2017 CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

SUMMARY

As part of Utah State University’s continuing efforts to address sexual misconduct in the campus community, the university implemented a survey in April 2017 to gauge attitudes about and experiences with nonconsensual sexual contact. This survey was based on best practices for “campus climate” surveys, which the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Education, and the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault (in 2014) have all indicated are an important component to help higher education institutions understand the scope and nature of the sexual violence problem.

Though national and peer institution campus climate surveys can offer general information about the experiences of nonconsensual sexual contact that students have while in college, a survey specific to USU students helps the university community understand the experiences on our campus and how USU should focus resources. Specific action steps the university is taking, or will take, are included at the conclusion of this document.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

USU surveyed a total of 23,201 students, all students enrolled in the spring semester of 2017, with the exception of concurrent enrollment (i.e. high school) students. There were 10,502 valid responses for a total response rate of 45 percent, but since not all students completed all of the questions, there is a lower percentage – 36 percent – of fully completed surveys that include demographic information (gender, age, etc.).

The survey focused on sexual misconduct, but specifically asked about experiences with one form of misconduct – nonconsensual sexual contact. The survey used the definition of nonconsensual sexual contact as defined by Utah’s state statute on nonconsensual sex offenses (Utah Code Ann. section 76-5-406), which includes a range of experiences, from fondling to rape.
OVERVIEW OF THE CAMPUS CLIMATE

In line with prior surveys of freshmen and sophomores, and the annual graduating students survey, the majority of those responding to the survey (93 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they generally felt safe on the USU campus. See the chart below.

A majority of respondents indicated trust in how the university would respond to a report of sexual misconduct. A majority of respondents (75 percent) said they thought it very likely or likely “the university would take steps to protect the safety of the person making a report” of sexual misconduct. See the chart below.
Of the total respondents to the survey, a little more than half (52.5 percent) strongly agreed or agreed they knew where to go to get help on campus. Less than half (48.4 percent) knew where to file a formal complaint with the university about a sexual misconduct, and 30 percent knew what would happen if they did file a complaint. See the chart below.

![Chart]

**KEY FINDINGS ON THE INCIDENCE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF NONCONSENSUAL SEXUAL CONTACT**

As previously stated, the survey focused in particular on one form of sexual misconduct: nonconsensual sexual contact. Overall, 7.4 percent (631) of the students responding to the survey said they had experienced nonconsensual sexual contact since arriving at USU, including 10.1 percent (438) of undergraduate women and 2.1 percent (64) of undergraduate men. The overall rate includes 87 students who did not indicate their biological sex. Additionally, 15.9 percent (1,362) of total respondents said they had experienced nonconsensual sexual contact before enrolling at USU.

The following findings focus on those who said they had experienced nonconsensual sexual contact since arriving at USU.

1. Nearly 90 percent said their assailant was someone they knew, including a casual or first date (22 percent), an acquaintance (17.9 percent), a current dating/romantic partner (14.9 percent), a non-romantic friend (12.5 percent), or an ex-dating/romantic partner (12.8 percent).

2. Of those saying they had experienced nonconsensual sexual contact since coming to USU, 61.6 percent said their assailant was a student at USU, while 8.4 percent said they were unsure.

3. Alcohol was involved in 36 percent of reported experiences of nonconsensual sexual contact. Though an additional 15 percent of victims said they were unsure.
4. Twenty-two percent of incidents of nonconsensual sexual contact occurred in buildings or spaces owned by, or affiliated with the university. Fifty-two percent occurred off campus in spaces near the school (private apartment, bar/club, or other non-USU location), and 26.1 percent occurred in locations not near USU.

5. Only 5 percent (28) of victims said they filed a formal complaint with the university about the incident of nonconsensual sexual contact. Thirty-seven percent of victims did not tell anyone at all. Of those who did (63 percent), most told a roommate, close friend, family member, and/or confidential resource provider such as a counselor.

6. Campus resources, including counseling, advocacy, and school accommodations are being underutilized by students who have experienced nonconsensual sexual contact. Forty-five percent of victims said the incident negatively impacted their schoolwork, and 65.6 percent said it caused depression or anxiety. As shown in the chart below, a much smaller number of victims are using services designed to help them.

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<tr>
<th>Did you seek counseling services as a result of the incident?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<th>Did you seek advocacy services as a result of the incident?</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<th>Did you seek a school accommodation from USU as a result of the incident?</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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**WHAT THE SURVEY CANNOT TELL US**

The survey did not ask questions that would enable one to differentiate between different categories of nonconsensual sexual contact so conclusions related to these more specific experiences could not be drawn.

The survey specifically asked students who “did not tell anyone” about an incident of nonconsensual sexual contact, why they did not, but it did not ask victims why they did not file a formal complaint with the university or seek resources. USU is particularly concerned about removing barriers to reporting and will be looking at how to learn this information through other ways.
UNIVERSITY ACTION STEPS

USU will continue to foster a campus culture that protects the safety of students, provides help and justice to victims, and abides by the principles of due process. USU has been actively engaged in improving its policies and processes, expanding its education programming, and improving support services. In response to the survey results, USU plans to take the following actions.

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

- **USU will expand the reach of a new bystander education program.** This fall, USU launched “Upstanding: Stepping Up to Prevent Violence in Utah,” a new campus-wide bystander intervention program created by the Utah Department of Health. This program is currently being rolled out by 25 trainers to target audiences across campus, including new incoming students, student leaders and club officers, Greek life organizations, students who live in on-campus housing, all student-athletes, international students, and other classes or groups upon request (upstander.usu.edu).
- **USU will enforce mandatory training on sexual violence.** All incoming students and student-athletes (in all years) are required to complete an online sexual assault awareness course.
- **USU will continue prevention education campaigns.** USU will continue a multi-pronged approach to educating students about issues related to sexual violence including the meaning of consent and amnesty for students who report medical emergencies and sexual violence, through speakers, panels, forums, websites, and print and digital social marketing.

POLICY AND FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

- **USU will improve and increase the information it provides about the formal complaint process.** There is much USU can do to educate students about how to file a formal complaint and what happens when they do. USU will continue to improve the information it provides about the Title IX office and the formal complaint process.
- **USU will develop tools to learn more about students’ experiences with the formal complaint process.** USU is extremely concerned by the low percentage of survey respondents who filed a formal complaint with the USU Title IX coordinator. The survey results do not specifically indicate why students who experience sexual misconduct are largely not filing a formal complaint. USU will seek additional information about students’ experience with the formal complaint process and barriers to reporting incidents to USU.
- **USU is revising its policies and processes for handling sexual assault complaints.** USU’s Policy and Process Working Group is currently updating and revamping the university’s
sexual misconduct policy to make it easier to understand and to simplify the formal complaint process. This is expected to be completed by spring semester 2018.

**SUPPORT RESOURCES**

- **USU will develop tools to learn more about students’ experiences with support resources.** USU is extremely concerned by the low percentage of survey respondents who utilized support resources provided by USU, and the survey results do not specifically indicate why students who experience sexual misconduct are largely not utilizing these services. USU will seek additional information about students’ experience with these resources and barriers to seeking assistance from USU.

- **USU will continue to increase students’ use of critical support services.** USU is working to increase use of campus resources, including advocacy through the Sexual Assault and Anti-Violence Information office, Counseling and Psychological Services, and accommodations through the Title IX office, which does not require a formal complaint to do so. USU released a new sexual assault resource guide, both in print and online at [usu.edu/sexual-assault](http://usu.edu/sexual-assault).

- **USU will educate students about how to support friends and classmates that have experienced sexual violence.** USU will also implement a “Start by Believing” campaign this year. USU’s survey results show that victims often tell a roommate or friend about their experience. By educating students about how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence, victims are more likely to be met with belief and support, and more likely to seek the services they need to recover and to file a formal complaint.

**COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

- **USU will continue to support the Cache County Community Coordinated Response Team.** USU leads the [Cache County Coordinated Response Team](http://www.usu.edu/sexual-assault) to improve local collaboration in providing services and support to victims, as well as seeking justice on their behalf. This project is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

- **USU will improve information sharing and cooperation with local law enforcement agencies.** We are currently finalizing a memorandum of understanding with local police agencies to ensure a better working relationship. In addition, USU recently purchased a software program to better share information with other police agencies, improving the safety of the public and USU police officers.

- **USU will continue to partner with local agencies to deliver educational programming to the Cache Valley Community.** The Upstanding bystander intervention program is also being rolled out in the local community to secondary education students through community partners, including Citizens Against Physical and Sexual Abuse and The Family Place. USU will work with these partners to ensure we use consistent language about violence and bystander intervention.