



Student Belonging, Inclusion, and Expression at Columbia

Findings from Harmful Exclusion Alleviation Longitudinal Study (HEALS) 2024-2025

HEALS Background

01

Origin

Developed in spring 2024 by NORC in collaboration with Columbia University's Antisemitism Task Force.

02

Instrument

Authored by NORC and Antisemitism Task Force co-chairs, with validated items from national campus-climate studies.

03

Baseline

NORC administered the inaugural 2024 survey amid heightened campus tensions, establishing a longitudinal baseline.

04

Continuation

OPIR assumed administration in 2025, retaining core items and methods while making the survey more concise for ease of completion.

Overview

Census

All students enrolled
in Fall 2024 and Spring
2025 invited

Duration

June 24-August 8,
2025

4,934

Responses retained
after data cleaning

14%

Approximate student
response rate

Method

Online Qualtrics
survey

Representation

Broadly representative by
school, gender, degree,
student level, race &
ethnicity

Interpretation Caution:

- Survey conditions differed across years, including field period, reminders, incentives, signatory, and campus context.
- This data is unweighted frequency distributions.
- Year-over-year findings are treated as directional evidence, paired with attention to remaining disparities.
- Apparent difference between years may not be statistically significant.

Key Findings

Belonging and Connection

- Overall sense of belonging improved
- Campus involvement and peer/professor ties shape belonging
- Experiences remain uneven across identity groups

Expression and Acceptance

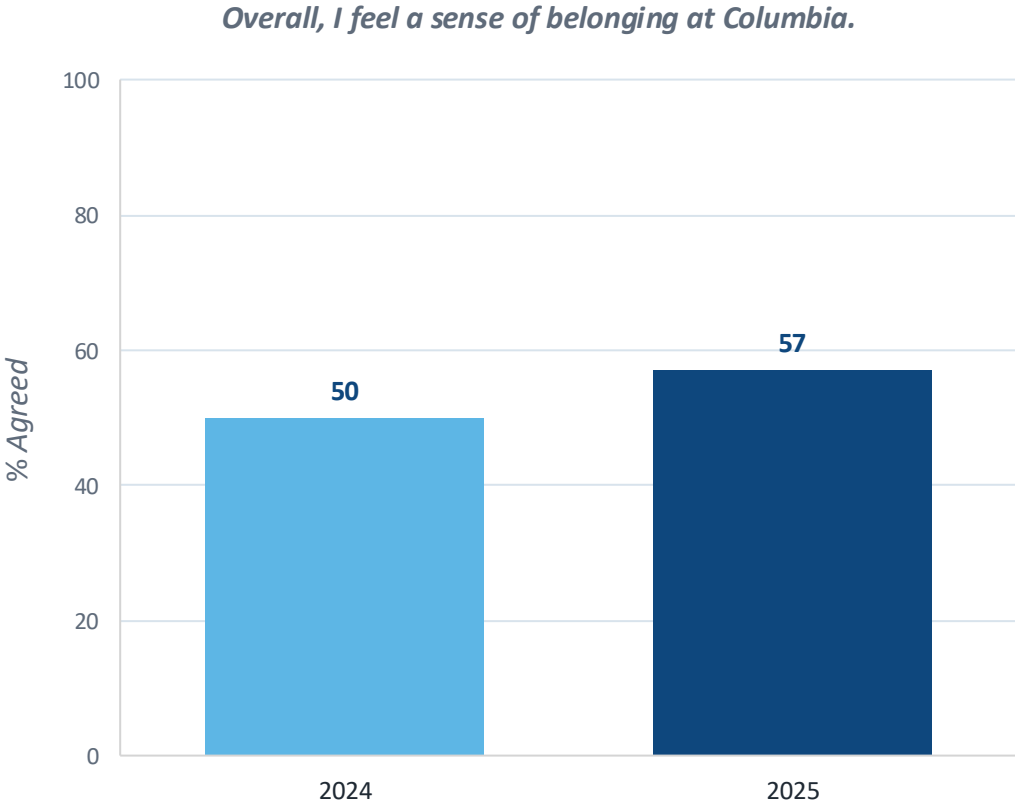
- Expression concerns eased on several measures
- Religious acceptance improved for some groups but remained lower for Jewish and Muslim students
- Racial/ethnic acceptance declined across multiple groups

Discrimination and Reporting

- Experiences with discrimination declined for Jewish and Muslim students
- Other discrimination signals were mixed
- Comfort reporting hate-based incidents declined

Belonging and Connection

Sense of Belonging Improved Overall

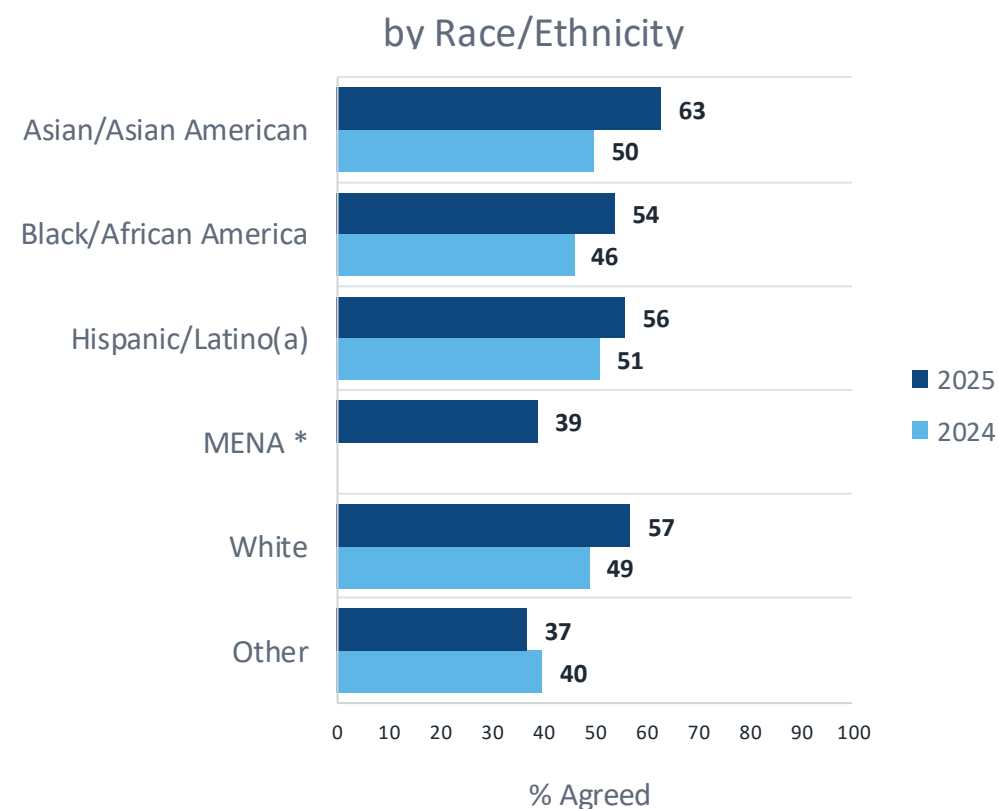
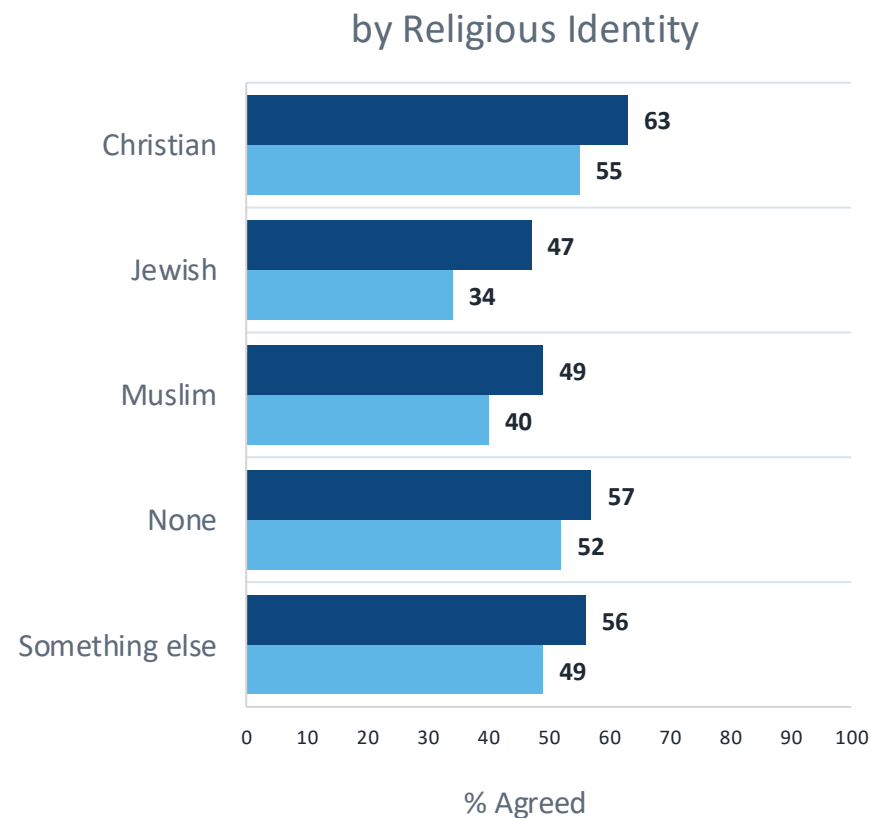


The share of students agreeing that they feel a sense of belonging rose from 50% to 57%.

- Improvements were observed across all religious identity and racial/ethnic groups.
- Undergraduates reported higher belonging than graduate students.
- Students involved in campus organizations were far more likely to report belonging.

Sense of Belonging Remains Uneven by Religious Identity and Race/Ethnicity

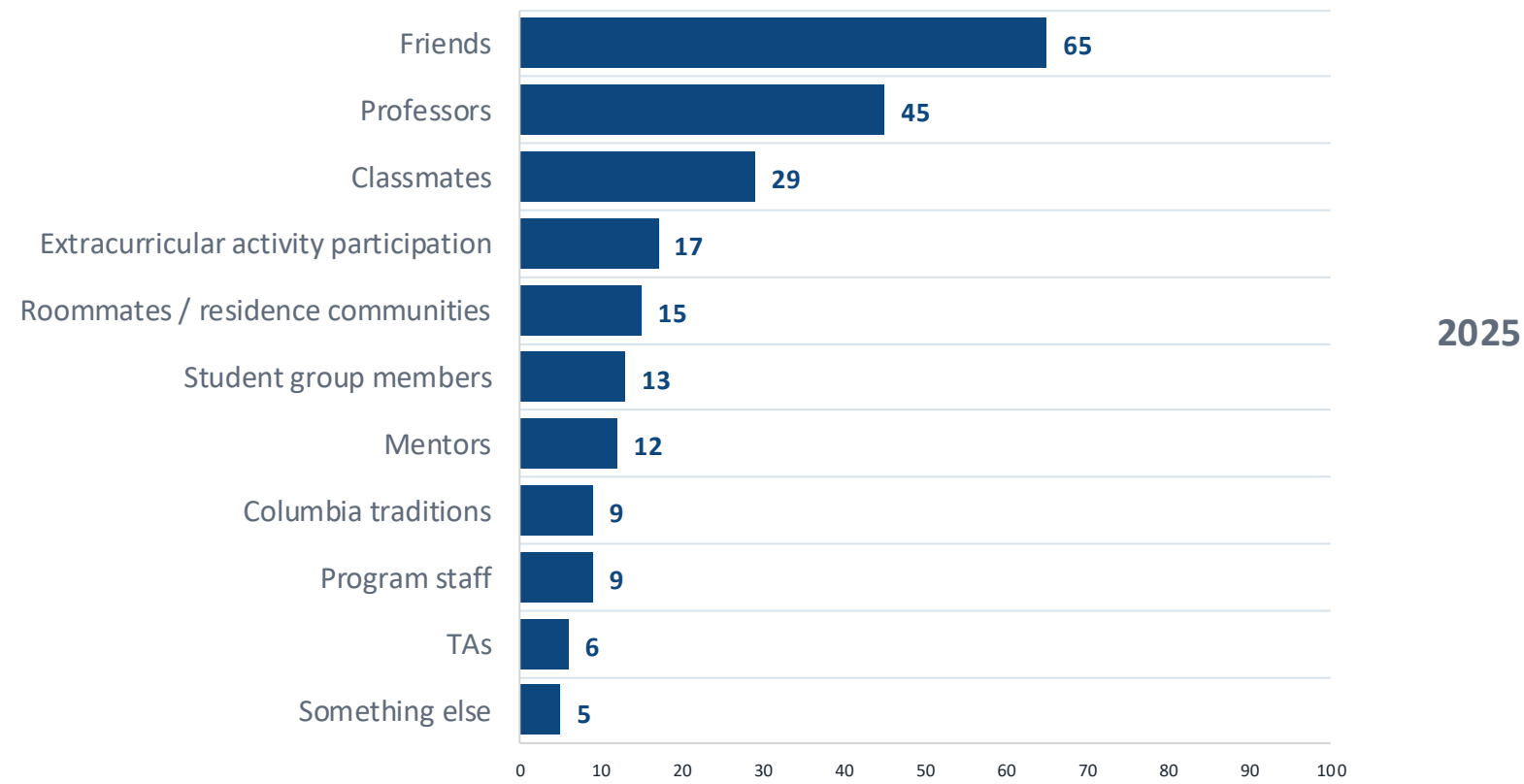
Overall, I feel a sense of belonging at Columbia.



* Middle Eastern/North African (not available as a 2024 category)

Sense of Belonging Is Rooted Strongly in Relationships

What, or who, makes you feel the greatest sense of belonging here at Columbia? Please identify your top three.

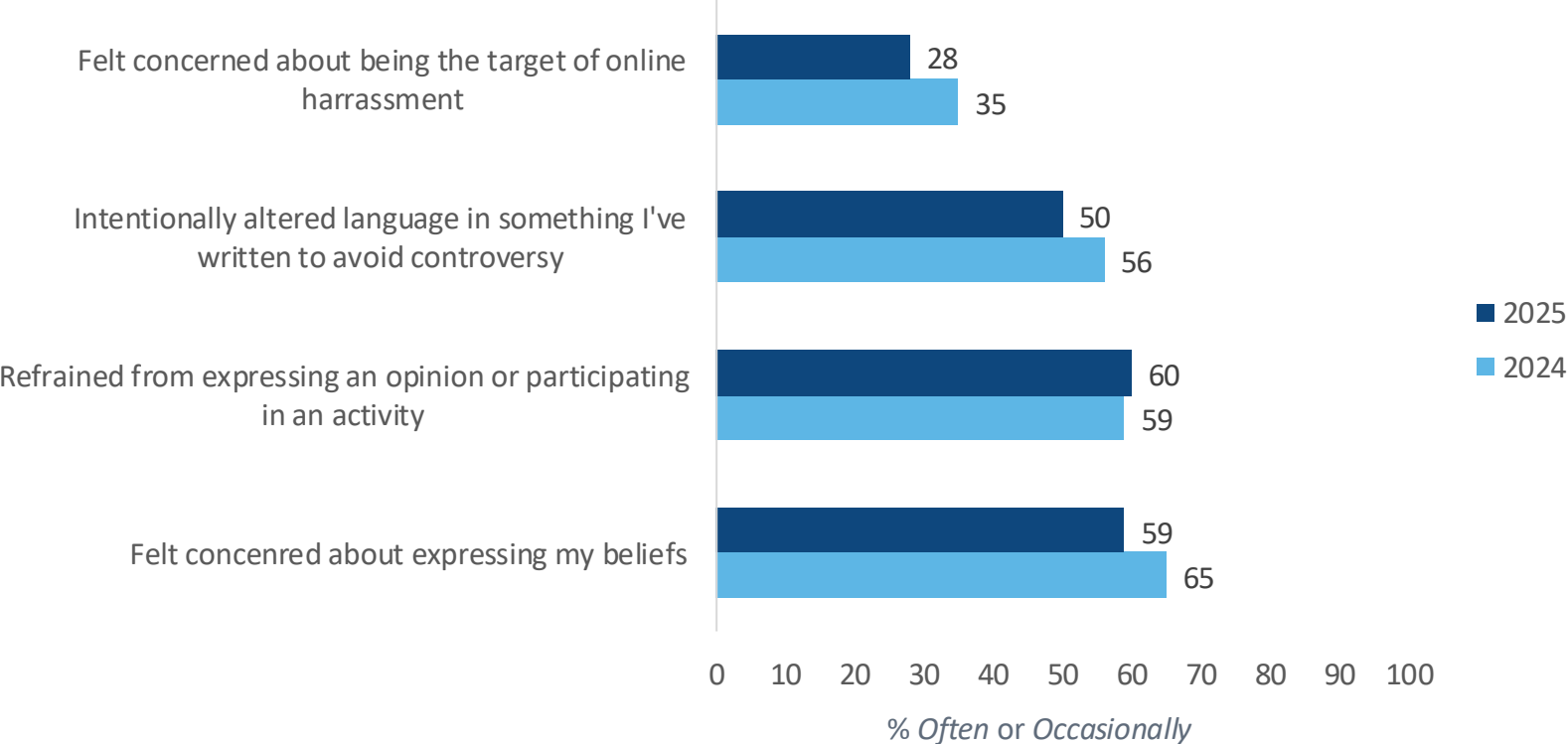


Note: 2025 results only. Instructions changed from "check any that apply" to "identify top three".

Expression and Acceptance

Students Reported Less Frequent Concerns About Expression, but Self-Censorship Remained Widespread

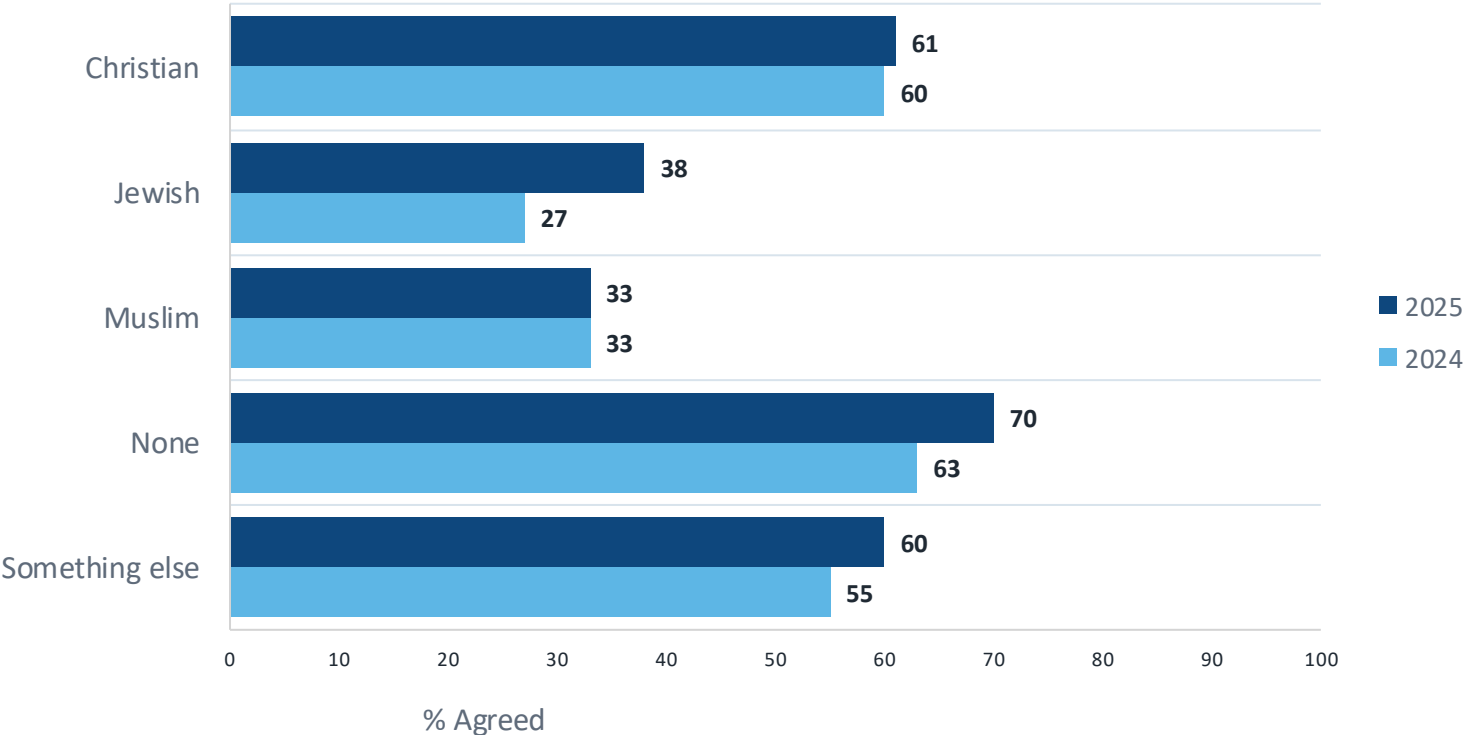
Indicate how frequently this has happened to you on campus or related to your status as a student at Columbia during the 2024-25 academic year.



Most concerns about expression were reported less frequently, but major shares of students still reported concern, self-censorship, or hesitation.

Religious Acceptance Showed Progress, Though Gaps Between Identities Persist

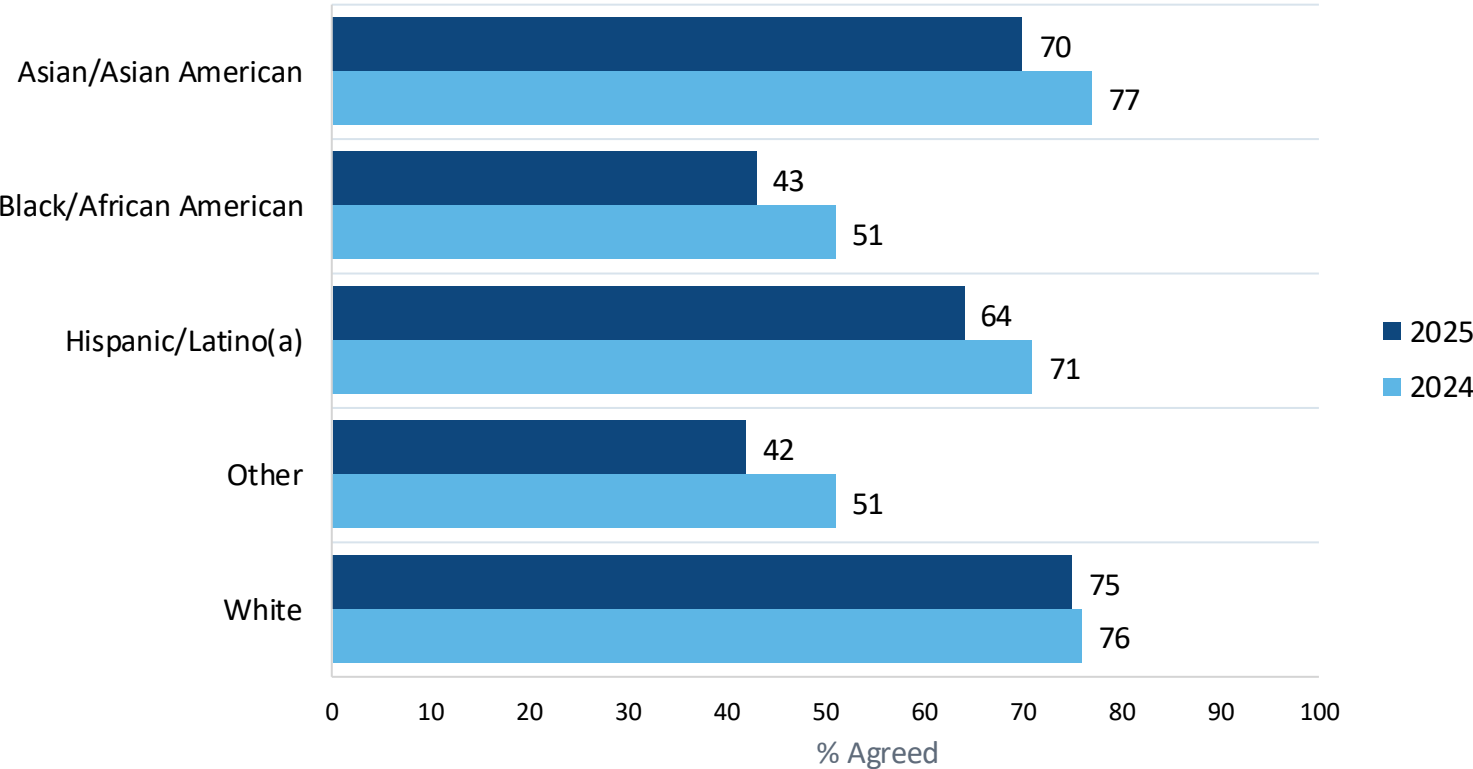
Overall, I feel accepted for my religious identity at Columbia.



Most religious identity acceptance levels stayed the same or saw modest improvements from 2024 to 2025.

Racial/Ethnic Acceptance Declined Across Multiple Groups

Overall, I feel accepted for my race or ethnicity at Columbia.



All students
71% -> 65%

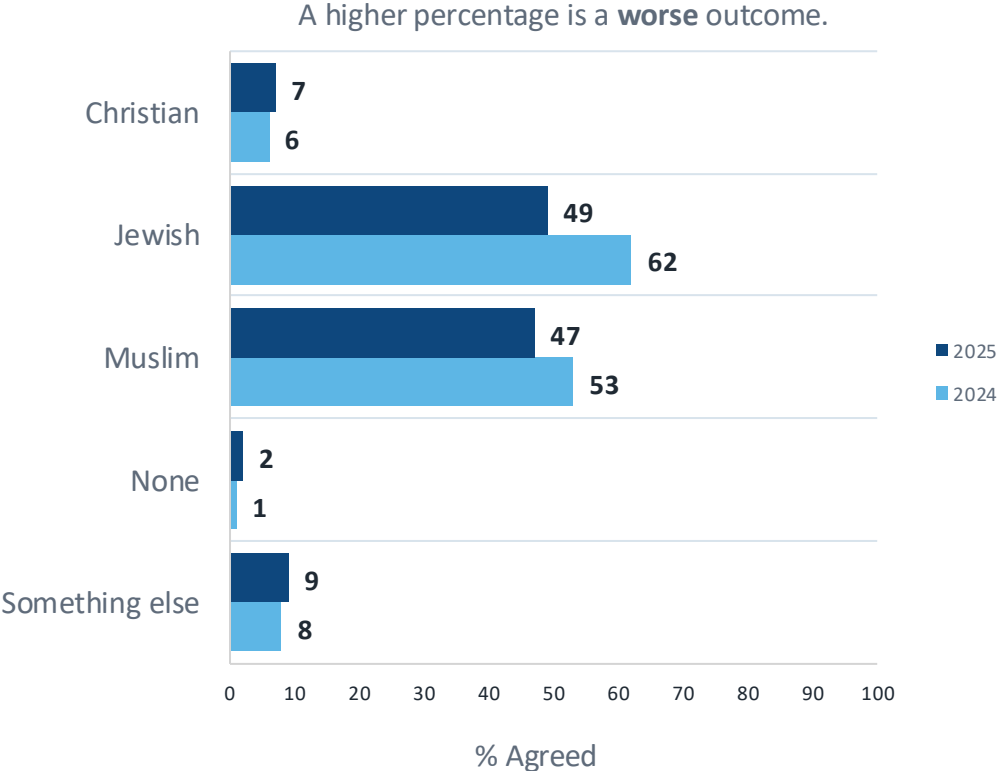
The percentage of all students who agreed that they feel accepted for their race/ethnicity declined between 2024 and 2025.

Middle Eastern/North African (MENA) students reported 29% agreement in 2025; MENA was not available as a 2024 category.

Discrimination and Reporting

Perceived Discrimination Patterns Are Mixed Across Identity Dimensions

I experienced discrimination because of my...religion.

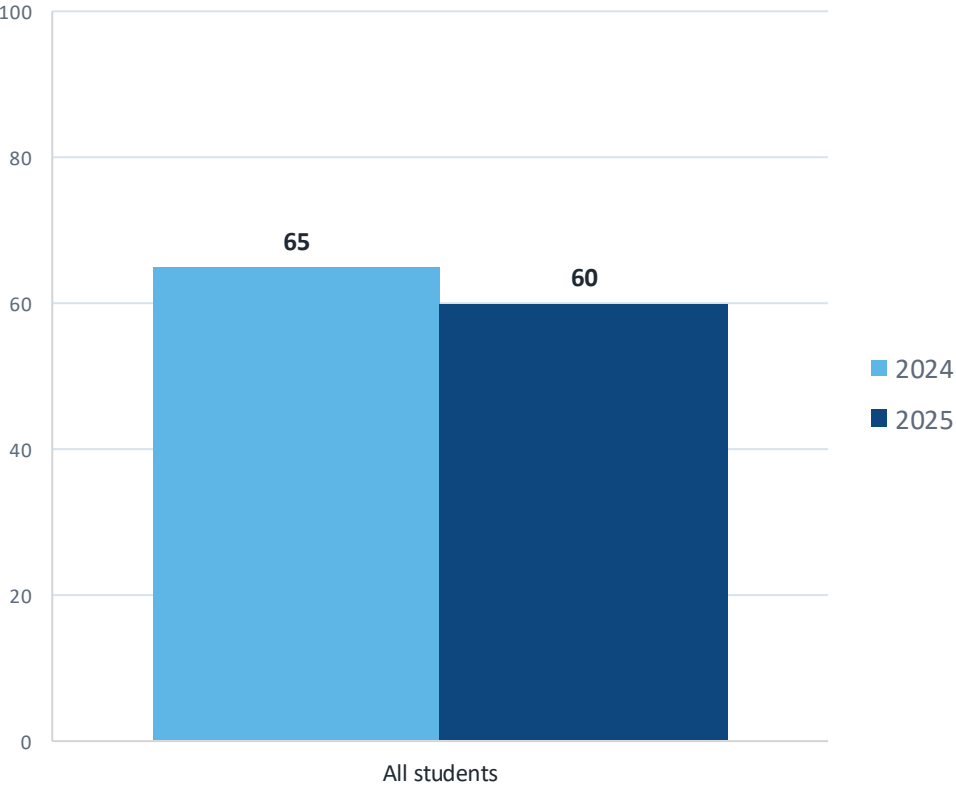


<i>I experienced discrimination because of my...</i>	2024	2025
<i>Disability status</i>	4%	6%
<i>National origin</i>	10%	13%
<i>Political beliefs/affiliation</i>	20%	22%
<i>Gender</i>	11%	9%
<i>Race or ethnicity</i>	20%	19%

While religious identity discrimination experiences improved – particularly among Jewish and Muslim students – other dimensions did not (e.g. national origin). Differential experiences by religious identity persisted into 2025.

Comfort Reporting Hate-Based Incidents Declined

How comfortable would you be reporting a hate-based issue or attack at Columbia?



By religious identity	2024	2025
Christian (any)	68%	63%
Jewish (any)	61%	59%
Muslim (any)	43%	43%
Something else	64%	61%
None	67%	60%

Declines were most visible among Christian students and students with no religious identity; Muslim students remained least comfortable reporting.

What's Next

Deepen analysis

Use fuller demographic detail to understand intersectional patterns.

Connect findings to opportunities

Map results to existing student supports, identify gaps, and promote opportunities.

Survey Integration

Integrate key HEALS measures into existing surveys where feasible.

Promote accountability

Assign ownership for follow-up and reporting progress.

Questions / Follow Up

Contact:

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