



Mercy University Campus Climate Survey Summary Report

Introduction

The Mercy University Campus Survey on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response was administered in May 2024. A total of 457 students participated in the survey. The survey assessed student knowledge of sexual misconduct prevention and response policies; awareness of resources and reporting options; perceptions of campus climate and institutional response; confidence in bystander intervention; and experiences related to sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, stalking, and related behaviors. These survey results represent an important snapshot in time of community perceptions around campus climate and sexual misconduct. These results should be considered to help inform future education, programming, and campus initiatives.

The results indicate generally positive perceptions of campus safety, support systems, and institutional response to sexual misconduct. Students reported strong confidence in Mercy University's ability to support individuals who report sexual assault and demonstrated substantial awareness of available resources and reporting mechanisms. Areas for improvement include continued education regarding reporting procedures, Title IX resources, bystander intervention skills, and increased engagement to improve survey participation.

Survey Participation:

A total of 457 students opened the survey, and 435 students completed the survey, with 22 individuals declining to complete the survey. The student participants were from the Bronx (24.1%), Dobbs Ferry (62.8%), and Manhattan (13.1%) campuses. The students were primarily full-time students (91.2%), and some were part-time students (8.8%).

Of survey participants, the students reported the following academic level:

- 24.1% first-year students
- 14.3% second-year students
- 15.8% third-year students
- 19.6% fourth/sixth-year undergraduates
- 23.8% graduate/professional students.

Of survey participants, the students reported the following living accommodations:

- 14.7% in university residence halls,

- 24.3% in off-campus apartments or houses,
- 57.6% at home with a family member,
- 1.5% unhoused or experiencing housing insecurity, and
- 1.7% not listed.

The survey participants represented a diverse student population:

Gender

- 79.7% identified as women
- 17.3% identified as men
- 2.3% identified as nonbinary

Race/Ethnicity

- 47.1% Hispanic/Latino/a/e/x
- 25.4% Black/African American
- 25.2% White
- 12.1% Asian/Asian American

Summary of Survey Responses:

The results below showed areas where Mercy University did well and should continue to build upon, as well as areas in which Mercy University can improve.

A. Awareness of Resources and Reporting Processes

Students generally demonstrated awareness of available supports and reporting procedures.

i. Sexual Assault Resources

- 42.4% know where to obtain help regarding sexual assault.
- 41.9% understand how to report sexual assault.
- 48.9% understand where confidential support can be found.
- 56.1% know where to seek accommodations following an assault.
- 38.7% know how to contact the Title IX Coordinator.

ii. Confidence in Institutional Processes

- 57.9% expressed confidence that administrators would follow necessary procedures when addressing complaints.

- 42.6% agreed they understood formal institutional procedures.

iii. Training Effectiveness

Among students receiving training:

- 80%+ rated training related to sexual assault definitions as moderately or very useful.
- More than 70% rated reporting-process training as moderately or very useful.
- More than 70% rated information on confidential resources and investigative procedures as moderately or very useful.
- More than 80% rated prevention-focused training as moderately or very useful.

B. Campus Climate and Institutional Trust

The survey reflects generally positive perceptions regarding campus climate and institutional support.

i. Positive Campus Climate Indicators

Students who agreed or strongly agreed:

- 78.0% feel safe at Mercy University.
- 63.7% are satisfied with their overall college experience.
- 63.5% believe faculty, staff, and administrators treat students fairly.
- 61.9% feel supported by faculty and staff in their major.
- 60.3% are happy to be at Mercy University.
- 58.6% believe faculty and staff respect student perspectives.
- 55.0% believe administrators are concerned about student welfare.

ii. Institutional Response and Safety

Students who agreed or strongly agreed:

- 52.3% believe the University would handle a crisis effectively.
- 52.4% believe safety protections for students are adequate.
- 52.5% believe there is a good support system for students facing difficulties.
- 34.2% believe the University responds too slowly in difficult situations.

- A significant percentage reported insufficient knowledge to evaluate institutional responses, suggesting opportunities for increased communication and transparency.

C. Perceptions of Title IX Response

Students expressed substantial confidence in institutional responses to reports of sexual assault.

i. Students Indicating “Likely” or “Very Likely”

If sexual assaults were reported:

- 53.4% believe administrators would take the report seriously.
- 51.0% believe administrators would protect the reporting party.
- 53.5% believe administrators would support the reporting party.
- 49.9% believe administrators would take corrective action.

In each area, approximately one-third of respondents indicated insufficient knowledge to assess the University's response.

D. Bystander Intervention and Prevention Culture

Students demonstrated strong confidence in their own willingness to intervene.

i. Self-Reported Confidence

Most respondents reported being likely or very likely to:

- Obtain help for a friend who has experienced sexual assault.
- Confront attitudes that excuse sexual violence.
- Challenge sexist remarks.
- Support peers experiencing abuse.
- Seek help when observing potentially harmful situations.

ii. Perceived Student Behavior

Students generally believed their peers would be willing to:

- Obtain consent.
- Intervene when a peer may be at risk.
- Stop sexual activity when consent is withdrawn.
- Take action when witnessing potentially harmful conduct.

These findings suggest a relatively strong prevention-oriented culture among respondents

E. Experiences with Sexual Misconduct

i. Sexual Harassment and Unwelcome Conduct

Fifty-four (54) survey participants reported experiencing one or more forms of sexually harassing behavior during the current academic year.

Reported behaviors included:

- Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes.
- Unwanted sexual images or messages.
- Repeated requests for dates after refusal.
- Unwanted sexual touching.
- Sexual rumor-spreading.

ii. Sexual Contact Without Consent

Among respondents:

- 5.7% reported experiencing sexual contact without consent since becoming a student.
- Most respondents reported no experiences involving force, coercion, incapacitation, or inability to consent.

iii. Characteristics of Reported Incidents

Among students reporting unwanted sexual contact:

- Most incidents involved acquaintances, friends, current or former romantic partners, or other known individuals.
- The majority of respondents identified the offending individual as male.
- Most incidents occurred off-campus.

iv. Reporting Behavior

Among those experiencing unwanted sexual contact

- Most did not use formal reporting procedures.
- Friends and family members were the most common disclosure recipients.

- Very few reported incidents to law enforcement or University officials.

Common reasons for not reporting included:

- Privacy concerns
- Belief the incident was not serious enough
- Fear of negative reactions
- Desire to handle the matter independently
- Lack of confidence that action would be taken

F. Stalking and Relationship Violence

i. Stalking Behaviors

- Of the survey participants, 12.1% reported experiencing stalking-related behavior on more than one occasion.
- Most students reported no stalking behaviors.

ii. Relationship Violence and Controlling Behaviors

Among survey participants who reported dating or intimate relationship:

Most reported never experiencing:

- Physical violence
- Sexual coercion
- Threats involving weapons
- Severe controlling behavior

However, some students reported experiences involving:

- Verbal criticism
- Monitoring behaviors
- Jealousy
- Emotional manipulation

These findings indicate continued attention should be paid to healthy relationship education.

G. Student Well-Being Impacts

Students reporting unwanted sexual contact described impacts including:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Fearfulness
- Flashbacks
- Sleep disturbances
- Difficulty concentrating
- Concerns about safety

Academic effects included:

- Poor performance on assignments
- Falling behind in coursework
- Missing classes
- Considering withdrawal or transfer

Most respondents, however, reported that these academic impacts occurred rarely or not at all.

Key Takeaways and Recommendations:

The survey results showed that most student participants knew about important information regarding support services, affirmative consent, and bystander intervention, as well as related policies, procedures, and reporting options. This is a positive and shows education and outreach efforts have been effective in raising awareness.

During the 2021 survey, it was identified that some students lacked awareness of the Mercy University Amnesty Policy and a student's right to support services without having to file a report or agree to an investigation. Unlike the 2021 survey, the 2024 survey did not include a direct measure of student awareness of the Mercy University Amnesty Policy or awareness that supportive measures are available regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed. Because these questions were not included, trend analysis is not possible. However, related awareness measures indicate that fewer than half of respondents reported confidence in locating support resources, understanding reporting procedures, or contacting the Title IX Coordinator, suggesting that continued education regarding student rights, supportive measures, confidential resources, and Amnesty protections remains warranted.

The key strengths identified in the survey are as follows:

- Students generally feel safe at Mercy University.
- Most students report positive overall educational experiences.
- Confidence in administrative response to reports remains relatively strong.
- Training efforts appear effective and well received.
- Students demonstrate willingness to intervene as active bystanders.
- Most respondents report no experiences with severe sexual misconduct, stalking, or relationship violence.

The key areas for continued improvement are as follows:

- Increase student awareness of:
 - Title IX reporting procedures
 - Confidential resources
 - Available accommodations
 - Names and contact information of key personnel
- Increase understanding of institutional response processes.
- Improve student participation rates in future climate surveys.
- Expand prevention education regarding:
 - Healthy relationships
 - Coercion and consent
 - Bystander intervention
 - Reporting options
- Continue targeted outreach to populations less likely to seek assistance or report incidents.
- Increase visibility of support resources through:
 - Social media campaigns
 - Orientation programs
 - Faculty partnerships
 - Student leadership organizations

Based on the above, it is recommended the University engage in the following actions to continue to improve knowledge, participation, and trust in the process amongst students:

Education and Outreach

- Continue annual student training on sexual misconduct prevention and response.

- Increase workshop offerings regarding consent, healthy relationships, and bystander intervention.
- Expand awareness campaigns regarding Title IX rights and resources.
- Trainings and tabling events to educate students on supportive measures and amnesty protections.

Communication

- Develop concise, student-focused messaging regarding:
 - Reporting options
 - Confidential resources
 - Supportive measures
 - Amnesty protections

Student Engagement

- Partner with Student Government, student organizations, athletic programs, and graduate student representatives to expand awareness efforts.
- Identify strategies to increase participation in future climate surveys.

Assessment

- Continue administering climate surveys regularly.
- Conduct subgroup analyses to better understand experiences among specific student populations.
- Include year-over-year trend reporting beginning with comparisons to the 2021 survey.

Should there be any questions about this summary report, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleIX.equity@mercy.edu.