



Dental Students' Perceptions of and Satisfaction with Faculty Diversity



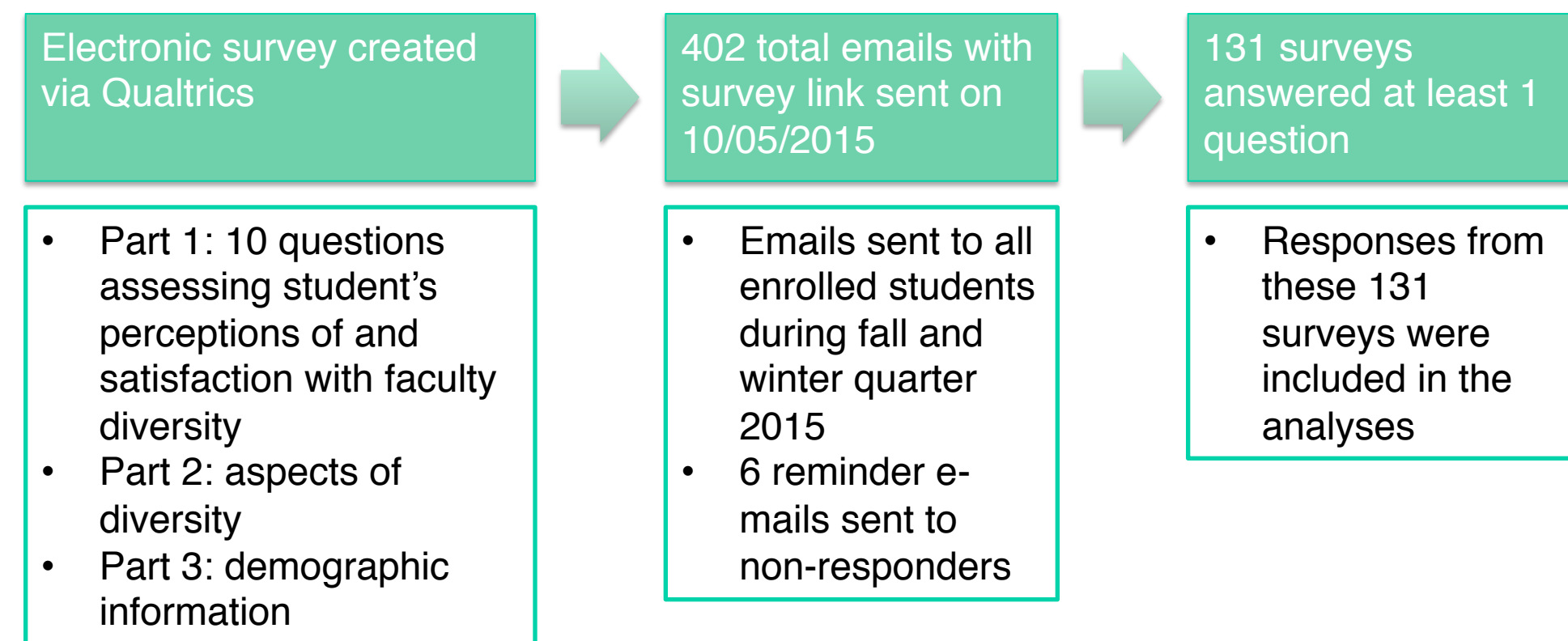
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Introduction

- Student cohorts at dental schools across the United States are becoming increasingly diverse. However, is the changing demographic of the dental student population reflected in the faculty who are tasked with these students' professional education?
- How students perceive faculty is important because faculty members play a critical role in the students' success.
- When faculty do not appear to represent a diverse population, some students may be more affected than others, by the perceived lack of inclusion (Lee, 2010).
- The purpose of this study is to examine UCSF dental students' perceptions of and satisfaction with faculty diversity, their perceptions of faculty diversity's contribution to their educational experience, and their perceptions of faculty respect of student diversity.
- Specifically, we will examine for differences between responses of students of represented racial/ethnic groups, gender, year in school, ESL status, and their enrolled program (traditional DDS vs. International Dentist Program).

Methods and Materials



Results

Fig. 1. Racial/ethnic identity of respondents

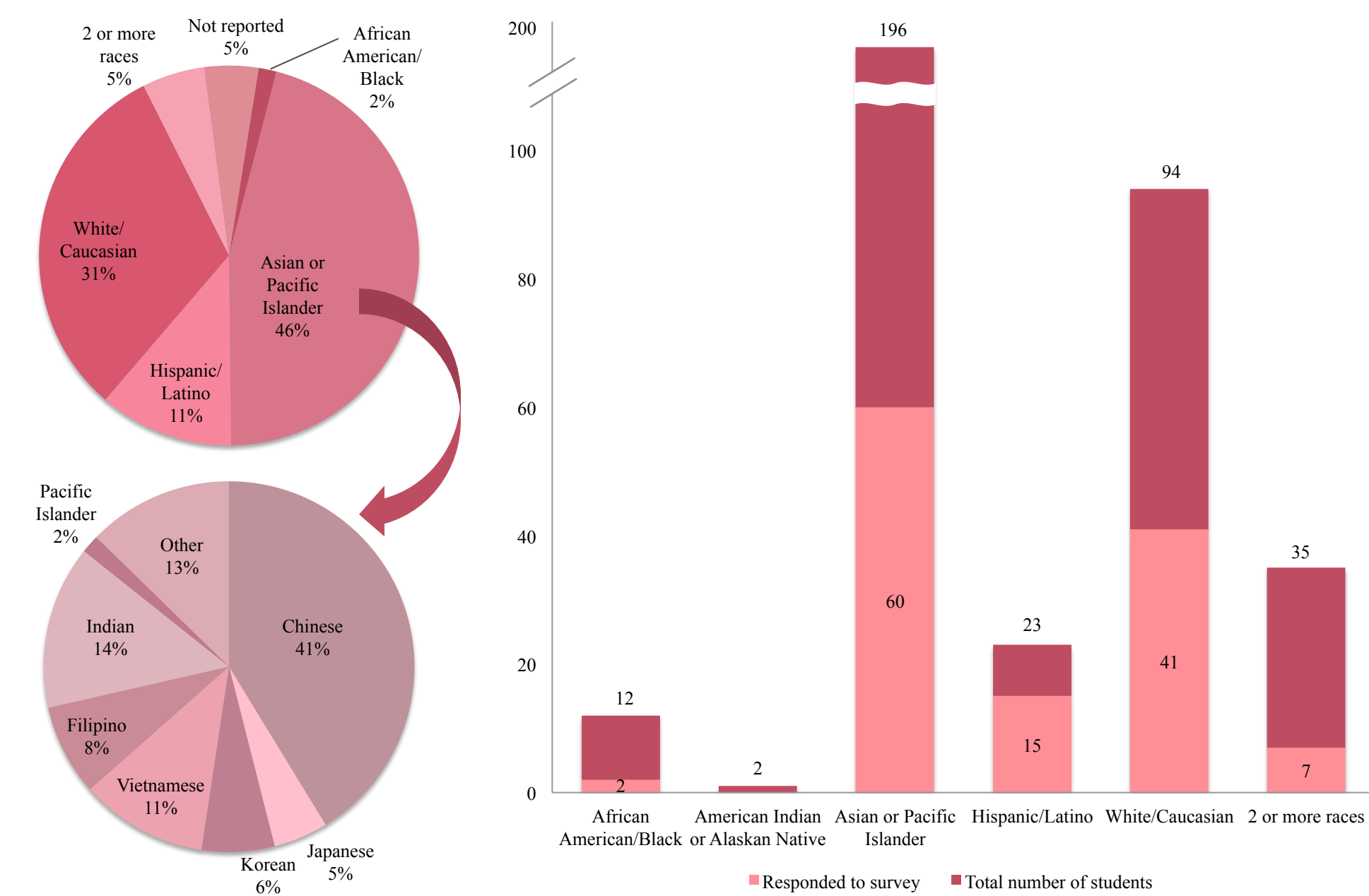


Fig. 2. Class year and program of respondents

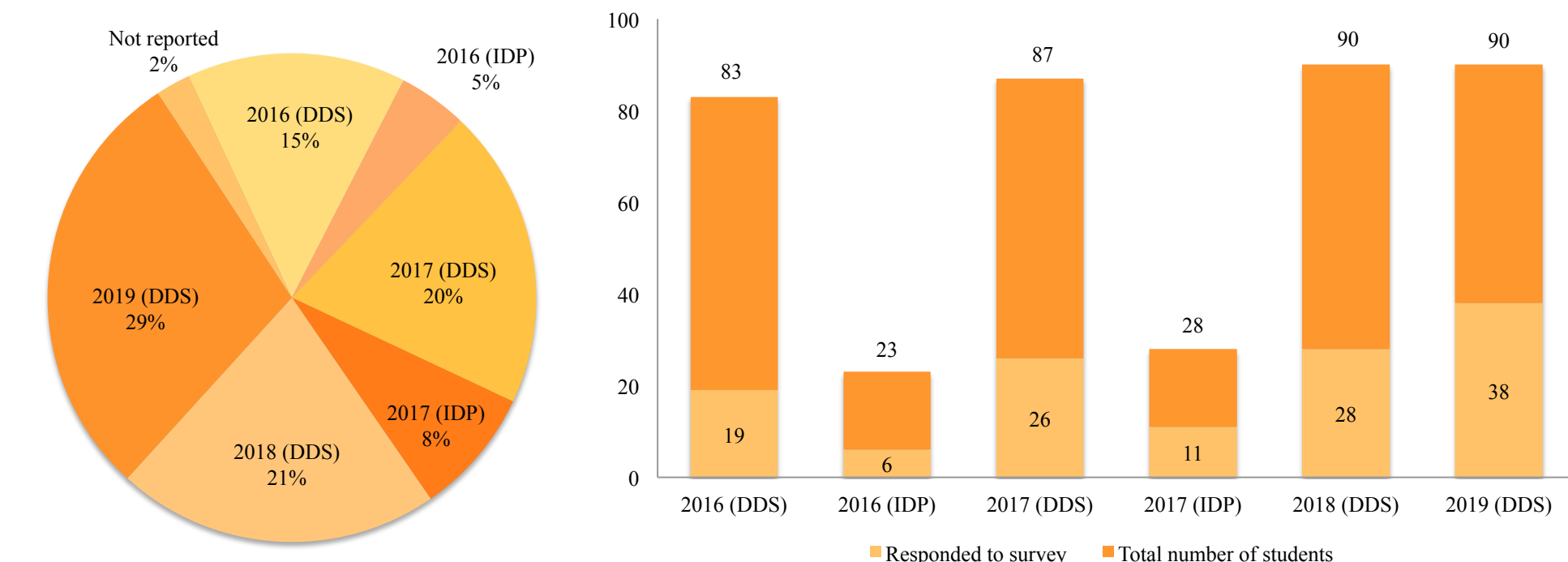


Fig. 3. Gender identity of respondents

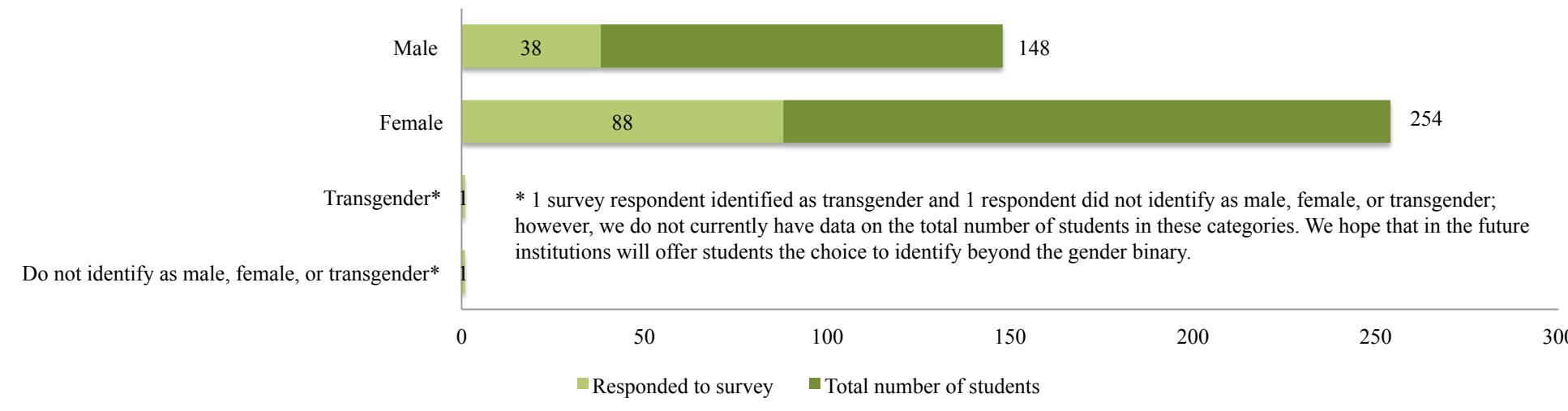
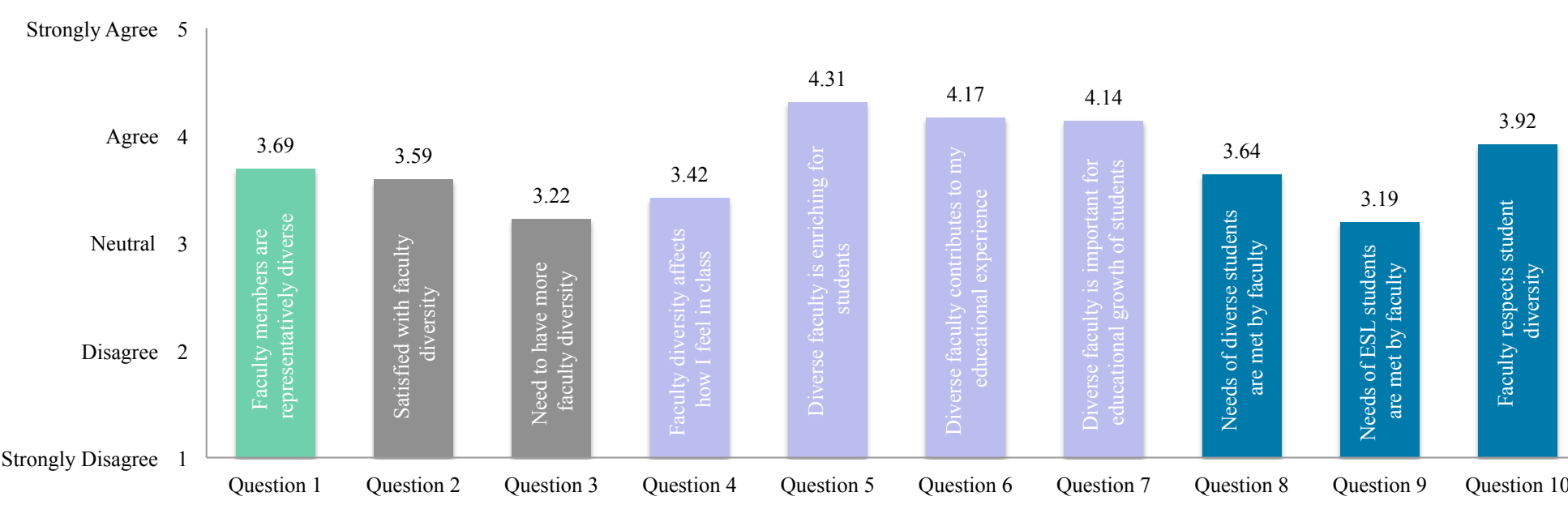


Fig. 4. Part 1 of survey, adapted from Lee, 2010

As you respond to the items below, please think of your personal experiences thus far with faculty (including didactic, pre-clinical/sim lab, and clinical faculty) at the UCSF School of Dentistry. Please think of diversity as including, but not limited to, ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Please select the answer that best reflects your feelings and beliefs. There are no right or wrong answers.

- For the following questions, please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree)
- 1) The faculty members at the UCSF School of Dentistry are representatively diverse.
 - 2) I am satisfied with the degree of diversity among the faculty of the UCSF School of Dentistry.
 - 3) There needs to be more diversity among the faculty members of the UCSF School of Dentistry.
 - 4) Faculty diversity affects how comfortable I feel in my classes.
 - 5) Having a diverse faculty is enriching for the students.
 - 6) Diversity among the faculty contributes to my educational experience.
 - 7) Diversity among faculty members is important for the educational growth of students.
 - 8) Educational needs of students from diverse backgrounds are met by the faculty at the UCSF School of Dentistry.
 - 9) Educational needs of students whose first language is not English are met by the faculty at the UCSF School of Dentistry, in-class and outside of class.
 - 10) I believe the instructors of my classes respect diversity among students.

Fig. 5. Average scores for questions in part 1 of survey (see Fig. 1)



The 10 questions from part 1 of the survey were divided into 4 factors:

- **Factor 1 (question 1):** perception of faculty diversity
 - **Factor 2 (questions 2 and 3 [reverse scored]):** satisfaction with faculty diversity
 - **Factor 3 (questions 4, 5, 6, and 7):** perceived contribution of faculty diversity to students' educational experiences
 - **Factor 4 (questions 8, 9, and 10):** perceptions of faculty respect for diversity among students
- ANOVAs were performed to test for differences between racial/ethnic groups, gender, year in school, ESL status, and the type of program. Significant differences ($p < .05$) denoted by *.

Fig. 6. Average scores for factor 1 – perception of faculty diversity

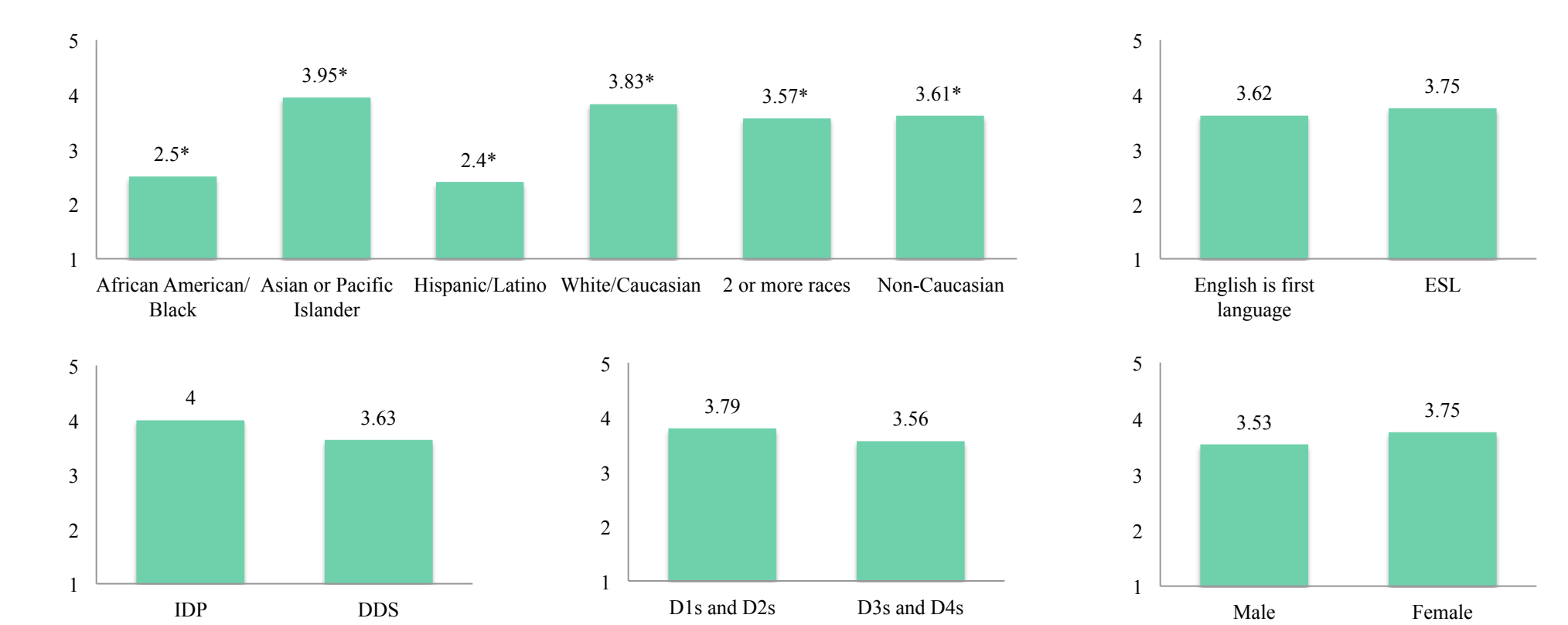


Fig. 7. Average scores for factor 2 – satisfaction with faculty diversity

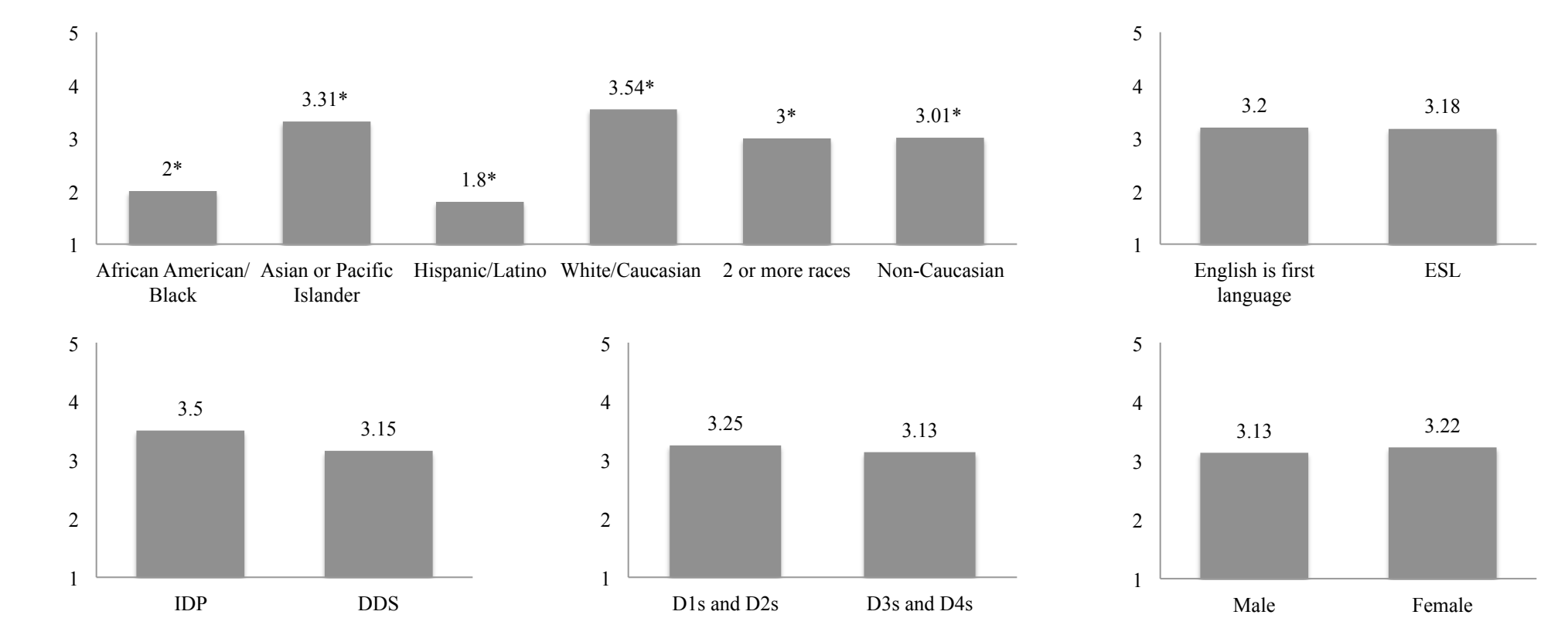


Fig. 8. Average scores for factor 3 – perceived contribution of faculty diversity to students' educational experiences

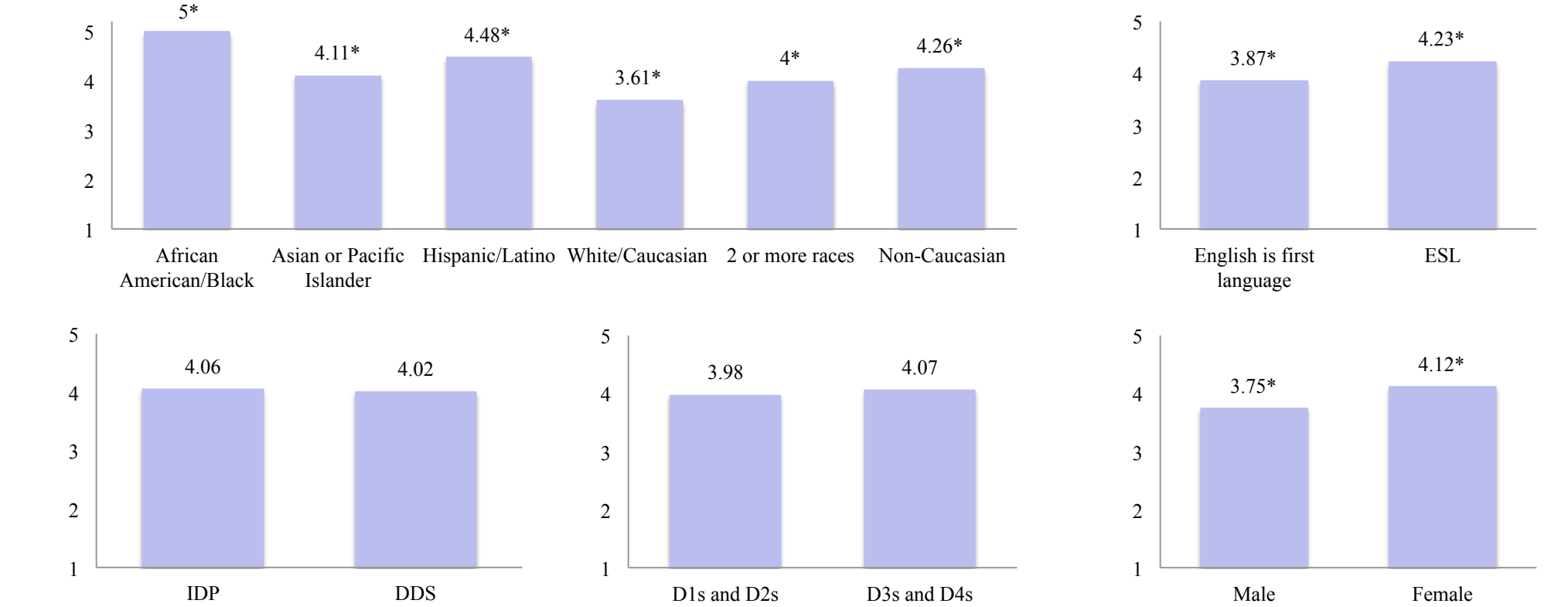


Fig. 9. Average scores for factor 4 – perceptions of faculty respect for student diversity

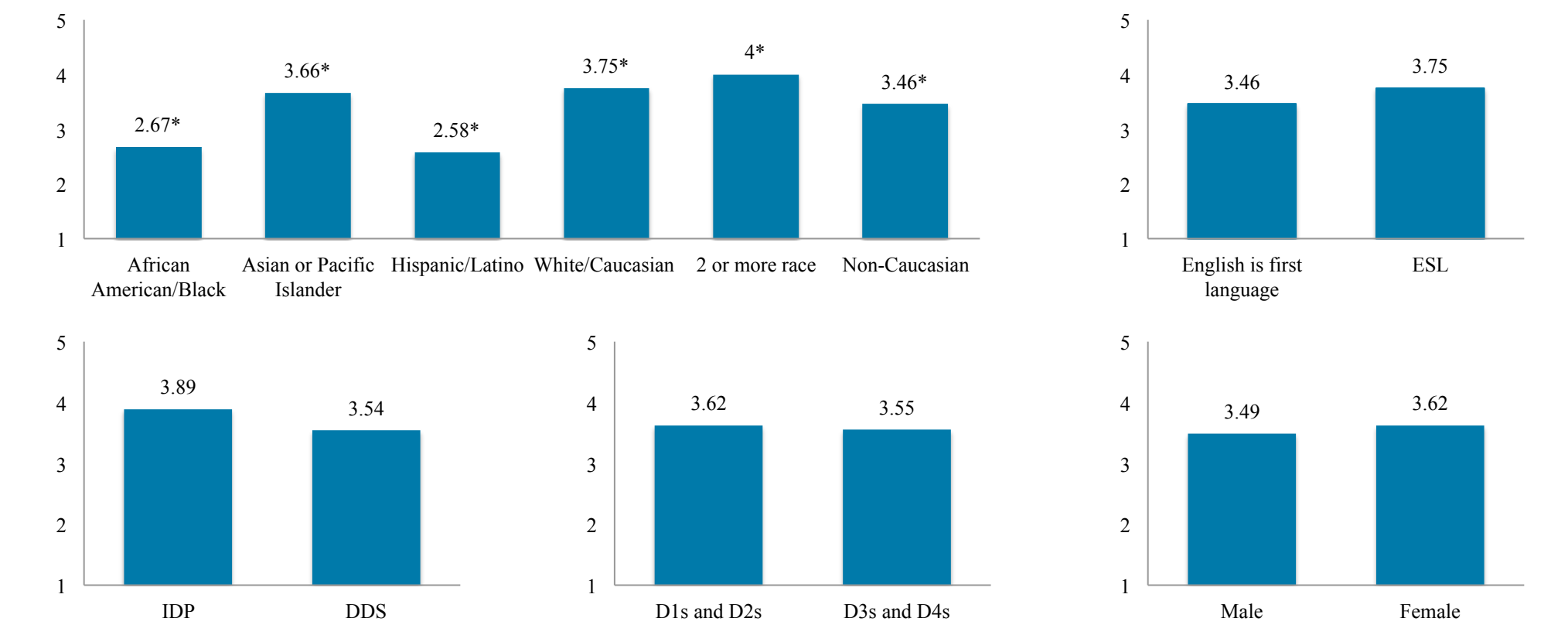
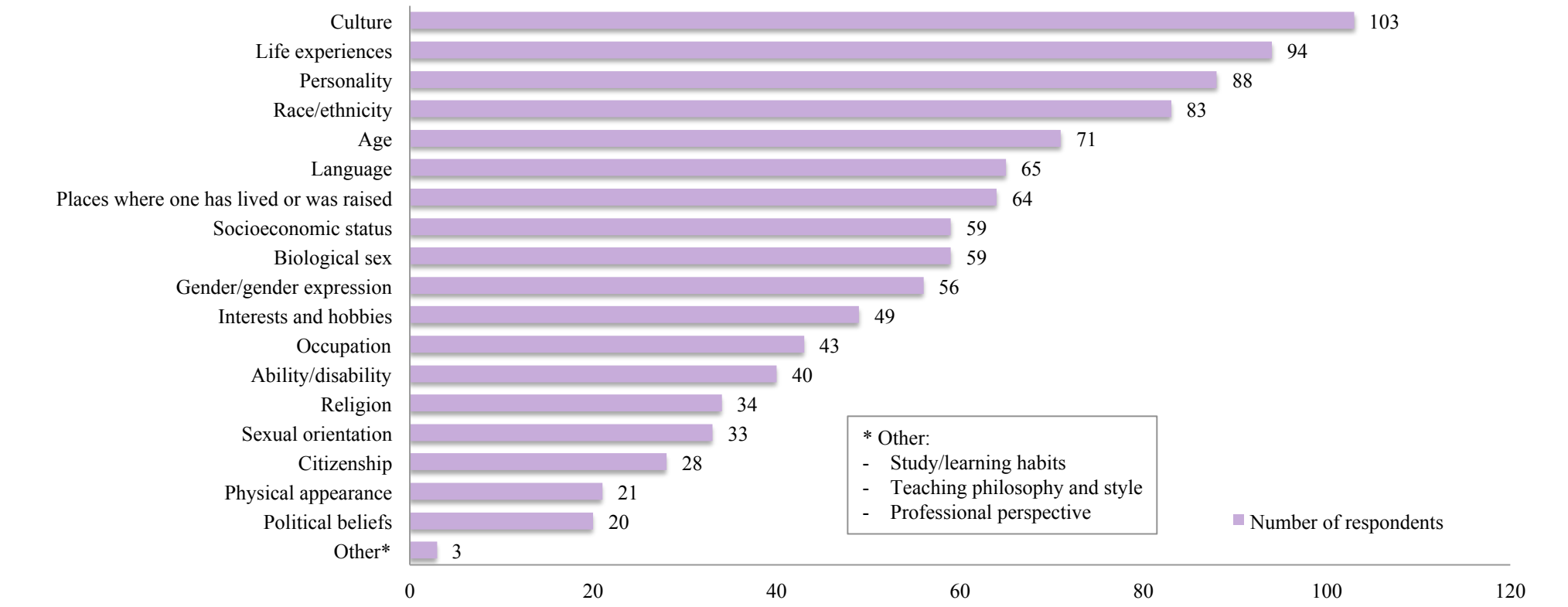


Fig. 10. Aspects of diversity respondents found personally important



Conclusion and Discussion

- Dental students generally believe that having a diverse faculty is important to their educational experience.
- Students belonging to groups that are traditionally well-represented in dentistry (Caucasians, males, and non-ESL students) perceive, experience, and are affected by faculty diversity differently than traditionally less represented student populations (non-Caucasians, females, and ESL students).
- The latter group perceive the faculty as less diverse, are less satisfied with the existing level of faculty diversity, agree more strongly that faculty diversity contributes to their educational experience, and agree less strongly that faculty respect student diversity.
- Administrators may consider these differences when identifying areas for faculty development in order to better meet the needs of the student body.
- Increasing faculty diversity may help solve the dental school faculty shortage problem. Providing students with more representative role models among the faculty may inspire more of them to consider a career in academia.
- Underrepresented minority faculty members play an important role in increasing enrollment and support of diverse students, thus increasing workforce diversity in healthcare, a crucial means of addressing health disparities (Mitchell and Lassiter, 2006).

References

Lee, Jo Ann. "Students' perceptions of and satisfaction with faculty diversity." College Student Journal 44.2 (2010): 400+. Academic OneFile.

Mitchell, Dennis A., and Shana L. Lassiter. "Addressing Health Care Disparities and Increasing Workforce Diversity: The Next Step for the Dental, Medical, and Public Health Professions." American Journal of Public Health 96.12 (2006): 2093-2097. PMC.