Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey Results: Executive Summary

Assumption University

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Survey Overview

Assumption University (hereafter referred to as University) engaged TNG Consulting, LLC., (hereafter referred to as "TNG") to evaluate the campus climate regarding sexual misconduct at Assumption University. The survey assessed multiple dimensions, including the prevalence of sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual harassment; student perceptions of the campus climate related to these forms of misconduct; student knowledge of and familiarity with institutional procedures for reporting and responding to sexual misconduct; and student awareness of and exposure to support services available to victims.

Specifically, the survey was designed to address the following research questions:

1. How prevalent is the experience of sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual harassment for students at Assumption University?
2. How do students perceive the climate related to sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual harassment at Assumption University?
3. How knowledgeable are students of sexual misconduct resources at Assumption University?
4. What demographic factors, if any, influence the experiences or perceptions of sexual misconduct at Assumption University?

To help answer these research questions, the survey included three sections and multiple subsections:

1. Prevalence of Sexual Misconduct: This section assessed the prevalence of various forms of sexual misconduct respondents experienced while enrolled as an Assumption University student. Respondents who answered "yes" to an item asking whether they experienced an incident(s) of any type of sexual misconduct were presented with follow-up questions regarding the nature of the incident, its impact, and whether or how they reported or responded to it. Additionally, respondents who indicated they experienced an incident of sexual misconduct were asked questions to assess what resources or services were made available to them.
2. Perceptions of Campus Climate Regarding Sexual Misconduct
   a. Perceptions of Sexual Misconduct - This portion of the survey assessed to what extent respondents believed sexual misconduct, by both students and employees, was a problem at Assumption University.
   b. Institutional Response to Sexual Misconduct – This section examined how respondents perceived the University would be likely to respond to a report of sexual misconduct, as well as perceived barriers to reporting.
   c. Knowledge of Sexual Misconduct Resources – This portion of the survey assessed respondents' knowledge of where to report sexual misconduct, seek support, and

access information, including knowledge of services available to victims of sexual misconduct. It also measured respondents' awareness of and trust in various campus resources.

    d. Exposure to Sexual Misconduct Education – The survey asked respondents to report the types of prevention and educational programming they had encountered, as well as the information they had received regarding sexual misconduct while enrolled as an Assumption University student.

3. Demographics

    a. The demographic portion of the survey collected information related to the respondents' academic status, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and age.

Key Findings

KEY FINDINGS: PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Unwanted fondling or kissing was the most common type of sexual violence and the most commonly reported type of sexual violence with 19.6% of respondents reporting unwanted fondling/kissing.
- 7.1% of respondents experienced attempted vaginal/anal penetration.
- 5.5% of respondents experienced completed vaginal/anal penetration.
- 3.7% of respondents experienced oral sex without consent.
- Sexual violence most often occurred when the individual proceeded without obtaining consent, checking in or while the other individual was still deciding, by ignoring the other individual's cues to stop or slow down, or when they initiated sexual activity despite the other person's refusal.
- While most commonly sexual violence occurred on one day, of those who experienced sexual violence, a concerning 17% reported experiencing on nine or more days.
- Most individuals who experienced sexual violence experienced sexual violence from more than one person.
- The perpetrator of sexual violence was most often a man.
- Three quarters of those who experienced sexual violence reported experiencing sexual violence from a friend or acquaintance.
- 86% of incidents of sexual violence occurred on campus.
- 62% of victims of sexual violence reported being under the influence of alcohol.
- 68% of those who experienced sexual violence did not report to a University employee and 91% of those who did make a report, also told a friend.
- Of those who did not tell a University employee, 63.3% reported it was because they didn't think it was serious enough.
- Over half of individuals who experienced sexual misconduct felt anxiousness, nervousness, fear, or embarrassment.
- 20% of those who experienced sexual misconduct either engaged in self-harm, attempted to die by suicide, or had thoughts of wanting to harm or kill themselves as a result.

DATING VIOLENCE
- 4.2% of respondents reported experiencing dating violence.

- Over half of those who experienced dating violence reported that the person threatened to hurt them and they thought they might really get hurt or that the person could scare or intimidate them without engaging in physical violence.
- 40% of respondents who experienced dating violence reported experiencing it on nine or more days.
- 72.7% of respondents who experienced an incident of dating experienced dating violence from one person, most often a man.
- 70% of incidents occurred on campus.
- Victims and perpetrators of dating violence did not tend to be using or under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the incident(s).
- 70% of those who experienced dating violence did not report to a University employee, most often because they did not think it was serious enough.
- 80% of those who did not tell an employee did tell a friend; few told anyone else.
- 60% of those who experienced dating violence reported engaging in self-harm, attempting to die by suicide, or having thoughts of wanting to harm or kill themselves as a result.
- Over half of individuals who experienced dating violence felt anxiousness, nervousness, or fear or had difficulty keeping up with classwork.

STALKING
- 5.8% of respondents reported being stalked.
- 100% of those who experienced stalking reported it took the form of unwanted communication; 80% were approached uninvited.
- 40% of individuals who experienced stalking reported experiencing it on nine or more days.
- 86.7% of respondents who experienced stalking experienced it from one person, most often a man.
- 92.9% of incidents occurred on campus.
- Victims and perpetrators of stalking did not tend to be using or under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the stalking.
- 85.7% of those who experienced stalking did not report to a University employee, citing that they did not think it was serious enough or that they could handle it themselves as reasons for not reporting.
- 78.5% of respondents who experienced stalking reported anxiety, nervousness, or fear because of the incident(s).

SEXUAL HARASSMENT
- 12.2% of respondents reported experiencing sexual harassment.
- 86.2% of those who experienced sexual harassment reported that it took the form of offensive comments about their appearance, body, or sexual activity.

- 58.6% of those who experienced sexual harassment experienced it from multiple individuals.
- 82.8% of incidents occurred on campus.
- Victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment did not tend to be using or under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the incident(s).
- 86.2% of those who experienced sexual harassment did not report to a University employee, most often because they did not think it was serious enough.
- 69% of those who experienced sexual harassment believed their gender identity played a role.
- 72.4% reported feeling embarrassed; 58.6% reported low self-esteem, and 51.7% reported anxiousness, nervousness, or fear as a result.

KEY FINDINGS: PERCEPTIONS OF CAMPUS CLIMATE

- Overall, respondents tended to strongly disagree/disagree that each type of sexual misconduct by students is a problem. However, over a quarter (27.6%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that sexual harassment by students is a problem at the University and 18.9% agreed or strongly agreed that sexual violence perpetrated by students is a problem.
- Most respondents did not agree that students use force or engage in sexual acts while students are unconscious, asleep or otherwise incapacitated but 22.2% believed coercion is used by students to engage in sexual acts.
- Respondents generally disagreed that sexual misconduct by employees is a problem.

KEY FINDINGS: PERCEPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

- 72.3% believed the University would take reports seriously.
- 71% believed the University would honor student preferences in handling reports.
- 66.6% believed the University would handle reports fairly.
- 69.8% believed the University would address underlying factors contributing to misconduct.
- 77.8% believed the University would protect student privacy.
- 68.8% believed the University would provide support.
- Most respondents did not believe the University would retaliate or punish reporting students.
- The most common perceived barriers to reporting were that the reporter would feel embarrassed, ashamed or overwhelmed, that the individual would not think the incident was serious enough, that they wouldn't want anyone to get in trouble, or that they would lack knowledge about how/where to report.

KEY FINDINGS: KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT RESOURCES

KNOWLEDGE OF RESOURCES

- 64% knew where to find help on campus.
- 53% knew where to find help off campus but 28.7% did not.
- 59% knew where to report on campus.
- 61.3% knew how to access confidential campus resources.

AWARENESS AND TRUST OF RESOURCES
- Highest awareness: Counseling Services, Health Services, and Campus Police.
- Lower awareness: CARE Team, Campus Advocate, Office of Community Standards.
- Most found all campus resources to be trustworthy.

KEY FINDINGS: EXPOSURE TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT EDUCATION

- 67% had received some sexual misconduct education prior to attending the University.
- Less than half reported receiving any form of information on sexual misconduct since enrollment including information about Title IX protections, where/how to report an incident, the definitions and types of sexual misconduct, where to go for help, and prevention strategies.
- 65.6% saw sexual misconduct posters; 50% attended Title IX training at orientation and few respondents reported engagement in or exposure to other educational programs or activities.
- 22.9% reported receiving no sexual misconduct information at the University.

Discussion and Recommendations

The Assumption University Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey produced critical insights into the prevalence, nature, and impact of sexual misconduct at the University. Though only 18% of the student body responded, the data offer important insights into both the prevalence of misconduct and the institutional conditions shaping students' engagement with reporting mechanisms and support services. This discussion and recommendations section engages a thoughtful examination of the survey results, drawing connections between the identified issues and possible solutions. The action items presented in this section were designed to address issues presented in the survey data and represent best practices in the field.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

A substantial portion of respondents reported experiencing some form of sexual misconduct while enrolled at the University. The most commonly reported experience was sexual violence in the form of unwanted fondling or kissing, followed by attempted or completed penetration and unwanted oral sex. Additionally, a relatively small percentage of respondents reported experiences of dating violence (4.2%), stalking (5.8%), and sexual harassment (12.2%). These incidents of sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual harassment most frequently involved individuals identified as male students and occurred on campus, emphasizing the relevance of campus-based interventions. Most troublingly, a substantial number of respondents reported repeated incidents and severe psychological impacts, including anxiety, low self-esteem, and in some cases, suicidal ideation, self-harm or attempted suicide.

Reporting rates to university employees were notably low across all forms of misconduct, with most respondents disclosing only to friends or not disclosing at all. Among those who chose not to report their experience to Assumption University, the most common reasons were perceptions that the incident was not serious enough, emotional discomfort, or fear of being disbelieved. Additional barriers included fear of retaliation, concerns about confidentiality, and a lack of clarity about where to report. These findings suggest that stigma, uncertainty, and mistrust impede formal reporting at the University.

PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT CLIMATE

Respondents' perceptions of the campus climate suggest that many do not view sexual misconduct as a widespread problem—only 27.6% agreed that sexual harassment by students is a problem, and just 18.9% agreed that sexual violence by students is a problem. Still, 22.2% believed that coercion is used by students to engage in sexual acts, indicating recognition of more subtle and complex forms of sexual harm. Respondents largely disagreed that sexual misconduct by Assumption University employees is a problem.

PERCEPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

Despite low reporting rates, respondents generally expressed moderate to high levels of confidence that the University would respond supportively to a report of sexual misconduct. A majority believed the University would take a report seriously (72.3%), honor student preferences (71%), and handle reports fairly (66.6%). There was also broad confidence in the University's ability to protect student privacy (77.8%) and provide supportive measures (68.8%). Negative institutional behaviors—such as retaliation or dismissiveness—were generally seen as unlikely, though some respondents remained skeptical about the fairness or effectiveness of the response process. These perceptions suggest that students recognize institutional intentions to respond supportively, even as personal, cultural, and social barriers continue to inhibit actual reporting behavior.

KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT RESOURCES

Knowledge of sexual misconduct resources presents a mixed picture. While 64% of respondents reported knowing where to seek help on campus, only 53% said the same about off-campus support. Awareness of how to report was also lower for off-campus resources, with nearly one-third indicating uncertainty. Familiarity with confidential support resources was relatively stronger, with 61.3% indicating they knew how to access these services. Respondents reported the highest awareness of Counseling Services, Health Services, and Campus Police. Awareness of other entities, such as the CARE Team or the Campus Advocate, was lower, though respondents generally trusted the services they recognized.

EXPOSURE TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT EDUCATION

Educational exposure appears to be a critical gap. While 67% of respondents reported receiving sexual misconduct education prior to enrollment, fewer than half had received such information while enrolled at the University. Attendance at Title IX orientation was moderate (50%), but few respondents reported additional engagement in prevention programming. Alarmingly, 22.9% indicated they had received no sexual misconduct information at the institution.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Together, these findings present a complex but actionable narrative. Although relatively rare, an impactful percentage of students at Assumption University experience a range of sexual misconduct behaviors. These behaviors are most often committed by people the individual knows and routinely happens multiple times. The impacts of these experiences are both psychological and academic, with alarming rates of distress and self-harm. Although students perceive the University as generally responsive and supportive, a significant proportion choose not to engage formal systems, largely due to internalized feelings of shame, fear, or a diminished sense of the incident's severity. These perceptions are likely shaped, in part, by limited exposure to comprehensive, ongoing sexual misconduct education and unclear pathways for accessing support.

Addressing these findings will require a multi-faceted institutional approach that enhances education, increases visibility of resources, strengthens peer and faculty allyship, and removes cultural and procedural barriers to reporting. Doing so will not only reduce harm but affirm the University's commitment to fostering a safe, respectful, and responsive campus environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey and the subsequent analysis, several actionable recommendations emerge to guide Assumption University in strengthening its prevention, response, and support strategies. These recommendations aim to reduce the prevalence of sexual misconduct, improve student trust and engagement with institutional processes, and promote a campus climate that is both safe and affirming for all students.

ENHANCE AND EXPAND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT EDUCATION

A critical gap identified through the survey was a lack of exposure to sexual misconduct education. The University administration should implement a comprehensive, developmentally sequenced sexual misconduct education program that begins with orientation and continues throughout students' academic careers. This campaign needs to include a variety of delivery methods, appropriate sequencing of training and events throughout the student lifetime, and comprehensive marketing efforts. While many students reported receiving information before arriving at the University, less than half reported receiving such education during their enrollment. Educational efforts should include:

- Annual, mandatory training for all students on consent, bystander intervention, definitions, reporting procedures, and available resources.

- Training students on how to support and refer friends who experience sexual misconduct.

- Targeted programming for student leaders, athletes, and residence life staff.

- Peer-led initiatives and workshops that promote open dialogue and normalize seeking help.

INCREASE VISIBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF REPORTING PATHWAYS

Many respondents reported they did not report experiences of sexual misconduct due to uncertainty about the seriousness of the incident, how to report, or fear of negative consequences. To address this:

- Clearly communicate reporting options through multiple platforms (e.g., campus apps, website, posters, syllabi).

- Develop user-friendly guides on what to expect when making a report and what protections are in place.

- Consider implementing anonymous or third-party reporting options that can help students initiate disclosure in low-pressure contexts.

PROMOTE AWARENESS AND TRUST IN SUPPORT RESOURCES

While students generally reported trust in recognized services like Counseling and Health Services, awareness of resources such as the CARE Team and Campus Advocate remains low. The University should:

- Launch a campus-wide awareness campaign highlighting all available resources, their roles, and how to access them.

- Ensure staff from these offices are present and visible at campus events and orientation.

- Regularly assess and promote confidential resources in addition to other avenues of support. Emphasize the perceived trustworthiness and approachability of support personnel.

STRENGTHEN SURVIVOR-CENTERED RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

Students who did report experiencing sexual misconduct often did so to friends or family rather than University employees. When disclosures were made to employees, perceptions of support and safety were generally positive. To enhance this:

- Ensure all employees who may receive disclosures are trained in trauma-informed response.

- Provide immediate, coordinated follow-up from trained professionals that includes supportive measures, academic accommodations, and safety planning.

- Collect and review feedback from students who have accessed services to improve service delivery.

- Deliver training to students and families on how to support friends or family members who disclose an incident of sexual misconduct and on the available resources and reporting options at the University.

ADDRESS CULTURAL NORMS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Many students did not recognize certain behaviors—such as coercion or psychological intimidation—as serious enough to report, despite experiencing harm. Educational and cultural strategies should:

- Emphasize the full range of behaviors that constitute sexual misconduct, including those that do not involve physical force.

- Facilitate discussions about healthy relationships, power dynamics, and the impact of gender norms on reporting and experience.

- Highlight the harm of minimizing or internalizing misconduct.

IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION AND CONTINUOUS CLIMATE ASSESSMENT

The low response rate limits generalizability but does not negate the seriousness of the experiences reported. To ensure continuous improvement:

- Repeat the climate survey in two years to with targeted strategies to increase participation. Once a strong response rate is established, consider a four-year assessment cycle.

- Incorporate focus groups or listening sessions to supplement quantitative data and capture diverse perspectives.

These recommendations, grounded in the lived experiences and perceptions of Assumption University students, offer a roadmap for institutional change. By committing to a comprehensive, transparent, and student-centered approach, the University can foster a campus climate that promotes trust, equity, and safety for all.