LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS

September 2016

Louisiana Campus Climate Survey Report

For Academic Year 2015-16

Table of Contents

I.   Executive Summary

Act 172 of the 2015 Regular Session sought to improve safety at Louisiana's public higher education campuses and to provide specific protections against and penalties for sexual assaults and other acts of sexual violence. One of the key requirements of Act 172 was a campus climate survey to be developed by the Board of Regents (BOR) in consultation with the four management boards and to be administered at every public higher education institution. BOR was required to submit, by September 1, the survey results of each such institution for the previous academic year to the Governor, and the Senate and House Committees on Education.[1]

AY 2015-16 was the first academic year that the survey was administered and this is the first such report to be submitted since the enactment of Act 172. The survey was administered at all institutions as required by Act 172, and made available to students on a voluntary basis, also in accordance with Act 172. The data yielded information about the experiences, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors related to campus climate and sexual violence. The response rate of approximately 5% is not considered an adequate response rate and therefore not representative of the entire student population at an institution or the student population of the state as a whole. (It is not uncommon for surveys on socially sensitive issues such as sexual assault to lack robust survey participation.) BOR has analyzed the data and prepared this report with as accurate an interpretation of the data as possible, in accordance with Act 172. However, caution must be exercised in interpreting the data to avoid overgeneralization. The survey is an essential first step in a statewide attempt to establish a baseline and to identify the assets and vulnerabilities of our institutions. The survey results will be an important component of the evolving process of coordinating the state's response to an issue that has thus far been left to individual institutions, of analyzing and improving the climate at our institutions. Those efforts will continue well beyond submission of this report. The survey findings and recommendations of the Regents' report for AY 2015-16 are as follows:

---

[1]The report could not be presented to the Board of Regents for its approval at the Board's August 24, 2016 meeting due to the floods in the region. Without the Board's review and approval, the report could not be submitted to the governor and the Legislature by September 1. The report was presented to the Board at its September meeting and subsequently submitted to the Governor and Legislature, resulting in a short delay in the submission.

❖ **Overall, survey participants reported that they perceive their campus to be moderately safe.** By ensuring that students have a sense of safety and security, campuses can improve students' chances of achieving educational and personal success. Some relatively easy measures to increase safety as well as the perception of safety include adequate lighting, the visibility of police officers, and an accessible emergency phone system.

❖ **By and large, survey participants were unaware of the policies and procedures for handling an incident of sexual assault.** Given that is this is the first year of a statewide coordinated effort to address campus sexual assault, this finding is not surprising. Campus leaders must continue to work to disseminate their policies in a manner that is engaging for students and provides opportunities for them to increase their knowledge and develop skills so that they are able to help themselves, their friends, and strangers.

❖ **Most of the survey participants indicated they do not drink often; however, when participants do drink, they tend to binge drink.** Campuses should combine sexual assault prevention education with alcohol and drug education programming. Programs on prevention of alcohol misuse can help students better understand the precise definition of sexual assault and information about the prevalence of alcohol-related sexual assault among students.

❖ **When survey participants experienced an incident of sexual assault, they were unlikely to use campus resources to address it.** Such limited use is likely related to generally low awareness of available campus services to address sexual violence. Institutions should make campus sexual assault prevention a visible goal, launch awareness and education programs, publicize available resources and procedural protections and emphasize the severe consequences for offenders.

❖ **While the majority of the survey participants reported that they *never* experienced intimate partner abuse (emotional or physical), of those that did report relationship violence, a higher number reported emotional abuse than physical abuse.** Despite the nebulous nature of relationship violence and stalking, the likelihood of such offenses can be lessened through a clear and well-publicized

policy that defines relationship violence and stalking and explains that it is not acceptable.

❖　**Findings suggest that survey participants are willing to help their peers; however, few indicated that they have taken part in activities or volunteered their time on projects focused on ending sexual violence.** Peers are an important source of support to prevent and address sexual violence. If students have the adequate tools to respond to incidents of sexual assault, they might be able to connect one another to services and supports when needed.

❖　**Most survey participants indicated that they would step up to intervene to stop a potential incident of sexual violence.** It is critical that campus leaders equip their students with active learning experiences to build skills and develop campus policies that provide safety nets for bystanders.

II.   Introduction and Background

Growing concerns over sexual assault on campuses, intensified by unclear legal parameters and inconsistent enforcement, prompted fact-finding and legislative efforts at both federal and state levels. In June 2015, the Legislature enacted Act 172, a state law that addressed sexual assault on campuses and established various requirements. Act 172 required the "Louisiana Board of Regents, in consultation with the public postsecondary education management boards, to develop the survey and establish procedures for the survey. . . [and] submit a written report not later than September first of each year regarding the survey results of each public postsecondary education institution and the state as a whole to the governor and the Senate and House of Representatives Committees on Education for the previous academic year" (Appendix A).

In March 2016, the Board of Regents and all of Louisiana's pubic postsecondary institutions partnered with EverFi (a leading education technology company headquartered in Washington D.C.) to administer online campus climate surveys. A web-based survey was administered to students from April 2016 to May 2016 (Appendix B). Sampling techniques varied across institutions based on their respective context. Some campuses invited all students to participate. Other campuses used random sampling procedures. Incentives and response rates also varied across institutions. It is important to note that although Act 172 required all public postsecondary institutions to administer the survey, it did not make the survey mandatory for students, but expressly provided that student participation shall be voluntary.

III.   Limitations of Campus Climate Survey

As previously noted, participants were not required to answer any specific question on the survey, and some participants chose to skip some questions. In addition, as institutions allowed participants to voluntarily participate in accordance with Act 172, students with strong opinions or substantial knowledge regarding climate issues on campus may have been more apt to participate in the study. A total of 10,186 students responded to the survey. This response rate represents approximately 5% of the student population currently enrolled in Louisiana's public postsecondary institutions. **Given the aforementioned study limitations,**

the results presented in this report should *only* be interpreted as representative of the survey participants, and should not be generalized to the population of all students at an institution or Louisiana students as a whole.

IV.   Results

The survey asked participants questions about the following: (1) survey demographics and academic characteristics, (2) general climate questions, (3) perceptions of policies, procedures and leadership, (4) alcohol and drug abuse, (5) sexual violence, (6) stalking and relationship violence, (7) readiness to help, and (8) bystander confidence, norms, and behaviors. **As mentioned previously, the results obtained from the survey *cannot* not be generalized to the population of all students at an institution or Louisiana students as a whole.**   Therefore, the results presented below are limited to the perceptions and opinions of the survey participants only.

A. Demographics and Academic Characteristics

Table 1 provides a summary of selected demographic and academic characteristics of survey participants.

B. General Climate Questions

Numerous studies have concluded that how students experience their campus environment influences both learning and developmental outcomes. For the purposes of this study, a general campus climate measure was constructed using a 15-item scale. Rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree), participants were asked to rate the following statements:

(1) I feel valued in the classroom/learning environment;

(2) faculty, staff, and administrators respect what students at this school think;

(3) faculty are genuinely concerned about my welfare;

(4) administrators are genuinely concerned about my welfare;

(5) I feel close to people at this school;

(6) I feel like I am a part of this college/university;

(7) I am happy to be at this college/university;

(8) the faculty, staff, and administrators at this school treat students fairly;

(9) I feel safe at this school;

(10) School officials could do more to protect students from harm (*reverse coded*);

(11) if there was a crisis at my school, my school would handle it well;

(12) the school responds too slowly in difficult situations (reverse coded)[2];

(13) school officials handle negative incidents in a fair and responsible manner;

(14) my school does enough to protect the safety of students; and

(15) there is a good support system at my school for students going through difficult times.

Scores were summed and divided by 15 (the number of items) to assess participants' mean score across the items. Values ranged from 1 (unsafe climate) to 5 (safe campus climate).

Observations on General Campus Climate

On a scale of 1 (unsafe environment) to 5 (safe environment), the mean score of survey was 3.41, indicating that overall students in Louisiana public higher education institutions perceive their campus to be moderately safe. While this mean score does not necessarily index a negative campus climate, this is an area in which campus leaders could enjoy an opportunity for improvement. Although this finding is not representative of the student population as whole, campus leaders should continue to strive to identify and address deficiencies in their campus environment (infrastructure, policies, procedures, and training) that could negatively impact campus safety, or the students' perceptions of campus safety (if the perceptions are not a true reflection of campus safety).

Recommendation

By ensuring that students have a sense of safety and security, campuses can improve students' chances of achieving educational and personal success. Some relatively easy measures to increase safety as well as the perception of safety include adequate lighting, the visibility of police officers, and an accessible emergency phone system. In-depth focus group interviews are a useful and manageable tool that can be used to identify gaps in services and to hear ideas from students on how to improve campus safety.

---

[2]Most of the items indicated a positive campus climate. However, because item 10 (School officials could do more to protect students from harm) and item 12 (the school responds too slowly in difficult situations) indicated a negative campus climate, the items were reverse coded before computing total scores.

C. Perceptions of Institutional Policies, Procedures and Leadership

Institutional policies, procedures and leadership are vital to effectively preventing and responding to sexual assault. The study conducted by the Board of Regents in 2014 concluded that the majority of Louisiana's campuses did not have institutional policies that were specifically designed to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual assault. Most institutions' sexual assault policies were subsumed under sexual harassment policies and procedures. To help ensure that each institution had policies and procedures that adequately prevented and responded to incidents of sexual misconduct, the Board of Regents Uniform Policy on Sexual Misconduct required each institution to develop and implement institutional policies and procedures that are clear, readable, and accurate by Fall 2015. To date, all of Louisiana's public postsecondary institutions have developed and implemented policies and procedures. Campus policies can be found on the Board of Regents website (http://www.regents.la.gov/page/LASAFEINFO) and on each institution's website.

Observations on Perception of Institutional Policies, Procedures and Leadership

- ❖ Overall, findings indicate that many survey participants are unaware of their campus sexual assault policies and procedures.
- ❖ Less than half (47%) of survey participants know where to go to get help regarding sexual assault at their school.
- ❖ Forty-one percent of survey participants understand how to report a sexual assault at their school.
- ❖ Less than half (49%) of survey participants understand where they can find confidential support at their school.
- ❖ Less than forty percent (39%) of survey participants understand where they can find 24/7 support related to sexual assault.
- ❖ Only 34% of survey participants know where to seek special accommodations at their school if they were assaulted.

Recommendation

Although these findings are not representative of the student population, because most campuses sexual assault policies and procedures were recently developed and implemented, there was a time lag between the time the recent improvements made by campuses in policies and practice, which may take some time for students to realize or experience. Future

climate surveys are likely to better capture students' understanding of the existing policies and procedures.

Campus leaders must continue to work to disseminate their policies in a manner that is engaging for students and provides opportunities for them to increase their knowledge and develop skills so that they are able to help themselves, their friends, and strangers. Louisiana's public postsecondary institutions have taken a step in that direction by having their policies accessible on their websites. It is important to note that the methods of delivery should also vary and should not be limited to one type of delivery method. Campus communication and public relations departments are an excellent existing resource to utilize in launching a communication/awareness campaign.

D. Alcohol and Drug Use

Data suggest that students are at considerable risk for experiencing sexual assault while intoxicated: this statistic is even more alarming for first-year students. In addition, victims who were incapacitated during the assault are *less likely* to report the incident to either mental health providers or law enforcement officials. Given the relationship between alcohol and drug use and incidents of sexual assault, it is critical for campus leaders to understand the level of alcohol and drug usage among the students at their campus. To evaluate students' experiences with alcohol and drug abuse, students were asked to report the frequency and amount of drug and alcohol use since the start of the academic year.

Observations on Alcohol and Drug Abuse

❖ Findings indicate that most survey participants do not drink often. In fact, 75% of students reported that they drink twice a month or less, since the start of the academic year.

❖ Interestingly, most of the survey participants indicated they do not drink often, but when they do drink, they tend to binge. In fact, 70% of survey participants, who indicated that they drink, also reported that "since the start of the academic year, they have consumed enough alcohol to get drunk".

Recommendation

While these findings do not reflect the student population, campuses should combine sexual assault prevention education with alcohol and drug education programming. Programs

on prevention of alcohol misuse can provide students with the precise definition of sexual assault and information about the prevalence of alcohol-related sexual assault among students.   In addition, studies show a link between alcohol and/or drug use and underreporting.[3] That is, victims who may have been drinking prior to an incident of sexual violence might fear sanctions for violating campus policy on alcohol use. To alleviate these concerns, Act 172 required all Louisiana public postsecondary institutions to "provide an amnesty policy for any student who reports, in good faith, sexual violence to the institution."

E. Sexual Violence

To understand the full extent of nonconsensual sexual contact on Louisiana's public postsecondary institutions, survey participants were asked a broad range of questions regarding unwanted sexual contact. This section summarizes the prevalence of victimization that was a result of unwanted sexual contact, as well as the characteristics of the victims, and whether the incident was reported to an agency or another individual.

Observations on Sexual Violence

- ❖ Findings indicate that 724 of 10,182 survey participants indicated that they experienced sexual contact without consent, since they became a student at their school.
- ❖ Seventy-one percent of survey participants who reported that they experienced sexual contact without consent live off-campus.
- ❖ Nearly one-third (32%) of survey participants who reported that they experienced sexual contact without consent stated that the incident occurred on campus.
- ❖ Of the 724 survey participants who indicated that they experienced sexual contact without consent, most survey participants told a friend/roommate about the incident.

Recommendation

While it is unreasonable to presume that all student victims of sexual assault will use campus resources for the investigation and adjudication of the incident or for personal

---

[3] Fisher, B.S., Cullen, F. T., & Turner, M.G. (2000). The sexual victimization of college women (NCJ Publication No. 182369). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

support, it is likely that many survivors' needs went unmet – given that the data show that few survey participants tapped into campus resources. Such limited use is likely related to generally low awareness of campus services related to sexual violence. Institutions should make campus sexual assault prevention a visible goal, launch awareness and education programs, publicize available resources and procedural protections and emphasize the severe consequences for offenders.

F. Stalking and Relationship Violence

Much of the research that focuses on sexual violence largely ignores relationship violence and stalking. In fact, it was not until recent legislation (2013) that the Clery Act was expanded to include rights to survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. According to a National Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence survey (2011), the highest rates of stalking occur for victims between the ages of 18 to 24 years old. These statistics make awareness and reporting of stalking even more important for colleges and universities.

Observations on Stalking and Relationship Violence

- ❖ Findings indicate that the majority (over 85%) of survey participants reported that they never experienced the following: (1) someone spying on them; (2) unsolicited letters or written correspondence, (3) unsolicited phone calls, (4) unsolicited emails/text messages; (5) someone who showed up in place where the participant was (without any reason to be there); (6) someone leaving an unwanted item for you; (7) someone who tried to communicate in other ways against the participant's will; (8) and/or vandalized/destroyed participant's property.
- ❖ While the majority of the survey participants reported that they *never* experienced intimate partner abuse (emotional and physical abuse), of those that did report relationship violence a higher number reported emotional abuse compared to physical abuse.

Recommendation

Unfortunately, the college campus environment (e.g., students' predicable routines, students' assailant living in the same residence hall or attending the same class, lack of student maturity) can make incident of relationship violence and stalking murky for students

and campus leaders. Despite the nebulous nature of relationship violence and stalking, the likelihood of such offenses can be lessened through a clear and well-publicized policy that defines relationship violence and stalking and explains that it is not acceptable. Campuses must also encourage the reporting of incidents by providing a safe environment for victims to come forward.

G. Readiness to Help

President Obama's "It's on Us" initiative calls upon everyone – including students -- to work toward preventing and responding to incidents of sexual assault on college campuses. Students can be effective leaders on campus who model what respect looks like and educate their communities about sexual assault, consent, and bystander intervention. Several measures were used to assess survey participants' readiness to help.

Observations on Readiness to Help

❖ Findings suggest that students are willing to help their peers; however, few indicated that they have taken part in activities or volunteered their time on projects focused on ending sexual violence.

❖ Seventy-five percent of survey participants strongly disagreed/disagreed that "doing something about sexual violence is solely the job of campus administrators."

Recommendation

While these findings are not representative of the student population, peers are an important source of informal support and can serve to prevent and address sexual violence. The current efforts are expected to increase mutual support among students, awareness of available services and prevention strategies. Student leaders such as Student Government Association officers, student athletes, and sororities and fraternities should all be integrated into the collective endeavor to shape campus culture. This first campus survey will be further strengthened next year, as the institutions begin to see the effects of their ongoing sexual assault prevention and education efforts. Next year's campus survey will benefit from this first survey this year, with improved sampling techniques, increased student awareness, and more robust survey participation rates.

H. Bystander Confidence, Norms, and Behaviors

Research on the causes of sexual violence and evaluation of prevention efforts indicate that bystander prevention is a critical piece of the work.[4] Legislative initiatives and institutional policies and programs can shift social norms so there is a social pressure for the campus community to take action. The aforementioned reports also suggests that although many students are willing to help, bystanders are often unsure of themselves and campus norms often impact whether and how a bystander will intervene.

Observations on Bystander Confidence, Norms, and Behaviors

- ❖ Few survey participants (6%) reported that they observed a situation that they believe was, or could have led to, sexual assault.
- ❖ Ten percent of survey participants reported that they were not confident to "speak up to someone who is minimizing or making attempts to excuse having forced someone to have sex with them."

Recommendation

Bystander intervention is a promising component of sexual violence prevention. However, it is critical that campus leaders equip their students with active learning experiences to build skills and develop campus policies that provide safety nets for bystanders.

V. Conclusions and Implications

Louisiana's public postsecondary institutions have made meaningful changes in their policies, programs, and resources to more effectively address sexual violence on their campuses. The campus climate survey provides a baseline to evaluate those efforts; however, these results do not reflect the opinions of Louisiana's students as a whole.

---

[4] Berkowitz, A.D. (2010) "Fostering Healthy Norms to Prevent Violence and Abuse: The Social Norms Approach." Accessed from: http://www.alanberkowitz.com/articles/Preventing%20Sexual%20Violence%20Chapter%20-%20Revision.pdf

Table 1. Louisiana's Public Postsecondary Institutions Survey Demographic and Academic Characteristics			
Demographics	**Subgroup**	***n***	**% of Sample**
Gender			
	Female	7,355	72%
	Male	2,799	28%
	Intersex	32	0.3
**Ethnicity/Race			
	Hispanic or Latino/a (yes)	603	6%
	Non-Hispanic or Latino/a	9,529	94%
	American Indian/Alaska Native	251	3%
	Asian	553	5%
	Black	2,247	22%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	65	0.6
	White	7,212	71%
	Other	321	3%
Sexuality			
	Asexual	716	7%
	Heterosexual	8,014	80%
	Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual	924	9%
	Questioning	119	1%
	Pansexual	184	2%
	Other	126	1%
Age			
	18	1,204	12%
	19	1,712	17%
	20	1,545	15%
	21	1,375	14%
	22	965	10%
	23 or older	3,360	33%
Academic Characteristics			
Enrollment Status			
	Full-time	9,089	90%
	Part-time	970	10%
Living Arrangements			
	Residence Hall	1,622	16%
	Fraternity or Sorority Hall	131	1%
	On-Campus Apartment	695	7%
	Off-Campus Apartment	4,826	48%
	At Home with Family	2,722	27%
	Other	150	1%
Grade Point Average(GPA)			
	4.0 – 3.5 (A average)	4,002	42.%
	3.4 – 2.5 (B average)	4,436	46.%
	2.4 – 1.5 (C average)	952	10%
	1.4 below (D average or below)	54	2%
	Don't know or not applicable	202	2%

*It is important to note that the percentages shown in Table 1 are based on the numbers of participants in the sample (n) for the specific demographic characteristics. The total *n* for each measure will differ due to missing data.

**Participants were able to select one or more race categories; therefore, the n and the percentage for this measure are larger than the study sample.