**Overview:**

The aim of this project is to demonstrate differences between LGBTQ+ respondents and non-LGBTQ+ respondents in their feelings of academic success, mental health, and sense of belonging within the campus environment. We primarily grouped respondents by self-identification of their gender and sexual orientation. We also incorporate information on age and degree programs to examine the effects of different factors.

**Stakeholders:** Colleges and Institutions in the United States

**Data:** Survey data from the Healthy Minds Study for the year 2019-2020. 89888 Students from 69 colleges and universities in the United States participated in the survey.

**Approach**

We built a set of dynamic dashboards in Tableau to visualize survey responses by respondents’ reported sexual orientation or gender. This approach allowed us to examine clear equity differences within each demographic group. When relevent, dashboards include a parameter to switch between either sexual orientation or gender. We examined responses to key survey questions to assess academic performance, mental health, and feelings of the campus climate.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Students who have a stronger sense of group and campus belonging are more likely to choose their school again and finish their degree. Students at schools that prioritize mental health are more likely to feel like they are able to finish their degree. LGBTQ+ students report that personal struggles affect their academic performance and outcomes. LGBTQ+ students have different experiences on campus in terms of trauma witnessed, sense of belonging, and sense of community. Experiences vary dramatically within the LGBTQ+ community by both sexual orientation and especially by gender identity

This analysis demonstrates differences in shared experiences between different demographic groups in order to quantify the needs of students. Identifying the needs of underrepresented groups is a critical step to help institutions identify resources and initiatives to help improve their academic performance and mental health. Results can inform both policy and practice at colleges and universities. Increasing availability and access to resources of underrepresented groups also benefits these institutions by reducing student risk on campus, improving academic performance, and increasing student retention rates. Documenting student performance and experience can help universities make decisions about resource allocation, such as providing additional mental health resources for students and prioritizing opportunities for underrepresented groups to foster their sense of campus belonging.

**Future work**

Future work will include analysis of additional survey years. The Healthy Minds Study has run since 2014 and has data available up to 2021-2022. However, since survey years include different questions and response options, additional data cleaning and transformation is needed. Data from 2021-2022 is notable in that respondents could select more than one gender or sexual orientation option, leading to more complex and nuanced responses. More granular analyses that focus on these different identities would better inform results and impacts of this work. The results of this current project indicate different reported experiences within the LGBTQ+ community, and more detailed analyses can better inform more targeted and effective institutional policy.