



# Challenges of URM to Non-URM Graduate Students in a Large Minority Serving R1 Research University: A Comparison

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## Background

Literature review: Research shows that challenges for URM students in the STEM fields start before their undergraduate education, (Chang, Sharkness, Hurtado, & Newman, 2014) which persist during their undergraduate education (Hurtado et al., 2009). Those who make it to the graduate level, face financial and diversity challenges (Bersola, Stolzenberg, Love, & Fosnacht 2014).

Objective: To help explain the low number of underrepresented minority (URM) faculty careers at universities, we conducted two focus groups and asked science doctoral students about challenges they experience. We also inquired about the likelihood of them pursuing a faculty position and why they thought there is low numbers of URM faculty members at universities.

## Method

We collected data using semi-structured focus groups (two in total) and analyzed it using qualitative analysis closely aligned with critical race theory (Crenshaw, 1995).

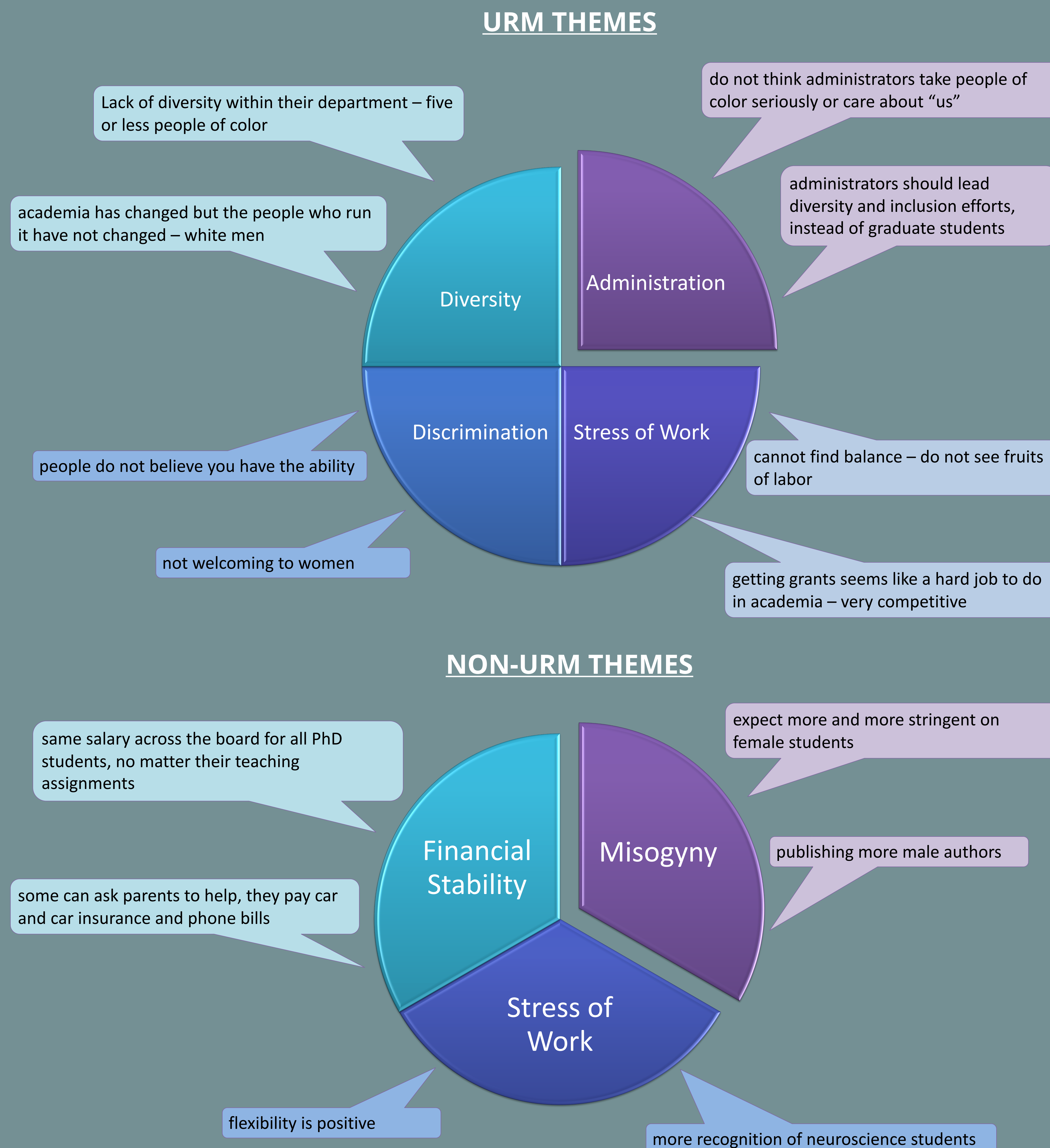
The Black doctoral student group consisted of 11 participants from various STEM fields.

The non-POC/ non-URM doctoral student group consisted of 4 women participants from the psychology department.

Some of the questions asked during the focus groups:

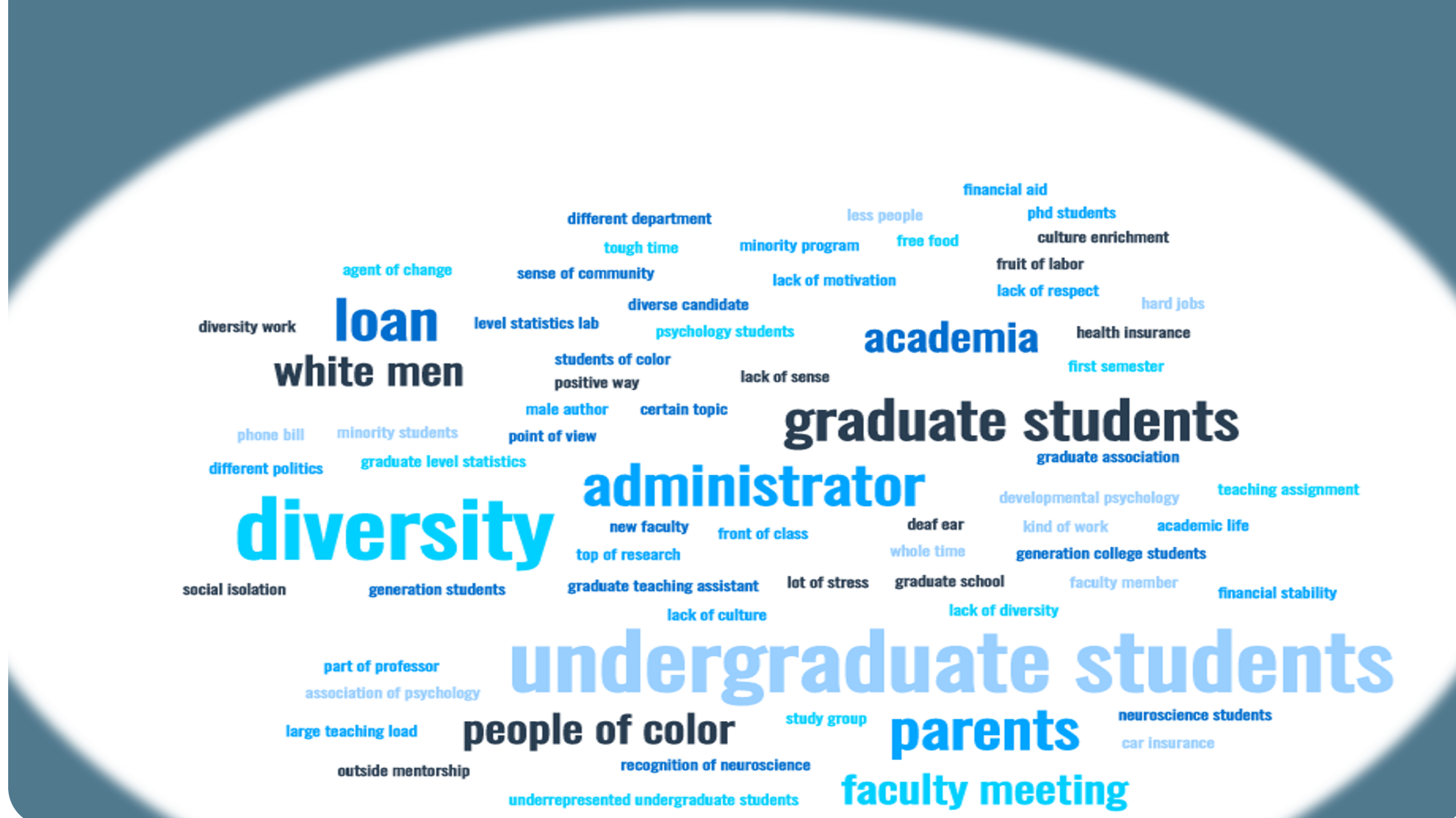
- Possible reasons that URM individuals are not going into academia?
- Lived experiences in their personal life and work life?
- How do they perceive academic life?
- What are some challenges perceived in academic life?

## Results and Themes



## Conclusion

- For BIPOC doctoral students, one of the most prominent themes was that there should be more action from administrators, top-down action.
- There should be more targeted efforts from the administration to recruit and retain BIPOC students and faculty in order to increase diversity.
- Non-BIPOC doctoral students most prominent theme was misogyny within the department.
- Non-BIPOC expressed more positive attitudes toward graduate school in general, compared to BIPOC students.



## References

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