

2020 Sexual Conduct and Campus Climate Questionnaire Results Overview

Content and Participation in Survey

The University of Notre Dame administered its fifth climate survey in October 2020. 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 (12,809) were invited to participate in the survey, and 47.5% (6,079) completed the survey. The survey response rate increased slightly from 2016 (45%) and 2018 (44%); however, as in previous survey administrations, the response rate remained higher for female students, first-year students, and students who lived on campus at the time of the survey administration.¹ 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 similar or improved compared to the 2018 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 a sexually hostile environment.

Familiarity with the University's policies related to sexual assault, other sexual misconduct dating or domestic violence, stalking, and other conduct that creates a sexually hostile environment each increased since 2018. 89% of students (1% more than in 2018) were familiar or somewhat familiar with the University's policy related to sexual assault, and 80% of students (6% more than in 2018) were at least somewhat familiar with the University's stalking policy. 81% of students at least somewhat agreed that Notre Dame's policies regarding sexual misconduct and sexual assault are clear, and 79% percent of students at least somewhat agreed that Notre Dame's policies regarding dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking are clear. 92% of students correctly responded that intoxication is not an excuse for failure to obtain consent, a 2% increase from 2018.

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 73% (compared to 70% in 2018 and 65% in 2016) of students were aware that they may pursue a complaint through the university conduct process and/or pursue a criminal complaint.

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.

90% of students reported that the University response to sexual assault is somewhat to very effective, a 3% increase from 2018. 86% and 87% of students reported the University response as somewhat to very effective related to conduct that creates a sexually hostile environment and sexual misconduct respectively. Similar to 2018, students' comments call for further transparency regarding University response to incidents.

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

¹ The survey results have not been weighted to account for non-respondent bias.

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 (95%) at least somewhat agreed that they trusted their friends would watch out for them. 96% of students at least somewhat agreed that they feel confident in their ability to judge if someone is too intoxicated to give consent. 21% of students reported that a fellow student had disclosed an experience with sexual assault at some time in their life with 87% reporting that they provided personal support and empathy and 37% 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, and students' comments affirmed that GreeNDot is an effective violence prevention program.

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

As in the past two survey administrations, students indicated sexist remarks about women (51%), men (32%), and individual body or appearance (43%) are prevalent instances of sexual harassment in social situations in our community, though the percentage of students who selected each of those responses decreased from 2018.

Students' self-reported instances of personal experiences with non-consensual sexual intercourse and non-consensual sexual contact decreased in comparison to 2016 and 2018, while experiences of dating/domestic violence and stalking remained the same.

A deeply troubling 4% 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 16% of female students and 4% of male students indicated they had personally experienced other forms of non-consensual sexual contact. Overall, 18% of female students and 4% 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 9% decrease in female students and 3% decrease in male students in comparison to 2018. Similarly to 2018, 1% of all students (1% of female students and <.5% of male students) reported they had experienced dating or domestic violence; and 3% of students reported experienced stalking behaviors (4% of female students and 1% of male students).

Students who experienced stalking behavior indicated the highest rates of reporting to the University (19%) compared to students who experienced non-consensual sexual intercourse (6%), dating or domestic violence (15%), or non-consensual sexual contact (3%). Compared to 2018 data, students reported non-consensual sexual intercourse and stalking less often. Reports of dating or domestic violence and non-consensual sexual contact remained similar.

The University remains committed to alleviating barriers to reporting and encouraging students to report any of these instances. Students cited several reasons they chose not to report an incident to the University. Similar to previous survey administrations, 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, and blaming themselves for what happened. Students also often cited they were not sure that reporting would solve anything and did not want to go through the University process. These responses are similar to 2018 survey responses. Opportunities continue to exist to further educate students about policies and how the University will respond to reports of sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating or domestic violence, stalking, and other conduct that creates a sexually hostile environment.

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 (Title.IX@nd.edu).