraduate student. Perhaps email correspondence with undergraduate students or flyers at the CAPS lab room may be helpful in getting word out.
- Our class had an EDI workshop in the first session of our lab, which I thought was very informative as I did not know the department had an EDI apartment when I joined Caps a year before. There were lots of useful resources that were introduced but I personally would have enjoyed a more interactive session (i.e. cased based discussion scenarios).
- I haven't heard much about any initiatives from CPS REDI

Q2. In order of priority, which activities would be most effective at enhancing your knowledge and/or promoting engagement with REDI initiatives?

*Staff comments*

None.

*Faculty comments*

- I have appreciated the opportunities for training on a general level. Perhaps a subset of the department could be invited for further in-depth training periodically, as well as brainstorming or opportunity to suggest future REDI directions for the department, based on who is interested. This will create a cohort of resource persons, preferably at all levels of the department.
- Yes, I would like to take an official course and receive credit for it.
- The workshops on implicit bias were quite good, but we need a form for open discussion on issues relevant to our department. The REDI committee has taken significant stances on 'anti-elitism' in hiring without consultation of our department. The committee should have open forums and discussions prior to making stances that impact the entire department.
- Websites and seminars from FoM REDI office are not impressive. Small workshops and deep discussions about REDI issues that impact our department is best.
- Writing here only because the survey seems to require it, even though the task is to drag and drop...
- Student / postdoc organized and led EDI projects.
- A balanced mix of small, interactive and large group (speaker) sessions will probably meet the needs (and tolerance levels) of a broader section of the department; loads of



materials to read or self-study perhaps not so helpful - unless required at a University-wide level.

*PDF/Grad student comments*

- I'd definitely like to see speakers, grad student/postdoc, and experts with lived experience in EDI leading these discussions (so long as they're adequately compensated for their contributions, of course). If courses were offered, I would absolutely like recognition for my time.

*Undergrad comments*

- I think that to reach a wider audience, REDI initiatives should be included in course material to educate UBC students

Q3. In order of priority, which steps can be taken by the department to promote greater equity, diversity, and/or inclusion in your working and learning environment?

*Staff comments*

None.

*Faculty comments*

- Number 1 is useful, particularly if provided by the Fac of Med  
 Number 4; holidays are all listed in the UBC calendar and every faculty member should be familiar with the collective agreement and the SAC guide to promotion and tenure.  
 Number 8 seems patronizing!  
 - All of these are good, however there are limits to the extent that an individual's 'culture and environments' should impinge on 'setting boundaries' restricting the free expression within standard social norms of others within our group.  
 - It is difficult to know how much these will help but I am willing to try any/all.  
 - Something I wish was on the list was an anonymous helpline or email where anyone with a question could get help. I know there are probably limitations about who would have access and a few 'what-ifs', but the helpline should come with caveats of it not being an emergency service, counselling service etc. but a place where people may seek clarification or share experiences anonymously. Sometimes sharing a difficulty is half of the solution.

*PDF/grad comments*

- Advocate, advocate, advocate! A lot of EDI work practices in theory and the desire to look good socially. Use privilege wherever it exists to uplift those who need it, and work with self-identified members of those communities to develop initiatives, protocols, career advancement, etc.

*Undergrad comments*

- I found certain lectures in my undergraduate courses to present biased research during lectures. IN CAPS 424 (endocrinology), the thrifty gene hypothesis was presented as a strong hypothesis with no mention of criticisms of the hypothesis and lack of evidence. One student even pointed this out with the goal of opening up discussion and was not taken seriously. This hypothesis has been propagated without substantial evidence and may come from a western view of First Nations communities being unable to take care of themselves prior to colonization. As such, I think if teaching this hypothesis, a more holistic approach with consideration and mention of criticism should be presented. Overall, this is just a specific case, but I think review of courses and more surveys reviewing current undergraduate courses material should be conducted to ensure course content is inclusive and considerate to everyone.

- In addition to these practices, one recommendation I have is to advocate making the prerequisites for the CAPS UG program less tedious. There are many courses (i.e PHYS 100 + 2 100 level PHYS, CHEM 211) that students must take to be eligible that are unrelated to the actual program. Most of the time, only certain students who have specific support will be able to achieve these prerequisites while still being competitive. This can include financial support to afford 6-7 courses a term, or not worrying about how to navigate living alone for the first time. In the 3rd year caps cohort, I believe that 15-16/17 of the students are from the Vancouver area. This is most likely due to how rigorous the courses were during the pandemic (2 online terms) and having to navigate these courses in a different time zone, in addition to not being accommodated by profs for midterms and finals. This does not only promote equity in the admissions process but leads to a lack of diversity in the cohort.

Q4. Based on your personal preference, please choose your Top 3 preferred formats for REDI committee communications.

*Staff comments*

None.

*Faculty comments*

- Faculty meetings are the only one for me, though I had to select three.

- Monthly

- IF REDI is going to make decisions that impact our department, such as in hiring practices, there should be significant efforts to provide feedback and discussion. This needs to include town hall or similar meetings.

- Discussions at faculty meetings would be best (every 2 months?)  
Deeper discussions at Town Halls would be next best (every 6 months/year?)  
Emails/newsletters will not be read by faculty.
- once in 2-3 months
- Emails monthly - to highlight available resources, put a spotlight on an EDI 'champion' or share a success story.

*PDF/grad comments*

- Twice a month.
- Perhaps monthly emails and social media posts as-needed/relevant.
- Monthly

*Staff comments*

- Monthly or quarterly
- Monthly

*Undergrad comments*

- I think once a week would be good
- at start of semester

Q5. I have faced, or witnessed, barriers to equity, diversity and/or inclusion in my interactions with the department.

No comments were permitted for this question.

Q6: In order of priority, please indicate how you prefer to communicate barriers (if any) to equity, diversity and/or inclusion you have faced, or witnessed?

*Staff Comments*

- I have not personally faced nor witnessed any such barriers during my time at UBC. Lucky me.

*Faculty comments*

- The Dept head should be the first stop. If not, then the REDI office at the faculty of medicine should be the next.

*PDF/grad comments*

- I think it is important to offer both anonymity and identification in online reporting. Options provide power and comfort to many people. I would most support an online tool as I've personally experienced multiple negative interactions when discussing

concerns of EDI with coworkers/superiors. The online tool would have to be easily accessible, easy to locate, and have a quick turn-around (*i.e.*, submissions don't sit in the inbox for months before the person receives support).

*Undergrad comments*

- I do not know what the online tool is nor student affairs.

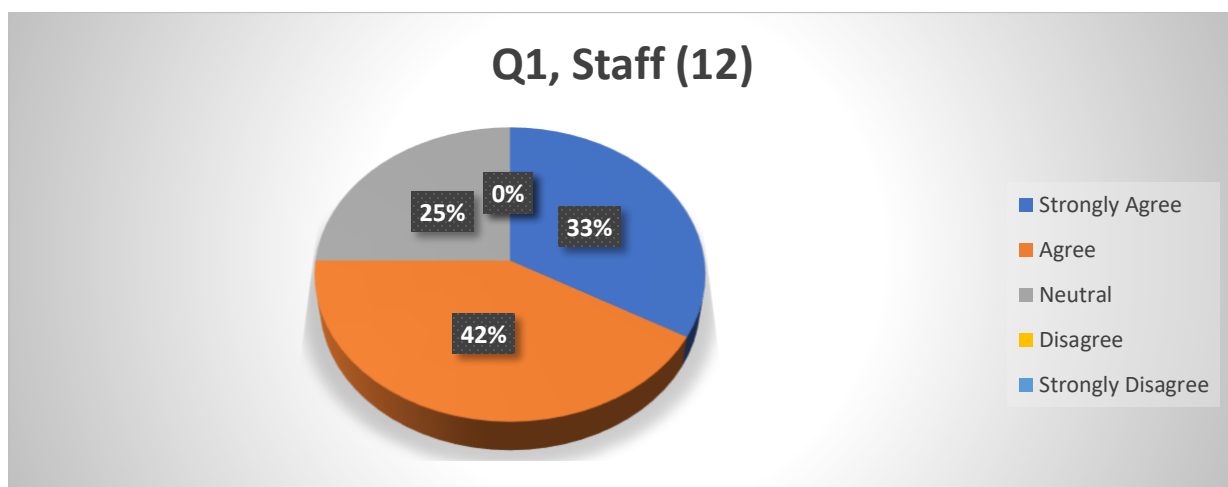
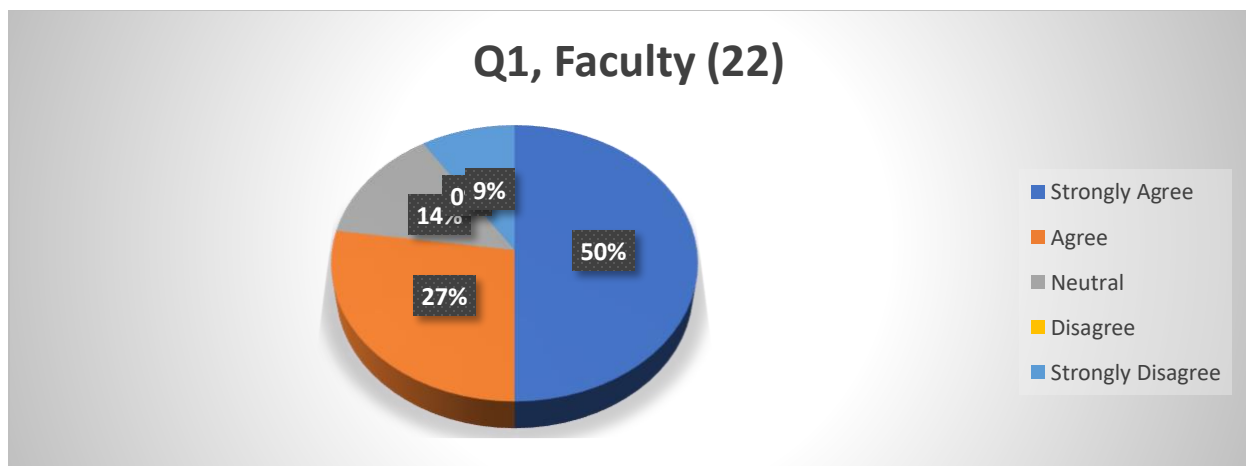
## Appendix B (data)

### Question 1

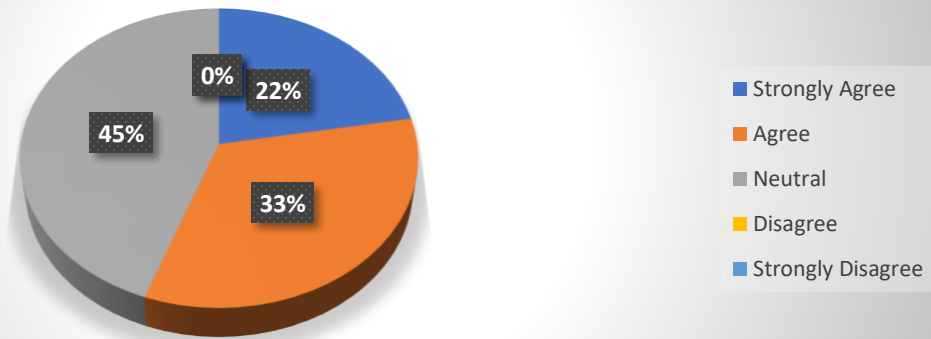
The CPS REDI committee is supporting an increase in my knowledge of, and engagement with, EDI practices and initiatives.

Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement. In the comments box below, please add any suggestions on how we can better support your needs.

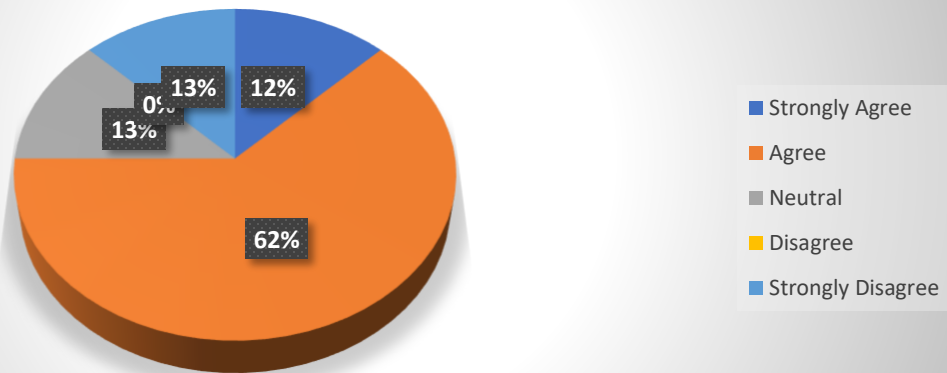
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree



**Q1, Grad (9)**



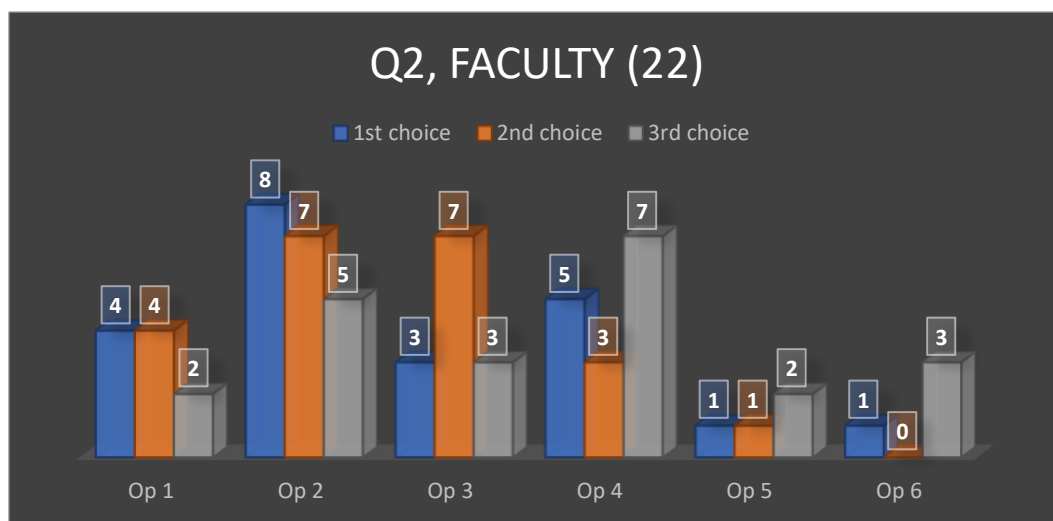
**Q1, Under Grad (8)**

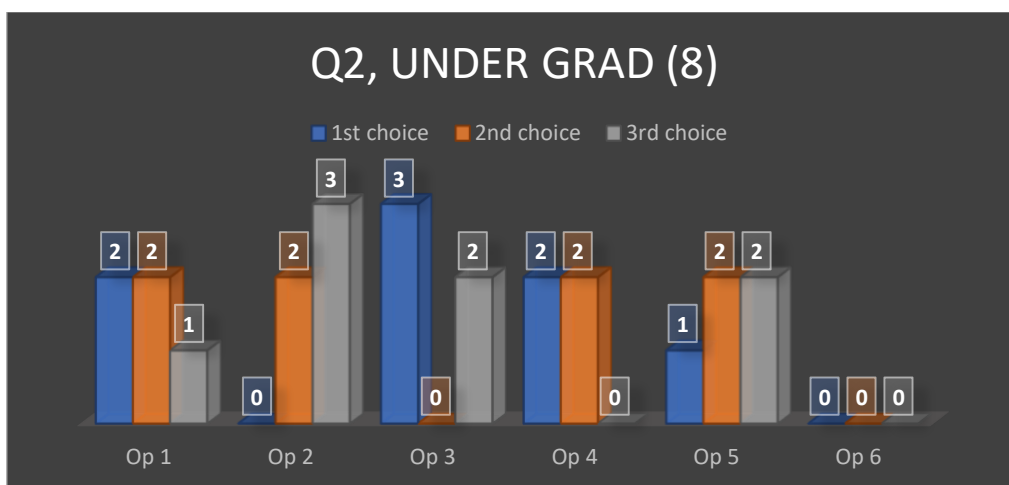
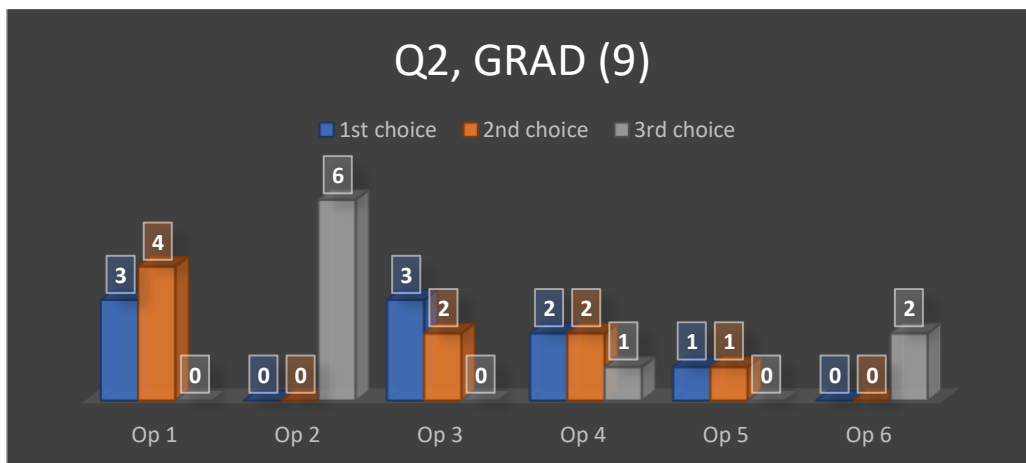
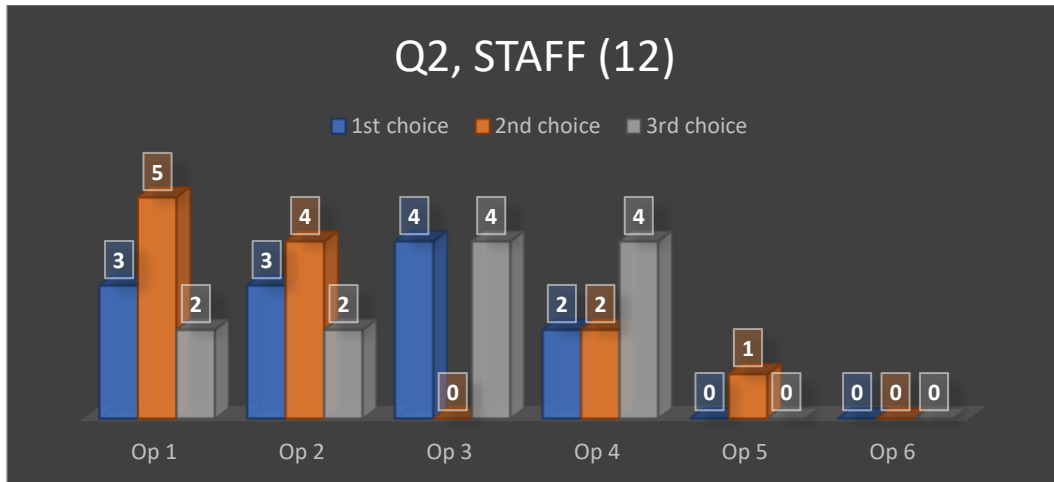


## Question 2

In order of priority, which activities would be most effective at enhancing your knowledge and/or promoting engagement with REDI initiatives? Use the comment box to suggest options not listed.

1. Seminar-based presentations from FoM REDI office (e.g. anti-racism, upstander engagement)
2. Invited speakers from experts in EDI
3. Employee / Student-organized and -led EDI projects and initiatives
4. Course material via Equity and Inclusion Office or Center for Teaching and Learning Technology (indicate whether you'd like to get recognition for your time in the text box)
5. Curated web resources via REDI website (CPS or FoM)
6. Small interactive sessions that are mediated by EDI experts



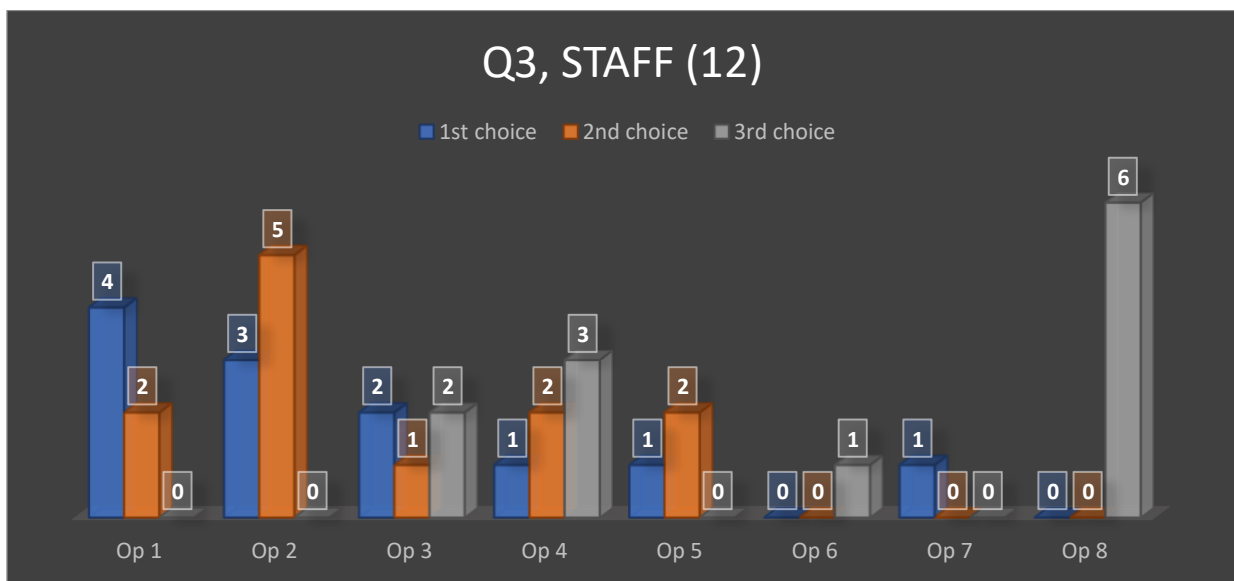
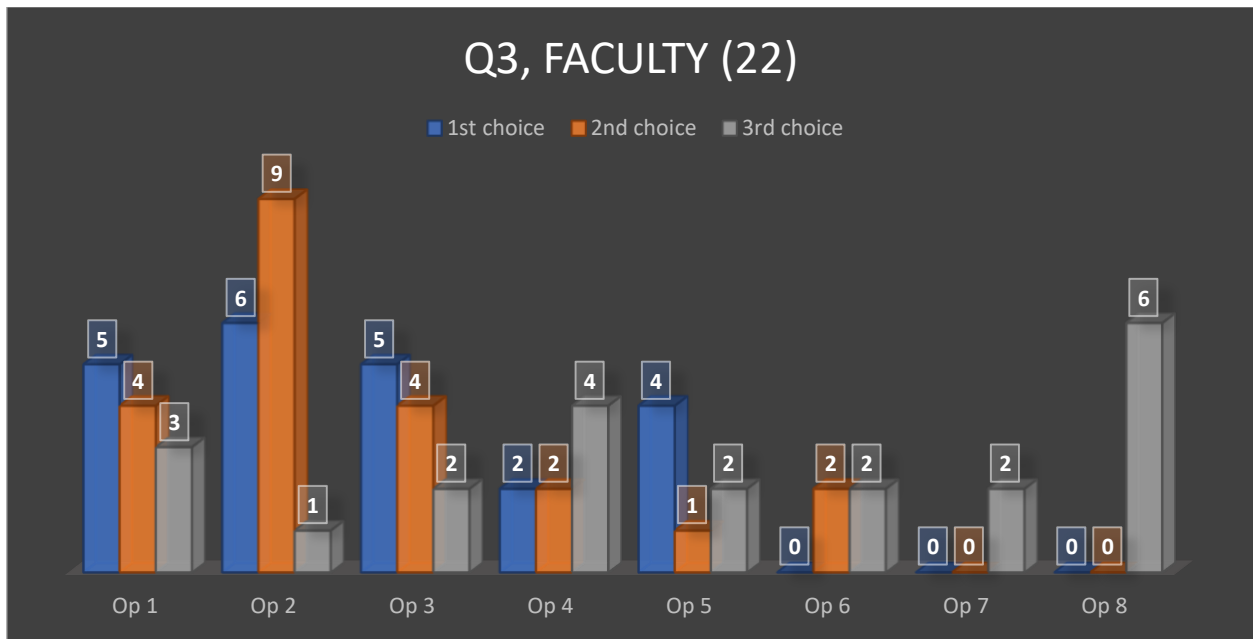


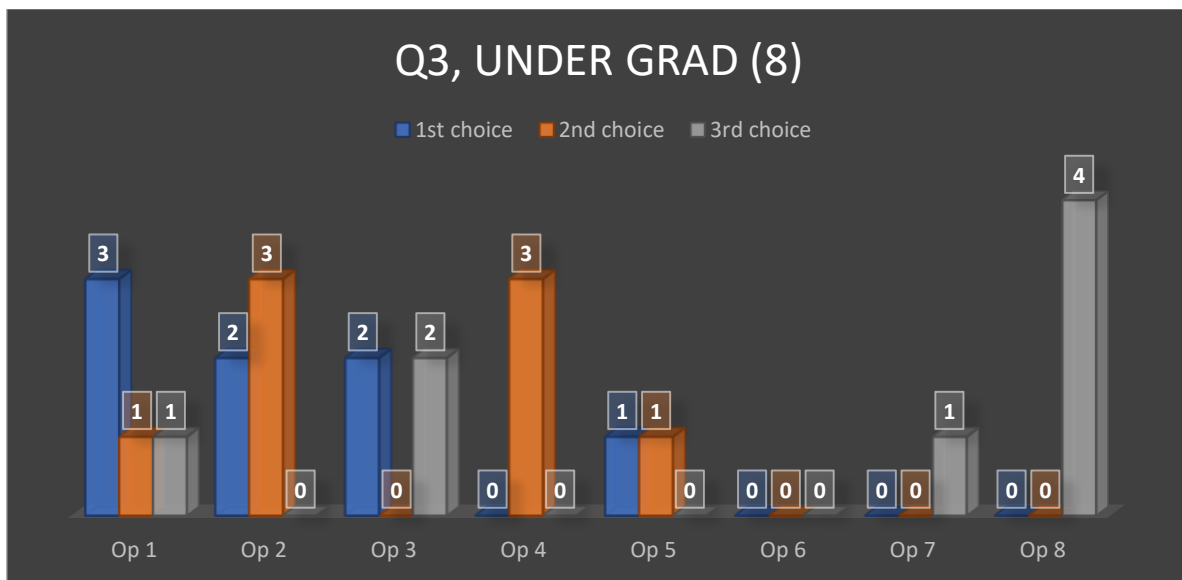
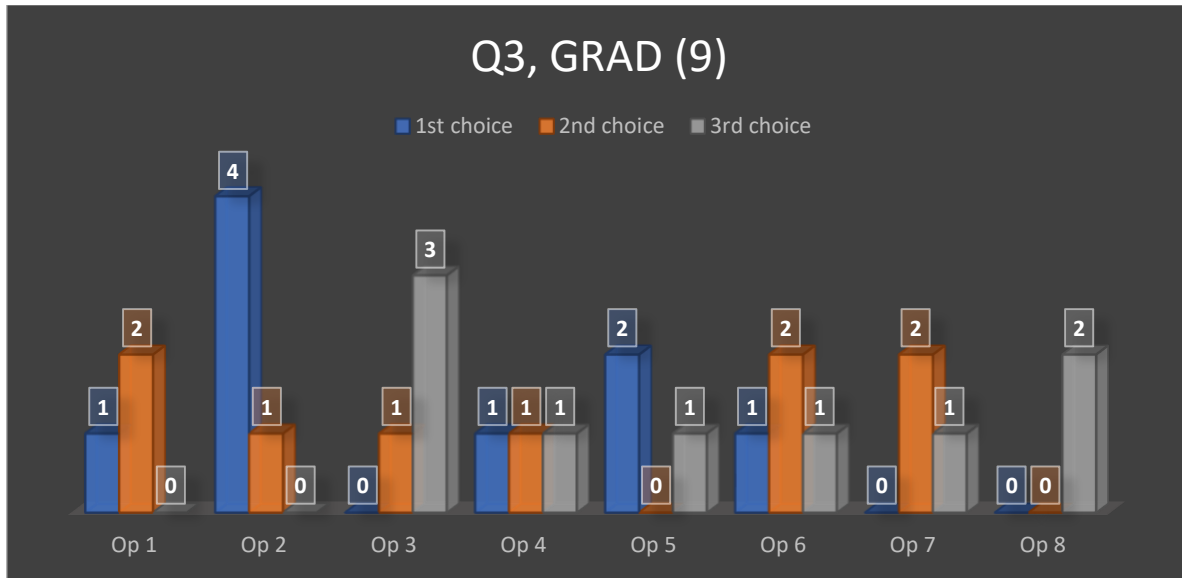


### Question 3

In order of priority, which steps can be taken by the department to promote greater equity, diversity, and/or inclusion in your working environment? Use the comment box to suggest any options not listed.

1. Career development opportunities tailored to diverse groups [*e.g.* faculty in leadership positions to share their career path as an Indigenous people, Black people, and Peoples of Colour (IBPOC person)].
2. Providing resources to support inclusion among diverse groups (*e.g.* mentorship programs)
3. Consideration of my EDI-related work in my performance evaluations (*e.g.* awards, promotion, merit)
4. Facilitating inclusive practices and providing inclusive resources within the department (*e.g.* welcome packages with lists of ethnic grocery stores, community groups)
5. Increasing the availability and awareness of accommodations available to department members (*e.g.* religious/cultural holidays, extensions to promotion timelines)
6. Advocate for consideration of systemic barriers faced by individuals prior to, or after, employment at UBC (*e.g.* pay increases, promotion, scholarships)
7. Developing recommendations for inclusive cultures and environments (*e.g.* inclusive social events, setting boundaries for conduct at meetings)
8. Regularly consult with departments members to evaluate progress towards promoting EDI (*e.g.* surveys), and adjust priorities according to needs

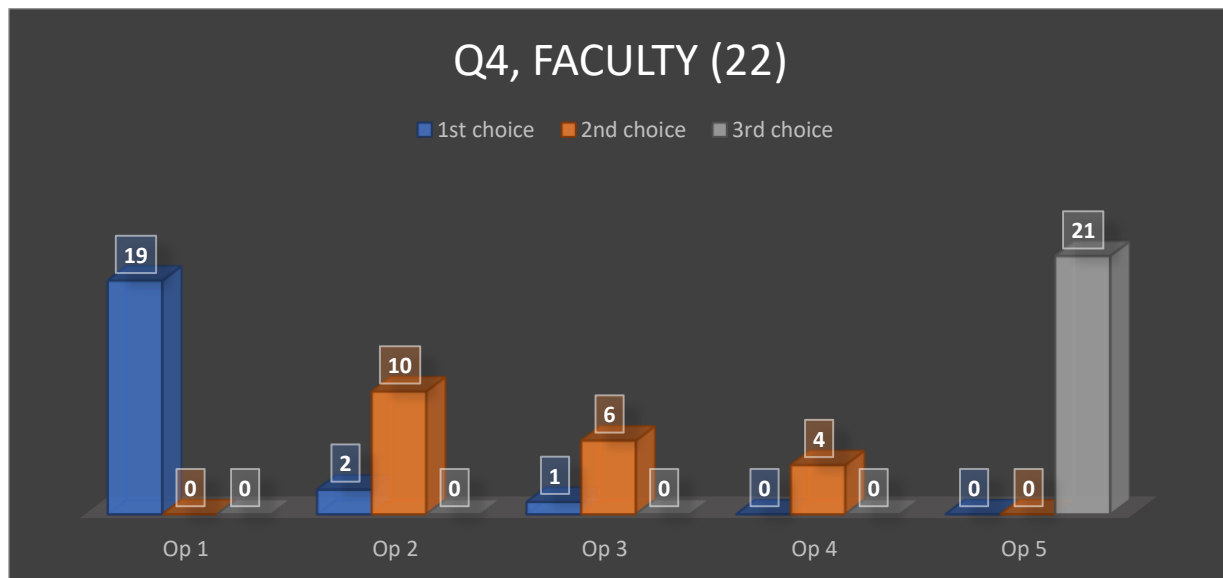


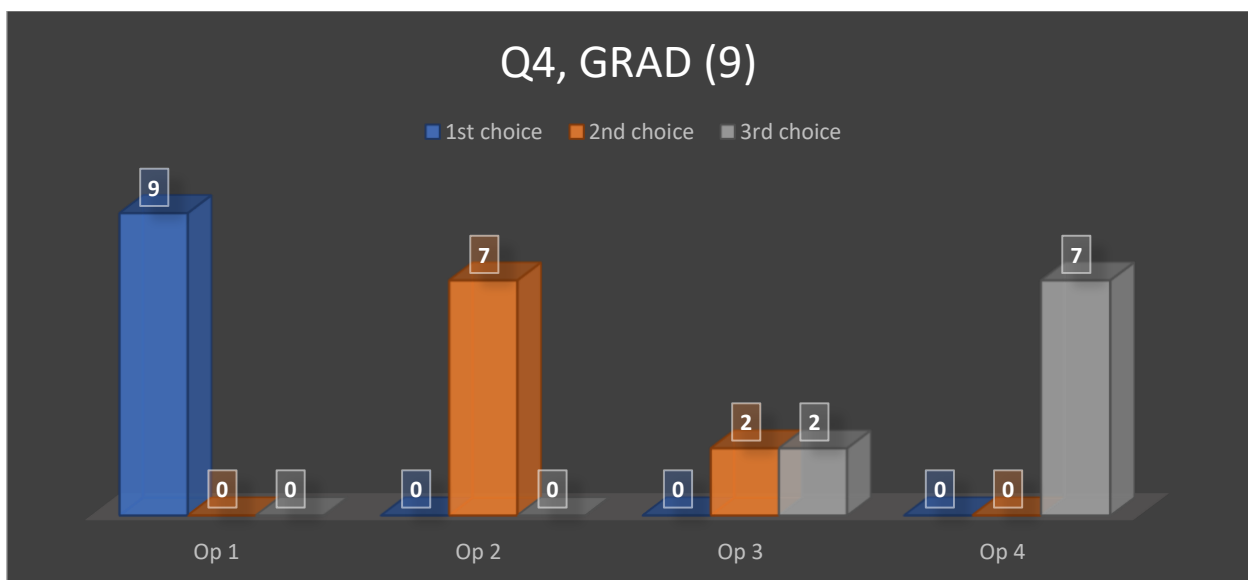
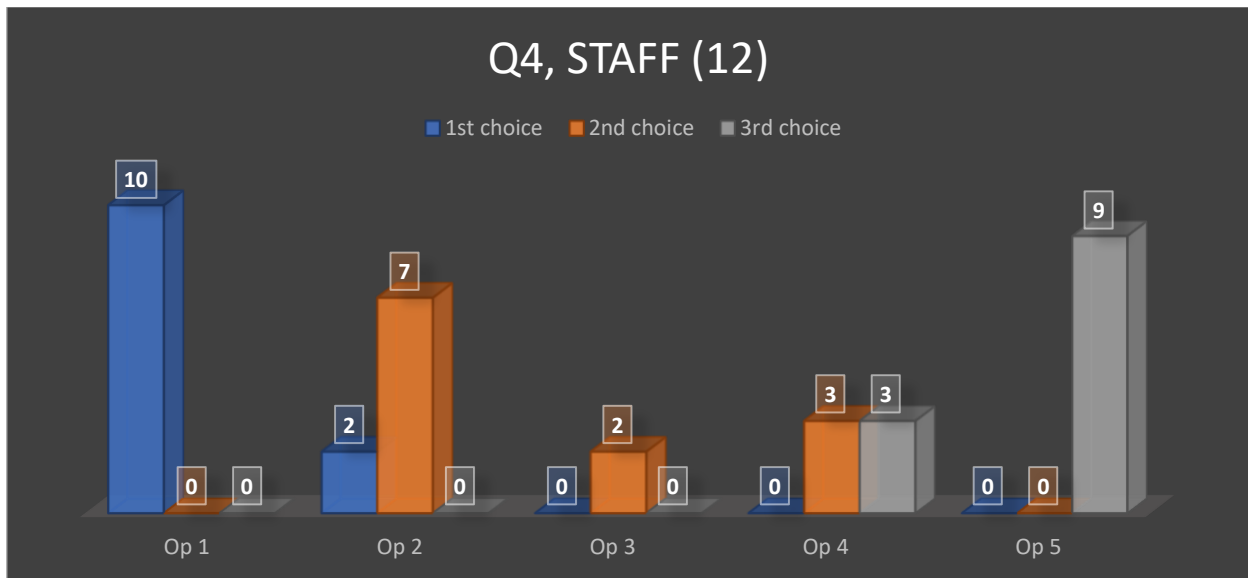


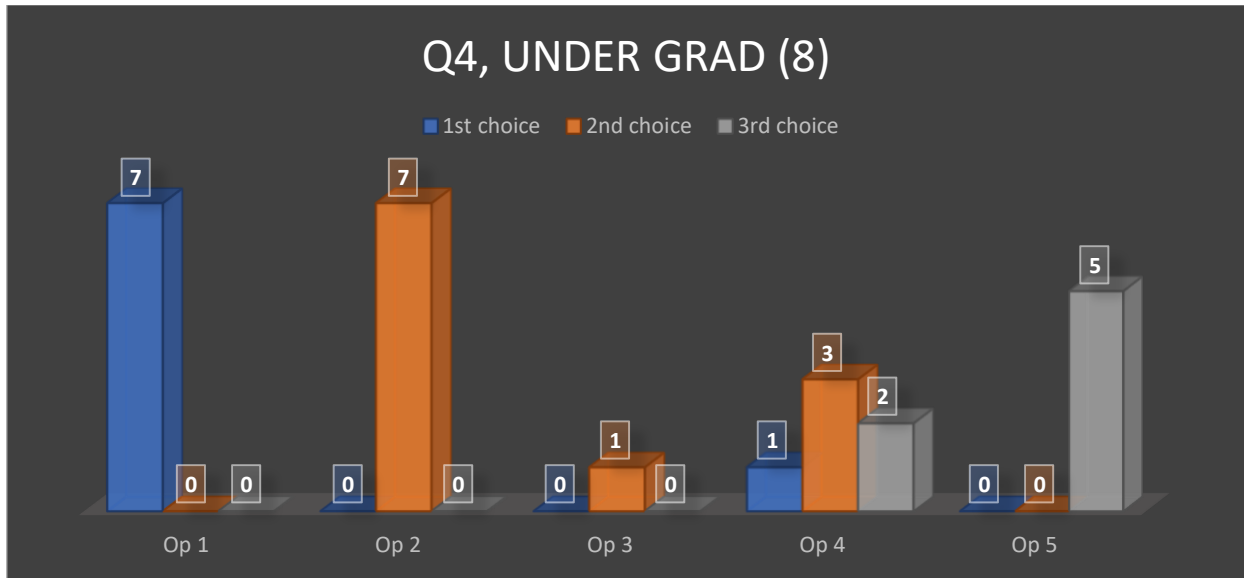
#### Question 4

Based on your personal preference, please choose your **Top 3** preferred formats for REDI committee communications. Use the comment box to suggest any options not listed and to indicate your preferred communication frequency (e.g. monthly, weekly).

1. Emails
2. Newsletters
3. Town halls
4. Social media (e.g. Twitter, Teams/Slack)
5. Faculty / Staff meetings / Class announcements



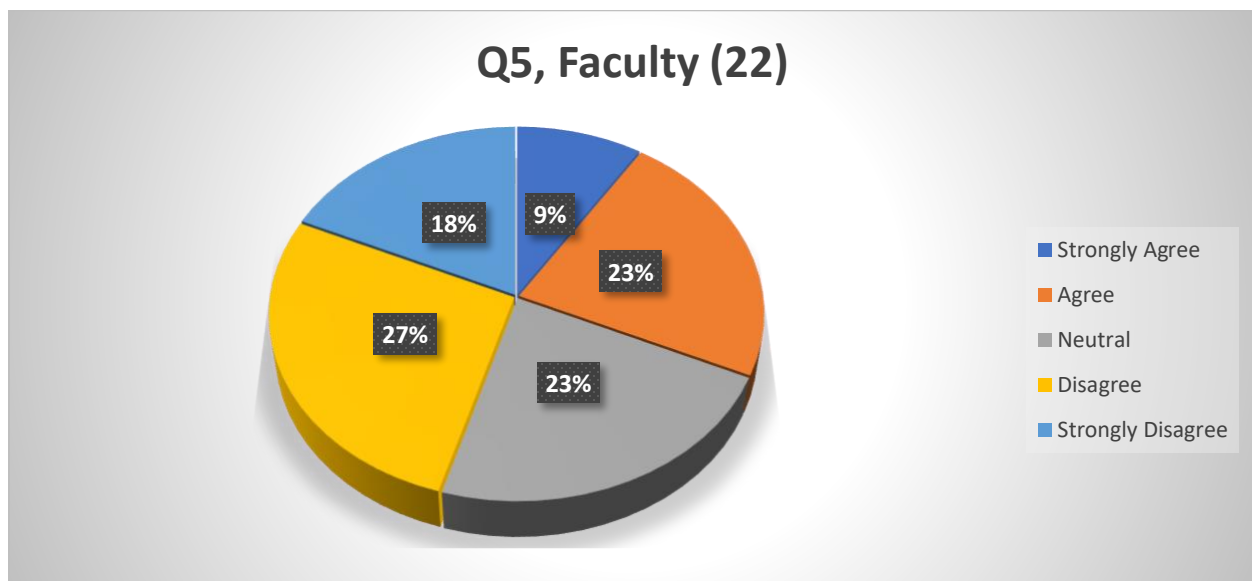




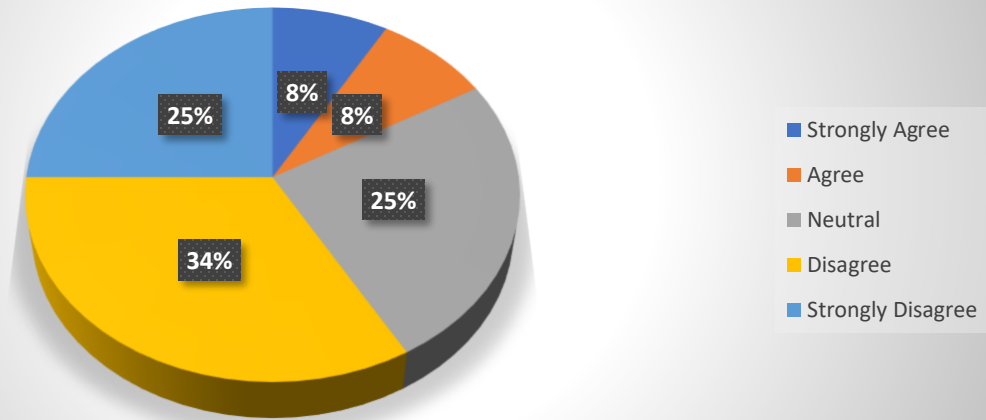
### Question 5

I have faced, or witnessed, barriers to equity, diversity and/or inclusion in my interactions with the department.

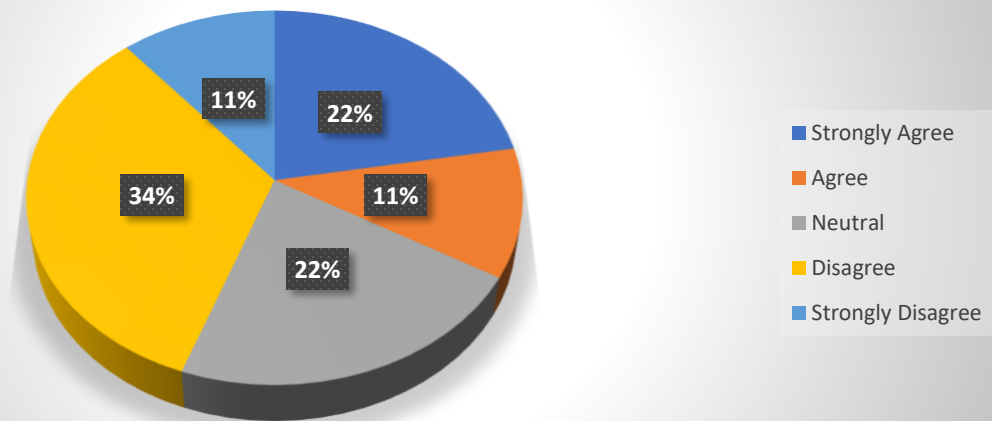
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree



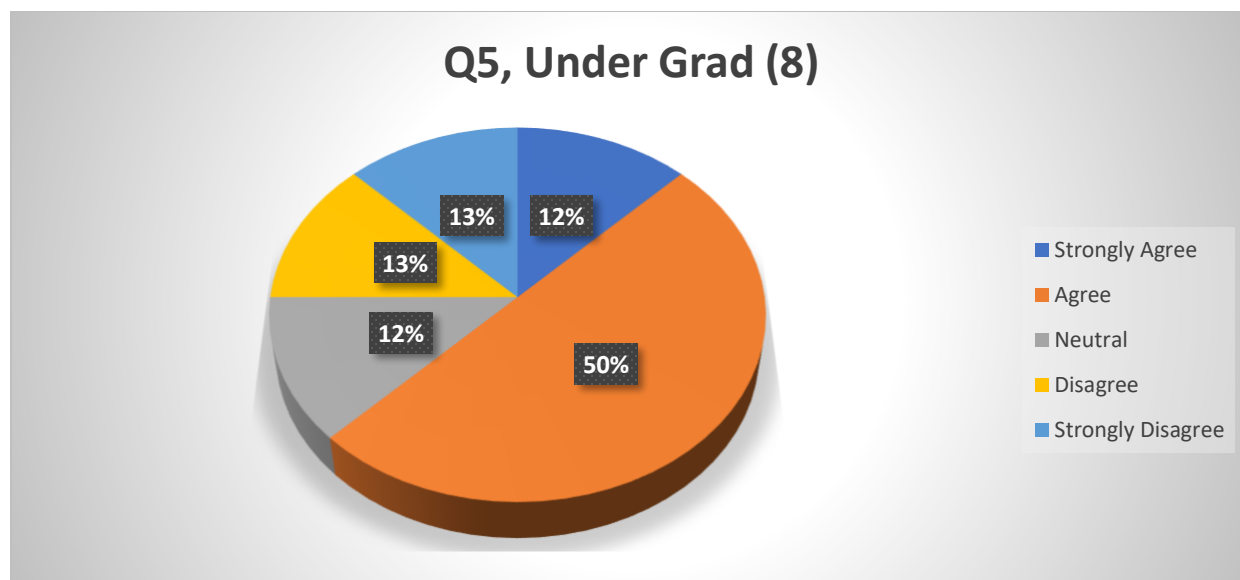
**Q5, Staff (12)**



**Q5, Grad (9)**







## Question 6

In order of priority, please indicate how you prefer to communicate barriers (if any) to equity, diversity and/or inclusion you have faced, or witnessed? Use the comment box to suggest options not listed.

1. Online tool
2. REDI committee
3. Faculty of Medicine / Faculty of Graduate / Postdoctoral Studies
4. Faculty Association / AAPS / Union / Human Resources / students Affairs
5. In-person one-on-one session (*e.g.* department head / trusted faculty members)
6. Anonymous online tool (*e.g.* Faculty of Medicine learner mistreatment tool)
7. I do not feel comfortable communicating my concerns

