

**Year 2 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

Utah State University

Sexual Misconduct Campus Climate Survey for Employees

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

- Measuring the prevalence of sexual harassment – conducted a climate survey to measure the prevalence of sexual harassment for the first time

Description of Work:

In spring 2021, Utah State University implemented its first sexual misconduct campus climate survey for employees. Previously, USU's sexual misconduct campus climate surveys were only conducted with students. The purpose of creating and conducting the employee campus climate survey was to establish a baseline of information about USU employee knowledge, perspectives, and experiences related to sex-based discrimination and sexual misconduct. The data from the employee survey will be incorporated into existing employee trainings about sexual misconduct topics, will be used to make new employee trainings, and will also potentially be the focus of an awareness or education campaign for employees about sexual misconduct issues.

In fall 2016, the university formed a task force and a number of working groups to improve how the university addresses sexual violence in the campus community. The Campus Climate and Survey Working Group was tasked with developing an ongoing student campus climate survey addressing sexual misconduct, and any other efforts required to assess campus attitudes and knowledge of issues related to nonconsensual sexual contact. The working group is chaired by the university's director of Analysis, Assessment & Accreditation, and its membership includes student representatives and faculty members with relevant experience (survey design and evaluation, research methods, partner violence, safety, trauma, and sexual violence). The working group began by carefully reviewing the materials and guidance developed by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women, the White House Task Force, and several publicly posted survey instruments that had been shared as potential national models (Rutgers, MIT, Boston University, Stanford, and the survey developed by the American Association of Universities). The working group adopted validated questions from these models, customizing numerous questions to match the specifics of USU (specific resources, reporting options, locations, etc.). Drafts of the student survey instrument were shared with campus stakeholders for comment and edit, and the final instrument was reviewed and approved by the working group in April 2017. The working group helped revise the 2019 and 2021 student survey instruments to align with updated university sexual misconduct policies and current prevention and education approaches.

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The spring 2021 employee survey mirrored the format and questions that have been used on the student survey since 2017, with some relevant modifications and additions. Prior to creating the employee survey instrument, research was conducted to understand whether other higher education institutions have implemented a campus climate survey for employees. Most often, institutions used the same survey for employees as they did for students. Relevant questions from the surveys conducted by institutions who collected employee-specific data were reviewed for possible inclusion in the USU employee survey. The primary additions to the employee survey included questions related to whether employees had received or reported sexual misconduct disclosures from students or other employees within the past five years and a section measuring employee experiences of workplace incivility. The workplace incivility section was adapted from an employee climate survey conducted by Michigan State University in spring 2019 and included behaviors like “doubted your judgement,” “made insulting or disrespectful remarks about you,” and “accused you of incompetence.”

The employee survey was open from April 1-22, 2021. An email about the survey was sent to all employees (including student employees) at all USU campuses who were active in the Human Resources system as of April 1. An article about the employee (and student) survey was published in Utah State Today and employees received a reminder email at the mid-point of the survey period. Participants could enter into a drawing for USU campus stores gift cards.

Twenty-seven percent of the USU employee population participated in the survey ($n=2,588$), with 56% of participants being female, 69% being white, 59% being a staff member, and 38% having been employed at USU for 1-5 years. The demographics of the survey participants are roughly representative of the demographics of the overall USU employee population. If participants had an experience of sexual misconduct since becoming an employee at USU, they were most likely to experience sex-based discrimination (15%) and sexual harassment (17%). Initial data analysis will continue through August 2021 and the public data report will be published online by September 2021.

Feedback about potential improvements to the employee survey was collected via conversations with and direct emails from employee participants and relevant campus partners after it was implemented. The Campus Climate and Survey Working Group will review all comments received about the employee survey, as well as current best practices for campus climate surveys, prior to the implementation of the next employee survey in spring 2023.

The employee climate survey is consistent with the recommendations found in the “evaluation” section of the 2021 Rubric on Areas of Work for Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education because it utilizes standardized, well-validated measures and assesses specific behaviors without requiring the respondent to label the behaviors as “sexual harassment” or “sexual misconduct.”

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Website for further information (if applicable): <https://www.usu.edu/sexual-respect/survey>

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