**Conference Assessment Highlights**

Overall, participants enjoyed the conference. They felt they had a common purpose in attending: Building community among Western’s people of color, exploring identity, and sharing stories of personal struggles and triumphs. One respondent said, “I feel that we all had the common purpose of connecting with others that face marginalization and learning from other people’s experiences and stories of it.” Another said that the shared purpose was to “explore our own identities as well as empathizing with and validating the experiences and identities of others.”

Every participant brought their own strengths to the conference, and this was apparent in the assessment results. Some brought confidence in sharing their own stories, others brought their ability and willingness to listen to others as they shared their stories. Everyone brought their own perspectives and experiences, which made for a wonderfully diverse conference, and they all worked to create a safe, supportive space in which people could be open and truthful. Participants appreciated much of the conference, but they particularly liked the time they spent in small groups. One said, “I liked how we stayed with the same people because it gave us an opportunity to grow comfortable around them and feel willing to share.” Participants found the closing session activity – the anonymous acknowledgements – especially powerful. One said they felt it “Made me matter.” Participants also appreciated the open sharing and found it “amazing and empowering.”

Participants took away a sense of community and new connections with fellow students, mentors, and staff. They felt they developed a network of support with participants and “plan on continuing friendships started here” back on campus. They left the conference knowing they are not alone and that others have had similar experiences and struggles to their own. Many also left with a sense of self-acceptance. “I gained perspective and became more comfortable about myself.”

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**How Attendees Heard about the Conference:**

- Friends and family who had previously participated
- ESC and ESC clubs
- Staff and faculty
- Their workplace, job training
- Previous attendance
- Social media or email
1. Please rate the following:

- Overall, this event was: 4.5
- Publicity: 4
- Choice of facility/venue: 4.5
- Schedule and timing: 4.3
- Overall organization of the event: 4.5
- Educational: 4.5
- Inclusive community: 4.5
- Safe space to explore identity: 4.5

The average rating of all aspects of the conference were between “Good” and “Excellent”.
6. Was the material too complicated, too simple, or just right?

- Too complicated: 2%
- Too simple: 8%
- Just Right: 90%

Most respondents said the complexity of the material presented at the conference was just right.
Post-Conference Reflection

Reflecting on this year’s theme, participants felt the past has much to teach us about...

**Ourselves:** The past doesn’t define us, but it has shaped us into who we are today. We can look back and learn from the past and our mistakes to make a better future for ourselves. By looking back, we can gain strength to move forward by seeing how far we’ve already come and what obstacles we’ve overcome. We can also look to the past to connect with our roots and previous generations.

**Others:** Everyone is shaped by their past, but it doesn’t define them and it doesn’t dictate their future. Everyone has a unique story and has struggled in their own way, so it is important to support them rather than judge them. Respect others’ pasts and what they have been through to get where they are now.

**The future:** Learn from the past and work toward a future you want. “Hope is always there and there will always be someone to support you.” Our past and our future will always be connected, but we can shape our futures however we want.

Program Recommendations

- Respondents were divided about the amount of small group time at this conference. Some would have preferred more time with small groups, some said they would have preferred to do more with people outside their small groups so they could meet more people. Respondents also mentioned they would have liked to have participated in more ice breakers with their small groups in a quieter setting. Some said the auditorium was too loud and they often couldn’t hear other group members.

- Respondents mentioned that quiet hours weren’t adhered to as strictly as they would have liked. Some recommended reorganizing sleeping arrangements so that people who planned to stay up later roomed on the bottom floors of the barracks, as noise from the top floors tends to carry more readily than that on the bottom floors. Some participants said they would have liked to have free time during the day as well as at night. One participant mentioned that “preferred pronouns” were never explained and that it would have helped to have some brief information about that.