2011 FGSA Climate Survey

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Abstract

In 2011, the Forum of Graduate Student Affairs conducted a survey to study the climate in physics. This survey looked at the language used by peers, superiors, and people outside the department, safety, verbal and physical harassment, reports and responses to harassment, and knowledge of institutional policies. Respondent demographics were broken down by gender, race/ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

1 Executive Summary

Each section of this survey has helped to determine different aspects of the physics climate. The 596 respondents are broken down into demographics of gender, race/ethnicity, ability, sexuality, and gender identity as described in detail in Section 2. In general, minorities in each section either noticed or were directly affected by a negative climate much more often than respondents in majority demographics. This trend exist across language heard from colleagues, superiors, and by others in the institution but outside of the department. Figures 1 and 2 show this trend in terms of verbal and physical harassment experienced. The majority of this harassment has gone unreported, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 4 shows that minority physicists have felt unsafe in their institutions at a much higher rate that majority physicists. In particular, of transgender and non-binary respondents, 58.3% felt unsafe due to their gender identity (compared to 9.1% of cisgender respondents) and 50.0% felt unsafe due to their sexual orientation (compared to 2.7% of cisgender respondents). Of respondents that have disabilities, 31.0% felt unsafe due to their gender, 17.2% felt unsafe due to their disability status, and 17.2% felt unsafe due to their sexual orientation (compared to 9.0%, 0.5%, and 3.0%, respectively, of respondents without disabilities). 21.3% of LGBTQQAP respondents felt unsafe due to their sexual orientation, compared to 0.2% of straight and cisgender respondents. 15.5% of people of color felt unsafe due to their race or ethnicity, compared to 2.0% of white or caucasian respondents.

Many institutions have policies in place to help mitigate discrimination and harassment. Most respondents were familiar with "Sex or Gender" and "Race or Ethnicity" being on these policies. Approximately a quarter of respondents, including 23.5% of people with disabilities, didn't know if the policies contained "Disability Status." This increased to between a third to half of the population, depending on demographics, not knowing if the policies
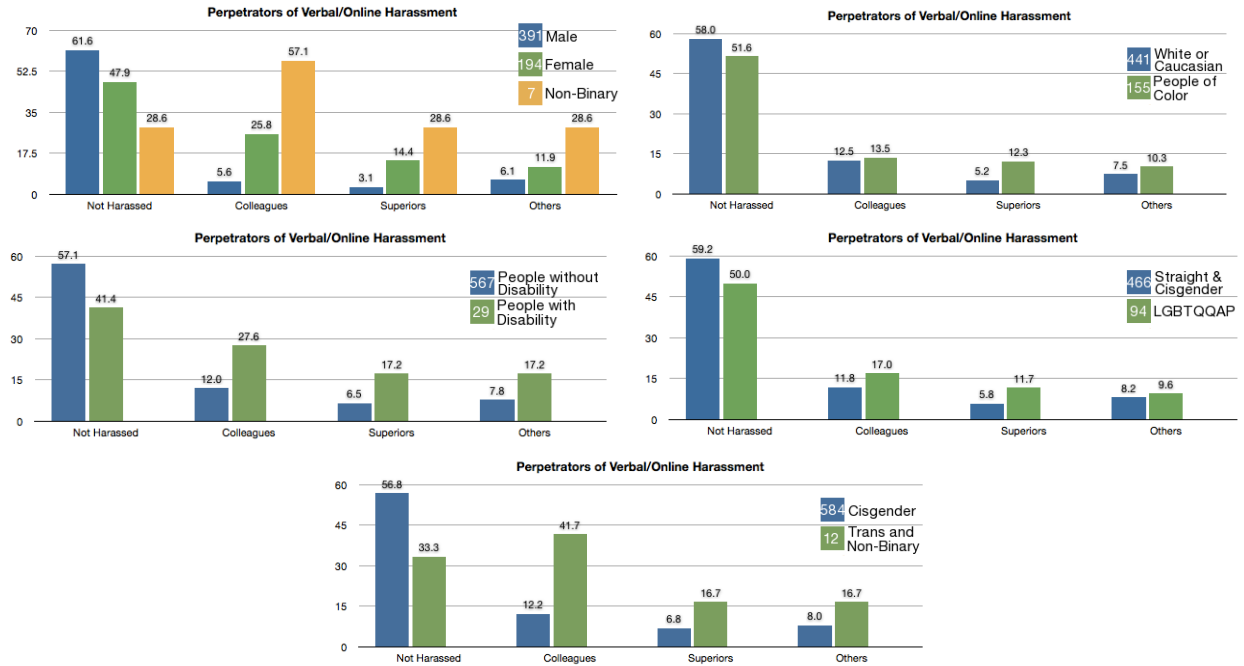
Figure 1: Responses to the question "Of which group or groups were the individual(s) who harassed you, verbally or online, a member?"
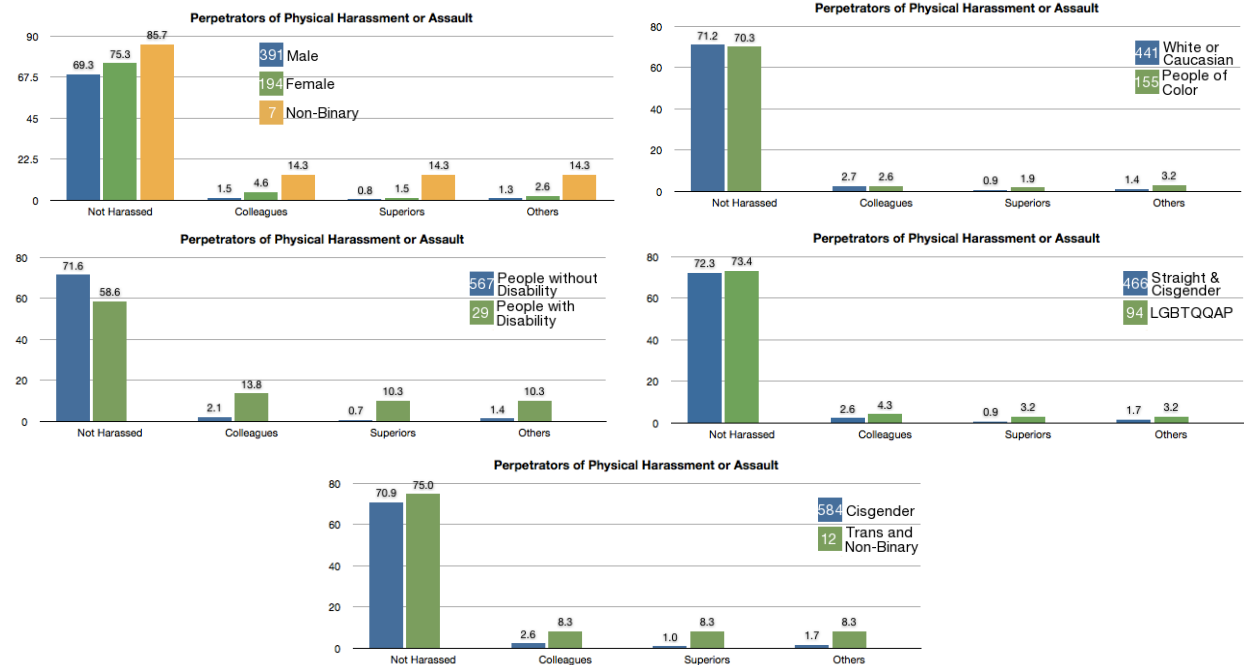

Figure 2: Responses to the question "Of which group or groups were the individual(s) who physically harassed or assaulted you a member?"
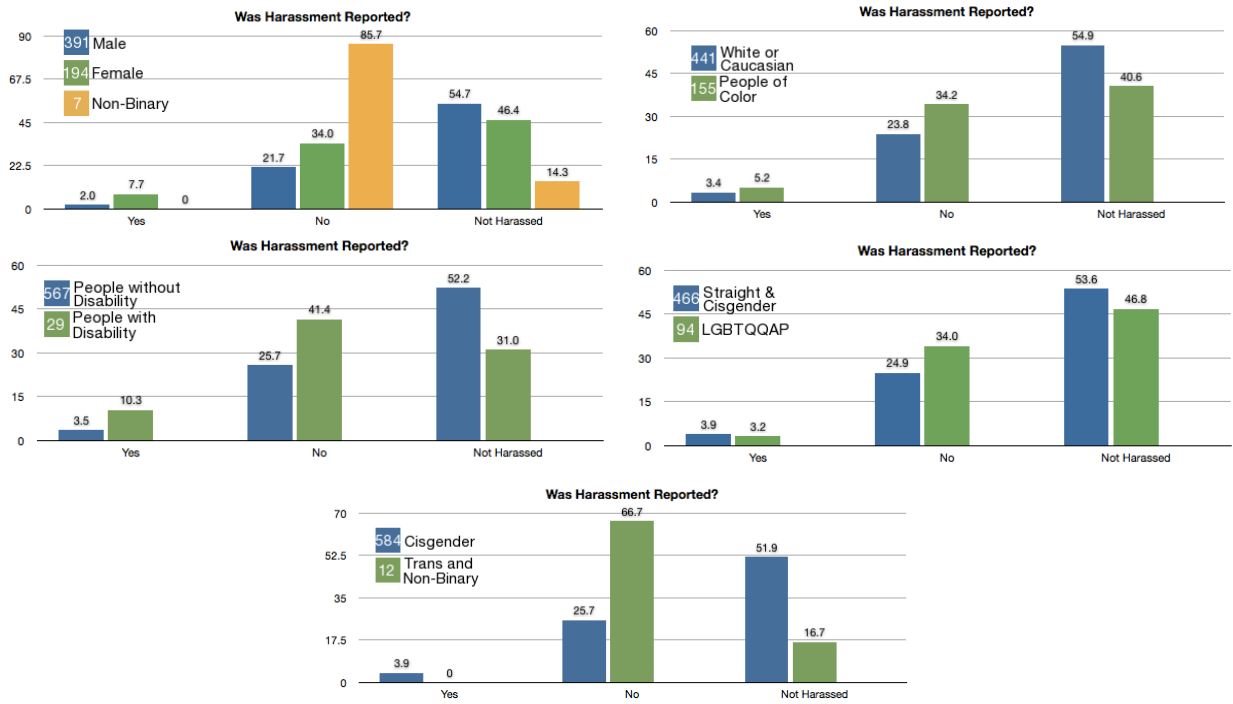
Was Harassment Reported? (Male: 391, Female: 194, Non-Binary: 7)

Yes — Male: 2.0, Female: 7.7, Non-Binary: 0
No — Male: 21.7, Female: 34.0, Non-Binary: 85.7
Not Harassed — Male: 54.7, Female: 46.4, Non-Binary: 14.3

Was Harassment Reported? (White or Caucasian: 441, People of Color: 155)

Yes — White or Caucasian: 3.4, People of Color: 5.2
No — White or Caucasian: 23.8, People of Color: 34.2
Not Harassed — White or Caucasian: 54.9, People of Color: 40.6

Was Harassment Reported? (People without Disability: 567, People with Disability: 29)

Yes — People without Disability: 3.5, People with Disability: 10.3
No — People without Disability: 25.7, People with Disability: 41.4
Not Harassed — People without Disability: 52.2, People with Disability: 31.0

Was Harassment Reported? (Straight & Cisgender: 466, LGBTQQAP: 94)

Yes — Straight & Cisgender: 3.9, LGBTQQAP: 3.2
No — Straight & Cisgender: 24.9, LGBTQQAP: 34.0
Not Harassed — Straight & Cisgender: 53.6, LGBTQQAP: 46.8

Was Harassment Reported? (Cisgender: 584, Trans and Non-Binary: 12)

Yes — Cisgender: 3.9, Trans and Non-Binary: 0
No — Cisgender: 25.7, Trans and Non-Binary: 66.7
Not Harassed — Cisgender: 51.9, Trans and Non-Binary: 16.7

Figure 3: Responses to the question "In the last five years, have you reported an incident of harassment that you experienced?"

Felt Unsafe Due To:
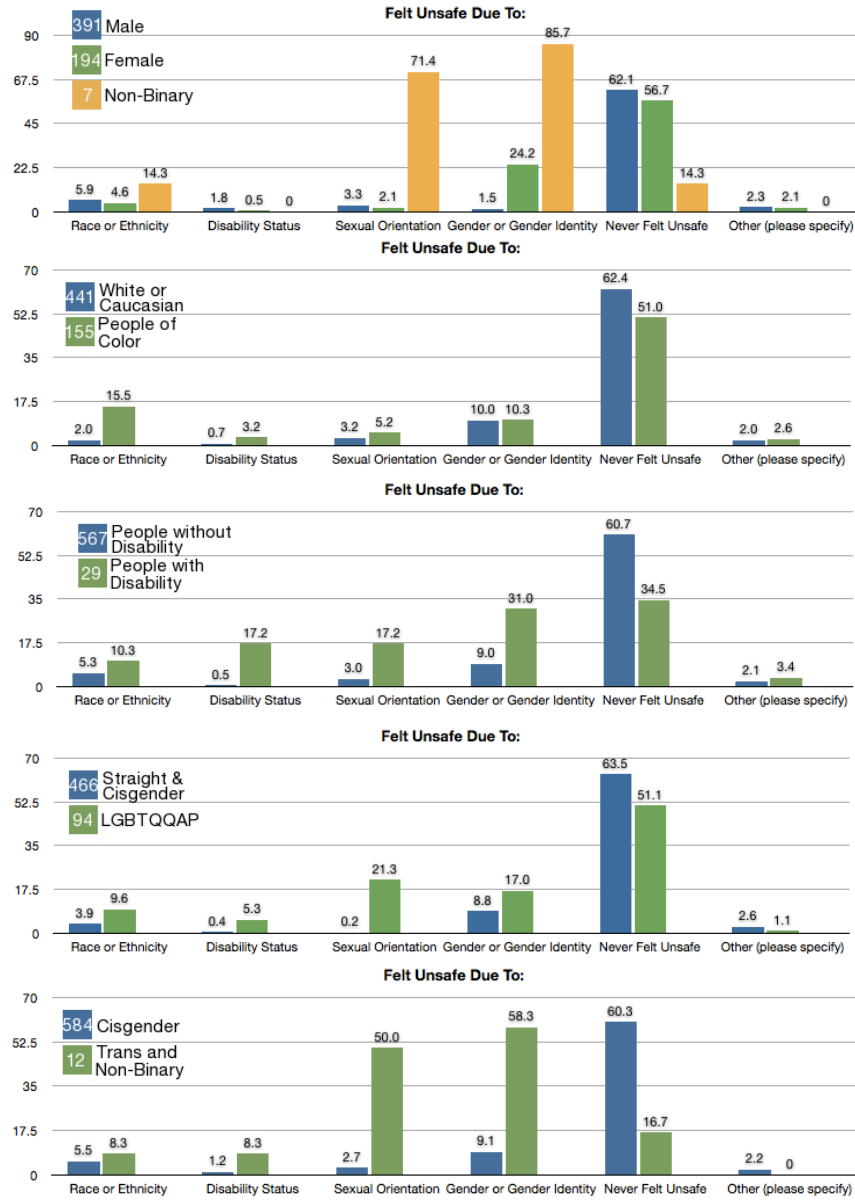
391 Male
194 Female
7 Non-Binary

	Race or Ethnicity	Disability Status	Sexual Orientation	Gender or Gender Identity	Never Felt Unsafe	Other (please specify)
Male	5.9	1.8	3.3	1.5	62.1	2.3
Female	4.6	0.5	2.1	24.2	56.7	2.1
Non-Binary	14.3	0	71.4	85.7	14.3	0

Felt Unsafe Due To:

441 White or Caucasian
155 People of Color

	Race or Ethnicity	Disability Status	Sexual Orientation	Gender or Gender Identity	Never Felt Unsafe	Other (please specify)
White or Caucasian	2.0	0.7	3.2	10.0	62.4	2.0
People of Color	15.5	3.2	5.2	10.3	51.0	2.6

Felt Unsafe Due To:

567 People without Disability
29 People with Disability

	Race or Ethnicity	Disability Status	Sexual Orientation	Gender or Gender Identity	Never Felt Unsafe	Other (please specify)
People without Disability	5.3	0.5	3.0	9.0	60.7	2.1
People with Disability	10.3	17.2	17.2	31.0	34.5	3.4

Felt Unsafe Due To:

466 Straight & Cisgender
94 LGBTQQAP

	Race or Ethnicity	Disability Status	Sexual Orientation	Gender or Gender Identity	Never Felt Unsafe	Other (please specify)
Straight & Cisgender	3.9	0.4	0.2	8.8	63.5	2.6
LGBTQQAP	9.6	5.3	21.3	17.0	51.1	1.1

Felt Unsafe Due To:

584 Cisgender
12 Trans and Non-Binary

	Race or Ethnicity	Disability Status	Sexual Orientation	Gender or Gender Identity	Never Felt Unsafe	Other (please specify)
Cisgender	5.5	1.2	2.7	9.1	60.3	2.2
Trans and Non-Binary	8.3	8.3	50.0	58.3	16.7	0

Figure 4: Responses to the question "In the last five years, have you felt unsafe because of any of the following personal characteristics? Check all that apply."

contained "Sexual Orientation." The majority of people didn't know if these policies contained "Gender Identity" and 25.0% of transgender and non-binary respondents reported that their institutions specifically did not include this language.

2 Demographics

This survey received 596 respondents. These are broken down in Tables 1-2 by gender, race/ethnicity, ability, sexuality, and gender identity. Although this survey was aimed primarily towards graduate students, which make up 75% of respondents, it was also open to those at other points in their career. Career status of respondents is shown in Table 5. Graduate student responses were further broken down into length in graduate school, Table 6, and how they are financially support, Table 7.

Gender	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Male	391	65.60
Female	194	32.55
Non-binary	7	1.17

Table 1: This table breaks down the respondents by gender.

Race/Ethnicity	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Middle Eastern, Arab, or Persian	16	2.68
Hispanic, Latino, or Latina	46	7.72
Black or African American	14	2.35
Indigenous, such as Native American, Inuit, or Aboriginal	6	1.01
Multiracial	27	4.53
White or Caucasian	452	75.84
Asian or Pacific Islander	81	13.59

Table 2: This table breaks down the respondents by race/ethnicity.

Ability	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Blind or Have Low Vision	8	1.34
A Person with a Physical Disability	10	1.68
A Person with a Mental Disability	12	2.01
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	5	0.84

Table 3: This table breaks down the respondents by ability.

Sexuality and Gender Identity	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Asexual	15	2.52
Bisexual	29	4.87
Gay	26	4.36
Lesbian	7	1.17
Pansexual	6	1.01
Queer	17	2.85
Questioning	21	3.52
Straight	486	81.54
Transgender	8	1.34

Table 4: This table breaks down the respondents by sexuality and gender identity.

Current Career Status	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Graduate Student	447	75.00
Post Doc	45	7.55
Undergraduate Student	55	9.23
Staff or Faculty	41	6.88
Retired	2	0.34

Table 5: This table breaks down the respondents by current career status.

Time in Grad School	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Less than 1 year	48	8.05
1-2 Years	119	19.97
3-4 Years	162	27.18
5+ Years	114	19.13
Not a graduate student	115	19.30

Table 6: This table breaks down the graduate student respondents by their year in graduate school.

Support of Graduate Students	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
TA	135	22.65
RA	288	48.32
Fellowship	147	24.66
Other (please specify)	20	3.36

Table 7: This table breaks down the graduate student respondents by how they are supported.

3   Remarks Heard by Peers or Colleagues

The language used in a department goes a long way to defining the climate. This section is the result of questions that looked at the language used by the peers and colleagues of respondents. The demographics described in Section 2 are used to break down the responses in five general categories: gender, race/ethnicity, ability, sexuality, and gender identity. Each of these is compared with the majority of respondents in each category. For sexuality, the acronym LGBTQQAP is used to show the responses from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, asexual, and pansexual respondents.
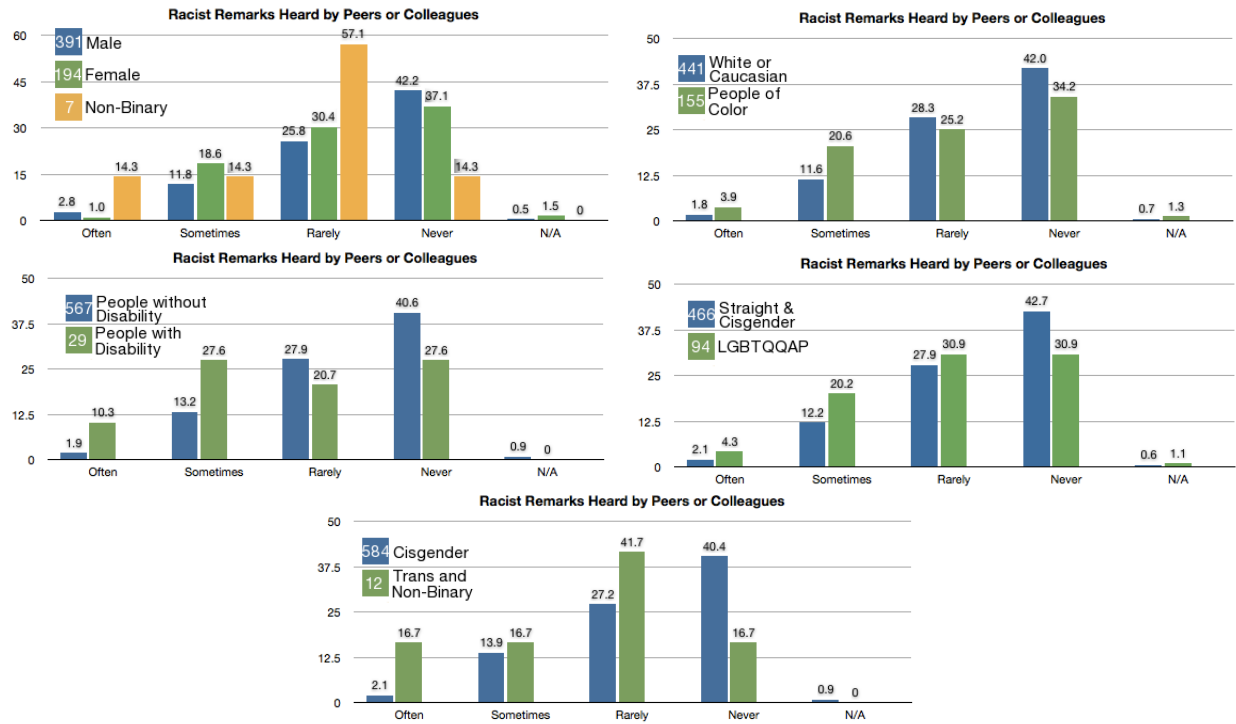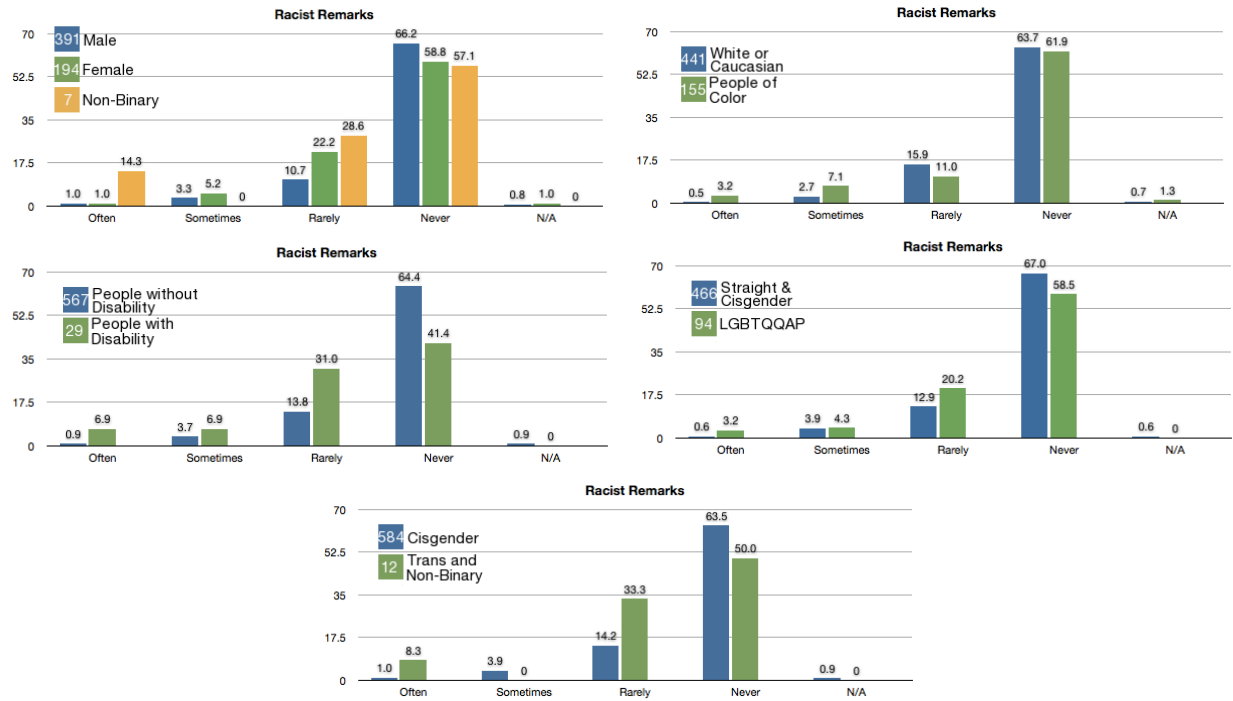

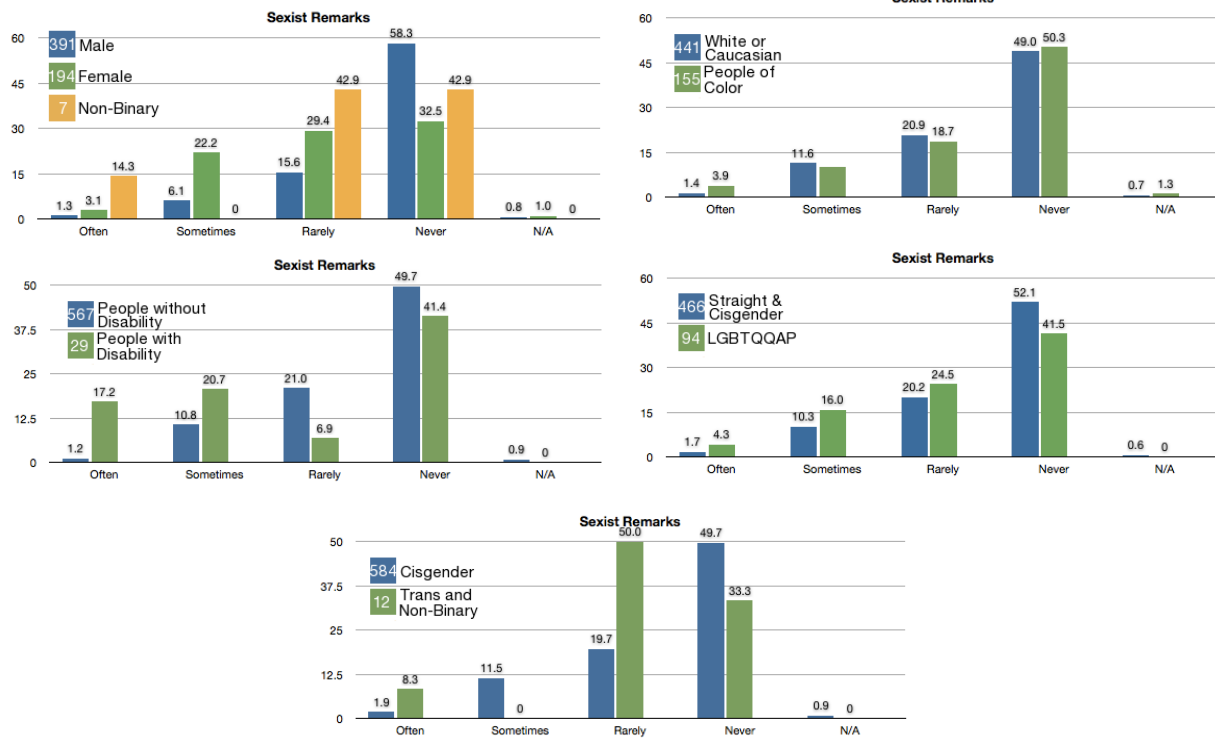Figure 5: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your peers or colleagues? - Racist remarks."
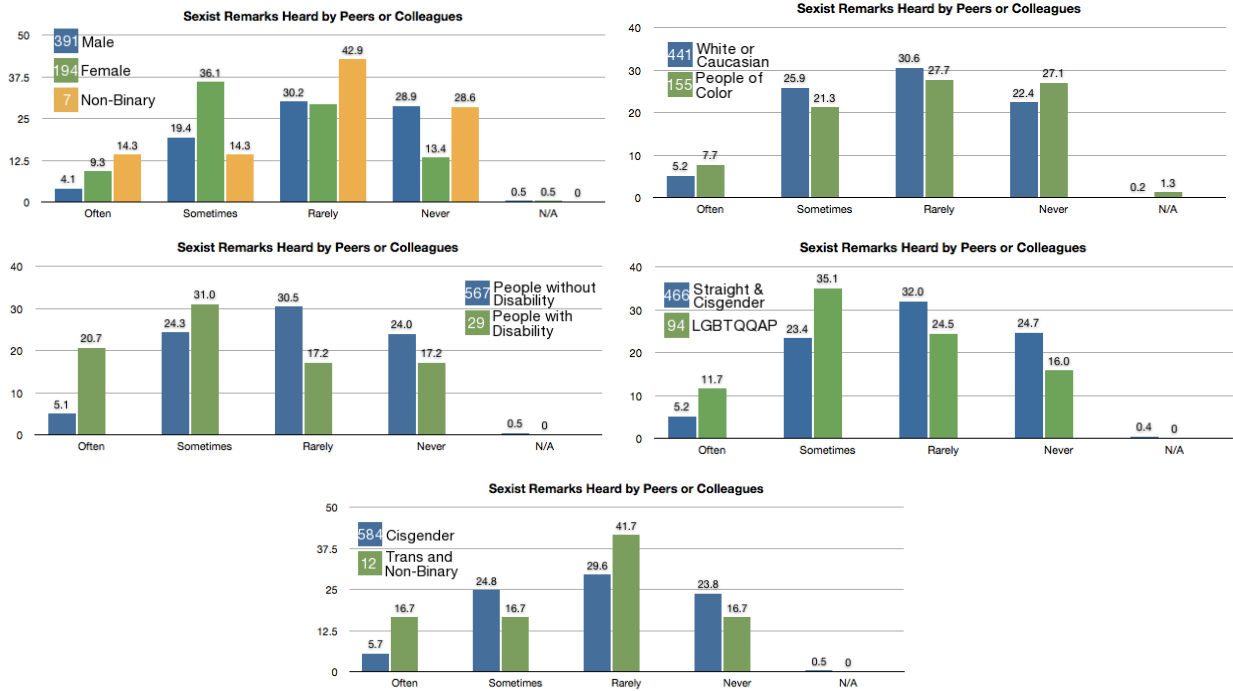
Figure 6: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your peers or colleagues? - Sexist remarks."
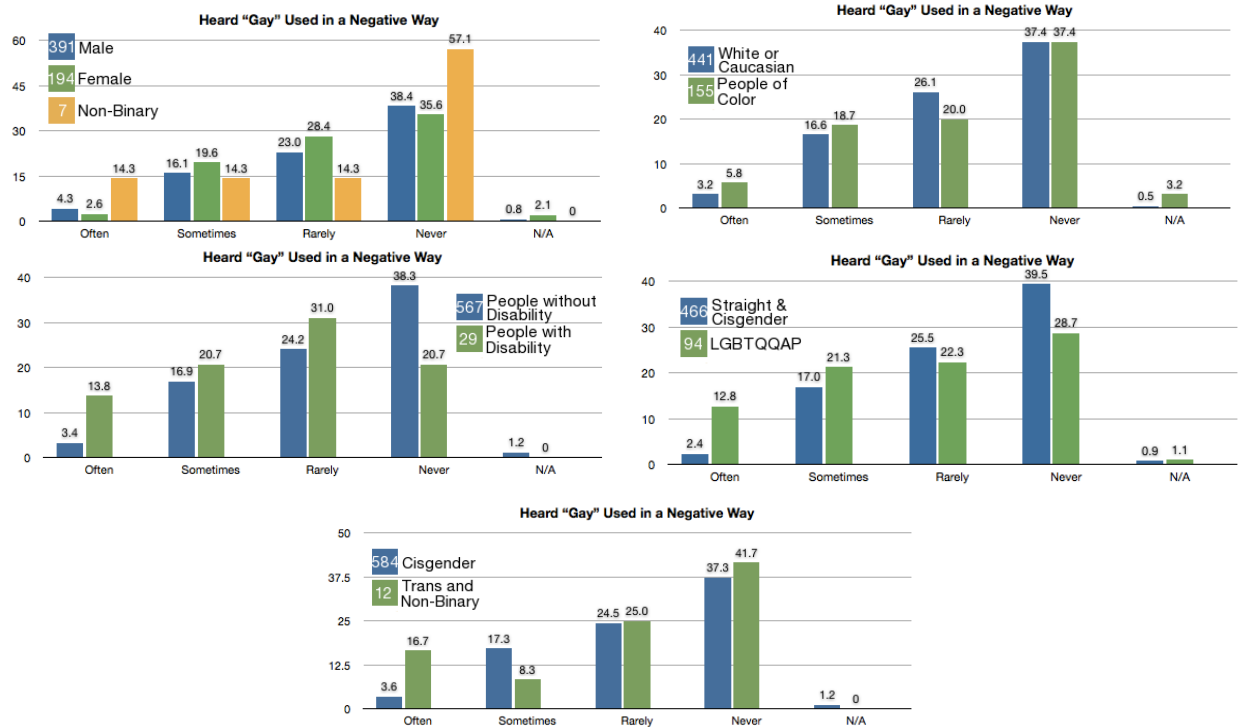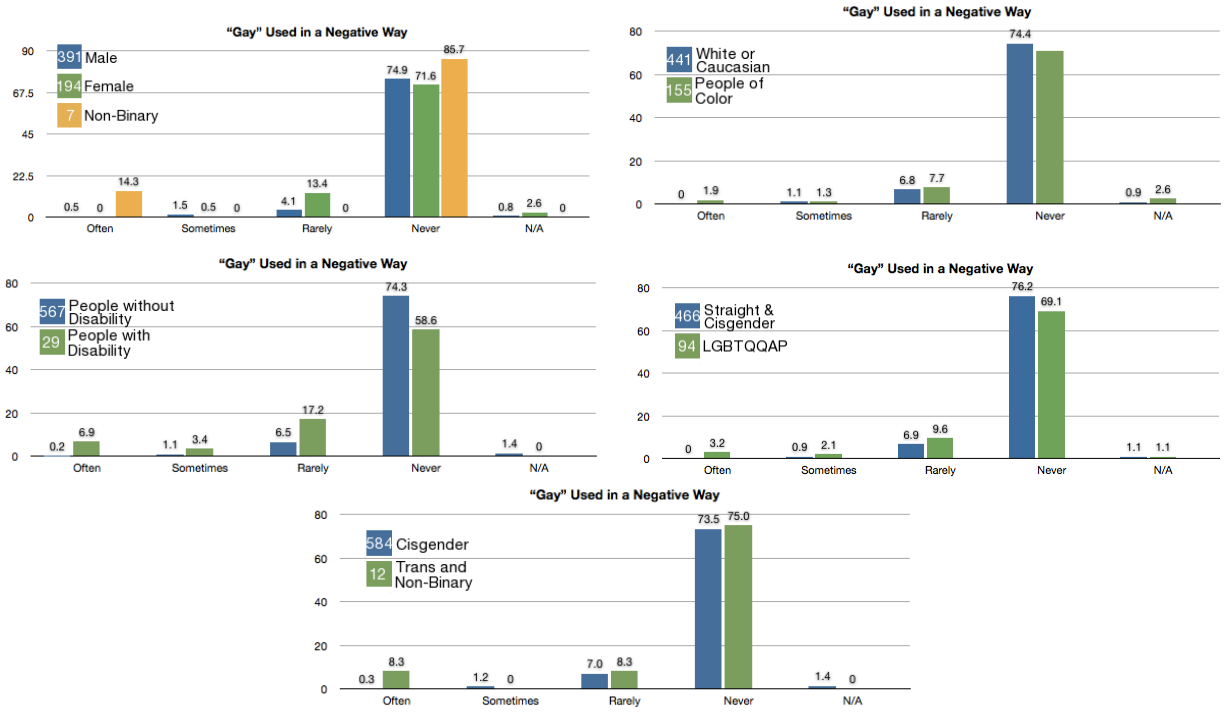
Figure 7: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your peers or colleagues? - Gay used in a negative way."
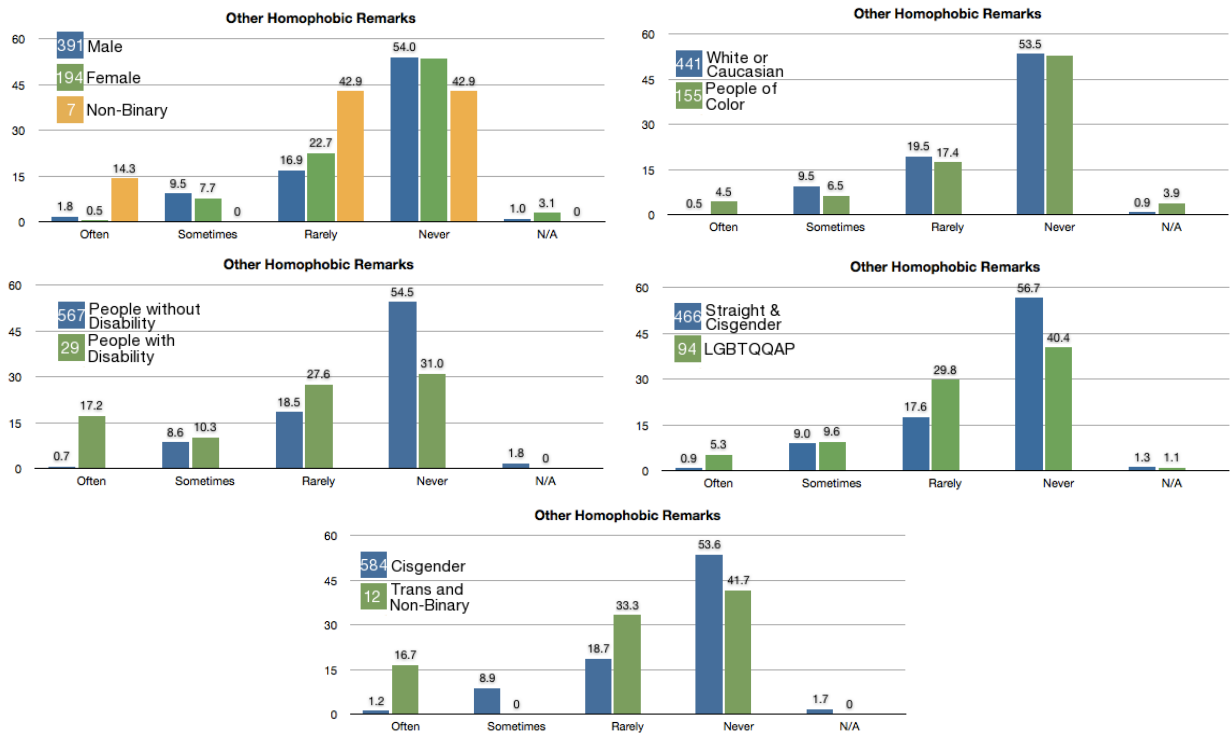
Figure 8: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your peers or colleagues? - Other homophobic remarks (e.g., 'fag,' 'dyke,' or 'No Homo')."
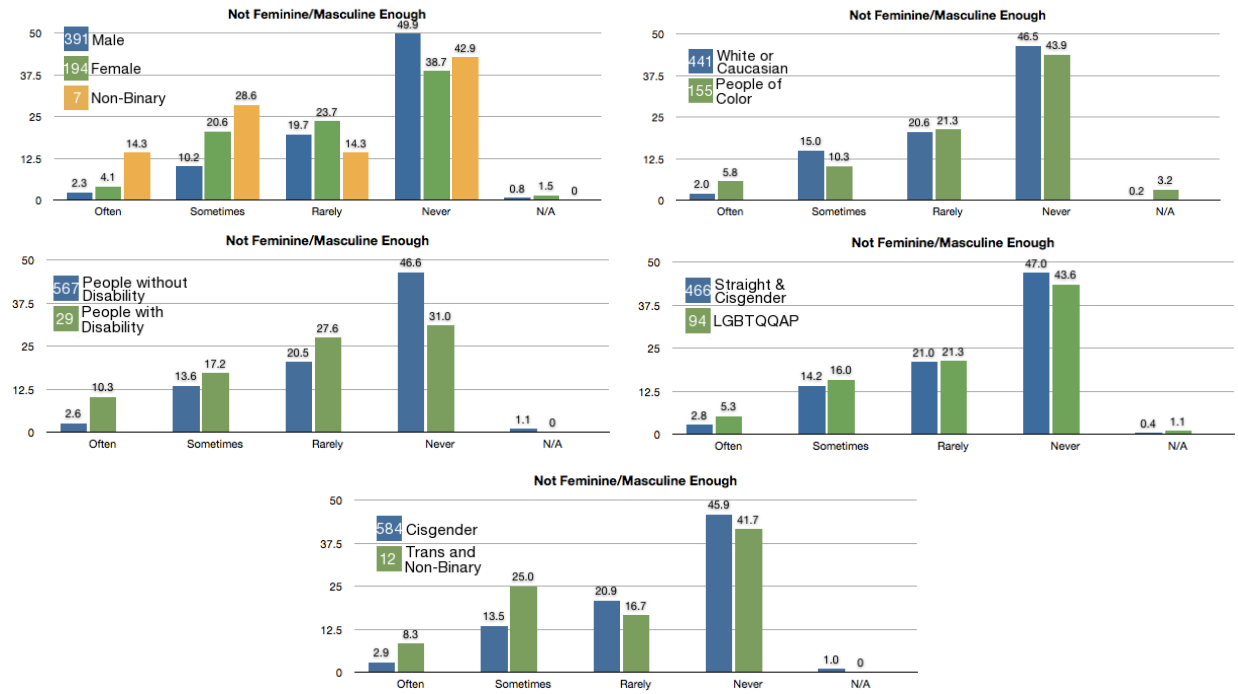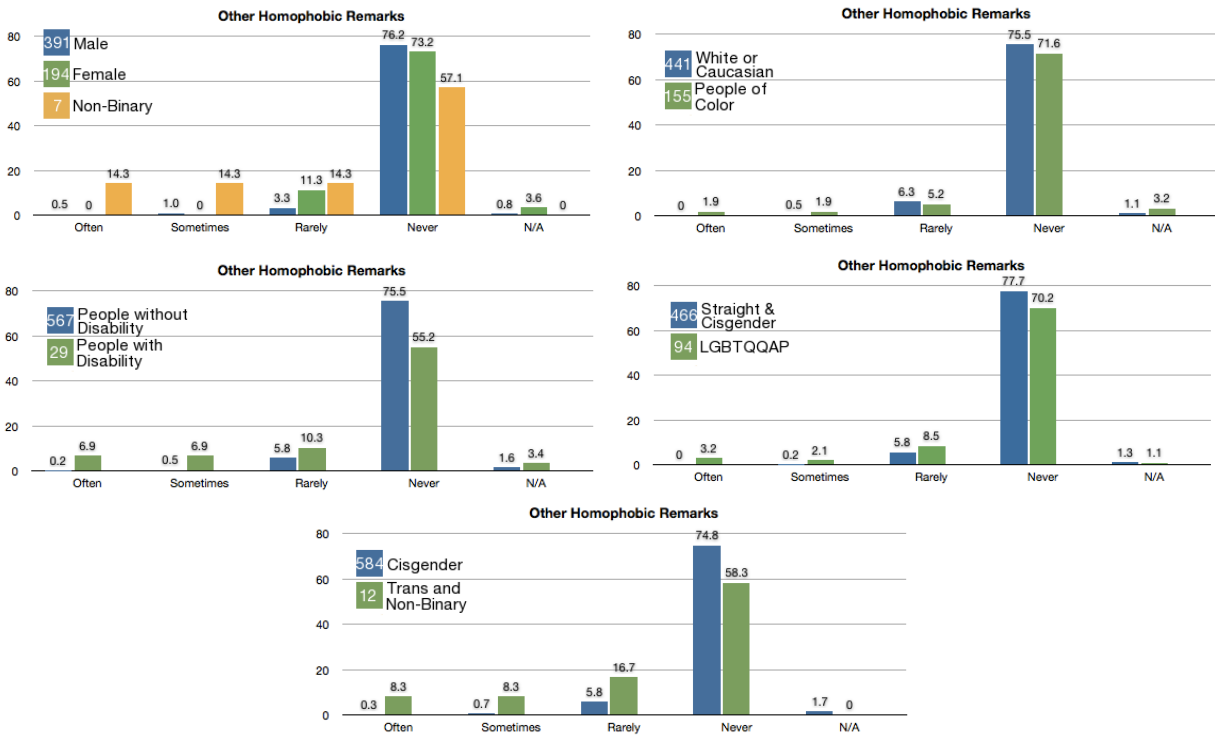
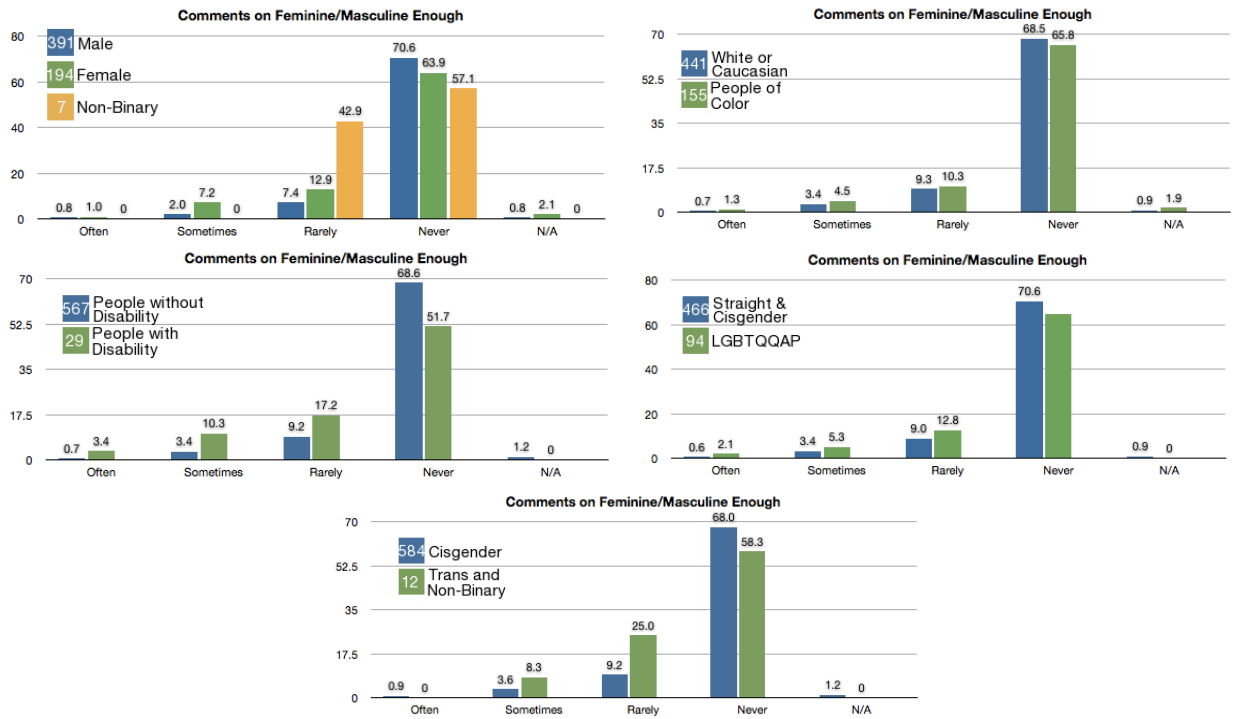Figure 9: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your peers or colleagues? - Comments about not acting 'feminine enough' or 'masculine enough'."
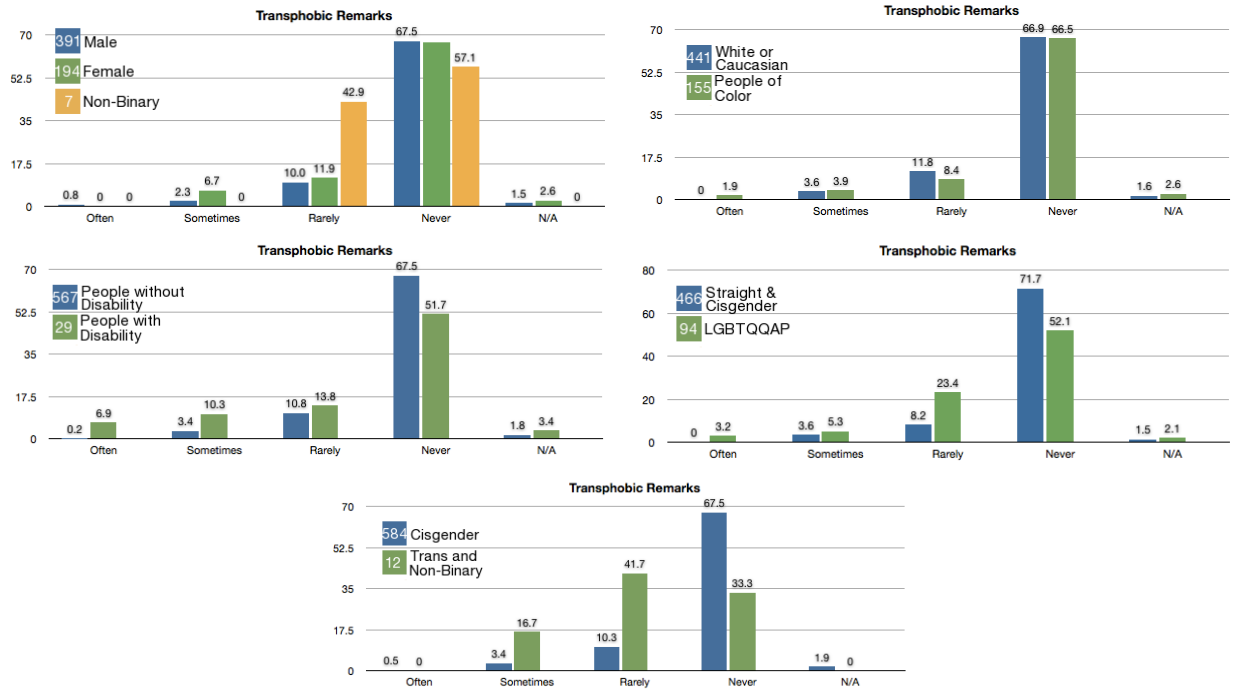
Figure 10: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your peers or colleagues? - Transphobic remarks (e.g., 'tranny' or referring to a trans person by incorrect pronouns or 'it')."
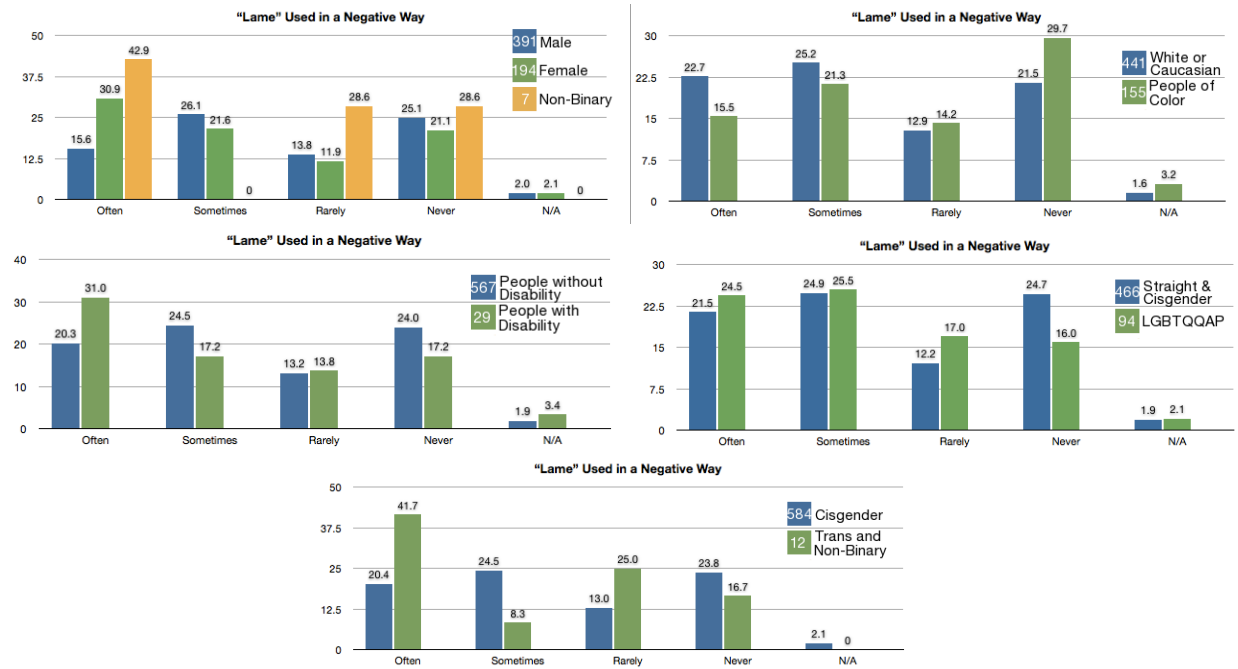
Figure 11: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your peers or colleagues? - 'Lame' used in a negative way."
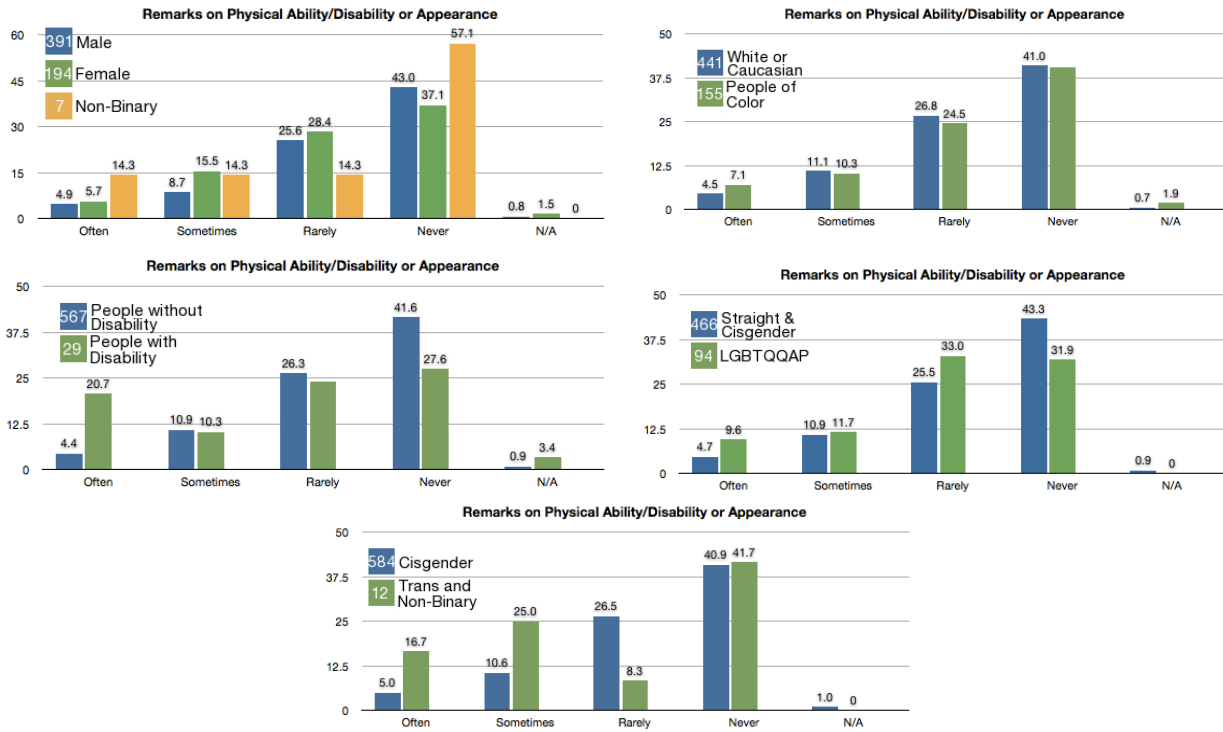
Figure 12: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your peers or colleagues? - Negative remarks about physical ability/disability or appearance."
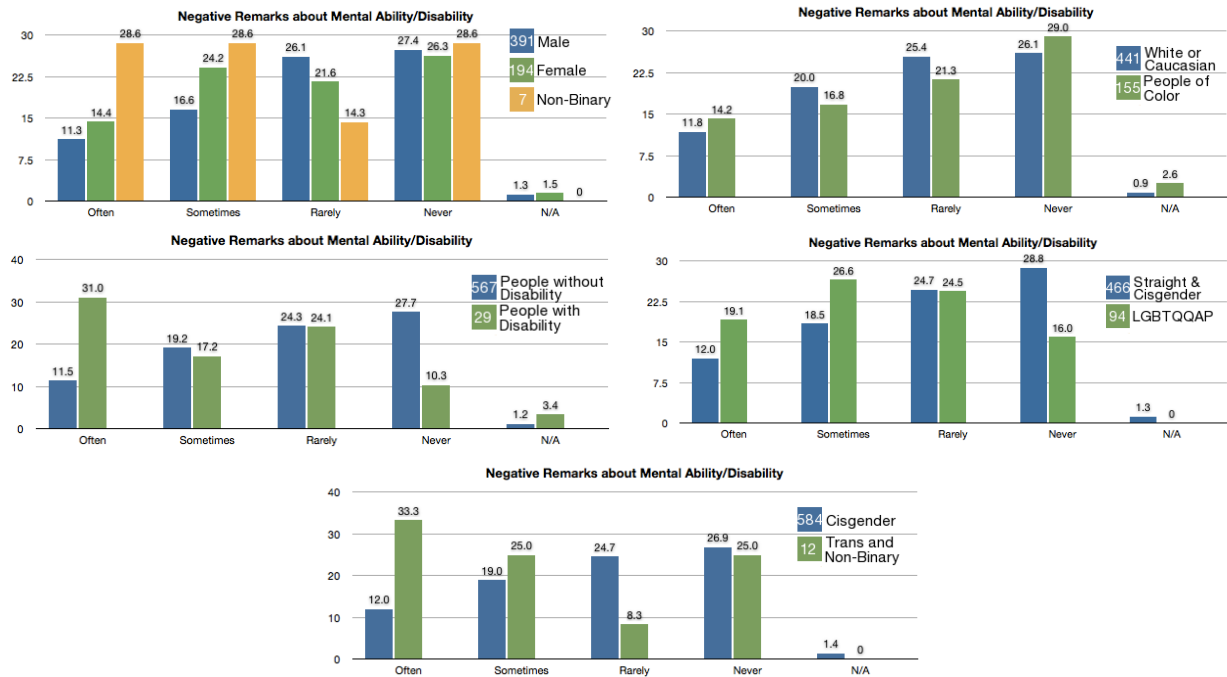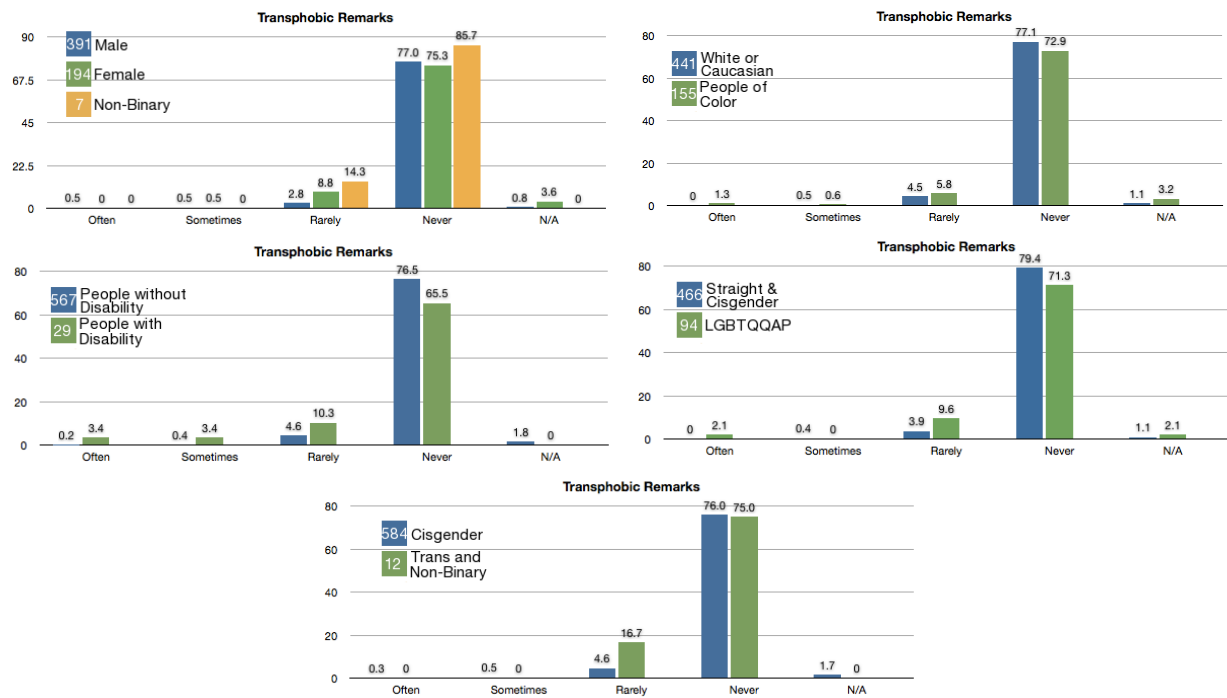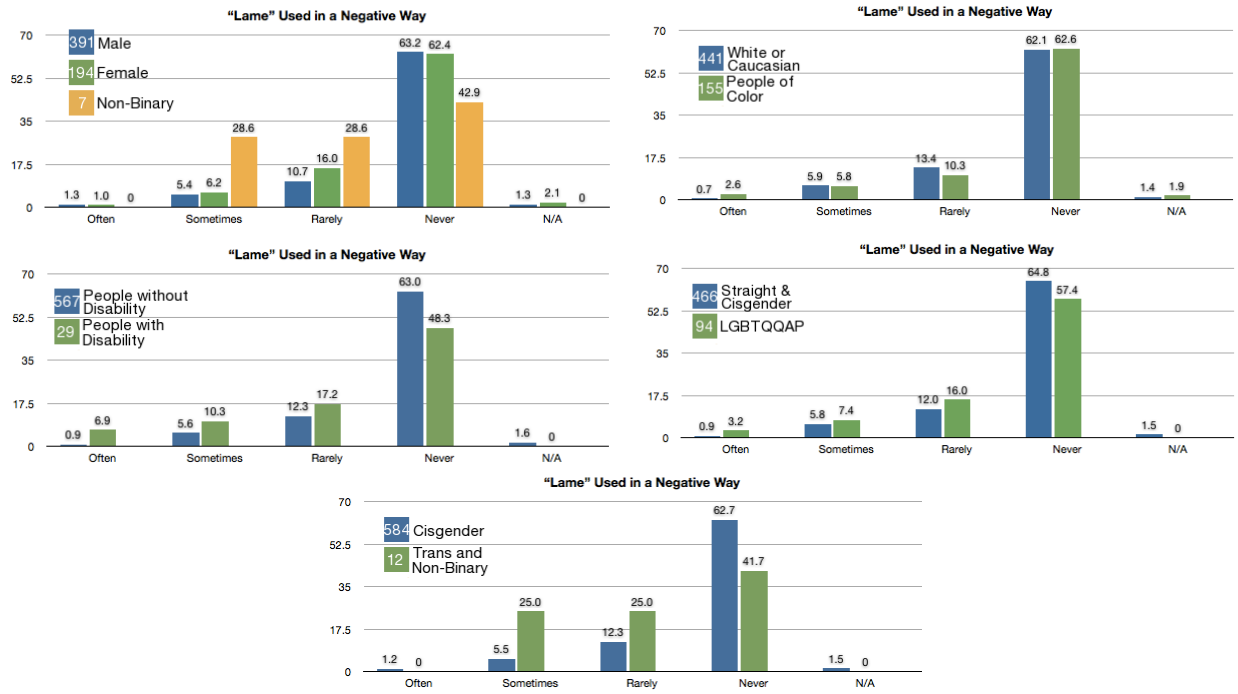
Figure 13: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your peers or colleagues? - Negative remarks about mental ability/disability (e.g., calling someone 'retarded' or 'stupid')."

4 Remarks Heard by Superiors

The language used in a department goes a long way to defining the climate. This section is the result of questions that looked at the language used by the superiors of respondents. The demographics described in Section 2 are used to break down the responses in five general categories: gender, race/ethnicity, ability, sexuality, and gender identity. Each of these is compared with the majority of respondents in each category. For sexuality, the acronym LGBTQQAP is used to show the responses from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, asexual, and pansexual respondents.
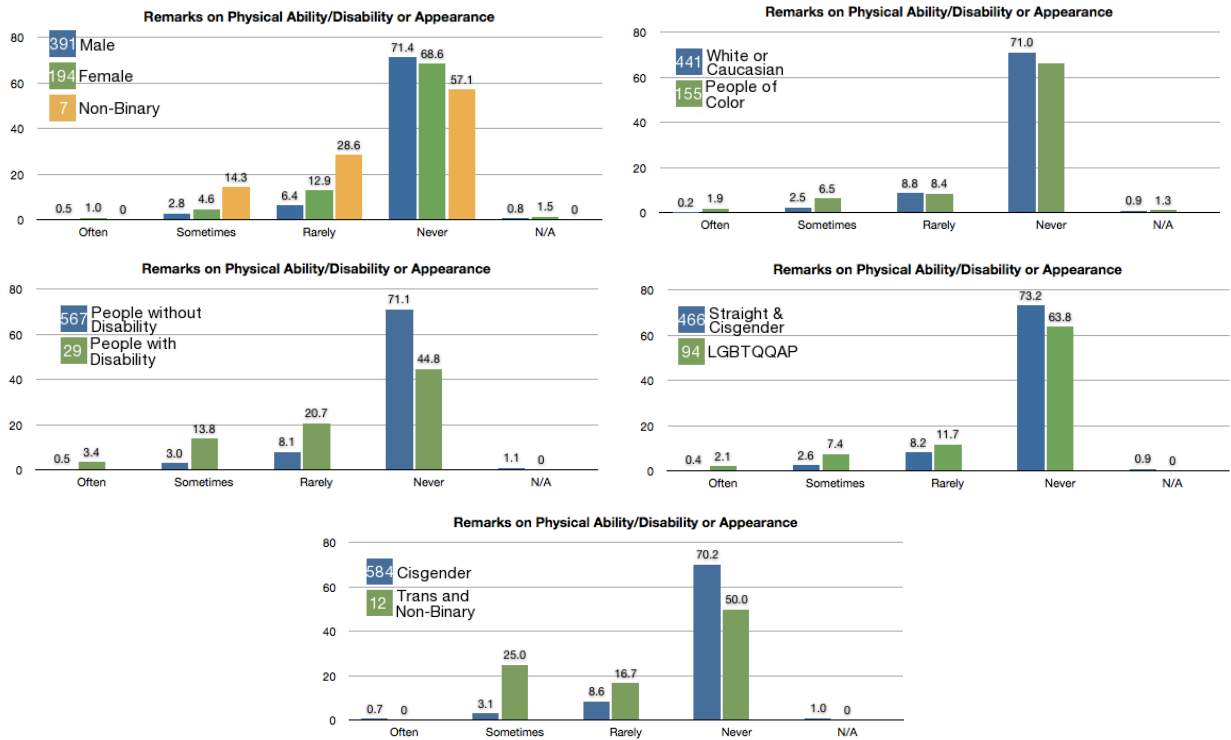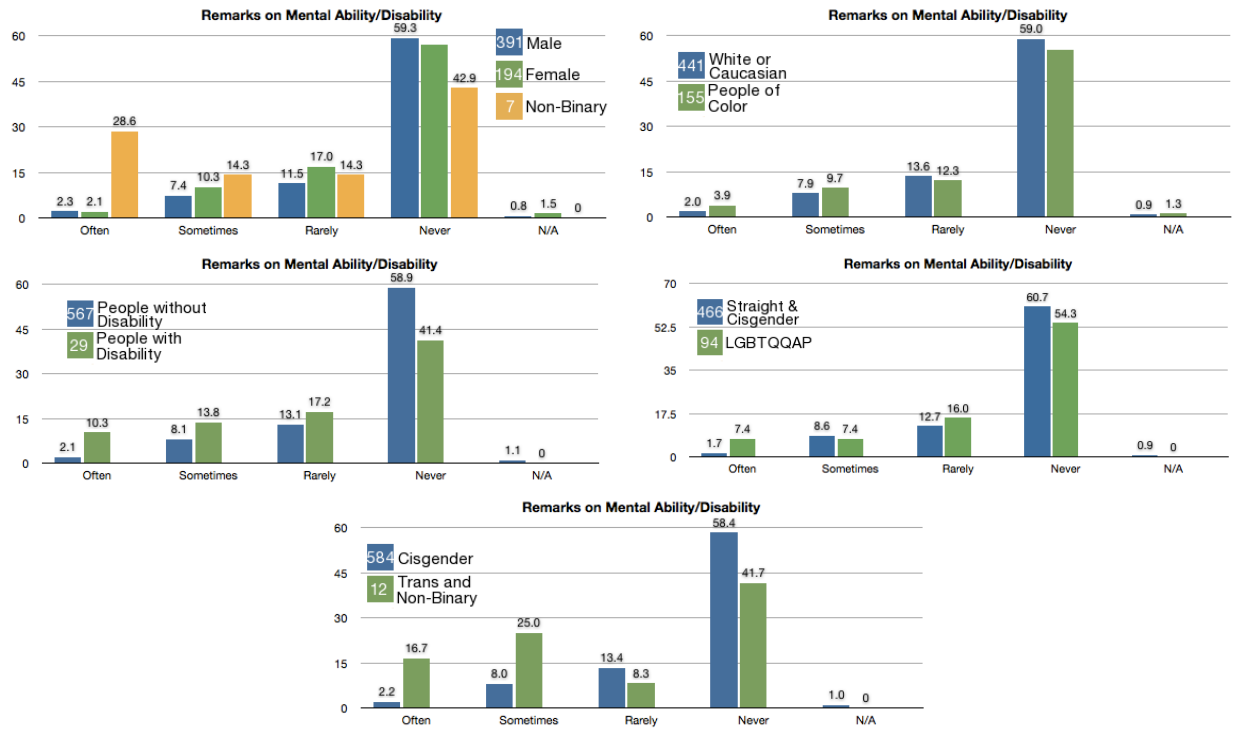

Figure 14: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your superiors (professors, supervisors, advisors, etc.)? - Racist remarks."

Figure 15: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your superiors (professors, supervisors, advisors, etc.)? - Sexist remarks."

Figure 16: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your superiors (professors, supervisors, advisors, etc.)? - 'Gay' used in a negative way."

Figure 17: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your superiors (professors, supervisors, advisors, etc.)? - Other homophobic remarks (e.g., 'fag,' 'dyke,' or 'No Homo')."

Figure 18: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your superiors (professors, supervisors, advisors, etc.)? - Comments about not acting 'feminine enough' or 'masculine enough'."
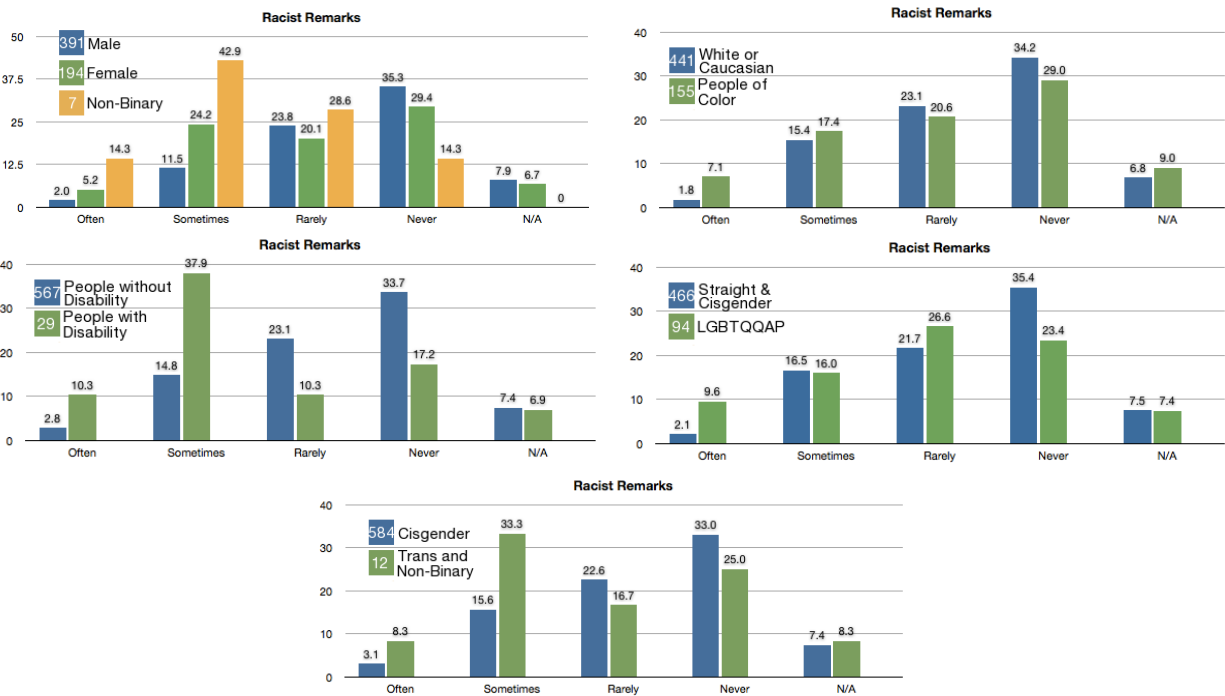
Figure 19: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your superiors (professors, supervisors, advisors, etc.)? - Transphobic remarks (e.g., 'tranny' or referring to a trans person by incorrect pronouns or 'it') ."
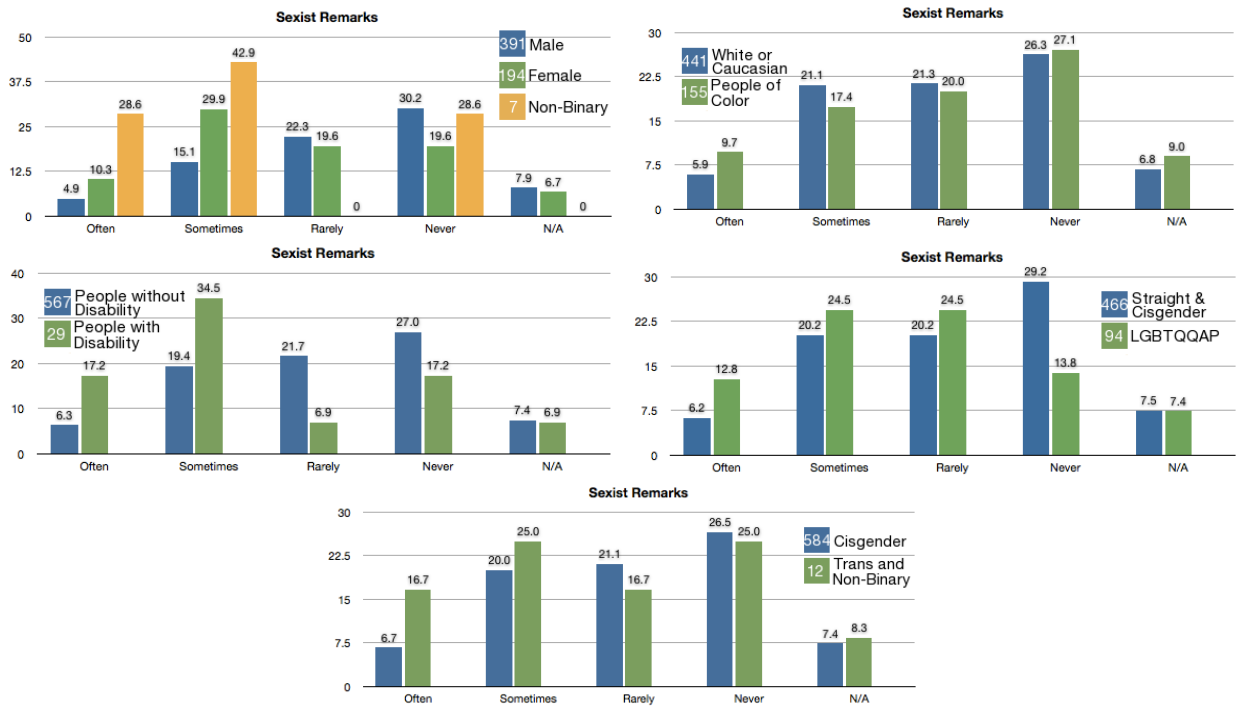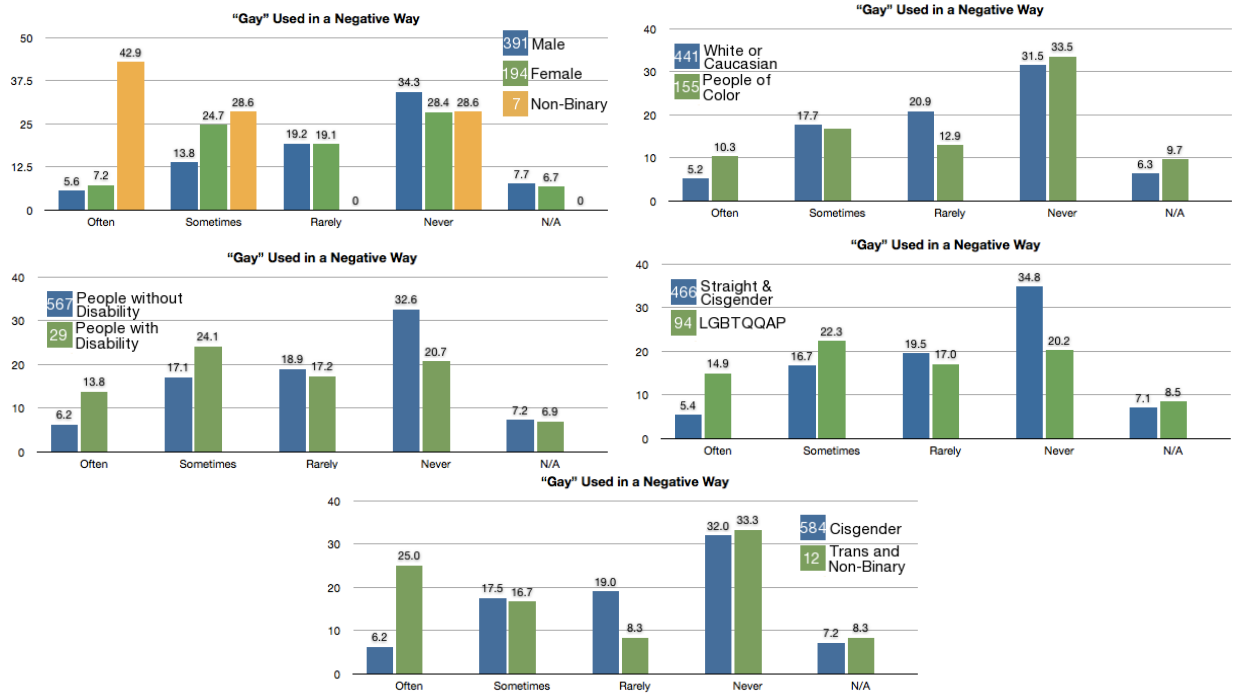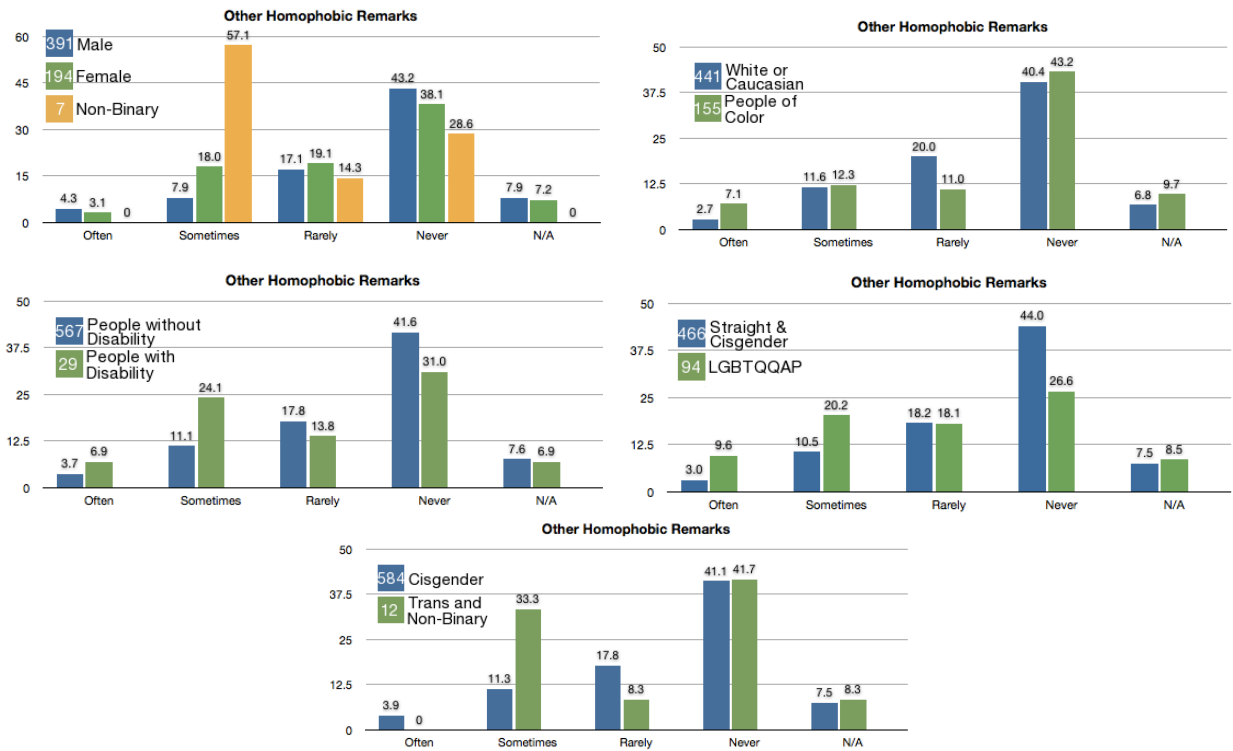
Figure 20: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your superiors (professors, supervisors, advisors, etc.)? - 'Lame' used in a negative way ."

Remarks on Physical Ability/Disability or Appearance

Male: 391, Female: 194, Non-Binary: 7

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
Male	0.5	2.8	6.4	71.4	0.8
Female	1.0	4.6	12.9	68.6	1.5
Non-Binary	0	14.3	28.6	57.1	0

Remarks on Physical Ability/Disability or Appearance

White or Caucasian: 441, People of Color: 155

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
White or Caucasian	0.2	2.5	8.8	71.0	0.9
People of Color	1.9	6.5	8.4		1.3

Remarks on Physical Ability/Disability or Appearance

People without Disability: 567, People with Disability: 29

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
People without Disability	0.5	3.0	8.1	71.1	1.1
People with Disability	3.4	13.8	20.7	44.8	0

Remarks on Physical Ability/Disability or Appearance

Straight & Cisgender: 466, LGBTQQAP: 94

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
Straight & Cisgender	0.4	2.6	8.2	73.2	0.9
LGBTQQAP	2.1	7.4	11.7	63.8	0

Remarks on Physical Ability/Disability or Appearance

Cisgender: 584, Trans and Non-Binary: 12

|	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
Cisgender	0.7	3.1	8.6	70.2	1.0
Trans and Non-Binary	0	25.0	16.7	50.0	0

Figure 21: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your superiors (professors, supervisors, advisors, etc.)? - Negative remarks about physical ability/disability or appearance."
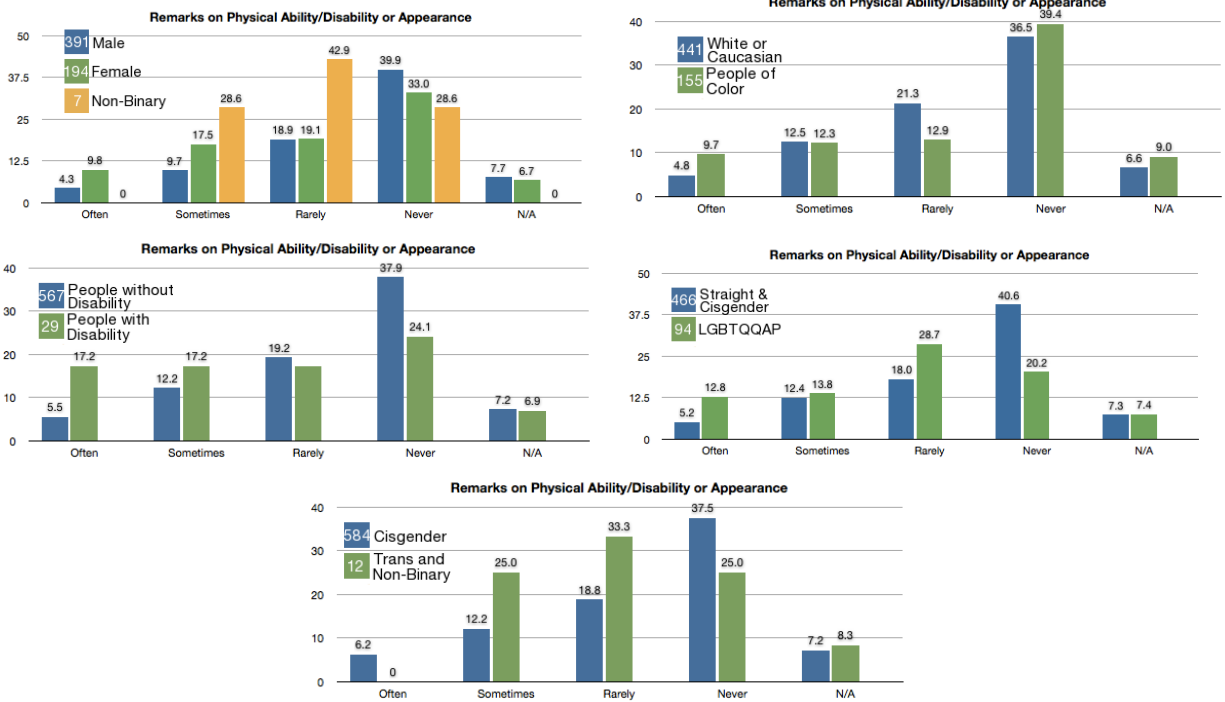
Figure 22: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from your superiors (professors, supervisors, advisors, etc.)? - Negative remarks about mental ability/disability (e.g., calling someone 'retarded' or 'stupid')."

5 Remarks Heard by Others in Institution but Outside Department

The language used in a department goes a long way to defining the climate. This section is the result of questions that looked at the language used by the people in the institution of respondents, but outside their department. The demographics described in Section 2 are used to break down the responses in five general categories: gender, race/ethnicity, ability, sexuality, and gender identity. Each of these is compared with the majority of respondents in each category. For sexuality, the acronym LGBTQQAP is used to show the responses from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, asexual, and pansexual respondents.
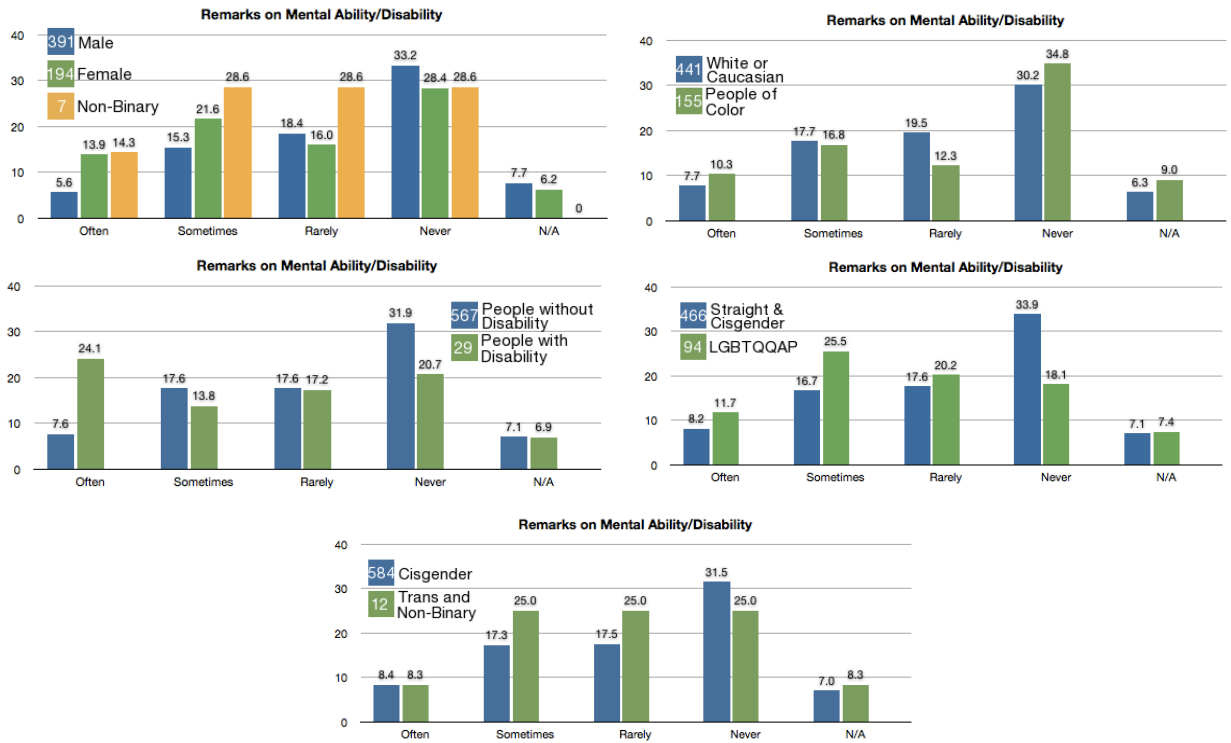

Figure 23: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from others in your institution but outside of your department? - Racist remarks."

Figure 24: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from others in your institution but outside of your department? - Sexist remarks."

Figure 25: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from others in your institution but outside of your department? - 'Gay' used in a negative way."

Figure 26: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from others in your institution but outside of your department? - Other homophobic remarks (e.g., 'fag,' 'dyke,' or 'No Homo')."
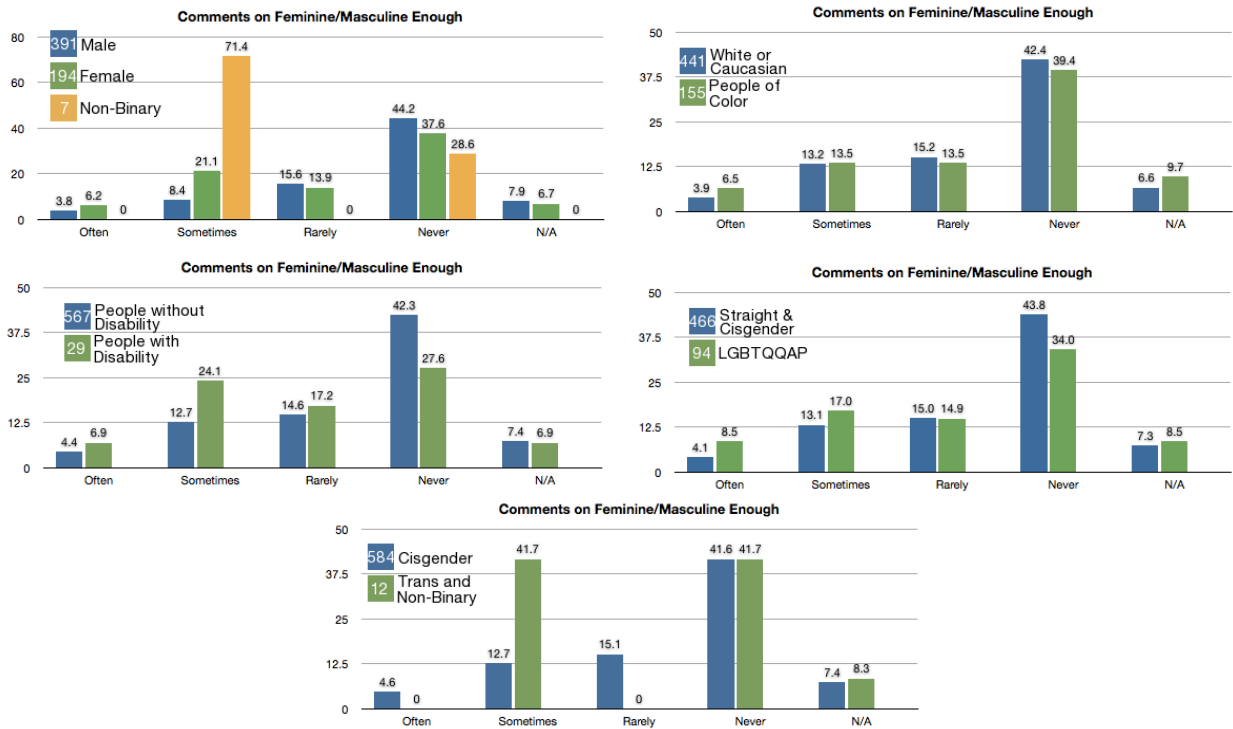
Figure 27: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from others in your institution but outside of your department? - Comments about not acting 'feminine enough' or 'masculine enough'."

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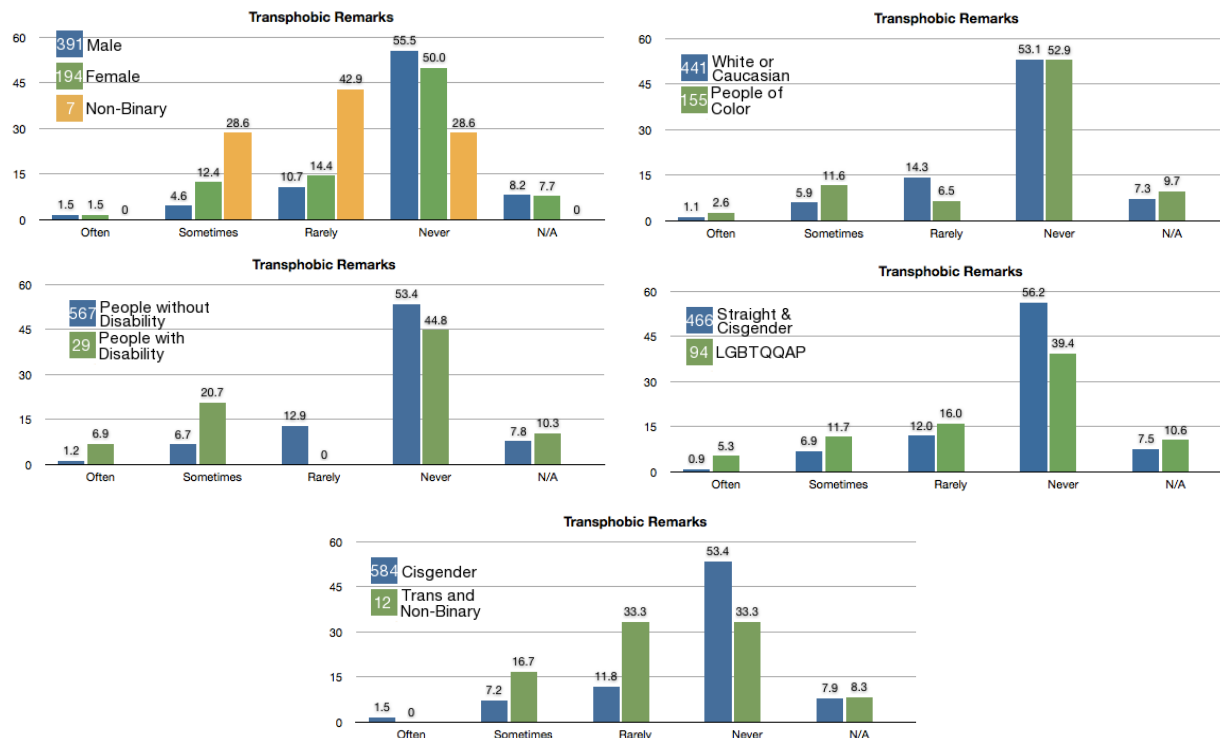
Figure 28: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from others in your institution but outside of your department? - Transphobic remarks (e.g., 'tranny' or referring to a trans person by incorrect pronouns or 'it')."
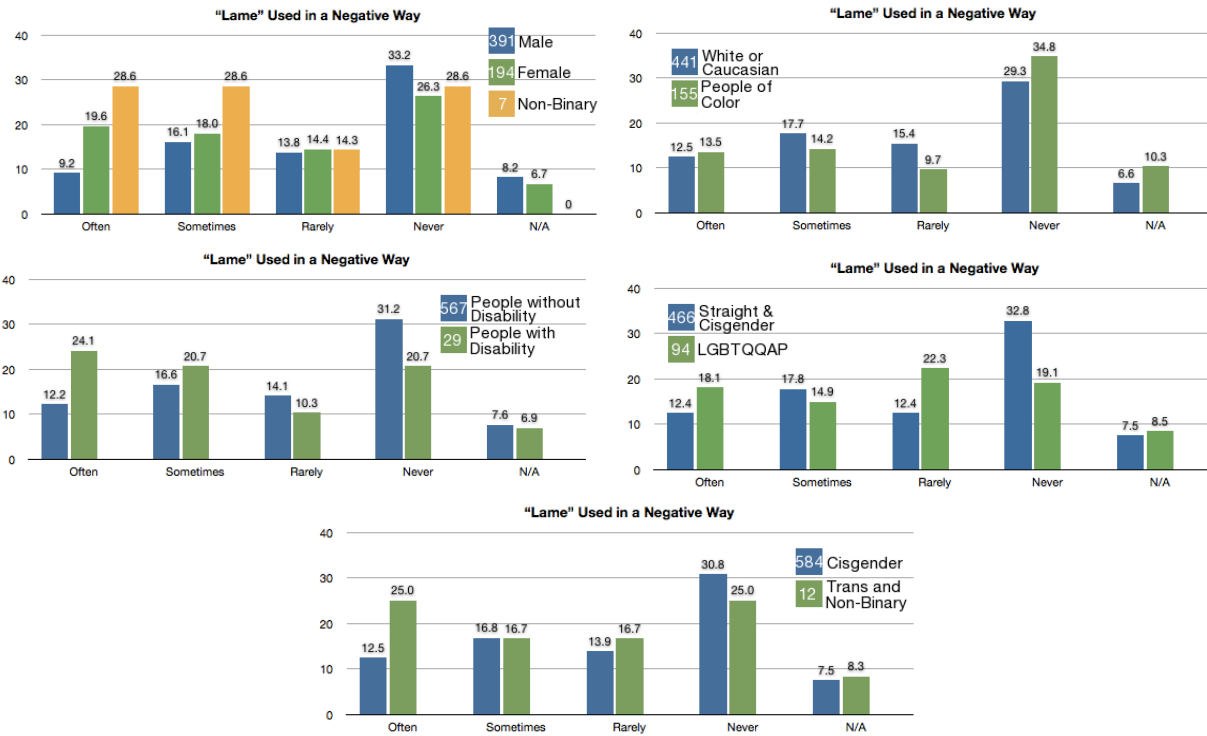
Figure 29: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from others in your institution but outside of your department? - 'Lame' used in a negative way."

Figure 30: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from others in your institution but outside of your department? - Negative remarks about physical ability/disability or appearance."

Figure 31: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often have you heard or read the following language from others in your institution but outside of your department? - Negative remarks about mental ability/disability (e.g., calling someone 'retarded' or 'stupid')."

6 Safety

In order to be productive, people must feel safe in their workplace. This includes having a workspace free from verbal, online, and physical harassment. In addition to general feelings of safety, this section is further broken down into reports of verbal and online harassment in Section 6.1, and physical harassment in Section 6.2. Furthermore, if harassment occurs, people must feel comfortable reporting it. This is explored in Section 6.3.
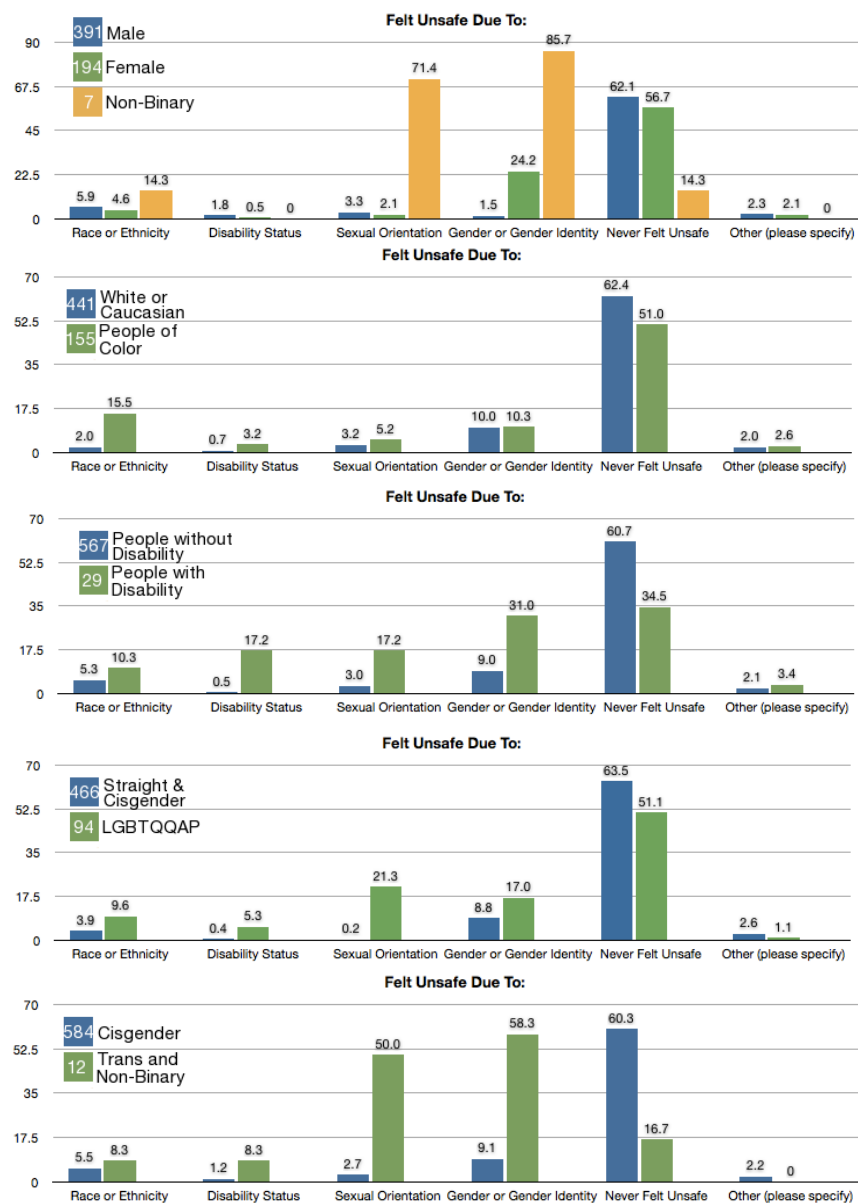
Figure 32: Responses to the question "In the last five years, have you felt unsafe because of any of the following personal characteristics? Check all that apply."

6.1 Verbal and Online Harassment

Verbal and online harassment can make a person feel extremely unwelcome in their department. This section explores whether respondents experienced this type of harassment, what they felt it was based on, and who the harasser was.
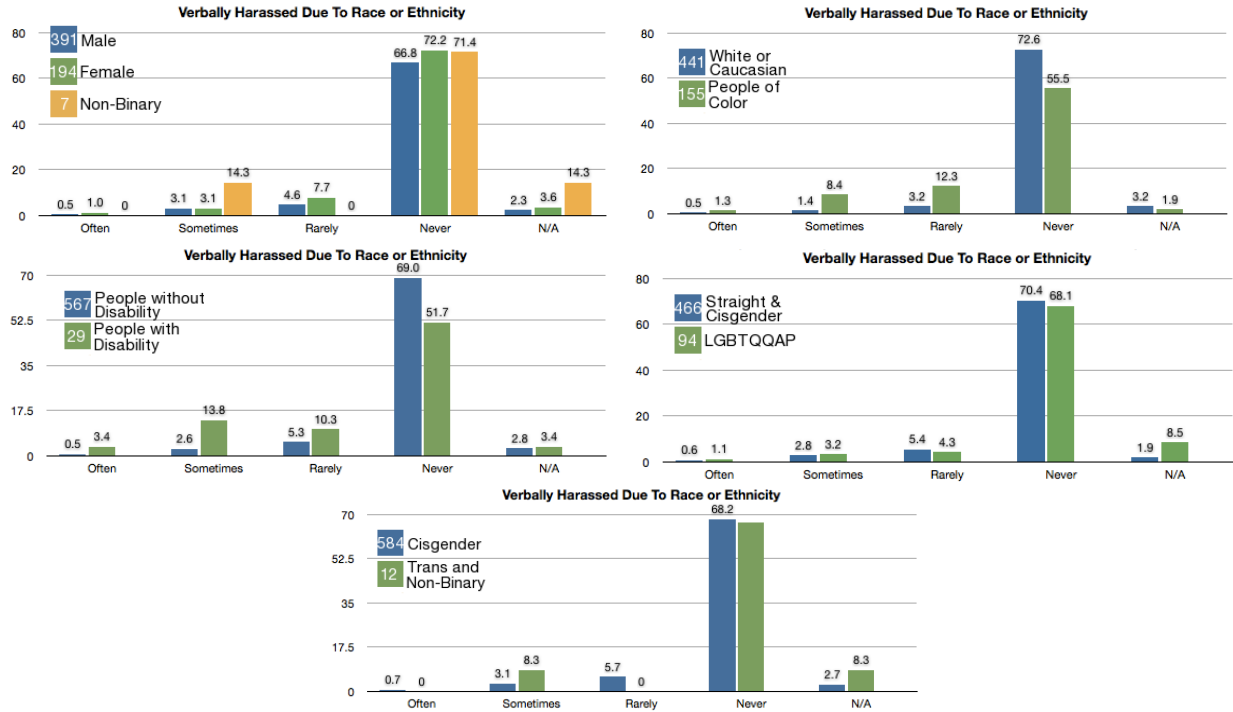
Figure 33: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often where you harassed verbally or online because of the following characteristics? - Race or Ethnicity."
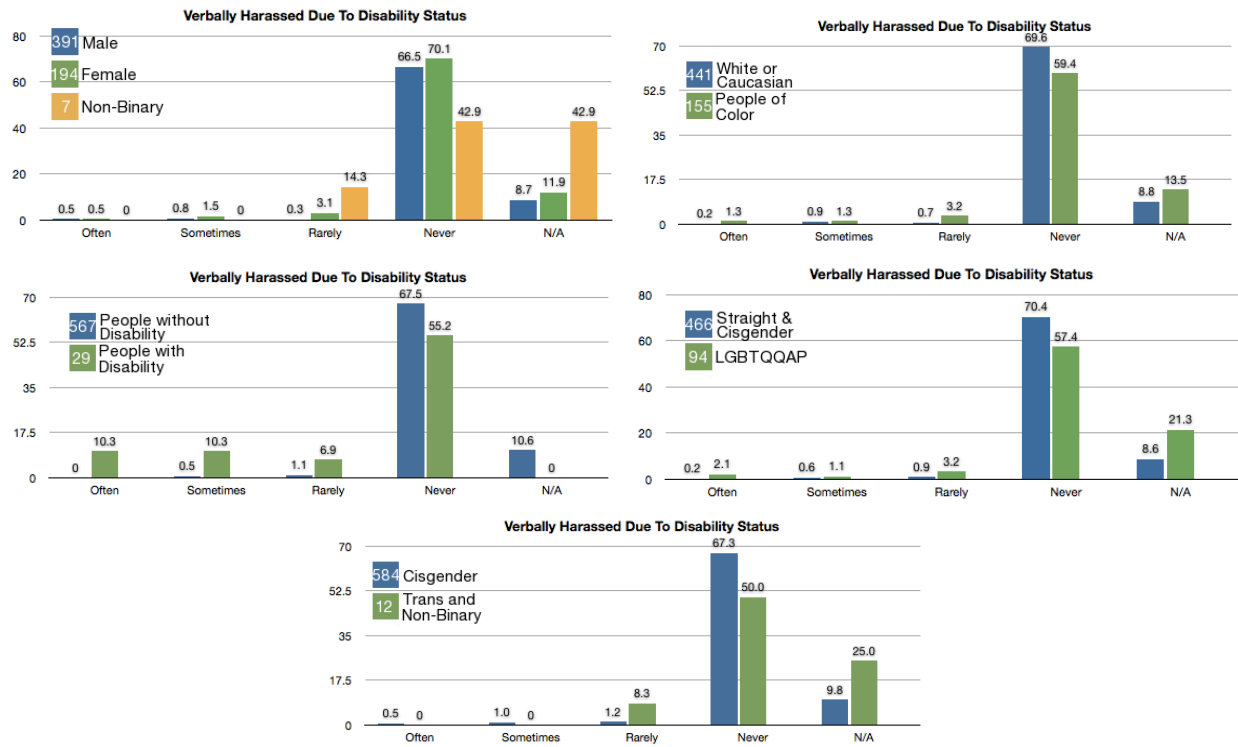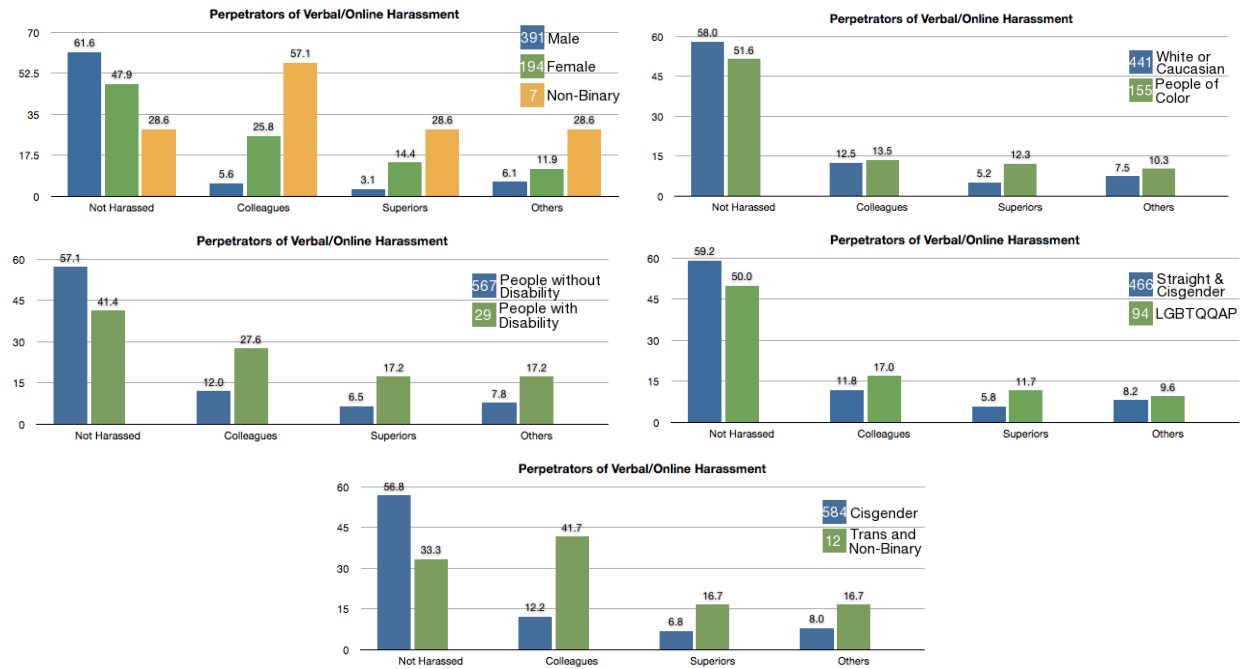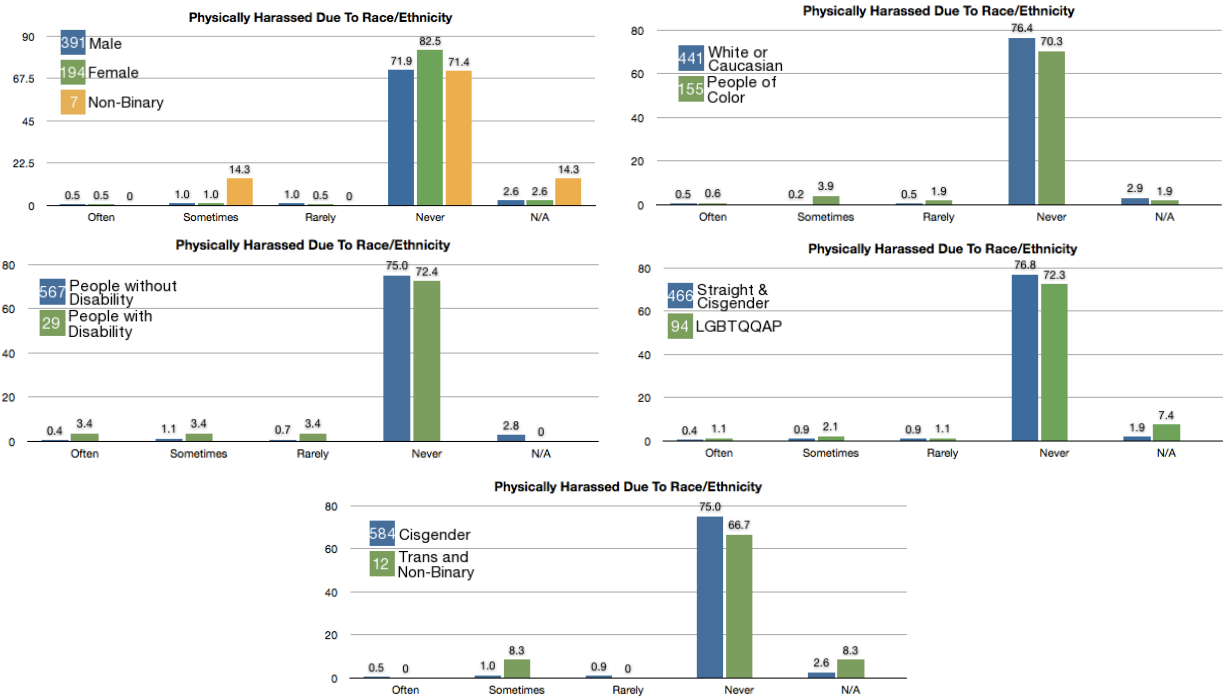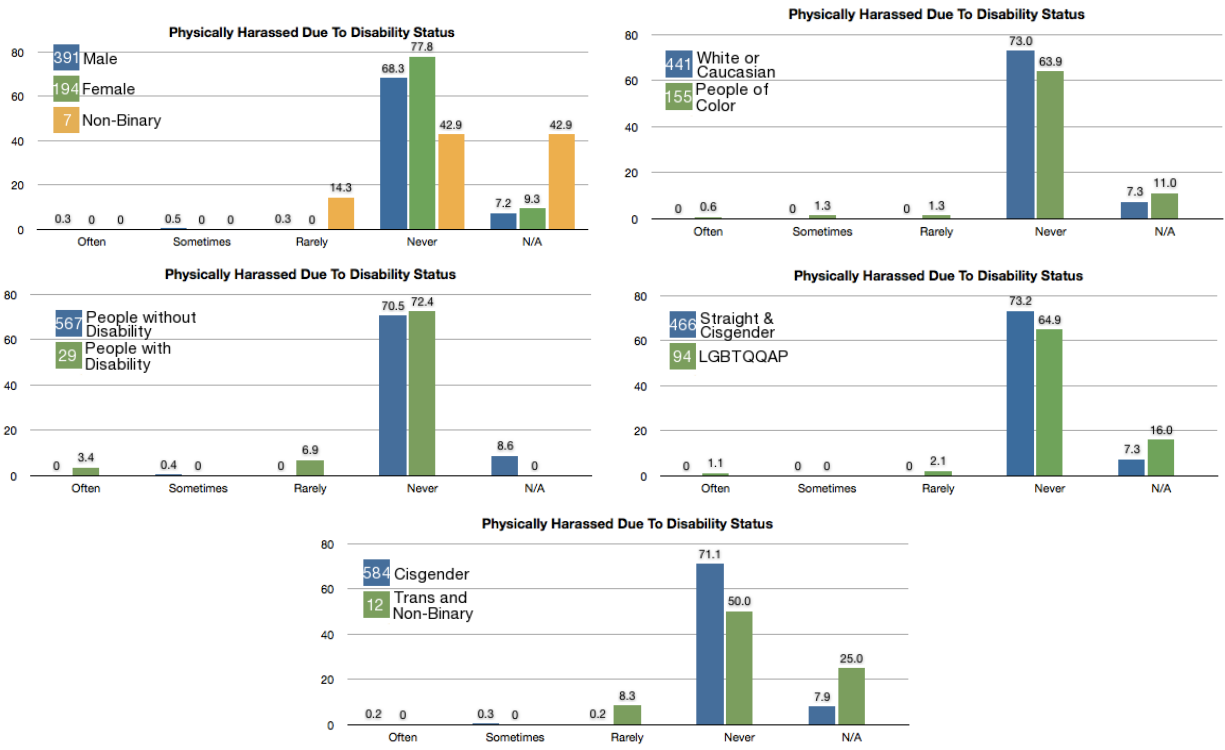
Figure 34: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often where you harassed verbally or online because of the following characteristics? - Disability Status."
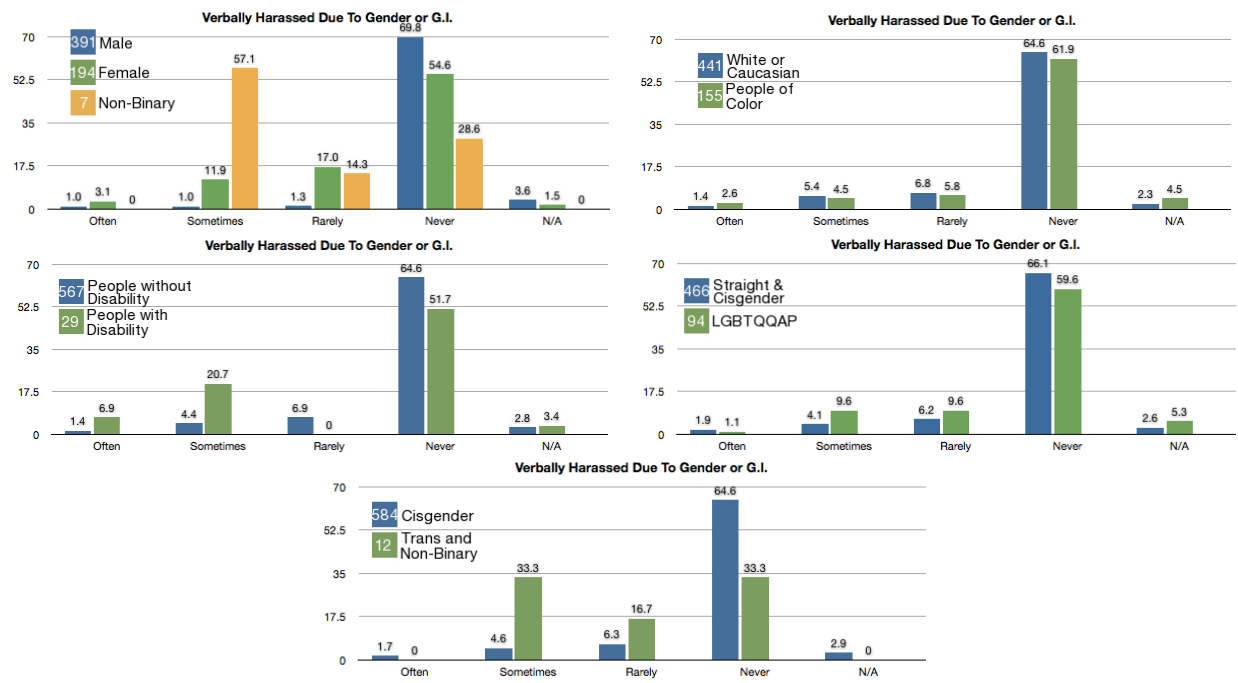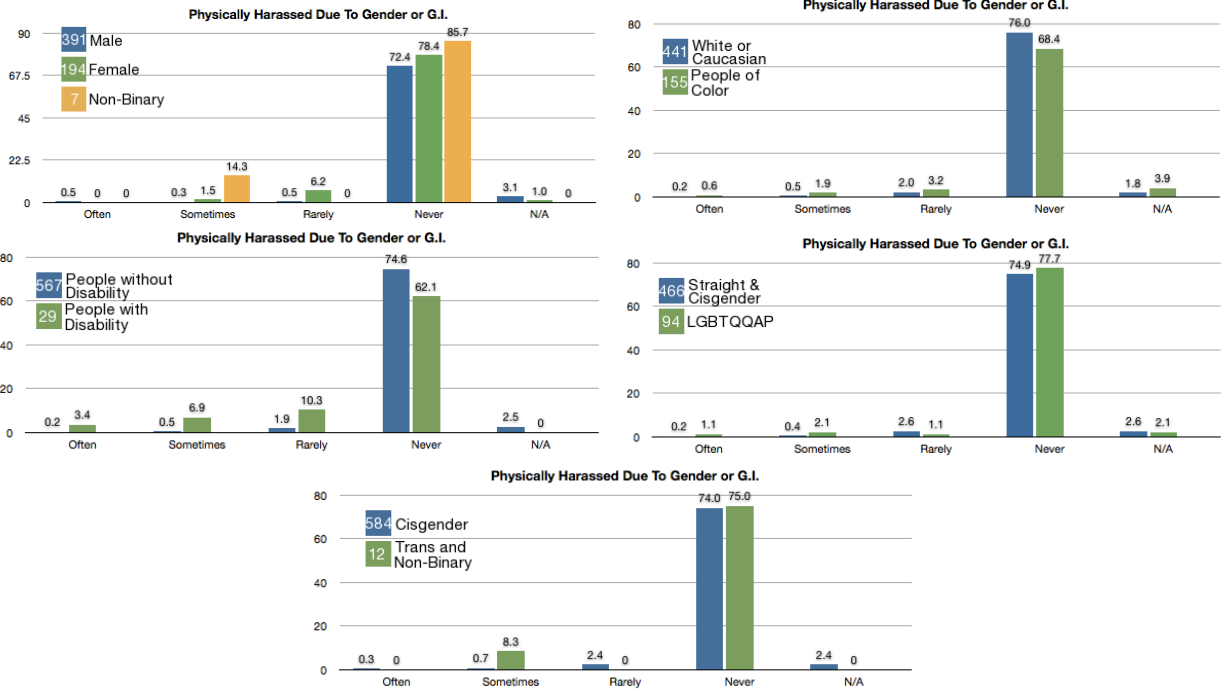
Figure 35: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often where you harassed verbally or online because of the following characteristics? - Gender or Gender Identity."
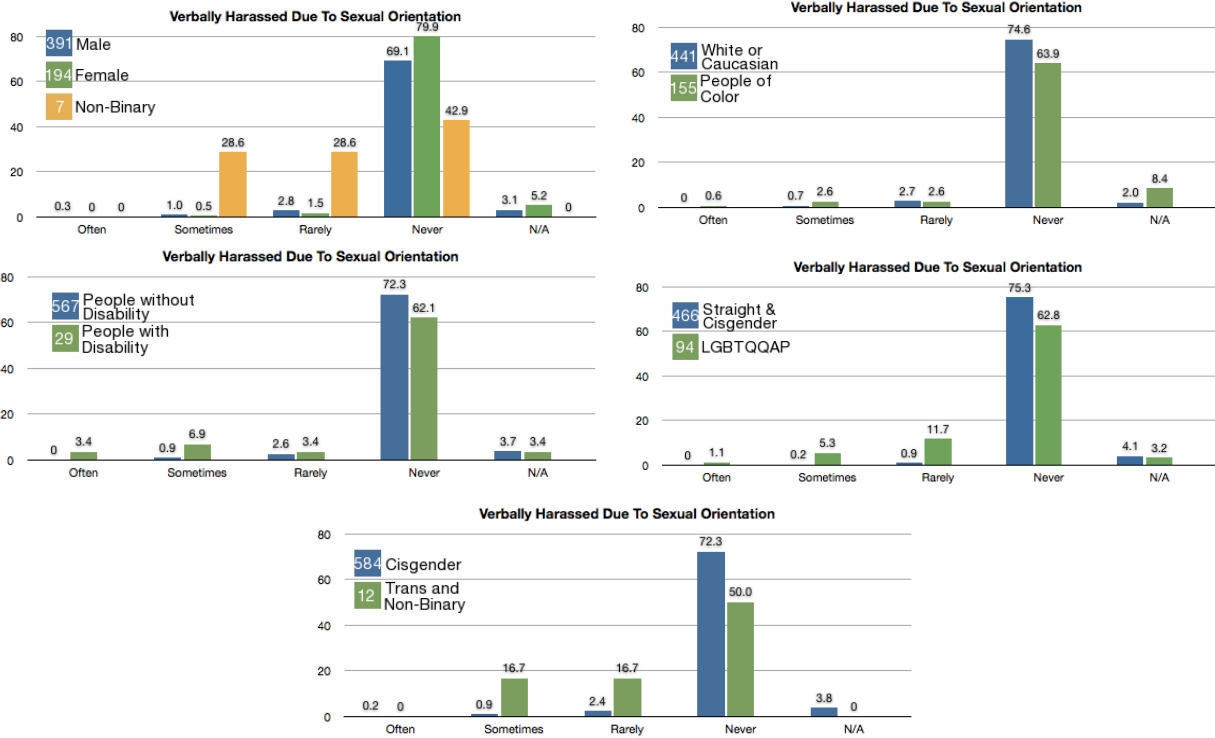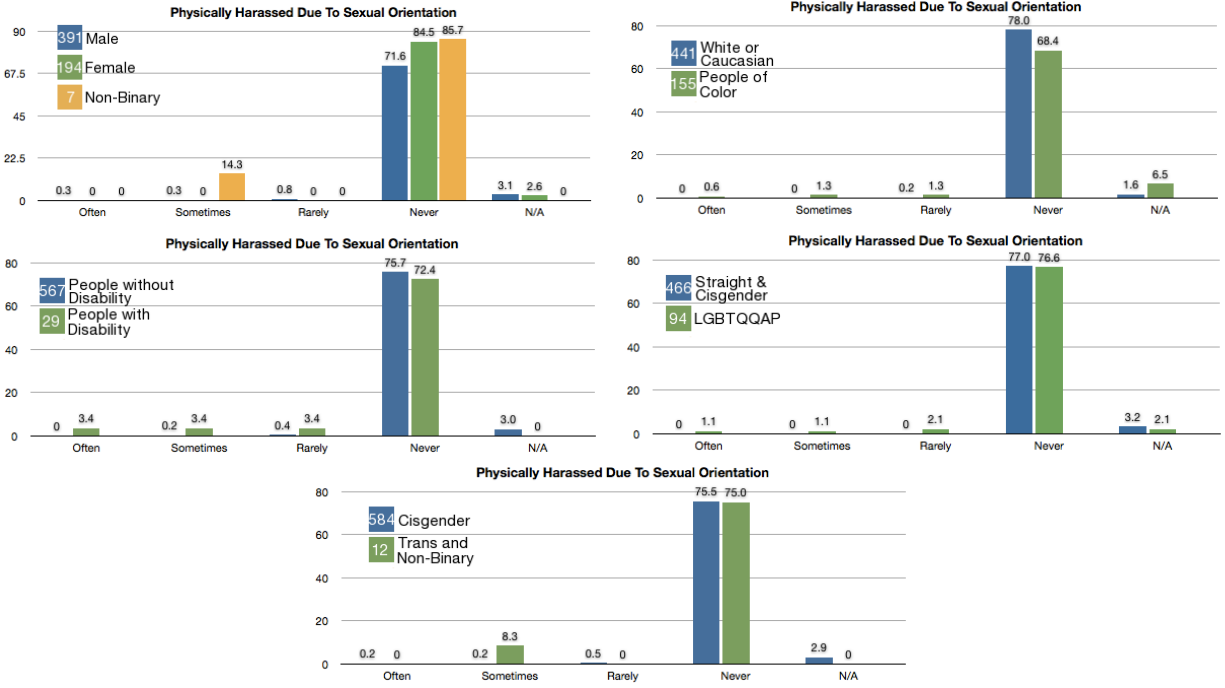
Figure 36: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often where you harassed verbally or online because of the following characteristics? - Sexual Orientation."
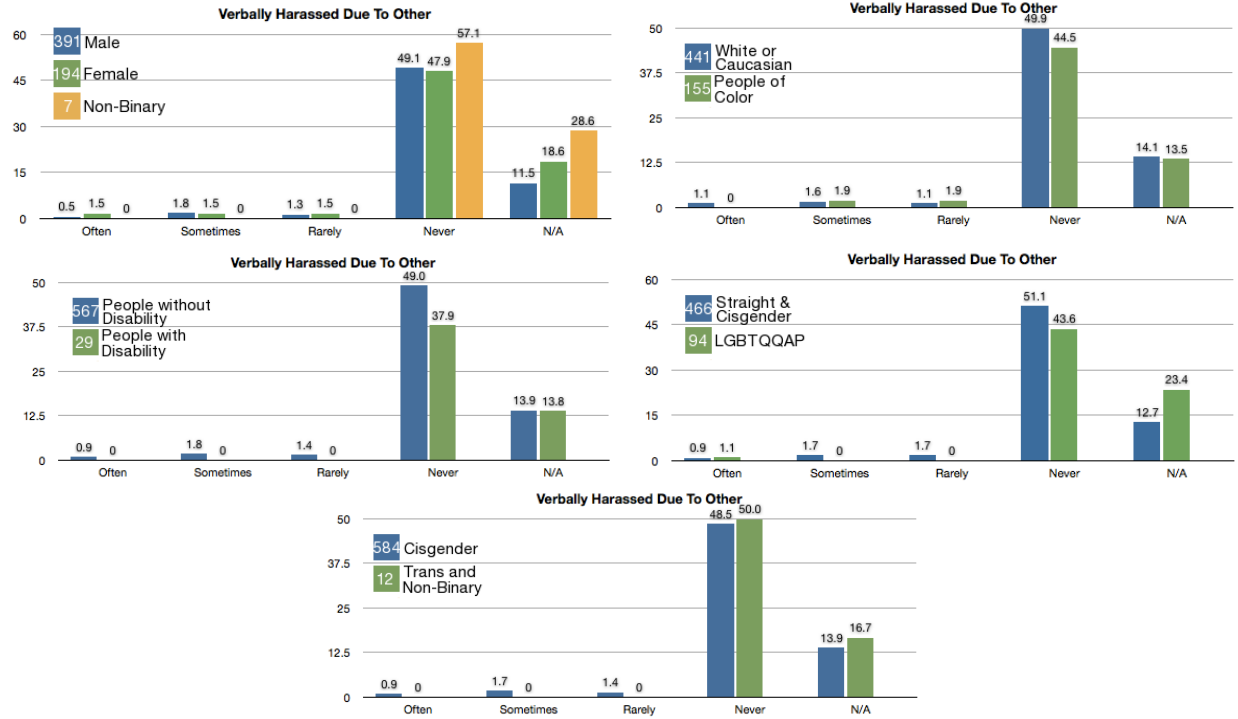
Figure 37: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often where you harassed verbally or online because of the following characteristics? - Other."

Figure 38: Responses to the question "Of which group or groups were the individual(s) who harassed you, verbally or online, a member?"

6.2 Physical Harassment

Physical harassment is something no one should ever have to face in their department. This section explores whether respondents experienced this type of harassment, what they felt it was based on, and who the harasser was.
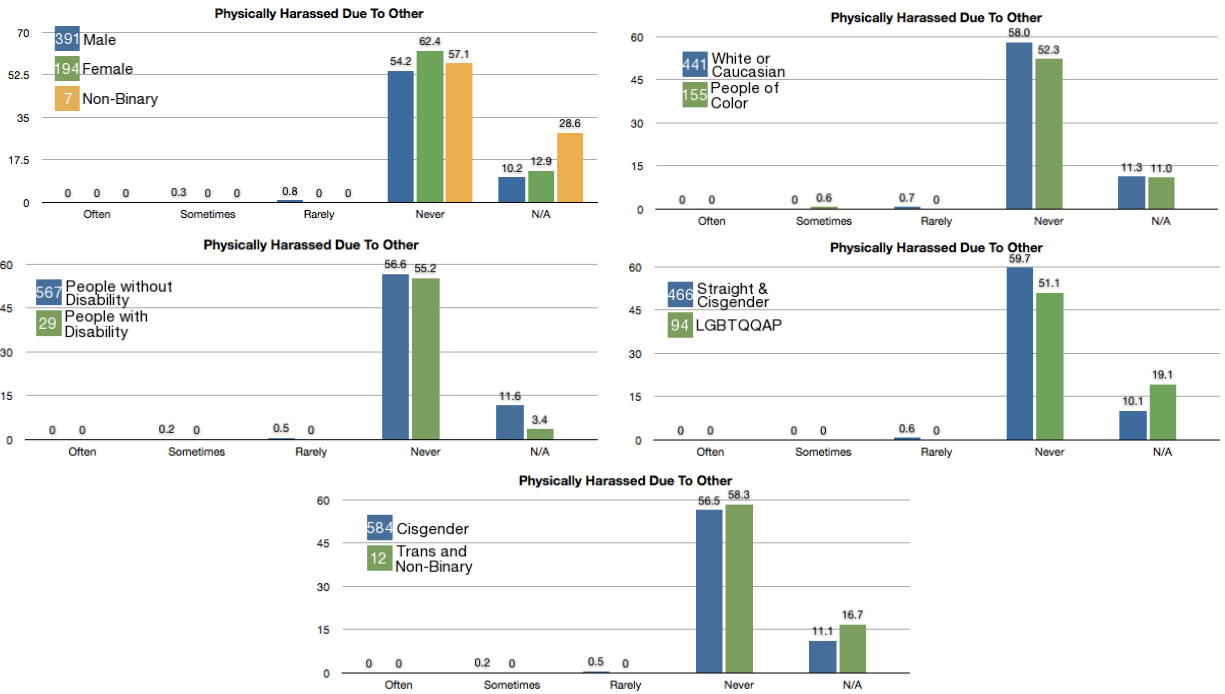

Figure 39: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often were you physically harassed or assaulted because of the following characteristics? - Race or Ethnicity."

Figure 40: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often were you physically harassed or assaulted because of the following characteristics? - Disability Status."
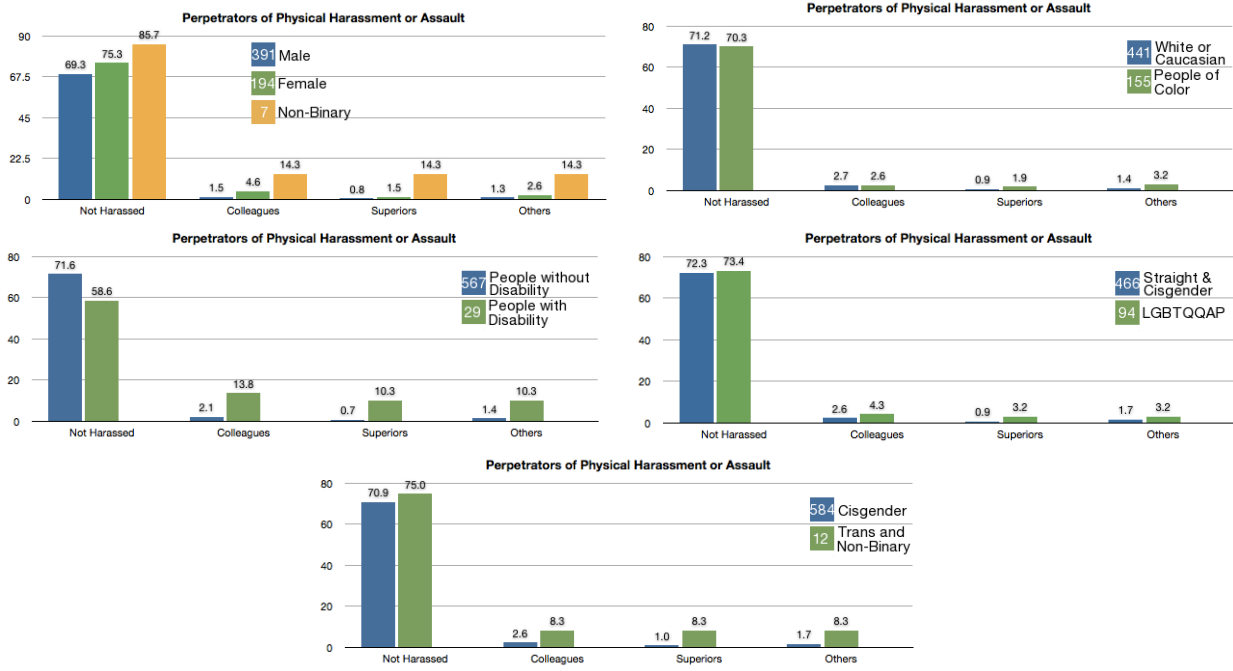
Figure 41: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often were you physically harassed or assaulted because of the following characteristics? - Gender or Gender Identity."

Figure 42: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often were you physically harassed or assaulted because of the following characteristics? - Sexual Orientation."

Figure 43: Responses to the question "In the last five years, how often were you physically harassed or assaulted because of the following characteristics? - Other."

Figure 44: Responses to the question "Of which group or groups were the individual(s) who physically harassed or assaulted you a member?"

6.3 Reporting Harassment

When harassment occurs, a person should feel comfortable reporting that harassment. This section explores whether harassment was reported, or if it was specifically not reported. It also explores some of the reasons why it wasn't reported.
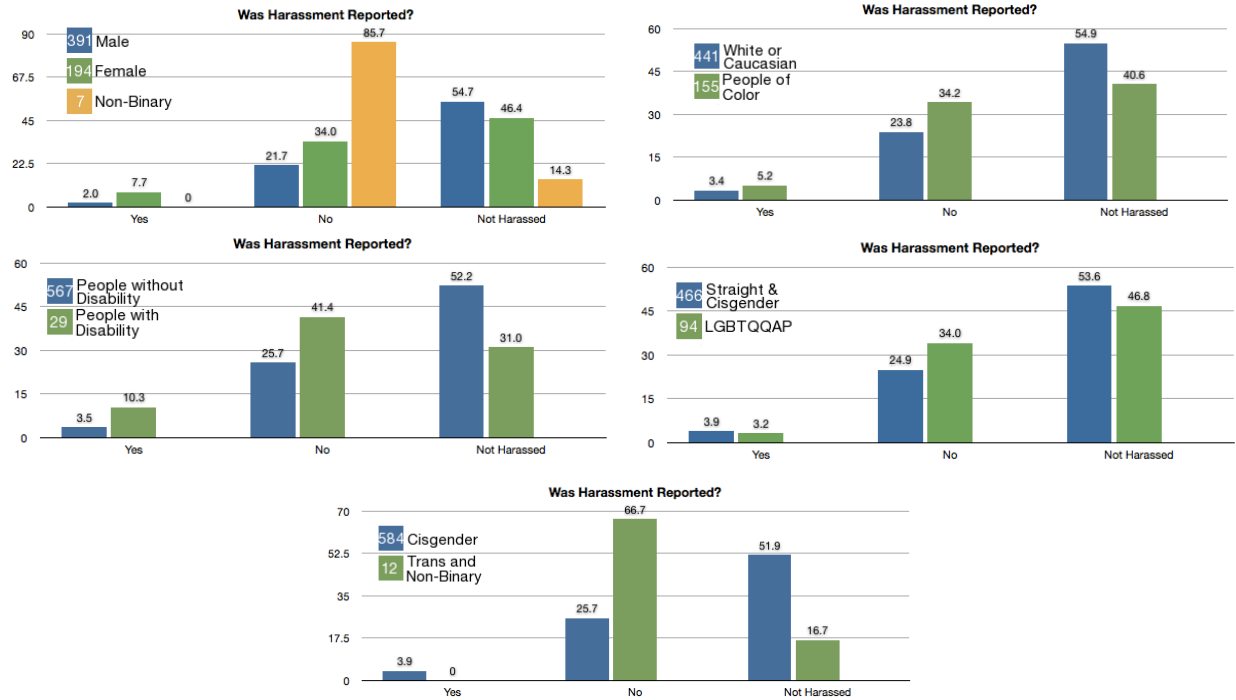
Figure 45: Responses to the question "In the last five years, have you reported an incident of harassment that you experienced?"
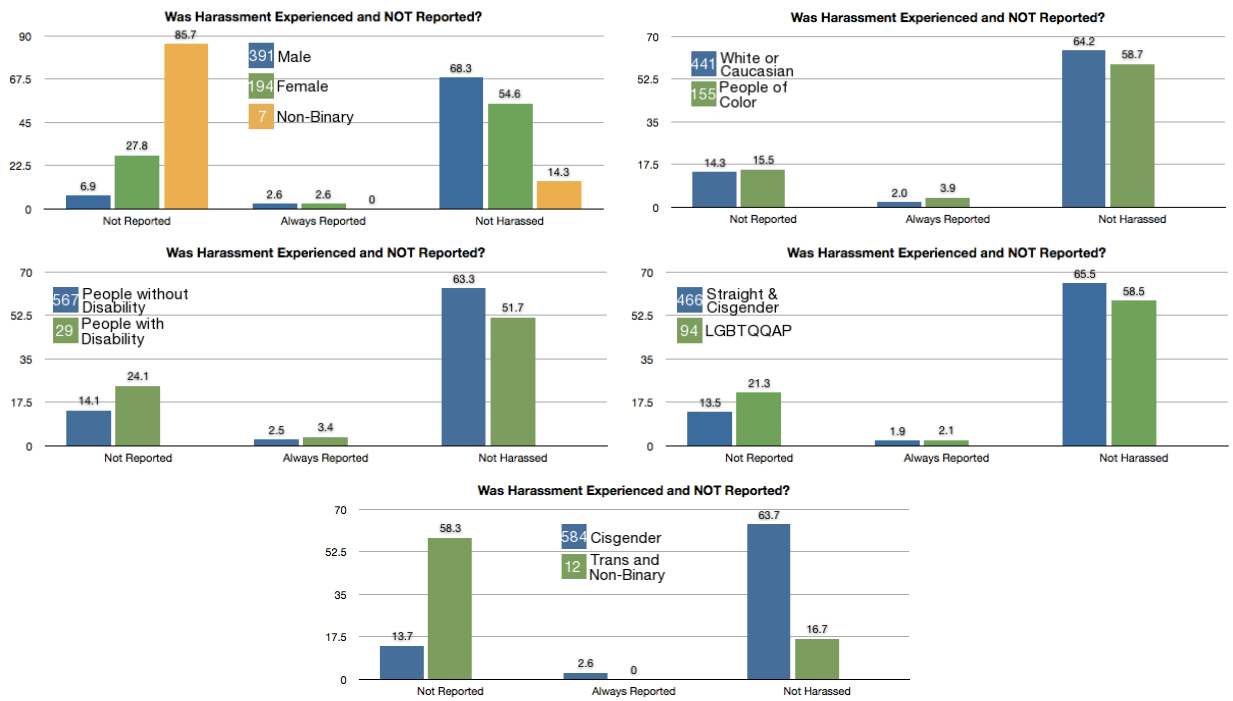
Figure 46: Responses to the question "In the last five years, have you NOT reported an incident of harassment that you experienced?"

7 Institution Policies

One way to show a strong commitment against discrimination is through institution policies. This section explores whether respondents are aware that harassment and equal employment/student opportunity policies exist in their institution as well as what they contain.
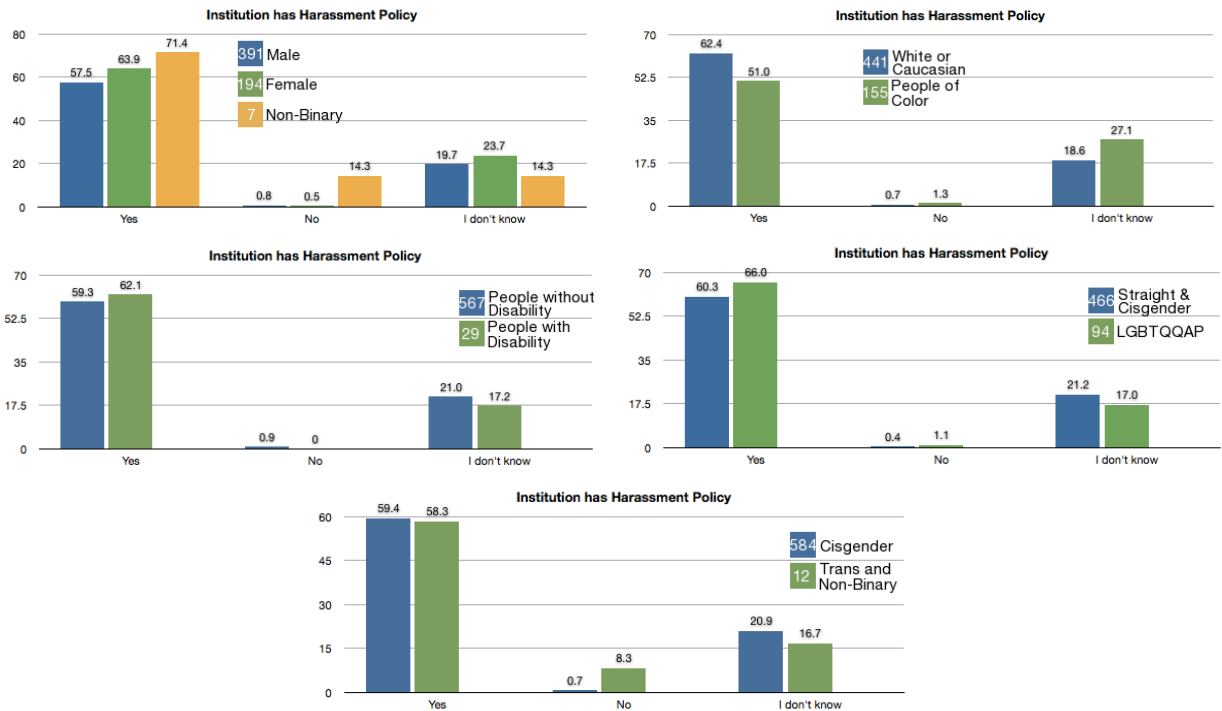
7.1 Harassment Policy

Figure 47: Responses to the question "Does your institution have a policy on harassment?"
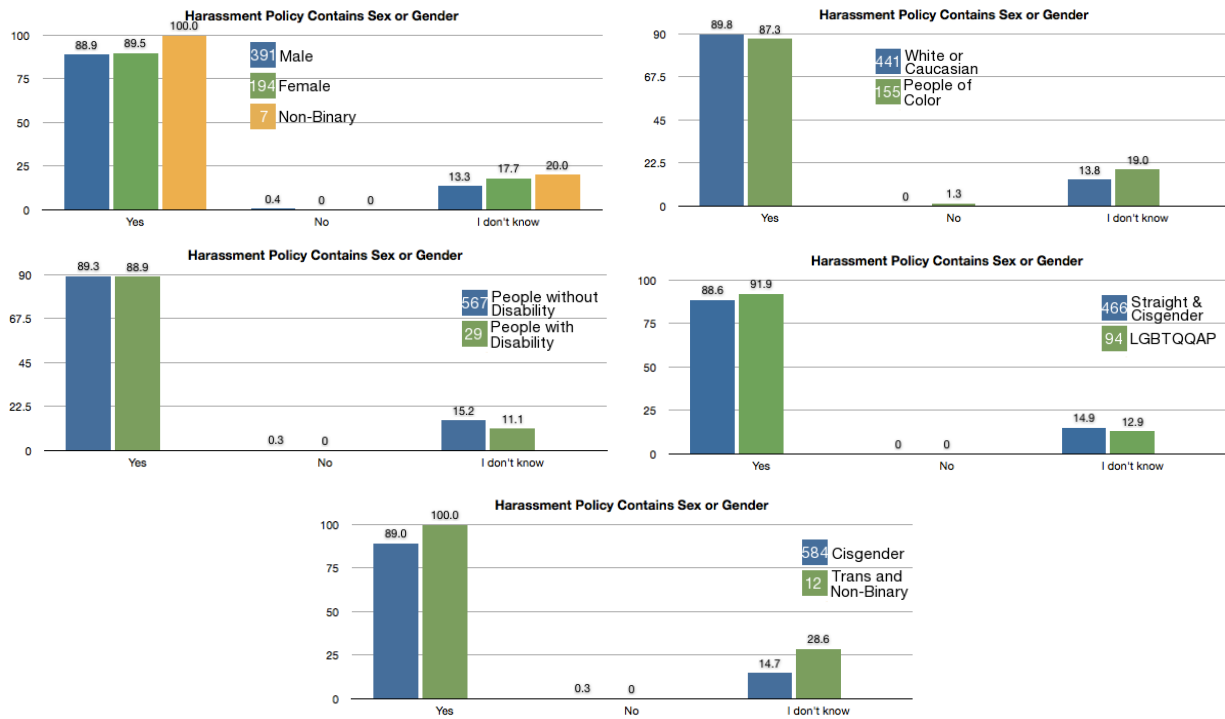
Figure 48: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's policy on harassment? - Sex or Gender."
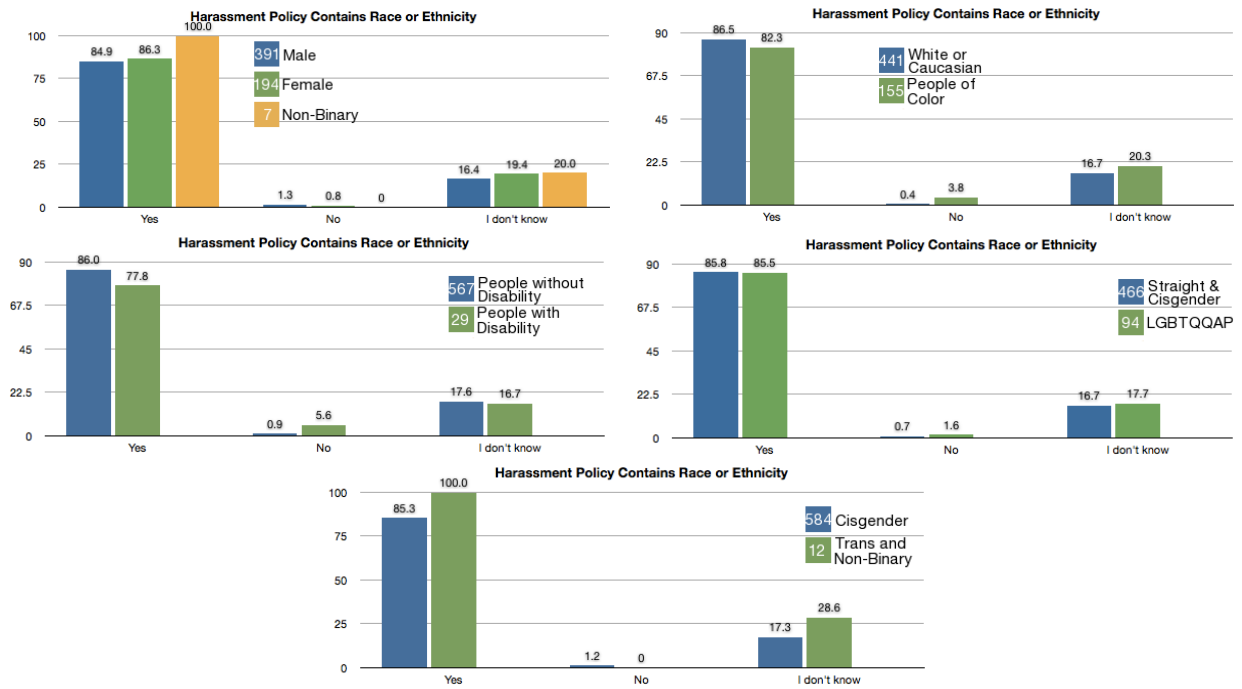
Figure 49: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's policy on harassment? - Race or Ethnicity."
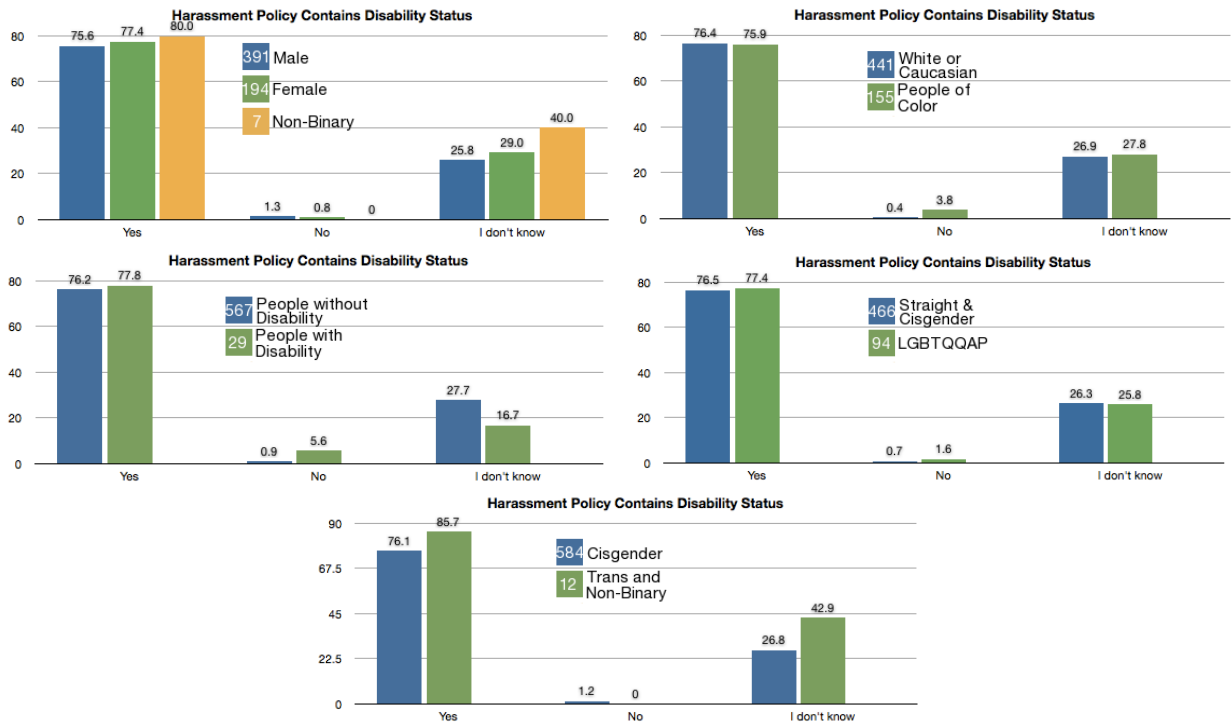
Figure 50: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's policy on harassment? - Disability Status."
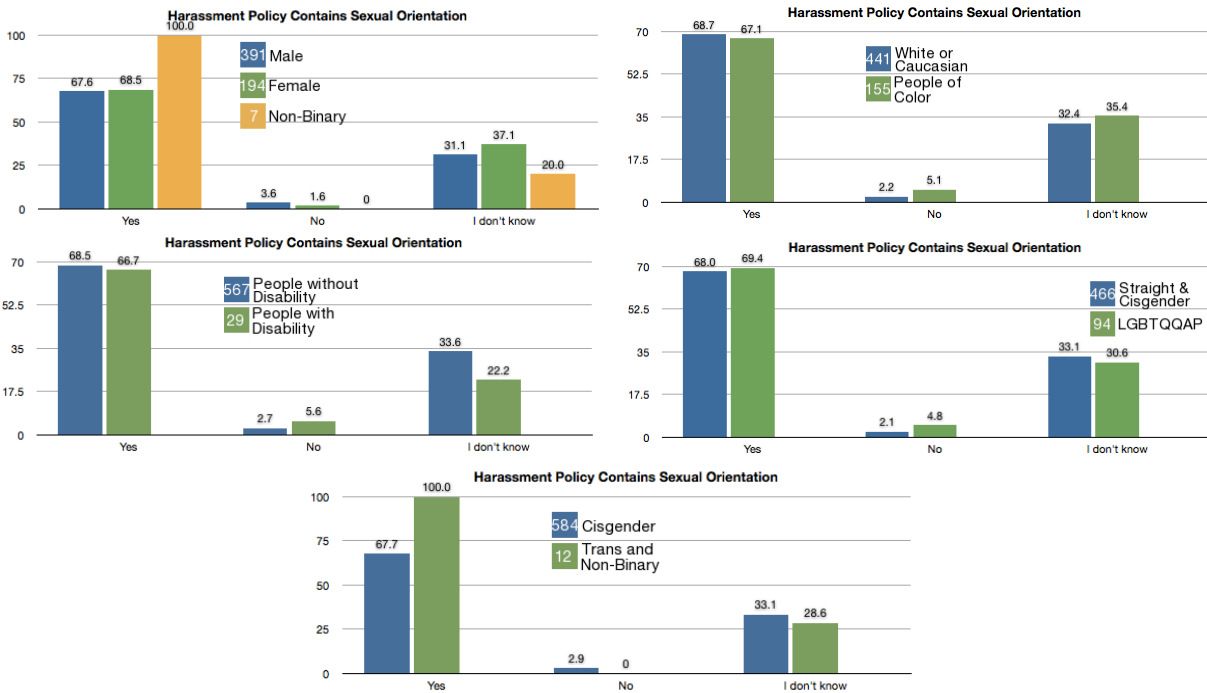
Figure 51: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's policy on harassment? - Sexual Orientation."
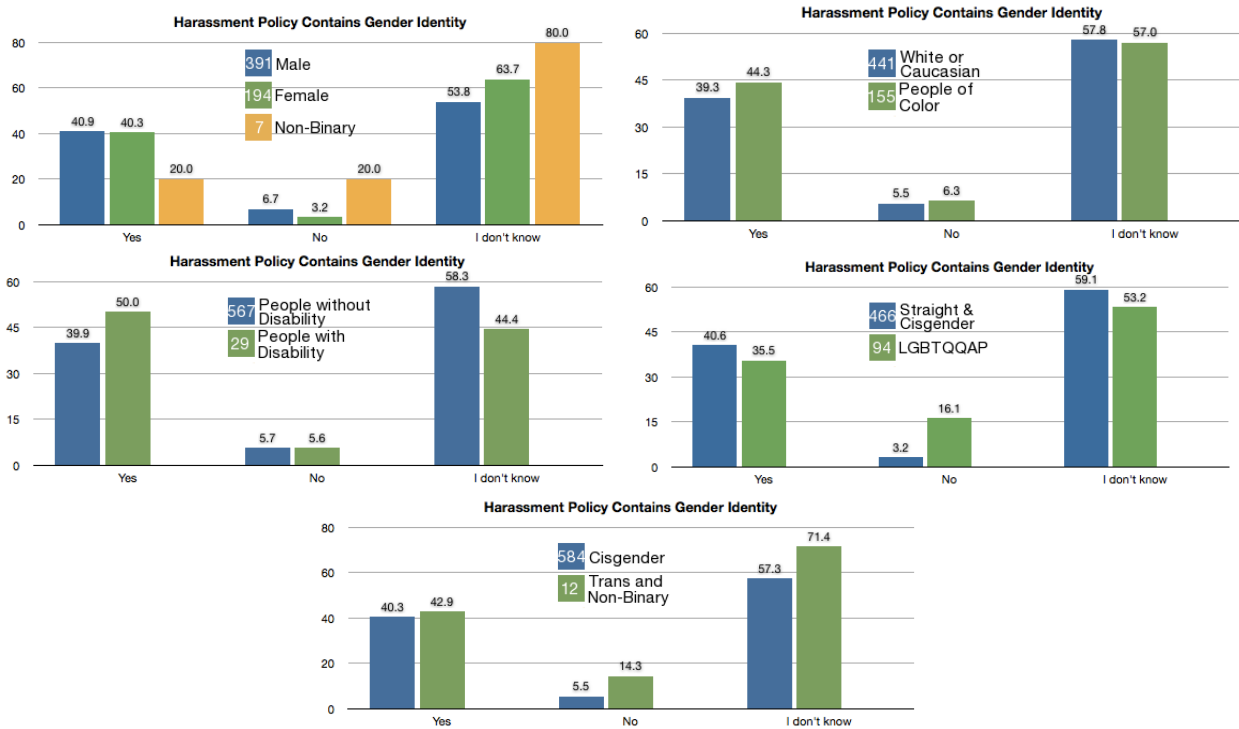
Figure 52: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's policy on harassment? - Gender Identity."
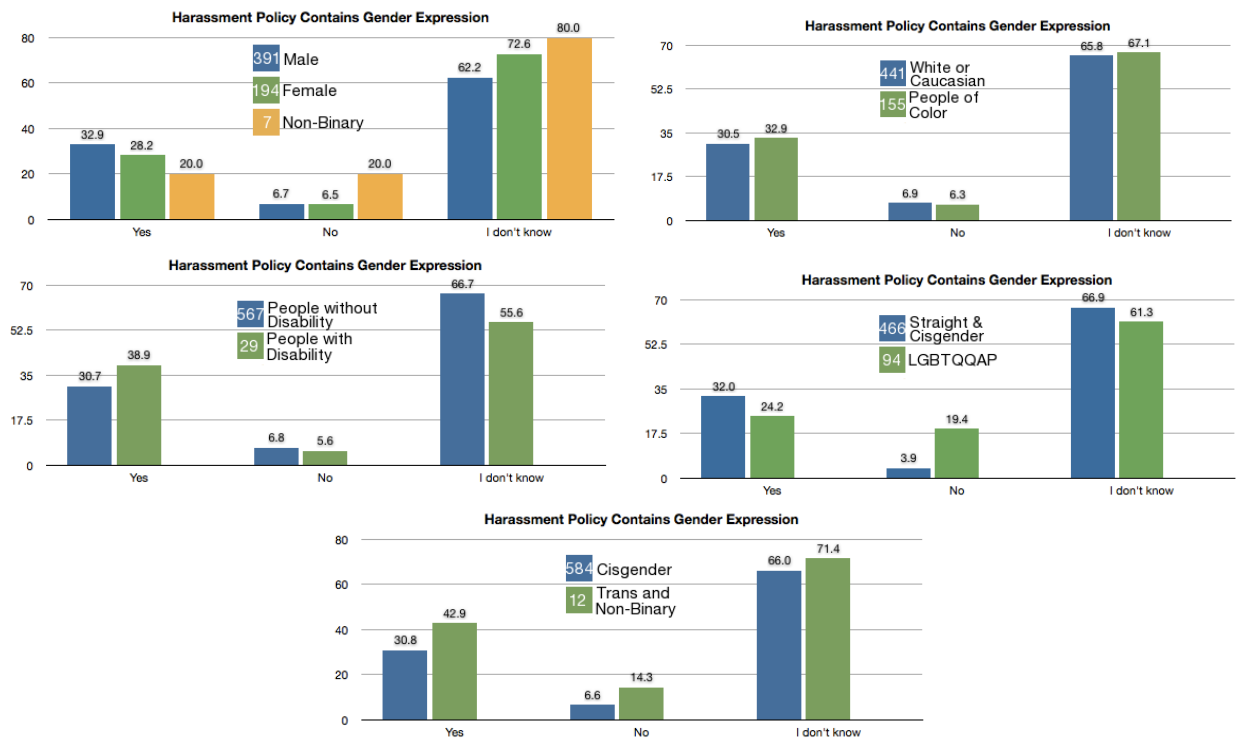
Figure 53: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's policy on harassment? - Gender Expression."

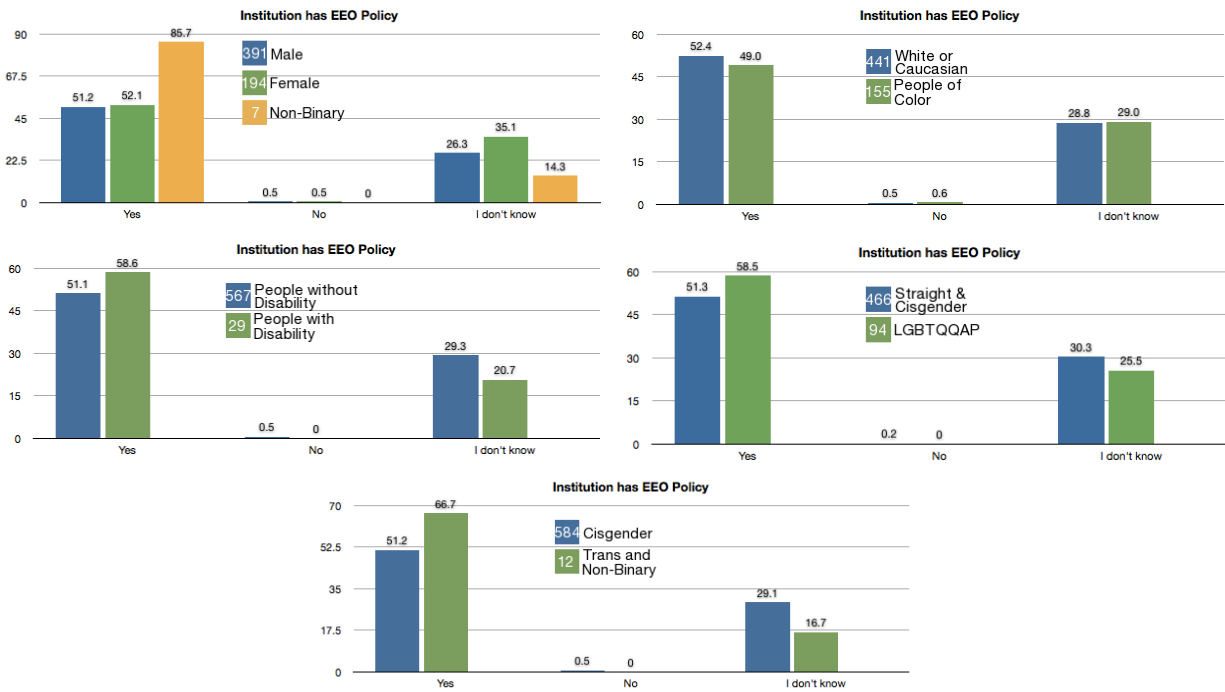## 7.2 Equal Employment/Student Opportunity Policy

Figure 54: Responses to the question "Does your institution have an equal employment/student opportunity policy?"
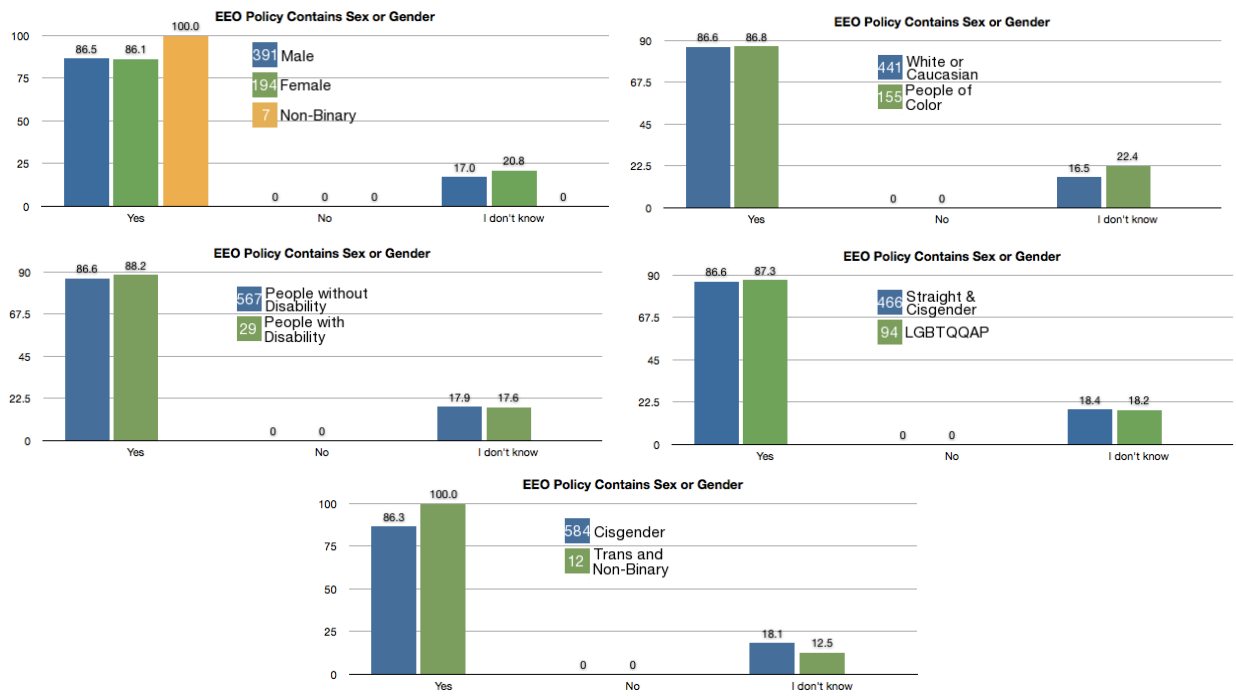
Figure 55: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's equal employment/student opportunity policy? - Sex or Gender."

EEO Policy Contains Race or Ethnicity

Figure 56: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's equal employment/student opportunity policy? - Race or Ethnicity."

Figure 57: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's equal employment/student opportunity policy? - Disability Status."

Figure 58: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's equal employment/student opportunity policy? - Sexual Orientation."
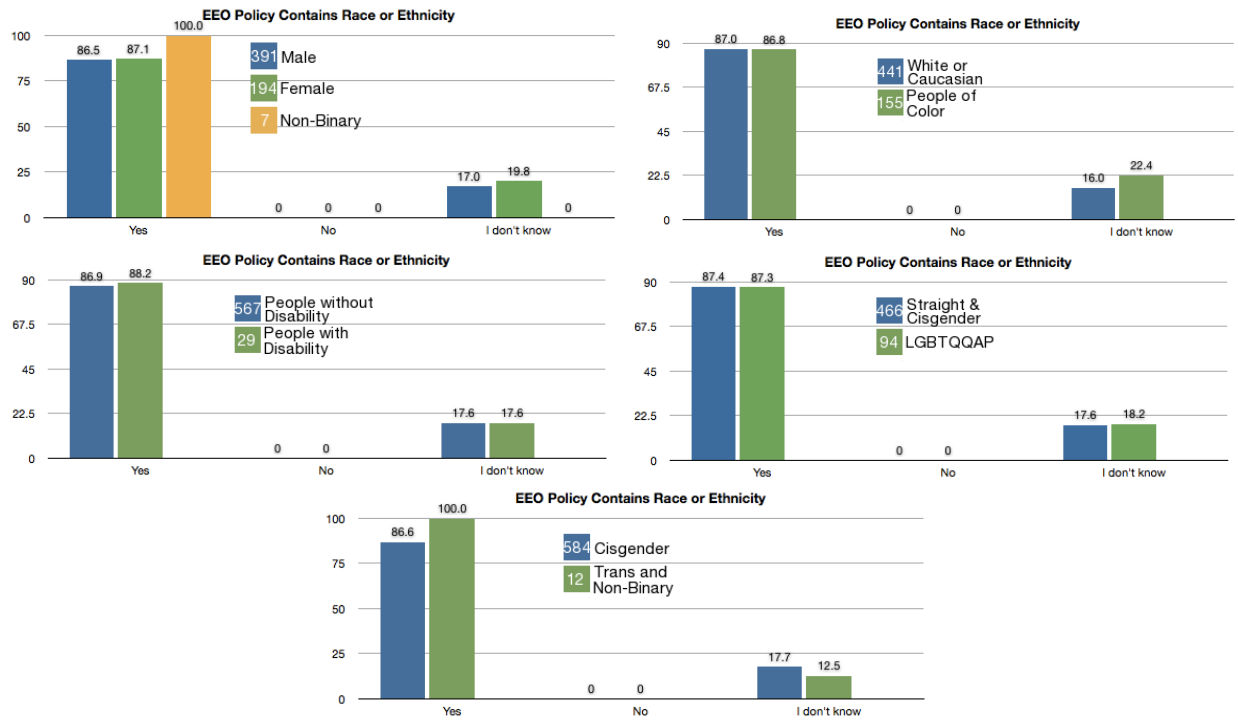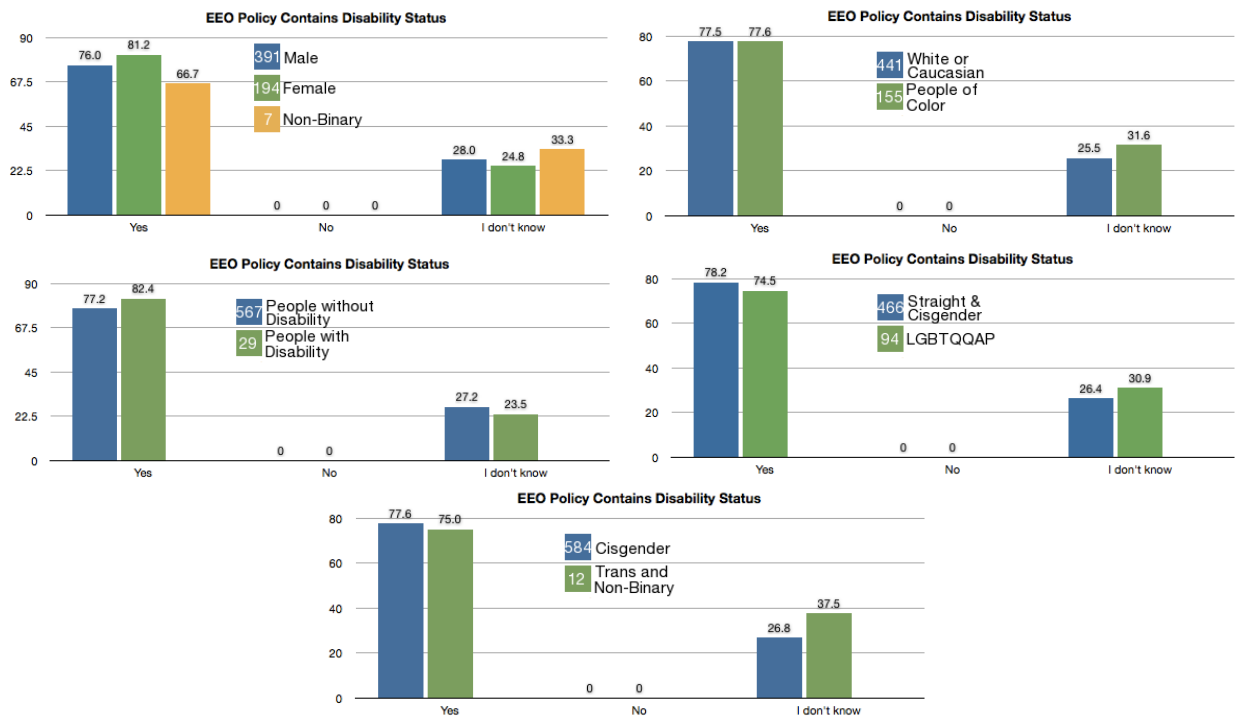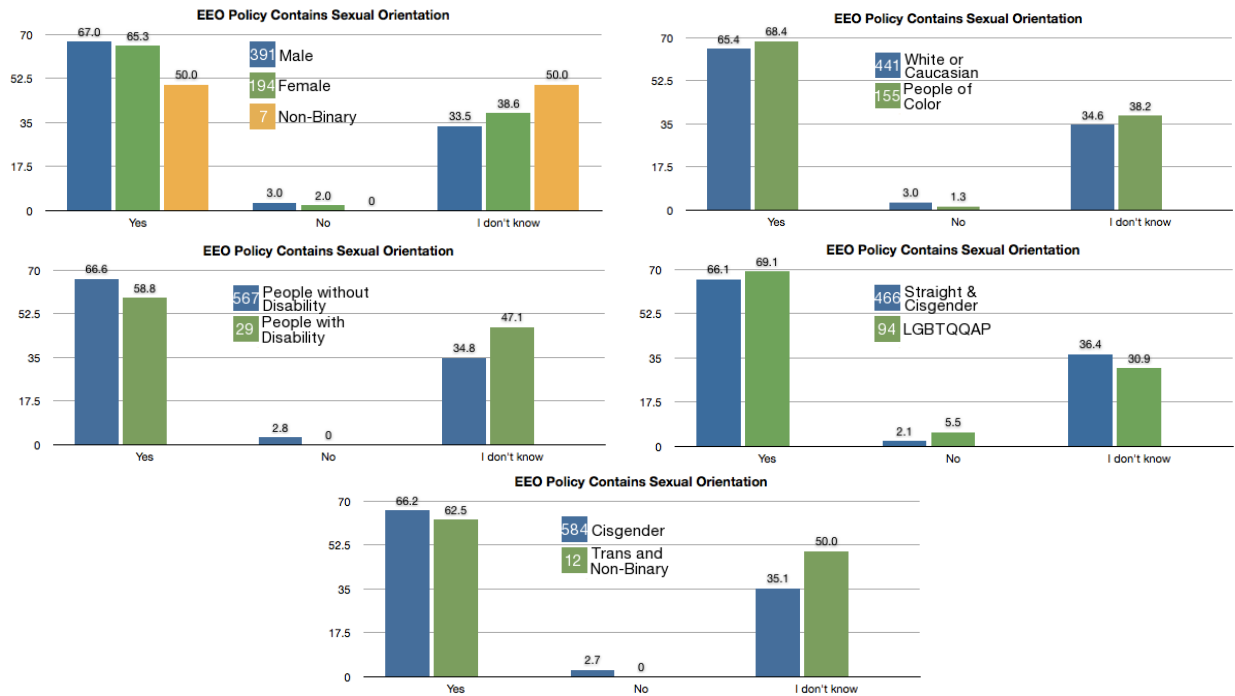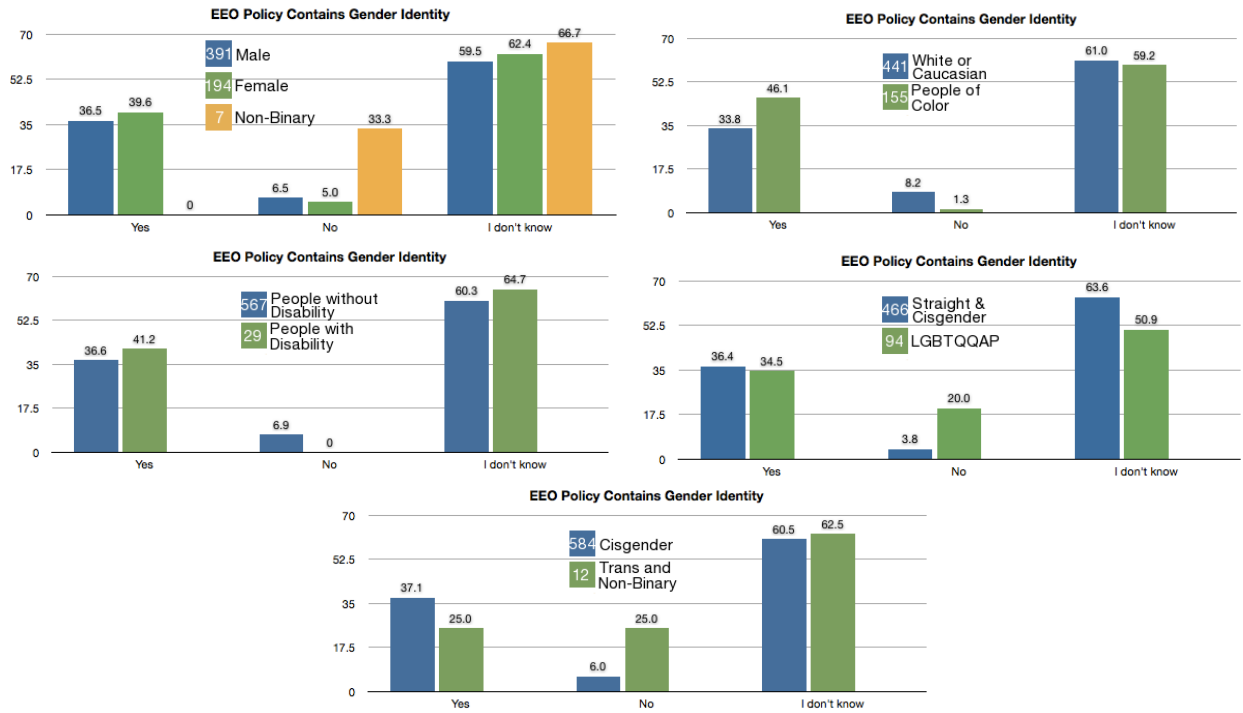
Figure 59: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's equal employment/student opportunity policy? - Gender Identity."

EEO Policy Contains Gender Expression

- 391 Male
- 194 Female
- 7 Non-Binary

	Yes	No	I don't know
Male	31.0	7.0	65.0
Female	30.7	7.9	67.3
Non-Binary	0	33.3	66.7

EEO Policy Contains Gender Expression

- 441 White or Caucasian
- 155 People of Color

	Yes	No	I don't know
White or Caucasian	26.4	9.5	66.7
People of Color	42.1	2.6	63.2

EEO Policy Contains Gender Expression

- 567 People without Disability
- 29 People with Disability

	Yes	No	I don't know
People without Disability	30.3	8.3	65.2
People with Disability	29.4	0	76.5

EEO Policy Contains Gender Expression

- 466 Straight & Cisgender
- 94 LGBTQQAP

	Yes	No	I don't know
Straight & Cisgender	31.0	4.2	68.6
LGBTQQAP	25.5	25.5	54.5

EEO Policy Contains Gender Expression

- 584 Cisgender
- 12 Trans and Non-Binary

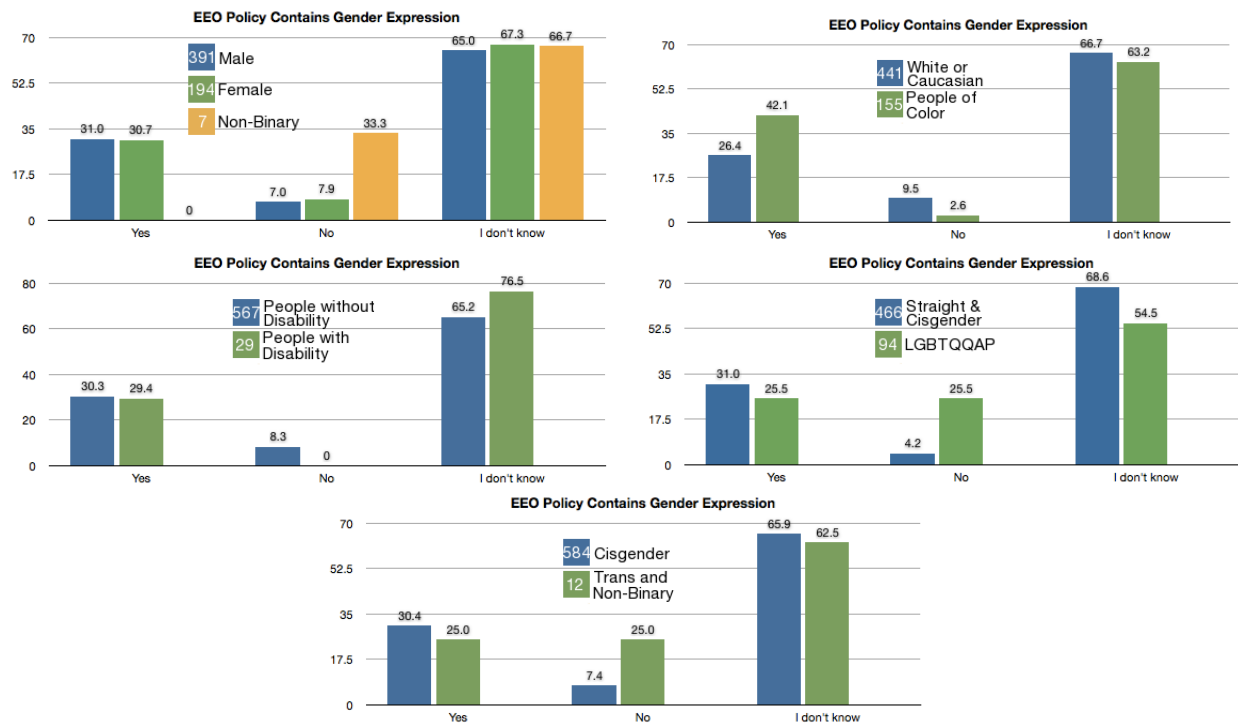|	Yes	No	I don't know
Cisgender	30.4	7.4	65.9
Trans and Non-Binary	25.0	25.0	62.5

Figure 60: Responses to the question "If you answered Yes to the previous question, are the following covered in your institution's equal employment/student opportunity policy? - Gender Expression."