



LAKE FOREST
COLLEGE

Sexual Assault Climate Survey Results Summary

About the Survey

In the spring of 2018, Lake Forest College collaborated with the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) to administer the HEDS Sexual Assault/Campus Climate Survey to our student body to learn more about students' experience with, and perceptions of, sexual misconduct on campus. The information gained from this study will be used to inform the College's education and prevention efforts, strengthen existing services for students, and create a safer and more caring community.

The survey asked students a series of questions about general campus climate and safety; their perception of being cared for by faculty, staff, and administrators; their expectations regarding campus response to reports; their perception of campus climate around sexual assault; bystander intervention behavior; as well as their experience with sexual misconduct. Survey respondents who reported that they had been sexually assaulted on campus, at College-affiliated event, or at a social activity near campus completed a series of questions about their assaults. The College included supplemental questions about relationship violence, threatening behavior, prevention training on campus, and experiences with support resources on campus.

Lake Forest College previously administered the HEDS sexual assault campus climate survey in spring of 2016, so comparison of data over time can be observed. Results from 2018 are generally comparable to those in 2016, but several notable differences are highlighted in the summary below. The 2018 HEDS survey was taken by over 13,000 students at 95 small institutions nationwide, and some comparisons may be made between Lake Forest College's data and that of small colleges generally. This report summarizes key results of the survey.

Survey Respondents

The survey was administered electronically to all students, and responses were anonymous. Twenty-three percent (319 of 1,469) of Lake Forest College students completed the survey, down from the 30% participation rate from the 2016 survey. Nationally, other small colleges had a slightly lower response rate average of 21%. Similar to the demographics of the overall student body, Lake Forest College survey respondents identified as primarily female (59% of respondents), white (63%), heterosexual (75%), and

lived on campus (81%).¹ The racial and ethnic composition of survey respondents was diverse and reflected the campus at large. Survey respondents represented all class levels (29% first years, 27% sophomores, 21% juniors, and 23% seniors). Nonetheless, the College recognizes that a higher student participation rate would provide more representative data and a fuller picture of student sexual misconduct experience at the College, and the College will continue to encourage greater student participation in future climate surveys.

Perceptions on Campus Climate

Students completing the survey felt that faculty, staff, and administrators are supportive and concerned about their welfare. For example, a large majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that faculty, staff, and administrators at the College respect what students think (89%), are genuinely concerned about students' welfare (89%), and treat students fairly (81%). Eighty-seven percent of the students responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they feel valued in the classroom environment (87%). Large majorities of respondents also believe that faculty, staff, and administrators contribute to a positive and supportive campus. Over 60% of students agreed or strongly agreed that campus officials respond well in difficult or dangerous situations. Student perceptions about faculty, staff, and administrators were higher across all categories from the 2016 data, and were higher than those of other small institutions participating in the 2018 HEDS survey.

While a majority of respondents believe that their fellow students are concerned about their peers' welfare and contribute to a positive and supportive campus, responses were less positive than they were about faculty, staff, and administrators. Survey respondents felt a part of the College community (68%) and believed that students were generally concerned about the welfare of other students (69%). Similarly, 65% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their fellow students contributed to a positive and supportive campus.

Eighty-seven percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safe on campus, up from 84% in 2016. Seventy percent of students surveyed indicated that they believe their fellow students understand the College's definition of consent for sexual activity.

There were differences in the responses from different demographic groups. Students of color indicated they felt less a part of the Lake Forest College community (62% compared to 72% of white students). LGBTQ-identified students also felt less a part of the Lake Forest College community (61% compared to 71% of heterosexual students) and also felt less safe on campus (75% compared to 91% of heterosexual students). LGBTQ-identified respondents were also less likely to agree that campus officials do a good job protecting students from harm (64% compared to 81% of heterosexual respondents) and that campus officials would handle a crisis well (58% compared to 69%).

Perceptions on Sexual Assault Prevalence and Reporting

A slight majority of survey respondents indicated that they believed the number of sexual assaults that occur at the College is low (56%) and that students would intervene if they witnessed a sexual assault

¹ The survey contained several options for identification of race and sexual orientation, but the data provided by HEDS was grouped into broader categories due to smaller response counts in order to prevent potential identification of survey respondents.

(57%), but the number of respondents who did not agree with these statements is noteworthy. A majority of respondents expressed that they did not believe that they or one of their friends was at risk for being sexually assaulted at the College (55%), which marks a slight decline in confidence from 2016 data. Students identifying as male and students identifying as heterosexual were more likely to feel the number of sexual assaults on campus is low and that their friends were not at risk of being sexually assaulted at the College than students identifying as female and LGBTQ-identified students.

Views on reporting sexual assault typically had more positive responses. A majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that campus officials would take a report of sexual assault seriously (85%), that campus officials would support the person making the report (80%), that campus officials would conduct a careful investigation (76%), and that campus officials would take action against the offenders (70%). These numbers show no statistically significant change in any category from the College's 2016 data, and are notably more positive than the average responses from students at other small institutions participating in the HEDS survey.

A majority of respondents expressed positive sentiments about their interactions with the Title IX office, and 72% agreed that they were provided with useful and clear information about their options, the College's complaint process, and resources available to them. A majority of respondents (69%) also agreed that their fellow students would support a victim making the report. These feelings of support for a fellow student significantly increased since 2016. However, female respondents were less likely than male respondents to believe that campus officials would take action against the perpetrators. However, female survivors who did report felt positively about their experiences with the College's formal reporting process.

Incidence of Unwelcome Sexual Contact, Attempted Sexual Assault, and Sexual Assault

The HEDS survey asked students about their experience with unwanted sexual contact, including verbal behaviors, nonverbal behaviors, and unwanted brief physical contact while a student at the College. Forty-eight percent of students reported that they had experienced unwanted verbal behavior, such as sexual comments, jokes, or propositions. Thirty-three percent indicated that they had experienced unwanted nonverbal behaviors, such as sexual texts or posts, leering, or being shown sexual pictures or objects. Thirty-eight percent indicated that they had experienced unwanted brief physical contact, such as brief groping, rubbing, pinching, or other unwelcome brief touching. Eighty-eight percent of those respondents indicated that another student at the College was responsible for the behavior. Regarding the frequency of these behaviors, a relatively small number of students (under 9% for each of the three types) indicated they had experienced unwelcome sexual contact often or very often, but the percentage of students indicating they experienced unwanted verbal behavior and nonverbal behavior often increased from 2016. Female-identified students were more likely to report experiencing unwanted sexual contact than male-identified students. Men were more likely than women to never experience any of these behaviors. Nationally, a comparable rate of students at other small institutions reported often experiencing unwanted verbal behavior and unwanted brief physical contact, though more survey respondents at Lake Forest, especially female students, reported experiencing unwanted nonverbal behaviors often or very often.

The HEDS survey defines sexual assault as unwanted or nonconsensual sexual contact including touching of a sexual nature, oral sex, vaginal sex, anal sex, or anal or vaginal penetration with another body part or any object. Thirty-six of 319 respondents (11%) indicated they had experienced an attempted (but not successful) sexual assault while on campus, off campus at a College event or program, or at a social event near campus, which is up from 9% in 2016. Of these students, 81% identified as female, 36% identified as LGBTQ, and 33% identified as students of color, and they represented all undergraduate class levels. Ninety-four percent of these respondents indicated that a College student was responsible for their attempted sexual assault. Nationally, a slightly lower percentage (9%) of survey respondents at small institutions reported experiencing an attempted sexual assault.

The same number, 36 of 319 respondents (11%), indicated that they had been sexually assaulted while on campus, off-campus at a College event or program, or at a social event near campus. This is slightly higher than reported in the 2016 HEDS survey, when 38 out of 435 students (9%) reported experiencing a sexual assault, and is comparable to the percentage reported by the national population of survey respondents at small institutions (10%). Lake Forest respondents who reported experiencing sexual assault predominately identified as heterosexual (64%), white (69%), female (81%), and represented all undergraduate class levels. Half of these respondents (18 of 36) indicated that their assault (or their first assault, if they had experienced more than one) occurred during their first year at the College, and 5 of the 18 (14%) indicated it occurred in their second year at the College. The number of sexual assaults experienced by each of the 36 respondents varied from one to more than four.

Eighty-nine percent of the respondents who reported experiencing a sexual assault indicated that their assaults included touching of a sexual nature, and 50% indicated that their sexual assault included vaginal sex. The percentage of assaults that involved alcohol went up from 2016. In 2018, 78% of respondents reported that their offender had been drinking prior to their assault (compared to 53% in 2016), and 72% of respondents in 2018 reported that they drank prior to their assault (compared to 45% in 2016). Over half (53%) of the 2018 respondents indicated that they were unable to provide consent during their assault due to incapacitation, an increase from 34% in 2016. Finally, 31% of perpetrators used force or threatened to use physical force against victims.

Eighty-nine percent of the survey respondents who reported experiencing sexual assault indicated that they were assaulted in campus housing. A large percentage (86%) indicated that their perpetrator was male, and 81% indicated that their perpetrator was a student at Lake Forest College. All women were assaulted by another man or group of men, and both men and women perpetrated sexual assault against men. Seventy-eight percent indicated that their perpetrator was a non-romantic friend or acquaintance—an increase from 45% in 2016. Additional perpetrator categories included strangers (25%), casual dates or hookups (14%), and ex-romantic partners (19%).

The majority of the survey respondents who reported experiencing a sexual assault indicated that they confided in a close friend about their assault. Others told parents, counselors, romantic partners, and roommates. Eleven percent (four people) indicated they reported the incident to a campus Title IX coordinator, 8% (three people) indicated they told a faculty or staff member, and 6% (two people) indicated they reported it to public safety. None of the survivors who reported to the College were dissatisfied with the process, they were either neutral or satisfied about the College response. Several students indicated that they had not told anyone about what happened, for reasons such as thinking

they would not be believed, thinking others would not understand, not recognizing it as sexual assault at the time, thinking they would be blamed, or wanting to deal with it on their own.

Bystander Intervention

Only a small percentage of survey respondents (7%) who did not experience a sexual assault or attempted sexual assault indicated that they had observed a sexual assault or a situation that could have led to a sexual assault (8%). A majority of those respondents indicated they intervened in those situations. The most common types of intervention reported included creating a distraction; asking the person who appeared to be at risk if they needed help; telling someone in a position of authority about the situation; and asking others to step in with them to diffuse the situation.

In contrast, 15 respondents (42% of the respondents who reported being sexually assaulted) indicated that there were bystanders around then they were sexually assaulted, which is up from nine respondents (24%) in 2016. In the 2018 survey, only two of these respondents indicated that the bystanders intervened, which is a slightly higher rate of bystander intervention than reported in the 2016 survey, when only one student indicated that bystanders intervened.

Incidence of Dating Violence and Stalking

Lake Forest College supplemented the HEDS survey with additional questions about behavior that could be dating violence or stalking. Seven percent of respondents indicated that they have had a romantic partner threaten violence or use violence against them since starting at the College, and almost all of these students indicated that a College student was responsible for the behavior. Fifteen percent of survey respondents indicated that they experienced repeated threatening acts by the same person that might make friends and family afraid for them or worry about them, and most of these indicated that another College student was responsible for the behavior.

Views on Sexual Assault Education

Students' responses to questions about receiving information and education from the College about sexual assault and reporting were more positive than they were in 2016. Ninety-five percent of respondents indicated that they had received information or education from the College about sexual assault and how to recognize it, and 81% of respondents indicated that they had been provided information about how to report sexual assault. While 80% indicated they were aware of confidential resources on campus, just 62% of survey respondents were aware of the procedures for investigating an alleged sexual assault at the College. Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated that they remembered all or most of the information they received from the College about sexual assault, and 77% said they found the College's sexual assault education information helpful or very helpful. LGBTQ-identified respondents indicated lower rates of awareness of how to report incidents, confidential resources, and investigation procedures, and female-identified students indicated lower rates of awareness of investigation procedures than male respondents.

When asked what types of training they would prefer, the greatest number of students indicated a preference for online training, with a sizeable number also indicating they would be interested in speakers and panel discussions, awareness campaigns, and group trainings for teams, Greek organizations, and student organizations.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Overall, the results from the 2018 climate survey are comparable to those from 2016, but several critical areas showed improvement. One of the most notable areas of improvement was students' feelings that faculty, staff, and administrators are supportive, fair, and concerned about their welfare. This data also was considerably more positive than national data. In addition, students' perceptions about the effectiveness of the sexual misconduct prevention education they received at the College improved since 2016.

While most Lake Forest College students feel safe on campus, sexual assault and unwelcome sexual contact remain a problem on our campus as on all college campuses. The data show that a slightly higher percentage of students in 2018 reported having experienced an attempted sexual assault or a sexual assault since starting at the College than they did in 2016, and more students reported that they had often experienced unwelcome behavior. Lake Forest College's data is comparable to that of other small institutions nationally.

Though many students are benefiting from the College's education and prevention programs, the data indicate that the role of alcohol in sexual assault has increased from 2016, and that student bystanders are not intervening in problematic situations as readily as they believe. Increased training about sexual assault on campus, effective bystander intervention, the role of alcohol in sexual assault, and distribution of information about the complaint resolution process, will help build trust, safety, and create culture change. Additional outreach to demographic groups that reported feeling less supported at the College and who reported lower rates of awareness of resources and reporting will also be important going forward.

Consistent with the College's commitment to improve the climate on campus for all students, the information gained from this survey is being used to inform our education and prevention efforts, strengthen awareness of existing resources, and create a safer and more supportive community. The following are some of the College's initiatives to address sexual misconduct prevention and response in light of the data collected in this survey, as well as other recent steps taken by the College in this area:

- In summer 2018, all students participated in annual online training regarding prevention of sexual misconduct. First year and transfer students completed a comprehensive module, and returning students completed a refresher course to solidify their knowledge. Returning student-athletes completed a specialized training course designed for student-athletes. One hundred percent of students participated in required training.
- In addition to the interactive "Drunk Sex or Date Rape" presentation about consent and sexual assault provided to new students during orientation, the Title IX Coordinator conducted a presentation for all entering first year and transfer students at orientation in 2018 about the College's sexual misconduct policy, reporting options, and the investigation and complaint resolution process.
- During the 2018-2019 school year, the Title IX Coordinator provided additional training for faculty, staff, students, and student organizations regarding the resources available to

individuals who experience sexual misconduct and the process by which the College investigates and remedies sexual misconduct.

- During the 2018-2019 school year, the Coalition Against Sexual Misconduct (“CASM”), the Health and Wellness Center, and the Title IX Office planned and presented numerous educational sessions, panels, programs, and awareness activities in partnership with student government, student organizations, and outside experts regarding consent, the prevalence and impact of sexual assault, societal factors contributing to sexual misconduct, the experience of sexual misconduct in marginalized groups, and how to support survivors.
- Staff and coaches in Athletics have received annual training on sexual misconduct, fostering a safe and welcoming culture, reporting obligations, and how to respond to sexual misconduct disclosures. All staff and faculty were required to complete an online refresher training on sexual misconduct and their reporting obligations in spring of 2018.
- In early 2018, the College implemented a new policy, the *Policy on Consensual Romantic or Sexual Relationships and Evaluative Authority*, which prohibits romantic or sexual relationships between faculty and students and staff and students. In summer 2018, the College revised its *Policy on Sexual Discrimination and Misconduct* and its *Sexual Misconduct Complaint Resolution Procedures* to reflect evolving best practices in sexual misconduct response and complaint resolution. The policies and procedures can be viewed here:
<http://www.lakeforest.edu/sexualmisconduct/policy.php>.
- In spring of 2018, the College reorganized and updated its sexual misconduct website to make it more user-friendly and to contain additional valuable resources.
- In the 2018-2019 academic year, the College publicized the resources and options available to students who have experienced sexual misconduct using various means, including email, posting new vinyl cling stickers about sexual misconduct options on mirrors in campus bathrooms, posting Illinois sexual harassment prevention posters, and wider distribution of the Campus Guide to Sexual Misconduct Policies and Resources, which can be accessed here:
<http://www.lakeforest.edu/sexualmisconduct/>.
- The College designated and trained two additional staff members (in addition to the Title IX Coordinator) to conduct prompt, thorough, and impartial investigations of complaints of sexual misconduct in the 2018-2019 school year. In spring of 2019, the College officially designated a Deputy Title IX Coordinator to assist in sexual misconduct response and prevention efforts. These staffing measures have improved access to Title IX resources at the College.
- The College is currently reviewing available bystander intervention training offerings with the goal of implementing additional programming during the 2019-2020 academic year.

If you have questions about this report or suggestions about how Lake Forest College can reduce the incidence of sexual misconduct on campus and improve the support offered to students when it does occur, please contact the Title IX Coordinator.

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