

# SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

## Campus Sexual Violence Survey Executive Summary

Spring 2016



## **SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY**

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## BACKGROUND

Sexual assault is a significant challenge for colleges and universities nationwide, affecting the health, mental health, and academic success of students. Schools and Universities are looking to climate surveys to fill this gap in knowledge, and conducting regular climate surveys is a best-practice response to campus sexual assault. Understanding other climate issues, such as students' knowledge about reporting policies and resources for victims, their attitudes about prevention, and their perceptions about how their community is addressing the problem of sexual violence, are critical pieces of information for improving campus responses.

In the Spring of 2015, San Diego State University conducted a student survey of sexual violence and related beliefs. The purpose of the study was to administer an anonymous comprehensive sexual assault survey to all students attending San Diego State University. Following recommendations from the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2014) an anonymous survey was developed that included questions about sexual assault/violence on or near campus, attitudes about sexually related violence, inclination to intervene/help in response to sexual violence, and awareness of sexual violence related services and policies. The goals of the survey were to provide 1) Information about the prevalence of sexual violence on the campus, students' knowledge about reporting policies and resources for victims, and students' attitudes related to sexual violence, and 2) a benchmark to measure improvements/declines over time in attitudes and prevalence. All students were contacted via their university-provided email and given a link to the anonymous survey. The survey was emailed to 30,469 students, and 9,161 students responded to the survey, which represents a substantial response rate of 30%.

## SUMMARY

The results of the survey revealed that SDSU students are very informed about sexual violence resources, are well-versed in affirmative consent policy, and feel ready to intervene to prevent sexual violence from occurring on campus.

SDSU's prevalence rates of sexual violence compare favorably to national averages. Only 6% of respondents reported that they had experienced sexual assault since coming to SDSU. When presented with a range of sexual experience situations, 15% of SDSU students reported having experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact or violence since coming to SDSU, with over 40% of such assaults occurring within 5 miles of campus. The national average is approximately 20%. Of these actions, most fell into the category of unwanted fondling, kissing or rubbing. Some rape myths and other problematic attitudes related to sexual assaults persist among SDSU students, suggesting there is still work that remains to educate students and help reduce the risk of sexual violence on campus.

## SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

### Bystander Intervention

- Most SDSU students (65%) reported being very ready to intervene in some capacity (bystander confidence) when witnessing sexual assault.
- On average, all students are very confident in talking to a friend who they suspect is in a sexually abusive relationship.

### Attitudes and Beliefs Relating to Sexual Violence

- Sixty-one strongly disagree with the statement “when a woman is raped, it is often because the way the woman said “no” was unclear.”

### Knowledge of Campus Policies, Procedures and Resources

- Ninety-two percent of students believe they understand how SDSU defines affirmative consent to engage in sexual activity.
- Nearly all (98%) of all students do not believe that a person can give consent when they are being threatened or coerced.
- Only 56% of all students believe that at SDSU, sexual acts are considered non-consensual if a person is incapacitated from alcohol or drugs.

### Prevalence of Sexual Assault and Rape

- The rate of any sexual assault was 17% and 20.8% for freshman and sophomores respectively, compared with 16% and 17% for juniors and seniors.

- The rates of sexual assault among men are 10%, 19% among women 19%, and 14% among those who don't identify as either male or female.
- Those who identify as bisexual report rates of experiencing sexual assault at 29%, compared to those who identify as gay/lesbian at 20%, and those who identify as heterosexual men and women 16%.
- The rates of any sexual assault for American Indian/Alaska Natives are 27%, 14% for Hispanic/Latinos, 19% for multi-racial individuals, 16% for Asians, 17% for African-Americans, and 18% among white students.
- The rate of sexual assault among those involved in Sororities is 27%.

### Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence and Stalking

- Approximately 16% of the sample reported experiencing physical abuse and 4.5% report being injured by a partner since attending SDSU.
- Slightly over 4% of the sample perceive they have been stalked since attending campus, Slightly over 8% meet a stricter legal standard of experiencing unwanted harassment that elicited fear or a sense of threat.