

SAFETY  
INFORMATION

ILLINOIS

# Sexual Misconduct and Perceived Campus Response Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



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## INTRODUCTION

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is charged by the state to enhance the lives of people in Illinois, across the nation and around the world through our leadership in learning, discovery, engagement and economic development. We strive to provide the best possible Illinois Experience for the students we serve and are committed to the health, safety, and well-being of our students, staff, and faculty. To that end, the University administered a survey to better understand students' experiences of sexual misconduct, and students' knowledge of the resources available to them.

Sexual misconduct refers broadly to sexual assault, stalking/cyber harassment, sexual harassment, and dating violence. Sexual misconduct is not unique to college campuses. According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, in the United States one in five women and one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives.<sup>i</sup> Approximately one in three women (35.6%) and one in four men (28.5%) have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.<sup>ii</sup> The Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey data show that women ages 18-24 experience higher rates of rape and sexual assaults than women in other age brackets.

Data indicate that students on college campuses may be at lower risk for sexual assault victimization when compared with nonstudents. Highlights from a Bureau of Justice Statistics report, "Rape and Sexual Assault among College-Age Females, 1995-2013," show that the rate of rape and sexual assault was 1.2 times higher for nonstudents (7.6 per 1,000) than for students (6.1 per 1,000)<sup>iii</sup>. However, campus climate reports on the prevalence of sexual assault clearly show that it is a serious problem on college campuses. In a survey of female college students by the Association of American Universities, about one in four (23%) said they experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact – ranging from kissing to touching to rape, carried out by force or threat of force, or while they were incapacitated because of alcohol and drugs. About one in 10 (11%) said the unwanted contact included penetration or oral sex<sup>iv</sup>.

While there is an abundance of data on the prevalence and incidence of sexual misconduct on college campuses, differences in research methodology and instruments make comparisons across campuses difficult. To create a high-quality assessment across campuses, a consortium of sexual assault researchers and student affairs professionals came together to respond to the White House Task Force on Keeping Students Safe on Campus. They developed a campus climate survey referred to as the Administrator-Researcher Campus Climate Collaborative (ARC3). Use of the ARC3 on our campus was not aimed at establishing prevalence or incidence or indicating whether sexual misconduct reported meets legal definitions; the study is not designed to do so and does not have a sufficiently representative sample to draw definitive conclusions. Rather, our campus utilized the ARC3 to better understand students' sexual misconduct experiences, perceptions of the campus response to sexual misconduct, reporting behaviors, and knowledge of campus resources.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In fall 2015, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign distributed a Sexual Misconduct and Perceived Campus Response Climate survey based on the Administrator-Researcher Campus Climate Collaborative (ARC3). Sexual misconduct refers broadly to various forms of misconduct including sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, and dating violence. At the time the survey was conducted, there were 44,087 students on campus. Over 5,000 began the survey (11%), and 2,431 (6%) completed it. While respondents reflect the demographic diversity of the campus, findings should be interpreted with caution given that only a small portion of students responded.

### Student Experiences of Sexual Misconduct

Consistent with findings from other campus studies, a sizable minority of students report sexual misconduct experiences including sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking/cyber harassment, and dating violence. While sexual misconduct disproportionately affects women, men also report victimization.

#### Sexual Assault

Students were asked to identify sexual experiences that constitute sexual assault. They were asked to indicate the physical nature of the experience (e.g., touching, penetration), the tactic used by the perpetrator (e.g., coercion, force), and the number of times a given experience occurred. One in seven women (15%) and one in 42 men (2%) indicated nonconsensual penetration through physical force.

#### Sexual Harassment

Students were asked about sexual harassment, including a wide range of experiences from sexist or sexual remarks to sexual coercion (e.g., bribery, threats, and rewards contingent on sexual contact) perpetrated by people in positions of authority (i.e., faculty, staff, and/or students employed by the University). Very few students reported sexual coercion (one in 63 women and one in 63 men) and unwanted sexual attention (one in 19 women and one in 37 men). A larger number of students reported witnessing offensive sexist or sexual remarks or comments (one in three women and one in five men).

#### Stalking Experiences and Cyber-Harassment

Students were asked how often they experienced unwanted attention typically associated with stalking. Stalking involves a person repeatedly surveilling, following, or otherwise interfering with an individual's life, resulting in the survivor feeling distressed and fearful for their safety; this survey is unable to identify such patterns of stalking. Yet, about one in four women (28%) and one in five men (20%) reported experiences associated with stalking. Students were also asked about cyber-harassment, which involves unwanted contact or harassment through electronic technology. About one in four men (25%) and almost one in three women (32%) reported an experience with cyber-harassment.

## Dating Violence

Students were asked to report experiences of violence within the context of an intimate relationship. About one in 10 students reported controlling behaviors including, for example, their partners insisting on knowing where they are (12%), partners scaring them without touching them (10.5%), and partners refusing to wear condoms (8.8%). About one in four women (26%) and one in seven men (15%) reported one or more experience of physical violence in their intimate relationships

## Perceptions of Institutional Response and Campus Climate

**The vast majority of students had generally positive impressions of how the University would respond to sexual misconduct when it was reported.**

- 72% (69% of women, 83% of men) believed that it was likely or very likely that the University would take a report of sexual misconduct seriously;
- 81% (81% of women, 85% of men) believed that it was likely or very likely that the University would maintain the privacy of someone making a report;
- 67% (62% of women, 75% of men) thought it was likely or very likely that the University would support the person making the report;
- Only 5% (4% of women, 5% of men) said they thought it was likely or very likely that the University would punish the student making the report.

## Reporting Sexual Misconduct

**Many students did not report their experiences to anyone. Those who did share their sexual misconduct experiences told informal supporters such as friends or parents.**

- Of those who experienced sexual assault, just over half of women (58%) and about half of men (47%) told someone. For those who experienced harassment, about one in three women (38%) and one in five men (20%) told someone.
- An overwhelming number of women who disclosed their sexual assault told a friend or roommate (99%). They were also likely to tell a romantic partner (42%) or a family member (25%). Men who disclosed their sexual assault most commonly told a friend (88%) followed by their romantic partner (23%) or a family member (20%)

**For the most part, students did not report concerns about backlash following a report of sexual misconduct, and viewed the issue as a private matter to be handled on their own.**

- Only 12% of students believed their peers would consider someone making a report of sexual misconduct to be a “troublemaker.”
- Students who did not disclose their experiences with the University primarily believed it was a private matter and should be handled on their own (40%). Of the students who did not report to the University, very few (2.8%) were concerned with being punished by the University.
- Women who disclosed their experience reported more positive responses from peers than did men. Compared with students without any victimization experiences, individuals who did not disclose their victimization to peers assumed they would receive more negative responses and fewer positive responses.

## Knowledge of Campus Resources

Students had mixed knowledge of where to go to get help on campus and what occurs after a report is made.

- About half of students (54%) report knowing where to get help following an incident of sexual misconduct and about one in three (30%) report understanding the process that occurs following a report of misconduct.
- Students who had more knowledge of the University's policies and resources were more confident in the school's response to sexual misconduct.

## Possible Outcomes of Sexual Misconduct

Students who reported sexual misconduct experiences were more likely to experience academic disengagement and poorer mental and physical health. This survey does not establish causation, but these findings echo those in the broader literature regarding the potential consequences of sexual misconduct.

- Individuals reporting any form of victimization had significantly higher levels of academic disengagement.
- The individuals who reported any form of victimization reported significantly lower levels of life satisfaction, general mental health, overall health, and feelings of safety on campus.

## Peer Support for Assault

Students generally reported that their peers did not promote social norms and behaviors that condone sexual assault including, for example, having many sexual partners or getting someone drunk or high to have sex with them. The presence of peer norms supporting sexual assault vary by gender and affiliation with Greek life.

- The vast majority of students (92%) report “little” or “no” pressure from peers to have sex, though men who participate in Greek life report more pressure than their unaffiliated counterparts.
- Overall, men generally scored higher than women on the scale assessing peer norms condoning sexual assault, as did those involved in Greek life.

## Bystander Intervention

Students report engaging in a variety of bystander interventions to prevent sexual misconduct, including watching out for people who were drinking, and approaching those who appeared upset.

- Women reported intervening more in risky scenarios than men, and women who had a victimization experience reported engaging in more bystander behaviors than women without victimization. Students involved in Greek life reported more bystander intervention behaviors when compared with unaffiliated students.
- A little over half of students (51%) reported they most of the time or all of the time made sure that people who were intoxicated at parties were not left behind by their friends.

- Almost half of students (48%) reported they asked someone who looks very upset at a party if they needed help. Only 13% of students said they never did this.

The full report provides a detailed description of the survey design and methodology, survey response rates, and survey responses, including the results to questions about peer responses, possible outcomes including well-being and engagement with academic work, affirmative consent, peer norms, and bystander intervention.

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<sup>i</sup> Black, M. C., Basile, K. C., Breiding, M. J., Smith, S. G., Walters, M. L., Merrick, M. T., & Stevens, M. R. (2011). National intimate partner and sexual violence survey. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,75.

<sup>ii</sup> Black, M. C., Basile, K. C., Breiding, M. J., Smith, S. G., Walters, M. L., Merrick, M. T., & Stevens, M. R. (2011). National intimate partner and sexual violence survey. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,75.

<sup>iii</sup> Rennison, C. M. (2002). Rape and sexual assault: Reporting to police and medical attention, 1992-2000. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

<sup>iv</sup> AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct. (n.d.). Retrieved September 08, 2016, from <http://www.aau.edu/Climate-Survey.aspx?id=16525>