

# USABE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

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USABEPENN.COM

AUGUST 12, 2023



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## Meet the 2022-23 Board

**Shriya Karam (President): SSE 2023**

Affiliation: Society of Women Engineers (SWE)

**Gabrielle Bioteau (Vice President): SSE 2023**

Affiliation: National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)

**\*Darian Parks (Ambassador): CIS 2025**

**\*McKenzie Davis (Ambassador): BE 2025**

**\*Lily Min (Ambassador): CBE 2025**

Affiliation: Society of Women Engineers (SWE)

**\*Alfredo Velazquez Vazquez (Freshman Ambassador): BE 2026**

**Shaira Tabassum (Freshman Ambassador): CIS 2026**

**Shivi Jain (Freshman Ambassador): EE 2026**

Affiliations: Society of Women Engineers (SWE), Advancing Women  
in Engineering (AWE)

**Tendai Ball (Freshman Ambassador): BE 2026**

Affiliation: National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)

**Xue Jiang (Freshman Ambassador): CIS 2026**

Affiliation: Women in Computer Science (WiCS)

*\*current 2023-24 board members*



## Mission and Goals

### Mission Statement

USABE strives to create a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive community among engineers through student advocacy. This entails connecting, empowering, and amplifying the underrepresented voices throughout SEAS.

### Goals

- Facilitate meaningful, actionable discourse around the collective experiences of our underrepresented engineers through surveys and open forums
- Connect underrepresented students with useful resources and programming around personal, social, and professional development
- Present our findings to SEAS administrators to express student feedback and create opportunities for the administration to further support the needs of underrepresented students

*Student input is the cornerstone of our work as we draw from the experiences of engineers today to continue to improve the experiences of engineers tomorrow.*

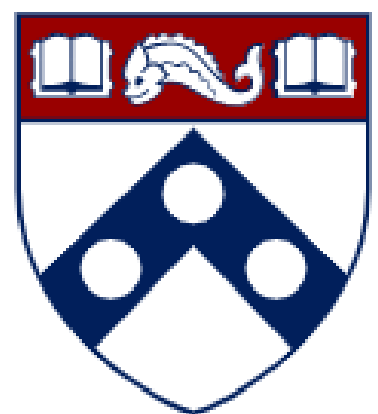


## 2022 - 2023 Highlights

The new Student Advocacy Award was developed to recognize faculty members' commitment to supporting underrepresented and minority (URM) students. USABE and our constituent groups selected Dr. Brittany Shields as the first recipient.



To expose students to a variety of professional opportunities, USABE worked hard to expand our alumni relations. Our alumni database is now almost 40 alumni strong and we held our first in-person alumni event this year.



**Penn**  
University Secretary

USABE presented student perspectives from Student Surveys and Open Forums to the University Council in February 2023. USABE was appointed a seat on the council for next year and plans to use the opportunity to expand our advocacy to a school-wide level.



## Student Advocacy

### *Objectives*

- Understand the shared experience(s) of URM students in SEAS
- Communicate both concerns and strategies for support to administration

### *Motivation*

- Feedback gathered through conversation and surveys enables us to identify and improve key issues for underrepresented students



Students gathered for the Spring Open Forum (March 2023)

*Every year, we conduct semesterly Student Surveys to get a quantitative perspective on students' experiences. Major takeaways from the surveys and forums from Winter 2022 and Spring 2023 are included throughout the report.*



## Student Advocacy: Key Takeaways

### Equitable Learning

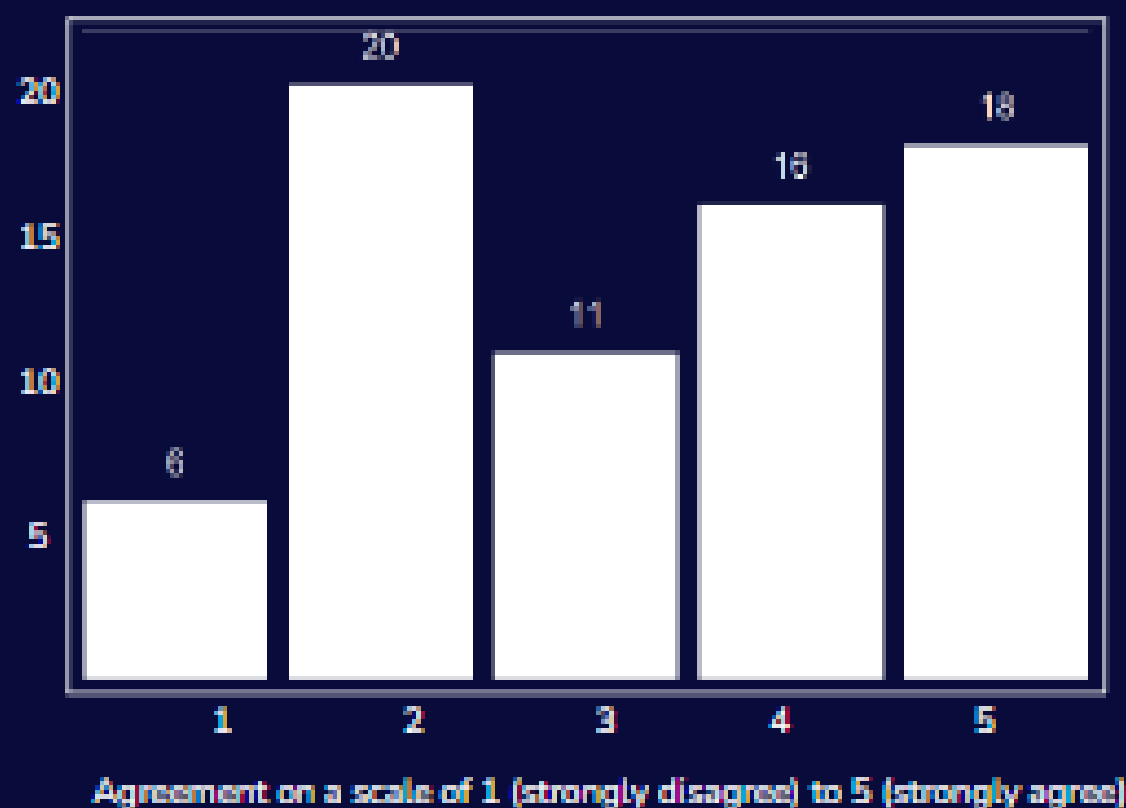
*Concerns regarding equitable learning were some of the most common comments we received in the Spring Student Survey. Students expressed concerns regarding an achievement gap, which is a difference in learning capability between students due to the resources available to them prior to attending Penn. Other issues expressed included TA biases and textbook costs.*

Feedback from a CIS '25 Student  
"I, and other students, have felt the achievement gap between students who have had prior experiences (e.g., tutoring, private schooling) and those who haven't."

Feedback from a CBE '25 Student  
"Some TAs talk down to the girls in the major... TAs should get diversity training."

From our Student Surveys and Open Forums, it is clear that diverse faculty hiring is a concern of students. As seen by the data from our Spring 2023 survey below, students have mixed feelings about faculty in Penn Engineering who can relate to their identity. In particular, this issue is exacerbated for minority students.

There are faculty in SEAS that relate to my identity.



Results by race...

| Race / Ethnicity       | Mean |
|------------------------|------|
| Hispanic/Latinx        | 2.25 |
| Middle Eastern         | 2.5  |
| Black/African American | 3    |
| Caucasian              | 3.45 |
| Asian                  | 3.46 |
| Asian, Caucasian       | 3.5  |
| Other                  | 4    |



## Student Advocacy: Initiatives

*Using the data we collected from our Student Surveys and the experiences students have shared during our Open Forums, we identified key issues that underrepresented SEAS students face. We have shared these concerns with the Dean of Engineering, Associate Dean for DEI, Director of ODEI, and faculty through department wide faculty meetings. Below are some of the key issues USABE is focusing on:*

### TA Training

USABE is working closely with the Dean and Associate Dean of Engineering to pilot a DEI module for TA training in the Fall 2023 semester.

### DEI in Course Curricula

DEI is a vital component of engineering education. We are advocating for more DEI modules and focus in technical courses.

### Mid-semester Feedback

USABE is advocating for mid-semester feedback forms to ensure student input in the classroom is emphasized and used to create more equitable learning environments.

### Diverse Faculty Hiring

Given the importance of faculty role models to underrepresented student success, USABE is advocating for more underrepresented student involvement in diverse faculty hiring evaluations.





## Student-Faculty Engagement

### *Objective*

- Facilitate meaningful connections between faculty and students to increase URM student support

### *Motivation*

- Faculty who promote visibility toward DEI increase URM students' sense of belonging

The Faculty Fireside Chat Series gave students the chance to connect personally with a couple faculty in a casual environment. We held four Fireside Chats total in the 2022-2023 school year.

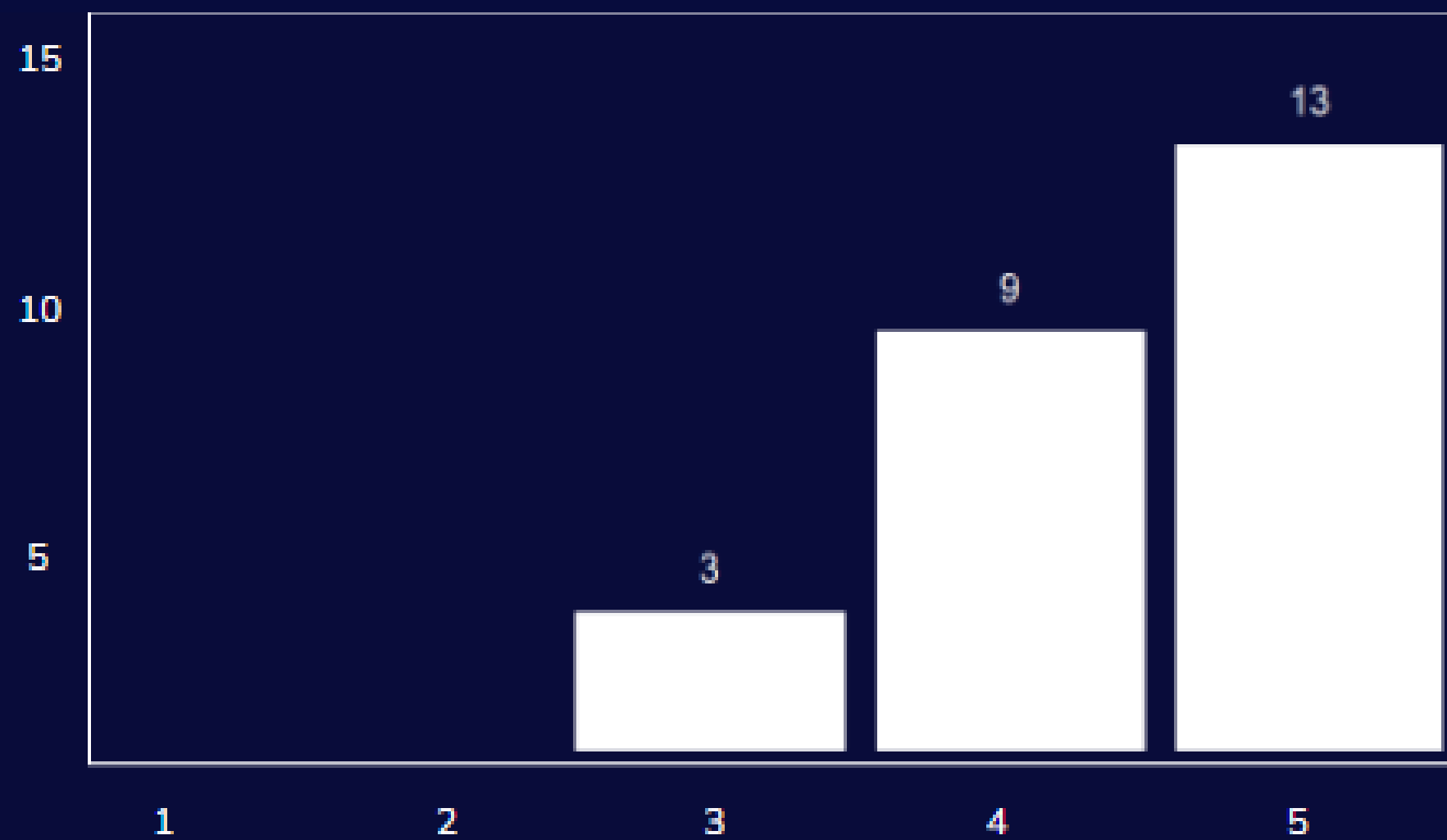


In March 2023, we held our first ever Student-Faculty Mixer, a larger scale event that featured more faculty through both lightning talks and discussion.



## Student-Faculty Engagement: Key Takeaways

From the Fireside Chats: "How likely are you to reach out to faculty after this event?"



Agreement on a scale of 1 (extremely uncomfortable) to 5 (extremely comfortable)

Students felt very comfortable reaching out to faculty after our fireside chats.

From the Student-Faculty Mixer: "The mixer allowed me to build new connections with students and faculty."

Students felt that our new student-faculty mixer helped them connect with both faculty and students.

**100%**

of students agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.



## Student-Faculty Engagement: Initiatives

### Faculty Pledge List

The faculty pledge list demonstrates faculty support of USABE's mission to amplify underrepresented voices and create spaces for community building/mentorship. Click [here](#) to view the list, and click [here](#) to sign (if you are an interested faculty member).

85%

growth in number of  
faculty on the Faculty  
Pledge List (May  
2022-2023).

### Student Advocacy Award

This year, we launched our new Student Advocacy Award. The award celebrates faculty who have shown an outstanding commitment to women and underrepresented student advocacy, equity, and inclusion. Next year, we plan to further establish and promote this award.

Click [here](#) to read more about the award and last year's winner, Dr. Brittany Shields.

*If you are a faculty member, check out the Get Involved page to join the Faculty Pledge List and learn about ways to support URM students in SEAS!*



## Community Enrichment

### *Objective*

- Coordinate informal spaces for students to connect with URM undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni

### *Motivation*

- Underrepresented student community enhances personal and professional success



USABE hosted our first in person alumni event in April 2023. The Alumni Mixer featured alumni from different disciplines for lightning talks and small group discussions.

*If you are an alum, check out the [Get Involved](#) page to join our alumni list serv and learn about ways to support URM students in SEAS!*



## Community Enrichment: Initiatives

From the Alumni Mixer: "I feel more comfortable reaching out to Penn alumni."

Students felt that our new alumni mixer made them more comfortable with reaching out to Penn alumni.

**100%**  
of students strongly agreed with this statement.

### Alumni Panel

We also held a virtual alumni panel in October 2022, where alumni offered career advice to underrepresented SEAS students. With the virtual format, we were able to invite alumni who were not local to Philadelphia to participate. We plan to continue both the in-person alumni mixer and virtual alumni panel in the coming years.

### Alumni Database

The alumni database contains alumni from our constituent groups with their contact information and line of work. Students can contact these alumni for academic or professional advice. Click [here](#) for the database.

### Alumni Listserv

The alumni listserv is a way for alumni to stay connected to USABE by being updated on events and initiatives that USABE is working on. Click [here](#) to fill out the Alumni Interest Form to join the database and/or the listserv.



## Community Enrichment: Initiatives



Leaders of WiCS, SHPE (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers), SWE, and NSBE answer questions during the NSO Preceptorial Panel (August 2022)

### NSO Preceptorial Panel

In August, USABE holds the "Launching into SEAS: Underrepresented @ Penn Engineering" NSO Preceptorial, which provides incoming engineering freshmen with the resources to succeed as they navigate their first year in SEAS. We feature a panel of leaders from our constituent groups that answer questions about their transition to college.

### Freshmen Ambassadors

In Fall 2021, USABE launched the Freshmen Ambassador Program. This program provides opportunities for programming, leadership, and relationship building. We continued this program into Fall 2022 and plan to recruit a new class of Freshmen Ambassadors in Fall 2023.



## Community Enrichment: Initiatives



USABE's Halloween Social (October 2021)

### Graduate Student Engagement

Graduate students can provide underrepresented SEAS undergraduates with mentorship and introduce them to academia/graduate school as a potential path in the future. In the 2022-2023 school year, we introduced a new position: a Graduate Student Ambassador. We also held our first ever Graduate Student Panel in March 2023, where four graduate students shared their educational/professional paths.

### Constituent Group Engagement

USABE works closely with our constituent groups and supports their missions, initiatives, and events to foster a sense of community within underrepresented engineers. We collaborated with NSBE and SHPE for our E-week crochet circle in February 2023, and will continue to identify areas to best support the unique needs of each organization. For more information on our constituent groups, click [here](#).



## Get Involved

Check out the following ways to get involved in USABE as a student, faculty member, or alum!

### For students:

- Attend our events throughout the year - check out when they're happening on our [website home page](#)
- Apply for USABE board positions
- Connect with us on social media below to receive updates on new initiatives and events
- Check out the Faculty Pledge [list](#) to get in contact with faculty who are interested in supporting URM students
- Check out the [Alumni Database](#) and reach out for career advice

### For faculty:

- Sign our faculty pledge [list](#) to show commitment toward engaging with and advocating for underrepresented students within SEAS
- Apply for our Student Advocacy Award to be recognized for your efforts in supporting underrepresented students in SEAS

### For alumni:

- Fill out the alumni interest [form](#) to join the alumni list serv to receive monthly updates on USABE's initiatives and progress in the Penn Engineering community
- Join our [Alumni Database](#) if you are interested in being contacted by current underrepresented SEAS students



[www.usabepenn.com](http://www.usabepenn.com)



[usabe\\_penn](https://www.instagram.com/usabe_penn)



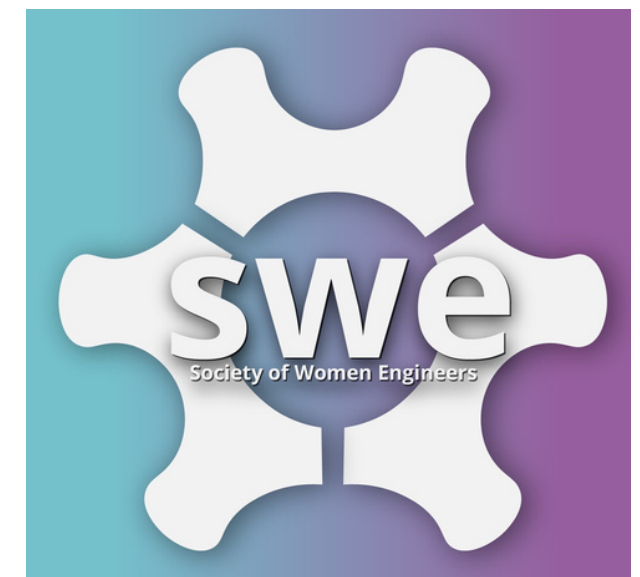
[usabexpenn](https://www.facebook.com/usabexpenn)





## Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank the following individuals from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Dr. Laura Stubbs, Dr. Yulanda Essoka, Dean CJ Taylor, and André Marston for their continued support for USABE. Additionally, we would like to thank Dean Vijay Kumar and Dean Russell Composto for their support and collaboration. Finally, we'd like to recognize our constituent organizations for their dedication and commitment to USABE's mission.





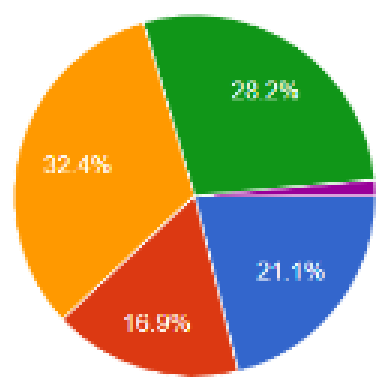
# Appendix

## Additional survey results and data

### Student Pulse Survey - Spring 2023

Year

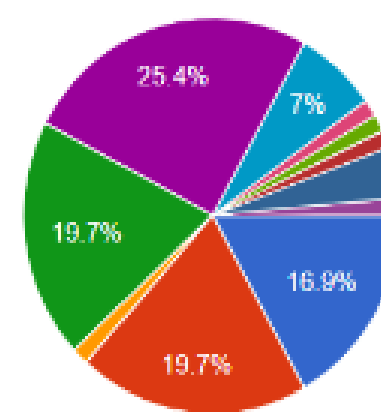
71 responses



- Class of 2023
- Class of 2024
- Class of 2025
- Class of 2026
- PhD Student

Major

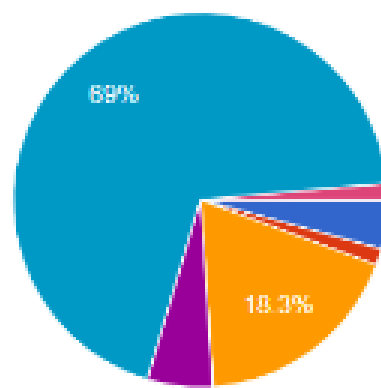
71 responses



- Networked and Social Systems Engineering
- Undecided
- Bioengineering
- Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
- Materials Science and Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Computer Science
- Systems Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Computer Engineering
- Digital Media Design

Sexual Orientation

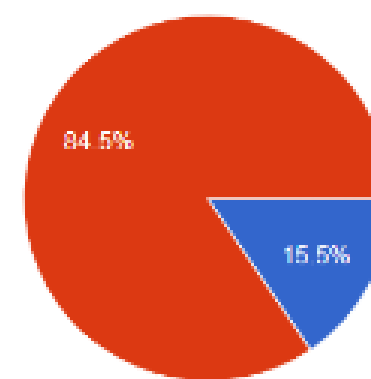
71 responses



- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Asexual
- Straight
- pansexual

Do you identify as FGLI (First Generation Low-Income)?

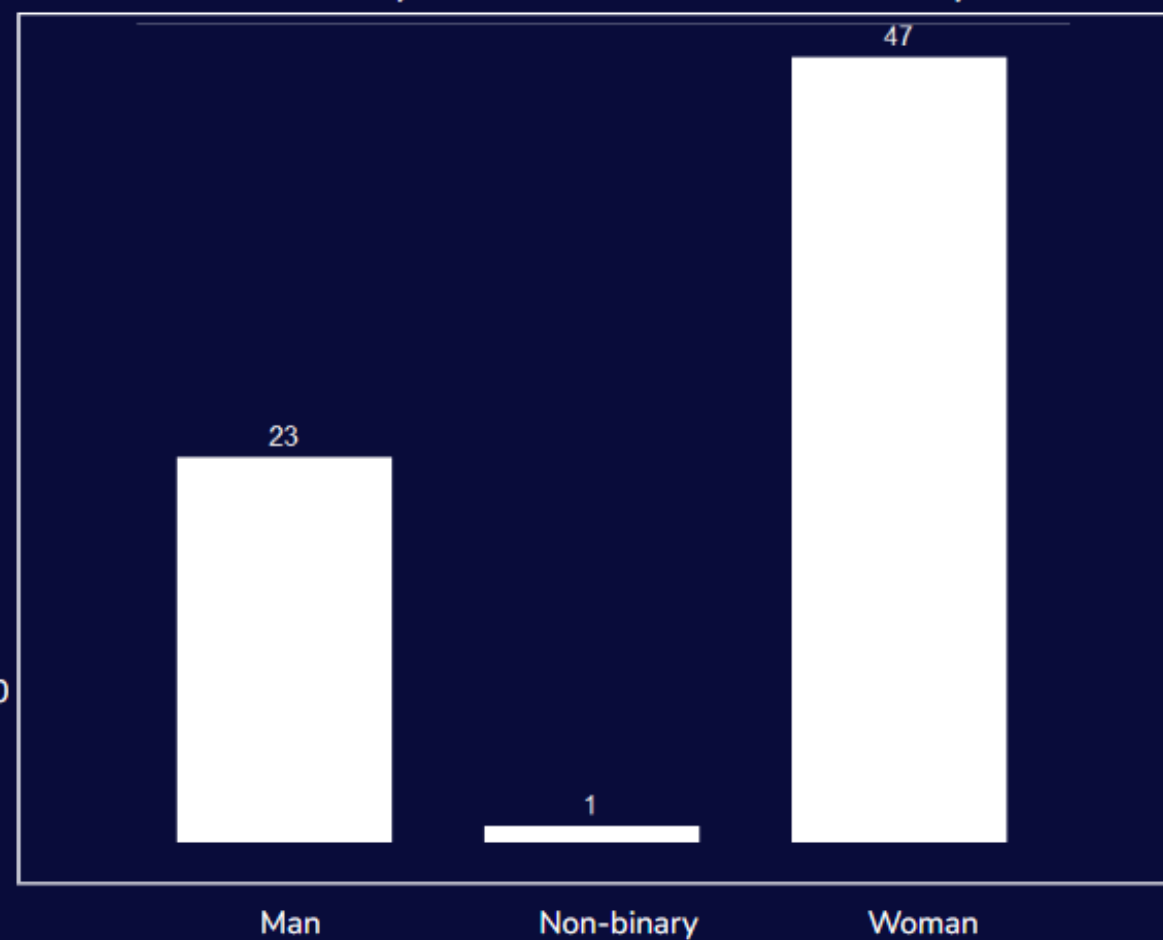
71 responses



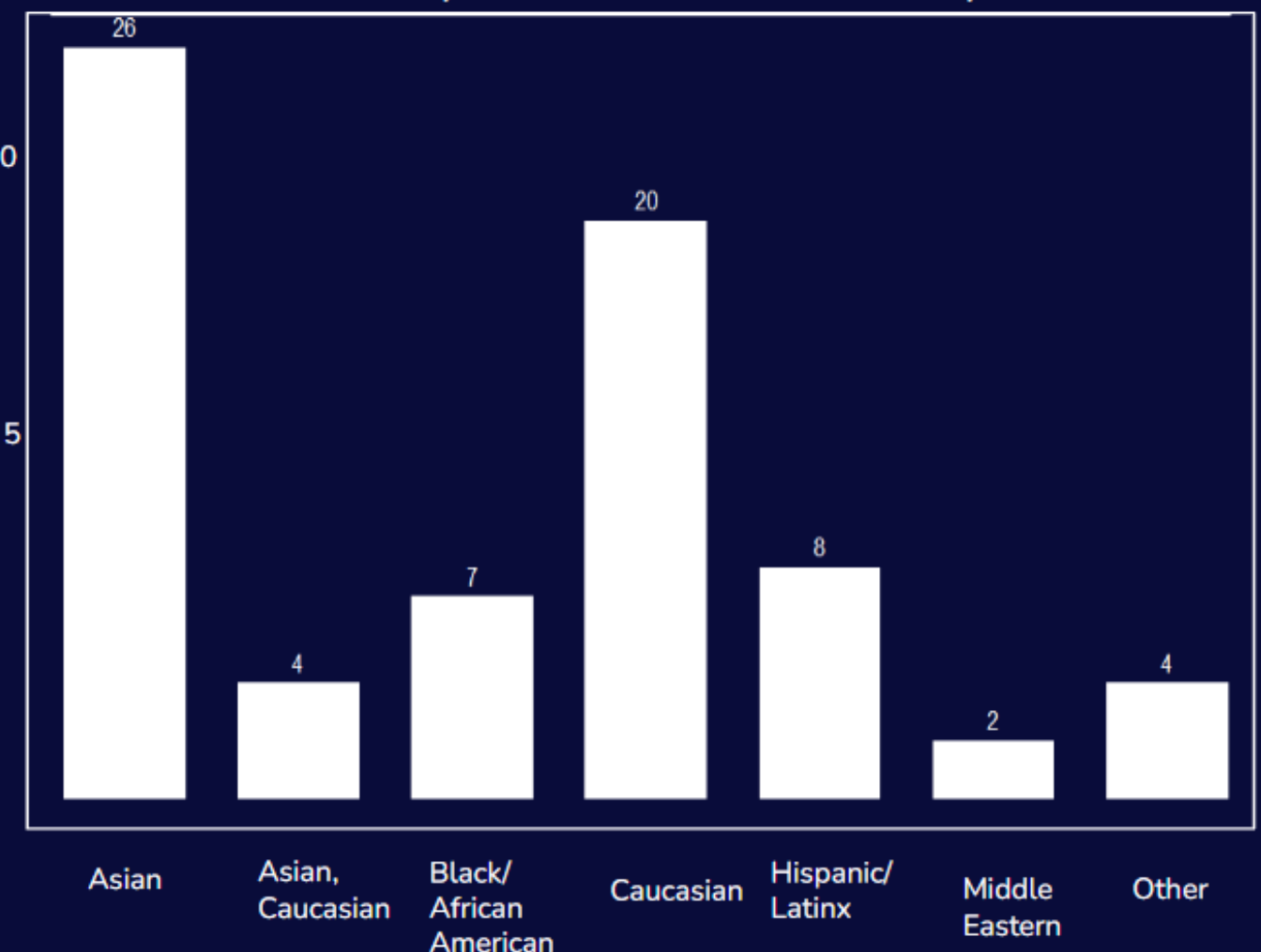
- Yes
- No

### Student Pulse Survey - Spring 2023

Gender diversity from the student pulse survey



Racial diversity from the student pulse survey

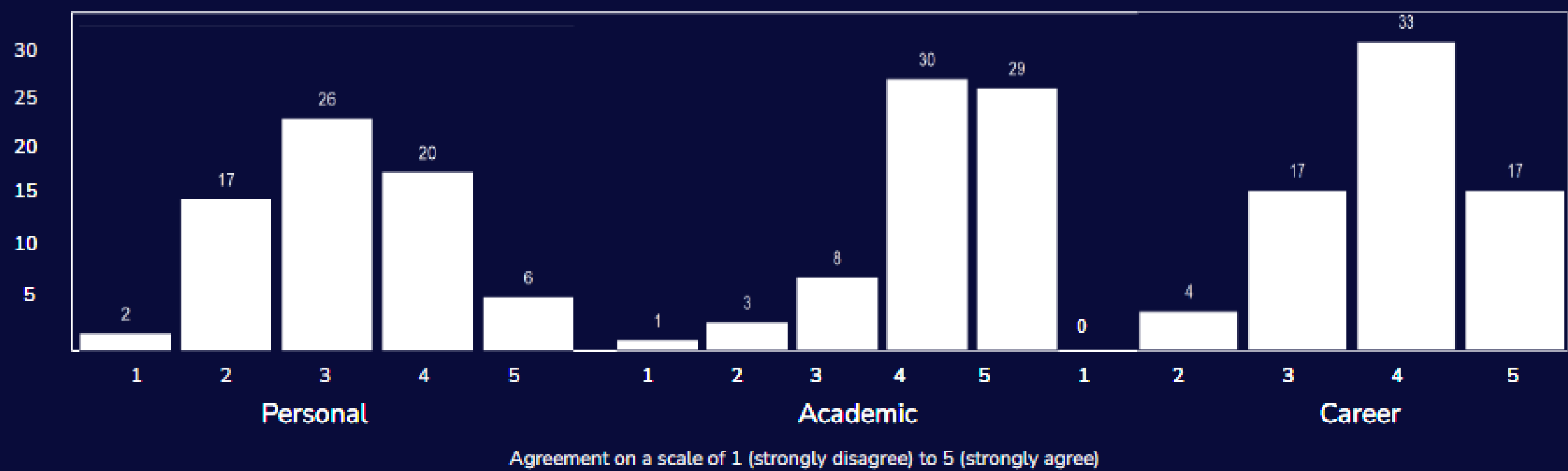




## Appendix

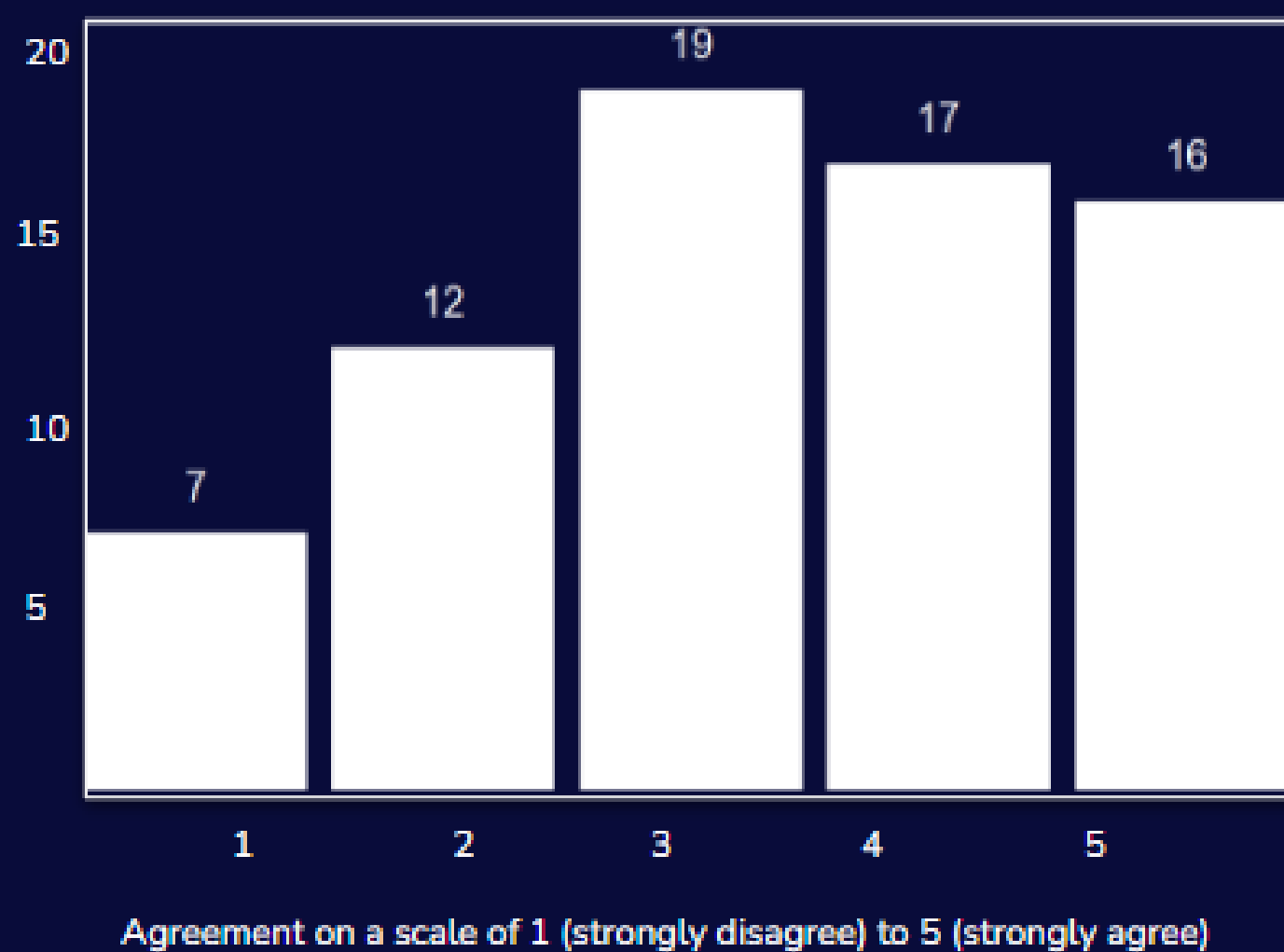
*Additional survey results and data*

Faculty are accessible for personal, academic, and career mentorship.



*Students find that faculty are not as available for personal mentorship as they are for academic or career mentorship.*

SEAS faculty should integrate material on DEI and/or community engagement in technical coursework.



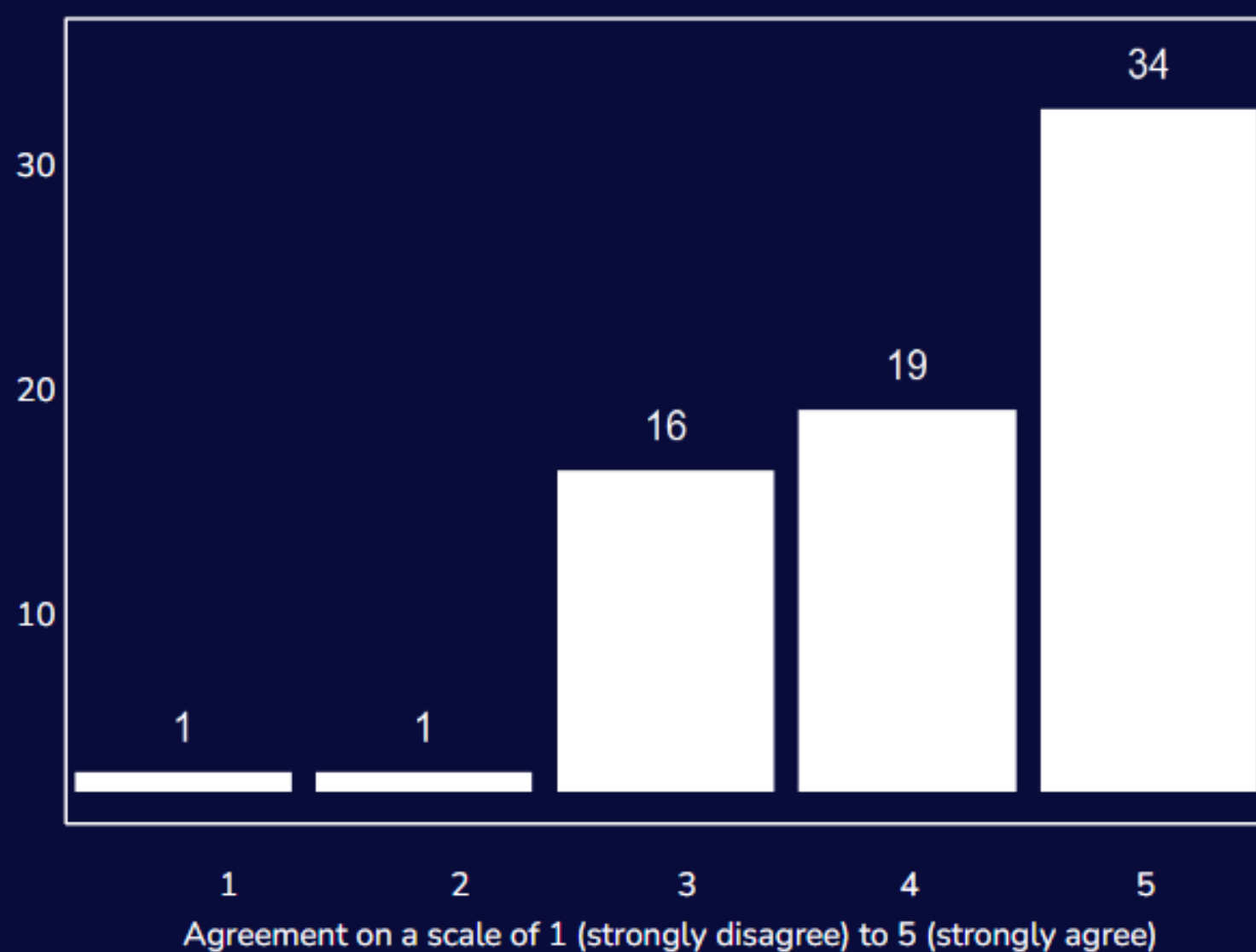
*Students had mostly supportive or neutral feelings about integrating DEI into course curricula.*



## Appendix

*Additional survey results and data*

SEAS departments should have DEI committees to promote DEI and community within majors.



74.6% of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that engineering departments should have DEI committees to promote DEI and community within majors.