



BROWN

Executive Summary: 2019 AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct for Brown University

At Brown University, preventing and responding to incidents of sexual and gender-based violence and harassment is an institutional priority addressed jointly by faculty, staff and students across campus. In 2015, Brown was one of 27 institutions to participate in a landmark national survey on sexual assault and misconduct, organized by the Association of American Universities (AAU) and administered by the research firm Westat. That survey provided detailed data demonstrating that campus sexual and gender-based harassment and violence is a serious issue confronting colleges and universities across the nation.

In April 2019, Brown joined 32 other institutions in asking students to share their experiences with, and perceptions of, sexual misconduct on campus through a follow-up survey. Participation in the 2019 Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct, once again organized by AAU and Westat, was voluntary and anonymous.

Brown's goals in participating in the 2019 follow-up to the 2015 survey were to gain insights into any nuances or shifts in the prevalence of sexual and gender-based misconduct and to explore students' knowledge and experience related to available resources. Given Brown's extensive efforts to proactively encourage a culture in which students report incidents of sexual misconduct and seek support, the follow-up AAU survey was also an opportunity to assess the impact of work across campus in the areas of prevention and response. Brown's participation in the initial AAU survey complemented the work of the University's Sexual Assault Task Force, which convened in 2014 to develop recommendations to better address sexual misconduct on campus, and issued its final recommendations in 2015.

After the close of the 2019 survey, conducted at Brown over the period of April 4 to May 5, Westat created reports and data tables for each of the 33 participating institutions, and an aggregate report that combined data for all of the institutions. On Oct. 15, 2019, Brown released the report developed for its campus to coincide with the AAU's release of the aggregate report. This document summarizes some of the key results in the Brown report. It is not intended to represent the totality of what can be gained from a careful review of the report. The full Brown report and data tables with aggregate data from the 33 participating institutions are posted on Brown's Title IX and Gender Equity [website](#).

It is important to note that the 2019 survey instrument created by AAU and Westat is a revised version of the 2015 survey, but is not a direct duplicate. In some cases, questions remained the same, which enables direct comparisons of 2015 and 2019 data; in many other cases, given new questions or revisions to how the survey collected information, no comparisons are possible.

For the 2019 survey at Brown, nearly 3,100 undergraduate, graduate and medical students participated — a 31.5% response rate. Of the participants, 72% were undergraduates. Approximately 62% of all respondents were women.

The 2019 survey results for Brown showed marked improvement in students' perception of risk, knowledge of resources and perspectives on institutional response. Students expressed greater trust that Brown takes reports seriously and conducts fair investigations. The results also served as a reminder that nonconsensual sexual contact remains a significant challenge for campuses nationwide, including Brown. Given the focus on encouraging reporting, the University was prepared for the likelihood that the percentage of students who have witnessed or experienced sexual misconduct would exceed what was reported in 2015 — this indeed proved to be the case, as more students reported incidents of harm and use of campus resources. Consistent with the findings in 2015, undergraduate women as well as students who identified as transgender, genderqueer and/or gender nonbinary reported experiences of nonconsensual sexual contact at higher rates and reported perceptions of greater risk and less confidence in the University's response.

The following data points and insights, grouped into sections reflective of the 2019 overall survey’s goals, include additional details on findings. As noted, the full Brown report and data tables are available on the Title IX and Gender Equity [website](#).

Note: For the tables included in this document, percentages are weighted based on sample characteristics (gender, student level, etc.) in order to estimate the total population response to the question. The number (n) shown is the actual, unweighted number of respondents. The “S” designator indicates suppression due to small cell sizes. A dash indicates zero respondents. TGQN is defined by the Westat survey as “trans man or woman, genderqueer or nonbinary, questioning or not listed.”

Student Perceptions on Sexual Assault and Misconduct

- 22.1% of students believe that sexual misconduct is very or extremely problematic on campus, compared to 34.6% in 2015. Conversely, 39.7% indicate that it is a small problem or not a problem at all, compared to 27% in 2015. (Table 1.3)
- 6.9% of students believe it is very or extremely likely that they will experience sexual assault or misconduct while enrolled at Brown, compared to 6.5% in 2015. 80.7% of students believe that it is unlikely or very unlikely, compared to 76.2% in 2015. (Table 1.3)
- 66.4% of students believe that it is very or extremely likely that campus officials would take a report seriously, compared to 50.5% in 2015. Conversely, 8.5% believe that it is unlikely or very unlikely that campus officials would take the report seriously, compared to 17.4% in 2015. (Table 1.1)
- 46.4% of students believe that it is very or extremely likely that campus officials would conduct a fair investigation in the event of a report, compared to 25.6% in 2015. Conversely, 14.5% believe that it would be unlikely or very unlikely that the investigation would be fair, compared to 33.6% in 2015. (Table 1.1)

Sexual assault/misconduct a problem at university	2019											
	Undergraduate Students						Graduate Students					
	Female		Male		TGQN		Female		Male		TGQN	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Extremely	8.2	108	5.8	44	20.3	14	5.2	25	2.5	10	7.9	2
Very	19.8	270	15.5	117	30.5	20	13.6	65	5.9	22	35.4	8
Somewhat	45.8	620	37.3	290	38.0	26	32.2	155	28.2	109	28.1	7
A little	21.5	299	29.5	230	9.4	6	30.3	142	33.6	121	23.6	4
Not at all	4.7	63	11.9	92	1.8	1	18.7	82	29.7	102	5.0	1

Campus officials would conduct fair investigation	2019											
	Undergraduate Students					Graduate Students						
	Female		Male		TGQN		Female		Male		TGQN	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Extremely	6.6	84	12.9	99	2.6	2	8.8	40	19.3	70	4.9	1
Very	32.7	426	38.9	288	22.3	15	34.9	161	38.5	138	24.6	5
Somewhat	45.3	589	35.9	265	48.5	32	37.7	178	31.5	120	40.6	9
A little	11.5	147	9.1	66	10.5	7	13.0	62	6.6	25	20.1	5
Not at all	3.9	49	3.2	24	16.1	9	5.6	26	4.2	16	9.9	2

Resources Related to Sexual Assault and Misconduct

- 29.1% of students are very or extremely knowledgeable about how Brown defines sexual assault and misconduct, compared to 18.4% in 2015. Conversely, 31.5% of students have little or no knowledge, compared to 42.3% in 2015. (Table 2.2)
- 38.6% of students are very or extremely knowledgeable about where to find help with issues related to sexual misconduct, compared to 29.8% in 2015. Conversely, 21% of students have little or no knowledge, compared to 29.8% in 2015. (Table 2.2)
- 30.4% of students are very or extremely knowledgeable about where to make a report, compared to 20.1% in 2015. Conversely, 31.2% of students have little or no knowledge, compared to 43.8% in 2015. (Table 2.2)
- 16.7% of students reported that they are very or extremely knowledgeable about what happens after an incident has been reported. (Table 2.2)

Frequency and Nature of Victimization by Physical Force or Incapacitation

Students were asked about a number of different types of nonconsensual sexual contact since arriving at Brown. This section describes the prevalence of incidents that occurred as a result of either physical force or the inability to consent or stop what was happening. This information is presented in Tables 3.1 to 3.5 in the full report.

Since arriving at Brown, respondents reported experiencing such nonconsensual sexual contact at the following rates:

- Undergraduate women: 24.5% in 2019 (compared to 25% in 2015)
- Graduate women: 9.5% in 2019 (compared to 8% in 2015)
- Undergraduate men: 8% in 2019 (compared to 6.8% in 2015)
- Graduate men: 3.1% in 2019 (compared to 2.7% in 2015)
- TGQN: 30.2% in 2019 (compared to 25.7% in 2015)

Reports of incidents:

- 41.7% of students who reported acts of nonconsensual penetration contacted a program or resource about the experience; 18.9% of students who reported sexual touching contacted a program or resource.

In the 2018-19 academic year, respondents reported experiencing such nonconsensual sexual contact at the following rates:

- Undergraduate women: 11.4% in 2019 (compared to 9.9% in 2015)
- Graduate women: 2.9% in 2019 (compared to 2.2% in 2015)
- Undergraduate men: 3.5% in 2019 (compared to 3.1% in 2015)
- Graduate men: 1.5% in 2019 (number of students was too low to report data for 2015)
- TGQN: number of students was too low to report data for 2019 (compared to 11.1% in 2015)

Students reported the following about the characteristics of offenders:

- 78.4% of offenders were current Brown students in 2019, compared to 87.6% in 2015.

	2019											
	Undergraduate Students						Graduate Students					
	Female		Male		TGQN		Female		Male		TGQN	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Since entering college	24.5	331	8.0	60	32.9	21	9.5	46	3.1	12	22.9	6
Penetration	11.6	159	1.9	15	19.6	13	4.5	22	S	S	S	S
Sexual touching	18.1	243	6.4	48	18.1	11	6.8	33	2.4	9	S	S
During the 2018-19 year	11.4	156	3.5	27	S	S	2.9	13	1.5	6	S	S
Penetration	4.3	60	1.0	8	-	-	1.3	6	S	S	-	-
Sexual touching	8.4	114	2.6	20	S	S	1.6	7	1.0	4	S	S

Prevalence of Sexual Harassment

- 48.2% of students reported experiencing at least one type of offensive or inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature, compared to 55.8% in 2015. (Table 5.1). 22.3% of the students in the 2019 survey felt that the behavior rose to the level of harassment.
- Inappropriate or offensive comments about body, appearance or sexual activities was the most common form of harassing behavior reported. (Table 5.1)
- 17.6% of students contacted a program or resource about the experience, compared to 10.7% in 2015. (Table 5.2)

Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

- 9.5% of students reported experiencing at least one type of controlling, threatening or physical harm from an intimate partner, compared to 7.8% in 2015. (Table 5.5)
- Controlling or attempted controlling behavior was the most common form behavior reported. (Table 5.5)
- 36.7% of students contacted a program or resource about the experience, compared to 26.4% in 2015. (Table 5.6)

Prevalence of Stalking

- 6.3% of students reported experiencing behavior associated with stalking, compared to 4.2% in 2015. (Table 5.5)

- Showing up uninvited or waiting for someone when they do not want you there was the most common behavior reported. (Table 5.9)
- 36.7% of students contacted a program or resource about the experience, compared to 26.4% in 2015. (Table 5.6)

Bystander Behavior Upon Witnessing Sexual Assault or Other Sexual Misconduct

- 31.1% of students witnessed someone acting in a sexual way that they believed was making others feel uncomfortable or offended. (Table 1.2) Students who witnessed such behavior did one or more of the following:
 - 23.4% intervened directly
 - 55.1% checked in with the harmed student
 - 27.2% confronted the person engaging in the behavior
 - 18.1% were unsure of what to do
- 8.6% of students witnessed a pattern of ongoing sexual comments or behaviors that created concern that a fellow student was experiencing sexual harassment. (Table 1.2) Students who witnessed this behavior did one or more of the following:
 - 15.3% intervened directly
 - 63.7% checked in with the harmed student
 - 20.9% confronted the person engaging in the behavior
 - 12.4% were unsure of what to do
- 17.1% of students witnessed a situation that they believed could have led to a sexual assault. (Table 1.2) Students who witnessed this behavior did one or more of the following:
 - 36.3% intervened directly
 - 54.6% checked in with the harmed student
 - 20.5% confronted the person engaging in the behavior
 - 16.6% were unsure of what to do
- 14.3% of students reported witnessing someone behaving in a controlling or abusive way towards a dating or sexual partner. (Table 1.2) Students who witnessed this behavior did one or more of the following:
 - 9.0% intervened directly
 - 65.1% checked in with the harmed student
 - 17.1% confronted the person engaging in the behavior
 - 15.4% were unsure of what to do