

Does the Introduction of TX SB17 Decrease Positive Attitudes in UTD Undergraduate Students Regarding Student Success?

By

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Introduction

This research paper investigates the relationship between legislative policy and student attitudes towards academic success, using the case of Texas Senate Bill 17 (TX SB17 also referred in this paper as “anti-DEI laws”) at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD). This paper seeks to explore the intricate relationship between legislative measures and student attitudes. It aims to understand how such policies can shape student perceptions and attitudes, which are crucial for educational outcomes and student satisfaction.

Research Background

The significance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in higher education cannot be overstated. Studies have shown that a diverse faculty and student body are integral to fostering an inclusive educational environment, enhancing cognitive development, and promoting cross-cultural empathy. Recent legislative trends, however, particularly in Texas, have introduced significant changes in the approach to DEI in educational settings. The introduction of anti-DEI laws, such as TX SB17, marks a pivotal shift in the political and educational landscape. These laws have led to alterations in DEI initiatives at universities impacting the academic and personal development of students. This legislative approach has broader implications for the cultivation of a well-rounded, inclusive educational environment, affecting students' confidence in and attitudes towards their education and prospects. In this context, this study seeks to understand the impact of anti-DEI laws on UTD students' attitudes towards student success.

Research Question and Hypotheses

Our central research question is: "Does the introduction of TX SB17 impact positive attitudes in undergraduate UTD students regarding student success?"

Three hypotheses guide this study:

H1: The introduction of TX SB17 will decrease positive attitudes about student success at their university.

H2: Negative attitudes about student success at their university will discourage students from exploring higher education at their universities.

H3: Negative attitudes about student success at their university will decrease satisfaction and positive attitudes toward their discipline/field of study.

The exploration of these hypotheses has been achieved through a robust methodology involving an online survey of UTD undergraduates, supplemented by analysis of discussions from the UT Dallas subreddit. As observed in our findings, the legislation appears to have a profound impact on student attitudes towards their university and academic fields. Our study, grounded in Social Identity Theory and Intersectionality Theory, suggests that these attitudes are significantly influenced by perceptions of the university's commitment to DEI.

By investigating these hypotheses, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the nuanced effects of anti-DEI legislation in the higher education sector. It will offer insights into how legislative decisions shape student attitudes, thereby affecting their academic success and satisfaction, and potentially influencing their future educational choices.

Literature Review

In this chapter we present a concise literature review focused on the effects of anti-DEI laws on undergraduate students at UTD. This approach is intentional to allow greater emphasis on our findings and discussion chapter. The review, grounded in Social Identity and Intersectionality Theories, briefly explores key themes such as DEI dynamics in higher education, legislative impacts on DEI, and the consequences of anti-DEI laws. This structure aims to offer a foundational understanding of the shifting landscape of DEI in academia, reflecting the ongoing evolution of this research area.

DEI dynamics in the higher education sector

Having a diverse and well-supported student body, faculty, and staff is crucial for fostering equity and inclusion in educational settings. This diversity creates opportunities for students to encounter relational discontinuities and cognitive dissonance, both of which are key to enhancing their cognitive growth and development. Doane and Unda (2023) noted that the presence of a faculty that is racially and ethnically diverse notably increases the likelihood of students from underrepresented groups graduating, underlining the importance of diversity in faculty composition for student success.

Cumming et al. (2023) and Stout et al. (2018) both underscore the importance of DEI programs in higher education. They highlight that DEI benefits all students, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, or gender. These programs are seen as essential for fostering a higher education culture where diverse individuals can collaborate and learn from each other, enriching the overall educational experience.

Doane and Unda (2023) emphasize the value of DEI initiatives in higher education, noting their role in exposing students to diverse perspectives. This exposure is crucial for

developing enhanced critical thinking abilities and cross-cultural empathy, thus equipping students with a deeper understanding of the modern, diverse world, and preparing them for success in a multicultural society.

Role of legislation in shaping DEI efforts

Murray et al. (2023) detail the origin of anti-DEI legislation in the U.S., beginning with the signing of the executive order 'Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping' by President Trump in 2020. This order, which opposed certain DEI training and concepts, marked a pivotal shift in the political landscape regarding DEI policies. Although the order was later revoked by President Biden in 2021, its effects had already reverberated across the country, inspiring a wave of anti-DEI laws in various state legislatures. This legislative momentum against DEI initiatives reflects a significant transformation in the approach to DEI in educational and other institutional settings, showcasing the profound impact of federal actions on state policies.

Easley (2023) highlights a significant legislative trend: by August 2023, over 22 state legislators in the United States had introduced 40 bills imposing restrictions on DEI aspects in higher education. These bills varied in their extent but commonly aimed to prohibit efforts promoting racial inclusivity in colleges and restrict faculty from developing and teaching DEI-related instructional materials. This legislative approach has implications for the academic and personal development of students, potentially limiting exposure to diverse perspectives and hindering the cultivation of a well-rounded, inclusive educational environment.

Doane and Unda (2023) note that in response to Texas enacting anti-DEI laws, several universities have significantly altered their approach to DEI initiatives. Notably, the University of Texas and Texas A&M systems have put these initiatives on hold, as reported by Cruz (2023).

Additionally, the University of Houston system has opted not to incorporate DEI initiatives in its hiring and promotion processes.

Florida has also been a key player in introducing anti-DEI legislation within its state educational system. In response, scholars are increasingly focusing their research on understanding the implications of these anti-DEI measures in Florida's educational landscape. Russell-Brown (forthcoming) discusses Florida's HB 999, particularly focusing on its DEI provision. This bill, widely debated, targets DEI programs as purportedly biased and as efforts to indoctrinate students. In response, Florida colleges and universities have started reassigning or reclassifying DEI-related staff, with several departments removing DEI statements from their websites. This reflects a significant shift in the state's approach to DEI in higher education.

Consequences of anti-DEI legislation

As state-level bills are becoming law, they are progressively introducing significant limitations in higher education. Murray et al. (2023) noted that these evolving legal changes are beginning to restrict admissions processes designed to enhance diversity, influence curricular decisions, and reshape the methodologies of teaching and learning. Additionally, they are affecting the professional development offerings available to faculty, staff, and students, signaling a substantial shift in the educational environment. The recent legislative bills also aim to curtail the use of diversity and inclusivity statements in faculty hiring processes. Historically, these statements have been integral in evaluating how potential faculty members might foster a culture of belonging and inclusiveness in educational settings. They also served to demonstrate how the principles of DEI inform a faculty member's research and scholarly perspectives. This legislative shift thus potentially impacts the cultivation of diverse and inclusive academic environment.

Doane & Unda (2023) emphasize that the enactment of anti-DEI laws could significantly affect student and professional organizations, student success programs, and identity-based offices. These entities are crucial for creating spaces that honor and embrace students' diverse cultures and backgrounds. The absence of such supportive environments would impede students from fully connecting with their diverse identities and sharing their cultural backgrounds, ultimately affecting their preparedness to navigate a globalized world after college. Russell-Brown (forthcoming) described how Florida's HB 999 has prohibited DEI-related programs at its public state colleges and universities, effectively ending the efforts of numerous educators and administrators in the DEI field. This law also silenced a vast body of DEI research and had broader implications, as it devalued race-related scholarship, casting doubt on its academic significance.

DEI initiatives are crucial for the well-being of students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds. The recent wave of anti-DEI legislation is part of a broader national campaign that threatens to dismantle the emerging inclusive environment in higher education. With the introduction of such laws in Texas and elsewhere, there is a noticeable impact on students' confidence and trust in the higher education system. Further research into these exclusionary policies is vital, as it would provide valuable insights for policymakers to understand and address the institutional and individual consequences of these changes.

Methodology

This methodology chapter outlines the approach used to investigate the impact of anti-DEI laws on student perspectives at the University of Texas at Dallas. Given the complexity of the research question, a robust methodology combining different data sources was crucial. This

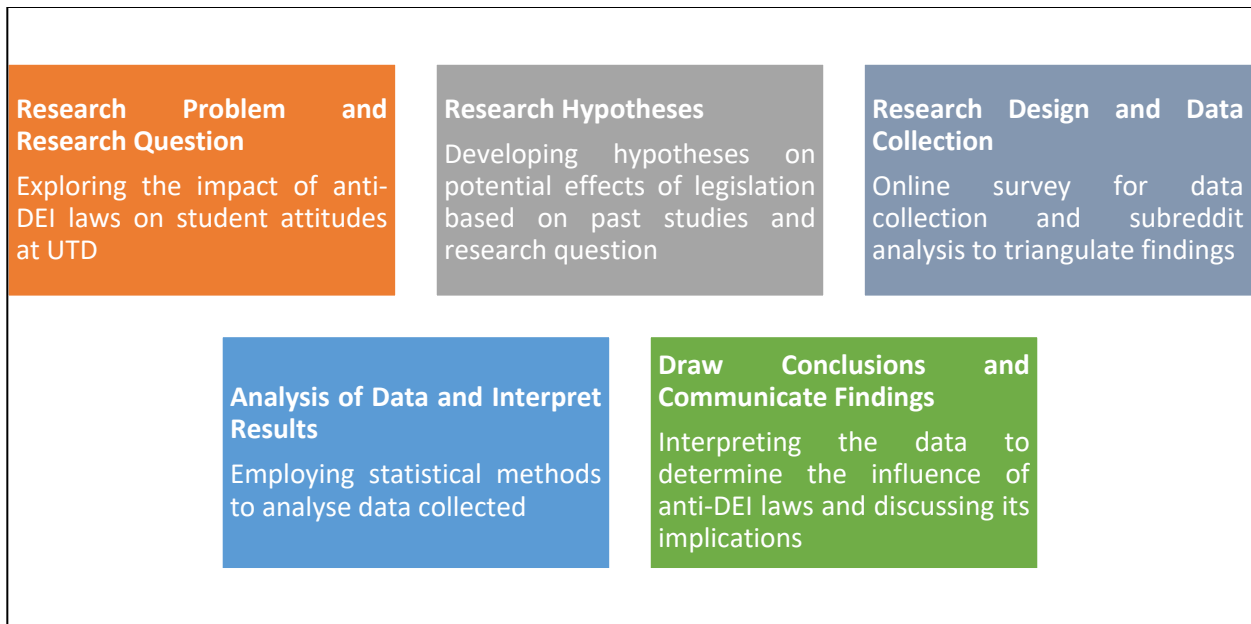
approach was necessary to test the hypotheses and provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Methodology Overview

The study primarily utilized an online survey, designed to capture original data directly from the student body, serving as a primary source of information. The survey, conducted through Qualtrics, included various question types to gather a wide range of data. Additionally, analysis of the UT Dallas subreddit was conducted to supplement the survey findings, although the emphasis was more on the survey component. The dual-faceted approach afforded a methodological triangulation, strengthening the study's findings by corroborating evidence from multiple sources, which is particularly effective in social research where the complexity of human attitudes and behaviors is best captured through varied lenses.

Experimental Design and Data Collection

The survey was carefully designed, incorporating a range of multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions to ensure comprehensive data collection. The inclusion of these varied question types was deliberate, aimed at capturing a broad spectrum of student insights, which were essential for grasping the subtle aspects of their viewpoints on DEI policies. While the survey formed the core of the data collection effort, the examination of the UT Dallas subreddit provided a supplementary perspective. Although this part of the analysis was not as detailed, it added value by revealing raw, unedited student sentiments, thereby enriching the overall depth of the research. This two-pronged approach enabled a more nuanced understanding of the students' reactions to and interpretations of DEI initiatives within their academic environment.



Data Analysis

In the data analysis phase, the survey responses were subjected to rigorous statistical evaluation. By scrutinizing the data through the lens of respondents' profiles, such as gender, race and ethnicity, and religion, we could discern nuanced relationships and trends that might influence students' views on DEI policies.

Statistical techniques were also employed to analyze the responses to the survey questions, enabling a clear assessment of the prevailing attitudes towards DEI legislation. The analysis honed-in on the survey's statistical data, sorting responses by demographics for targeted insights, with the subreddit content serving as a quiet backdrop to contextualize the numerical findings. This approach strengthened the reliability of the conclusions drawn from the survey data and provided a solid groundwork for ongoing inquiry into the subject.

Findings and Discussion

This study explores the impact of anti-DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) laws on the perspectives of undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) regarding student success. An online survey targeting UTD undergraduates was administered to collect primary data. Additionally, we extracted relevant discussions from the UT Dallas subreddit to gain insights into the spontaneous and unfiltered perspectives of students. This paper presents the findings from both the survey and the subreddit data analysis. While our analysis is grounded in the principles of Social Identity Theory and Intersectionality Theory, our primary focus lies in the empirical data and its implications in the context of anti-DEI legislative impacts on student attitudes.

Survey Findings and Discussion

The survey, consisting of 25 questions, was designed using Qualtrics, drawing inspiration from recent research conducted by Hanover Research and Pure Spectrum. Key aspects considered in the survey's development included its frequency (one-time or recurring), target demographic, sampling frame, sample design, and mode of data collection. Ultimately, a one-time survey was chosen to be administered to undergraduate UTD students. To maximize response rates, the survey was distributed via a web-based platform using a convenience sampling method.

The survey instrument was structured into four distinct sections. Initially, participants were queried about their status as undergraduate students at UTD, along with their school affiliation and academic year. The second section delved into their perceptions of UTD's DEI-related policies and practices. The third segment probed into the effects of anti-DEI legislation on their

attitudes toward student success and their overall experience at the university. The concluding section gathered demographic information from the respondents.

Respondents' Profile

The Qualtrics survey received a total of 129 responses. Utilizing the survey's skip logic, those who indicated they were not undergraduate students were automatically excluded from the subsequent questions. After further removing incomplete responses of respondents who identified as undergraduate students but failed to answer additional questions, we were left with 87 valid responses for analysis. Below is an overview of the respondents' profiles:

Responses were received from undergraduate students across all schools within UTD. Most responses came from the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science (ECS), totaling 22, with the Naveen Jindal School of Management (JSOM) following with 14 responses. The School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (NSM) recorded the fewest responses at 7. The detailed breakdown of responses by school is as follows:

S.No.	School Name	Abbreviation	Responses Received
1	Harry W. Bass Jr. School of Arts, Humanities, and Technology	AHT	10
2	School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences	BBS	10
3	School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences	EPPS	12
4	Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science	ECS	22
5	School of Interdisciplinary Studies	IS	12
6	Naveen Jindal School of Management	JSOM	14
7	School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics	NSM	07
Total Responses			87

Table 1: Respondents' Profile (School-wise responses)

The gender breakdown of the survey respondents at UTD revealed a balanced mix, with 34 identifying as male and 33 as female. Non-binary or gender non-conforming respondents accounted for 16 entries. Additionally, 4 respondents either chose to self-describe in unlisted

categories or preferred not to disclose their gender, reflecting the diverse spectrum of gender identities among the participants. Echoing the wide-ranging gender identities captured in the previous survey data, the sexual orientation of respondents at UTD showcases a similar breadth of diversity in responses, as depicted below:

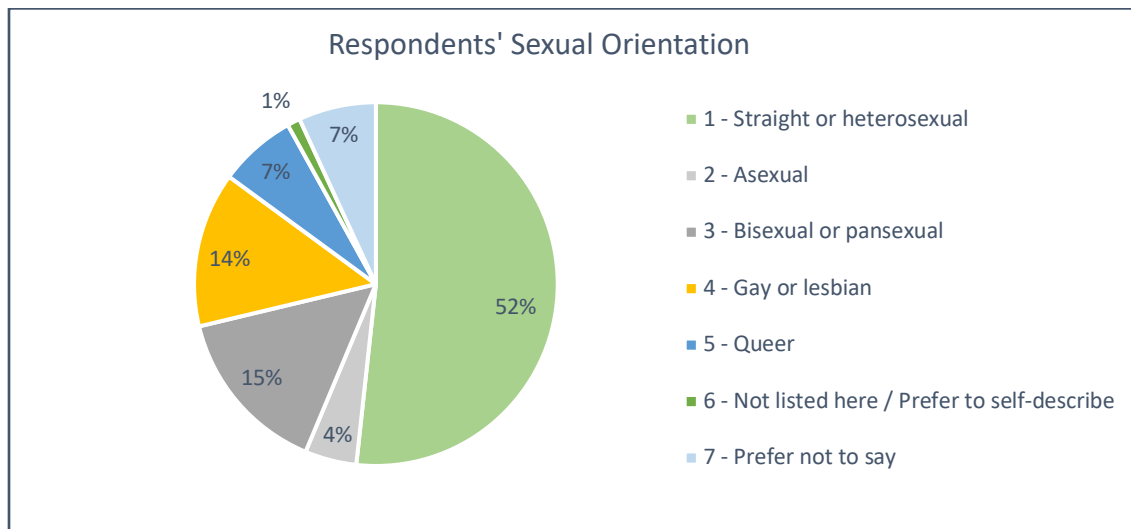


Figure 1: Respondents' sexual orientation

The racial and ethnic identities of the UTD survey participants also varied. White (Non-Hispanic), and Asian respondents were equally represented, each with 28 responses. Those identifying as Hispanic or Latin(o/a/x) were the next largest group with 13 responses. Both Black or African American and Middle Eastern or North African categories saw 6 respondents each. A single individual reported being Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Four respondents preferred not to specify their race/ethnicity.

In the UTD survey, diversity extended to religious affiliations as well, with Atheist/Agnostic leading the responses at 25. Christians were represented by both Catholic and Protestant respondents, numbering 11 and 12, respectively. The Muslim community contributed 10 responses, while smaller numbers were evident for Buddhists, Hindus, and Jews, each group offering 3 to 4 responses. There was a single response from a Sikh participant, and two

individuals indicated a religious affiliation not explicitly listed in the survey. No Latter-day Saint/Mormon individuals responded. At the end of this spectrum, 16 respondents elected not to reveal their religious identity, which was a notably higher count than for other demographic queries, perhaps indicating a certain level of discomfort or disinterest in sharing this personal detail in the survey context. When asked about disability, 13 reported having a disability, while a majority of 68 did not, and 6 chose not to disclose this information. These aspects add additional layers to the understanding of the demographic profile of the students involved in the study.

Perceptions about UTD's DEI-related policies and practices

Responses to the question of UTD's support in fostering a culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) indicated a moderate level of satisfaction among participants. The largest group, consisting of 28 respondents, felt that the university was moderately supportive, while a combined total of 34 participants perceived UTD as being slightly or not at all supportive. Delving deeper into demographic distinctions, the survey revealed noteworthy trends. Among schools, ECS displayed a balanced perspective with the highest 'Very Supportive' responses, while NSM showed least positive responses. Religion-wise, those preferring not to disclose their beliefs tended more towards 'Not at all Supportive' or 'Slightly Supportive', hinting at possible apprehensions about DEI initiatives (chart on next page).

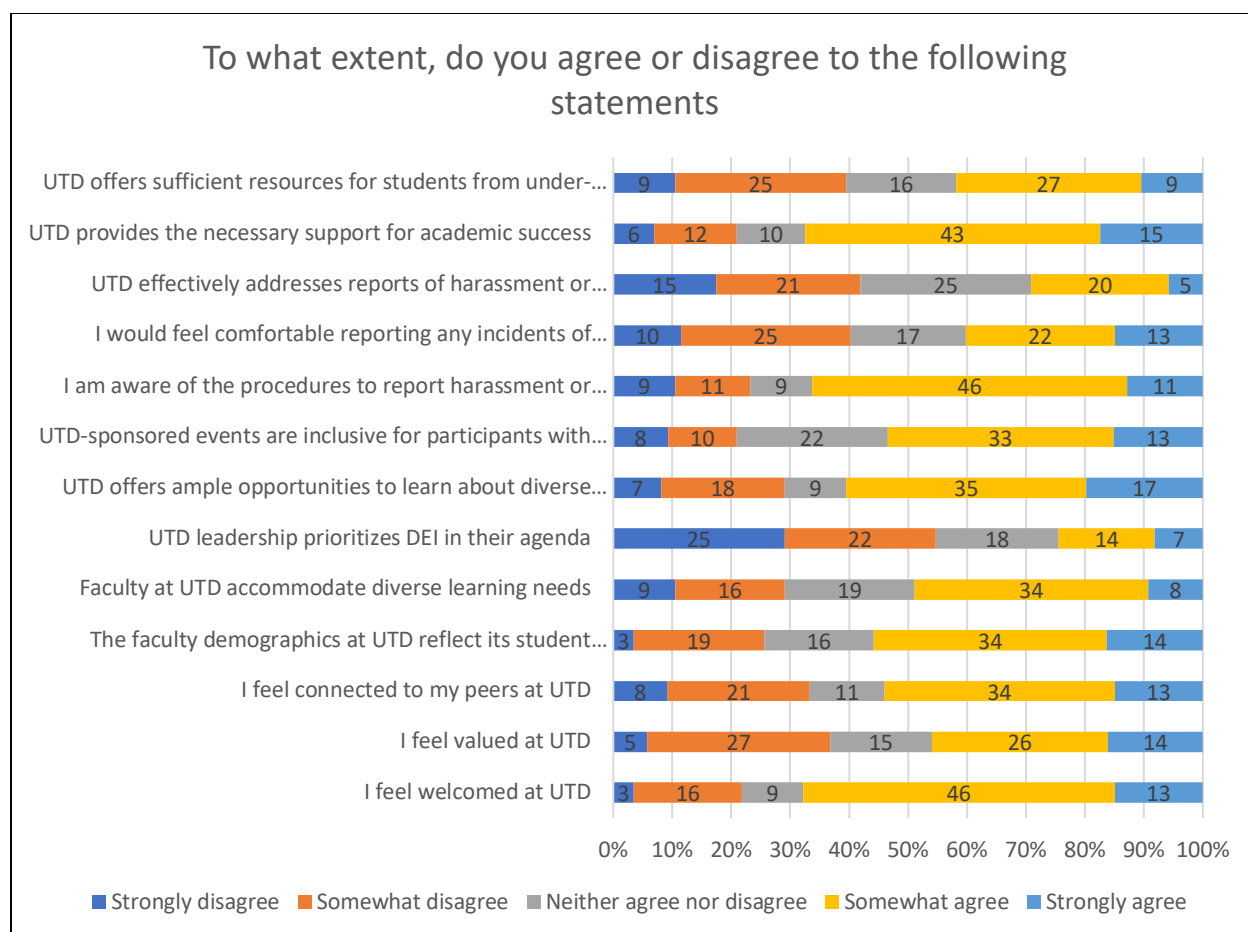


Figure 2: Response to Question 5

The responses to questions about personal feelings and connections at UTD reveal varying degrees of agreement among students. For feeling welcomed at the university, a majority of 59 respondents either 'Somewhat Agree' or 'Strongly Agree', indicating a generally welcoming atmosphere. However, when it comes to feeling valued at UTD, the responses are more divided; 40 students either 'Somewhat Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree', while 40 others lean towards agreement ('Somewhat Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'). These responses suggest that while many students feel welcomed, there is a notable portion of the student body that does not feel valued at the university. Gender-wise division of responses showed that male respondents felt more valued at UTD as compared to other gender identities. In assessing feelings of being valued at UTD across racial and ethnic lines, Middle Eastern or North African students displayed a tendency to

'Somewhat Disagree', indicating potential areas for improvement in UTD's inclusivity efforts. Within the religious demographics of respondents, Atheist/Agnostic students at UTD showed a relatively even spread of opinions on feeling valued, with a slight lean towards agreement, while Muslim students expressed the most discomfort, with the majority 'Somewhat Disagreeing'.

The survey suggests a critical view on UTD leadership's commitment to DEI, with 47 of 87 respondents expressing some level of disagreement, indicating a potential gap between the institution's DEI goals and student perceptions of those priorities. Among gender demographics, female respondents at UTD exhibited the most pronounced level of disagreement regarding the prioritization of DEI by university leadership, with over 63% signaling 'Strongly disagree' or 'Somewhat disagree'. In terms of sexual orientation, respondents identifying as gay or lesbian at UTD showed a significant level of dissatisfaction with DEI prioritization, with 67% either 'Strongly disagreeing' or 'Somewhat disagreeing'. Among religious groups at UTD, Muslim students showed the strongest disagreement with the university leadership's commitment to DEI, with 80% expressing 'Strongly disagree'. Respondents who preferred not to disclose their religion also largely disagreed, though with a significant number opting for 'Somewhat disagree'.

Survey responses indicate a moderate awareness among students about the procedures to report harassment or discrimination at UTD, with 57 respondents indicating some level of agreement. However, comfort with reporting such incidents is less assured, with 35 respondents expressing discomfort. Additionally, there is skepticism regarding UTD's effectiveness in addressing reports of harassment or discrimination, with 36 respondents disagreeing and 25 neither agreeing nor disagreeing, suggesting a potential lack of confidence in the university's response mechanisms. Non-binary/gender non-conforming respondents express the greatest discomfort with reporting incidents of harassment or discrimination, with 69% disagreeing to

some degree, reflecting a significant concern about the reporting environment for gender-diverse students. They also show significant doubt regarding the university's handling of harassment or discrimination, with a combined 56% either strongly or somewhat disagreeing with the effectiveness of the institution's response.

Impact of anti-DEI legislation

In the survey's third section, we began by gauging the perceived importance of DEI initiatives among students at UTD. This initial query set the stage for a deeper exploration of the impact of anti-DEI legislation on students' attitudes toward success and their overall experience at the university. A significant 76% of respondents, totaling 66, deemed DEI initiatives as 'Important' or 'Very important'. This contrasts with a mere 5 participants who considered these initiatives 'Unimportant' or 'Very unimportant', while 16 maintained a neutral stance. These results suggest a strong inclination among the majority towards valuing DEI as an integral part of their educational experience. EPPS respondents showed the highest valuation of DEI initiatives, with a notable 58% of respondents rating them as 'Very important'. Queer and bisexual or pansexual respondents expressed a strong belief in the importance of DEI initiatives, with 100% rating them as 'Important' or 'Very important'. In contrast, straight or heterosexual students displayed a broader range of views, with a notable 29% remaining neutral on the topic.

One of the key questions asked in this survey was whether UTD's response to anti-DEI laws aligns with respondent's expectations. As later discussed, this question was key in understanding the impact of anti-DEI laws on positive attitudes regarding student success and exploring further education (graduate studies) at UTD. In evaluating UTD's response to anti-DEI laws, respondents presented diverse viewpoints. Those expressing dissatisfaction, either feeling that the response does not align or only somewhat aligns, formed a notable group (41%),

indicating a prevalent sense of the university's response falling short of their expectations. On the flip side, a comparable number of respondents (23%) felt that UTD's actions were somewhat in line with what they expected. The presence of a sizeable neutral group reflects a segment of the student body that holds a more ambivalent or undecided view on this matter. Gender-wise, female students demonstrated the greatest awareness but also the most significant disagreement, with over 45% stating that UTD's response does not align with their expectations at all or only somewhat aligns. Based on religious identities, Christian - Catholic students demonstrated a notable alignment with the university's response to anti-DEI laws, with a combined 55% indicating they 'Somewhat' or 'Strongly' align. On the other end of the spectrum, Muslim respondents and those who selected 'Prefer not to say' showed a considerable level of discontent, with 80% and 75% expressing that the response does not align with their expectations. These contrasting views reflect the varied expectations and experiences of the student body in relation to the university's stance on DEI issues.

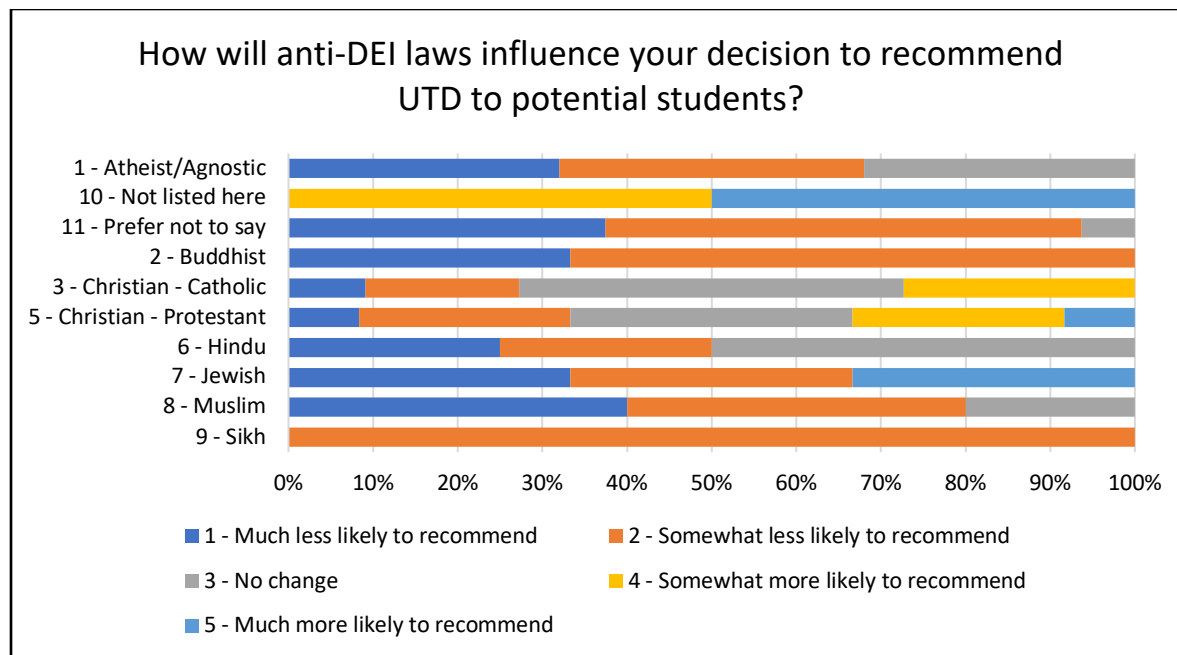
The perception among UTD students regarding the impact of anti-DEI laws on the diversity of the student body and faculty leans predominantly towards the negative. Approximately 75% indicated either a 'Very negative' or 'Somewhat negative' impact, highlighting concerns that these laws could detract from diversity. Straight or heterosexual students at UTD, while varied in their perceptions, have a notable proportion (62%) seeing anti-DEI laws as having a negative impact on diversity. Among LGBTQ+ groups, this sentiment is even stronger, with gay or lesbian, bisexual or pansexual, and queer students collectively perceiving the impact as negative at rates of 92%, 85%, and 100% respectively. This illustrates a significant concern regarding the effects of anti-DEI legislation on diversity among these groups.

More than 90% respondents with disabilities also agreed that these laws would negatively impact student and faculty diversity, as against 69% with no disabilities.

Another key question asked respondents if their perceptions of UTD's commitment to student success has changed since the passing of anti-DEI laws. More than 57% of respondents report a decreased perception, with nearly half seeing a significant decrease. Results showed a clearer picture when analyzed based on respondents' profile. As compared to male (41%) and female (64%) respondents, non-binary (85%), prefer to self-describe (100%), and prefer not to say (100%) felt that their perception of UTD's commitment to student success has decreased since the passing of anti-DEI laws. Muslim students at UTD have shown a distinctly negative shift in perception regarding the university's commitment to student success following the introduction of anti-DEI laws, with 80% reporting a decreased perception. Atheist/Agnostic students also share a concern, with a significant 68% indicating a decreased perception, pointing to substantial apprehension within these groups about the university's direction in the context of these legislative changes.

Following the enactment of anti-DEI laws, 45% of UTD students surveyed lean towards being unlikely to continue with graduate studies at the institution, with the most common response, at 33%, being 'Somewhat unlikely'. Meanwhile, 29% of students remain ambivalent, and 23% are inclined to consider UTD for further education, either 'Somewhat likely' or 'Extremely likely'. Three-fourth of non-binary / gender non-conforming students said that it is unlikely that they would seek further education at UTD, as compared to 41% male respondents. Queer (83%) and gay or lesbian (75%) are also less likely to pursue graduate studies at UTD as against heterosexual (42%) students.

The introduction of anti-DEI laws has swayed a notable number of UTD students against recommending the university to potential students, accounting for about 63%, feel less inclined to recommend the university to prospective students. On the other hand, 22 students believe these laws will not affect their recommendation, and a minority of 10 students are now more likely to endorse UTD.



Responses indicate that the impact of anti-DEI laws on students' satisfaction with their field of study at UTD is mixed. A combined 47 respondents either agree or strongly agree that their satisfaction has been impacted, suggesting a notable sentiment that these laws have affected their academic contentment. However, a significant number of students, 22, remain neutral, and 18 respondents disagree to some extent, indicating that for many, satisfaction with their field of study remains unchanged despite the legislative environment.

Hypotheses Testing

In our study, we investigated the effect of anti-DEI laws on undergraduate student sentiment at UTD, guided by a trio of hypotheses and employing Pearson correlation and

regression analyses to test their validity. The first hypothesis (H1) tested that the introduction of TX SB17 would reduce positive attitudes towards student success within the university. The second hypothesis (H2) analyzed that burgeoning negative attitudes might dissuade students from further educational pursuits at UTD. Finally, the third hypothesis (H3) studied the relation between change in perception about UTD's commitment to student success and perceived impact of anti-DEI laws on respondents' field of study. Our analyses provided support for the first two hypotheses and offered some insights into the third, reflecting the nuanced impact of the legislation on student perspectives.

To evaluate Hypothesis 1, we examined the correlation between students' views on the university's response to anti-DEI laws and any subsequent change in their perception of the university's commitment to student success. Additionally, we assessed the link between students' perceptions of the impact of anti-DEI laws on the diversity of the student body and faculty and their views on the university's dedication to student success. The analysis revealed that a perceived misalignment between UTD's response to anti-DEI laws and student expectations, as well as concerns about diminishing diversity, were strong indicators of waning confidence in the university's commitment to student success. These factors substantiated the hypothesis, indicating that the legislation has indeed influenced student attitudes.

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. pwcorr S W if W != 0, sig
```

	S	W
S	1.0000	
W	0.4227 0.0001	1.0000

```
. regress S W if W != 0
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Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	77
				F(1, 75)	=	16.32
Model	13.2467546	1	13.2467546	Prob > F	=	0.0001
Residual	60.8831156	75	.811774874	R-squared	=	0.1787
				Adj R-squared	=	0.1677
Total	74.1298701	76	.975393028	Root MSE	=	.90099

S	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P> t	[95% conf. interval]	
W	.3226827	.0798801	4.04	0.000	.1635533	.4818121
_cons	1.296754	.2361571	5.49	0.000	.8263048	1.767203

Utilizing Pearson correlation and linear regression, we found a moderate positive correlation (0.4227) with a highly significant p-value (0.0001), suggesting that students who believe UTD's response does not aligns with their expectations also perceive a decline in commitment to student success from the university. The regression analysis further supported this, showing a significant model with an F-statistic of 16.32 and the same p-value, where perceived alignment with expectations explains about 17.87% of the variation in the perception of UTD's commitment. This comprehensive statistical evidence substantiates the direct impact of UTD's response to anti-DEI laws on students' confidence in the university's dedication to their success.

For the same hypothesis, our statistical analysis probed into how perceptions of the impact of anti-DEI laws on the diversity of UTD's student body and faculty correlate with views on the university's commitment to student success.

. pwcorr S X, sig						
	S	X				
S	1.0000					
X	0.5826	1.0000				
	0.0000					
. regress S X						
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	87
Model	26.9546297	1	26.9546297	F(1, 85)	=	43.68
Residual	52.4476692	85	.617031402	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.3395
				Adj R-squared	=	0.3317
Total	79.4022989	86	.923282545	Root MSE	=	.78551
S	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P> t	[95% conf. interval]	
X	.5938346	.0898468	6.61	0.000	.4151952	.772474
_cons	.9944361	.205018	4.85	0.000	.5868055	1.402067

The Pearson correlation yielded a strong positive coefficient of 0.5826, indicating a significant relationship where a more positive view of the impact of anti-DEI laws on diversity aligns with an increased perception of UTD's commitment to student success. This finding is further reinforced by a linear regression model with an F-statistic of 43.68 and a highly significant p-value, explaining approximately 33.95% of the variance in the perception of commitment to student success by the perceived impact of these laws. The positive correlation and regression analysis reveals that lower evaluations of the effects of anti-DEI laws (indicating a more negative view) correspond with diminished perceptions of the university's commitment to student success. This pattern suggests that views on diversity directly influence opinions on institutional commitment.

To evaluate Hypothesis 2, our analysis focused on understanding the relationship between the shift in perception regarding UTD's commitment to student success following the enactment of anti-DEI laws and the inclination to pursue further education at the university.

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. pwcorr V S, sig

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	V	S
V	1.0000	
S	0.5013	1.0000
	0.0000	


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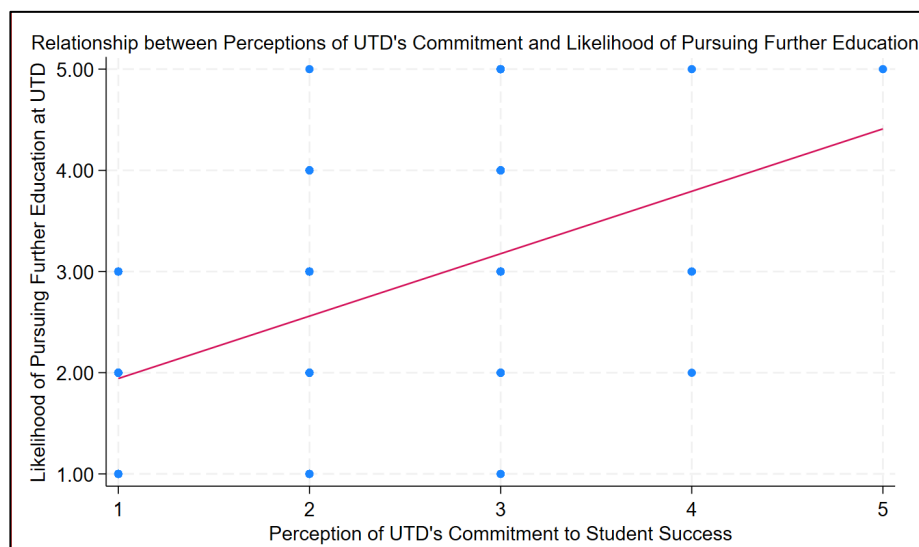
. regress V S

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Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	87
Model	30.210053	1	30.210053	F(1, 85)	=	28.53
Residual	90.0198321	85	1.05905685	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.2513
				Adj R-squared	=	0.2425
Total	120.229885	86	1.39802192	Root MSE	=	1.0291

V	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P> t	[95% conf. interval]	
S	.6168211	.1154897	5.34	0.000	.3871967	.8464455
_cons	1.325709	.280168	4.73	0.000	.7686604	1.882758

Our analysis using Pearson correlation and linear regression examined the link between students' altered perceptions of UTD's commitment to student success after anti-DEI laws and their willingness to pursue further education there. With a correlation coefficient of 0.5013, we found a moderate positive relationship, indicating that more positive views of UTD's commitment are associated with a higher likelihood of continuing education at the university. This significant correlation is supported by a p-value of 0.0000.



The study reveals a notable positive correlation between change in students' views on UTD's commitment to student success after the anti-DEI laws and their willingness to engage in further education at the university. This suggests that a decline in students' perceptions of the university's commitment, influenced by anti-DEI legislation, is associated with a decreased likelihood of them choosing UTD for advanced studies.

To further explore Hypothesis 2, we examined the relationship between students' perception of UTD's commitment to student success, particularly following the introduction of anti-DEI laws, and their likelihood of recommending UTD to potential students.

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. pwcorr AA S, sig
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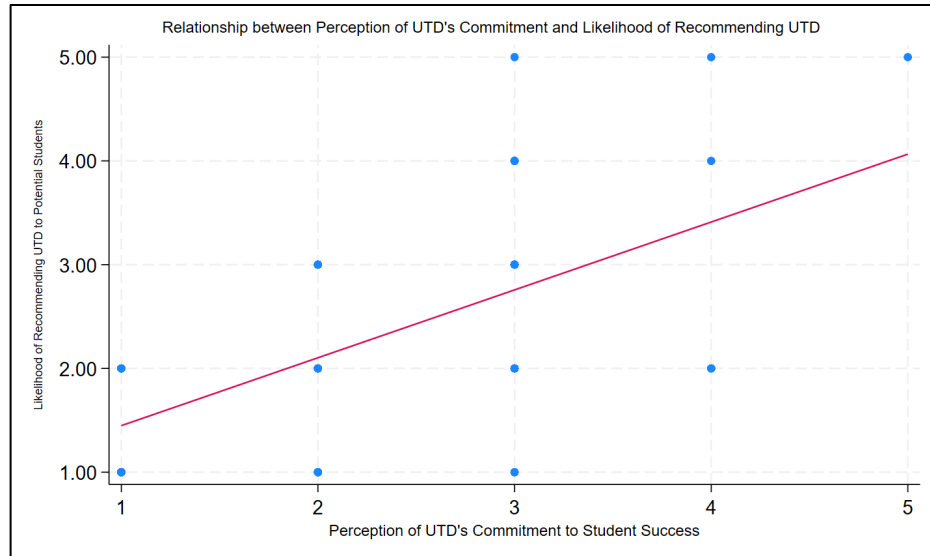
	AA	S
AA	1.0000	
S	0.5998	1.0000
	0.0000	

```
. regress AA S
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	87
				F(1, 85)	=	47.77
Model	33.9791962	1	33.9791962	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual	60.4575854	85	.711265711	R-squared	=	0.3598
				Adj R-squared	=	0.3523
Total	94.4367816	86	1.09810211	Root MSE	=	.84337

AA	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P> t	[95% conf. interval]	
S	.6541691	.0946454	6.91	0.000	.4659887	.8423494
_cons	.7941517	.2296015	3.46	0.001	.3376424	1.250661

Our analysis showed a strong positive correlation (0.5998) between students' perceptions of UTD's commitment to student success post anti-DEI laws and their likelihood of recommending the university to potential students. The significant p-value (0.0000) confirms this correlation. The linear regression model also reveals that a decrease in positive perceptions about UTD's commitment to student success is associated with a lowered likelihood of recommending the university.



In examining the third hypothesis, our study focused on the link between changes in UTD students' perceptions of the university's commitment to student success following the introduction of anti-DEI laws and their agreement with the notion that these laws impact their satisfaction with their field of study.

```
. pwcorr AG S, sig
```

	AG	S
AG	1.0000	
S	-0.3352 0.0015	1.0000

```
. regress AG S
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	87
Model	15.6617082	1	15.6617082	F(1, 85)	=	10.76
Residual	123.740591	85	1.45577165	Prob > F	=	0.0015
Total	139.402299	86	1.62095696	R-squared	=	0.1123
				Adj R-squared	=	0.1019
				Root MSE	=	1.2066

AG	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P> t	[95% conf. interval]	
S	-.4441228	.1354036	-3.28	0.002	-.7133413	-.1749042
_cons	4.553561	.3284774	13.86	0.000	3.90046	5.206662

Analysis using Pearson correlation and linear regression revealed a moderate negative correlation (-0.3352), signifying that students less confident in UTD's commitment post anti-DEI laws are more likely to agree that their satisfaction with their field of study has been impacted.

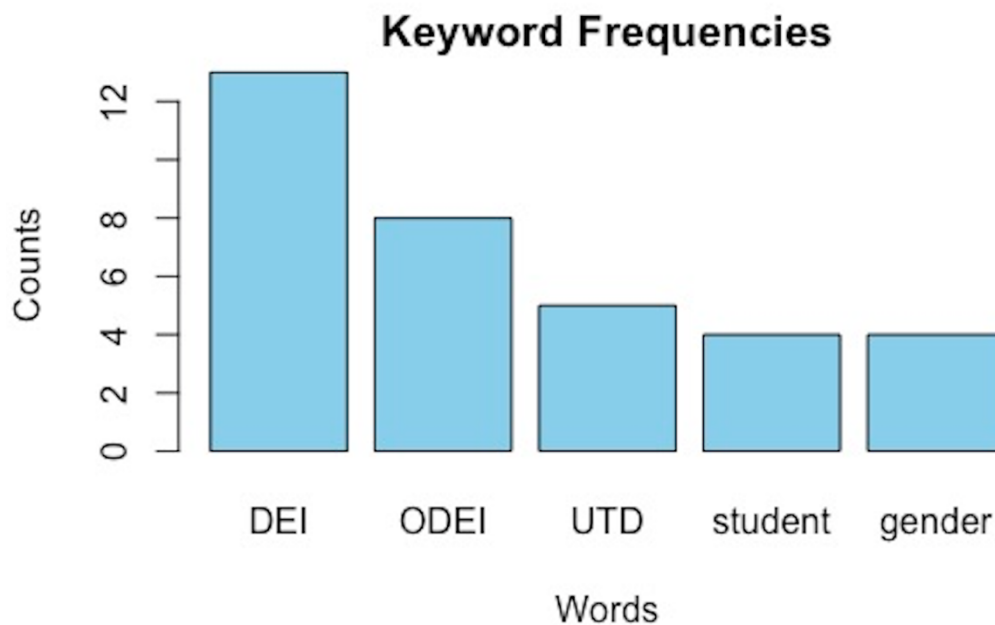
This significant relationship is underscored by a p-value of 0.0015. The regression analysis, showing a coefficient of -0.4441228, aligns with this finding, suggesting an inverse relationship between perception of UTD's commitment and satisfaction with the field of study. However, the relatively low R-squared value of 0.1123 indicates that this relationship accounts for only about 11.23% of the variance, pointing to the presence of other influential factors.

Web scraping discussion

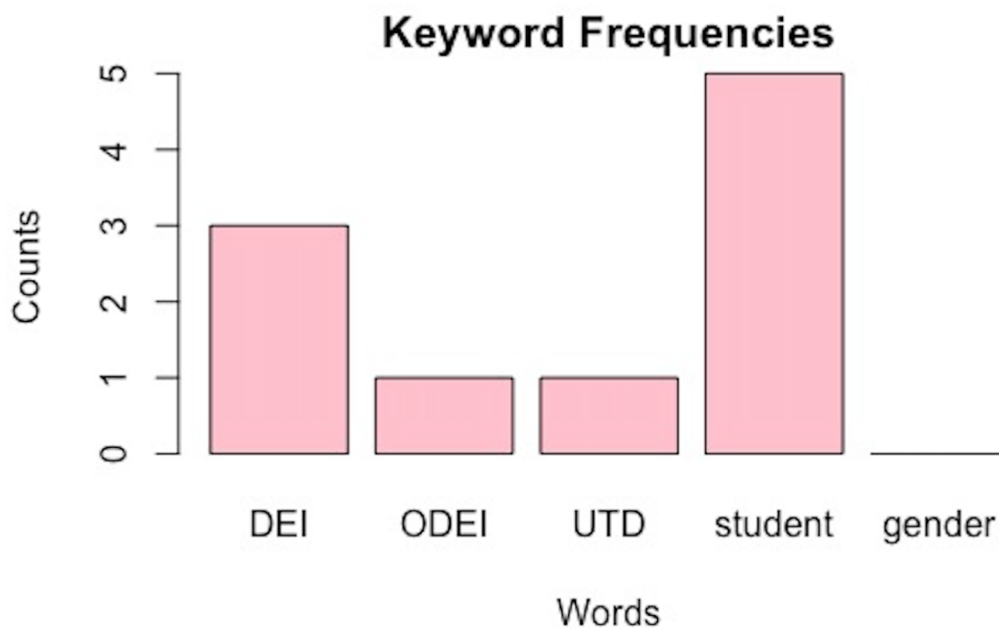
Web scraping was used as a method of data collection because many students are known to use social media to express their ideas and thoughts, specifically relating to UTD. This method can be tricky, as it is now much more difficult to obtain user data from social media platforms. Most data scientists and developers utilize APIs, which are becoming more difficult to access due to social media companies' efforts to monetize user data. One notorious example is X (formerly "Twitter"), who privatized their data once Elon Musk took over. The social media site Reddit, for example, has monetized its APIs and user data, making it difficult for small developers to obtain their data. Instead of APIs, we focused our efforts on scraping content from Reddit such as posts and comments.

Data was mainly collected and generated through RStudio, using the packages "tidyverse", "RedditExtractR", and "rvest". First, we attempted to scrape data from the entirety of content posted on Reddit since early October of this year. We sorted through the data and gathered relevant information. The most data centered around DEI came from one post on Reddit specifically addressing the Senate bill and UTD's response. R was used to generate word

frequency in one specific post regarding new anti-DEI initiatives on campus announced by President Benson. These were the most frequent key terms used:



Alongside this plot, we generated another plot using the same keywords, except displayed their frequencies among the comments. These were the frequencies of our keywords:



Looking closely at the keyword frequencies, we can infer that the active users on this Reddit post mentioned “DEI” and “student” the most. This could indicate that many users are concerned about the impact of DEI on students at UTD. Keyword frequencies can also help us determine which topics are most important to Reddit users. Overall, the scraped data shows that there was a relatively high level of concern regarding SB17 and DEI at UTD, which reflects the responses in our survey. Students appear to be concerned about how anti-DEI legislation will impact their well-being on campus, and whether they would recommend UTD to prospective students. These findings imply that DEI plays an impactful role in students’ perception of their campus, as well as their satisfaction with their studies. Further disintegration of DEI efforts could generate bad consequences for students, such as dissatisfaction and discomfort on campus.

This chapter's findings and discussion, shaped by responses from a diverse student body at UTD, are anchored in Social Identity Theory and Intersectionality Theory. The discussion illuminated various factors influencing student attitudes in the context of anti-DEI legislation. We found strong support for the first two hypotheses, indicating a notable impact of these laws on students' perceptions of UTD's commitment to success and their educational choices. The third hypothesis suggested a more complex interplay of factors affecting satisfaction in academic fields. These insights set the stage for the conclusion chapter, where we will further synthesize and contextualize these findings within the broader landscape of higher education and policy impacts.

Conclusion

Our results indicated a meaningful relationship between DEI at UTD and undergraduate students' positive attitudes about the campus. Though our sample was relatively small, these findings can help policymakers understand how anti-DEI legislation affects students at large. Texas and Florida are so far the only states who have instituted anti-DEI legislation, and it is possible that more states will follow in their footsteps. Analyzing attitudes among students is integral to understanding the impact of legislation. So far, results imply that there is a wealthy amount of dissatisfaction among students. The scope of this study was small – it can be replicated at a larger scale. For instance, more students across the state of Texas could be used in the study. This would include students from UT, A&M, UNT, and so on. These attitudes may be different based on the campus. UTD flourishes as one of the most inclusive campuses in Texas, so it could be that other schools have more lax attitudes. Policymakers in other states can use this data to generate an idea of how anti-DEI legislation would affect the student bodies of their college campuses. Importantly, schools with the most inclusive environments should be analyzed the most. We are unsure of the future of DEI at UTD – the efforts against it have largely generated frustration and disappointment. Despite this, there is hope that – with more available data and more conclusive studies – policymakers can reverse these mistakes and make better choices for the students in their state.

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