

# In Their Own Words: Race and Ethnicity Self-Identification in the Faculty, Academic Careers and Environments (FACE) Survey

Laura Burns Fritch, RTI International

Caren A. Arbeit, RTI International

KC Culver, University of Alabama

Adrianna Kezar, University of Southern California

Emily Koren, University of Southern California

John Curtis, JWC Consulting



# Faculty, Academic Careers and Environments Project (FACE)

# Faculty, Academic Careers and Environments Project (FACE)

## ○ Purpose

- Understand who is doing faculty-like work
- What their academic careers look like
- How work environments shape their ability to thrive

## ○ Goal

- Identify best practices to help policymakers and institutional leaders improve support for faculty

# Faculty, Academic Careers and Environments Project (FACE)

- Survey of Faculty and Academic Staff in the United States
  - Faculty, instructional, research and public service staff (faculty-like roles)
  - Part-time and full-time
  - Tenure-line and contingent faculty (i.e., non-tenure track faculty)
  - Across disciplines
  - Employed in two-year and four-year sectors in public or nonprofit institutions
  - Excluded postdocs and administrators; medical, dental, and nursing fields

# Faculty, Academic Careers and Environments Project (FACE)

- Why now?

- Nationally representative data have not been collected since 2004 (NSOPF)
- Increase in contingent, soft funded and short-term contract positions and decrease in tenure-line faculty
- Increase in faculty with minoritized identities

# Faculty, Academic Careers and Environments Project (FACE)

- Pilot study funded by the National Science Foundation (Grant No. NSF 2200769)
  - Designed to be a two-stage survey: Institutional followed by faculty data collection
  - Institutional pilot of 300 institutions
  - Faculty pilot of 1,500 faculty at 3 institutions plus a non-probability sample
    - Very few non-probability respondents
- Next steps: Full-scale two stage level data collection

# Experiment and Motivation

# Motivation for this Research

- OMB released Federal Register Notice which includes the Federal Interagency Working Group's initial proposals on revising race and ethnicity statistical standards (SPD 15)
- Default is to collect detailed race and ethnicity categories within the minimum categories
  - Except when detailed collection is not feasible or justified



# January 2023 Federal Register Notice

## Combined Question with Minimum and Detailed Categories

**What is your race or ethnicity?**  
*Select all that apply AND enter additional details in the spaces below.  
Note, you may report more than one group.*

**WHITE** – Provide details below.

German       Irish       English  
 Italian       Polish       French  
*Enter, for example, Scottish, Norwegian, Dutch, etc.*

**HISPANIC OR LATINO** – Provide details below.

Mexican or  
Mexican American       Puerto Rican       Cuban  
 Salvadoran       Dominican       Colombian  
*Enter, for example, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.*

**BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN** – Provide details below.

African American       Jamaican       Haitian  
 Nigerian       Ethiopian       Somali  
*Enter, for example, Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, etc.*

**ASIAN** – Provide details below.

Chinese       Filipino       Asian Indian  
 Vietnamese       Korean       Japanese  
*Enter, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.*

**AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE** – Enter, for example,  
*Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of  
Barrow Inupiat Tribal Government, Tlingit, etc.*

**MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN** – Provide details below.

Lebanese       Iranian       Egyptian  
 Syrian       Moroccan       Israeli  
*Enter, for example, Algerian, Iraqi, Kurdish, etc.*

**NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER** – Provide details below.

Native Hawaiian       Samoan       Chamorro  
 Tongan       Fijian       Marshallese  
*Enter, for example, Palauan, Tahitian, Chuukese, etc.*

## Motivation for this Research (continued)

- FRN called for public comments and evoked discourse around race and ethnicity
- Research Question:
  - How would FACE respondents describe their race and ethnicity in their own words?

# Experimental Item, Screen 1

**Which of the following racial or ethnic categories apply to your identity?**

(Select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African-American
- Hispanic or Latina/o/e/x
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (non-Native Hawaiian)
- Middle Eastern or North African
- White
- Other race or ethnicity
  
- Prefer not to answer

Next

# Experimental Item, Screen 2

**Please describe your racial or ethnic identity in your own words.**

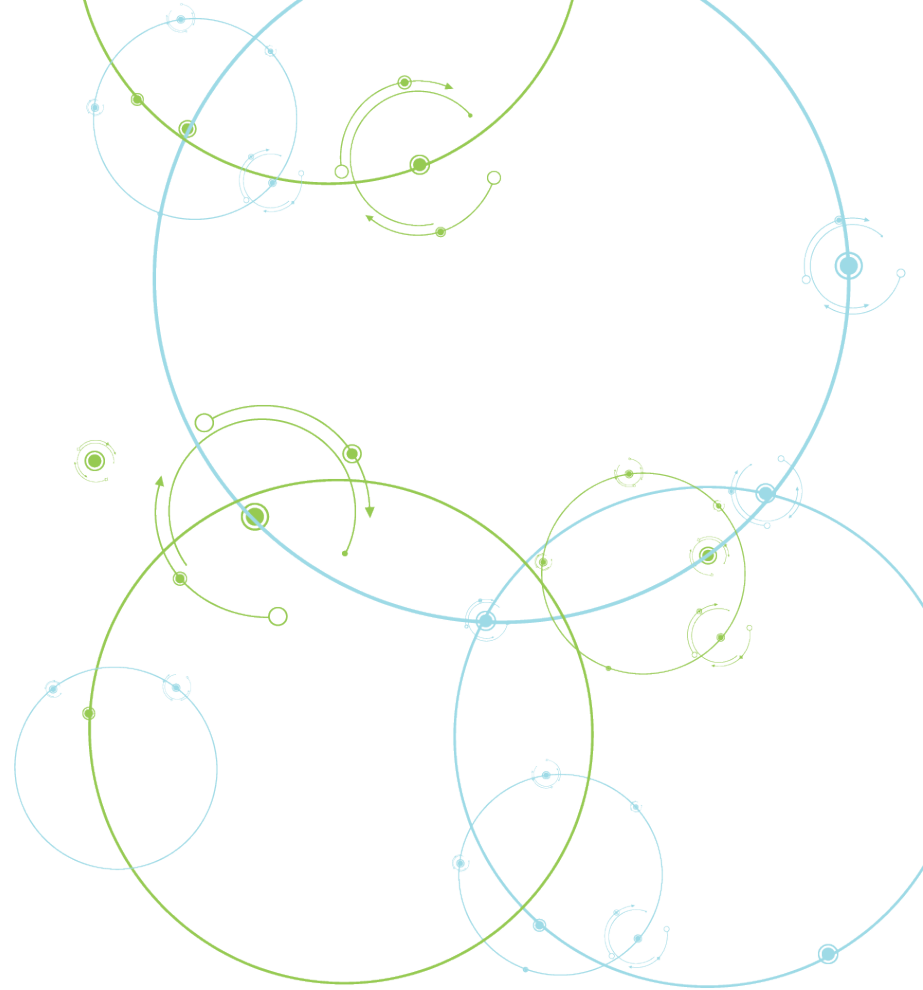
**Previous**

**Next**

# Results

# General results

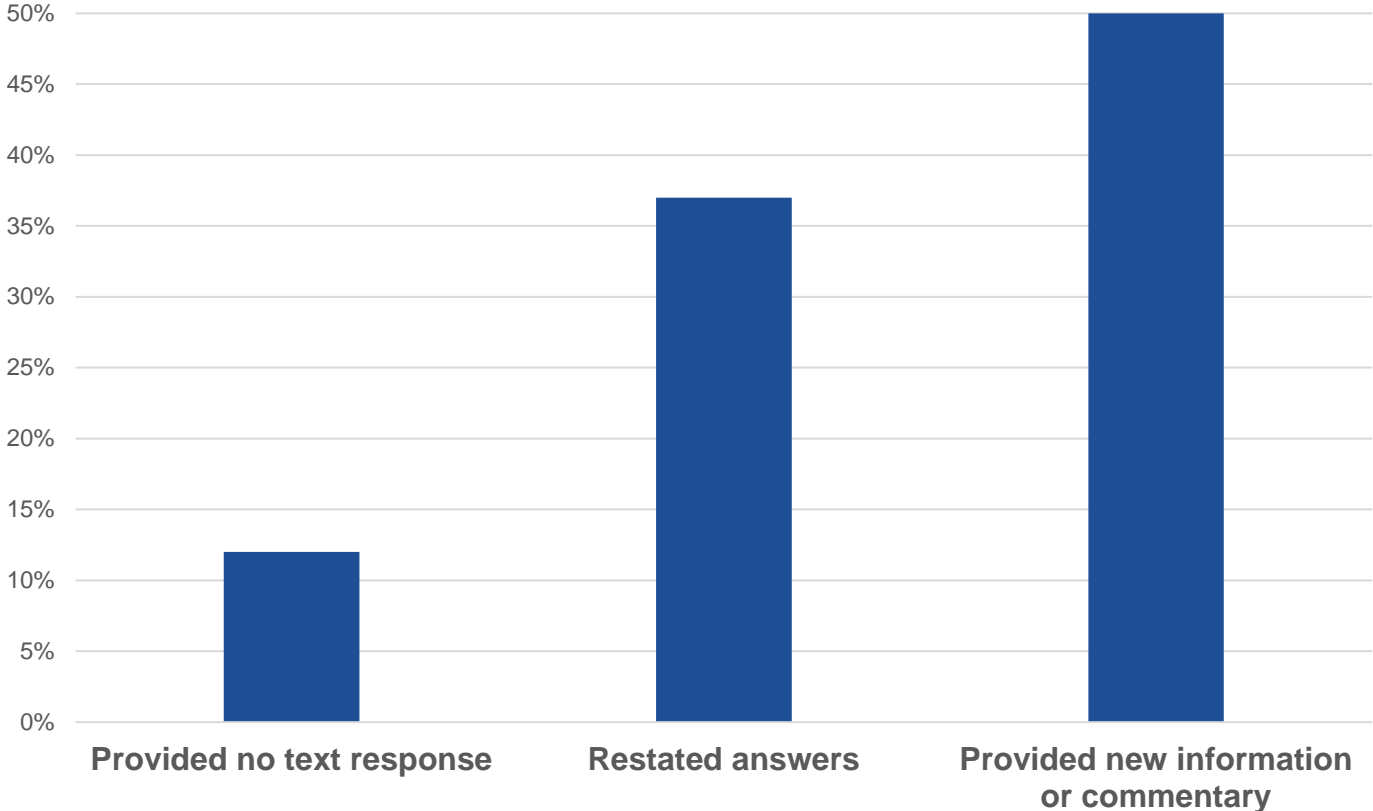
- 480 respondents responded to 1 or more race/ethnicity item
  - Includes 15 who chose “prefer not to answer”
  - We have race/ethnicity data for 465 respondents
- 408 respondents provided open ended text



## Responses to the categorical race/ethnicity item

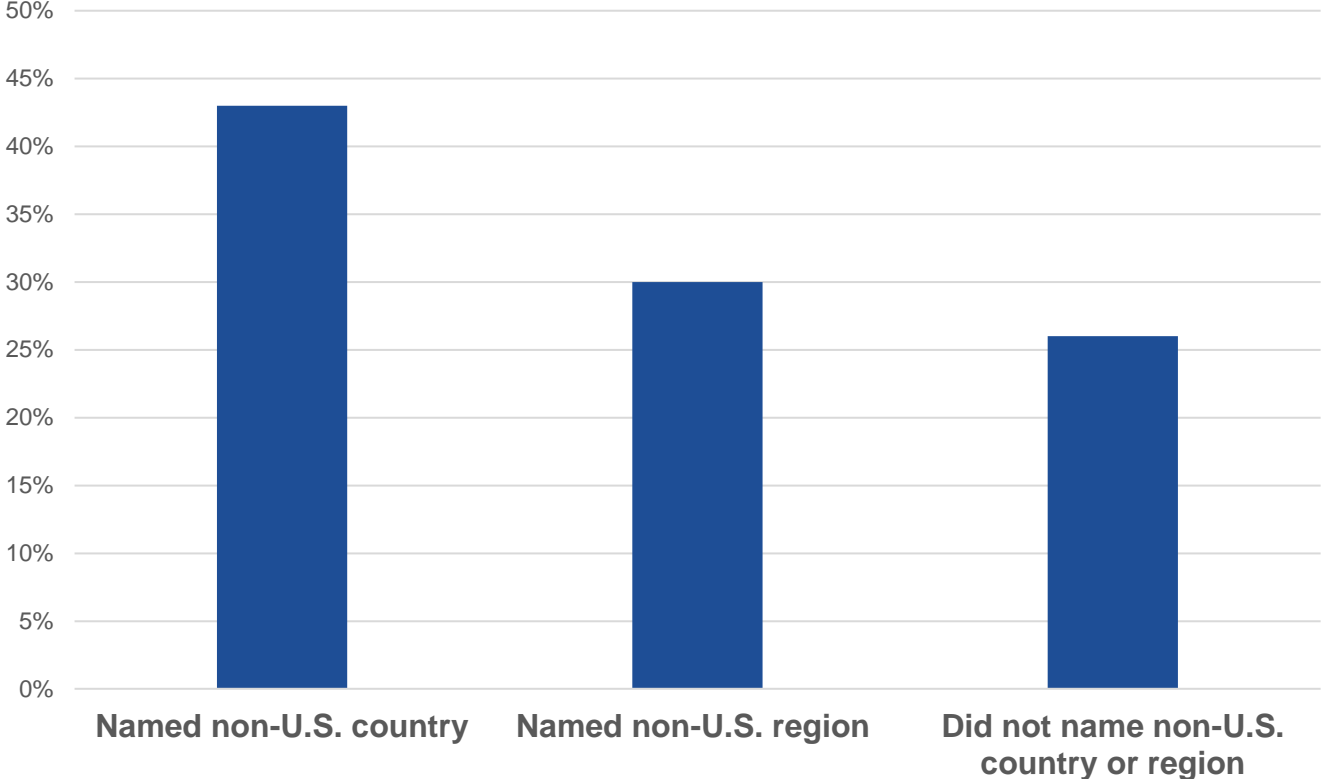
<b>Race or ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent selecting more than one race/ethnicity</b>	<b>Percent that provided text</b>
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	2.1	80.0	90.0
Asian	19	4.0	21.1	73.7
Black or African-American	32	6.7	9.4	93.8
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	27	5.6	59.3	88.9
Middle Eastern or North African	8	1.7	75.0	100.0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	0.2	100.0	50.0
White	394	82.1	5.8	88.1
Another race or ethnicity	8	1.7	50.0	75.0
Prefer not the answer	15	3.1	na	na

# Respondents who Selected at Least One Race or Ethnicity





# Respondents who Provided New Information or Commentary



# How Else Did Respondents Identify?

# Citizenship

“American”

“Italian/U.S. dual citizen”

“I am a Black American, who identifies as ‘Black.’”

“Croatian Canadian”

# Region of the United States

“Midwestern white guy”

“I am white, originally from California”

# Parents or Ancestors

“My family is German on my father's side and Swedish and English on my mother's side.”

“I'm an American with mostly Scandinavian ancestors.”

# Varied Background

“Western European hodgepodge”

“British Isles mutt”

# DNA Analysis

“According to 23 and me, I'm 99.9% white of Scandinavian and English descent.”

“I am roughly 80% British and 20% Scandinavian by DNA.”

# Generation

“My generation was the first generation completely born in the United States.”

“White of about 4th generation European descent”

“White, non US born”



# Color of Skin

“Mexican and European...light brown...Chicanito”

“I present and am received as white”

“burns quickly in sunlight”

# Emphasizes “Whiteness”

“white as heck”

“white bread Midwesterner”

“All Europe all the time. Even the Jewish part is European and white.”

# Religion and Culture

“Cultural Jew”

“Last name and family culture would identify as Czech/Polish”

## Emphasis on “Immigrant” or from elsewhere

- “Black originally from Africa”
- “I consider myself Latina because I was born in Chile”
- “Northern European immigrant”

# Other Demographic Characteristics

“White older guy”

“White - WASP/suburban background”

“I am a white female born in the US who identifies as Hispanic, because my mother was Mexican.”

# Does not Identify with Countries of Ancestors

“I'm Scotch-Irish by heritage, but that was generations ago, so I just consider myself "white.””

“I identify as White because that is the category assigned to someone living in the U.S. who is of European descent. I have no strong ethnic identifications.”

“White and seven generations in the US, lacking any specific ethnic identity beyond a white American.”

# Rejects the Concept of Race

“This is not really something I give much thought to. Race is an entirely invented concept, and one which I reject.”

“I am a human being.”

# Uncertainty

“I'm caucasian from my father. It is unknown as to what my mother's side is.”

“I am from Venezuela. Unsure about my race (mixed?).”



# Summary

- Pilot survey of faculty in the United States
- Half simply restated or did not provide text describing their race/ethnicity
- Half responded to the prompt with new information or commentary on race/ethnicity
  - 43% of these named at least one non-U.S. country
  - 30% of these named a non-U.S. region (but not a country)
- Concept of race and ethnicity is complex with many different interpretations and associations

# Limitations

- Data not representative of the general population of the United States
- Few respondents in smaller racial/ethnic groups



# Thank you

Contact: Laura Burns Fritch | email: [lbfritch@rti.org](mailto:lbfritch@rti.org)