

November 12, 2015

Dear Haverford Community Members:

Seniors, juniors and sophomores may recall taking a survey last spring about sexual assault and unwanted sexual contact on Haverford's campus, addressing their personal experience, sense of prevalence, and perception of institutional responsiveness. The survey was wide-ranging, including questions both about specific experiences of sexual assault, and about how the institution educates its members to heighten awareness. The results of this survey, presented in detail below, suggest that there are areas where Haverford has made significant progress and that there are also areas where we would like to do more to serve our students well.

Our student response rate was 50%, which attests to our community's commitment and to the quality of the data (the average for all institutions was just under 20%). We are grateful to all of the students who took the time to answer this comprehensive and detailed survey.

The survey that Haverford students took was developed cooperatively by the Higher Education Data Sharing consortium (known as HEDS) and administered by participating schools, which included 57 institutions total, 54 of which are relatively comparable in size to Haverford (less than 3500 students) and include most of what we would consider our "peer schools." Thus we are able to benchmark our results – that is, to see whether our students' experiences and impressions are representative of life in small residential liberal-arts colleges, and to see how our efforts are faring in comparison to those undertaken elsewhere. Ultimately, though, we remain most interested in what our individual set of data might suggest about how to improve the experience of all Haverford students, whether or not they directly suffer the impact of sexual misconduct.

To begin with more general data regarding campus climate, over 80% of Haverford students responded positively (agreed or strongly agreed) to the following statements (the first figure is the Haverford %, and the second is the % for all institutions, including Haverford):

- Faculty, staff and administrators respect what students think (92%/82%);
- Faculty, staff and administrators are genuinely concerned with students' welfare (95%/85%);
- Faculty, staff and administrators treat students fairly (89%/75%);
- Students at Haverford are genuinely concerned with the welfare of other students (86%/72%);
- I feel safe on this campus (94%/83%);
- Campus officials do a good job of protecting students from harm (85%/66%);
- Campus officials would take a report of sexual assault seriously (92%/80%);

- Campus officials would support and protect the person making the report (82%/73%).

Students responded somewhat less positively – if more positively on average than did students at other institutions – to the following questions:

- Campus officials respond quickly in difficult situations (69%/54%);
- Campus officials would conduct a careful investigation [of a report of sexual assault] in order to determine what happened (78%/66%);
- Campus officials would take action against the offender(s) (62%/61%);
- Students would support the person making the report (72%/67%);
- There is a good support system to help students through difficult times (61%/62%).

On the topic of education around sexual misconduct, at least 80% of students felt that:

- They knew what sexual assault is and how to recognize it (85%/77%);
- They were aware of Haverford's confidential resources for sexual assault and how to locate them (85%/60%);
- They were aware of what actions they could take themselves to prevent assault (88%/75%).

The positive responses were somewhat lower for the following questions:

- They knew how to report a sexual assault (69%/62%);
- They found the information they had received on this topic helpful (74%/65%);
- They remembered most, almost all or all of it (64%/62%);
- They were familiar with the procedures for investigating a sexual assault (41%/37%).

On the individual level, Haverford's self-reports in this survey about experiences of sexual assault reflect the following: 5.9% reported being assaulted and 3.5% responded that they suspected they had been assaulted but were not certain. Within these general figures, women students are represented at a slightly higher incidence, 7.5% reporting an assault and 4.5% suspecting an assault but not being certain. 57% of those responding in the affirmative indicated a single experience of assault, with four being the maximum indicated.

Overall, of the Haverford students who indicated having been assaulted or suspecting that they had been:

- Most reported that they told a close friend, if they told anyone (86%);
- 86% reported that at least one of their assailants was a fellow Haverford student;
- 81% reported that the assault(s) took place in a residential building;

- 67% reported that alcohol was involved on the part of the assailant (s), and 55% said that alcohol consumption on their part was involved;
- 65% reported that the assault(s) occurred before the end of their first year, while 78% indicated that the assault(s) occurred in their first or second year at Haverford;
- 11% (10% for females and 20% for males) did not tell anyone. Of the 88% who did tell someone, 86% reported telling a close friend and just over half (51%) told someone affiliated with the College, e.g. peer advisor, Title IX coordinator or other administrator.

The aggregates shown above clearly signal some trends and recurring themes that should inform our further work – and that hopefully will inform your own thinking about this issue and about how you can be most responsive. The survey has helped us recognize the need to work both on the educational front and in encouraging students to come forward. While the information disseminated in Customs appears to be useful and well-received, we clearly need to continue educational outreach for the duration of a student’s time at Haverford. Moreover, though the 41% response about familiarity with investigative procedures is in line with results from other institutions, and not surprising since students would have relatively little occasion to know this information in depth, we need to consider whether better understanding of those procedures might lead to more consistent reporting. Most broadly, we will be following up on the fact that only 61% of respondents felt that there is a good support system in campus to help students through difficult times. While this number is also comparable to other schools’ results, it seems to extend beyond the issue of sexual-assault reporting and response into areas that we might want to address more comprehensively.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation for the work of the Title IX coordinator, Dean Steve Watter; the members of SMPAC (Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee); SOAR; the staff of the Women’s Center; the Customspeople involved in training on sexual misconduct; Campus Safety and all of the other offices, students and personnel committed to making Haverford a campus in which all community members feel safe. It is clear from the data we have shared that we can point to some significant accomplishments in certain areas, but also that there is a great deal of work to do, and we look forward to hearing from community members with suggestions and directions. We will be reaching out to schedule some venues for discussion of the results of this survey as well as evaluating ways to build on these results, including the possibility of complementary survey mechanisms.

With all best wishes,

Kim Benston, President

Martha Denney, Dean of the College