



**SUNY Sexual Violence Prevention (SVP) Survey Report
Purchase College, SUNY
Spring 2021**

Contacts:

Jerima DeWese, Title IX Coordinator, Jerima.dewese@purchase.edu, 914-251-5981
Barbara Moore, Director of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment,
barbara.moore@purchase.edu, 914-251-6018

Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment
Purchase College, SUNY
735 Anderson Hill Road
Purchase, New York 10577

Executive Summary

Purchase College is committed to providing a safe environment that respects all individuals, encourages exploration, and increases growth and knowledge both in and out of the classroom. In order to better understand our students, faculty and staff the SUNY Sexual Violence Prevention (SVP) Survey was conducted in spring 2021. As per SUNY policy 'Results will be published on the campus website providing no personally identifiable information shall be shared'.

By [State University of New York \(SUNY\) policy](#) this SUNY-wide survey ascertains faculty and staff awareness of policies and resources, and student experience with and knowledge of college reporting and adjudicatory processes for sexual harassment, including sexual violence and other related crimes.

The response rate for students was 14.1% while the response rate for faculty and staff was 19.3%. It is important to note that with the low student response rate, we cannot assume a representative sample. Accordingly, this report cannot serve as a basis for drawing *conclusions* regarding the state of awareness of resources and prevalence of incidences of sexual assault on this campus. However, we are required by law to publish results and so we do so with the qualifier of potential bias.

It is important to note that this survey was administered in the spring of a highly anomalous academic year in which the on-campus population, usually approximately 2600 students, was below 950 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to having a greatly reduced on-campus student population, students were not allowed to visit each other in residence hall rooms. Thus, the opportunity for in-person interactions were greatly reduced. Forty-seven percent of student respondents stated that they lived on campus for a portion of the academic year.

Results indicate that faculty and staff are generally aware of the policies, laws, and resources. Of the 217 faculty and staff who completed the survey, 189 (88%) were aware that the college has policies and procedures specifically addressing sexual assault. 158 or 72.8% knew how to contact the Title IX Coordinator, and 124 or 57.1% responded that they knew how to direct a student who was sexually assaulted to help on campus. However, only 84 or 38.7% understand what happens when a student reports sexual assault at our campus. This is an indication that the College should continue with its comprehensive efforts to increase awareness of process and resources.

The student responses to the questions on knowledge of how to report incidences of sexual violence or harassment ranged from 51.3% – 64.8% depending on the type of violence. Of the 474 student respondents, 128 or 27% indicated they did not know how to report any form of sexual violence or harassment. This indicates the need to continue with the student awareness programming.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact [Barbara Moore](#), Director of [Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment](#). If you have recommendations about how the College can reduce the incidence of conduct that creates a hostile environment on campus, including sexual violence and related crimes, and improve the support the College offers when it does occur, please contact the Interim Title IX Coordinator at <mailto:titleix@purchase.edu>.

Background

Consistent with policies of The State University of New York, Purchase College participated in the 2021 University-wide Biennial SUNY Campus Climate Survey. Two separate surveys were concurrently administered, one to students and one to employees (faculty and staff). Students 18 years old or older and the entire faculty/staff population with college email addresses received the survey invitation. The survey timeline was as noted in Table #1 below.

Timeline – Set by SUNY

Student Survey	Employee Survey
Launch – Monday, February 15	Launch – Thursday, February 18
Reminder #1 – Tuesday, February 23	Reminder #1 – February 26
Reminder #2 – Saturday, February 27	Reminder #2 – Monday, March 1
Reminder #3 – Wednesday, March 3	Reminder #3 – Wednesday, March 10
Reminder #4 – Monday, March 8	Reminder #4 – Tuesday, March 16
Reminder #5 – Thursday, March 18	Reminder #5 – Monday, March 22
Survey Close – Monday, March 22	Survey Close – Thursday, March 25

Table 1: Timeline for administration of the SUNY Campus Climate Survey

For the first administration of the survey (fall, 2016) after many discussions, including several with members of the Purchase Student Government Association, the decision was made not to offer an incentive for participation in this survey. This decision was revisited during debriefing conversations as being a factor in the very low student response rates for that survey administration. For this survey administration, SUNY raffled off 150 \$100 VISA gift cards system-wide, and Purchase College raffled off four (4) \$50 VISA gift cards for our students.

Prior to the survey start date, a marketing campaign was launched that included posting flyers and posters, outreach to faculty at school meetings, outreach to staff at various meetings, and outreach to various groups of students (athletes, RAs, freshmen in their Freshmen Seminars, etc.). Talking points were prepared for faculty who were interested in discussing the survey with their students. In addition, survey reminders to the campus community was included in the weekly Student Affairs digest starting the week before the survey open date.

The survey was administered using a SUNY platform for collecting, tracking, and sharing data. SUNY is committed to maintaining the highest standards in data security. Information is protected during internet transactions (when the survey is being completed). In addition, unit level data are securely stored with multiple firewalls and security procedures. Campuses do not have access to individual unit records. Rather, data is provided in summary form only.

The survey was administered to the entire college population and was available in both English and Spanish. This decision was based on the relatively small population sizes as well as a history of low student response rates to surveys administered at Purchase College. The only individuals excluded from the survey were minor students (below the age of 18) and employees, primarily in the Operational Services Unit of CSEA who lacked a Purchase College email address.

The response rates for the Sexual Violence Prevention survey are outlined in the Table 2 below.

	spring 2021			spring 2019	fall 2016
	# surveyed	# responded	response rate	response rate	response rate
Faculty/Staff	1076	229	19.30%	21.8	21.28%
Student	3379	474	14.10%	16	7.68%

Table 2: Three-Year Trend of Student and Faculty/Staff Response Rates to the SUNY Campus Climate Survey

In order to preserve the strictest confidentiality of the data, the decision was made SUNY-wide not to capture respondent IDs. Responses are de-identified by SUNY System before being made available to campuses. Therefore, survey data cannot be linked to the student information system to determine the representativeness of the survey population for any demographic elements other than gender.

Spring 2021	Overall Student Population		Survey Respondents	
	HC	%	HC	%
Male	1362	40.2%	148	31.2%
Female	2024	59.8%	325	68.6%
Other			4	0.8%

Table 3: Gender of survey respondents compared to overall headcounts.

The above table shows that many more females completed the survey than did males and that this difference was much greater than the difference that exists in the overall population. The Student Information System does not allow for any gender other than male or female, and four of the survey respondents identified as a gender other than either of those two binary options.

As required by NYS law, Purchase College will again administer the SUNY Sexual Violence Prevention survey during spring 2023.

Results

As noted earlier in this report, the student response rates for this survey were low, so we cannot assume that the results listed below are representative of the entire population. While the below results can assist the college with the direction of future initiatives, more and better work must be done in future survey administrations to increase the response rate.

- *Campus Efforts at Policy Awareness*

The Office of Diversity and Compliance provides annual Title IX training to faculty, staff, students, and any individual who is designated as a responsible party. Training is provided in various modalities; in-person, via Everfi software, and in a hybrid modality. Despite the College’s outreach to students and employees providing information on sexual assault, Table #4 below shows that students are not absorbing the training and messaging.

	Student	Employee
The definition of sexual assault	68.6	70
How to report a sexual assault	64.1	72.8
Where to go to get help if you or someone you know is sexually assaulted	64.6	80.5
To whom you can speak confidentially about a sexual assault	62	65
Policies prohibiting sexual assault	62.4	70.5
To my knowledge, I have not received information regarding any of the above	15.4	12.4

Table 4: Percent of students who report receiving written and/or verbal information from anyone at the college about sexual assault prevention.

- *Title IX Coordinator’s role*

At the time of the survey administration in spring 2021, the College did not employ either a Title IX Coordinator or a Title IX Investigator reporting to the Coordinator. Those functions were being handled by the Chief Diversity Officer who has responsibility for all Title IX functions. This could explain the low response rate for faculty and staff who were aware that a victim/survivor or witness can formally disclose a sexual assault on campus to the Title IX Coordinator.

As outlined in the Table 6 below, the various roles of the Title IX Coordinator are not well understood on campus, by either students or employees.

<i>Which are the roles of a Title IX Coordinator in regards to sex discrimination/sexual assault/sexual misconduct? (Check all that apply)</i>	Student	Faculty/Staff
Receiving reports	58.5%	63.6%
Coordinating campus responses to complaints	48.4%	57.1%
Ensuring training/educating is provided to the campus community	50.1%	64.1%
Providing reporting individuals with accommodations and services during an investigation	51.2%	46.5%

Table 6: Student and Faculty/Staff knowledge of the role of the Title IX Coordinator.

While 68.8% of student respondents are aware that a victim/survivor or witness can formally disclose a sexual assault on campus to the Title IX coordinator, this percentage drops to 32.3 for faculty and staff respondents. This is further indication that efforts to increase employee awareness of the role of the Title IX Coordinator must continue. However, the good news is that more students are so aware than was reported in the 2016 survey when 55.78% of student respondents understood that a formal complaint could be made to the Title IX Coordinator.

- *How and where to report sexual violence as a victim/survivor or witness*

Only 35.4% of employee respondents indicated an understanding of the difference between confidentiality and privacy. This is an important distinction as it could determine where an employee

goes to make a report. The Counseling and Health Center protect confidential disclosure; however, as confidentiality does **not** exist with the Title IX Coordinator, no report will be made to that office without student consent. The Counseling and Health Centers are two of the three offices (including our Wellness Center) where confidential disclosures can be made. Reports made to other offices are considered formal disclosures and, while privacy is maintained confidentiality is not.

The results of the employee survey indicate that further training on the difference between confidentiality and privacy would be beneficial. As the table below indicates, 69.6% and 56.2% of employees believe a formal disclosure can be made to the Counseling and Health Centers respectively.

To whom can a victim/survivor or witness formally disclose a sexual assault on campus?	
Title IX Coordinator	71.0%
University Police	77.4%
Counseling Center*	69.6%
Advocacy Services	48.8%
Student Affairs	36.9%
Health Center*	56.2%
Affirmative Action	38.7%
Human Resources	49.8%

Table 7: Employees indication of where a formal disclosure can be made.

Encouragingly, it appears that less students erroneously believe a formal disclosure can be made to the Counseling Center and Health Center. 90.5% of student respondents in 2016 believed that a formal disclosure could be made to the Counseling Center, compared with 63.5% today; and 78.46% believed in 2016 that such disclosure could be made to the Health Center, as compared with 36.5% today. Certainly, staff at these offices can refer students to UPD or the Title IX Coordinator. However, while all other staff are obligated to follow-up, staff at this three offices are not. They and they alone can maintain confidentiality at the request of the victim/survivor, or witness.

Student responses to the questions pertaining to knowledge of how to report various incidences of sexual violence seem to indicate a relatively high level of awareness. A majority knew how to report sexual assault (64.4), sexual harassment (62.5%), domestic and/or dating violence (53.7%), and stalking (50.9%). However, this means that over 1/3 of student respondents do not know how to report an incidence of sexual assault, and even higher percentages of students are unaware of how to report other types of sexual violence.

Of some concern is that there seems to be a sense of faculty and staff distrust about the process triggered when they report student complaints of sexual violence. Only 125 (57.6%) responded that they believed the campus would take their report seriously; 109 (50.2%) responded that they agree the campus would take conduct a fair investigation; and, 106 (48.8%) responded that the campus would provide the student with necessary support during the process.

- *The availability of resources on and off campus, such as counseling, health, academic assistance*

Employee respondents were generally aware of on-campus resources, although such awareness was less than was reported in 2016. Awareness of the Office of Student Conduct was 59.9% down from 70%, University Police was 77.4% down from 99%, Counseling Center 74.7% down from 98%, Health Services 72.4% down from 98%, and Human Resources 71.4% down from 96%. Again, this speaks to the need to continue with policy awareness training across the campus.

Student respondents indicated that they were aware of on-campus resources such as University Police (79%) and Health Services (79%). However, they were less aware of on-campus resources such as the Title IX Coordinator (68.8%), the Counseling Center (63.5%); and they were much less aware of Student Affairs (29.4%) as a resource. In addition, only 42.1% of student respondents were aware of Human Resources as a resource, which makes sense as it primarily serves employees. Similar to the results from the employee survey, a number of student respondents also claimed awareness of Advocacy Services (43.4%) which does not exist on campus.

For a variety of technical and resource reasons, the SUNY Sexual Violence Prevention Survey does not customize the surveys for each of the 64 campuses to avoid including offices that might not exist on a particular campus. This “one size fits all” survey SUNY-wide creates some confusion due to the researchers’ inability to understand if the respondent might be referring to an office/employee with a different name, title or structure.

- *The prevalence of victimization and perpetration of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking on and/off campus during the last year*

The faculty/staff survey did not include questions relating to the prevalence and incidence of sexual violence and assault. The results in this section reflect only that from the student survey. While the numbers are low, any incident of sexual violence is unacceptable. It is important to note that students may be more inclined towards candor on a confidential survey (anonymous to the institution and SUNY) than they are in coming forward to report any such incidents.

A number of student respondents indicated having been the recipient of some form of sexual activity rising to the level of violence without their consent during the last year, including:

<i># of student respondents indicating sexual activity without consent</i>	<i>Attempted</i>	<i>Completed</i>
someone fondled, kissed, or rubbed up against the private areas of my body	29	20
someone removed some of my clothes	13	9
someone performed oral sex on me or forced me to perform oral sex	9	6
someone sexually penetrated me	6	10

Table 8: Number of students who responded on the survey that they were the recipient of some form of non-consensual sexual activity.

The survey asks for incidents that occurred in the past year but does not specify for each incident whether it took place on campus. However, when asked to identify the perpetrators affiliation with the college for the most recent incident, 31 (23.5%) indicated some form of affiliation. No student respondent identified any college employees involved in these incidents. However, only 9 identified

other students, making it unclear as to what affiliation the perpetrator had with the campus. It is possible that other students were instead identified as acquaintances, non-romantic friends, casual or first date, current romantic partner, or ex-romantic partner. Every reported incident is taken very seriously, and is given a thorough review by the Title IX Coordinator and Office of Diversity and Compliance.

- *Whether victims/survivors reported to the College and/or police, and reasons why they did or did not report*

For the respondents above who indicated that they had been a victim of some form of sexual assault, only 1 indicated that they used the College's formal procedures to report the incident(s). All other respondents who indicated victimization opted not to report the incident(s). The most common reasons given were 1) They did not think it was important enough, 2) they did not recognize the incident as sexual assault at the time of the occurrence, and 3) someone told them not to report it.

- *The general awareness of the definition of affirmative consent*

73.3% of employee respondents and 80.7% of student respondents were aware of the definition of affirmative consent, both down from 2016. However, approximately 26% of employee-respondents and approximately 20% of student-respondents were not, or were unsure. While a good majority of employee respondents (84%) and student respondents (86.4%) were aware that an incapacitated person cannot give consent, this is a decrease from 2016 when 99% and 94% respectively were so aware.

Discussion and Next Steps

The campus is steadily working to increase awareness of campus resources, as well as what constitutes sexual violence, and how to prevent it.

The Office of Diversity and Compliance conducts annual training session on the topics of Title IX, Sexual Violence and Prevention Response and Sexual harassment and Discrimination. A majority of these trainings (Title IX) are collaboratively conducted with staff from the Conduct Office, Counseling Services and University Police. The training is provided to all:

- Incoming freshman and transfer students and their parents during the summer and at the beginning of the Spring semester
- Student athletes, coaches, athletic trainers and athletic administrators are provided with the training prior to the beginning of the semester.
- Student leaders who are members of the student government, and student clubs
- Resident Assistants and Resident Directors
- Student Orientation leaders

During the academic semesters, training is also provided on the topics of Title IX and Sexual Harassment to all faculty and staff. In academic year 2019-2020, 567 faculty, staff and responsible parties were trained. In addition, 3157 students participated in training sessions.

To increase awareness on the campus of the issues and/or resources related to Title IX, the Affirmative Action Office has intensified its efforts by increasing the number of campus broadcasts that go out to faculty, staff and students during the academic year, and conducting more training sessions.

In addition to the above, the campus continually reviews existing policies, collaborates across offices, and incorporates new initiatives to enhance the safety and freedom of our community members. Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Division significantly revamped orientation presentations and welcome week activities to tease out and emphasize the role of the Title IX coordinator.

Since the administration of the survey in spring 2020, we have hired a full-time Title IX Investigator who reports to the Chief Diversity Officer and Title IX Coordinator. In a time of tightening budgets, this is a huge and obvious commitment to protecting the welfare of our students and campus community.

The College understands that nationally, there is a low percentage of students who come forward to make a formal complaint or disclosure of sexual violence. Through our continued efforts to educate, raise awareness, provide resources, and support our students we hope to see more and more success in subsequent surveys.