

FACT SHEET: The Campus Climate Survey Validation Study

The Department of Justice's (DOJ) [Bureau of Justice Statistics' \(BJS\) Campus Climate Survey Validation Study Final Technical Report \(CCSVS\)](#) presents the results of a nine-school pilot test conducted to develop a campus climate survey that collects school-level data on sexual victimization of undergraduate students. The survey also collects data on students' perceptions of the "campus climate" related to sexual harassment and sexual assault at their school. More than 23,000 undergraduate female and male students completed the survey.

The report provides the following information for each school:

- estimates of the prevalence and incidence of sexual assault,¹ rape,² and sexual battery³ during the 2014–15 academic year, including characteristics about the victim, offender, incident, and consequences;
- estimates of the prevalence of sexual assault among students since entering college and during their lifetime; and
- an analysis of the relationship between measures of campus climate⁴ and rates of sexual victimization.

The CCSVS report reinforces the importance of campus climate surveys, both for understanding the scope of the problem and for improving prevention and response. We now have critical information about how to conduct these surveys more effectively, including specific details on using a campus climate survey to get reliable and useful results.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Schools can successfully conduct a valid and reliable campus climate survey that provides a high-level overview of the prevalence of sexual assault experienced by students.
- ✓ Rates of sexual assault vary greatly from school to school, as do student perceptions, so it is crucial for schools to conduct campus climate surveys to understand the unique problems and opportunities for prevention on their specific campuses.

KEY FINDINGS

- For undergraduate females in any year of college, the average prevalence rate for sexual assault since entering college at the nine schools was 21%, though the rates varied from 12% to 38%.
- The average prevalence rate for fourth year female undergraduates attending four-year schools was about 25%, or 1 out of 4 reporting they had experienced sexual assault since entering college.
- For undergraduate males, the average prevalence rate for sexual assault since entering college at the nine schools was 7%.
- Across the nine schools, only 13% of rape incidents and 4% of sexual battery incidents were reported to an official – a school administrator, faculty or staff, campus police, or local law enforcement.
- Females, younger students and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students were most at risk for sexual assault. Since entering college, the prevalence rate of sexual assault at all nine schools for lesbian and gay students was 22%, 35% for bisexual students, and about 28% for transgender students.

¹ The CCSVS defined sexual assault as any unwanted and nonconsensual contact that involved either rape or sexual battery. It does not include sexual harassment or coerced sexual contact.

² The CCSVS defined rape as any unwanted and nonconsensual contact that involved a penetrative act.

³ The CCSVS defined sexual battery as any unwanted and nonconsensual contact that involved forced touching of a sexual nature not involving penetration.

⁴ Campus climate refers to student perceptions on school connectedness; general perceptions of campus police, faculty, and university leadership; perceptions of leadership around sexual assault prevention and response; student norms related to sexual conduct; and attitudes about sexual assault.