

October 31, 2024

## **Illinois Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act Annual Report**

Northwestern University is committed to fostering an environment in which all members of our community are safe, secure, and free from sexual misconduct of any form. Northwestern's Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct prohibits all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, dating and domestic violence, and sexual harassment. Additionally, pursuant to the United States Department of Education's Final Rule on Title IX Sexual Harassment, the University has adopted an Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment. When an incident of alleged sexual misconduct is reported to the University, whether it is reported in person, by email, electronically, anonymously, or through another person, the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance reaches out to the potentially impacted person(s) to offer information and resources, including our resource guides on sexual misconduct.

A person who reports an act of sexual misconduct by a member of the Northwestern community has the option to request that the University adjudicate whether a violation of University policy occurred. Disciplinary action can be taken against any student, staff, or faculty member who is determined to have violated either policy. When Northwestern receives reports alleging sexual misconduct by individuals not affiliated with the University (and not otherwise connected to a University program or activity), support and resources are offered to the impacted individual(s) and other measures that may be needed to secure the safety of the community are also taken.

Northwestern University has two campuses in Illinois: a 240-acre campus in Evanston and a 25-acre campus in Chicago.<sup>1</sup> Northwestern's Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct and Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment apply to both of these campuses. The University's Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance works with community members on both the Evanston and Chicago campuses to address and resolve all reports of sexual misconduct. The data in this report reflects reports received from both the Chicago and Evanston campuses with a delineation of the data from each campus.

The data described in this report was assembled using the parameters included in the Illinois Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/9.21(b)) and the Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Reporting Requirements document issued by the Illinois Attorney General's Office, revised on October 14, 2020. Accordingly, this report contains student reports

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the geographic size difference between the Chicago and Evanston campuses, there are no residential facilities on the Chicago campus.

of sexual misconduct occurring within Clery geography or those reported without a known location.<sup>2</sup>

### **Part A.**

- (1) A copy of the higher education institution’s most recent comprehensive policy in accordance with Section 10 of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act.**

Northwestern University’s Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct is available online at: <https://www.northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office/policies-procedures/policies/policy-on-discrimination-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct.pdf>

Northwestern University’s Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment is available online at: <https://www.northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office/policies-procedures/policies/interim-policy-on-title-ix-sexual-harassment.pdf>

- (2) A copy of the higher education institution’s most recent concise, written notification of survivor’s rights and options under its comprehensive policy, required pursuant to Section 15 of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act.**

Northwestern University’s Resource Guide, which provides written notification of a survivor’s rights and options, are available online at:

- [https://www.northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office/resources/3422\\_a\\_ocr\\_discrimharasssexmisconduct\\_resourceguide\\_022924.pdf](https://www.northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office/resources/3422_a_ocr_discrimharasssexmisconduct_resourceguide_022924.pdf)
- [https://www.northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office/resources/3422\\_b\\_ocr\\_titleixsexharass\\_resourceguide\\_032624.pdf](https://www.northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office/resources/3422_b_ocr_titleixsexharass_resourceguide_032624.pdf)

### **Part B.**

#### **I. Campus Training, Education and Awareness**

The University strives to ensure that any programming developed is culturally relevant; trauma informed; inclusive of diverse communities and identities; sustainable; responsive to community needs; informed by research or assessed for value, effectiveness, and outcome; and considerate of environmental risk and protective factors as they occur on the individual, relationship, institutional, community, and societal levels.

Primary prevention training for undergraduate and graduate students was provided through Vector Solution’s Sexual Assault Prevention package. The modules in this package include definitions of

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<sup>2</sup> The number of incidents in this report may not align with the numbers in Northwestern’s Annual Security and Fire Safety Report made pursuant to the Clery Act. Clery Act data is limited to incidents occurring on campus or in the area immediately surrounding campus, while the data in this report also includes incidents where a location was not known. Further, unlike Clery Act data, this report encompasses only those concerns reported by or on behalf of students and includes reports made to confidential resources.

consent, sexual violence, the relationship between drugs, alcohol and the ability to consent, customized sections for Northwestern's reporting options on and off campus, confidential advisors and survivor support services, bystander intervention strategies, and skill building for culturally sensitive responses to survivors. All incoming first year and transfer students completed the first learning module in the vendor's undergraduate series. In addition, returning undergraduates were assigned the Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduate: Ongoing Healthy Relationships module to build on their content knowledge and further explore risk reduction strategies. The Sexual Assault Prevention for Graduates and Sexual Assault Prevention for Adult Learners was assigned to both full time and part time graduate students. While all programs covered federal and Northwestern annual training requirements, the scenarios and examples utilized in modules were tailored to be relevant for those groups. All returning student athletes completed the Sexual Violence Prevention for Athletes module which put sexual misconduct and reporting options into context applicable to the student athlete experience.

A primary prevention effort required for all first year and transfer undergraduate students was "Student Body," a sexual violence and healthy relationships theatrical performance with small group processing and resource sharing discussions afterwards. The Center for Awareness Response and Education (CARE) organized and trained these small group leaders and ensured content during the performance highlighted confidential campus resources, survivor support services, reporting options, definitions and examples of consent and sexual violence behaviors, bystander intervention, risk reduction, and healthy communication.

Primary prevention training for all faculty and staff utilized the Vector online modules to reach all employees and addressed the requirements of VAWA, IPSVA, the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance, and University policies. The interactive module Preventing Harassment & Discrimination: Gateway (Illinois) educated participants about sexual misconduct, sex discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. Customization options on the platform also allowed our office to include information about survivor services at Northwestern, confidential campus resources, reporting options on campus, reporting obligations, associated laws and University policies.

A full list of both primary prevention and awareness programs for students and employees, in addition to ongoing awareness programming is available in the University's [Annual Security and Fire Safety Report](#).

## II. Reports

- From January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023, the Title IX Coordinator/responsible employees received 23 reports of sexual violence (reports of sexual penetration without consent or sexual contact without consent under Northwestern's Policy on Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, or reports of Title IX sexual assault under Northwestern's Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment) made by or on behalf of students that were reported as occurring either within Clery geography or were reported without a known location. Of these reports, 20 were made on the Evanston campus, 0 reports were made on the Chicago campus, and 3 reports had unknown locations.

- From January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023, the Title IX Coordinator/responsible employees received 6 reports of dating/domestic violence (under either Northwestern’s Policy on Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, or Northwestern’s Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment) made by or on behalf of students that were reported as occurring either within Clery geography or were reported without a known location. 3 of these reports were made on the Evanston campus, 0 reports were made on the Chicago campus, and 3 reports had unknown locations.
- From January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023, the Title IX Coordinator/responsible employees received 25 reports of stalking (under either Northwestern’s Policy on Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, or Northwestern’s Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment) made by or on behalf of students that were reported as occurring either within Clery geography or were reported without a known location. 21 of these reports were made on the Evanston campus, 2 were made on the Chicago campus, and 2 reports had unknown locations.
- Northwestern has several confidential resources (including confidential advisors) that provide support and resources to students on both the Evanston and Chicago campuses. These resources were asked to provide aggregate data for reports of sexual misconduct received from January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023, consistent with any applicable professional privilege. Northwestern’s confidential resources provided aggregate data for reports from students in 2023 reflecting the receipt of 158 reports of sexual violence, 112 reports of dating/domestic violence, and 85 reports of stalking. The aggregate data did not include information on the location of these reports. Due to the confidential nature of the data provided, the University cannot ascertain whether these reports were also made to additional staff/offices on campus.

### **Response to reports to the Title IX Coordinator or Responsible Employees**

Per ILCS 155/15, all reports or disclosures made to the Title IX Coordinator or responsible employees were responded to with outreach (see Part A) that included information on how to connect with or report to law enforcement.

- Of the 23 reports of sexual violence (reports of sexual penetration without consent or sexual contact without consent under Northwestern’s Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct, or reports of sexual assault under Northwestern’s Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment) received by the Title IX Coordinator or responsible employees, 9 students did not respond to outreach and follow up; 2 students responded and requested not to proceed with the complaint resolution process; 1 report listed an anonymous student as complainant; and 1 report involved an unaffiliated respondent. After reviewing each of these reports, the University determined that it could honor the student’s request not to move forward with an investigation and/or could not proceed as it did not have sufficient information or jurisdiction over the respondent. The University formally investigated 10 reports of sexual violence (and resolved 6 during the 2023 calendar year) under its complaint resolution processes. All of these reports with known locations came from the Evanston campus.

- Of the 6 reports of dating/domestic violence received by the Title IX Coordinator or responsible employees, 3 students did not respond to outreach and follow up; 1 student responded and requested not to proceed with the complaint resolution process, and 1 report involved an unaffiliated respondent. After reviewing each of these reports, the University determined that it could honor the student's request not to move forward with an investigation and/or could not proceed as it did not have sufficient information or jurisdiction over the respondent. The University formally investigated 1 report of dating/domestic violence under its complaint resolution process and resolved the matter during the 2023 calendar year. All of these reports with known locations came from the Evanston campus.
- Of the 25 reports of stalking received by the Title IX Coordinator or responsible employees, 16 students did not respond to outreach and follow up; 6 students responded and requested not to proceed with the complaint resolution process, and 2 reports involved an unaffiliated respondent. After reviewing each of these reports, the University determined that it could honor the student's request not to move forward with an investigation and/or could not proceed as it did not have sufficient information or jurisdiction over the respondent. The University formally investigated 1 reports of stalking under its complaint resolution process. That report came from the Evanston campus.

Note: All students were offered resources, including the ability to request interim measures and support services, regardless of whether the student responded to outreach or whether or not they wished to proceed with the complaint resolution process. In some of these cases, the University also addressed the concern through informal action. Informal action involves measures taken by the University in response to a situation or report of sexual misconduct when formal resolution is not desired by the person who may have experienced sexual misconduct, or when there is not enough information to proceed with a formal resolution process against a known respondent. Informal action is not used when formal resolution is desired by a complainant and the respondent's identity is known. Informal action does not result in findings related to responsibility or in sanctions. Informal actions include, but are not limited to, an educational meeting with the subject of the report or training for a group or unit.

### **Complaint Resolution Procedure Outcomes**

- The University received 10 reports of sexual violence in 2023 for which an investigation was opened. In these matters, 4 reports remain under investigation, 5 reports were resolved through alternative resolution, 0 respondents were found responsible, and 1 of the respondent was found not responsible. These reports all came from the Evanston campus. Additionally, 5 reports of sexual violence received in 2022 for which an investigation was opened were resolved in 2023.
- One of the reports of dating or domestic violence the University received in 2023 had an investigation opened. That report was resolved through alternative resolution.

- The University received 1 report of stalking in 2023 for which an investigation was opened. That matter remains open. Additionally, 2 reports of stalking received in 2022 for which an investigation was opened were resolved in 2023.

**Part C.**

Additional information about Northwestern's response to sexual misconduct can be found on our website at: [www.northwestern.edu/sexual-misconduct](http://www.northwestern.edu/sexual-misconduct). Questions or concerns can be directed to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator, Emily Babb, at [ocr@northwestern.edu](mailto:ocr@northwestern.edu).