

Honors Day Abstract

Title: Belongingness in Queer and Straight Students at Alma College

For this poster, I'll be presenting on an independent study I am working on with Dr. Blazek in psychology analyzing how queer and straight students at Alma feel they belong. The study is a survey design. We are asking questions about which specific spaces respondents feel they belong in, what belonging means to them, what the college does well and poorly in terms of making them feel they belong, etc. We are also using a modified version of the General Belongingness Scale adapted to be relevant specifically to college students.

Our research questions are as follows: What demographics, if any, affect how students feel they belong on campus? What spaces do queer and straight students feel like they belong in? How do queer students perceive their own belonging? What is it about the college that makes queer students feel that they do or do not belong?

While data collection is still in progress, we hope to gather 80-100 participants. Our hope is that the study will provide us some insight into how queer students fit into the Alma College community and what can be done to improve their experience, and also that we can contribute to the broader conversation of queer belongingness. If sample sizes permit, we also hope to be able to take an intersectional approach and analyze what other factors may impact how queer students belong (ex: religion, race, sex, etc.), which would allow us an even deeper analysis into which specific groups of students may be struggling and need more support. With a better understanding of where we excel and where we lack in terms of belongingness, we can begin to bridge gaps and address how best to support queer students and help them thrive.