

# HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey (Spring 2017)

During March and April of 2017, Lawrence participated in a sexual assault campus climate survey conducted by the Higher Education Data Sharing consortium (HEDS). The survey was administered to 1444 Lawrence University students, and 314 surveys were completed (22%). Respondents included freshman (24%), sophomores (28%), juniors (24%), and seniors (24%). A majority of respondents were female (63%) and about one-quarter identified as non-white (24%). The survey consisted of five sections: general climate, assessing unwanted sexual contact and assault, context and disclosure (given only to those respondents who indicated they were assaulted), bystander behaviors, and demographics. Findings were compared with the average survey results from a peer group of 75 small institutions with fewer than 4,000 undergraduates that administered the HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey in the 2015-2016 and/or 2016-2017 academic years.

## Summary of Findings

### General Climate

- **Approximately three-quarters or more of Lawrence students were satisfied with the general campus climate and reported feeling safe on campus.** Lawrence students agreed that the university respects what they think (86%) and is concerned about their welfare (89%), and they reported feeling safe on campus (82%). Agreement with these statements was slightly higher for Lawrence students compared to peer institutions (by 2-6%). Three-quarters agreed students care about the welfare of other students, which was comparable to peer institutions (74%). A lower percent agreed that students are treated fairly (73%), which was slightly lower than peer institutions (75%).
- **The majority of Lawrence students agreed that faculty, staff, administration, and students contribute to a positive and supportive campus climate.** Lawrence students agreed faculty (88%) and staff (82%) contribute to a positive and supportive campus climate. Approximately 70% of Lawrence students agreed administration and students contribute positively to the climate. We rated higher than our peers for two of the four groups contributing to climate (administration by 4% and faculty by 1%) and lower for the remaining groups (students by 4% and staff by 2%).
- **Slightly more than half but less than three-quarters of Lawrence students agreed with Lawrence's response to difficult or dangerous situations.** Lawrence had more favorable ratings compared to peer institutions when it came to campus officials responding to difficult or dangerous situations. Lawrence students agreed that campus officials do a good job protecting students from harm (71%), respond quickly in difficult situations and have confidence officials

would handle it well (60% each), and handle incidents in a fair and responsible manner (55%). A majority of students (62%) agreed that Lawrence has a good support system for students going through difficult times, which is slightly lower than peers (64%).

- **The student view of sexual assault at Lawrence is concerning. Generally speaking less than half of Lawrence students agreed that the number of sexual assaults occurring is low, that they or their friends are at risk for being sexually assaulted, and that students at Lawrence would intervene if they witnessed a sexual assault.** Lawrence students were less likely to agree with these statements relative to their peers, with a 13% difference appearing for the statement, “I do not believe that I or one of my friends is at risk for being sexually assaulted on campus, off campus at event or program connected with Lawrence, or at a social activity or party near campus” (28% of Lawrence students agreed compared to 41% of peers). Most concerning is that only about half (53%) would intervene if they witnessed an assault, which was lower compared to peer institutions (60%).
- **If someone were to report a sexual assault to a campus official, nearly three-quarters of Lawrence students agreed students would support the person making the report and that campus officials would take the report seriously. However, the perception of actions taken by the institution is an area of concern.** Two-thirds (67%) agreed campus officials would support and protect the person making the report and 60% agreed officials would conduct a careful investigation, which was slightly lower than peers. However, only 44% of Lawrence students agree campus officials would take action against the offender(s), which is nearly 14% lower compared to peer institutions.
- **The majority of Lawrence students were educated about sexual assault including the actions needed to prevent assault, how to report an incident, and confidential resources and how to locate them, but they were less sure of the procedures for investigating an assault. They found the education to be helpful and retained the information.** Lawrence students were more likely than their peers to recognize (89%), prevent (84%), and report (73%) a sexual assault as well as locate confidential resources (72%). Almost half of Lawrence students (42%) reported receiving information about the procedures for investigating an assault, which was similar to their peers (43%). Lawrence students were more likely than peers to remember education about sexual assault (69% endorsed *almost all, or all of it/most of it*) and thought it was helpful (71% endorsed *very helpful/helpful*) compared to peers.

## Prevalence

- **Less than 10% of Lawrence students reported experiencing unwanted verbal behaviors, less than five percent experienced unwanted brief physical contact, and less than three percent experienced unwanted verbal behaviors *often* to *very often*; all of which were similar to peers.**
- **Approximately 1 in 5 (21%) of Lawrence students reported someone attempted, but did not succeed in sexually assaulting them, or they**

**suspected someone attempted to assault them but are not certain, which was slightly higher compared to our peers (15%).** Both females (28%) and males (7%) reported an attempted sexual assault since starting at Lawrence. Approximately 1 in 5 non-white (22%) and white (21%) students reported an attempted assault. The perpetrator who attempted assault tended to be other students from Lawrence (90%).

- **Approximately 1 in 5 (20%) of Lawrence students reported being sexually assaulted, or suspected they were assaulted but were not certain, which was slightly higher compared to our peers (14%).** Females (26%) are three times more likely report being assaulted than males (8%). Approximately 1 in 5 non-white (21%) and white (20%) students reported being assaulted. Of those who reported an assault, the majority (57%) report more than one incident, which was comparable to peers. Seven percent report more than one assailant, which is lower than peer institutions (20%).
- **Since the last administration of the HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey in 2015, students were more likely to report a sexual offense as evidenced by the steep increase in cases from 2015 to 2016 reported on the annual crime statistics report (Clery report).**

## Type

- **The majority of reported sexual assaults involved unwanted touching; however, there are various types of assault that are reported.** Sexual assaults by one assailant involved unwanted touching (86%), vaginal sex (38%), oral sex (33%), vaginal or anal penetration with a finger or object (7%), and anal sex (5%). Assaults by more than one assailant involved higher rates of touching (100%), vaginal sex (25%), and penetration by a finger or object (25%); oral or anal sex (0% each) did not occur.
- **About one-third to one-half of reported assaults involved other people threatening to use physical force, coercion, or intimidation.** About one-third of assaults involved coercion or threat (34%) or the use of physical force (29%). Coercion or threat (50%) or the use of physical force was more common in incidents involving multiple assailants (50%).

## Assailants

- **Most incidents of sexual assault at Lawrence (91%) were perpetrated by a single assailant,** which was higher than peer institutions (78%). Sexual assaults involving multiple assailants was lower (7%) at Lawrence compared to peer institutions (20%).
- **Most assailants were males (83%) and Lawrence students (86%).** All female victims had male assailants. Male victims had male or female assailants.
- **Assaults involving a single assailant described the perpetrator as non-romantic friends or acquaintances (55%), casual dates or hookups (26%), and strangers (24%).** Assaults involving multiple assailants described the perpetrators strangers (75%) and casual dates or hook ups (50%).

## Time & Location

- **Most assaults involving a single assailant occurred within the first two years and on campus.** Most assaults involving a single assailant occurred in the first (52%) or second (31%) year on campus. More than half (59%) of assaults occurred on campus, in a dormitory or other campus housing (not a fraternity or sorority), while about one-quarter (23%) occurred in a fraternity or sorority house, on or off campus, including college owned housing.
- **Half of assaults involving multiple assailants occurred during the second year and in Greek housing.** For assaults involving more than one assailant, half occurred in the second year and the remaining 50% was equally split occurring in the first year (25%) and in the third year (25%). Half of assaults occurred in a fraternity or sorority house, on or off campus, including college owned housing while 25% occurred on campus, in a dormitory or other campus housing (not a fraternity or sorority) and 25% occurred during study abroad, study away, or other off-campus study program.

## Alcohol & Drugs

- **Alcohol consumption was a contributing factor in sexual assaults.** When the victim was assaulted by one person, alcohol had been consumed by both assailants (62%) and victims (61%). When the victim was assaulted by more than one person, 100% of assailants and 75% of victims consumed alcohol.
- **Of particular concern is that the majority of victims assaulted by one person were given a drug without their knowledge, which is a significant increase from the survey administered in 2015.** The majority (83%) of victims assaulted by one person were given a drug without their knowledge in 2017 compared to 12% in 2015. When the victim was assaulted by more than one person, no victim was given a drug without their knowledge or consent.
- **Being incapacitated occurred in one-third of assaults by a single assailant.** Consent was not provided in over one-third of assaults (33%) due to incapacitation (e.g., being passed out, drunk, drugged, or asleep). Lack of consent due to incapacitation was less common for incidents involving more than one assailant (25%).

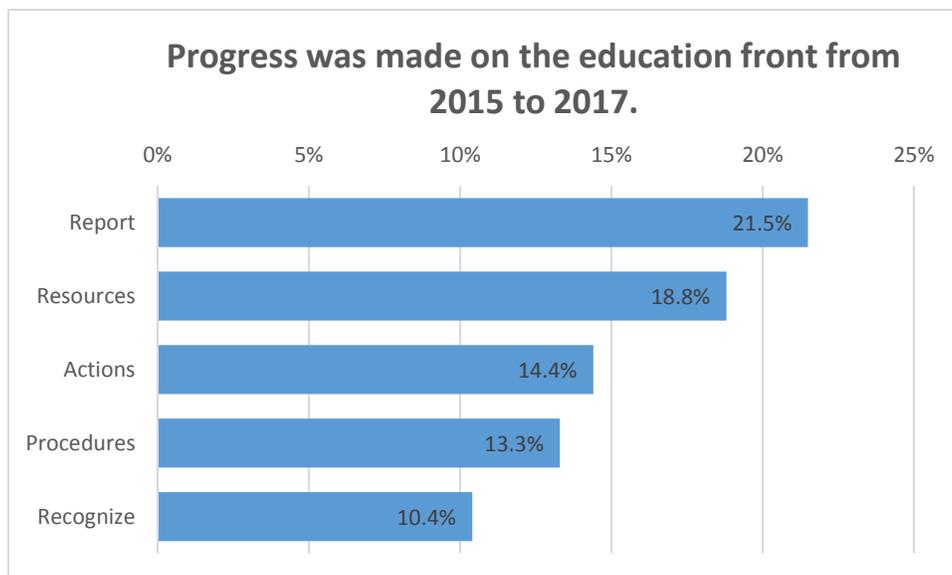
## Reporting

- **Victims were most likely to confide in a close friend.**
  - For sexual assaults with a single assailant, victims most commonly confided in a close friend (83%). Next most common confidants included a romantic partner (33%), roommate (29%), parent or guardian (21%), on-campus counselor (17%), and Title IX Coordinator or faculty, staff, or administrators (14% each). Victims were less likely to tell the campus sexual assault advocate or resident advisor/assistant or other peer advisor (10% each). Five percent chose not to confide in anyone.

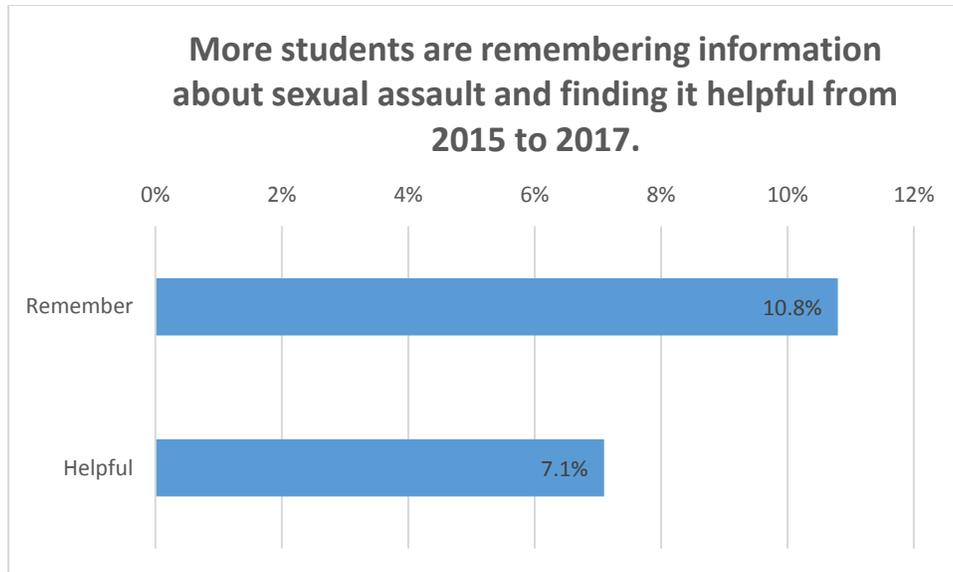
- For assaults with more than one assailant, victims were most likely to confide in a close friend or romantic partner (50% each) but also confided in a roommate, parent or guardian, campus sexual assault advocate, or Title IX coordinator (25% each). A quarter chose not to confide in anyone.
- **Bystanders were present when one-third to one-half of sexual assaults occurred, and one-quarter to one-half of those intervened.** Close to one-third (31% or N=13) of bystanders (N=42) were present when a victim was sexually assaulted by a single assailant, and of those 23% (N=3) intervened by stepping in and trying to separate the victim from the assailant, asking the victim if they needed help, or confronting the assailant. Half (50% or N=2) of bystanders (N=4) were present when a victim was sexually assaulted by multiple assailants, and of those 50% (N=1) intervened by confronting the assailant.

## Changes over Time (2015 to 2017)

**Progress was made on the education front. Students are remembering the information or education from Lawrence about sexual assault and find it to be helpful.** The largest percent increase was around knowing how to report sexual assault (22%) followed by knowing confidential resources and how to locate them on campus (19%). There were also large percent increases in knowing about actions to take to prevent sexual assault (14%), procedures for investigating assault (13%), and recognizing sexual assault (10%).



There was an 11% increase in retention of information about sexual assault and 7% increase in the helpfulness of that information.



**The views on general climate, sexual assault at Lawrence, Lawrence’s response to difficult or dangerous situations, and what might happen if someone were to report a sexual assault to an official at Lawrence declined over time.** There was one exception - the statement, “Students would support the person making the report” showed a positive percent increase.

**Reported unwanted sexual contact is stable over time.** A very slight increase in unwanted verbal and nonverbal behaviors (1% each) was apparent with no change in unwanted brief physical contact over time.

**Reports of sexual assault are on the rise.** Lawrence students reported a 7% increase in both attempted, but not completed, sexual assaults (14% in 2015 to 21% in 2017), and completed sexual assaults (13% in 2015 to 20% in 2017).

### Changes since the 2017 HEDS Survey

The university has taken the actions listed below to improve the campus climate. The effects of these actions will be measured in part by the next HEDS survey, scheduled for spring 2019.

1. Designated faculty, staff, and student members of SHARE as confidential resources for members of the Lawrence community who have experienced sexual harassment or assault,
2. Continued to provide Title IX training to all employees on the sexual misconduct policy, reporting requirements, the SHARE website and app, and the role of SHARE confidential resources,
3. Encouraged the activities of student groups who work to increase awareness and prevention of sexual assault and expanded bystander training to other groups on campus,

4. Worked in partnership with the Sexual Assault Crisis Center (SACC) to provide a campus advocate, on-campus counseling, and prevention and education training, and
5. Required online program for all first-year and returning students on sexual assault prevention. Required active bystander training for all students hosting parties and offered the training to all athletic teams and student organizations.