

Dear Northwestern Students,

I write to share the results of Northwestern's participation in the 2019 Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct. The University's [Office of Equity](#) was pleased to hear from 5,398 of our students, representing 25.2% of the Northwestern students invited to participate. This is significantly higher than the 15% participation rate we saw with our 2015 Northwestern climate survey on sexual misconduct. We appreciate the confidence all of our participants showed by sharing their experiences and are grateful for the opportunity to use this information to guide our work.

Northwestern is committed to fostering a learning, working and living environment where all members of our community can thrive, free from sexual misconduct, and this survey data will help enhance University policies and priorities going forward.

The survey was administered by the firm Westat, which provided Northwestern with a summary of our results and data tables with additional detail. This information is available on the Office of Equity's [website](#), along with a summary of data considered by the Office of Equity when developing our plan to engage with the community in the coming academic year. Northwestern was one of 33 schools that participated in the 2019 AAU Campus Climate Survey. The AAU announced the results of the survey nationally today, and the aggregate report and data tables are available [here](#).

Throughout the academic year, the Office of Equity will hold events to engage with the community and consider the survey results together. A list of planned events can be found on the Office of Equity's [website](#). Based on our review of the survey results and community feedback, the Office of Equity will release a summary in May 2020 of with proposed action items.

The Office of Equity's initial review of the data revealed bright spots, including:

- The majority of students who reported witnessing sexual misconduct also reported taking some type of action;
- 74.3% of students perceived that it is very or extremely likely that campus officials would take a report of sexual misconduct at Northwestern seriously; and
- 58.5% of students believe it is very or extremely likely that campus officials would conduct a fair investigation in response to a report of sexual misconduct.

However, the survey also revealed opportunities for improvement, including:

- Only 50% of students indicated they are aware of the [Office of Equity](#), and 50.8% indicated an awareness of [CARE](#); and
- Certain groups reported experiencing sexual misconduct at higher rates:
  - Undergraduate women and trans, genderqueer or nonbinary and questioning ("TGQN") students reported experiencing sexual harassment, intimate partner

violence, stalking and nonconsensual sexual contact at higher rates than others surveyed.

- LGBQA students reported experiencing harassing behavior, intimate partner violence, stalking and nonconsensual sexual contact at higher rates than heterosexual students.
- Students with disabilities reported experiencing harassing behavior, intimate partner violence, stalking and nonconsensual sexual contact at higher rates than students who did not identify as having a disability.

In response to the Office of Equity's initial review of the results, a few action items have already been implemented:

- As of September 1, 2019, Kate Harrington-Rosen has been named the director of equity outreach and education in the Office of Equity. This elevated role allows Kate to take a systematic approach to overseeing our outreach and education efforts, with the goal of increasing campus knowledge of processes and resources.
- A new position has been created: Equity Outreach and Education Coordinator. This person will assist Kate in her training and program delivery and allow our office to reach additional students, staff and faculty through in-person outreach and training each year.
- The Office of Equity will increase its outreach and support efforts to populations that reported experiencing higher rates of sexual misconduct, including undergraduate women, TGQN students, LGBQA students and students with disabilities.
- As of Oct. 1, 2019, all new faculty and staff are required to complete an online training module about harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct. Later this fall, this program will roll out to all current faculty and staff.

The voices of our students are integral to our efforts to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct. We thank you for your participation thus far, look forward to your continued engagement and want you to know we are listening.

Sincerely,

**Colleen Johnston**

Director, Sexual Misconduct Response and Resources

Title IX Coordinator