

Pedagogies of Place: Who Are Our Students?

A Faculty Development Workshop about Teaching in Queens

Spring 2026 | Lizandra A. Friedland (OIE/ PHIL)



Overview

About

These materials were developed through a collaborative project between the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Leadership (CETLL) and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Our goal is to help you develop a richer picture of who your students are, where they come from, and what they carry with them into your classrooms.

During this time, you will:

- Engage in guided, small-group exercises exploring student data
- Share your group's reflections with the larger group
- Leave with questions, ideas, and connections to CETLL and OIE resources

Learning Objectives

About knowing students

- Develop a data-informed portrait of who QC students are — where they come from, what they carry, and what they need
- Recognize the demographic, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity of our student body and its implications for teaching

About teaching practice

- Reflect on how course design, classroom climate, and faculty accessibility shape student outcomes
- Consider how place-based approaches might deepen student engagement in your specific discipline

About professional growth and community

- Identify resources through CETLL and OIE that can support your ongoing development as a teacher at QC
- Leave with questions worth sitting with — about your students, your practice, and your discipline's role in this community

Explore the Data: Who Are Our Students?

For Sections A through G:

- Pre-work: review the data and take notes on your impressions, questions, and the connections you might make to your teaching.
- In the workshop, we will come together in small and large groups for discussion.

A. Where do our students commute from?

Queens College draws students primarily from the surrounding borough, but our students come from all over NYC, representing one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse places in the world.

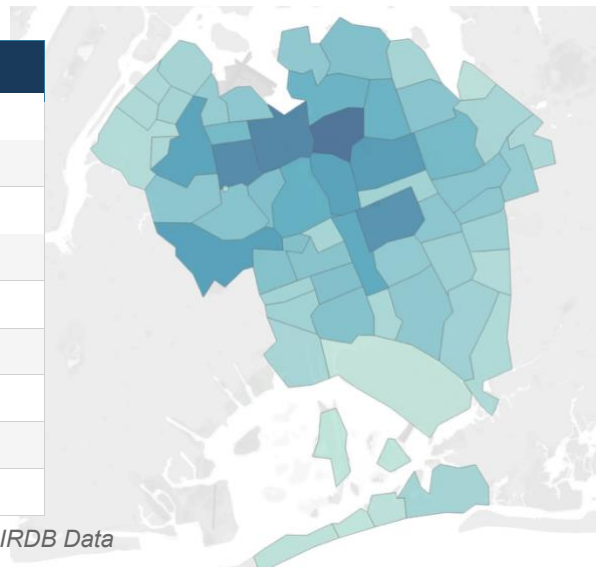
Where our students are from (by county)

County	2014	2024
Queens	67%	71%
Nassau	19%	13%
Brooklyn	5%	6%
Suffolk	4%	3%
Bronx	2%	3%
Manhattan	2%	2%
Other	3%	2%

Source: CUNY IRDB Data

Top Queens neighborhoods represented

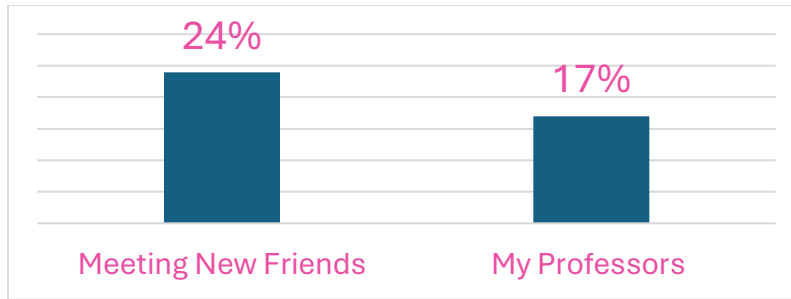
Neighborhood	% of Students
Flushing	18.0%
Jamaica	5.1%
Corona	5.0%
Fresh Meadows	4.8%
Elmhurst	4.6%
Queens Village	4.6%
Jamaica Estates	4.3%
Glendale	3.4%
Astoria	3.3%



Source: CUNY IRDB Data

As a commuter school, our students crave community.

New students name making new friends and their professors as the top two best parts of their first year experience at QC.



Source: Fall 2024/25 New Student Survey

TABLE DISCUSSION

- Place-based pedagogy often asks: *whose knowledge counts?* Our students bring deep local knowledge of neighborhoods, communities, and histories. Where in your course might that knowledge have a seat at the table?
- Many of our students are looking for community. How might your teaching practices support (or could support) community-building in your classroom?

Notes:

B. How diverse are our students?

Queens College students reflect the extraordinary diversity of Queens County itself.

~78%

of QC students come from racial/ethnic minority communities

~68%

of QC students are multilingual (grew up speaking a language other than English only)

Shift in racial/ethnic makeup of QC students (2014–2024)

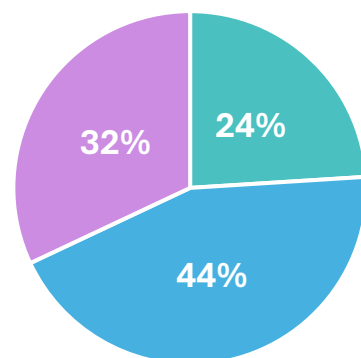
	2014	2024	%change
American Indian/ Alaska..	0.3%	0.4%	+0.1%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	26.8%	32.8%	+6.0%
Black	7.8%	9.6%	+1.8%
Hispanic/Latinx	27.8%	29.8%	+2.0%
White	31.9%	18.5%	-13.4%
Two or more races	0.9%	2.8%	+1.9%
Non-resident Alien	4.6%	6.2%	+1.6%

Source: Queens College Student Profile

Home language background

	% of Students
English plus another language	44%
English only	32%
No English at home (introduced later)	24%

Source: 2022 Academic Writing Survey (W courses), RR = 9%



This mirrors broader demographic shifts in Queens County:

Between 2000 and 2022, the AAPI population in Queens increased by 8.7 percentage points, while the White population decreased by 10.2 percentage points. (Source: US Census Data)

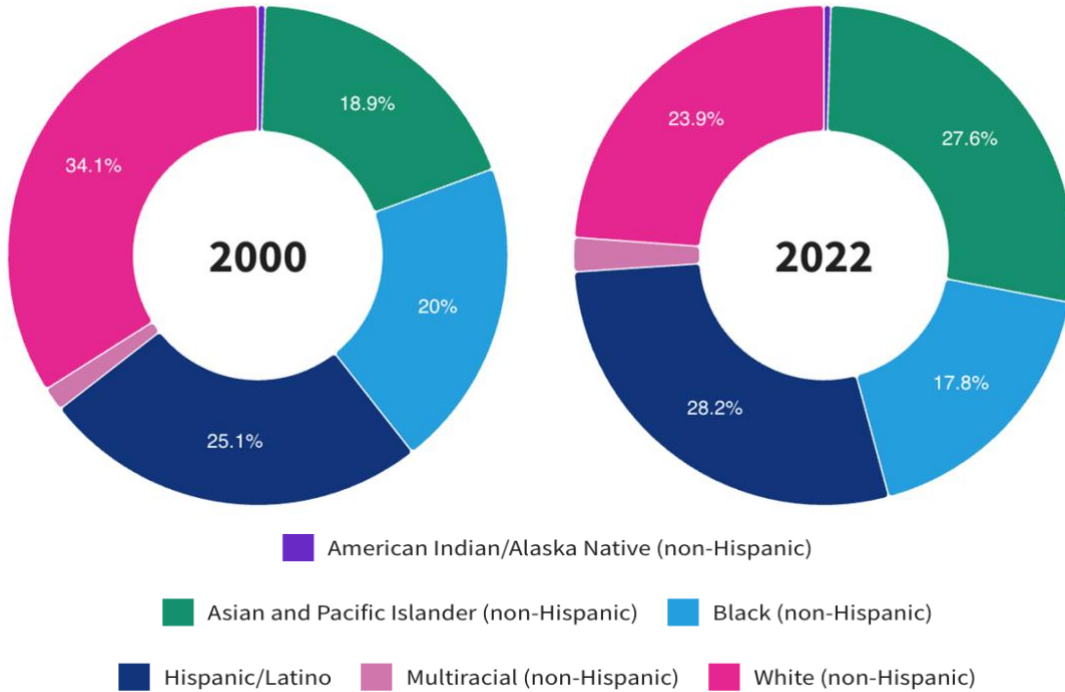


TABLE DISCUSSION

- Over two-thirds of our students grew up in multilingual households. How does this show up in your classroom — in written work, participation, peer interactions?
- How do you create space for multilingual students? What might you want to try?
- Are there moments in your course where students could investigate, document, or analyze change in their own communities as a form of learning and a form of civic engagement?

Notes:

C. What do we know about our students' religious and LGBTQ+ identities?

Queens College students are religiously diverse, and a meaningful proportion identify as LGBTQ+. Both dimensions of identity can shape how students experience the classroom climate.

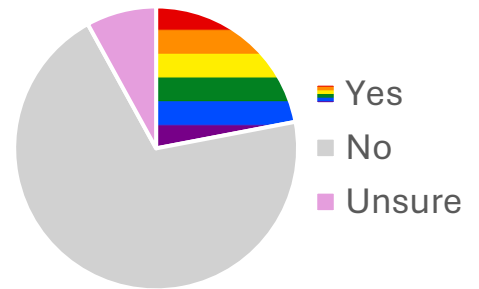
Religion	2002	2022
Christian	46%	36%
No religion	17%	29%
Muslim	7%	15%
Jewish	15%	7%
Hindu	2%	6%
Buddhist	5%	2%

Source: CUNY Student Experience Survey (2002 RR = 35%; 2022 RR = 11%)

Note: Response rates dropped significantly between 2002 and 2022. It's best to treat the 2022 figures as directional rather than precise. These trends align with broader demographic shifts in Queens.

~22%

of QC students identify as LGBTQ+ (another 8% are unsure)



Source: 2022 QC DEI Survey, Student RR = 7%.

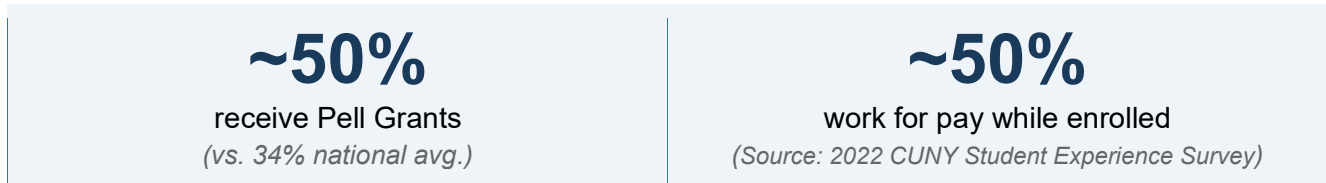
TABLE DISCUSSION

- How do you create a classroom climate that is welcoming across religious and LGBTQ+ identities, especially when those identities may be in tension with one another?
- Are there topics in your discipline that feel particularly charged along these lines? How do you navigate them?

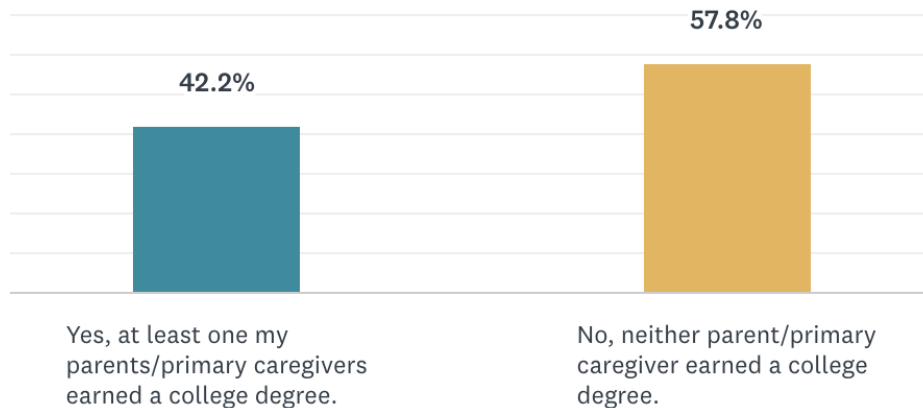
Notes:

D. What are our students' economic realities?

Queens College has long served students from working-class and economically precarious backgrounds. Understanding students' financial realities is essential context for teaching and policy.



About half of QC students are among the first in their families to attend college.



Source: 2022 QC DEI Survey, Student RR = 7%

Queens College is an engine for upward social and economic mobility.

We are in the top 1% of U.S. colleges that help students from the bottom 20% of the income distribution reach the top 20% in earnings.

Chronicle of Higher Education 2018 / Chetty et al. 2017, Mobility Report Cards

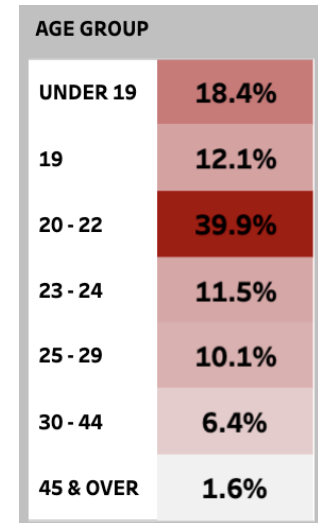
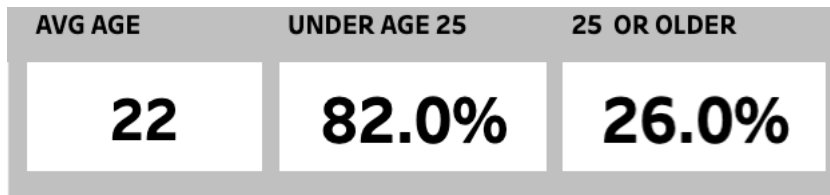
TABLE DISCUSSION

- Roughly half of students work for pay. How can deadlines, attendance policies, and workload expectations support students who are working 20–40 hours a week?
- What does 'first-gen friendly' teaching actually look like? What parts of the “hidden curriculum” can we explicitly teach?
- Many of our students are deeply embedded in local economies as workers and caregivers. How might coursework connect academic learning to the real economic and civic conditions of the communities students live in?

Notes:

E. Who is Generation Z, and what do they need from us?

90% of QC undergraduates are 29 or younger, placing them squarely in Generation Z (born roughly 1997–2012). Understanding this generational context helps us understand how students approach learning, technology, and institutional life.

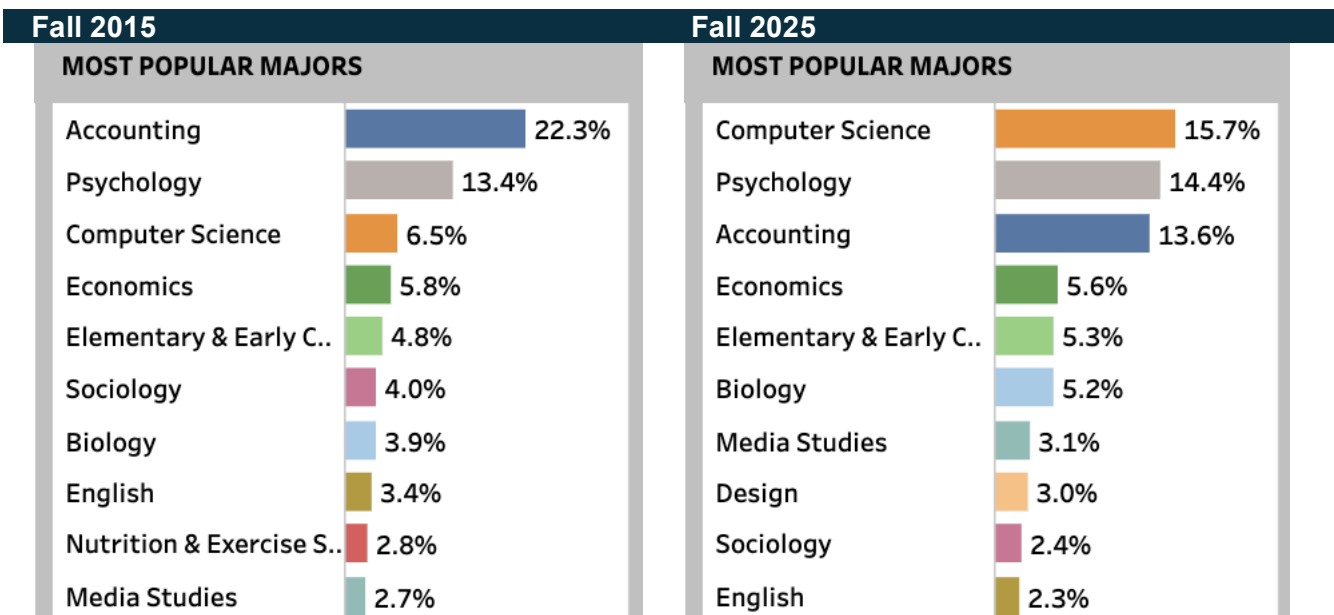


Characteristics associated with Gen Z students

Digital natives	Grew up in a high-stimulation, high-interruption digital environment; may struggle with sustained attention or conflate finding information with understanding
Pandemic-era formative years	Experienced disrupted schooling; may have gaps and heightened anxiety
Expect flexibility & transparency	Respond well to clear communication, rationale behind policies, and flexibility
Focus on mental wellness	More likely to name mental health as a concern; benefit from supportive classroom norms
Pragmatic orientation	Often focused on career relevance; value understanding the 'why' behind coursework

Source: Pew Research Center; QC Spring 2025 Student Wellness Survey

Over half of QC undergraduates pursue degrees in STEM, Business, or Education



Source: Queens College Student Profile.

TABLE DISCUSSION

- Gen Z students experienced significant disruption during their formative years and tend to expect transparency and flexibility. How do your course policies, syllabi, and communication style speak to these needs — and where might there be room to adjust?
- Many of our students are pragmatically focused on careers and credentials, yet they are enrolled in a liberal arts institution. How do you help students see the relevance and value of a well-rounded education?

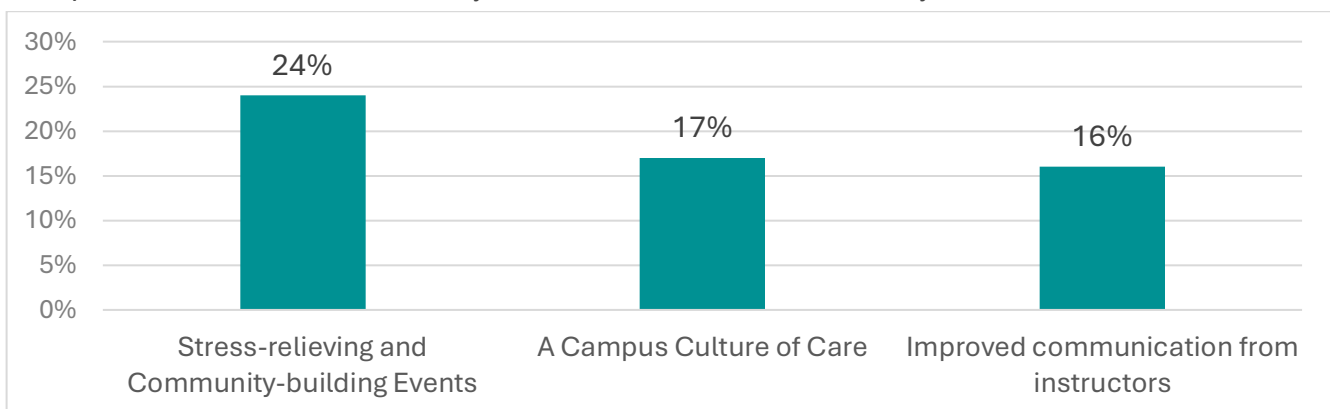
Notes:

F. What do our students need to thrive?

The Spring 2025 Student Wellness Survey revealed that feeling supported dramatically predicts student outcomes.

	Feels Well-Supported at QC	Not Well-Supported at QC
Feels confident in abilities as a student	69%	33%
Can communicate needs to instructors	56%	20%
Frequent mental health concerns this term	21%	61%

When asked **how QC can better support students during high-stress periods**, students pointed to transparent communication, flexibility, and accessible instructors as key factors.



Source: Spring 2025 Student Wellness Survey

QC Course Evaluation Survey

The QC Course Evaluation Survey includes items on transparency, communication, and feedback — three areas where faculty can most directly impact student success and wellbeing.

AREA		ASPECT	ITEM
COURSE STRUCTURE <i>DO MY STUDENTS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT?</i>	1	RELIABILITY	The instructor followed the course syllabus, or clearly explained any changes.
	2	ORGANIZATION	The course is organized such that it is easy to understand how topics, assignments, and activities fit together.
	3	ALIGNMENT	The graded assessments (exams, papers, projects, etc.) directly reflect course topics and assignments (lectures, readings, exercises, etc.)
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT <i>ARE MY STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO BE ENGAGED?</i>	4	INCLUSION	I felt welcome in this class.
	5	ACTIVE LEARNING	I had opportunities to be actively engaged in this class .
STUDENT SUPPORT <i>DO MY STUDENTS HAVE THE SUPPORT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED?</i>	6	ASSESMENT CRITERIA	I received guidance on how to do well on graded assessments.
	7	COMMUNICATION	There are multiple, open channels for communication where students can ask questions and seek help.
	8	FEEDBACK	I received regular feedback about how to best meet my instructor's expectations.
LEVEL OF RIGOR <i>HOW CHALLENGING AND TIME INTENSIVE IS MY CLASS?</i>	9	CHALLENGE	How would you rate the level of challenge in this course?
	10	TIME	In an average week, how many hours per week did you spend on this course?
FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE <i>WHAT WORKED WELL FOR STUDENTS?</i> <i>WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO STUDENTS OFFER FOR IMPROVEMENT?</i>	11	STRENGTHS	What aspects of the course enhanced your learning the most?
	12	RECOMMENDATIONS	What aspects of the course could be improved to better support students to succeed?
	13	OPEN-ENDED	Is there anything else that you would like to share about this course?

Learn more at: qc.cuny.edu/oie/course-evals/



TABLE DISCUSSION

- The data shows a dramatic gap in confidence and well-being based on whether students feel supported. What does 'feeling supported' look like in your course?
- Transparency, communication, and feedback are key student needs. What is one practice you use (or could start) in each of these areas?

Notes:

G. What does all of this mean for our teaching?

Take a few minutes to reflect on the full picture.



TABLE DISCUSSION

- What from this data surprised you most? What felt familiar?
- What feels particularly useful to hold as you plan your courses?
- Did anything in the data change how you think about a specific teaching practice/policy?
- Place-based education begins with a simple premise: *where we are shapes how we learn*. Looking at everything you've seen in this data, what does it mean to teach *here* — at this college, in this borough, with these students?

Notes:

Share-Out

- Can you share one data point and teaching practice that your group discussed?
- Was there a topic or data point that your group kept returning to?
- What came up for your group as you discussed place-based pedagogy?
- Did any questions come up for your group as you reviewed the data?
- What support from CETLL or OIE would help you act on what you learned today?

Notes:

Collaborate with CETLL

CETLL is your on-campus partner for translating insights like the ones in this workshop into concrete classroom practice. Through faculty development programming, CETLL supports innovative, equitable, and student-centered teaching across in-person, hybrid, and online modalities — with particular attention to instructional technology, professional growth, leadership development, and faculty wellness. Whether you're looking to redesign an assignment with multilingual learners in mind, explore flexible course structures that better serve working students, or simply connect with a community of colleagues thinking seriously about teaching, CETLL is a resource for you.

Here are some ways to engage:

- **Faculty development workshops and institutes:** Explore upcoming programming on pedagogy, instructional design, and student-centered practice
- **Individual consultations:** Work one-on-one with a CETLL team member on a specific teaching challenge or course redesign
- **Instructional technology support:** Get guidance on tools and strategies for effective teaching across modalities
- **Community of inquiry and care:** Connect with fellow QC faculty who are asking the same questions you are

Collaborate with OIE

The OIE is a research and collaboration partner. Here are some ways we aim to support you:

- **Applied research:** Partner on student studies, needs assessments, or program evaluations
- **Course evaluations:** Access resources and guidance at [qc.cuny.edu/oie/course-evals/](https://www.qc.cuny.edu/oie/course-evals/)
- **Alumni data:** Explore our alumni outcomes data at [qc.cuny.edu/oie/alumni-outcomes](https://www.qc.cuny.edu/oie/alumni-outcomes)
- **Surveys:** Review our survey reports at [qc.cuny.edu/oie/surveys/](https://www.qc.cuny.edu/oie/surveys/)

Data Sources Referenced in this Workshop

- QC OIE Dashboards [QC Student Profile](#)
- QC OIE Surveys <https://www.qc.cuny.edu/oie/surveys/>
- 2002 CUNY SES [2002 CUNY Student Experience Survey](#)
- 2022 CUNY SES [2022 CUNY Student Experience Survey](#)
- QC Alumni Outcomes Project <https://www.qc.cuny.edu/oie/alumni-outcomes/>
- Pew Research Center
 - [Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins](#)
 - [What We Know About Gen Z So Far](#)
 - [37% of U.S. H.S. students report mental health struggles](#)
- QC Course Evaluations [Faculty Resources for Course Evaluations](#)
- Chetty et al. 2017 [Mobility Report Cards](#)

Reflection & Action Guide:

- Ideas I want to revisit / research:

- Resources to explore later:

- One thing I want to try next semester:

- One conversation to have with colleagues:

- My top 3 take-aways:

Thank you for your commitment to knowing your students!

About the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Leadership (CETLL)

The Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership (CETLL) provides faculty development opportunities to support innovative, equitable, and student-centered pedagogical practices across teaching and learning modalities, with attention to creative and effective uses of instructional technology, as well as opportunities for professional growth, leadership development, and overall faculty wellness. CETLL aims to build a collaborative community of inquiry for all faculty at Queens College so that they, in turn, can foster learning environments that support student success, in all its forms.

About the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE)

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness supports evidence-based decision-making at Queens College. The OIE provides access to data and conducts analyses and applied research to inform student and faculty success initiatives, program development and evaluation, grants, strategic planning, and to help meet compliance reporting requirements. Through collaboration with academic and administrative departments across the college, the OIE supports a culture of inquiry and innovation.

About the Presenter

In the OIE, Lizandra is the institutional research manager for applied research. In this role, she aims to promote a deeper understanding of our community's experiences and development through cohort studies, impact evaluation studies, needs assessments, course evaluations, and other projects. Outside the OIE, Lizandra teaches in the Philosophy department where she guides her students through the fascinating world of formal logic. A first-generation graduate and QC alum, collaborating with fellow faculty and staff on student-centered initiatives is the highlight of her work.

