

2018 UW Campus Climate Survey – FAQs/Response to Comments

1) How can I report a known instance of sexual misconduct – one that has already happened, or in the event that one happens in the future?

Great question! Thank you for asking. Although the survey was designed, in part, to assess knowledge about reporting options, we do want to ensure that students know how to report and what options exist. Because of the anonymous and confidential nature of the research process, the researchers associated with this survey are not able to report directly on your behalf. The UW “Report It” website provides essential information about reporting options and procedures: <http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit/>.

If you are a sexual assault survivor and in need of confidential advocacy and support, please contact or visit the STOP Violence office: <http://www.uwyo.edu/stop/>.

2) This survey is sexist! Lots of questions pertain to male-perpetrated assaults experienced by women. There wasn't a place to indicate other kinds of assaults. Why is that?

First, it should be noted that no one at UW wrote or crafted the wording of this survey. The survey was selected because it is used by dozens of universities nationally which will make our findings directly comparable to other institutions. Though the wording might not be ideal in spots, it should be noted that it has undergone extensive testing and validation and is in widespread use nationally. **Second**, you are correct in noting that the content predominantly focused on assaults experienced by women and perpetrated by men. This is by design and wholly appropriate. Sexual assault is a heavily gendered crime. While all genders (e.g., male, female, trans*, gender-nonconforming) experience sexual assault, the overwhelming majority of victims identify as female or outside of the binary and the overwhelming majority of perpetrators identify as male (National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, Centers for Disease Control, 2012). The survey reflects the gendered reality of the crime. This isn't “male bashing” (in fact, a male is typing this document right now ☺). It is important to note that although the overwhelming majority of sexual violence perpetrators are male, the overwhelming majority of males are not sexual violence perpetrators. **Third, and perhaps most importantly**, it is not the case that the survey did not inquire about other variants of sexual misconduct and varied perpetrator-victim gender possibilities. Although the length of the survey may have caused some individuals to read less carefully or overlook some content, the survey included *MORE THAN THIRTY* questions about gender-neutral sexual violence or sexual harassment experiences. These questions inquired about the behavior/transgression generally and then – if endorsed – allowed respondents to indicate the gender (more than 2 options presented) of the perpetrator.

3) That survey was long! (Ok, that's more of an observation than a question).

You sure are right about that! Again, we did not develop the survey but selected a very comprehensive one that is used nationally. In order to provide an accurate and detailed understanding of students' experiences, beliefs and knowledge about these important and complex issues, it was necessary to adopt a lengthy survey. Because we knew that it was lengthy, we wanted to have numerous, generous incentives for participation. Although over 2000 UW students completed the (long) survey, approximately 1 in 10 won a prize. We appreciate your patience (and endurance!) and please know that these responses will be critical in informing future sexual misconduct response and prevention efforts. In short, it was indeed a lot of work on your part – but for a very important cause. Thank you!

4) The specific type of uncomfortable or objectionable misconduct I experienced was not reflected in the survey.

Sorry about that! It would be difficult to develop a survey that would include every possible variation or form of misconduct and every possible transgression. The developers of the survey focused primarily on commonly occurring or frequent violations on college campuses, while recognizing that it may not be all encompassing. We did have an open-field for additional comments and questions which many people used to describe their specific circumstances. Thank you for doing so!

5) I haven't actually had (or perpetrated) a sexual assault or other type of misconduct, so this survey didn't really apply to me.

Actually, the survey was designed to gather information from ALL students – regardless of past personal experiences or lack thereof – about their knowledge of university resources, beliefs about sexual misconduct, and perceptions of institutional response. We need the input of all students even those who have not had direct, personal experiences with these issues.

6) How can I find out the results of the survey?

Because these issues impact the entire campus community and should be of concern to the entire campus community, we believe that transparency is crucial. Given the length of the survey, it should not surprise you to learn that the data analysis process will be extensive and time-consuming. That said, we WILL have a final, comprehensive report produced by early summer. If you're interested in the results, send me an email and I'll hook you up. (Matt Gray – gray@uwyo.edu).

7) I'd like to take a more active role in sexual violence prevention at the University of Wyoming. Is that possible?

I sure hope so! Many universities have peer support and advocacy options. Depending on the level of student interest, this may be something that we can coordinate and develop. If you are strongly committed to this issue and interested in being involved, let me know (Matt Gray – gray@uwyo.edu).

8) "I think the University is doing GREAT with these issues" and also "I think the University is doing a TERRIBLE job with these issues"!

Indeed, we heard both things – reflecting the reality that different people have different experiences and outcomes. What you should know is that ALL universities have strengths and weaknesses in this area, and ALL universities have blind spots. The whole reason to do a large-scale campus climate survey is to find out what things are going well and what things need improvement. You should know that evaluating these strengths and weaknesses is the beginning of an ongoing process, and that these responses can inform and improve sexual misconduct response and prevention programming. Thank you for feeding into this process!

9) I didn't like that this survey was mandatory!

Well, you're in luck! It wasn't mandatory. Approximately 26% of the UW student body participated which is a GREAT response rate, but clearly the majority of students did not participate. Even student groups on campus who were encouraged to participate by faculty and staff, fell well short of 100% completion rates. Students could stop participation at any time (many did). As noted on the very first page of the informed consent, participation is entirely voluntary and participants are free to withdraw their participation at any time.

10) “If we could have firearms on campus we wouldn’t even have a sexual assault problem.”

Nope. Not even in the ballpark of being an accurate statement, but let me explain. This isn’t an anti-gun philosophy. There may be very good reasons to allow firearms on campus and very good reasons not to allow firearms on campus and people can and should make their opinions heard on that issue as they see fit. Sexual assault prevention isn’t particularly germane to that debate, however. First of all, a very small percentage (approximately 5%) of sexual assaults are “stranger in the bushes” type scenarios – contrary to popular belief/misconception. The majority of sexual assaults are unwelcome escalations of what may start out as consensual low-level intimacy. Unless you plan to be “locked and loaded” in low level sexual intimacy contexts (something that may well result in other gun-related mishaps!), it may not be particularly helpful. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the great majority of assaults happen off campus (where guns are not prohibited) – so even the very small percentage of “stranger in the bushes” type assaults that do occur – are not impacted by campus firearm policies. There may be great reasons to have a firearm but the impact on sexual violence would be negligible at best. In fact, one recent study showed an *increase* in sexual violence on campuses after overturning campus-carry bans (Biastro, Larwin, Carano, 2017).

11) This survey was difficult to complete if you have a history of sexual violence victimization.

We certainly recognize the sensitive nature of this survey and questions that were asked – particularly among Survivors. We do recognize that the content would be more difficult and distressing for some respondents. To address these concerns we made every effort to clearly notify from the outset (in the informed consent) that the content would pertain to sexual violence and misconduct and that these questions could be distressing. It was also noted that one could stop at any time without penalty. Importantly, we take sexual violence prevention and response very seriously and need the input of Survivors to improve policy, response and support. We very much appreciate your participation in particular and your input will be pivotal to improving the experience of future Survivors and – ultimately/ideally – will help to reduce the frequency of such events in the future as these results can inform prevention efforts and programming.

12) Some of the questions pertained to a bunch of excuses that people give for assaulting others or seem to justify perpetration. What’s up with that?

You are correct! We did include some items pertaining to “rape myths” – i.e., things that some people erroneously believe invite or justify assault. These are called rape myths precisely because we know them to be false, and yet some people believe them to be true. In order to understand what problematic beliefs exist and how many people endorse such beliefs, we need to ask about them. If many people hold such beliefs, it will need to be a critical component of future campus sexual violence prevention efforts and education – but we need to assess the pervasiveness of such beliefs to make this determination. It should be noted that, not unlike the main/primary survey, this measure was not developed at or by UW and is used nationally on dozens of campuses. Because we did not want to ask about such beliefs without providing corrective information, we included – in the debriefing at the end of the survey – extensive information about consent and information challenging and discrediting rape myths.

In closing, once again, **THANK YOU** for your participation and observations. If you have any additional questions or concerns, do not hesitate to email me (gray@uwyo.edu), call me (766-2927) or pop by during office hours. You may also contact Tess Kilwein at tkilwein@uwyo.edu.