

# **Identity Matters! A Study of Undergraduate Involvement and Leadership in Student Government at Ualberta**

**Research and Political Affairs  
University of Alberta Students' Union  
September 2017**



# The Question

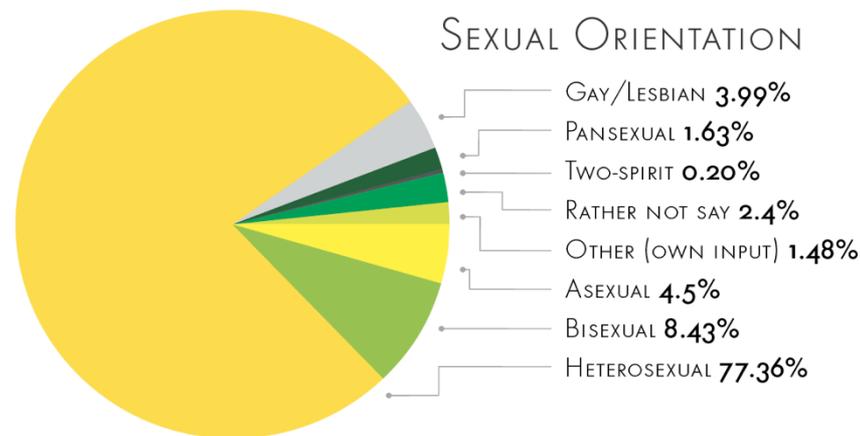
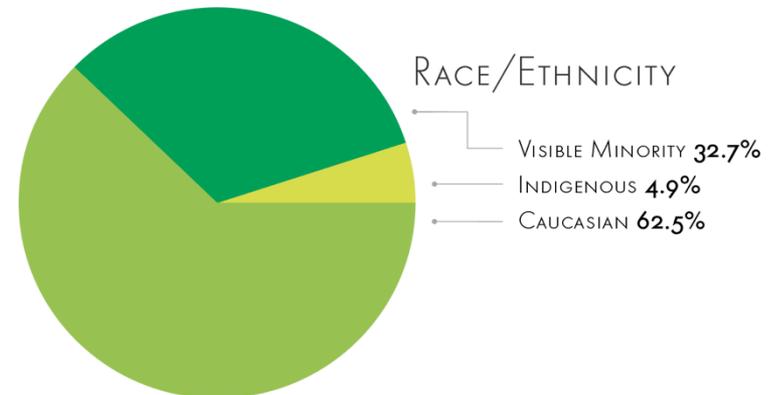
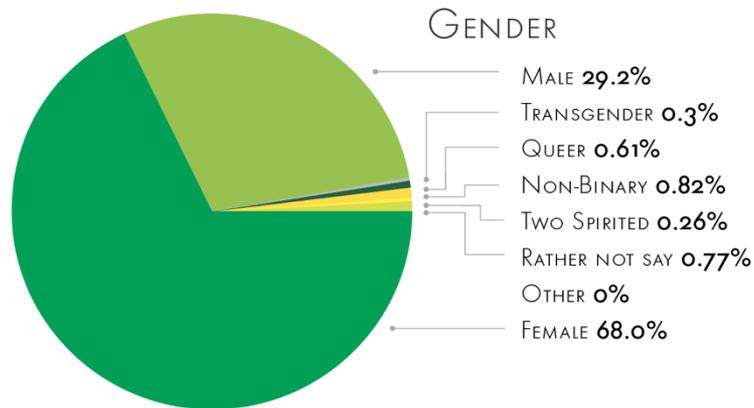
- Does (and how does) identity matter in undergraduate involvement and desire to seek elected office in post-secondary student government?







# Participant Demographics - General Survey



# Participant Demographics - FA Executives, Student Councillors & SU Executives



	Faculty Association	Students' Council	SU Executive
<b>Total Participants:</b>	30	17	15
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	19	7	5
Male	11	10	10
<b>Race</b>			
Caucasian	24	8	6
Visible Minority	4	8	9
Indigenous	2	1	0
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			
Heterosexual	25	13	10
Sexual Minority	3	4	4
Declined to Say	2	0	1



# What did we find?

- Overall, identity matters in undergraduate involvement and leadership in student government
  - Interest in seeking elected office
  - Confidence in running
  - Campaigning experience
  - Serving in Representative roles









*Because I did more one-on-ones for exec, I faced more situations where I was asked whether I will be able to handle it because of my gender...*

*- SU Executive, Female, Visible Minority, Heterosexual*

*I came across instances where students said 'Oh you are female, are you sure you are going to be able to handle the stress?' I would just question my own abilities. Or sometimes I will get comments like I will vote for you because you are cute. Not because they have seen my platform and think I can do the job. That's quite memorable because I never thought it would bug me so much, but it did.*

*- SU Executive, Female, Visible Minority, Heterosexual*







*Maybe I should lower the Black level just a little bit when I go into a meeting, and not be fully who I am, because it is one of those things where there is a lot of times where... The majority of them are white, and the majority of their friend circle is white, there is that question of how me can I be. There are all these instances where you feel like you have to work to make them more comfortable.*

*- SU Executive, Male, Visible Minority, Heterosexual*

*Previously, as a councillor I had been to Executive organized events where some University senators may have called other female students or me "sweetie" – mostly by old men.*

*- SU Executive, Female, Visible Minority, Heterosexual*





# Summing Up

- Gender stands out as the significant determinant in experience of seeking, campaigning for, and serving in leadership role in student government.
- Need for further research
  - Comparing to other post-secondary institutions
  - Longitudinal comparisons
  - Tracking post-graduation involvement in leadership roles (including in politics)



**SO NOW WHAT?**



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
**STUDENTS'  
UNION**

# Encouraging Diverse Representation in Student Governance



# YOU GOT THIS.

## #UASUgotthis

- Awareness campaign aimed at women, non-binary individuals, and other underrepresented groups
- Encourage people to run AND to support those that do run
- Consists of posters, SUTV, Social Media and outreach

# STUDENTS NEED YOU!

YOU GOT THIS.



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SU ELECTIONS!

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# NOW IS YOUR TIME.

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# YOU ARE ENOUGH.



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# SPEAK YOUR MIND.



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# YOU ARE READY.



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# Questions?



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