

2024 SEXUAL MISCONDUCT CLIMATE SURVEY: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Massachusetts, all colleges and universities are required by law to conduct a climate survey on issues relating to sexual misconduct on their campuses every four years. In October 2023, Bard College and Bard Academy at Simon's Rock administered the 2023-24 Campus Climate Survey through Rankin Climate, LLC to survey its academy and undergraduate college students concerning their understanding of, and experiences with, sexual misconduct and related topics. The hope of this survey is to better understand students' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences related to sexual misconduct.

This document provides a summary of the key findings from the survey based on the sample of students who participated. The results of the survey will be used to inform campus policies and processes going forward and help us to better respond to students who have experienced incidents of sexual and gender based misconduct.

All current students (292) were invited to participate in the survey. A total of 166 students accessed the survey, with 131 participating in part, and 76 answering all or most close-ended (e.g. multiple choice) questions, providing a response rate ranging from 25% to 45%[1]. In addition, 22 students (7% of student population) provided responses to the open-ended (qualitative) questions.

1) Perceptions of Campus Climate (% endorsing "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree")

a) General (n =131)

- 79% of survey participants feel welcome at Simon's Rock.
- 60% would recommend Simon's Rock to others.
- 72% would still choose to attend Simon's Rock (if to go back in time).
- 12% have considered leaving Simon's Rock because of personal experiences with sexual misconduct; an additional 17% have considered leaving because of friends' experiences with sexual misconduct.

b) Campus Safety (n =73)

- 44% of survey participants reported that they feel safe from sexual harassment.
- 49% feel safe from dating violence.
- 43% feel safe from sexual violence.
- 47% feel safe from stalking.

c) Sexual Misconduct on Campus (n =73)

- A minority (8%) of students agreed with the statement, "I don't think sexual misconduct is a problem at Simon's Rock." In other words, 76% indicated that it is a problem (endorsed "somewhat disagree" or "strongly disagree"), and 16% were neutral.
- Approximately one-third (34%) of students also agreed with the statement, "I don't think there is much I can do about sexual misconduct at Simon's Rock." In other words, 51% indicated that there is something they can do (endorsed "somewhat disagree" or "strongly disagree"), and 15% were neutral.

2) <i>Campus Resources</i> (n = 73)

a) Student's *trust in campus resources* if an incident occurred (% "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree")

- 42% of survey participants believe that Simon's Rock would actively support the student with either formal or informal resources.
- 36% believe that Simon's Rock creates an environment where it's safe to discuss these types of experiences.
- 33% believe that Simon's Rock would take the report seriously.
- 27% do *not* believe that Simon's Rock would deny that the experience happened in some way.
- 25% do *not* believe that Simon's Rock would suggest the experience might affect the reputation of Simon's Rock.
- 23% do *not* believe that Simon's Rock creates an environment where staying at Simon's Rock was difficult for the student.
- 22% believe that Simon's Rock would meet their needs for support and accommodations.

b) Rankin's analysis of the 22 participants' responses to the **open ended questions** presented two main themes, both focused around students' feelings about the institution's responses to sexual misconduct. These were: *Lack of Accountability* (e.g., "Simon's Rock did not take the situation seriously" or "handled these issues poorly") and *Lack of Institutional Support* (e.g., "Campus can feel unsafe due to Title IX not really addressing sexual misconduct cases"). While experiences with the Title IX Office varied, a general theme was the need for better institutional support services in the Title IX Office. Rankin's analysis also stated that several responses indicated that the student considered leaving Simon's Rock.

3) <i>Harassment and Other Inappropriate Behaviors - From Other Students</i> (n = 109)
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Between 30% and 62% of respondents (who completed this part of the survey) reported experiencing harassing or inappropriate behaviors that made them feel uncomfortable from another student ("rarely," "sometimes," "often," or "very often"), with percentages varying by particular behavior. The remaining students who responded to each question reported "never" experiencing that particular behavior.

Speech/language use. For example:

- Made offensive sexist remarks (62%) (i.e. 38% "never")
- Put you down or was condescending to you because of your gender identity or expression (56%)

Unwelcome or differentially negative treatment:

- Treated you "differently" in a negative way because of your gender identity or expression (62%) or sex (64%)
- Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature that embarrassed or offended you (48%)

Unwanted sexual advances:

- Touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable (45%)
- Repeatedly asked you to meet them for a romantic dinner, date or other intimate connections after you told them you were not interested (30%)

4) Harassment and Other Inappropriate Behaviors - From Faculty & Staff (n = 88)
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Between 10% and 33% of respondents (who completed this part of the survey) reported experiencing harassing or inappropriate behaviors that made them feel uncomfortable from an employee (“rarely,” “sometimes,” “often,” or “very often”), with percentages varying by particular behavior. The remaining students who responded to each question reported “never” experiencing that particular behavior.

Speech/language use. For example:

- Made offensive sexist remarks (33%) (i.e. 66% “never”)
- Put you down or was condescending to you because of your gender identity or expression (28%)

Unwelcome or differentially negative treatment:

- Treated you “differently” in a negative way because of sex (36%) or put you down or was condescending to you because of gender identity (37%)
- Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature that embarrassed or offended you (10%)

Unwanted sexual advances:

- Repeatedly you asked to meet them for a romantic dinner, date or other intimate connections after you told them you were not interested (13%)
- Touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable (10%)

5) Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct (n = 75-80)
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a) Stalking or hostile rumor-spreading behavior

Between 13% and 33% of respondents (who completed this part of the survey) indicated that they had experienced one or more forms of stalking or hostile rumor-spreading behavior that caused them to feel uncomfortable once or more. For example:

- Approached you or showed up in places unwanted & made you uncomfortable (33%)
- Spread rumors about you online, whether true or not (32%)
- Made unwanted comments to you online and wouldn't stop (15%)
- Left cards, letters, or presents when they knew you didn't want them (13%)

b) Non-consensual sexual conduct

Between 4% and 24% of respondents indicated that they had experienced some form of attempted or non-consensual sexual conduct once or more. For example:

- Fondled, kissed, or removed clothing without your permission (24%)
- Continued to try to have sex after you initially gave your permission but then withdrew your permission (13%)
- Engaged in some form of sexual act (oral, vaginal, or anal sex) without your permission (4%-5%)

c) Intimate partner or dating violence

Between 4% and 26% of respondents indicated that they had experienced one or more forms of intimate partner or dating violence once or more. For example:

- Insulted, humiliated, or made fun of me in front of others (26%)
- Pushed, grabbed or shook me (11%)
- Threatened to hurt me, or beat me up (4%-5%)

6) *Students' Response to the Experiences Described* (n = 84)

Of the survey participants who experienced any of the behaviors described in the survey:

- 62% avoided the person
- 26% avoided the location of the incident(s)
- 27% confronted the person immediately and/or at a later date/time.
- 70% said that they didn't seek any support or report the behavior.

- Of those participants who experienced one or more of the behaviors included in this survey, an aggregate of 27% indicated that they didn't know where to go for support/resources.

- Of those respondents who told someone about their experience with the behaviors described in the survey (n=68), most often, they told a friend at Simon's Rock (n=57). Others told included a friend not at Simon's Rock (n=35), a family member (n=30), or other support off-campus (e.g., therapist) (n=17). They also rated these support individuals as most useful to them. Relatively few reported their experiences to Title IX Office (n=6), Wellness (n=6), Campus Life (n=8) or their advisor (n=10).

7) *Students' Understanding of Consent and Bystander Intervention Expectations* (n=122)

- Respondents reported strong levels of awareness about consent. On the 7-item measure of overall awareness of consent (e.g. *Consent must be given at each step in a sexual encounter*), over 95% of respondents endorsed these rules of consent. The item with the lowest level of endorsement was *Mixed signals [do not] mean consent*, which was endorsed by 86% of respondents.

- Respondents also indicated a strong likelihood to intervene if they witnessed another student at risk. For example, 93% of students endorsed the statement, *I would walk a friend who has had too much to drink home from a party or other social event*. 77% endorsed, *I would speak up against someone telling sexist or gender-inappropriate jokes*. Approximately 30% indicated they would expect a negative response from peers if they intervened to help someone; and over 50% indicated that they would expect a positive response.

[1] Only 76 respondents completed the demographic information. Of these, approximately two-thirds of the sample were First-year or Sophomores, one-quarter seniors or juniors, and only 5 were Academy students. More than half of the sample identified as female, more than one-quarter as queer/nonconform/nonbinary, and less than one-quarter as male. Approximately three-quarter (77%) identified as being on the spectrum of queer identities, with the largest percentage within that (26% of the total) identifying as bisexual. Approximately one-quarter (23%) identified as heterosexual. Approximately three-quarters (74%) identified as white or caucasian; and one-quarter (26%) as students of color, and 10 respondents identified as an international student.