

The University of Virginia today released the results of a comprehensive survey gauging the climate and culture related to sexual assault and other forms of sexual and gender-based harassment misconduct at the University.

In 2015, the University was one of 27 higher education institutions to participate voluntarily in the Association of American Universities Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct administered by Westat, a leading social science research firm. Consistent with the University's ongoing interest in gauging the climate and culture on this critical topic, the University partnered again with Westat to administer a survey in late spring 2017.

Specifically, the purpose of the 2017 survey was to:

- Estimate the incidence and prevalence of different forms of nonconsensual sexual contact, harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence during the 2016-17 academic year;
- Collect information on student views and perceptions related to the climate surrounding sexual assault and sexual misconduct; and
- Assess student knowledge and evaluation of UVA's resources and procedures when responding to instances of sexual assault and sexual violence.

The survey was distributed to a stratified sample of 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students between March 15 and April 12, 2017. The survey response rate was 54.5%, an increase of slightly more than 20% percent over the 2015 response rate.

The results that appear in UVA's institutional report can be extrapolated to the respective total student populations. Some of the key UVA findings based on survey responses to hypothetical situations include:

- 70.4% of students believe that it is very or extremely likely that a victim would be supported by other students in making a report of sexual assault or misconduct to a University official, as compared with 56.3% in 2015;
- 72.7% of students believe it is very or extremely likely that a report would be taken seriously by campus officials, as compared with 58.8% in 2015;
- 68.6% of students said that if an occurrence of sexual assault occurs, it is very or extremely likely that the individual's safety would be protected, as compared with 55.2% in 2015;
- 57.8% of students believe it is very or extremely likely that a fair investigation would occur, as compared with 41.9% in 2015;
- 44.8% of students said it is very or extremely likely that campus officials would take action against the offender, as compared with 28.2% in 2015; and
- 55.3% of students said it is very or extremely likely that campus officials would take action to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault or misconduct, as compared with 32.4% in 2015.

When asked how problematic students believe sexual assault or sexual misconduct is at the University, 21.5% reported that it is very much or extremely problematic, as compared with 38.6% in 2015. Sexual assault encompasses an array of behaviors from nonconsensual penetration to nonconsensual groping of intimate body parts above or below clothing, and specific tactics including force or threat of force or incapacitation.

For the 2016-2017 academic year, the incidence of sexual assault by physical force, threats of physical force, or incapacitation reported by female undergraduate students was 11.8% compared to 2.3% percent for male undergraduate students and 4.1% for female graduate students compared to 1.2% for male graduate students.

The survey of a representative sample of the student body was one of many recent initiatives on Grounds to continue to ensure that UVA creates a living, learning, and work environment that is free from sexual and gender-based harassment and other forms of interpersonal violence, such as sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence.

All incoming first-year and transfer students are required to complete new mandatory training modules for sexual and gender-based violence prevention and alcohol abuse. The sexual and gender-based violence online training informs students about the University's [**Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence**](#) as well as available resources and reporting options. Graduate and professional students receive a version of the online training tailored to them. All employees also participate in online "Not On Our Grounds" responsible-employee training that covers similar information.

The University has continued to expand resources for the Title IX Office, which is part of the University's Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights (EOCR). Additions include an Assistant Vice President for Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator, a Deputy Title IX Coordinator, three Title IX investigators, and an Executive Assistant. The University also added trauma counselors in both the [**Maxine Platzer Lynn Women's Center**](#) and the University's [**Counseling and Psychological Services**](#). In addition, the [**Office of the Dean of Students**](#) hired a new Program Prevention Coordinator, charged with identifying and implementing proven strategies to reduce sexual and gender-based harassment and violence and other forms of violence and hazing.

The University and its students continue to collaborate on multiple initiatives designed to raise awareness in the community. These include the following.

- **Charlottesville-Albemarle Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)**, which is based on a memorandum signed by the University, City and County Commonwealth's Attorneys, the Sexual Assault Resource Agency, UVA Medical Center, local victim/witness programs, and the Charlottesville, Albemarle and UVA police departments to ensure appropriate communication and response in the event of a sexual assault.

- A continued partnership with the **Sexual Assault Resource Agency (SARA)**, which includes providing support for SARA's community initiatives and providing training to SARA volunteers on the University Title IX policies.
- A partnership with the University's athletics department to provide in-person and online Title IX training to all student athletes, coaches, and athletics employees to ensure that the University meets the NCAA's sexual violence education requirements.
- Continued cooperation with students, including training for student groups, support to the Student Climate committee, and training to peer-led student groups, such as One in Four and One Less.
- "**Hoos Got Your Back**," a bystander awareness campaign aimed specifically at combatting incidents of sexual violence during the first few weeks of a new academic year when students are most at risk for sexual assault. This initiative is a collaboration between students, faculty, staff, Corner merchants, and other members of the University community. It encourages awareness of potentially dangerous situations and teaches them how to intervene safely and effectively.
- Partnering with **Green Dot**, a national organization dedicated to reducing power-based personal violence through community mobilization.