

## In student newspaper articles that mention the humanities and liberal arts, race dominates conversations around diversity.

Diversity connotes variation, a departure from sameness. But as seen in our [Collection 14](#)--which contains 21,182 university and college newspaper articles written by students that mention “humanities” or “liberal arts”--“diversity” in University Wire discourse predominantly implies *racial diversity*.

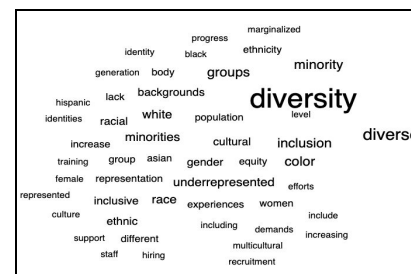
[Topic 112](#) in our [C-14.250 topic model](#) of the collection (250 topics) demonstrates the central discourse around diversity and race. Many of the articles most associated with this topic begin by introducing the lack of diversity on campuses--e.g., how “[academia is dominated by white men](#)” with little perceived representation by “[people of color](#)” and “[underrepresented minorities](#).” In nearly all of these articles, “diversity” acts as a *de facto* substitute for “racial diversity.”

We chose to examine Topic 112 because its most frequent words include “diversity” and “inclusion”, along with two other terms of interest: “representation” and “identity.” Containing all four of these terms, this topic is a productive site for examining meta-discourses around diversity and inclusion in universities as perceived by students. Other related topics reveal how diversity takes shape in discussions around gender and sexuality (topics [58](#) and [169](#)), immigration ([93](#)) and politics ([80](#)). However, these topics contain just one or two of the four key terms mentioned above, and are thus less helpful for making broad inferences about how diversity and inclusion are perceived by students in universities.

A key theme that emerges in [topic 112](#), which tightly links “diversity” specifically to

race, is that *faculty leadership is seen as critical to inclusion*. Many of the top articles are a rallying cry by [students](#) and [university leadership](#) alike to increase racial diversity among faculty. One argument is that students who do not see role models who [look like themselves](#) are less likely to pursue certain disciplines. Thus, if universities (and other humanistic institutions) want diverse populations, a critical first step may be to address the diversity of leadership.

Furthermore, the university’s tendency to concentrate diversity discourse specifically around *race* (as covered in student newspapers) reveals how “diversity” is used improperly as a blanket statement, as it is not equitably employed in reference to other social identity groups. Providing clarity on the term with a preceding word, such as *racial diversity*, *viewpoint diversity*, etc., may help students and university officials draft more powerful, inclusive diversity statements.



**Topic #112** viewed in [TopicBubbles](#).

Document collection studied: [C-14](#)

Topic model of collection: [C-14:250](#) (250 topics)

Interesting sample topics: [#112](#), [#1](#), [#6](#)

Representative articles: [a](#), [b](#), [c](#)

Evidentiary documentation for this key finding:

[WE1S Interpretation Protocol](#)