

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

An article in 2015 conducted a study that proved that a peer-led learning community was correlated with improved progression throughout the pharmacy program¹. Another study in 2013 showed that about half the students ranging from P1-P3 year utilized one-on-one and large group peer-led sessions for exam preparation². Another study in the same year demonstrated significant changes in study strategies throughout their four-year pharmacy program³.

We are presenting this scholarly project to see which resources offered at USC Mann School of Pharmacy students perceive as helpful for exam preparation.

The resources provided at USC that we will be comparing are:

- SI sessions
- Rho Chi review sessions
- Faculty office hours
- Faculty exam review sessions
- Wellness counseling services
- Student affairs

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify which resource(s) offered by the USC Mann School of Pharmacy do pharmacy students find to be more helpful in exam preparation.
2. Analyze and compare the use of each resource between demographics.
3. Distinguish which resource(s) students found to be the most helpful between each cohort.
4. Distinguish which resource(s) students found to be the least helpful between each cohort.

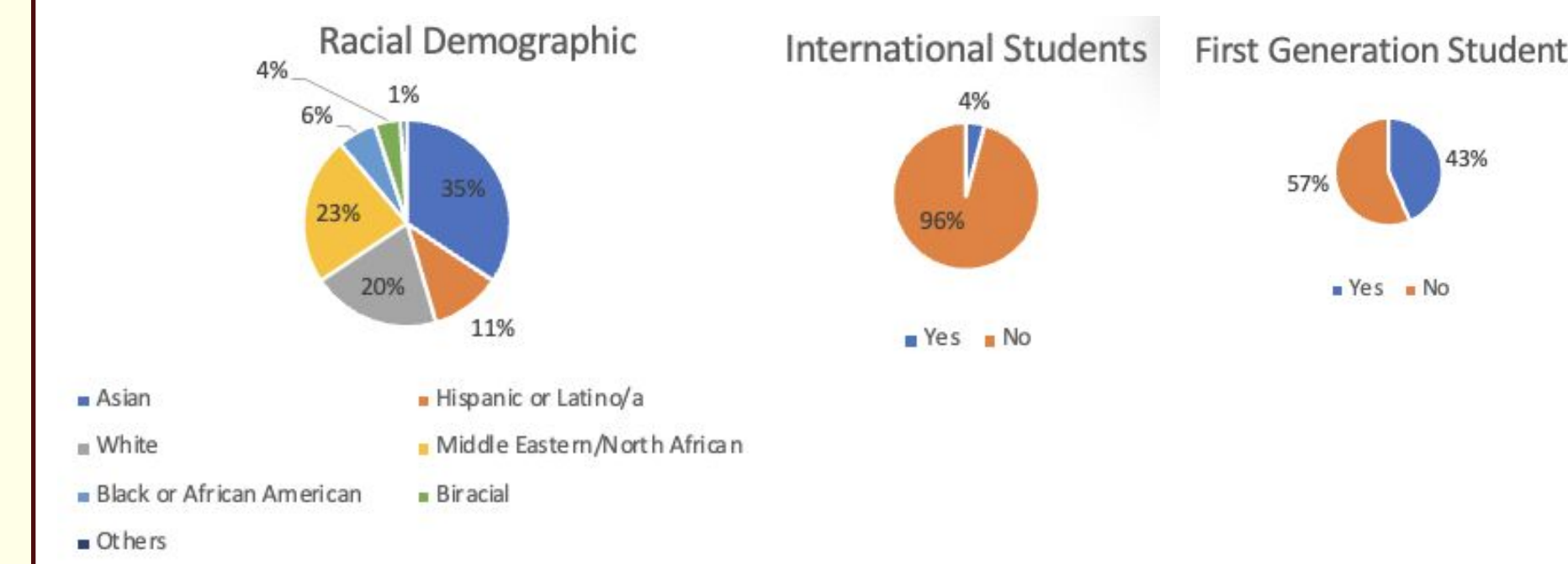
MATERIALS & METHODS

A survey was conducted and sent out electronically to all USC Mann School of Pharmacy students. The survey asked participants about the different resources offered at USC Mann and how helpful each resource was in exam preparation. The questions were formatted to ask if they have participated in each respective resource and if so, to rank the statement that the resource has helped them be better prepared and successful in course exams. The options were "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neither Agree nor Disagree", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree". Each participant had the option to explain the specific aspects that were the most helpful and the least helpful. The survey included demographic questions about their race, whether they were a first generation student, and whether they were an international student.

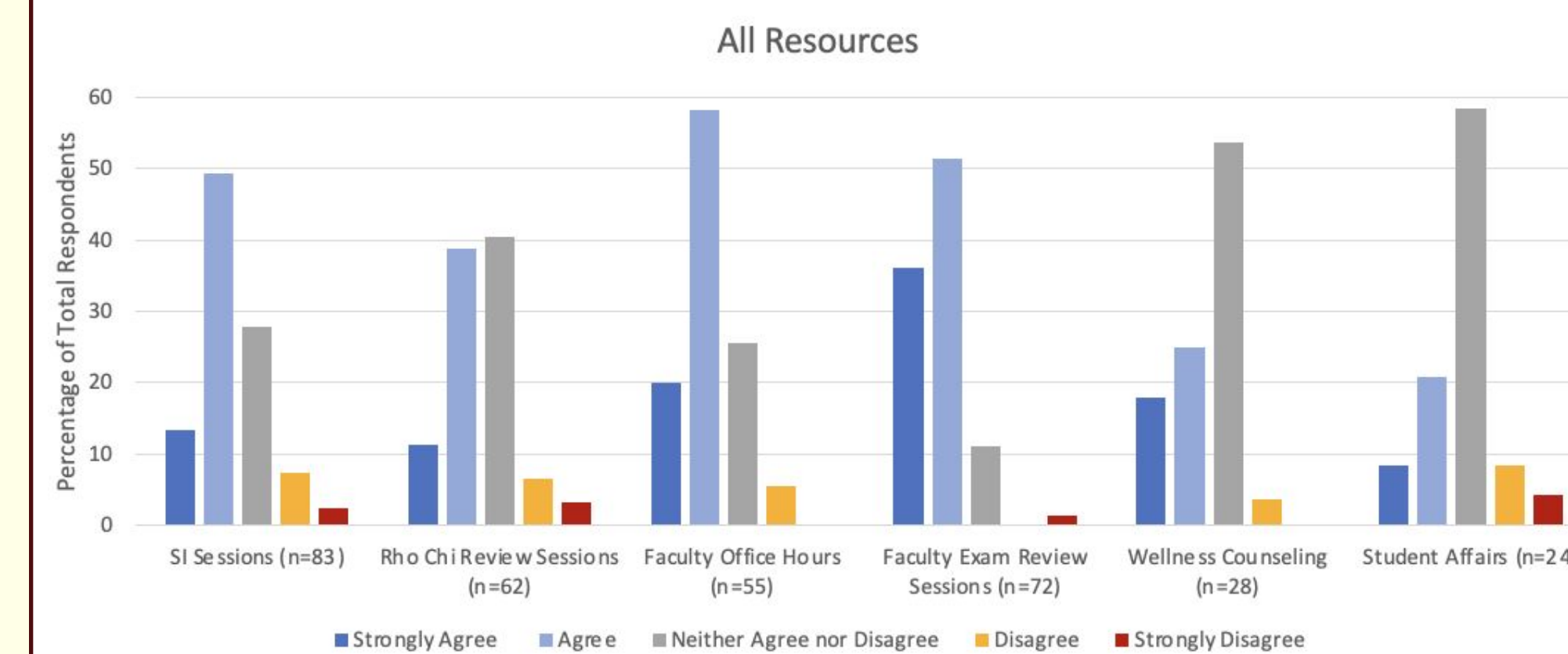
We obtained 126 total responses. Due to incomplete responses, only 101 responses were used for in our responses. The results section shows our data.

RESULTS

The pie charts below show the overall distribution of the demographics of our respondents.



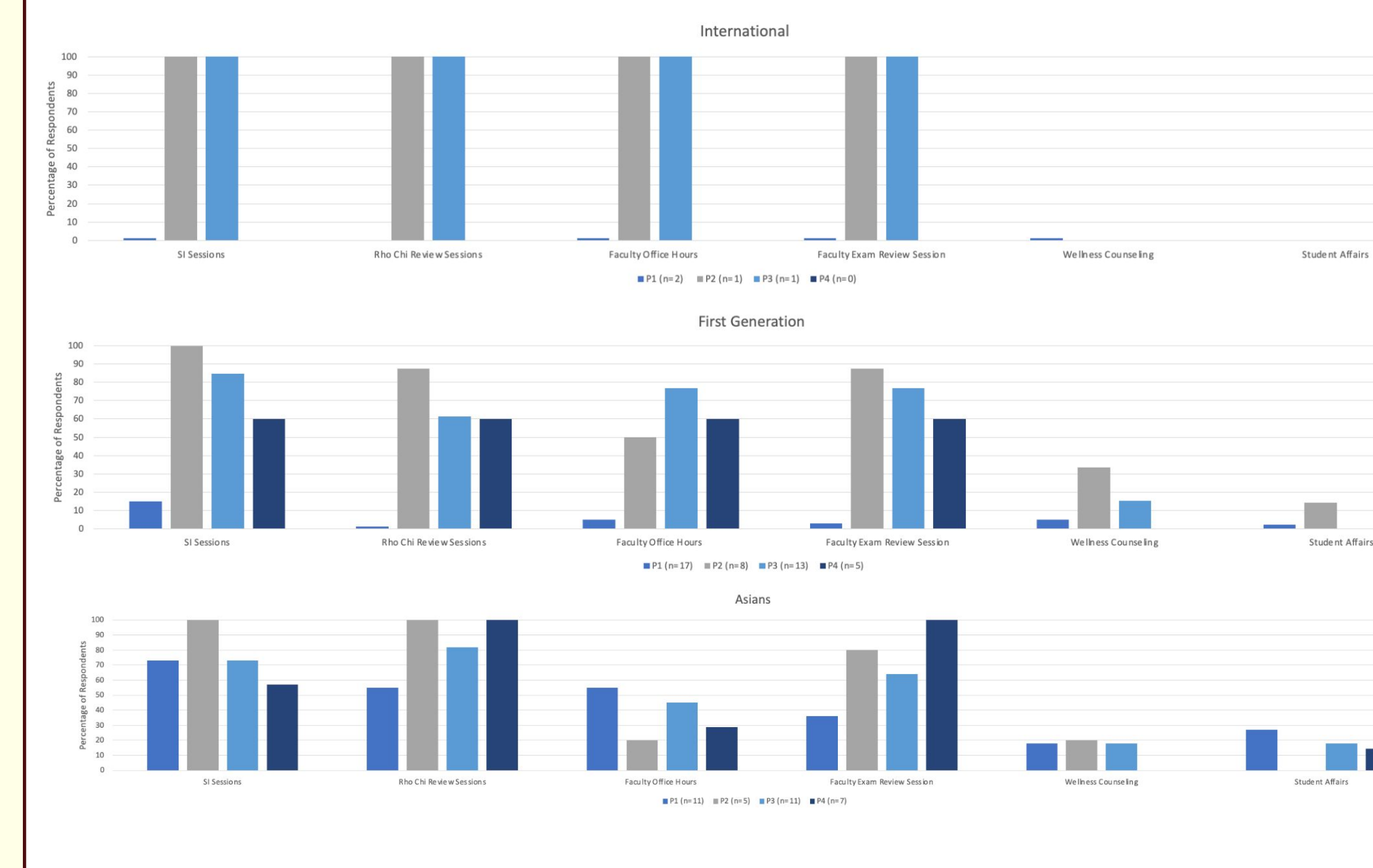
The bar graph below shows a comparison between each resource and the percentage that students found answered "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neither Agree nor Disagree", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree" to the statement that each respective resource helped them be better prepared and successful in course exams.



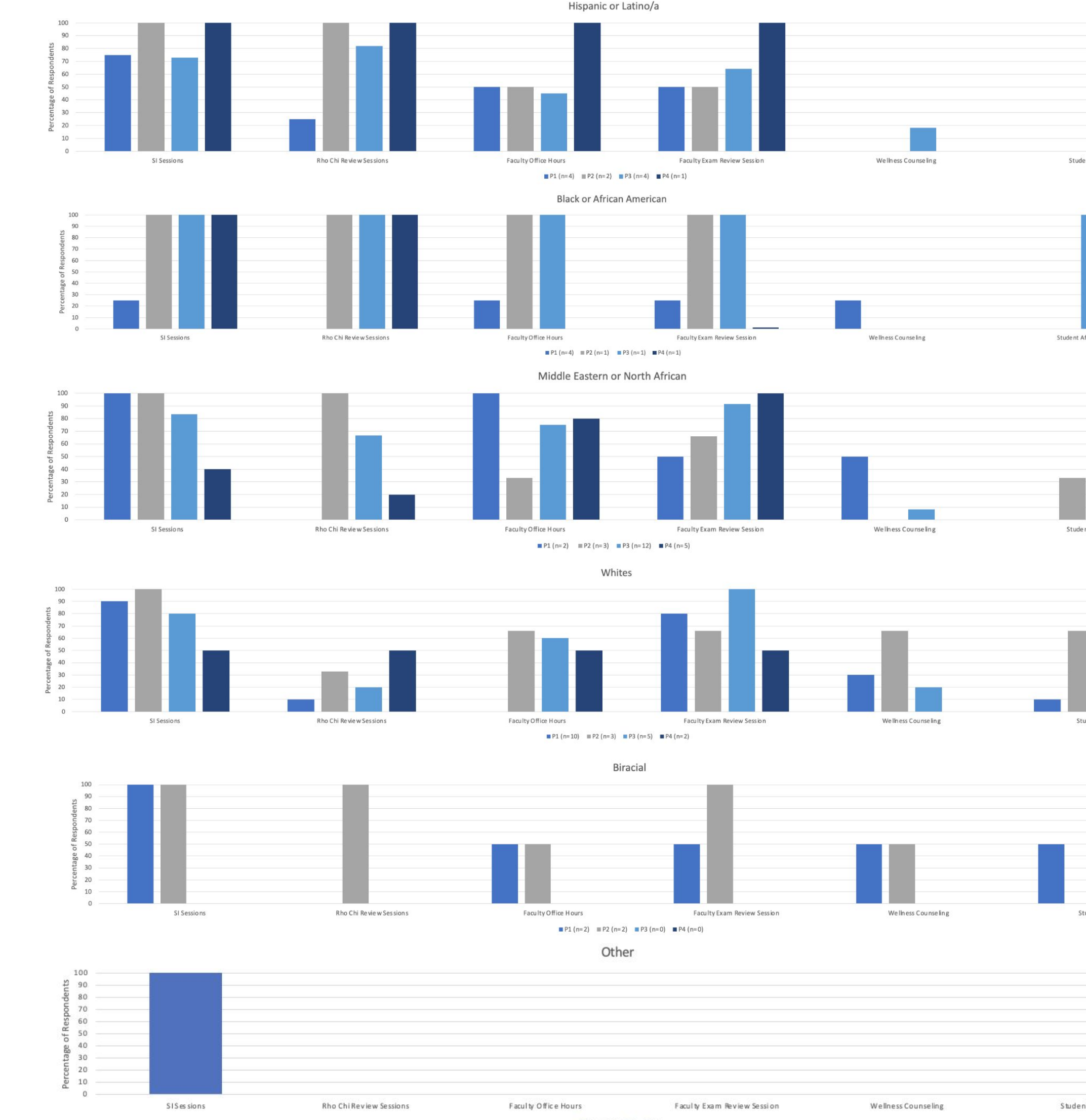
These are common themes on what our respondents found to be the most and least helpful for each resource:

	SI Sessions	Rho Chi review Sessions	Faculty Office Hours	Faculty Exam Review Sessions	Wellness Counseling	Student Affairs
Most Helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice test/questions • Summarized slides • Advice from other students • Working through questions • Simplifying difficult topics • Exam prep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review packets • PowerPoint presentations and patient cases • Summaries/review important points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact with the professor • Getting 1 on 1 help • Addressing questions/concerns • Being able to ask questions without feeling judged by peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying confusing topics • Focusing on key topics for exam preparation • Understanding why certain questions are correct • Understanding faculty expectations • Reinforcing concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal connection and advice • Validation of feelings and concerns • Supportive environment • Assistance in managing stress during challenging weeks • Acknowledgement of the importance of emotional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive experience with office hours and provision of snacks • Appreciation for tips on mindful studying habits along with snacks • Helps with communication between students and faculty
Least Helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition of lecture • Conflicting information from SI leaders • Irrelevance of pre-prepared questions • Timing of the sessions • Online sessions • Reading off slides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading off the slides • Information was not current • The sessions were too long • Inconvenient hours • When the professor is only there to answer specific questions without any further guidance • The time allocated was not enough to go over all relevant material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of availability • Limited amount of time to speak with professors • Concerns about the vagueness from professors • Not being able to review exams to understand what mistakes were made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing of review sessions are too close to exams • Concerns about the vagueness from professors • Not being able to review exams to understand what mistakes were made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes is a short duration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of staffing • Feeling unsupported and lectured • Negative experience with student affairs

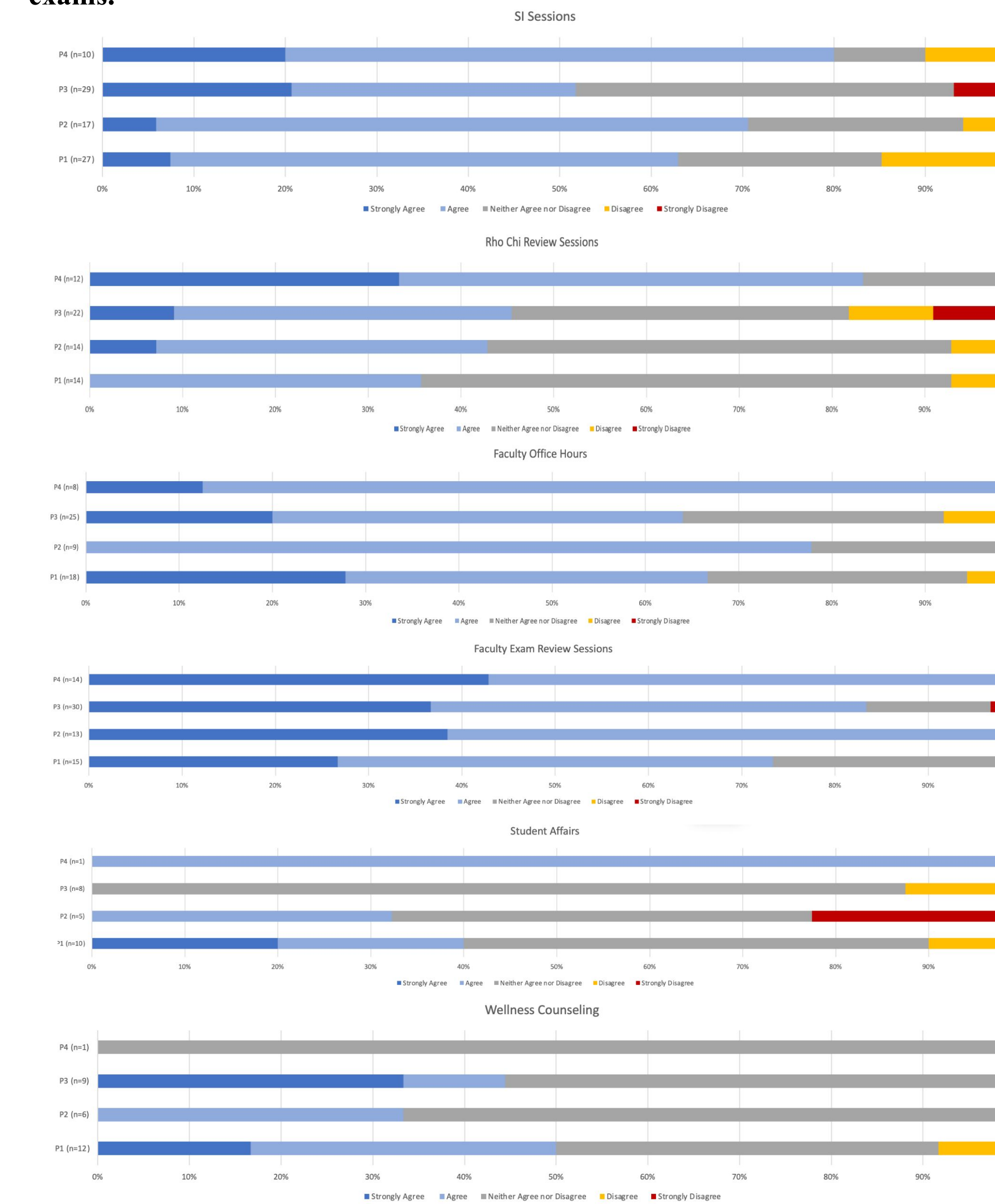
Each graph below represents each demographic group and the percentage of respondents that answered "yes" to participating in each respective resource for each cohort.



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Each graph below represents each resource offered at USC Mann and is further categorized into each cohort. It shows the percentage of participants that answered "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neither Agree nor Disagree", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree" when asked to rate the statement that each respective resource helped them be better prepared and successful in course exams.



CONCLUSIONS

As a whole, about 36% and 58% of respondents found faculty exam review sessions and faculty office hours to be the most helpful in exam preparation, respectively.

Across all P1s to P4s, faculty exam review sessions were the resource that students found to be the most helpful in exam preparation. In addition, faculty office hours were also perceived as one of the most helpful for P1s. Student affairs was found to be the least helpful for P1s and P2s. P3s found Rho Chi review sessions to be the least helpful, while P4s found SI sessions to be the least helpful.

Most students identified as first-generation, Middle Eastern or North African, Black or African American, and biracial students participated in SI sessions. Similarly, the majority of respondents who identified as Asian, White, Hispanic, or Latino participated in SI sessions and Rho Chi review sessions. Lastly, most respondents who identified as international students participated in SI sessions, Rho Chi sessions, faculty office hours, and faculty exam review sessions.

The resources with the lowest participation percentage for first-generation students were student affairs for P2-P4s and Rho Chi review sessions for P1s. Hispanics/Latinos(as) had a low percentage of participation in wellness counseling and student affairs across the cohorts. Those who identified as Black or African American participated the least in student affairs across the cohorts, with and addition of P1s having a low participation rate for Rho Chi Review Sessions, P4s for faculty office hours, and P2s and P3s for wellness counseling. The respondents who identified as Asians had the lowest participation percentage for wellness counseling and student affairs. P3s and P4 who identified as Middle Eastern or North African also had low participation in wellness counseling and student affairs, while P1s who have low participation in Rho Chi review sessions and student affairs and P2s for wellness counseling. Out of the respondents who identified as White, P1s participated the least in faculty office hours, P2s in Rho Chi review session, P3s in student affairs, and P4s in wellness counseling.

Overall, the participation didn't match what students found to be the most helpful. We see that SI sessions and Rho Chi review sessions are among the most common resources that students have participated in, yet they are not the resources voted to be the most helpful in exam preparation. We see that student affairs and wellness counseling are some of the resources that students have not yet participated in and, therefore, might not be well known.

REFERENCES

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3. Trinh AM, Vu TT, Gruenberg K, MacDougall C. Changes in Pharmacy Students' Self-Reported Learning Strategies Across a Four-Year Doctor of Pharmacy Program. *American journal of pharmaceutical education.* 2023;87(3):ajpe8991-ajpe8991. doi:10.5688/ajpe8991

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