



Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey Executive Summary

Introduction

The University of Delaware's Campus Climate Survey was conducted in spring 2015 to examine the extent of sexual misconduct, particularly sexual assault, and to explore student perceptions of resources and the climate around these issues at the University.

All 18,222 degree-seeking Delaware undergraduate students were invited to participate in the survey. Of those 18,222 students, 4,088 started the survey, with 2,592 completing all sections of the survey (overall a 22.4% response rate with a 14.2% completion rate). Given the relatively low response rate and likelihood of selection bias, the survey results are not considered to be a valid measure of rates of sexual misconduct across the entire undergraduate population.

The confidential survey asked students about their experiences with sexual misconduct, perceptions of the University's response to sexual assault, knowledge and education about sexual misconduct and campus climate.

The full report is available on the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness website at https://sites.udel.edu/ire/files/2016/02/SexualMisconductReport_FINAL-2bptezk.pdf.

Experiences with sexual misconduct

The survey was designed to capture experiences of unwanted sexual contact in two distinct ways. The first set of questions asked students whether they had experienced one or more of five incidents while at UD: stalking, an abusive relationship, sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

Based on responses to the first set of questions, of the 2,592 students who completed the survey, nearly a third of female undergraduates (30.6%) and a tenth of male undergraduates (9.5%) experienced one or more incidents of sexual misconduct while a student at UD. Those experiences included stalking, following, or receiving unwanted messages/texts/emails (experienced by 221 women and 30 men); controlling or abusive relationship (98 women and 22 men); sexually harassed (348 women and 28 men); sexually assaulted (176 women and 12 men); and raped (73 women and 6 men).

A second set of questions asked students whether they had experienced *specific acts* of unwanted sexual activity while attending UD: fondled or kissed, clothing removed, attempted penetration, sexual penetration, attempted oral sex, and oral sex.

When considering the answers to this set of questions about specific acts, the rates of unwanted physical contact were actually higher than demonstrated in the first survey question.

Overall, based on responses to this second set of questions, nearly half of female respondents (683) and a fifth of male respondents (80) experienced one or more incidents of unwanted sexual contact.

This indicates that some students who identified experiences of specific unwanted sexual contact in the second question were hesitant to classify or label the incident as “assault” or “rape” in the first survey question.

Incidents occurred in a range of settings including off-campus student apartments or houses (51%), fraternity or sorority houses (30.3%), UD residence halls (26.3%), or elsewhere on UD’s campus (11.3%). A smaller proportion of incidents occurred at another college or university, a parent or relative’s home, or an unspecified off-campus location.

A quarter of the incidents occurred by force, while the majority of incidents occurred through other means. Survey respondents reported the people who did these behaviors did so by “catching me off guard, or ignoring non-verbal cues or looks”, “taking advantage of me when I was too drunk, high, asleep or out of it”, or “showing displeasure, criticizing my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry”. Additional means cited by respondents included “telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumors, or verbally pressuring me”, “using another method”, or “threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me”.

As it pertains to reporting these incidents, most victims shared their experience with someone else within 24-hours and nearly all victims told a friend, classmate, or peer, while some also confided in a romantic partner or family member. A very small number, just 4.9%, formally reported the incident to the University. A large majority of students (89.8%) who responded to the survey, who had been victimized while attending UD, reported they did not use any University resources.

Respondents who were victimized selected a variety of reasons for not reporting their experiences with sexual misconduct. The most commonly cited reasons include not feeling what happened was serious enough to talk about (68.3%), believing it was not clear that harm was intended (49.3%) and feeling they were partly at fault (34.4%).

Perceptions of the University’s response to sexual assault

Relatively few survey respondents (12.6%) agree or strongly agree that “the UD administration already does enough to prevent sexual assault from happening,” while over three quarters of respondents (76.7%) agree or strongly agree that “the UD administration should take stronger action when sexual assault occurs.” Thus survey respondents generally support the idea that the University should both increase efforts to prevent sexual assault on campus and also take action when sexual assault occurs.

More than half (57.6%) of the students who responded to the survey thought it likely or very likely that UD would support the person making the report of sexual assault, and 59.7% thought it likely that UD would take steps to protect the person making the report. Two thirds (68.6%) of respondents said they believed it was likely or very likely that UD would maintain the privacy of the person making the report.

Students expressed mixed views as to how sexual assault reports would be investigated and resolved. When asked if UD would handle the report of sexual assault fairly, less than half of the survey respondents thought it likely or very likely, while more than a third were unsure.

Students were more positive in their assessment of whether the UD administration would take a report of sexual assault seriously; with more than half of respondents (61.4%) suggesting this was likely or very likely. When asked if the UD administration would take actions to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault, about half of the participants (53.4%) thought this would be likely or very likely while a quarter (26.4%) were unsure.

Open-ended questions in the survey suggested a perception among participants that the University does not devote sufficient attention to sexual misconduct. As one student responded, “the University of Delaware needs to take a more active and transparent role in addressing sexual assault on campus.”

Also reflected in the comments of a number of survey respondents was the attitude that the University might pay greater attention to protecting its reputation than aiding victims. This skepticism about the University administration’s commitment to protecting victims and ensuring fair resolutions to investigations of misconduct was linked to a recent highly publicized incident of sexual misconduct by a University employee, which occurred prior to the issuance of the survey. This particular case remained salient for students, and thus is reflected in the comments of a number survey respondents.

Students were generally unclear about the investigative process and possible outcomes. A number of students shared negative perceptions linked to their own experience or a friend’s experience with reporting sexual misconduct. Areas of concern included lack of clarity in the timeline for resolution, which students may perceive as a lack of attention.

Knowledge and education about sexual misconduct

The survey results showed an apparent lack of understanding of who is required to report information about sexual assault to the University of Delaware. Survey respondents were most likely to agree that the following must report sexual assault to the University: UD police (84%), UD Resident Assistants (77.2%), Newark Police (71%), UD Student Health Services (68.2%), UD faculty and instructors (67%), UD Sexual Offense Support (64%), the UD Center for Counseling and Student Development (59.5%), UD advisors (59.4%) and UD teaching assistants (51.6%).

The survey results showed that among the respondents, there is lack of awareness of many of the offices that provide sexual assault services on campus. Those resources with the highest awareness among students are Student Health Services (51.9%), the Center for Counseling and Student Development (45.6%), Sexual Offense Support (45.1%), and Students Wellness & Health Promotion (44.3%). Students were asked about their knowledge of where and how to seek help for sexual harassment and sexual assault. Just over a third of survey respondents (36.2%) reported they knew where to seek help for sexual harassment incidents, while a somewhat larger proportion (44.1%) reported they knew where to seek help for sexual assault incidents.

When students were asked how they had learned about sexual assault since being admitted to UD, 61.2% said conversations with friends. Other common responses were posters on campus (44.7%), discussions in an FYE or FYS class (43.2%), and letters or emails from UD administrators or staff (39.2%). US citizens were more likely than international students to have conversations with friends about sexual assault and international students were more likely than US citizens to report learning about sexual assault on the UD website. Fewer students reported receiving information about how to report sexual assault and Title IX protections against sexual assault. Students suggested a number of changes to the way sexual assault education can be implemented on campus: in class, to all freshmen and upper classmen, and integrated every year to all students.

Campus Climate - Bystander Attitudes

Among the survey participants, nearly all women (96.3% of survey respondents) and most men (90.1%) reported they always or usually made sure that a friend was not left stranded, while about three quarters of women and men said they always or usually talked to the friends of a drunk person to make sure he/she wasn't left behind. A smaller proportion of women (63.4%) and men (62%) tried to intervene when someone was about to take advantage of a drunk person. Far fewer women (29%) and men (33.9%) reported always or usually offering to walk home an impaired person they did not know.

Similarly, nearly three quarters of students who took the survey reported they would be likely or very likely to tell a campus authority information about a sexual assault case even if pressured by peers to stay silent, while about half of students thought other students would be likely or very likely to allow personal loyalties to affect reporting of sexual assault.

Survey Methodology

The survey was developed collaboratively by the data collection subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Commission on Sexual Harassment and Assault, Institutional Research and Effectiveness and the Office of Equity and Inclusion. Analysis of results was conducted by Institutional Research and Effectiveness with input and direction from the Faculty Senate subcommittee. Questions for the study were adapted from numerous sources, including previously published research and climate surveys conducted at other universities.

A full copy of the survey questions is available upon request from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. The survey was administered via Qualtrics during the period April 16 – May 20. An email link was sent to the entire undergraduate population (18,222 students), with three subsequent reminders approximately five days apart with the exception of a gap during the week of the OCR visit. 4,088 students started the survey, with 2,592 completing all sections of the survey (14.2% response rate).

Use of Findings and Next Steps

The results of the survey will be used to inform University decision-making about policies, procedures, education and prevention training and awareness, and communication efforts around sexual misconduct.

Prevention through education continues to be an important area of focus for UD, and the University has been working on ways to improve awareness and information sharing.

During fall 2015, the University administered an online training module to educate as well as bring awareness to our employees about our policies, federal and state laws pertaining to sexual misconduct. This was administered to the entire workforce, both full-time and part-time employees, which collectively is just under 15,000 people.

Effective July 1, 2015, the University has implemented a new policy and process as to how it will respond to reports of sexual misconduct. Title IX Governance is monitoring the implementation of the policy (www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/policies).

The Office of Equity & Inclusion continues to work on disseminating sexual misconduct information by meeting with departments and faculty senate, student leaders, and staff; releasing UDaily articles and updates; and holding “meet and greets” for student leaders.

The Title IX Prevention/Education/Training for Students Committee is charged with developing a comprehensive program for students to include the following steps:

- Review and recommend an online training program for all students (undergraduate, graduate, non-traditional, international);
- Formalize the Sexual Assault Prevention and Education committee (SAPE) from its grassroots history to give it sustainable structure and prominence;
- Develop learning outcomes for New Student Orientation and 1743 Welcome Days to implement in the 2016-2017 programming; and
- Implement a bystander intervention program and begin to train staff to train others on our campus.