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International ACAC

DEIJ Assessment

Final Report

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December 2020

Contents

About this Report - Overview

This Summary Report discusses the findings of DEIJ assessment commissioned by International ACAC.

The Executive Summary provides a brief summary of the report. The Opportunities and Recommendations are presented using the 7-S framework.

Section 1 provides the context, scope and approach of the assessment.

Section 2 provides the group IDI results for the Executive Board and the Committee on Issues of Diversity.

Section 3 and 4 discusses the key themes in terms of International ACAC's Strengths and Opportunities.

Section 5 and 6 provides recommendations based on the assessment results.

Executive Summary

International ACAC partnered with an external consultant, julius erolin of Erolin Solutions (ES), to facilitate a holistic organizational change process on diversity, equity, inclusion and justice[1] (DEIJ). Key outcomes of the DEIJ project are:

- Begin to **build capacity** (skills, tools and resources) for achieving DEIJ goals;

- Gather **baseline data** on the current state of DEIJ in the organization (organizational assessment); and,

- Provide **actionable recommendations** for the organization on DEIJ.

This Executive Summary provides the results of the organizational assessment. The goal of the assessment was to assess International ACAC's current strengths, challenges and opportunities on achieving its commitment and goals on DEIJ. ES was also tasked with identifying organizational areas needing improvement that may not directly relate to DEIJ.

The assessment consisted of:

- Review of relevant documents such as current bylaws, policies and procedures, previous survey results, Facebook posts, member and leadership communications, and previous trainings evaluations.

- A member survey completed by 621 members, consisting of 17% of current members (37% of those members who opened the email communication).

- Semi-structured interviews with 12 key individuals, including past presidents, current staff, and some members who had previously expressed concerns about DEIJ at International ACAC.

- 14 focus groups across all organizational regions, attended by 71 members.

- A Change Workgroup consisting of 21 members from across regions who applied and volunteered to review the assessment process and results, and provide their perspectives and recommendations.

- Results from the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) psychometric instrument taken by Board members and the Committee on Issues of Diversity as part of their training and development. The IDI is a measure of organizational intercultural competency, the capacity to deeply understand and effectively bridge cultural differences. The level of individual and group intercultural competency has been shown to be a predictor of achieving diversity, equity and inclusion goals.

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[1] International ACAC is currently using "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ)" to refer to what is commonly referred to in the field as diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). As noted in this report, there is a need to provide shared meaning and understanding around those terms particularly given the organization's international membership.

The assessment was limited in scope and had varying engagement. The focus was on building upon current information already available to International ACAC, and gathering member experiences and perspectives through a survey, interviews, focus groups and the Change Workgroup. Data was gathering and analyzed using McKinsey's 7-S framework, which looks at an organization's "7 S's" - shared values, structures, systems, strategies, staff (people/members), skills and style.

The assessment results provided sufficient data for sound analysis of the progress of the organization in relation to DEIJ, and for development of actionable recommendations.

In this Executive Summary, the themes from the assessment are arranged in terms of Strengths (what International ACAC is doing well) and Opportunities and Recommendations (what International ACAC can improve). The Opportunities and Recommendations are presented using the 7-S framework.

The full report provides more detail on the Opportunities, and divides the Recommendation into two sections: Recommendations using the 7S Framework, and Recommendations on Action Plan and Timeframe.

Based on the assessment, we conclude that International ACAC is in a pivotal moment to leverage its significant membership growth and diversity to enhance organizational effectiveness, achieve DEIJ goals, and continue to pursue its vision for the profession and its members.

Strengths

1. **Shared understanding of the value of DEIJ**: Across the organization, DEIJ are generally seen as essential to the organization.
2. **Welcoming and inclusive organization**: A significant majority feel that the organization is welcoming and inclusive.
3. **High membership growth and satisfaction**: International ACAC has seen significant growth since its inception. More than 75% of survey respondents are satisfied with their membership, and more than 92% would recommend the organization to their colleagues.

Opportunities and Recommendations

A. Shared Values, Mission and Vision

1. Strategic Planning

   - Review mission, vision and values given rapid growth and diverse membership needs and challenges.

   - Create a 5-year strategic plan.

2. DEIJ statement, principles and goals

- Part of strategic planning process that can be a separate DEIJ strategy document or part of the organizational strategic plan.

- Develop clear mission/vision/values statement, principles and definitions, goals and actions.

3. Review and clarify relationship with NACAC

- Identify the rationale and value of the relationship as well as roles/responsibilities.

- Cleary identify the impact of the relationship particularly with regards to International ACAC's unique role/status as an **international** organization.

B. Strategy

1. Strategic Planning (see A above on Shared Values)

- Engage in a strategic planning process that identifies the following: Goals—Objectives—Tactics/Actions—Metrics—Accountabilities.

- Consider appointing an ad hoc committee to draft the organization's 5-year strategic plan.

2. Key strategic areas – build on current "pillars" (from draft strategy) with particular focus on:

- Member engagement and communication

- Diversity and representation

- Leadership and member development

- Communication strategy and plan for the current organizational change process.

C. Structures

1. Strategic and structural alignment

- Align structures with 5-year strategic plan

- Consider new governance and operational structures to increase effectiveness and performance, role and decision-making clarity, and adaptability to changing needs of members.

2. Regional Engagement and Representation - Within the current structure, consider creating a VP for Regional Engagement and a Committee for Regional Engagement

3. DEIJ - Within the current structure, consider creating a VP for "DEIJ" and a Committee for "DEIJ".

4. Executive Director - Define, clarify and codify role and function.

D. Systems

1. Policies and Procedures

   - Conduct a comprehensive inventory of programmed or routine activities of committees and Board members.

   - Develop formalized procedures and/or guidelines for key programs and activities.

   - Key areas to focus on:

     o Decision-making – process and decision-making authority

     o Onboarding for new leaders

     o Complaint/Grievance – policy and procedure for handling complaints and conflicts

     o Nomination and selection processes

2. Engagement & Communication Mapping

   - Map current communication systems and practices

   - Identify effectiveness and gaps

E. Staff (People/Members)

1. Engagement, representation, governance clarity and member development - These areas are addressed in Recommendations B through D.

F. Skills and Style

1. Leadership Development and Support

   - Develop onboarding process

   - Develop leadership development program including formal mentoring and coaching for leaders.

   - Use leadership development program to widen and increase access to the leadership pipeline.

   - Key development areas:

     o Board roles/responsibilities

     o Strategic thinking – planning, systems, finance

     o Decision-making, communications and conflict

     o Global mindset and intercultural competence

2. Members' professional development

- Key qualities, mindsets and skills for members
- Integrate global mindset and intercultural competence in member professional development

Acknowledgments

We would like to take the opportunity to thank International ACAC members who actively engaged in the DEIJ assessment process and shared their time and perspectives. Individuals and groups responded positively and were willing to discuss both strengths and areas for development. This creates a strong platform for future improvements. Particular appreciation is extended to the Executive Board and the Presidents' Team, the Executive Director and her staff, the Diversity Committee, and the ad hoc Change Workgroup.

Should you wish to discuss this review's conclusions further, or have questions please contact us at the details provided in this report. We would be happy to engage in any future conversation to support International ACAC's future development.

1 Context, Scope and Approach

1.1 Context

International ACAC partnered with an external consultant, julius erolin of Erolin Solutions (ES), to facilitate a holistic organizational change process on diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ). Key outcomes of the DEIJ project are:

- Begin to **build capacity** (skills, tools and resources) for achieving DEIJ goals;

- Gather **baseline data** on the current state of DEIJ in the organization (organizational assessment); and,

- Provide **actionable recommendations** for the organization on DEIJ.

The goals of the organizational assessment were to:

- Capture and assess the current strengths, challenges and opportunities of the organization in terms of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice;

- Identify areas that can enhance the organization's effectiveness in serving its members; and

- Provide specific and actionable recommendations

1.2 Scope

The organizational assessment was limited in scope. The focus was on building upon current information already available to International ACAC. ES sought to obtain quantitative and qualitative information in the form of individual and groups experiences. These experiences and perspectives were obtained through a survey, individual interviews, focus groups, administration of the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory, a psychometric instrument that measures individual and group intercultural competence) to the Executive Board and the Committee on Issues of Diversity.

The assessment results provided sufficient data for sound analysis of the progress of the organization in relation to DEIJ, and for development of actionable recommendations.

1.3 Approach and Methodology

ES collected data from six sources to capture the experiences and perspectives from a diverse range of members and stakeholders:

- High level review of relevant documents and data

- A brief member survey

- 12 semi-structured interviews

- 14 focus groups across all organizational regions attended by 71 members

- A Change Workgroup consisting of 21 members from across regions who applied and volunteered to provide their perspectives and recommendations as well as review the assessment process and results.

- Administration of the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) to the Executive Board and the Committee on Issues of Diversity as part of the training and development (33 total completed)

1.3.1 DOCUMENT REVIEW AND SECONDARY ANALYSIS

The document review and secondary analysis included the following documents:

- International ACAC website: https://www.internationalacac.org/

- International ACAC Bylaws (dated October 27, 2020)

- International ACAC Bylaws (dated November 12, 2019)

- International ACAC Policies and Procedures (revised October 2, 2020)

- International ACAC Election Process

- International ACAC World Regions (membership)

- International ACAC Conference Feedback Themes

- Strategic Plan 2020-2025 Priorities & Objectives Summary Document

- Strategic Plan 2020-2025 Pillars Graphic

- Leadership, committees, and staff (various documents)

- DEIJ workplans

- Diversity training documents

- Member Survey Voting Question Responses (May 2019)

- NACAC Leadership in College Admission

- NACAC Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission

The documents were reviewed specifically to identify the current commitment, structures and systems, achievements and challenges related to DEIJ and organizational effectiveness.

1.3.2 MEMBER SURVEY

A brief survey was conducted to gather member perspectives related to member engagement and DEIJ. Specifically, survey questions were intended to focus on four main areas:

1. Engagement and satisfaction with the organization

2. Perception of the value and relevance of DEIJ to International ACAC's goals and day-to-day work

3. Perception of inclusion and fairness in the organization

4. Successes and challenges around DEIJ.

The survey allowed for more specific comments in the free text boxes to place the answers in some context and to support an understanding of the responses provided. Respondents provided a total of **1,448 comments in the "free" text boxes**.

The survey was open for four weeks. About **17% (621) of all members completed the survey**. About 50% of members opened the survey email notification. According to International ACAC, this "open rate" of email communications is fairly consistent with other emails from the organization. The survey was completed by 37% of those members who opened the survey email communication. The 17% and 37% response rates constitute about an average to good response rate compared to comparable surveys of members or customers. There was **good distribution and representation across demographic groups**. Full survey analysis and results can be found in Appendices 7.1 and 7.2.

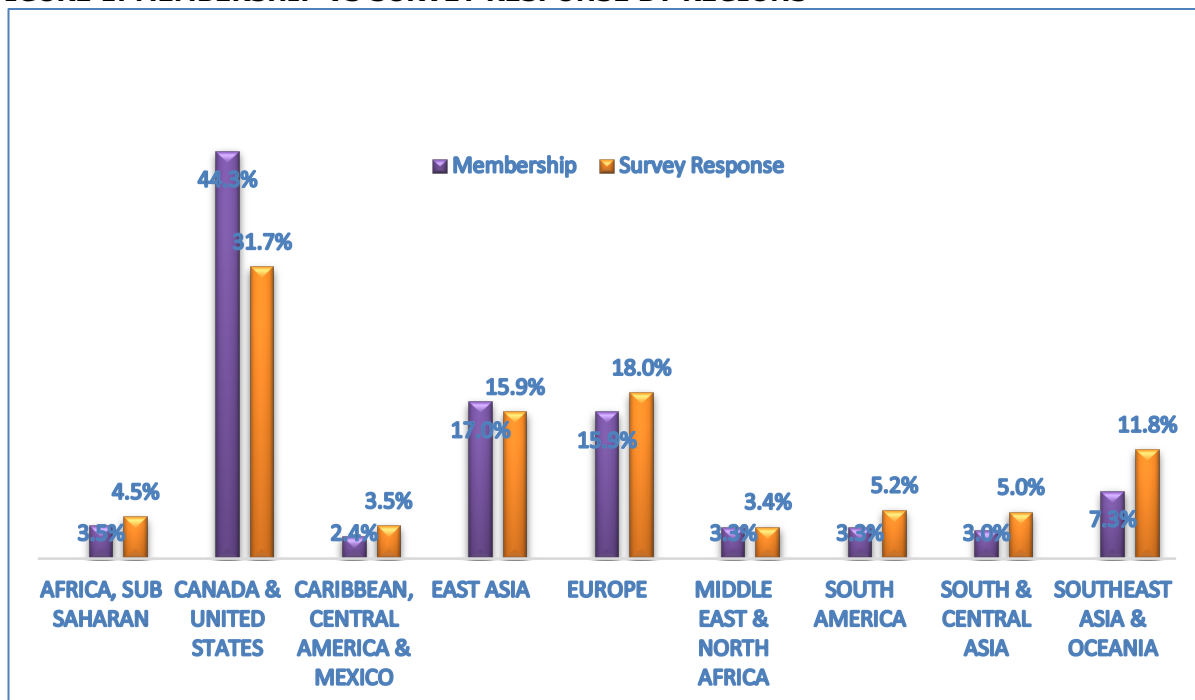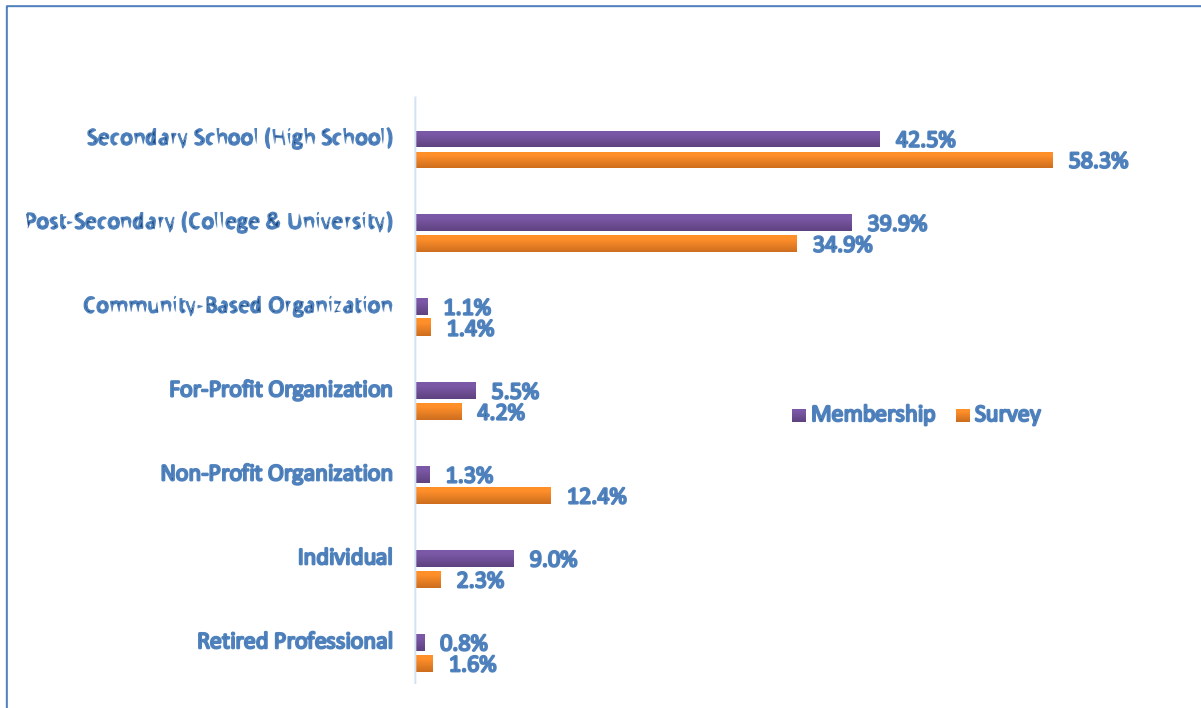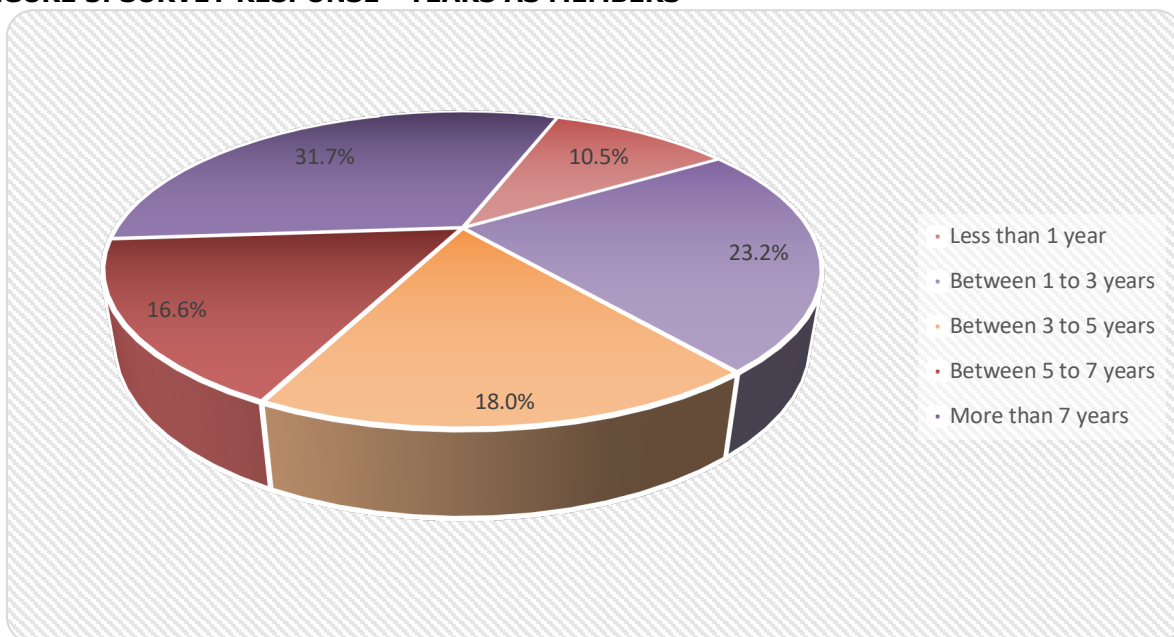**FIGURE 1: MEMBERSHIP VS SURVEY RESPONSE BY REGIONS**

FIGURE 2: MEMBERSHIP VS SURVEY RESPONSE BY PROFESSIONAL AREA[2]

Other demographic breakdown of the survey results are in the following charts:

FIGURE 3: SURVEY RESPONSE - YEARS AS MEMBERS

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[2] Survey percentage total is greater than 100% since members can choose all the professional areas that are applicable to them.

FIGURE 4: SURVEY RESPONSE - RACE & ETHNICITY

- Asian / Asian American
- Bi-racial / Multi-racial (two or more races)
- Black / African / African American
- Hispanic / Latino
- Indigenous / Native American / First Nations
- Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern / North African (MENA)
- Roma / Traveller
- White / Caucasian
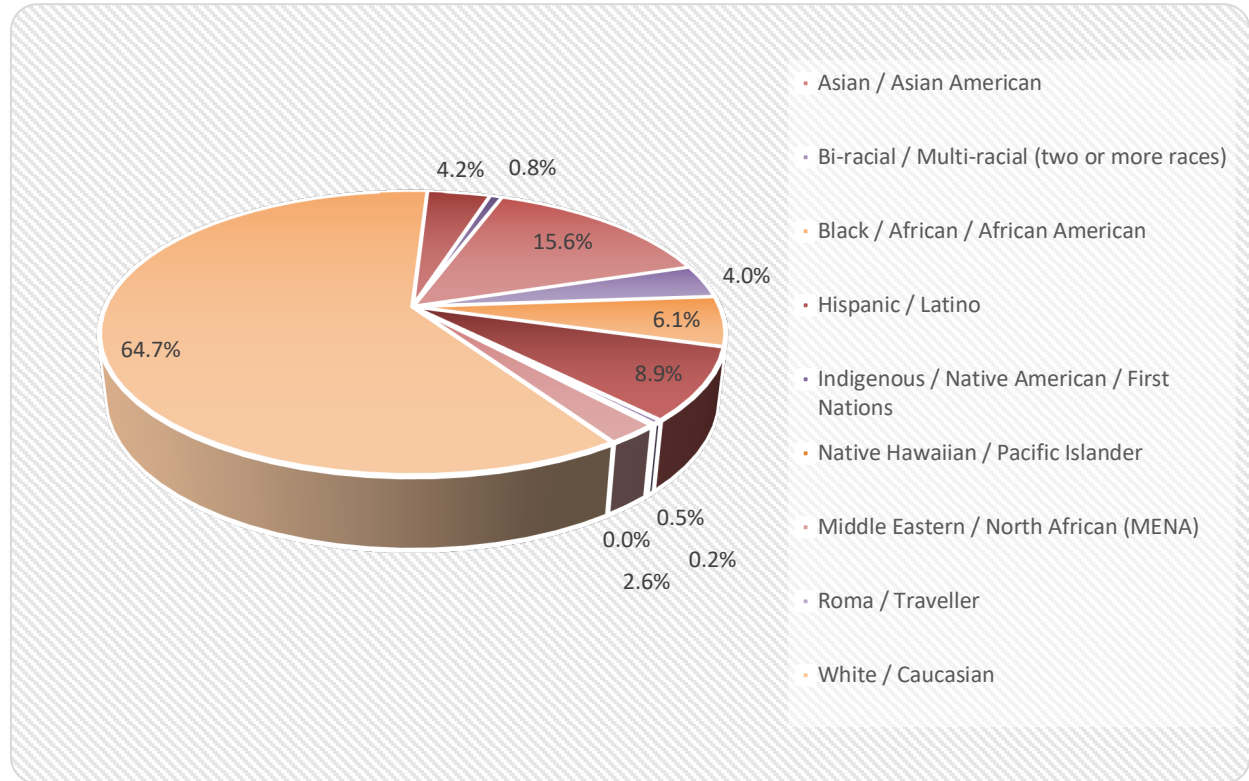
FIGURE 5: SURVEY RESPONSE - GENDER IDENTITY

- Woman
- Man
- Transwoman
- Transman
- Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- Prefer not to answer
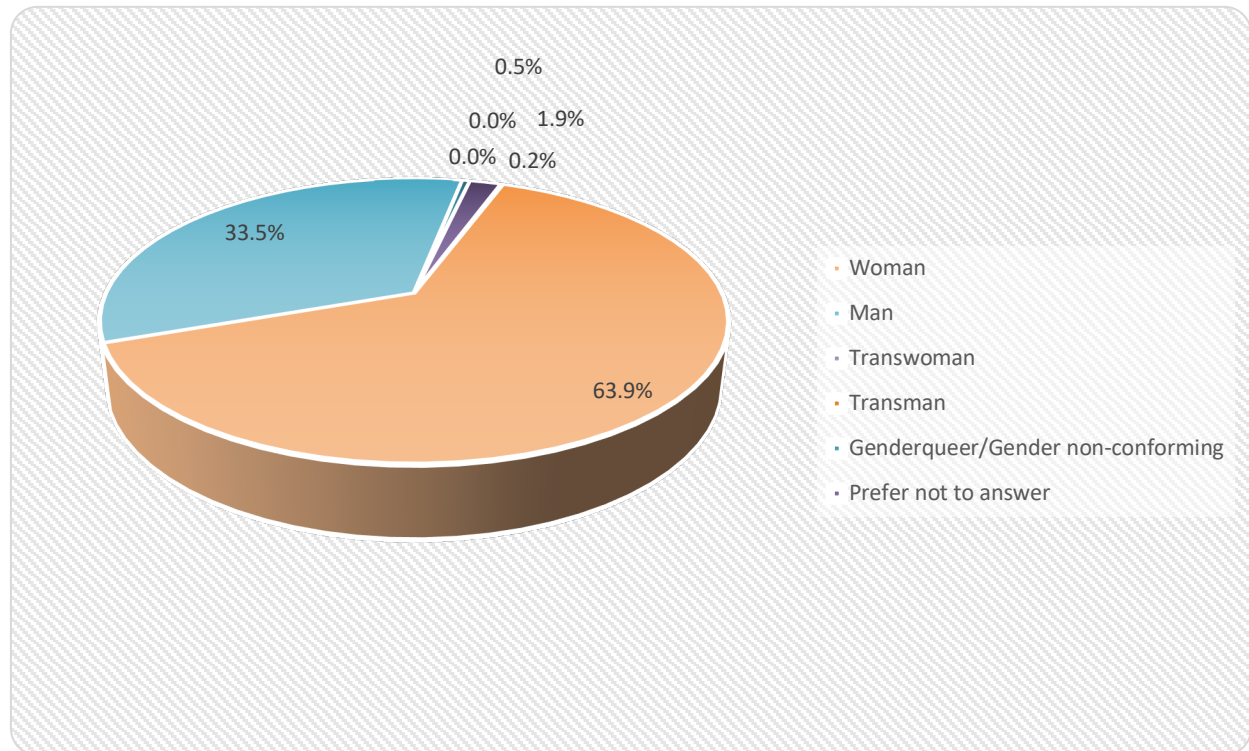
1.3.3 INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Twelve (12) individual semi-structured interviews were conducted, including past presidents, current staff, and some members who had previously expressed concerns about DEIJ at International ACAC. Each interview was about 60 minutes in length.

14 Focus Groups were conducted and facilitated by volunteers from the Executive Board and Committee members. ES provided a written resource guide to the facilitators. Each region had at least one focus group scheduled. 229 members signed up for the focus groups and 71 members attended the focus groups.

The interviews and focus groups focused on the role of DEIJ to International ACAC's goals, what the organization is doing well around DEIJ, and the challenges around DEIJ.

1.3.4 CHANGE WORKGROUP

Members were invited to apply and volunteer to be part of the ad hoc Change Workgroup. The purpose of the Change Workgroup (CW) is to serve as an advisory body to help facilitate and guide the assessment and change process. Specifically, the CW's role is to:

- Support the change process by providing information, feedback and ideas to ensure an effective process;
- Use their position and influence to increase awareness of and engagement with the change process; and
- Work with ES, the Board and staff to identify challenges and opportunities for progressing organizational change.

CW consisted of 21 members from across regions. The group had four 1.5 hour meetings facilitated by ES.

1.3.5 INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY (IDI)

The Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®) assesses intercultural competence—the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior in order to achieve individual and group goals. The IDI is a statistically reliable and cross-culturally valid measure of an individual's and group's intercultural competence. The IDI provides "baseline data" as well as guidance on developing the skills and behaviors necessary to work effectively with cultural differences. The IDI has been successfully used in corporate, government, non-profit, academic and other settings for a wide variety of purposes in more than 40 countries.

The Executive Board and the Committee on Issues of Diversity completed the 50-item online inventory. Group results were used to guide the training and development of both groups.

A separate report on the IDI group results is in Appendix 7.3.

### 1.3.6 ANALYTICAL APPROACH - 7-S FRAMEWORK

The assessment used the 7-S Framework[3] as an analytical approach to gather and analyze data in relation DEIJ. The framework looks at seven elements of a group or organization:

- Shared Values: Core values of the organization that are evidenced in the group's vision, mission and ways of working (e.g. culture).
- Strategy: The objectives, goals and actions plans devised to achieve group priorities and internal and external challenges.
- Structure: The structures, procedures and processes that divide tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Systems: The policies and procedures, both formal and informal, for carrying out tasks.
- Members (People): The people in the group or organization and their demographics, motivations, attitudes and behaviors.
- Skills: The knowledge, competencies, skills and approaches of the individuals to accomplish goals and objectives.
- Style: The work styles and preferences of all individuals, particularly leaders and key individuals.

The framework works from the assumption that shared values underpin all organizations, and levels of organizational and team performance is determined by how well all elements are aligned and mutually reinforcing. The framework is useful in assessing organizational strengths and gaps while ensuring that interventions in certain parts of the organisation are linked to shared values and supported by other elements (S's) of the organization.

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[3] Adapted from McKinsey 7-S Model; McKinsey and Company; Corporate Leadership Council Research.

FIGURE 6: MCKINSEY'S 7-S MODEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
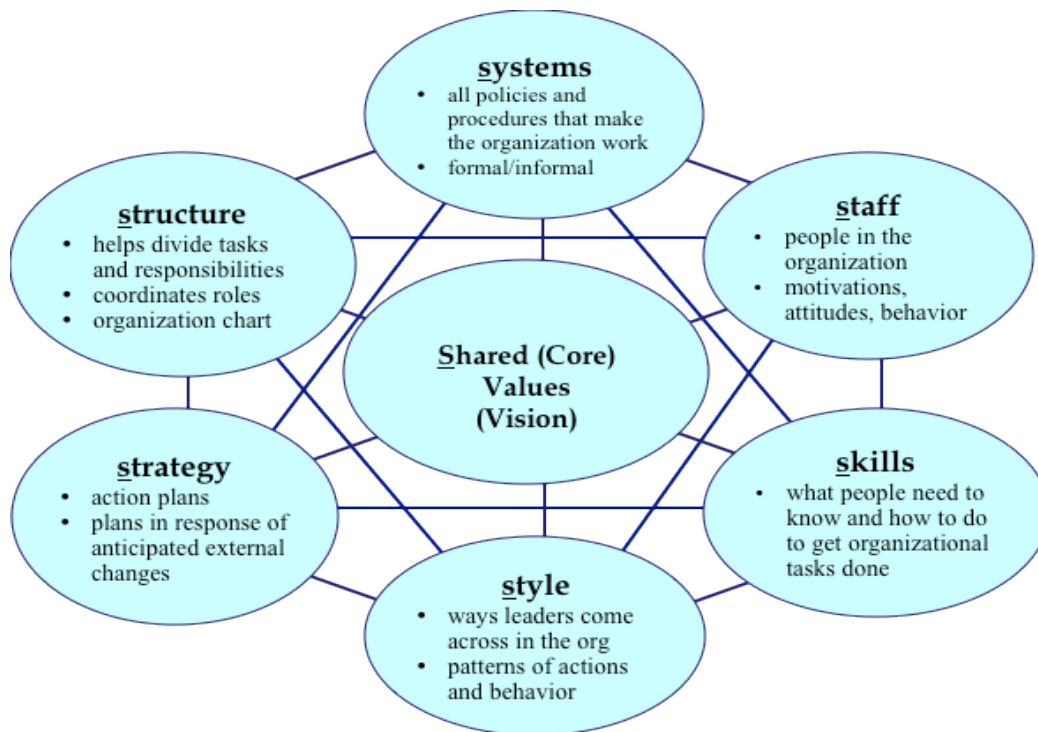
1.3.7 DETERMINING STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Data from the survey, interviews, focus groups, document review and the IDI group results were analyzed to determine strengths (what International ACAC is doing well) and opportunities (areas that can be improved).

In the survey, the ratings scale questions used a 5-point scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Don't Know, (4) Agree, and (5) and Strongly Agree.

An average score 4 or above (that is, between "Agree" and "Strongly Agree") is an indication that the member has a "positive" feeling about the question(s) being asked. This generally translates into higher member engagement; feelings of inclusion; engagement and/or commitment to DEIJ; and positive feelings about the organization's commitment and progress around DEIJ. Scores 4 and above constitute Strengths; scores below 4 constitutes Opportunities or areas that need improvement.

2 Summary of IDI Group Results

A detailed report on International ACAC's IDI Group Results is in Appendix 7.3.

2.1 About the IDI Theory and Measure

Intercultural competence is the capability to shift perspective and adapt behavior to cultural differences. Intercultural competence reflects the degree to which cultural differences in values, expectations, beliefs, and practices are effectively bridged, an inclusive environment is achieved, and specific differences that exist in the company are addressed from a "mutual adaptation" perspective.

People are not alike in their capabilities to recognize and effectively respond to cultural differences. The Intercultural Development Continuum® (IDC) identifies five orientations that range from the more monocultural orientations of Denial and Polarization to the transitional mindset of Minimization to the more intercultural or global mindsets of Acceptance and Adaptation.

FIGURE 7: INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM
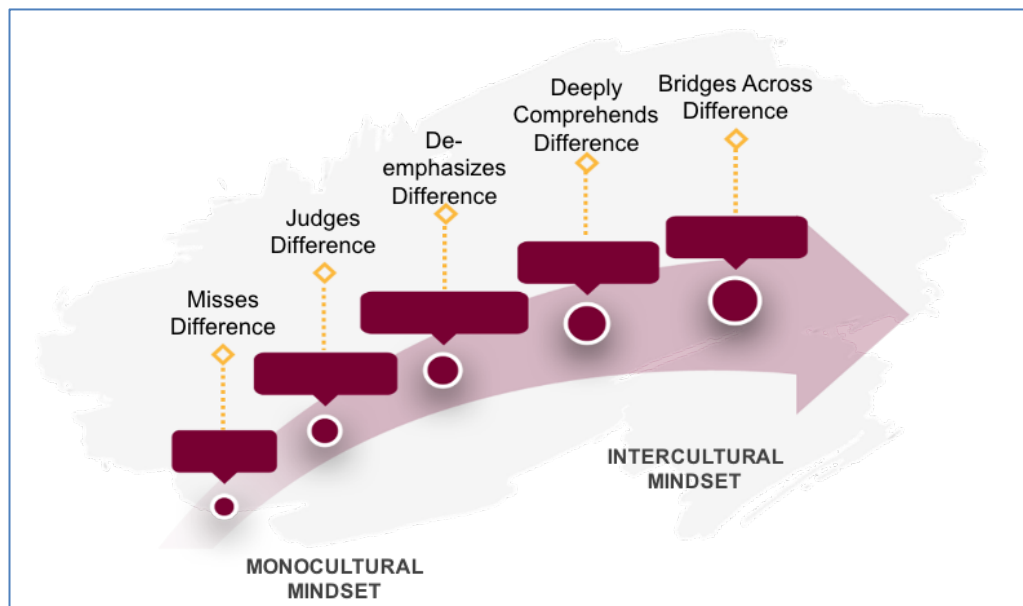
Research tells us that groups in intercultural mindsets of Acceptance and Adaptation have a greater likelihood of achieving their goals around diversity, equity and inclusion goals, as well as goals around organizational change, innovation, and increasing team performance. The capacity to deeply understand culturally-learned differences, recognize commonalities, and act on this increased

insight in culturally appropriate ways facilitate goal accomplishment among diverse individuals and groups.

2.2 Perceived Orientation vs Developmental Orientation

The IDI Group Profile Report presents information about how International ACAC makes sense of and responds to cultural differences and commonalities. The IDI Group Report reviews the following information specifically focused on the group's approach to cultural differences and commonalities:

- Perceived Orientation (PO): The Perceived Orientation (PO) reflects where the group places itself along the Intercultural Development Continuum. This reflects how the group sees itself when interacting with culturally diverse individuals and groups. International ACAC's group's Perceived Orientation is Acceptance. This means that International ACAC intends or aspires to deeply understand and value cultural differences.

- Developmental Orientation (DO): The Developmental Orientation (DO) indicates the group's primary orientation toward cultural differences and commonalities along the Continuum as assessed by the IDI. The DO is the perspective your group most likely uses in those situations where cultural differences and commonalities need to be bridged. International ACAC's group's Developmental Orientation is Minimization. This means that the group tend to overemphasize commonalities which may miss deeper cultural differences.

FIGURE 8: PERCEIVED AND DEVELOPMENTAL ORIENTATION
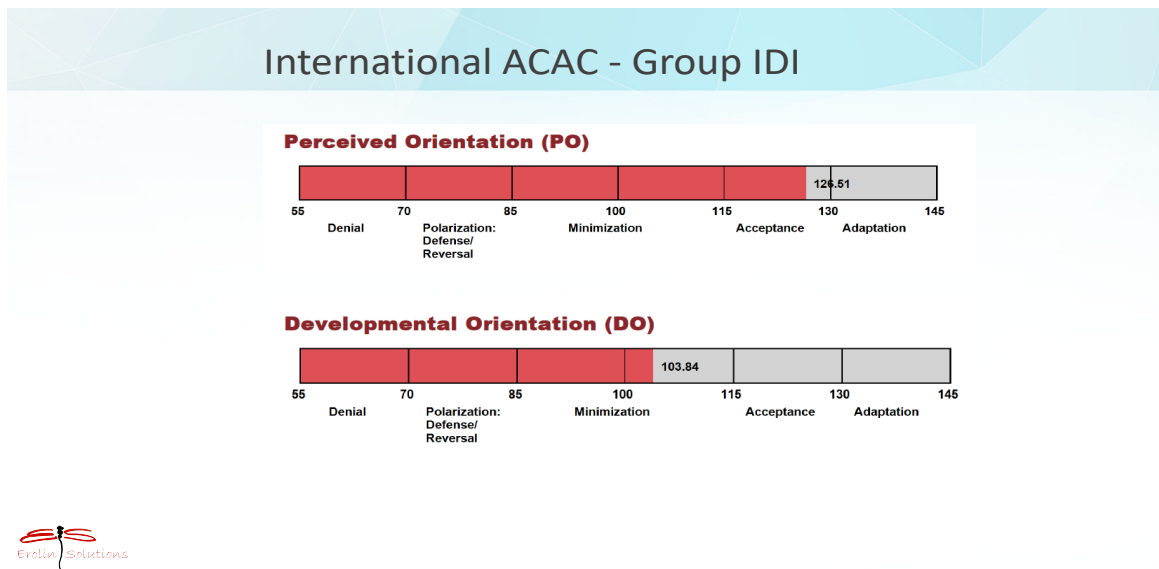
2.3 Group Result - Minimization

Each of the IDI mindsets - Denial, Polarization, Minimization, Acceptance and Adaptation has strengths and weaknesses when navigating cultural differences and commonalities. For DR's developmental orientation of Minimization, the following are the possible strengths:

- Strong commitment to "consistency" and "fairness"

- Focus on group commonality – "common ground"

- Cohesion, harmony, unity

- Tolerance of others

- Awareness of other cultures

The developmental orientation of Minimization has the following possible stumbling blocks:

- Assumption of similarity: Cultural differences may be missed or not acknowledged and taken into account given the assumption of similarity.

- Verbal, non-verbal misinterpretation: The assumption of similarity increases the likelihood of misinterpretations.

- Intent does not equal impact: Minimization focuses on intent and might miss the impact on another individual or group regardless of the intent.

- Translating the "talk" into the "walk": Groups who may not be in the majority culture may experience the group as "talking the talk" in terms of diversity and inclusion, but not actually "walking the talk" or doing what the group or company says.

- Avoidance of difficult conversations or conflict: Given the overemphasis on commonality, harmony and unity, the group may avoid difficult conversations which has the impact of missing deeper cultural differences that may be impacting the group.

- Non-dominant or "minority" groups do the "fitting in" or adapting: Minority groups often have the additional burden "fitting in" or adapting to the majority group.

3   Themes - Strengths

3.1   Shared understanding of the value of DEIJ

Across International ACAC, diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice are seen as essential to the organization. For many, DEIJ is at the core of the organization's identity as an international association of professionals whose mission in part is to support students access to higher education.

Survey results were as follows:

- There was an average score[4] of 4.42 (between agree and strongly agree) in the 5 questions addressing the importance of DEIJ in International ACAC.[5]

- More than 95% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that diversity and inclusion are essential to the organization's mission. Around 72% strongly agreed.

- About 74% of survey respondents agreed that they interested in more learning opportunities on DEIJ at International ACAC. Some regions had higher percentages of interest, and those who chose racial/ethnic identities other than White had 82% express interest in further DEIJ learning.

- 93% of respondents agreed that a diverse leadership team is essential to International ACAC, with 64% strongly agreeing.

**FIGURE 9: A DIVERSE LEADERSHIP TEAM IS ESSENTIAL TO THE MISSION OF INTERNAIONAL ACAC**
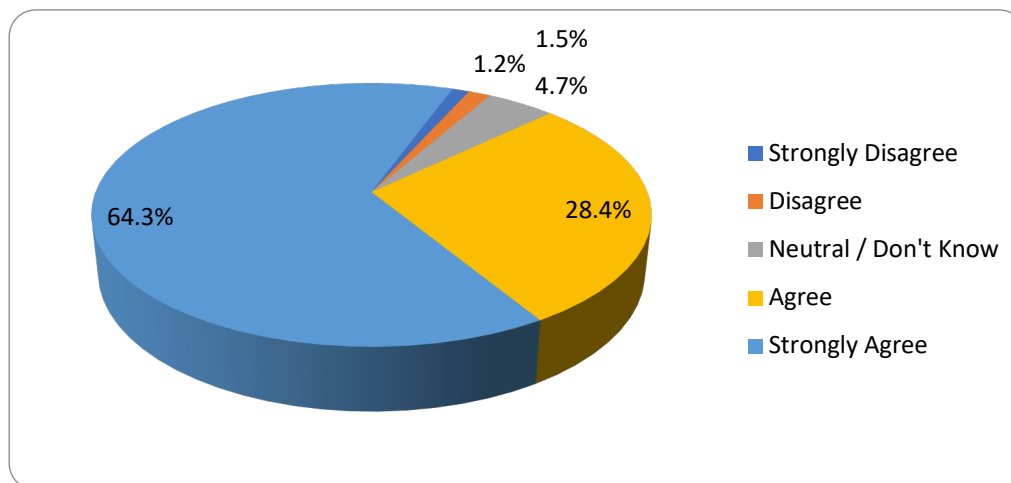
4 As noted in Section 1.3.7 of this report, an average score 4 or above constitutes an organizational strength and an indication that members have "positive" feelings about the question(s) being asked. This generally translates into higher member engagement; feelings of inclusion; engagement and/or commitment to DEIJ; and positive feelings about the organization's commitment and progress around DEIJ..

5 See Appendix 7.1 Survey Analysis (Comparison Tables).

A slightly lower percentage agreed and a higher percentage chose "neutral/don't know" with the statement that equity and social justice are essential to the mission of International ACAC.

FIGURE 10: EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE MISSION OF INTERNATIONAL ACAC
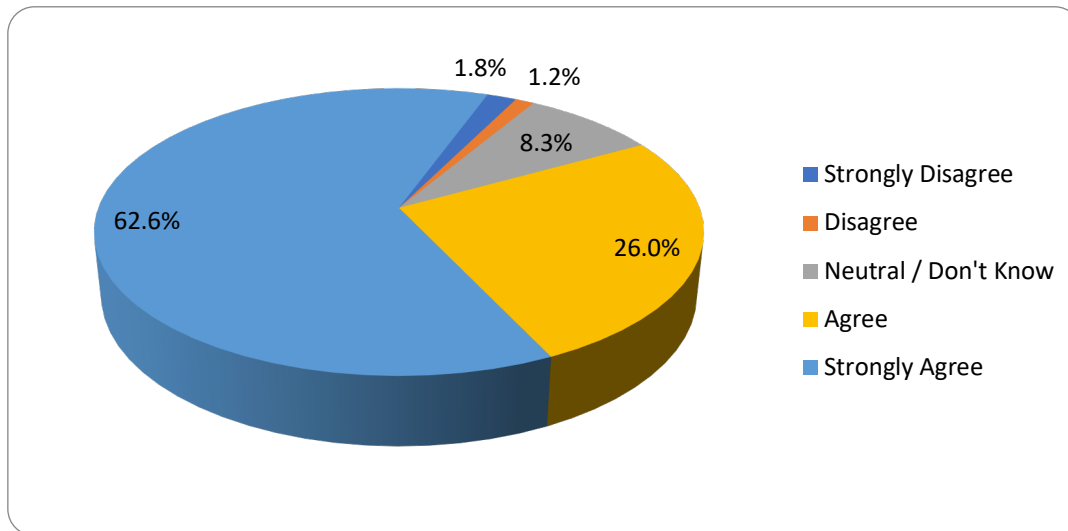
The lower agreement and higher "don't know" responses may be reflective of the lack of shared meaning of those terms, and the perspective by some members that DEIJ, particularly the equity and social justice parts, are viewed as "American-centric" concepts.

3.2 Welcoming and inclusive organization

Members generally feel welcomed and valued in the organization with high rates of satisfaction with their membership and highly likely to recommend the organization to colleagues and friends.

- Many of the regions scored above 4.0 on the survey question of feeling welcomed and valued in the organization, with an average of 3.96 for all regions. The Canada/US and Asian regions had scores below 4.0.
- 92% of all survey respondents would recommend International ACAC to colleagues and friends.
- Comments from the focus groups and the survey highlighted the organization's current dialogue and efforts around DEIJ.

Examples of the more than 260 survey comments of what the organization is doing well include:

> *I always feel welcomed at IACAC . . . .*

> *I feel well informed and invited to participate . . .*

I have always observed that IACAC is a welcoming and inclusive organisation.

Accommodating time zones, locations and hosting many sessions for representatives to share and participate.

Running virtual engagement with members has been a positive for me. I appreciate that there are often 2 time slots for Zoom meetings given all the time zone challenges

The best thing is that we are talking about it and encouraging open conversations.

Having difficult conversations, allowing voices to be heard.

The work that has recently started is positive and needs to continue.

You're doing a lot of outreach and discussion - really commendable work
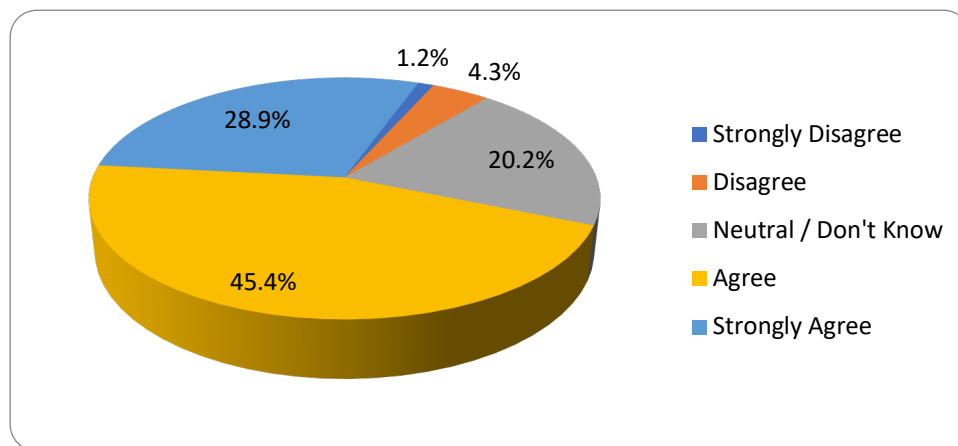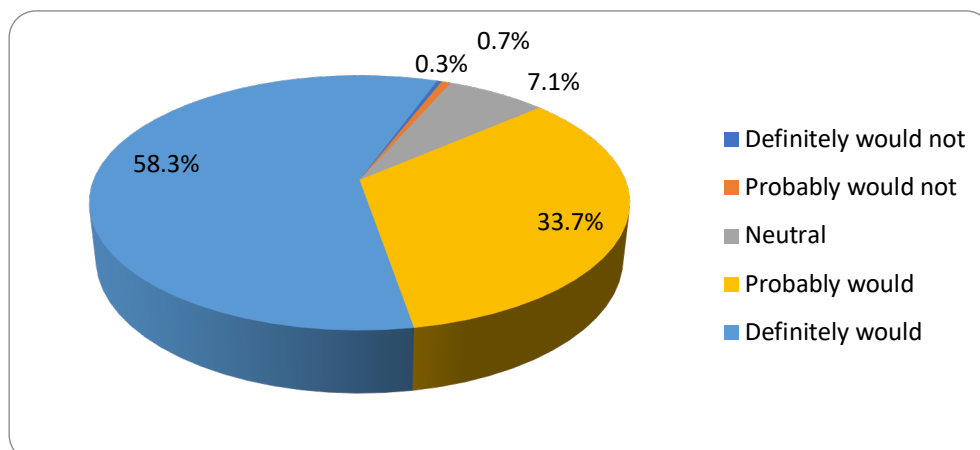
FIGURE 11: I FEEL WELCOMED AND VALUED

FIGURE 12: WOULD RECOMMEND INTERNATIONAL ACAC TO A COLLEAGUE OR A FRIEND

3.3 High membership growth and good satisfaction

International ACAC has grown tenfold to more than 3,500 members since its inception. 76% of survey respondents are satisfied with their membership, and 92% would recommend the organization to their colleagues. Other survey results indicate:

- An overall score of 4.08 for the four survey questions that measured member satisfaction, with all regions scoring above 4.0.

- Regional scores for International ACAC meeting the professional needs of members range from 3.91 (Canada & US) to 4.23 (African and MENA regions).

- US BIPOC[6] as a group scored the lowest satisfaction at 3.85 compared to US White members at 4.02.

- Comments from the focus groups and the survey highlighted satisfaction with involvement, learning and networking opportunities.

FIGURE 13: REGIONAL COMPARISON OF SATISFACTION QUESTIONS

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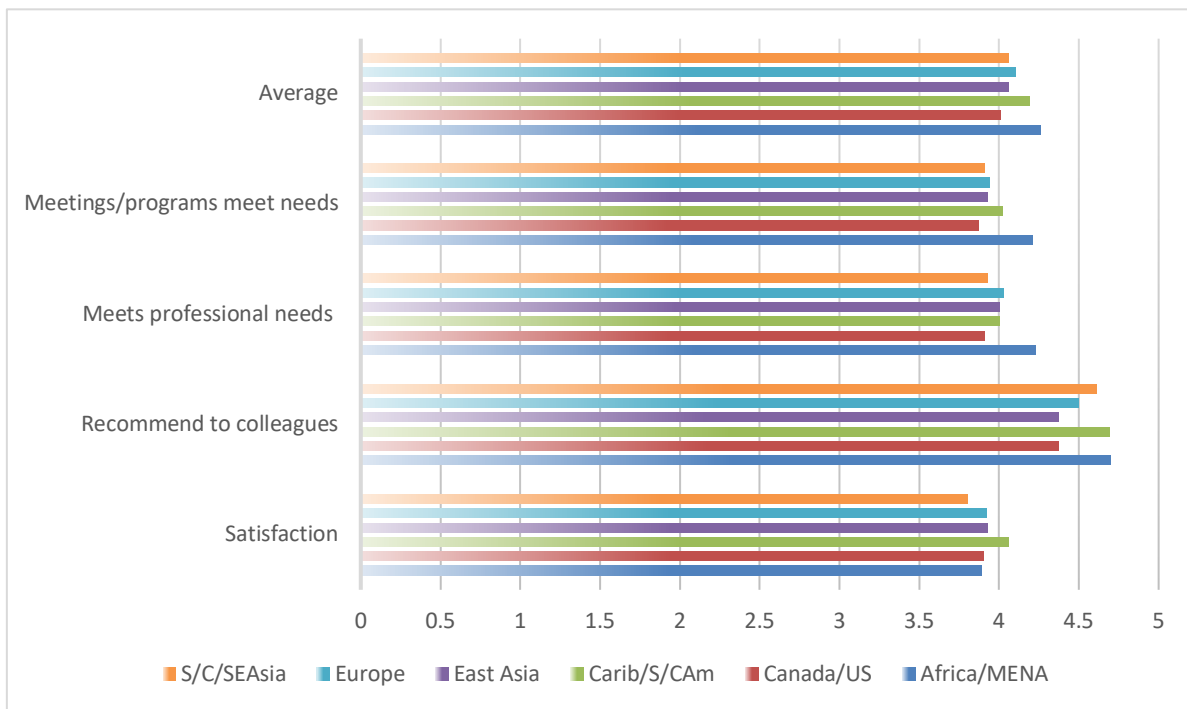
[6] BIPOC - Black, Indigenous, People of Color. First referenced in a 2013 tweet, Black and Indigenous were included in the people of color acronym to account for the erasure of black people with darker skin and the unique experiences of Native American people. The major purpose was to be more inclusive of different voices. (NYT, June 17, 2020)

4 Themes - Opportunities (Areas to Improve)

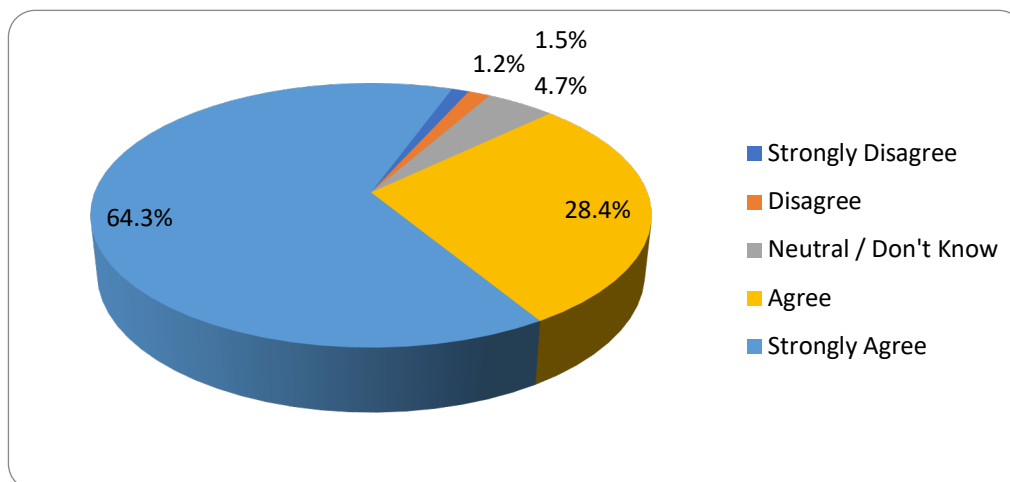The Assessment identified five key areas of opportunities or areas for International ACAC to improve:

1. **Diversity and representation**: Increase regional and racial/ethnic (i.e. BIPOC) diversity in leadership roles.

2. **DEIJ structure and strategy**: Establish shared meaning, strategies, structures and accountabilities to demonstrate ongoing organizational commitment to DEIJ and achieve DEIJ goals.

3. **Member engagement and communication**: Establish member engagement and communication goals, strategies and accountabilities.

4. **Organizational clarity and transparency**: Review and revise organizational mission, values, principles, structures, and policies and procedures to ensure clarity and transparency of goals.

5. **Leadership and member development**: Establish specific development and support opportunities for leaders and members to increase leadership effectiveness, increase access to leadership roles, and improve global, intercultural and DEIJ competence.

4.1 Diversity and Representation

The need for greater diversity in involvement, particularly in leadership roles, was one of the most highlighted areas by members.

- 93% to 96% agreed that diversity in membership and leadership was essential to the mission of International ACAC.

FIGURE 14: DIVERSE LEADERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL

Pie chart with segments: 64.3%, 28.4%, 4.7%, 1.2%, 1.5%.
Legend: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral / Don't Know, Agree, Strongly Agree

- 69% of survey respondents agreed that the organization provides ample opportunities for involvement, with a low score of 3.76.

FIGURE 15: AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT
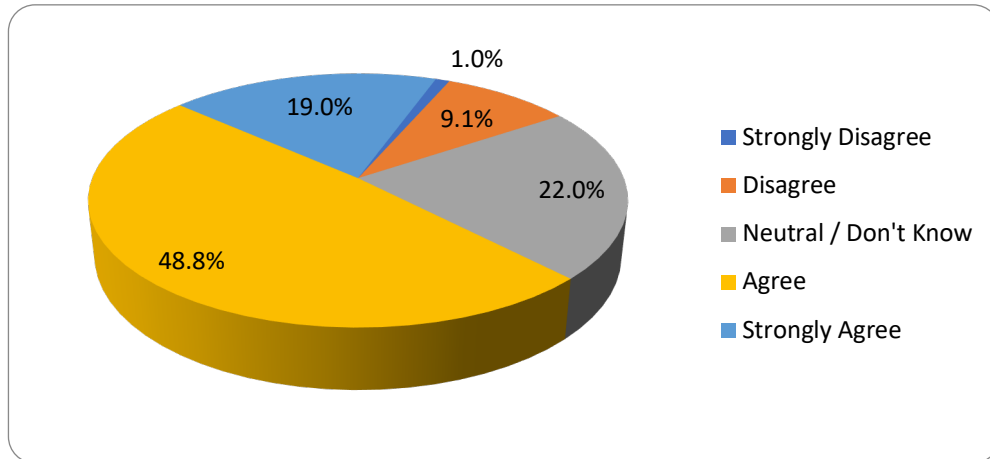
- The lowest survey score (3.45) was on equal opportunity and whether members agreed that they have equal opportunity for leadership (i.e. Board and Committees) positions.

  - 49% agreed that they have equal opportunity, with 18% disagreeing and 33% don't know or neutral.

  - Regional scores ranged from 3.33 (Canada/US and South/Central/SE Asian regions) to 3.65 (Europe).

  - US BIPOC respondents scored at 3.14 compared to 3.41 for US White respondents.

  - Across all regions, 54% of those identifying as White agreed that they have equal opportunity compared to 39% of those who chose racial/ethnic identities other than White.

FIGURE 16: HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
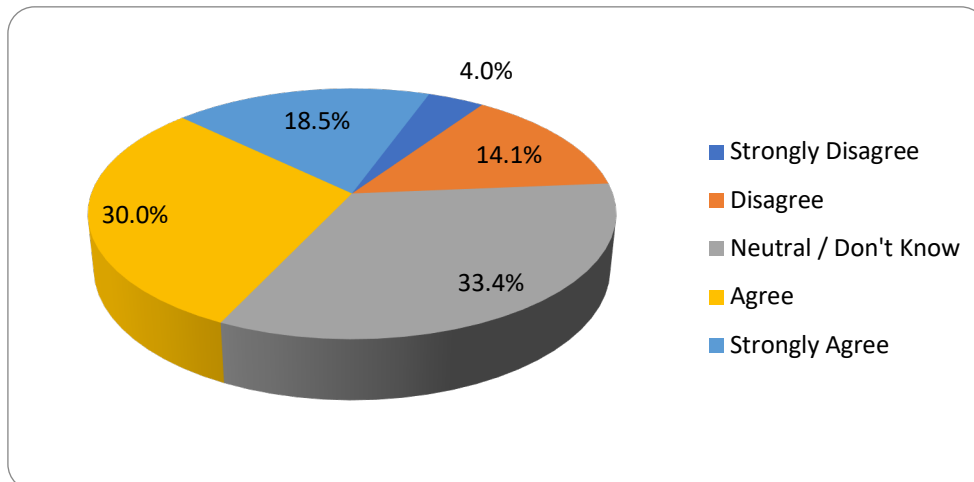
- Survey respondents who chose racial/ethnic identifies other than White reported lower scores on feeling welcomed, having equal opportunity and feeling that their perspectives are welcomed.
  - o 59% of US BIPOC felt welcomed and valued compared to 72% of US White.
  - o 55% of US BIPOC felt that their perspectives and opinions are welcomed compared to 69% of US White.
  - o 39% of those who chose racial/ethnic groups other than White (all regions) reported having equal opportunity compared to 54% of those identifying as White.

FIGURE 17: INCLUSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY RESULTD BY RACE (WHITE/BIPOC)
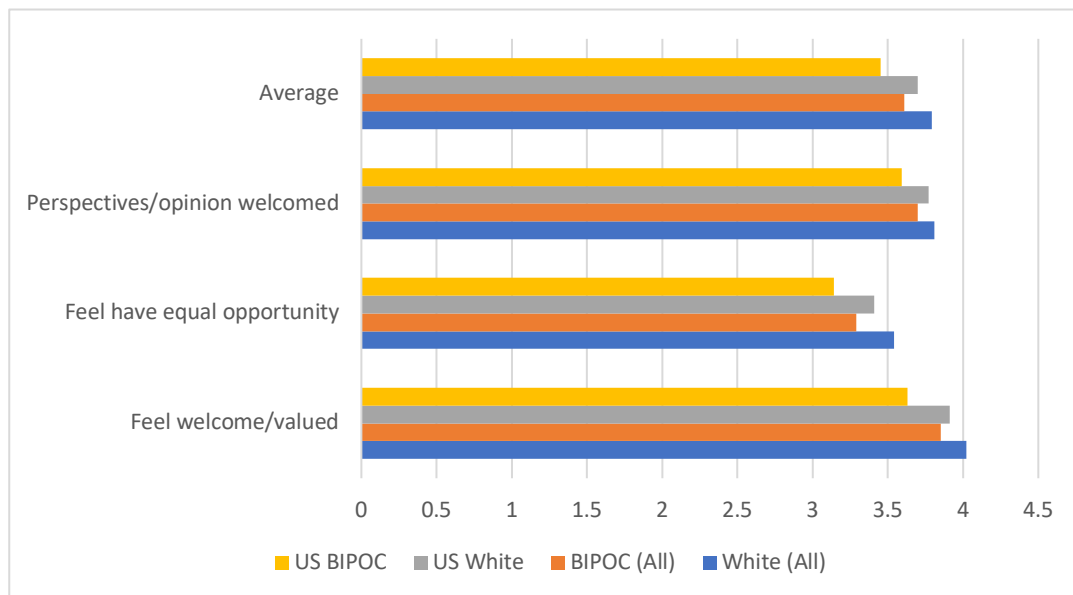
- Comments from the survey, interviews, focus group comments highlight the need for diverse representation:

    More diversity and more representation among presenters, leaders.

    Since it is international, it should turn to internationals more.

    It seems extremely cliquey.

    We need a more diverse board. Not just in terms of racial diversity, but in country of origin and philosophy of thought.

    Walk the walk. More diversity in leadership roles,

    Members of leadership need to reflect the organization's mission and commitment to diversity and inclusion.

These results are consistent with the IDI developmental orientation of Minimization.

FIGURE 18: GROUP IDI RESULTS
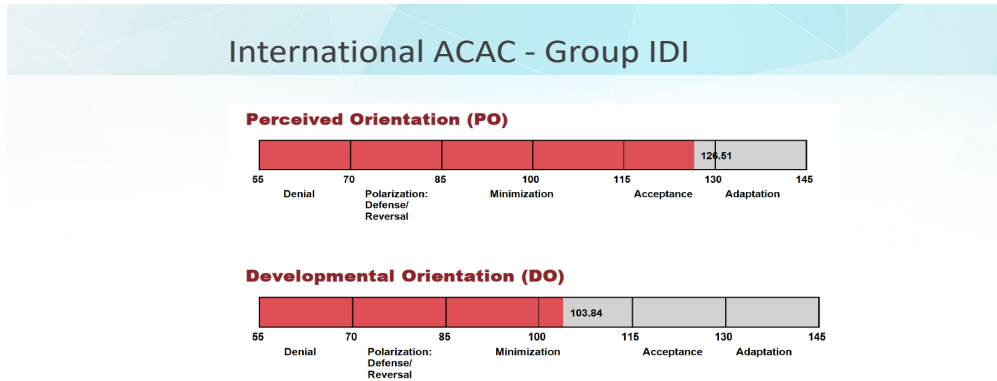
There is a gap between the group's Perceived Orientation and Developmental Orientation. The group intends to be in Acceptance (understanding and valuing cultural difference), and its actual impact is Minimization (overemphasizing commonality which may miss deeper cultural differences).

Groups in Minimization:

- Tend to overemphasize consistency, fairness and equality.

- "Comfort", "what we have done in the past", what's familiar, "compliance" and "best practice" are usually not examined for impact of different groups.

- This may result in the "halo effect" where the group tends to "hire" or "promote" individuals who are most similar to the majority group or culture.

- Tend to be more risk averse, and cultural differences may be perceived as "risky" and similarity is seen as "safe".

4.2 DEIJ Strategy and Structure

International ACAC has an opportunity to develop more effective and sustainable strategies, structures and systems to support DEIJ. This will help ensure that DEIJ is embedded in daily practice and leveraged for organizational success. It will also help ensure that the organization deliver on its stated commitment and intent on DEIJ.

The lack of DEIJ strategies and structures is reflected in the assessment results. There are low survey scores on the five questions assessing the organization's commitment and progress on DEIJ - an average of 3.77 and high levels of "don't know" responses (about 30% across all questions).

72% of respondents agree that the organization is committed to diversity and inclusion, and 67% agreement for equity and social justice. White and BIPOC respondents had different perceptions of the organization's commitment to DEIJ:

- 67% of non-white respondents compared to 75% of White respondents agreed that the organization is committed to DEIJ.
- 49% of US BIPOC respondents agreed compared to 73% of US White respondents.
- 49% of US BIPOC respondents were satisfied compared to 56% of US White.
- More than 27% US BIPOC disagreed compared to 13% of US White.

The survey score for satisfaction with the organization's DEIJ efforts was 3.59, the lowest score of all survey questions. Only 56% of survey respondents were satisfied with the organization's efforts. Some survey respondents commented that they scored the question higher given the current efforts (e.g. survey, focus groups, use of external consultant).

**FIGURE 19: SATISFACTION WITH DEIJ EFFORTS**
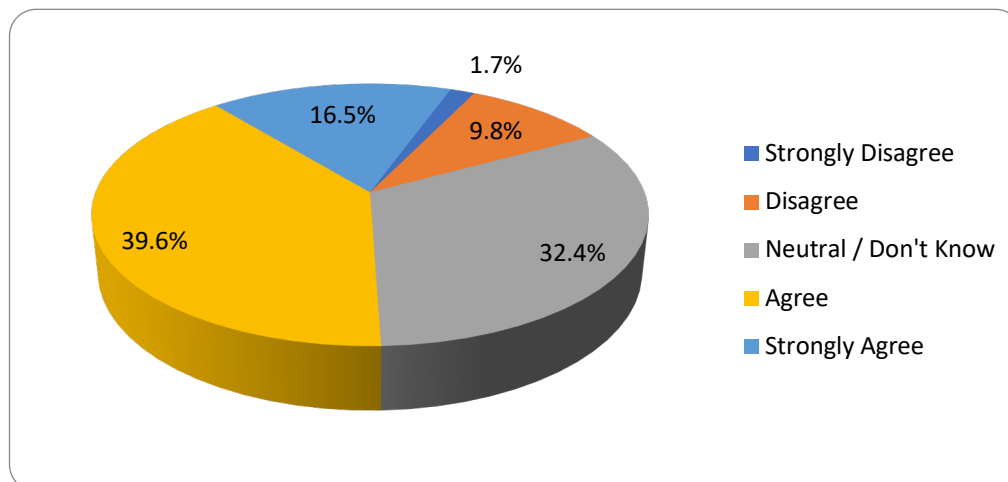
The level of satisfaction was also different among certain groups:

- Canada and US region had the lowest survey score of 3.43 among the regions.
- US BIPOC respondents had a survey score of 3.14 compared to 3.41 of US White members.
- 49% of US BIPOC respondents were satisfied compared to 56% of US White. More than 27% US BIPOC disagreed compared to 13% of US White.

The IDI Group results are also consistent with other assessment results. The IDI puts International ACAC within the mindset of Minimization - an overemphasis on similarities which may miss deeper cultural differences. In many organizations, this can lead to "talk" about valuing diversity and inclusion without specific strategies and actions, resulting in the criticism of "talking the talk, but not walking the talk".

Establishing specific short and long term strategies, structures and systems on DEIJ will help address these issues as shown on Figure 21.

**FIGURE 20: ROLE OF DEIJ STRATEGIES STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS**
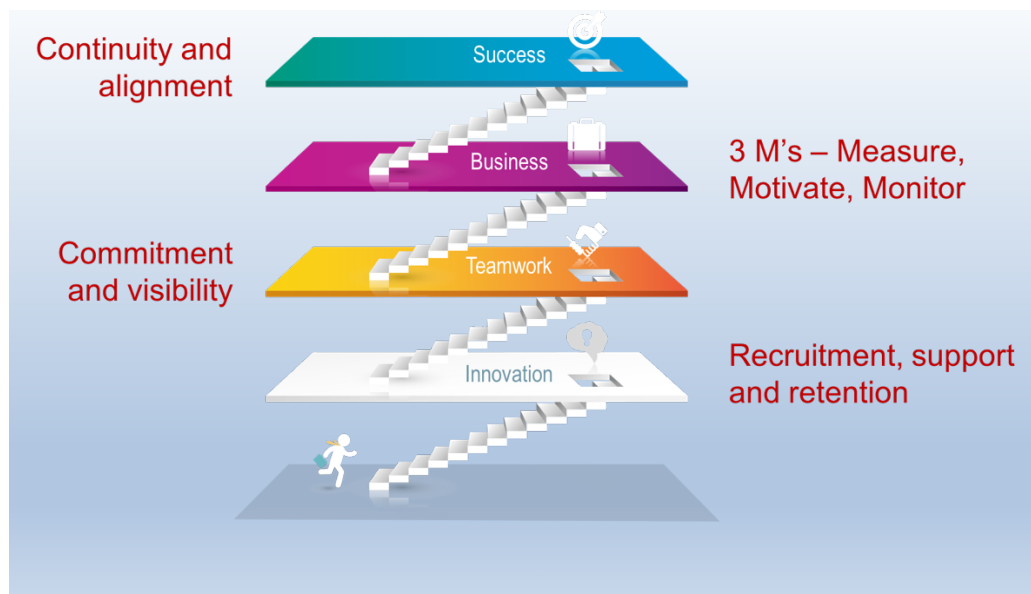
4.3 Member Engagement and Communication

Many members throughout this assessment have highlighted their appreciation for the organization's good intent, current efforts, and engagement and feedback opportunities on these critical issues. International ACAC has an opportunity to build on this process to increase engagement, improve communication and ensure greater responsiveness to its members.

Assessment results indicate the need for better member engagement and communication:

1. Survey response rate: Less than 50% of the email communication regarding the member survey was opened by the recipients. It is unclear how the current global pandemic may have impacted engagement in this assessment process. However, staff noted that the 50% email open rate is within the norm. As an example, the recent email on the annual conference, usually the most popular program offered by the organization, was opened by a little more than 50% of all email recipients.

2. Survey responses

    *   A significant number of questions in the survey had high response rates of "neural or don't know" (20%-34%). This may indicate that many members are not engaged or informed, and/or member communications have not been effective.

    *   63% of survey respondents felt that their perspectives and opinions are welcomed, with a low survey score of 3.76. 33% answered "neutral or don't know". These results were also consistent with individual comments that the organization were "defensive" or "not open" to complaints and suggestions.

FIGURE 21: PERSPECTIVES AND OPINIONS WELCOMED
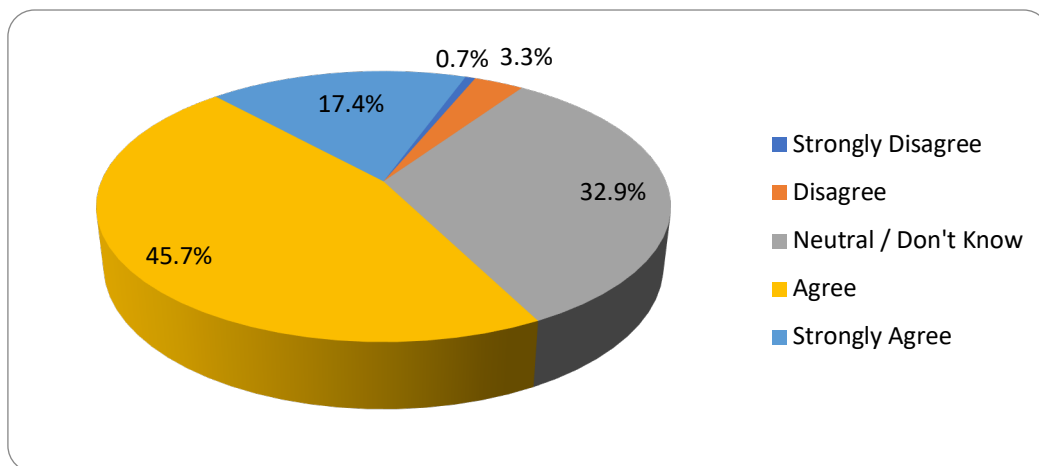
*   55% of US BIPOC respondents agreed that their perspectives and opinions are welcomed compared to 69% of US White respondents.

- 69% of survey respondents agreed that the organization provides ample opportunities for involvement, with a low score of 3.76, and a high rate of "don't know" (22%). The score is lowest among US BIPOC respondents, with a high percentage disagreeing (17%).

FIGURE 22: AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT
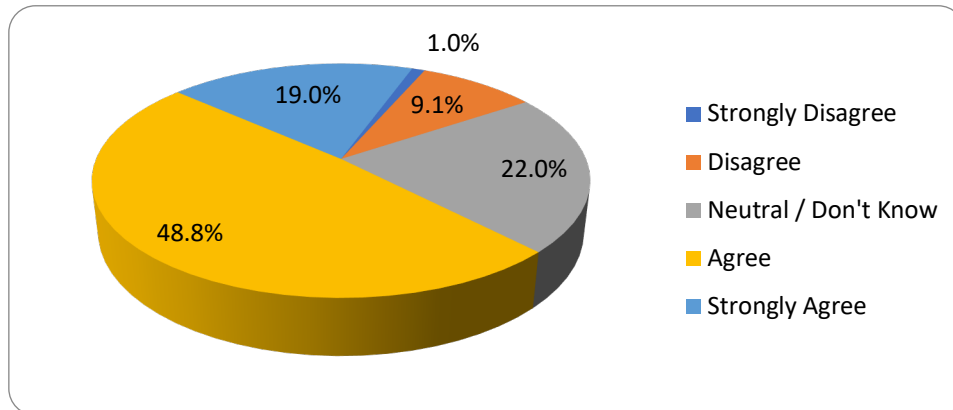
3. Other assessment results

- Based on interviews and review of documents, there are no current systematic strategies and systems to monitor, measure and improve member engagement and communications.

- There is a feeling among some members, evident from the survey comments, interviews and focus groups, that member perspectives are not valued and their voices are not being heard. This is particularly felt by members when it comes to the issue of DEIJ. Some members expressed reluctance speaking openly due to concerns about "negative repercussions".

- The organizational Facebook page is one medium where members can openly discuss issues and concerns related to the organization. However, because of fear of possible backlash from the leadership, members established an outside channel (separate Facebook page) where they can "vent off" their frustrations with the organization.

4.4 Organizational Clarity and Transparency

Given the rapid growth of the organization, the changing landscape of international higher education and college admission, and the diverse needs of its members, International ACAC has an opportunity to review its mission, vision, strategies, structures and systems to ensure continued relevancy and effectiveness.

The following assessment results indicate the need for greater clarity and transparency in all the above areas:

1. Survey responses

   - A significant number of questions in the survey had high response rates of "neural or don't know" (20%-34%). This may indicate that many members are not engaged or informed, and/or member communications have not been sufficient or effective.

   - On involvement opportunities, there was a low survey score of 3.76, indicating that members are unaware of opportunities, do not know how to get involved, opportunities are insufficient, and/or the organization is not providing relevant involvement opportunities. There was also a high rate of "don't know" (22%) to the question, and the score is lowest among US BIPOC respondents, with a high percentage disagreeing (17%).

   - Almost all regions also scored below 4.0 on the following areas with high rates of "don't know" responses (more than 20%):
     - Whether meetings and programs meet member needs
     - Whether networking opportunities meet member needs

   - As noted in Section 4.1, the lowest survey score (3.45) was on equal opportunity and whether members agreed that they have equal opportunity for leadership (i.e. Board and Committees) positions. Comments in the survey, individual interviews, focus groups and the Change Workgroup point to the perception of "clique-ness", being in the "in-group", "it's who you know", and "American-centric" as barriers to equal opportunity.

2. "American-centrism" and "International". A recurring theme in the assessment is the idea that International ACAC is "American-centric"; that it primarily serves members from the North American regions. Many question what makes the organization truly "international", as well as the nature and value of its relationship with NACAC.

3. Accessibility and transparency. Review of documents and members' comments highlighted the challenge of accessing and understanding the following:

   - How the organization works or function;

   - How to get involved;

   - How decisions are made and the roles of individual leaders and committee members;

- How feedback, suggestions and complaints are gathered and handled; and

- How committees function and do their work.

4.5 Leadership and Member Development

A key strength of International ACAC is shared understanding among leaders and members that DEIJ is essential to the mission of the organization. Leaders and members also demonstrate a deep commitment to the success of the organization and a strong willingness to improve. International ACAC has an opportunity to build on this commitment by developing and delivering specific development and support opportunities for leaders and members to:

- Increase leadership effectiveness,

- Increase member access to leadership roles,

- Improve global and intercultural competence,

- Increase shared understanding and DEIJ competence, and

- Develop structures, systems and practices that are diverse, equitable, and socially just.

Assessment results indicate the following:

1. Inconsistent or lack of specific training and development to support leadership effectiveness and success.

   - There is currently no consistent onboarding process for all leaders. Understanding among leaders on onboarding process was mixed with some indicating no formal onboarding process while others pointing to documents and one-on-one orientation. Onboarding of committee members is usually left to the appropriate committee chair or Vice President.

   - There are currently no specific or formal training and development for the Executive Board on key areas often necessary for board success. These areas include strategic thinking, effective decision-making and communication, inclusive and adaptive leadership, and financial and data analysis.

2. High member interest in learning more on DEIJ

   - 74% of survey respondents indicated interest in learning more on DEIJ. Interest is higher with BIPOC respondents (82%) compared to White respondents (70%). 20% of respondents answered "neutral or don't know".

FIGURE 23: INTEREST IN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ON DEIJ AT INTERNATIONAL ACAC
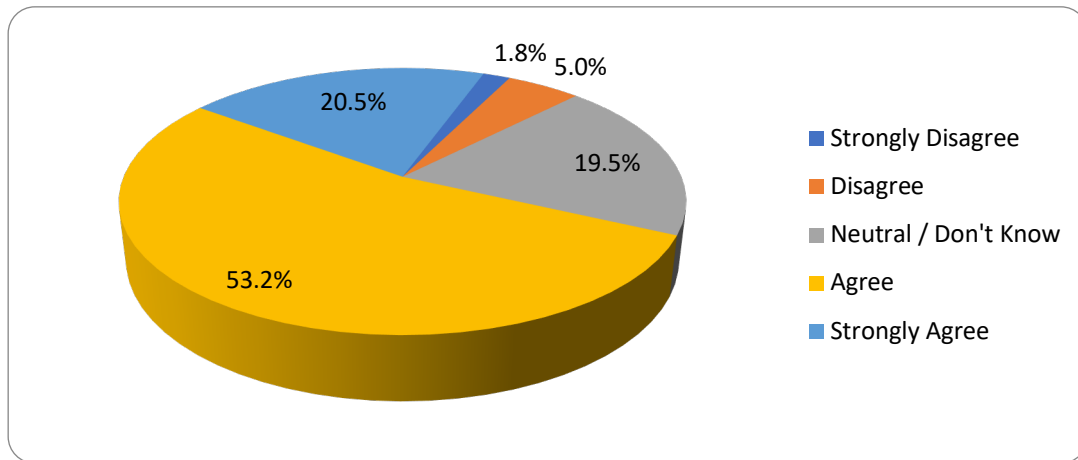
3. Group IDI Results - Orientation Gap. The IDI Group results are consistent with the desire to learn more about DEIJ. The group's Perceived Orientation (PO) is in the mindset of Acceptance. A group's PO is interpreted as where the group thinks it is. It is also where it wants to be or aspires to be. In the IDI mindset of Acceptance, a group deeply understands and values cultural differences. International ACAC aspires or intends to deeply understand and value cultural differences.

5 Recommendations - 7-S Framework

5.1 Shared Values, Mission and Vision

1. Strategic Planning

   - Review mission, vision and values given rapid growth and diverse membership needs and challenges.

   - Create a 5-year strategic plan.

2. DEIJ statement, principles and goals

   - Part of strategic planning process that can be a separate DEIJ strategy document or part of the organizational strategic plan.

   - Develop clear mission/vision/values statement, principles and definitions, goals and actions.

3. Review and clarify relationship with NACAC

   - Identify the rationale and value of the relationship as well as roles/responsibilities.

   - Cleary identify the impact of the relationship particularly with regards to International ACAC's unique role/status as an **international** organization.

5.2 Strategy

1. Strategic Planning (see 5.1.1 above on Shared Values)

   - Engage in a strategic planning process that identifies the following: Goals—Objectives—Tactics/Actions—Metrics—Accountabilities.

   - Consider appointing an ad hoc committee to draft the organization's 5-year strategic plan.

2. Key strategic areas – build on current "pillars" (from the organization's current draft strategy) with particular focus on:

   - Member engagement and communication

   - Diversity and representation

   - Leadership and member development

   - Communication strategy and plan for the current organizational change process.

5.3 Structures

1. Strategic and structural alignment

    • Align structures with 5-year strategic plan

    • Consider new governance and operational structures to increase effectiveness and performance, role and decision-making clarity, and adaptability to changing needs of members.

2. Regional Engagement and Representation - Within the current structure, consider creating a VP for Regional Engagement and a Committee for Regional Engagement

3. DEIJ - Within the current structure, consider creating a VP for "DEIJ" and a Committee for "DEIJ".

4. Executive Director - Define, clarify and codify role and function.

5.4 Systems

1. Policies and Procedures

    • Conduct a comprehensive inventory of programmed or routine activities of committees and Board members.

    • Develop formalized procedures and/or guidelines for key programs and activities.

    • Key areas to focus on:

        ○ Decision-making – process and decision-making authority

        ○ Onboarding for new leaders

        ○ Complaint/Grievance – policy and procedure for handling complaints and conflicts

        ○ Nomination and selection processes

2. Engagement & Communication Mapping

    • Map current engagement and communication systems and practices

    • Identify effectiveness and gaps

5.5 Staff (People/Members)

1. Engagement, representation, governance clarity and member development - These areas are addressed in Recommendations 5.1 through 5.4.

5.6 Skills and Style

1. Leadership Development and Support

   - Develop onboarding process

   - Develop leadership development program including formal mentoring and coaching for leaders.

   - Use leadership development program to widen and increase access to the leadership pipeline.

   - Key development areas:
     o Board roles/responsibilities
     o Strategic thinking – planning, systems, finance
     o Decision-making, communications and conflict
     o Global mindset and intercultural competence

2. Members' professional development

   - Key qualities, mindsets and skills for members

   - Integrate global mindset and intercultural competence in member professional development

6 Recommendations - Action Plan and Timeframe

The following recommended action plan and time frame are intended to assist International ACAC in their discussions on possible next steps.

6.1 Within 0-3 Months

1. Executive Board Planning: Engage in discussion and planning for member communication and action planning.

2. Member Communication: Develop and implement communication plan for engaging members on the assessment results and next steps. Possible strategies/tactics include:

   - Website information and feedback

   - Email summary and feedback

   - Regional presentations and dialogues

   - Asynchronous video presentation

   - Synchronous "open" presentations and dialogues

3. Ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee and subcommittees: Establish ad hoc committees to address specific recommendations with action plans and timeframe.

   - Ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee (SPC)

     o Focus on mission, values and key strategies

     o Approximately 15-20 members

     o Establish SPC website portal for ongoing updates and feedback for members

   - Ad hoc SPC Subcommittees

     o Regional Engagement (possibly use interim committee on regional engagement - see section 6.2.1 below)

     o Member Communication

     o Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice (possible use current Committee on Issues of Diversity, with additional members)

     o Leadership and Member Development

   - Considerations

     o Change Workgroup - invite them to be part of the SPC or one of the subcommittees

     o Use external or internal facilitators with expertise on strategic planning

6.2 Within 3-6 Months

1. Structural Changes

    • Establish and appoint Interim VP for Regional Engagement

    • Establish and appoint Interim VP for DEI(J)

    • Establish Committee on Regional Engagement

2. Organizational Mapping

    • Engagement activities

    • Communication activities

3. Strategic Planning

    • SPC - mission, vision, principles completed; draft key strategies

    • Subcommittees' ongoing work and providing results to SPC

    • SPC integrate subcommittee work and draft 5 year strategic plan with action plan

6.3 6-12 Months

1. Change and action plan

    • Specific actions, timeframe and accountabilities

2. Strategy and change implementation

    • Changes to bylaws, policies and procedures

    • Structural changes

7 Appendices

7.1 Survey Analysis (Comparison Tables)
7.2 Survey Results (All)
7.3 IDI Group Report

8 Further information

Should you wish to discuss this assessment further, or have questions please contact us at the contact details below. We would welcome the opportunity to engage in any future conversation to support International ACAC's future development.

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