

## **Michigan Tech's Title IX: 2020 Speak Up Sexual and/or Relationship Misconduct Survey Executive Summary**

### **Background:**

Title IX is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender in educational programs and activities. This includes 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 dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, and rape.

All organizations/schools that receive federal and state funds are mandated to take immediate and effective steps to respond to sexual violence.

Sexual violence is a significant challenge for students, affecting their health, mental health, and academic success. Our hope is that assessment tools will help us to understand the scope and nature of the issues at Michigan Tech.

### **Introduction:**

The recent Michigan Technological University sexual misconduct climate survey, *Title IX: 2020 Speak Up Sexual and/or Relationship Misconduct Survey*, reflects the University's student voice and thoughts on sexual misconduct. In January 2020, the survey invitation was distributed to all currently enrolled students. The survey explored questions about students experience and views concerning Michigan Tech's sexual misconduct climate including information related to incidents of sexual violence, policy, reporting, training, educational programming, support, resources and prevalent perceptions and attitudes.

### **Key Survey Design Points:**

- Date Range Survey Completed: January 13, 2020 to March 6, 2020.
- The survey was administered by Michigan Technological University, with the administrative assistance from Campus Labs: Baseline.
- The survey should have taken most students about 30 minutes to complete. Participation was voluntary, and students may have chosen to skip questions or stop responding at any point.
- The on-line survey was distributed via email to all currently enrolled graduate and undergraduate students. The survey was not distributed to anyone under the age of 18.

- The survey asked questions about their views regarding campus climate, including information related to incidents of sexual violence, policy, reporting, training/programming/education, support, resources and prevalent perceptions and attitudes.
- Responses were anonymous. Responses were reported in terms of groups of students rather than as individual cases.
- Students were made aware that by responding, they were not making an official report of the incidents(s).
- 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 in regard to sexual and/or relationship misconduct.
- Students were asked about their experience in the **current academic** year, not prior history. This enables us to gauge scope and nature of the issues 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?**

A regularly distributed Title IX climate survey concerning sexual misconduct is a best practice response to campus sexual misconduct. We know from research that victims rarely report sexual assault. Thus, official statistics underrepresent the extent of the problem on any one campus. Further, campus response, intervention, and prevention efforts will be more successful if they are tailored to the needs of each campus community.

Understanding 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.

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

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 violence on campus and provides us with helpful information regarding students’ thoughts and opinions of the sexual misconduct climate. As an institution, we have a responsibility to protect our students from sexual misconduct and to create a safe campus community.

### **What is the value of climate surveys?**

- Climate surveys can provide information about student perceptions, knowledge and attitudes relevant to sexual assault (violence).
- Incident rates assessed via confidential or anonymous surveys can be another source of data about the extent of the problem.
- Regularly administering surveys can show changes over time, such as decreases in sexual assaults (violence) and increases in awareness or reporting.
- Surveys can provide information about the problem in a particular campus community, enabling schools to tailor prevention and response efforts.
- Conducting a climate survey can demonstrate the university's commitment to addressing sexual assault (violence) and build trust with students, faculty, parents, and others.

### **Summary of Findings:**

Sexual and/or relationship misconduct has been identified as a national problem that significantly impacts college and university students. Federal and state laws place requirements upon colleges and universities to address issues of sexual and/or relationship misconduct. The University is committed to educating students, faculty, and staff about this topic and working with the surrounding communities and resource centers to offer as great a variety of services as possible. Michigan Tech's policies expressly prohibit sexual and/or relationship misconduct. Sexual and/or relationship misconduct includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking.

The number of respondents was 786 students, which is approximately 11% of the student population. Of these respondents, 21% were graduate students and 77% undergraduate students and 2% no reply. Also 12% identified themselves as international students and 15% as underrepresented demographic group members.

### **Key Findings in the 2020 Survey:**

- Overall, Michigan Tech students strongly agree or agree that faculty and staff are concerned about their welfare. They feel like they are a part of Michigan Tech and that Michigan Tech has a good support system for students going through difficult times.
- Approximately 96% (745 students) of Michigan Tech students who responded to the survey said that they feel safe on the Michigan Tech campus, and 90% (679 students) said they believe protecting the safety of students is a priority for the University.

- Students said that “Since the beginning of this current academic year, has anyone had sexual contact with you by using physical force or threatening to physically harm you?” Fifteen students said YES (2.4%). And, “Since the beginning of this current academic year, has anyone attempted but not succeeded in having sexual contact with you by using physical force or threatening to physically harm you?” Fourteen students said YES (2.25%).
- When asked, “Since the beginning of this current academic year, did you have sexual contact from someone when you were unable to provide consent or stop what was happening because you were passed out, drugged, drunk, asleep?” Twenty-two students (3.53%) said YES. When a student responded YES to this question, they indicated the following occurred:

Count	Respondent %	Response %	
27	71.05%	32.93%	Forced touching of a sexual nature
16	42.11%	19.51%	Oral sex
16	42.11%	19.51%	Sexual intercourse
4	10.53%	4.88%	Anal sex
16	42.11%	19.51%	Sexual penetration with a finger/object
3	7.89%	3.66%	Don't know

NOTE: This question said, “Check all that apply.”

- It is important to acknowledge, as we did in the survey, that even if a student had been drinking or using drugs the student is in no way responsible for any sexual violence that may have happened to them. That being said, 35 of the 39 students indicated that unwanted sexual misconduct incidents occurred under the influence of alcohol, and 10 out of 39 indicated they had voluntarily been taking drugs other than alcohol.
- Approximately two-thirds of non-consensual sexual experiences occurred off campus. Approximately one-third occurred on campus.
- In most cases, students who had an unwanted sexual experience said another Michigan Tech student was responsible, specifically a non-romantic friend or a casual or first date.

- Among students who said they had a least one unwanted sexual experience at Michigan Tech, most often told a close friend, a romantic partner other than the one that did this to you, a roommate, or no one. Only 4 of these students said they reported the incident.
- When asked why they did not report their experience, most students who responded to this question said they felt it was a private matter/wanted to deal with it on their own, didn't think what happened was serious enough to talk about, or wanted to forget about it. A significant number of students also felt embarrassed or ashamed, said they had other things to focus on and were concerned about like classes and work, or they thought they would be blamed for what happened.
- Most students, 84%, indicated they strongly agree or agree that Michigan Tech officials handle conduct incidents in a fair and timely manner. In addition, 92% said that they thought the University would take the report seriously, and 88% said they thought the University would support the person making the report.
- In regard to retaliation, 83% said the University would take steps to protect the person making the report from retaliation. It is concerning that 44% of students indicate that it is very likely or likely that the alleged offender(s) or their associates would retaliate against making the report.
- In regard to information specifically about Michigan Tech's Title IX efforts, 82% said they had received or seen information concerning Title IX and/or sexual violence prevention/education. For training and education, 70% said they received online or in-person training and 83% stated they thought the training was useful. Only 23% of the respondents said they did not know how to contact the Title IX Coordinator.
- Only 10% said they sought assistance or used a hotline after an incident.
- In regard to bystander intervention, 436 students (82%) felt "extremely confident" that they could, "express their discomfort if someone said that rape victims are to blame for being raped." And 446 students (83%) felt "extremely confident" that they would "Ask a friend if he/she needs to be walked home from a party."
- As for consent, 504 of the students who responded to this question (98%) felt it "likely or extremely likely" that they would stop having sex with a partner if he/she says to stop, even if it started

consensually. Additionally, 467 students responding (92%) said they were either “likely or extremely likely” to *not* engage in sex with a partner if they were drunk.

### **Key Findings in Comparing the 2020 survey to the 2015 Survey:**

We found some positive changes when comparing the 2020 survey responses to the 2015 responses.

<u>2020</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>Question</u>
82%	70%	Received or seen information on Title IX/sexual violence prevention
70%	51%	Received online or in-person prevention education on Title IX/sexual violence prevention
60%	32%	Know how to contact the Title IX Coordinator
80%	64%	If I or a friend were a victim, I know where to go to get help
77%	62%	If I or a friend were a victim, I know how to report.
62%	56%	Express my discomfort if someone says the victim is to blame for being raped
57%	47%	Extremely confident they would get help for a friend that says they have raped/assaulted
63%	54%	Extremely likely to ask for verbal consent when intimate with my partner
89%	83%	Extremely likely to stop sexually activity when asked to
69%	59%	Extremely likely to decide not to have sex if their partner is drunk
69%	58%	Extremely likely confront a friend that plans to give someone alcohol to get sex
57%	47%	Extremely likely confront a friend if I hear rumors that forced sex on someone
54%	44%	Extremely likely to speak up to my friend who is taking a drunk person to their room at a party
52%	41%	Extremely likely that I would report a friend that committed sexual violence

Overall, we are seeing an increase in student’s willingness to speak up about the serious incidents, using helping behaviors, and giving and understanding consent. This is good news; however, we know there is more work to do.

Here a few changes that have raised our concerns.

<u>2020</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>Question</u>
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26% 7% Just prior to the incident, had you voluntarily taking or using drugs

91% 85% No, I did not report the incident

Also, we are still seeing a reluctance to speak up about smaller/gateway harassment behavior, for example expressing discomfort is someone makes a joke about a women's or man's body, speaking up to someone making a sexist remark, or continuing to allow for personal loyalties to get in the way of reporting.

**Preliminary recommendations:**

In reviewing these Title IX: Speak Up Sexual and/or Relationship Misconduct survey results, we will assess the scope of the problem and assess the effectiveness of our policies, procedures, reporting, training, educational programming, support, and resources.

In general, it is clear that Michigan Tech students feel safe on campus. Our prevention efforts seem to be having some positive effects as we compare results between the 2020 and 2015 surveys. In particular, students are indicating they are more likely to speak up and/or help a fellow student and use active consent more often. This is encouraging, but as always more needs to be done to continue this upward trend.

As we reflect on the survey results, we will strive to improve our awareness and educational programming, make the response and reporting processes easier to understand, and continue to focus on increasing support and resources for victims of sexual misconduct.

During the fall semester of 2020, the survey findings will be discussed in depth with the [Title IX Awareness Committee](#), as well as students and department representatives from all areas of the campus community. This input will further assist improvement of programs and response to sexual and/or relationship misconduct and recommendations for a safer campus.