

Vassar College's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response

2024 Campus Climate Survey Results

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Introduction

Vassar College's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Biennial Campus Climate Survey reflects a community-wide effort to better understand students' experiences, perspectives, and needs. The survey was developed collaboratively by the Office for Institutional Equity, Title IX Student Advisory Committee, the Office of Institutional Research, and with input from student support resources within the Dean of the College division, including but not limited to the Support, Advocacy, and Violence Prevention (SAVP) Office, Campus Safety, and the CARE Office.

The biennial survey examines perceptions of campus climate; access to and awareness of reporting processes, institutional responses, education and prevention efforts on campus, and experiences with sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic or intimate partner violence, and stalking, and bystander intervention.

Findings are shared openly with students, faculty, staff, and leadership to encourage dialogue, accountability, and continuous improvement. Our goal is to use these insights to strengthen prevention efforts, enhance support systems, and foster a climate where every student, of every gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and background, feels valued, respected, and safe to thrive.

Survey Metrics

In Fall 2024, 2639 Vassar College students (including those studying abroad) were contacted to participate in the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Survey. Three email reminders were sent to students between November 4 and November 13, 2024. Eight hundred thirty-seven (837) students agreed to participate in the survey, a 32% participation rate. Six hundred eighty-nine completed a significant portion of the survey. Women made up 58% of the respondents, men 26%, and other (trans, nonbinary, queer, etc.) 16%. Over half of those taking the survey identified as white (56%). 44% of respondents identified as people of color. Class-year representation was split evenly, with slightly larger numbers among first-year and sophomore students.¹ See [Table 1](#).

Methodology

To better understand patterns within the data, both descriptive and inferential statistical approaches were used. Descriptive statistics summarize students' responses to each item, providing an overview of key themes such as perceptions of safety, belonging, and institutional trust. These descriptive measures help identify overall trends in the student experience and highlight areas of strength and opportunity across the campus community. A chi-square analysis was conducted to examine whether differences in responses were

¹ Survey respondents (first year 31%, sophomore 28%, junior (21%), senior 20%)

statistically significant across specific student identity groups. Comparisons were made by class year (first-year, sophomore, junior, and senior), gender identity (cisgender women, cisgender men, and trans, nonbinary, or gender-diverse students), and racial/ethnic identity (students of color and white students). This analysis allows the College to identify meaningful variations in perceptions and experiences across student populations, helping ensure that future prevention, education, and support initiatives are responsive to the needs of all members of the Vassar community.

Findings

Perceptions of Campus Climate

See [Table 2](#).

- **95%** of students reported feeling safe on campus.
- **88%** of students found one or more communities where they feel they belong. Research indicates that a sense of belonging is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety and supports academic success.²
- **92%** of students felt listened to, respected, and valued in classrooms and academic settings.
- **85%** of students felt listened to and respected in non-classroom spaces.
- Students report feeling an increase in their sense of belonging and connection to campus as they become more familiar and spend more time within the Vassar Community.³

Significant Differences:

- Students of Color (**93%**) were less likely than White students (**96%**) to report feeling safe on campus ($p = 0.021$).
- First-year students (**82%**) were less likely to report a sense of belonging than sophomores (**90%**), juniors (**91%**), and seniors (**92%**) ($p = 0.01$).
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**82%**) were less likely to report belonging than Cis-Men (**87%**) and Cis-Women (**90%**) ($p = 0.02$).
- Students of Color (**90%**) were less likely than White students (**94%**) to feel respected in academic settings ($p = 0.038$).
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**79%**) and Cis-Men (**80%**) were less likely than Cis-Women (**88%**) to feel respected in non-classroom spaces ($p = 0.00$).
- Students of Color (**81%**) were less likely than White students (**88%**) to feel respected in non-classroom spaces ($p = 0.010$).

² Museus and Chang, 2021; McKenzie et al, 2024; NSSE, 2020

³ Sense of belonging/connection to campus (first year 82%, sophomore 90%, juniors 91%, seniors 92%).

Sexual Misconduct Awareness & Institutional Response

See [Table 3](#).

- **86%** of students knew where to seek help if they or a friend experienced sexual misconduct.
- **74%** of students believed faculty and administrators were concerned about issues of sexual violence.
- **72%** of students believed the College was actively working to prevent sexual violence.
- **74%** of students believed the Office for Institutional Equity would honor the reporting student's request.
- **63%** of students believed the College would provide accommodations following a report.
- **66%** of students believed the College would take a sexual misconduct report seriously.
- **59%** of students believed a formal investigation would be fair, impartial, and thorough.
- In contrast, students of color were more likely than white students to believe supportive measures would be provided (69% compared to 58%) and to believe the investigation would be fair (63% compared to 55%).

Significant Differences:

- First-year students (**82%**) were more likely to believe the College would take a report seriously than seniors (**54%**) ($p = 0.00$). This suggests there is an opportunity to better understand and address differences in student perceptions across class years.
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**52%**) were less likely to believe the College would take reports seriously compared to Cis-Men (**80%**) and Cis-Women (**64%**) ($p = 0.00$).
- First-years (**87%**) were more likely than sophomores (**70%**), juniors (**62%**), and seniors (**66%**) to believe the College was actively preventing sexual violence ($p = 0.00$).
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**64%**) were less likely than Cis-Men (**81%**) and Cis-Women (**70%**) to believe the College was preventing violence ($p = 0.00$).
- First-year students (**78%**) were more likely to believe the College would provide accommodations than juniors (**52%**) and seniors (**55%**) ($p = 0.00$).
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**50%**) were less likely than Cis-Men (**65%**) and Cis-Women (**66%**) to believe accommodations would be provided ($p = 0.01$).
- Students of Color (**69%**) were more likely than White students (**58%**) to believe accommodations would be provided ($p = 0.00$).
- First-years (**73%**) were more likely than juniors (**49%**) and seniors (**50%**) to believe the formal investigation would be fair ($p = 0.00$).
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**43%**) were less likely than Cis-Men (**63%**) and Cis-Women (**61%**) to believe the investigation would be fair ($p = 0.00$).
- Students of Color (**63%**) were more likely than White students (**55%**) to believe the investigation would be fair ($p = 0.03$).

Experience of Exclusionary Conduct

See [Table 4](#).

- **24%** of students reported being treated differently because of their sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- Approximately a fifth of Vassar student survey respondents have overheard offensive remarks about their appearance, body, or sexual activities (20%).
- **25%** of students were put down or condescended to.
- **20%** of students heard offensive remarks about their appearance, body, or sexual activities.
- **11%** of students received unwanted communication that made them feel unsafe.
- When asked more specific questions about negative behaviors experienced by students, the top response included being isolated (10%), ignored or left out (8%), insulted, humiliated or subjected to derogatory written content (7%) or target of racial/ethnic profiling (6%) and being verbally demeaned/bullied (6%) or subjected to derogatory posts (4%). See [Chart 1](#).

Significant Differences:

- First-year students (**13%**) were less likely to report differential treatment than sophomores (**30%**), juniors (**24%**), and seniors (**32%**) ($p = 0.00$).
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**34%**) reported more differential treatment than Cis-Men (**15%**) and Cis-Women (**25%**) ($p = 0.00$).
- Students of Color (**19%**) were less likely than White students (**28%**) to report being treated differently ($p = 0.02$).
- First-years (**13%**) were less likely to be put down or condescended to compared to juniors (**32%**) and seniors (**33%**) ($p = 0.00$).
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**12%**) were more likely than Cis-Men (**4%**) and Cis-Women (**15%**) to receive unwanted communication ($p = 0.01$).

Experiences of Unwanted Sexual Contact

See [Table 5](#).

- **4%** of students reported experiencing nonconsensual sexual exposure, such as flashing.
- **13%** of students reported experiencing unwanted touching or grabbing.
- **4%** of students reported sexual penetration without consent.
- **4%** of students experienced flashing or exposure without their consent.
- **2%** of students reported receiving non-consensual explicit content.

Significant Differences:

- First-years (**4%**) were far less likely than sophomores (**14%**), juniors (**17%**), and seniors (**20%**) to experience unwanted touching ($p = 0.00$).
- Women students (**16%**) were more likely than Cis-Men (**6%**) and Trans/Non-Binary (**13%**) to report unwanted touching ($p = 0.01$).
- Seniors (**12%**) were significantly more likely than students in other class years (0–2%) to report non-consensual sexual penetration ($p = 0.00$).

Bystander Intervention and Reporting

See [Table 6](#).

- **79%** of students would express discomfort if someone made a joke about a person's appearance or body.
- **97%** of students would call for help in an emergency.
- **99%** of students would get help for a friend who reported being assaulted.
- **95%** of students would intervene in the moment if it was safe to do so.
- **90%** of students would call SAVP or confidential resources for assistance
- **76%** of students would report concerns to the Office for Institutional Equity.
- **66%** of students would tell a campus administrator or trusted faculty member.

Significant Differences:

- First-years (**86%**) were more likely than sophomores (**74%**) and seniors (**67%**) to express discomfort at inappropriate jokes ($p = 0.00$).
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**71%**) were less likely than Cis-Men (**76%**) and Cis-Women (**83%**) to express discomfort at inappropriate jokes ($p = 0.04$).
- Seniors (**90%**) were slightly less likely than other students to intervene in the moment ($p = 0.05$).
- First-years (**79%**) were more likely than sophomores (**63%**), juniors (**59%**), and seniors (**52%**) to report concerns to a campus administrator or faculty member ($p = 0.00$).
- Trans/Non-Binary students (**52%**) were less likely than Cis-Men (**66%**) and Cis-Women (**70%**) to report concerns to a campus administrator ($p = 0.03$).

Conclusions

The development, implementation, and analysis of any campus climate survey on student experiences, awareness, and attitudes in response to issues of sexual violence and sexual misconduct represent an ongoing process of reflection and improvement, not a single endpoint. Each round of data collection provides a valuable starting point for identifying emerging trends, understanding community experiences, and

pinpointing areas that may require additional attention or resources. Vassar’s commitment to this work reflects a growth mindset grounded in continuous improvement, where findings from each survey inform both the next set of questions and the next phase of institutional action.

The findings from this campus climate survey also point to the importance of approaching this work as an ongoing process grounded in continuous improvement. Each survey cycle offers an opportunity to identify trends, assess progress, and refine both future questions and institutional strategies. Rather than serving as a single endpoint, the survey should function as a foundation for sustained reflection, learning, and action.

To support this approach, continued attention to transparency and communication is essential. Providing clear, accessible information about reporting processes, available supportive measures, and institutional responses can strengthen student understanding and build confidence in campus systems. When students know what to expect and how to access resources, they are more likely to engage with available supports.

The survey findings also highlight the importance of strengthening outreach and engagement with student groups that reported lower confidence in institutional processes, including students of color and trans and nonbinary students. Targeted, culturally responsive education and outreach efforts can help reduce barriers to reporting, increase awareness of resources, and foster a stronger sense of trust and belonging. Regular listening sessions and sustained engagement with student affinity groups can further ensure that diverse perspectives inform institutional practices.

Expanding opportunities for student voice more broadly will also be critical. Creating consistent forums, such as advisory groups or listening sessions, allows students to share feedback, raise concerns, and help shape policies and practices. This ongoing dialogue can strengthen relationships between students and institutional offices while reinforcing a shared commitment to accountability and improvement.

Findings from the 2024 survey reflect both meaningful progress and emerging challenges when viewed alongside 2023 results. Overall perceptions of the campus climate have improved. Students reporting that they feel safe increased from 91% in 2023 to 95% in 2024, while sense of belonging remained strong at 88% across both cycles. Awareness of resources also improved, with knowledge of where to seek help rising from 75% in 2023 to 86% in 2024.

At the same time, student confidence in institutional response declined across several key measures. The percentage of students who believe the College would take a report dropped from 83% in 2023 to 66% in 2024. Similarly, confidence that the College would provide support following a report decreased from 79% to 63%, and belief that investigations would be fair and impartial declined from 64% to 59%. These shifts indicate a gap between awareness and trust. More students know where to get help, but fewer believe the College will respond effectively when a report is made.

Other findings remained consistent. Willingness to intervene and support peers continues to be high, with students reporting strong likelihood of helping a friend or calling for help in both years. At the same time,

experiences of exclusionary conduct and unwanted sexual contact remain persistent concerns, indicating that the overall prevalence of these behaviors has not meaningfully declined across survey cycles.

Patterns of disparity across student groups also remain consistent. Trans and nonbinary students continue to report lower levels of belonging and confidence in institutional response, and differences by class year persist, with first-year students expressing greater confidence than seniors.

Taken together, these comparisons suggest a mixed trajectory. Improvements in safety, belonging, and awareness are evident, but declines in trust and confidence in institutional response highlight a critical area for continued attention.

In addition, integrating trend analysis and benchmarking into future assessments will provide valuable context for understanding progress over time. Comparing findings across survey cycles and with peer institutions can help identify emerging patterns and highlight effective practices in prevention, response, and support.

Future surveys would also benefit from incorporating more qualitative or narrative elements. Open-ended questions can capture the nuance and context of students' experiences, offering deeper insight into the factors that shape perceptions of campus climate and institutional responses. This richer data can inform more responsive and effective interventions.

Taken together, these recommendations underscore a commitment to using data thoughtfully and proactively to strengthen prevention efforts, enhance support systems, and promote a campus environment rooted in trust, equity, and shared responsibility. By continuing to listen, learn, and adapt, Vassar can build on existing strengths while addressing areas for growth in ways that center on student experience and well-being.

The data collected through this survey are most meaningful when used to guide progress in areas such as educational programming, outreach, transparency in communication, and procedural clarity. Results should be reviewed not only for compliance with institutional, state, and federal requirements but also as tools to foster trust, inclusion, and shared accountability across the Vassar community.

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Appendix: Data Tables

Table 1. Demographic of survey participants

Gender Identity	#	%
Woman	464	58%
Man	207	26%
All Other	124	16%
Grand Total	795	100%

Race/Ethnicity	#	%
PoC	357	44%
White	446	56%
Grand Total	803	100%

Class Year	#	%
2025	161	20%
2026	167	21%
2027	219	28%
2028	248	31%
Grand Total	795	100%

Chart 1. Percentage of students who reported they experienced at least one of the following behaviors

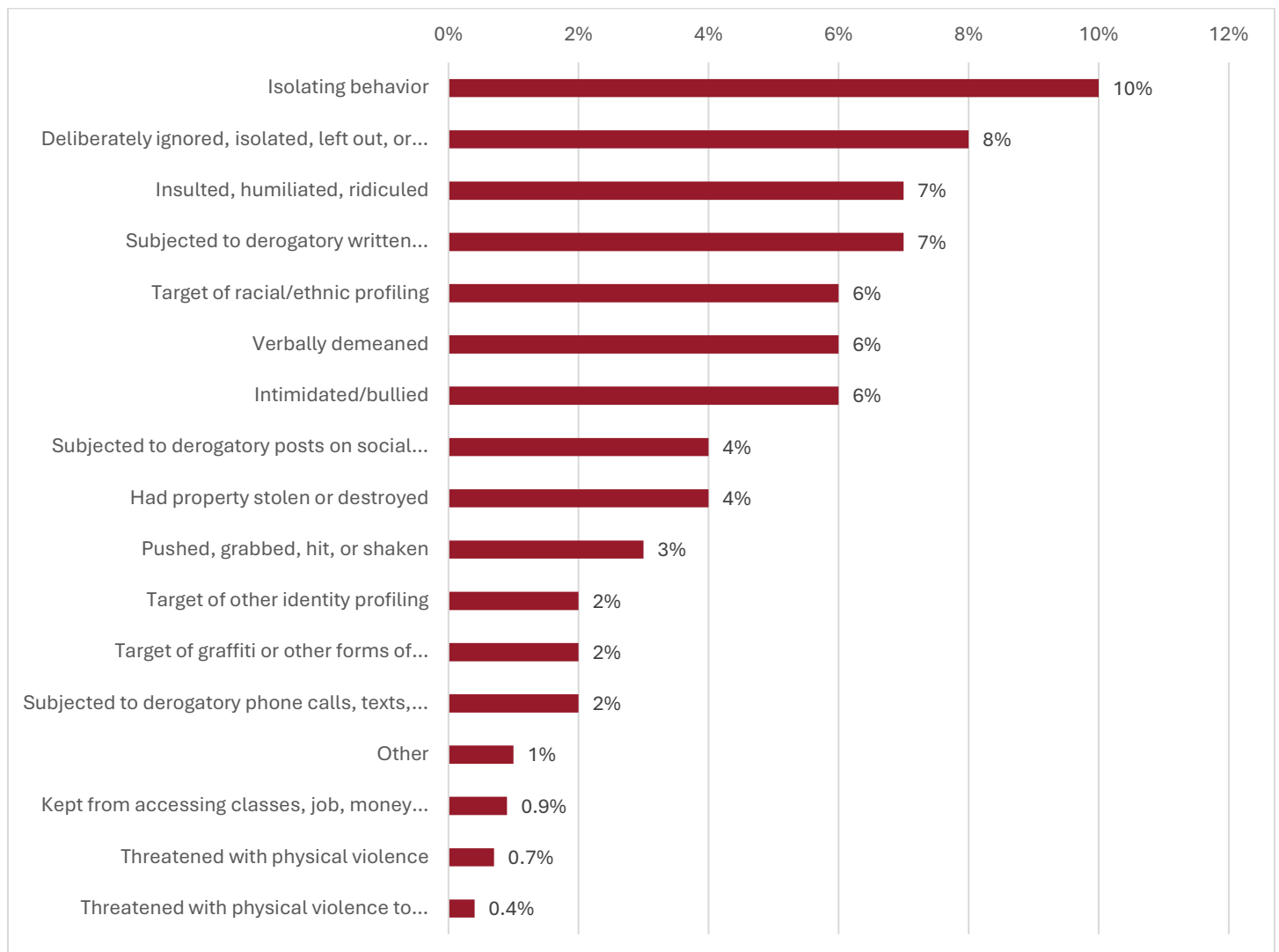


Table 2. The percentage of respondents who responded strongly agree or agree to the following statements.

	Total	Class					Gender Identity				Race/Ethnicity		
		First years	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	P-value	Trans/Non-Binary/Other Genders	Cis-Men	Cis-Women	P-value	People of Color	White	P-value
	N=774	N=239	N=211	N=160	N=155		N=120	N=200	N=453		N=345	N=425	
I feel safe on this campus.	95%	97%	93%	94%	94%		95%	95%	95%		93%	96%	0.021
I have found one or more communities or groups where I feel I belong at Vassar.	88%	82%	90%	91%	92%	0.01	82%	87%	90%	0.02	87%	89%	
I feel listened to, respected, and valued in my classrooms and other academic settings.	92%	95%	89%	91%	94%		90%	92%	93%		90%	94%	0.038
I feel listened to, respected, and valued in spaces outside the classroom on campus (residential, social, etc.)	85%	86%	84%	86%	84%		79%	80%	88%	0.00	81%	88%	0.010

Table 3. The percentage of respondents who responded strongly agree or agree to the following statements.

	Total	Class					Gender Identity				Race/Ethnicity		
		First years	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	P-value	Trans/Non-Binary/Other Genders	Cis-Men	Cis-Women	P-value	People of Color	White	P-value
	N=714	N=239	N=210	N=160	N=155		N=115	N=185	N=414		N=318	N=393	
If a friend or I experienced sexual misconduct, I know where to go to get help on campus.	86%	87%	86%	86%	90%		85%	86%	87%		86%	87%	
Faculty members and administrators at Vassar are concerned about the issues of sexual violence and other forms of sexual misconduct on this campus.	74%	82%	67%	71%	75%	0.00	63%	81%	74%	0.00	72%	75%	
Students at Vassar are concerned about the issues of sexual violence and other forms of sexual misconduct on this campus.	86%	89%	86%	82%	85%		86%	89%	85%		85%	86%	
The College would take a sexual misconduct report seriously.	66%	82%	62%	62%	54%	0.00	52%	80%	64%	0.00	68%	65%	
The College is actively working to raise awareness and prevent sexual violence and other forms of sexual misconduct from happening on this campus.	72%	87%	70%	62%	66%	0.00	64%	81%	70%	0.00	72%	72%	
Following a report, the College would provide accommodations and support to impacted parties (e.g., academic, housing, work, assistance connecting with support services on- and off-campus).	63%	78%	62%	52%	55%	0.00	50%	65%	66%	0.01	69%	58%	0.00
If a report was made to the EOAA/Title IX office, they would honor the request of the person making the report about how to proceed with their case unless legally required to do otherwise (e.g., child abuse, imminent threat, use of a weapon).	74%	81%	73%	71%	68%	0.05	64%	77%	75%	0.04	75%	72%	
If a formal complaint were filed, the investigation and resolution process would be thorough, impartial, and fair to both the Complainant (person reporting harm) and the Respondent (person accused).	59%	73%	58%	49%	50%	0.00	43%	63%	61%	0.00	63%	55%	0.03

Table 4. The percentage of students who reported that they have been in a situation where they experienced at least once these behaviors

		Class					Gender Identity				Race/Ethnicity		
		First years	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors		Trans/Non-Binary/Other Genders	Cis-Men	Cis-Women		People of Color	White	
	Total					P-value							P-value
	N=629	N=184	N=177	N=131	N=130		N=104	N=156	N=369		N=372	N=354	
Treated you "differently" because of your sex, gender identity or sexual orientation?	24%	13%	30%	24%	32%	0.00	34%	15%	25%	0.00	19%	28%	0.02
Put you down or was condescending because of your sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation?	25%	13%	27%	32%	33%	0.00	30%	20%	25%	0.02	21%	28%	
Made offensive remarks about your appearance, body, or sexual activities?	20%	7%	22%	28%	30%	0.00	21%	18%	21%		17%	23%	
Asked you for dates, drinks, dinner, etc., even though you said no?	11%	3%	11%	15%	18%	0.00	8%	6%	14%		8%	13%	
Sent you unwanted phone calls, emails, voice messages, texts, DMs on social media sites in a way that made you feel unsafe?	11%	5%	13%	18%	12%	0.01	12%	4%	15%	0.01	12%	11%	
Made unwanted attempts to establish a romantic, intimate, or sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it?	14%	7%	15%	16%	21%	0.00	15%	9%	15%		14%	14%	
Pressured or threatened you to engage in a romantic, intimate, or sexual relationship with someone because of their position or authority?	3%	2%	4%	2%	5%	0.04	6%	1%	4%		2%	4%	

Table 5. The percentage of students who reported that they have been in a situation where they experienced at least once these behaviors

	Total	Class					Gender Identity				Race/Ethnicity		
		First years	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	P-value	Trans/Non-Binary/Other Genders	Cis-Men	Cis-Women	P-value	People of Color	White	P-value
		N=185	N=176	N=134	N=130		N=105	N=157	N=368		N=268	N=359	
Touched you or grabbed you (genitals, groin, breasts, or buttocks), either directly or through clothing without your consent?	13%	4%	14%	17%	20%	0.00	13%	6%	16%	0.01	10%	15%	
Penetrated you sexually, no matter how slight, without your consent (including vaginally, orally, or anally with any body part or object)?	4%	0%	2%	2%	12%	0.00	4%	1%	4%		3%	4%	
Flashed or exposed themselves without your consent?	4%	1%	4%	2%	9%	0.01	4%	4%	4%		3%	4%	
Showed or sent you sexually explicit images, photos or recordings of your private sexual activity or nakedness (or creates a fake) without your consent?	2%	0%	1%	3%	7%	0.00	2%	1%	3%		2%	2%	

Table 6. The percentage of respondents who reported they would be likely or very likely to take the following actions in response to the following incidents.

		Class					Gender Identity				Race/Ethnicity		
	Total	First years	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	P-value	Trans/Non-Binary/Other Genders	Cis-Men	Cis-Women	P-value	People of Color	White	P-value
	N=572	N=138	N=137	N=105	N=95		N=86	N=119	N=277		N=207	N=273	
Express their discomfort if someone makes a joke about a person's body or appearance.	79%	86%	74%	85%	67%	0.00	71%	76%	83%	0.04	80%	78%	
Call for help if someone was in immediate danger (e.g. call 911 or Campus Safety).	97%	98%	96%	98%	97%		98%	96%	98%		96%	98%	
Get help or resources for a friend who tells them they have been assaulted.	99%	99%	98%	99%	97%		99%	97%	99%		98%	99%	
Directly intervene in the moment if it was safe to do.	95%	96%	94%	98%	90%	0.05	95%	94%	95%		93%	96%	
Call SAVP or other confidential resources on campus for assistance.	90%	94%	91%	89%	83%		91%	86%	92%		90%	90%	
Report to EOAA/Title IX	76%	81%	77%	75%	66%		66%	72%	80%		74%	77%	
Tell another campus administrator or trusted faculty member	66%	79%	63%	59%	52%	0.00	52%	66%	70%	0.03	66%	66%	