



## Collection and use of demographic data

*What demographic data are collected at the University of Alberta and in the Earth and Atmospheric Science department?*

- As of 2019 the UofA has been developing a survey to collect census data (<https://www.ualberta.ca/equity-diversity-inclusivity/survey-and-reports.html>). The data are intended to be released in a report.
- Additional reports track self-identified indigenous people (<https://www.ualberta.ca/strategic-plan/media-library/isp/images/reports/13251-fpg-report-2020-final.pdf>). Growth in indigenous population at the UofA between 2015 and 2020 has been 10% year over year.
- The EAS department does not collect demographic data with the exception of nationality and gender.
- Peoplesoft (an Oracle human resources software) has the ability to record this information but opted out when introduced 20 years ago.

*Are demographic data publicly available?*

- At present there are no demographic data available, outside of self-identified indigenous people. When the University of Alberta EDI committee initiates their survey, the data are only available to those who manage the UofA's equity census. Questions can be directed to [equity@ualberta.ca](mailto:equity@ualberta.ca). The data are expected to be periodically released in reports and displayed as charts.

*Should we collect demographic data in the Earth and Atmospheric Science (EAS) department of the University of Alberta (UofA)?*

- The use of student population demographic data to measure the success of programs designed to increase diversity would be a seemingly ideal approach and we believe it is important to collect such data. However, is it ethical and would it foster an inclusive environment to do so? The measurement of our success is difficult to quantify in a manner that does not single out individuals from minority groups in which there are few members. In addition, asking such questions in surveys is likely to make people from



visible minority groups uncomfortable. Finally, a demographic survey is likely to suffer from voluntary response bias leading to results that do not provide meaningful statistics. It is the conclusion of our pod from this session, that the collection and use of quantifiable demographic data would ultimately **not** lead to a more inclusive environment at this time.

*What are our goals?*

- Parity with the general population is the ultimate demographic goal (Canadian demographic data is shown below). However, as noted above collection of such data at this time is not possible in an unobtrusive manner that would not expose individuals. In contrast, additional goals may uniquely track success of programs:
  - Foster a culture and inclusive environment that is welcoming to all people; that is, make people from minority groups have a positive experience and feel like they belong.
  - Build support networks for individuals to discuss research issues, discrimination, or harassment (e.g. mentorship program).
  - Develop better harassment and discrimination policies that require immediate actionable steps be taken when such complaints are made. It is additionally important that people feel like actionable steps will be taken seriously addressing any complaints (e.g. mandatory training for new students and staff outline the complaints policies and how complaints are dealt with).
  - Develop an internship program with industry partners designed to give minority peoples industry experience.
  - Successful outreach programs that lead to greater interest in geoscience from the general population.
  - The geosciences culture often includes alcohol, which can be a religious or cultural barrier. We could introduce more networking events without including alcohol to increase overall inclusivity.
  - Create a social media catch-all platform for alumni for discussion of EDI issues, bring people together, and foster community.
- When an inclusive welcoming environment has been established, it may be possible to collect direct demographic data in voluntary surveys.



- In terms of a timeline, we thought 8-10 years for a goal would be appropriate to allow time for the changes we are currently implementing to take effect and positively impact students from the start to the finish of their programs.

*How can we track if we are reaching our goals?*

- In the absence of quantitative data, qualitative data may be collected to track how well we are reaching our goals (e.g. understanding what is the student experience). We suggest the development of a professional survey to track the student experience. Ideas of such a survey involve:
  - Partnering with social science or geography department staff and students to develop and track the student experience in the EAS department at the UofA.
  - Seeking funding for tracking of qualitative data over time in more detailed studies (e.g. using focused groups).
  - Offer research funding for tracking students' experience through focus groups.
  - The introduction of a yearly, anonymous 'exit' interview (survey) might serve as a qualitative way of gauging year to year successes.
  - Surveys should include a numbered response with space to short answers. This allows both rapid and more detailed analysis of the data.
  - Questions could be directed towards the culture of the department (i.e. "how would you describe the department culture") and feelings of inclusivity in the department (i.e. "do you feel that you are part of the community?; "Have you experienced isolation/discomfort as part of the EAS community?").
  - Use social media catch-all platforms for alumni to track the graduated student population experience in EAS and minority population that remain in geoscience post-graduation.
- With department plans to foster a more inclusive environment in the following years, it is important to implement a concurrent survey to track the experience of outgoing students to that of incoming students.
- The longevity and legacy of such a survey is important to consider. This should be a department initiative that is viewed as important to maintain, improve, and track over decades.



2016 Canadian Census Data

Ethnic Origin Data:

- Summary data from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=PR&Code1=01&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&SearchText=Canada&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Ethnic%20origin&TABID=1&type=1>

	Counts	Rates (%)
Total - ethnic origin data for the population in private households - 25% sample data	34,460,065	100
North America Aboriginal origins	2,130,520	6.2
Other North American origins (e.g. Acadian, Quebecois, Newfoundland, etc.)	11,613,042	33.7
European origins	19,683,320	57.1
Caribbean origins	749,155	2.2
Latin, Central and South American origins	674,640	2.0
African origins	1,067,930	3.1
Asian origins	6,095,235	17.7
Oceania origins	85,470	0.2

Note from the website: This is a total population estimate. The sum of the ethnic groups in this table is greater than the total population estimate because a person may report more than one ethnic origin in the census.



Visible Minority Data:

- Summary of data from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=PR&Code1=01&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&SearchText=Canada&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Visible%20minority&TABID=1&type=1>

	Counts	Rates (%)
Total - Visible minority for the population in private households - 25% sample data	34,460,065	100
Visible minority	7,674,580	22
Not a visible minority	26,785,480	78
<p>Note from the website: members of visible minorities means persons, <b>other than Aboriginal peoples</b>, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour</p> <p>Note: The subgroups of visible minorities from the 2016 census are south asian, chinese, black, filipino, latin american, arab, southeast asian, west asian, korean, japanese, visible minority not included elsewhere, and multiple visible minorities.</p>		