

# Northwestern

## Campus Climate Survey: From Recommendations to Actions

### Introduction

In May of 2015, Northwestern launched its first campus climate survey on sexual misconduct to all undergraduate and graduate students. The survey contained questions related to sexual misconduct incidence, attitudes, and awareness of resources. A working group led by the Office of Student Affairs Assessment analyzed the data and prepared a detailed report for the community setting forth the results of the survey, which was published on September 28, 2016 and is posted at: <http://www.northwestern.edu/sexual-misconduct/docs/2015-campus-climate-survey-report.pdf>.

After reviewing the report, the Title IX Coordinating Committee, the Campus Coalition on Sexual Violence (CCSV) Climate Survey Working Group, and Associated Student Government's "It's on Us" Committee each submitted recommendations in Winter 2016 for consideration of the administration. The recommendations and action plans are summarized in the following sections below: **Strengthen Prevention Initiatives; Expand Support and Response Services; Enhance Marketing and Communications; and Conduct Future Climate Surveys.**

### Strengthen Prevention Initiatives

1. **RECOMMENDATION:** Based on climate survey data and overall campus sexual violence data indicating that 20-25% of women report experiencing sexual assault while in college, a significant number of male students also report experiencing sexual assault, and LGBTQ and underrepresented minority students are even more likely to report experiencing sexual assault, the need for ongoing prevention programming for students is essential. Northwestern should assess the reach and effectiveness of current sexual misconduct prevention programming for students and create a comprehensive and ongoing prevention program for students. A Prevention Working Group should be formed and should consider the following specific areas in developing the prevention plan:
  - Determine how best to provide prevention education for students on an ongoing basis, including whether training for students after orientation should be mandatory. Conduct benchmarking of other universities' programs and consider best practices.

- Assess the training and materials provided to Resident Assistants (RA's) and Peer Advisors (PA's) on sexual misconduct prevention, resources, and reporting and determine how they can be improved.
- Develop a plan for educating students who participate in Greek life, and consider whether ongoing consent and sexual violence education should be required for Greek organizations.
- Support continued assessment of LGBTQ+ and underrepresented minority students' experiences at the University and target prevention efforts accordingly. Explore whether other groups would benefit from targeted training.
- Consider whether the online sexual misconduct training should be required for all current and entering graduate and professional students, and what additional prevention outreach should be developed for graduate and professional students.
- Assess the effectiveness of the StepUP! bystander intervention program for sexual violence and determine whether and how the StepUp! program or another bystander intervention program should be scaled to reach more students.
- Identify and address institutional and systemic sources of unhealthy and violent norms around alcohol use and sex.

***ACTION: A Prevention Working Group has been convened, which includes representatives from Health Promotion and Wellness, CARE, and the Sexual Harassment Prevention Office. The Prevention Working Group will assess training provided to RA's and PA's and make any needed enhancements prior to Fall of 2016. The Prevention Working Group will work to analyze the University's programming for students and propose a comprehensive multi-year prevention model by Spring 2017. The Prevention Working Group will consider the above recommendations in developing a prevention plan. In addition, Northwestern recently concluded a successful rollout of online sexual misconduct training to all graduate and professional students.***

2. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** A new position of Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Prevention should be added to help oversee prevention and training efforts across all constituencies.

***ACTION: The University has approved the creation of a new position of Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Prevention, located in the Sexual Harassment Prevention Office, with a target hire date in Fall 2016. The Sexual Harassment Prevention Office, with the input of CARE, will prepare a position description.***

3. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** Northwestern should place a high priority on funding strategic requests related to sexual violence prevention and response efforts. Northwestern is urged to commit funding for the continuation of the Coordinator of Men's Engagement

position, the graduate intern for StepUp! position, student workers, and programming costs currently supported by the Department of Justice Violence Against Women grant that ends in September 2017.

***ACTION: Northwestern has committed to continuing the staff positions and initiatives currently funded by the Department of Justice grant after it expires.***

4. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** Northwestern should provide special funds for students interested in pursuing independent research projects about sexual violence, its causes, and prevention strategies.

***ACTION: Northwestern has funded independent student research projects about sexual violence, and will continue to make funding available for student research requests through the Office for Undergraduate Research.***

## **Expand Support and Response Services**

The climate survey data suggest low student awareness of how and where to make a complaint of sexual misconduct and how to get help. It is essential for Northwestern to ensure that all populations on both campuses understand the support and reporting structures in place.

1. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** Currently, sexual misconduct matters are handled in different offices depending on whether the respondent is a student or a faculty member, staff member, or third party. The University should centralize the handling of all sexual misconduct complaints in one office, regardless of whether the respondent is a student, staff, faculty member, or other party. This will increase awareness of University Title IX processes and lead to greater efficiencies and consistency in investigating and resolving complaints.

***ACTION: Northwestern will centralize the handling of all sexual misconduct reports in the Sexual Harassment Prevention Office with a targeted completion by Fall 2016. A Transition Team has been developing this new structure. In addition, the University has created three new staff positions to help support sexual misconduct response and prevention: an Associate Vice President for Title IX and Equity, a second full-time Title IX Investigator, and a full-time Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Students. These positions have been posted.***

2. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** In order to better serve the significant graduate and professional student population on the Chicago campus, the University should conduct a needs assessment to determine what resources, space, and staff are needed on the Chicago campus to provide sexual misconduct response services, including advocacy and Title IX complaint response, for these students.

***ACTION: During the 2016-2017 academic year, the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost will conduct an assessment to***

***determine needs of graduate students on the Chicago Campus for sexual misconduct response services.***

3. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** Determine ways to better equip students, faculty, and staff to support their peers who disclose experiences of sexual violence. Expand capacity to provide training, especially within CARE, and refer students to participate in “Support Starts Here.”

***ACTION: CARE is continuing outreach through programs to train faculty, staff, and students to support their peers, and plans more targeted outreach to student groups in Fall 2016. In addition, over 20,000 faculty, staff, and graduate students recently completed Northwestern’s online training on sexual misconduct and Title IX, including how to support students who disclose sexual misconduct. The Prevention Working Group will consider whether other training or resource materials to help support survivors can be developed.***

4. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** Northwestern should identify ways to best provide support and advocacy to staff and faculty who are victims/survivors of sexual violence.

***ACTION: Northwestern’s Faculty and Staff Assistance Program can provide confidential support and assistance to staff and faculty victims of sexual violence. In addition, the Title IX Coordinator can refer staff and faculty to local community agencies that provide support and advocacy for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other sexual misconduct.***

## **Enhance Marketing and Communications**

The climate survey data suggest that many students do not know about the sexual misconduct complaint resolution process and available resources offered by the University. The following recommendations focus on raising awareness among students of Northwestern’s policies and the resources available to them and on helping build trust in the resolution process.

1. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** Administrative offices involved in sexual misconduct response and prevention should collectively determine action steps they can take to improve their visibility as a resource in sexual violence prevention and response.
  - Northwestern should consider how to provide information to students about the complaint reporting and resolution processes. The information should clarify the various pathways through advocacy, reporting, and the conduct process. Northwestern should also increase transparency about complaint outcomes and sanctions.
  - Northwestern should better publicize its policy on amnesty for students reporting sexual violence and its guidelines on the relationship between consent and

alcohol.

- Northwestern should consider engaging the services of a marketing strategist to help launch a unified communication plan to increase awareness of resources, reporting, how the Title IX complaint resolution process works, resolution outcomes, and prevention efforts. Northwestern should make resources and funding available for marketing for CARE year-round.

***ACTION: The Prevention Working Group will develop additional information for students about complaint reporting and resolution processes prior to Fall 2016. The Office of Student Conduct and the Sexual Harassment Prevention Office will provide sexual misconduct complaint outcome data on a regular basis, beginning in Summer 2016. The Prevention Working Group will consider how to publicize the Sexual Misconduct Policy provisions relating to amnesty and alcohol. Northwestern will develop a Title IX marketing and communication plan during the 2016-2017 academic year.***

## Conduct Future Climate Surveys

The recommendations support the use of surveys on sexual misconduct as a way of gathering important information about Northwestern community members' experience with sexual assault during their time at Northwestern and their awareness of University processes, offices, and resources. The data provided by climate surveys can be used to gauge the effectiveness of prevention and communication efforts. Sexual violence is a sensitive issue and time is needed between surveys to allow response and prevention efforts to influence campus culture.

1. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** Northwestern should conduct a campus climate survey of students on sexual misconduct every two to three years. Northwestern should disseminate data within leadership groups to improve sexual violence prevention and response. In addition, Northwestern should incorporate climate survey data into new and existing outreach efforts. In addition:
  - Northwestern should use statistically validated questions in subsequent sexual misconduct climate surveys.
  - In future surveys, Northwestern should consider participating in a consortium with peer institutions using the same survey instrument. This will facilitate school-to-school comparisons of climate and effectiveness of resources.
  - Northwestern should allocate sufficient funding to offer incentives that will help increase the response rate in future campus climate surveys on sexual misconduct and to ensure that all populations are well represented in the data.

***ACTION: The Title IX Coordinating Committee will partner with the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Institutional Research to form a working group to oversee the development of the next campus climate***

***survey for students, to be conducted not later than Spring 2018. The working group will consider options for participating in a consortium with peer institutions and using a model survey with statistically validated questions. Northwestern will use more valuable incentives to increase the response rate in the next survey.***

2. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** Northwestern should consider conducting a climate survey for faculty and staff about sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in the next three years.

***ACTION: During the 2016-2017 academic year, the Office of the Provost and the Office of Human Resources will explore conducting a faculty and staff climate survey to gather data on sexual misconduct incidence and knowledge of resources and reporting obligations.***