

Beyond Federal Reporting Categories: Racial Composition of WFU Undergraduates

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Background

The U.S. Department of Education requires a very specific methodology for collecting and reporting race/ethnicity information¹.

This methodology, described in greater detail herein, allows students to identify in multiple categories. They are reported, however, in only one. Consequently, the federal reporting categories do not convey all of the race/ethnicity information that is collected.

For example, a student who identifies as “Black or African American” and also as “White” is reported in the “Two or more races” category and not in the “Black or African American” or “White” categories. So the “Black or African American” reporting category does not include *every* student who identifies as Black, and the “White” reporting category does not include *every* student who identifies as White, and the “Asian” reporting category does not include *every* student who identifies as Asian, and so on.

Purpose

As a supplement to the federal reporting categories, which are widely used in higher education, **this paper provides a count for each race category of every student who identified with that category**. This methodology, unlike federal methodology, counts some students more than once. The student in the example above, is counted in both of the categories “Black or African American” and “White.” This methodology will be referred to as “Maximum Counting” since it provides the largest possible count in each race/ethnicity category.

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¹Federal Register / Vol. 72, No. 202 / Friday, October 19, 2007 / Notices. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2007-10-19/pdf/E7-20613.pdf>

Federal Methodology

An Explanation of Federal Methodology

It is important to understand that the *collection* categories and the *reporting* categories are slightly different.

Collection Categories and Methodology

Institutions *must* use a 2-part question to *collect* race/ethnicity data². The first part is often referred to as the “ethnicity” question, and the second part as the “race” question. The questions must be presented in this order:

1. Are you Hispanic or Latino?
2. Select one or more of the following races:
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - White

Reporting Categories and Methodology

Institutions are required to *report* each student in *one* of the following categories:

1. Nonresident Alien
2. Hispanic/Latino
3. American Indian or Alaska Native
4. Asian
5. Black or African American
6. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
7. White
8. Two or more races
9. Unknown race and ethnicity

A “trumping” scheme is used to place students in the reporting categories.

- First, all nonresident aliens are reported in the “Nonresident Alien” category (regardless of how they answer the race and ethnicity questions).
- Then, any student who responded “Yes” to the Hispanic question is reported in the “Hispanic” category (regardless of which races are selected on the race question).
- Then, any student who chose two or more race categories on the race question is reported in the “Two or more races” category.
- Then, any student who chose exactly one race is reported in that category.
- Otherwise, the student is reported in the “Unknown race and ethnicity” category.

This methodology counts each student exactly once.

²National Center for Education Statistics. *Collecting Race and Ethnicity Data from Students and Staff Using the New Categories*. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/report-your-data/race-ethnicity-collecting-data-for-reporting-purposes>

Data Tables: Federal Reporting Methodology

The following tables reflect the official undergraduate enrollment on the census date of the Fall semester of the given year.

Table 1: Federal Reporting Categories - Counts

Federal Reporting Category	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
American Indian/Alaska Native	7	8	7	6	4
Asian	221	204	204	195	177
Black or African American	311	325	344	337	337
Hispanic/Latino	320	333	349	372	395
NativeHawaiian/PacificIslander	3	3	2	1	1
Nonresident alien	364	437	495	521	513
Race and ethnicity unknown	7	8	7	1	1
Two or more races	128	140	146	180	198
White	3510	3497	3548	3612	3661
Total	4871	4955	5102	5225	5287

Table 2: Federal Reporting Categories - Percent

Federal Reporting Category	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Asian	4.5%	4.1%	4.0%	3.7%	3.3%
Black or African American	6.4%	6.6%	6.7%	6.4%	6.4%
Hispanic/Latino	6.6%	6.7%	6.8%	7.1%	7.5%
NativeHawaiian/PacificIslander	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Nonresident alien	7.5%	8.8%	9.7%	10.0%	9.7%
Race and ethnicity unknown	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Two or more races	2.6%	2.8%	2.9%	3.4%	3.7%
White	72.1%	70.6%	69.5%	69.1%	69.2%

Maximum Counting Methodology

An Explanation of Maximum Counting Methodology

The Maximum Counting methodology counts a student in each of the race categories that the student checked. This means that one student can be counted in multiple categories. For example, if a student answered “Yes” on the Hispanic question, and then checked “Asian” and “White,” that one student is counted in each of those three categories.

Data Tables: Maximum Counting Methodology

The following tables reflect the official undergraduate enrollment on the census date of the Fall semester of the given year.

Table 3: Students Identifying in Each Race/Ethnicity Category - Counts

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
American Indian or Alaskan Native	36	37	46	55	69
Asian	613	656	692	715	691
Black or African American	370	394	419	432	445
Hispanic/Latino	339	357	376	401	424
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	19	17	18	19	15
White	3925	3956	4033	4166	4237
Unduplicated Headcount	4871	4955	5102	5225	5287

Table 4: Students Identifying in Each Race/Ethnicity Category - Percent

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%	1.1%	1.3%
Asian	12.6%	13.2%	13.6%	13.7%	13.1%
Black or African American	7.6%	8.0%	8.2%	8.3%	8.4%
Hispanic/Latino	7.0%	7.2%	7.4%	7.7%	8.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%
White	80.6%	79.8%	79.0%	79.7%	80.1%

Note:

Percentages are calculated by dividing the number who identified in the particular category by the unduplicated undergraduate headcount for that term. The sum of the column percentages will be greater than 100%.