

Psychology Climate Report

December 5, 2019

Leah Somerville

Chair, Departmental Climate Committee

Psychology Department Climate Committee

Current Members



Joshua
Cetron
(PhD student)



Hayley
Dorfman
(Postdoc)



Lindsay
Hanford
(Postdoc)



Daniel
Janini
(PhD student)



Katie
McLaughlin
(Faculty)



Fiero
Cushman
(Faculty)



Ashley
Thomas
(Postdoc)

Former Members



Francesca
Ramirez
(PhD student)



Daniel
Reznik
(Postdoc)



Shirley
Wang
(PhD student)



Erika
Weisz
(Postdoc)



Kelly
Zuromski
(Postdoc)

Casting light on our department's climate

January



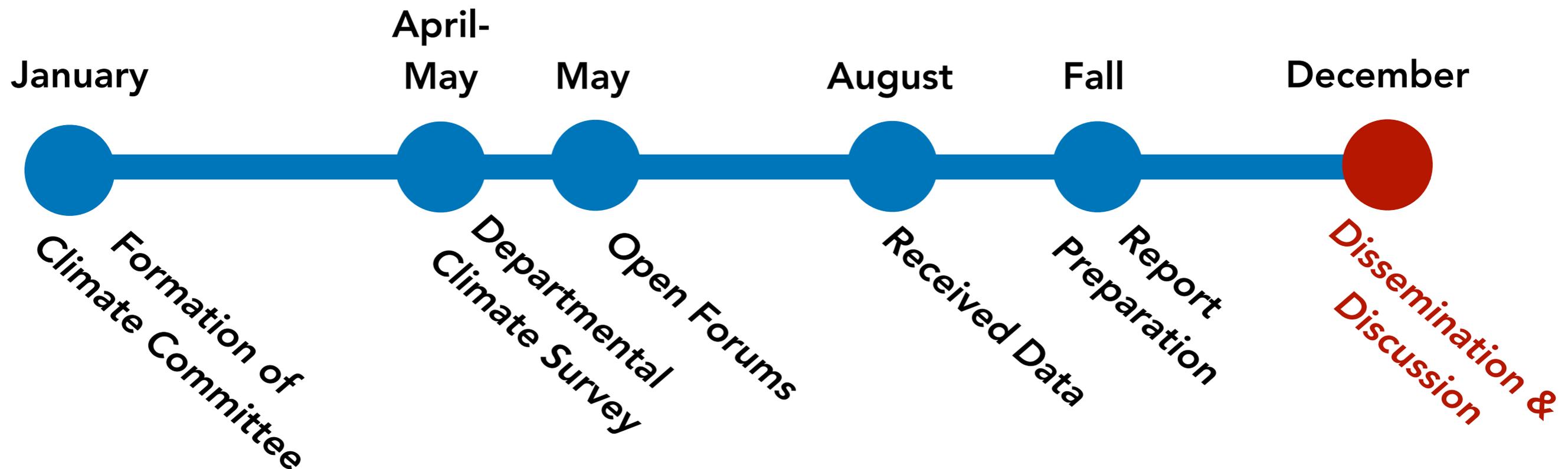
Formation of
Climate Committee

"The purpose of this committee will be to generate topics that concern departmental climate and raise them for discussion within faculty meetings and with the department as a whole."

- Prof. Mahzarin Banaji

Casting light on our department's climate

2019 objective: Learn about our department's climate, as experienced by all members of the department



2020 objective: Engage in activities to strengthen our department's climate

Today's presentation

Summarize results of the climate survey

- Goals
 - Methods
 - Analysis
 - Limitations
-

Immediate next steps

- Review full report
- Assemble as a community to discuss them and recommend ways to improve our department (*December Town Halls*)

Longer term next steps (for 2020)

- Develop recommendations
- Prioritize and implement

Climate Activities

Scope of Climate

The overall social and professional attitudes, standards, and environment in the Psychology Department.

- Overall climate
- Resources and mentoring
- Academic environments and lab dynamics (for those in labs)
- Work and identity
- Community
- Harassment and discrimination
- Inclusion and belonging
- Diversity

Approach

Climate Survey

- Administered by *Harvard College Institutional Research Office*
 - Karen Pearce, Scott Spurlock, Lynda Zhang
 - Quantitative data tabulated for descriptive examination
 - Qualitative report based on open-ended responses
 - “In your own words” prompt transmitted directly to us

Open Forum Meetings

- Two forums moderated by graduate students & faculty
- One-on-one conversations with climate committee chair

Climate Report

Today's focus: Convergent themes

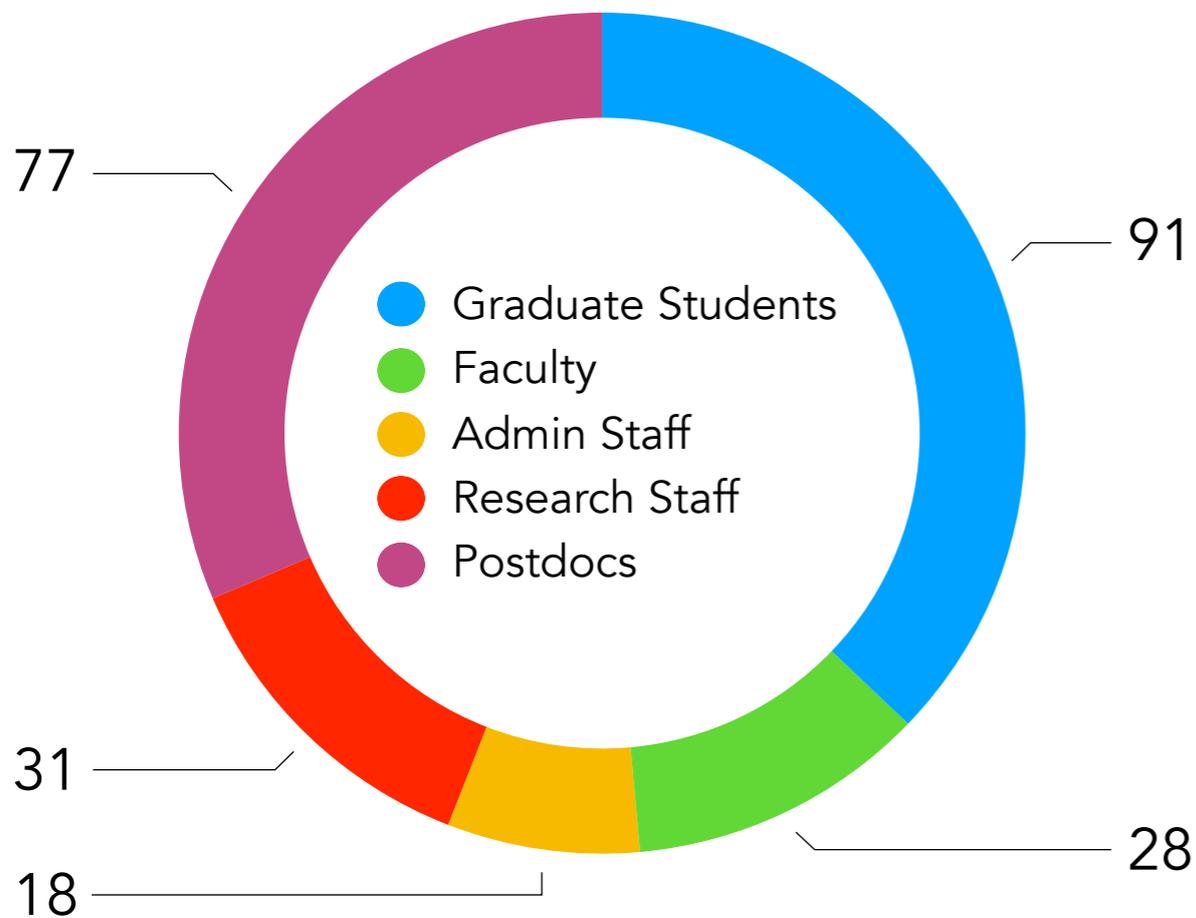
- Quantitative, qualitative, open-ended responses
- Examination of data by subgroup ($n \geq 10$)
 - Role within department
 - Gender
 - Race/ethnicity
 - BGLTQ identity
- Cross-referencing data from other departments and surveys

Comprehensive report

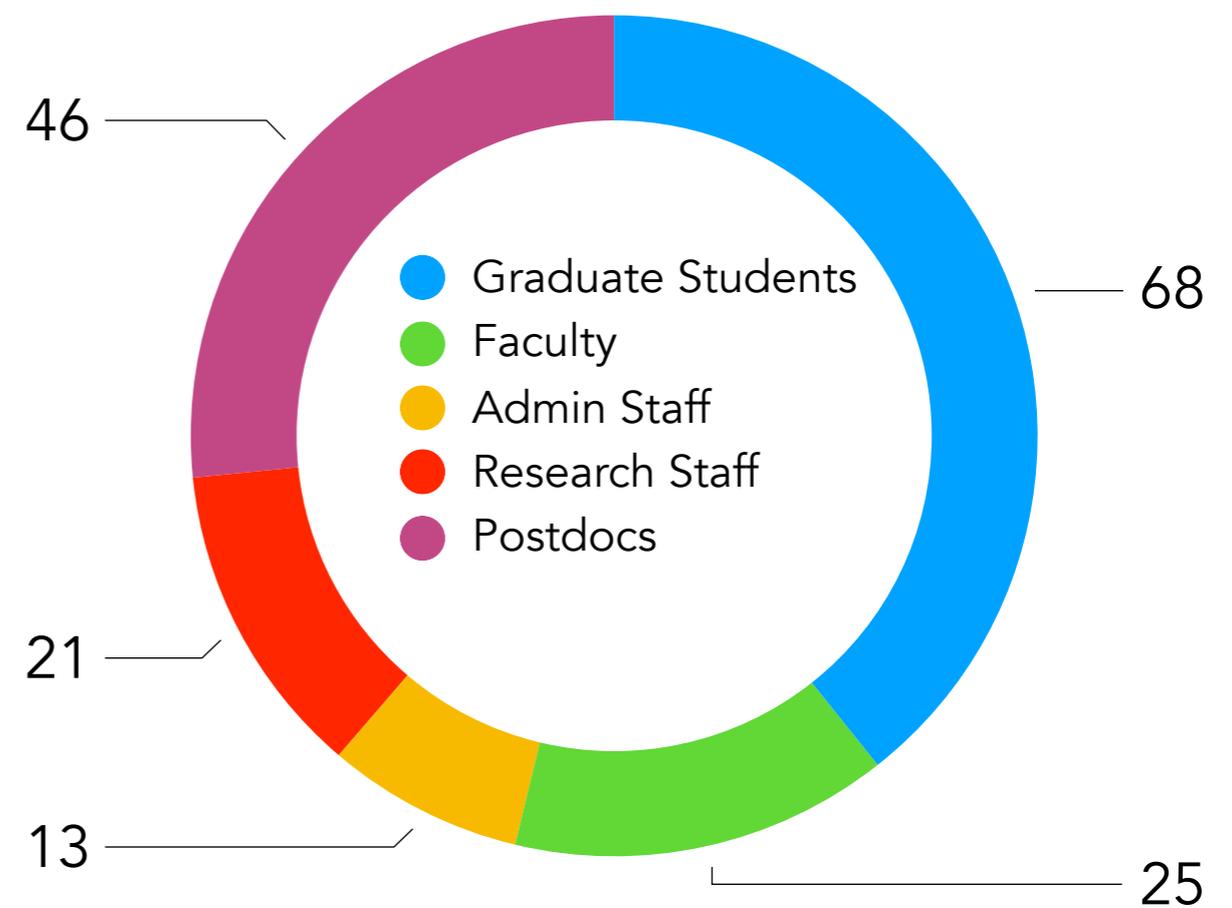
Population & Respondents

Overall response rate: 70.6%

245 invited



173 responded



Response rates:

Faculty 89%, Graduate students 75%, Admin staff 72%, Research staff 68%, Postdocs 60%

Limitations

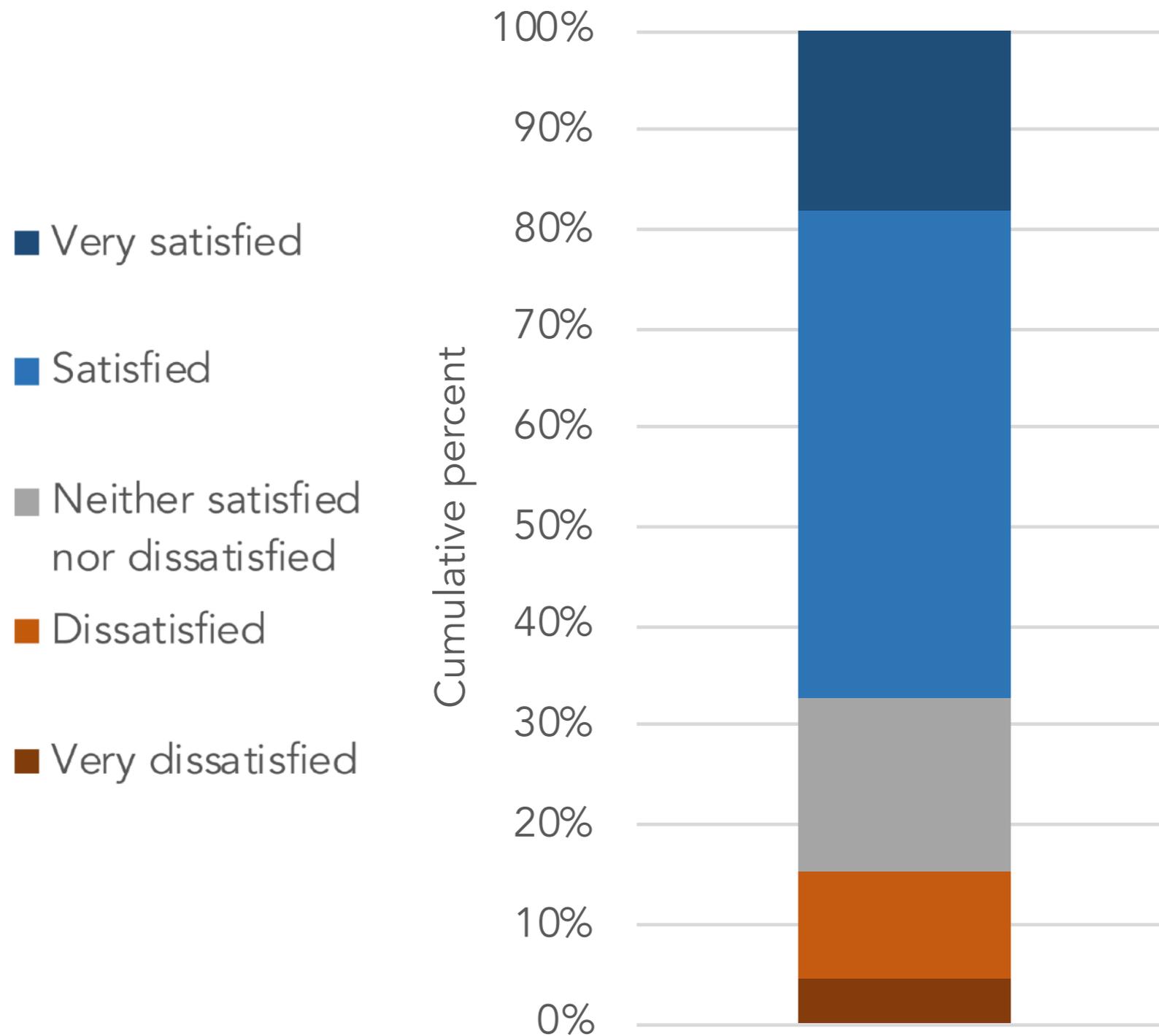
- 70.6% response rate sufficient for generalization to community at large, but still may not represent full range of viewpoints.
- Some groups contained small numbers of respondents, limiting their examination.
 - Race/Ethnicity: Black and Latinx combined
 - “Other” gender identities combined
 - Intersectional identities could not be examined

I. Overall satisfaction with departmental climate

Everyone in the department

Overall satisfaction with department climate

How satisfied are you with the current climate of the Psychology Department?

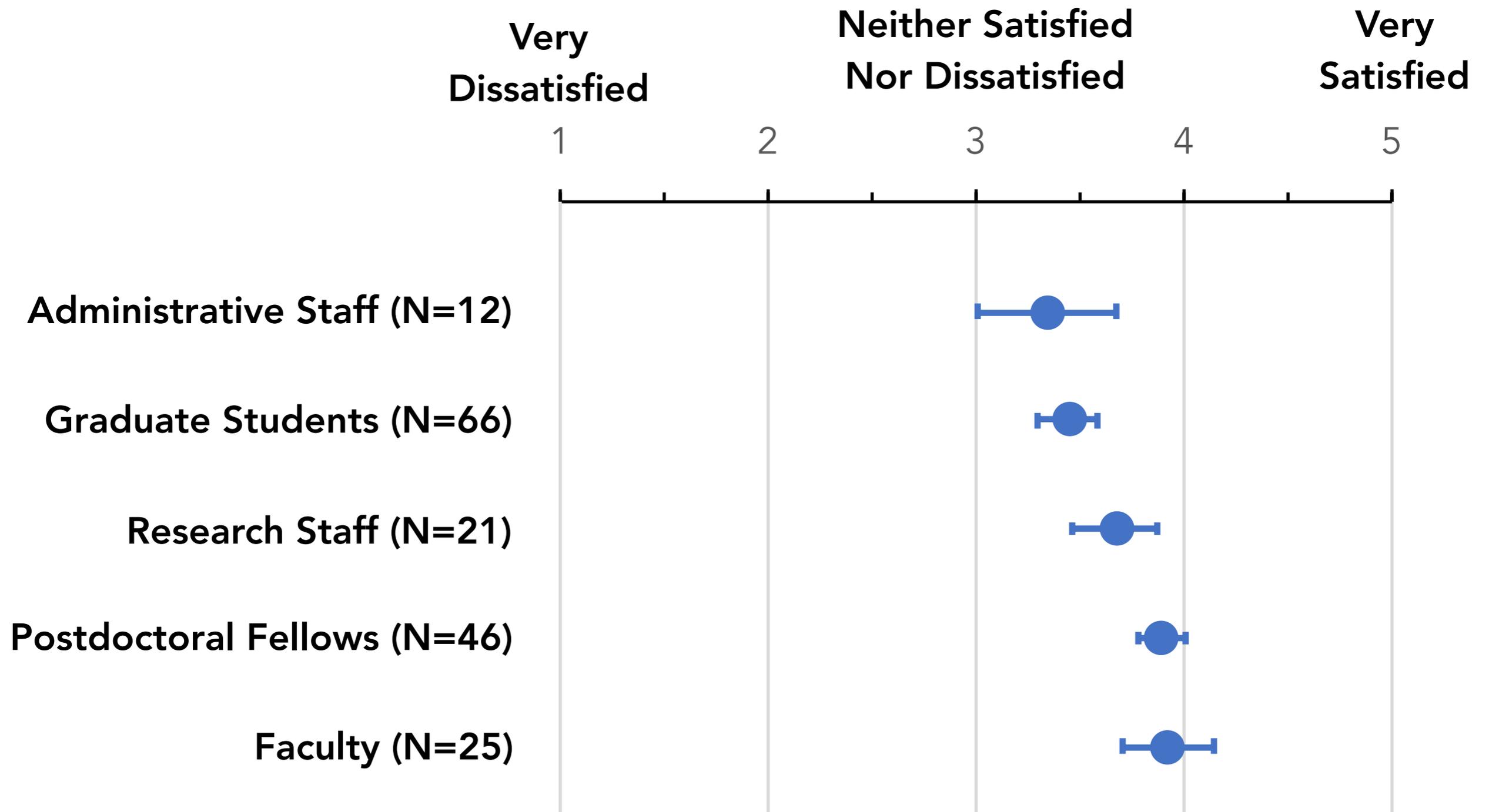


Comparison to other recent surveys at Harvard:

	Mean	N
This survey	3.65	170
Department of Government	3.6	343
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Overall satisfaction by role

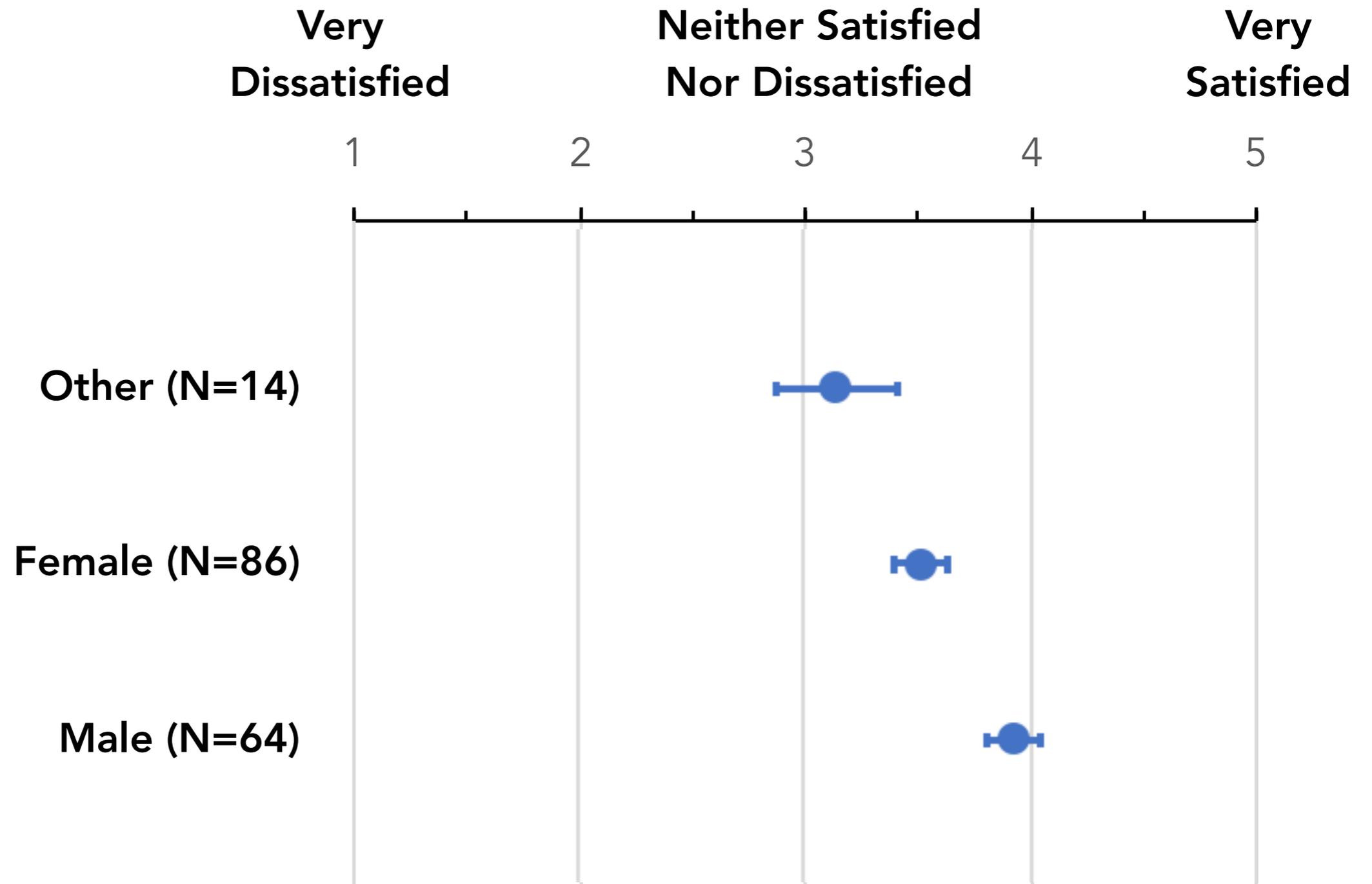
How satisfied are you with the current climate of the Psychology Department?



For all plots, Dot: Mean, Error: SEM (between subs)

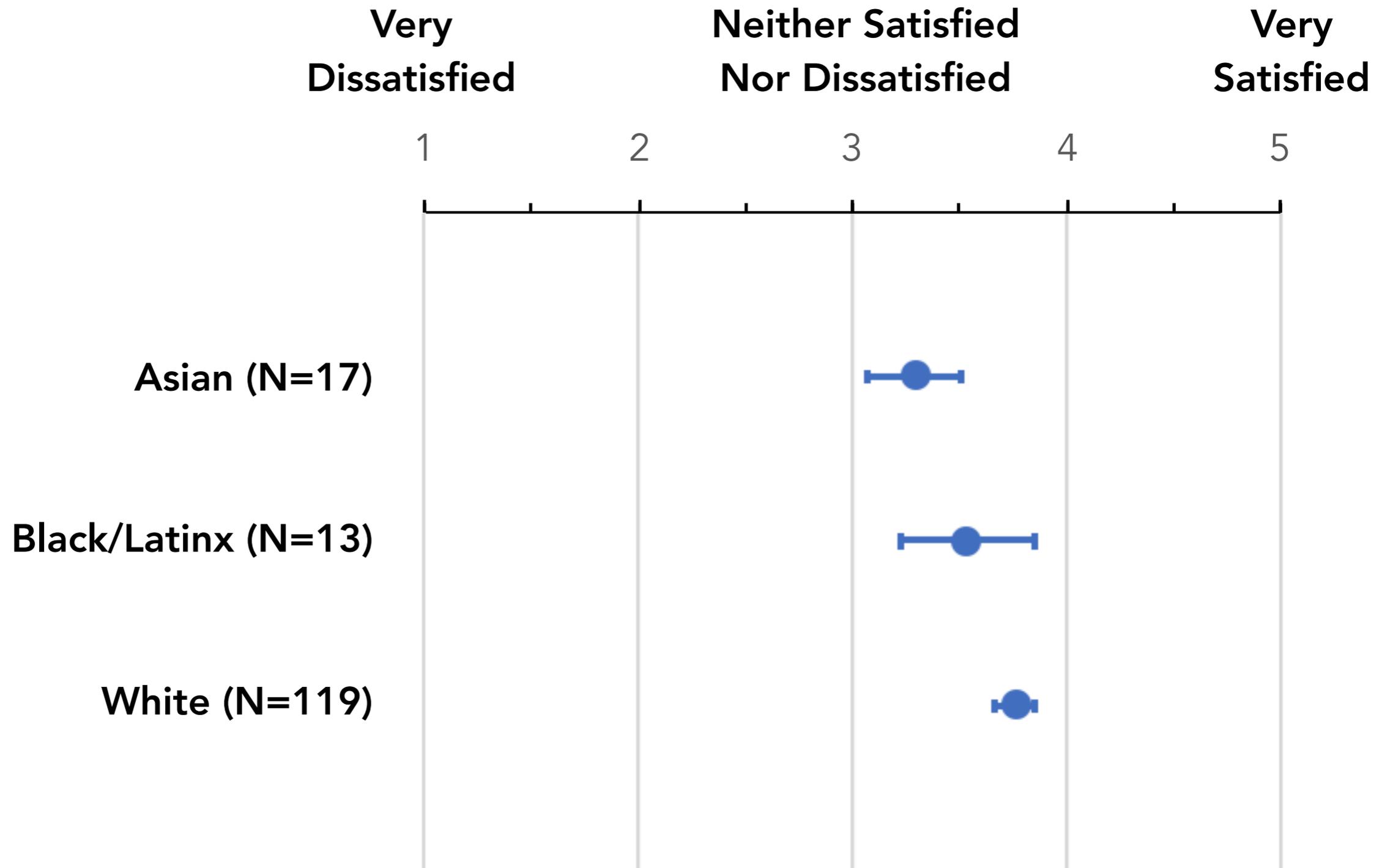
Overall satisfaction by gender

How satisfied are you with the current climate of the Psychology Department?



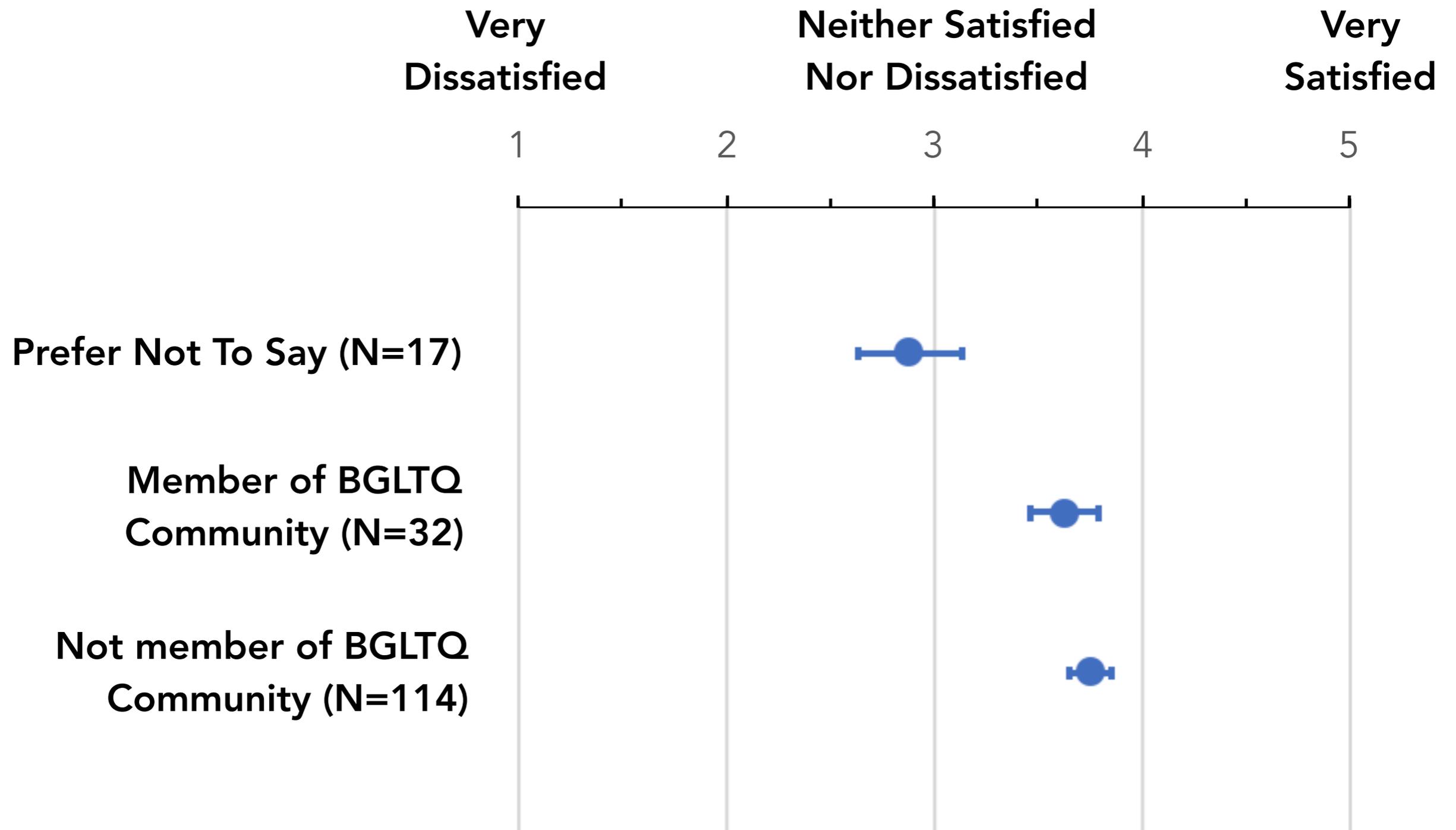
Overall satisfaction by race and ethnicity

How satisfied are you with the current climate of the Psychology Department?

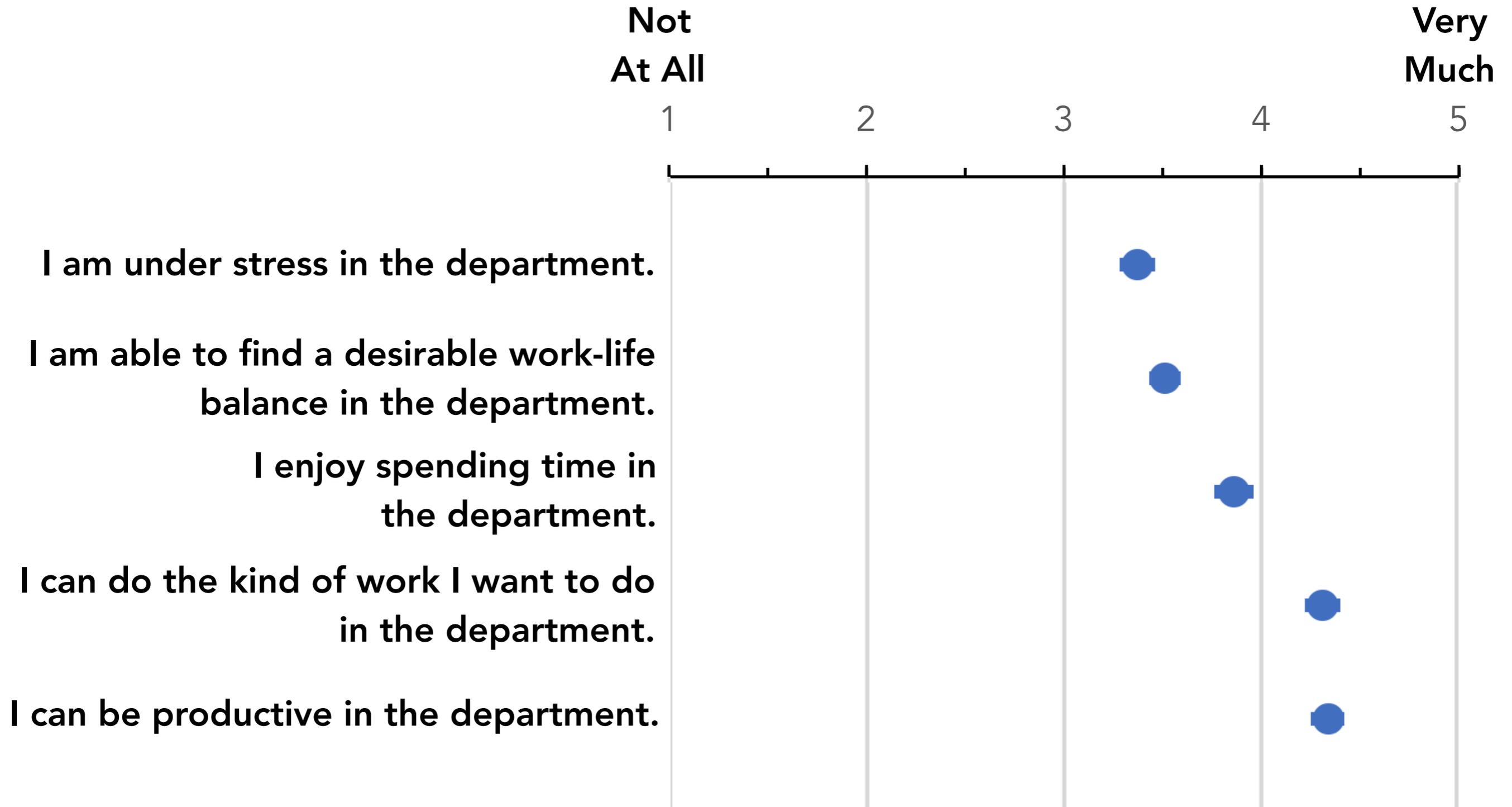


Overall satisfaction by BGLTQ identity

How satisfied are you with the current climate of the Psychology Department?



Other factors contributing to overall climate



Qualitative Analysis (►) of Overall Climate

Variability among respondents

- Due to the lab-centric structure of the department, the lack of a department-wide standard results in highly variable experiences, especially across labs.

Lack of department-wide standards

- Many comments reveal a perception that the Psychology Department does not have, communicate, or enforce department-wide standards of conduct.
- Without department-wide standards of conduct, survey respondents indicated that individual behaviors can have undue influence on a person's experience.

Open-ended response from member of our community

"It seems like there is wide variability in diversity, inclusiveness, and climate from lab to lab and little accountability for mentors who create an uncomfortable environment for their mentees."

Qualitative Analysis of Overall Climate

Positive comments

- ▶ Although relatively few in number, the positive responses to the open-ended questions were, in most cases, the flipside of the negative ones.

Open-ended response from member of our community “From my advisor and lab members to the faculty, students and staff outside my lab, I have been extremely fortunate in getting a chance to work with such amazing individuals. Yes, every lab and department must grow and change over time, but I want Harvard Psych to know that I would make the same choice to attend the program again in a heartbeat and would recommend our program to anyone 100 times over.”

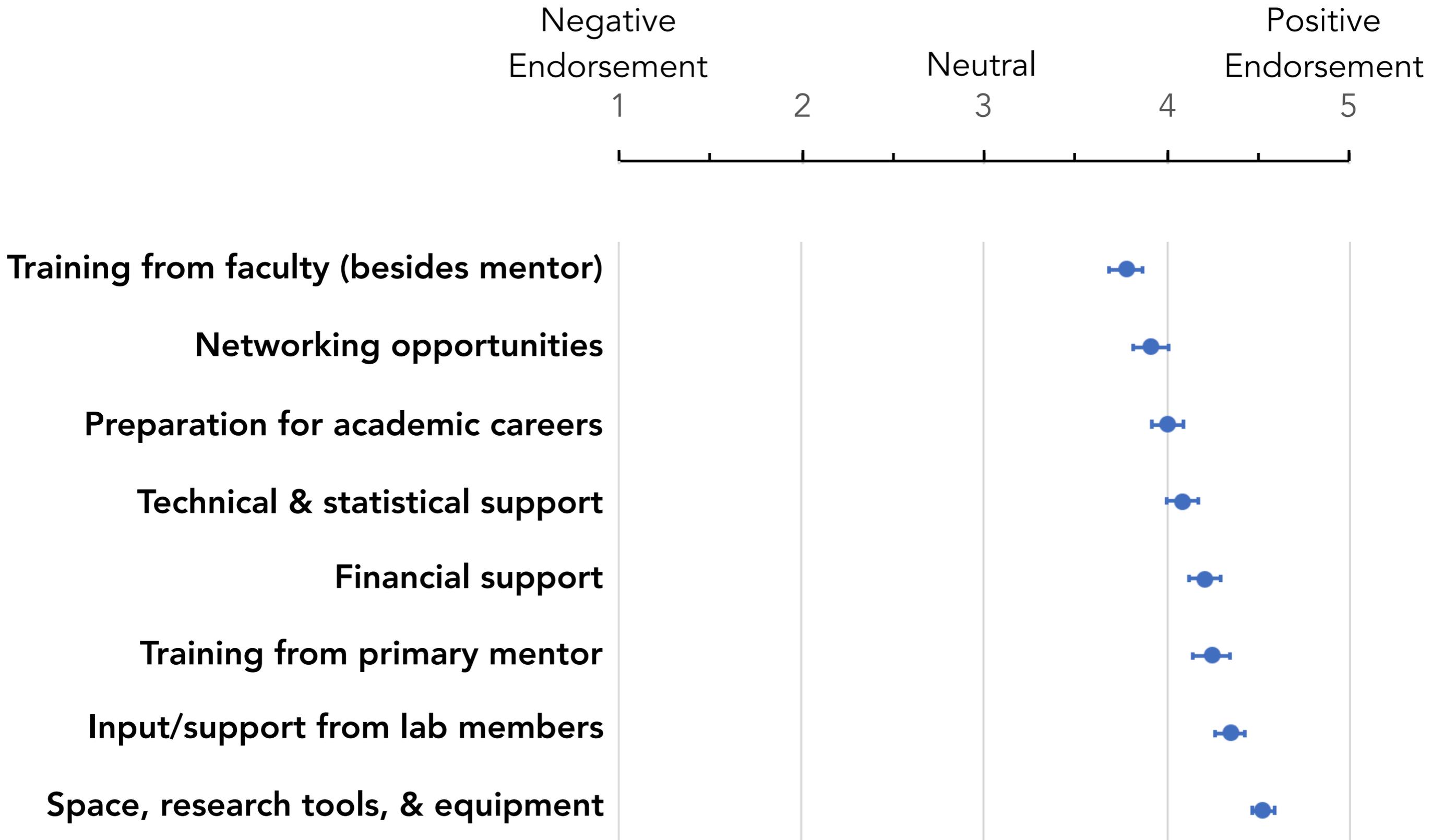
Open-ended response from member of our community “Overall, I think the Psychology Department is doing a great job. :)”

II. Resources & Mentoring

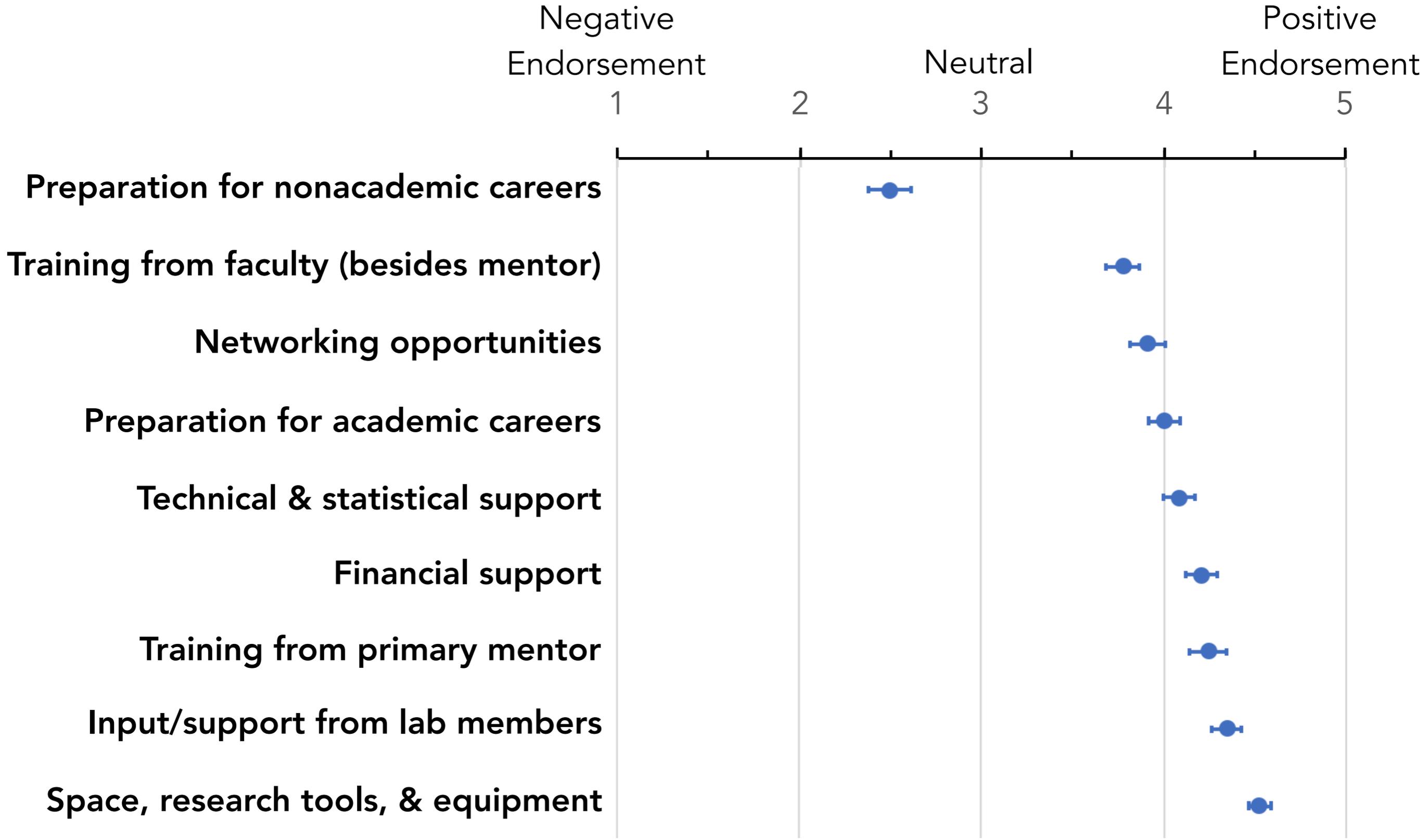
Graduate Students and Postdocs

*Research Staff, Graduate
Students, and Postdocs*

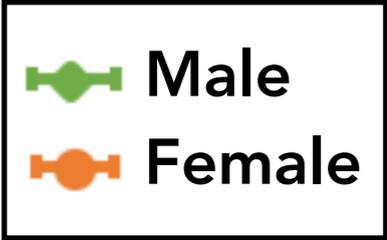
Availability of Resources



Availability of Resources



Availability of Resources



Negative Endorsement 1 2 3 Neutral 4 5 Positive Endorsement

Preparation for nonacademic careers

Training from faculty (besides mentor)

Networking opportunities

Preparation for academic careers

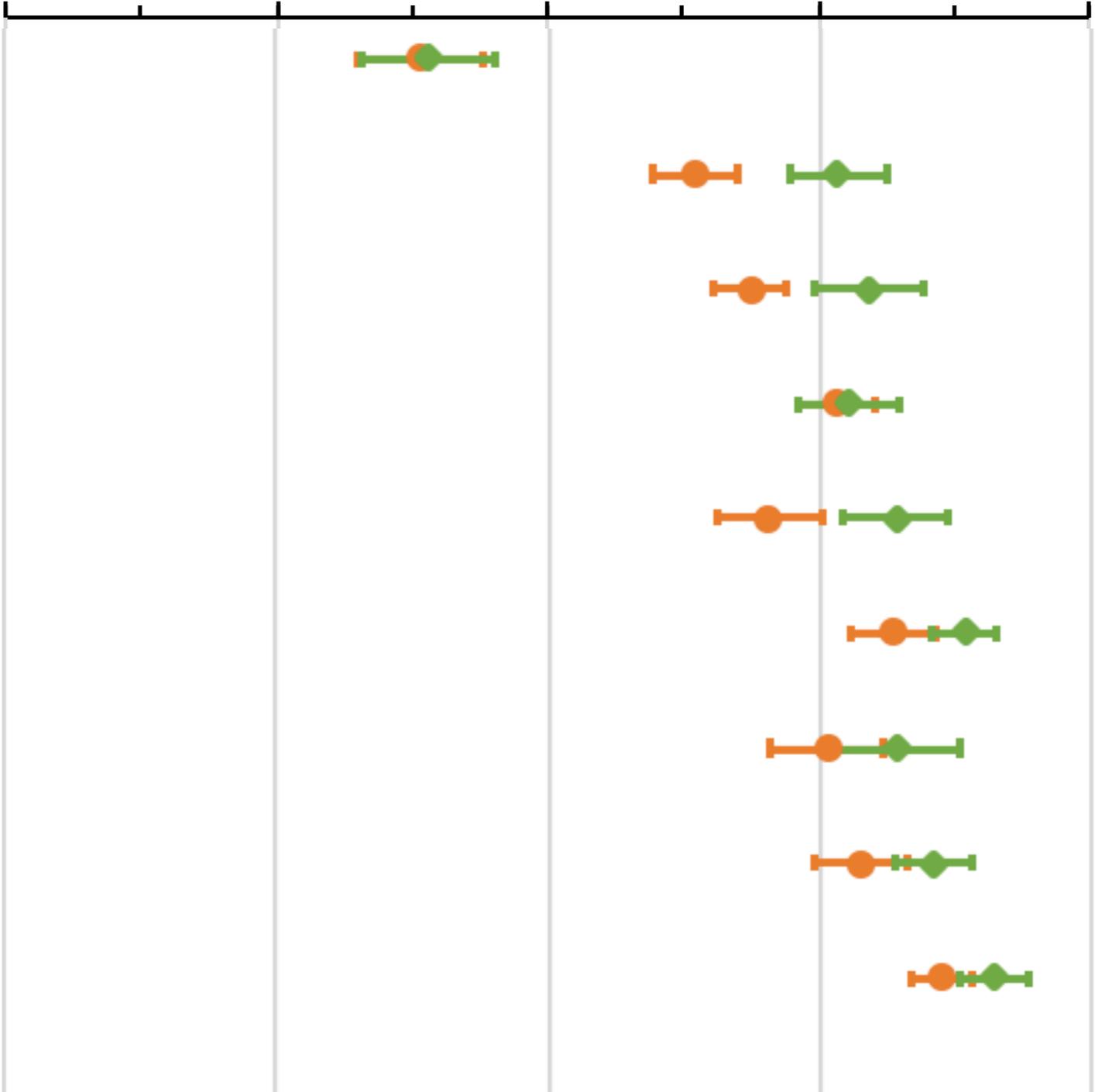
Technical & statistical support

Financial support

Training from primary mentor

Input/support from lab members

Space, research tools, & equipment

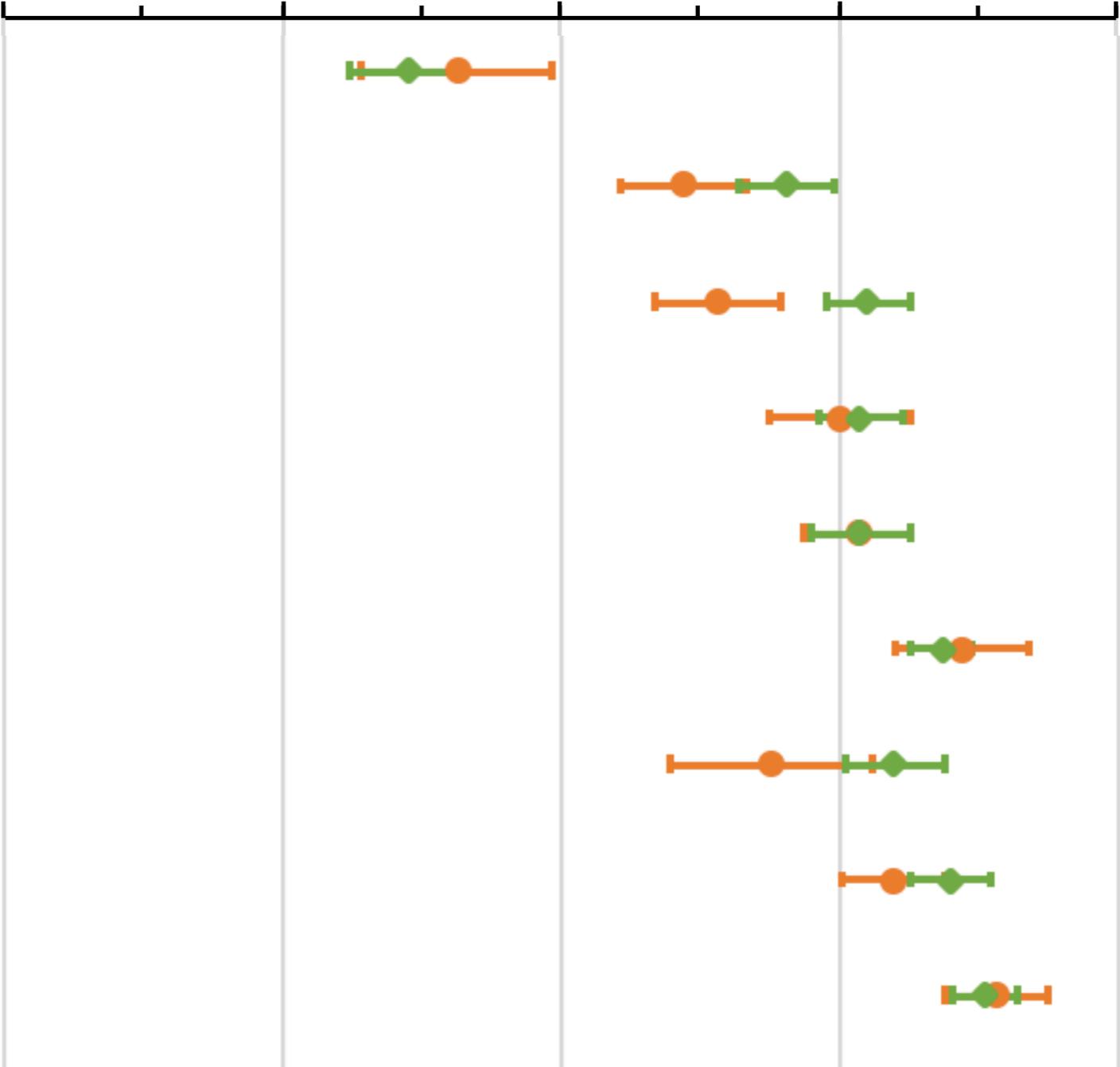


Availability of Resources



Negative Endorsement 1 2 3 Neutral 4 5 Positive Endorsement

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- Training from faculty (besides mentor)
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Mentoring

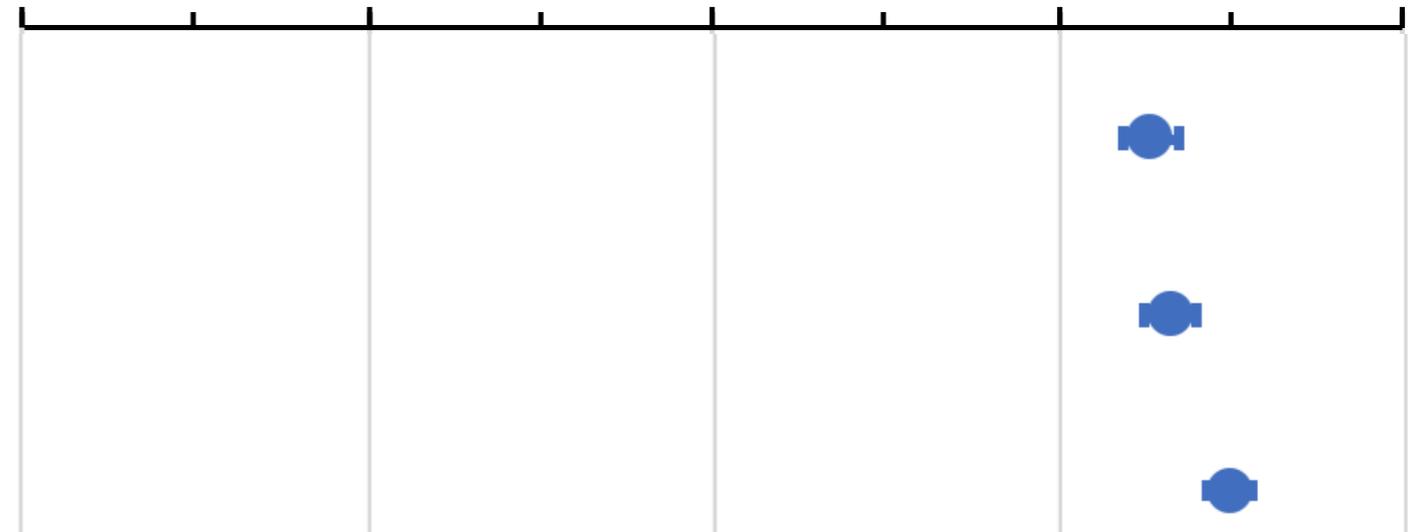
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 Neutral 4 5 Strongly agree

My mentor...

... helps me achieve my professional goals

... cares about me as a person

... cares about my professional success

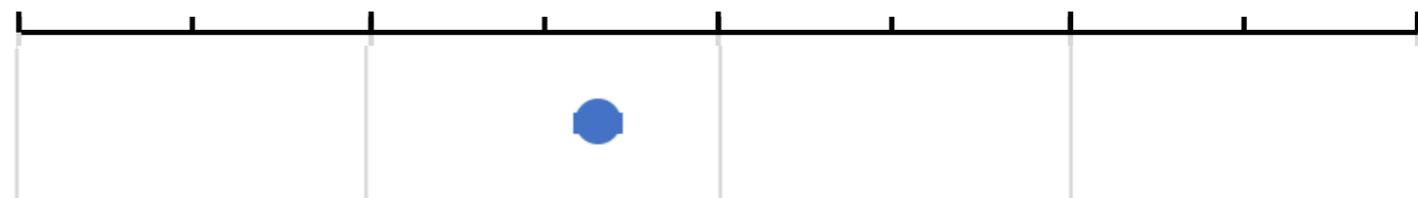


Faculty accessibility

- ▶ In some cases, responses indicated that faculty often appeared too busy or too focused on endeavors that didn't allow for sufficient one-on-one engagements with students/lab members.

Far too little 1 2 3 Neutral 4 5 Far too much

How much time do you have with your mentor to work on professional projects?

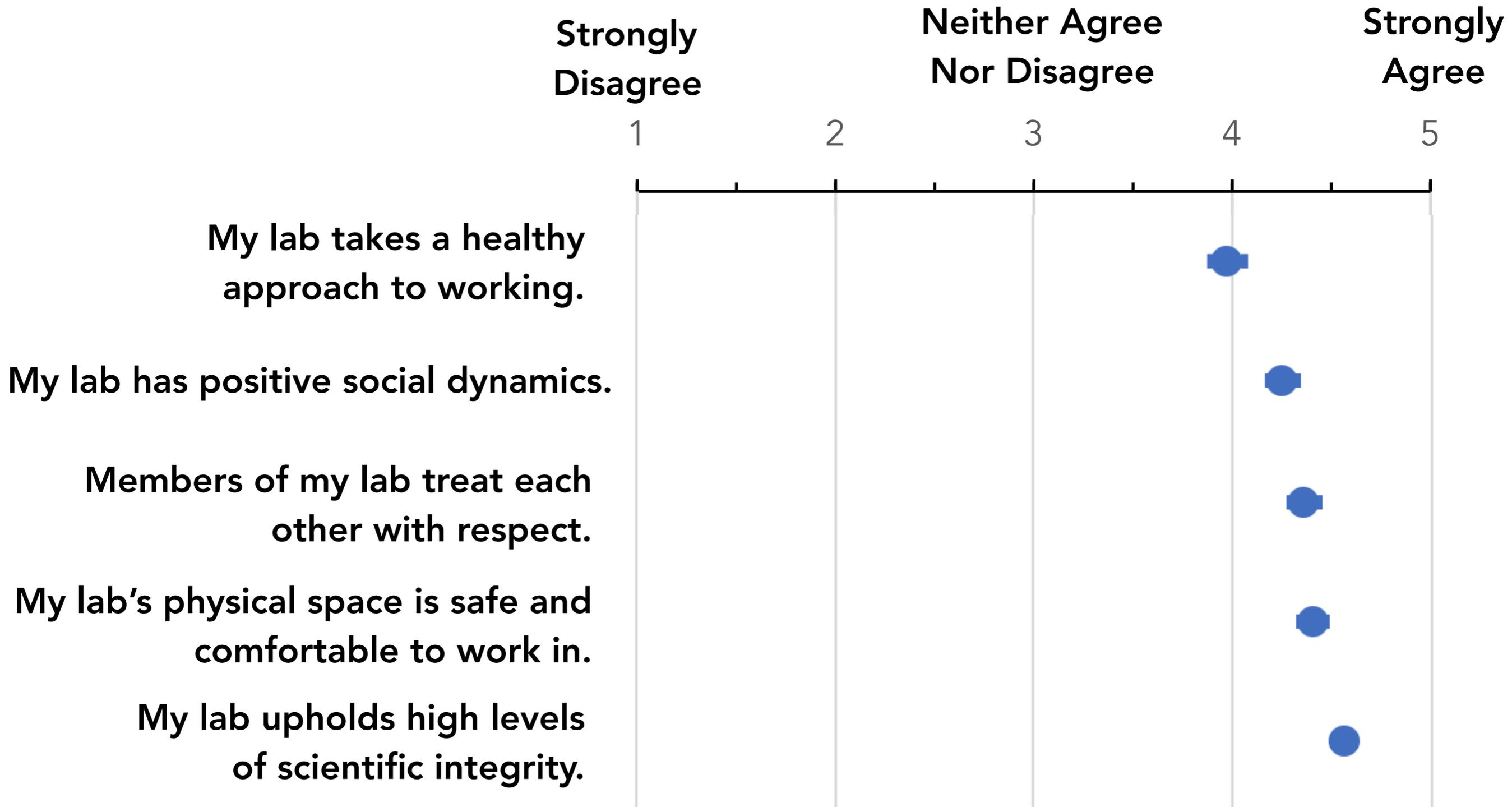


Research Staff, Graduate Students & Postdocs (n=132)

III. Academic environments & lab dynamics

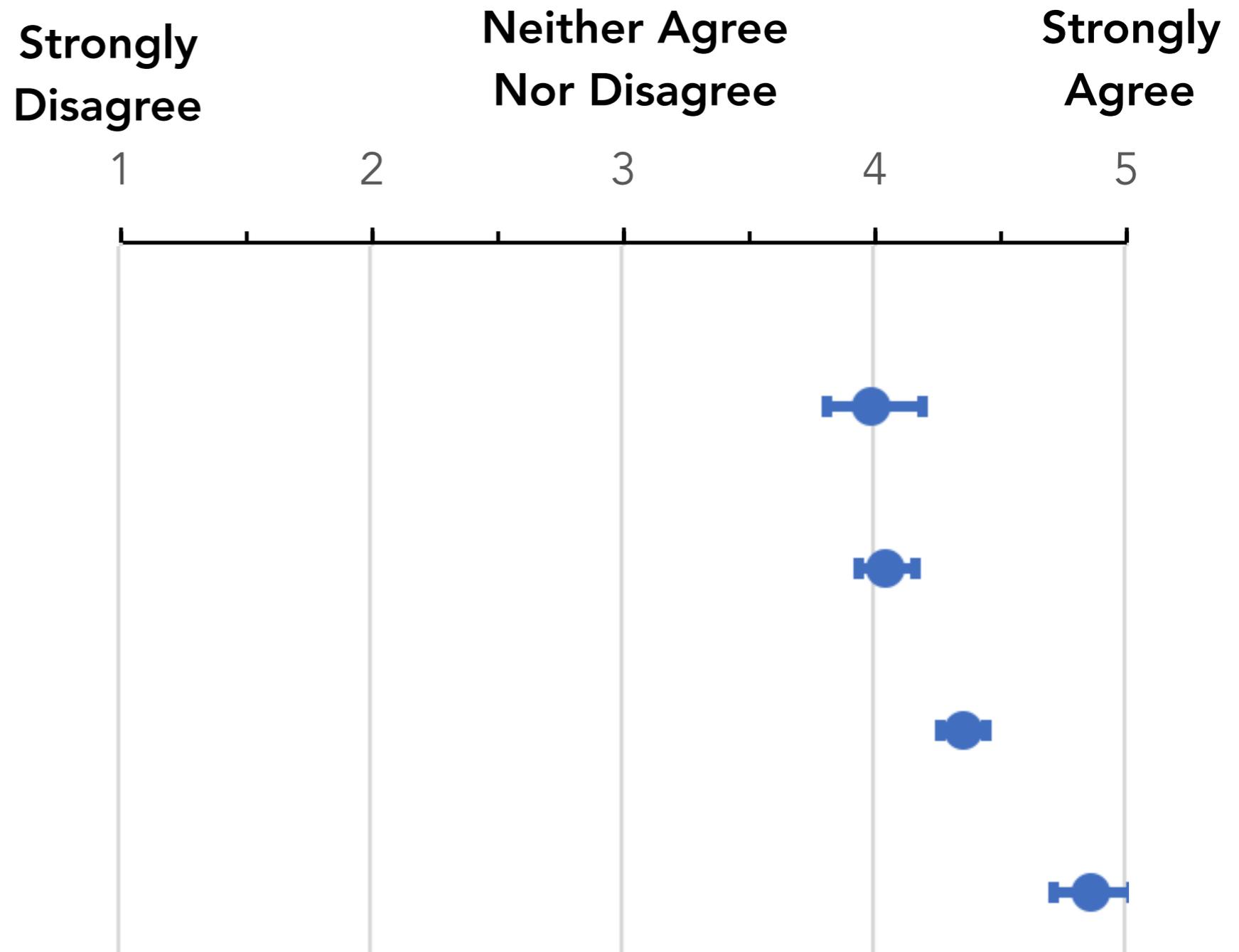
Research Staff, Graduate Students, Postdocs, and Faculty

Laboratory environment



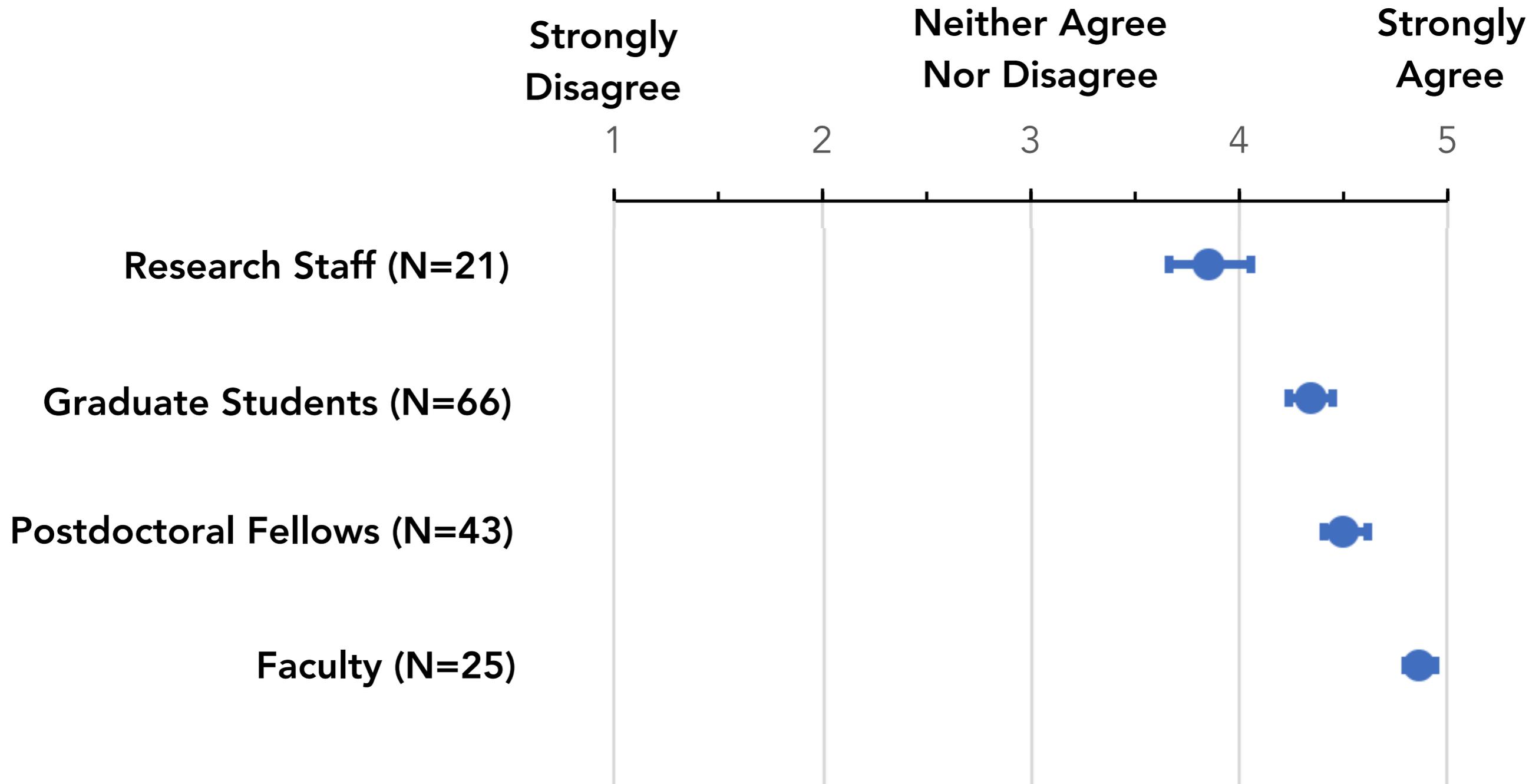
Laboratory environment

The overall social dynamics of my laboratory are positive.

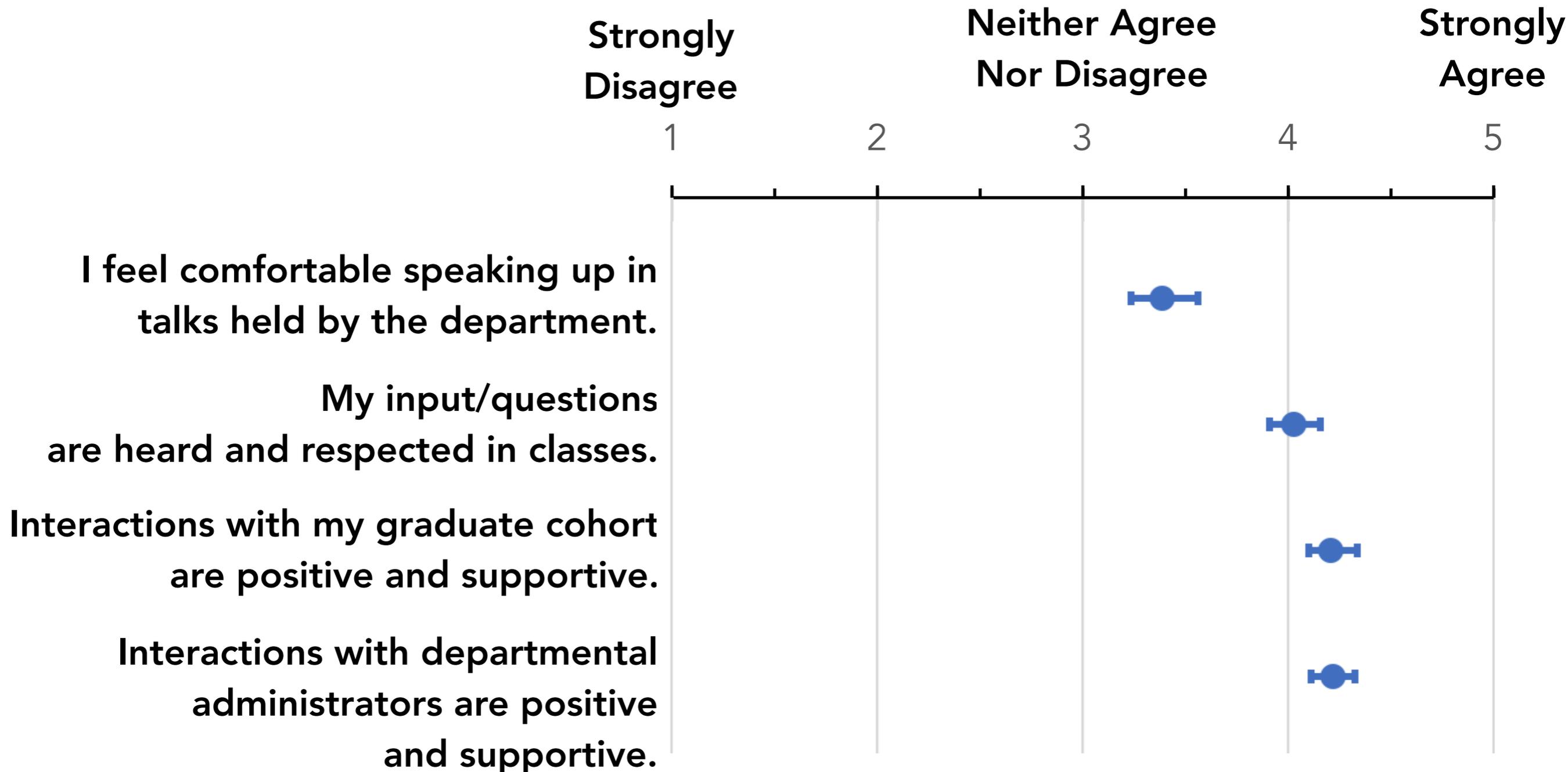


Laboratory environment

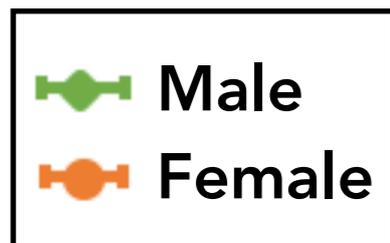
The members of my laboratory treat each other with respect.



Other departmental environments



Other departmental environments



Strongly Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Strongly Agree

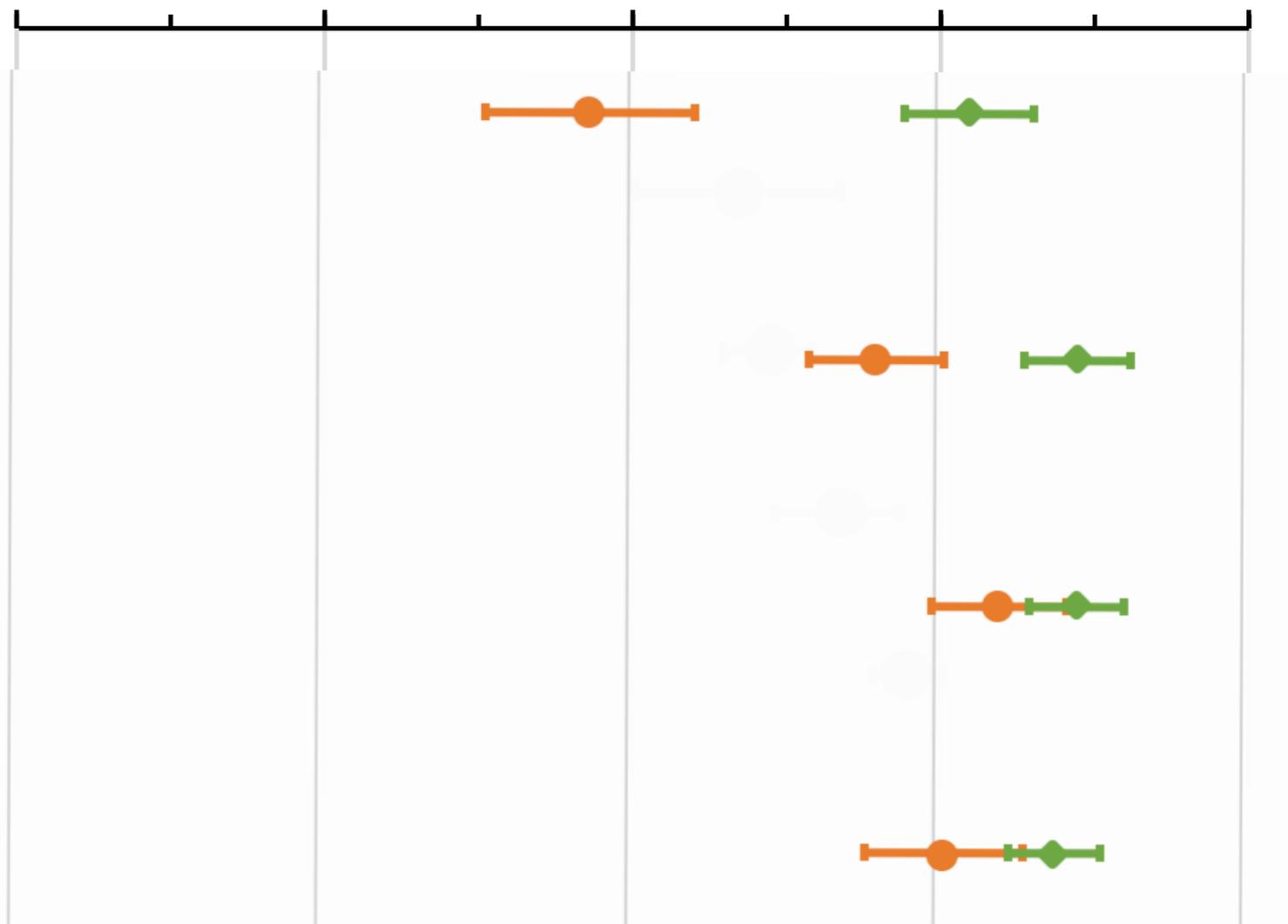
1 2 3 4 5

I feel comfortable speaking up in talks held by the department.

My input/questions are heard and respected in classes.

Interactions with my graduate cohort are positive and supportive.

Interactions with departmental administrators are positive and supportive.



Other departmental environments



Strongly Disagree

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

Strongly Agree

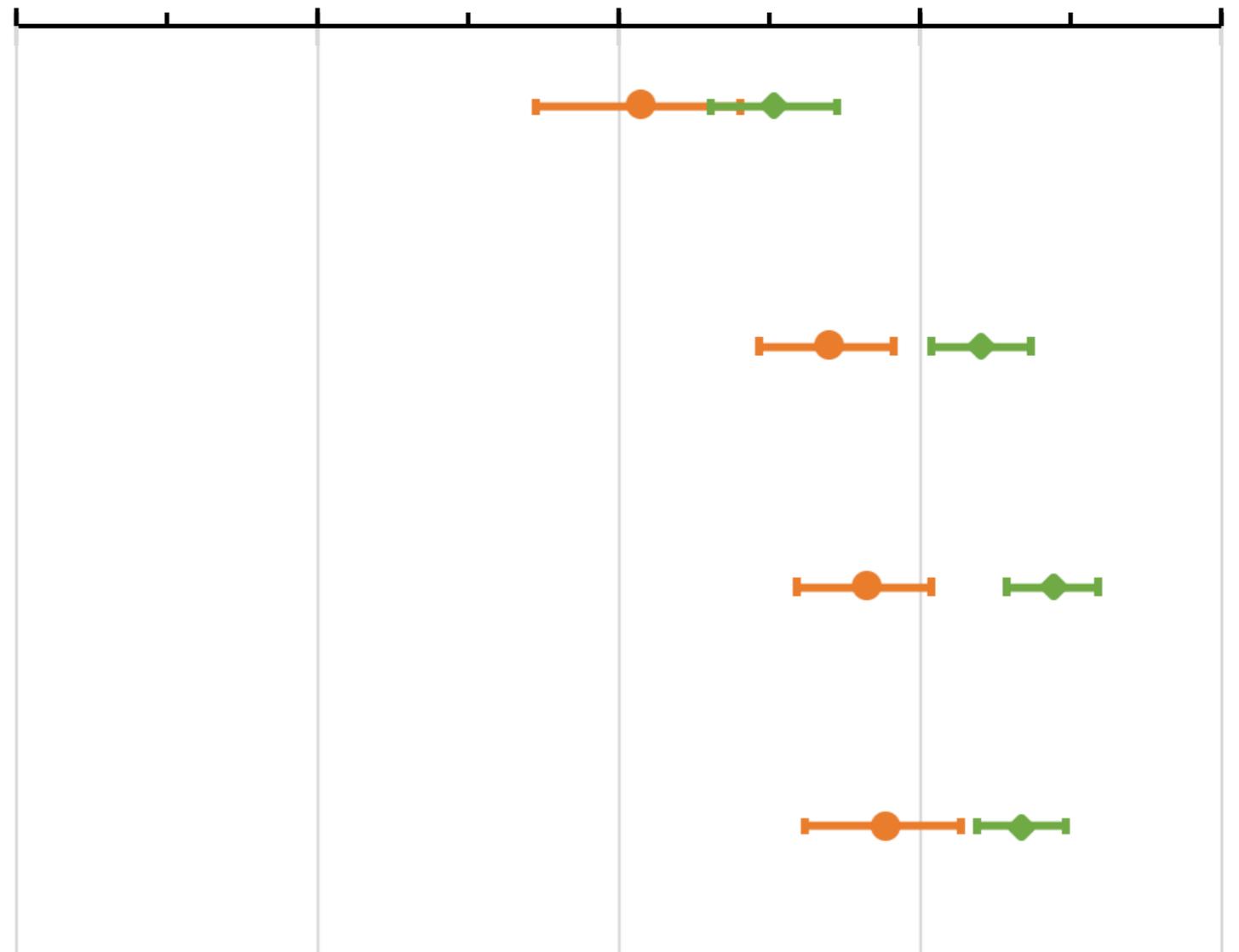
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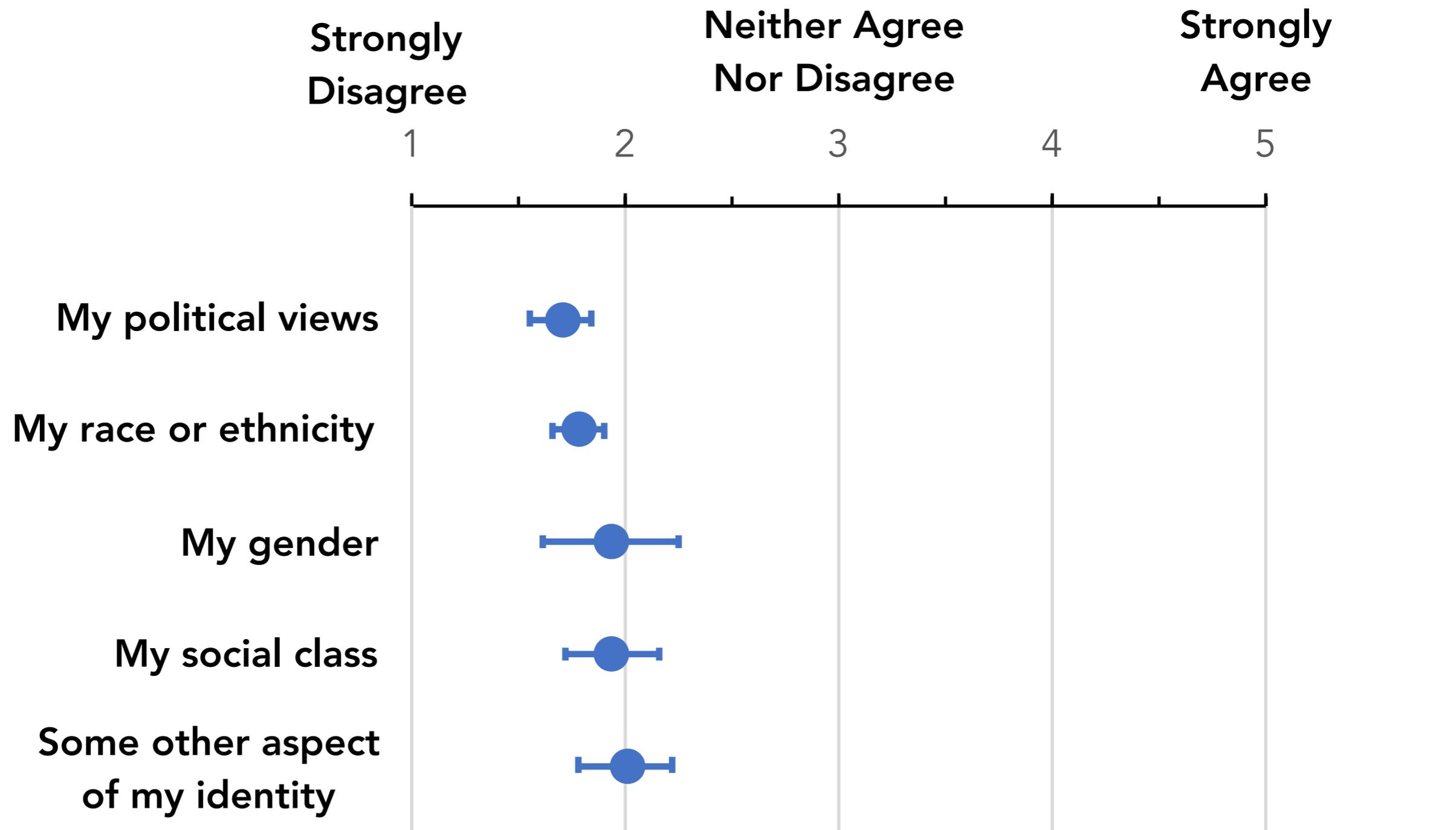


IV. Work & Identity

Whole department

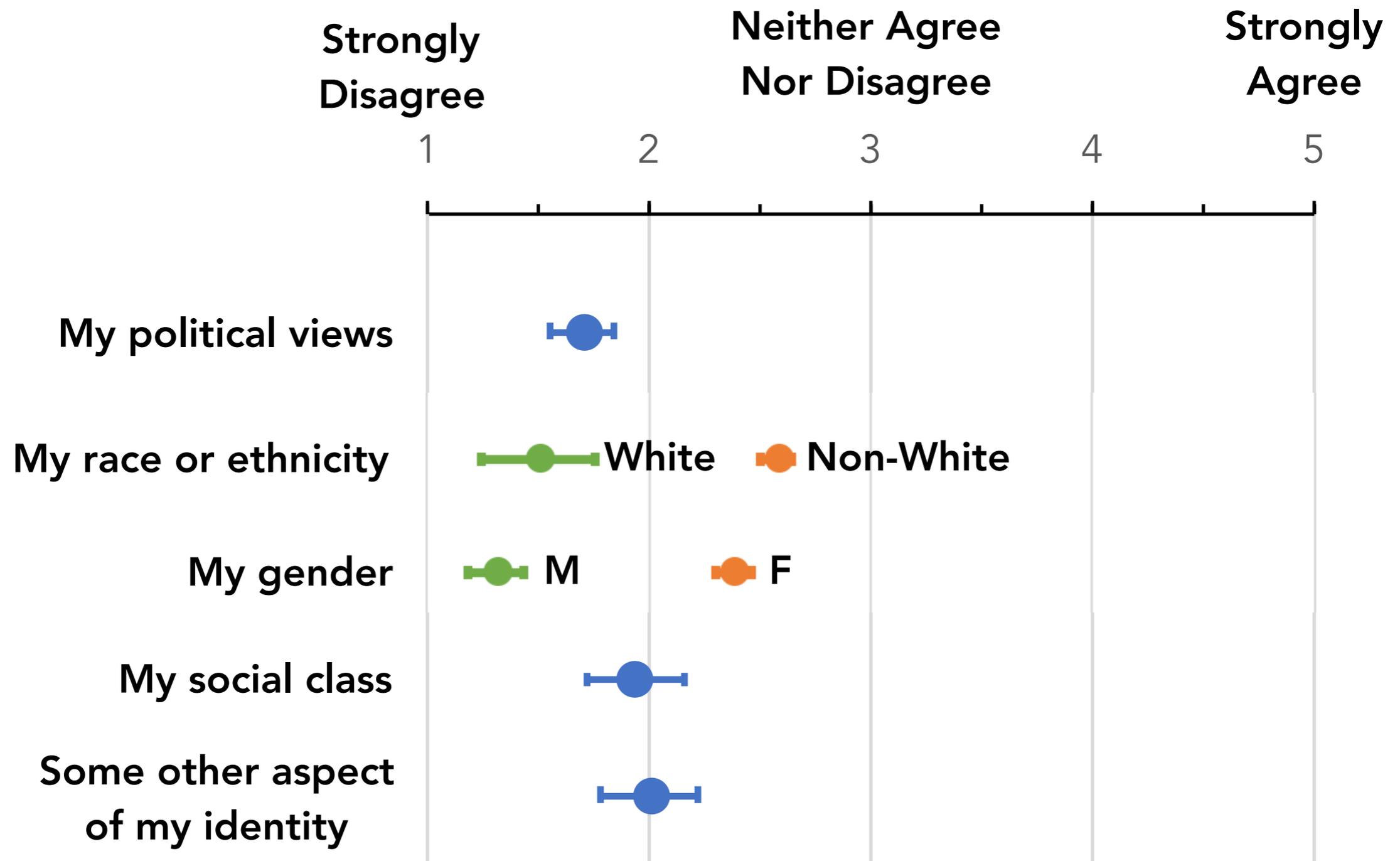
Work and identity

In the Psychology Department, my work or study is limited/negatively affected by....



Work and identity

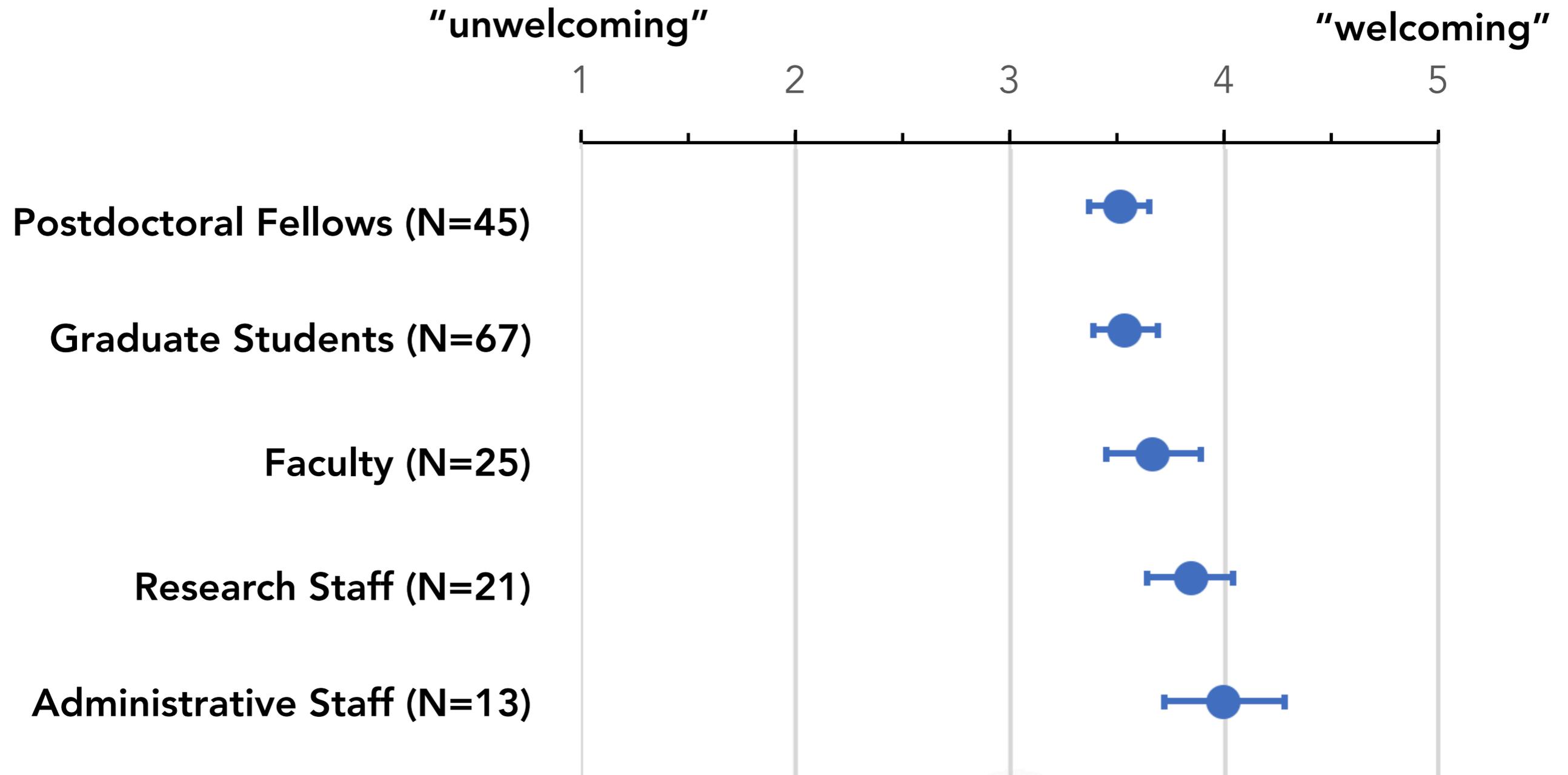
In the Psychology Department, my work or study is limited/negatively affected by....



V. Community

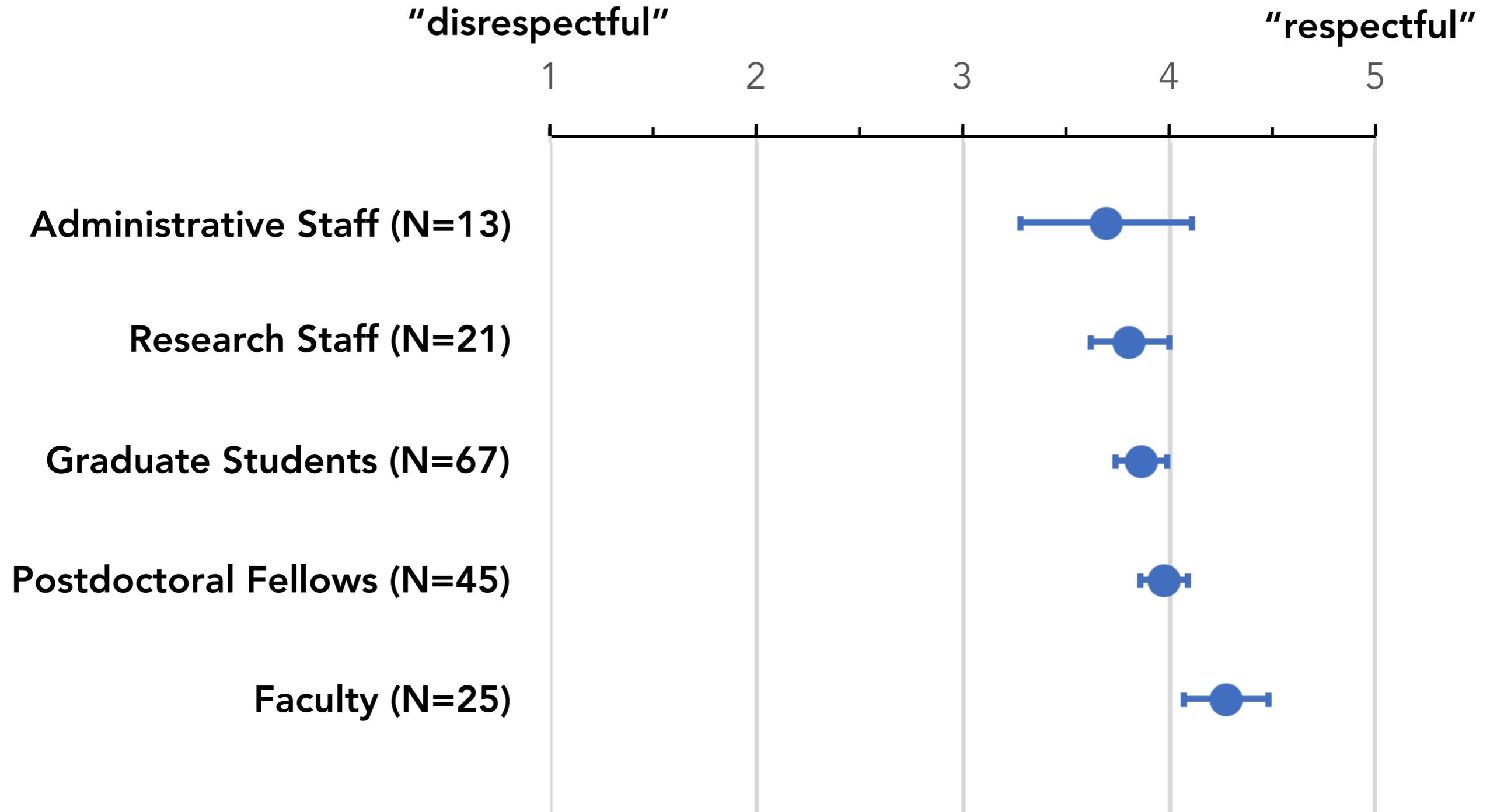
Whole department

How 'welcoming' is the department?



- ▶ Postdoctoral fellows and administrative staff report feeling invisible and lacking in community. Postdocs have reported a lack of focused activities for them within the department.

How 'respectful' is the department?



- ▶ Staff communicated the perception of feeling invisible to other sectors of the department.

There is a desire for a departmental culture with greater community spirit, and a greater focus on health and well-being

- ▶ Some comments referenced the desire for a departmental culture focused less on outward markers of achievement and competition and more on collaboration and students' wellbeing.

Open-ended responses from members of our community

"Honestly, discussing the climate in the psychology department as a whole feels like discussing the climate on the moon: It's not that there is something terribly wrong - there just isn't much climate of any kind. Everyone sticks to their floors, and largely to their labs. [...] Relatedly and generally, it would be good to have a greater sense of community in the department. A lack of any serious initiative on this front leads to a sense of indifference. I suspect that active, vocal faculty support on this issue would strongly facilitate an improvement. At the very least it would signal from the position of authority that a positive community within our department is not a distraction from work or added bonus but rather an important and valued component of our graduate (and human) experience."

"I feel like the department should try to improve on a sense of community."

VI. Harassment & Discrimination

Whole department

Experiences with harassment

Harassment, for the purpose of this survey, is defined as conduct that is either severe or persistent enough to interfere with one's academic or professional performance, limit one's ability to participate in an academic program, or create an intimidating or hostile academic or work environment.

Have you experienced harassment by someone associated with the Psychology Department?

- 30/169 respondents (18%) said "yes" or "unsure"

Comparison to other recent survey at Harvard:		
	%	N
This survey	18	169
Department of Government	5	322

Experiences with harassment

What specific forms of harassment?

Rank	Top responses (of 11 possible)
1	Derogatory, embarrassing or humiliating remarks or gestures
2	Being bullied
3	Derogatory, embarrassing or humiliating emails, texts or social media posts
4	Undesired sexual attention
5	Other
6	Unwanted sexual contact

Experiences with harassment

What aspect of your identity was that harassment based on?

Rank	Top responses (of 12 possible)
1	A reason unrelated to my identity
2	Gender
3	Unknown
4	Race/Ethnicity
5	Socioeconomic status

Experiences with harassment

Who was the source of harassment you experienced in the Department?

Rank	Most frequent responses
1	Faculty
2	Staff/Administrator
3	Postdoctoral Fellow
4	Graduate Student
5	Undergraduate
6	Other

Demographics of those who reported experiencing harassment

Role	Staff and Faculty > Students and Postdocs
Gender	Female > Male and Other
BGLTQ	BGLTQ > Non-BGLTQ and Prefer Not to Say
Race/ethnicity	White > Non-White

*Caveats: Small Sample; Time in Dept confound;
Demographic base rates confound*

Experiences with discrimination

Discrimination is defined as unjust or prejudicial treatment on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, creed, national origin, age, genetic information, military service, disability, or any other legally protected basis.

Have you experienced discrimination from somebody associated with the Psychology Department?

- 29/169 respondents (17%) said yes or unsure

Comparison to other recent surveys at Harvard:		
	%	N
This survey	17	169
Department of Government	17	322

Experiences with discrimination

What specific forms of discrimination?

Rank	Top Responses (of 10 possible)
1	Unfair comments in a Psychology Department classroom, seminar, or other work environment
2	Being treated unfairly by a student or lab member
3	Being treated unfairly by an instructor
4	Being denied full participation in a Psychology Department classroom, seminar, or other work environment
5	Being denied the resources necessary to be successful in your scholarship or other work

Experiences with discrimination

What aspect of your identity was that discrimination based on?

Rank	Top Responses (of 15 possible)
1	Gender Identity
2	Race/Ethnicity
3	Unknown
4	Sexual Orientation
5	Political Views
6	Age
7	Socioeconomic Status

Experiences with discrimination

Who was the source of discrimination you experienced in the Department?

Rank	Most frequent responses
1	Faculty
2	Staff/Administrator
3	Graduate Student
4	Postdoctoral Fellow

Demographics of those who reported experiencing discrimination

Role	Staff and Graduate Students > Faculty and Postdocs
Gender	Female and Other > Male
BGLTQ	BGLTQ and Prefer Not to Say > Non-BGLTQ
Race/ethnicity	Non-White > White

*Caveats: Small Sample; Time in Dept confound;
Demographic base rates confound*

Qualitative Analysis of Harassment & Discrimination

Prevention

- ▶ Some respondents acknowledged the department's recent activities to address issues of harassment, workplace bullying, and intimidation. Despite these activities, comments suggest that prevention and enforcement continue to be a problem.

Lack of accountability

- ▶ A common issue raised by graduate students and staff is that the department does not hold individuals accountable for problematic behaviors.

Culture of silence

- ▶ There is also a perception that there is a "culture of silence" with regards to problematic behaviors. Harassment, in particular, is an issue that many respondents have experienced, witnessed, or heard about within the department but feel it is an issue that the department is unwilling to actively address.

Open-ended response from member of our community

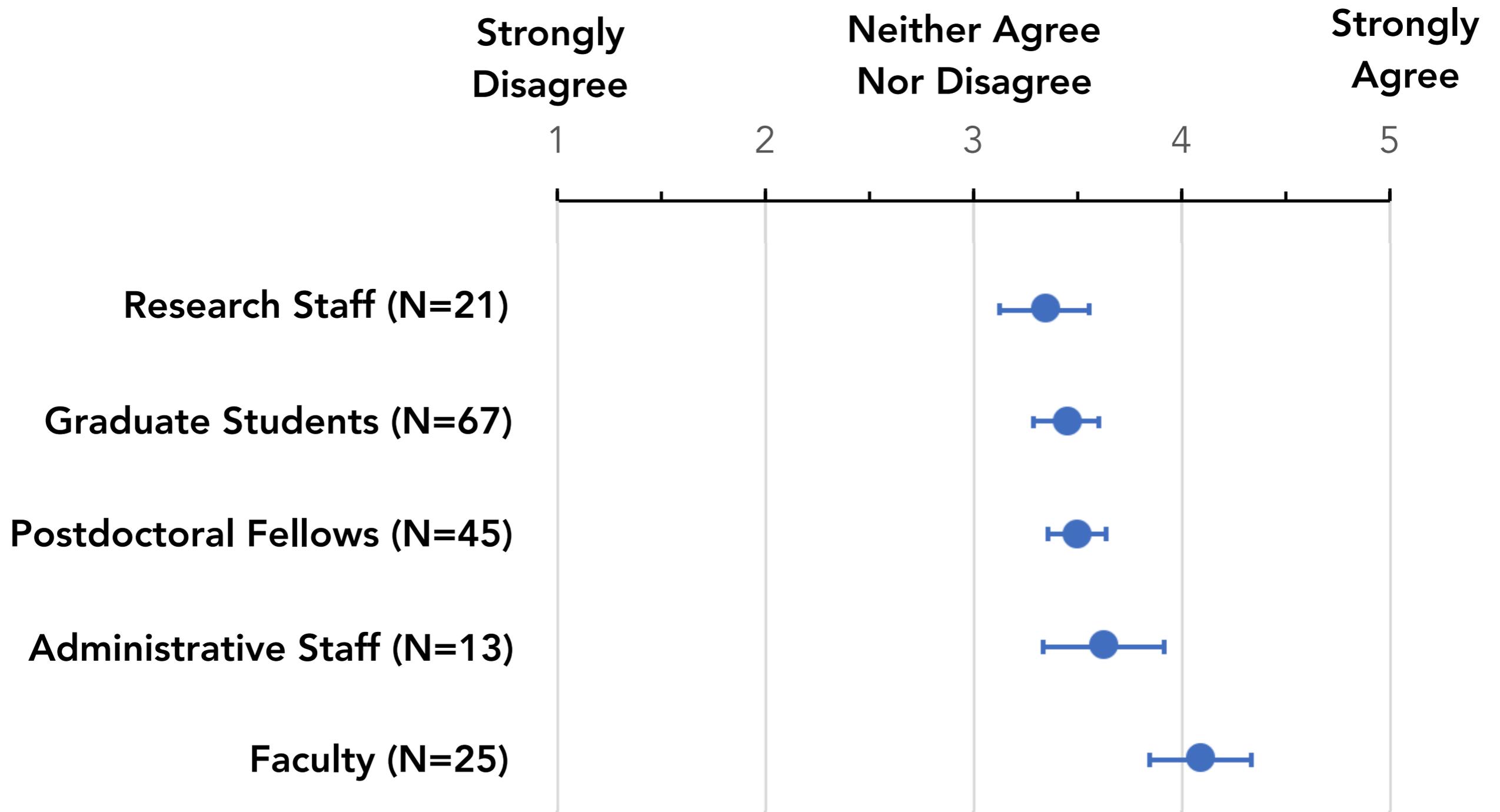
"One challenge I have experienced is knowing what I should do when I know something is happening but it is not happening to me. This could be a valuable topic to address in future meetings and trainings."

VII. Inclusion & belonging

Whole department

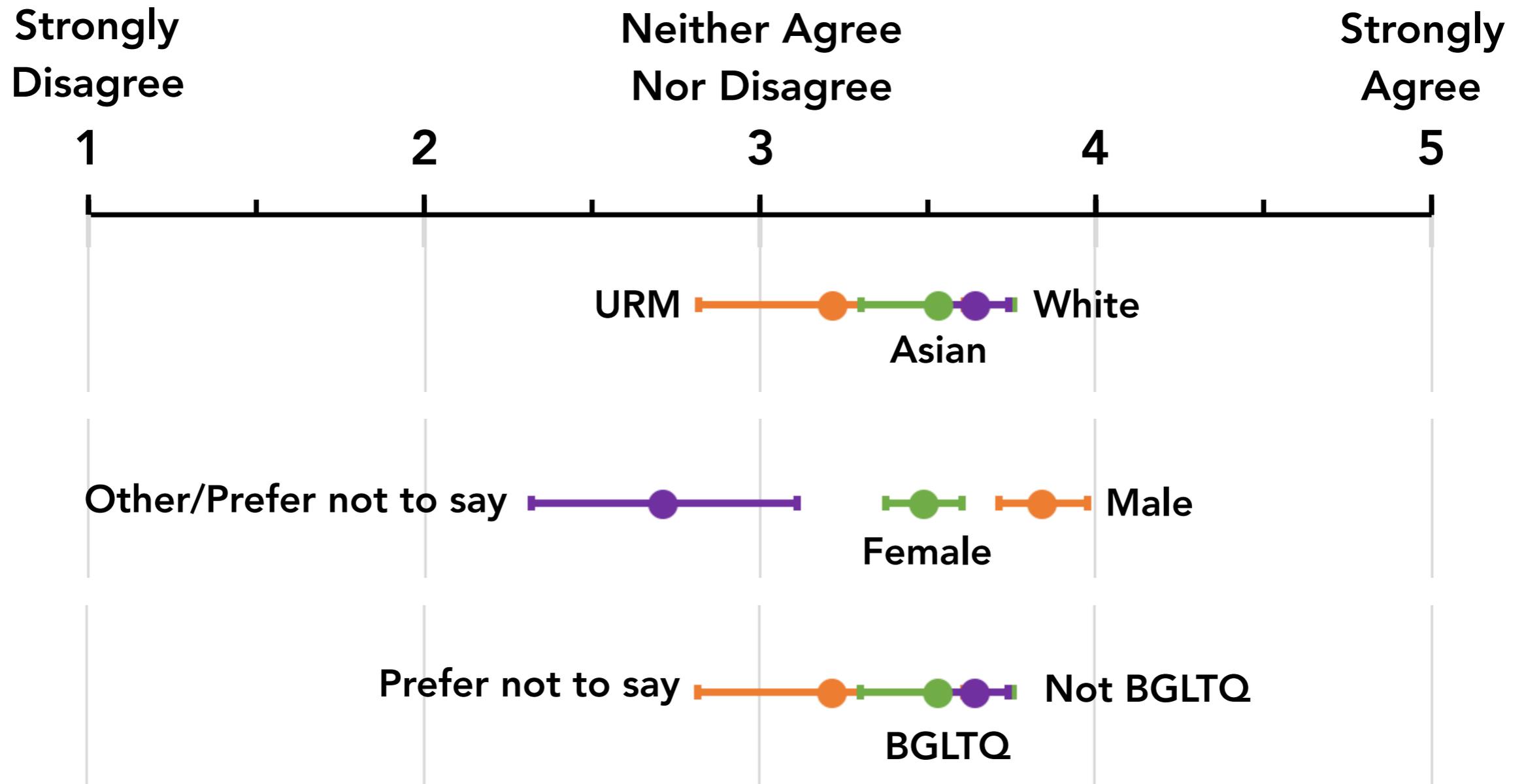
Inclusion & Belonging

I feel like I belong in the Department of Psychology.



Inclusion & Belonging

I feel like I belong in the Department of Psychology.



Qualitative Analysis of Identity, Inclusion, & Belonging

Lack of efforts to create inclusive environment

- ▶ There are perceptions, especially among graduate students, that the department lacks sensitivity to women, ethnic minorities, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, international students, and individuals with conservative or religious ideologies.

This perception has negative impacts on community members

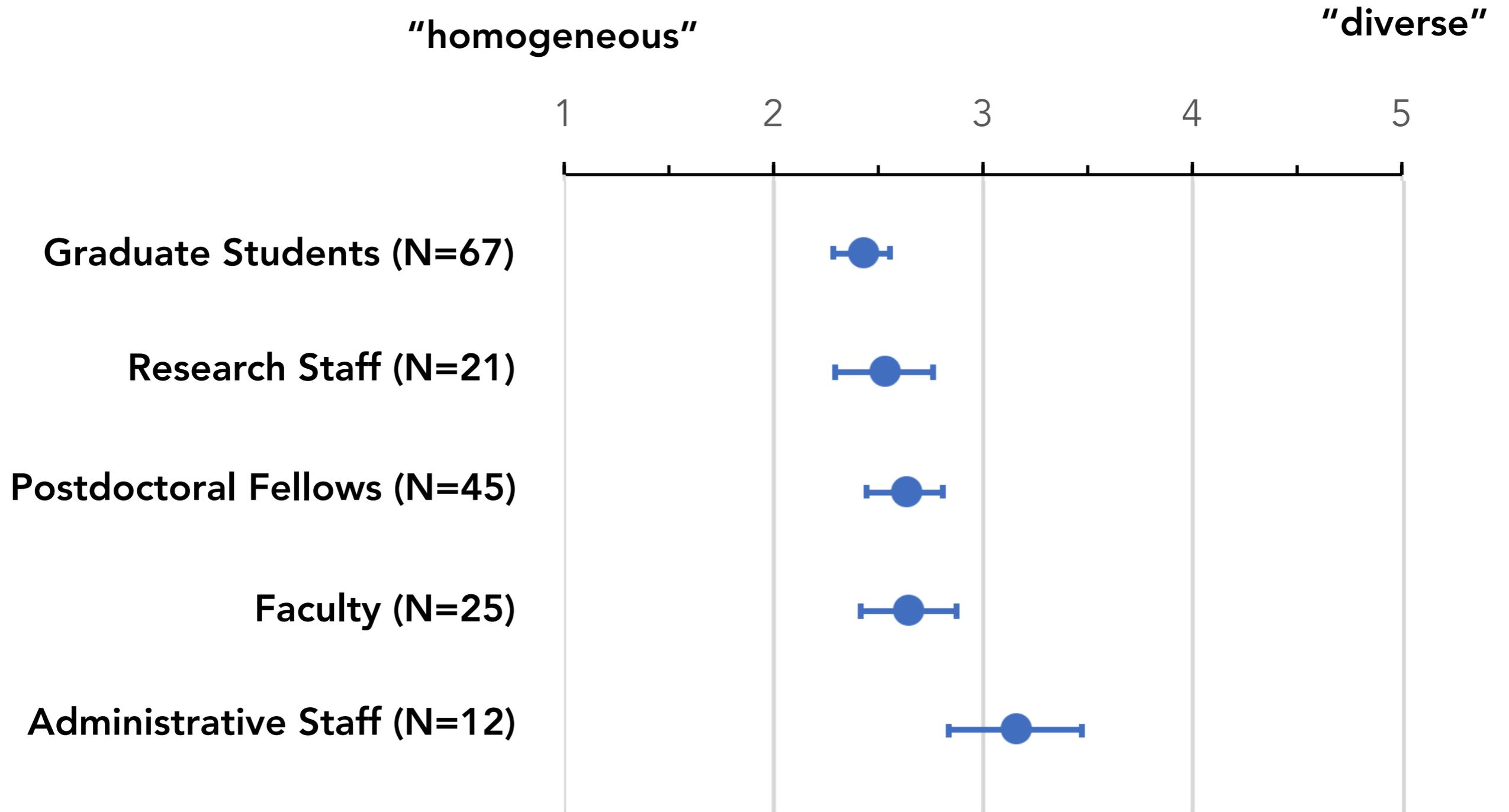
- ▶ Students among these groups report feeling alienated within labs and day-to-day conversation.

Perceived high levels of variability among faculty members in commitment to fostering inclusion and belonging

- ▶ Some respondents acknowledged in their comments that there are many psychology faculty who care about issues of belonging and inclusion, but there is the perception that there are also many psychology faculty who do not care about these issues. Graduate students perceive that faculty do not adequately recognize how important it is to feel a sense of belonging and inclusion. Some student comments also suggest that many faculty in the department may not be equipped to address these issues.
- ▶ A few individuals characterized these concerns as mere political correctness or identity politics that are destructive to the department.

VIII. Diversity

Perceptions of departmental homogeneity/diversity



Qualitative Analysis of Identity, Inclusion, & Belonging revealed concerns about lack of diversity

- ▶ There is mostly consensus that the department lacks diversity, especially among the faculty but also among the graduate student population. The most frequently cited area of concern was racial and ethnic diversity. Lack of diversity was also noted for socioeconomic status, scientific ideology/pedigree, and political viewpoints.

Open-ended responses from members of our community

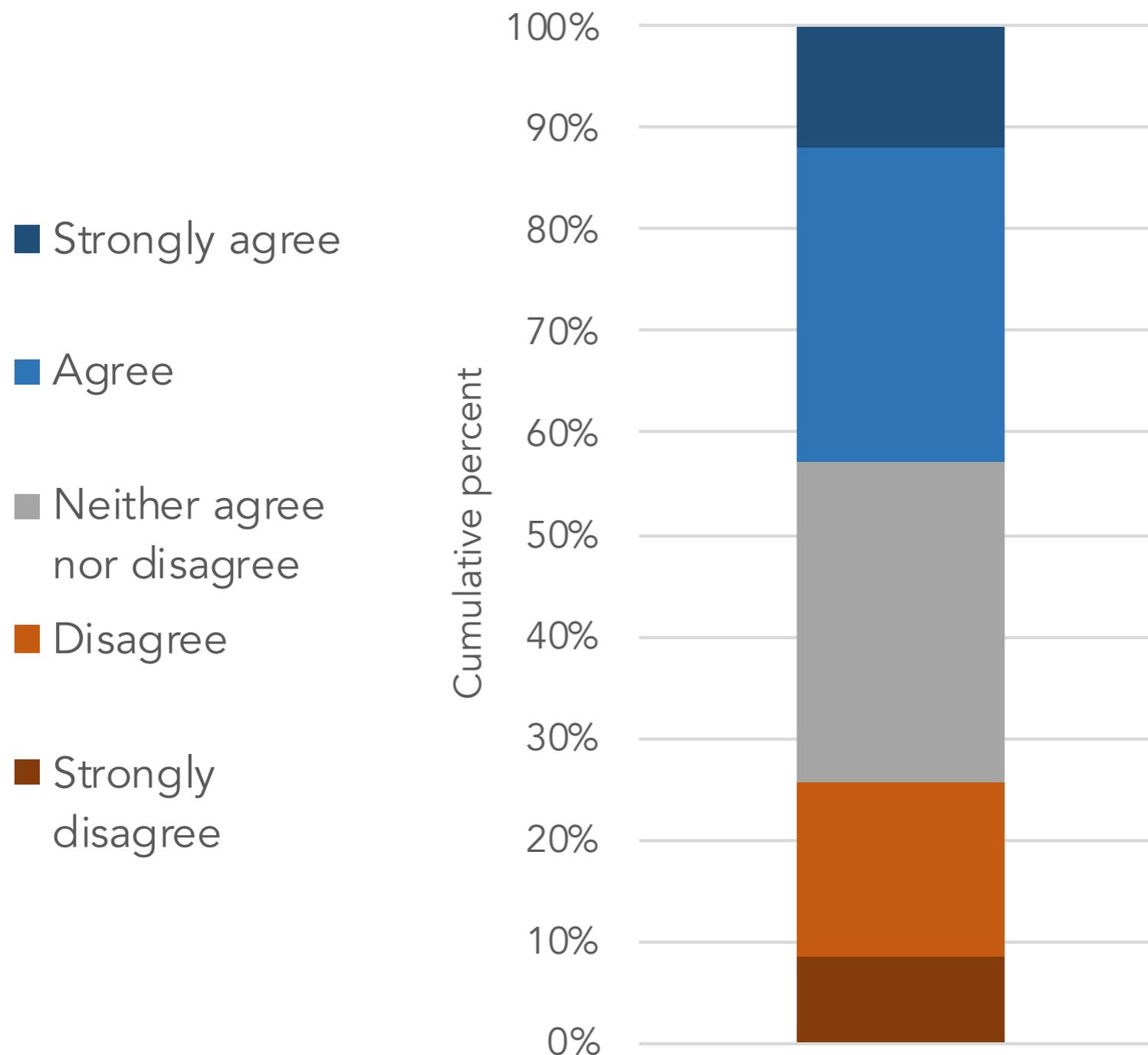
"...[Efforts] should include recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty and students with various minoritized statuses (e.g., sexual minorities, people of Color) *and* those who explicitly study the psychology of oppressed populations."

"There is still a long way to go with regards to racial and ethnic representation, and even more work to do to make the department more inclusive along the SES axis. Most people in the department are very friendly and welcoming, but there is a lack of acknowledgement with regards to how well off Harvard Psychology labs are, and how elitist they can be."

"[There is a] "hidden curriculum" ...[that is] is very obvious in the ways staff and students are expected to participate or not in events, lectures, classes, take advantage of specific resources, study in certain ways for graduate exams, and so on. Without the privilege of knowing how to swim the academia sea and where your life savers are, I feel like I am drowning most of the time."

Effort toward facilitating inclusion and belonging

The Psychology Department undertakes sufficient effort toward creating an inclusive and belonging environment.

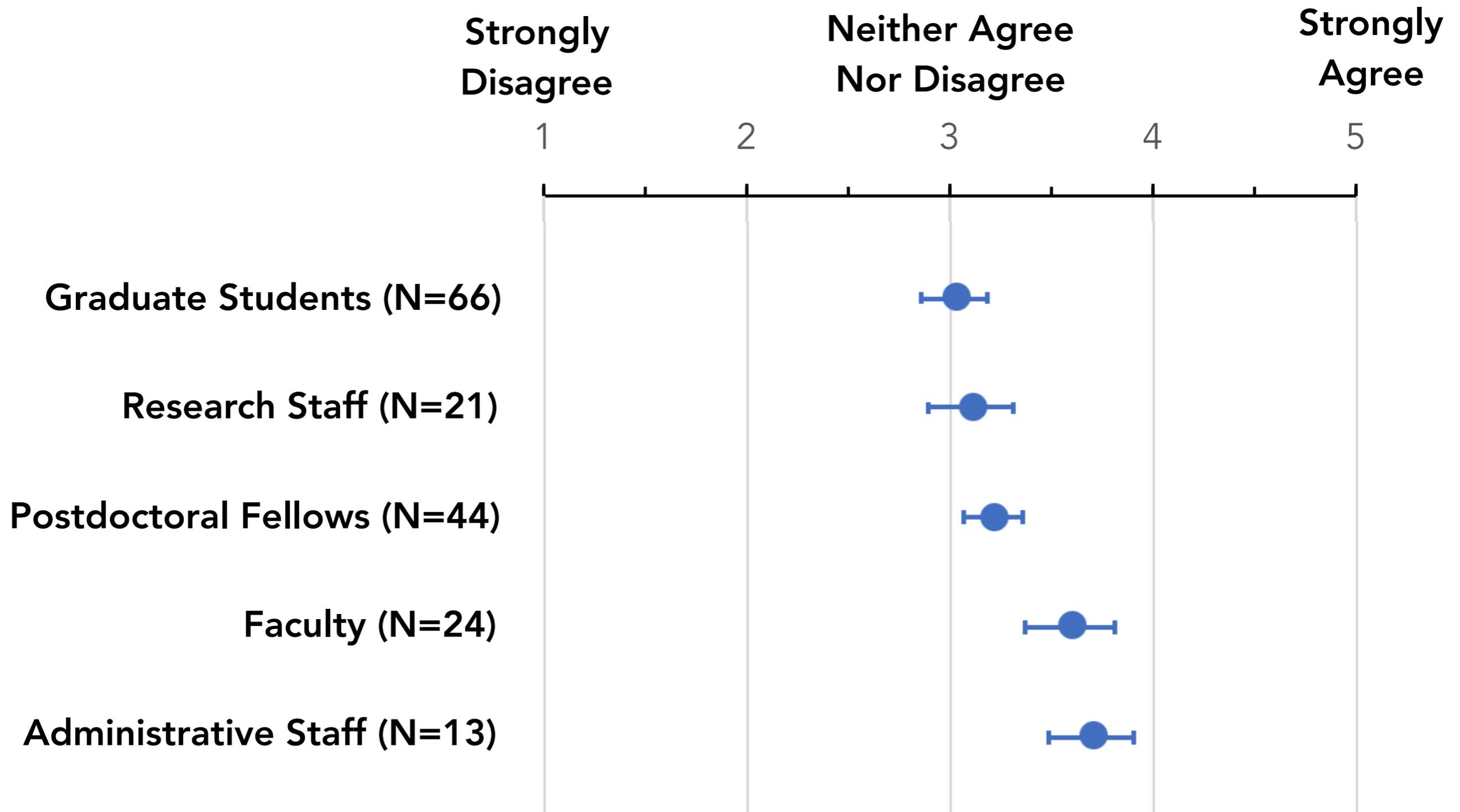


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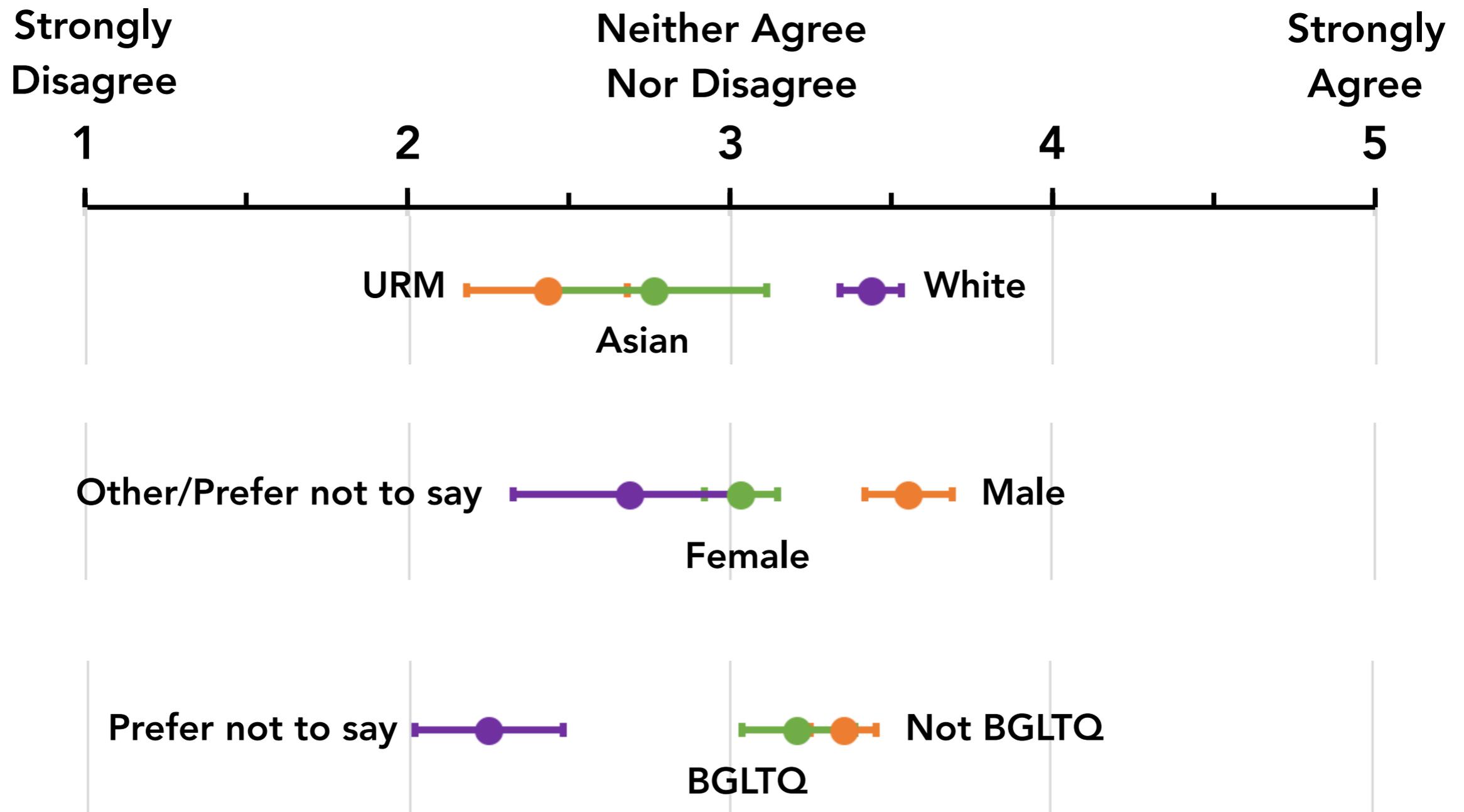
Effort toward facilitating inclusion and belonging

The Psychology Department undertakes sufficient effort toward creating an inclusive and belonging environment.



Effort toward facilitating inclusion and belonging

The Psychology Department undertakes sufficient effort toward creating an inclusive and belonging environment.



Looking ahead

Climate Agenda

Today: Summarize results of the climate survey

- Goals
 - Methods
 - Analysis
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Immediate next steps

- Review full report online (link to be sent)
- Assemble as a community to discuss them and recommend ways to improve our department (*December Town Halls*)

Longer term next steps (for 2020)

- Develop recommendations
- Prioritize and implement

Town Hall Meetings

Join us:

December 9th, 4-5pm, in Rm B1 and B4 WJH

- Moderated by graduate students and postdocs
- For graduate students and postdocs only

December 10th, 4-5pm, in Rm 1305 WJH

- Moderated by faculty
- Everyone is invited

Acknowledgments

- Departmental Climate Committee
- Mahzarin Banaji and Matthew Nock (Chairs)
- Psychology Business Office
- Harvard College Institutional Research Office
- Ryan Enos (Government)
- Everyone who participated in the survey, open forums, and one-on-one meetings