

Lake Forest College HEDS Campus Climate Survey Results Summary

Updated 12/16/2016 with minor corrections to some data points.

In the spring of 2016, Lake Forest College collaborated with the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) to administer the HEDS Sexual Assault/Campus Climate Survey to learn more about students' experience with, and perceptions of, sexual misconduct on campus. The survey was also administered at 49 other institutions nationwide. The survey asked student respondents a series of questions about general campus climate and safety as well as their experience with sexual misconduct. Respondents who reported that they had been sexually assaulted on-campus, at a Lake Forest College affiliated event, or at a social activity near campus completed a series of questions about the alleged assaults. All respondents then completed a final section about bystander behaviors related to sexual misconduct.

Thirty percent (435 of 1,461) of Lake Forest College students completed the survey. The national survey produced nearly 24,000 responses, with an overall response rate of 19%. Thus, comparatively speaking, Lake Forest College had a better than average response rate. The demographic breakdown of Lake Forest respondents is consistent with the makeup of the student body. Survey respondents were primarily female, lived on-campus, and heterosexual. The racial and ethnic composition of respondents was diverse and survey respondents also represented all academic levels evenly. Lake Forest College students reported many of the same experiences at similar rates as other students at peer institutions that participated in the HEDS survey. The following is a summary of survey results.

A large majority of students feel safe on campus and that they are valued members of the Lake Forest College community. Additionally, most students reported that they feel that faculty, staff, and administrators contribute to a positive learning environment and are genuinely concerned about their welfare. It is important to note that while most students do experience Lake Forest College as safe and supportive, a lower percentage of female respondents, non-heterosexual respondents, and non-white respondents feel safe. Overall, students also indicated less confidence in their peers' concern for the welfare of others and contributions to creating a safe and supportive environment on campus.

Only a small number of students reported being victims of sexual assault: Sexual assault, as defined in the HEDS survey, includes extended non-consensual touching of a sexual nature, oral sex, vaginal sex, or anal sex. In addition to non-consensual anal or vaginal sex with a body part other than a penis or tongue, or by an object.

Thirty-eight respondents reported they experienced a sexual assault. Most of these alleged incidents were reported to have occurred on campus, at an off-campus event, or at a social activity near campus. Most of the respondents who reported they were sexually assaulted identified as women, and most reported that another Lake Forest College student was responsible. Approximately half of the respondents who reported being sexually assaulted were assaulted in their first year. Many incidents of sexual assault involved alcohol use by both the victim and the perpetrator, and 13 of the 38 students reported they were unable to consent due to incapacitation from alcohol or drugs. Fifty-four percent reported that physical force was used. Twenty-one of the 38 students who reported being sexually assaulted also said they were assaulted on more than one occasion.

Many students have experienced unwanted sexual contact, although a relatively small number of students experienced repeated unwanted sexual contact: Unwanted sexual contact as defined by HEDS includes unwanted verbal behaviors and nonverbal behaviors, as well as unwanted brief physical contact. Women were more likely to experience unwanted sexual contact. Students reported that a majority of unwanted sexual contact was initiated by their peers.

A large majority of students believe that campus officials would take reports of sexual misconduct seriously. Respondents indicated strong confidence (76%) in campus officials responding appropriately to reports of sexual misconduct than students (62%).

Seventy-six percent of respondents confided in a close friend, roommate, parent/guardian, romantic partner, other family member, campus counselor, private counselor, faculty/staff, and/or campus health services.

However, only 17% formally reported the incident to the College and another 13% did not tell anyone. Reasons for not reporting varied and included fear they would be blamed; not be believed or would be retaliated against; shame and embarrassment; wanting to forget; and not wanting others to find out.

A large majority (84%) of students reported intervening when seeing a suspected sexual assault and 64% of students reported intervening when seeing a situation that could have led to a sexual assault. However, only 1 victim out of the 9 who reported bystanders were present during the sexual assault, indicated that the bystander intervened.

Overall, most students reported that they found the information provided by the College regarding recognition and reporting of sexual misconduct, available resources, and bystander intervention to be helpful. However, less than half of students recalled receiving information about the procedures for investigating sexual assault, although that information is provided annually to all students.

Conclusion: It was reassuring to learn that so many Lake Forest College students feel safe on campus and experience faculty and staff as supportive and genuinely concerned for their welfare, but remain aware that sexual assault and unwanted sexual contact occur on campus. While it seems clear that students are benefiting from the College's education and prevention programs, the data indicates that student bystanders are not intervening in problematic situations as readily as they believe, and numbers of students are still uncertain how incidents of sexual misconduct are investigated. This information, along with more training on effective bystander intervention, will help build trust, safety, create culture change, and reduce the number of incidents of sexual misconduct.

Implications: As a result of the survey, the College has established the following goals:

- The Coalition Against Sexual Misconduct, the Health and Wellness Center and the Title IX Coordinator will continue to plan and present educational opportunities in partnership with Student Government, student organizations, and outside experts regarding the prevalence and impact of sexual assault on all students, with a particular focus on students of color, LGBTQ students, and men.
- In addition to requiring all new students to participate in the StepUp! Bystander Intervention program during new student orientation, eight StepUP! Bystander Intervention trainings and one student facilitator training will be offered this year to students who have not yet taken the course or wish to help administer the course in the future.
- The College will provide additional training for faculty, staff, student organizations and leadership regarding the resources available to individuals who experience sexual misconduct and the process by which the College investigates and remedies sexual misconduct.
- The College will provide a campus and community resource fair where students can obtain more information regarding available resources for students who experience sexual misconduct.
- All students will participate in an on-line Haven "refresher" course regarding prevention and response to sexual misconduct.
- The College will provide additional information to students regarding the College's policy and procedures for reporting and investigating sexual misconduct by way of the Reach Out Lake Forest App, student group-targeted presentations by the Title IX Coordinator and peer educational programs.

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