

# *2015 Sexual Conduct and Campus Climate Questionnaire Results Overview*

## **Content and Participation in Survey**

The University of Notre Dame administered its second climate survey between January and February 2015<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of the survey was to assess the knowledge, perceptions, and experience of Notre Dame students in relation to sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. The survey instrument was developed by Notre Dame, though several questions were included from surveys utilized at peer institutions. Differences in the survey instrument itself, timing, and question sequence render survey result comparisons across institutions difficult.

All enrolled students (11,988) were invited to participate in the survey, and 38% (4,516) completed the survey. Response rates were higher for female students, first year students, Graduate School/Graduate Architecture students, and students that lived on campus at the time of the survey administration<sup>2</sup>. The survey was administered by the Office of Strategic Planning & Institutional Research, which handles all of Notre Dame's institutional and consortium survey participation. Individual student responses are kept strictly confidential.

## **Student Perspectives and Knowledge**

Students' knowledge of University policies and understanding of consent remained stable or improved compared to the 2012 survey, but specific further educational opportunities were identified. 98% of students agreed that it was important for Notre Dame students to understand what constitutes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual assault. 91% of students were very to somewhat familiar with the University's Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault Policy. 93% or more correctly identified questions about a person's capacity to give consent and 92% or more identified situations where consent could not be assumed. 30% of students, however, believed that a person's level of intoxication might change his or her responsibility to obtain consent to sexual activity. By policy, intoxication is not an excuse for failure to obtain consent.

Students largely were aware of reporting and safety resources on campus, with 82% or more aware of how to contact Notre Dame Security Police and local police. 89% of students were aware that they had options in terms of pursuing both University and criminal courses of action. An opportunity exists to provide further education about the additional on and off campus resources available – including the University's Deputy Title IX Coordinator or the local rape crisis center at the Family Justice Center (S-O-S). An encouraging 98% of students were very or somewhat likely to seek advice on reporting a case of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual assault from at least one University resource.

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<sup>1</sup> The first survey was administered in 2012. The University identified a number of [major themes](#) from that survey, which were shared with the University community.

<sup>2</sup> The survey results have not been weighted to account for non-respondent bias.

## **Barriers to Reporting**

Students suggested that a variety of barriers exist that prevent victims from reporting incidents of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or sexual assault. Discomfort in discussing the details of the incident and fear that their reputation would be damaged remain the two most serious barriers (64% and 61%, respectively), followed by a desire to forget about the incident (56%) and a fear of “getting in trouble” for violations of University policies (56%). The latter barrier remains an educational opportunity. By policy, the University will not refer a complainant or witness to the University Conduct Process to address lesser policy violations (e.g., parietals or alcohol violations). The most significant barrier to reporting by third parties remains a respect for the wishes of a victim who would rather not report (72%), though 59% of students indicated that a desire to “stay out of it” is a serious barrier.

## **Personal Experiences of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, and Sexual Misconduct**

Students’ self-reported instances of personal experiences with sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual assault at Notre Dame demonstrate significant concerns that appear comparable to peer survey results and national studies. All personal experience questions were newly added in the 2015 survey instrument. Students indicated that sexist remarks about women (69%), men (57%), and individual body or appearance (58%) are prevalent instances of sexual harassment in our community. A deeply troubling 6% of females and 2% of males indicated that they had personally experienced non-consensual sexual intercourse (including any type of penetration) while a student at Notre Dame. A concerning additional 19% of female students and 4% of male students indicated that they had personally experienced other forms of non-consensual sexual contact. Even one instance of sexual assault is too many, and Notre Dame will continue to adopt policies and develop programs designed to reduce these incidents. These responses also suggest that Notre Dame, like other institutions, experiences underreporting of both sexual assault and sexual misconduct. The University remains committed to alleviating barriers to reporting and encouraging students to report any of these instances.

## **Impressions of University Response**

Students reported varied impressions of the University’s response to incidents of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual assault. While 58% of students agreed that the University responded to these incidents effectively, 27% were neutral and 15% disagreed. Student written responses urged more transparency on this topic, including the release of these climate survey results. Only 2% of students had participated in the University’s Administrative Investigation or Administrative Hearing processes that occur as a result of an official report to the University of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking. Satisfaction with the impartiality, timing, and outcome of administrative investigations and university conduct process for these students was bifurcated across all dimensions, with some of the small number of students satisfied and others dissatisfied.

For further questions about the survey results, please contact the Deputy Title IX coordinator in the Division of Student Affairs ([CampusClimateReportFeedback@nd.edu](mailto:CampusClimateReportFeedback@nd.edu)).