

Michigan Tech's Title IX: Sexual and/or Relationship Misconduct Survey: Spring 2017

Background:

Title IX is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities. This includes gender discrimination, pregnant and parenting discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Sexual violence is defined as any physical act which is sexual in nature that is committed by force or without full and informed consent of all persons involved, and may include rape, sexual assault, non-consensual sexual intercourse, intimate partner violence (relationship/dating violence, domestic violence), stalking, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual coercion, and sexual exploitation.

Sexual harassment and violence are significant challenges for colleges and universities nationwide, affecting the health, mental health, and academic success of students. Our hope is that this assessment tool will help us to understand the scope or nature of the problem at Michigan Technological University.

Introduction:

The 2017 Michigan Technological University sexual misconduct climate survey, entitled the Title IX: Sexual and/or Relationship Misconduct Survey, reflects the University's student voice and thoughts on sexual misconduct. In March 2017, the survey invitation was distributed to all currently enrolled students. The survey explored questions about student experience and views concerning Michigan Tech's sexual misconduct climate including information related to incidents of sexual harassment and violence, policy, reporting, training/programming/education, support, resources, and prevalent perceptions and attitudes. The March 2017 survey was the second time a sexual and/or relationship misconduct survey was administered. The first survey was in April 2015.

Key Points:

- Date range during which survey was administered: March 13 to April 2, 2017
- The survey was administered by a third party independent researcher who used the Administrator/Researcher Campus Climate Collaborative (ARC3) Campus Climate Survey.
- The survey should have taken most students about 30 minutes or less to complete. Participation was voluntary so students may have chosen to skip questions or stop responding at any point.

- The online survey was distributed via email to all currently enrolled graduate and undergraduate students. The survey was not distributed to anyone under 18 or any dual enrolled students.
- Questions were asked about their views regarding campus climate, including information related to incidents of sexual harassment and violence, policy, reporting, training/programming/education, support, resources, and prevalent perceptions and attitudes.
- A total of 6,701 survey invitations were distributed.
 - Of the 6,701 surveys distributed, 20 percent were to graduate students and 80 percent were to undergraduate students.
 - 1,115 students started the survey, which is approximately 16 percent of the student population.
 - 644 students completed the survey, which is approximately 9 percent of the student population.
 - Of the students who completed the survey, 15 percent were graduate students and 85 percent were undergraduate students. Thirty-eight percent of respondents identified as female, 57 percent identified as male, and 5 percent identified as transgender/gender non-conforming.
- Responses were anonymous. Responses were reported in terms of groups of students rather than as individual cases.
- We use the term “survey” to mean a standard set of questions given to participants in a questionnaire to assess different aspects of campus climate regarding sexual and/or relationship misconduct.
- Students were asked about their experiences since enrolling at the university, not prior history. This enables us to gauge scope and nature of the problems during their time as a student at Michigan Tech.
- Due to the sensitive nature of the questions, no questions required a response. This means that students would sometimes skip questions, causing the number of responses to vary.

Why was a sexual misconduct climate survey conducted and why now?

The federal government has stated that conducting a regular climate survey concerning sexual misconduct/violence is a best practice response to campus sexual misconduct.

We know from decades of research that victims rarely report sexual assault to law enforcement. Many victims do not access formal services, like crisis centers. Thus, official statistics underrepresent the extent of the problem on many campuses. Further, campus response, intervention, and prevention efforts will be more successful if they are tailored to the needs of each campus community.

In order for our campus to improve responses to incidents of sexual misconduct, it is imperative that we have an understanding of campus issues, such as students' knowledge of policies and resources for both complainants and respondents, attitudes about misconduct prevention, and perceptions of how their campus community is addressing issues of sexual misconduct.

We believe that as an institution, we will see benefits from conducting climate surveys. For example, when campuses address sexual violence, victims may feel more comfortable coming forward, so the rates of reporting such violence might increase. Importantly, we can help victims heal from the trauma they have experienced, enabling them to stay in school.

Michigan Tech's Title IX office made the decision to conduct a survey every other year. Even though it is not required by the federal government at this time, the survey is a benchmark. It is important for us to know what is happening on our campus. The survey offers us an understanding of the prevalence of incidents of sexual harassment and violence on campus, and provides us with helpful information regarding student's thoughts and opinions of the sexual misconduct climate. As an institution, we have a responsibility to create a safe campus community.

Summary of Findings:

Sexual and/or relationship misconduct has been identified as a national problem that has a significant impact on college and university students. Federal and state laws place requirements upon colleges and universities to address issues of sexual and/or relationship misconduct. Michigan Tech is committed to educating students, faculty, and staff about this topic, and to working with the surrounding communities and resource centers to offer as great a variety of services as possible. The [University's Student Code of Community Conduct](#) expressly prohibits sexual and/or relationship misconduct. Sexual and/or relationship misconduct includes sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, and stalking.ⁱ

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, an on-going survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, finds that about one in three women and nearly one in six men were victims of sexual violence at some point in their lives. In addition, one in four women and one in seven men have

experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime.ⁱⁱ The [Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) reports that 11.2 percent of all students nationwide experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation (among all graduate and undergraduate students). It also notes that 4.2 percent of students have experienced stalking since entering college.ⁱⁱⁱ

Each year, schools disclose the number of sexual assaults reported on campus in their [annual security reports](#) and to the US Department of Education. In 2013, the requirements for schools were updated as part of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA). Colleges and universities will now also disclose the annual number of domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking incidents reported.

For these reasons, we are sharing some key findings of Michigan Tech's Title IX: Sexual and/or Relationship Misconduct Survey.

Key Findings:

- Overall, Michigan Tech students strongly agree or agree that they are satisfied with life at Michigan Tech, and if they had to select a college over again they would still attend Michigan Tech. In addition, 88 percent strongly agree or agree that they would recommend attending Michigan Tech to others.
- Most students indicated it would be likely or very likely that Michigan Tech would take sexual misconduct reports seriously and would handle reports fairly.
- Approximately 93 percent of Michigan Tech students who responded to the survey said that they feel safe on the Michigan Tech campus. More specifically, this majority of students feels safe from sexual harassment, dating violence, and sexual violence on or around campus.
- When asked, "How aware are you of the function of campus and community resources specifically related to sexual misconduct response" 93 percent of students responded they are aware of the Title IX/Institutional Equity and Inclusion office.
- When asked about sexual harassment: "Since you enrolled at Michigan Tech, have you been in a situation in which a student made offensive sexist remarks?", students responded:

Responses: Never = 53%
Once or twice = 19%
Sometimes = 16%
Often = 7%
Many times = 5%

- When asked about dating violence: “Not including horseplay or joking around, the person can scare me without laying a hand on me,” students responded:

Responses: Never = 89%
Once or twice = 6%
Sometimes = 3%
Often = 2%

- When asked about sexual violence: “Someone fondled, kissed, or rubbed up against the private areas of my body or removed some of my clothes without my consent by taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it to stop what was happening,” students responded:

Responses: 0 times = 87%
1 time = 8%
2 times = 2%
3+ times = 3%

- It is important to acknowledge, as we did in the survey, that even if a student had been drinking, the student is in no way responsible for any sexual violence that may have occurred against them. That being said, more than half of the students who responded indicated that sexual violence occurred when all parties involved were under the influence of alcohol.
- Approximately two-thirds of sexual harassment incidents occurred on campus. Conversely, approximately two-thirds of dating violence or sexual violence incidents occurred off campus.
- In most cases, students who had an unwanted sexual experience said another Michigan Tech student was responsible. This is consistent with national data indicating that an overwhelming majority of victims know their attacker.
- Among students who said they had at least one unwanted sexual experience at Michigan Tech, 81 percent told a close friend. Thirty-three percent of those students said they reported the incident to law enforcement or an official University resource, including Counseling Services, Residence Hall staff and/or the Title IX Coordinator. (Note: Counseling Services is a designated confidential resource so reporting is not “mandated.”)
- When asked how a friend or peer would respond when told about an incident of sexual misconduct, most students agreed that their friend/peer would help them to get information about coping with the experience and discuss the options.
- Regarding bystander intervention, 71 percent of students who responded stated that they always, most of the time, or sometimes “walked a friend who has had too much to drink home from a party, bar, or other social event.” If someone at a party looks very upset, 72 percent of

students who responded would always, most of the time, or sometimes “ask if they are okay or need help.”

- As for consent, 90 percent of the students strongly agree or agree that consent must be given at each step in a sexual encounter. Additionally, 95 percent strongly disagree or disagree that consent for sex one time is consent for future sex.

Recommendations:

In reviewing the Title IX: Sexual and/or Relationship Misconduct Survey results, we will re-assess the scope of the issues and re-examine the effectiveness of our policies, procedures, reporting, training/programming/education, support, and resources. The data collected from this survey will help us in our prevention efforts and in continuing to create a safer campus.

In general, it is clear that our students feel safe on campus and will assist a fellow student. While this is encouraging, it is important to remember that sexual harassment and violence happen on all college campuses. Our students need to continue to be aware and educated.

Upon reflection of the survey results, we will continue to 1) enhance our awareness and educational programming, 2) create awareness about reporting processes, and 3) focus on providing support and resources for victims of sexual misconduct.

In addition, we hope to provide new information and programming on healthy relationships, healthy masculinity, and more education about sexual violence against men.

In the 2017 fall semester, the survey findings will be discussed with the [Title IX Awareness Committee](#), as well as students and department representatives from all areas of the campus community.

ⁱ <http://www.mtu.edu/conduct/policies/student-conduct/sexual-misconduct/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/infographic.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.rainn.org/statistics>