

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

Experiences of Ethnic and Racial Minority Undergraduate Students within the College of
Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Florida

Cynthia Gutierrez

University of Florida

Honors Thesis

Cynthia Gutierrez, Undergraduate Student

Cecilia E. Suarez, Faculty Advisor

Andrew Thoron, Undergraduate Honors Coordinator

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

Abstract

This study provides insight into the experiences of undergraduate ethnic and racial minorities pursuing a career path in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Florida. Students that participated in this study shared individual experiences and personal stories revolving around their racial and ethnic identities that have impacted their choice in major and career path in general at the University of Florida. This study surveyed 10 students, whose names were changed to protect their identities, from across six different majors. In this study, 70% of participants stated that their identities affected their lives or academic experience in a certain manner and acknowledged their individual identities could impact their future profession. Additionally, 50% of the students who participated in this study stated a driving force for their education and profession was to educate, help, and reach out to underrepresented or misrepresented communities with identities like theirs in the future. By understanding this, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences can provide greater support from the influences and experiences that enrich the lives of minority students pursuing a career in any of the fields provided by the college.

Literature Review

Throughout childhood education students are taught about many different industries, from X to Y, such as those that arose during the Industrial Revolution, like the steel, automotive, and others (History, 2009). One such industry, agriculture, has undergone much progress due to technology, advanced education, and the government. Pivotal events related to agriculture date back to the establishment of land grant institutions with the Land-Grant College Act of 1862, or Morrill Act, that provided granted land to states to create colleges specializing in agriculture and mechanic arts (National Agricultural Library, N.D.). Other Acts, such as the Hatch Act of 1887, helped pave the way for agriculture with research from experimental farms, disease control, as well as feeding and fattening livestock (National Institute of Food and Agriculture). Yet, it was not until the second Morrill Act of 1890 that allowed underrepresented groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, enter the realm of agriculture education, but at a cost. The second Morrill Act forced each state with funding for Whites to open their facilities to Black students or to provide separate learning facilities (Seevers & Graham, 2012).

In 2003, women were “~50% of the undergraduate population in animal science departments at the original land grant state universities, but racial minorities lag far behind”, as stated in the *Journal of Animal Science* (Beck & Swanson, 2003, pg. 2895). Although female populations at land-grant universities were increasing, the turnout of female operators just in the farmer sector were decreasing, as reported by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) (Census Highlights, 2012). One can argue that females of any race are not primarily interested in farming compared to other agricultural sectors of the industry, but this is one statistic that demonstrates the decrease of minority commitment to the industry for reasons not always clear to others.

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

Even with laws prohibiting race, gender, and ethnicity discrimination from impeding employment or education opportunities, minority numbers are still shrinking. In a recent study conducted by the Washington Post, Black enrollment is shrinking at Florida's premier universities; University of Florida and Florida State University, worrying administrators of damaging the school's world class standing and college experience (Samuels, 2015). Research conducted by the Journal of Dairy Science shows that students who classify themselves as minorities, do not pursue an animal science major due to discrimination or difficulty to prosper in the field because of demographics (Casey & Plaut, 2003). Institutions, like the University of Florida, have implemented programs specifically to introduce and encourage minorities to health and science majors, but this does not promise a student's commitment to that major up to graduation (UF Summer Program). These programs are potentially the support system students who identify as minorities, ethnic/racial and gender, need in order to continue striving for their future profession.

Although there has been a progression made towards the inclusion of minorities into agriculture with the creation of organizations, such as Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), these organizations still have ways to go to increase more minority participation in the industry. A study conducted by Pennsylvania State University professors focused on assessing the leadership skills and professional development found that members are receiving the desired needs, but the organization at this specific university was addressing the needs of African American members, as African Americans comprised the majority of membership demographic (Foster & Henson, 1992). This was the case for Pennsylvania State University with its MANRRS organization focused on the needs of its members. This research, if conducted at different universities, can vary depending on the

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

demographics of the members.

Yet, with organizational help, it does not erase the perception that most minorities may have the “legacy of minority youth perceiving agriculture as occupations involving manual labor with low pay and low prestige” (Talbert, Larke, & Jones, 1999, pg. 90). With history depicting minorities as only slaves, manual laborers, and seasonal migrant employees, it creates a sense of impossibility to advance in agricultural careers and education for minorities today. Additionally, it has become a supporting point to argue that minorities contribute to the agricultural worker make-up, but not as the employer or scientist. The perception of agricultural opportunities to minorities is not seen the same as for a non-marginalized race or ethnicity.

There are many factors that affect decision-making and sentiment for such perceptions, but there is no pinpoint, specific reason that impacts all minorities the same. Factors that impact minorities vary from fear of discrimination, socio-economic status, career self-efficacy, support systems, exposure to agriculture, and family attitudes. Previous studies show that minority youth do not receive the same quality education as non-marginalized race and ethnicities (Jean-Philippe, et.al). This also is a strong factor into why minorities may not receive the same experience as other races, because lack of knowledge and confidence in material.

Overall, in science-based careers and education, minorities such as Hispanics, African Americans, American Indians, and women are underrepresented in science workforce, possibly due to all or a combination of the factors previously listed. It is to be noted that the USDA reported 37,745 male operators compared to 9,995 female operators in Florida. Additionally, 68,753 White operators compared to five racial minority groups that were only a fifteenth of the White statistic (National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2016). There is not enough current or

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

updated data to support partial assumptions nor to reject theories, hence, why the purpose of this study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand and examine experiences ethnic and racial minority undergraduate students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Florida, and how it impacts this population's education. This project will assist the University of Florida's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences understand the experiences undergraduate minorities may have that impact the academic path selected and potentially provide more focused support opportunities.

The College of Agricultural Life and Sciences at the University of Florida provides many majors and field concentrations for students to strive in. Yet, there is a gap between the number of undergraduate minorities receiving bachelor's degrees compared to those who enroll. Race and ethnic minorities are, but not limited to be, Latinos, Blacks, Asians, and Pacific-Islanders. According to a 2016 report conducted by the Black Student Affairs Task Force, there already is an "impact of the declining enrollment numbers for Black students at UF presenting challenges related to the university's mission statement and campus climate for Black students" (Division of Student Affairs). Information is needed to determine factors as to why this may be more prominent within minorities at the university within this specific college. Information gathered in this study can be used by the college to provide increased and deliberative support to racial and ethnic minority students and to strengthen recruitment efforts.

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

Objective

The objectives of this study are as follow:

1. Understand the experiences of ethnic and racial minority undergraduate students within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences while pursuing a bachelor's degree.
2. Examine what factors have impacted this population's academic experience the most.

Methodology

This qualitative study consisted of 30-60-minute-long individual interviews to capture the narratives and experiences of the targeted population. With approval from the Institutional Review Board (Case IRB201800093), an email was sent to undergraduate students within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences for recruitment of participants. Recruitment emails and information were also sent to on-campus organizations. Target organizations for recruitment were University of Florida's Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences, Collegiate 4-H, Minority Pre-Vet Club, and the Multicultural & Diversity Affairs. Students took a one to three-minute demographic survey, and if interested, submitted contact information to participate in interviews.

Students were asked the following questions during individual interviews:

1. Why did you select a major in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences?
2. What identities are most salient (most important) to you?
3. How do your identities impact your academic experience within CALS?
4. What has impacted your academic experience the most?
5. How do your identities impact your academic experience in your future profession?

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

6. Who or what, if any, are your support system on campus? In CALS?

a. Why are these your support systems?

Acknowledging that each student's experience may be different, it was not known how personal the experiences could get so maintaining questions in a general format allowed participants to answer however they felt most natural and comfortable.

Subjectivity Statement

As the main researcher for this thesis, my sole purpose in conducting this study was to learn, understand, and comprehend the experiences, positive or negative, of other minorities within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the university. I grew up in a big city, full of other minorities, and with little interaction and involvement in the agriculture industry. I did not become involved in the industry until high school where I raised and exhibited livestock. Within those four years, I gained a lot of knowledge, lessons, and experiences from doubt to hope and recognition. This is not the same experience fellow students of a racial/ethnic minority felt. Those experiences and from my childhood impacted how I view the industry today, how I wish to continue pursuing my career within agriculture, and how I want to help others. This study is only one step forward to those goals.

Participant Recruitment, Selection, & Overview

Recruitment

In order to recruit participants, a demographic survey was created via Qualtrics to narrow down individuals that met the criteria for this study. The survey was distributed to undergraduate students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Florida Collegiate 4-H,

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

University of Florida Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences, Minority Pre-Vet Club, and the Multicultural & Diversity Affairs. There was no incentive or reward for taking the survey or participating in the study. The survey explicitly stated the purpose of the study, that interviews may last between 30-60 minutes, that all information shared in this survey, including contact information, would be kept confidential, and if there was no availability for a face-to-face interview, a telephone interview was possible. When participants interested in interviews were contacted, they were reminded that they can agree to not be recorded during the interview, would receive no repercussions for deciding to leave the study, as well as it depended on their availability for time and location of the interviews.

Selection

To recruit the target audience, the survey asked specific demographic questions to narrow down eligible participants. The survey was sent to organizations that had members identifying as minorities or the organization was aimed for minorities, in order to follow the purpose of this study. After the survey date closed, there was a review of respondents. Eligible and consenting respondents were contacted, and interviews were set, both face-to-face and telephone interviews. The demographic surveys consisted of asking current undergraduate students at the university their major, undergraduate year, to self-identify as an ethnic minority, sexual orientation, and for basic contact information if selected to participate in interview process.

Overview

The interview responses were analyzed holistically to determine the experiences that have impacted the population's undergraduate experience in the College of Agricultural and Life

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

Sciences the most. Experiences may not explain fully all the reasons or feelings that attribute to minorities pursuing or not pursuing a career or major in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, or an agriculture-based career, but provide greater insight into this population by centering their experiences in this project. The following charts depict demographics of students that participated in interviews only.

In Figure 1, respondents in this study were 70% Black/African American and 30% were Hispanic/Latino. Respondents' race/ethnicity was only one of the criteria required to participate in the study.

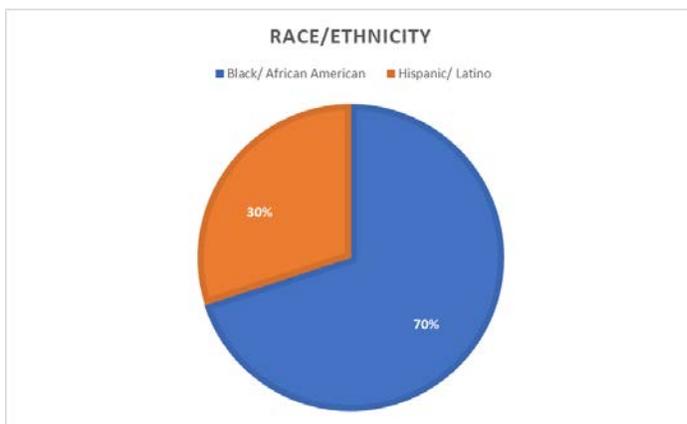


Figure 1

In Figure 2, Respondents in this study were 70% females and 30% males. Respondents' gender was only one of the criteria required to participate in the study.

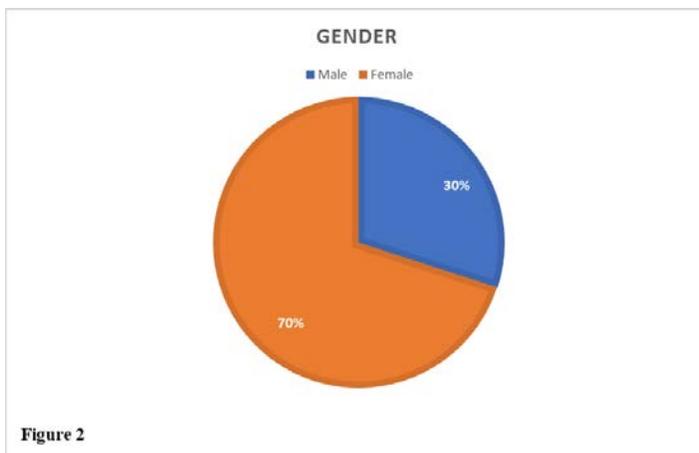
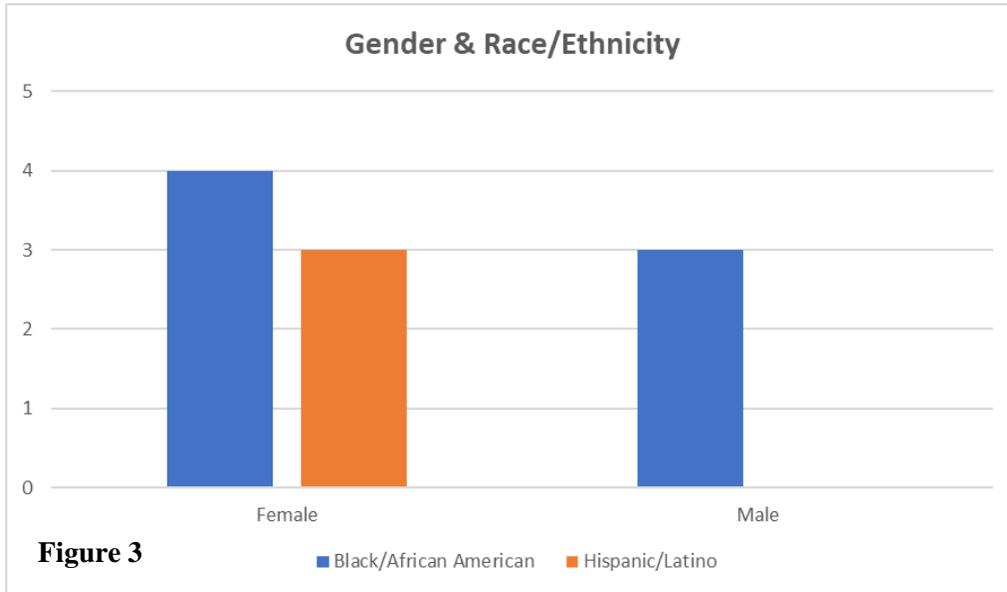


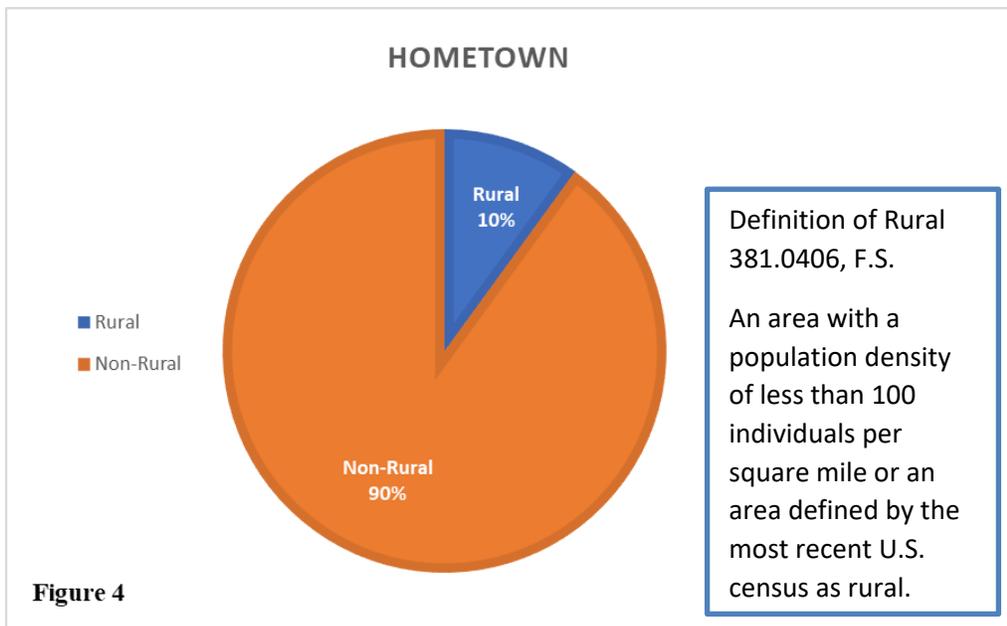
Figure 2

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

In Figure 3, the information is clearer as to how many males and females of each race participated in the study.

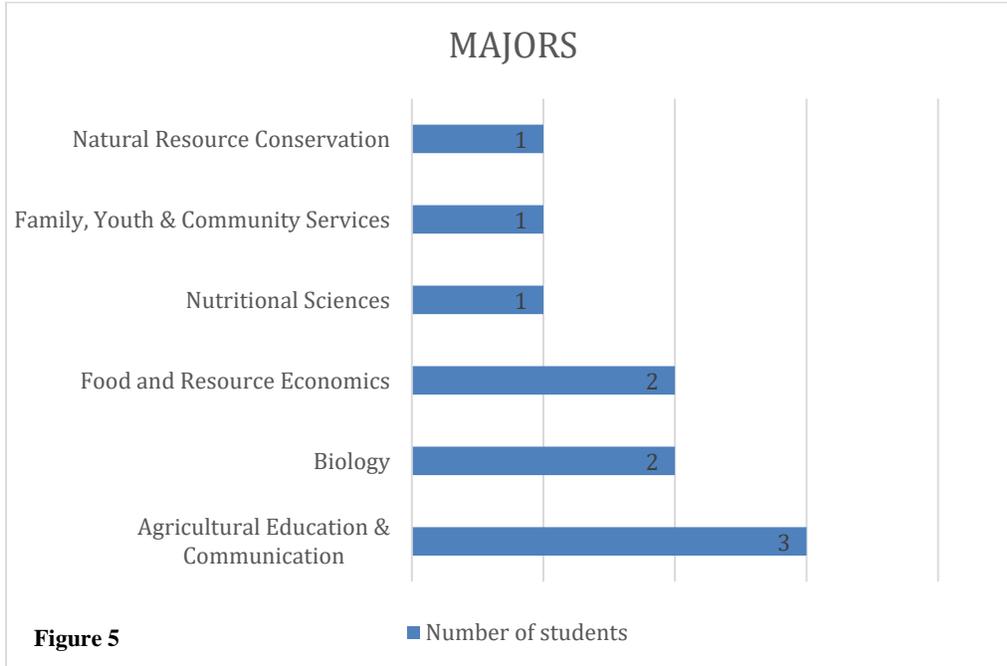


In Figure 4, respondent hometowns, or areas where they were born or raised, had an impact on what they learn and what is available for opportunity, such as how some students in rural areas may not have the same opportunities as students from cities, and vice versa. Classifying hometowns as rural or not, may impact responses.

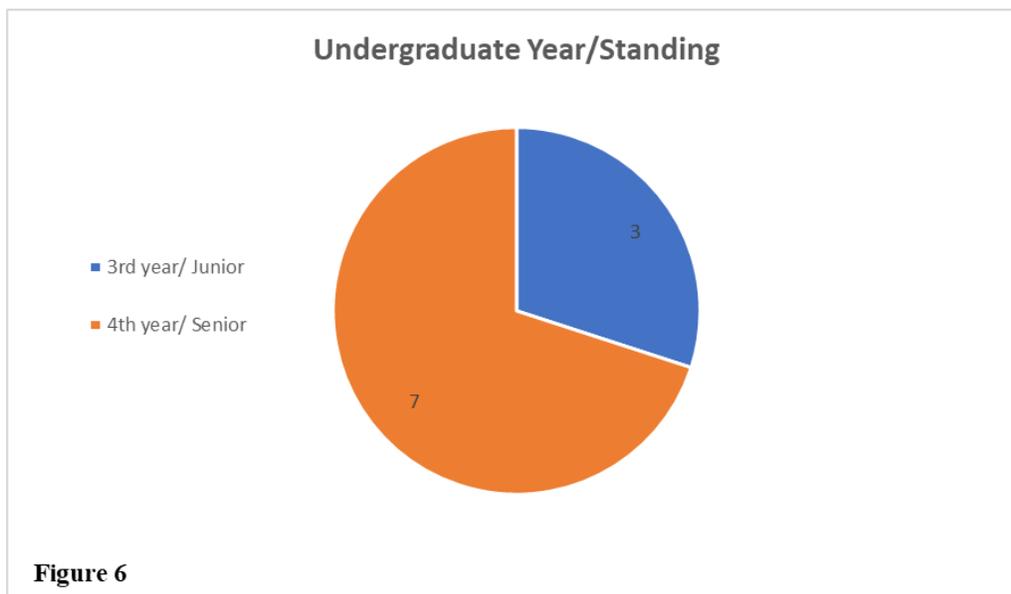


EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

In Figure 5, one can see the majors of students that participated in this study. As shown above, there were more Agricultural Education & Communication majors that participated. Student majors were only one of the criteria required to participate in the study.



In Figure 6, seven of the 10 participants were seniors or fourth year students, while the remaining three were juniors or third year students. Respondents undergraduate year/standing was only one of the criteria required to participate in the study.



Results & Findings

After conducting the ten interviews, I transcribed all interviews, coded for themes, and reviewed the notes and correlations made throughout interviews. The following interviews were kept confidential and included in this thesis with participant consent. Student names were also changed to protect the identities of the participants.

Question 1: Why did you select a major in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences?

Participant areas of study and varied among six different majors; Agricultural Education and Communication, Food and Resource Economics, Biology, Nutritional Sciences, Natural Resource Conservation, and Family, Youth, and Community Sciences. Each participant had their own reasons for why they selected a major such as the major taught them skills necessary for their career path, it was their passion, or it was similar to Lisa, a fourth year Agricultural Education and Communication major from Miami, Florida, “Being from the city, I did not have that [agricultural] experience. So, I thought it would be cool to actually reach back into the city to teach kids about agriculture”. Likewise, Maripili, a fourth year Food and Resource Economics major specializing in Food and Agribusiness Marketing and Management stated:

“I’ve seen the poverty in Venezuela and the food insecurity and it triggered my interest in food and the sciences, the economics. I initially wanted to do food science, but I supposed that doing research on food insecurity and helping the economy with aide has steered me to food and resources economics.”

It was testimonials such as that, that should bring awareness to institutions and departments on how to better serve their students, especially minorities.

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

Question 2: What identities are most salient (most important) to you?

Many of the participants were proud of their identities, placing the importance on how their race and gender primarily, are driving forces behind their passion and livelihood like Maripili does stating, “I think more than ever, today being a female is more important because society is being empowered by all these feminists, so I think it very important in this generation”. To Carl, a Black/ African American male and Food and Resource Economics major, specializing in Food and Agribusiness Marketing and Management junior, he states his identities are “not really that important. I just look at it as this is the way it is. I am more concerned about getting into a field, never thought about actually being a minority. People usually bring it up, but it is one of the things that never really bothered me, so I never really thought about it.” On the other hand, third year Nutritional Sciences female from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, Sherr, emphasizes her true identity as being from the Caribbean, “I typically identify as a Black female, but I am Caribbean so that is a more important identity to me than just identifying with the Black community”. There were also participants, like Mary the third year Biology major from Miami, Florida believes that “being Hispanic is a big part of my identity, but I don’t think it is more important than anything else. I definitely consider myself a student, a volunteer, a catholic and those are all big parts of my life as well.”

Question 3: How do your identities impact your academic experience within CALS?

Although a few participants stated their identities did not set much or any importance or impact their lives, for others it is what they cannot help but notice at times just as Carl, the Food and Resource Economics junior does stating,

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

“At one time it is kind of weird when you walk into a class of 300 people and there are only 3 Black people. It is not something that bothers me, it is just something you notice. But it does not affect me in what I am doing, it is just a statistic that is just there.”

Similarly, this was the case for Agricultural Education and Communication senior, Lisa,

“I don’t think my identity has impacted my academics per say, I do think it is a little bit tougher for me in the agriculture industry because the industry is predominantly Caucasian, so I feel like an outsider. But, it’s fine. It hasn’t affected me academically to be honest but does make me feel on the outside”.

This seemed to be more of a consistent response for Black/ African Americans in these majors than any other race or ethnicity. That response was seen as well with organizations or clubs, like the following testimonial from Shelia, another senior in Agricultural Education and Communication from Miami, Florida:

“I think that often times in CALS, when I look at for example CALS Ambassadors, I don’t see a lot of diversity amongst those [ambassadors]. I feel that in my major when it comes to leadership and different opportunities there is as much diversity as possible, but there is not much diversity to begin with. But when I do run for things, or speak up, I do feel that my voice is heard, but I think on a level of the college itself, there can be a better job done with that. They can do better with actually diversifying what’s going on or reaching out to different students of different backgrounds, asking how they can better serve them as a college advisor or as a whole.”

For other students, being the minority, gender wise, is what they have noticed in their classes or clubs. For female Maripili in the Food and Resource Economics major, she saw that she would be one of the few, if not only, females in her courses. The opposite experience was shared by DJ, a fourth year Family, Youth, and Community Sciences male with being one of the very few men and Black men in his major and courses.

Question 4: What has impacted your academic experience the most?

For this specific question, participants were encouraged to share their most impactful experience to their education, not necessarily in connection to any of their identities. Yet for a

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

few participants, their experiences circled back to their identities. Coincidentally, those few participants were participants that stated their identities were of high importance to their livelihood. This was the case DJ, the Family, Youth, and Community Sciences senior stating, “by joining organizations on campus because you surround yourself with people like you, almost like a home away from home, but right here on campus.” Similarly, Shelia, the Black/African American Agricultural Education and Communication senior conveyed:

“Also, getting into agriculture in general from a younger age was positive leading up to it [my major at the University of Florida], so I knew that this is a field that, I don’t know exactly what I want to do, but I am passionate about. I think that was very insightful and am glad I had the opportunity to do so, especially being from a big city where agriculture is not common where I grew up. This too, and it may be odd, but when I did show livestock, and did well one year I was at the fair, I heard a Caucasian man saying to all the other children that were at the fair ‘you let this girl from Miami out of all places come show you up’. That has been a driving factor because it is like I am not going to let the color of my skin or the fact that I am a girl deter me from anything I want to do, whether it be in agriculture or in tourism or in applying to a job because at the end of the day I am going to show you up and show you, Yes I am better than you”.

Other testimonials included professor and advisor guidance and support, volunteering, and other opportunities that seemed exclusive to the University of Florida as stated by Sherr, third year Nutritional Sciences major:

“I never thought I would be a part of a lot of things that I have done during my time here. For example, I was able to study abroad, complete an internship at a different school, and still make a difference on campus within different organizations, as well as influencing first and second year students to be just as involved as I am.”

Question 5: How do your identities impact your academic experience in your future profession?

Participants, whether they stated there was importance to their identities or not, shared how they thought their identities could impact their future profession as a result of their current studies in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Interestingly, participants that did not place high importance on their identities or stated that their identities did not affect their current academic experience, acknowledged that their identities would be a factor into their future

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

profession, such as Rebecca, fourth year Black/African American Biology major from Miami, Florida:

“I want to go to medical school, and there are not many female position in the field right now, so it [my identities] would definitely have an impact on my future profession when I start applying. I don’t think they would at me any different because of statistics, but it would help the statistics if I were to get in and improve Black female positions in the country.”

Other participants hope to defy the stigma of their race or gender according to their field, just Hispanic female Maripili from West Palm Beach, Florida hopes to achieve in her Food and Resource Economics major and career path, “In agriculture, it is predominately White race, so I am hoping to break some barriers, being a female and Hispanic to change the game”.

Question 6: Who or what, if any, are your support system on campus? In CALS? Why?

Every participant when asked this question took a moment to think about those who they consider their backbone, motivation, and team. Generally, most participants included family, friends in their major, friends in organizations, advisors, professors, and mentors. Although a few support systems exist on campus or in the college due to the level of comfort, for one participant stated, “there is not a club that I would feel most comfortable at in all honesty that is geared for minorities.”. All support systems included the manner in how their systems guided them to better choices, encouraged them to continue striving for greatness, and most of all, being there when they were needed most.

For fourth year Black/African American Agricultural Education and Communication major, Albert, being involved in organizations where he knows “at the end of the day I can go back see my friends and associates I have made in those organizations and express myself and that is what keeps me grounded.” Additionally, having organizations such as scholar program,

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

like the one Sabrina, a fourth Natural Resource Conservation major, has that “aims at enhancing diversity in conservation and thanks to that program I have had experiences. Even the advisor is always sending out emails for opportunities, recommendation letters, and mentors we meet bi-weekly to help write resumes, cover letters, curriculum vitae, etc. They helped me apply for graduate school and helped me realize that is the path for me. I am really close with the friends I have there, and they motivate me for more and better.”

Discussion

The findings of this study could suggest multiple reasons why undergraduate minorities in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences may have decided to pursue their current field of interest. Understanding that majority of the participants from this study were driven by their identities as a minority to contribute back to their communities, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences could enhance organizations to promote volunteer work, internships, and more opportunities to minority communities that students identify with.

Many of the participants in this study were from further south of the University of Florida, primarily from Miami-Dade County and Miami the actual city. This could be perceived as a reason student may have difficulties feeling comfortable or at ease in their courses in the college. In 2013, the University of Florida’s Black undergraduate enrollment decreased from a peak of 3,571 in 2009 to a low of 2,346 as stated in data collected by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Reports (IPEDS, 2013). With most of the participants from Miami being Black/African American, this information could be discouraging, increasing the lack of diversity and commonalities in their classes and among their peers.

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

Agriculture alone is miscommunicated to the public and perceived only as farm work or working in a laboratory. These misconceptions may be reasons there are not many students that belong to minority racial and ethnic groups. It could be argued that due to this, there may be more Hispanics compared to Blacks in an area of the industry, or that there are more men than women in another area such as Agribusiness.

Additional factors that could be considered if there were a more in depth analyze of the participants and their backgrounds. For some students, such as Maripili, seeing the poverty in Venezuela, similarly for Mary with her knowledge of Hispanic misconceptions and lack of knowledge of health checks in countries like Nicaragua, is what has driven these two young ladies to their current majors. Yet, this was not the case for all participants, as they would be the first in their families or peer groups to pursue a major or path in the Agricultural and Life Sciences area. Consequently, breaking into the major or communities may be difficult.

For sure there are factors not considered into the responses as responses varied per participant and it was encouraged to be as open as possible, but there were no repercussions for not elaborating on any responses.

Limitations

While this study provides insight into a population of students whose voice and experiences are often overlooked, misunderstood, or simply unknown, as with any study, there were some limitations. This study took place during Spring 2018. The Spring semester's main break is Spring Break, which is drawn out after midterms. This caused restrictions in student time availabilities to do face-to-face interviews, resulting in telephone interviews as well. If the process could have started a year in advance, it could give more feedback to the college from a

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

larger sample. Telephone interviews also created a less controllable environment since participants may not speak as freely over the phone, as in person.

Another limitation is the lack of email responses. Although the survey was sent to various organizations, it does not guarantee an immediate distribution of the survey to organizations member email list. Additionally, there were more female responses than male responses, likewise as more Black/African American responses than any other race. These results may be viewed as incomplete since there was not an even number of each race, ethnicity, or gender.

Recommendations

For further research to be made for this study, or a similar study, it is highly recommended to look at other minority categories, such as gender and sexual orientation. The results of a similar study focused on another category of minorities can shed more light onto issues or varied experiences on students and how it impacts them today. Although focusing on only one aspect will not answer all the questions one may have about why students may pursue a career or major at a college, it paves the path to understanding why maybe some do not. In reference to participant recruitment, I would suggest using an incentive to obtain more information on the study. Through this process, it was difficult to gain participants due to Spring Break approaching, mid-terms, and other student involvement organizational events and daily schedules. Most of the participants in this study were graduating this semester or rising seniors, both maintaining heavy semester class loads. Although the survey was distributed to many outlets, it is hard to gage how many students would actually take the survey and agree to an interview. Hence why, it is recommended to include an incentive for taking the survey and for

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

participating in an interview and working closely with individuals in this manner than conducting one or more focus groups. This may promise more participants but is not guaranteed. This research provides a small sample of experiences that current students have faced and how it has affected their current and future profession. By increasing the sample size and time frame for the study, the college can gain a better perspective to positively impact the experiences of minorities enrolling into the college. This qualitative study allows for further exploration on reasons why minorities from a certain area of Florida may feel different compared to others. Similarly, by looking at other areas of study such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), more information can be gathered to encourage minorities to continue pursuing their career paths.

Conclusion

This study provides a mere glimpse into the thoughts and perspectives of undergraduate students that identify as minorities in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. The significance of this all was to create awareness of these experiences or address the elephant in the room that minorities must confront each day. Minorities can be considered in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, religion and more. Other minorities that did not participate in this study may think differently than those that took part in this particular survey and interview process, yet the issue still stands that minorities may not be feeling the same results or impacts of the college as the non-marginalized race might. From this study, students may not feel as comfortable in classrooms or organizations. Although, appreciative of the education they are receiving, being the only or one of the few of the individuals that look like them in their classes or majors, makes it difficult to continue their desired path. In this study, 70% of participants stated that their

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

identities affected their lives or academic experience in a certain manner and acknowledged their individual identities could impact their future profession. Additionally, 50% of the students who participated in this study stated a driving force for their education and profession was to later educate, help, and reach out to underrepresented or misrepresented communities with identities like theirs. Participants stated the University of Florida pushes them to continue to do great things with how the university strives to make a comeback for diverse student enrollment, as stated by UF President Kent Fuchs “There is work to be done” (Schweers, 2015).

References

- Beck, M. M., and J. C. Swanson. (2003). Value-added animal agriculture: Inclusion of race and gender in the professional formula¹. *Journal of Animal Science* 81:2895-2903. Pg. 2895. Retrieved September 17, 2017, from <https://www.animalsciencepublications.org/publications/jas/articles/81/11/0812895>
- Casey, T.M., and Plaut, K. (2003). Women and Minorities in Animal Science: Do Issues Exist? (2003, June). *Journal of Dairy Science*. Retrieved September 17, 2017, from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022030203740387>
- Census Highlights. (2012). Retrieved February 23, 2018, from https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/Highlights/Farm_Demographics/#fewer_women
- Division of Student Affairs. (May 2016). Black Student Affairs Task Force Campus Climate Executive Summary. University of Florida Student Affairs. Retrieved September 19, 2017, from http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/uploads/ufsa/BSATF_Report_2016.pdf
- Foster, E., & Henson, W. (1992). MANRRS: The national society for minorities in agriculture, natural resources and related sciences, 1986–92. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 9(1), 434-437. doi:10.1007/bf02226508
- History (2009). Industrial Revolution. Retrieved April 05, 2018, from <https://www.history.com/topics/industrial-revolution>
- IPEDS. (2013). Retrieved March 02, 2018, from <https://ir.aa.ufl.edu/reports/ipeds/>
- Jean-Philippe, S., Richards, J., Gwinn, K., & Beyl, C. (17). Urban Youth Perceptions of Agriculture. *Journal of Youth Development*, 12(3), 2-6. doi:10.5195/jyd.2017.497 |
- National Agriculture Library. (n.d.). Morrill Land Grant College Act. Retrieved February 23, 2018, from <https://www.nal.usda.gov/morrill-land-grant-college-act>
- National Agricultural Statistics Service. (2016). 2016 STATE AGRICULTURE OVERVIEW. Retrieved February 23, 2018, from https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=FLORIDA
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture. (n.d.). The Hatch Act of 1887. Retrieved February 23, 2018, from <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/hatch-act-1887>
- Rural Health Networks. (n.d.). Retrieved February 23, 2018, from http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0300-0399%2F0381%2FSections%2F0381.0406.html

EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITY UNDERGRADUATES IN CALS

Samuels, R. (2015, April 06). After Bush order, Florida universities cope with shrinking black enrollment. Retrieved September 19, 2017, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/after-bush-order-florida-universities-cope-with-shrinking-black-enrollment/2015/04/06/82d1e574-bcfe-11e4-bdfa-b8e8f594e6ee_story.html?utm_term=.46bab5060877

Schweers, J. (2015, January 31). Black enrollment at UF takes a hit. Retrieved March 02, 2018, from <http://www.gainesville.com/news/20150131/black-enrollment-at-uf-takes-a-hit>

Seevers, B., & Graham, D. (2012). The Morrill Act of 1980. In *Education Through Cooperative Extension* (3rd ed., p. 25). Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas.

Talbert, B. A., Larke, J. A., & Jones, W. A. (1999). Using a Student Organization to Increase Participation and Success of Minorities in Agricultural Disciplines. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 74(2), 90-104. doi:10.1207/s15327930pje7402_8

UF summer programs introduce minority students to health careers and research. (2001, August 20). Retrieved September 17, 2017, from <https://ufhealth.org/news/2001/uf-summerprograms-introduce-minority-students-health-careers-and-research>