



DOWNSTATE
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University
Sexual Violence Prevalence (SVP) Campus Climate Survey
Report
October 2023

SUNY's Sexual Violence Prevalence (SVP) Campus Climate Survey is intended to gather information about the rate of incidents of sexual violence and about the knowledge of policies and resources. Per [NYS Education Law](#)¹ and [SUNY BOT policy](#)², every SUNY campus is required to participate in this uniform survey project bi-annually. As per policy, "results will be published on the campus website providing no personally identifiable information shall be shared". This document contains a reporting template that can be used for public websites or other campus publications.

Questions regarding this document can be sent to svpcimatesurvey@suny.edu and/or IR@suny.edu.

Executive Summary

On May 1st, 2023, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University began an online administration of the Sexual Violence Prevalence (SVP) Campus Climate Survey. This survey was administered to students and employees and is required to address, at minimum, student and employee knowledge about:

- The Title IX Coordinator's role;
- Campus policies and procedures addressing sexual assault;
- How and where to report sexual violence as a victim/survivor or witness;
- The availability of resources on and off campus, such as counseling, health, academic assistance;
- The prevalence of victimization and perpetration of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking on and off campus during a set time period (for example, the last two years);
- Bystander attitudes and behavior;
- Whether victims/survivors reported to the College/University and/or police, and reasons why they did or did not report.
- The general awareness of the difference, if any, between the institution's policies and the penal law; and
- The general awareness of the definition of affirmative consent.

In reviewing the results, we highlight that the survey indicated several important trends, as well as areas for greater focus.

Awareness of Policies Resources and Reporting Options

Overall, students and employees are generally aware policies prohibiting sexual violence and how to report sexual violence. Employee awareness of these policies and reporting options was much higher than student awareness. Employee awareness of the understanding of the definition of sexual assault and how to report sexual assault was also much higher than student awareness. The majority of students and employees reported being aware of counseling, health services and advocacy.

¹ <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/6445>

² <https://system.suny.edu/sexual-violence-prevention-workgroup/policies/campus-climate/>

Prevalence of Sexual Violence Experiences

While a significant proportion of students and employees reported that they did not experience sexual harassment during the past 12 months, 5% of employees reported experiencing unwanted sexual comments, sexual slurs or demeaning jokes from a faculty member or a staff member, and 18% of students reported being sexually harassed by a stranger unaffiliated with the campus. More than half of the students reported not telling anyone about it because they either did not think that it was important to take action or just did not want to deal with it. As for employees, 35% reported speaking to their supervisor about the incidents.

Background

The SVP survey is administered every other year by all SUNY campuses, who work closely with SUNY System Administration to coordinate the survey administration itself. An effort is made to keep the questions from one administration to the next as consistent as possible to allow for reliable and meaningful longitudinal data. System-wide IRB review takes place for each survey administration.

SUNY Downstate administered the student survey and the employee survey between **April 11th, 2023**. Excluded survey populations were individuals under 18 years of age, and all incarcerated individuals regardless of age

A survey invitation was sent to all eligible survey participants

- Downstate did not offer incentive
- Emails were disseminated from College Deans and the SVP of Student Affairs to generate survey outreach.

Student Survey Demographics

| | Surveyed | Respondents | % Responded |
|----------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Students | 2004 | 234 | 12% |
| Faculty Staff | 2127 | 506 | 24% |

The student response rate was 12%, with 234 respondents. Seventy-seven percent of the student respondents were female, and sixty-six percent were first-generation college students. Most of the student respondents (59%) were living with family, forty-one percent were living in off campus housing with roomates/friends. Twenty-six percent of the respondents reported having a disability or a chronic mental health condition.

Respondents identified their gender as follows:

- 73.8% women;
- 22.5% men;

The sexual orientation of respondents was as follows:

- Respondents were primarily heterosexual (83%);

- 4.3% identified as gay;
- 5.5% identified as bisexual;
- 4.5% identified as queer;

Results

RESPONSE RE: TITLE IX INFRASTRUCTURE, POLICIES & RESOURCES:

The following section relates to students' knowledge and awareness of SUNY Downstate's Title IX Office, policies and procedures, and campus and community resources.

- Most students (40.0%) compared to employees (27%) reported **not** knowing how to contact the Title IX Coordinator.
- Most students reported awareness of the role of the Title IX Coordinator.
 - 71.1% reported knowledge of the Title IX Coordinator role in regards to receiving reports of sex discrimination/sexual assault/ sexual misconduct;
 - 62.6.7% reported knowledge of the Title IX Coordinator role in regards to coordinating the campus response;
 - 64.8% reported knowledge of the Title IX Coordinator role in regards to ensuring training/education to the campus; and
 - 61.1% reported knowledge of the Title IX Coordinator role in regards to providing accommodations and services to reporting individuals.
- Most students responded knowing how to report Title IX incidents, with:
 - 46.9% knowing how to report a sexual assault;
 - 46.5% knowing how to report sexual harassment;
 - 38.5% knowing how to report domestic violence/dating violence;
 - 36.2% knowing how to report stalking; and
 - **50.2% reported not knowing how to report any of these types of incidents.**
- The top five campus departments where students responded a victim or witness could file a formal complaint of sexual assault were:
 - University Police (84.4%);
 - Title IX Coordinator (74.9%);
 - Counseling Center (68.3%);
 - Health Center (68.1%); and
 - Advocacy Services (59%).
- Most students reported receiving from SUNY Downstate either written or verbal (presentations, trainings) information about sexual assault, including:
 - 50.0% received information on the definition of sexual assault;
 - 44.9% received information on how to report a sexual assault;
 - 43.5% received information on where to go to get help;
 - 37.9% received information on who to speak to confidentially about a sexual assault;
 - 44.9% received information on policies prohibiting sexual assault; and
 - 38.8% reported not receiving information on any of the above.

- The majority of students (78.0%) are knowledgeable about the definition of affirmative consent.
- The majority of students (86.3%) reported knowing that someone who is incapacitated cannot provide consent.
- Most students (54.2%) reported knowing the difference between the university disciplinary process and the criminal justice system.
- Most students (46.9%) reported being **unaware** of the amnesty policy (related to the use of drugs and alcohol).
- The top six campus and community resources students reported having an awareness of (the Title IX office was not included) were:
 - University Police (79.1%);
 - Health Services (67.2%);
 - Counseling Center (65%);
 - Local Police/Sheriff (65.3%);
 - Local health services, hospitals (49.2%) and
 - Office of Student Conduct (40.1%)

STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL/DATING/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND/OR STALKING

This section asked SUNY Downstate students about their experience, within the past year, with sexual and interpersonal violence, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking, including whether students disclosed their experience to others and/or reported the incident to SUNY Downstate. If they did not report the incident, the survey asked their reasons for not reporting.

Respondents reported the following incidents having occurred without their consent within the year preceding the survey:

- 17.9% reported experiencing unwanted sexual comments, sexual slurs, or demeaning jokes;
- No respondents reported someone viewing their sexual activity/nakedness, or taking explicit pictures/recordings without consent;
- 7.9% reported experiencing unwanted sexually suggestive digital communications, words or images, or both, including emails, texts, social media, or other written communication;
- No respondents reported having experienced an attempted but not completed incident of being fondled, kissed, or being rubbed up against the private areas of body without consent; 13.2% reported that the act, i.e., fondling, etc. was completed;
- No respondents reported someone attempted but did not complete the removal of respondent's clothes without consent; 8.7% reported that the act was completed;
- No respondents reported that someone attempted, but did not complete, performing oral sex on them or forcing them to perform oral sex without consent; 5% reported the act was completed;
- No respondents reported that someone attempted, but did not complete, sexual penetration (by inserting penis, fingers or object into vagina or anus) without consent; 8.2% reported the act was completed.

Students reported the relationship to the person as follows: 45.7% were strangers and the person was not affiliated with the campus community (69.2%)

Students reported telling about the most recent incident were to a friend (71.4%).

No students reported the most recent incident to the University (Title IX office, student conduct or University Police)

For those who decided not to report the most recent incident to SUNY Downstate, the top reasons/concerns were (could choose all that applied):

- “I did not think it was important enough” (61.1%);
- “I just did not want to deal with it” (44.4%)

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Students were asked about experiences with intimate partner violence (intimate partner was defined as “a boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, or anyone [the respondent] was in an intimate relationship with or hooked up with, including exes and current partners”) within the past year.

- 5.9% of students reported that an intimate partner controlled or attempted to control them;

Stalking

3.2% of students reported that a stranger/friend/current or ex-partner repeatedly followed, watched, texted, called, emailed, or communicated with them in ways that seemed obsessive and made them afraid and concerned for their safety. No respondents indicated telling someone about the most recent incident.

Students were asked if incidents of sexual violence, dating/domestic violence and stalking made them change their educational plans, and reported: No respondents reported changing academic schedule and/or housing.

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

This section asked students about their perceptions of how their fellow students would respond and how SUNY Downstate would respond, in various situations.

- 65.7% reported that a fellow student would call 911 for help if they heard a neighbor yelling “help”;
- 55.9% reported that a fellow student would confront a friend who told them they had sex with someone who was passed out or who did not give consent;
- 53.3% reported that a fellow student would express their discomfort if someone made a joke about a person’s body;
- 78.1% reported that a fellow student would get help and resources for a friend who disclosed they had been assaulted; and
- 54.4% reported that a fellow student would tell a resident assistant or other campus authority about information that might help in a sexual assault case, even if pressured by their friends to stay silent.

Students' perceptions about how the campus would respond to a formal complaint of sexual violence:

- 69.8% reported that SUNY Brockport would take the report seriously;
- 67.4% reported that SUNY Brockport would conduct a fair investigation; and
- 77% reported that SUNY Brockport would provide the student with the necessary support during the process.

SUMMARY:

The student response rate of 11.7% did not meet the sample size required to generalize the survey findings which was the case for most SUNY campuses. The survey results provide information for the Title IX office and other departments on campus such as, Health Promotion and Prevention Education (HPPE), and Hazen Health and Counseling Centers.

Recommendations:

Following a review of the survey results, the Offices of Title IX (Bolaji Olasokan) recommend the following:

- Enhance student awareness of Title IX Office. Only 27% of students (37.9% employees) reported knowing how to contact the Title IX Coordinator, over one-quarter of the student respondents (27.1%) reported not knowing how to contact the Title IX Coordinator.
- Enhance awareness of the amnesty policy. Only 27% of students (30.8% employees) reported being aware of the amnesty policy, 46.9% students (43.5% employees) did not know;
- Increase training and education about Title IX to the Downstate community as 50.2% of students reported not knowing how to report any of these types of incidents.

Next Steps

The SUNY Sexual Violence Prevalence Campus Climate Survey 2023 revealed that more work is needed for Downstate to increase employee and student awareness of sexual misconduct policies, resources, and reporting. The main areas of focus:

- More employees than students are aware of most policies and resources. We need to maintain efforts to increase student knowledge while being aware of training fatigue and the multiple demands on students' time.

Report respectfully submitted by:

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