

# ABIDEing to a Culture of Diversity and Inclusion at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media

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## Abstract

Every student should feel safe regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. Our group researched what the ABIDE (Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity) Initiative could do to improve diversity at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media. We additionally researched methods that ABIDE could utilize to increase its overall publicity and make its presence visible on UNC's campus.

This research utilized qualitative and quantitative research methods, including in-depth interviews, observations, a focus group discussion, and a quantitative survey. Our research suggests that many Hussman students were unaware of the ABIDE committee and its mission.

Our professional recommendations for ABIDE, based on this research, including utilizing social media to promote its mission and events, advocating for more people of color to be hired at the media school, and creating and promoting a sense of belonging through lectures and forums focused on topics important to diverse audiences.

## Research Questions

**RQ1:** What should ABIDE implement to bring awareness to the organization and improve diversity at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media?

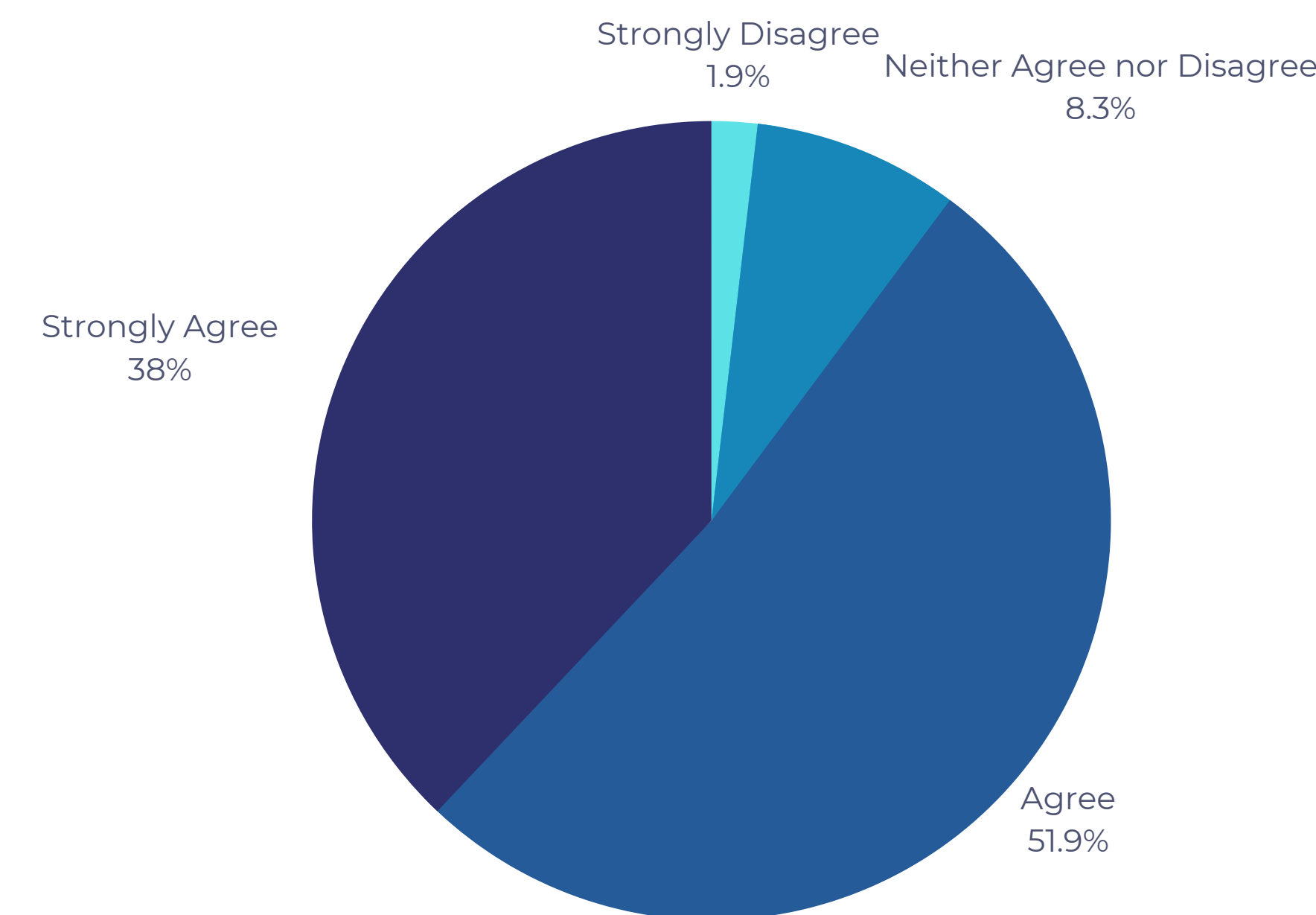
**RQ2:** What communication methods can ABIDE implement to bring awareness to the committee and improve diversity at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media?

## Hypothesis

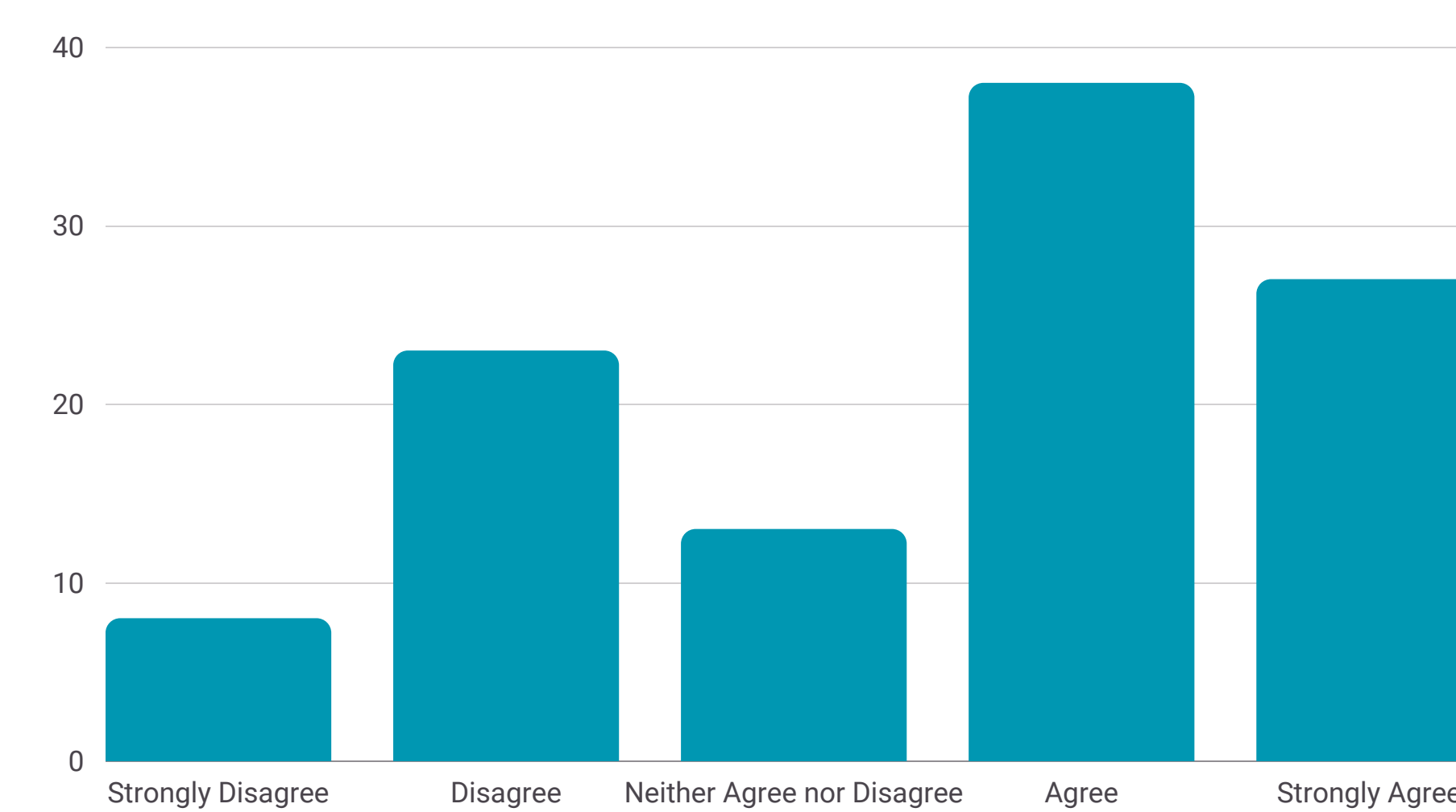
**H1:** If the Hussman School of Journalism and Media were to incorporate social media, podcasts, or a blog, the ABIDE Initiative would be able to gain more publicity and traction amongst faculty and students on the UNC campus.

## Quantitative Analysis

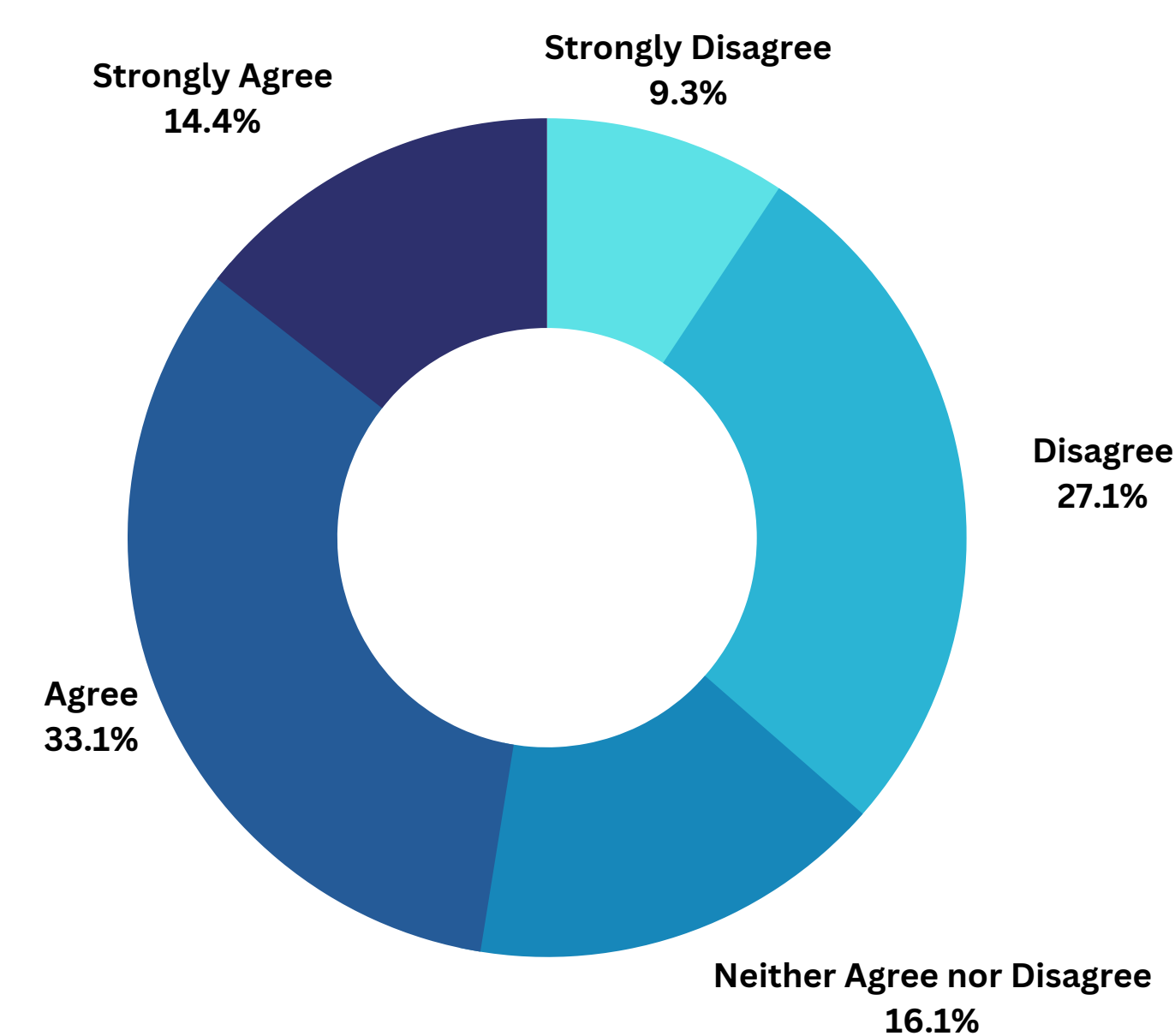
Do you think that using social media (i.e. Podcasts, blogs, Instagram, etc.) would help increase awareness of ABIDE on campus?



The curriculum/courses at The Hussman School celebrate diversity and bring awareness to diverse backgrounds.



We asked respondents whether minority races and ethnicities are well represented at Hussman.



## Qualitative Analysis

For our qualitative research, we utilized **inductive reasoning** (using participants' responses to create themes) to create an overall **thematic analysis** to discern and assess the culture of diversity and inclusion at Hussman School of Journalism and Media, along with the ABIDE committee's opportunities.

We identified **three themes** within our qualitative research:

- **Visibility (of ABIDE):** Most of the participants did not know about ABIDE prior to this focus group interview, and agreed that an increased social media presence and in-person meetings (guest speakers, forums, etc.) could generate success for the initiative and uphold its mission.
- **Sense of Belonging and Representation:** All of the participants agree that there is diversity among the students at Hussman School of Journalism and Media; however there appears to be a lack of representation among faculty/staff, which contributes to low representation and less sense of belonging. Diversity should be encouraged and represented across all aspects of the school, as a result.
- **Room for Opportunity:** All of the participants agree that there always is more needed to be done to encourage diversity/belonging at Hussman School of Journalism and Media across students, faculty, and staff. This is simply not a one-time conversation, but rather a process that should always be evaluated, prioritized, and valued by the Hussman School of Journalism and Media.

Suggestions included more forums, events, and meetings centered around diversity, equity, and inclusion at Hussman School of Journalism and Media; an example that was given includes the MLK events in January 2023. Opportunities similar to this, along with adequate promotion on social media, could make ABIDE successful, according to participants.

## Methods

**Qualitative:** Our **focus group** consisted of four participants who met via Zoom on March 23 having a conversation that centered around seven questions. Participants were students at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media at UNC Chapel Hill. The demographics of one participant are a sophomore who identifies as a female and Filipina. The demographics of one participant was a junior who identifies as female and Caucasian. Two of the participants were seniors who identify as female and Caucasian.

**Quantitative:** We utilized a 16-question survey that gathered 97 responses. Our sampling technique was a **snowball sample**: a non-probability sampling method where new units are recruited by other units to form part of the sample. The survey took approximately 10 minutes for participants to complete. Hussman School of Journalism and Media students filled out our survey and shared it with peers. We additionally contacted professors affiliated with ABIDE, who shared it with students.

## Professional Recommendations

The ABIDE Initiative should...

Create social media presence (such as Instagram) to increase publicity and promote the ABIDE Initiative mission.

Integrate a unit on diversity, equity, and inclusion into the curriculum of the Hussman School of Journalism and Media courses.

Host forum events, listening sessions, and panelist discussions centered around diversity.

Promote and support the hiring/curriculum of faculty of diverse backgrounds.

