Content and Participation in Survey

The University of Notre Dame administered its fourth climate survey between October and November 2018. The purpose of the survey was to assess the knowledge, perceptions, and experience of Notre Dame students in relation to sexual assault, other sexual misconduct, dating or domestic violence, stalking, and other conduct that creates a sexually hostile environment. Notre Dame developed the survey instrument, and several questions were included from surveys utilized at peer institutions. However, differences in the survey instrument itself, timing, and question sequence render survey result comparisons across institutions difficult.

All enrolled students (12,376) were invited to participate in the survey, and 44% (5,475) completed the survey. Response rates were consistent with 2016 survey response rates and remained higher for female students, first-year students, and students who lived on campus at the time of the survey administration. The survey was administered by the Office of Strategic Planning & Institutional Research, which oversees 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 their understanding of consent remained stable or improved compared to the 2016 survey. 99% of students agreed it is important for students to understand what constitutes conduct of sexual harm, and 98% of students agreed that they would be able to recognize a situation that has the potential for harm related to sexual assault, other sexual misconduct, dating or domestic violence, stalking, and other conduct that creates as sexually hostile environment.

88% of students (5% less than in 2016) were familiar or somewhat familiar with the University's policy related to sexual assault, but only 74% of students were at least somewhat familiar with the University's stalking policy (2% less than in 2016). 79% of students at least somewhat agreed that Notre Dame's policies regarding sexual misconduct and sexual assault are clear, and 75% percent of students at least somewhat agreed that Notre Dame's policies regarding dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking are clear. 90% of students correctly responded that intoxication is not an excuse for failure to obtain consent.

Students largely were aware of reporting and safety resources on campus. Additional efforts to further educate students about possible courses of action proved helpful as 70% (compared to 65% in 2016) of students were aware that they may pursue a complaint through the University conduct process and/or pursue a criminal complaint. The largest increase in awareness was for male students, which increased from 69% in 2016 to 76% in 2018.

Impressions of University Response

Students reported varied impressions of the University's response to incidents of sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating or domestic violence, stalking, or conduct that creates a sexually hostile environment.

87% of students reported that the University response to sexual assault is somewhat to very effective. 83% and 84% of students reported the University response as somewhat to very effective related to conduct that creates a sexually hostile environment and sexual misconduct respectively. Student comments echoed those of 2016, calling for further transparency regarding University response to incidents. Students believe that certain student groups and faculty are treated differently through the processes.

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1 The first survey was administered in 2012, the second was administered in 2015, the third was administered in 2016, and the fourth in 2018. The Committee for Sexual Assault Prevention (CSAP) identified themes and made recommendations for the 2018 survey after conducting focus groups with students.

2 The survey results have not been weighted to account for non-respondent bias.
Participation questions were adjusted since the 2016 survey to include the new Administrative and Alternative Resolution procedures. 3.2% of students who completed the survey reported being involved as a complainant, respondent, or witness in a University process to adjudicate sexual harm. Satisfaction with the impartiality, timeliness, support services, and outcome of administrative investigations, University conduct process, administrative resolution, and alternative resolution for these students remained distributed across all dimensions with students reporting being both satisfied and dissatisfied.

**Student Engagement and Prevention Efforts**

Most students (93%) at least somewhat agreed that they trusted their friends would watch out for them. 91% of students at least somewhat agreed that they are aware of strategies to intervene if a situation had potential for sexual assault. 28% of students reported that a fellow student had disclosed an experience with sexual assault at some time in their life (up from 22% in 2016) with 86% reporting that they provided personal support and empathy and 38% reporting that they referred the fellow student to resources. 94% of students felt the University’s prevention efforts were somewhat to very effective. Bystander intervention training is now mandatory for all incoming students. Other than the noted increase in students disclosing sexual assault to a friend, these results remained consistent or the same as were reported in 2016.

**Personal Experiences of Sexual Assault, Sexual Misconduct, Dating or Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Other Conduct that Creates a Sexually Hostile Environment**

Students’ self-reported instances of personal experiences with sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating or domestic violence, stalking, and other conduct that creates a sexually hostile environment while a student at Notre Dame demonstrate significant concerns that appear comparable to peer survey results and national studies, and appear relatively stable compared to students’ personal experiences reported in 2016.

Questions related to personal experience with sexual assault and sexual misconduct were consistent with the 2016 survey. Students indicated sexist remarks about women in social settings by women (69%) and by men (63%), and sexist remarks about men in social settings by women (39%) and by men (50%). Remarks about an individual’s body or appearance (57%) are prevalent instances of sexual harassment in social situations in our community.

A deeply troubling 7% of females and 1% of males indicated they had personally experienced non-consensual sexual intercourse (including any type of penetration) while a student at Notre Dame. A concerning 23% of female students and 6% of male students indicated they had personally experienced other forms of non-consensual sexual contact. Overall, 27% of female students and 7% of male students indicated they had experienced some form of non-consensual sexual intercourse or non-consensual sexual contact while a student at Notre Dame, which is a 3% increase in female students and 2% increase in male students in comparison to the 2016 data. 1% of all students (1% of female students and 1% of male students) reported that they had experienced dating or domestic violence, which is consistent with the 2016 results. 3% of students reported experiencing stalking behaviors (1% of male students and 4% of female students), which is also consistent with the 2016 results.

Students who experienced stalking behavior indicated the highest rates of increased reporting to the University (28% in 2018 compared to 17% in 2016). Reporting to the University also increased for students who experienced non-consensual sexual intercourse (14% in 2018 compared to 10% in 2016) and dating or domestic violence (14% in 2018 compared to 8% in 2016).

Even with an increase in reporting to the University, opportunities exist to address students’ barriers to reporting sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating or domestic violence, etc. Students cited several reasons they chose not to report an incident to the University. Most cited personal reasons, including wanting to forget about the incident, reluctance to get the perpetrator in trouble, not being sure that what happened constituted an offense, blaming themselves for what happened, and fear of retaliation. Students also often cited they were not sure that reporting would solve anything and did not want to go through the University process. Opportunities exist to further educate students about policies, especially as it relates to parietals,
and how the University responds to reports of sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating or domestic violence, stalking, and other conduct that creates a sexually hostile environment.

The University remains committed to alleviating barriers to reporting and encouraging students to report any of these instances. When comparing the 2016 results to 2018 regarding barriers to reporting sexual assault, most barriers increased. The two categories that increased most were: did not trust the University’s process (increased by 12% in 2018) and concern that others wouldn't believe them (increased by 11% in 2018). Reluctance to get the perpetrator(s) in trouble decreased by 6% in 2018, while being afraid to get in trouble for other violations of University policies (parietals, underage drinking, etc.), remained the same compared to 2016.

Even one instance of harm to a member of our community is too many, and Notre Dame will continue to adopt policies and develop programs designed to reduce these incidents. Student responses to the personal experience questions suggest that Notre Dame, like other institutions, experiences underreporting of sexual assault and sexual misconduct.

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