What is it like to be a Republican on a campus full of Democrats?

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Literature Review
- African American college students feel more pressure to graduate (Gardner, 2008).
- Sexual minority students are more likely to be harassed on Christian campuses (Yarhouse, Stratton, Dean, and Brooke, 2009).
- Campus Republicans held events to promote their conservative ideology after having been repeatedly persecuted for their beliefs (Harper’s Magazine, March 1998).
- Campus Republicans at UC Berkeley held a racist bake sale to express their distaste for affirmative action. The cost of each item depended on the mass media influence (CNN, September 2011).

Research Question
What is it like to be a Republican on a campus full of Democrats?

Instruments and Methods
Multiple-Choice Survey
- I distributed a survey along with my class and another class to students at both John Jay and Columbia.
- The survey was given to any random student who was willing to participate, and the total amount of students surveyed was 500.

Personal Interviews
- I conducted personal interviews with members of both Democratic and Republican student organizations at both John Jay and Columbia.
- Interview Participants: Campus Democrats answered questions about Campus Republicans.
  - Campus Republicans share the room with the Campus Democrats and they’re all actually really close.
  - Campus Republicans hadn’t been in the room since the election.
  - It’s easier than it once was to be a Republican at John Jay because the administration no longer puts obstacles in their way when it comes to having events at school.
  - They don’t feel pressure to graduate as some African American students might, and not only do our Campus Republicans not get harassed, but they are actually the ones doing the harassing.
  - The events that Campus Republicans took part in at other schools probably wouldn’t go over as well at John Jay as they did elsewhere because we have so many ethnic minorities.

Interview Findings
John Jay
- Interview Participants: Campus Democrats answered questions about Campus Republicans.
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  - Campus Republicans hadn’t been in the room since the election.
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  - The events that Campus Republicans took part in at other schools probably wouldn’t go over as well at John Jay as they did elsewhere because we have so many ethnic minorities.

Columbia
- Interview Participants: One Campus Republican
  - It’s difficult to share opinions as a Campus Republican because people tend not to agree with you.
  - He doesn’t feel pressure to graduate because of his (political) minority status.
  - He does feel pressure to gravitate towards people who are like himself and thinks that racial minorities feel that same pressure.
  - The harassment he faces is different than the harassment one might face as a sexual minority. He doesn’t get physically harassed, but he gets cursed out or told to leave rooms when he tries to intermingle with other clubs.
  - The events that took place at other schools would not go over as well at Columbia because of its location in New York City.

Survey Findings
John Jay
- A survey of about 500 students
- Percent of Democrats vs. Republicans at John Jay
  - Blue = Democrat (90%)
  - Red = Republican (10%)

Columbia
- A survey of about 500 students
- Percent of Democrats vs. Republicans at Columbia
  - Blue = Democrat (93%)
  - Red = Republican (7%)

What I Have Learned
“You need to understand something in order to accept it.”
That’s what my brother-in-law’s father said on Thanksgiving about an unrelated matter.
However, I think it holds true to my project. I went into this with the assumption that all Republicans were like the hardcore, stereotypical radicals that are given shows on Fox News. Such is not the case. Talking to someone from the “GOP at Columbia,” as they call themselves, made me understand and accept Republicans. I went into this wanting to know whether or not Campus Republicans in New York City face the same type of hardships as other minorities do in other places; however, I actually made a realization about life, and that’s more than most people get out of their research projects.

References