



**University of Virginia
AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct
2019 Executive Summary**

The University of Virginia today released the results of the 2019 Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct, a comprehensive survey gauging the climate and culture related to sexual assault and other forms of sexual and gender-based harassment and misconduct at the University. The 2019 survey was administered by Westat, a leading social science research firm.

The 2019 AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct study is a cohort study of 33 participating universities. Of a total student population of 830,936 students across 33 universities participating in the 2019 administration, 181,752 students completed the survey. It is a follow-up to the 2015 AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct, which the University was one of 27 higher education institutions surveyed, including over 150,000 graduate, undergraduate, and professional students. Between March 19 and April 16, 2019, the University conducted a census survey that included 23,032 enrolled undergraduate and graduate/professional students. The overall survey response rate was 30.4%, compared to an overall response rate of 26.4% in 2015. The results that appear in UVA's institutional report can be extrapolated to the respective total student populations.

Similar to the 2015 administration, the purpose of the 2019 survey was to:

- Estimate the incidence and prevalence of different forms of nonconsensual sexual contact, harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence during the 2018-2019 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 the University's resources and procedures when responding to instances of sexual assault and sexual violence.

Overall, the survey results indicate a positive direction in the data. In addition, the report finds that 85% of students report that students, faculty, and staff are at least somewhat engaged in actions to improve the climate around sexual misconduct at the University.

The data set is robust, and the University's analysis of the data is ongoing. However, preliminary results include that, for the 2018-2019 academic year, the incidence of sexual assault by physical force, threats of physical force, or incapacitation reported by female undergraduate students was 13.4%, 4.2% for male undergraduate students, 3.4% for female graduate students, and 0.7% for male graduate students. With the exception of undergraduate men, rates are slightly lower than the 2015 administration of the survey, which were 13.8% for undergraduate women, 3.2% for undergraduate men, 4.5% for graduate women, and 0.8% for graduate men. The foregoing results measure incidence in one year.

The percent of students who have experienced an incident of sexual assault by physical force, threats of physical force, or incapacitation *since entering college* has increased for undergraduate women (25.5% in 2019 vs. 23.8% in 2015) and undergraduate men (7.9% in 2019 vs. 4.5% in 2015), decreased for graduate women (10.0% in 2019 vs. 12.3% in 2015), and remained the same for graduate men (1.9%).

Changes were made in the 2019 survey to harassment questions, which decoupled reporting of harassment from impact of that experience. Specifically, in 2019 students were asked about several types of harassing experiences, and then subsequently asked if the harassing behavior(s) had interfered with their living/learning experience or created a hostile environment. In 2015, students were asked to report only on harassing experiences that interfered with their living/learning experience or created a hostile environment. Even with this change, UVA overall numbers in 2019 are lower. The percent of students who reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment decreased between 2015 and 2019 across all cohorts, with an overall total population decrease from 52.6% in 2015 to 46.7% in 2019.

Consistent with the University's peer education model and core values that inform the student experience, the University added questions to the survey to gain a better understanding of student's disclosure and response regarding certain forms of sexual misconduct. Peers are an extremely important resource and support system for students who experienced an incident. Most students who had experienced an incident of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct told at least one friend. Some of the key findings regarding that friend's response are below:

- Two-thirds of students who had experienced sexual harassment told at least one friend and reported that:
 - 85.7% of those friends listened to the person, comforted them, or reassured them;
 - 47.4% of those friends provided ongoing support;
 - 34.2% of those friends shared their own experience; and
 - 19.3% of those friends helped manage or limit ongoing interactions with the person who did this or mutual acquaintances.
- Four out of five students who had experienced penetration or sexual touching involving physical force or inability to consent told at least one friend and reported that:
 - 88% of those friends listened to the person, comforted them, or reassured them;
 - 54.5% of those friends provided ongoing support;
 - 31% of those friends shared their own experience; and
 - 23.3% of those friends helped manage or limit ongoing interactions with the person who did this or mutual acquaintances.

Comparison of 2019 data with 2015 data (in parenthesis) indicates that the University has been moving in a positive direction as far as student perceptions about how University officials respond to reports of sexual misconduct:

- 71.8% (vs. 58.8%) of students believe it is very or extremely likely that a report would be taken seriously by campus officials;
- 55.6% (vs. 41.9%) of students believe it is very or extremely likely that a fair investigation would occur; and
- 47.3% (vs. 32.4%) 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.

When asked how problematic students believe sexual assault or sexual misconduct is at the University, 27.4% reported that it is very much or extremely problematic, compared with 38.6% in 2015.

The 2019 Climate Survey is one of many initiatives on Grounds which addresses sexual and gender-based harassment and other forms of interpersonal violence, such as sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence. Since 2015, the following administrative changes have occurred:

- The University continues to expand resources dedicated to the response, support, and prevention concerning incidents of sexual and gender-based violence. The University's Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights (EOCR) has continued to expand the staff dedicated to the University's non-discrimination policies. The EOCR Title IX team added an additional investigator and now includes four full-time investigators, who are responsible for responding to and investigating reports made under the University's [Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#) (Title IX Policy). In addition, the University reorganized EOCR under the newly created role of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, that oversees both EOCR and the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. On August 1, 2019, Kevin McDonald assumed this role at the University.
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) is the primary mental health clinic for University students. CAPS has nearly doubled its staff over the past 5 years and includes licensed social workers, counselors, psychologists, nurse practitioners, and psychiatrists. CAPS offers a range of services, including psychotherapy, medication management, case management, and 24-hour on-call crisis support. CAPS staff are trained in a variety of interventions, including evidence-based trauma therapies, and are confidential resources for students seeking support following sexual assault and other forms of interpersonal violence.
- A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) is housed with the Medical Services unit with the Department of Student Health and Wellness. The SANE can perform a Physical Evidence Recovery Kit (PERK) exam, or forensic exam, within the Department of Student Health & Wellness during open hours of operation and at any time with the University Emergency Department. More information about these services at the Department of Student Health & Wellness is available at <https://www.studenthealth.virginia.edu/perk-kit>.
- Through the addition of new positions in recent years, the counseling and wellness services staff at the [Maxine Platzer Lynn Women's Center](#) has become a diverse team of six full-time members that better reflects the population of University students they serve. The team includes two trauma counselors, a case manager who helps students access a wide variety of available resources, and a Resident in Counseling with special expertise and experience in the role of cultural, racial, gender, and sexual identity in mental health. The team continues to incorporate specific tools and trainings that have been demonstrated to be effective with young adults recovering from trauma. Examples of such therapies include Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Mindfulness-based cognitive-behavior therapy (MCBT), Internal Family Systems (IFS), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and a Psychiatric Service Dog trained to provide specific Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI).
- The Maxine Platzer Lynn Women's Center offers the Survivor Support Network training, which prepares faculty and staff members to support students who may disclose experiences with sexual assault and gender-based violence to them, including information on navigating their role as responsible employees. Interns at the Women's Center have developed a student-focused version of the Survivor Support Network training, which they began offering during the 2018-

2019 academic year. In the student version, participants learn about the neurobiology of trauma and the array of resources available at the University. Informed by the knowledge that students experiencing sexual assault and gender-based violence are most likely to share their experience with a friend first, this training is designed to prepare those peers as they support their friends.

- In 2018, the University shifted to the [Office of Health Promotion](#) the Health Promotion Specialist position, charged with developing, implementing, and evaluating evidence-informed interventions to create a Grounds-wide healthy sexual culture and reduce sexual harm and hazing.
- For the 2019-2020 academic year, the Office of Health Promotion expanded the University's bystander education program and created the Hoos Got Your Back bystander intervention program. The office launched the new campaign and the Hoos Got Your Back Bystander Intervention Workshop, a one-hour workshop to teach participants to recognize signs of sexual harm and how to intervene to prevent an incident in a safe and realistic way. In addition, all incoming First Year students attended a one-hour Hoos Got Your Back introduction presentation the day before the first day of classes in the Fall, followed by a discussion facilitated by their Resident Advisor. To learn more about the Hoos Got Your Back Bystander interventions, visit <https://hoosgotyourback.virginia.edu/> or email hoosgotyourback@virginia.edu.
- In the 2019-2020 academic year, One in Four, an all-male identified sexual assault peer education group, and One Less, a female and gender nonconforming sexual assault and relationship violence education group, are merging to create Culture of Respect Educators (CORE), a student-run organization dedicated to sexual harm prevention in the Charlottesville community. CORE's mission is to educate the community about healthy relationships and promote a safe and respectful community of trust at the University. This peer education group provides "Dorm Norms" education about sexual harm prevention and promotion of healthy relationships to the residents of First Year residence halls. This strategy is consistent with the 2019 survey results which state that nearly one quarter of UVA believe the most meaningful way to learn about ways to prevent sexual misconduct is through organized discussions led by peers.
- All incoming first-year and transfer students are required to complete mandatory training modules for sexual and gender-based violence prevention and alcohol misuse. Further, every two years, all students are required to take additional training for sexual and gender-based violence prevention. During the 2018-2019 academic year 8,553 undergraduate students and 4,099 graduate/professional students completed the online training module. All employees also participate in online training regarding their role as Responsible Employees pursuant to the Title IX Policy. Since the administration of the 2015, 18,487 employees have completed the "Not on Our Grounds" training module.
- In addition, EOCR provides in-person training sessions to students, faculty, and staff on a variety of topics concerning sexual and gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination and harassment. Following the 2017 administration of the survey, EOCR expanded its training efforts directed towards graduate students, increasing the number of direct in-person trainings provided to Graduate Teaching Assistants, Graduate schools and departments, and Graduate student orientation events. The Title IX team has partnered with EOCR staff responsible for the

Preventing and Addressing Discrimination and Harassment and Preventing and Addressing Retaliation policies (collectively PADHR Policy) to address often-related issues of discrimination and harassment based on other protected characteristics, such as race, national origin/ethnicity, disability, age, religion, etc. in its training and presentations. To request an in-person training, contact the Title IX Coordinator at (434) 297-7988 or titleixcoordinator@virginia.edu.

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

- Membership in the **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, the University Medical Center, local victim/witness programs, and the Charlottesville, Albemarle, and University police departments to ensure appropriate communication and response in the event of sexual assault. In May 2018, EOCR and the SART participated in a statewide conference hosted by the Sexual Assault Resource Agency regarding the creation and implementation of SARTs. The Charlottesville-Albemarle SART was the first in the state to incorporate a University's Title IX office.
- A continued partnership with the **Sexual Assault Resource Agency (SARA)** includes providing support for SARA's community initiatives and providing training to SARA volunteers on the University's Title IX Policy and Procedures.
- Participation in **International Pronouns Day**, a global effort to which the University's efforts are connected, is designed to raise awareness of and promote the use of chosen third person personal pronouns. In October 2018, EOCR partnered with Schools and Departments to distribute pronoun buttons and stickers, provided information about the importance of pronouns, and hosted a film screening of *Free Cece*, a film that confronts the culture of violence against trans women. On October 16, 2019, and throughout that week, EOCR will again host events supporting International Pronouns Day.