



Fitchburg State University Student Experience Survey

2025 Report



PREPARED FOR

Fitchburg State University
May 2025

PREPARED BY

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Study Design

The Fitchburg State University Student Experience Survey surveyed graduate and undergraduate students aged 18 or older. The survey was administered online by Grand River Solutions, an independent company, with a survey tool developed by the Grand River Solutions team.

Fitchburg State University identified the student pool for the survey, and sent a message to potential participants notifying them to expect an email from Grand River Solutions with the survey link. When possible, Fitchburg State University provided the race/ethnicity, binary gender, age, class year, residency status, full/part-time status, Pell Grant status, and academic level (undergraduate/graduate) of the participant pool. This information was provided to Grand River Solutions through a secure portal. If Fitchburg State University could not provide this data, a question was included in the survey to obtain it.

Grand River Solutions sent a personalized email to the students, each with a unique link to the survey, and sent reminder emails to non-respondents over the field period. The number of reminder emails and the field period were mutually agreed upon by Fitchburg State University and Grand River Solutions.

All personally identifying information was automatically de-linked from survey responses once submitted. All personally identifying information was permanently deleted from Grand River Solutions devices and accounts within 60 days of the end of the survey field period and Fitchburg State University was provided with a signed certification of data destruction.

Participants were informed that their responses were confidential and would be reported in aggregate form, and that no individually identifying information would be reported. The survey was provided in English and Spanish, and participants were able to toggle between the two languages throughout the survey. All survey questions were optional to participants. Fitchburg State University was able to add custom questions to the survey as agreed upon by Fitchburg State University and Grand River Solutions. The survey was approved by the Fitchburg State University Institutional Review Board.

At the end of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to enter their contact information for incentives. The first one hundred (100) students to complete the survey received a Starbucks drink card (up to \$7). All interested participants were entered into a raffle for one of six (6) \$50 Amazon Gift Cards. Participants' survey responses were not connected to their raffle entry in any way.

Study Measures

Demographics

In addition to the demographic data provided by Fitchburg State University, the survey included questions pertaining to the student's self-identification as an intercollegiate athlete, first-generation college student, ROTC student, residency status, and parental status, when applicable. Students were also asked to identify their sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability status.

Knowledge and Campus Culture

Students were asked about their knowledge of key campus policies relevant to sexual misconduct. They were also asked about their perceptions of the campus culture, Fitchburg State University's prevention and response efforts relevant to sexual misconduct, and bystander intervention.

Sexual Misconduct

The survey asked participants about their experiences of sexual misconduct since they have been a student at Fitchburg State University, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, intimate partner violence, and stalking.

The survey included follow-up questions for those that experienced sexual misconduct. These questions asked about academic, professional, and mental health impacts of their experience, their relationship with the perpetrator, the location of the incident, whether or not they reported the incident, reasons why they did not report, and their experiences during the reporting process.

School Connectedness

Students were asked to reflect on their experiences at Fitchburg State University and to identify their feelings and perceptions of belonging, equity, and well-being.

Data Analysis Methods

To be considered valid, a respondent had to have answered at least one question beyond the demographic section. To preserve participant confidentiality, any findings with a low response rate were omitted in reports to Fitchburg State University.

Reports provided to Fitchburg State University included only statistically significant findings. Statistical significance was determined using chi square tests and a p-value of <0.05 . Statistical significance for the difference in means was determined using a t-test or one-way anova. When cell counts were less than 5, a Fisher's t-test was used to evaluate statistical significance.

All personal experience questions were collapsed to yes/no variables for each of the types of sexual misconduct. Sexual orientation was collapsed to straight/heterosexual and LGB+. Gender identity was collapsed to man, woman, and transgender, genderqueer, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming (TGQN). Race/ethnicity were collapsed into federally recognized categories of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and White. Definitions of these categories are included on the following page.

All likert scales (strongly agree to strongly disagree) were converted to a four-point ranking where 4= positive response and 1= negative response. Likert questions were grouped based on pre-determined themes of belonging, well-being, equity, and culture (when applicable). Responses to these questions were averaged for each theme and reported on a scale of 1 to 4.





Key Terms

BIPOC

Black, Indigenous, and People of color (BIPOC) includes respondents who self-identified as African, Alaska Native, Asian/Asian American, American Indian/Indigenous, Black or African American, Caribbean/West Indian, East Asian, European, Hispanic/Latino/a/x/e, Latin American, Middle Eastern or North African, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, South Asian, Southeast Asian, or another race/ethnicity.

LGB+

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual plus (LGB+) includes respondents that self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, fluid, pansexual, queer, questioning, or another sexual orientation.

Sexual Misconduct

Used to refer to sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, intimate partner violence, and stalking collectively.

Sexual Violence

Used to refer to sexual assault and/or rape collectively.

TGQN

Transgender, genderqueer, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming (TGQN) includes respondents that self-identified as agender, genderqueer/gender-fluid, non binary, questioning, two-spirit, another gender identity, intersex, man but not male assigned at birth, or woman but not female assigned at birth.

Response Rate and Participant Demographics

A total of 5,296 Fitchburg State University students were invited to participate, and 459 (9%) completed the survey. The results of this report reflect only those who participated and may not reflect the experiences of all Fitchburg State University students. Findings in this report should not be used to make conclusions about the entire student population.

Fig. 1 Race and ethnicity

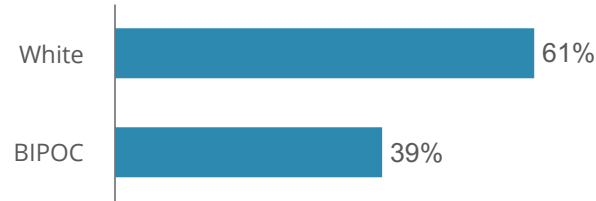


Fig. 2 Gender identity

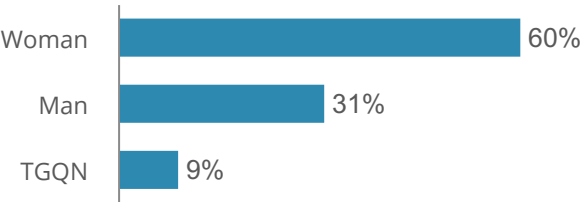


Fig. 3 Age

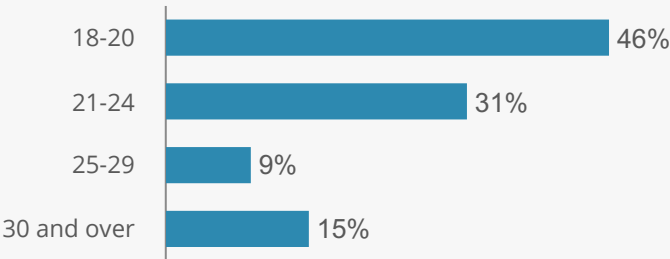


Fig. 4 Sexual orientation

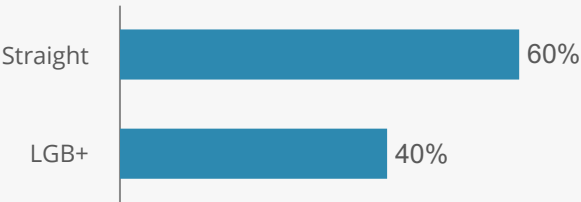
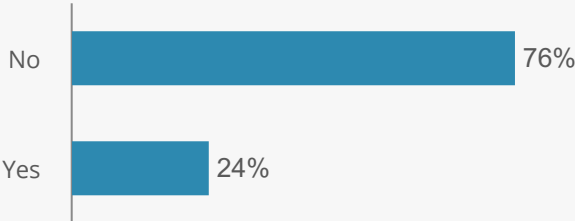


Fig. 5 Disability status



Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Participant Demographics

Fig. 6 Class year

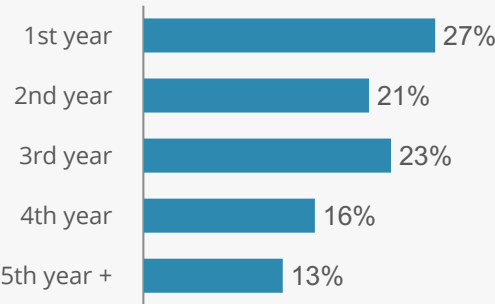


Fig. 7 Enrollment status

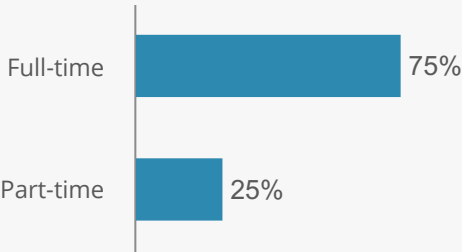


Fig. 8 Transfer status

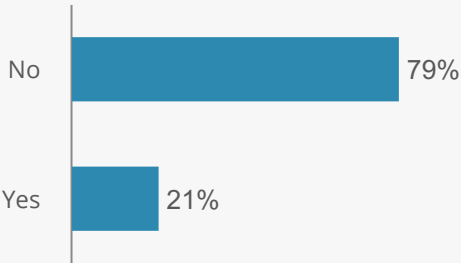


Fig. 9 Residency

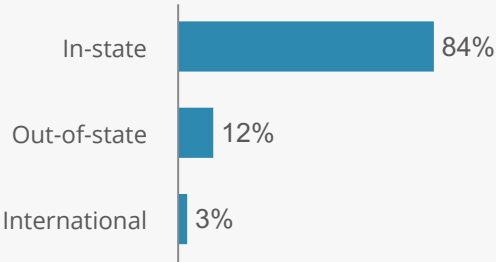
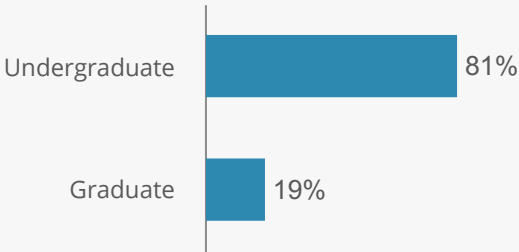


Fig. 10 Academic status



Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Participant Demographics

Fig. 11 Athlete

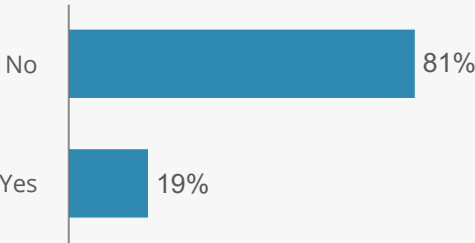


Fig. 12 Greek Life

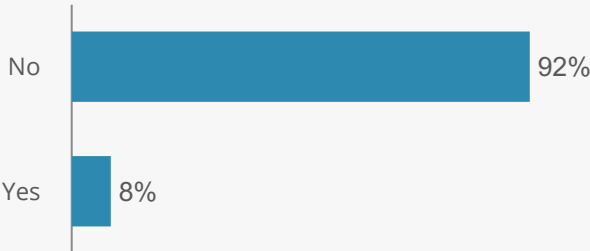


Fig. 13 First-generation student



Fig. 14 Pell Grant

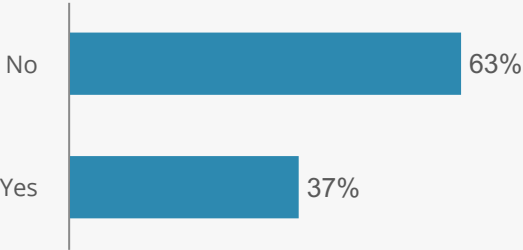
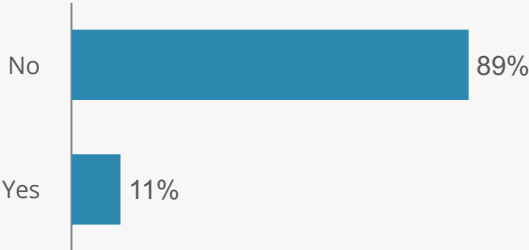


Fig. 15 Parent



Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Participant Demographics

Fig. 16 Military veteran

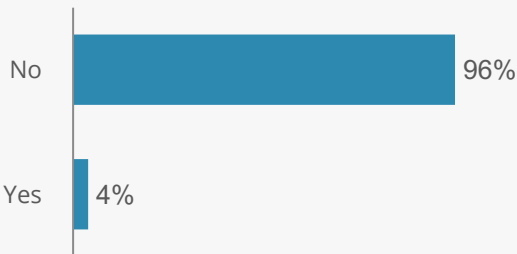


Fig. 17 Active duty military

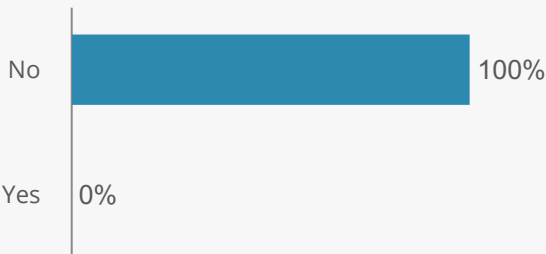


Fig. 18 ROTC

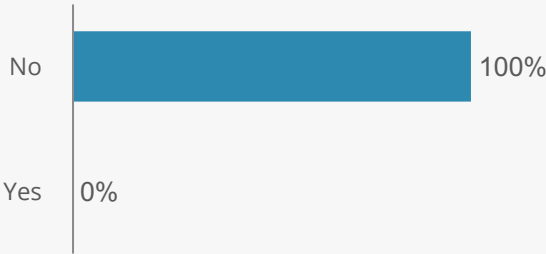


Fig. 19 College course

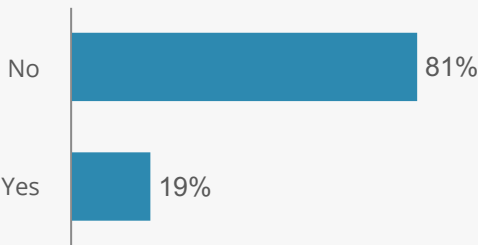
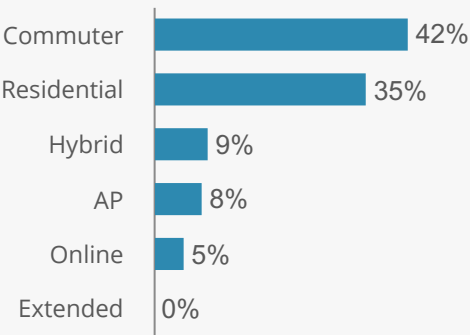


Fig. 20 Campus status



Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Executive Summary

School Connectedness

On average, participants agreed that they feel a sense of belonging, equity, and well-being at Fitchburg State University. Perceptions of belonging, equity, and well-being varied among some demographic groups.

Knowledge of Policies, Resources, and Offices

A majority of participants confirmed that they have learned about sexual misconduct through classes or trainings, and a majority were aware that confidential resources are available at the University. Most participants were aware of the Title IX Coordinator, Counseling Services, and Disability Services at the University.

Campus Climate and Confidence in Reporting

Overall, participants slightly agreed that it is uncommon for people at the University to make sexist comments or jokes, and that the University is doing a good job of preventing and responding to sexual misconduct. Perceptions of the campus culture varied among some demographic groups.

Sexual Misconduct

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of participants indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, stalking, sexual assault, and/or rape since they have been a student at Fitchburg State University.

Reporting

The majority of participants who experienced sexual misconduct did not report the incident to the University. The most common reasons why students chose not to report were that they did not think the incident was serious enough to report, they were worried that reporting the incident would interfere with their studies or other activities, and they were worried they would not get the outcome they were looking for.

Bystander Intervention

Under half of participants confirmed that they received training or information on how to intervene as a bystander from someone at the University. The most common reasons why participants who witnessed sexual misconduct did not intervene were that they did not know what to do and they felt it was not their business to intervene.



Findings

School Connectedness

Perceptions of Belonging, Equity, and Well-being

Students were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements about their feelings of belonging, equity, and well-being at Fitchburg State University. Their responses were scored on a scale from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most positive response.

Belonging

On average, most students **agreed** that they feel a sense of belonging at Fitchburg State University.

Equity

On average, most students **agreed** that Fitchburg State University treats all students equitably.

Well-being

On average, most students **agreed** that they feel safe and protected at Fitchburg State University.

3.2_{/4}

Belonging

3.1_{/4}

Equity

3.2_{/4}

Well-being

1 = negative response
4 = positive response

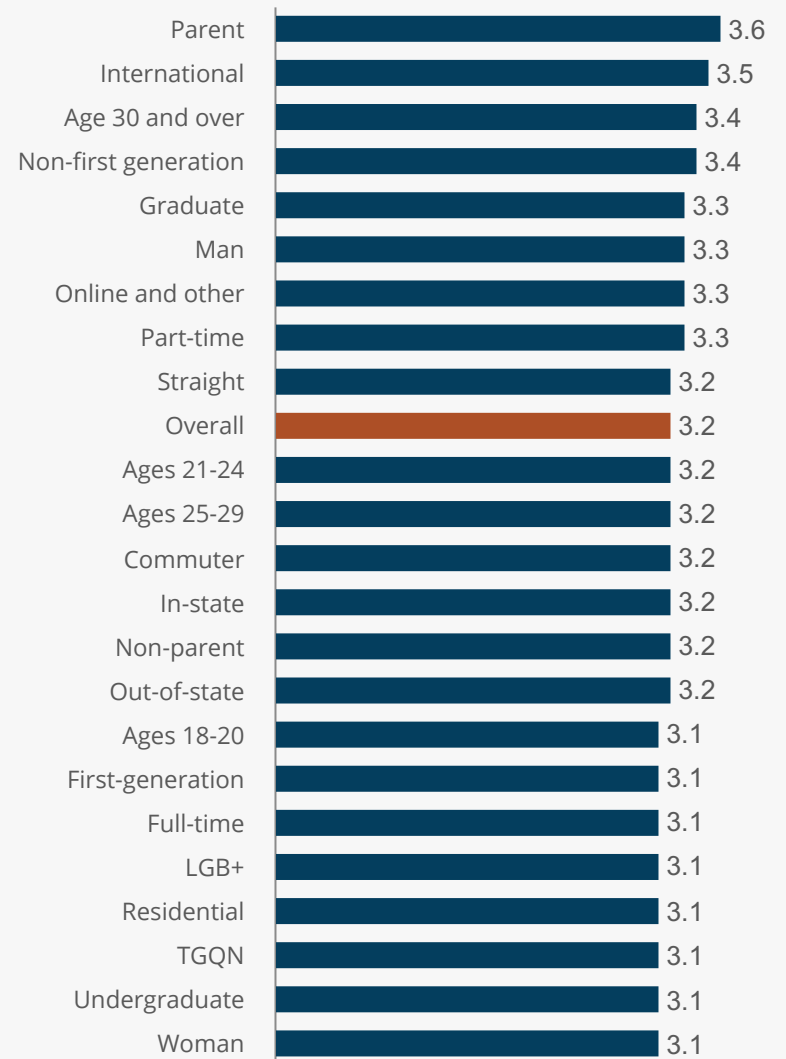
Differences in Perceptions of Belonging

Some demographic groups had lower perceptions of belonging.

Groups who were less likely than their counterparts to agree that they feel a sense of belonging at Fitchburg State University include:

- Women
- TGQN students
- Undergraduate students
- Residential and commuter students, relative to online and other students
- Full-time students
- First-generation students
- Students age 29 and under, particularly age 20 and under
- In-state and out-of state students, relative to International students
- Students who are not parents

Fig. 21 Differences in perceptions of belonging



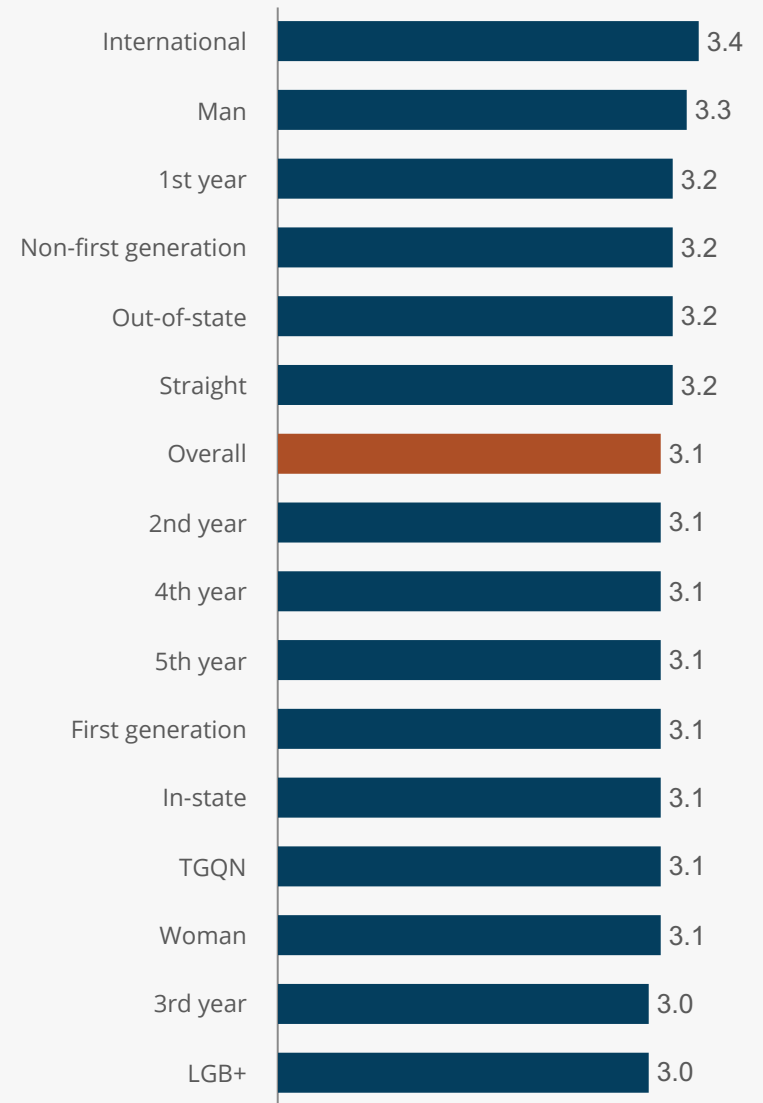
Differences in Perceptions of Equity

Some demographic groups had lower perceptions of equity.

Groups who were less likely than their counterparts to agree that they feel that students are treated equitably at Fitchburg State University include:

- LGB+ students
- Women and TGQN students
- In-state students, relative to out-of state and International students
- First-generation students
- Students in their second year and beyond, especially third-year students

Fig. 22 Differences in perceptions of equity



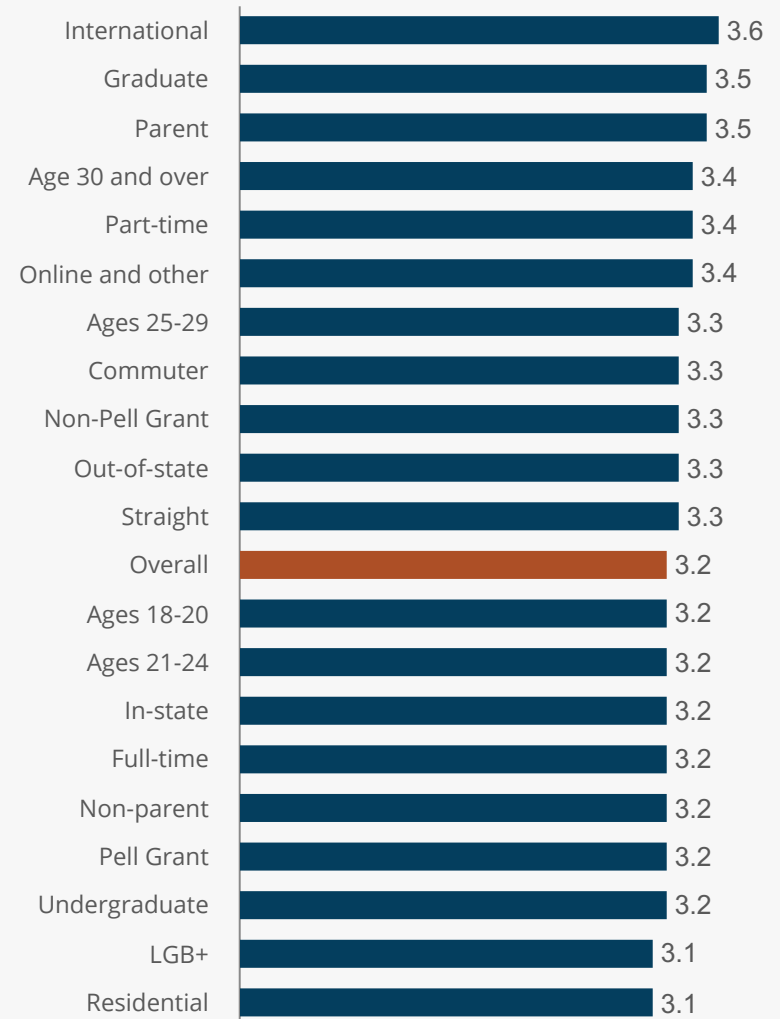
Differences in Perceptions of Well-being

Some demographic groups had lower perceptions of well-being.

Groups who were less likely than their counterparts to agree that they feel a sense of well-being at Fitchburg State University include:

- Residential students, relative to commuter, online, and other students
- LGB+ students
- Undergraduate students
- Pell-Grant recipients
- Students who are not parents
- Full-time students
- In-state students, relative to out-of state and International students
- Students age 24 and under

Fig. 23 Differences in perceptions of well-being





Findings

Knowledge of Resources, Policies, & Offices

Knowledge of Resources and Policies

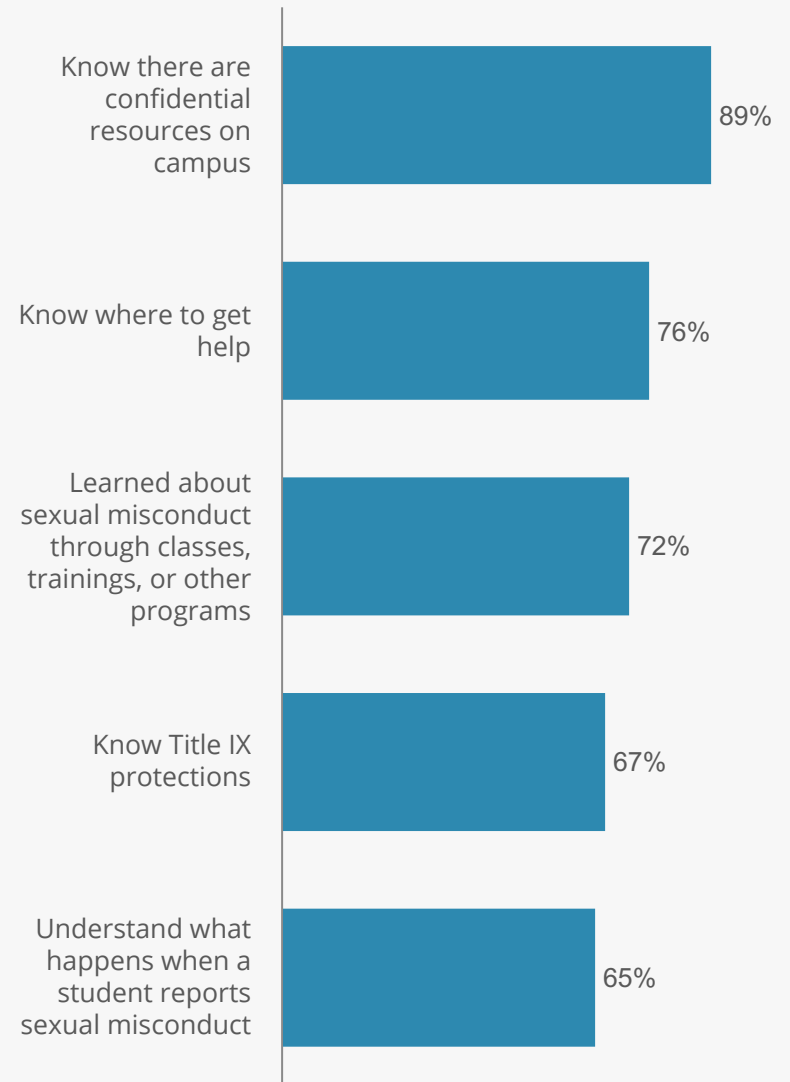
Students were asked about their knowledge of campus resources and policies relevant to sexual misconduct.

Eighty-nine percent (89%) were aware that there are confidential resources available on campus and 76% knew where at Fitchburg State University they could get help if someone they know experiences sexual misconduct.

Seventy-two percent (72%) of students confirmed that they learned about sexual misconduct through classes, trainings, or other programs at Fitchburg State University. Additionally, 67% indicated that they knew their Title IX protections.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of students understood what happens when a student reports sexual misconduct.

Fig. 24 Knowledge of campus resources and policies



Knowledge of Campus Offices and Departments

Students were asked about their knowledge of certain campus offices and departments.

A majority of students confirmed that they knew about Counseling Services and Disability Services. Half were aware of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Less than half of students were aware of TRIO, Community Health Connections, Student Conduct, FAVE, and CARE & Case Management.

When asked if Fitchburg State University has a Title IX Coordinator, 58% of participants answered 'yes,' while 42% answered that they were unsure.

Fig. 25 Knowledge of campus offices/departments

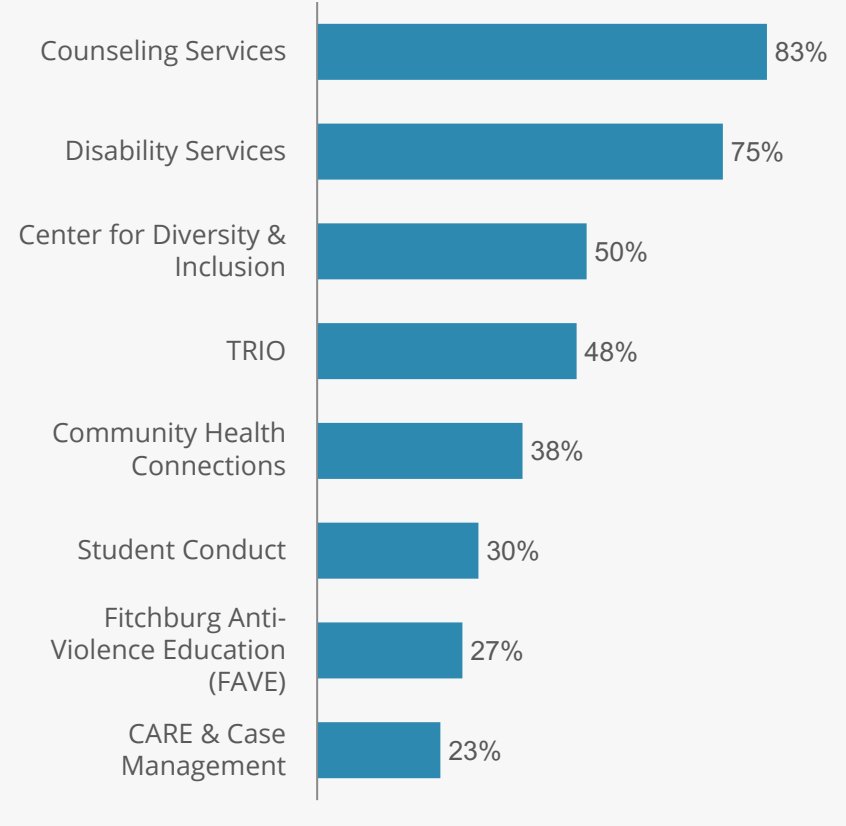
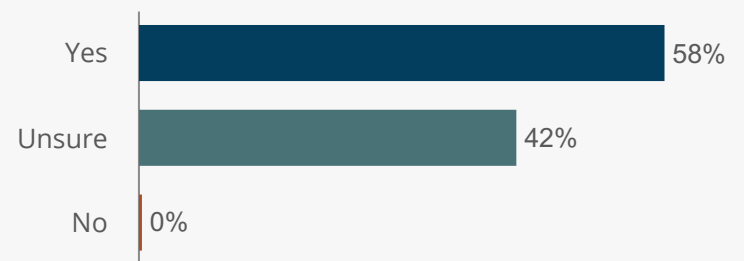


Fig. 26 Does Fitchburg State University have a Title IX coordinator?



Knowledge of Sexual Misconduct Prevention

Students were asked whether they had received written, verbal, or online information from anyone at Fitchburg State University relevant to sexual misconduct prevention.

Prevention

Sixty percent (60%) received information on how to help prevent sexual misconduct and 48% of students confirmed that they have received information on how to intervene as a bystander.

Definitions and Policies

Seventy-three percent (73%) were informed of the University's policy on sexual misconduct and 67% were informed of the definition of consent. Sixty-six percent (66%) of students confirmed that they received information on the definition of sexual misconduct.

Reporting and Resources

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of students received information on how to report sexual misconduct, and 64% were informed about where to get help if someone they know experiences sexual misconduct.

Fig. 27 Received information about the following from someone at the school

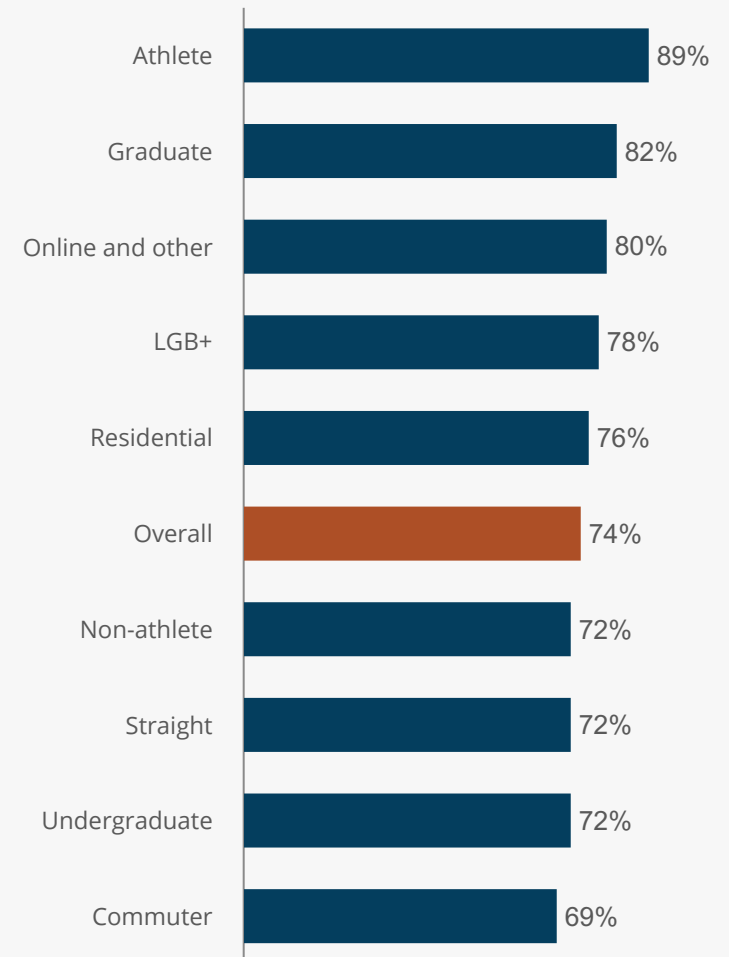


Differences in Knowledge of Resources and Policies

Some demographic groups were less likely to agree that they knew about campus resources and policies relevant to sexual misconduct.

Students who commute, undergraduate students, straight students, and non-athletes were less likely to agree that they knew this information compared to their respective counterparts.

Fig. 28 Differences in knowledge of campus resources and policies





Findings

Campus Climate

Campus Culture

Students were asked about the culture of sexual harassment at Fitchburg State University, and their perceptions of Fitchburg State University's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct. Their responses were scored on a scale from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most positive response.

On average, students **slightly agreed** that it is uncommon for people at the University to make sexist comments or jokes, and that Fitchburg State University is doing a good job of trying to prevent sexual misconduct from occurring and of holding perpetrators accountable.

2.9_{/4}

Campus Culture

1 = negative response
4 = positive response

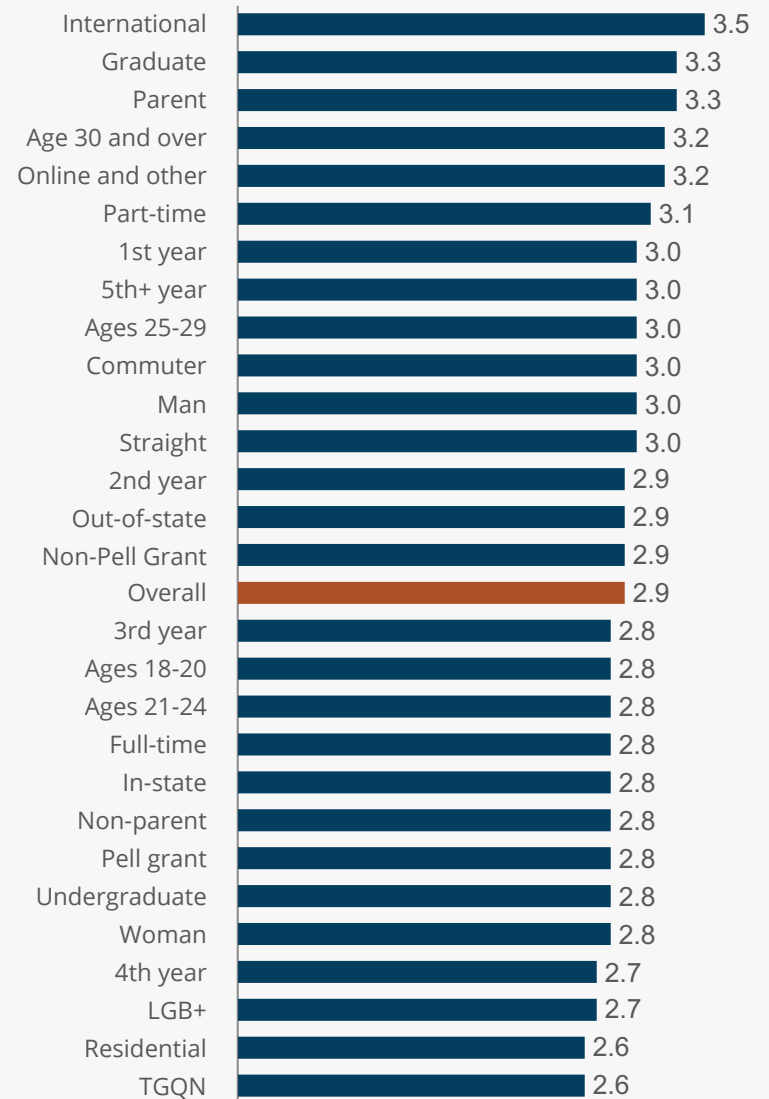
Differences in Perception of Campus Culture

Some demographic groups had lower perceptions about the culture of sexual harassment at Fitchburg State University.

Groups who were less likely than their counterparts to agree that it is uncommon for people at the University to make sexist comments or jokes, and that the University is doing a good job of preventing and responding to sexual misconduct include:

- TGQN students
- Residential students, relative to commuter, online, and other students
- LGB+ students
- Students in their fourth or third year
- Women
- Undergraduate students
- Pell Grant recipients
- Students who are not parents
- In-state students, relative to out-of-state and international students
- Full-time students
- Students age 24 and under

Fig. 29 Differences in perception of campus culture



1 = negative response
4 = positive response

Confidence in Reporting

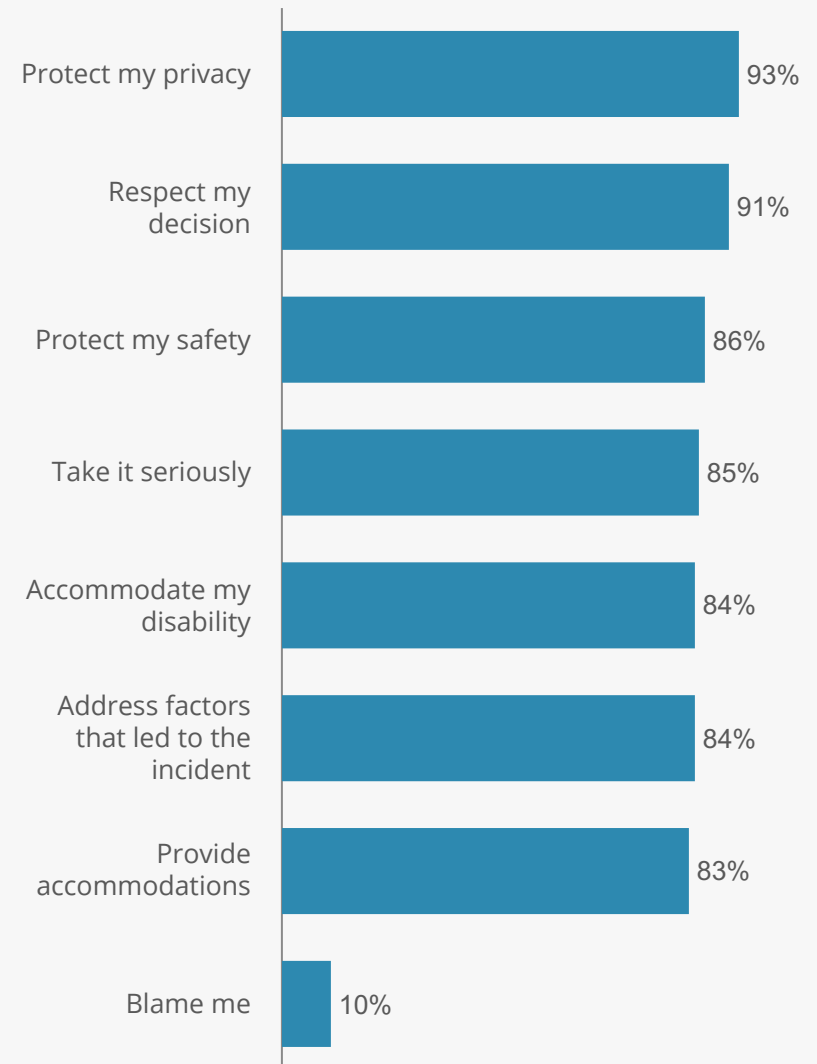
Participants who did not experience an incident of sexual misconduct since they have been a student at Fitchburg State University were asked about their confidence in the University's reporting process and campus resources. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of students indicated that they would seek counseling or health services, 27% would go to the University Police Department, and 39% would go to another employee if sexual misconduct occurred.

Ninety-one percent (91%) believed that the University would respect their decision about what to do and 85% of students believed that their case would be taken seriously if they reported an incident of sexual misconduct.

A majority of students believed that their privacy (93%) and safety (86%) would be protected by the University, and 84% felt that the University would address the factors that may have led to the incident. Ten percent (10%) of students believed that the University would blame them or not believe them.

Eighty-three percent (83%) of students believed that the University would provide support and accommodations. Of those who identified as having a disability, 84% believed that the University would properly accommodate their disability.

Fig. 30 If an incident of sexual misconduct occurred, I believe Fitchburg State University would...





Findings

Personal Experience

69% of Students Experienced Sexual Misconduct

The survey asked students about their experiences of non-consensual sexual contact, sexual harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence since they have been a student at Fitchburg State University. Overall, 69% of participants experienced at least one form of sexual misconduct.

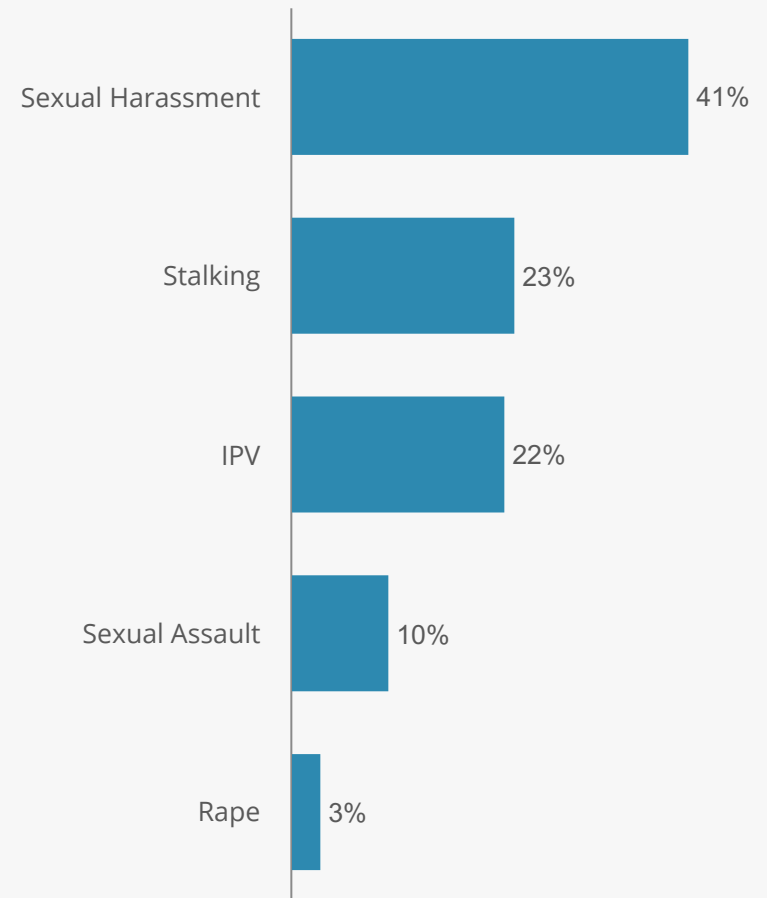
- **41%** experienced sexual harassment
- **23%** experienced stalking
- **22%** experienced IPV
- **10%** experienced sexual assault
- **3%** experienced rape

INSIGHTS

Even with an anonymous survey, individuals may be hesitant to disclose experiences of unwanted sexual contact.¹

¹ Hirsch, J. S. & Khan, S. (2020). Sexual citizens: A landmark study of sex, power and assault on campus. WW Norton.

Fig. 31 Prevalence of sexual misconduct



23%

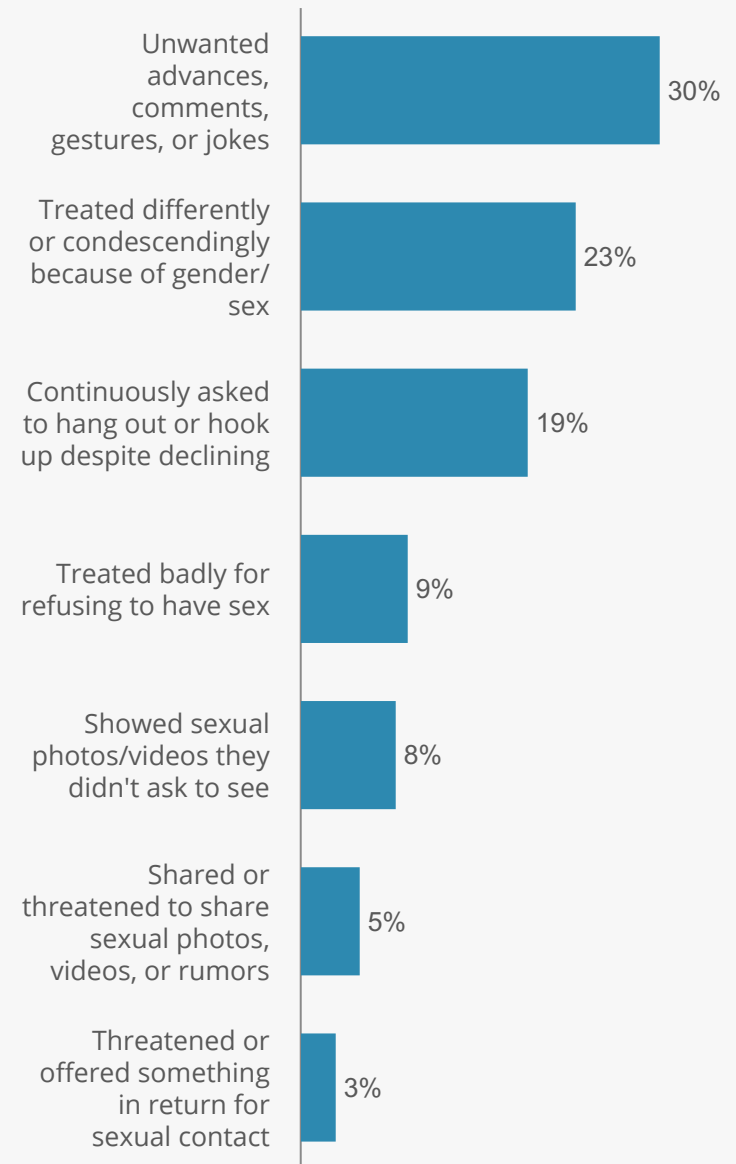
experienced **two or more** instances of sexual misconduct.

41% of Students Experienced Sexual Harassment

The survey asked students about their experiences of sexual harassment since they have been a student at Fitchburg State University. Overall, 31% of participants experienced sexual harassment once and 10% experienced sexual harassment more than once.

The highest percentage of students reported that someone made unwanted sexual advances, comments, gestures, or jokes toward them (30%), that someone treated them differently or condescendingly because of their gender/sex (23%), and that someone continuously asked them to hangout or hook up despite them declining (19%).

Fig. 32 Prevalence of sexual harassment



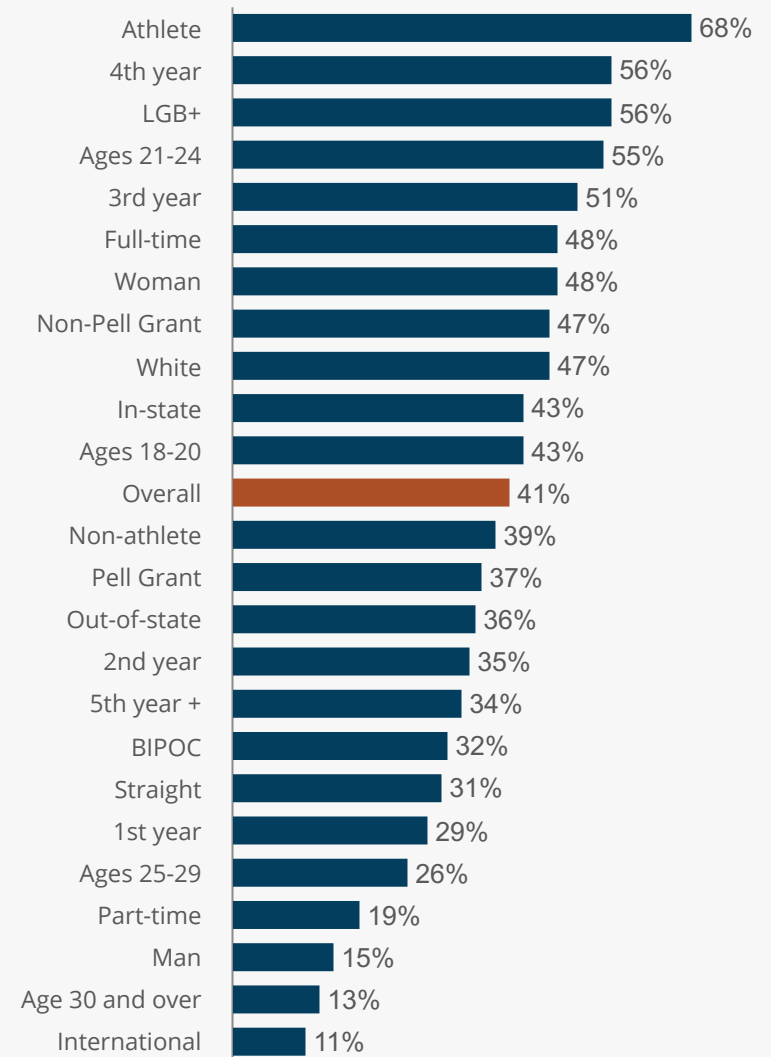
Differences in Experience of Sexual Harassment

The prevalence of sexual harassment varied across demographic groups.

Groups who were more likely to experience sexual harassment than their counterparts include:

- Athletes
- Fourth and third year students
- LGB+ students
- Students ages 18-24
- Full-time students
- Women
- Non-Pell Grant recipients
- White students
- In-state students

Fig. 33 Prevalence of sexual harassment by demographics

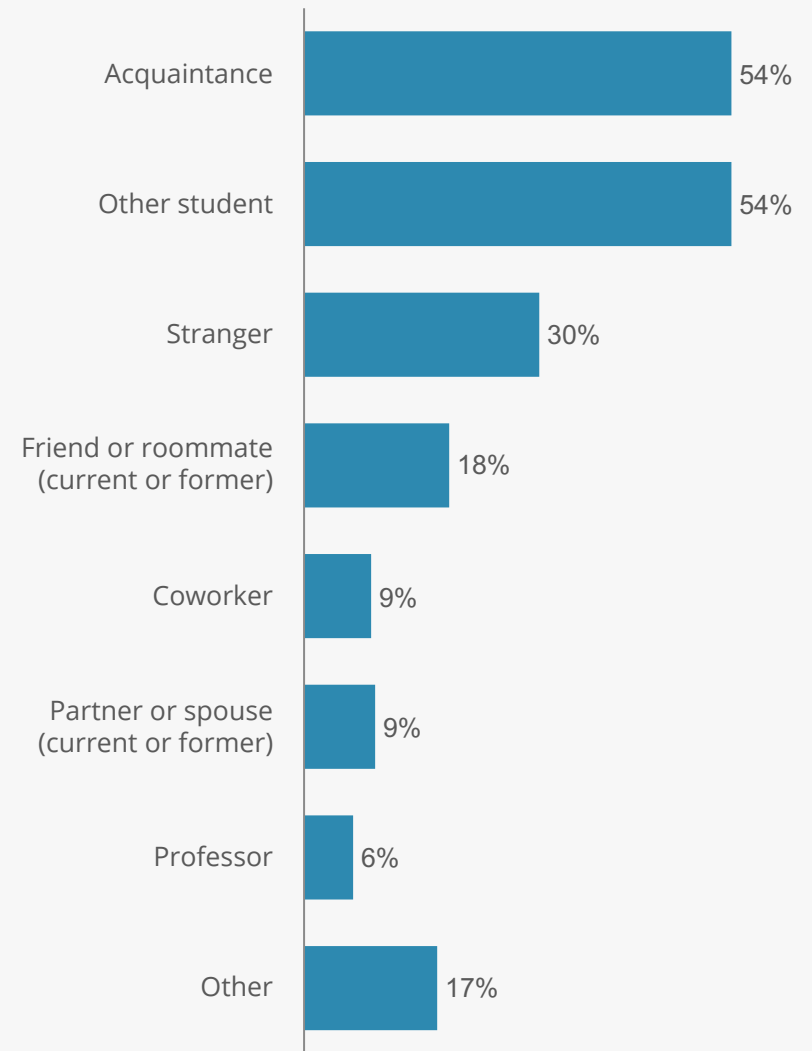


Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment

Students who experienced sexual harassment were asked what their relationship was with the person(s) who engaged in that behavior.

The highest percentage of students indicated that the perpetrator was an acquaintance, friend of a friend, or someone they just met (54%), followed by another student (54%), and stranger (30%).

Fig. 34 Perpetration of sexual harassment



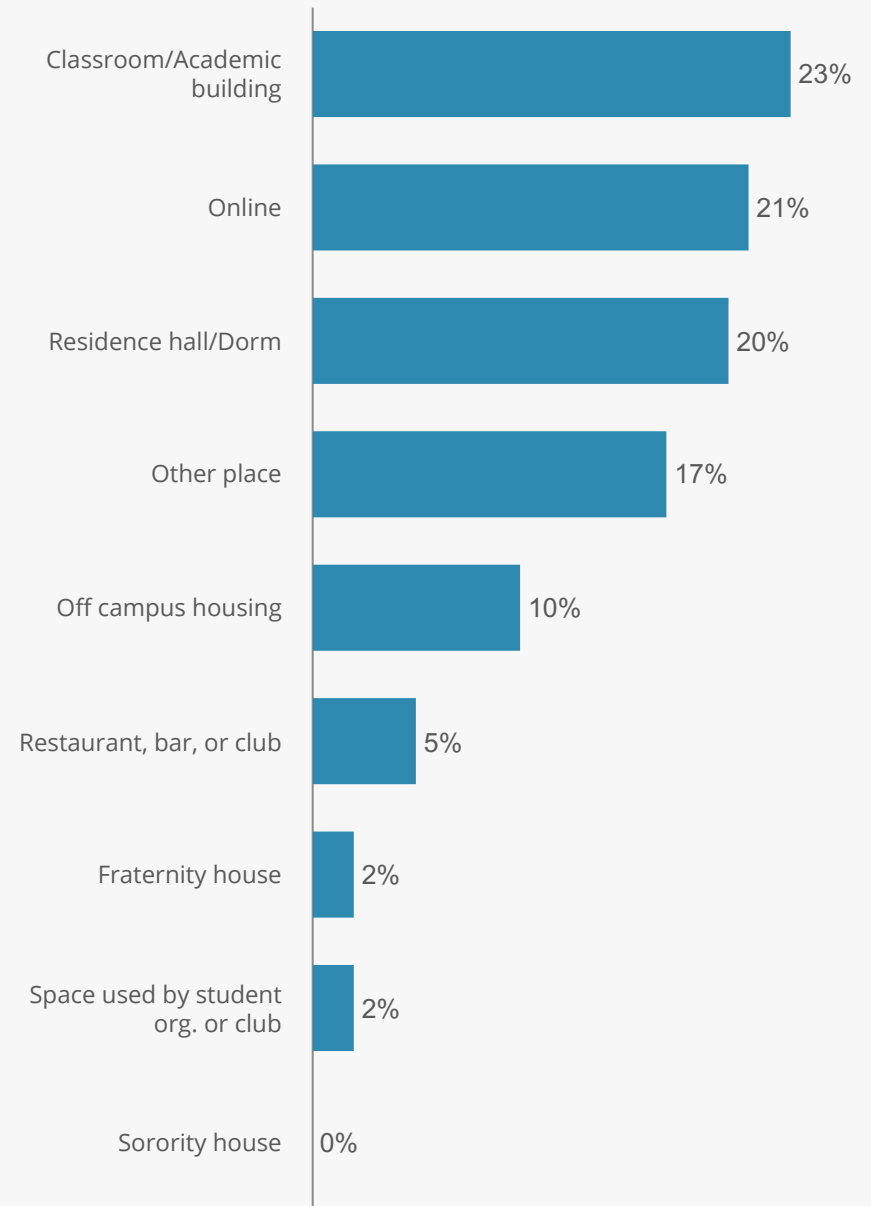
*Other includes boss or supervisor, coach or trainer, family member, someone else, other employee, TA or RA, and unsure. The response rates of these options were too small to report separately.

Locations Where Sexual Harassment Occurred

Students who experienced sexual harassment were asked about where the incident took place.

The highest percentage of students indicated that the incident occurred in a classroom or other academic building (23%), online (21%), and in a residence hall or dorm (20%).

Fig. 35 Prevalence of sexual harassment by location



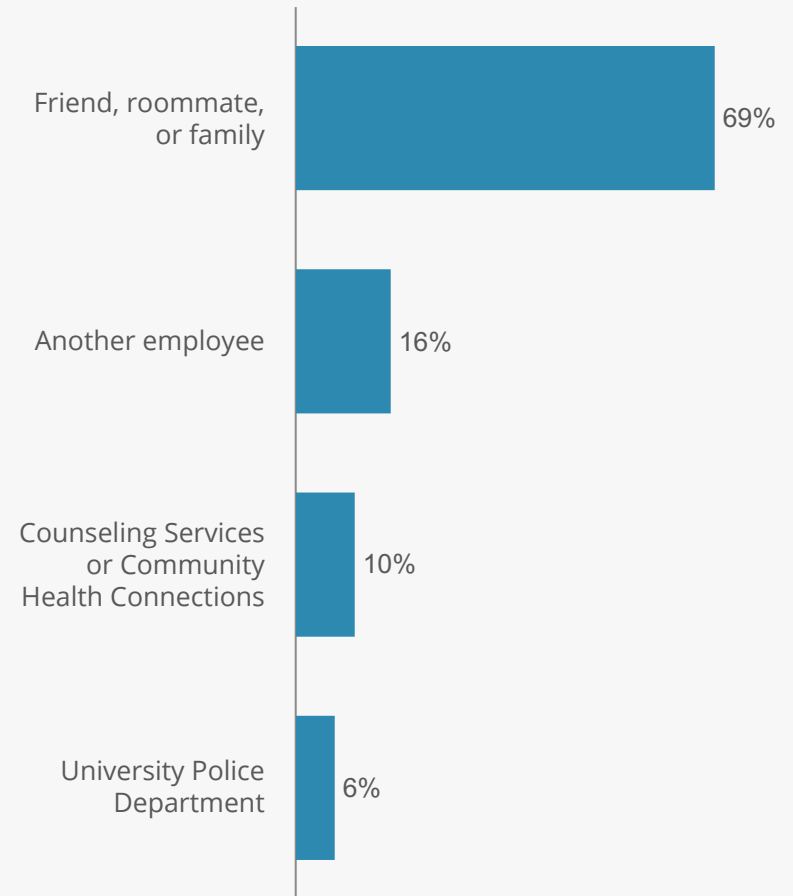
Reporting of Sexual Harassment

Students who experienced sexual harassment were asked if they told someone about the incident.

While most students told a friend, roommate, or family member (69%), a majority did not report the incident to the University.

- **16%** contacted another campus employee
- **10%** contacted Counseling Services or Community Health Connections
- **6%** contacted the University Police Department

Fig. 36 Reporting of sexual harassment

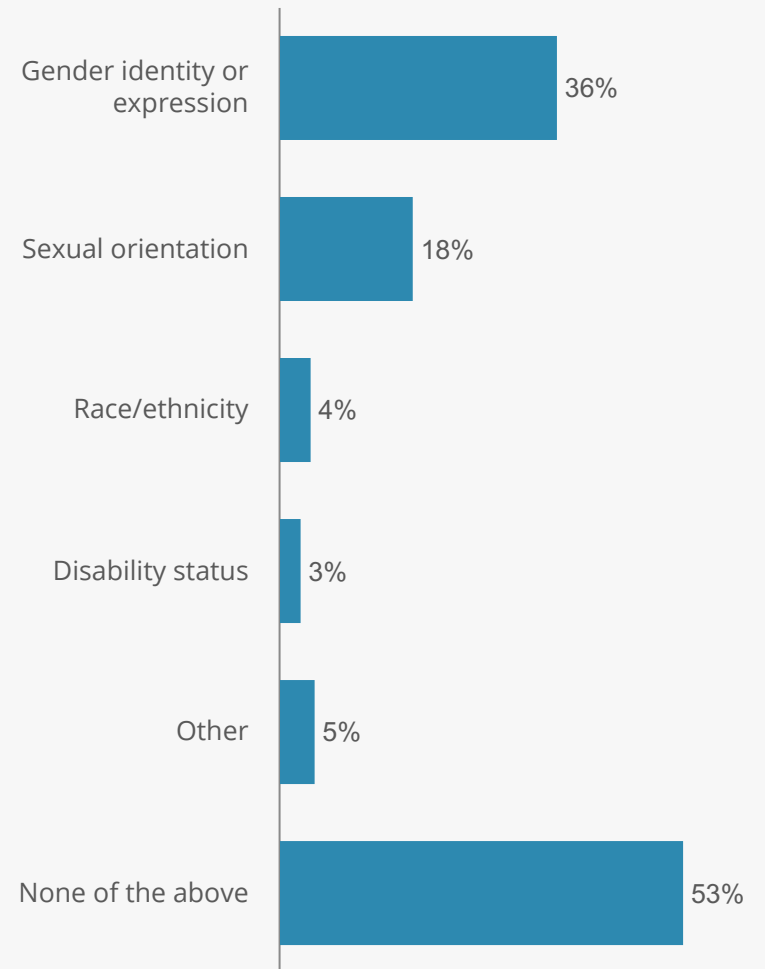


Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

Students who experienced sexual harassment were asked if they believed the incidents were related to an identity that they hold.

- **36%** believed the incident was related to their gender identity or gender expression
- **18%** believed the incident was related to their sexual orientation
- **4%** believed the incident was related to their race or ethnicity
- **3%** believed the incident was related to their disability status
- **5%** believed the incident was related to another identity

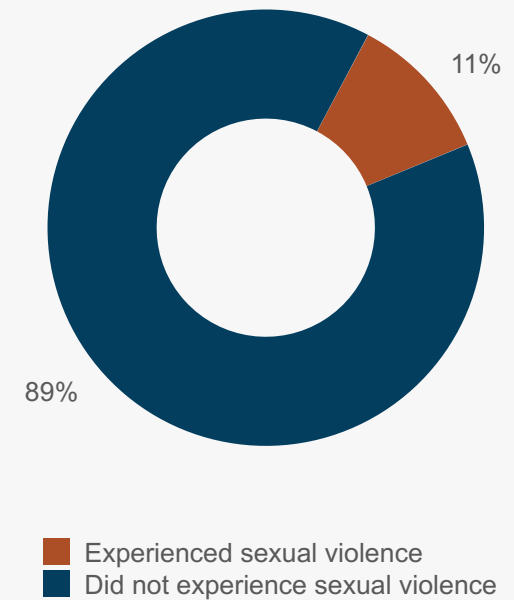
Fig. 37 Sexual harassment and discrimination



11% of Students Experienced Sexual Violence

Overall, 11% of participants indicated that they experienced sexual assault and/or rape since they have been a student at Fitchburg State University.

Fig. 38 Prevalence of sexual violence

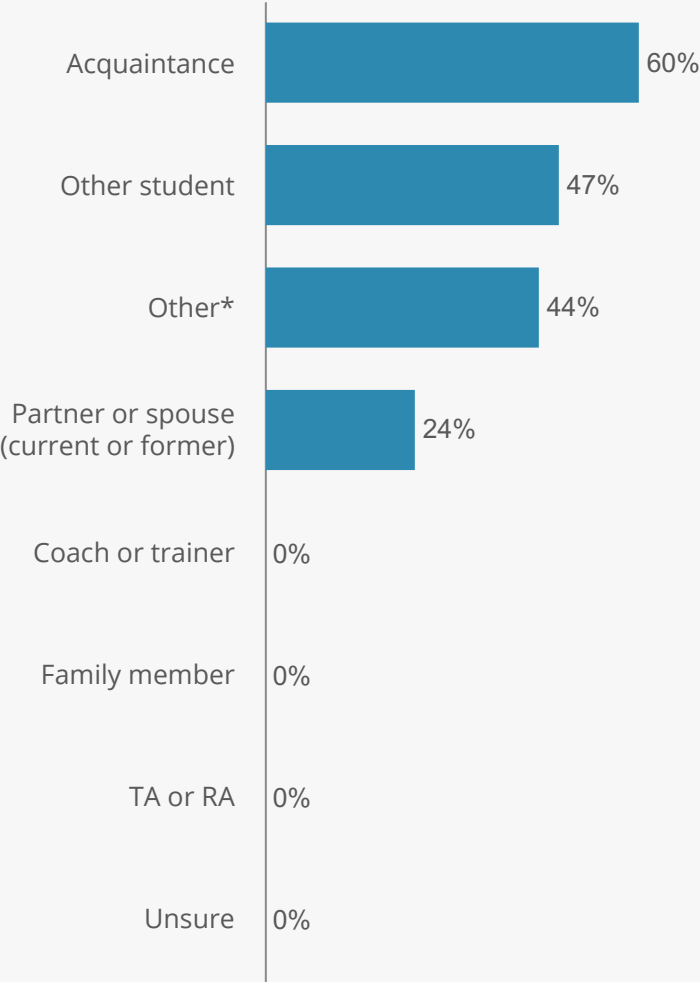


Perpetrators of Sexual Violence

Students who experienced sexual assault and/or rape were asked what their relationship was with the person(s) who engaged in that behavior.

The highest percentage of students indicated that the perpetrator was an acquaintance, friend of a friend, or someone they just met (60%), another student (47%), and a current or former partner or spouse (24%).

Fig. 39 Perpetration of sexual violence



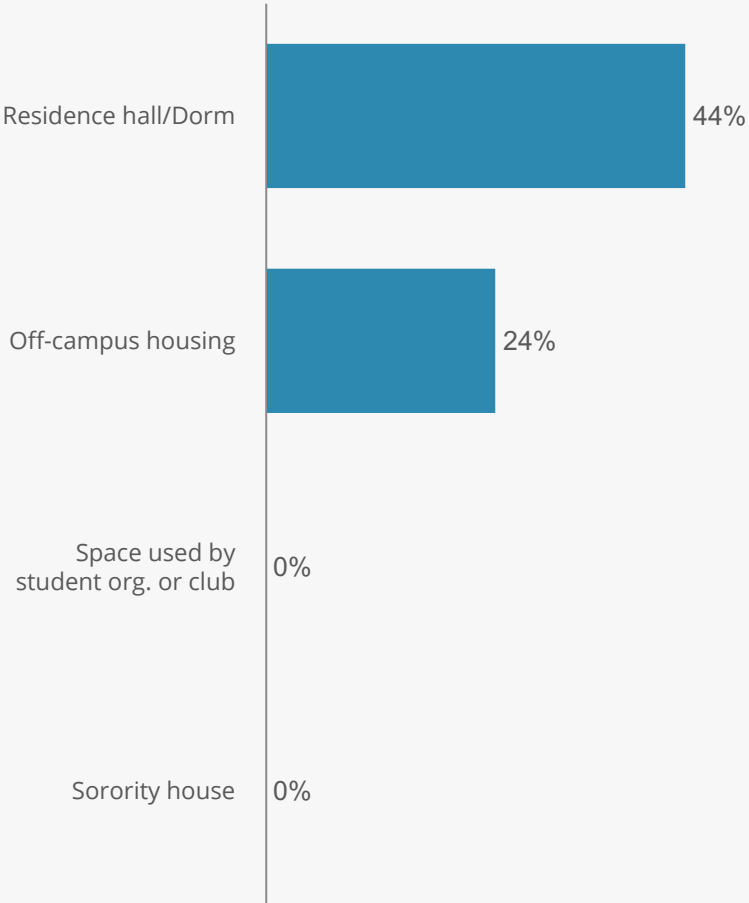
*Other includes boss or supervisor, coworker, friend or roommate, other employee, professor, stranger, or someone else. The response rates of these options were too small to report separately.

Locations Where Sexual Violence Occurred

Students who experienced sexual assault and/or rape were asked about where the incident took place.

The highest percentage of students indicated that the incident occurred in a residence hall or dorm (44%) or in off-campus housing (24%). The prevalence was too small to report for incidents that occurred in the classroom or academic spaces, fraternity houses, restaurants or bars, or other place.

Fig. 40 Prevalence of sexual violence by location



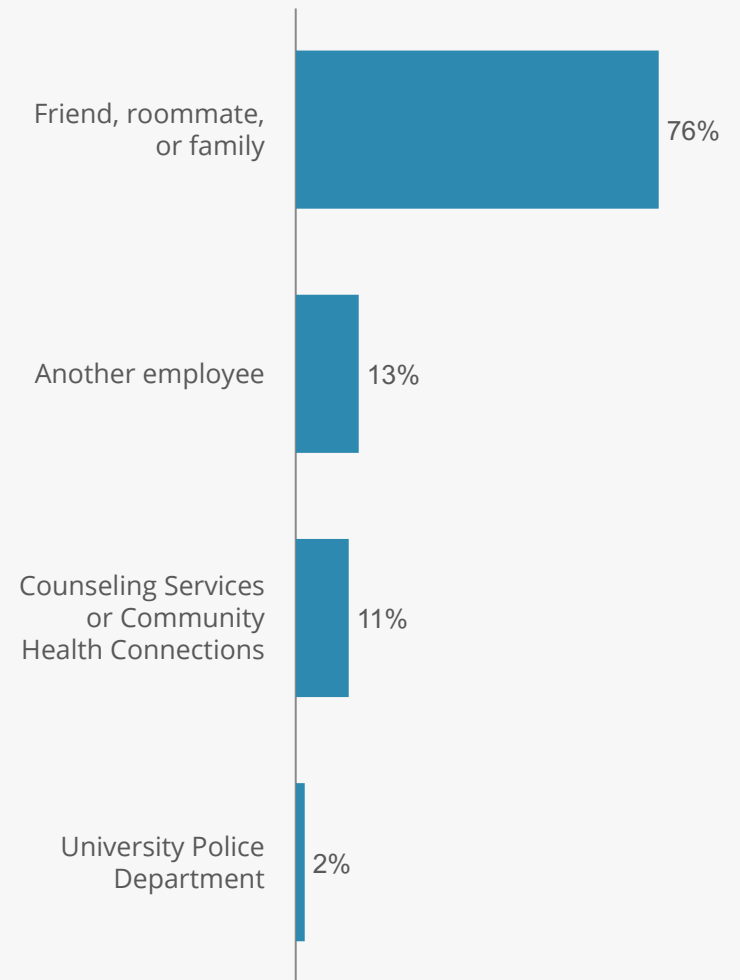
Reporting of Sexual Violence

Students who experienced sexual assault and/or rape were asked if they told someone about the incident.

While most students told a friend, roommate, or family member (76%), a majority did not report the incident to the University.

- **13%** contacted another campus employee
- **11%** contacted Counseling Services or Community Health Connections
- **2%** contacted the University Police Department

Fig. 41 Reporting of sexual violence

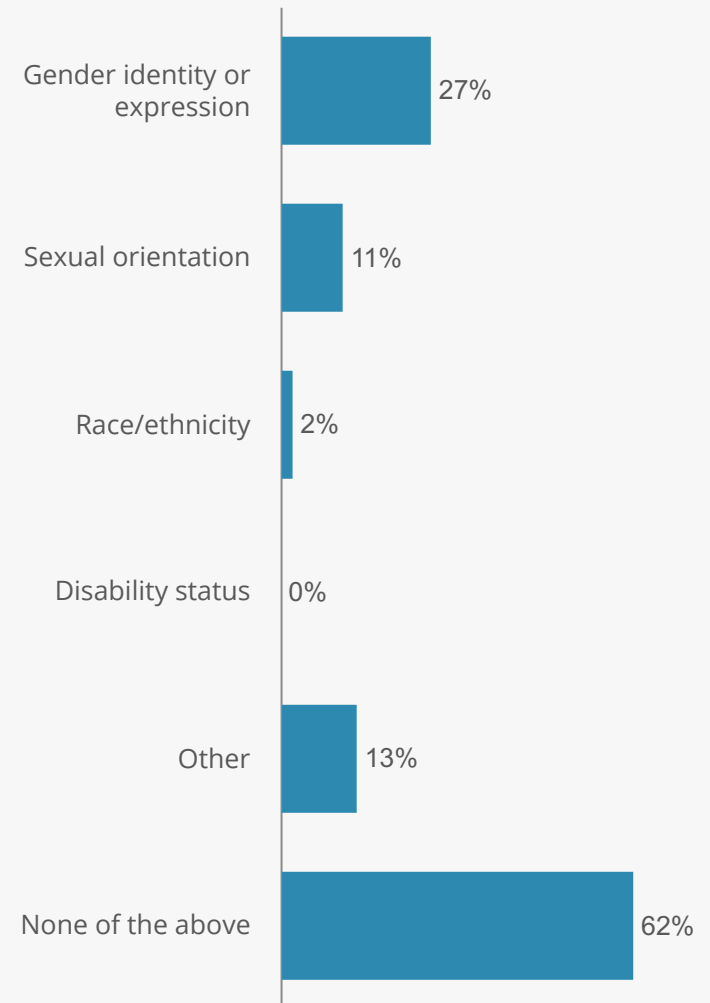


Sexual Violence and Discrimination

Students who experienced sexual violence were asked if they believed the incidents were related to an identity that they hold.

- **27%** believed the incident was related to their gender identity or gender expression
- **11%** believed the incident was related to their sexual orientation
- **2%** believed the incident was related to their race or ethnicity
- **13%** believed the incident was related to another identity

Fig. 42 Sexual violence and discrimination

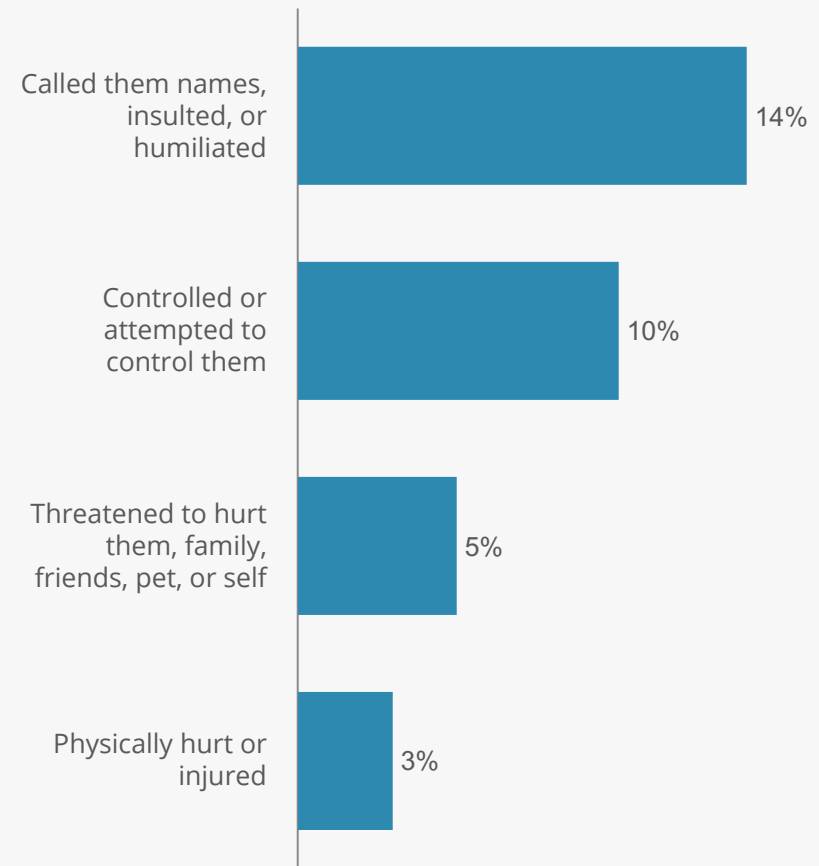


22% of Students Experienced Intimate Partner Violence

The survey asked students about their experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) since they have been a student at Fitchburg State University. Overall, 11% of participants experienced IPV once and 11% experienced IPV more than once.

Students reported that an intimate partner called them names, insulted, or humiliated them (14%), controlled or attempted to control them (10%), threatened to hurt them, their family, friends, or pets, or threatened to hurt themselves (5%), and physically hurt or injured them (3%).

Fig. 43 Prevalence of intimate partner violence



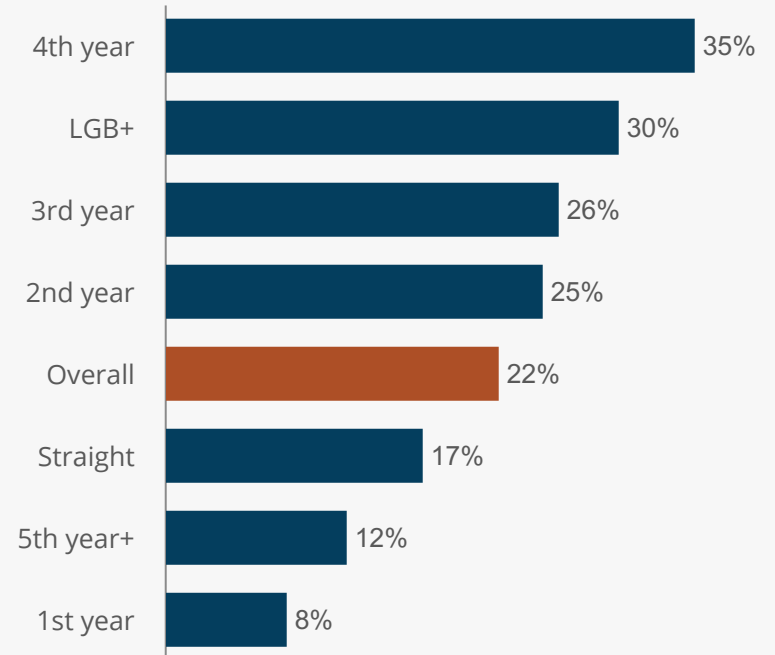
Differences in Experience of Intimate Partner Violence

The prevalence of intimate partner violence varied by class year and sexual orientation.

Students in their fourth year were most likely to have experienced IPV, followed by students in their third, then second year. Students in their fifth+ and first years were least likely to have experienced IPV.

LGB+ students were more likely to have experienced IPV than straight students.

Fig. 44 Prevalence of intimate partner violence by demographics



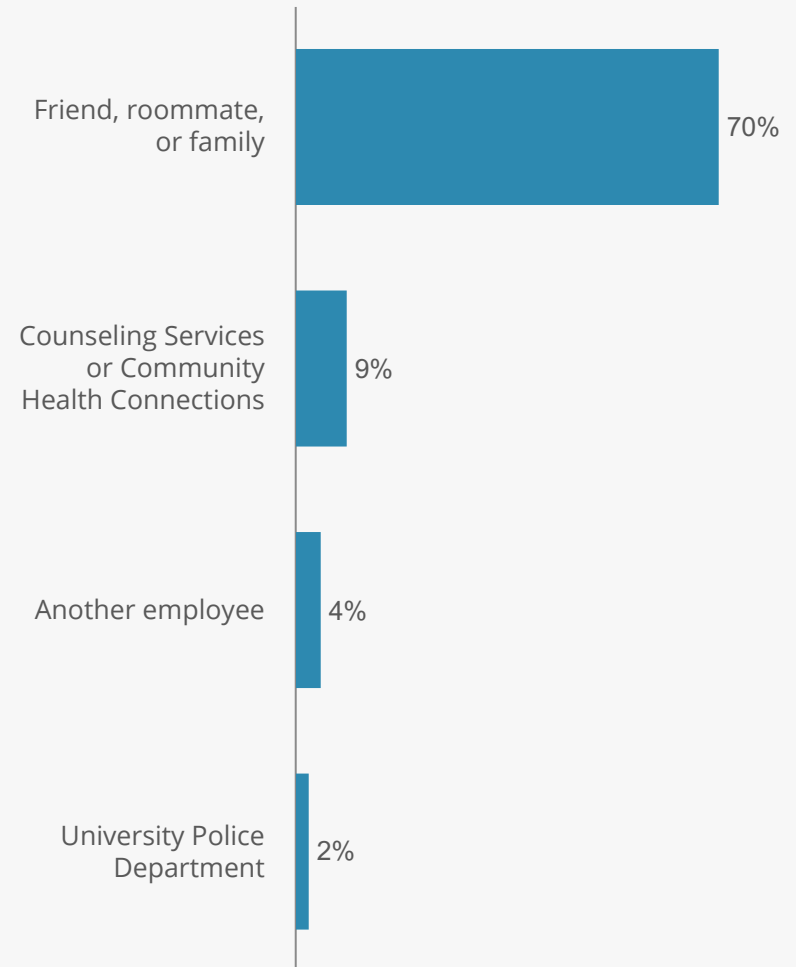
Reporting of Intimate Partner Violence

Students who experienced intimate partner violence were asked if they told someone about the incident.

While most students told a friend, roommate, or family member (70%), a majority did not report the incident to the University.

- **9%** contacted Counseling Services or Community Health Connections
- **4%** contacted another campus employee
- **2%** contacted the University Police Department

Fig. 45 Reporting of intimate partner violence

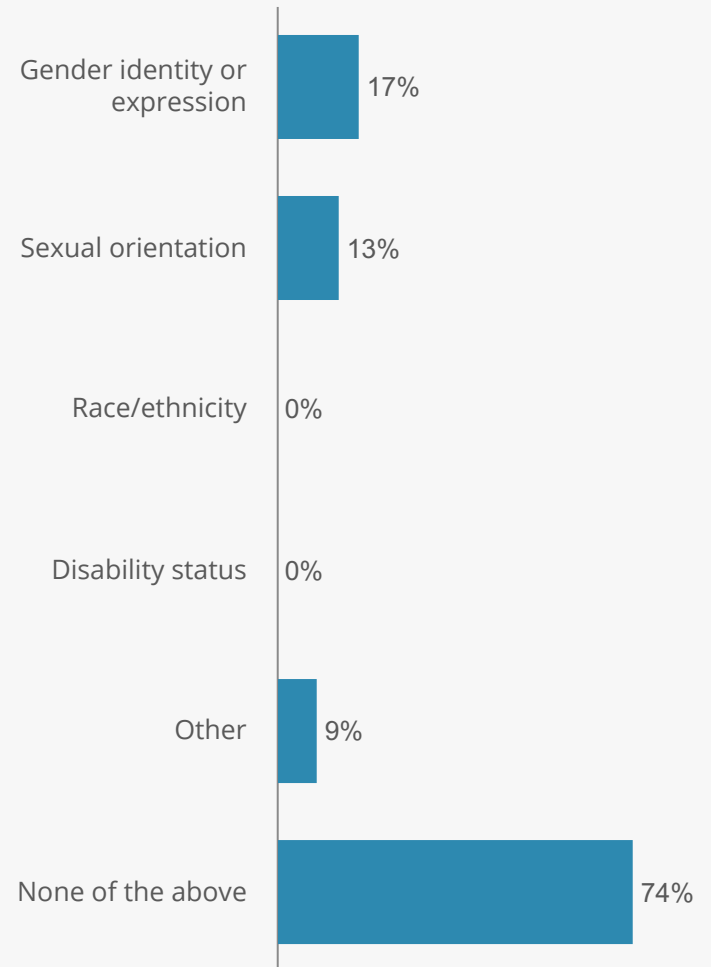


Intimate Partner Violence and Discrimination

Students who experienced intimate partner violence were asked if they believed the incidents were related to an identity that they hold.

- **17%** believed the incident was related to their gender identity or gender expression
- **13%** believed the incident was related to their sexual orientation
- **9%** believed the incident was related to another identity

Fig. 46 Intimate partner violence and discrimination

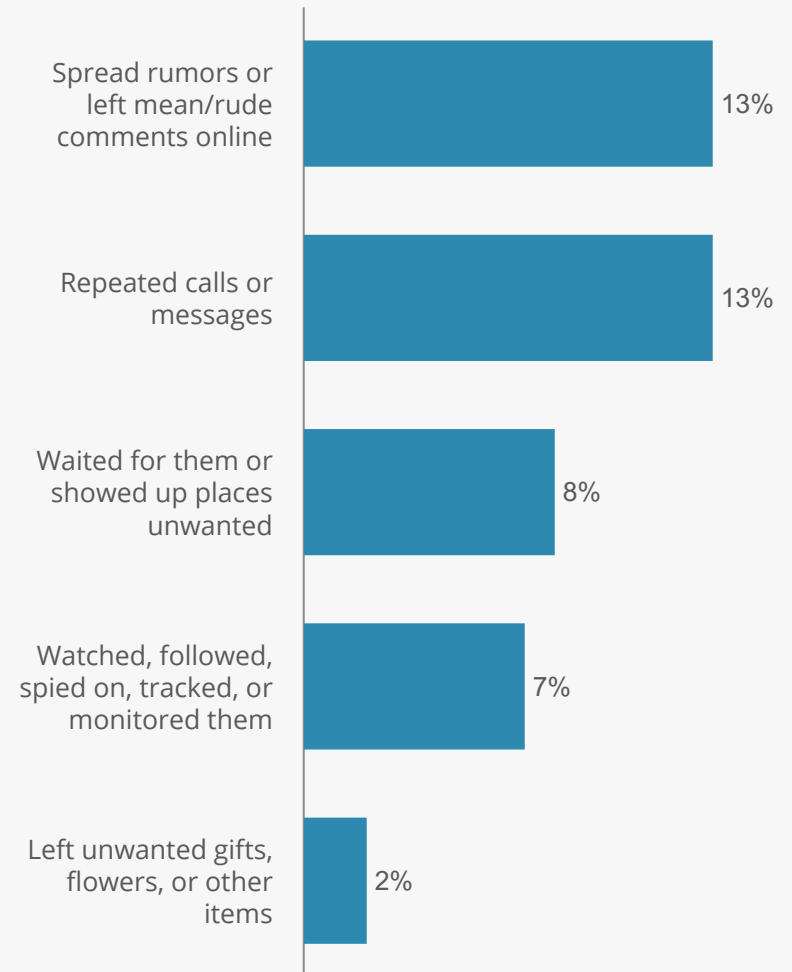


23% of Students Experienced Stalking

Students were asked about stalking situations when someone acted in a way that seemed obsessive or made them concerned for their safety since they have been a student at Fitchburg State University. Overall, 13% of participants experienced stalking once and 11% experienced stalking more than once.

The highest percentage of students reported that someone spread rumors or left mean/rude comments online (13%) and that someone repeatedly called them or sent unwanted messages (13%).

Fig. 47 Prevalence of stalking by behavior



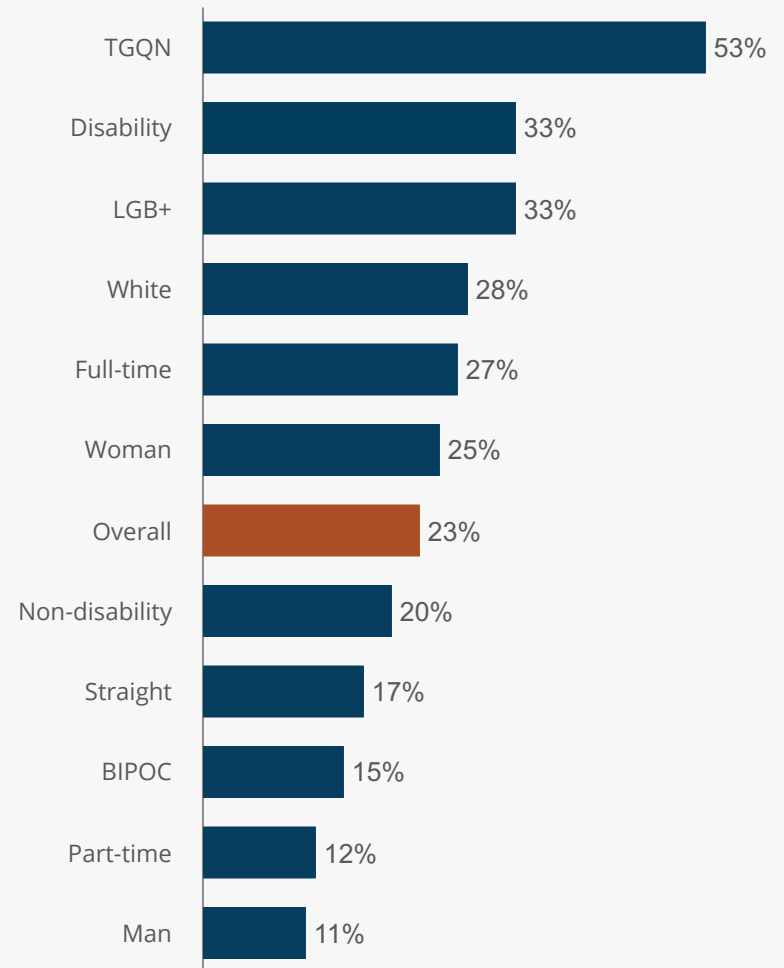
Differences in Experience of Stalking

The prevalence of stalking varied by gender, disability status, sexual orientation, race, and enrollment status.

Groups who were more likely to experience stalking than their counterparts include:

- TGQN students
- Students with disabilities
- LGB+ students
- White students
- Full-time students
- Women

Fig. 48 Prevalence of stalking by demographics

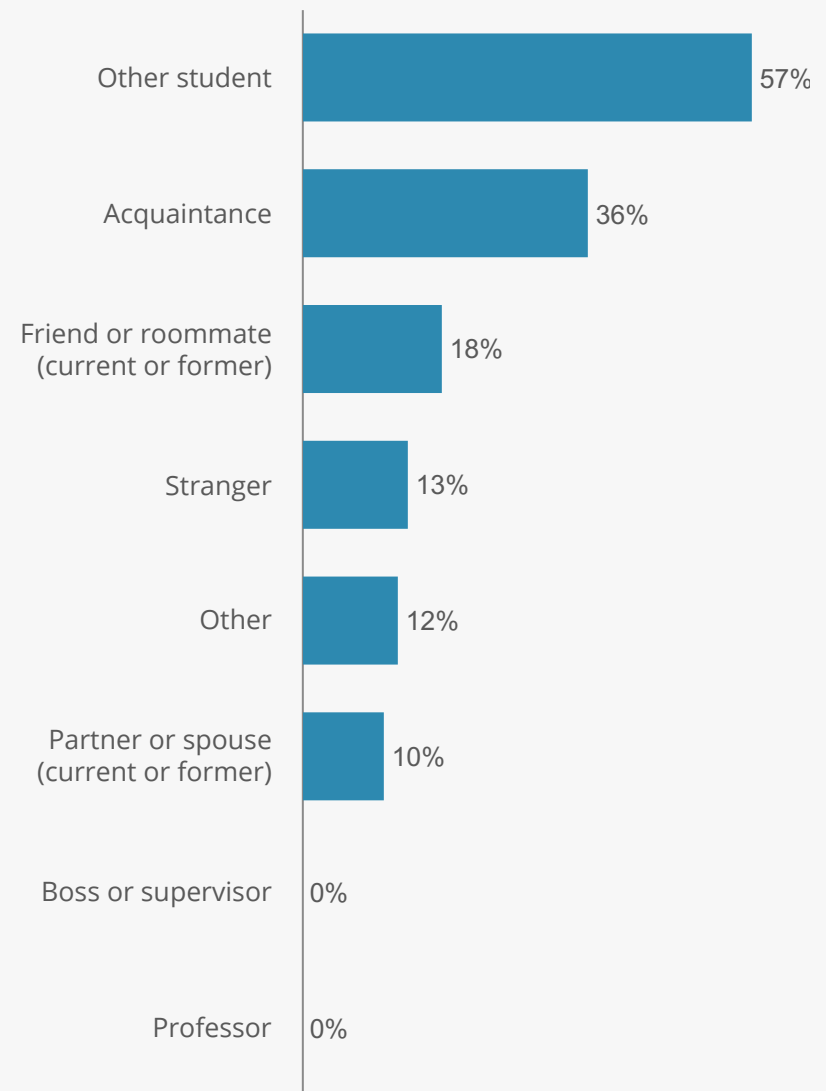


Perpetrators of Stalking

Students who experienced stalking were asked what their relationship was with the person(s) who engaged in that behavior.

The highest percentage of students indicated that the perpetrator was another student (57%), an acquaintance, friend of a friend, or someone they just met (36%) and a current or former friend or roommate (18%).

Fig. 49 Perpetration of stalking



*Other includes coach or trainer, coworker, family member, other employee, TA or RA, someone else, or unsure. The response rates of these options were too small to report separately.

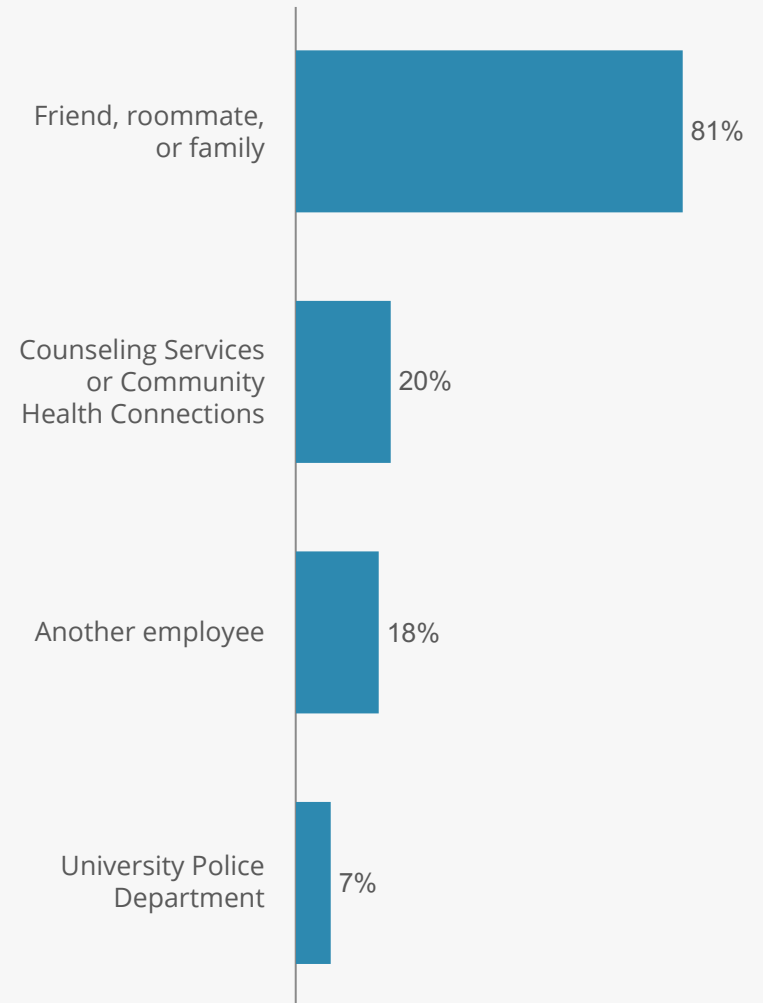
Reporting of Stalking

Students who experienced stalking were asked if they told someone about the incident.

While most students told a friend, roommate, or family member (81%), a majority did not report the incident to the University.

- **20%** contacted Counseling Services or Community Health Connections
- **18%** contacted another campus employee
- **7%** contacted the University Police Department

Fig. 50 Reporting of stalking

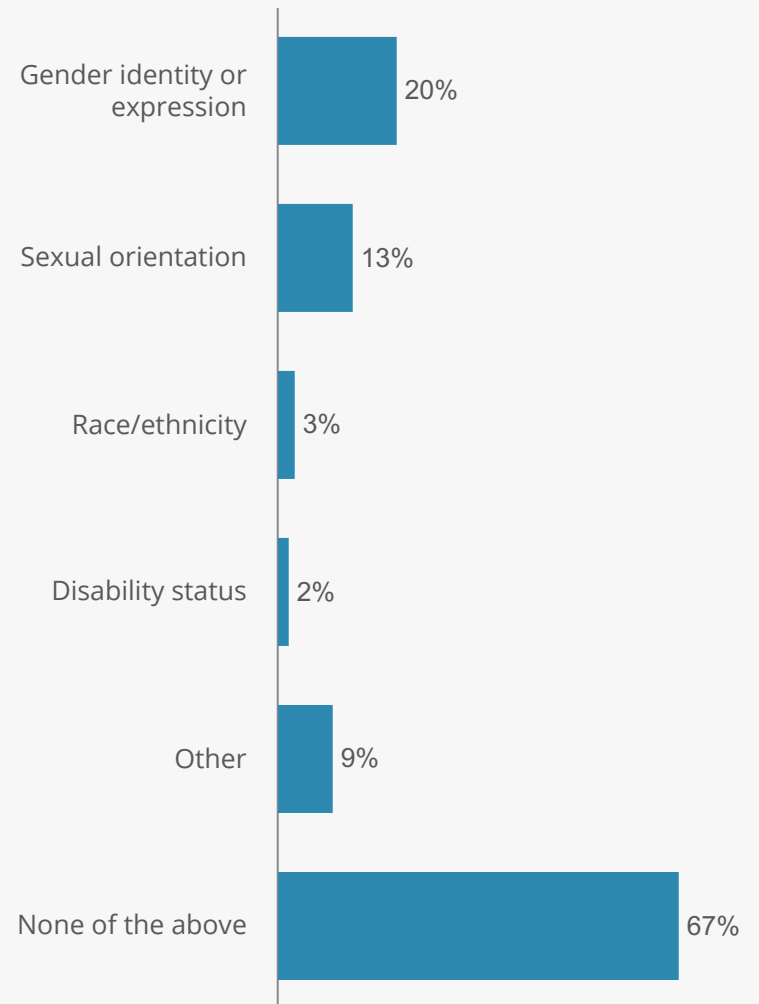


Stalking and Discrimination

Students who experienced stalking were asked if they believed the incidents were related to an identity that they hold.

- **20%** believed the incident was related to their gender identity or gender expression
- **13%** believed the incident was related to their sexual orientation
- **3%** believed the incident was related to their disability status
- **2%** believed the incident was related to their race or ethnicity
- **9%** believed the incident was related to another identity

Fig. 51 Stalking and discrimination





Findings

Reporting

Reasons Students Did Not Report

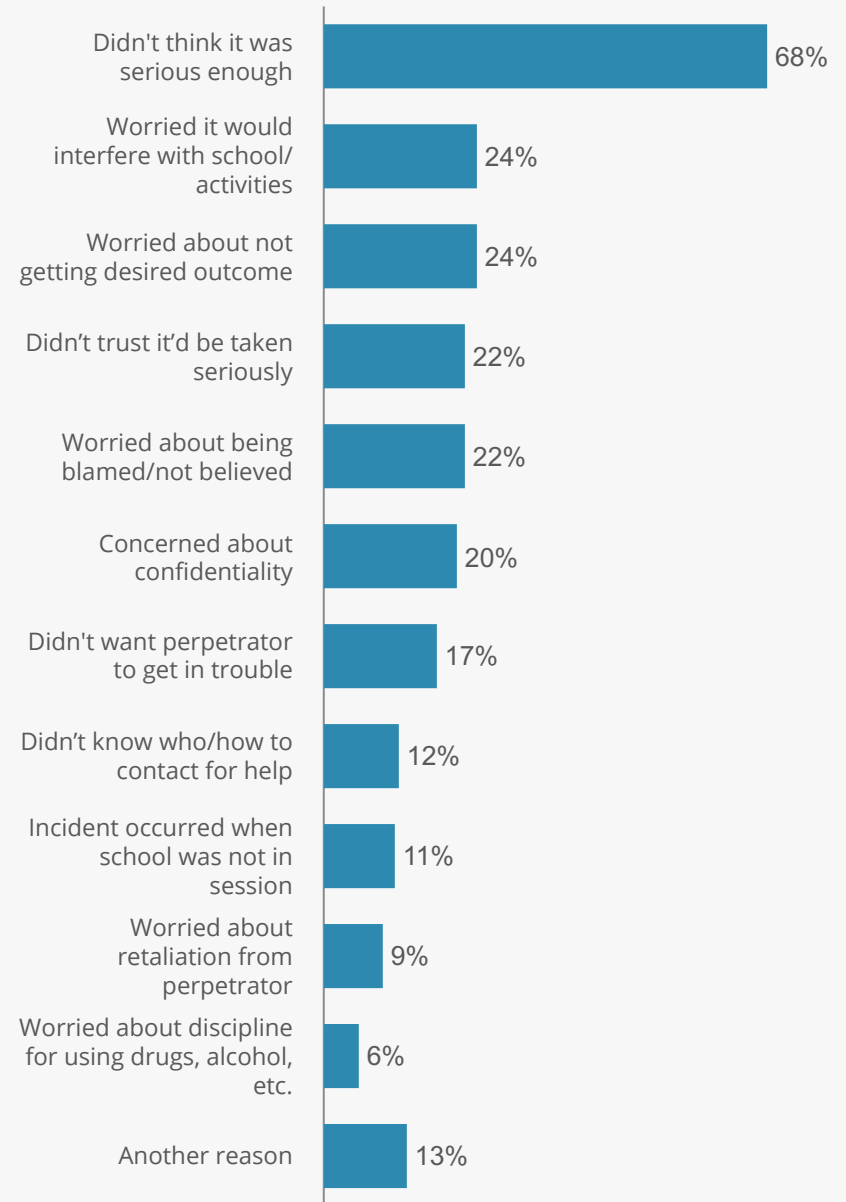
Students who experienced sexual misconduct but did not report it were asked about reasons they did not contact a campus official about the incident.

The most common reason why students did not report the incident was they did not think the incident was serious enough to report (68%).

Twenty-four percent (24%) felt it would take time away from studies or other activities, and 24% were worried they would not get the outcome they were looking for.

Twenty-two percent (22%) didn't trust that the report would be taken seriously and worried about being blamed or not believed.

Fig. 52 Reasons participants did not report sexual misconduct



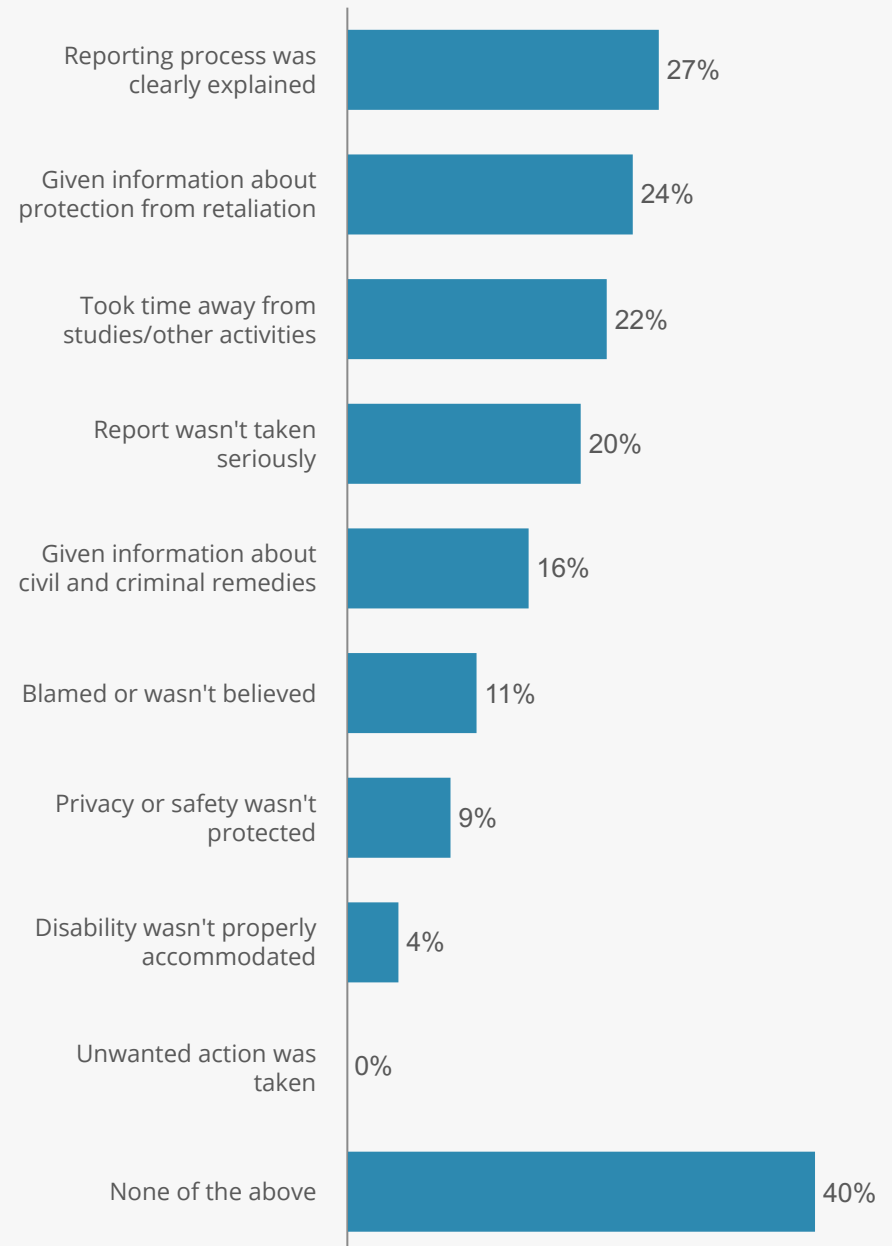
Experiences with the Reporting Process

Students who experienced sexual misconduct and told a campus official were asked about their experience reporting the incident.

Some students indicated that the reporting process was clearly explained (27%), they were given information about protection from retaliation (24%), and they were given information about civil and criminal remedies (16%).

Twenty-two percent (22%) felt that the process took time away from their studies or other activities. Twenty percent (20%) of students who reported an incident felt that their disclosure was not taken seriously.

Fig. 53 Experiences reporting sexual misconduct





Findings

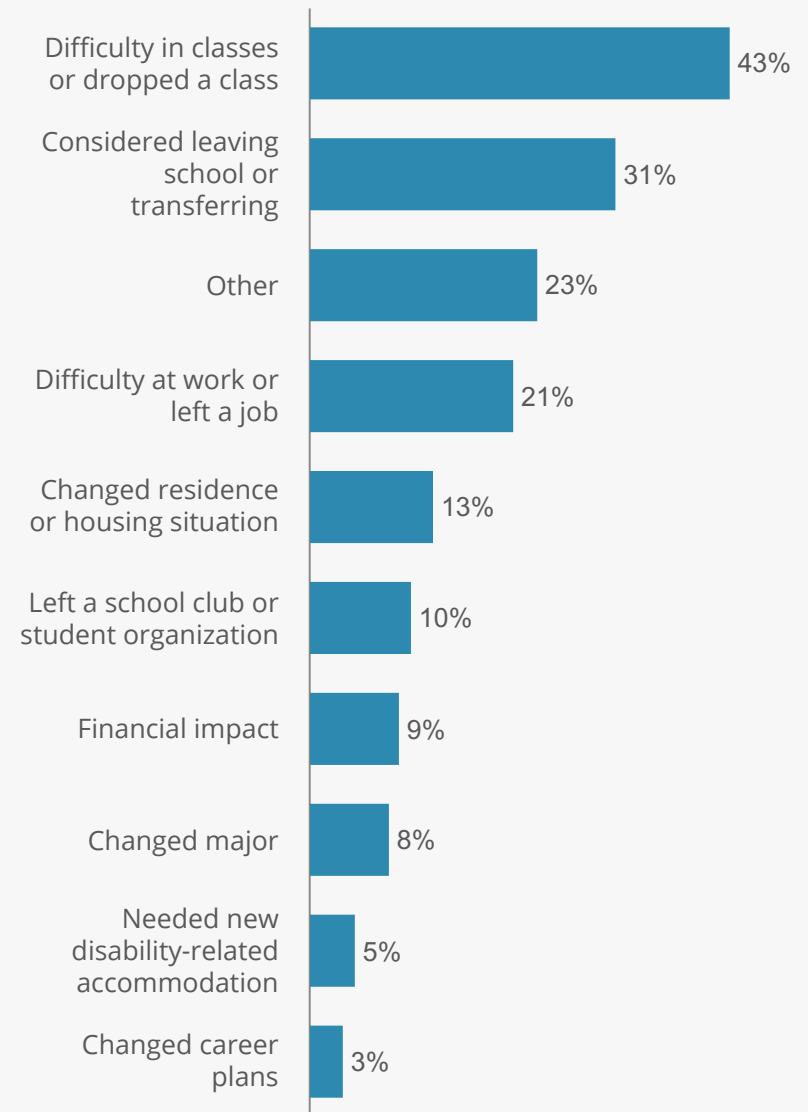
Impacts

Academic, Professional, & Student Life Impacts

Students who experienced sexual harassment, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, or stalking were asked about impacts they experienced following the incident.

Many students who experienced sexual misconduct also experienced difficulty in classes or dropped a class (43%). Thirty-one percent (31%) considered leaving school or transferring and 21% had difficulty at work or left a job.

Fig. 54 Impacts on academic, professional, or student life



Mental Health Impacts

Students who experienced sexual harassment, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, or stalking were also asked about whether they experienced certain mental health symptoms.

A majority of students who experienced sexual misconduct also felt nervous, anxious, or on edge (63%), felt down, depressed, or hopeless (57%), or had little interest or pleasure in doing things (55%).

The prevalence of mental health impacts varied by class year. Second year students (96%) were most likely to report experiencing at least one mental health impact, followed by fourth-year students (89%).

INSIGHTS

The COVID-19 pandemic has been linked to an increase in anxiety, depression, and social isolation among college students. A sense of belonging with their college campus may be a protective factor.²

2 Gopalan, M., Linden-Carmichael, A., & Lanza, S. (2022). College Students' Sense of Belonging and Mental Health Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic. *The Journal of Adolescent Health*, 70(2), 228-233.

Fig. 55 Impacts on mental health

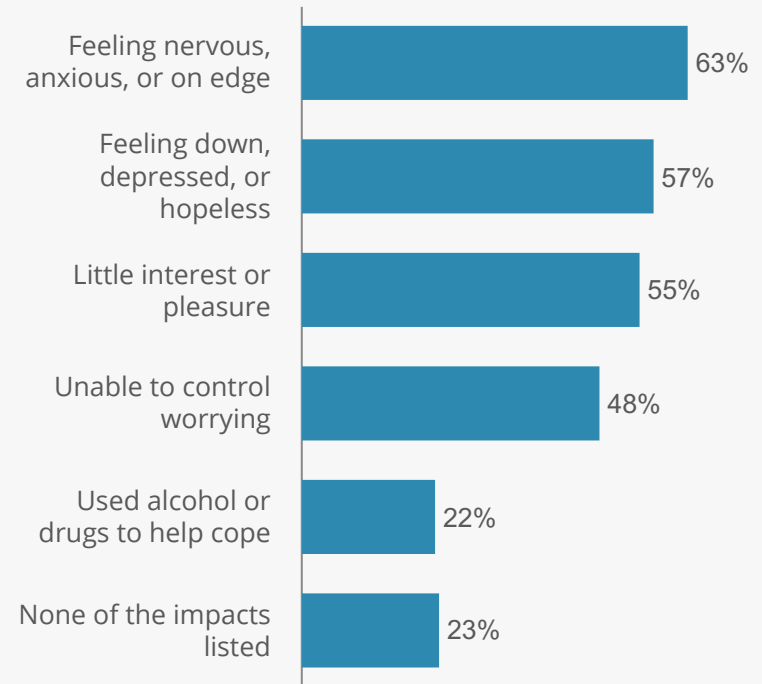
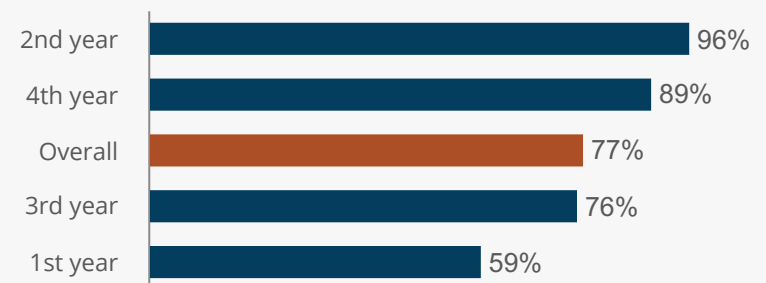


Fig. 56 Prevalence of mental health impacts by demographics



Overall represents the prevalence of students who reported experiencing at least one mental health impact.



Findings

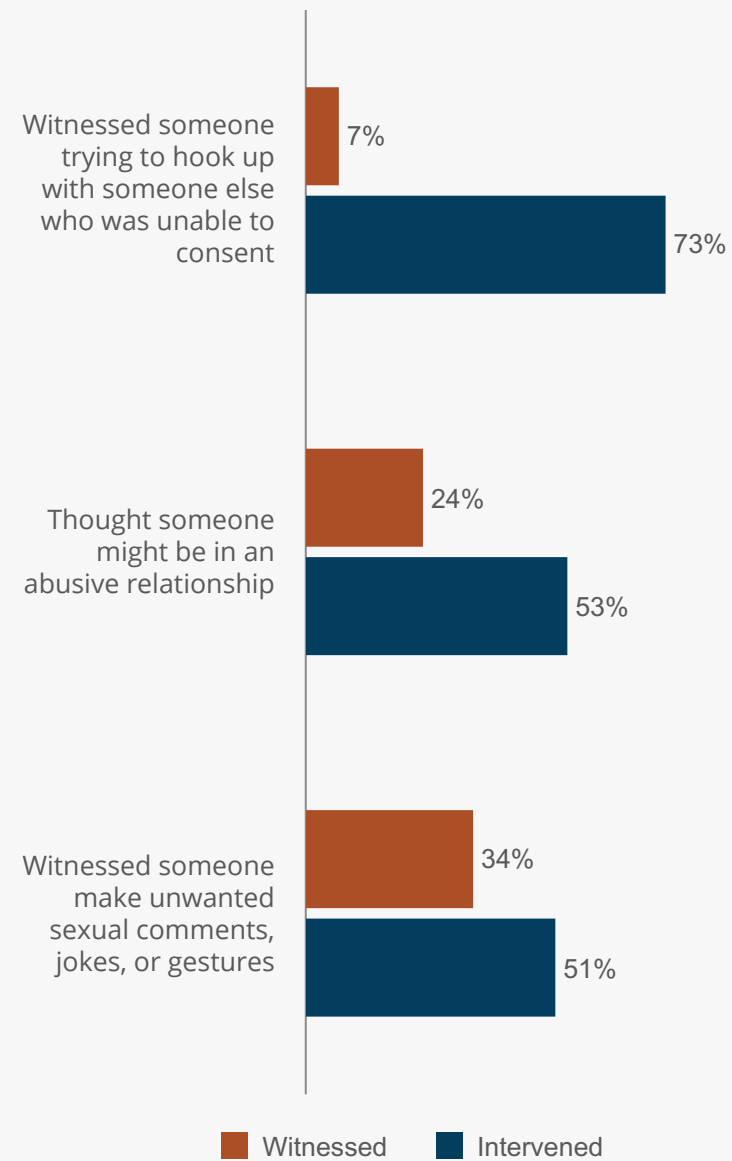
Bystander Intervention

Bystander Behaviors

Students were asked if they witnessed certain situations of sexual misconduct since they have been a student at Fitchburg State University and, if so, how they responded to those situations.

- **7%** witnessed someone trying to hook up with someone else who was passed out or unable to consent. Among those, 73% intervened in some way.
- **24%** thought someone might be in an abusive relationship. Among those, 53% intervened in some way.
- **34%** witnessed someone make unwanted sexual comments, jokes, or gestures. Among those, 51% intervened in some way.

Fig. 57 Percentage of students who intervened after witnessing sexual misconduct

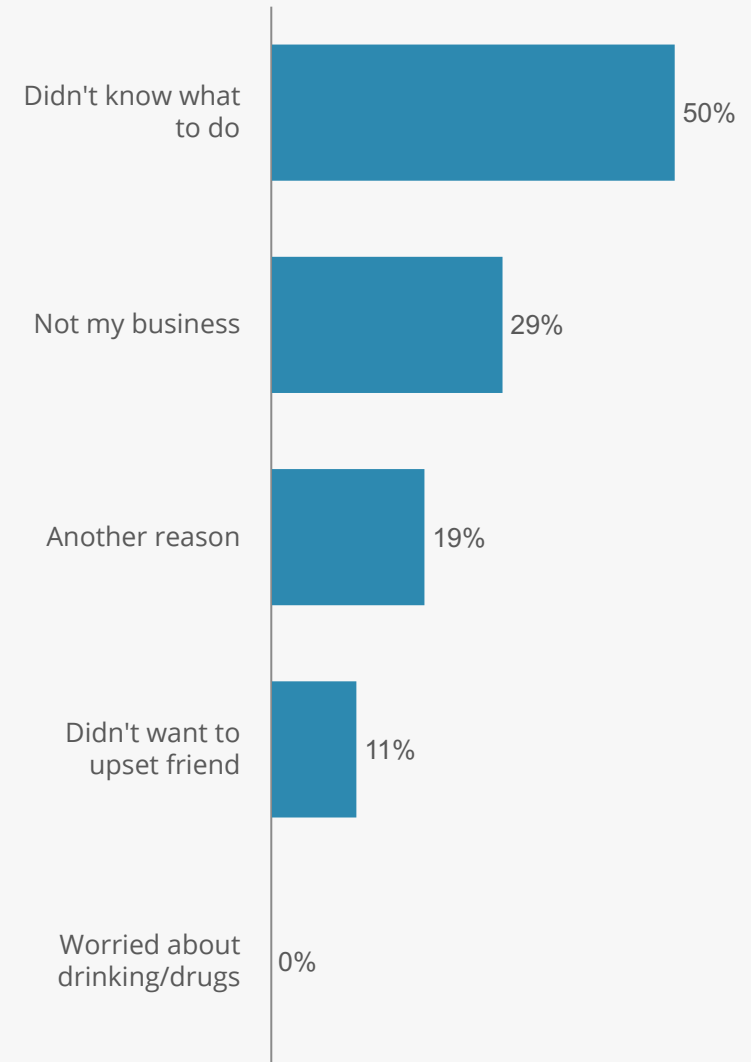


Why Students Did Not Intervene

Students who witnessed certain situations of sexual misconduct were asked about reasons why they did not intervene.

- **50%** were not sure what to do
- **29%** felt it was not their business
- **19%** did not intervene for another reason
- **11%** did not want to upset a friend

Fig. 58 Reasons students did not intervene





Recommendations

Recommendations

Included on the following pages are recommendations to address key findings from the survey. We recognize that it may not be feasible to implement all of these recommendations, but this list serves as a starting point for you to develop an evidence-based action plan.

Any mention of specific programs is not an endorsement of the program, but a recommendation that was developed based on evidence of risk and protective factors for sexual misconduct, effectiveness, accessibility, and input from experts.

Research supports that effective programming should 1) be implemented at several [socio-ecological](#) levels, 2) utilize various approaches, 3) and occur often. Research also shows that retention of knowledge and skills tends to decline after three months, highlighting the importance of frequent training and programming.³

3 McMahon, S., Steiner, J. J., Snyder, S., & Banyard, V. L. (2021). Comprehensive Prevention of Campus Sexual Violence: Expanding Who Is Invited to the Table. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 22(4), 843–855.

Developing an Action Plan

An action plan can help you implement and track the effectiveness of the prevention efforts at your institution over time.

Considerations when developing the action plan:

- 1 **Collaborate with a diverse group of campus stakeholders.** When developing and implementing the action plan you may choose to include students, faculty/staff, leadership, and community partners, among others. This group should be representative of the entire campus population.
- 2 **Tailor the action plan to your institution.** Our recommendations are broad and should be considered within the context, needs, and culture of your institution. An effective action plan should include a specific goal, actionable steps, allocation of resources, a timeline, and a plan for monitoring and evaluating progress.
- 3 **Be transparent.** Every campus community member has a vested interest in reducing sexual misconduct. Being open and honest when communicating about the action plan can help build trust.

Key Findings

Students expressed some concerns about school connectedness and the campus culture.

pg. [13-16](#), [23](#), [24](#)

Recommendations

1. Evaluate current steps being taken to protect students' physical and emotional safety and improvements that can be made.
2. Provide programming that addresses rape myths, gender norms, and unhealthy relationship dynamics.
3. Strengthen and expand on campus services provided for TGQN students and LGB+ students.
4. Consider conducting focus groups to better understand the experiences of students and their perceptions of the campus culture and belonging, equity, and well-being.
5. Communicate transparently about how the University plans to address these survey findings to help improve perceptions of the campus culture and accountability.

Key Findings

There is opportunity to improve knowledge of policies and resources.

- 42% were unaware of the Title IX coordinator
- 35% did not know what happens when a report is made

pg. [18](#), [19](#), [21](#)

Recommendations

1. Review all policies to ensure they are explained in plain language that avoids legal jargon.
2. Increase awareness of policies through targeted educational efforts. Students are more likely to remember policies if they are exposed to them in various formats at various times throughout their academic career.
3. Place policy information in accessible, commonly viewed areas, such as dining halls, bathrooms, class syllabi, and on your website. Clearly and succinctly explain the Title IX reporting process to help students make an informed decision about whether to report an incident.
4. Consider aiming extra education efforts toward groups who had less awareness of policies and resources, such as non-athletes, straight students, undergraduate students, and commuter students.

Key Findings

Overall, reporting to campus officials was low.

Common reasons students did not report:

- Did not think it was serious enough
- Worried it would interfere with school or other activities
- Worried they would not get the outcome they wanted

Students who did report expressed that they experienced the above concerns and fewer than one in three students (27)% said the reporting process was clearly explained to them.

[pg. 32](#), [37](#), [41](#), [46](#), [49](#), [50](#)

Recommendations

1. Regularly train response staff on trauma-informed care and interventions.
2. Address systemic barriers for reporting to law enforcement and work to establish a partnership with police to address violence and harassment.
3. Create a uniform system for explaining the reporting process to students in a way that is trauma-informed and excludes jargon.
4. Evaluate the requirements of students during the reporting process and explore methods to reduce the time commitment. Create a process for faculty to offer extra time and accommodations to students who may be engaging in the process.

Key Findings

Many students who experienced sexual misconduct reported academic and mental health impacts.

pg. [52](#), [53](#)

Recommendations

1. Educate faculty about the role mental health can play in academic performance and the support resources that are available to students.
2. Evaluate whether campus counseling and health services have the capacity to handle students' needs.
3. Ensure that professors and staff are able to identify signs of mental health concerns within the classroom and are equipped with skills to provide support and referrals including options for off-campus resources and services.

Key Findings

Students may benefit from bystander training.

- Less than half of students (48%) reported that they received information on bystander intervention
- 50% of students that witnessed an incident did not intervene because they did not know what to do and 29% believed it was not their business to intervene

pg. [20](#), [55](#), [56](#)

Recommendations

1. Assess current bystander intervention programming and consider increasing and altering programming to meet the specific needs of your student population.
2. Examples of bystander intervention programs supported by research include:
 1. Bringing in the Bystander
 2. Green Dot
 3. The Men's Program
 4. TakeCARE
 5. Take a Stand
 6. The Women's Program
 7. InterAct
 8. SCREAM
 9. OneAct
 10. MVP
 11. RESPECT
 12. Friends Helping Friends
 13. Safe Sisters
 14. The Men's Project
 15. SWAT
 16. U Got This!
 17. Intervene