

# STUDENT CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY

## BRIEF 2: UNWANTED SEXUAL EXPERIENCES AT UNA

### INTRODUCTION

In fall 2014 the University of North Alabama (UNA) administered a Student Campus Climate Survey. The purpose of the survey was to provide UNA with critical information regarding our campus climate, campus resources, and experiences of our students. This is the second brief in a series of four that presents key findings from the survey along with recommendations for developing effective prevention and intervention programming for our students. The focus of this brief is on data pertaining to unwanted sexual experiences of students at UNA. The full report is available at [una.edu/title-ix](http://una.edu/title-ix)

### METHODS

All measures in the survey were taken directly from the White House Task Force Report (2014). The online survey contained measures designed to assess the incidence and prevalence of unwanted sexual experiences, demographic information about individuals reporting unwanted sexual experiences, demographic information about perpetrators, context of unwanted sexual experiences, and disclosure and reporting of unwanted sexual experiences.

### SAMPLE

A total of 978 surveys were completed. The median age of participants was 21 years old. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the sample identified as female, 26% identified as male, and approximately 1% identified as transgender or other. The class standing of participants was as follows: 20.2% freshman, 17.4% sophomore, 26.4% junior, 29.0% senior, 6.6% graduate student, and 0.4% special student. The racial composition approximated well the racial makeup of the University.

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

The survey defined sexual contact as touching of a sexual nature, oral sex, sexual intercourse, anal sex, and sexual penetration with a finger or object. Participants were asked about nonconsensual or unwanted sexual contact they may have experienced since becoming a student at UNA.

### INCIDENCE OF UNWANTED SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

Incidence refers to a count of how many unique incidents of unwanted sexual contact occur during a given period of time (i.e., since becoming a student at UNA). A total of 117 incidents of unwanted sexual contact were reported from a sample of 978 students for an incidence rate of 12%.

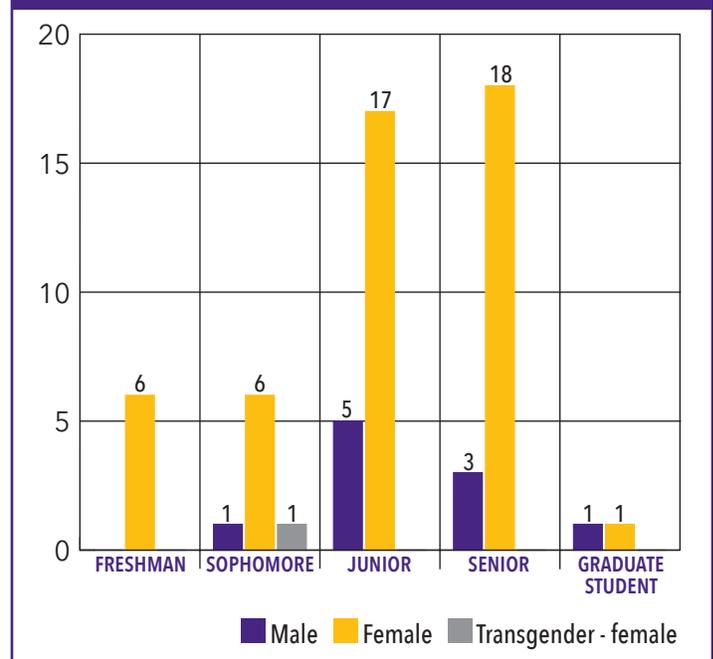
### PREVALENCE OF UNWANTED SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

Prevalence rates are a count of how many unique people have had an unwanted sexual experience during a given period of time (i.e., since becoming a student at UNA). A total of 68 students in our sample reported experiencing at least one incident of unwanted sexual contact for a prevalence rate of 7%.

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS REPORTING UNWANTED SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

Figure 1 is a breakdown of the gender and class standing of the 68 individuals in our sample who reported an unwanted sexual experience and provided demographic information.

FIGURE 1.  
UNWANTED SEXUAL EXPERIENCES BY GENDER AND CLASS STANDING



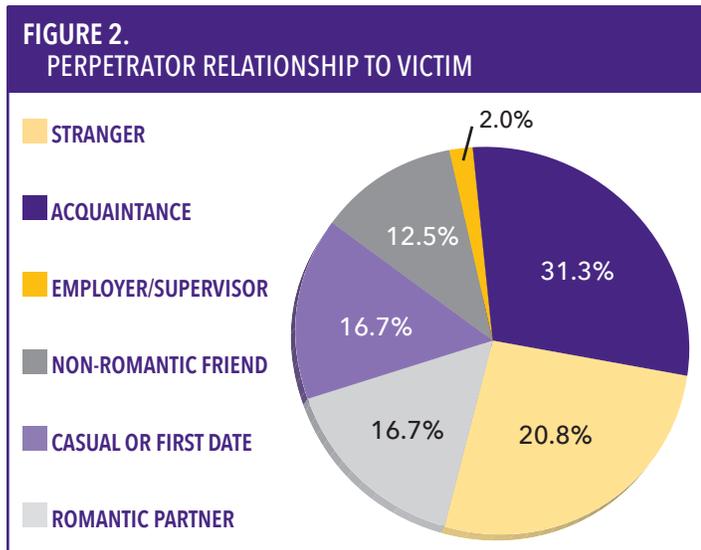
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Women reported a greater incidence of unwanted sexual experiences (86.4%) than men. Juniors and seniors accounted for nearly three quarters of the participants who reported an unwanted sexual experience. However, this breakdown is not surprising when one considers that participants were asked to report how many instances of unwanted sexual contact have occurred since becoming a student at UNA. Unless they are transfer students, most juniors and seniors will have had a longer history at UNA than freshmen and sophomores.

Group affiliation was also analyzed to determine if any of the following groups were overrepresented in reporting victimization: athletes; social fraternity and sorority members; band members; ROTC cadets; international students; and early college students. Social fraternity and sorority members were the only group that was overrepresented in reporting victimization. While social fraternity and sorority members accounted for 13% of the overall sample, they accounted for 28.3% of reported victims.

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT PERPETRATORS

Eighty-six percent (86.4%) of victims identified their perpetrators as male, 7.6% as female, and 6% were unsure of the gender of their perpetrator. Over 80% of victims reported their perpetrator was someone known to them. Figure 2 is a graphic representation of the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim.



\* Percentages reflect % of those who answered this specific question.

The majority of perpetrators were affiliated with the university. Fifty-eight (58.2%) of victims identified their perpetrators as a student at the university and 6% identified their perpetrator as affiliated with the university as an employee, faculty, or staff member.

### CONTEXT OF UNWANTED SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

When asked where the incident occurred, 65.6% of victims reported that the incident took place off campus while 34.4% reported that the incident took place on-campus.

Victims were asked a series of questions that assessed if the incident involved their or the perpetrators' use of alcohol and/or drugs, including if they were given drugs without their consent. Table 1 is a breakdown of victims' responses.

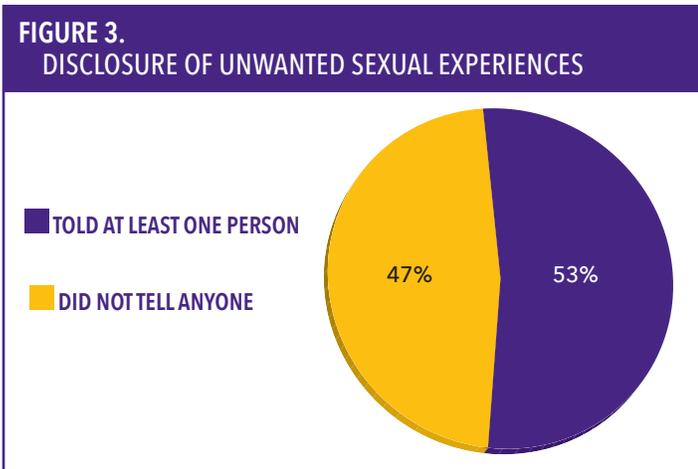
**TABLE 1. ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUGS USED OR GIVEN DURING INCIDENTS.**

	N	VALID %
THE OTHER PERSON'S USE OF ALCOHOL	24	35.3
YOUR USE OF ALCOHOL	26	38.2
THE OTHER PERSON'S USE OF RECREATIONAL DRUGS	5	7.4
YOUR USE OF RECREATIONAL DRUGS	2	2.9
YOU BELIEVE YOU WERE GIVEN DRUGS WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT	2	2.9
YOU ARE NOT SURE IF YOU WERE GIVEN DRUGS WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT	6	8.8
NO ALCOHOL OR RECREATIONAL DRUG USE BY EITHER PARTY	22	32.4

\* Valid percentages reflect % of those who answered yes to that specific question.

## DISCLOSURE OF UNWANTED SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

Of the 68 individuals in our sample who reported an unwanted sexual experience, 53% said they had told at least one person about the incident, while 47% said they did not tell anyone about the incident.



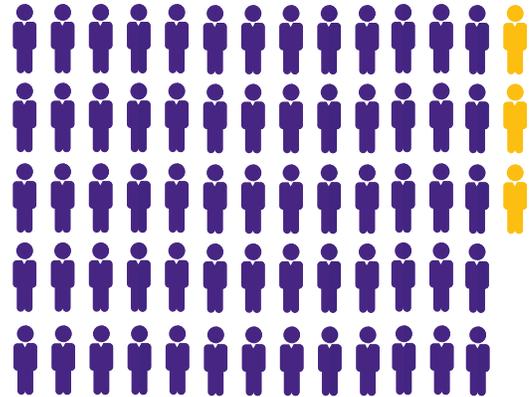
Victims who said they had told at least one person about their unwanted sexual experiences were asked to identify who they told about the incident and were allowed to indicate multiple individuals if they had told more than one person. Victims were nearly three times more likely to disclose to a close friend than to any other group listed, including roommates, romantic partners, parents, counselors, faculty, staff, police, or victim support services. If victims indicated they did not tell at least one person about the incident, they were asked to indicate why and were allowed to indicate multiple reasons. Table 2 is a break down of the most common reasons listed by victims for why they chose not to disclose.

**TABLE 2.**  
MOST COMMON REASONS FOR NON-DISCLOSURE.

	N
FELT IT WAS A PRIVATE MATTER	15
WANTED TO FORGET IT HAPPENED	14
HAD OTHER THINGS I NEEDED TO FOCUS ON (SCHOOL, WORK)	12
DIDN'T WANT OTHERS TO WORRY ABOUT ME	12
DIDN'T THINK IT WAS THAT SERIOUS	11
ASHAMED / EMBARRASSED	9

## REPORTING OF UNWANTED SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

Out of 68 individuals reporting an unwanted sexual experience, only 5% of victims (N=3) chose to use UNA's formal procedures to report the incident.



These three individuals were asked to indicate how much they were helped by UNA's formal procedures on a scale of 1 – 5 (1=didn't help me at all; 5=completely solved the problem). The average rating of UNA's formal procedures by those who utilized them was a 4.0 (SD=1.73), which indicates that victims who used the formal procedures found them beneficial.

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that UNA develop and implement systematic programming to prevent sexual assault and make our students more aware of the resources available to them if a sexual assault occurs.

Sexual assault prevention on college campuses often focuses on self-defense training, which assumes that victim's attackers are strangers (Gidycz, Rich, Orchowski, King, & Miller, 2006). In our sample, 80% of victims reported their perpetrator was someone known to them. Therefore, it is recommended that sexual assault prevention education on our campus raise awareness about acquaintance rape as well as provide information to students about how to establish consent with a potential sexual partner.

Only 5% of individuals who indicated they had an unwanted sexual experience chose to use UNA's formal procedures to report the incident; nevertheless, victims who used the formal procedures reported they found them beneficial. It is recommended that UNA promote knowledge of its resources and make students aware

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of the positive experiences of those who have utilized those resources.

Based on the survey findings and guidelines from the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2014), it is recommended that all sexual assault prevention programming at UNA:

- provide students education about communication tools related to explicitly establishing consent between partners
- engage men by acknowledging male victims and focusing on men as allies
- promote responsible use of alcohol in a way that does not blame victims
- promote knowledge of resources on campus and make students aware of the positive experiences of those who have utilized those resources

In order to ensure that the programming is as effective as possible, it is recommended that all freshmen be required to participate in sexual assault prevention education. Beginning in fall 2015, all freshmen at UNA will be required to take a First Year Experience (FYE) course, which would be an ideal delivery system for this programming. However, it will also be critical to target our current students who will not have gone through an FYE course. Therefore, it is recommended that the university require all students to participate in online training that is focused on sexual assault prevention. It is also recommended that the university deliver a series of sexual assault education events throughout the year. Since social fraternity and sorority members were overrepresented in reporting victimization, it is recommended that this population be targeted for programming.

### PROJECT COLLABORATORS

The principal investigators for the Student Campus Climate Survey were UNA faculty members Drs. Amber Paulk, Andrea Hunt, and Yaschica Williams from the Department of Sociology and Family Studies. Once the initial survey was compiled, the UNA Title IX Education and Prevention Advisory Board reviewed the survey. The advisory board includes UNA's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Tammy Jacques; UNA faculty, staff, and students; representatives from UNA Student Counseling Services; the UNA Police Department; and Rape Response.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact UNA's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Tammy Jacques, at [tmwells@una.edu](mailto:tmwells@una.edu) or **256-765-4223**.

### REFERENCES

Gidycz, C., Rich, C., Orchowski, L., King, C., & Miller, A. (2006). *The evaluation of a sexual assault self-defense and risk-reduction program for college women: A prospective study*. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30, 173-186.

*White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2014). Not alone: The first report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.*