

Co-Creating Focus Groups: Analysis of Reports on Inclusion - Executive Summary

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In Spring 2021, 50 facilitators (students, staff, and faculty) conducted 80 co-creating focus groups to discuss inclusion at St. Olaf College, asking three questions: 1) What helps them feel connected, seen, and valued?, 2) What hinders them from feeling these things?, and 3) What do they think would help all members of the college community feel connected, seen, and valued? Separate focus groups were conducted for faculty, staff, and students.

This summer we (a research professor and four student researchers) coded and analyzed these data, focusing on the main themes that arose in the focus groups. We used the four core experiences identified in the DEIA [theory of transformation](#) – curriculum and pedagogy, co-curriculum, workplace environment, and mentoring and peer relationships – identifying sub-themes in each of those areas. This summary describes main themes from the faculty, staff, and student focus group discussions of the three inclusion questions.

The 80 focus groups included 21 faculty groups, 30 staff groups, and 28 student groups (data were unreported for one group). Each group had a notetaker who reported the group's themes, specific notes and quotes, or both. Many of the faculty groups represented a single department, but some included two departments (e.g., Social Work and Nursing; Political Science and Sociology/Anthropology), the Music Department had three groups, and some departments were missing (e.g., history, languages). The staff groups ranged across departments, but some were combined in a single group (e.g., Library and IT; Facilities and Finance), while Advancement, Student Life, and Athletics each had three groups and Facilities had two groups of its own and five that were combined with Finance. Student groups represented a range of co-curriculars, but SGA had three and music ensembles had 18. While there was only one focus group from BIPOC student organizations, BIPOC students were represented in ensembles and other groups. BIPOC students and organizations have already provided much data and feedback to the college, and some organizations declined to participate.

Our analysis involved several steps. We used open coding to identify themes in each quote and axial coding to categorize those themes, informed by the DEIA theory of transformation. We then coded a subgroup of data and compared codes to achieve consistency across coders (inter-rater reliability). We then coded the data from the 80 focus groups and analyzed the codes for themes, counts, examples, and quotes. We chose the quotes included here based on the main themes from the focus groups.

Question 1: What at St. Olaf helps people feel connected, seen, and valued?

The most common themes across the faculty, staff, and student focus groups were relationships and the workplace experiences of feeling welcomed and having a sense of community. The various emphases were distinct: Faculty emphasized the importance of interdepartmental/committee work, staff emphasized work recognition, and students emphasized co-curriculars and professor behaviors.

Faculty: Factors that promote inclusion

Faculty mentioned a wide array of inclusion-promoting factors such as socializing and developing relationships with students, staff, and colleagues; attending campus events; being included across

traditions (e.g., interfaith events at the Lutheran Center); department-level inclusion in decisions and collaboration; and interdepartmental work including committees, task forces, and team teaching.

Four main factors stood out in faculty discussions of inclusion, as shown in Table 1. These involved relationships with students, interdepartmental work, departmental factors, and being welcomed and having a sense of belonging, as shown in the table and illustrated in the quotes below each factor.

Here and in the following tables, we counted the factors mentioned in three ways. First, we counted the number of times a factor was mentioned in the note-takers’ entries. Because these counts may be skewed by the short or long extent of notes (some were extensive entries and some were short), we also counted the number of focus groups in which those factors were recorded in notes. Further, because some departments, such as music, were over-represented, we also counted the number of types (e.g., departments) for which the notes include the factor.

Table 1. Main inclusion-promoting factors mentioned by faculty in focus groups

Inclusion-Promoting Factor	Total times noted	Total groups noted (of 21)	Total types of focus groups
<p>Relationships with students, specifically talking with them outside of classes, watching them learn and grow, and connecting with alums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<u>Chatting with students before and after class...</u> gratitude that we have this opportunity to <u>be involved in young lives.</u>” • “I teach the students a lot, they teach me a lot, and we team up on projects. It’s really <u>rewarding</u> to see what they learn over time.” • “Students make me feel seen and valued. Many have come back and said <u>thank you</u> for preparing them for the real world.” 	30	16	14
<p>Interdepartmental work, service on committees and for the campus community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<u>Committee work</u> with colleagues like Faculty Life Committee and others, helped understand the structures of St. Olaf, helped make connections beyond [the] department; ...[and] colleagues in <u>older generation welcomed newer faculty.</u>” • “I am valued when I am <u>asked [due to] my specific skills or areas of expertise to help the campus community.</u>” 	30	17	15
<p>Departmental factors, specifically relationships, support, collaboration, and having one’s input valued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “My department <u>recognizes my input</u> is important” • “There is Grace in the department. <u>Faculty can make mistakes.</u> People will tell you if you are doing something wrong and will <u>help</u> you out.” • “[Doing] projects with [department] colleagues; love being able to <u>collaborate...</u>” 	27	17	15
<p>Being welcomed and having a sense of belonging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Existing faculty have been very welcoming and helpful to new: <u>new faculty always know who to ask</u> if they need anything.” • “The way that the community responds <u>when someone is in a crisis...</u> support; <u>small acts of kindness</u> from students and fellow faculty” • “As a new/visiting professor and a woman, I feel welcomed when I observe other women speaking up in meetings and <u>treated with respect.</u>” 	21	13	12

Less common yet important inclusion-promoting factors mentioned by faculty include campus events that enable broad socializing, informal gatherings/meetings with colleagues (e.g., meeting for coffee at the Cage), and treatment of non-tenure-track faculty (e.g., being included in meetings, and being recognized and valued).

Staff: Factors that promote inclusion

Staff members mentioned a broad range of inclusion-promoting factors such as being connected to co-workers, faculty, staff, students, and alumni; collaborating; receiving positive recognition of one’s work; seeing students’ success; being trusted to do one’s job; PLT emails; the small community of the college; staff meetings; seeing more diversity efforts on campus; having BIPOC affinity groups; being welcomed to speak up; and being invited to be involved in something on campus.

As with faculty, four main factors stood out in staff discussions of inclusion, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Main inclusion-promoting factors mentioned by staff in focus groups

Inclusion-Promoting Factor	Total times noted	Total groups noted (of 30)	Total types of focus groups
<p>Being welcoming and having a sense of community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of community: St. Olaf College is a small place, tight-knit community. You <u>get to know people quickly.</u>“ • “...co-workers are very welcoming and great...everyone is very <u>helpful and open to questions</u> and anything that's needed.” • “Colleagues [put] flowers on desk when first started, made alterations to items that apply to the job so it was suited to the individual, made a manual just for individual when they started... [which] <u>made a lasting impact...</u>” 	24	13	9
<p>Relationships with students, especially connections and expressions of appreciation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Relationships with students and co-workers <u>keep me here</u>” • “Students show a sense of <u>gratitude</u> for [staff] presence and work.” • “<u>Small moments</u> with students (e.g., move-in weekend, Christmas Festival, student organizations) makes me feel connected.” 	24	16	11
<p>Recognition of one’s work, both formal awards and informal recognition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<u>ROAR awards</u> [for self or others] ...nice to have that recognition and money.” • “My <u>co-workers</u> will affirm when I do a good job--<u>direct praise.</u>“ • “<u>Thankyous from the students</u> make me feel valued.” • “...when someone reads [my] reports and sends an <u>email to recognize good work.</u>” 	23	14	9
<p>Relationships with co-workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Relationships in the office are what makes me feel the most connected.” • “Co-workers make me feel connected, seen, valued. <u>Small conversations in the halls, little moments...</u>” 	20	10	8

Less common yet important inclusion-promoting factors mentioned by staff include college events (e.g., holiday party, fall picnic, and convocations), larger meetings (e.g., all-staff and all-college meetings), and specific social spaces (e.g., Tomson atrium and the Cage).

Students: Factors that promote inclusion

Students mentioned a variety of inclusion-promoting factors such as general friendliness on campus, being in a residential community, Deans bringing their dogs to campus, The Big Read, the departments of their major(s), DAC, advisors, collaborative projects in classes, and so on.

As with faculty and staff, four main factors stood out in student discussions of inclusion. These involved professors’ behaviors and interactions with students, co-curricular involvement, inclusive student services, and mentoring, as shown in Table 3 and illustrated in the quotes below each factor.

Table 3. Main inclusion-promoting factors mentioned by students in focus groups

Inclusion-Promoting Factor	Total times noted	Total groups noted (of 28)	Total types of focus groups
<p>Professors’ behaviors and interactions with students, specifically showing interest and meeting students where they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There is a <u>genuine interest</u> from professors to care for their students and provide a <u>safe space</u>.” • “...appreciate when faculty <u>meet students where they’re at</u> and students don’t need to explain the details of the challenges they’re facing.” 	45	22	6
<p>Co-curricular involvement, especially for feeling connecting, being “seen” for who they are, and collaborating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Student organizations that individuals can be a part of that allow them to <u>feel connected with people who truly see you</u>” • Regarding a music leader: “He would ask about what we wanted to work on...a much more <u>collaborative</u> environment than I’m used to...” 	37	21	4
<p>Student services that are welcoming and provide a sense of belonging and community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Feel welcomed at the Taylor Center and the Lavender House. Nice to have an environment where [you] <u>can be yourself</u> and not have to create another persona so that other people feel comfortable.” • “Pastors Matt and Katie: really <u>affirming of my identity</u> as queer and Christian--seeing and interacting with them every week is such a joy “ • “JC’s have done to their best ability to <u>give community</u> to their buildings. A lot have <u>checked in</u> [with their students]“ 	16	12	5
<p>Mentoring from professors, staff, and older students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I appreciate professors who create opportunities for one-to-one mentoring and ‘<u>check-ins</u>’...who demonstrate <u>care</u> for their students.” • “[My] experience with the Title IX coordinator is so wonderful--says, ‘<u>I believe you; you shouldn’t have to go through this experience</u>’” • “Especially this year, for first-years it’s been difficult to form relationships. It’s meant a lot when upperclassmen make an effort to <u>include</u> first-years or organize group events – that’s something that makes me feel seen.” 	12	5	4

Less common yet important inclusion-promoting factors mentioned by students include specific spaces (e.g., The Cage, Buntrock and the cafeteria, Boe House, student lounges such as in Tomson, and some but not all dorms), small class sizes that facilitate relationships with professors and peers, and music ensembles (e.g., rehearsing and performing together).

Question 2: What at St. Olaf gets in the way of feeling connected, seen, and valued?

No common theme was shared across faculty, staff, and student groups. Faculty and staff both emphasized compensation and status issues, and faculty and students emphasized diversity issues. Faculty were distinct in focusing on a lack of social connection, staff in emphasizing a lack of inclusion in decisions and a resistance to change at the College, and students in needing more communication and transparency from administration and on professor shortcomings and co-curriculars.

Faculty: Factors that hinder inclusion

Faculty mentioned a wide array of inclusion-promoting factors such as heavy use of Zoom, college corporatization, the increased power of the college administration, ideas for change being shut down, and the high use of anti-racist language.

Three main factors that stood out in faculty discussions, shown in Table 4 along with illustrative quotes.

Table 4. Main inclusion-hindering factors mentioned by faculty in focus groups

Inclusion-Hindering Factor	Total times noted	Total groups noted (of 21)	Total types of focus groups
<p>Lack of sufficient opportunity to forge and sustain social connections on campus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>“Lack of opportunities to build social connections and social capital --Not enough opportunities for social time between faculty and staff members... To take a colleague for coffee off campus would build connections”</u> • <u>“Wish we had more chances to connect... lack of intentional community... Workload inhibits faculty gathering together and taking time to socialize, eat lunch together; don’t know each other like we used to”</u> • <u>“The culture encourages people to be extra busy so people often work through lunch or eat alone at their desk.”</u> 	65	16	14
<p>Diversity issues, including a lack of diversity and the need to address and devote resources to other diversity-related issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>“(The) number of BIPOC faculty members is really low - it helps to feel valued and connected when there are people around you who look like you; isolation of some BIPOC faculty [who] are only diverse faculty in department”</u> • <u>“Culture feels resistant and closed off to “other” groups”</u> • <u>“...the administration must [act] because we have the money to make decisions and resources put in place to make an inclusive community.</u> • <u>“Some faculty are not necessarily interested in inclusivity...[Someone’s] terrain will be invaded... or the machine might have to be rewired...”</u> • <u>“[Some guest speakers on campus]... make me feel alienated, not represented.”</u> • <u>“Lutheran identity dichotomy with Multiculturalism”</u> 	58	15	12
<p>Workload, pay, and status issues, specifically uncompensated labor and a need for greater respect to NTTs and visiting professors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>“Uncompensated heavy workload...”</u> • <u>“College has a rhetoric of community/vocation---> exploitation and unpaid labor/ “deeply meaningful work” that gives the college its credibility and should be recognized and compensated.”</u> • <u>“Lack of respect to NTTs and visiting profs; a class split between the tenured/track and NTTs assumptions that the NTTs won’t be around long”</u> 	35	16	15

Less common yet important inclusion-hindering factors mentioned by faculty include poor communication style (e.g., disagreements aired via email, overly polished communication from

administration, administration asking for input when it seems they have already made a decision, feeling intimidated about speaking out), inflexible work environment (e.g., hard to set boundaries, pressure to work over lunch, expected to attend to all aspects of students’ lives), challenges of parenting during COVID (e.g., homeschooling children), and the high emphasis on prayer, religion, and Lutheranism (e.g., alienating for non-religious and non-Lutheran people, and the high emphasis on Christian holidays).

Staff: Factors that hinder inclusion

Staff mentioned a broad range of inclusion-hindering factors such as pay and benefits, discomfort and lack of clarity regarding the Bias Reporting System, lack of communication other than top-down communication, the need to focus on “putting out fires,” isolation and extra work due to COVID, the lack of work awards for some categories of staff, and toxic campus emails.

Three main factors that stood out in staff discussions, shown in Table 5 along with illustrative quotes.

Table 5. Main inclusion-hindering factors mentioned by staff in focus groups

Inclusion-Hindering Factor	Total times noted	Total groups noted (of 30)	Total types of focus groups
<p>Pay, status, and workload issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We have expertise in what we do but we are <u>not seen as professionals</u>” • “<u>Workload is overwhelming</u> [and] <u>salary does not reflect workload</u>” • “One benefit of our job is to audit classes...we can't take advantage of this because we're hourly workers who don't get paid a lot...<u>how can we audit a class when we need our hours?</u>” 	114	23	16
<p>The College’s structure, lack of communication & transparency, & resistance to change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sometimes <u>decisions are made without the involvement of all the stakeholders</u>.... different decisions could have been made that might have had perhaps better outcomes.” • “<u>Hierarchical structure</u> on campus - certain voices are being valued over others, generally little room for input in decision making. Decisions are often made without any opportunity for input.” • “<u>Change feels like a slow-moving process</u>. It feels like the college wants to do change in the ‘least upsetting way’ but that can feel too careful and ineffective...” • “<u>Suggesting new ideas or procedures is not always welcomed or seen as a good thing</u> at the college. Challenging norms or traditions is not encouraged and is often met with defensiveness.” 	59	21	16
<p>Lack of social connections and sense of community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<u>We don’t have shared activities</u>... opportunities to have care & empathy for one another” • “Missing interaction with community, faculty/staff, feeling more isolation, <u>especially due to COVID</u>” • “<u>Oles-Only community</u>. Those [who are] not Oles feel excluded.” • “<u>Faculty and staff divide</u> that Covid has made more clear” • “Being aware of <u>staff changes in other departments</u> and not being able to build long lasting connections” 	27	14	11

Less common yet important inclusion-hindering factors mentioned by staff include faculty elitism (some are disrespectful, untrusting, have unreasonable expectations, and talk down to staff), the culture of

“perfectionism” on campus (everything must be done perfectly), and the reduced budgets (including fear of “not making the budget”).

Students: Factors that hinder inclusion

Students mentioned a variety of inclusion-hindering factors such as low awareness of the Title IX office, Con programs taking over dorm spaces, high competition in STEM fields, and the resignations of BIPOC faculty. The four main factors that stood out in student discussions are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Main inclusion-hindering factors mentioned by students in focus groups

Inclusion-Hindering Factor	Total times noted	Total groups noted (of 28)	Total types of focus groups
<p>Microaggressions and other forms of racism, classism, sexism, etc.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “<u>..microaggressions</u> [are prevalent] on campus... I feel the most discriminated against that I’ve ever been. Holding me back... more prevalent where there are fewer ‘authority’ figures... Objections are met with ‘you’re being too sensitive.’” “<u>White fragility...</u> [making] white people uncomfortable gets in the way of progress (e.g., inviting [speakers] to campus hostile to BIPOC people, then disputing BIPOC people’s reaction against that).” “<u>Professors expect that people of color [should] share their experiences without even asking</u> those students if they’d be comfortable...” “<u>Accountability structure</u> is non-existent... professor used a racial slur in class; several students reported...; faculty member [said] that students should come to faculty rather than report through the bias system” “...no kosher or halal [food or] worship [place] for non-Christian students” “<u>[Social] class expectations</u>: economic gaps and expectations shared [by students about how they pay for college, the small ways they live]” 	73	18	12
<p>Administration issues, specifically poor communication, transparency, and accountability issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “<u>Communication from administration doesn't feel ‘authentic’ or meaningful.</u> Creates a sense of distance... Often doesn't acknowledge the problems on campus... makes students feel as though they aren't heard.” “<u>[R]eporting systems</u> ...are problematic. If I want to hold someone accountable, the school is not doing anything... I don’t feel valued when my criticism or questions are brushed by [with] ‘that’s just how it works.’” “Students are really <u>unaware of the role the BOR plays</u> - feel disconnected from it. ‘Why are their notes sealed for years?’” 	35	20	12
<p>Professor attitudes and behaviors (beyond microaggressions), specifically understanding student issues & the professor-student power dynamic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “[Some] professors have a harder time understanding... <u>mental health issues</u>.... responsibility [for accommodations] is always placed on the student... Professors don’t follow through. Students have to re-share [sensitive information]” “<u>Professors not realizing the power relationships they’re in with students</u> – students [un]comfortable addressing professors’ abuse of power... directly” 	32	10	8
<p>Co-curricular issues, specifically exclusion in music ensembles and lack of support for BIPOC student organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Music ensembles <u>lack diversity</u> and aren’t accessible” “<u>Lack of support</u> for BIPOC orgs” “If you're in touring ensembles, <u>you're expected to take lessons; not everyone can afford</u> [that] and they're excluded because of that...” 	31	11	8

Less common yet important inclusion-hindering factors mentioned by students include difficult COVID limitations (e.g., student organizations being unable to meet; insufficient Rest Days, uneven enforcement of rules), and inadequate mental health resources and support (e.g., lack of Boe House openings and resources; insufficient suicide watch).

Question 3: What ideas do people have for making the St. Olaf community more inclusive, so that people of all backgrounds and identities feel connected, seen, and valued?

The most common themes across the faculty, staff, and student groups were improving diversity, addressing related issues (hiring, training, reparations), and improving transparency and communication, especially from the college administration. Faculty were distinct in emphasizing the importance of reducing busy-ness and time pressures while staff emphasized work recognition and increasing pay and benefits as well as interdepartmental/committee work. Both faculty and staff emphasized the importance of providing more opportunities for community/socializing across faculty and staff (and, for staff, with students). Students stood out in their focus on DEIA training and related improvements among professors and on making housing more inclusive and flexible.

Faculty: Ideas for St. Olaf Inclusion

Faculty mentioned a wide array of inclusion-promoting ideas such as increasing support and recognition for junior faculty, increasing retention, banning use of open email to air disagreements, increasing funding and events for inclusion, increasing communication and transparency from administration, modeling how to disagree respectfully, and providing course releases for committee and DEI work. The three main faculty ideas are shown in Table 7, along with sample quotes.

Table 7. Main Ideas for inclusion at St. Olaf mentioned by faculty in focus groups

Inclusion-Promoting Idea	Total times noted	Total groups noted (of 21)	Total types of focus groups
<p>Improve diversity in faculty, staff, & leadership/BOR: Demographics & issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[Do] cluster hires [for] faculty of color... Faculty who could identify with students more closely because of a shared racial background would be powerful.” • “Critical Mass of BIPOC [would show] diversity within the group [and] when decisions are made then there are more perspectives.”” • “[Have] programs with incentives for those who are attentive to inclusion, e.g., international students paired with domestic students.” • “Diversify leadership... Would be great to get a diverse new president.” 	52	12	12
<p>Provide more opportunities for community via informal socializing with time, space, and food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[Create] community spaces for faculty and staff... A faculty/staff lunchroom...” • “Fun, informal events would bring a sense of community and belonging: Food truck Friday, Coffee cart on the green.” • “[Give] faculty coffee cards to... take a colleague or a student for coffee.” • “[Add] a new one-hour Community Time added to Tuesdays that isn’t for work meetings. It could be for Courageous Conversations or affinity groups or just informal connections. Taking the time and physical space to connect.” • “To foster connection, we need to take the time. The college needs to commit to setting a time and making connection the point of it.” 	44	12	12
<p>Reduce time pressures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Busy-ness is undermining the social fabric of the college. You hardly have time to get lunch, visit with someone, visit other classes.” • “Culture of overworking... Burn out is very present among faculty” 	12	6	6

Less common yet important inclusion-promoting ideas from faculty involve changing the faculty governance system to a faculty senate and decreasing the expectations of NTT faculty.

Staff: Ideas for St. Olaf Inclusion

Staff mentioned a broad range of ideas for how to promote inclusion at St. Olaf such as retreats; a faculty/staff lounge; free or discounted lunches to encourage shared meals; more staff exposure to faculty meetings, the Board, and PLT; improvements in pay, benefits, professional development, affordable parental leave, and flexible work schedules; making supervisors more aware of the need for work recognition; creating professional pathways to director positions; finding ways to connect non-student facing staff with students; staff governance; having more conversations like the Co-Creating discussions and having them across faculty, staff, and students; having higher-quality trainings including more training on how to avoid microaggressions; creating a faculty/Staff LBTQA+ space; addressing the exclusionary feel of the focus on “Lutheran” identity; and providing event and Cage food that meets a wide range of dietary needs.

The three main factors that stood out in staff discussions are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Main Ideas for inclusion at St. Olaf mentioned by staff in focus groups

Inclusion-Promoting Idea	Total times noted	Total groups noted (of 30)	Total types of focus groups
<p>Increase diversity and address diversity-related issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[For] diverse students... how are we <u>ensuring they are comfortable</u> in the space?” • Hire “more diverse folks” at “<u>higher levels</u> (President & PLT levels)” • “<u>Expand DEI program</u> (too much demand on POC - VP for E&I needs a team)” • “[Make] <u>reparations</u>- what is St. Olaf going to do to repair the damage and harm that has been done to BIPOC faculty, staff and students?” 	35	16	13
<p>Increase opportunities for community-building and informal socializing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “More opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to <u>get to know each other</u> • “Spaces and opportunities to <u>have fun, to connect, games</u>” • “Pull ‘<u>tips</u>’ from <u>study abroad</u> experiences (the ways they bring students together and create community) and apply them to campus life” 	21	18	12
<p>Improve pay and benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<u>[Stop having] vacation and sick leave combined</u>... Sick leave for facilities workers, who due to their hourly employment currently penalized for being sick” • “...<u>paid lunch hour</u>... <u>compensation for extra work and not an expectation</u> (stipends available to staff and faculty), community service paid days off. “ • “[Be] consistent across divisions [so all have] <u>flexibility</u>... leave early for a medical appt so long as your work is getting done, start day later or take a longer lunch.” 	26	12	12

Less common yet important inclusion-promoting ideas from staff include improving the onboarding process for new hires, bridging the athletics/non-athletics divide, especially in relation to music; and decreasing the barrier between college leadership, especially PLT, and the rest of the college.

Students: Ideas for St. Olaf Inclusion

Students mentioned a wide array of inclusion-promoting ideas such as having more hosting for international students, improving the textbook policy (so students won’t need to buy a text that is not used in class), addressing sexual harassment effectively, increasing financial support for students (including study-abroad funding and higher work-study pay), relaxing the protest policy, having accountability for administration, having administration office hours, having more anonymous ways of giving feedback, increasing faculty support for accommodations, and making the college website easier to navigate.

The four main factors that stood out in student discussions are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Main Ideas for inclusion at St. Olaf mentioned by students in focus groups

Inclusion-Promoting Idea	Total times noted	Total groups noted (of 28)	Total types of focus groups
<p>Provide DEIA training & corrections for professors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...[require] courses around anti-racism training. Most of the training has been basic awareness and need <u>more in-depth examples</u> of experiences. Incorporating these topics in mainstream classrooms.” • [In <u>male-dominated classes</u>]: “It can be easier for girls to work with girls because guys tend to like talking over people... [They] aren’t necessarily trying to be exclusive... Make sure there are at least two girls in each group as opposed to spreading the girls out across all groups. Or put all the girls in one group... “ 	23	15	6
<p>Increase transparency and communication from Administration and the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Want administrators to be clear that they are <u>interested</u> in hearing from students and incorporating their perspective and feedback” • “Provide more <u>data behind college’s COVID restrictions</u>” 	10	4	4
<p>Increase demographic diversity among faculty, staff, and the Board of Regents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Making sure the college hires a <u>diverse faculty</u>. [This] matters a great deal.” • “Representation on the <u>board</u> needs to reflect the diversity of the student body” 	12	9	4
<p>Make student housing more inclusive and provide more options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Creating more <u>gender inclusive</u> housing... Especially for students who are navigating their own sexuality and identity.” • “It’d be amazing for <u>international or multicultural students to have dedicated [dorm] space</u>.” • “[Have] gender free floors [and] <u>co ed dorms</u> (without having to live in a pod).” 	10	6	4

Less common yet important inclusion-promoting ideas from students include increasing mental health resources including Boe House appointment slots, increasing food options and access (vegetarian options, addressing medical needs and food insecurity, and not locking dorm kitchens), improving COVID policies and consistent enforcement of COVID rules, and increasing access to music ensembles and lessons (including having the cost of lessons included in tuition).