

Year 1 Public Description of Work for  
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of California, Santa Barbara

**Develop and Institute Periodic Climate Survey**

**This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s):** Evaluation #23, #24, #25, #26

**Description of Work:**

Upon review of the current campus resources and reports, the UCSB Action Collaborative Steering Committee (“Committee”) noted a significant lack of accessible data on campus climate issues, and specifically related to incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault. As noted in the 2018 NASEM report<sup>1</sup>, climate surveys that use standardized measures are the most effective way to evaluate the prevalence of these issues within the academic community. The Committee found that regular conduct climate surveys have not been conducted since 2014. As a result, it is difficult to assess the progress and efficacy of existing campus resources that address the safety and civility of the campus environment. The Committee compiled the existing data from multiple sources to best understand the collective campus efforts, and provide a foundation to build upon.

In the 2014 survey<sup>2</sup>, the campus received 8,193 responses from students, staff and faculty; a 30% response rate. Some of the major findings included:

- High levels of comfort with the climate at UCSB (faculty, staff and students)
- Positive attitudes about work – life issues (faculty and staff)
- Positive attitudes about academic experiences (students)
- Some (23%) personally experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive or hostile conduct
- A small fraction (8%) experienced unwanted sexual contact in the previous 5 years at UCSB; the majority of these respondents who experienced unwanted sexual contact (n = 569) were undergraduates

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24994/sexual-harassment-of-women-climate-culture-and-consequences-in-academic>

<sup>2</sup> Rankin and Associates, University of California Santa Barbara Campus Climate Project Final Report, March 2014.

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Aside from the fact that UCSB has not conducted a broad campus climate assessment in almost seven years, the results from the last survey were not shared with the community. It is very important that there be a commitment to share the results and to address concerns following the analysis of survey responses. The NASEM 2018 report recommends improved transparency and accountability with regard to sexual harassment and standards of behavior, and that institutions should “...utilize climate surveys to further investigate and address systematic sexual harassment, particularly when surveys indicate specific schools or facilities have high rates of harassment or chronically fail to reduce rates of sexual harassment”<sup>3</sup>.

Further, the Committee reviewed other surveys that were focused on sexual harassment, sexual assault and those with a broader campus climate agenda. It was determined that UCSB would benefit from a broader focus that not only includes sexual harassment and sexual assault, but also asks questions that consider intersectional perspectives related to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual identity, religion, disability, and other protected categories.

In examining universities that have effective surveying practices, the Committee identified additional criteria necessary for a successful evaluation. First, a campus climate assessment must be tailored to our campus. The Committee reviewed and was impressed with UC Berkeley’s *My Voice* survey on sexual assault and harassment and UC Berkeley’s campus climate survey. Both surveys were purposefully focused on aspects of UC Berkeley’s community. The Committee recommends a similarly tailored approach and a broad marketing campaign around the survey to generate responses. Second, it is imperative that the survey include students, faculty, and staff, and that UCSB commits to administering a campus climate survey on a regular periodic basis. Buy-in from the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and Associated Students (AS) would likely increase the response rate from students. Further, a survey distribution every two to three years would be ideal. This frequency would allow all students to participate in a campus climate survey once during their enrollment. Third, the Committee recommends that qualitative and quantitative survey methods be employed. Subcommittee member and UCSB Gevirtz Graduate

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24994/sexual-harassment-of-women-climate-culture-and-consequences-in-academic>, pg. 182.

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School of Education Dean Jeffrey Milem would lend his expertise on campus climate surveys to work with the Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to generate a UCSB survey plan.

The Committee recommends that the new Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion implement a periodic climate survey, complemented by qualitative research on student experiences. It is further recommended that the survey instrument be based on research and national best practices, but also meet the specific needs of the UCSB community, and that it be administered to all members of the campus community. Finally, it is recommended that the results be publicly shared, and that they be used to instigate positive change on campus. Because multiple points within this plan rely on the newly appointed Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the work is in process of being finalized. The work described above offers UCSB a new approach for data compilation and distribution. To ensure its success, the Committee plans to assign follow-up activities to committee members who will meet with the noted stakeholders on a regular basis to describe and further discuss the implementation of this work.

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