

Disability and Ableism in Classics: A State of the Field Study

by

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Master of Arts in Classics

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This study examines the prevalence of ableism and discriminatory behavior toward disabled students in Classics and related studies, such as History and Anthropology. This study focuses in on the existence of ableism in few specific areas of study rather than academia at large, as other previous studies have. To gather the necessary data, an anonymous survey was sent to all schools in the United States that have an active Classics program. The results of that survey were then studied and compared to understand fully the impact of ableism in Classics. Those who have invisible disabilities, particularly those who have a cognitive disability, are the most dissatisfied with their treatment as disabled students in Classics. The findings presented in this study show a great need for education for educators and universities for the betterment of disabled students in academia.

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Introduction

One in four adults in the United States have some form of disability [CDC]. For university students, that percentage is one in five for undergraduates, and one in ten for graduate students [NCES]. This study poses several questions; what ableism is present in universities, specifically in the Classics and Humanities, what can universities do to better academic life for disabled students, and what does this matter for Classics as a study?

Inspired by my own experiences as a disabled student in academia, I began this study with the hopes of furthering understanding of the disabled experience and ableism in the academic world. I, personally, prefer using identity-first language to refer to myself and my disability rather than person-first, so that will generally be what is used throughout the study. I also will be typing using a sans font, because studies have shown that for Neurodivergent individuals, like myself, as well as for those with cognitive disorders it can make texts easier to read (Rello, Baeza-Yates). This has been an emotionally exhausting process, but a rewarding one. What is likely not taken into account by many is the emotional labor, and the physical and mental stress that disabled students bear along with the many responsibilities of being a successful student. What may seem like an easy task to some can be a near impossible hurdle to others. What is the point of a study that only accepts, encourages, and acknowledges those who fit into their status quo? What new ideas and discoveries can be made by the same

types of experiences, again and again? How can disabled bodies and lives be known in the Classics when disabled lives aren't acknowledged properly in present?

Methodology

This study is centered around understanding how Classicists and Classics as a whole view and work with disabled students.

To gather this data on the state of Classics and disabled students, a survey was conducted using Qualtrics. Emails were sent out to over 250 universities throughout the United States, any that had an active Classics program listed on their programs list. These universities were requested to them disperse the survey, via a private link, to their Classics students (both undergraduate and graduate), and any adjacent studies they felt would be helpful to the research. Adjacent studies suggested by the researcher were: History, Anthropology, and Art History. The research and survey deals with human subjects, however an IRB (Institutional Review Board) exemption was granted. The survey is anonymous, collects no IP addresses, and contains a consent form for everyone who participates in the research to complete. The survey was open from January 28th to February 28th, with the

last survey completed on February 27th. Subjects did not have to complete the survey for it to be reported via Qualtrics, and the amount of reported survey responses does diminish with each question answered (which will be further discussed in the Final Thoughts portion of this study).

The survey itself consists of six questions. Each question is meant to gather a particular set of data.

Question 1 is a multiple-choice question that allows the subject to choose as many options as are applicable. The question asks the subject if they experience or identify with any of the following disabilities, impairments, or identities: chronic health conditions; neurodivergence (ADHD, autism, learning disabilities, etc.); cognitive disability (related to memory, learning, processing, reading, etc.); vision; hearing; speech; psychological and mental health; physical disability (spinal issues, arthritis, cerebral palsy, etc.); other (asked to specify). The subject is also able to select a choice of 'not applicable/I do not' or a choice of 'prefer not to respond.' The purpose of Question 1 is to obtain percentages of those who are disabled versus those who are not. Question 1 also allows for those who do not claim disability or neurodivergence to be filtered out of subsequent questions, and for each disability type to be individually examined, for a closer read.

Question 2 is a multiple-choice question that allows subjects to choose one option. The question asks the subject what their experience with student

disability accommodations are at their university. Optional answers are as follows: I currently utilize my university's disability accommodations, support, etc.; I have utilized disability accommodations, support, etc. at my university in the past; I plan to seek out accommodations or support at my university; I requested accommodations but they were denied; Do not utilize and do not plan to seek; I am unaware of such services at my university; Prefer not to answer. Question 2, in a similar manner to Question 1, allows for a closer examination of individual answers. Rather than assuming that every disabled person must use accommodations, this question is helpful in understanding how many disabled people do use accommodations, how many don't, and how many are unsure of the process overall.

Question 3 is a multiple-choice question that allows subjects to choose one option. The question asks the subject, under the condition that they answered that they are disabled or neurodivergent in Question 1, if their professors, instructors, advisors, or other faculty members in their department know of their status as disabled/neurodivergent. Their answer options are: Yes; No; Maybe; Does not apply/Do not identify as neurodivergent/disabled; Prefer not to answer. Question 3 was born of a sub-question to the research question; will professors/instructors who know the student is disabled treat them differently than if they did not know? Question 3 could indicate that yes, there is a correlation between a professor

that knows of a student's disability and discrimination by that professor, or the opposite.

Question 4 provides a series of eleven 'I' statements, then requests the subject to indicate their level of agreement with the aforementioned statements with one of five options: Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree. The statements are as follows:

I have been singled out in class because of my accommodations or disability/I have seen someone singled out in class because of their accommodations or disability.

My department/program takes steps to create an inclusive environment for students with disabilities.

My professors, instructors, advisors, and other faculty members are adequately educated in the accommodations process at my university.

I understand the process of reporting if I believe I have been discriminated against because of my disability/neurodivergence or use of accommodations.

I have been excluded from departmental activities, events, academic programs, etc. because of my disability/neurodivergence and/or use of accommodations.

My status as a disabled/neurodivergent student and/or use of accommodations has had a negative impact on funding, placement, TA/GEship, or any other graduate-specific requirements.

My professors and instructors are willing to make course-related accommodations.

Any acts of discrimination against disabled/neurodivergent students I have experienced or seen has been intrapersonal (individual, personal acts of discrimination toward someone) rather than systemic.

Any act of discrimination against disabled/neurodivergent students I have experienced or seen has been systemic (relating to the system, institution, or group of people as a whole) rather than intrapersonal.

My status as a disabled/neurodivergent student is respected by my academic peers (professors, advisors, staff members, TAs, etc.) in academic settings outside of the classroom (e.g. advisory meetings, office hours, etc.).

I would recommend the Classics/Humanities/Related programs at my university to other students interested in the field.

Question 4 asks a series of questions that all serve various purposes. It asks of differences between intrapersonal and systemic discrimination, of willingness to make accommodations, of respect. These are specific questions about experiences (whether their own or witnessed) to examine

more closely the overall treatment of disabled and neurodivergent students in the academic field.

Question 6 is an optional write-in question, that allows subjects to, if they so choose, share experiences they have had related to neurodivergence or disability and/or the use of accommodations within their Classics or related departments.

Question 7 is an optional write-in question, that allows subjects to. If they so choose, offer suggests for improvements in the treatment of disabled and neurodivergent students.

Questions 6 and 7 serve similar purposes to each other; this is an emotional and very individual-based study. Although it is still anonymous, these write-in questions can give more in-depth answers than a multiple-choice answer can, and can give valuable insight to the individual plights, concerns, or suggestions people may have concerning views on disability in Classics and related studies.

For analysis, using Qualtrics, filters were placed on the responses given. For this research, because we are examining neurodivergent and disabled students, those responses that included 'not applicable/I do not' or 'prefer not to respond' in Question 1 were removed. A similar filter was applied to Question 3 answers 'does not apply/do not identify as neurodivergent/disabled' and 'prefer not to answer.' From there, responses

were further filtered, narrowing down the responses by type, to compare them to those from other questions.

Statistics for national averages of individual disabilities in the US will be given as well, to compare the percentages of those found in this study. If the percentages of individual disability type in this study are similar to national averages (with a reasonable differential between the percentages in this study and national percentages), it could increase the overall credibility of the study.

Survey Results

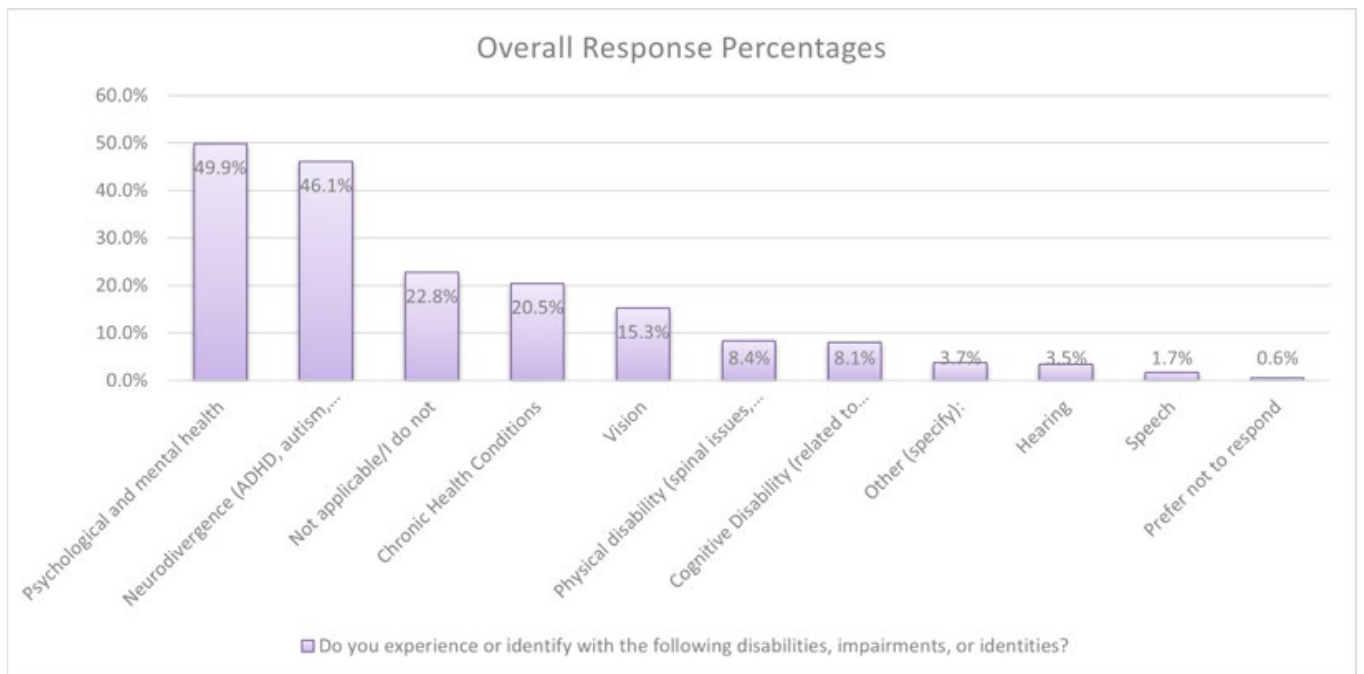


Figure 1: Question 1 Results

Figure 1.1 shows the unaltered responses to Question 1 of all subjects who consented to taking the survey. Of the 347 respondents (remembering that subjects could choose one or more choices for Question 1), approximately half claim to struggle with mental illness, slightly less than

half claim neurodivergence, a fifth claim to have chronic health conditions, 15.3% claim vision impairment, 8.4% claim a physical disability, 8.1% claim a cognitive disability, 3.7 other, 3.5% claim hearing impairment, 1.7 claim speech impairment, 0.6% opted to not respond, and 22.8% claimed that they are not in any way disabled.

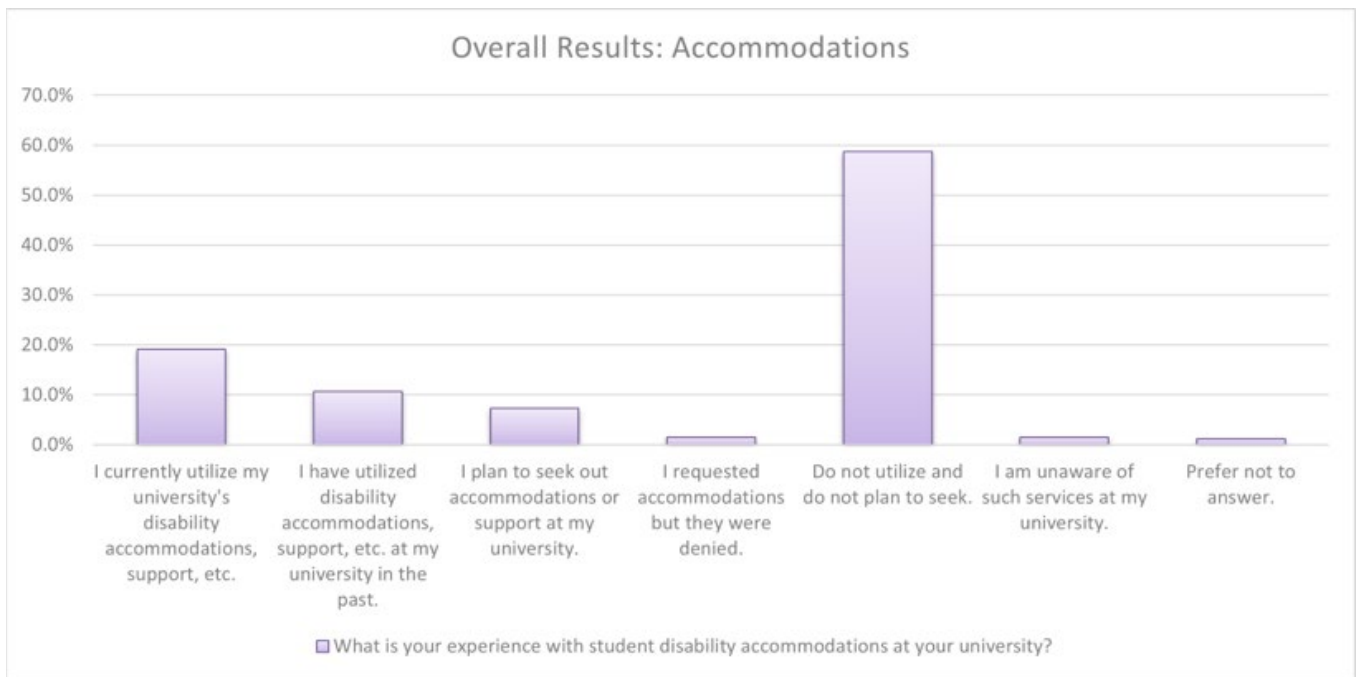


Figure 2: Question 2 Results

Figure 1.2 corresponds to Question 2 and had 330 responses. Over half of respondents claim that they do not utilize and do not plan to seek out accommodations at their university.

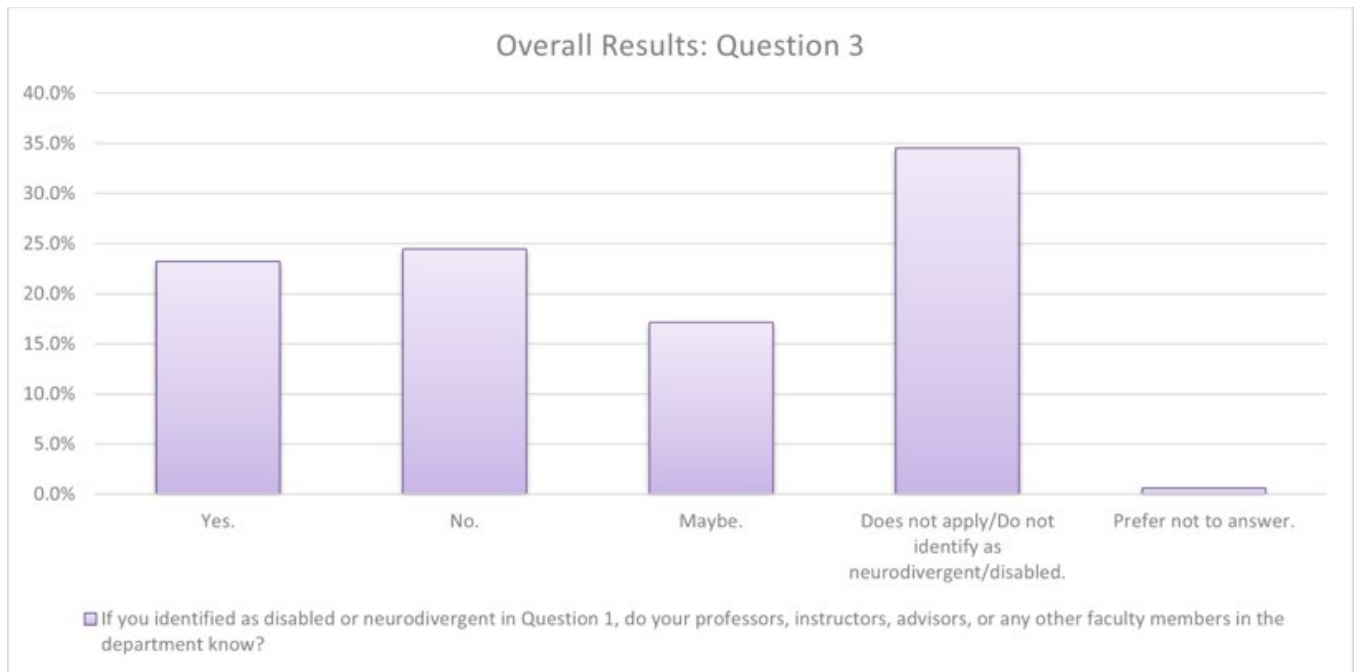


Figure 3: Question 3 Results

Figure 1.3 corresponds to Question 3 and had 327 responses. Most respondents selected that they do not identify as neurodivergent or disabled, or that the question does not apply to them. The second most selected response was that the respondent's professors, instructors, advisors, or other faculty members do not know that they are disabled, followed closely with professors knowing of the respondents' disability.

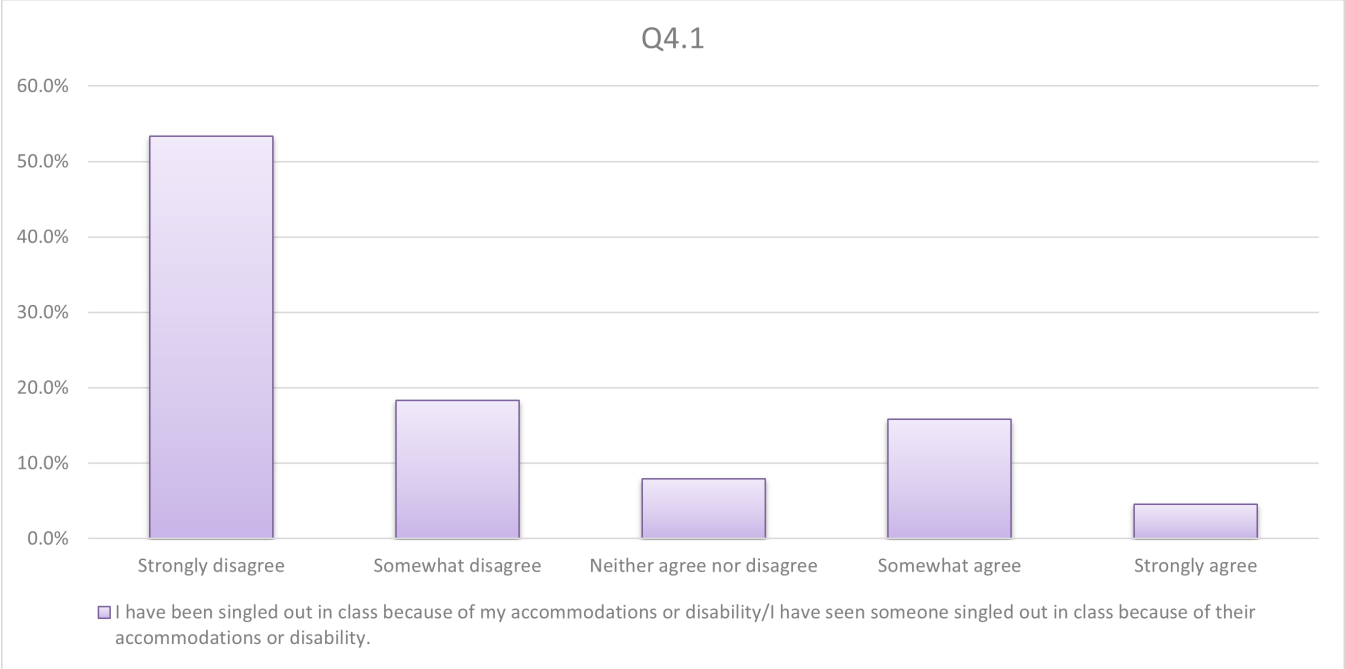


Figure 4: Results for Question 4.1

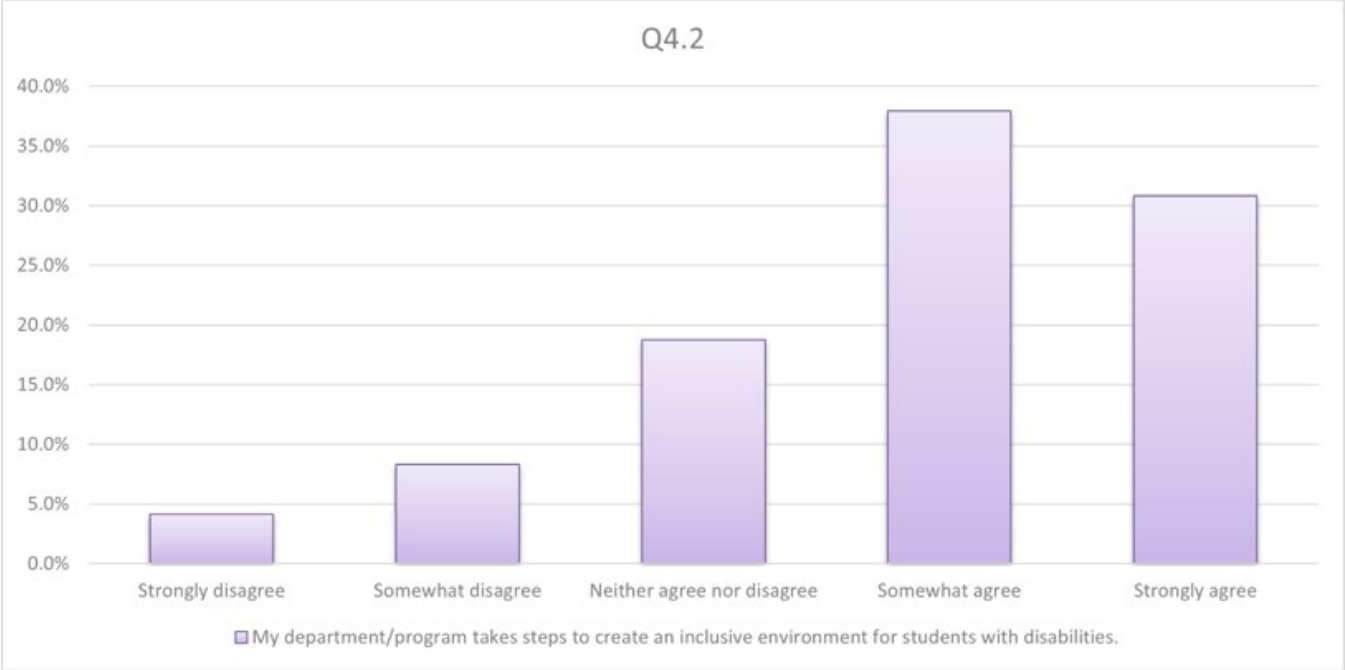


Figure 5: showing results for Question 4.2

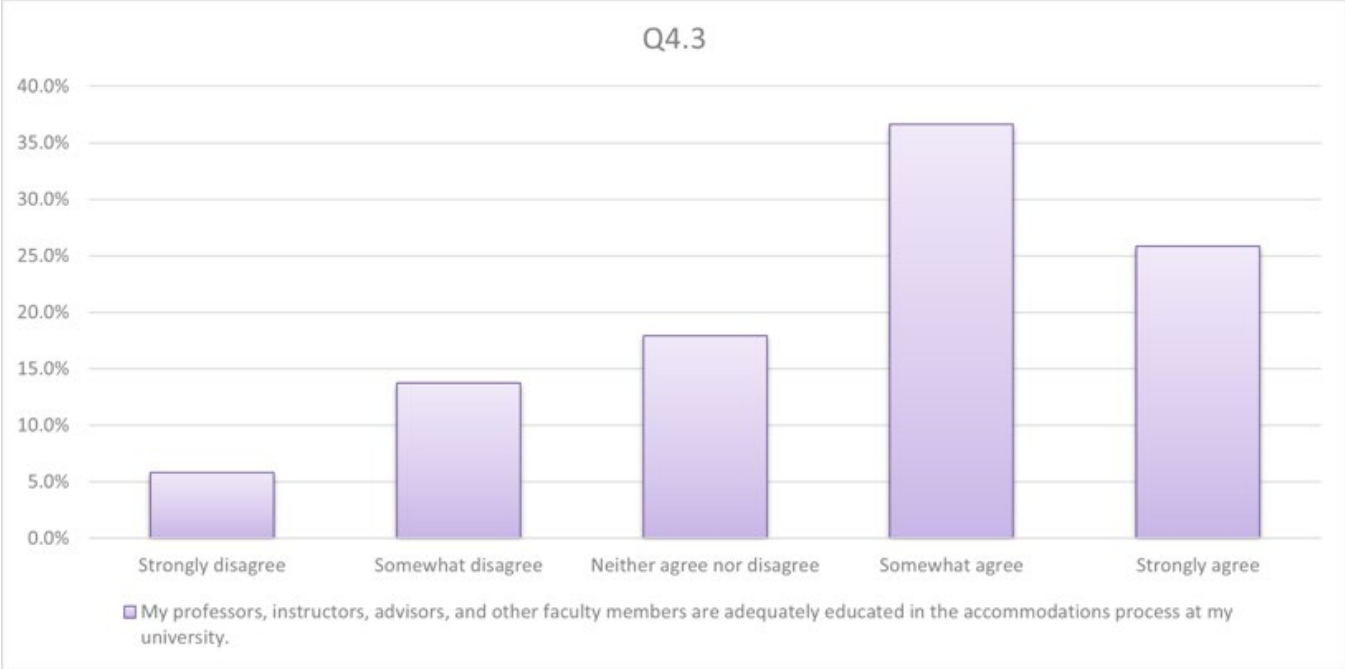


Figure 6: Showing Results for Question 4.3

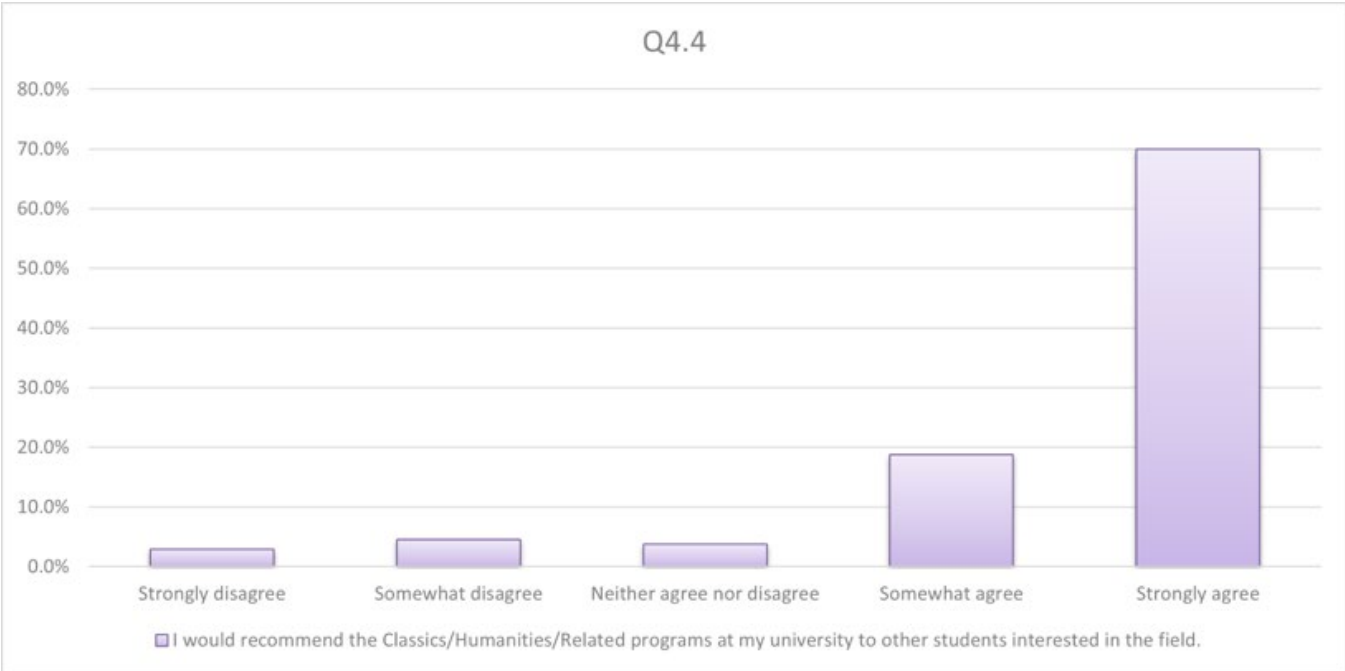


Figure 7: results for Question 4.4

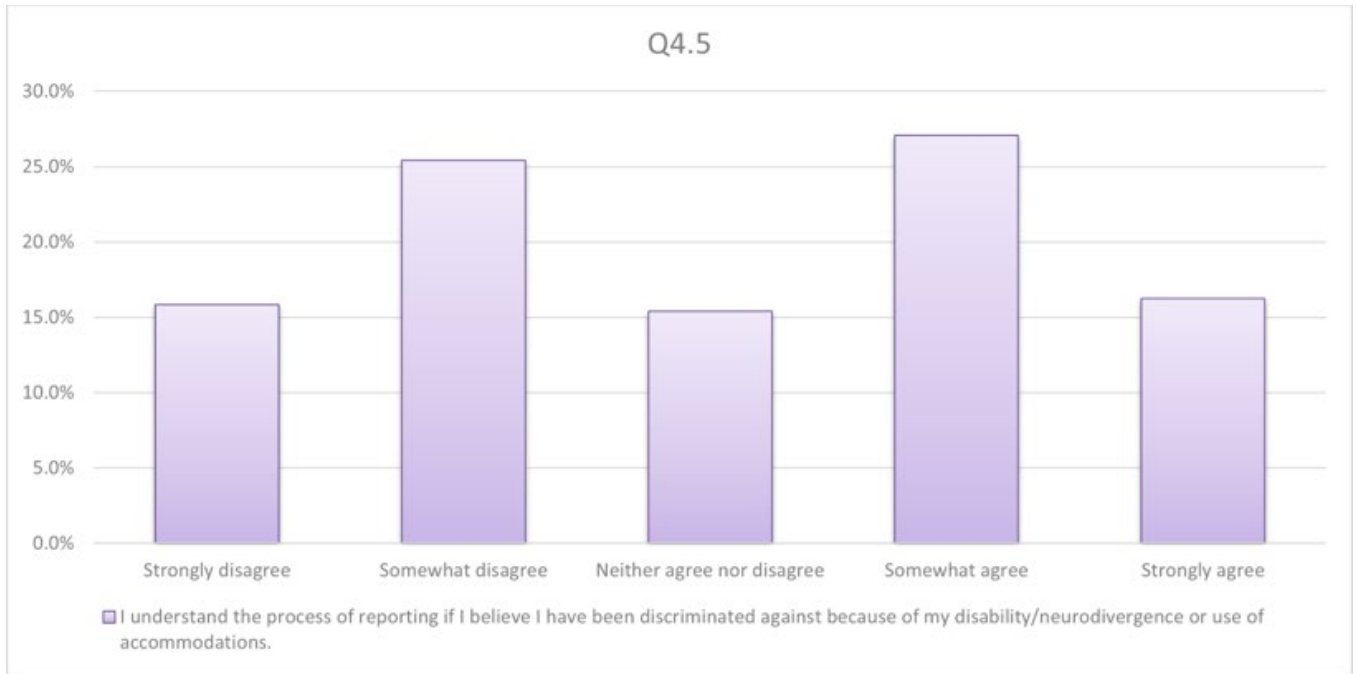


Figure 8: results for Question 4.5

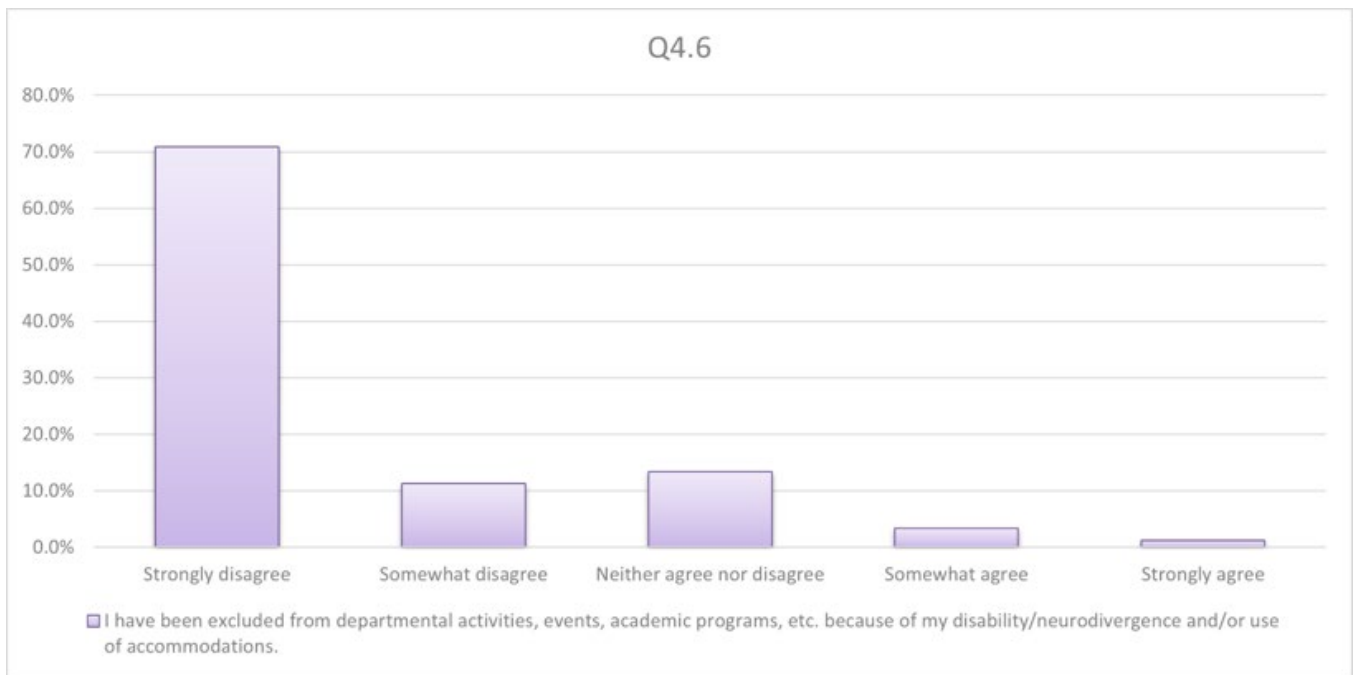


Figure 9: results for Question 4.6

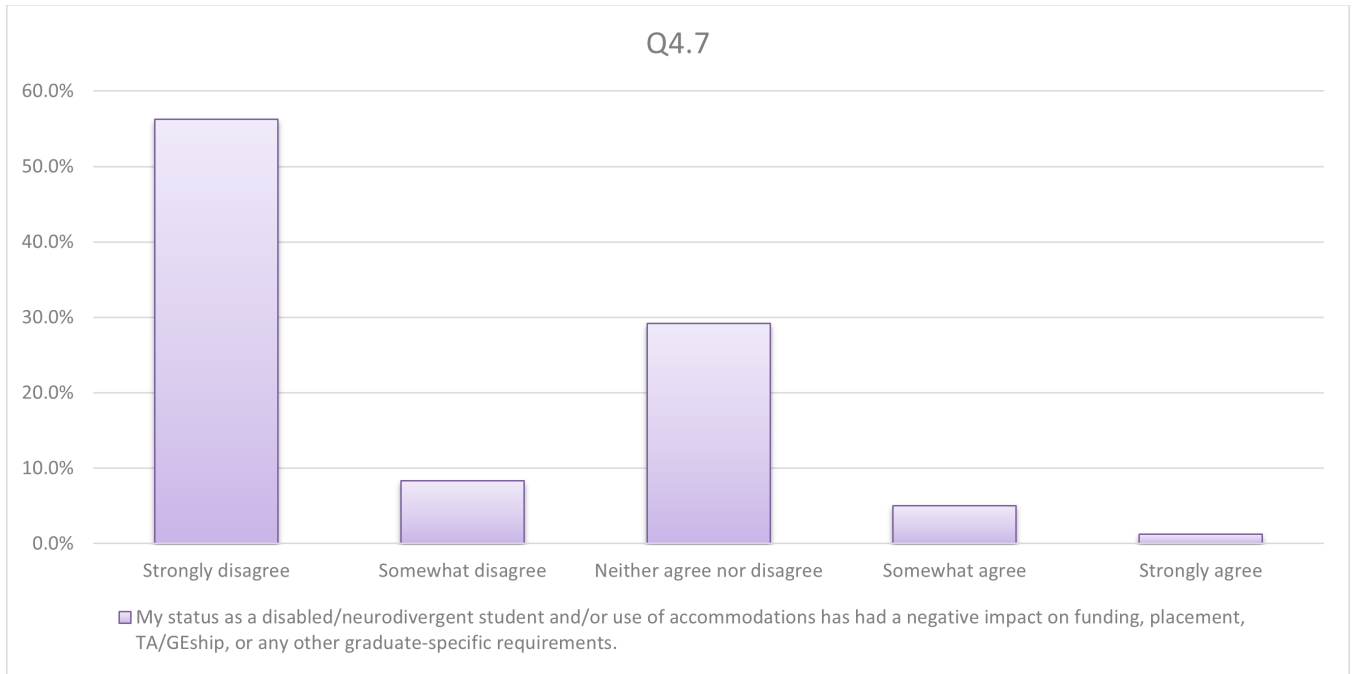


Figure 10: results for Question 4.7

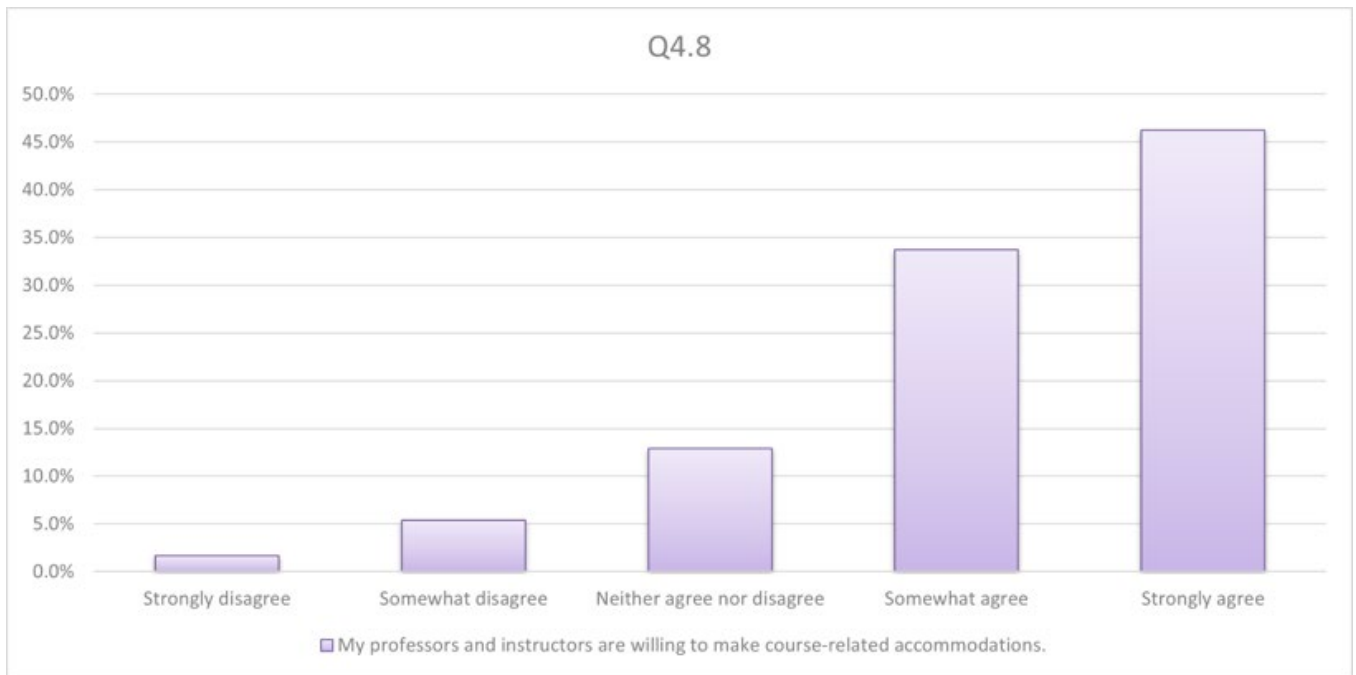


Figure 11: results for Question 4.8

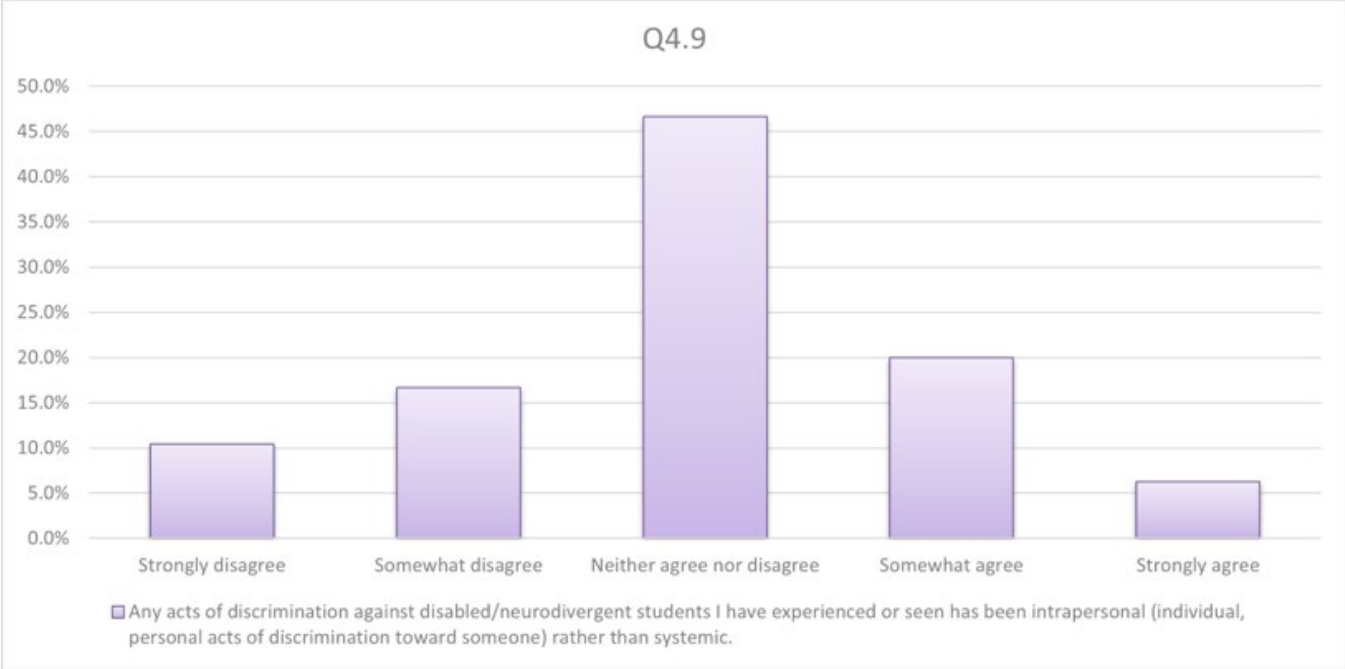


Figure 12: results for Question 4.9

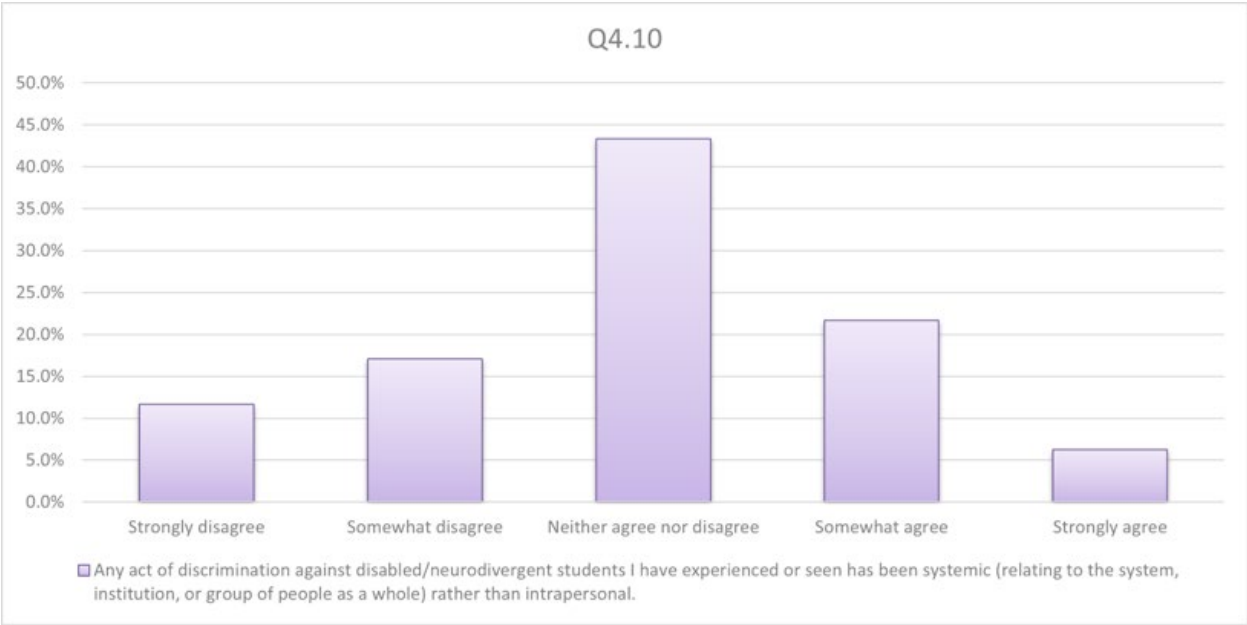


Figure 13: results for Q4.10

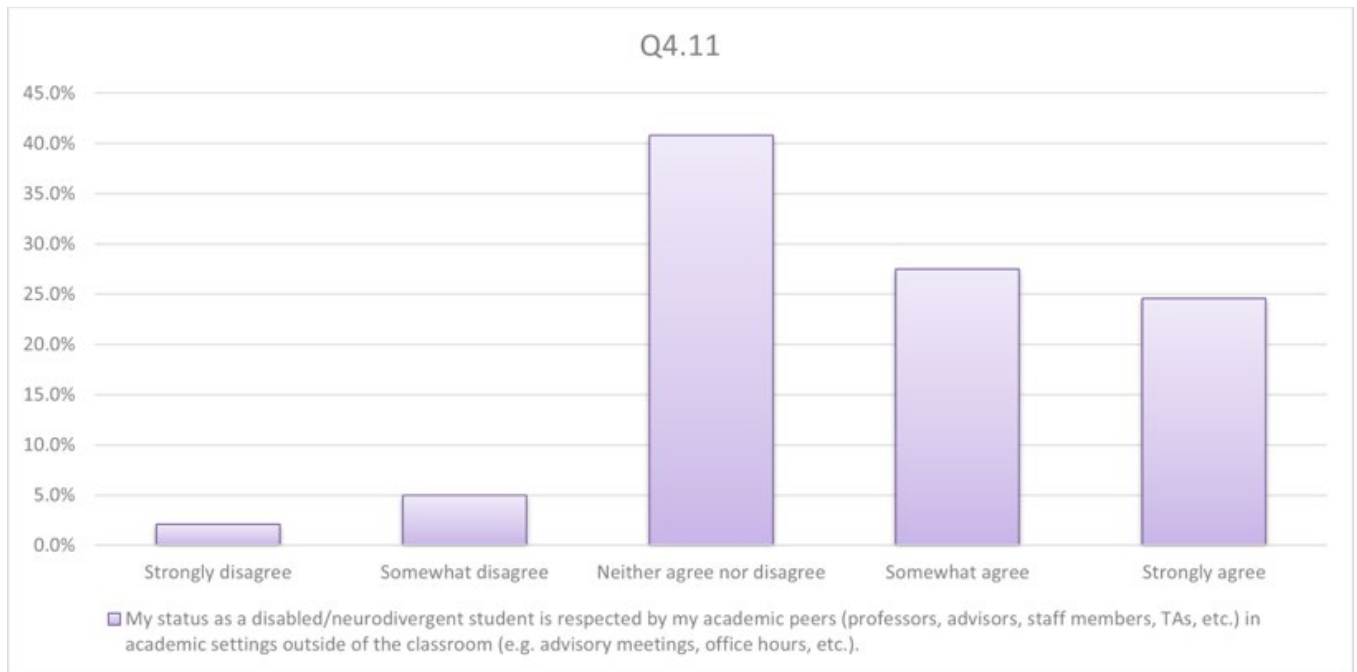


Figure 14: results for Q4.11

Question 4 had 240 respondents. There was a 30% decrease in completed survey responses by this question.

Overall, the results of Question 4 appear to be on the positive, that there is little evidence of discrimination within their departments. However, these include still those who are not disabled or neurodivergent, which will skew the percentages. Notably, Questions 4.9 and 4.10 relating to systemic vs. intrapersonal discrimination have almost identical responses, meaning that respondents likely answered that discrimination is both intrapersonal and systemic, rather than answering whether they believed if the discrimination was interpersonal *or* systemic. Most of the answers on Question 4.9 and Question 4.10 were 'neither agree nor disagree.' Also

notable are the answers concerning Question 4.5. It is an even split as to whether students understand how to report discrimination if they witness or experience it. There also seems to be some uncertainty amongst respondents as to whether their faculty is well-educated in the accommodations processes at their universities (see Q4.3). Otherwise, the questions tend to fall heavily toward one end of the spectrum or the other.

Initial Findings

Hearing

In the United States, around 13% of adults have some form of hearing loss, with 1.6% having severe hearing loss (Madans 2021). The percentage of Deaf/hearing impaired found in my sample was around 4.1%. Possible reasons for that could include the difficulty of obtaining the accommodations

needed for hearing loss (interpreter, personal hearing aids, etc.), and that universities are intended for those without hearing loss (Brown 2021; Tidwell 2004). Of that 4.1%, ~2.08% did not seek out accommodations and did not plan to seek out accommodations at their university. For all parts of Question 4, I will be looking at the 2.08% that either currently use accommodations, have in the past, or are seeking out accommodations, because many of the questions used in my survey are based on accommodation use.

Q2

Question 2 asks students about their accommodation use at their university. 18.2% of Deaf/hearing impaired students currently utilize accommodations, 9.1% have utilized accommodations in the past, and 18.2% plan to seek out accommodations. 9.1% requested accommodations and were denied. 45.5% do not utilize accommodations and do not plan to seek out accommodations.

Q3

Question 3 asks students, with the condition that they identify as disabled or neurodivergent, if their professors, instructors, advisors, or other faculty members in their department know. 45.5% said yes, 27.3% said no, and 27.3% said maybe.

Q4.1

Question 4.1 pertains to those who have been singled out or have seen someone singled out due to accommodation use or disability. 60% of the 2.08% who are listed as having hearing loss said that they strongly disagreed with this statement. 30% somewhat agreed, and another 10% strongly agreed, making a cumulative 40% of those with hearing loss who have been singled out or have seen someone singled out.

Q4.2

Question 4.2 asks if respondents think their department/program takes steps to create an inclusive environment for students with disabilities. 20% somewhat disagree, 20% neither agree nor disagree. 20% somewhat agree, and the final 40% strongly agree. 60% of students with hearing loss who use accommodations believe that their department takes steps to create an inclusive environment.

Q4.3

Question 4.3 asks if respondents believe that their professors, instructors, advisors, and other faculty members are adequately educated in the accommodations process at their university. Overall 40% disagree, with 20% somewhat disagreeing and 20% strongly disagreeing. 60% agree, with 20% somewhat agreeing and 40% strongly agreeing.

Q4.5

Question 4.5 asks if the process of filing a report or complaint is understood, if they believe they have been discriminated against because of

their disability or use of accommodations. 40% strongly disagree, 20% neither agree nor disagree, and 40% somewhat agree. Note that this question, although it appears evenly split, veers toward the negative because of the difference in verbiage (*strongly* vs. *somewhat*).

Q4.6

Question 4.6 asks if the respondent feels that they have been excluded from departmental activities, events, academic programs, etc. because of their disability and/or use of accommodations. Overall, 80% disagreed, with 60% strongly disagreeing and 20% somewhat disagreeing. The remaining 20% somewhat agreed that they have been excluded from departmental activities because of disability/use of accommodations.

Q4.7

Question 4.7 asks if students feel that their status as a disabled student and/or use of accommodations has had a negative impact on funding, placement, teaching assistant placement, or any other graduate-specific requirements. Most disagreed, with 40% strongly disagreeing, and 20% somewhat disagreeing. 40% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Q4.8

Question 4.8 asks if students feel that their professors and instructors are willing to make course-related accommodations. 20% somewhat disagreed, 40% somewhat agreed, and 40% strongly agreed.

Q4.9

Question 4.9 asks if students believe that any acts of discrimination against disabled students they have personally experienced or they have seen has been *intrapersonal* (individual, personal acts of discrimination toward someone) rather than *systemic*. 20% somewhat disagreed, 40% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 40% somewhat agreed.

Q4.10

Similarly to Question 4.9, Question 4.10 asks students if they feel any acts of discrimination against disabled students they have experienced or have seen has been *systemic* (relating to the system, institution, or group of people as a whole) rather than *intrapersonal*. The numbers are, curiously, close to the same as Question 4.9. 20% somewhat disagreed, 40% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 40% *strongly* agreed.

Q4.11

Question 4.11 asks if students feel that their status as a disabled student is respected by their academic peers (professors, advisors, staff members, teaching assistants, etc.) in academic settings *outside* of the classroom (e.g. advisory meetings, office hours, etc.). 40% somewhat disagreed, 20% somewhat agreed, and 40% strongly agreed.

Vision

12% of respondents from my sample have some form of vision impairment, compared to the United States statistic of roughly 15% (AFB).

Q2

For Question 2, 63.3% Blind/vision impaired students do not utilize accommodations at their university and do not plan to. 21.2% currently utilize accommodations, 3% have utilized accommodations in the past, and 9.1% plan to seek out accommodations. 3% are unaware of such services at their university.

Q3

37.5% of students responded that yes, their professors, instructors, advisors, or other faculty members know about their status as a disabled student. 34.4% said no, 25% said maybe, and 3.1% preferred to not answer.

Q4.1

50% strongly disagreed and 16.7% somewhat disagreed that they have been singled out or have seen someone singled out. 8.3% neither agree nor disagree. 16.7% somewhat agree, and 8.3% strongly agree.

Q4.2

8.3% of Blind/visually impaired students strongly disagreed that their department takes steps to create an inclusive environment, while 16.7%

neither agree nor disagree. 41.7% somewhat agree, and 33.3% strongly agree.

Q4.3

8.3% of students strongly disagree and 8.3% somewhat disagree that their professors, instructors, advisors, and other faculty members are adequately educated in the accommodations process. 16.7% neither agree nor disagree. 25% somewhat agree, and 41.7% strongly agree.

Q4.5

16.7% strongly disagree and 33.3% somewhat disagree that they understand the process of reporting discrimination. 41.7% somewhat agree, and 8.3% strongly agree.

Q4.6

75% of students strongly disagree that they have been excluded from departmental activities, and 8.3% somewhat disagree. 8.3% neither agree nor disagree, and 8.3% somewhat agree.

Q4.7

50% of Blind/visually impaired students strongly disagreed that their status as a disabled student impacted funding, placement, or other academic statuses. 25% somewhat disagreed, and 25% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Q4.8

8.3% strongly disagree, 8.3% somewhat disagree, 16.7% neither agree nor disagree, 16.7% somewhat agree, and 50% strongly agree that their professors are willing to make course-related accommodations.

Q4.9

8.3% of students strongly disagree, 25% somewhat disagree, 50% neither agree nor disagree, and 16.7% somewhat agree that discrimination they have experienced or seen has been *intrapersonal* rather than systemic.

Q4.10

8.3% of students somewhat disagree, 50% neither agree nor disagree, 16.7% somewhat agree, and 25% strongly agree that discrimination they have experienced or seen has been *systemic* rather than intrapersonal.

Q4.11

16.7% of visually impaired students somewhat disagree, 8.3% neither agree nor disagree, 33.3% somewhat agree, and 41.7% strongly agree that their status as a disabled student is respected in academic settings outside of the classroom.

Chronic Illness

21.6% of respondents from my sample have some form of chronic illness. The national statistic was 53.8% in 2019 for those aged 18-34 (Watson 2022).

Q2

42.9% of chronically ill students utilize accommodations, 10.7% have utilized accommodations in the past, 7.1% plan to seek out accommodations, and 7.1% requested accommodations and were denied, and 32.1% do not utilize accommodations and do not plan to.

Q3

42.1% of chronically ill students say that their professors know they are disabled, 10.5% say no, and 47.7% say maybe.

Q4.1

37.1% of chronically ill students strongly disagree that they have been singled out in class or have seen someone else singled out because of disability and/or accommodation use, and 34.3% somewhat disagree. 8.6% neither agree nor disagree. 11.4% somewhat agree, and 8.6% strongly agree.

Q4.2

5.7% of chronically ill students strongly disagree that their department/program takes steps to create an inclusive environment, and 14.3% somewhat disagree. 25.7% neither agree nor disagree. 28.6% somewhat agree, and 25.7% strongly agree.

Q4.3

8.6% of chronically ill students strongly disagree that their professors, instructors, advisors, and other faculty members are adequately educated in

the accommodations process, 8.6% somewhat disagree, 22.9% neither agree nor disagree, 42.9 somewhat agree, and 17.1% strongly agree.

Q4.5

20% of chronically ill students strongly disagree that they understand the process of reporting discrimination, 31.4% somewhat disagree, 8.6% neither agree nor disagree, 34.3% somewhat agree, and 5.7% strongly agree.

Q4.6

57.1% of chronically ill students strongly disagree that they have been excluded from departmental activities, 20% somewhat disagree, 14.3% neither agree nor disagree, 5.7% somewhat agree, and 2.9% strongly agree.

Q4.7

45.7% of chronically ill students strongly disagree that their status as a disabled student and/or use of accommodations has had a negative impact on funding, placement, etc., 8.6% somewhat disagree, 28.6% neither agree nor disagree, 8.6% somewhat agree, 8.6% strongly agree.

Q4.8

2.9% of chronically ill strongly disagree that their professors are willing to make course related accommodations, 11.4% somewhat disagree, 14.3% neither agree nor disagree, 25.7% somewhat agree, 45.7% strongly agree.

Q4.9

20% of chronically ill students strongly disagree that acts of discrimination against disabled students they have experienced or seen has been *intrapersonal* rather than systemic, 20% somewhat disagree, 31.4% neither agree nor disagree, 25.7% somewhat agree, 2.9% strongly agree.

Q4.10

2.9% of chronically ill students strongly disagree that any act of discrimination against disabled students is *systemic* rather than intrapersonal, 20% somewhat disagree, 40% neither agree nor disagree, 28.6% somewhat agree, 8.6% strongly agree.

Q4.11

2.9% of chronically ill students strongly disagree that their status as a disabled student is respected by their academic peers (professors, advisors, staff members, etc.), 11.4% somewhat disagree, 20% neither agree nor disagree, 40% somewhat agree, 25.7% strongly agree.

Neurodivergence

2.7% of US children (1 in 36) have been diagnosed with autism (CDC 2023). 11.4% of US children have ADHD. These disabilities are often, but not always, diagnosed as children, and are more documented for children

than adults, so I will be using those statistics rather than the adult statistics. In my sample, 56% of respondents claim some form of neurodivergence.

Q2

27.6% of Neurodivergent students currently utilize accommodations, 16.7% have utilized accommodations in the past, 10.3% plan to seek out accommodations, 2.6% requested accommodations but were denied, 42.3% do not utilize and do not plan to seek out accommodations, and 0.6% preferred not to answer.

Q3

35.9% of Neurodivergent students said their professors know they identify as disabled, 35.3% said no, and 28.8% said maybe.

Q4.1

51.2% of Neurodivergent students strongly disagree that they have been singled out in class or have seen someone else singled out because of disability and/or accommodation use, and 23.8% somewhat disagree. 3.8% neither agree nor disagree. 15% somewhat agree, and 6.3% strongly agree.

Q4.2

2.5% of Neurodivergent students strongly disagree that their department/program takes steps to create an inclusive environment, and 10% somewhat disagree. 22.5% neither agree nor disagree. 38.8% somewhat agree, and 26.3% strongly agree.

Q4.3

8.8% of Neurodivergent students strongly disagree that their professors, instructors, advisors, and other faculty members are adequately educated in the accommodations process, 12.5% somewhat disagree, 15% neither agree nor disagree, 33.8% somewhat agree, and 30% strongly agree.

Q4.5

16.3% of Neurodivergent students strongly disagree that they understand the process of reporting discrimination, 31.3% somewhat disagree, 11.3% neither agree nor disagree, 27.5% somewhat agree, and 13.8% strongly agree

Q4.6

70% of Neurodivergent students strongly disagree that they have been excluded from departmental activities, 16.3% somewhat disagree, 10% neither agree nor disagree, 2.5% somewhat agree, and 1.3% strongly agree.

Q4.7

60% of Neurodivergent students strongly disagree that their status as a disabled student and/or use of accommodations has had a negative impact on funding, placement, etc., 8.8% somewhat disagree, 21.3% neither agree nor disagree, 6.3% somewhat agree, 3.8% strongly agree.

Q4.8

6.3% of Neurodivergent students somewhat disagree that their professors are willing to make course related accommodations 12.5% neither agree nor disagree, 32.5% somewhat agree, 48.8% strongly agree.

Q4.9

15% of Neurodivergent students strongly disagree that acts of discrimination against disabled students they have experienced or seen has been *intrapersonal* rather than systemic, 21.3% somewhat disagree, 33.8% neither agree nor disagree, 25% somewhat agree, 5% strongly agree.

Q4.10

7.5% of Neurodivergent students strongly disagree that any act of discrimination against disabled students is *systemic* rather than intrapersonal, 17.5% somewhat disagree, 33.8% neither agree nor disagree, 27.5% somewhat agree, 13.8% strongly agree.

Q4.11

1.3% of Neurodivergent students strongly disagree that their status as a disabled student is respected by their academic peers (professors, advisors, staff members, etc.), 5% somewhat disagree, 21.3% neither agree nor disagree, 45% somewhat agree, 27.5% strongly agree.

Cognitive Disability

10% of respondents from my sample have some form of cognitive disability. According to the CDC, 12.8% of adults in the US have a cognitive disability relating to concentration, remembering, or decision making (CDC).

Q2

42.9% of students with cognitive disability currently utilize accommodations, 10.7% have utilized accommodations in the past, 7.1% plan to seek out accommodations, 7.1% requested accommodations but were denied, 32.1% do not utilize and to not plan to seek out accommodations.

Q3

42.9% of students with cognitive disability said their professors know they identify as disabled, 21.4% said no, and 35.7% said maybe.

Q4.1

25% of students with cognitive disability strongly disagree that they have been singled out in class or have seen someone else singled out because of disability and/or accommodation use, and 12.5% somewhat disagree. 6.3% neither agree nor disagree. 43.8% somewhat agree, and 12.5% strongly agree.

Q4.2

12.5% of students with cognitive disability strongly disagree that their department/program takes steps to create an inclusive environment, and

12.5% somewhat disagree. 18.8% neither agree nor disagree. 37.5% somewhat agree, and 18.8% strongly agree.

Q4.3

25% of students with cognitive disability strongly disagree that their professors, instructors, advisors, and other faculty members are adequately educated in the accommodations process, 18.8% somewhat disagree, 12.5% neither agree nor disagree, 31.3% somewhat agree, and 12.5% strongly agree.

Q4.5

31.3% of students with cognitive disability strongly disagree that they understand the process of reporting discrimination, 31.3% somewhat disagree, 18.8% neither agree nor disagree, 18.8% somewhat agree.

Q4.6

56.3% of students with cognitive disability strongly disagree that they have been excluded from departmental activities, 6.3% somewhat disagree, 12.5% neither agree nor disagree, 18.8% somewhat agree, and 6.3% strongly agree.

Q4.7

43.8% of students with cognitive disability strongly disagree that their status as a disabled student and/or use of accommodations has had a negative impact on funding, placement, etc., 43.8% neither agree nor disagree, 6.3% somewhat agree, 6.3% strongly agree.

Q4.8

6.3% of students with cognitive disability strongly disagree that their professors are willing to make course related accommodations, 18.8% somewhat disagree, 6.3% neither agree nor disagree, 31.3% somewhat agree, 37.5% strongly agree.

Q4.9

25% of students with cognitive disability strongly disagree that acts of discrimination against disabled students they have experienced or seen has been *intrapersonal* rather than systemic, 12.5% somewhat disagree, 25% neither agree nor disagree, 25% somewhat agree, 12.5% strongly agree.

Q4.10

12.5% of students with cognitive disability somewhat disagree that any act of discrimination against disabled students is *systemic* rather than intrapersonal, 31.3% neither agree nor disagree, 43.8% somewhat agree, 12.5% strongly agree.

Q4.11

18.8% of students with cognitive disability somewhat disagree that their status as a disabled student is respected by their academic peers (professors, advisors, staff members, etc.), 12.5% neither agree nor disagree, 37.5% somewhat agree, 31.3% strongly agree.

Psychological

48% of respondents from my sample have some form of mental health or psychological disability. In the United States, 20% (1 in 5) adults suffer from mental illness (NAMI). However, the American Psychological Association states that over 60% of university students have some form of mental health problem (Abrams).

Q2

27.4% of students with psychological disabilities currently utilize accommodations, 17% have utilized accommodations in the past, 11.9% plan to seek out accommodations, 3% requested accommodations but were denied, 40% do not utilize and to not plan to seek out accommodations, and 0.7% are unaware of such services at their university.

Q3

34.6% of students with psychological disabilities said their professors know they identify as disabled, 38.8% said no, and 27.1% said maybe.

Q4.1

48.6% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that they have been singled out in class or have seen someone else singled out because of disability and/or accommodation use, and 20.8% somewhat

disagree. 4.2% neither agree nor disagree. 19.4% somewhat agree, and 6.9% strongly agree.

Q4.2

4.2% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that their department/program takes steps to create an inclusive environment, and 13.9% somewhat disagree. 25% neither agree nor disagree. 33.3% somewhat agree, and 23.6% strongly agree.

Q4.3

16.7% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that their professors, instructors, advisors, and other faculty members are adequately educated in the accommodations process, 9.7% somewhat disagree, 16.7% neither agree nor disagree, 30.6% somewhat agree, and 26.4% strongly agree.

Q4.5

20.8% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that they understand the process of reporting discrimination, 29.2% somewhat disagree, 11.1% neither agree nor disagree, 30.6% somewhat agree, and 8.3 strongly agree.

Q4.6

66.7% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that they have been excluded from departmental activities, 20.8% somewhat

disagree, 5.6% neither agree nor disagree, 5.6% somewhat agree, and 1.4% strongly agree.

Q4.7

61.1% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that their status as a disabled student and/or use of accommodations has had a negative impact on funding, placement, etc., 9.7% somewhat disagree, 19.4% neither agree nor disagree, 5.6% somewhat agree, 4.2% strongly agree.

Q4.8

1.4% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that their professors are willing to make course related accommodations, 9.7% somewhat disagree, 13.9% neither agree nor disagree, 30.6% somewhat agree, 44.4% strongly agree.

Q4.9

15.3% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that acts of discrimination against disabled students they have experienced or seen has been *intrapersonal* rather than systemic, 19.4% somewhat disagree, 31.9% neither agree nor disagree, 26.4% somewhat agree, 6.9% strongly agree.

Q4.10

6.8% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that any act of discrimination against disabled students is *systemic* rather than

intrapersonal, 18.8 somewhat disagree, 39.3% neither agree nor disagree, 25.6% somewhat agree, 9.4% strongly agree.

Q4.11

2.8% of students with psychological disabilities strongly disagree that their status as a disabled student is respected by their academic peers (professors, advisors, staff members, etc.), 8.3% somewhat disagree, 20.8% neither agree nor disagree, 41.7% somewhat agree, 26.4% strongly agree.

Physical

10% of respondents from my sample are physically disabled. 18.5% of adults in the United States have difficulty walking or climbing steps (CDC), and 21.2% of adults have been diagnosed with some type of physical disability (arthritis, gout, lupus, fibromyalgia, etc.) (CDC).

Q2

41.4% of physically disabled students currently utilize accommodations, 3.4% have utilized accommodations in the past, 13.8% plan to seek out accommodations, 6.9% requested accommodations but

were denied, 31% do not utilize and to not plan to seek out accommodations, and 3.4% preferred not to answer.

Q3

48.3% of physically disabled students said their professors know they identify as disabled, 37.9% said no, and 13.8% said maybe.

Q4.1

35.3% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that they have been singled out in class or have seen someone else singled out because of disability and/or accommodation use, and 41.2% somewhat disagree. 11.8% neither agree nor disagree. 5.9% somewhat agree, and 5.9% strongly agree.

Q4.2

5.9% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that their department/program takes steps to create an inclusive environment, and 23.5% somewhat disagree. 17.6% neither agree nor disagree. 35.3% somewhat agree, and 17.6% strongly agree.

Q4.3

5.9% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that their professors, instructors, advisors, and other faculty members are adequately educated in the accommodations process, 17.6% somewhat disagree, 29.4% neither agree nor disagree, 29.4% somewhat agree, and 17.6% strongly agree.

Q4.5

17.6% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that they understand the process of reporting discrimination, 23.5% somewhat disagree, 5.9% neither agree nor disagree, 47.1% somewhat agree, and 5.9% strongly agree.

Q4.6

45.8% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that they have been excluded from departmental activities, 25% somewhat disagree, 20.8% neither agree nor disagree, 4.2% somewhat agree, and 4.2% strongly agree.

Q4.7

41.2% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that their status as a disabled student and/or use of accommodations has had a negative impact on funding, placement, etc., 5.9% somewhat disagree, 29.4% neither agree nor disagree, 11.8% somewhat agree, 11.8% strongly agree.

Q4.8

5.9% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that their professors are willing to make course related accommodations, 5.9% somewhat disagree, 5.9% neither agree nor disagree, 52.9% somewhat agree, 29.4% strongly agree.

Q4.9

17.6% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that acts of discrimination against disabled students they have experienced or seen has been *intrapersonal* rather than systemic, 23.5% somewhat disagree, 23.5% neither agree nor disagree, 29.4% somewhat agree, 5.9% strongly agree.

Q4.10

5.9% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that any act of discrimination against disabled students is *systemic* rather than intrapersonal, 29.4% somewhat disagree, 29.4% neither agree nor disagree, 29.4% somewhat agree, 5.9% strongly agree.

Q4.11

5.9% of physically disabled students strongly disagree that their status as a disabled student is respected by their academic peers (professors, advisors, staff members, etc.), 17.6% somewhat disagree, 23.5% neither agree nor disagree, 29.4% somewhat agree, 23.5% strongly agree.

Questions 6 and 7

Questions 6 and 7 were available for students to write in their own experiences as disabled students (for question 6) and thoughts on improvements (question 7). Several students discussed concerns of professors not understanding their disability and the necessary

accommodations, and some professors going as far as to disparage these students (Robb 2024).

I used accommodations extremely frequently for exam situations, and although I received certain accommodations (e.g. separate testing room, extended time), it was always clear to me that my department felt that these small accommodations somehow fixed the problem entirely. The department has been extremely resistant to universal design approaches to grad student assessments, and usually refuses to do personalized accommodations even in extreme circumstances. Usually I'm just told that I'm not trying hard enough.

I have accommodations through our disability services but my disability impairs my ability to drive. I end up fighting with professors just to get a zoom link to class as I am so able and willing to participate, I just can't get there and dorming isn't an option due to money and I live only 30 mins away. It also seems as though professors and faculty don't understand the meaning of "chronic" illness. I could be sick everyday.

I was told by my advisor not to seek accommodation because it would negatively affect my reputation within the department and my ability to get jobs in the future.

backhanded comments are sometimes made when students who do not appear to have a disability are using extra time or their laptops instead of a pencil or pen.

My professors have made it clear thru various comments that they don't believe I can be physically disabled unless my body is visibly deformed and I am using mobility aids. I have told profs about struggles doing certain assignments or coming to class due to conditions and they have not understood me

Students also mention professors actively denying accommodations, as well as how uncomfortable it can be to feel as if you have to publicize your disability in order to get help.

Being dyslexic I have an audio-processing disorder that sometimes prevents me retaining especially adhoc information such as an authors name or a title that is shared. My advisor would consistently mention somebody who I should read, but having never heard the name or seen it written, I didn't know how to spell it and find the individual. Asking anyone to spell something, sometimes comes with embarrassment. And in my written qualifying exams, my (mis)spelling of words when writing in a rush. Another issue I run into is with foreign languages is needing to read things out loud. Especially if I've never seen the text before; my brain just literally needs extra time to process the different alphabet so I can make the correct sounds; when I'm rushed...I read ancient greek or one of my modern languages like a small child who's first learning to read. And that just leads me to disclosing my disability/learning disorder to more and more ppl,

You actually can't physically enter the floor of the department through the building its located in the winter! You have to go through a connecting building. But teachers denying disability accommodations because they "felt I didn't need them", or implementing them wrong have been frustrating.

Suggestions were for professors to try to educate themselves, be more understanding, and implement the Universal Learning Design for all students regardless of level.

Interpretation

Comparing the responses of each variety of disability within Question 4, it is immediately apparent that the less visible disabilities are often those that have higher percentages of discrimination within academia.

The students that notably face the most discrimination within academia, as found within my sample survey, are those with cognitive disabilities. Students with cognitive disabilities felt they were singled out more (by over 30% difference from the overall average), felt that their professors were unwilling to create accessible environments (25% compared to the 12.5% average), felt excluded from events (25% compared to 4.6%), and felt that they were not respected because of their disabilities (31.3% compared to 7.1% average). Considering the personal experiences shared by students, I am not surprised that students with cognitive disabilities face the most challenges. Many able-bodied professors may find it difficult to believe that students cannot easily recall every name told, or struggle with vocabulary. For a study as language heavy as Classics, with such necessary focus on Ancient Greek and Latin, it can be oftentimes overwhelming and exhausting for those who struggle with memory and cognition. Accommodations, when given ones that are helpful and address the needs of students, can positively change the course of a student's academic career.

Those with physical disabilities also appear to struggle more in academia. This could be because not all physical disabilities are visible. Many, like my own (fibromyalgia), are another form of invisible disability. Roughly 30% of physically disabled students felt that their department does not take steps to create an inclusive environment, compared to a total average of 12.5%. 23.5% of physically disabled students felt that their status as a disabled student had a negative impact on funding, placement, etc., compared to a 6.3% average. Physically disabled students also felt that their status as a disabled student was less respected by their academic peers (23.5% compared to 7.1% average). For those who have difficulties with mobility, even walking around campus or getting into buildings can be difficult; student experiences given in my survey tell of buildings that have inoperable main doors in Winter. My own experiences with fibromyalgia make learning in certain buildings difficult when there is only one elevator, at the far end of the building. Stairs are not an option for everyone, and walking far distances to reach elevators can cause excruciating and lasting pains for some with physical disabilities.

The dissatisfaction rates among those with invisible disabilities, particularly those with cognitive disabilities and some physical disabilities, is much higher than those who have visible disabilities. One can see the person who has hearing or vision aids, but they cannot see the cognitive difficulties someone may go through in academia, such as impaired memory. Education

for professors is imperative here. Mandatory training on disability could be a way to mitigate any potential issues before they arise. That education and training should include information on all disabilities, both visible and invisible, so professors are more prepared for any hurdles that they or their students may encounter. Most universities have disability centers for their students. Advertising this center and actively encouraging professors to look into educational materials offered there would assist in the overall educational process. Provide scholarship and journals that are written by those who are disabled, so professors, educators, and students can all learn from primary sources what being a disabled student or researcher is like in academia. If professors only measure a student's ability by what they can immediately recall in class or on exams, or if they are unaware of how a disability can impact things like attendance and participation, a disabled student could very likely fail where an able-bodied student would not.

Question 4.4, relating to students recommending their Classics or related Humanities program to prospective students, had similar answers for all; the majority of students would strongly or at least somewhat recommend their programs to prospective or incoming students. This is heartening to see, to know that although there are some systemic issues students still overall enjoy their programs and recommend them to others who are interested in the Classics.

With Question 4.5, relating to understanding the process of reporting discrimination, it became clear that many do not understand the process. The average percentage for not understanding the process was 49%, with the lowest percentage being 40% and the highest 62.5%. Knowledge of this process should be easy to find and to understand, and it's concerning that it isn't for so many disabled students.

Regarding Questions 4.9 and 4.10, the answers were almost identical. Acts of discrimination against disabled students being systemic won out over intrapersonal by 1.6%. A majority of the responses were neither agree nor disagree (around half for both), which leads me to believe that the questions were either too long or complex compared to the rest of the survey. If I were to do this survey again, I would write separate questions for those relating to systemic and intrapersonal discrimination, and change the style of potential answers, to hopefully garner more helpful answers.

Many of the suggestions from Question 7 introduced Universal Design for Learning. This could be beneficial if implemented by more professors and instructors. It has three main principles; engagement, representation, and action and expression. Each principle then breaks down into three further categories to reach the goal. The three vertical categories for engagement are recruiting interest, sustaining effort and persistence, and self regulation. The three categories for representation are perception, language and

symbols, and comprehension. The three categories for action and expression are physical action, expression and communication, and executive functions. The goals, in order, are for learners to become purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, and strategic and goal-directed. Universal Design for Learning is meant to “change the design of the environment rather than to change the learner” (UDL) by offering a variety of ways to add to their curriculum to engage and represent a wider range of students.

Apply the UDL to a typical Classics course, Greek and Roman literature in translation. First, engagement. Try to relate the texts being read in class to relevant material in an authentic way, and try to facilitate active participation and imagination. Ask students how the Homeric texts can translate into the modern world, or show examples of modern adaptations. Ensure that goals are accessible and clear for students, make short term objectives for a long-term goal, and give multiple means of reaching that goal. Be flexible with course expectations, look at improvement in students’ progress, and potentially provide alternatives for students with different needs. Provide feedback that is timely, informative, pinpoints patterns of wrong answers, and identifies qualities for success in a students’ work. A student will be more likely to improve if they have constructive feedback quickly, than if they have to wait months.

Make sure all students have equal access to learning materials. All learners are different, and have different learning styles. Ensuring that your

information is accessible for all is important, whether that be by giving different methods of information (examples given are visual, auditory, and tactile), and that the information is adjustable by the learner. Applying that to a lecture could mean subtitling any recorded lectures, adding clear visuals, and adding clarification on any symbols and language used. A practical example would be making sure that an audio you want your students to listen to as an assignment has a transcription, or that your required texts are available in multiple formats.

Closing

There is a deficit in Classics when it comes to the needs of disabled students. Education and understanding must go beyond accommodation. The experiences offered by students around the country show that many professors stop their education of disability-related needs with very basic accommodations, some of which are not even helpful for the individual student. While an accommodation can have a profound impact on a

student's academic progress, true inclusion should be an ultimate goal for Classics. Inclusion of all students in academics, with understanding that each student has a variety of individual needs. At a glance, the average response sways toward the positive in my survey samples. However, a range of 5-15% of students claim some form of either outright discrimination or unintentional exclusion based on their disabilities. That percentage raises for those who have typically invisible disabilities. The percentage of disabled students who dropped out after one year was 25%, and after two years was 35%. For non-disabled students, the one-year drop out rate was 13.5%, rising to 22.4% after the second year (NCES). An individual professor or instructor cannot single-handedly end systemic ableism in academia, but they can put in the work to ease the emotional, mental, and at times physical struggles of their disabled students.

The Universal Design for Learning can be used as a guideline to make a more accessible and equitable classroom for all students. This could be particularly helpful for those who are uncomfortable with disclosing their disability to all professors, or who do not meet specific qualifications for accommodations at their universities. A lack of accommodation does not equate to a lack of disability. The implementation of new teaching methods, like the Universal Design for Learning, could easily help larger swathes of individuals, regardless of ability. The classroom should be an accessible place. There should be no conversation about Hephaestus' physical disability

or Tiresias' blindness while there is active ableism happening in the modern classroom.

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Figure 15: Results for Question 2, Hearing

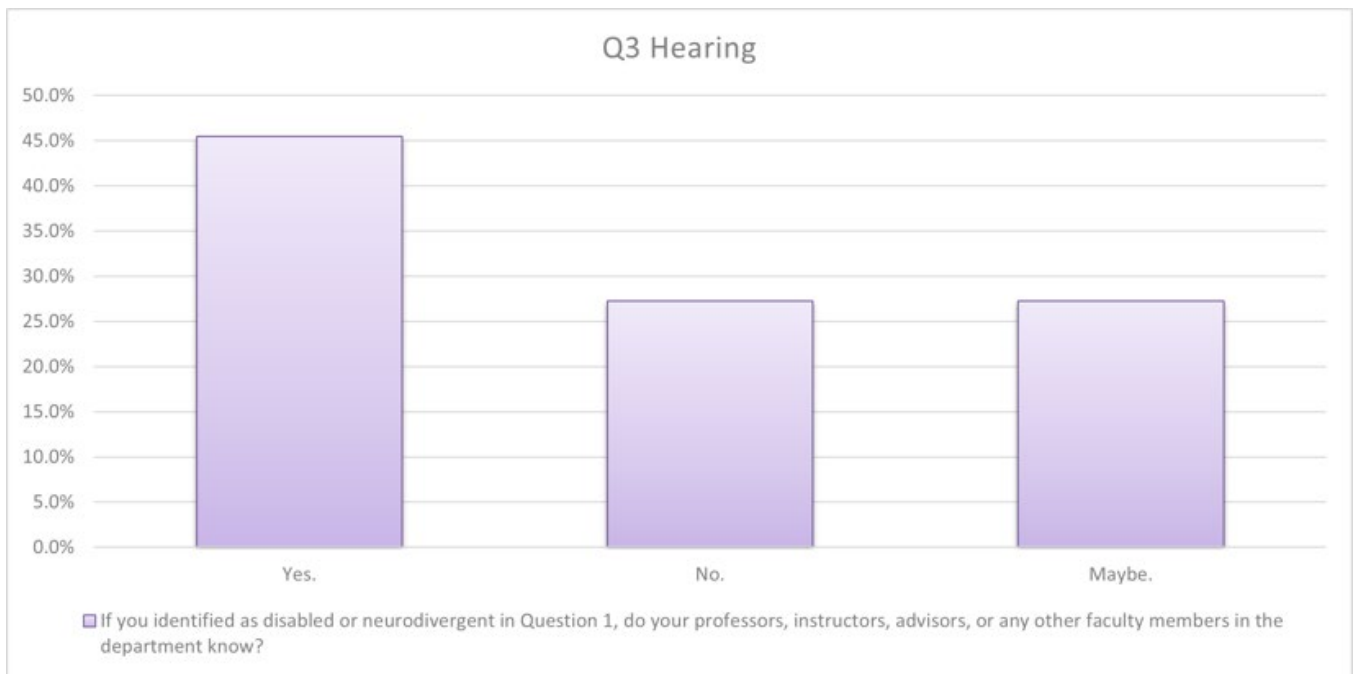


Figure 16: Results for Question 3, Hearing

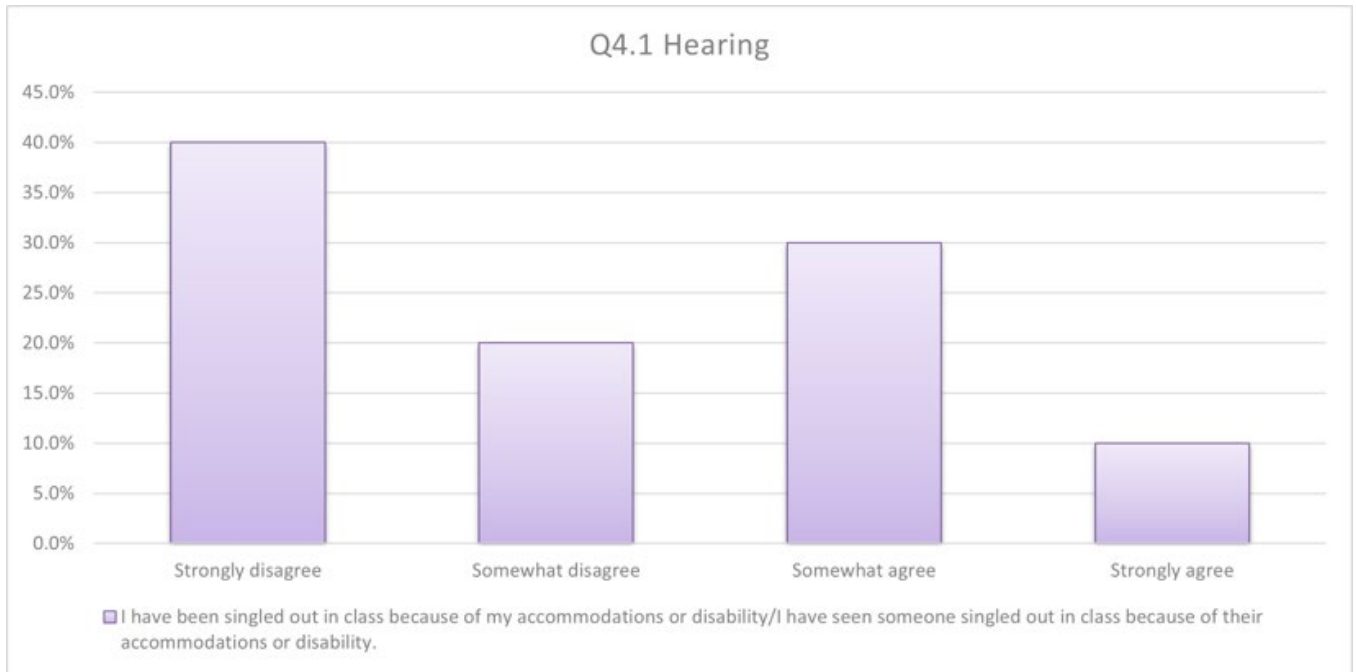


Figure 17: Results for Question 4.1, Hearing

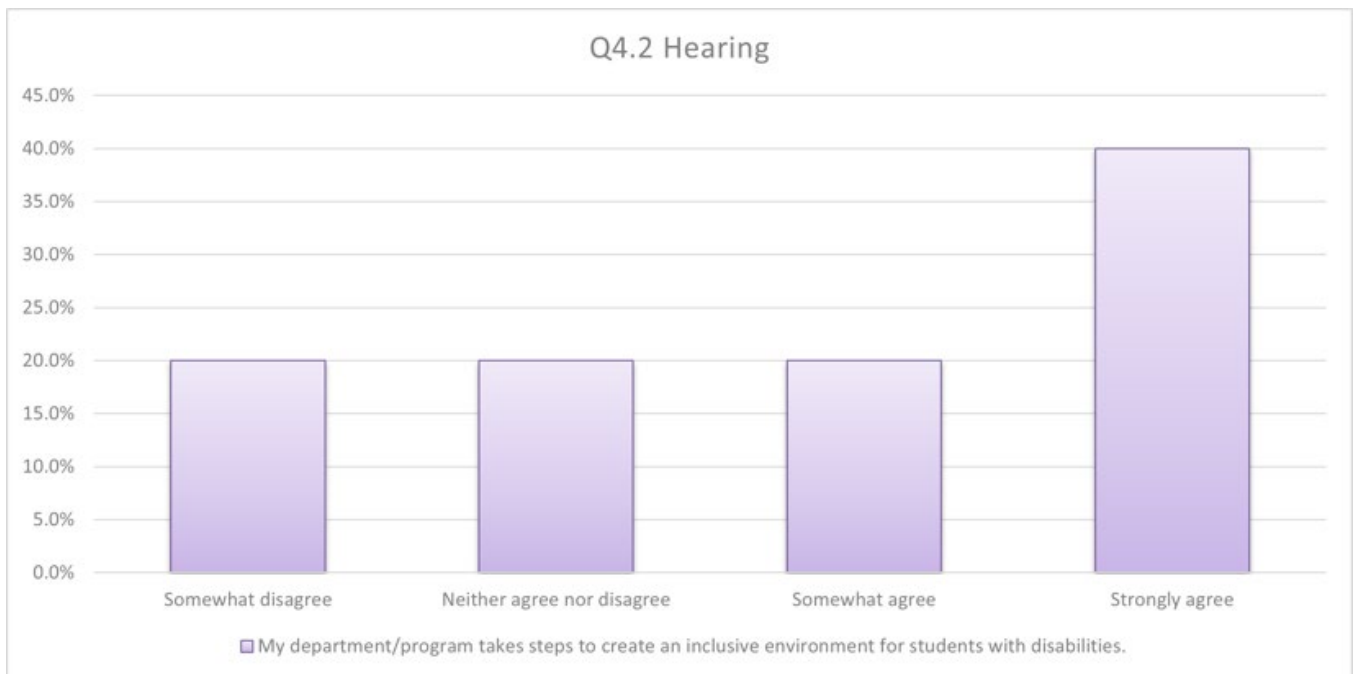


Figure 18: Results for Question 4.2, Hearing

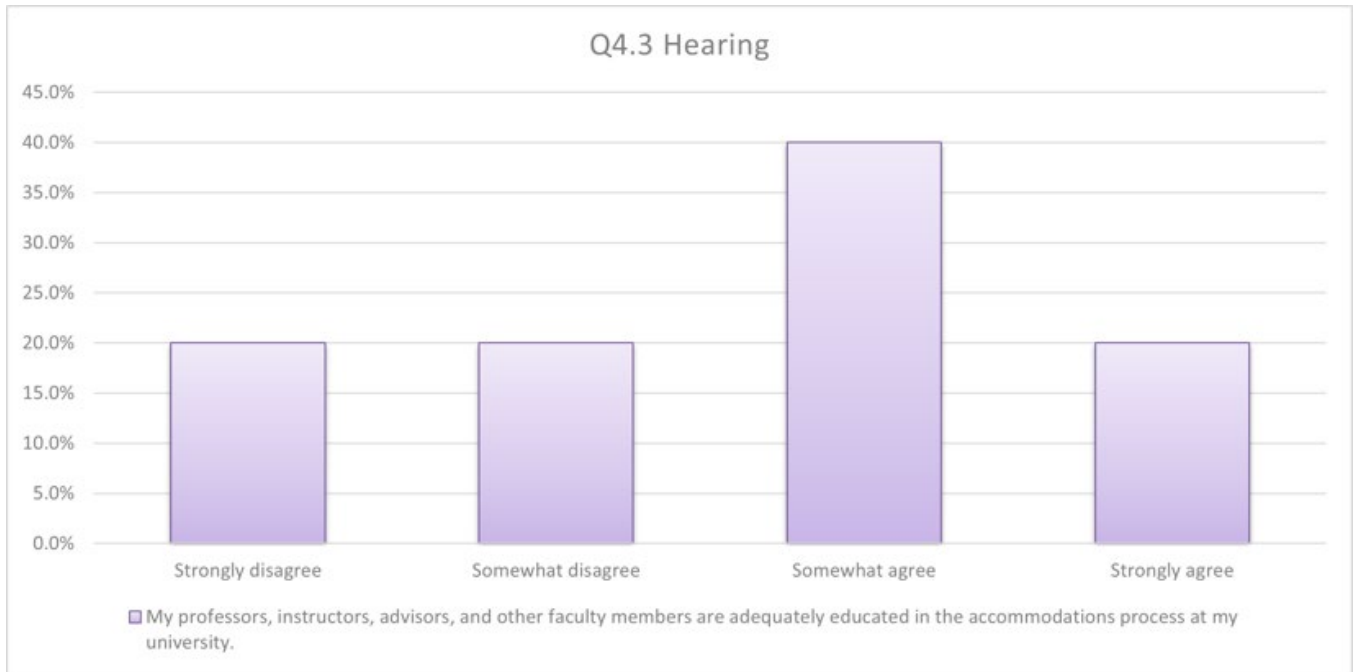


Figure 19: Results for Question 4.3, Hearing

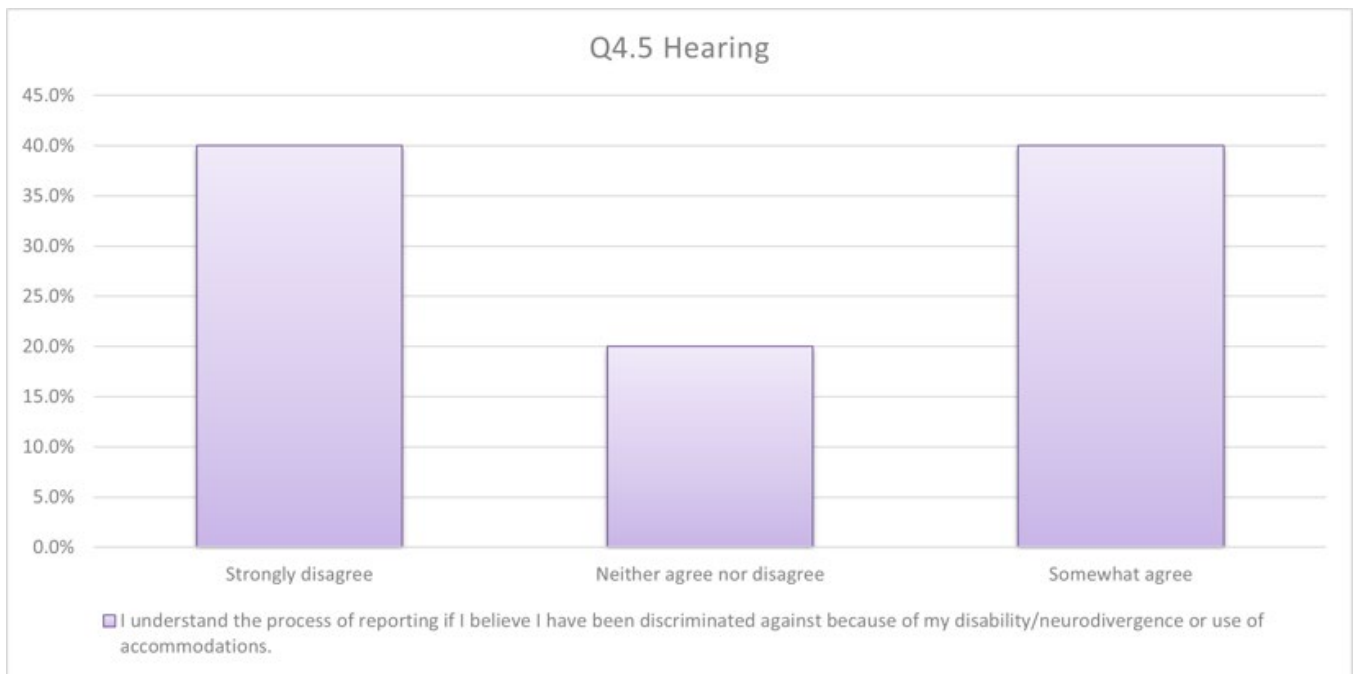


Figure 20: Results for Question 4.5, Hearing

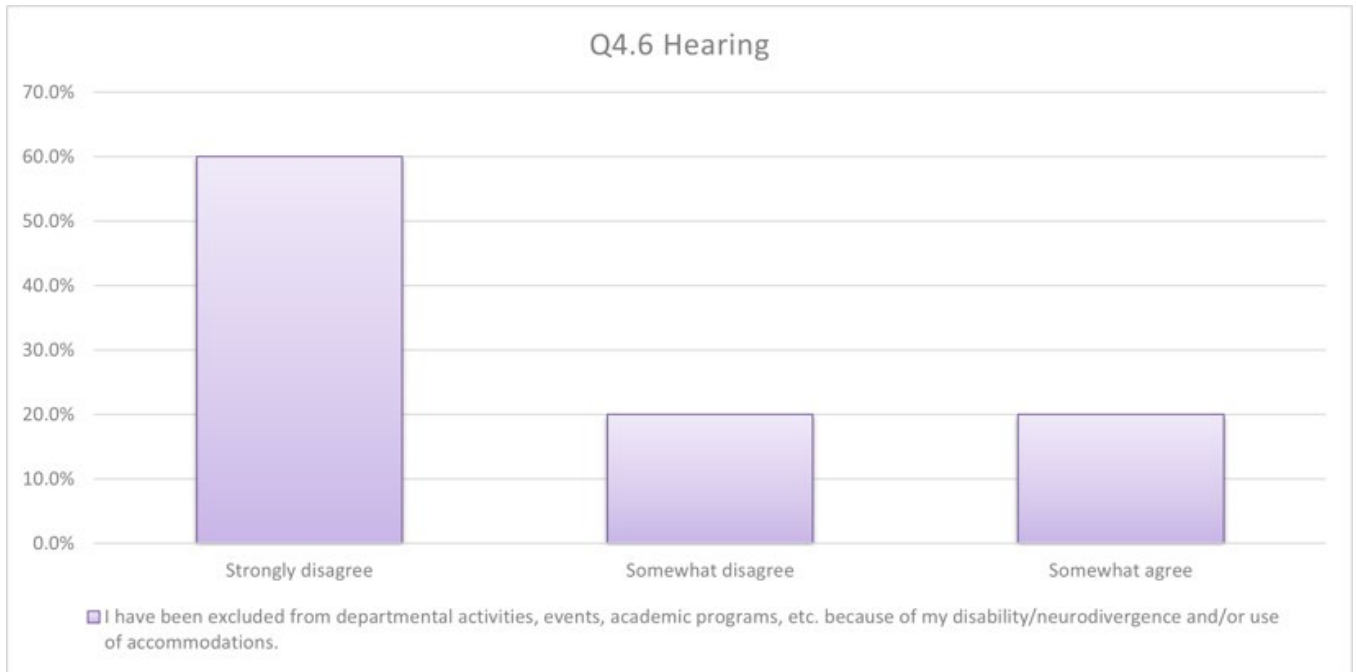


Figure 21: Results for Question 4.6, Hearing

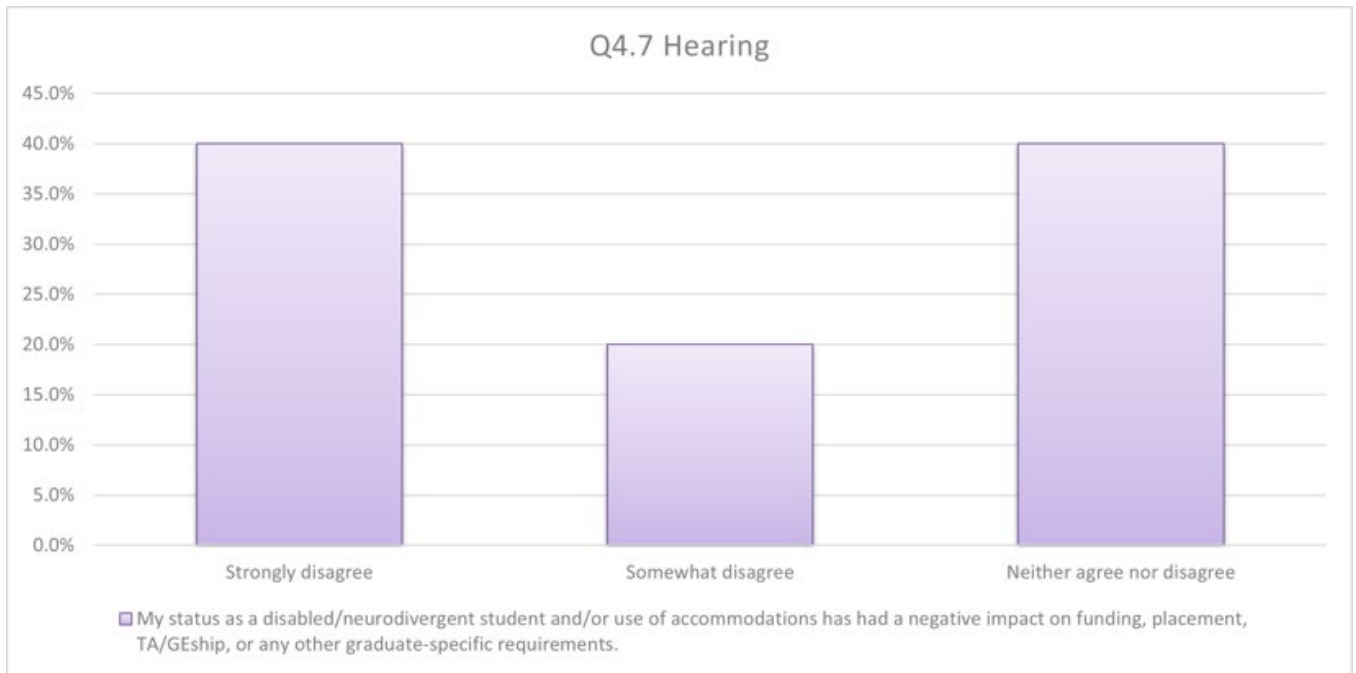


Figure 22: Results for Question 4.7, Hearing

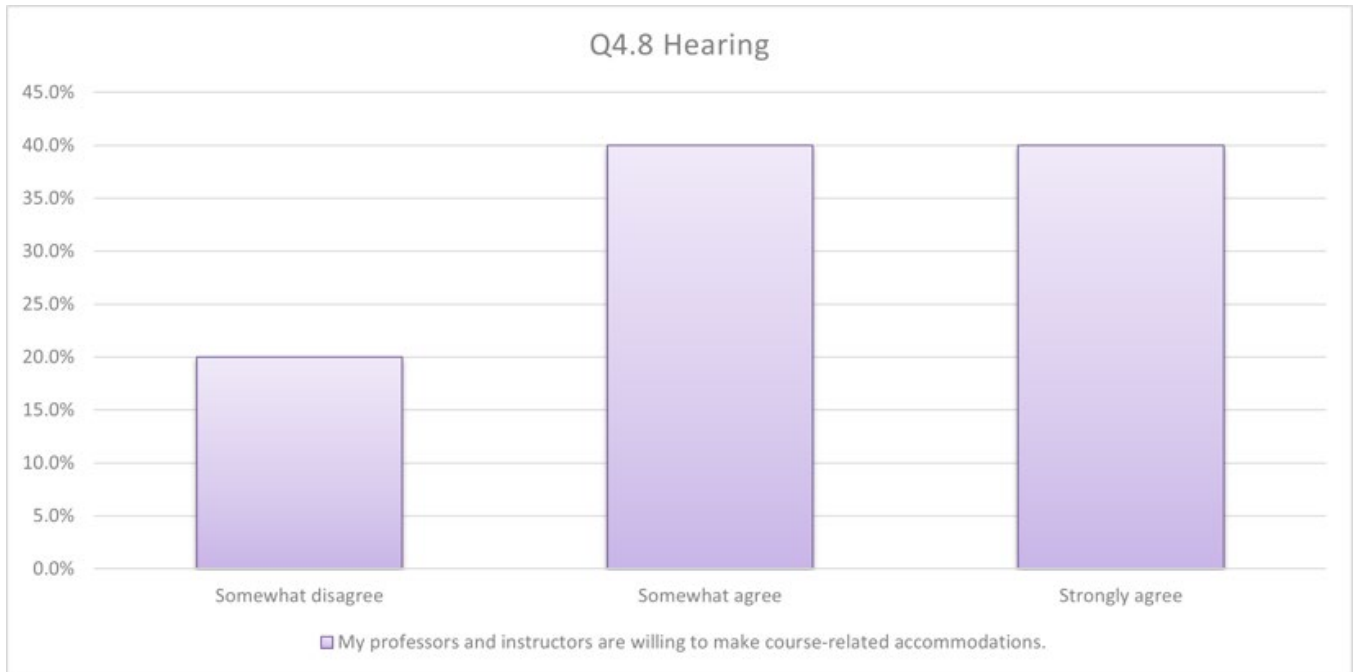


Figure 23: Results for Question 4.8, Hearing

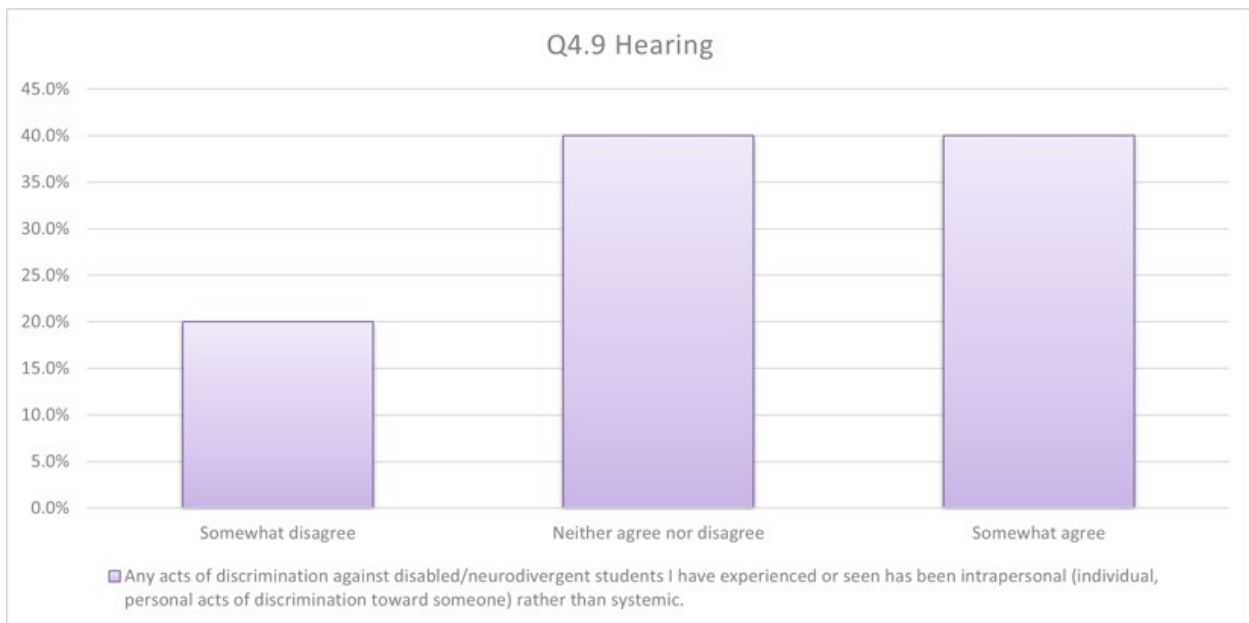


Figure 24: Results for Question 4.9, Hearing

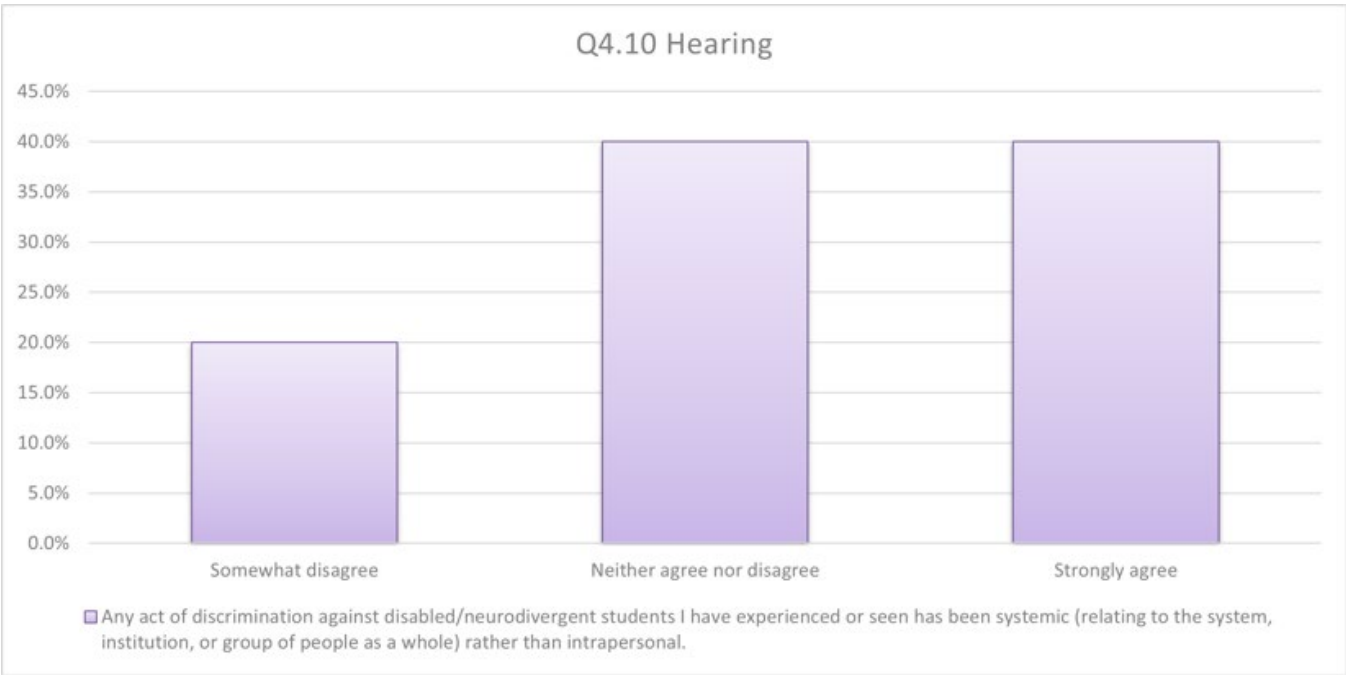


Figure 25: Results for Question 4.10, Hearing

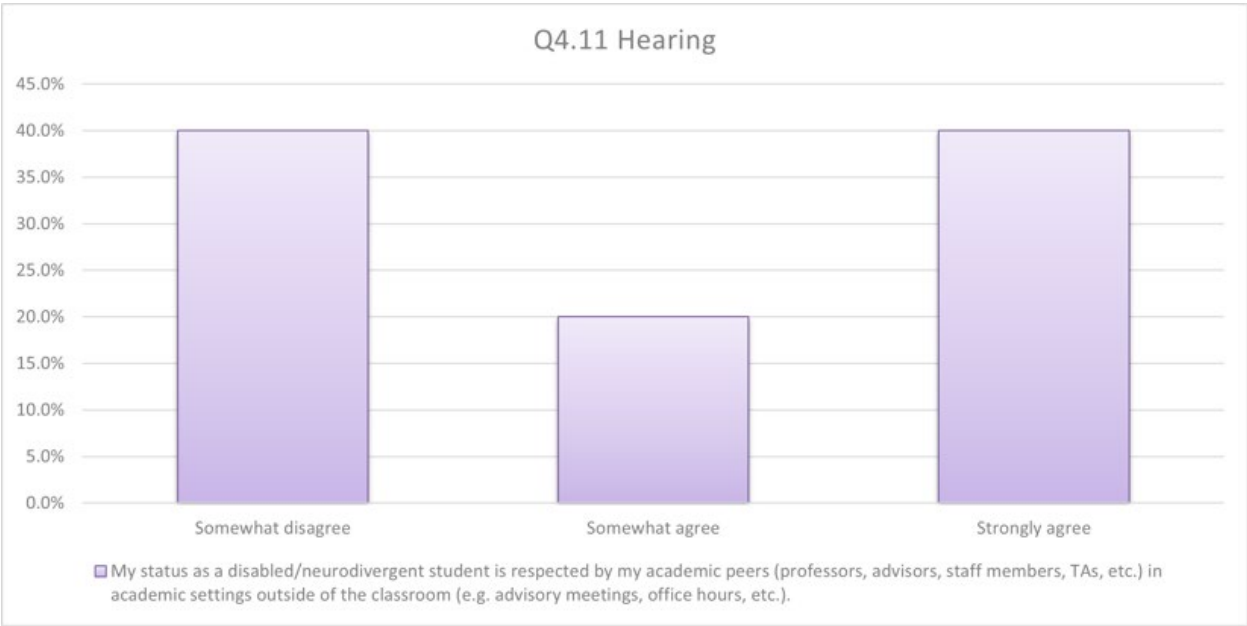


Figure 26: Results for Question 4.11, Hearing



Figure 27: results for Question 2, Vision



Figure 28: results for Question 3, Vision

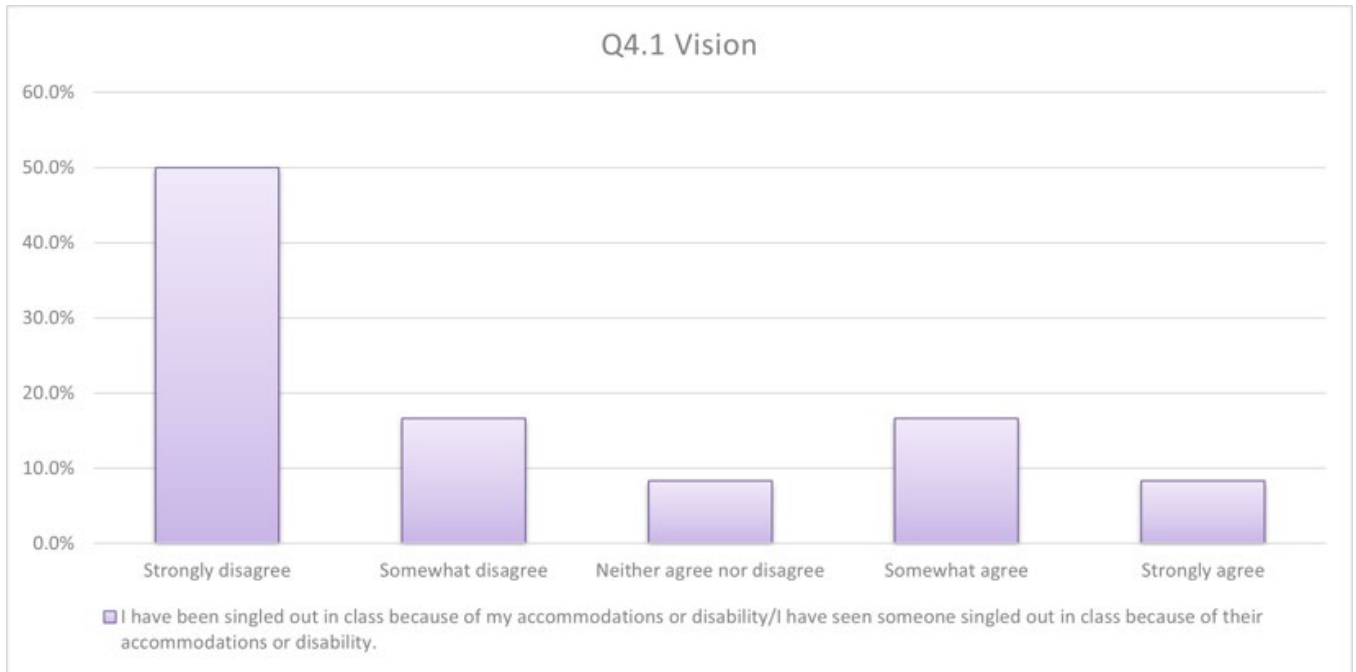


Figure 29: results for Question 4.1, Vision

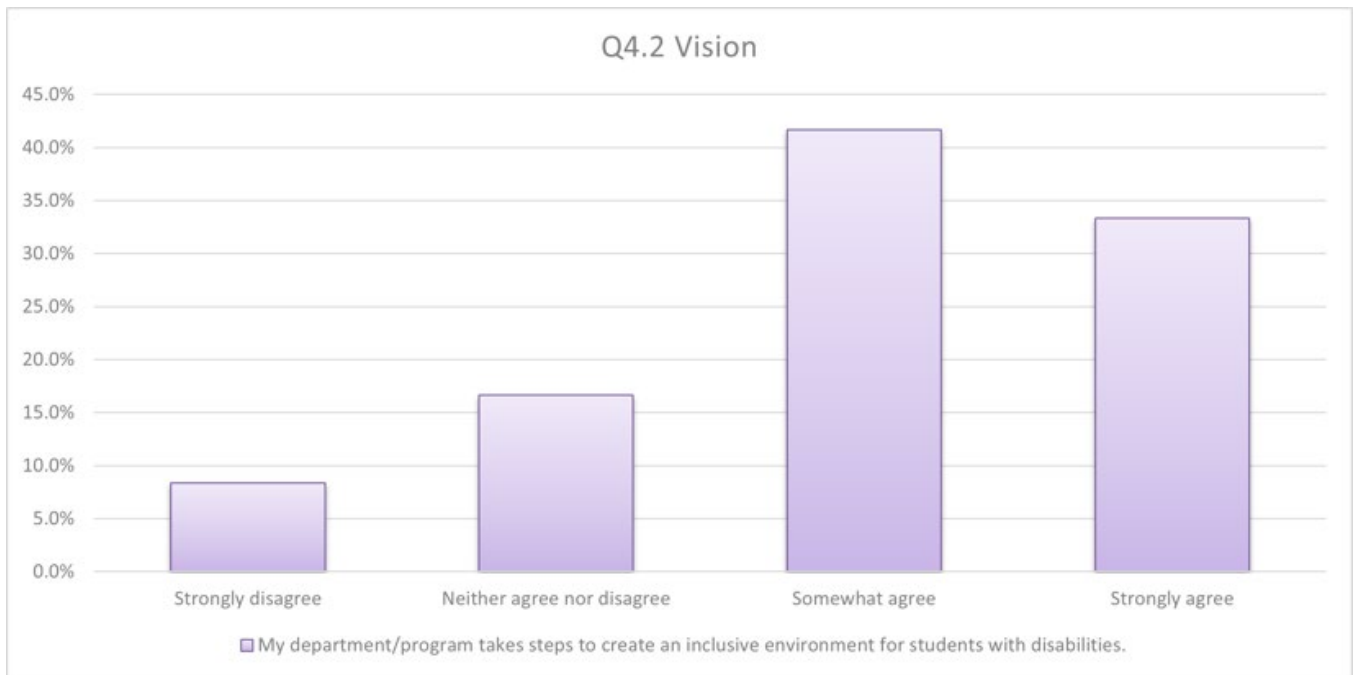


Figure 30: results for Question 4.2, Vision

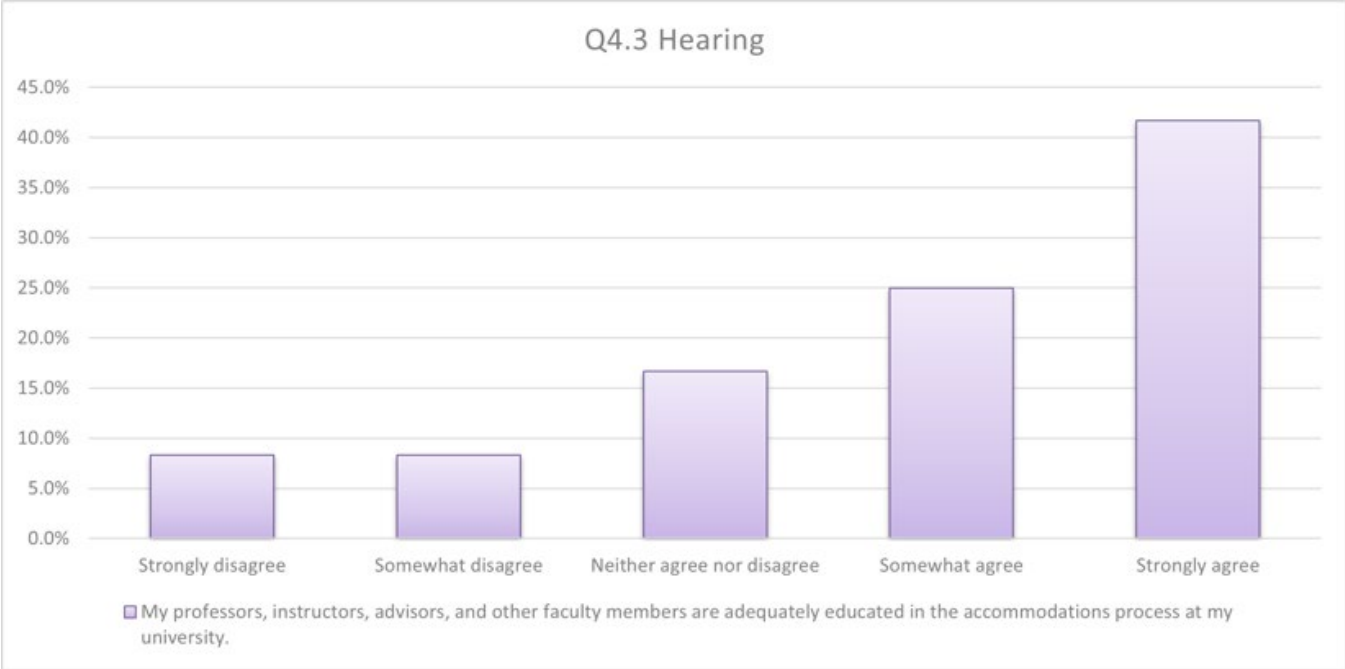


Figure 31: results for Question 4.3, Vision

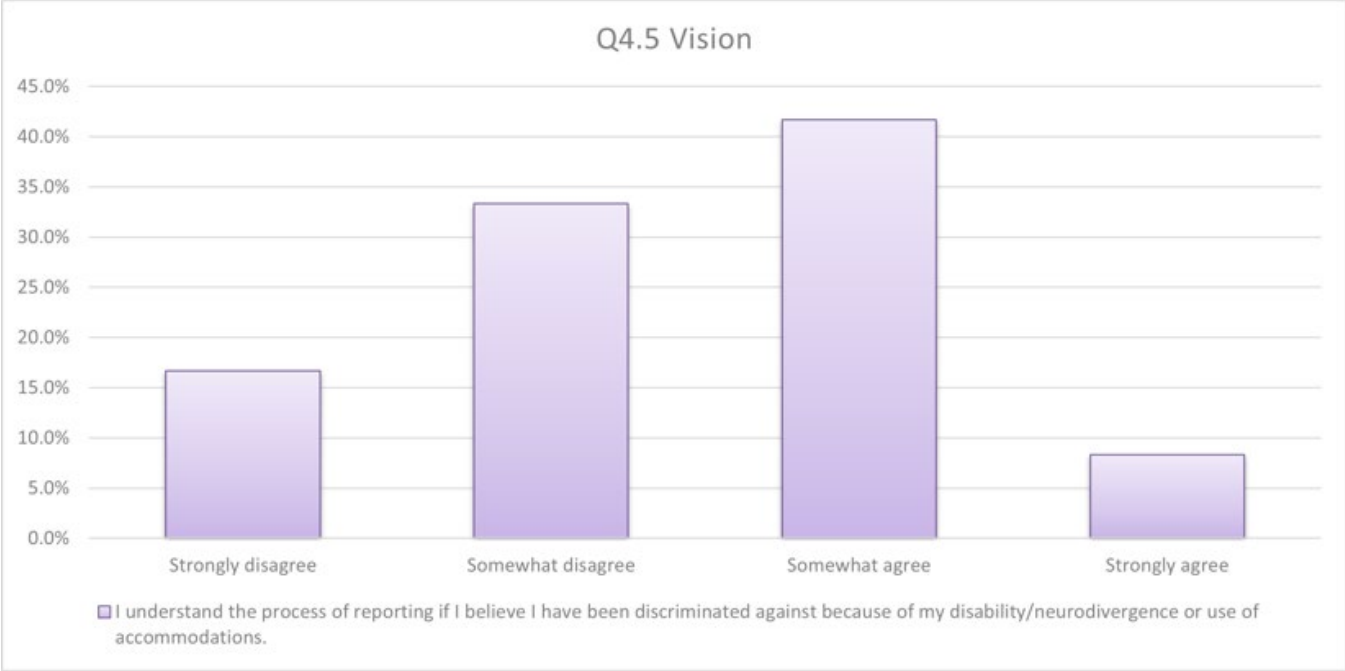


Figure 32: results for Question 4.5, Vision

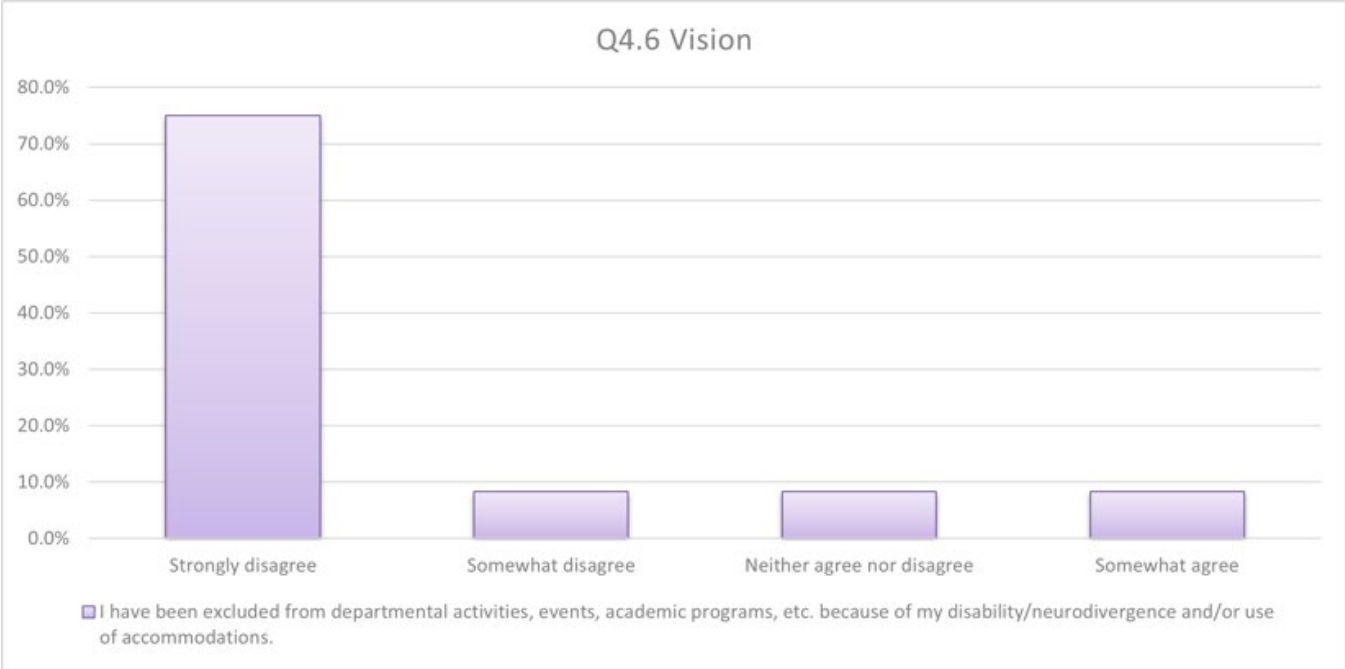


Figure 33: results for Question 4.6, Vision

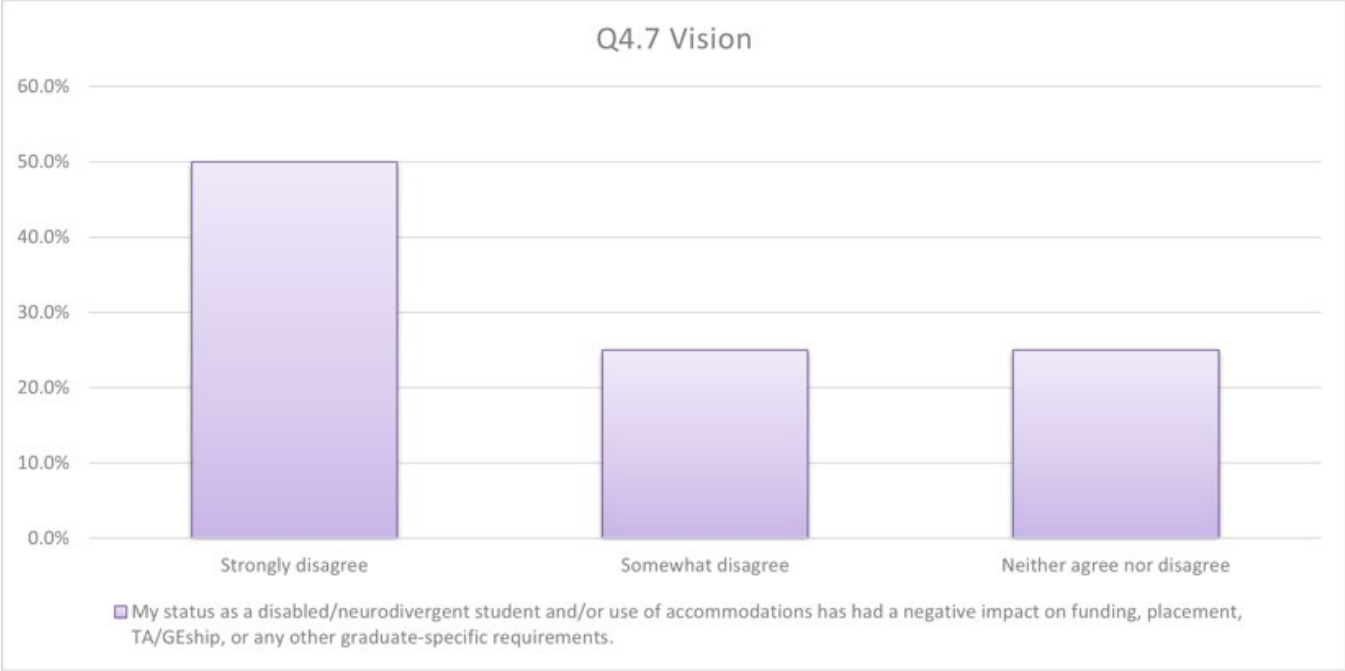


Figure 34: results for Question 4.7, Vision

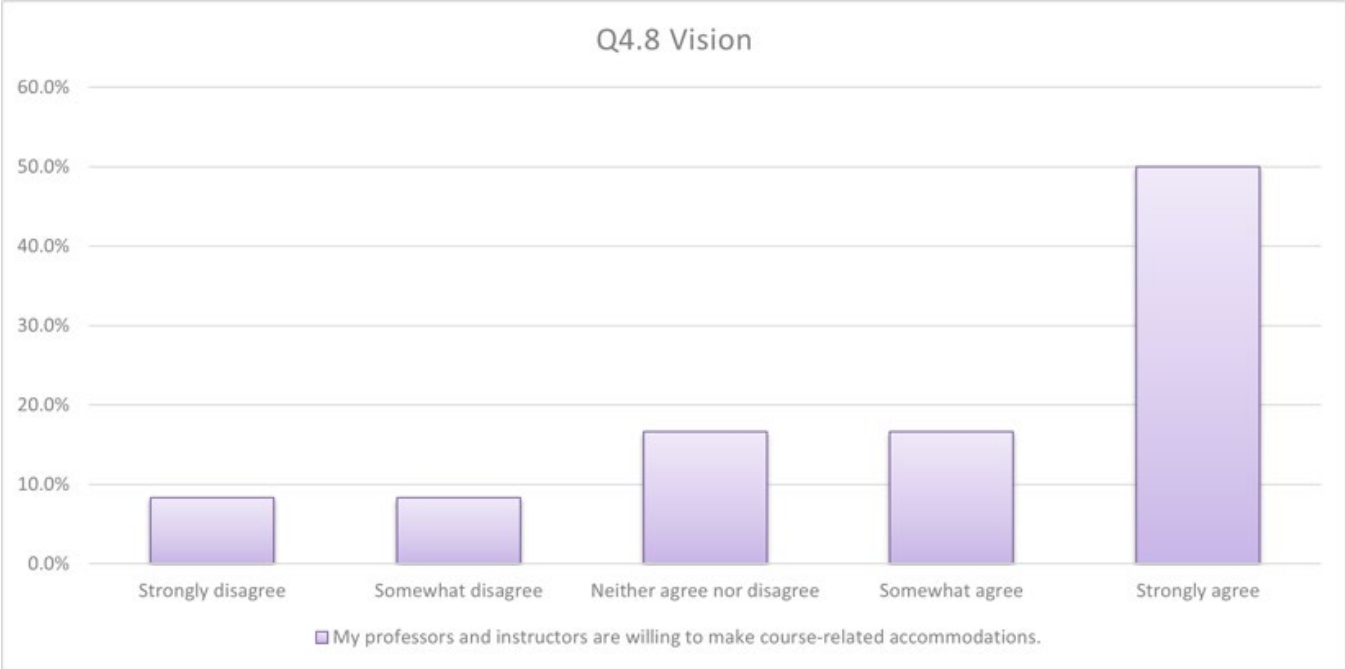


Figure 35: results for Question 4.8, Vision

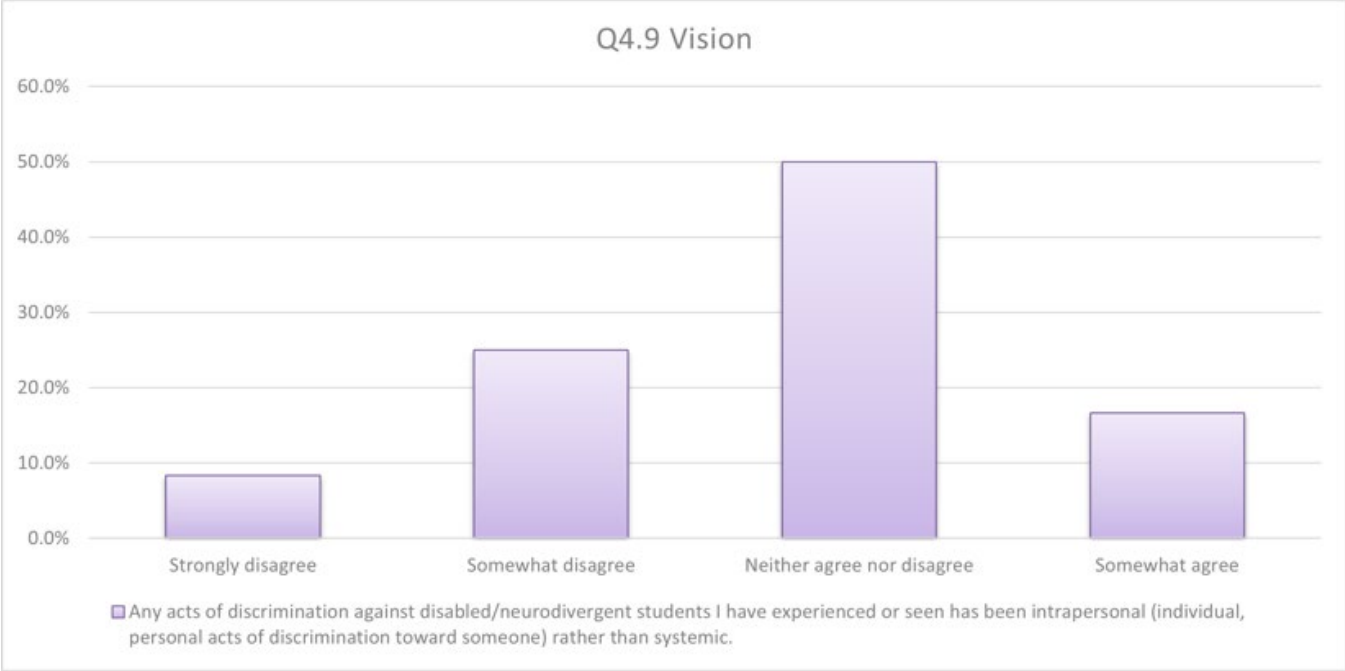


Figure 36: results for Question 4.9, Vision

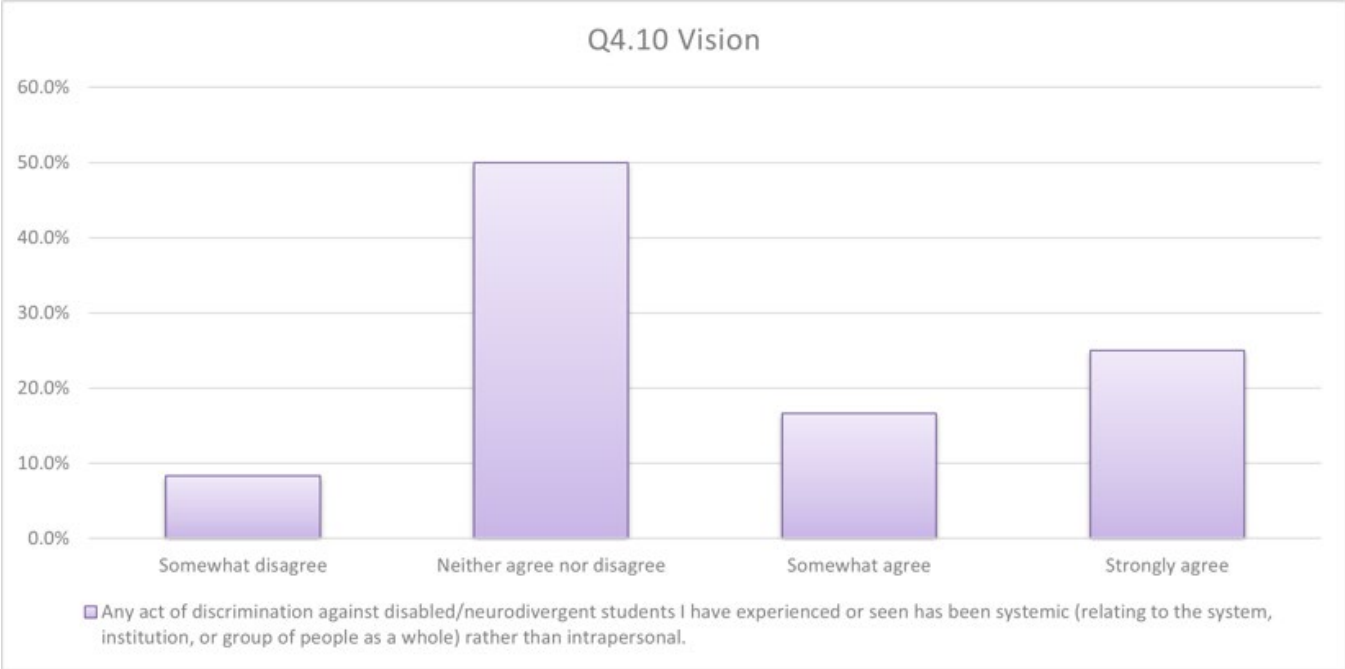


Figure 37: results for Question 4.10, Vision

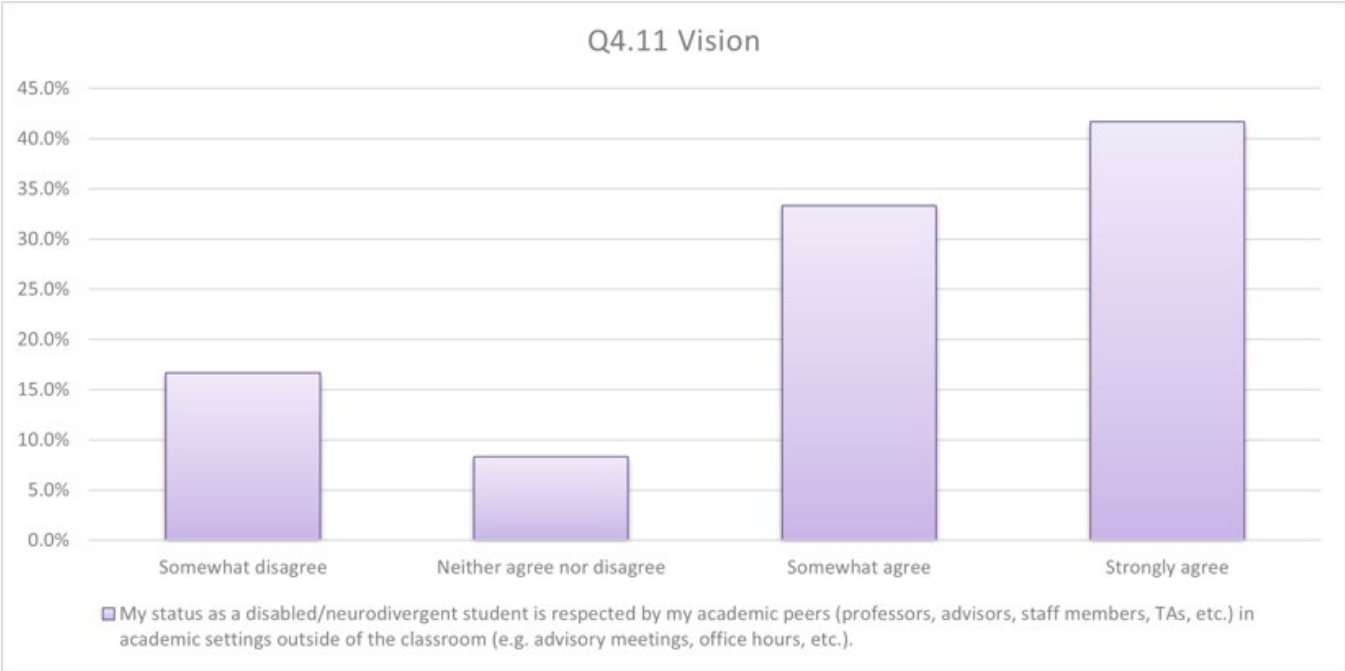


Figure 38: results for Question 4.11, Vision

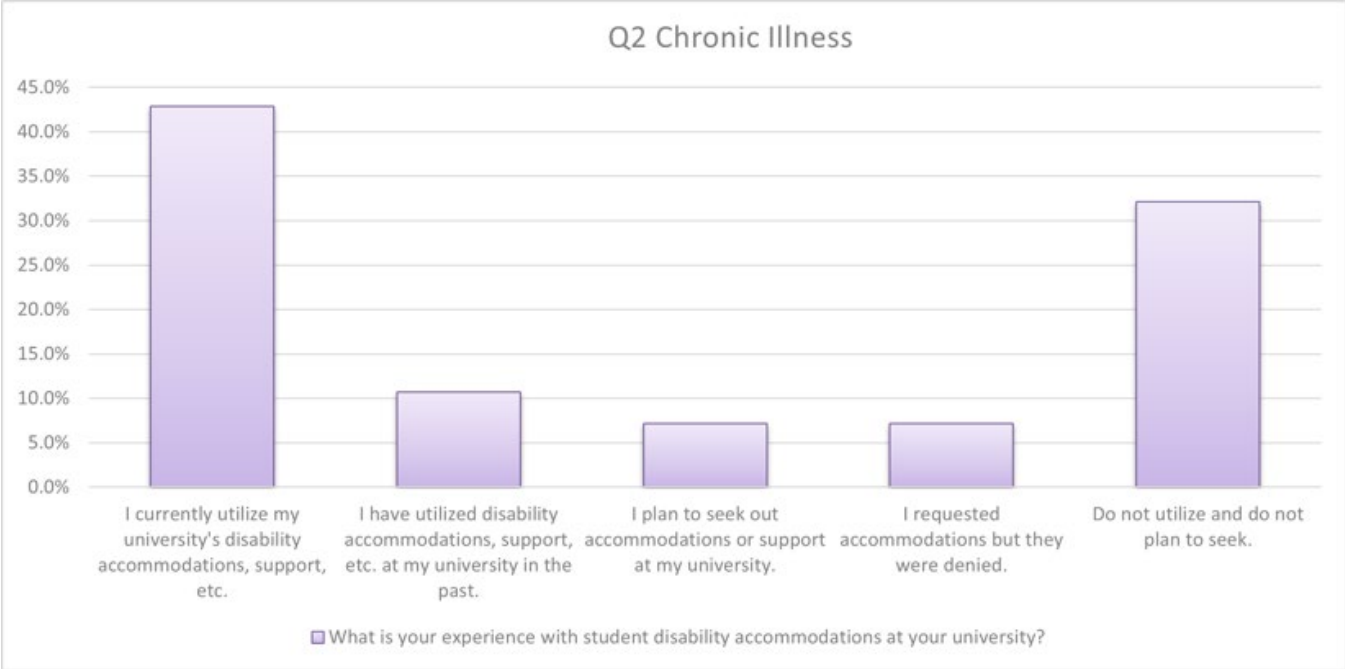


Figure 39: results for Question 2, Chronic Illness

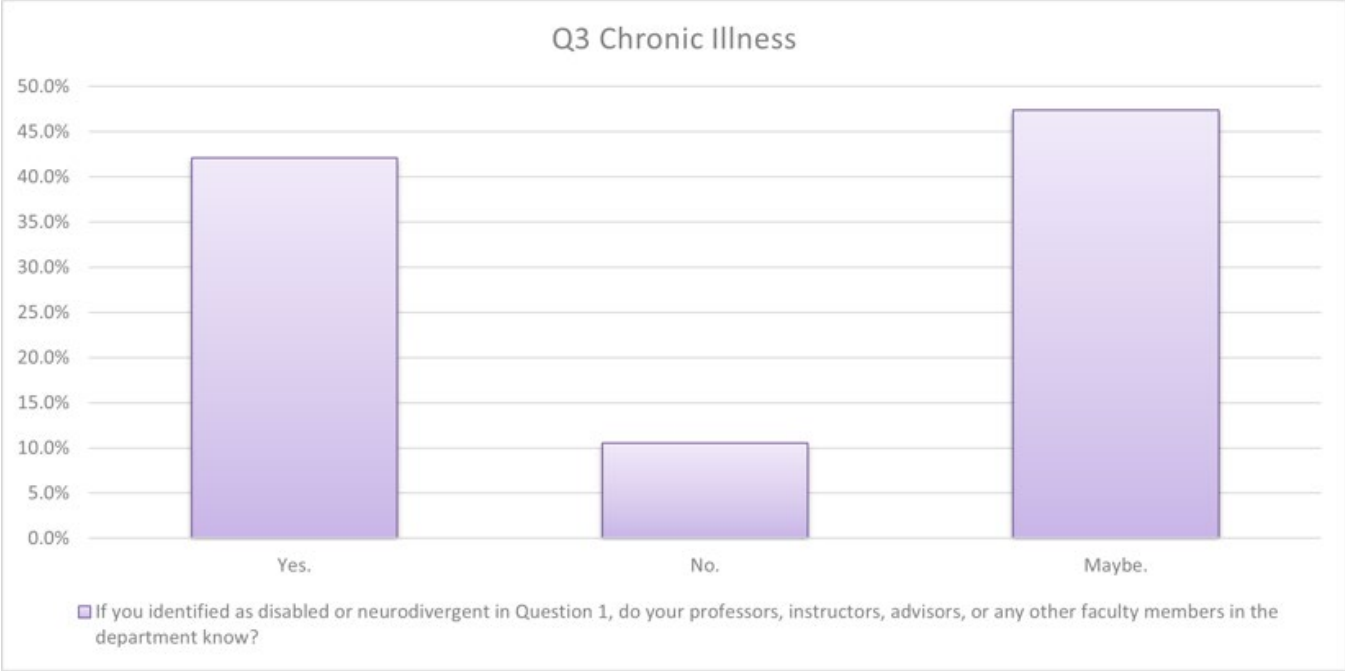


Figure 40: results for Question 3, Chronic Illness

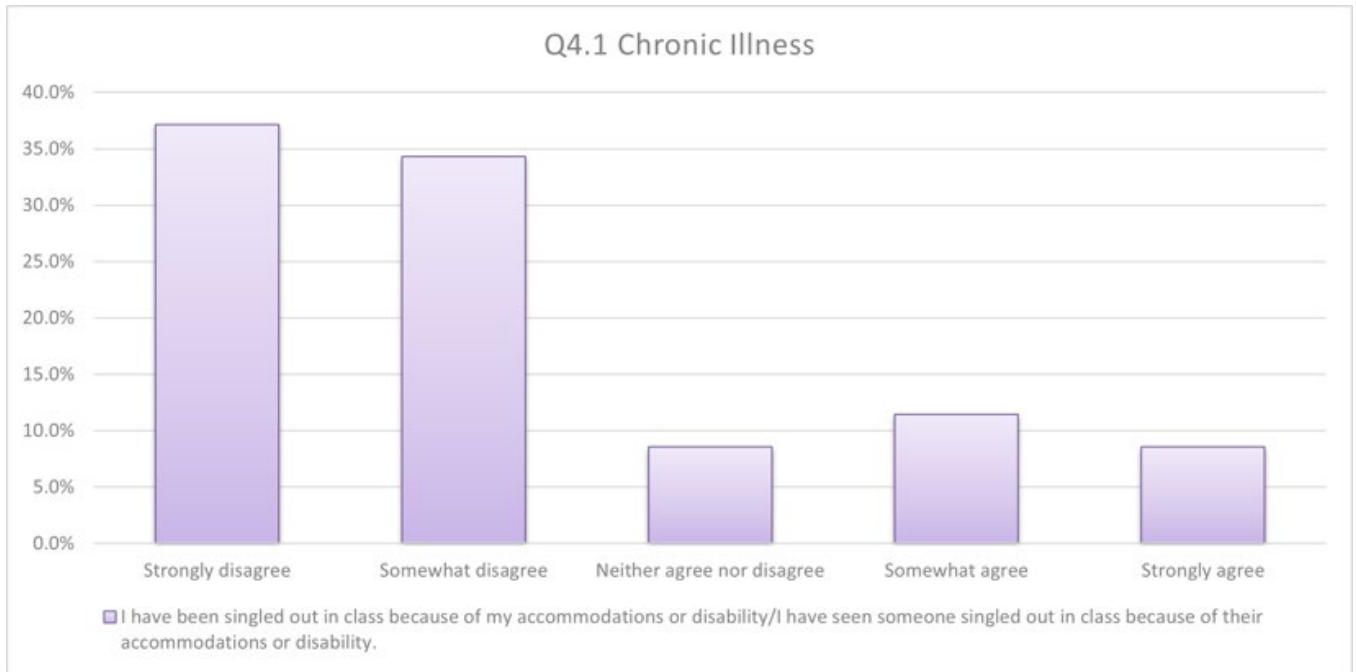


Figure 41: results for Question 4.1, Chronic Illness

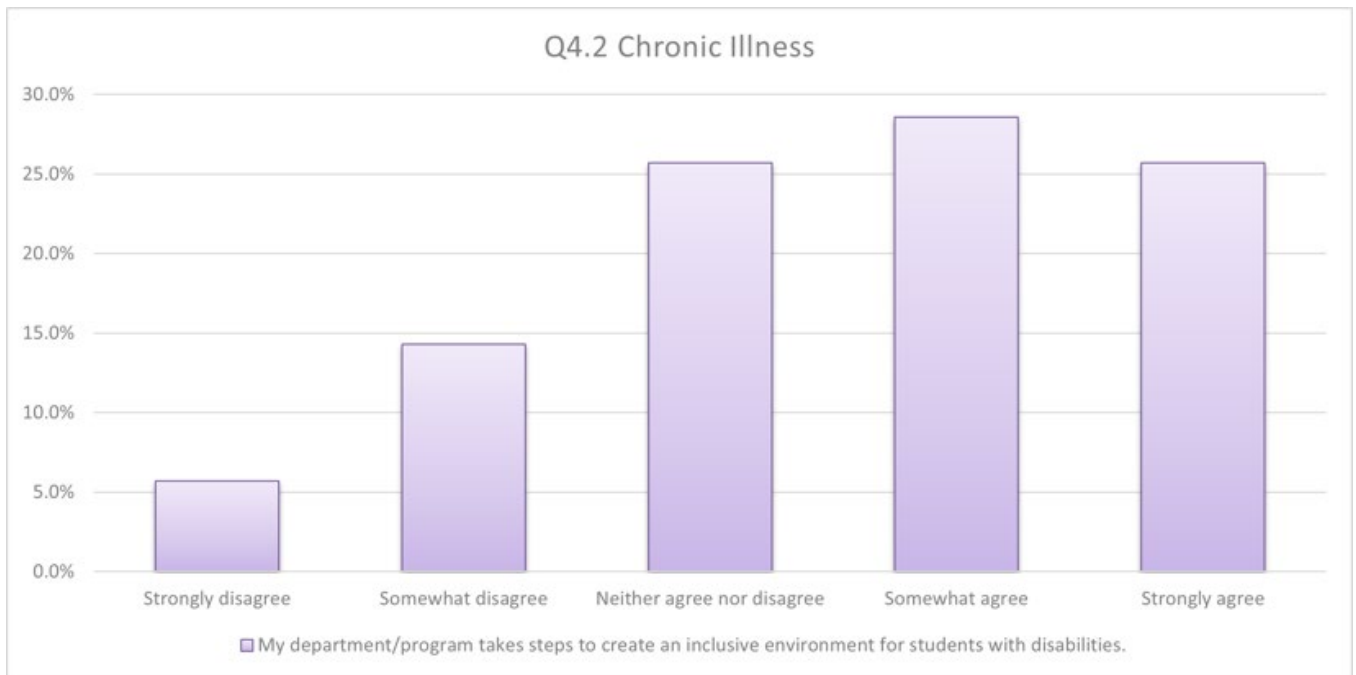


Figure 42: results for Question 4.2, Chronic Illness

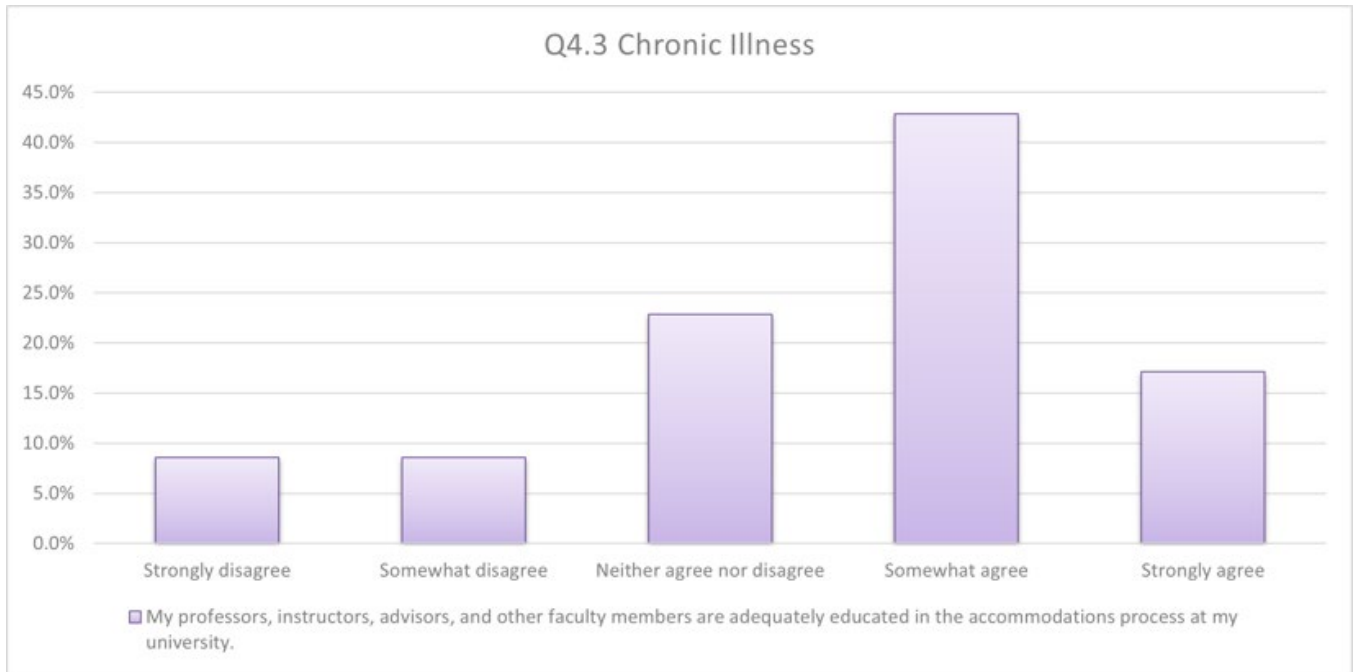


Figure 43: results for Question 4.3, Chronic Illness

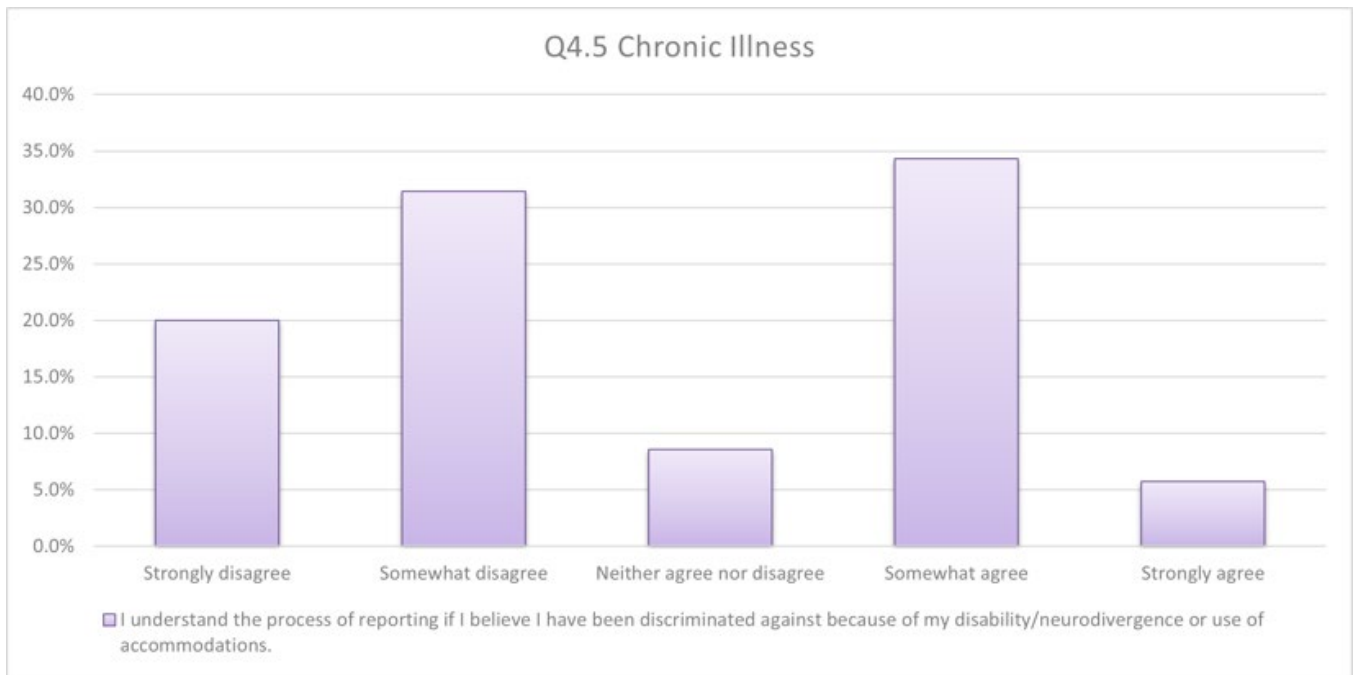


Figure 44: results for Question 4.5, Chronic Illness

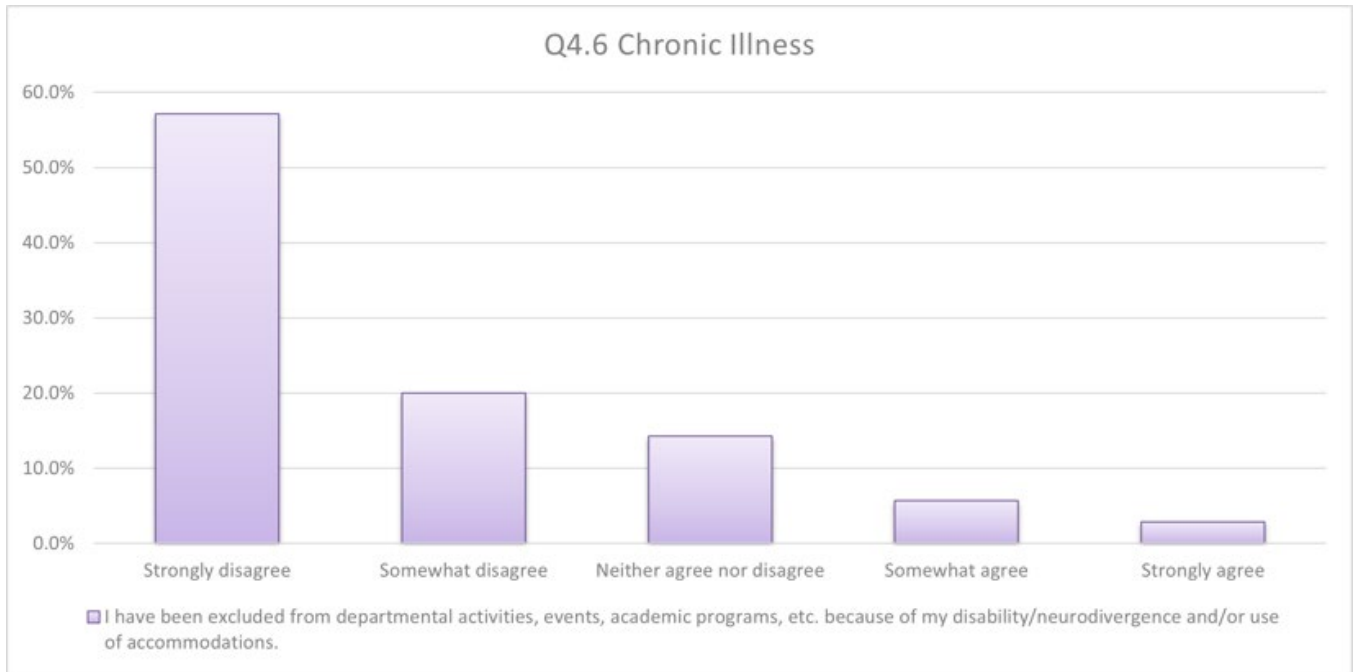


Figure 45: results for Question 4.6, Chronic Illness

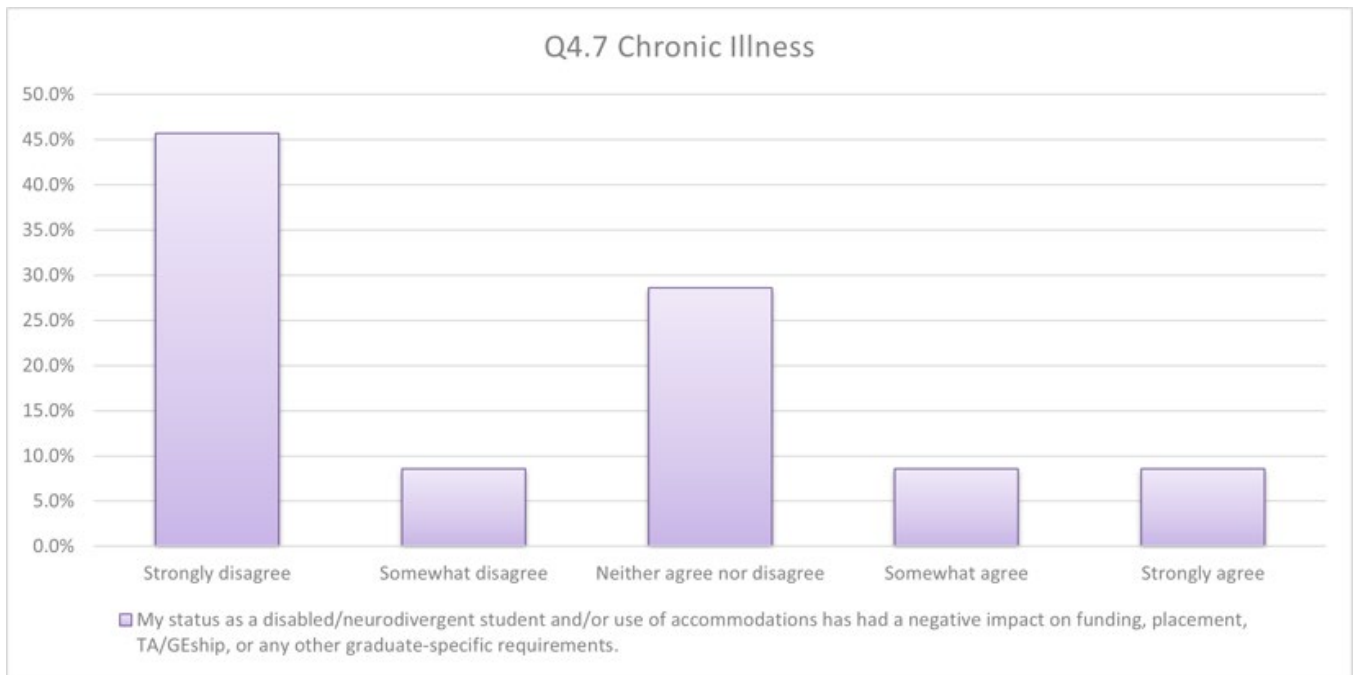


Figure 46: results for Question 4.7, Chronic Illness

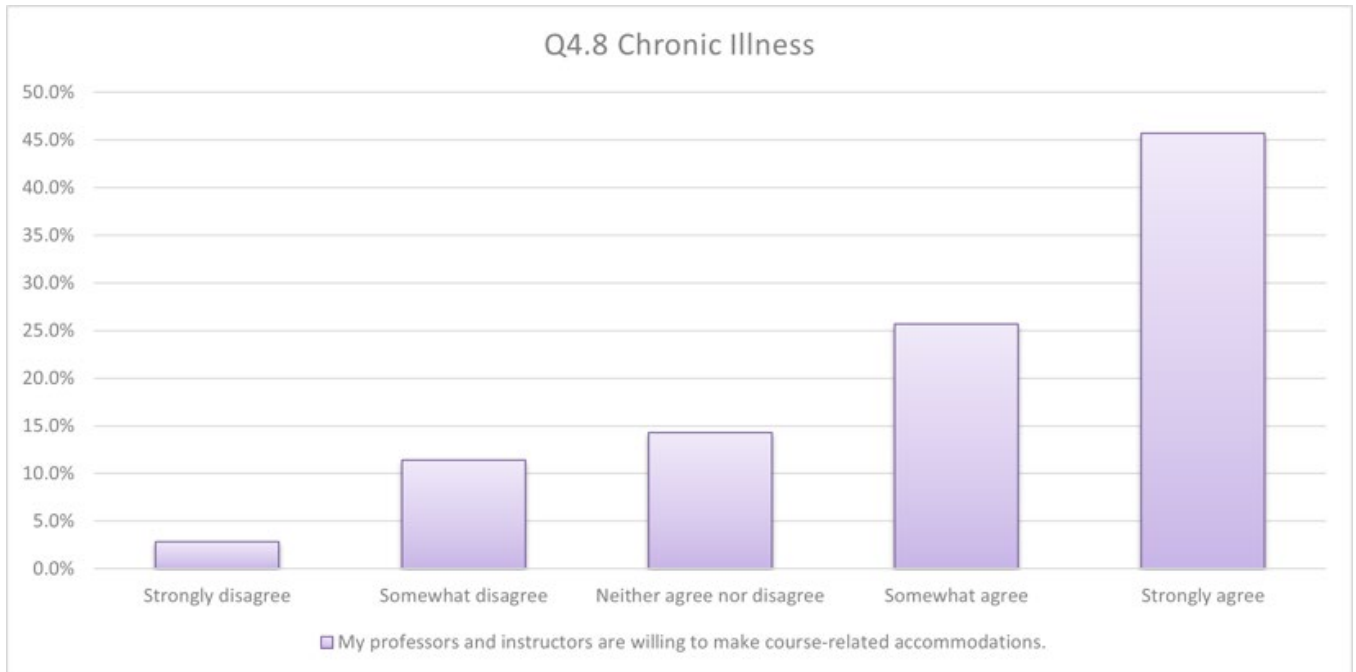


Figure 47: results for Question 4.8, Chronic Illness

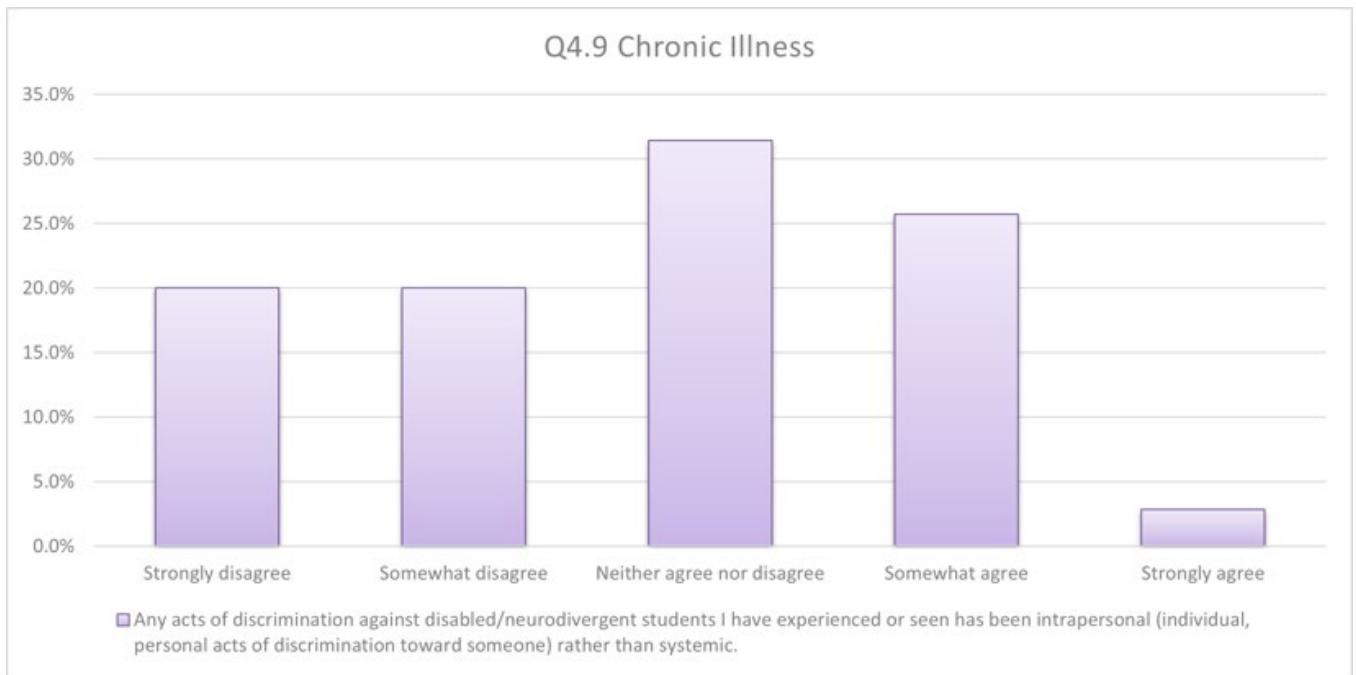


Figure 48: results for Question 4.9, Chronic Illness

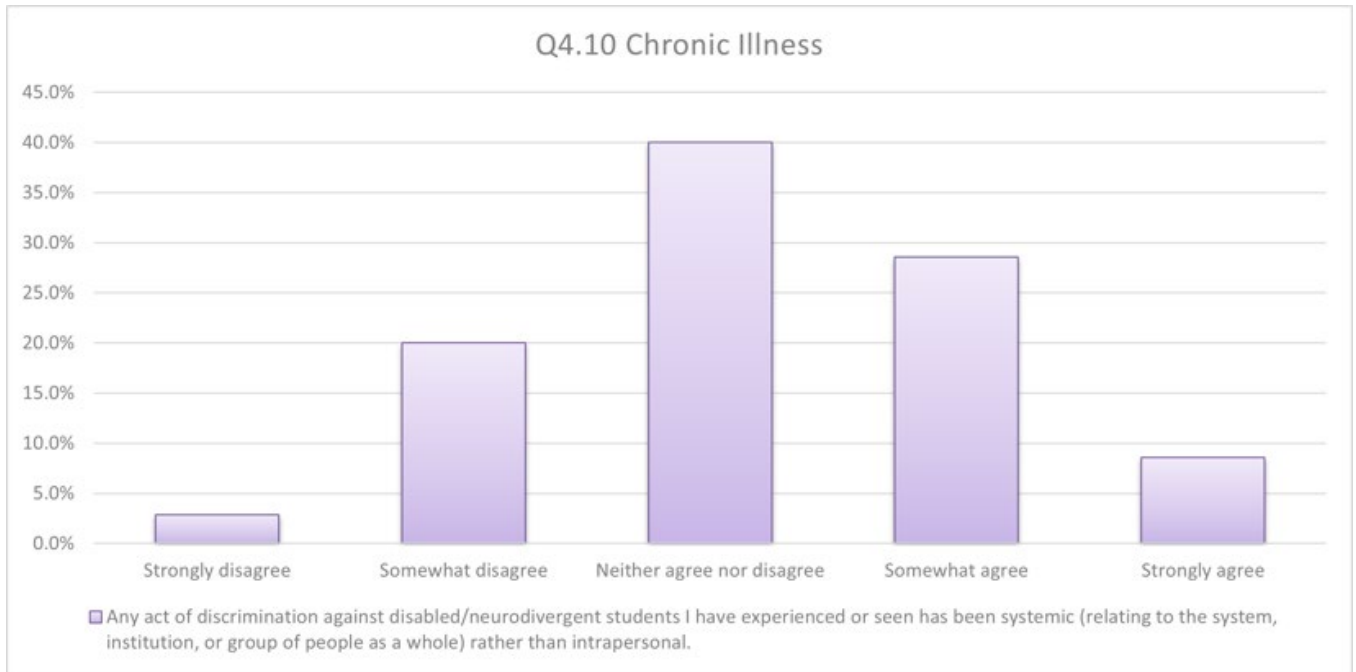


Figure 49: results for Question 4.10, Chronic Illness

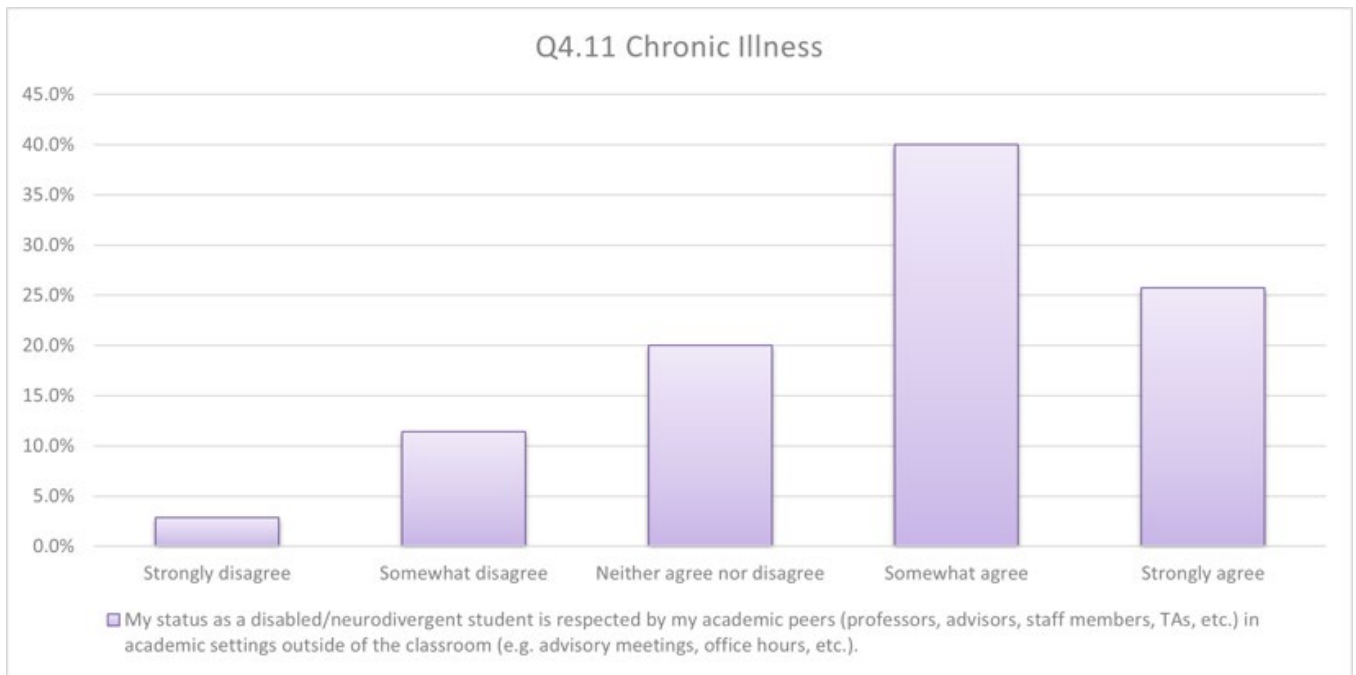


Figure 50: results for Question 4.11, Chronic Illness

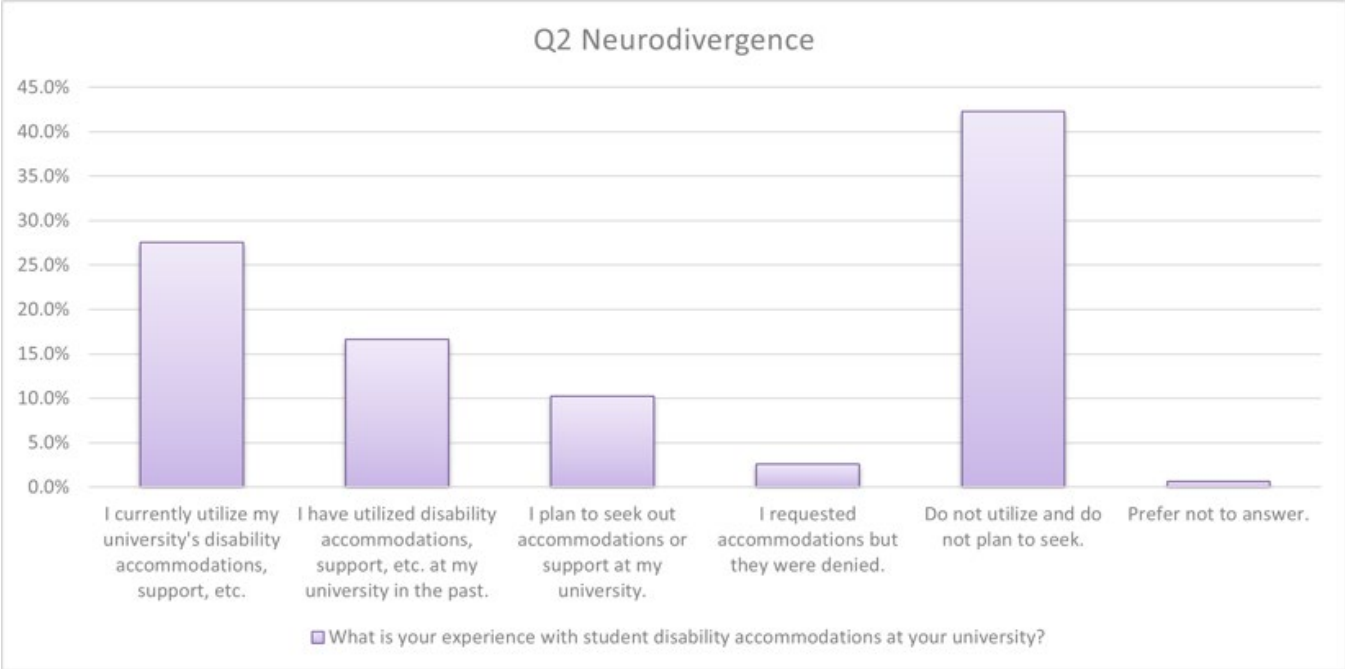


Figure 51: results for Question 2, Neurodivergence

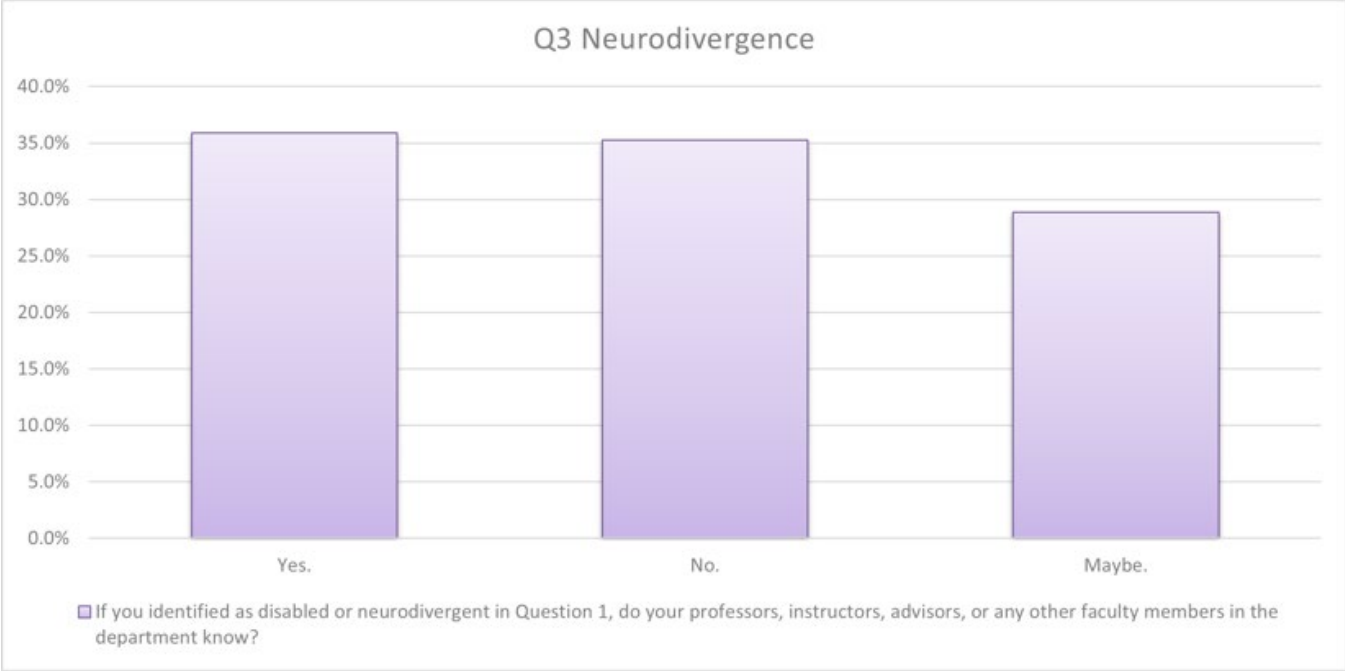


Figure 52: results for Question 3, Neurodivergence

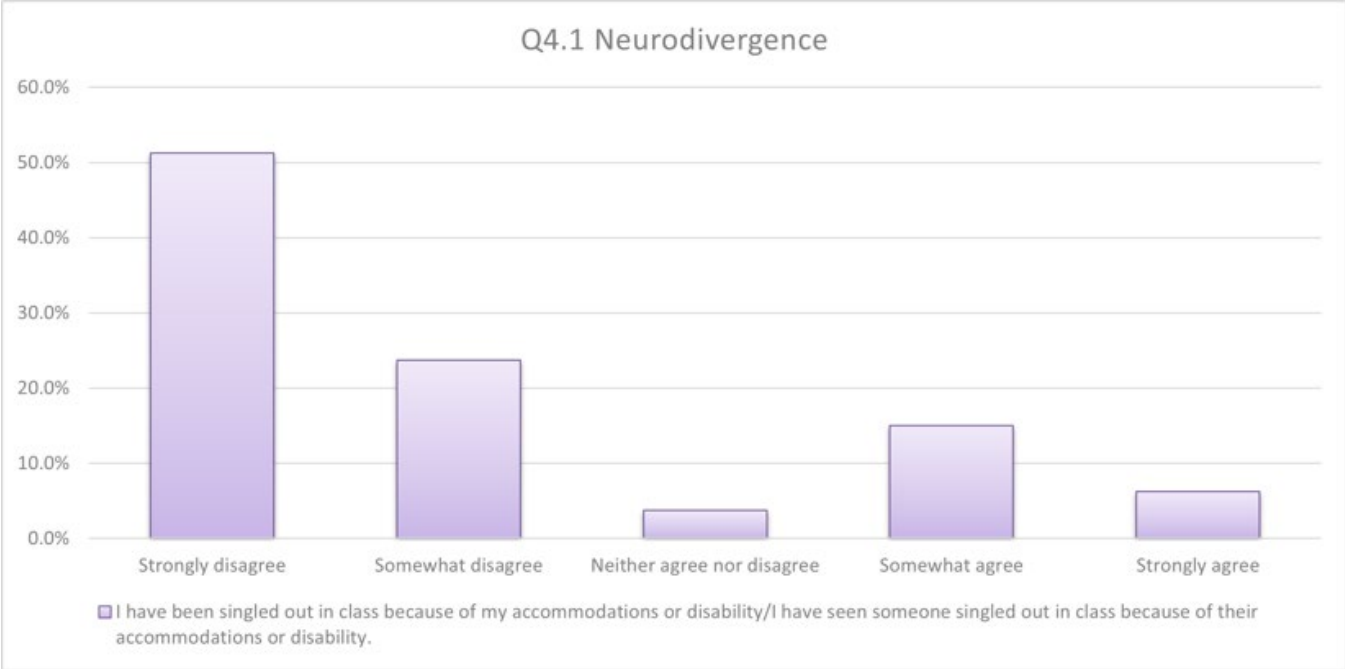


Figure 53: results for Question 4.1, Neurodivergence

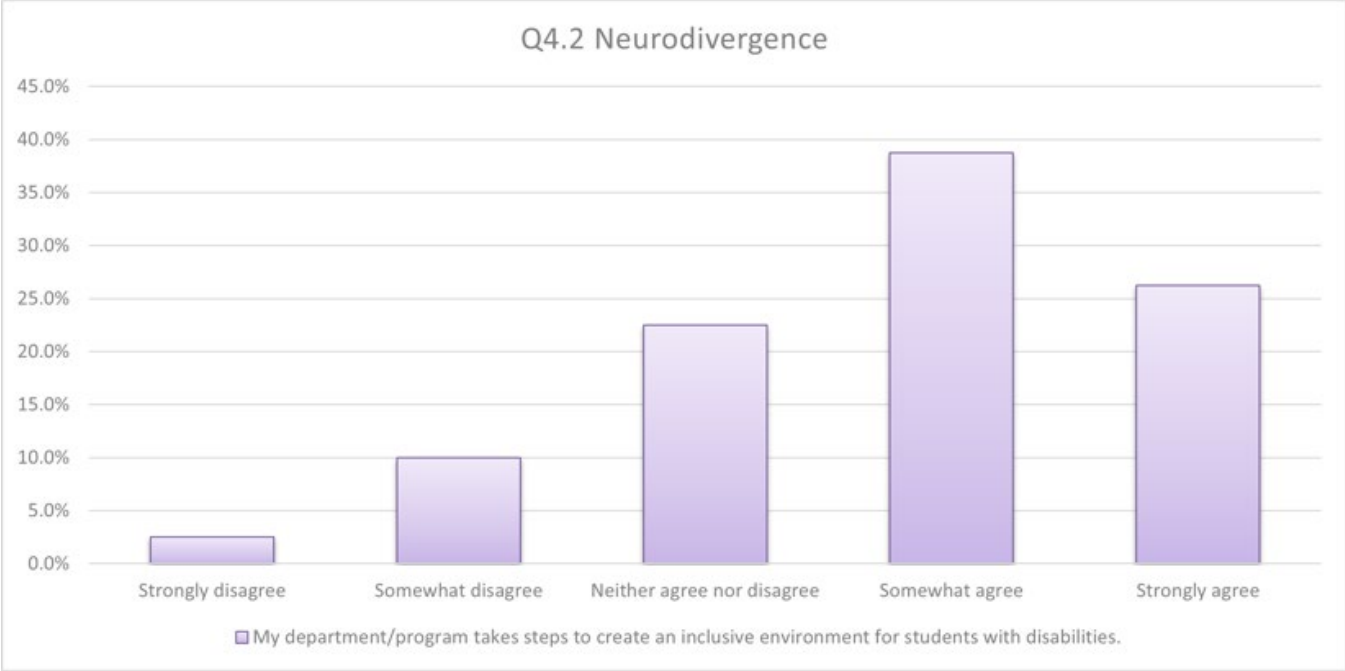


Figure 54: results for Question 4.2, Neurodivergence

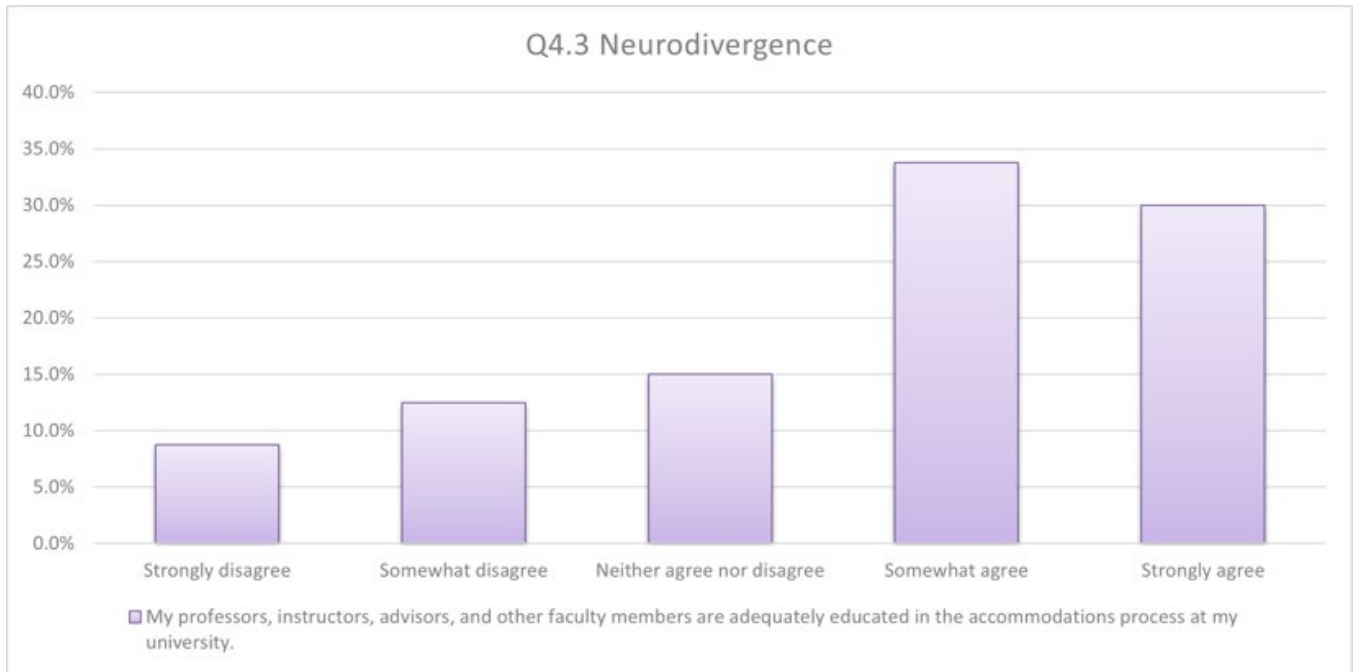


Figure 55: results for Question 4.3, Neurodivergence

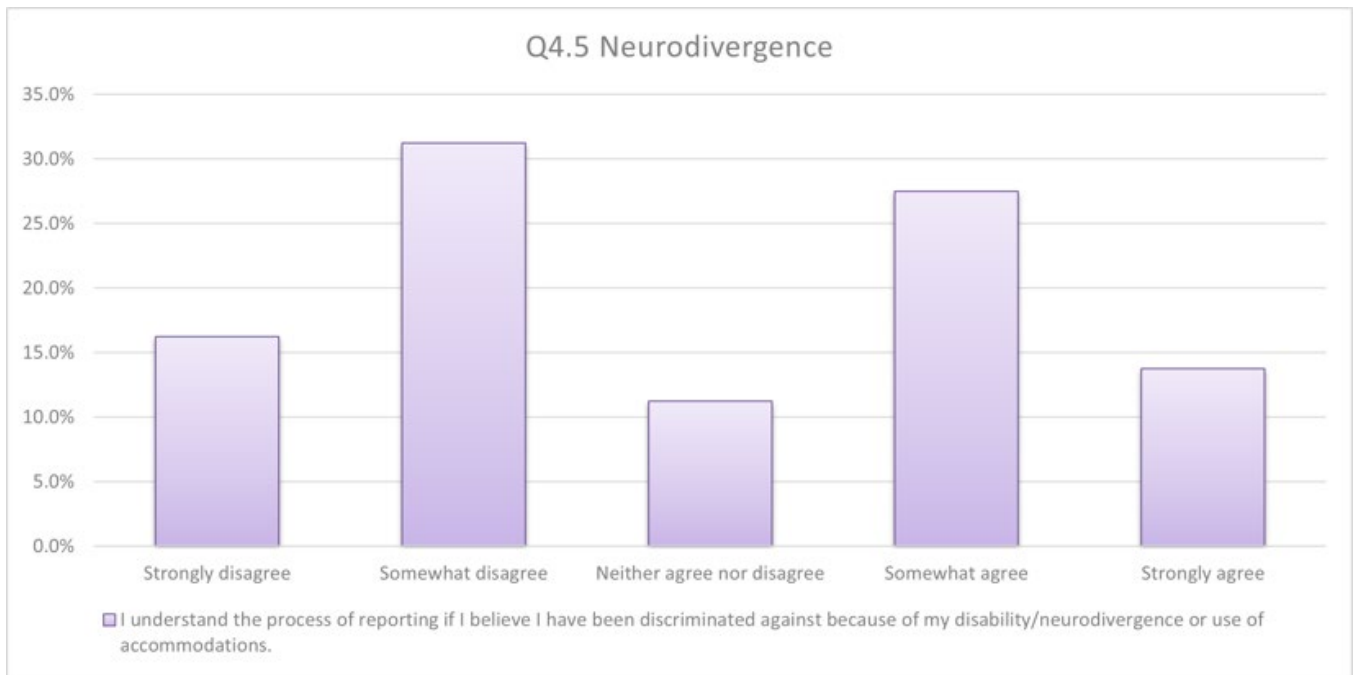


Figure 56: results for Question 4.5, Neurodivergence

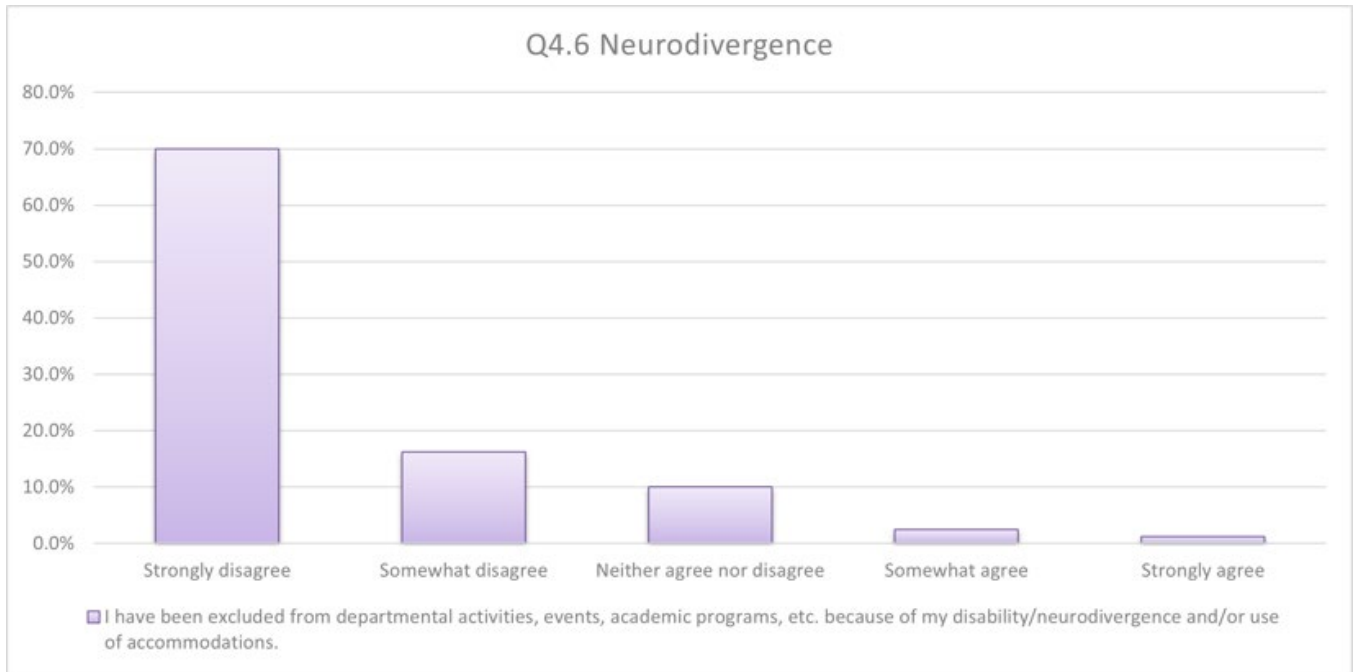


Figure 57: results for Question 4.6, Neurodivergence

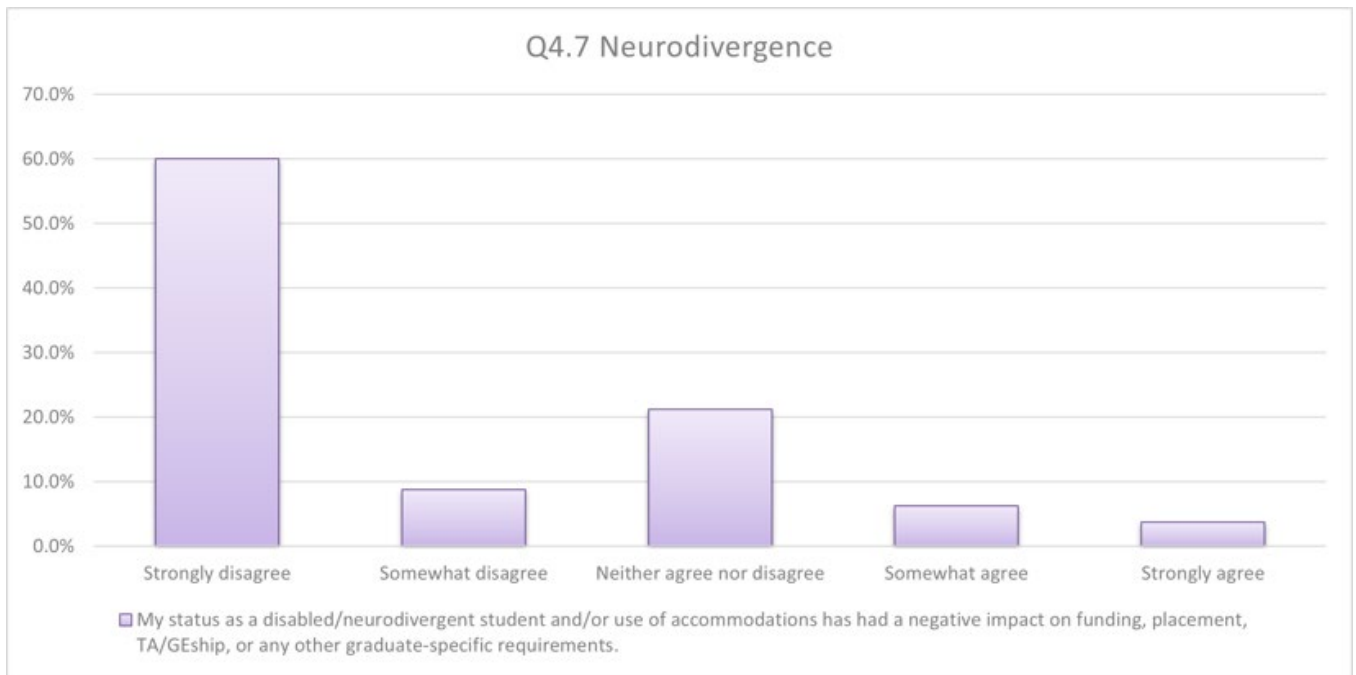


Figure 58: results for Question 4.7, Neurodivergence

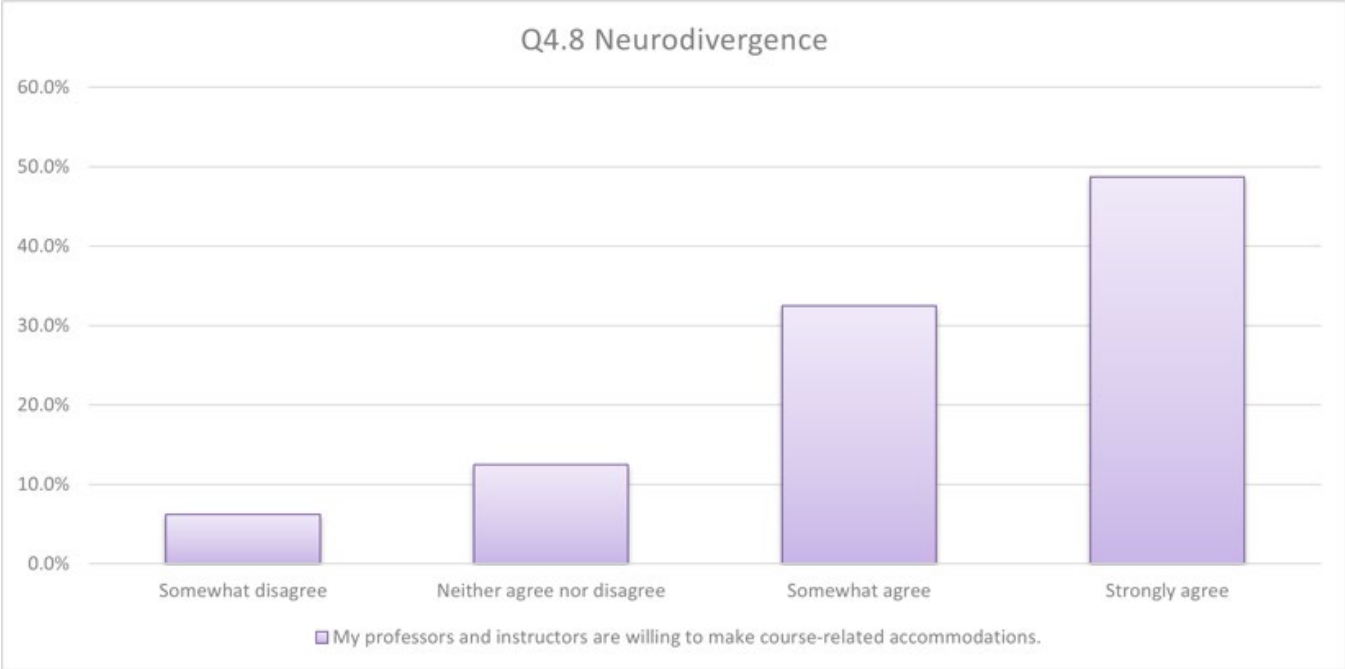


Figure 59: results for Question 4.8, Neurodivergence

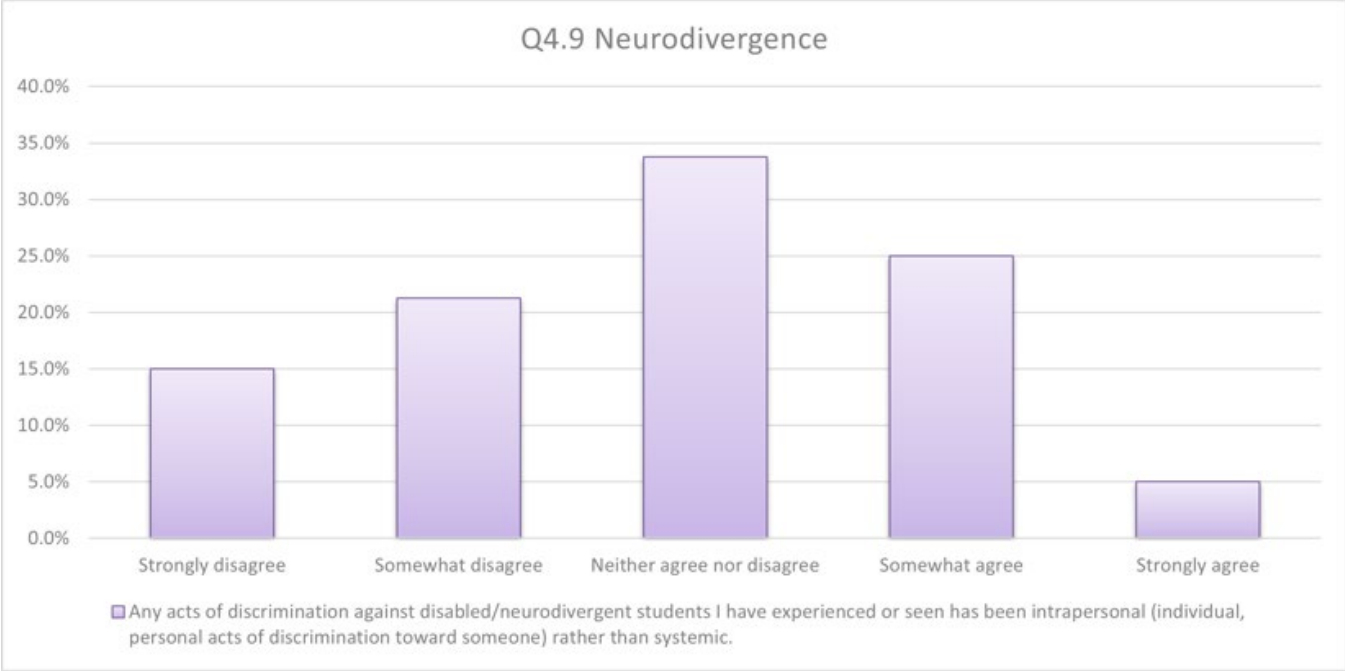


Figure 60: results for Question 4.9, Neurodivergence

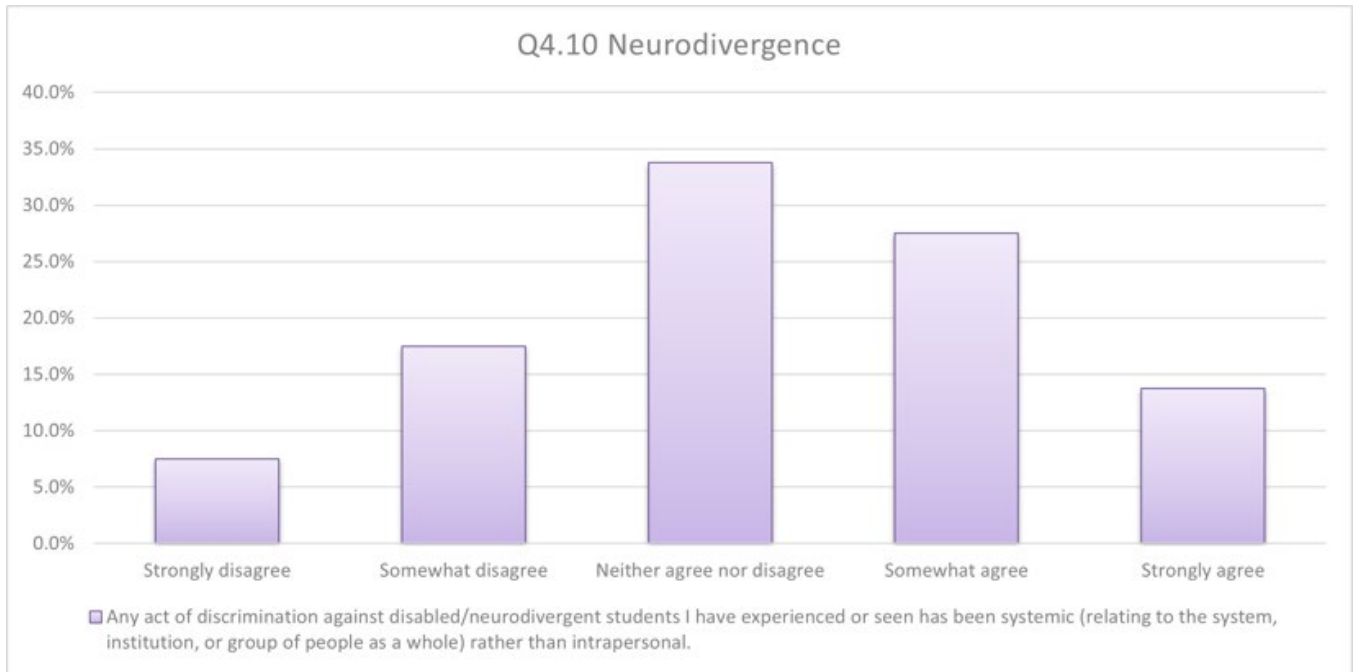


Figure 61: results for Question 4.10, Neurodivergence

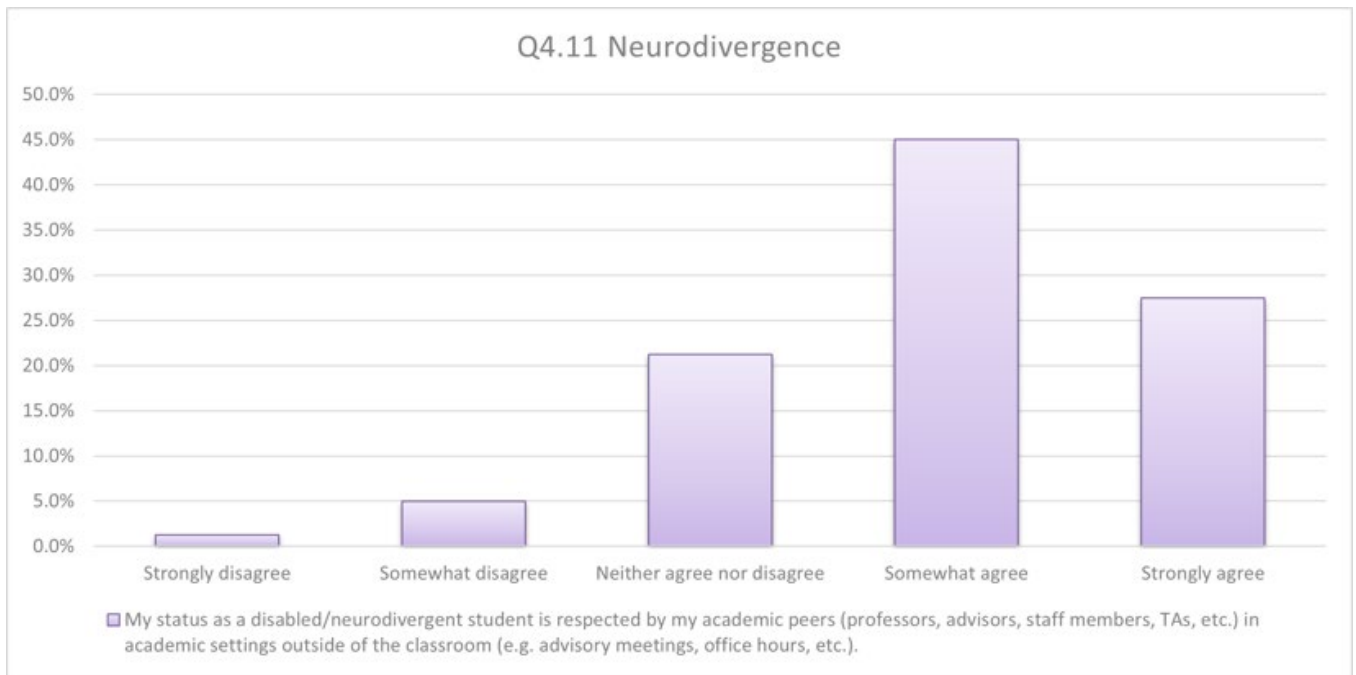


Figure 62: results for Question 4.11, Neurodivergence

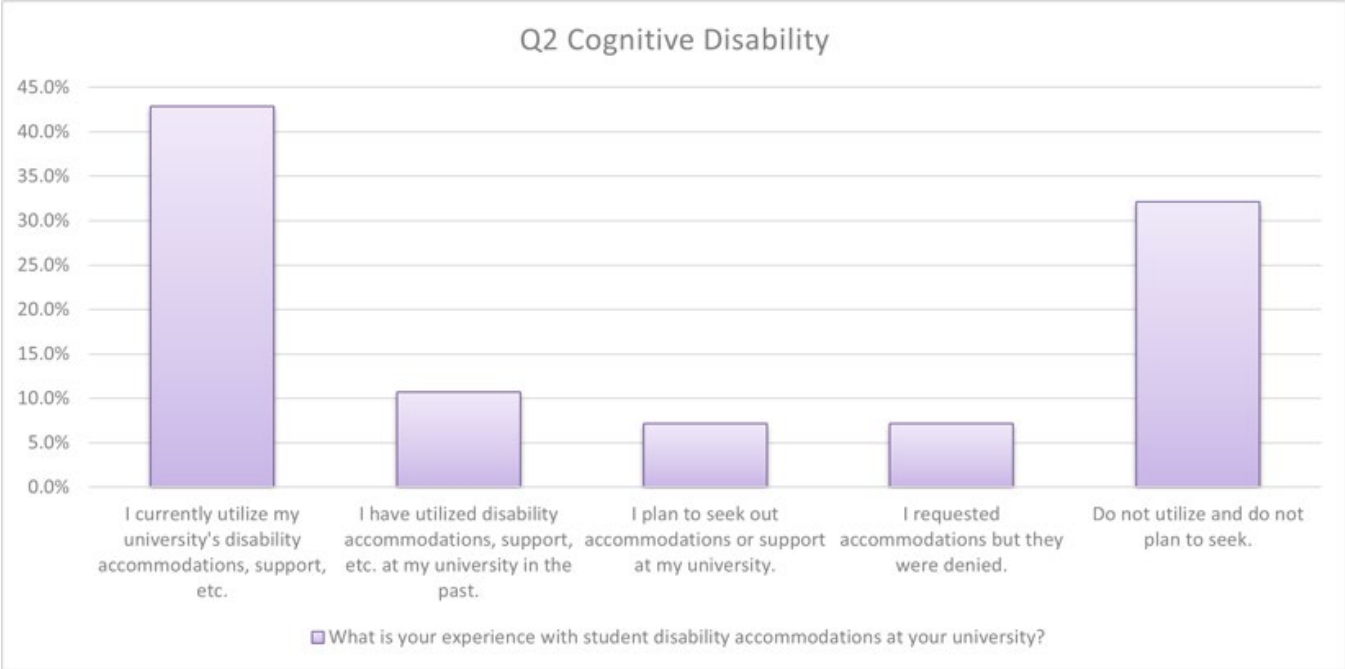


Figure 63: results for Question 2, Cognitive Disability

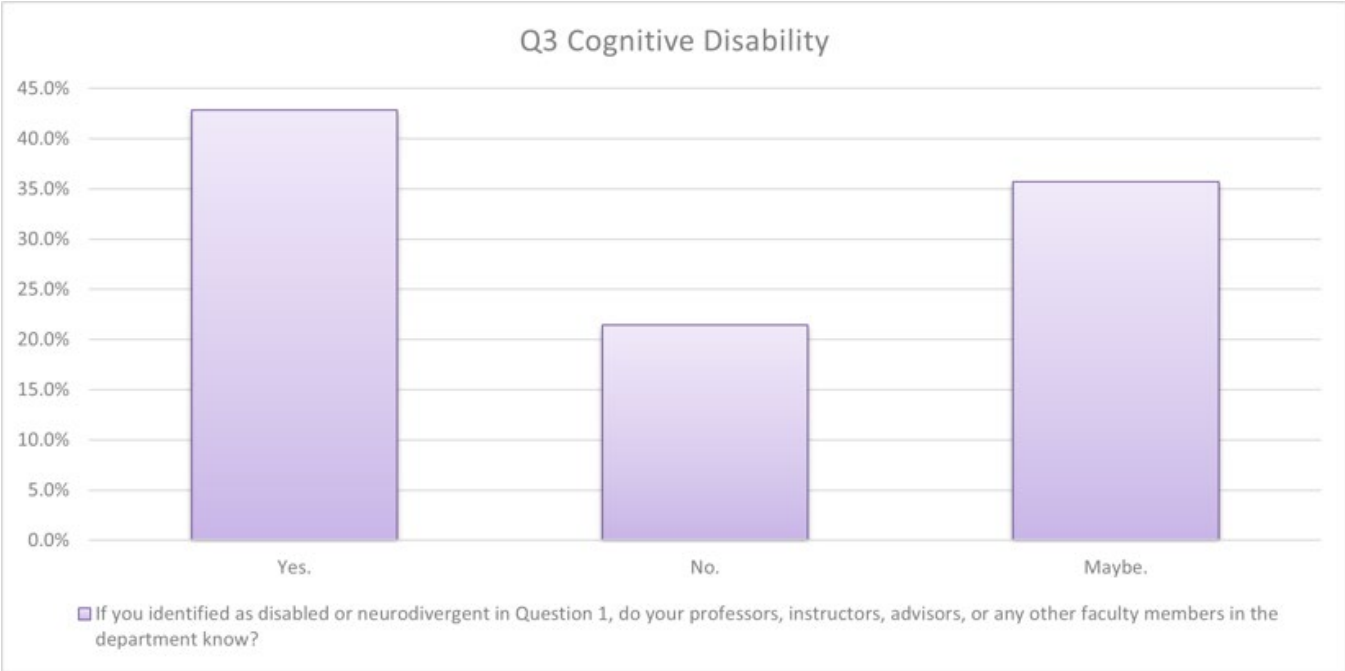


Figure 64: results for Question 3, Cognitive Disability

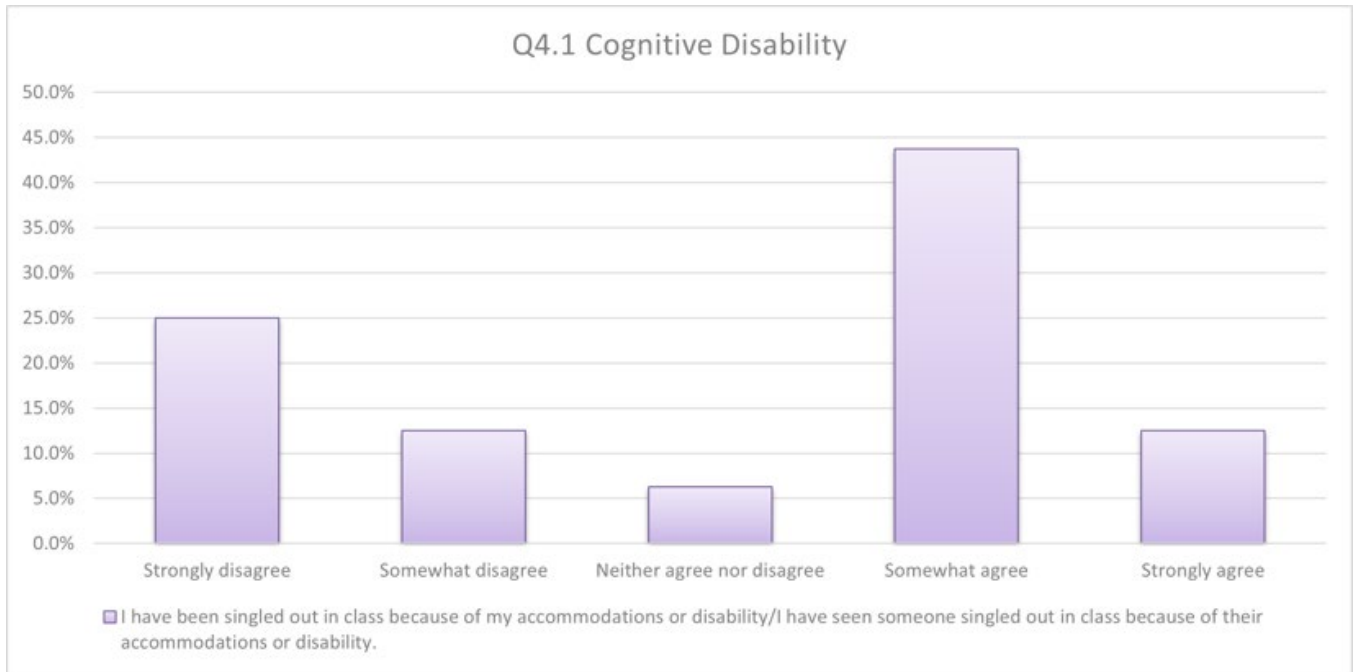


Figure 65: results for Question 4.1, Cognitive Disability

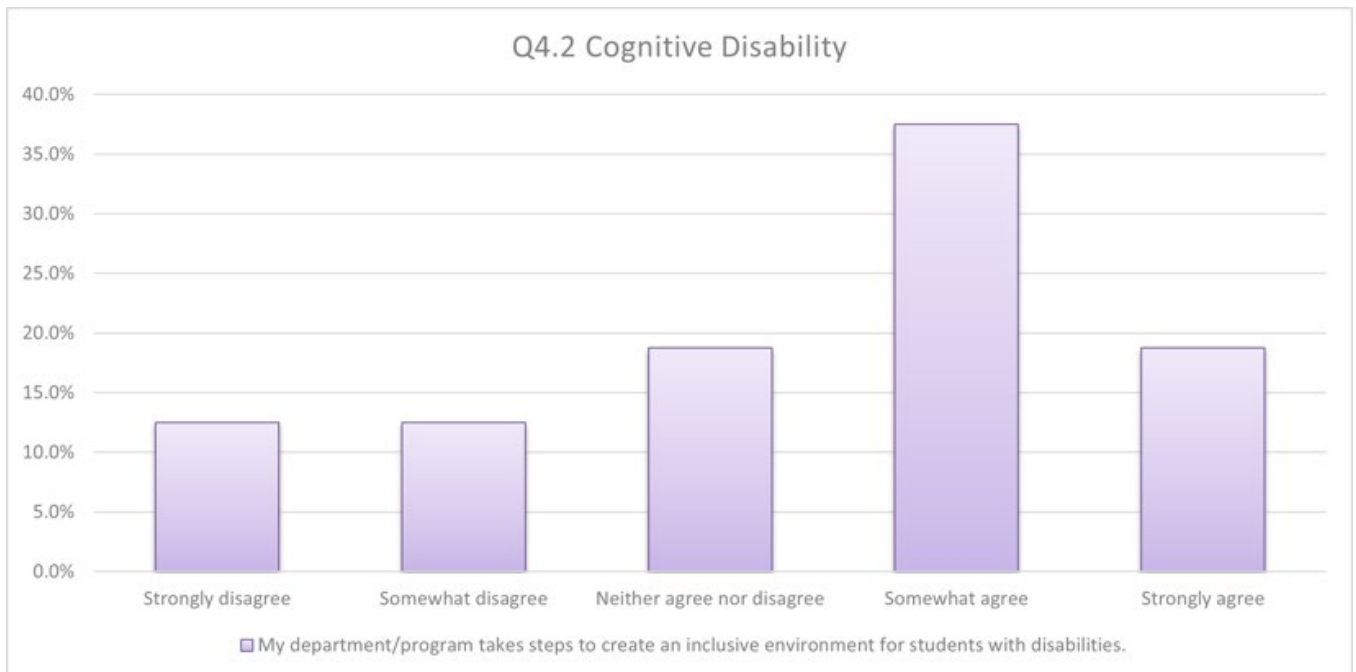


Figure 66: results for Question 4.2, Cognitive Disability

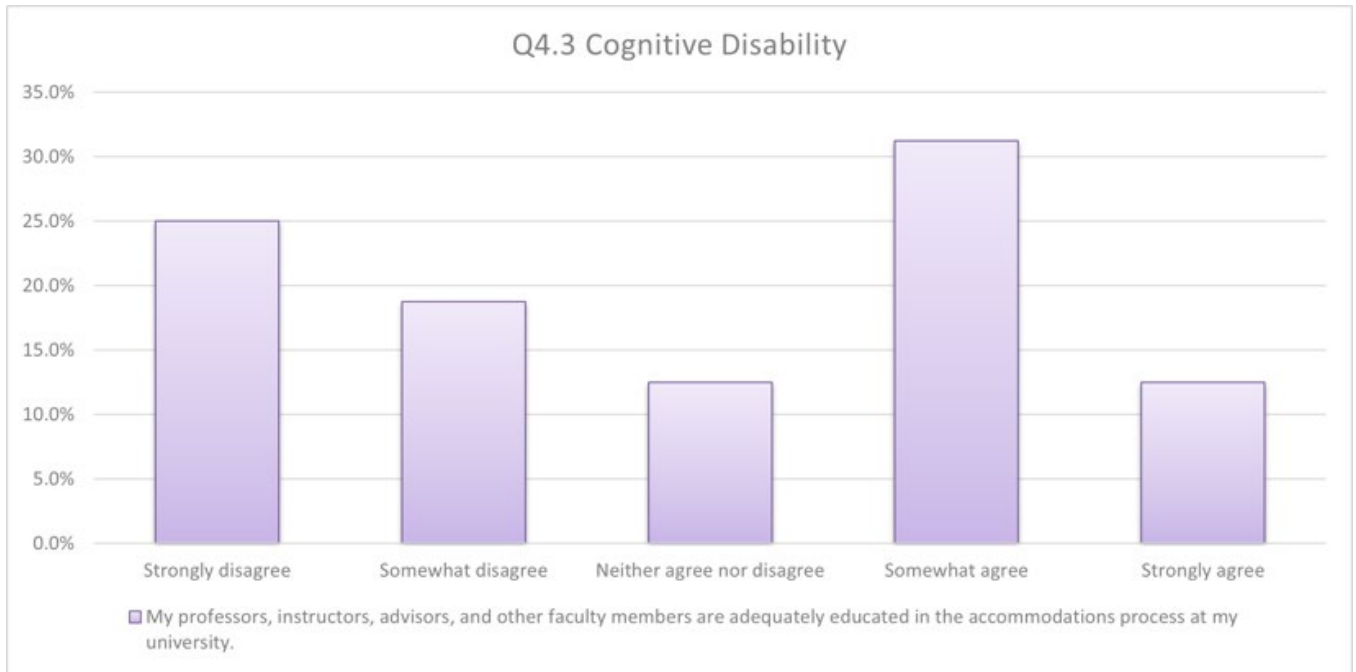


Figure 67: results for Question 4.3, Cognitive Disability

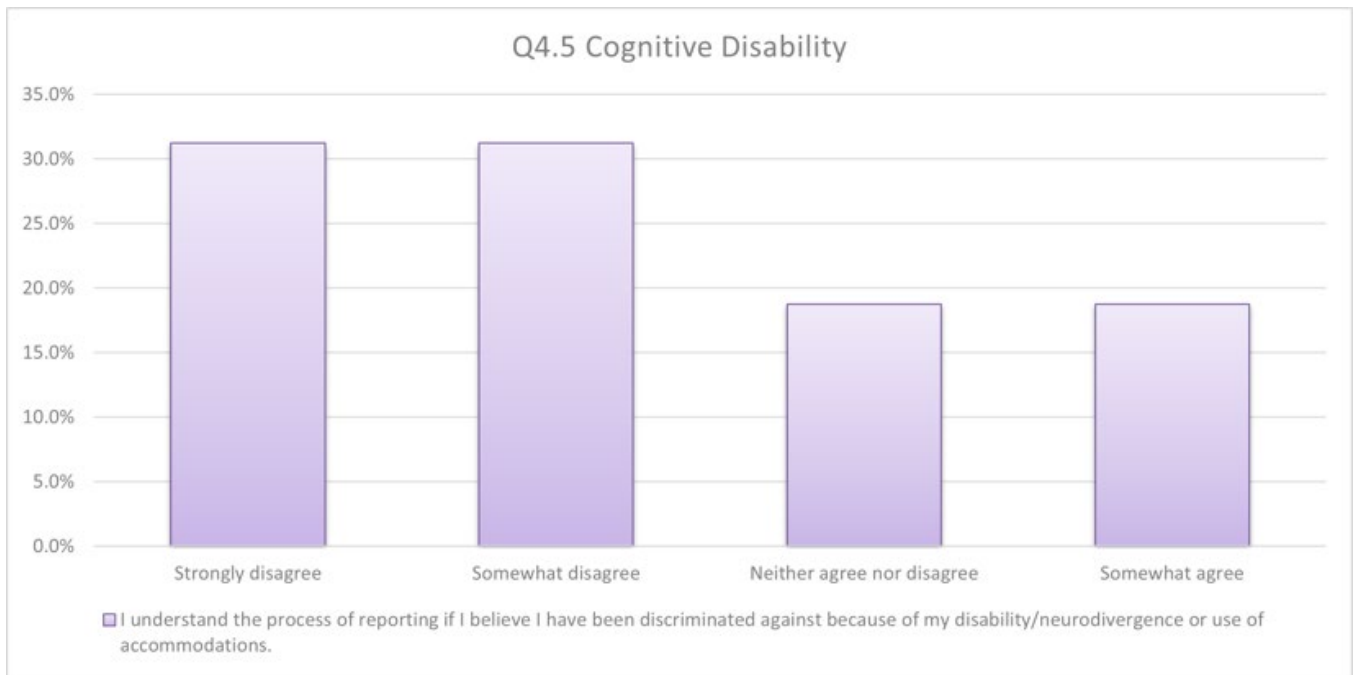


Figure 68: results for Question 4.5, Cognitive Disability

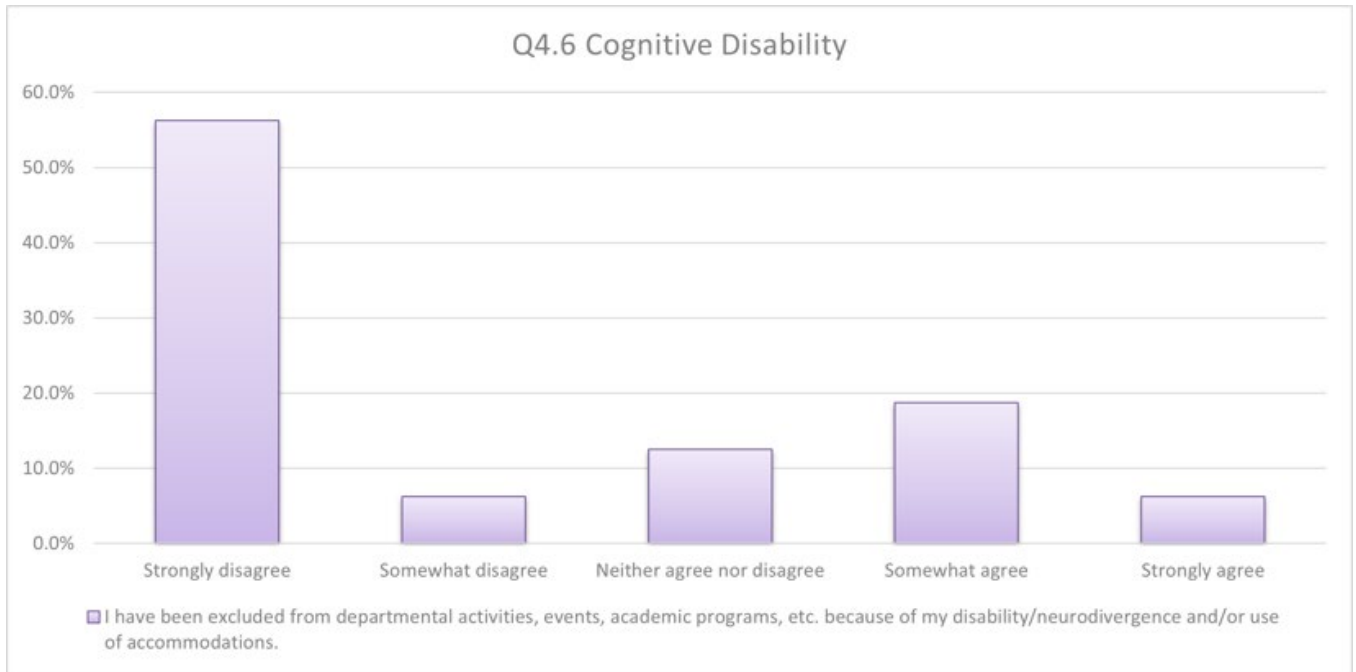


Figure 69: results for Question 4.6, Cognitive Disability

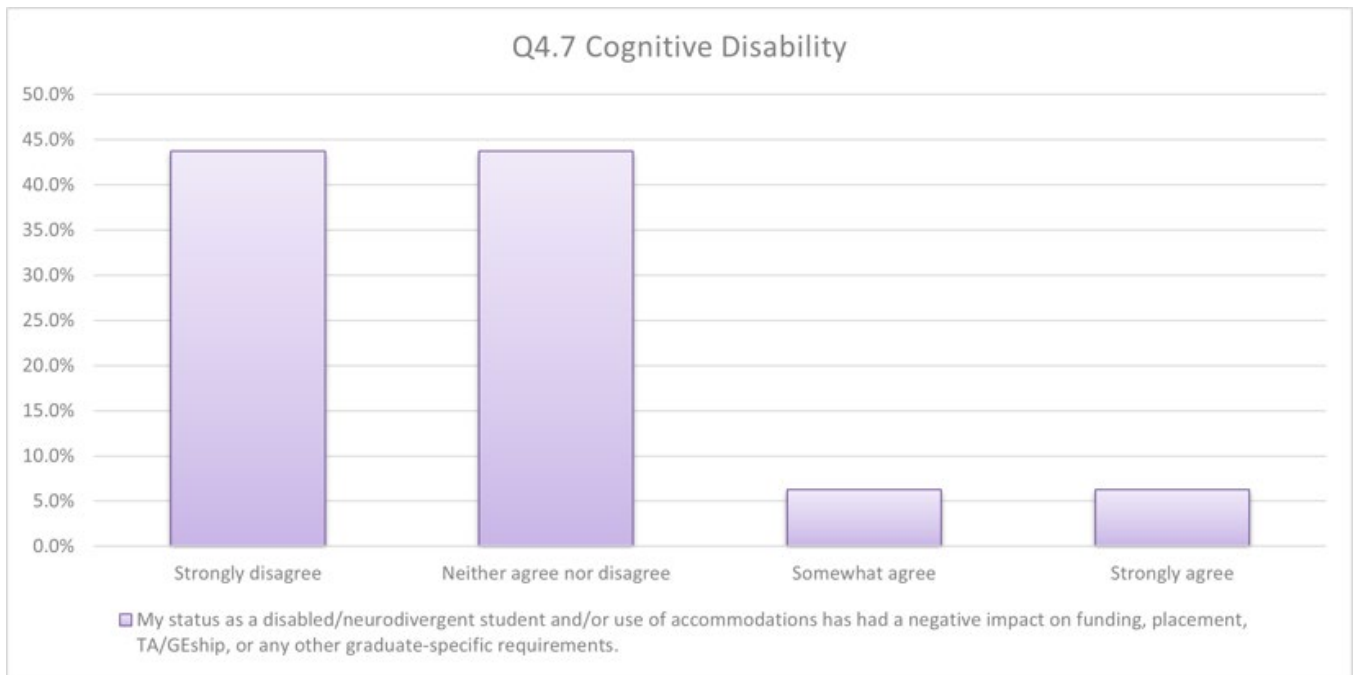


Figure 70: results for Question 4.7, Cognitive Disability

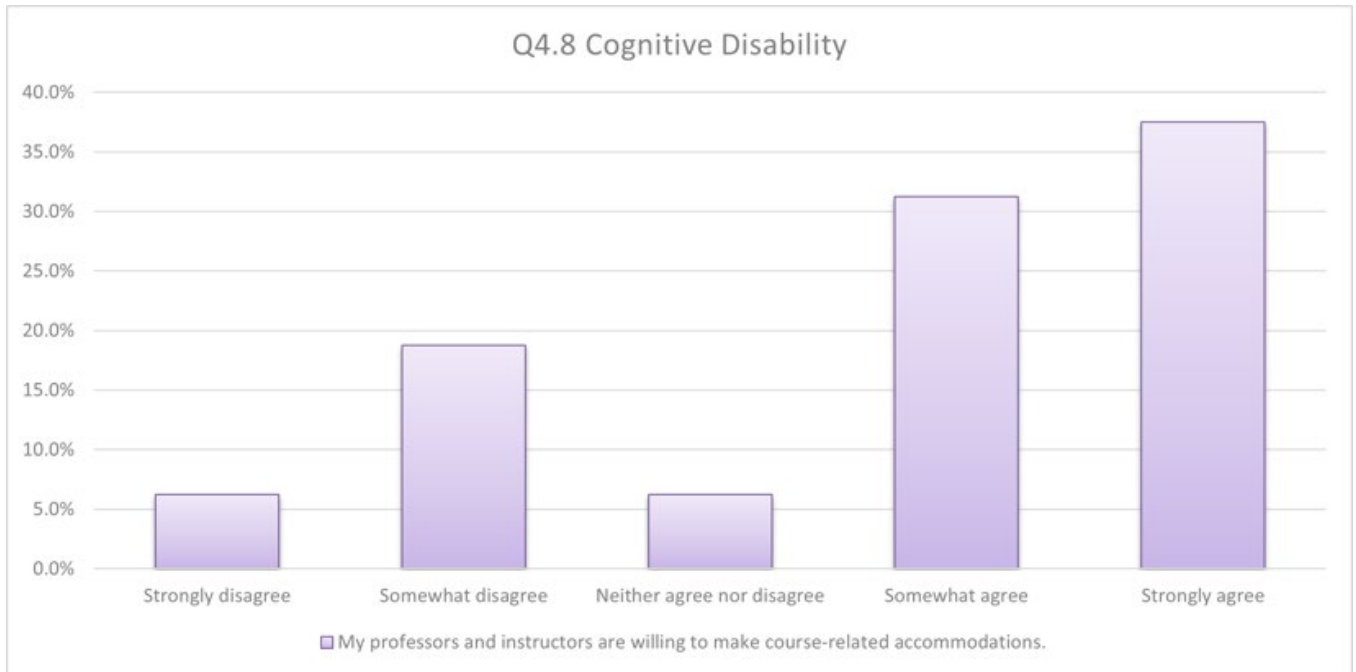


Figure 71: results for Question 4.8, Cognitive Disability

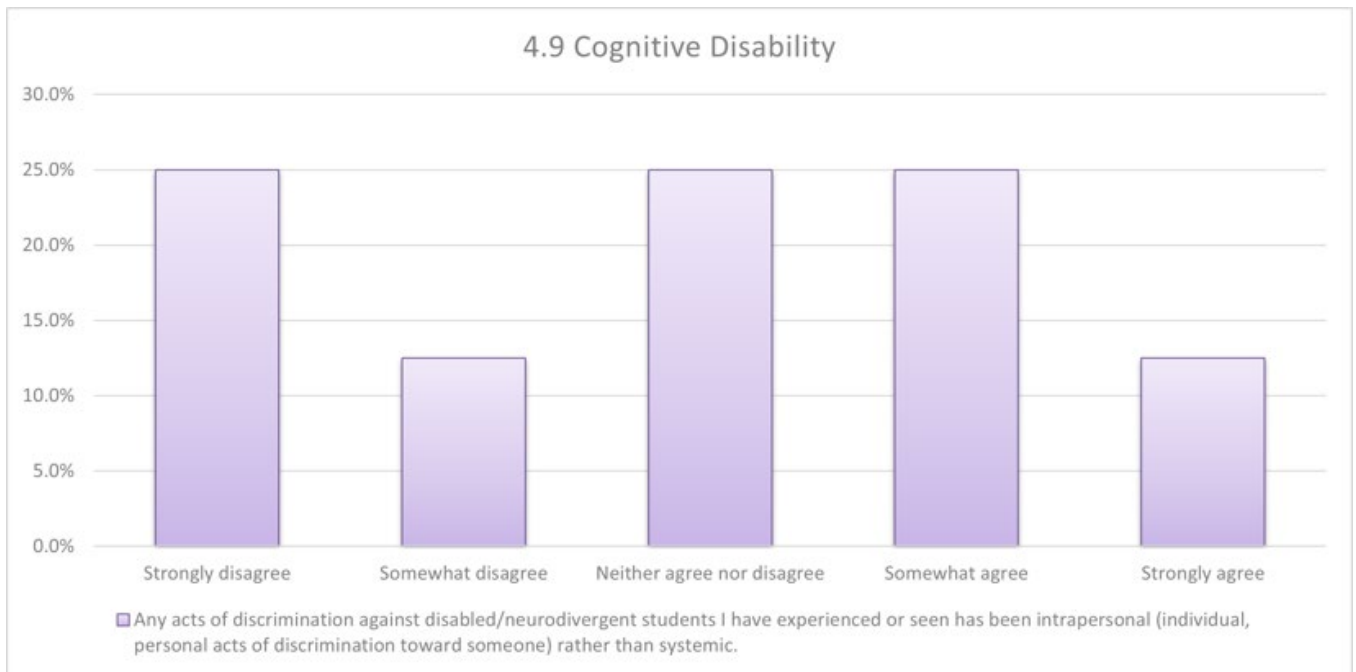


Figure 72: results for Question 4.9, Cognitive Disability

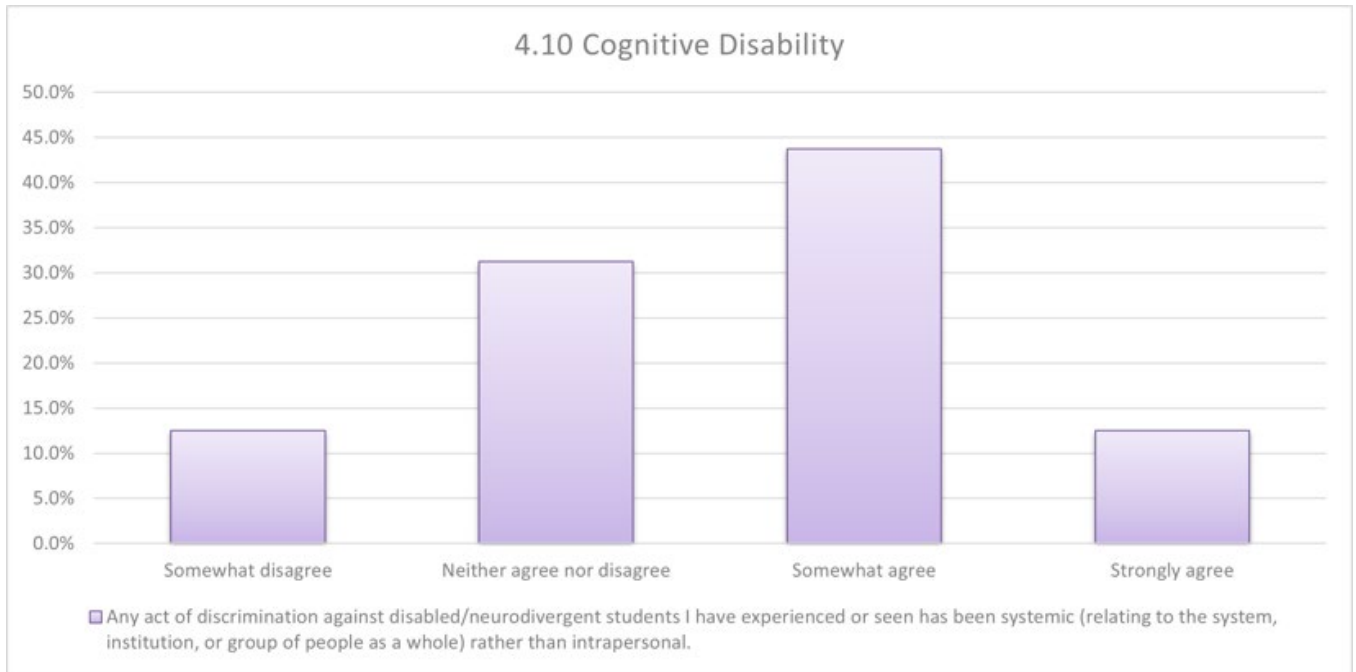


Figure 73: results for Question 4.10, Cognitive Disability

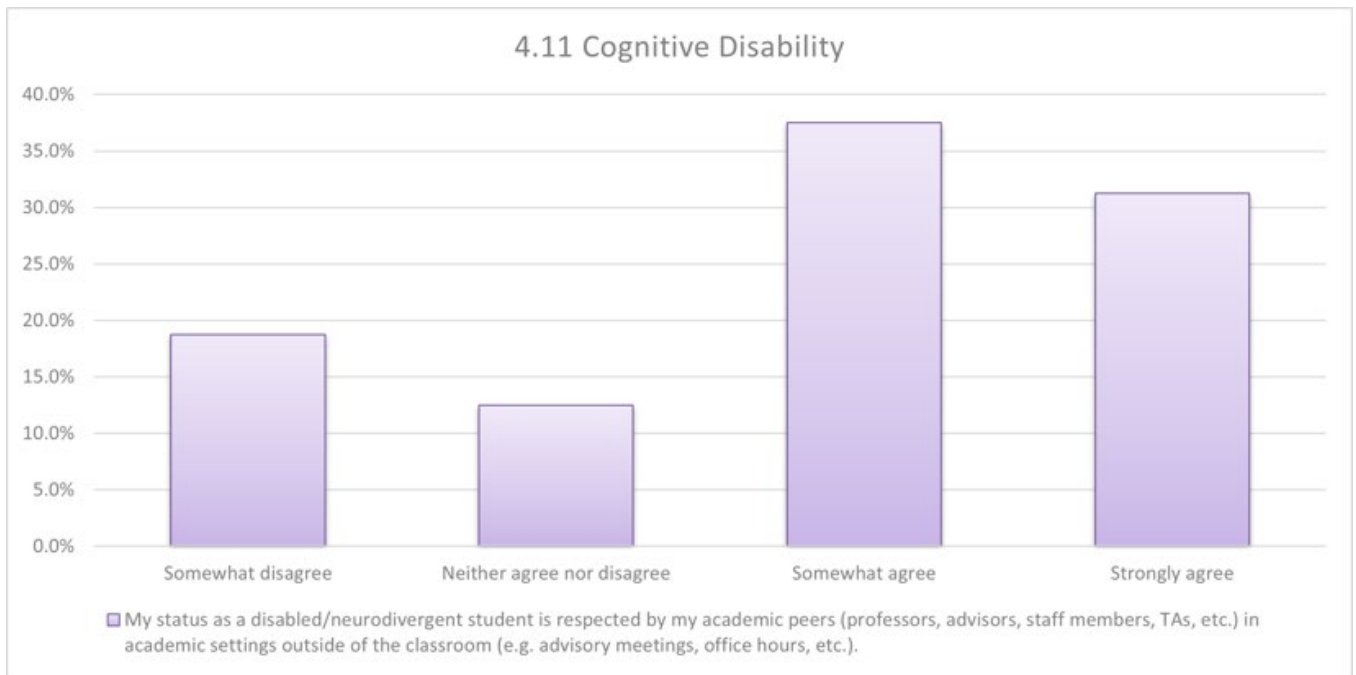


Figure 74: results for Question 4.11, Cognitive Disability

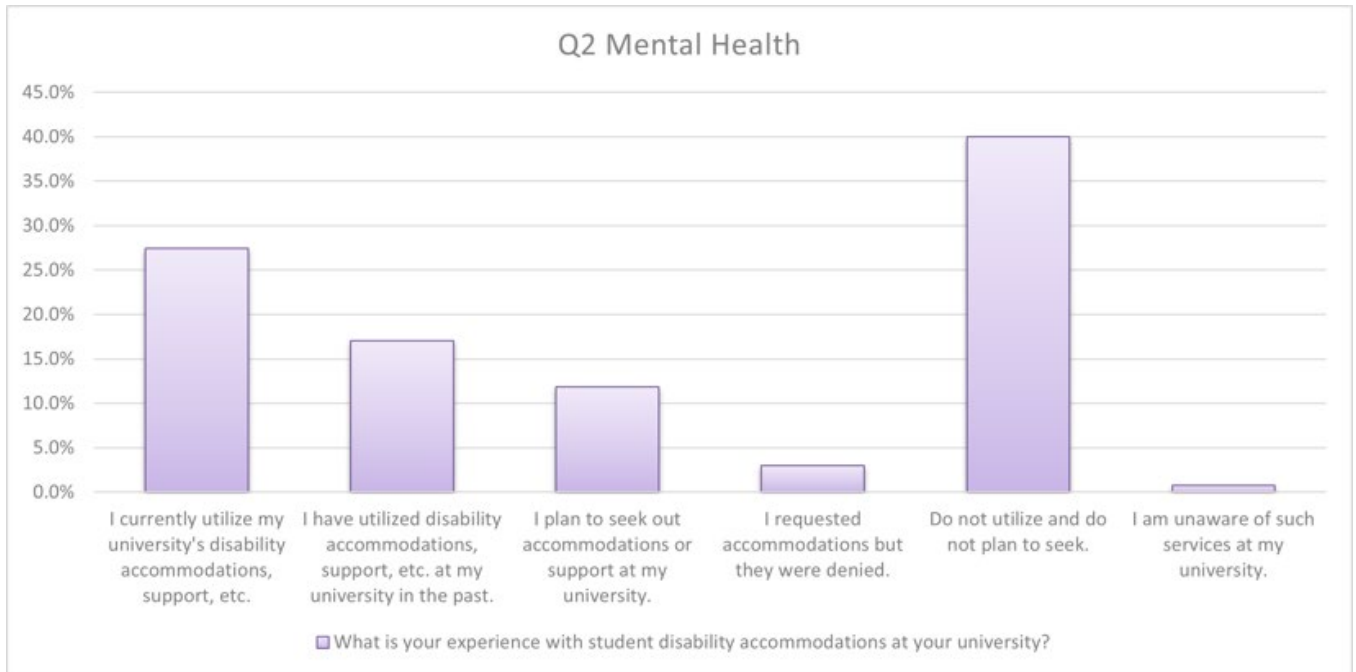


Figure 75: results for Question 2, Mental Health



Figure 76: results for Question 3, Mental Health

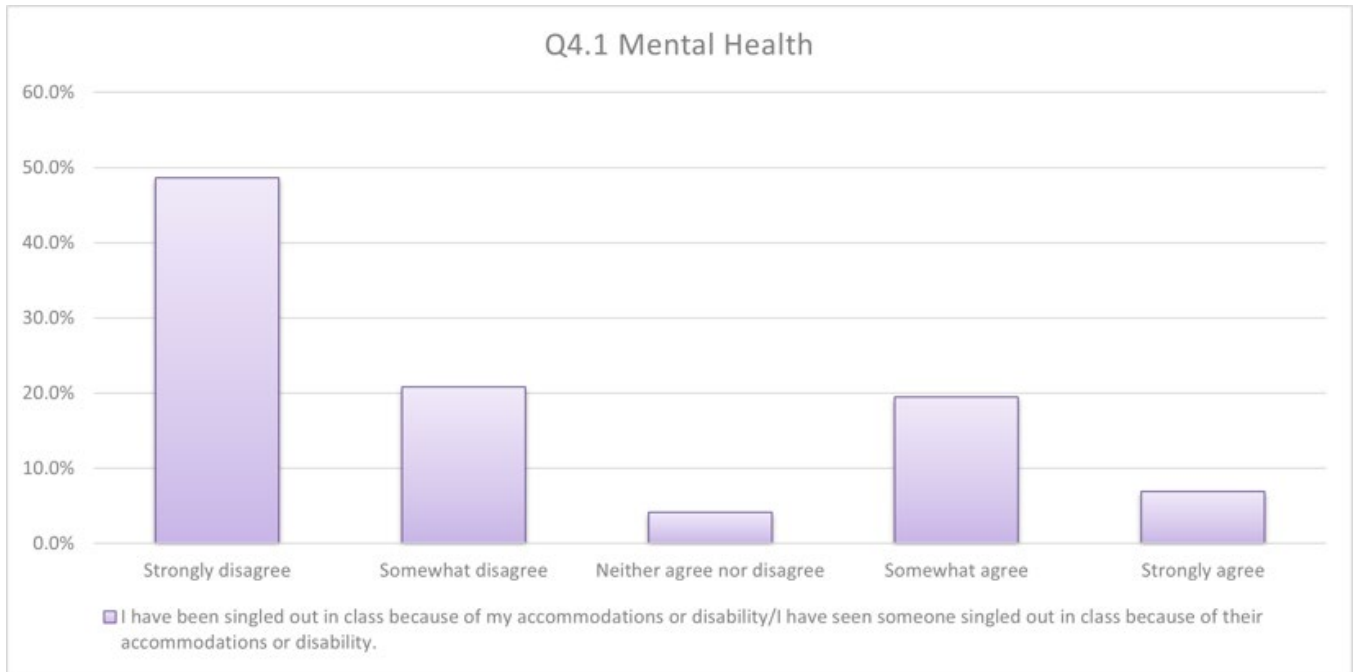


Figure 77: results for Question 4.1, Mental Health

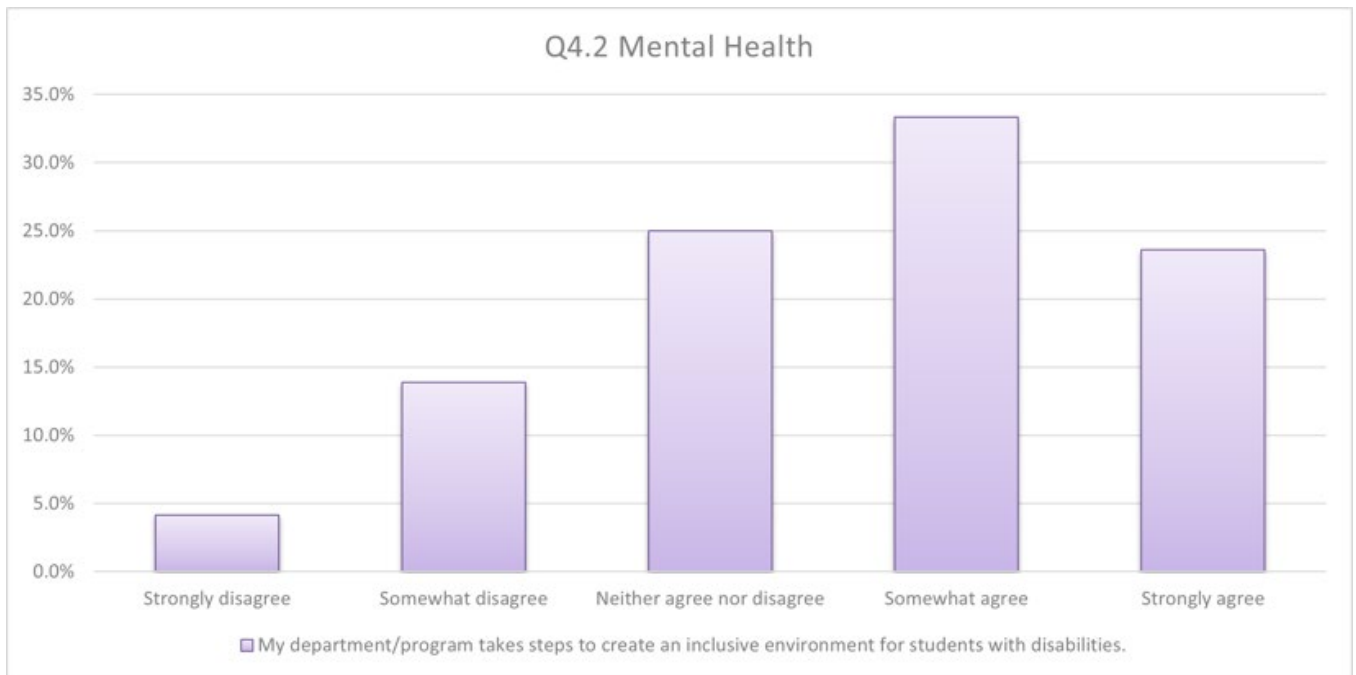


Figure 78: results for Question 4.2, Mental Health

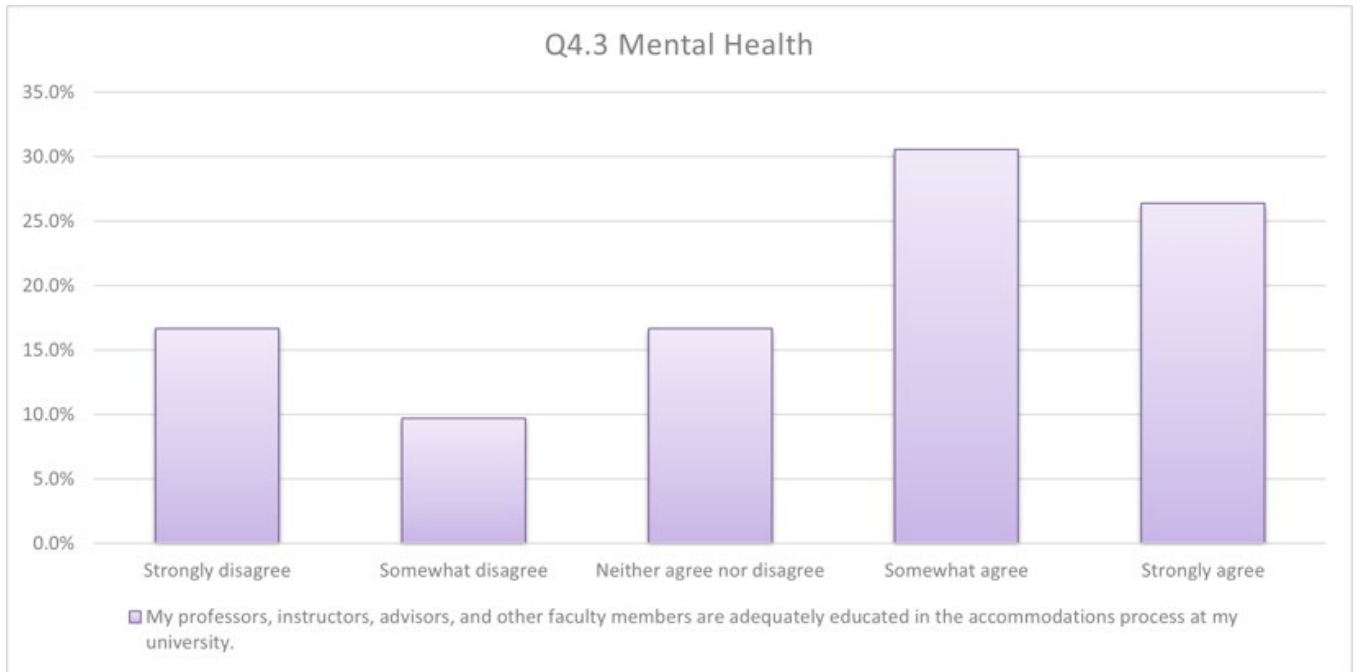


Figure 79: results for Question 4.3, Mental Health

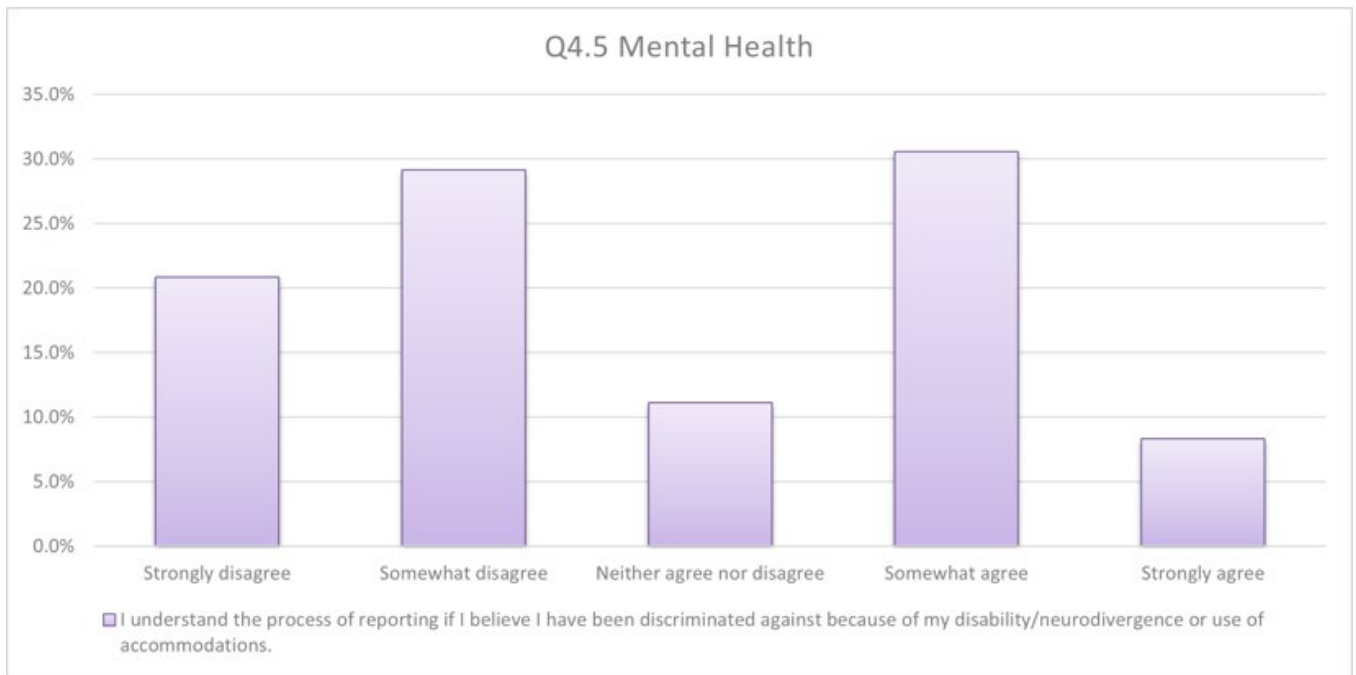


Figure 80: results for Question 4.5, Mental Health

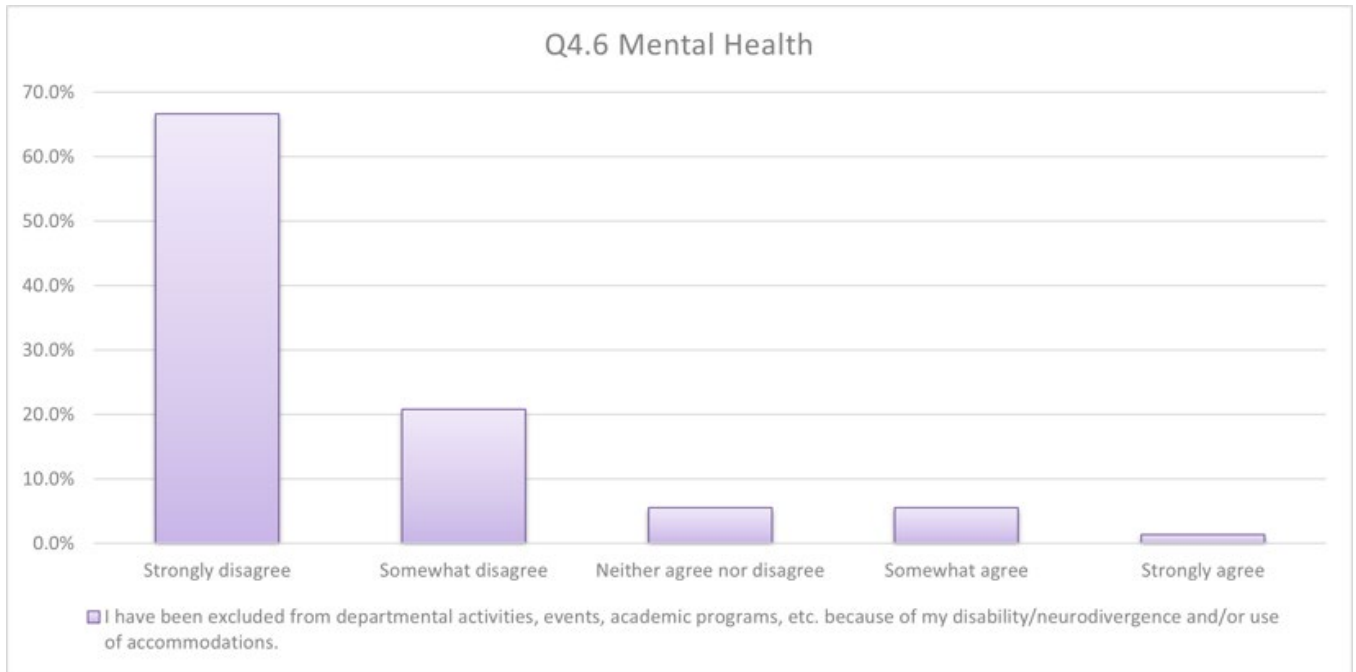


Figure 81: results for Question 4.6, Mental Health

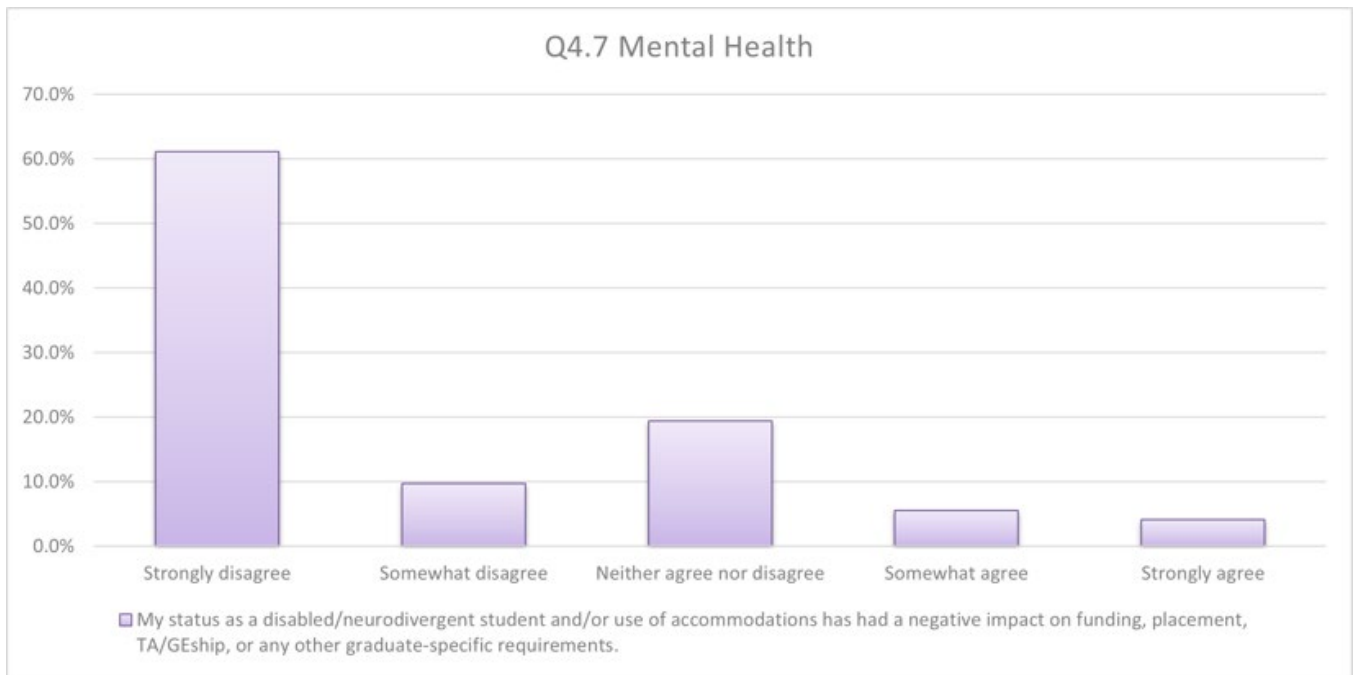


Figure 82: results for Question 4.7, Mental Health

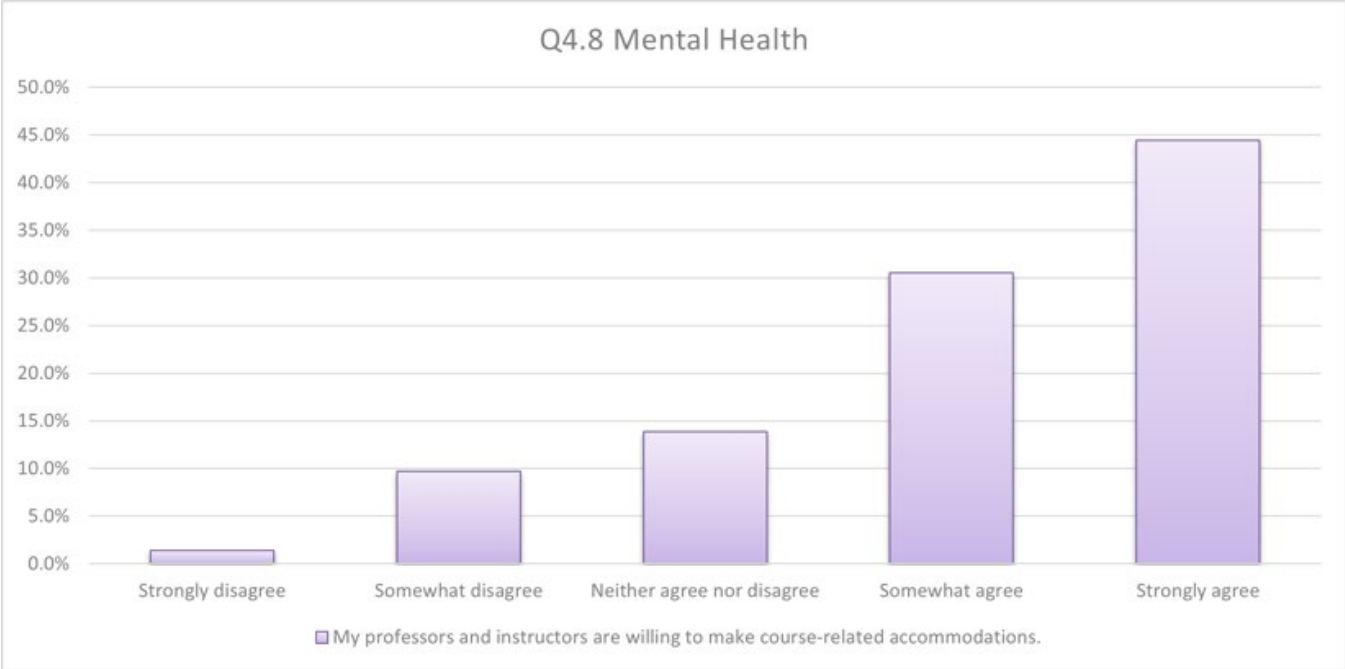


Figure 83: results for Question 4.8, Mental Health

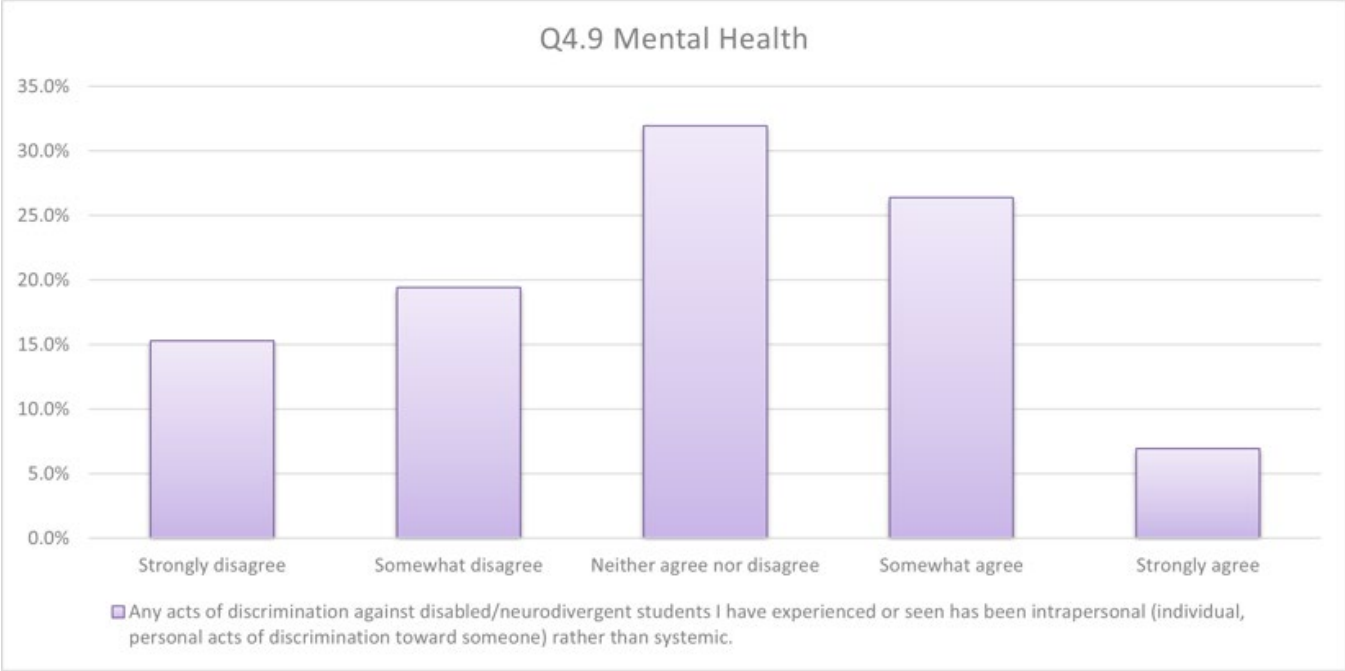


Figure 84: results for Question 4.9, Mental Health

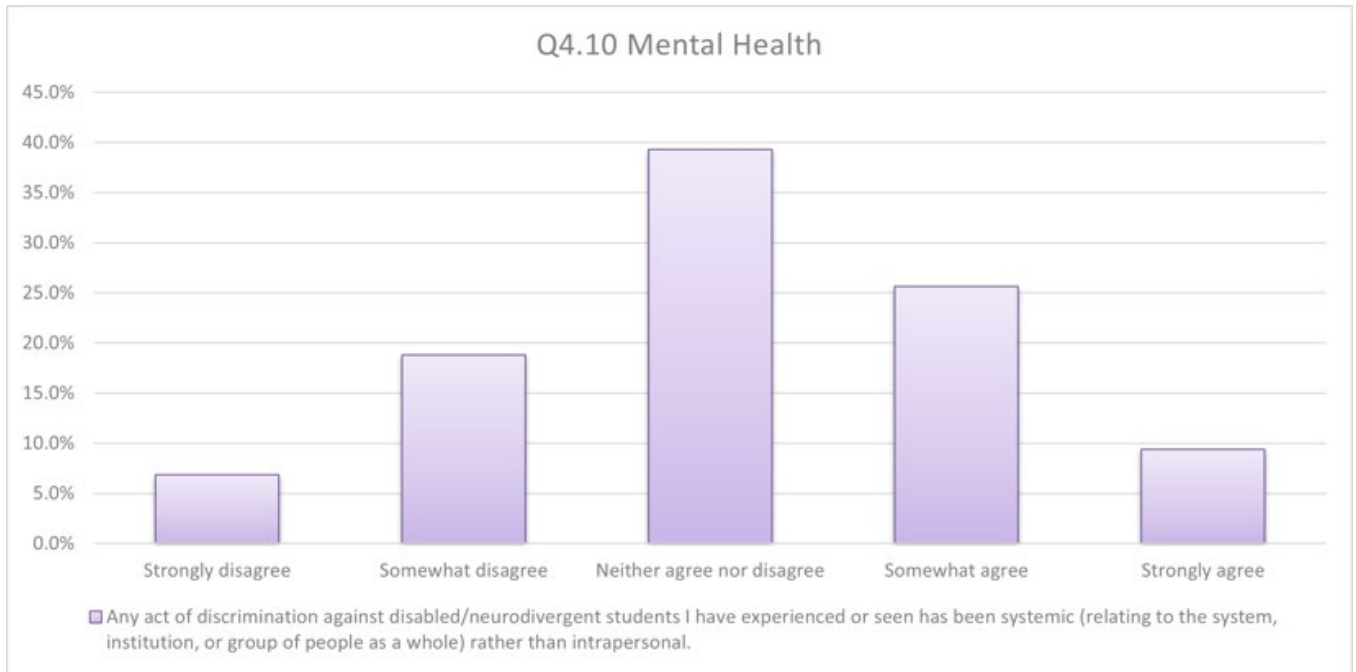


Figure 85: results for Question 4.10, Mental Health

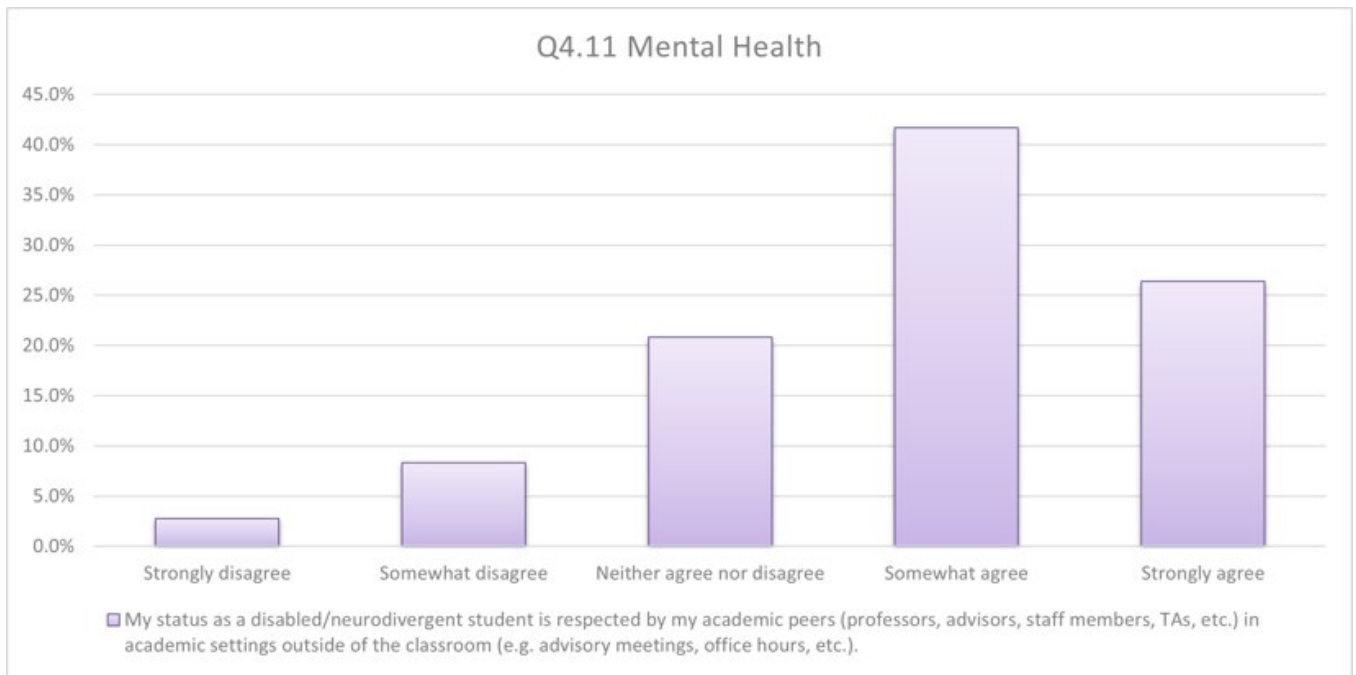


Figure 86: results for Question 4.11, Mental Health

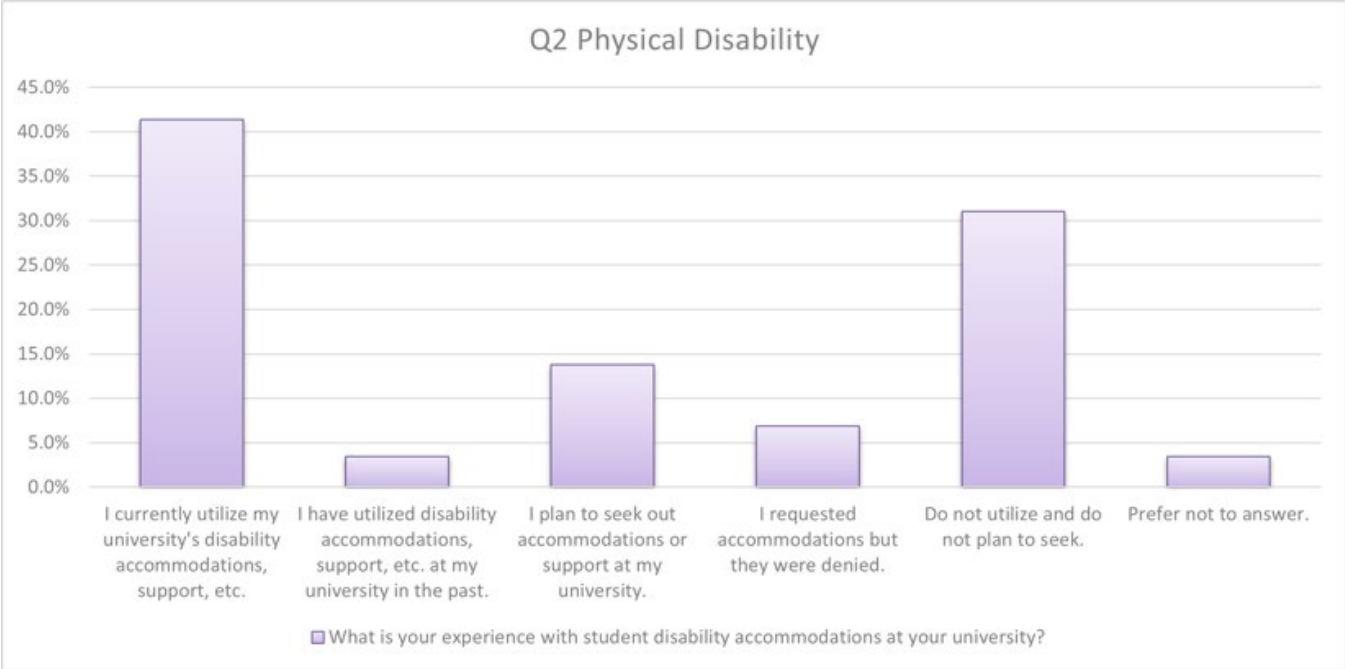


Figure 87: results for Question 2, Physical Disability

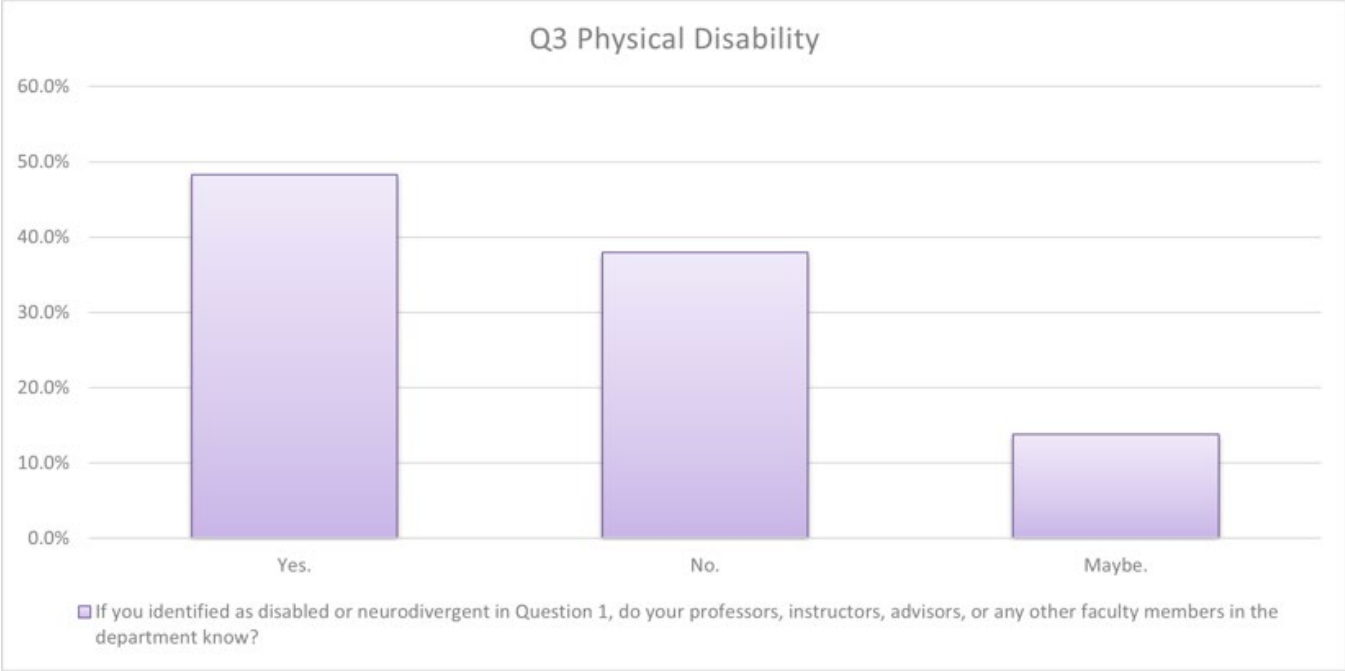


Figure 88: results for Question 3, Physical Disability

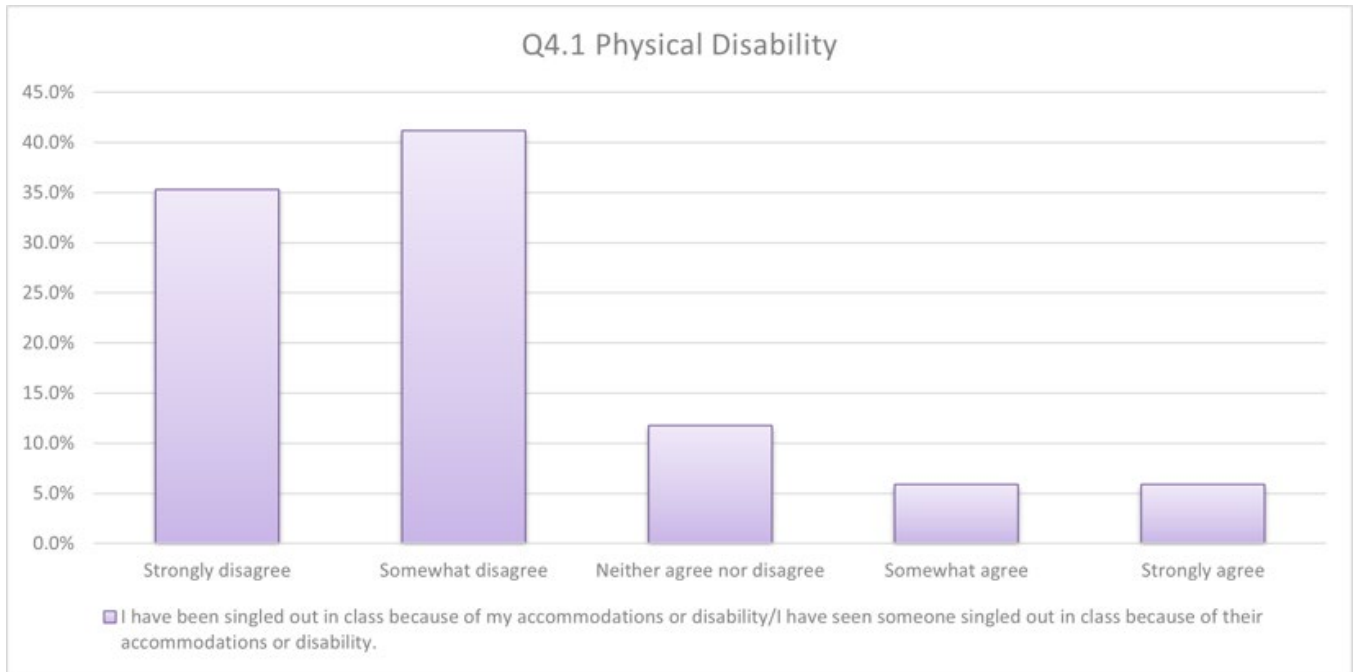


Figure 89: results for Question 4.1, Physical Disability

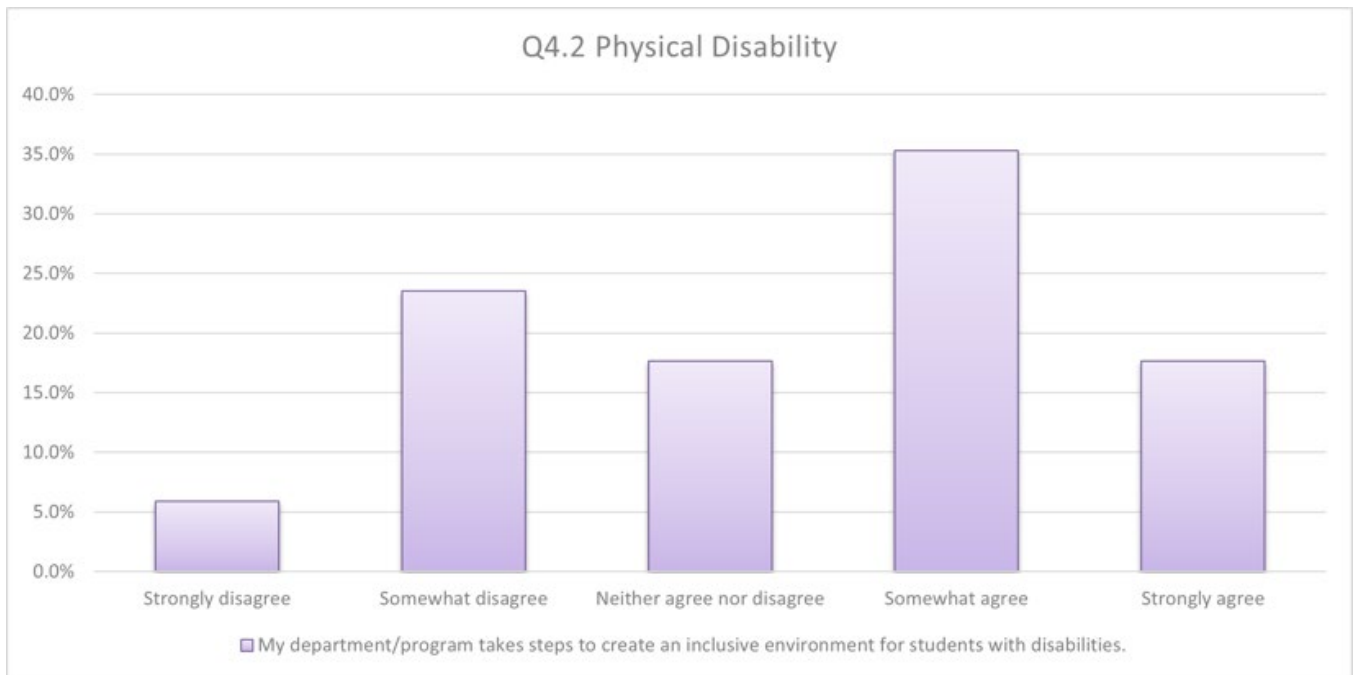


Figure 90: results for Question 4.2, Physical Disability

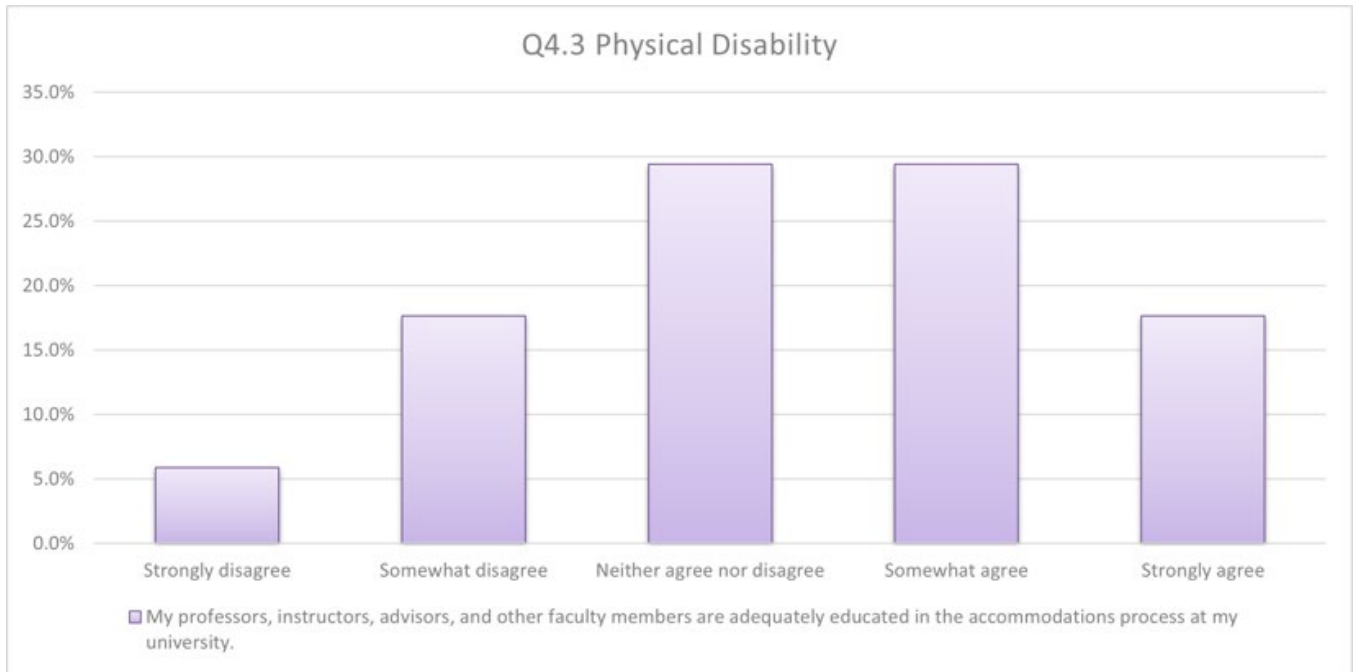


Figure 91: results for Question 4.3, Physical Disability

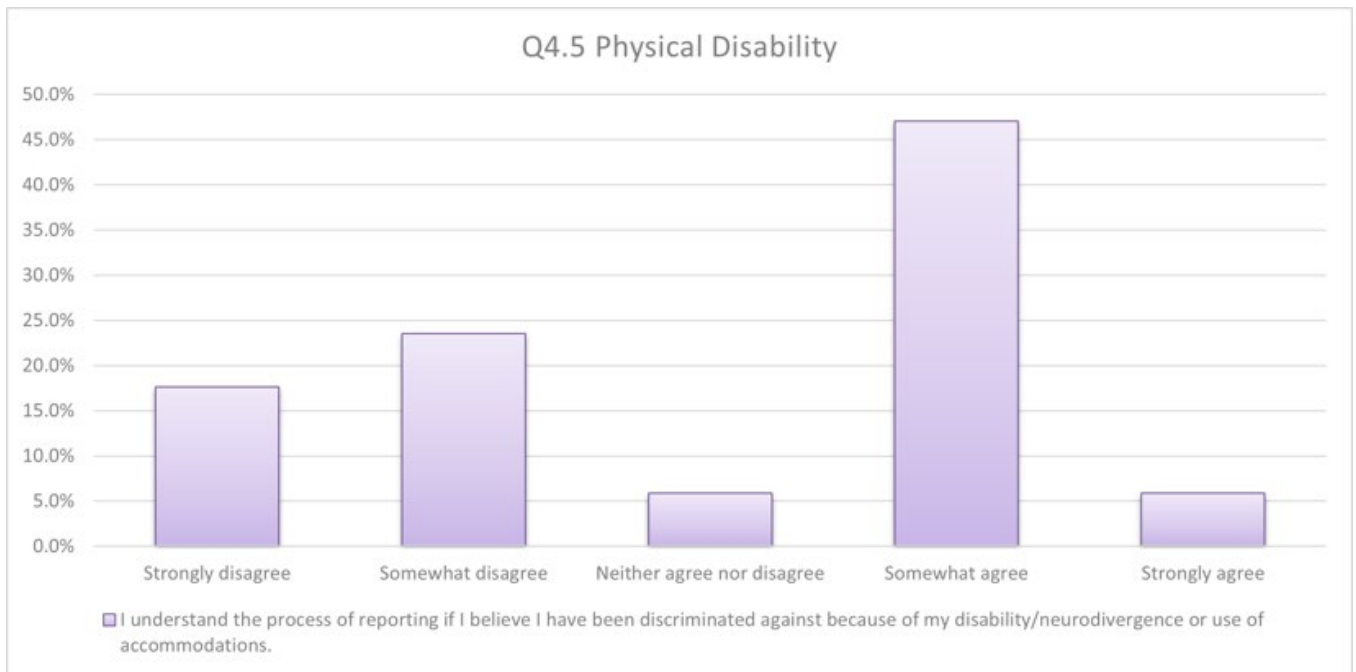


Figure 92: results for Question 4.5, Physical Disability

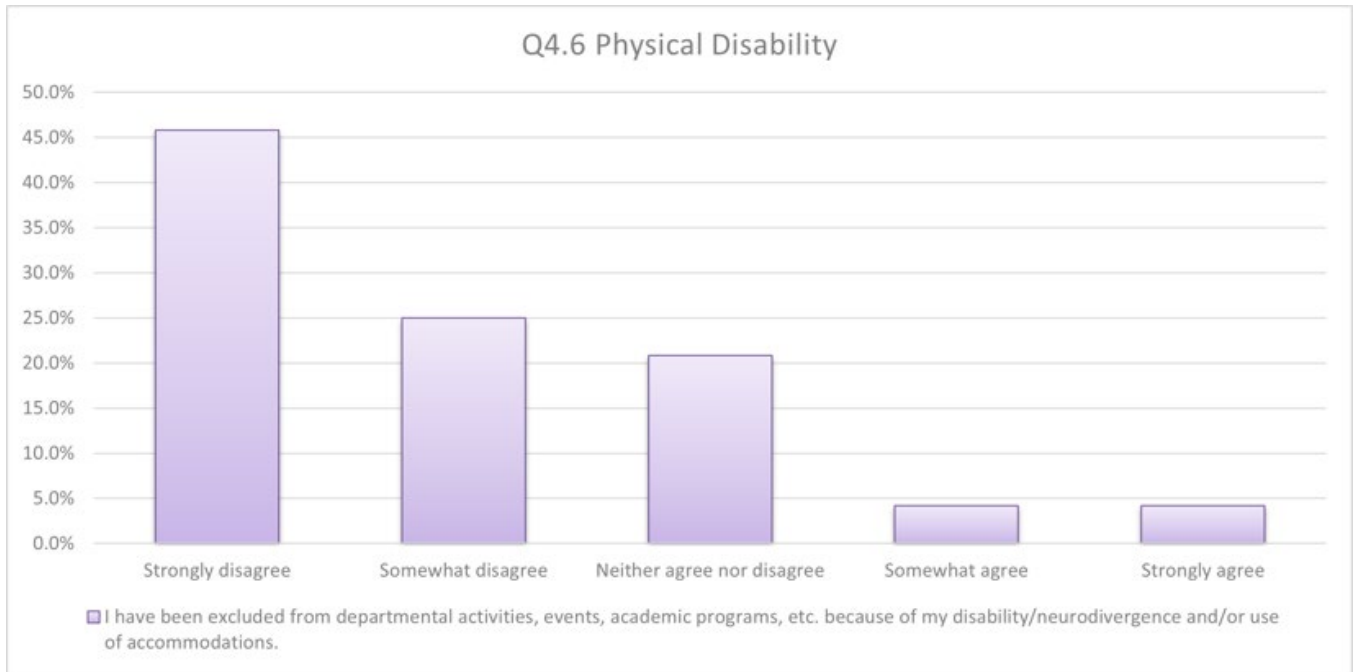


Figure 93: results for Question 4.6, Physical Disability

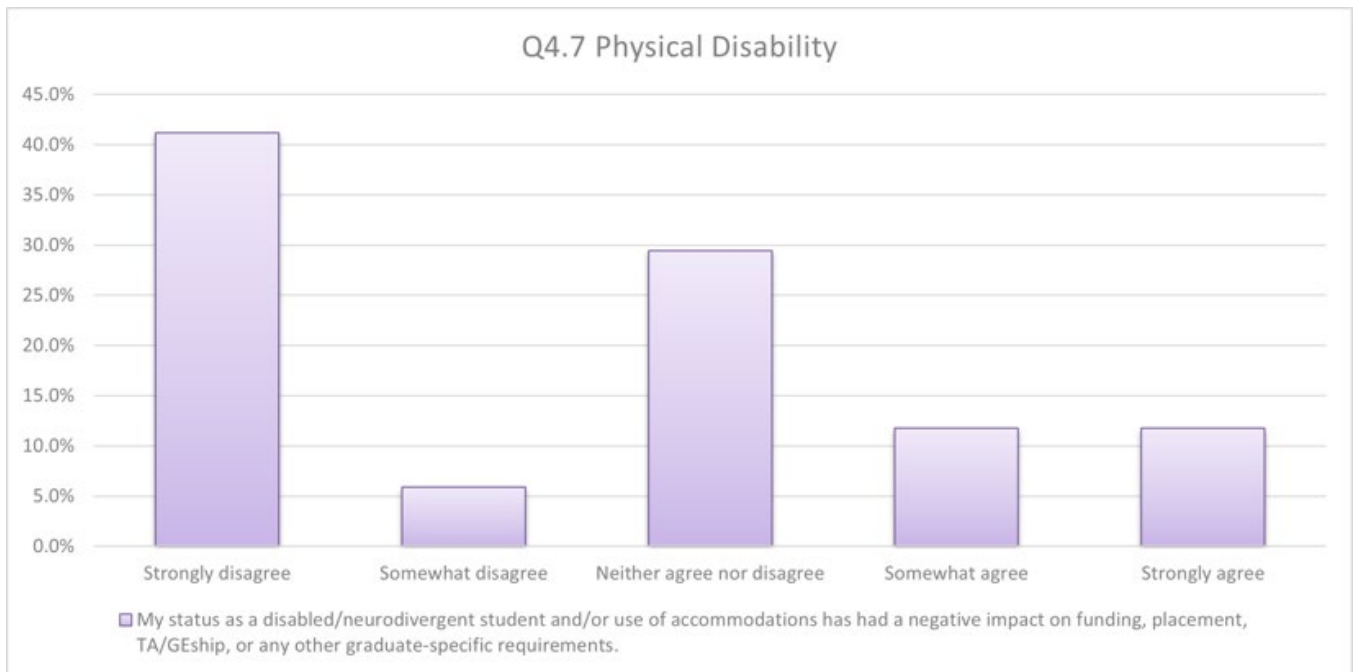


Figure 94: results for Question 4.7, Physical Disability

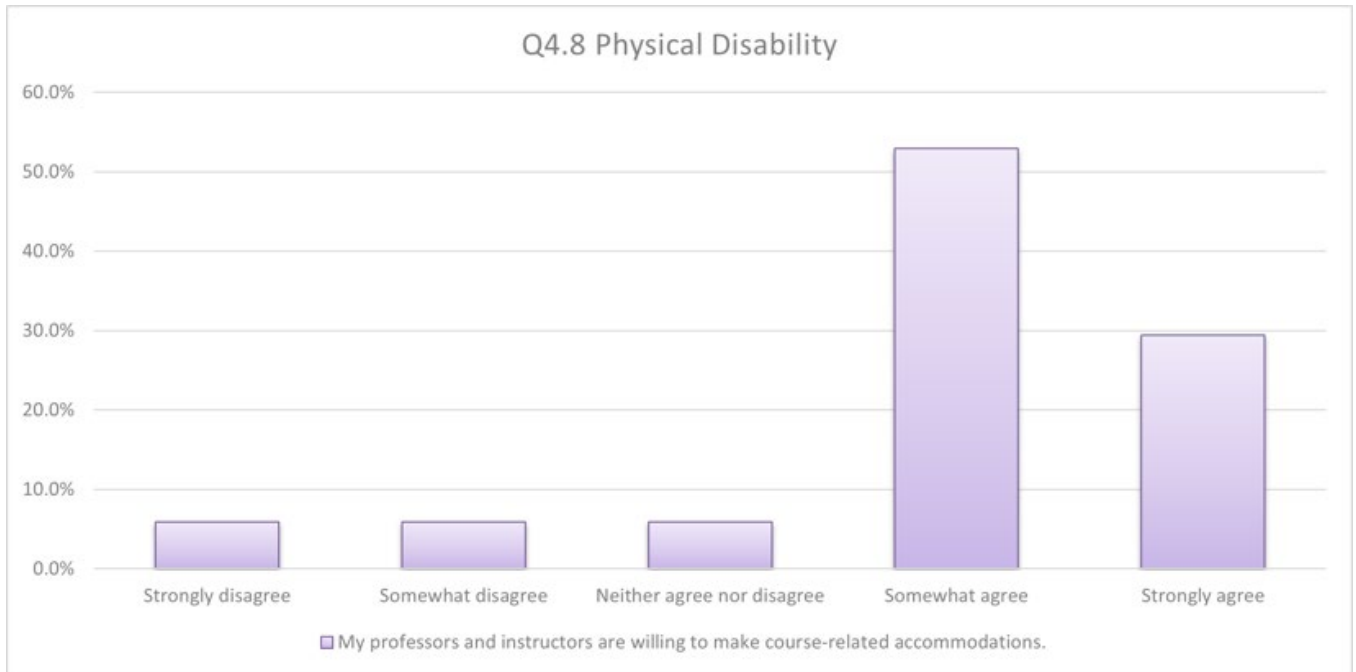


Figure 95: results for Question 4.8, Physical Disability

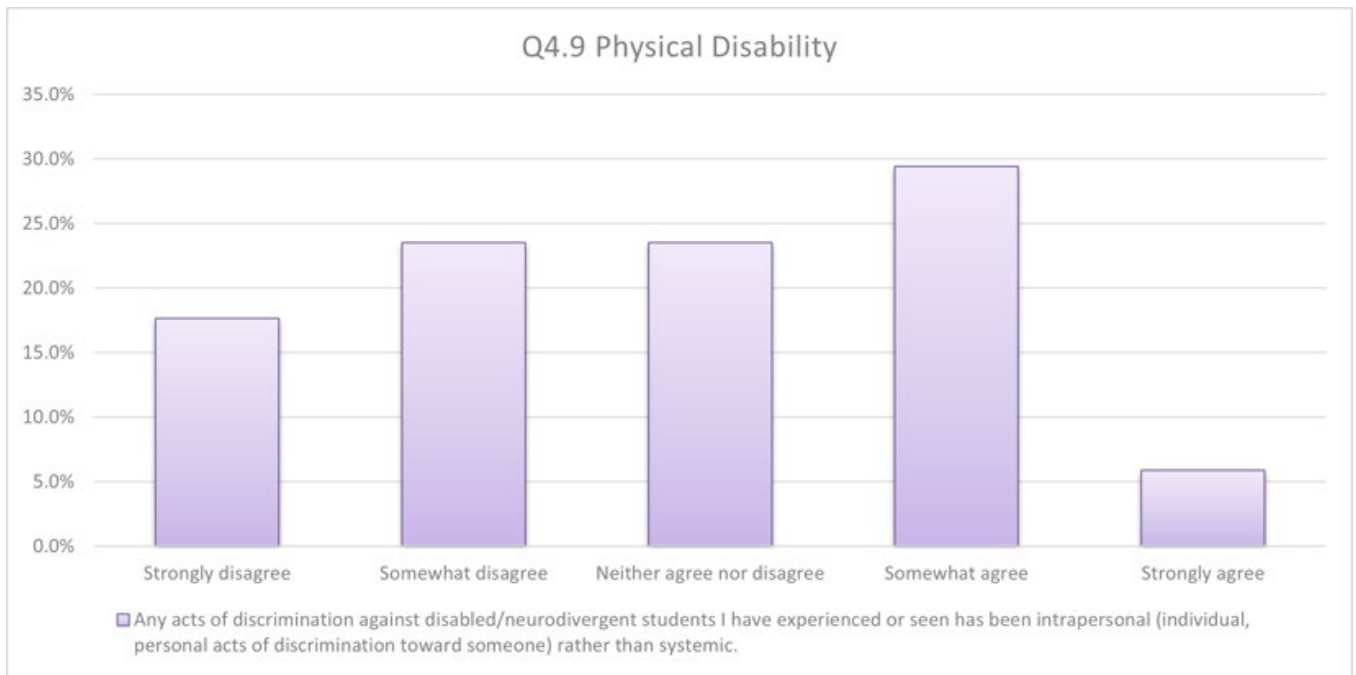


Figure 96: results for Question 4.9, Physical Disability

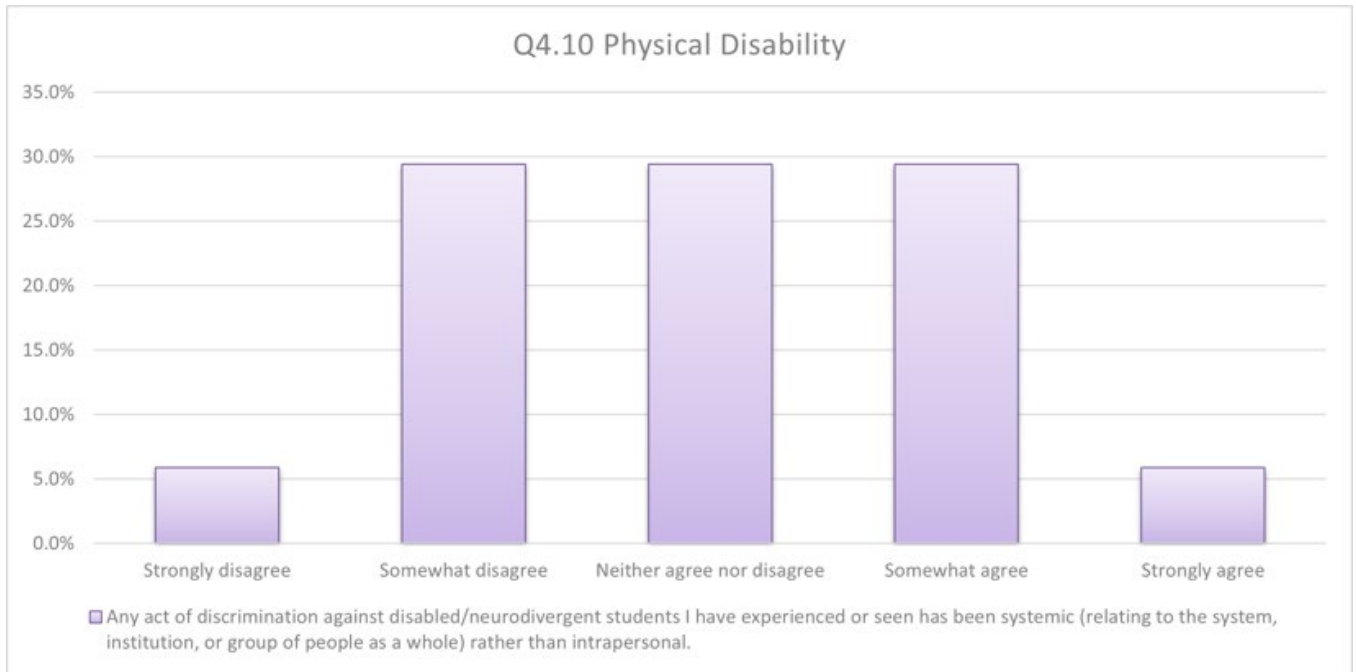


Figure 97: results for Question 4.10, Physical Disability

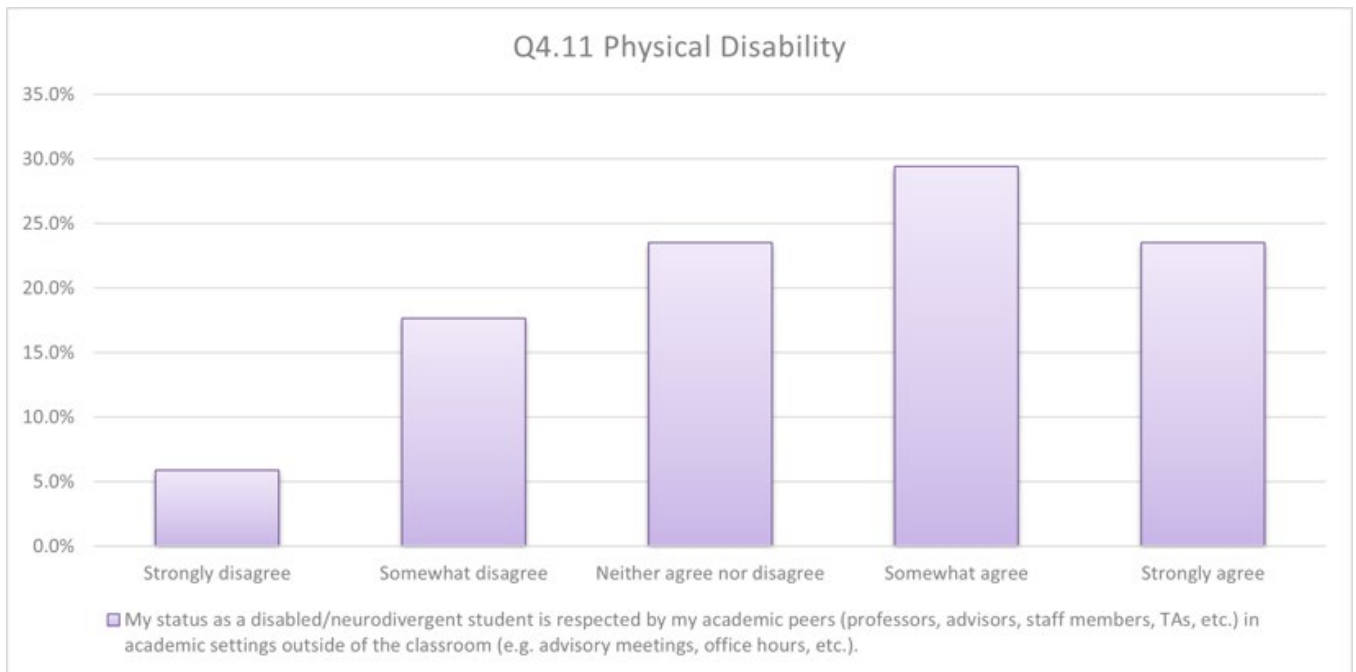


Figure 98: results for Question 4.11, Physical Disability