

ORIGINAL ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

Effects of Inclusion and Exclusion From U.S. Psychology Department Diversity Statements Among Undergraduate Students of Color and Fat Students

Flora Blanchette¹  | Skyler Carter²  | Shariena Green² | Alexandra Garr-Schultz²  | Kimberly E. Chaney³

¹Department of Women's and Gender Studies, University of South Carolina, South Carolina, USA | ²Department of Psychological Sciences, University of Connecticut, Connecticut, USA | ³Department of Psychology, University at Buffalo SUNY, New York, USA

Correspondence: Flora Blanchette (floswald@sc.edu)

Received: 8 September 2025 | **Revised:** 23 April 2026 | **Accepted:** 25 April 2026

Keywords: backlash | body size | fatness | identity safety cue | mixed-methods

ABSTRACT

Although many organizations, including university psychology departments, have expanded diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, these initiatives often center a limited set of marginalized identities, leaving others underrepresented and potentially undermining identity safety. We analyzed diversity statements from 100 U.S. psychology departments (Study 1) and found that race/ethnicity, gender/sex, and sexual orientation were most frequently represented. Across two follow-up experimental studies ($N = 639$), omissions of commonly represented identities (race/ethnicity) were more noticeable and reduced anticipated departmental equity, whereas omissions of less-represented identities (body size) were less noticed and had no such effect (Study 2). Participants evaluated diversity statements less positively and attributed greater external motivation when body size was included, suggesting backlash against size inclusion. However, fat participants reported greater departmental interest and anticipated less fat stigma when body size was explicitly included (Study 3); diversity in faculty body size did not influence participants' evaluations of departments or equity perceptions.

1 | Introduction

Diversity statements—i.e., statements of an organization's claims about their diversity values (Kruk and Matsick 2021)—are acknowledged as an effective identity safety cue (ISC) for promoting belonging among marginalized group members (e.g., Purdie-Vaughns et al. 2008). In recent years, many organizations, including universities and academic departments, have adopted such statements alongside additional forms of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programming in an effort to combat the ongoing underrepresentation of historically marginalized groups in workplace and educational settings (e.g., Garr-Schultz and Carter [forthcoming](#), Wilton et al. [forthcoming](#)).

However, like many ISCs, evidence of the efficacy of diversity statements for promoting identity safety among marginalized group members is mixed and primarily based on a select few marginalized groups (primarily racial and gender minorities; see Gündemir et al. 2019; Kruk and Matsick 2021; Kruk et al. [forthcoming](#)). Yet, additional groups, including those marginalized on the basis of body size, experience marginalization in educational and organizational contexts in which diversity statements are often employed (e.g., De Saint Priest et al. 2024; Waite et al. 2024; see also Rios and Cohen 2023). In the current studies, we examined and considered which groups are more and less likely to be explicitly included in diversity statements, how the centering of certain groups influences general perceptions of

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial](#) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is not used for commercial purposes.

© 2026 The Author(s). *Journal of Social Issues* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

diversity statements, and how groups who are less-represented in diversity statements (specifically, fat people) perceive and reflect on inclusion or exclusion from diversity efforts.

1.1 | Diversity Statements: Focus and Effectiveness

Diversity statements articulate an institution's diversity and inclusion norms, values, and commitments. Existing research and theorizing suggests these statements often take one of two approaches: (1) a colorblind or identity-blind approach which de-emphasizes identity-based differences and promotes assimilation, or (2) a multicultural approach which emphasizes group differences and promotes inclusion (e.g., Laiduc and Covarrubias [forthcoming](#); Purdie-Vaughns et al. [2008](#); Wilton et al. [2015](#); Yantis et al. [forthcoming](#)). Evidence of the effectiveness of these two approaches in prompting feelings of identity safety among marginalized group members is mixed and appears dependent on a number of contextual factors (see Ragland and Sommers [2024](#)); recent research suggests that multicultural approaches to diversity are more beneficial for racial-ethnic and sexual minorities, while identity-blind approaches may benefit women more (Cipollina and Sanchez [2025](#); Gündemir et al. [2019](#)).

Multicultural diversity statements appear to be more common than identity-blind messaging in U.S. higher education contexts (Wilton et al. [2015](#)). Such diversity statements often take a normative form which includes a list of identities which the institution purports to value. These statements often prioritize race and gender (see Wilson et al. [2012](#)), in line with lay beliefs in the United States, which associate diversity with race and gender (Chen [2012](#)). Similarly, race and gender are the focus of the bulk of research on diversity (see Rios and Cohen [2023](#)) and ISCs (see Kruk and Matsick [2021](#); Kruk et al. [2026](#)). Accordingly, research on diversity statements as ISCs tends to prioritize the experiences of racial minorities and women (see Rios and Cohen [2023](#); Wilton et al. [2015](#)). We seek to diversify the literature by understanding how members of groups both frequently and infrequently centered in diversity statements (racial minorities and fat people, respectively), as well as more general samples, perceive inclusive, and exclusive diversity statements.

1.2 | Diversity and Belonging in Higher Education

Though many universities and departments have initiated diversity programming including the use of diversity statements (e.g., Starck et al. [2021](#); Wilson et al. [2012](#)), empirical assessment of these practices in the higher education space remains scarce (Ragland and Sommers [2024](#)). Yet, the efficacy of educational diversity practices is crucial, as students with a broad range of marginalized identities experience identity threat in higher education spaces, with negative consequences for both academic performance and psychological well-being (e.g., Froehlich et al. [2023](#); Grimes et al. [2020](#); Stewart et al. [2023](#)). Recent research suggests the potential efficacy of diversity statements as ISCs in this context, finding that university Psychology course syllabi containing diversity statements prompt heightened anticipated belonging among students with a range of marginalized identities (Howansky et al. [2022](#); Maimon et al. [2023](#)).

However, additional work suggests that, among Black participants with backgrounds in STEM, faculty representation—but not a diversity statement—led to more positive perceptions of the diversity-related climate of a hypothetical graduate department (Ragland and Sommers [2024](#)). The researchers conclude that evidence-based ISCs (i.e., demonstrations of commitment) may be more effective in cueing identity safety in the higher education context than are expression-based ISCs (i.e., diversity principles or ideals; see Wilton et al. [2020](#)). However, it is also possible that the institutionalization and normalization of diversity statements—particularly in environments where stated diversity ideals do not align with the actual experiences of marginalized group members (i.e., diversity dishonesty, see Wilton et al. [2020](#))—has created a milieu in which diversity statements have lost their capacity to signal identity safety (see Chaney et al. [2025](#); Kroeper et al. [2022](#); Wilton et al. [2020](#)).

Suspicion of diversity efforts, however, is highest among groups who tend to be targeted by those efforts, and lower among members of marginalized groups less-represented in those efforts, such as fat people (see also Chaney et al. [2026](#)). Particularly among groups commonly targeted in diversity efforts, such efforts may be perceived as performative or dishonest (see Alt et al. [2026](#); Wilton et al. [2020](#)) and may be assumed to be more externally motivated (e.g., by profit or public image) than internally motivated (i.e., motivated by values or beliefs; Pereira-Jorge et al. [2025](#)). For groups not commonly represented in diversity efforts, such as fat people, there is likely less external motivation for organizations to signal identity safety. Thus, we contend that, though diversity statements may not be effective signals of identity safety in higher education contexts for racial minority students, they may serve a salient identity safety function for members of groups who tend to be less represented in diversity efforts.

1.3 | Author Positionality

All authors of this study have engaged with DEI-related learning, teaching, and/or research within psychology departments at U.S. institutions. Members of the authorship team hold expertise on topics including fatness, diversity and inclusion in educational spaces, and identity safety. The authorship team identify as women with varying sexual identities, racial/ethnic identities, class backgrounds, ages, levels of education, and relationships to fatness.

1.4 | The Current Studies

Members of a broad range of marginalized groups experience pervasive stigmatization and identity threat, including in the context of higher education. In acknowledgement of this threat, ISCs, including the use of diversity statements, have been instantiated in this context, though their efficacy in prompting identity safety has rarely been evaluated (Ragland and Sommers [2024](#)). Even when evaluated, such ISCs are limited in scope, focusing primarily on members of specific marginalized groups, particularly those based on race/ethnicity and gender (Wilson et al. [2012](#)). In the current work, we examined representation in diversity statements, considering which groups are more- and less-represented in psychology department diversity statements,

how the centering of certain groups influences perceptions of diversity statements, and how groups who are less-represented in departmental diversity statements anticipate belonging depending on inclusion or exclusion from such statements. We thus advance understandings of the efficacy of diversity statements as ISCs among a broader range of marginalized groups and with implications for understanding the generalizability and boundaries of identity safety processes.

Given our own background as psychologists, and that psychology has been at the forefront of examining the efficacy of diversity statements as an ISC, in Study 1 we focus on diversity statements in the context of psychology departments at U.S. institutions of higher education. We first established which groups are more- and less-represented in psychology department diversity statements generally. In Study 2, in a sample of undergraduate Psychology students, we experimentally examined how the presence and absence of more and less well-represented identities (race and body size, respectively) in diversity statements influenced perceptions of psychology departments. In Study 3, we used targeted sampling to examine the effects of group identity inclusion in departmental diversity statements on members of a less-represented group (fat people), examining this expression-based ISC in tandem with an evidence-based ISC of faculty body size diversity, mirroring recent work on race (Ragland and Sommers 2024). All study materials are openly available online: https://osf.io/4xdaj/?view_only=7c5479353b1148ebac032f647113efd3.

2 | Study 1

In Study 1, we randomly sampled psychology departments at accredited postsecondary institutions in the U.S. to assess (a) the presence of diversity statements/philosophies in their online materials and (b) where present, the identities or forms of diversity included in these materials.

2.1 | Methodology

2.1.1 | Sampling

On September 5, 2023, we downloaded the Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs from the U.S. Department of Education (<https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home>). This database contains information reported to the U.S. Department of Education directly from recognized accrediting agencies and state approval agencies and therefore constitutes a comprehensive list of accredited postsecondary institutions in the U.S.

From this list of 35,284 accredited programs, we removed all child units (e.g., mobile and online programs associated with traditional campuses), external sites (e.g., teaching hospitals), and additional locations (e.g., high schools with accredited college enrollment programs). This resulted in a list of 9976 unique accredited postsecondary institutions. From these, we sought to randomly sample 100 diversity philosophies (~1% of our population). Recognizing that not all institutions would adopt diversity philosophies, we chose a set point approach in which we randomized the order of all institutions and proceeded through this randomized list examining the online presence of

the psychology department (if present) at each institution until we had found 100 psychology departments with online diversity statements or philosophies, or until we had run through the entire list of accredited institutions. We coded the webpages of 2427 universities to obtain a sample of 100 statements, suggesting about 4% of accredited higher education programs may have a psychology department with a diversity statement that was findable online in 2023. Of the 2247, 910 programs had a psychology department, suggesting that about 11% of institutions with a psychology department had a diversity statement that is findable online.

2.1.1.1 | Sample. Our final sample included 100 psychology programs' diversity statements. We downloaded PDF versions of each statement on December 12, 2023 (all statements available via https://osf.io/4xdaj/?view_only=7c5479353b1148ebac032f647113efd3).

2.1.2 | List of Marginalized Identities

We sought to develop a comprehensive list of marginalized identities/forms of marginalization in order to determine whether some of those identities/forms of marginalization were being left out in efforts toward increasing diversity. To do so, we compiled existing lists of marginalized identities and forms of marginalization and created a taxonomy of the types of identities and marginalization appearing in those lists (see OSM for development materials and full taxonomy). We additionally ran a pilot study asking undergraduate students to list marginalized identities/forms of marginalization, which we then merged with our list. We presented the final list to six academics representing various social identities and with expertise in DEI related topics for feedback on the taxonomy.

Our final taxonomy included 16 forms of marginalization, each of which was accompanied by a non-exhaustive list of example identities or experiences falling under that form of marginalization (e.g., the category of *visible differences* included fatness, facial differences, limb differences, etc.). This list served as our coding schema; we coded all diversity statements in our sample for whether each type of marginalization was represented.

2.1.3 | Coding

Five trained research assistants completed coding between October–December 2023; coding was double checked by the first author. Coders had an initial reliability/agreement of 92.07%. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion with the first author until consensus was reached.

2.2 | Results

We found significant variability in the rate at which different axes of marginalization were included in diversity statements (see Table 1). Racial/ethnic identity was represented significantly more frequently than any other identity, with gender/sex and sexual orientation following closely behind. Identity categories that were much less well-represented included criminal history, which was not represented in any diversity statements, as well as mental illness, victimization history, gender/sex status, visible differences, and veteran status.

TABLE 1 | Frequency of representation of axes of marginalization in diversity statements.

Form of marginalization	#Of times indicated
Racial/ethnic identity	65 _a
Sexual orientation	57 _b
Gender	57 _b
Socioeconomic status	49 _c
Religion	46 _c
Age	39 _d
Physical disability	38 _d
Intellectual disability	35 _d
Citizenship/nationality	33 _d
Culture	24 _e
Veteran status	8 _f
Visible differences	7 _f
Gender/sex status	6 _f
Victimization history	2 _{f,g}
Mental illness	1 _g
Criminal history	0 _g

Note: Given the sample size of 100, values represent both frequency and % of representation. Differing subscripts indicate statistically significant differences in representation (two-sided test; p 's < 0.005). Gender/sex status refers to one's identity as cis- or transgender, while gender refers to one's gender identity (e.g., as a woman or as nonbinary).

2.3 | Study 1 Discussion

In Study 1, we identified discrepancies in the rate of representation of a variety of forms of marginalization in psychology departments' online diversity materials. In our search process, we found that about 4% of accredited U.S. higher education programs had a psychology department with a diversity statement that is findable online. Many institutions likely have a broader institutional diversity statement rather than one presented at the departmental level; indeed, Wilson et al. (2012) noted that 65% of their sample of higher education institutions had an institutional diversity statement, a proportion which has likely increased with increased attention to DEI in recent years—though notably, the visibility or presence of such statements may have decreased since 2025 when governmental threats to DEI programming emerged prominently.

In line with prior research suggesting the prominence of racial/ethnic identity in diversity statements and programming broadly (e.g., Zeng and Kirby *forthcoming*; Rios and Cohen 2023), we found that racial/ethnic identity was the most commonly represented identity category in psychology department diversity statements, followed by gender and sexual orientation (see also Kruk and Matsick 2021). These findings reflect trends in previous research on diversity statements, which also found race and ethnicity to be most frequently mentioned, though at a lower rate of 19% representation in a sample of 80 academic institutions (Wilson et al. 2012).

Other axes of identity were much less frequently represented. Criminal history was not represented in any diversity statements despite significant literature indicating disparities and identity

threat in educational contexts among people who have been incarcerated (e.g., Mukamal and Silbert 2018; Schreeche-Powell 2025). Veteran status was not well-represented, despite being a protected class under U.S. law, highlighting tensions between which identities are legally protected and which are considered when diversity is discussed. Neither victimization history nor mental illness was well-represented, though in some cases, mental illness may be considered under the category of disability. Gender/sex status (i.e., one's status as cis- or transgender) was also not well-represented but may be subsumed under the broader category of gender or gender identity, which was prominent in diversity statements; a similar argument could be made for culture and race/ethnicity. However, we opted to retain these as separate categories for our analysis, given that our taxonomy of forms of marginalization was developed a priori with input from multiple experts and, in all cases, these potential subcategories were explicitly mentioned independent of the broader domain at least once.

Finally, the category of visible differences was not well-represented in diversity statements. We conceptualized this category as including a range of potential visible differences, including those resulting from medical conditions or injuries (e.g., facial paralysis) and diversity in body shape and size (e.g., dwarfism, fatness), similar to Waite et al.'s (2024) conceptualization of characteristics included in appearance inclusivity. Despite the possible range of this category, and that people who would fall into this category comprise a significant portion of the population (for example, fat people alone make up an estimated 20%–44% of the college student population (Bailey et al. 2020), we only found seven mentions. Further, this absence is despite significant evidence that fat people experience ongoing and

pervasive marginalization in higher education spaces (e.g., Rezaei 2024; Stevens 2018; Stewart et al. 2023). With only 11% of university psychology departments having a diversity statement, and only around 7% of these including any form of visible difference, fat people are effectively excluded from contemporary DEI efforts in psychology (see also Dufur and Fox Okeke 2024).

Thus, despite acknowledgement of fat people's marginalization in higher education contexts, body size remains on the sidelines of or completely excluded from contemporary diversity efforts (Dufur and Fox Okeke 2024). This may in part be due to lay perceptions that anti-fatness is not serious or is in fact deserved by fat people, who are seen as responsible and therefore blameworthy for their own fatness and corresponding marginalization (see Oswald et al. 2025a). One qualitative study with fat participants revealed that diversity philosophies did not act as a salient ISC for fat people; the researchers suggest that this is due to their exclusion from most DEI programming (see Oswald et al. 2022). We thus consider fat people as a less-represented marginalized group and examine how the inclusion and exclusion of body size shapes perceptions of diversity statements.

3 | Study 2

In Study 2, we sought to experimentally examine how the presence and absence of more and less represented identities in diversity statements influenced perceptions of psychology departments. We manipulated the inclusion of a frequently represented identity (race/ethnicity) and a less frequently represented identity (body size) in diversity statements. We expected that participants in the high-representation-missing (race-missing) condition would be more likely than those in the low-representation-missing (size-missing) condition to spontaneously note the absence of the manipulated category (i.e., missing race/ethnicity would be noticed more often than missing body size). Furthermore, we expected that the absence of race would lead to more negative downstream evaluations of the department's racial equity in the race-missing condition, but that the absence of fatness would be less noticed and therefore would not impact downstream evaluations of size/bodily equity in the size-missing department.

We anticipated that we might observe some backlash toward the inclusion of fatness in diversity statements. Body size is not a legally protected identity, unlike many of the other categories often included in such statements (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity; see Meadows et al. 2022). Further, while many other axes of marginalization are considered to be uncontrollable and thus not blameworthy, body size is often thought of as being under individual control, and those with fat bodies are seen as responsible for their body size and thus blameworthy (see Nath 2019). Further, given backlash toward fat social justice efforts (see Oswald et al. 2025a), we anticipated that participants might respond negatively to the inclusion of fatness in diversity statements.

3.1 | Methodology

3.1.1 | Participants

An a priori power analysis for a small to medium effect indicated a desired sample of 246 participants (80% power) for a three-

cell one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). We oversampled to account for potential data quality issues.

An initial sample of undergraduate U.S. psychology students were recruited via Prolific; all participants completed the full survey and failed less than two attention checks, therefore no participants were excluded. The sample consisted of 279 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 29.47$, $SD = 9.43$). Participants were on average moderately liberal ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.49$) on a scale ranging from 1 (*very liberal*) to 7 (*very conservative*). Detailed participant demographics are presented in Table 2.

3.1.2 | Materials and Procedure

We selected the most inclusive statement based on our coding in the previous study to serve as the base stimulus and added mention of each of our coding categories (including mental illness, criminal history, victimization history, and visible differences, which were not originally noted). We altered the statement slightly to reduce length.

We created three versions of the statement: A fully inclusive control condition (all identities/forms of oppression mentioned); a high-representation missing condition (all identities/forms of oppression mentioned except race/ethnicity); and a low-representation missing condition (all identities/forms of oppression mentioned except visible differences—which we operationalized as body size). All statements are available in the Supporting Information.

Upon consenting and providing demographics, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three diversity statement conditions detailed above (race-missing, size-missing, and control). Participants were given the following cover story:

“Please imagine that you are a student member of your University Psychology department's council. In that role, you have a say in the departmental policies on things like course content, academic policies, and DEI initiatives. The department has drafted a new diversity statement as part of the DEI initiative. This statement will be posted on the department website and on internal department materials. As a member of the department council, you have been asked to review the diversity statement.”

After reviewing these instructions, participants were asked to carefully read the assigned diversity statement. The statement remained on the screen as participants completed the below measures in the order displayed below.

3.1.3 | Measures

3.1.3.1 | Identities Missing. Participants responded to the single item, “Are there any important identities that you feel have been left out of this statement?” Response options included “Yes, there are important identities missing” and “No, there are no important identities missing.” If participants responded in the affirmative, they were asked to respond to an open-ended item, “Please list the identities that you feel have been left out of this statement.”

TABLE 2 | Participant demographics (Studies 2–3).

Demographic	Study 2 (N = 279)	Study 3 (N = 360)
Race/ethnicity		
Black or African American	10.0%	9.4%
Asian or Asian American	16.1%	5.0%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	10.8%	7.5%
Indigenous or Native American	1.1%	2.8%
Middle Eastern or Arab	0.7%	0.3%
Multiracial/Multiethnic	3.6%	3.1%
White or Caucasian	65.6%	78.1%
Gender identity		
Male or man	25.1%	33.9%
Female or woman	67.7%	63.6%
Nonbinary/Genderqueer	6.5%	2.5%
Another identity/specify	0.7%	—
Sexual orientation		
Bisexual	22.9%	8.6%
Pansexual	—	2.8%
Gay	4.7%	3.9%
Lesbian	5.7%	3.3%
Queer	5.0%	1.4%
Straight/heterosexual	55.2%	76.4%
Asexual	3.6%	1.9%
Another identity/specify	2.9%	1.7%
Body size		
Very underweight/underweight	11.1%	—
The proper weight	48.7%	8.3%
Overweight/very overweight	40.1%	91.7%

Note: Participants could select more than one racial/ethnic category.

3.1.3.2 | Identities to Remove. Participants responded to the single item, “Are there any identities listed in this statement that you do not think should be included here (i.e., that should be removed)?” Response options included “Yes, there are identities listed in this statement that should be removed” and “No, there are no identities listed in this statement that should be removed.” If participants responded in the affirmative, they were asked to respond to an open-ended item, “Please list the identities that you feel should be removed from this statement.”

3.1.3.3 | Anticipated Stigma. Participants responded to nine items total (three items per group) assessing anticipated stigma in the department toward three marginalized groups (people of color, fat people, women; e.g., “How likely do you think it is that fat students are mistreated because of their body size in this department?”). Participants responded to each item on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 5 (*extremely likely*). We calculated scores for anticipated stigma toward each marginalized group ($\alpha_{\text{POC}} = 0.942$, $\alpha_{\text{fat}} = 0.389$, $\alpha_{\text{women}} = 0.756^1$).

3.1.3.4 | Procedural Fairness. Participants responded to six items assessing their perceptions of the target psychology department’s fairness toward marginalized groups, (e.g., “The faculty in this department treat marginalized students with respect”). Items were adapted from Chaney et al. (2019). Participants responded on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), $\alpha = 0.906$.

3.1.3.5 | Perceptions of Diversity Statement. Participants responded to the single item, “How positively do you feel about this diversity statement overall?” Responses were made on a sliding scale ranging from 0 (*extremely negative*) to 100 (*extremely positive*).

3.1.3.6 | Relative Department DEI Concern. Participants responded to six items assessing their perceptions of the target psychology department relative to similar psychology departments (e.g., “In your opinion, relative to other Psychology departments this department is more likely to promote racial equity”). Participants responded on a Likert-type scale ranging

from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). We examined both the single items for racial and bodily equity as well as an overall relative DEI concern index calculated by averaging responses to all items ($\alpha = 0.931$).

3.1.3.7 | Motivations for Diversity Statement.

Participants responded to seven items, adapted from Pereira-Jorge et al. (2025) assessing “how likely it is that the department that you read about above created this diversity statement for the following reasons...” Response options included three items assessing internal motivations (e.g., “The department believes it is wrong not to be inclusive of marginalized groups”) and four items assessing external motivations (e.g., “The department wants to avoid disapproval from others”). Participants responded to each item on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 5 (*extremely likely*), $\alpha_{\text{internal}} = 0.689$, $\alpha_{\text{external}} = 0.761$.

3.2 | Results

3.2.1 | Identity Absence Effects

A Kruskal–Wallis H test, $\chi^2(2) = 16.998$, $p < 0.001$, showed that participants in the race-missing condition were significantly more likely than those in the size-missing ($H = 27.382$, $p < 0.001$) or control conditions ($H = 17.925$, $p = 0.008$) to indicate that an identity was missing from the diversity statement. There were no differences by condition in the rate of participants reporting that an identity should be removed from the statements, $\chi^2(2) = 2.802$, $p = 0.246$.

Participants were more likely to notice race as missing than body size, $\chi^2(1) = 17.650$, $p < 0.001$. In the race-missing condition, 18.27% of participants indicated that race or ethnicity was missing from the statement; in the size-missing condition, zero participants indicated that body size was missing from the statement. Furthermore, across conditions with race included, zero participants thought that race should be removed from the statement, while across conditions with size included, 2.87% of participants thought that body size should be removed.

Fisher’s exact test indicated that noticing race as missing was not dependent on participant racial identity (White vs. POC; $p = 0.095$). Similarly, indicating that body size should be removed from the statement was not dependent on participant body size (overweight vs. underweight/proper weight; $p = 0.309$).

3.2.2 | Downstream Effects: Anticipated Stigma and Fairness

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics for all comparisons reported here. Table S1 shows descriptives for all outcomes by condition.

3.2.2.1 | Race/Ethnicity. Participants in the race-missing condition anticipated heightened race-related stigma in the department relative to the control or size-missing conditions, $F(2, 276) = 5.77$, $p = 0.004$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.040$, and perceived the race-missing department as less likely to promote racial equity relative to the size-missing, but not control condition, $F(2, 276) = 3.89$, $p = 0.021$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.027^2$.

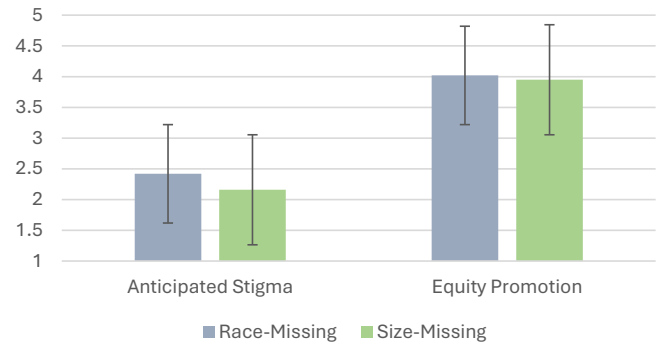


FIGURE 1 | Anticipated stigma and equity for minority groups. *Note:* Values represent size-based anticipated stigma and bodily equity for size-missing condition; values represent race-based anticipated stigma and racial equity for race-missing condition. Error bars represent standard deviations. [Color figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com)]

3.2.2.2 | Body Size. Participants in the size-missing condition did not anticipate heightened fat stigma in the department relative to the control or race-missing conditions, $F(2, 276) = 2.09$, $p = 0.125$. Further, participants did not perceive the size-missing department as less likely to promote bodily equity relative to the control or race-missing condition, $F(2, 276) = 0.88$, $p = 0.417$. Figure 1 shows means for race-missing and size-missing conditions.

3.2.3 | Departmental Perceptions

As the control condition diversity statement contained both race/ethnicity and size, for our tests of general departmental perception outcomes we created binary variables to conduct comparisons between conditions where the variables of interest were present versus absent. That is, we recoded the condition variable into two new variables: (1) a race-present (control and size-missing) vs. absent (race-missing) variable and (2) a size-present (control and race-missing) vs. absent (size-missing) variable. We examined how the presence of race and size influenced overall perceptions of the diversity statement, perceptions of the department’s diversity concern, assessments of the department’s procedural fairness, and perceived motivations for the department’s diversity statement. Reported analyses below utilize Welch tests given unequal variances in the size-disparate recoded conditions. Means and standard deviations for all comparisons are presented in Table 4.

3.2.3.1 | Race/Ethnicity. There were no significant differences between race-present and race-absent conditions on overall feelings toward the diversity statement ($p = 0.107$), anticipated procedural fairness ($p = 0.234$) or perceived external motivations for the diversity statement ($p = 0.195$). Participants in race-present conditions perceived the department as having heightened overall diversity concerns relative to those in the race-absent condition, $F(1, 188.77) = 5.52$, $p = 0.020$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.021$. Participants in race-present conditions also perceived the department as having heightened internal DEI motivations relative to those in the race-absent condition, $F(1, 208.03) = 4.10$, $p = 0.044$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.015$.

3.2.3.2 | Body Size. Participants in size-present conditions felt less positively toward the diversity statement relative to those

TABLE 3 | Means (standard deviations) for key downstream outcomes by condition, Study 2.

Outcome	Race-missing	Size-missing	Control
Anticipated racial stigma	2.42 (1.16)	1.99 (0.99)	2.00 (0.94)
Promote racial equality	3.95 (0.85)	4.26 (0.71)	4.17 (0.82)
Anticipated fat stigma	2.36 (1.12)	2.16 (1.00)	2.07 (0.91)
Promote bodily equality	4.17 (0.78)	4.02 (0.84)	4.14 (0.79)

Note: For anticipated fat stigma, we tested each individual item as well as the overall anticipated stigma scale given the low reliability, but found no significant differences for individual items (p 's > 0.300).

TABLE 4 | Means (standard deviations) for key departmental perceptions by condition, Study 2.

Outcome	Race-present	Race-absent	Size-present	Size-absent
Feelings toward diversity statement	81.99 (15.53)	78.39 (19.22)	79.01 (18.14)	84.28 (13.79)*
Overall DEI concerns	4.25 (0.65)	4.04 (0.77)*	4.11 (0.73)	4.31 (0.63)*
Anticipated procedural fairness	4.10 (0.69)	4.00 (0.66)	4.01 (0.69)	4.20 (0.65)*
Perceived internal DEI motives	4.27 (0.68)	4.09 (0.72)*	4.16 (0.70)	4.28 (0.70)
Perceived external DEI motives	4.18 (0.74)	4.28 (0.57)	4.29 (0.63)	4.04 (0.78)*

Note: Asterisks indicate a significant comparison within race conditions or size conditions.

in the size-absent condition, $F(1, 214.48) = 7.11$, $p = 0.008$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.021$, and perceived the size-inclusive department as having lower overall DEI concerns relative to the size-absent condition, $F(1, 191.34) = 5.37$, $p = 0.022$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.017$. Similarly, participants in size-present conditions perceived the department as having less procedural fairness toward marginalized students relative to those in the size-absent condition, $F(1, 174.23) = 5.05$, $p = 0.026$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.017$. Finally, the size-present departments were perceived as having greater external DEI motivations than the department in the size-absent condition, $F(1, 138.23) = 6.85$, $p = 0.010$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.028$; there were no significant differences in perceived internal DEI motives ($p = 0.165$).

3.3 | Study 2 Discussion

Study 2 findings supported our hypotheses. The absence of a high-representation identity (race/ethnicity) was more likely to be noticed than the absence of a low-representation identity (body size). Indeed, a number of participants even suggested that body size should be removed from the diversity statement, while no participants indicated that race should be removed, suggesting a differential valuation of these forms of diversity. Notably, participant race and body size did not influence these effects, though our samples were not demographically targeted to capture racial or body minority effects.

Furthermore, the absence of race, but not body size, led to more negative downstream expectations of marginalization within the department. Specifically, participants believed that the race-missing department was less likely to promote racial equity than the size-missing department and anticipated heightened race-related stigma relative to the other departments. Participants also perceived diversity statements that included race as signaling that departments had greater concerns about DEI and were more internally motivated to produce the diversity statement.

These findings together indicate that racial inclusion promotes identity safety and is seen as a signal of a DEI-conscious organization, likely due to race inclusion being the norm for diversity programming (see also Zeng and Kirby [forthcoming](#)).

Conversely, participants overall felt more positively toward departmental diversity statements when body size was absent, suggesting a salient backlash to the inclusion of body size in departmental diversity statements; backlash toward fat inclusion in social justice is common, as fat people are often seen as responsible for their marginalization and therefore not deserving of inclusion or equity (see Oswald et al. [2025a](#)). Although the absence of body size did not influence expectations of how body minorities or fat people in particular would be treated in the target department, participants perceived the department as having heightened DEI concern when body size was absent from the diversity statement, and perceived the department as having more external motivation to produce the diversity statement when body size was present. These findings may suggest that participants do not perceive fat stigma as problematic or likely (and thus inclusion in diversity programming would have no impact on fat people's experiences; see also Meadows et al. [2022](#)), or may be indicative of a sentiment that the inclusion is merely performative and would not reflect any authentic efforts at inclusion (see also Kruk et al. [forthcoming](#)). However, in this study, most participants did not hold the target identities, given the majority of the sample was White and not fat.

4 | Study 3

To better understand the identity safety effects of inclusion in departmental diversity statements for less-represented groups, in Study 3 we used targeted sampling to examine the effect of diversity statement inclusion on fat people. Additionally, we introduced a second manipulation, manipulating the body size

diversity of the departmental faculty, to examine the effect of multiple ISCs in tandem. We were thus able to test the same combination of evidence-based and expression-based ISCs as recent research focusing on racial minority students' perceptions of identity safety in a psychology department (see Ragland and Sommers 2024).

4.1 | Methodology

4.1.1 | Participants

An a priori power analysis indicated a minimum of 351 participants for a 2×2 between-subjects design with 80% power to detect a small effect size ($f = 0.15$). We oversampled 365 fat participants to account for exclusions. Participants were recruited via Prolific in 2024. We removed four participants who failed two or more attention checks and one who provided improbable weight/height data. Given our focus on a fat sample, these participants, unlike Study 2, were not a targeted sample of undergraduate psychology students.

The final sample consisted of 360 fat or overweight-identifying participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 45.26$, $SD = 13.30$). Participants were on average politically moderate ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.71$) on a scale ranging from 1 (*very liberal*) to 7 (*very conservative*). Participants reported identifying with descriptors such as fat (63.6%), obese (28.3%), curvy (27.5%), overweight (26.7%), and big (19.7%), among others. Detailed demographics are presented in Table 2.

4.1.2 | Materials and Procedure

The study was advertised to participants as an examination of perceptions of diversity practices. Upon consenting and entering the study, participants were asked to imagine themselves as part of a university task force that had been asked to review the psychology department's public-facing materials, and particularly the department's new diversity statement. The website participants were shown also included filler info (e.g., a blurb labeled "Why study Psychology?").

The fully inclusive control statement and size-missing statement from Study 2 were utilized. We also manipulated body size representation among departmental faculty. We selected neutral, White faces from the Chicago Face Database (CFD; Ma et al. 2015) to serve as stimuli. Six of the nine faces were identical across conditions; the other three faces were roughly matched on age and attractiveness to adapted CFD images from prior work examining fatness; in this prior work, the fat face stimuli were validated among undergraduate samples and demonstrated identity-safety effects among fat samples (Blanchette et al. Unpublished manuscript). We thus had two representation conditions: all-thin or size-diverse, with the size-diverse condition depicting three fat faces. Faces were photoshopped onto backgrounds representing relatively neutral environments that one might expect to or often see as videoconferencing backgrounds.

Participants were shown a webpage that included both a faculty Zoom image (see Figure 2) and the departmental diversity statement in a 2 (faculty size: all thin, size-diverse) \times 2 (diversity

statement: size included, size missing) between-subjects design. After reviewing the materials, participants responded to the measures detailed below.

4.1.3 | Measures

We used the same measures of *Identities Missing*, *Anticipated Stigma* ($\alpha_{\text{POC}} = 0.962$, $\alpha_{\text{fat}} = 0.947$, $\alpha_{\text{women}} = 0.942$), and internal and external DEI motivations ($\alpha_{\text{internal}} = 0.782$, $\alpha_{\text{external}} = 0.778$), as in Study 2. Additional measures included in this study are outlined below.

4.1.3.1 | Faculty Size Diversity. We included a manipulation check for size diversity ("Based on the information from the website, how diverse are the faculty in this department in terms of body size?") with responses ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*a great deal*).

4.1.3.2 | Personal Interest in Department. We included a measure of interest, adapted from Pereira-Jorge et al. (2025), which included five items (e.g., "I feel like I would belong in this department."). Participants responded to each item on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*); item scores were averaged to create a total personal interest score ($\alpha = 0.912$).

4.1.3.3 | Open-Ended Questions. At the end of the survey, participants responded to a series of questions about DEI statements. Participants responded to two open-ended items [emphasis original], "Do you *expect* fat identities or body size to be represented in diversity statements like the one you viewed here? Why or why not?," and "Do you *think it is important or valuable* for fat identities or body size to be represented in diversity statements like the one you viewed here? Should fatness/body size be included in efforts toward diversity, and why or why not? What, if anything, does it tell you when fatness/body size is not included in such statements?"

4.2 | Results

4.2.1 | Quantitative Findings

We first established that participants in the diverse faculty condition ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.10$) perceived the faculty as more diverse in body size than those in the thin-only condition ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.26$), $F(1, 357) = 4.19$, $p = 0.041$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.012$. Only six participants (all in the size-missing condition) acknowledged the absence of body size or fatness in the diversity statement.

For our primary analyses, we used 2×2 ANOVAs to examine the effects of faculty size and representation in diversity statements on perceptions of the psychology department. There were no significant effects of condition on perceived internal or external DEI motivations; see Table 5. However, there was a significant effect of diversity statement condition on personal interest in the department; participants in the inclusive statement condition ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.98$) reported heightened personal interest in the department relative to those in the size-missing condition ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.03$), $F(1, 355) = 7.68$, $p = 0.006$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.021$; see

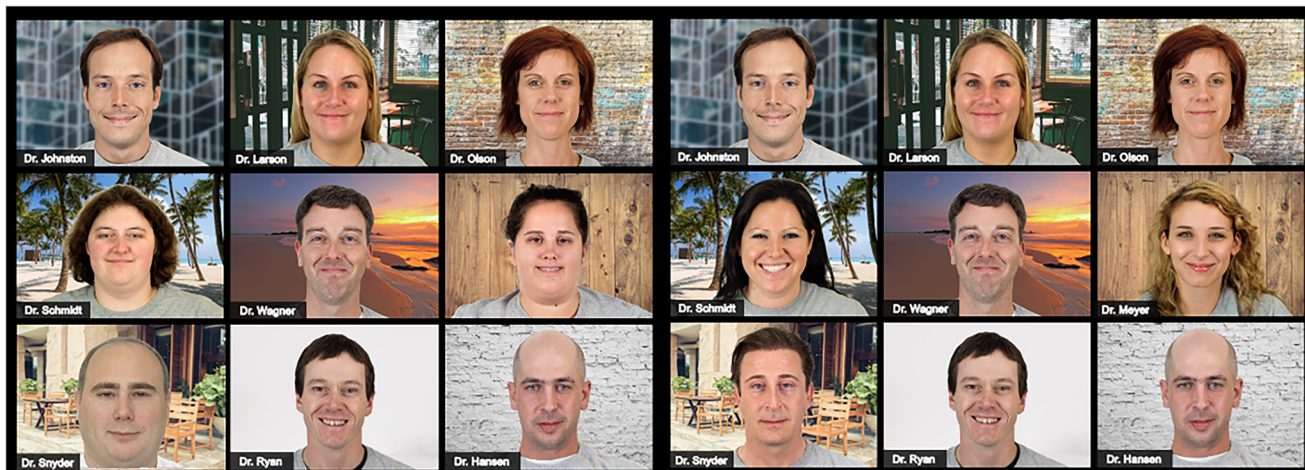


FIGURE 2 | Website information displaying size-diverse (left) and control (right) condition faculty images. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

TABLE 5 | Study 3 ANOVA results for internal and external DEI motivations.

Outcomes	Diversity statement condition			Faculty size diversity condition			Interaction effect		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Internal DEI motivations	2.02	0.156	0.006	0.34	0.561	0.001	3.09	0.079	0.009
External DEI motivations	0.18	0.670	0.001	0.370	0.544	0.001	1.16	0.283	0.003

Note: $F(1,355)$.

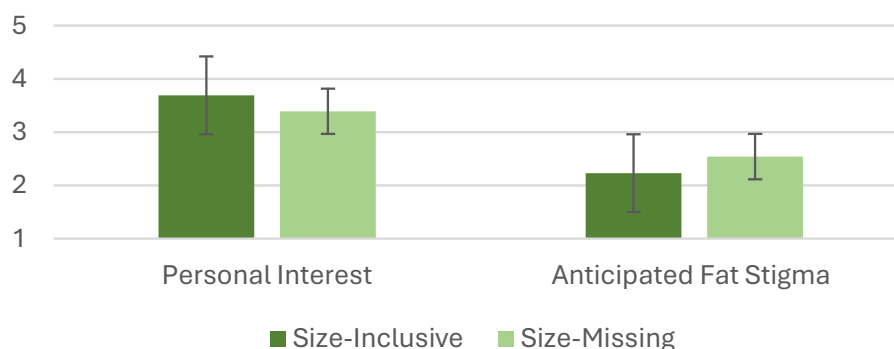


FIGURE 3 | Effects of size inclusion in departmental diversity statement on interest and anticipated stigma. Note: Error bars depict standard error. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Figure 3. The effect of faculty size diversity was not significant, $F(1, 355) = 0.16, p = 0.689, \eta_p^2 = 0.000$ nor was the interaction, $F(1, 355) = 1.38, p = 0.245, \eta_p^2 = 0.004$.

Similarly, there was a significant effect of diversity statement condition on anticipated fat stigma. Participants in the inclusive statement condition ($M = 2.23, SD = 0.92$) reported less anticipated fat stigma in the department relative to those in the size-missing condition ($M = 2.54, SD = 1.09$), $F(1, 355) = 8.27, p = 0.004, \eta_p^2 = 0.023$; see Figure 3. The effect of faculty size diversity was non-significant, $F(1, 355) = 1.08, p = 0.299, \eta_p^2 = 0.003$, nor was the interaction, $F(1, 355) = 0.41, p = 0.524, \eta_p^2 = 0.001$. Additional analyses are presented in the Supporting Information.

4.2.2 | Qualitative Analysis and Findings

We used a consensual qualitative research—modified approach (CQR-M; Spangler et al. 2012) to analyze our qualitative data. CQR-M is a data-driven approach used to analyze large samples of relatively brief, simple qualitative data (Spangler et al. 2012). We coded responses to each of the open-ended items separately, developing unique sets of codes to characterize each set of responses.

Two trained authors coded the data, and the first author acted as a mediator in discussions. The coders first read papers on best practices for CQR-M (Spangler et al. 2012), then separately read

through the qualitative dataset as many times as it took to become familiar with responses before developing initial domains. Once coders had an initial scheme, the research team met to develop a comprehensive set of coding categories for each of the two questions.

We then developed a spreadsheet to track the responses of each participant and identify the presence and absence of each code in each response. This allowed us to calculate how many times each code was represented in the data. Coders independently indicated the presence or absence of each theme in a response (1 = *theme present*, 0 = *theme absent*). Initial coding reliability across the coders was 94.7%; discrepancies were resolved through conversation between the coders. A given response could be coded for more than one theme. We removed any codes that were represented in <1% of responses as per best practices (Spangler et al. 2012).

4.2.2.1 | Expectations of Inclusion. Eighteen codes best characterized responses for expectations of inclusion of body size in diversity statements. Table 6 provides a comprehensive depiction of all codes; here, we briefly review particularly salient or relevant codes to provide additional context.

Broadly, more participants reported *acceptance of body size as an identity in DEI* (23.3%) than *resistance to body size as an identity in DEI* (13.2%). The most reported reason supporting the inclusion of body size in DEI was the notion of *weight-based discrimination*, with participants reasoning that since weight-based discrimination exists and harms fat people, fatness should be included in efforts toward diversity and inclusion (e.g., “Yes. People who are overweight are discriminated against on a daily basis just like other marginalized groups”—48 year-old White woman who described herself as overweight). Conversely, opposition to the inclusion of body size in DEI endorsed the notion that *weight-based discrimination isn't as bad as other forms of stigma* (e.g., “No I don't. I'm obese myself and am also gay. I've found over the years a lot more stigma attached with sexual orientation than body size. Being overweight isn't going to affect the way someone learns.”—58 year-old White man who described himself as large).

Similarly, those who supported the inclusion of body size in DEI suggested that body size should be included because *fatness is not controllable* (e.g., “It would be nice to see body size included in DEI statements, because some people cannot control their “fatness”, and face discrimination for their weight.” - 55 year-old White woman who described herself as tall); contrarily, those who opposed the inclusion of body size in DEI efforts indicated that *fatness should not be included because it is controllable* (e.g., “Body size is one of the only things a person has some measure of control of from an appearance standpoint. Black people can't stop being black, but bigger people can do things to lose weight or appear slimmer. It is kind of up to them.”—48-year-old White man who described himself as overweight).

Among other codes, participants frequently acknowledged how norms shape expectations of body size in DEI. For instance, participants noted that *DEI norms exclude fatness* (e.g., “I think body size is often left out of diversity conversations. Therefore I would not expect it to be represented in diversity statements, but I am very pleasantly surprised to have seen it. It should

not be so often omitted from conversations about diversity.”—40 year-old Black woman who described herself as overweight) and that overarching norms situate *fat prejudice as socially acceptable* and therefore unlikely to be acknowledged in DEI conversations (e.g., “Probably wouldn't be represented because that's one social stigma that seems ok to be rude and nasty to large people.”—52 year-old White man who described himself as plump). Participants also pondered how the inclusion of body size in DEI demonstrated *fit with DEI values* (e.g., “I think that if we feel the need to make a diversity statement than body size and shape is also a diversity.”—58 year-old White woman who described her body as comfortable) and noted that body size appears low in the *DEI hierarchy* (e.g., “I do not expect this as most faculties, organizations, or companies focus more so on gender/sex, race/ethnicity, and sometimes LGBTQ+.”—26 year-old Asian woman who described herself as midsize). A number of similar codes emerged when participants were asked to consider the importance of including body size in DEI efforts.

4.2.2.2 | Importance of Inclusion. Twenty-three codes best characterized the importance of body size as an included identity in diversity statements. Table 7 provides a comprehensive depiction of all codes. Below, we briefly review the most salient or relevant codes to provide additional context.

Overall, more participants reported holistic acceptance of body size as an important identity in DEI (47.5%) than resistance to including body size in DEI (27.7%). Again, weight-based discrimination was the most commonly cited reason for its importance. These participants acknowledged that anti-fat discrimination exists and, as a result, fatness is important to include and recognize in statements (e.g., “Yes, I think it's crucial. As I mentioned before, there is currently discrimination going on in jobs against people who are fat. I don't think there is any difference in job performance based on body size. And since there is discrimination going on, it is very important it be included in diversity statements”—60-year-old White woman who described herself as overweight). Others believed it is important to include because fatness is not controllable (e.g., “there are a lot of people who are just genetically more likely to carry extra weight, or have patterns established during early childhood that are difficult to change”—45-year-old White woman who described herself as overweight).

On the other hand, the most common resistance suggested that *body size should not be included in DEI* because *fatness is a choice*, unlike traditionally included identities (e.g., “No because it's something you can change very easily and not be judged. You can't change your race or age. You can get thinner or fatter”—44-year-old White woman who described herself as fat). Others participants posited that body size is *not an exclusive or minoritized identity*, suggesting that anyone could presumably be fat (e.g., “Absolutely NOT. Being FAT is not an identity. It is part of what makes a person. FAT people are not ALL the same and should not be ‘grouped together’”—67-year-old White man who described himself as fat). Lastly, some participants maintained that *weight-based discrimination either does not exist or is not as severe as other forms of stigma* (e.g., “If I was aware of more people getting mistreated because of their weight in such areas, then I may be more inclined to say they were needed, but I have never

TABLE 6 | Coding domains and frequency for expectations of fatness in diversity statements.

Coding domain	Domain description	Example quote	Frequency
Resistance to body size as an identity in DEI	Overarching category including any responses that resist the inclusion of body size in DEI	“I don’t because I don’t think that we should be paying attention to someone’s body size.”	13.2%
Weight-based discrimination isn’t as bad as other forms of stigma	Adding fat identities is seen as unnecessary or excessive because stigma is not perceived as an issue	“I would say no because I’ve yet to see someone denied a fair opportunity to succeed because they were overweight or thin.”	4.1%
Fatness should not be included because it is controllable/a choice	Body size should not be included because it is not an immutable characteristic	“Not really because its not like being fat is the same as being black or something its a trait you can change and should”	8.5%
Non-exclusive identity/not minority	Anyone can have this identity or the majority of people have this identity, therefore it should not be included	“Not really, I may be fat but I would prefer to not receive special treatment. I am not a minority.”	3.8%
Holistic acceptance of body size as an identity in DEI	Overarching category including any responses that support the inclusion of body size in DEI	“Yes, I think they should be because everyone should be treated fairly.”	23.3%
Weight-based discrimination	Body size should be included in DEI because fat people experience discrimination and subsequent negative outcomes	“Yes, it is very important since fatphobia is a documented issue in our society.”	18.4%
Fatness is not controllable	Fatness is just another attribute of human diversity like other identities, and therefore should be included in DEI	“It can be just as much of a disadvantage as any other minority status, and it’s not always something that can be changed, despite common misconceptions.”	1.4%
Only if it is domain relevant	Whether fatness should be included depends on the relevance of body size to the specific domain or context	“if it was something like a physical education or something maybe.”	1.4%
Doesn’t come to mind	Body size is often overlooked or not immediately considered when thinking about discrimination and diversity	“Not really, it’s just not something I think about when I think about diversity.”	14.2%
DEI hierarchy	Other identities are or are perceived to be more important to highlight in DEI efforts	“I think that it’s important to emphasize that people of varying weights won’t be discriminated against, but it’s also kind of hard for me (even as a fat woman) to equate being fat with, say, your skin color or sex that you’re born with.”	3.6%

(Continues)

TABLE 6 | (Continued)

Coding domain	Domain description	Example quote	Frequency
Fatness as a (non)-protected class	Whether fatness should be included is linked to the fact that fatness is not a legally protected class	“No, obesity is not a protected class and is something that can usually be changed by an individual with enough dedication, unlike race.”	2.7%
Fat prejudice is socially acceptable	The socially acceptable nature of fat prejudice makes it important to include, but also renders it unlikely to be included	“yes, because that’s the one area that it seems ok to discriminate against today”	3.0%
DEI norms exclude fatness	Body size is unexpected in DEI efforts because it is typically excluded from these efforts	“I don’t expect it as it isn’t usually identified as a class of people for equity purposes”	20%
Fit with DEI values	Whether fatness should be included depends on whether this inclusion is perceived to fit with broader DEI values	“I very much would expect it to be included. Inclusiveness should be directed at all people, not just most of them.”	8.2%
Organizational motives	Inclusion of body size in DEI signals underlying beliefs or motives of the organization	“I feel like that is only there for show and doesn’t need to be included.”	2.7%
Anti DEI statements	General distaste or dislike for DEI	“I think DEI is stupid sets up companies and other institutions for failure.”	4.1%
Fatness as disability	Whether fatness should be included is linked to whether fatness is perceived as disabling	“I did not anticipate body size to be specifically mentioned because I thought that ability/disability would incorporate body sizes outside the “normal.”	1.6%
Not sure/no response	Unsure or no response	“i am not sure”	7.7%

Note: Percentages rounded.

seen it before.”—28-year-old White man who described himself as short and stocky).

Furthermore, some participants thought the inclusion of fat identities should depend on individual and contextual factors. For instance, some believed inclusion should depend on whether *fatness is genetic or a result of lifestyle* (e.g., “There are many reasons medically and genetically that make it no fault of the person and is not just a matter of eat less and exercise more.”—59-year-old indigenous woman who described herself as obese). Others suggested that inclusion should depend on whether *fatness is relevant within the specific domain* (e.g., “I think body size should never be a reason for someone not to be hired, unless fitness and body size is a necessary qualification for the position like a lifeguard. I suppose if body size is a very important issue, it should be included, but body size should not disqualify someone for most jobs as it is.”—51-year-old White man who described himself as overweight).

Lastly, several codes captured organizational themes. For example, participants expressed that the inclusion of body size on diversity statements signaled various organizational ISCs, such

as the *organization’s motives* (e.g., “When it is left out it makes me think they intentionally did not want to include it and they do have a [sic] issue with body size.”—49-year-old White woman who described herself as obese), the *organization’s treatment of fat people* (e.g., “Omitting fat people from diversity statements perpetuates the marginalization.”—47-year-old Latino man who described himself as buff), and the *organization’s diversity efforts* (e.g., “I think when these aren’t included in diversity statements it tells me that the people behind the statement haven’t dug as far as they could into DEI.”—25-year-old White man who described himself as plus-sized).

4.3 | Study 3 Discussion

Among a sample of fat participants, a psychology department diversity statement inclusive of body size increased personal interest in the department and decreased anticipated fat stigma in the department. However, the size-inclusive statement did not influence perceptions of the department’s overall DEI concern, likelihood of the department promoting bodily equity, procedural fairness toward fat students, or perceived motives for the

TABLE 7 | Coding domains and frequency for importance of fatness in diversity statements.

Coding domain	Domain description	Example quote	Frequency
Resistance to body size as an important identity in DEI	Overarching category including any responses that resist the inclusion of body size in DEI	“I don’t think it is important. I feel like every possible prejudice can’t be addressed”	27.7%
Weight-based discrimination isn’t as bad as other forms of stigma	Adding fat identities is seen as unnecessary or excessive because stigma is not perceived as an issue	“I’m not sure if it belongs in a diversity statement because it could take away from some of the more discriminated against races, sexual orientation, and disability.”	1.4%
Fatness should not be included because it is controllable/ a choice	Body size should not be included because it is not an immutable characteristic	“Body size is not something that should be included with diversity. The people choose to eat and drink like that so they can change.”	6.9%
Non-exclusive identity/not minority	Anyone can have this identity or the majority of people have this identity, therefore it should not be included	“No, it shouldn’t. Fat people aren’t different than skinny people in the way men and women are different. To make it a different “category” means that fat people are different, and they aren’t.”	4.1%
Holistic acceptance of body size as an important identity in DEI	Overarching category including any responses that support the inclusion of body size in DEI	“Yes it is important for fat identities to be represented.”	47.5%
Weight-based discrimination	Body size should be included in DEI because fat people face experience discrimination and subsequent negative outcomes fat	“It is important. As stated before, people are discriminated against for everything that isn’t seen as “normal”, including being overweight.”	25%
Fatness is not controllable	Fatness is another attribute of human diversity, like other identities, and should be included in DEI	“It should be included, it tells me that it is maybe seen as something that can be controlled by the individual, although this is not always true...”	1.4%
Only if it is domain relevant	Whether fatness should be included/ is important depends on the relevance of body size to the specific domain or context	“I suppose it should be included in areas where fat people are more discriminated against.”	2.2%
Intersectionality is important	Whether fatness is important to include depends on intersecting identities.	“I think it is valuable, especially because fatness intersects with things that are included like age, race, gender, and disability status.”	1.6%
Doesn’t come to mind	Body size is overlooked or not immediately considered in the context of DEI	“Maybe. I’d never thought about it before but that would make sense.”	7.4%
DEI hierarchy	Other identities are perceived to be a priority over body size in DEI efforts	“No, there are other identities that need the inclusion more”	4.7%
Fat prejudice is socially acceptable	The socially acceptable nature of fat prejudice makes it essential to include but also renders it unlikely to be included	“Overweight people are some of the most discriminated people in society. All too often even those who believe in diversity still disfavor obese people”	1.6%
DEI norms exclude fatness	Body size is unexpected in DEI efforts because it is typically excluded or not prioritized	“If it’s not included it doesn’t tell me much, as it usually isn’t.”	3.6%

(Continues)

TABLE 7 | (Continued)

Coding domain	Domain description	Example quote	Frequency
Fit with DEI values	Whether fatness should be included depends on whether it aligns with broader DEI values	“I think people of different body sizes should be represented in more diversity statements here. Diversity statements are meant to be inclusive...”	5.2%
Organization diversity efforts	Including body size in DEI demonstrates an organization’s commitment to upholding and valuing DEI practices	“I think it’s nice when they are represented. It shows that those in charge are aware of all types of discrimination, and that they take seriously treating everyone equally.”	6.0%
Organizational motives	Inclusion of body size in DEI signals underlying beliefs or motives of the organization	“It is very important. When there aren’t people of various sizes, then it shows me that the company isn’t interested in different customers.”	4.4%
Organization treatment of fat people	When body size is excluded from DEI statements, it suggests a lack of inclusivity and reinforces negative treatment of fat individuals	“It tells me that it is shameful to be fat or large sized when big people are not included in such statements.”	6.9%
Anti-DEI statements	General distaste or dislike for DEI	“No, I think all DEI needs to be abolished...”	6.0%
Merit-based opposition	Advocates for merit-based practices	“I’m overweight and I do not think this should be included. People should get a job based on merit.”	1.9%
Concerns about unhealthy body size promotion	Inclusion of body size in DEI promotes obesity	“No it is not an important for body size to be represented in a diversity statements. They should promote trying to lose weight instead...”	3.8%
Including fatness is excessive because it is a health issue	Body size is viewed as a health issue rather than being included in DEI	“No. “Fatness” is a medical condition and of course no one should ever be discriminated based on medical conditions. But I don’t think it needs to be a separate group from others with disabilities or medical conditions”	2.2%
Genetic vs. lifestyle acceptability	The inclusion of fatness depends on whether it is viewed biologically based rather than behaviorally driven	“Well, I mean it does and it doesn’t. For those that have genetic conditions, etc. that make it so they can’t lose weight, sure, we need to be kind and compassionate. But those that are just gorging themselves on the American diet, no.”	1.4%
Not sure/no response	Unsure or no response	“I’m not sure.”	7.4%

Note: Percentages rounded.

department’s DEI efforts. Anticipated stigma in the department for other marginalized groups (i.e., ISC transfer effects; see Chaney et al. 2016) was not influenced by the inclusion of body size in the diversity statement. It is possible that ISCs aimed at a group less-represented in diversity efforts are less likely to transfer “upwards” to groups that are more represented in such efforts, while the downward or lateral transfer of ISCs may be more likely.

We did not find any effects of our manipulation of faculty body size diversity, though manipulation checks indicated that the manipulation worked as intended. These null findings contrast literature on fatness or body size diversity as an ISC for fat people (see Oswald and Adams 2024; Oswald et al. 2022). Further,

these findings are opposite those of Ragland and Sommers (2024), who found that faculty racial diversity, but not a diversity statement, positively influenced Black participants’ assessments of a psychology department. It is possible that the expression-based ISC of representation in a diversity statement was more effective in the context of body size given that this representation deviates from norms which tend to exclude body size in DEI, while the representation of racial identity in diversity statements is status quo and thus may be a less authentic signal (e.g., Chaney et al. 2025). It is also possible that body size diversity is a less effective evidence-based ISC than racial minority representation given that fat people are a numerical majority in many spaces, despite pervasive marginalization (see Oswald and Adams 2024).

Finally, participants reported that they had low expectations for body size being included in diversity efforts, and infrequently saw body size represented in such efforts, mirroring recent research indicating the exclusion of fatness from DEI programming (Dufur and Okeke 2024). Qualitative findings broadly supported these findings, indicating that many participants perceived current DEI norms as excluding body size and thus did not expect to find fatness represented in DEI efforts. Many responses appeared to express internalized fatphobia, with participants—despite their own fatness—de-emphasizing the importance of weight stigma and pointing to the controllability of fatness as an important factor for distinguishing culpability and deservingness (see also Oswald et al. 2025b). Yet, participants generally reported that the inclusion of fatness in DEI efforts was important. For example, participants often cited existing body size discrimination and the crucial role of organizational acknowledgment to foster equity and inclusivity.

5 | General Discussion

Although many organizations and institutions, including university psychology departments, have made strides toward increased DEI programming in recent years, this programming remains centered on a small number of specific marginalized identities, limiting the capacity and reach of DEI policies. We conducted an analysis of 100 psychology department diversity statements, which demonstrated that certain axes of identity appeared much more frequently than others. In particular, mirroring research trends, race/ethnicity was more frequently represented in diversity statements than any other identity characteristic, followed closely by gender and sexual orientation (e.g., Kruk et al. [forthcoming](#); Rios and Cohen 2023). Other groups, such as fat people, were nearly invisible in diversity statements.

Accordingly, in a follow-up experiment, psychology student participants tended to notice when race was missing from a departmental diversity statement and had more negative perceptions of the race-related climate of the department when its diversity statement did not include race. However, participants tended not to acknowledge the absence of body size—likely because body size is not normatively included in such statements (see Oswald et al. 2022). In line with this finding, in Study 3, fat participants reported low expectations for the inclusion of body size in DEI efforts. These low expectations may underlie the effectiveness of inclusion as an ISC in this context; we found that departmental diversity statement including body size increased personal interest in the department and decreased anticipated fat stigma among fat people. It is likely that the mismatch in expectations and actual representation—that is, expecting to be excluded due to the norm, but then finding one's identity to be included—may heighten the identity safety effect (see also Zeng and Kirby [forthcoming](#)) in line with expectancy violation theory, which posits that observers evaluate behaviors more extremely when they violate an expectation (e.g., Burgoon 1993)—in this case, a norm which excludes body size from DEI.

However, this expectancy violation may also underlie backlash from dominant group members. In Study 2, when body size was included in diversity statements, a number of participants

suggested that it should be removed; furthermore, with body size included, participants felt more negatively toward the statements and perceived the department as having more external motivation to produce the diversity statement. These findings reflect broader trends in backlash toward fat social justice (see Oswald et al. 2025a) and may explain in part why fatness continues to be essentially invisible in diversity efforts in the university context (see Dufur and Fox Okeke 2024). As our Study 3 findings suggest, this backlash may also come from fat people themselves due to internalized fatphobia, which may lead fat people to understand fatness as undeserving of inclusion, denigrate fatness, and exclude themselves from the category of fat (see also Oswald et al. 2025b). Future research should target variables such as internalized racism, heterosexism, and sexism among marginalized group members to understand their relationship to perceptions of and backlash against DEI policies, which may provide interesting insights into heterogeneity of marginalized communities' relationships to DEI policies.

We expect that similar dynamics of backlash may extend to additional groups who are less-represented in diversity statements. For example, we found no evidence of the inclusion of people with criminal histories in departmental diversity statements, despite their ongoing marginalization in higher education spaces, as well as acknowledgements of and corrective steps regarding this marginalization in the broader discipline of psychology (see Schreeche-Powell 2025; Wilcox and Taylor 2023). We anticipate that backlash would also extend to the inclusion of this category in diversity statements, given the shared perception of blameworthiness for one's conviction history and one's body size which seems to underlie this backlash (see Oswald et al. 2025a). However, such backlash seems less likely to extend to categories which are seen as less blameworthy or which are held as protected classes by the U.S. government, such as veteran status. Future research should further examine the interaction between protected class policies, who is included in lay definitions of diversity and diversity policies (see also Zeng and Kirby [forthcoming](#)), and how understandings of the safety afforded by legal protections and inclusion in DEI efforts shape lived experiences.

Given significant evidence of anti-fatness across contexts including but not limited to education, as well as the general need for fat inclusion (e.g., Oswald et al. 2022; Stewart et al. 2023), fat people should be included in DEI efforts (see also Dufur and Fox Okeke 2024; Meadows et al. 2022). Policymakers should also utilize evidence-based methods to understand additional groups who face significant marginalization but who may be excluded from current DEI policymaking. However, we are also wary of over-inclusive approaches to DEI which, similar to identity-blind approaches, have the potential to undermine or negate identity safety among members of marginalized groups (see Chaney et al. 2026). Policymakers must apply a contextually sensitive lens, considering who experiences marginalization in a given space, the historical context of that marginalization, and whether and how inclusion in DEI efforts would benefit marginalized group members. Backlash against the inclusion of additional marginalized groups in DEI efforts must be addressed at a systemic level, through methods such as educating people about the salience and harms of anti-fatness (see also Gordon 2020).

5.1 | Limitations and Future Directions

The current research is rooted in a U.S. higher education context, and in the context of psychology departments specifically. Though psychology remains fatphobic in many ways, there is a growing alliance between psychology and fat studies (e.g., McHugh and Chrisler 2019; Watkins and Gerber 2016), suggesting that psychology departments maybe slightly more inclusive than other areas or programs in higher education. We expect that health-focused departments (e.g., medicine, public health) would be even more hostile to fat inclusion in DEI programming given the medicalization of fatness within these disciplines. Generally, the effects of representation of less- and more-represented groups should be examined across the full range of educational and organizational contexts to better understand the effects noted here. Additionally, future research should examine how representation in diversity efforts is perceived among and by members of varying groups. This research could serve to highlight underlying dynamics that shape reactions to ISCs, both among marginalized and advantaged group members.

Future research should examine whether providing examples of discrimination against fat people in higher education might prompt people (particularly non-fat people) to perceive the inclusion of fatness in DEI efforts as more important. It is possible that people are less aware of fat stigma than other forms of discrimination, and awareness may increase support. Future research should also attend to variability among marginalized group members. In Study 3, we examine perceptions of diversity statements among a sample of fat participants, but do not examine within-group variability (e.g., in terms of participant race, gender, sexual orientation, age). It is likely that participants with multiple marginalized identities may respond differently to ISCs; future research should thus attend to this within-group variability.

6 | Conclusion

Our findings suggest that DEI efforts, research on these efforts, and the ISC literature broadly would benefit from greater consideration of historically less-represented identities (see also Oswald et al. 2022). The present research provides useful insight into the nature of contemporary DEI efforts, including the frequency with which different axes of marginalization are centered in these efforts. We argue that more inclusive research on less-represented identities could highlight novel pathways and mechanisms through which ISCs operate.

Author Contributions

Flora Blanchette: conceptualization, investigation, writing – original draft, methodology, visualization, writing – review and editing, formal analysis, data curation. **Shariena Green:** writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, data curation, formal analysis. **Alexandra Garrschultz:** conceptualization, investigation, supervision, resources, writing – review and editing, project administration, methodology. **Kimberly E. Chaney:** writing – review and editing, supervision, project administration, funding acquisition, conceptualization, investigation, methodology,

resources. **Skylar Carter:** writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, formal analysis.

Funding

No funding was received.

Ethics Statement

All study procedures were deemed exempt from review by the University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board.

Consent

N/A: No participants under the age of consent.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Endnotes

¹Women were included here as a filler group given participants were not aware of which identities were manipulated.

²Given these significant findings, we tested whether indicating race as missing mediated the relationship between condition (0 = race included, 1 = race missing) and anticipated race-related stigma or likelihood of the department promoting racial equity. Multiple linear regression indicated that the B path (effect of indicating race as missing) was not significant in either model when condition was included, and Sobel tests supported the conclusion of no mediation (anticipated stigma $p = 0.345$; promoting racial equity $p = 0.063$).

References

- Alt, N. P., J. Wong Chavez, D. Wu, K. L. Hung, and B. B. W. Stanton. 2026. "Identity Safety Cues in the Context of Confronting Prejudice: Black Americans' and Asian Americans' Perceptions of Identity Threat and Ally Sincerity." *Journal of Social Issues*, 82, no. 2: e70053. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.70053>.
- Bailey, C. P., S. Sharma, C. D. Economos, E. Hennessy, C. Simon, and D. P. Hatfield. 2020. "College Campuses' Influence on Student Weight and Related Behaviours: A Review of Observational and Intervention Research." *Obesity Science & Practice* 6, no. 6: 694–707. <https://doi.org/10.1002/osp4.445>.
- Blanchette, F., I. Pereira-Jorge, E. Todd, S. M. Stevens, and J. L. Matsick. Unpublished manuscript. Diverse Representations of Physician Body Size, Gender, and Race Strengthen Belonging and Lessen Anticipated Weight Stigma Among Fat Women.
- Burgoon, J. K. 1993. "Interpersonal Expectations, Expectancy Violations, and Emotional Communication." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 12, no. 1-2: 30–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X93121003>.
- Chaney, K. E., I. Pereira-Jorge, and F. Blanchette. 2026. "A Framework for the Attributions of Ideology and Motivation From Identity Safety Efforts." *Advances in Prejudice Research Volume 1*: 1–66.
- Chaney, K. E., D. T. Sanchez, and M. R. Maimon. 2019. "Stigmatized-Identity Cues in Consumer Spaces." *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 29, no. 1: 130–141. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1075>.
- Chaney, K. E., D. T. Sanchez, and J. D. Remedios. 2016. "Organizational Identity Safety Cue Transfers." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 42, no. 11: 1564–1576. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216665096>.
- Chaney, K. E., E. Wedell, I. Pereira-Jorge, and M. B. Forbes. 2025. "Context Norms Shape Perceived Motives of Organizational Diversity Statements." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 1461672251330694. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672251330694>.
- Chen, J. M. 2012. "Understanding Diversity: From Representations to Perceptions." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, UC Santa Barbara.

- Cipollina, R., and D. T. Sanchez. 2025. "It's Best Not to Discuss or See Sexual Orientation": An Examination of Sexuality Blindfolding." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 28, no. 3: 546–570. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684302241305036>.
- De Saint Priest, O., F. Krings, and C. Toma. 2024. "Too Old to Be Included: Age Diversity Statements Foster Diversity Yet Fall Short on Inclusion." *Frontiers in Psychology* 15: 1303224. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1303224>.
- Dufur, M. J., and T. Fox Okeke. 2024. "Being Big in the Big Tent: Is Fat Social Justice Part of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts on College Campuses in the United States?" *Fat Studies* 13: 135–152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21604851.2024.2318671>.
- Froehlich, L., L. G. Brokj b, J. Nikitin, and S. E. Martiny. 2023. "Integration or Isolation: Social Identity Threat Relates to Immigrant Students' Sense of Belonging and Social Approach Motivation in the Academic Context." *Journal of Social Issues* 79, no. 1: 264–290. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12548>.
- Garr-Schultz, A., and S. R. Carter. (Forthcoming). "When Policies Remove Identity Safety: Anti-DEI Laws, Prospective Students' Perceptions, and University Messaging." *Journal of Social Issues*.
- Gordon, A. 2020. *What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About Fat*. Beacon Press.
- Grimes, S., E. Southgate, J. Scevak, and R. Buchanan. 2020. "University Student Experiences of Disability and the Influence of Stigma on Institutional Non-Disclosure and Learning." *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability* 33, no. 1: 23–37. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1273678>.
- G ndemir, S., A. E. Martin, and A. C. Homan. 2019. "Understanding Diversity Ideologies From the Target's Perspective: A Review and Future Directions." *Frontiers in Psychology* 10: 282. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00282>.
- Howansky, K., M. Maimon, and D. Sanchez. 2022. "Identity Safety Cues Predict Instructor Impressions, Belonging, and Absences in the Psychology Classroom." *Teaching of Psychology* 49, no. 3: 212–217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628321990362>.
- Kroeper, K. M., H. E. Williams, and M. C. Murphy. 2022. "Counterfeit Diversity: How Strategically Misrepresenting Gender Diversity Dampens Organizations' Perceived Sincerity and Elevates Women's Identity Threat Concerns." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 122, no. 3: 399–426. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000348>.
- Kruk, M., E. Todd, J. T. Sullivan, and J. L. Matsick. (forthcoming). "Pride or Profit: Perceived Authenticity of the Rainbow Pride Flag as a Safety Cue for LGBTQ+ Americans." *Journal of Social Issues*.
- Laiduc, G., and R. Covarrubias. (Forthcoming). "(Critical) Multicultural Cues Promote Identity-Safety and Social Justice Beliefs in STEM While Reducing Perceptions of Diversity Dishonesty Among Students." *Journal of Social Issues*.
- Kruk, M., and J. L. Matsick. 2021. "A Taxonomy of Identity Safety Cues Based on Gender and Race: From a Promising Past to an Intersectional and Translational Future." *Translational Issues in Psychological Science* 7, no. 4: 487–510. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000304>.
- Ma, D. S., J. Correll, and B. Wittenbrink. 2015. "The Chicago Face Database: A Free Stimulus Set of Faces and Norming Data." *Behavior Research Methods* 47: 1122–1135. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-014-0532-5>.
- Maimon, M. R., K. Howansky, and D. T. Sanchez. 2023. "Fostering Inclusivity: Exploring the Impact of Identity Safety Cues and Instructor Gender on Students' Impressions and Belonging." *Teaching of Psychology* 50, no. 2: 105–111. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00986283211043779>.
- McHugh, M. C., and J. C. Chrisler. 2019. "Making Space for Every Body: Ending Sizeism in Psychotherapy and Training." *Women & Therapy* 42, no. 1-2: 7–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2018.1524062>.
- Meadows, A., S. Dani lsd ttir, D. Goldberg, and M. Mercedes. 2022. "Fighting for a (Wide Enough) Seat at the Table: Weight Stigma in Law and Policy." In *Legislating Fatness*, edited by S. von Liebenstein, 25–48. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003275336>.
- Mukamal, D., and R. Silbert. 2018. "Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Students." In *Contemporary Issues in Higher Education*, edited by M. Gasman and A. C. Samayoa, 169–181. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429438127>.
- Nath, R. 2019. "The Injustice of Fat Stigma." *Bioethics* 33, no. 5: 577–590. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bioe.12560>.
- Oswald, F., and R. B. Adams. 2024. "Visual Perception of Group Fatness as a Precursor to Social Identity Threat and Safety." *Fat Studies* 13, no. 3: 293–318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21604851.2024.2354634>.
- Oswald, F., D. Khera, J. L. Matsick, and K. E. Chaney. 2025b. "Cultural Stereotypes and Personal Beliefs About Thin People: A Form of Fat Resistance." *Body Image* 53: 101897. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2025.101897>.
- Oswald, F., M. D. Pham, R. J. Harr, A. Garr-Schultz, and K. E. Chaney. 2025a. "They Are Fat and Want Special Treatment for Being Fat": Backlash to and Lay Theories of Fat Activism." *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 25, no. 1: e70006. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.70006>.
- Oswald, F., S. Stevens, M. Kruk, C. I. Murphy, and J. L. Matsick. 2022. "Signaling Sizeism: An Assessment of Body Size-Based Threat and Safety Cues." *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 22, no. 1: 378–407. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12301>.
- Pereira-Jorge, I., K. E. Chaney, F. Blanchette, and A. Garr-Schultz. 2025. "Organizational Norms and Gender Identity Contexts Shape When Pronoun-Sharing Is Perceived as Disingenuous Allyship: Evidence of a Normative Eclipsing Effect." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 120: 104782. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2025.104782>.
- Purdie-Vaughns, V., C. M. Steele, P. G. Davies, R. Dittmann, and J. R. Crosby. 2008. "Social Identity Contingencies: How Diversity Cues Signal Threat or Safety for African Americans in Mainstream Institutions." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94, no. 4: 615–630. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.4.615>.
- Ragland, K. P., and S. R. Sommers. 2024. "Can I See Myself There? How Black Potential Applicants Use Diversity Cues to Learn About Graduate Program Climate." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 153, no. 11: 2742–2750. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0001571>.
- Rezaei, R. 2024. "Taking Up Space: The Experience of Fat Students in Higher Education." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University.
- Rios, K., and A. B. Cohen. 2023. "Taking a 'Multiple Forms' Approach to Diversity: An Introduction, Policy Implications, and Legal Recommendations." *Social Issues and Policy Review* 17, no. 1: 104–130. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12089>.
- Schreche-Powell, E. 2025. "Insecurity and Fragility: The Perpetual Duo of Precarity for 'Convict Criminologists' in a Risk Averse Academy." *Critical Criminology* 33: 155–170. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-024-09807-y>.
- Spangler, P. T., J. Liu, and C. E. Hill. 2012. "Consensual Qualitative Research for Simple Qualitative Data: An Introduction to CQR-M." In *Consensual Qualitative Research: A Practical Resource for Investigating Social Science Phenomena*, edited by C. E. Hill, 269–283. American Psychological Association.
- Starck, J. G., S. Sinclair, and J. N. Shelton. 2021. "How University Diversity Rationales Inform Student Preferences and Outcomes." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 118, no. 16: e2013833118. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2013833118>.
- Stevens, C. 2018. "Fat on Campus: Fat College Students and Hyper(in)Visible Stigma." *Sociological Focus* 51, no. 2: 130–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00380237.2017.1368839>.
- Stewart, T. J., D. J. Scanlon, M. E. Evans, R. L. Breden, E. R. Weston, and J. Collier. 2023. "Too Fat to Learn: Sizeism as a Barrier to College Student Learning." *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 18: 369–381. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000525>.

- Waite, E., J. Parnell, E. Guest, D. Harcourt, R. Stokes, and A. Slater. 2024. ““Make Sure That Everybody Feels There Is a Space for Them””: Understanding and Promoting Appearance Inclusivity at University.” *Body Image* 51: 101809. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2024.101809>.
- Watkins, P. L., and M. R. Gerber. 2016. “Weight-Centrism in Psychology: Implications and New Directions From the Field of Fat Studies.” *Fat Studies* 5, no. 1: 57–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21604851.2016.1116353>.
- Wilcox, M. M., and T. O. Taylor. 2023. “Ban the Box: Addressing Effects of Systemic Racism on Justice-Involved Individuals in Pathways to Professional Psychology.” *Training and Education in Professional Psychology* 17, no. 2: 191–199. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tep0000407>.
- Wilson, J. L., K. A. Meyer, and L. McNeal. 2012. “Mission and Diversity Statements: What They Do and Do Not Say.” *Innovative Higher Education* 37, no. 2: 125–139. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-011-9194-8>.
- Wilton, L. S., A. N. Bell, M. Vahradyan, and C. R. Kaiser. 2020. “Show Don’t Tell: Diversity Dishonesty Harms Racial/Ethnic Minorities at Work.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 46, no. 8: 1171–1185. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167219897149>.
- Wilton, L. S., J. J. Good, C. A. Moss-Racusin, and D. T. Sanchez. 2015. “Communicating More Than Diversity: The Effect of Institutional Diversity Statements on Expectations and Performance as a Function of Race and Gender.” *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology* 21, no. 3: 315–325. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037883>.
- Wilton, L. S., H. Salman, and H. Adams. (Forthcoming). “Student perceptions of U.S. college institutional diversity efforts and identity safety.” *Journal of Social Issues*.
- Yantis, C., S. Kornberg, and V. Jones Taylor. (Forthcoming). “How race-conscious (vs. colorblind) cues impact White Americans’ inter and intra-racial interactions.” *Journal of Social Issues*.
- Zeng, Y., and T. A. Kirby. (Forthcoming). “How Broadening Diversity Impacts White Americans’ Organizational Perceptions.” *Journal of Social Issues*.

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section.

Supporting Information: josi70057-sup-0001-SuppMat.docx