

# **Carnegie Mellon University Rowing Club Internal Survey Report**

The Carnegie Mellon University Rowing Club Internal Survey was constructed by the Carnegie Mellon University Rowing Club Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee. As part of our acknowledgement of the elitism and homogeneity in the sport of rowing as a whole and the possibility of our club not meeting the values of inclusion that we strive to have, the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee constructed a survey, posed to our current team members, to pinpoint our areas of improvement. In this report, we will go into more detail about our methodology, results, and future plans moving forward. Please address any questions to the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Chair, Rachel Niu, at [inclusion@tartancrew.org](mailto:inclusion@tartancrew.org).

At the Carnegie Mellon University Rowing Club (CMURC), we recognize that there are potential barriers of entry to rowing for many students on campus, such as dues payments, access to necessary equipment, and a base-level of fitness, as well as potential cultural and social barriers to entry and to stay. Collectively, these barriers may be preventing members of the Carnegie Mellon University community from entering our team, as well as causing our current team members to feel uncomfortable, excluded, or disconnected from our team as a whole.

The possibility of inaccessibility and exclusion, and our complacency with it, conflicts with our mission statement and values as a team. Our mission statement states that “we are committed to fostering an environment where everyone feels welcomed and supported” and that “we believe that [rowing] has the power to change lives and want to make that opportunity accessible to anyone who wants to join.” Our mission statement clearly displays our values of inclusion and our commitment to fostering an accessible and welcoming club. With the construction of our Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Committee, we recognize that we have work to be done in order to make our club more accessible and welcoming to anyone who wants to be a member on this team.

In order to address our potential problems on this team, we needed to pinpoint what exactly needs to be changed. This is the purpose of our internal survey, to pose questions to current team members about the current state of the team, to then have direction for improvement directly driven by our team’s community perspectives.

This report was constructed and written by the Carnegie Mellon University Rowing Club Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee.

## Summary of Key Results

- For Likert Question 1 (“I feel welcome at practices and other team events”) and Likert Question 10 (“I feel like I can be my true self on this team”), the women’s team responses indicate a significant positive response (agreement with that statement) compared to a given respondent’s mean response.
- For Likert Question 15 (“I feel that CMURC is inviting to students of any gender identity or sexual orientation”) and Likert Questions 16 (“I feel that CMURC is inviting to students of any religious background”), the men’s team responses indicate a significant positive response (agreement with that statement) compared to a given respondent’s mean response.
- Between both the men’s and women’s teams, 4% of participating team members reported feeling excluded from team events. Additionally, 20% of participating team members reported that they have at some point felt alienated by other members of the team.

## Methodology

This survey was administered to 25 members of the men’s and women’s teams between August 31 and September 7, 2020 via Qualtrics and Google Forms. It included 18 Likert scale questions, listed below. Following these scale questions were two yes/no questions about feelings of exclusion and alienation, and two open-ended questions which asked team members to describe any personal experiences they felt were relevant to the survey and what diversity and inclusion on the team would mean to them. Results for the men’s and women’s teams were analyzed separately alongside a whole-team analysis.

### Likert Scale Questions:

1. I feel welcome at practices and other team events.
2. I feel like I belong in the CMURC community.
3. I feel respected by other members of the team.
4. I feel that different racial, socioeconomic, religious, gender, sexuality, etc backgrounds are respected & valued by members of the team.
5. I feel that the leadership and culture of the team values diversity & inclusion.
6. Insensitive jokes / comments are not tolerated on this team.
7. I feel comfortable with the culture and social dynamics on this team.
8. If I have concerns about discrimination/harassment/microaggressions/etc I know where to turn.
9. When I speak up, my opinion is valued and heard.
10. I feel like I can be my true self on this team.
11. I rarely feel singled out, or like I'm the "only one", on this team.
12. I feel that CMURC is a diverse club.
13. I feel that CMURC is inviting to students of any socioeconomic background.
14. I feel that CMURC is inviting to students of any level of physical ability.
15. I feel that CMURC is inviting to students of any gender identity or sexual orientation.
16. I feel that CMURC is inviting to students of any religious background.
17. I feel that 'rowing culture' accepts me.
18. I feel that CMURC's team culture reflects the culture of rowing in general.

Yes/No Questions:

1. Have you ever felt excluded from team events?
2. Have you ever felt alienated by other members of the team?

Open-Ended Questions:

1. Do you have any comments or personal experiences regarding CMURC’s team culture that you would like to share?
2. What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?

## Results

The following table reports the mean and standard deviation for each Likert scale question on the internal survey. The Likert scale questions could be scored from 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. Note that these figures have not been standardized, but still provide information regarding how team members generally agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Summary	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7	L8	L9	L10	L11	L12	L13	L14	L15	L16	L17	L18
<b>Team Mean</b>	4.68	4.48	4.44	4.52	4.24	3.72	4.32	3.76	4.36	4.52	4.4	3.88	3.84	4.08	4.6	4.72	4.4	3.76
<b>Team SD</b>	0.68	0.75	0.75	0.57	0.95	1.04	0.68	1.21	0.93	0.85	0.89	0.91	1.12	1.16	0.69	0.53	0.8	1.21
<b>Men's Mean</b>	4.67	4.53	4.53	4.8	4.47	3.8	4.6	4.13	4.53	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.53	4.87	4.87	4.47	3.93
<b>Men's SD</b>	0.79	0.81	0.81	0.4	0.88	1.11	0.61	1.09	1.02	1.02	1.08	0.83	0.71	0.72	0.34	0.34	0.88	1.39
<b>Women's Mean</b>	4.7	4.4	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.2	4.1	4.7	4.4	3.4	3	3.4	4.2	4.5	4.3	3.5
<b>Women's SD</b>	0.46	0.66	0.64	0.54	0.94	0.92	0.54	1.17	0.7	0.46	0.49	0.8	1.1	1.36	0.87	0.67	0.64	0.81

Although significant differences are only seen for Likert Questions 1 and 10 for the women’s team and Likert Questions 15 and 16 for the men’s team, the DEI Committee thought it important to look at the results holistically. We want to be sure to analyze our results in a way that accounts for the possibility that our culture and opportunities result in only a handful of people feeling left out or excluded, as opposed to the majority of the team. We don’t want anyone to feel excluded, so results that may not be statistically significant, but still show a general trend, are valuable to us.

A more useful visualization tool for comparing Likert scale responses is a graph of average difference between a respondent's answer to any given Likert question and their mean response for all questions. (Fig. 1). This allows us to understand which questions were most likely to prompt a significantly different response in either direction. The further the bar graphs are from zero, the more or less the respondents agreed or disagreed from their personal mean. It should be noted that these differences from the personal mean response is not significant for any Likert question.

The only questions that were not Likert scale questions on the survey asked whether any team members had ever felt alienated by team members or excluded from team events. Fig. 2 shows the response rate to this question for each team. Of the respondents from the women's team, 40% stated that they have felt alienated by team members at some point or another. Between both teams, 20% of respondents claimed to have experienced alienation, while only 4% of respondents claimed to have experienced exclusion.

Fig. 1

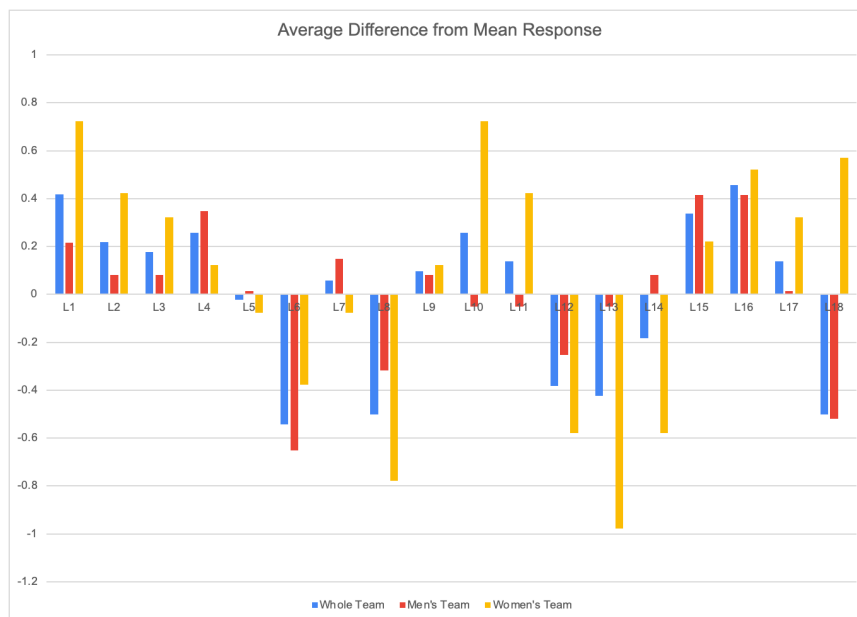
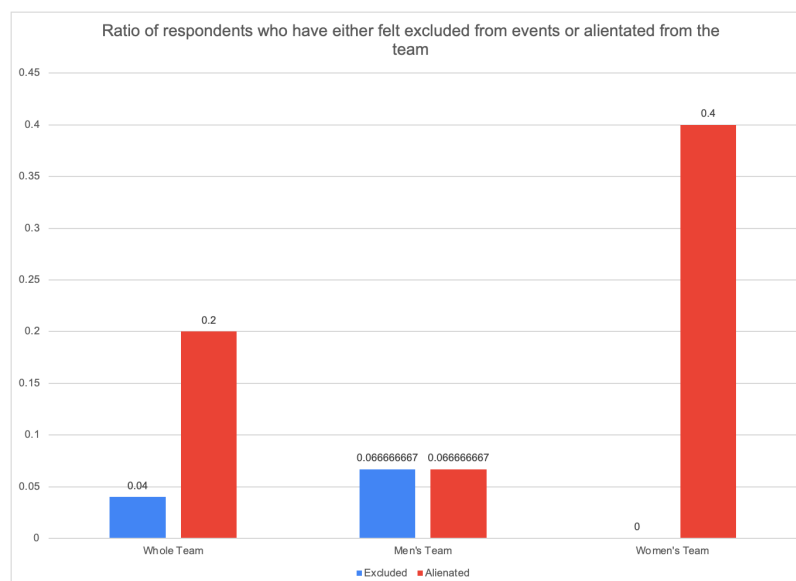


Fig. 2



## Conclusions and Discussion

CMURC members expressed through this internal survey that it is important for the team to be as inviting of an environment as possible for all current and future rowers on the team. Prospective members should have a safe and comfortable social environment to foster their love of the sport, and there are several steps we can take to accomplish this. Survey results suggest that we could take additional steps to support rowers of varying levels of physical ability, particularly levels of physical ability upon entry to the team. Currently, we say we welcome all physical abilities, however we do require novice athletes to run to practice (about four miles) and come equipped with adequate running shoes, athletic attire, and general knowledge of how to take care of yourself as an athlete. Looking at these requirements logically, requiring a new athlete to go from no physical training to running four miles six days a week, without adequate training gear, is not safe nor conducive to long-term success. We want new athletes to build-up their fitness in a way that encourages long-term growth and success as a rower, not to stunt that potential by encouraging poor training behaviors. The DEI Committee is looking towards alternative options to get novice safely to practice, as well as a community bin of athletic attire for new athletes to take what they need for safe and effective training.

From the survey results, it appears socioeconomic burdens are a concern for people on the team. We recognize that our dues requirement (\$300 per semester) is a substantial amount that may hinder the ability for athletes to stay on the team. We currently offer options to talk with our Treasurer for reductions in dues to accommodate the rower, however we recognize that there is more we could do. In order to avoid feelings of alienation in having to pay dues, we have reworded the Constitution to read “membership dues requirement” instead of simply “pay dues.” With this change in wording, we’re working on providing other alternatives to paying the \$300 that would still grant the Club money. For instance, we’re looking into potential additional fundraising opportunities, as well as communicating with the Tartan Crew Alumni Network (TCAN) for alumni sponsorships.

Another concern from the team is the tolerance of insensitive jokes and comments. To combat this issue, we hope the generation of a de-identified feedback form (described more below) will help people voice their concerns. In addition, we’re working towards creating a culture that shuts down these ideas and comments in the moment. To foster this culture, we will be having mandatory annual anti-racism workshops with the entire team, as well as talking with our coaches about how to handle offensive behavior. In accordance with these proposed changes, we have updated the Constitution to include suspensionable offenses for behavior that infringes on our efforts of fostering an inclusive space.

Survey results indicated that team members were unsure of who to go to with concerns for interpersonal conflicts or discriminatory actions with other team members. CMURC chose to establish a DEI chairperson who will lead these efforts in making our team a more inviting space for all prospective members and be a clear person to turn to for any questions and concerns. The DEI Committee has established a de-identified drop-box that is monitored by the DEI chair, to provide a platform for any questions and concerns team members may have, while remaining anonymous.

Following the results from this survey, our immediate next step is to conduct interviews. These survey results were helpful in gathering general ideas about where our areas of improvement are, however we

believe that having interviews could help us solidify what needs changing. These interviews will be held by a subset (one or two) DEI Committee members and interviewee responses will be de-identified after the interview.

Future DEI Committee members should continue to administer this survey, or a similar questionnaire, on a yearly basis to allow for more longitudinal analysis across multiple seasons. It is our hope that with more sensitivity and forethought towards diversity and inclusion issues on our team, future survey results will reflect our changing sensitivities to every rower's needs.

*note: In our Constitution, our Committee is currently called the "Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Committee". However, in accordance with the other inclusion committees in rowing, we will be moving towards calling ourselves the "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee", which is the reason for this title use in this document. In future Constitution revisions, this change will be officially made.*