

Findings from William & Mary’s Sexual Misconduct Campus Climate Assessment

Released by the Task Force for Preventing Sexual Assault & Harassment
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Key Findings

See the specified pages for more details about each key finding.

- **2%** of all respondents indicated they had been raped since enrolling at W&M. Among only undergraduate women and men, these percentages are 4% and 1% respectively (pp. 7-8). Only **12%** of those had filed a grievance with the university (p. 10).
- **18%** of all respondents had experienced some form of *physical* sexual misconduct (e.g., unwanted sexual touching, grabbing, and pinching, as well as rape). Among undergraduate women and men, these percentages are **28%** and **11%**, respectively (pp. 6-7).
- **46%** of all respondents had experienced some form of *physical or non-physical* sexual misconduct, including unwanted sexual jokes, comments, and gestures; unwanted physical contact (e.g., sexual touching, grabbing, and pinching, as well as rape); indecent exposure; and requests for sexual favors (p. 6). Only **3%** of these students had filed a grievance with the university (p. 10).
- Members of social fraternities and sororities experienced and observed various types of sexual misconduct at considerably higher levels than unaffiliated students (pp. 8-9).

Introduction

William & Mary participated in the National Sexual Misconduct Campus Climate Survey (NSMCCS) in October 2014. The web-based survey was designed and administered by eduOutcomes, a higher education data collection and analysis company. Although the survey did not capture all of the information we think is relevant to the issue of sexual assault and harassment on campus, it provided us with a solid foundation of information that we can build on through future survey efforts.

The survey invitation was sent by email to 8,282 individuals, which represented the entire population of actively enrolled students who were over the age of 18 as of September 30, 2014, including graduate students and part-time students. We are grateful to the many students who chose to participate and share their information.

Respondents

A total of 32% of the student population (n=2,660) responded to the survey and answered at least one question. Approximately 500 respondents started the survey but did not finish it. Using the more conservative completion rate (27%), the margin of error for findings based on all respondents is $\pm 1.8\%$.

Note on the margin of error: *The 1.8% margin of error applies only to the entire respondent pool. Margins of error for subpopulations, if known, are provided in Tables 2 and 3 below. We caution readers not to calculate the number of cases of misconduct for the entire student body (or a subpopulation) without taking the appropriate margin of error into account. Survey research is not an exact science, and even good margins of error can result in a large range.*

Table 1 shows the composition of the respondent pool. All demographic information was self-reported by the respondents. The exact number of respondents varied by question, because students either did not complete the survey or opted not to answer particular demographic questions. The percentages in Table 1 reflect the composition of the respondents who provided answers to those demographic questions.

Note on gender categories: *The survey gave students the option of identifying their gender as Male, Female, Transgender, and Other. The Transgender and Other categories have been collapsed into a single category, which we refer to in this report as “trans*,” an umbrella term for people who do not identify with the gender binary.*

We must acknowledge that students' experience of sexual assault and/or harassment might have influenced their decision to opt in or out of the survey. Unfortunately, we cannot know the extent of any potential bias that might have resulted from this self-selection. Although we recognize self-selection as a factor to bear in mind in interpreting the results, it does not undermine our confidence in the overall findings.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.

	Respondents (n)	% of Respondents	W&M Population (N)	% of W&M Population
Undergraduates	1679	78%	6154	74%
Gender				
<i>Men</i>	588	35%	2701	44%
<i>Women</i>	1066	64%	3453	56%
<i>Trans*</i>	18	1%	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
		100%		100%
Race/Ethnicity				
<i>White</i>	1191	71%	3678	60%
<i>Students of color</i>	467	28%	2057	33%
<i>Unknown</i>	21	1%	419	7%
		100%		100%
Fraternity/Sorority				
<i>Men</i>	141	8%	750	12%
<i>Women</i>	347	21%	1150	19%
<i>Total</i>	488	29%	1900	31%
Athletes				
<i>Men</i>	43	3%	274	4%
<i>Women</i>	58	3%	222	4%
<i>Total</i>	105	6%	505	8%
Graduate Students	479	22%	2110	25%
Gender				
<i>Men</i>	180	38%	996	47%
<i>Women</i>	294	61%	1115	53%
<i>Trans*</i>	4	1%	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
		100%		100%
School				
<i>A&S and VIMS</i>	105	22%	553	26%
<i>Business</i>	75	16%	498	24%
<i>Education</i>	95	20%	400	19%
<i>Law</i>	152	32%	659	31%
<i>Unknown</i>	52	11%	0	0
		101%		100%

Survey Content & Findings

The survey included questions about (1) students' personal experiences with various forms of sexual misconduct; (2) their observation of misconduct directed at others; (3) their knowledge of Title IX; (4) their experience with the university grievance process (if applicable); and (5) their perception of the campus climate with regard to accountability, respect, and other related issues. The content and most notable findings for each section are provided below.

Sections I & II: Experience and Observation of Sexual Misconduct

Section I of the survey began with this instruction:

“Please answer the following questions after thinking about your personal experiences since being enrolled at William & Mary. **Please note you should only report experiences that were unwelcomed.** Has an employee or student at William & Mary ever done the following?” (The bold typeface was included in the instruction.)

- Made comments of a sexual nature to you?
- Made jokes of a sexual nature to you?
- Made gestures of a sexual nature to you?
- Spread rumors about your sexual orientation?
- Spread rumors that were sexual in nature about you?
- Touched you in an unwelcomed sexual way?
- Grabbed you in an unwelcomed sexual way?
- Pinched you in an unwelcomed sexual way?
- Purposefully brushed up against you in an unwelcomed sexual way?
- “Flashed” or exposed themselves to you (flashing is when someone intentionally and without your permission displays his/her breasts or genitals to you)?
- “Mooned” you (mooning is when someone intentionally and without your permission displays his/her buttocks to you)?
- Asked you for sexual favors in exchange for something?
- Raped you (rape is defined as vaginal, oral, or anal penetration with an object or body part)?

If students indicated they had experienced a particular behavior, they received two follow-up questions asking how often they had experienced that behavior and how recently.

Section II asked students to “think about behaviors that you have seen of others since being enrolled at William & Mary. Have you ever **observed** a William & Mary employee or student engage in any of the following unwelcomed activities towards someone other than you?” They were then given the same behaviors and follow-up questions as in Section I.

Prevalence of Misconduct

Looking at all respondents together, 46% reported experiencing at least some form of sexual misconduct, and 56% reported observing misconduct toward someone else.

Women reported experiencing most forms of sexual misconduct at higher rates than men, and undergraduates have experienced it more frequently than graduate students. Table 2 shows different types of misconduct and the percentage of students in each group who had experienced those behaviors. (Note: Because the number of trans* students in the overall population is so small, their information is presented here as a group, not divided by degree level.) The margin of error for each sub-population is provided, if known.

Table 2. Experience of Sexual Misconduct by Gender and Degree Level

	Female Undergrads		Male Undergrads		Female Grad Students		Male Grad Students		Trans*	
	% (±2.5)	n	% (±3.6)	n	% (±4.9)	n	% (±6.6)	n	%	n
Experienced non-physical misconduct ^a	50%	524	40%	232	34%	98	21%	36	39%	9
Experienced indecent exposure ^b	4%	42	7%	42	1%	3	2%	3	9%	2
Experienced requests for sexual favors	3%	36	2%	11	3%	8	0%	0	13%	3
Experienced physical misconduct ^c	28%	301	11%	62	11%	33	2%	4	22%	5
Observed misconduct of any kind	73%	752	63%	359	51%	140	35%	60	70%	16

^a Non-physical misconduct includes comments, jokes, gestures, and rumors.

^b Indecent exposure includes flashing and mooning.

^c Physical misconduct includes touching, grabbing, pinching, purposefully brushing up against someone, and rape.

The Justice Department's 2007 *Campus Sexual Assault Study*, which is the source of commonly-cited statistics on the prevalence of college sexual assault, included non-consensual sexual touching within its definition of sexual assault.¹ The "physical misconduct" variable reported

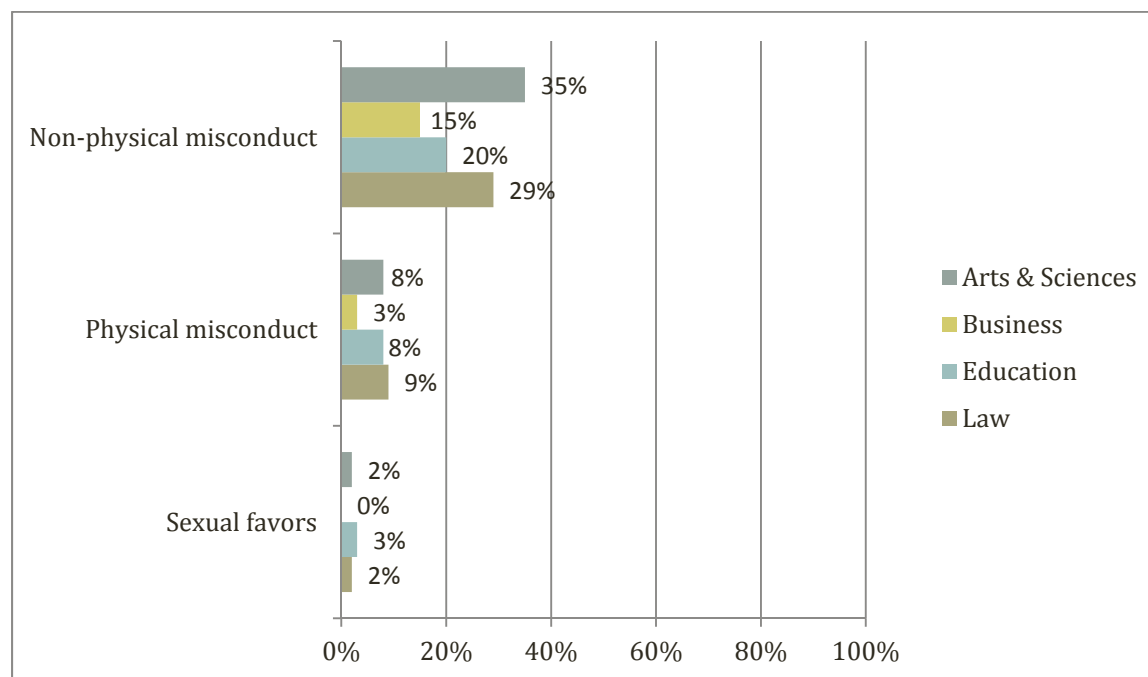
¹ Krebs, C. P., Lindquist, C. H., Warner, T. D., Fisher, B. S. & Martin, S. L. (2007). The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) study: Final report (Document 221153). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>

here is the closest variable we have as a basis for a comparison. According to the Justice Department study, one in five undergraduate women (20%) and one in 16 undergraduate men (6%) experience sexual assault while in college. The percentages of undergraduate women and men who experienced physical misconduct at W&M were 28% and 11%, respectively. We must bear in mind that the Justice Department's figures take into account only those acts that occurred as a result of physical force or incapacitation, whereas W&M's survey was less specific and allowed for a broader range of scenarios (including force and incapacitation, but also coercion and other possible means). We say this only to clarify how the data points differ, not to imply a judgment about the significance of any form of assault relative to another.

Graduate & Professional Schools

Figure 1 illustrates the prevalence of different types of misconduct in the university's graduate and professional schools. The School of Marine Science/VIMS is excluded from this chart because of the small number of respondents from those programs.

Figure 1. Experience of Sexual Misconduct by Graduate School



Experience of Rape

The "physical misconduct" variable in Table 2 and Figure 1 above includes rape, as well as other forms of unwanted physical contact. Looking at rape by itself, we see that 58 students (2% of the respondent pool) indicated they had experienced rape since enrolling at W&M. Table 3 shows how that group breaks down by gender and degree level. Eight students who indicated they had been raped declined to provide their gender or other demographic information.

Table 3. Experience of Rape by Gender and Degree Level

	Female Undergrads		Male Undergrads		Female Grad Students		Male Grad Students		Trans*		Gender Unknown
	% (±2.5)	n	% (±3.6)	n	% (±4.9)	n	% (±6.6)	n	%	n	n
Experienced rape	4%	38	1%	6	2%	5	0%	0	4%	1	8

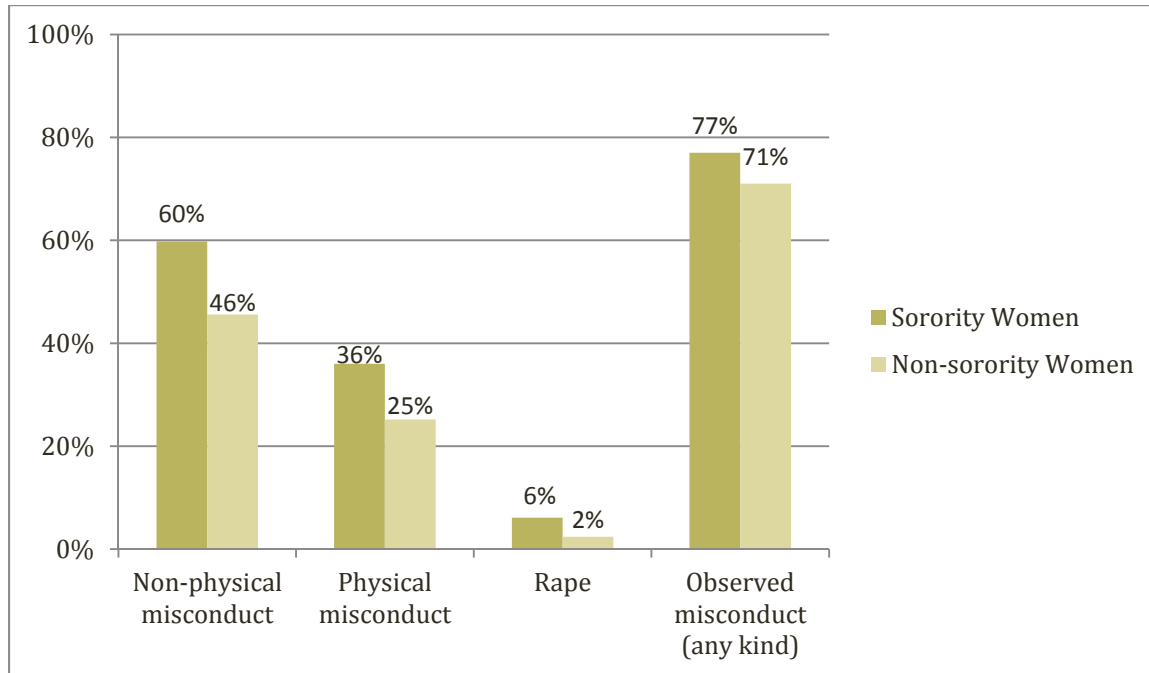
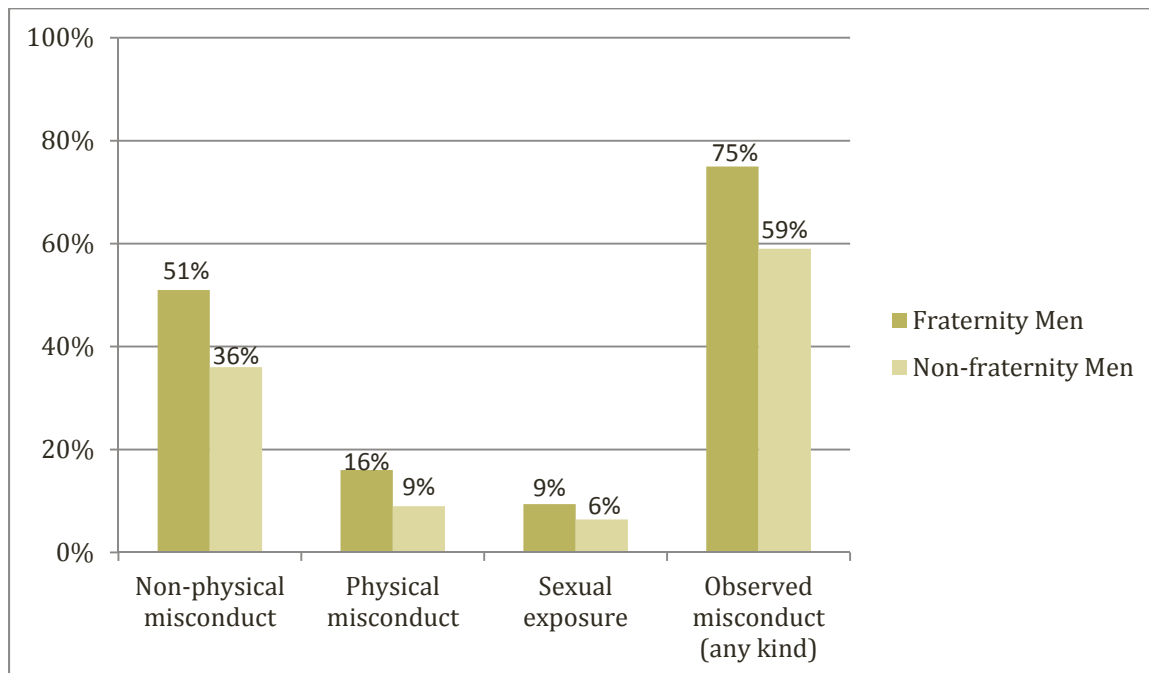
Of the 58 students who had experienced rape, 12 of them (21%) indicated they had been raped more than once. The response options for the follow-up question about frequency consisted of ranges, with the uppermost range being “5 or more times.” Although this makes it impossible to report a precise number of rapes, we can say that the total number of incidents is at least 83. Using the follow-up question about how recently students had experienced rape and comparing that to their self-reported ages, we were able to see that approximately 41% of the respondents who had been raped were 18-19 years old at the time of the assault.

Notable Sub-populations

To better understand how sexual misconduct was experienced within particular student sub-populations, we ran several analyses that compared students according to a variety of characteristics. In addition to gender and degree level, we compared groups based on race/ethnicity, major, residence (on- or off-campus), financial aid status, membership in a social fraternity or sorority, and membership on an intercollegiate athletic team. (The survey, unfortunately, did not include a question about sexual orientation.) These comparisons yielded only a few noteworthy differences.

White students reported experiencing nearly all forms of sexual misconduct at higher rates than students of color. The greatest difference was in the experience of non-physical misconduct (comments, jokes, gestures, and rumors), which was reported by 35% of students of color and 44% of white students.

The most striking differences involved undergraduate students in social fraternities and sororities. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate how Greek-affiliated undergraduates and non-Greek undergraduates experienced different types of misconduct. Compared to unaffiliated undergraduate women, sorority members were 31% more likely to experience non-physical misconduct, 43% more likely to experience physical misconduct, and 154% more likely to experience rape. The differences were similarly high for fraternity men, who experienced non-physical misconduct, physical misconduct, and sexual exposure at rates 40%, 86%, and 48% greater than non-fraternity men, respectively. Greek-affiliated undergraduates were also more likely to observe some kind of sexual misconduct, with more than 75% of fraternity and sorority members observing misconduct, compared with 67% of unaffiliated undergraduates.

Figure 2. Experience of Misconduct by Sorority and Non-sorority Undergraduates**Figure 3.** Experience of Misconduct by Fraternity and Non-fraternity Undergraduates

Section III: Title IX Knowledge

Just under 58% of all respondents said they knew how William & Mary defines sexual harassment/assault, and approximately 10% said they knew the name of W&M's Title IX Coordinator. (We do not know if they were correct; the survey did not ask them to enter a definition or a name.) More than half of the respondents (52%) indicated they **did not** know how to file a grievance. This may explain—at least in part—the fact that only 35 students reported filing a grievance with the university. That equates to less than 3% of the 1,227 students who had experienced some kind of misconduct. Among the 58 students who had been raped, 7 students (12%) had filed a grievance.

Section IV: Experience with the Grievance Process

The 35 students who had filed a sexual assault/harassment or gender discrimination grievance with the university were asked a series of questions about their experience with the process. A majority of students agreed that they were given a chance to tell their side of the story (63%); they were treated respectfully (63%) and fairly (57%); and the outcomes of their cases were consistent with institutional policies (51%). The largest source of dissatisfaction was the time it took to resolve a grievance; 43% said their grievance was not handled in a timely manner. Additionally, just under a third of the students felt the information they received about the process was either unclear or insufficient. (Some aspects of the grievance process, including communication about the process and outcome, were strengthened in the revised sexual misconduct policy and procedures that took effect in February 2015.)

Section V: Campus Climate

All students received questions about the degree of integrity they perceived in the people and processes at W&M, as well the degree to which women and men are treated with respect on campus. Most students agreed that expectations for student behavior are communicated clearly and consistently at the university (77% for undergrads, 71% for grad students), and that student conduct policies are enforced in a consistent manner (64% at both undergraduate and graduate levels). A similar percentage of students agreed that students hold one another accountable for their behavior (69% of undergraduates, 67% of grad students).

The survey revealed a stark difference in the perception of respect for men and women at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Among undergraduates, 85% agreed that men are treated with respect on campus, as opposed to only 62% who agreed with the same statement about women. Among graduate students, the figures were 85% and 75%, respectively. Figure 4 illustrates how the perception of respect for men and women differed by the gender of the respondent, and Figure 5 shows the differences among other undergraduate sub-populations. Given the high incidence of misconduct experienced by sorority women, it is not surprising that only 50% of that group agreed that women are treated with respect on campus.

Figure 4. Perceptions of Respect for Men and Women by Gender and Degree Level

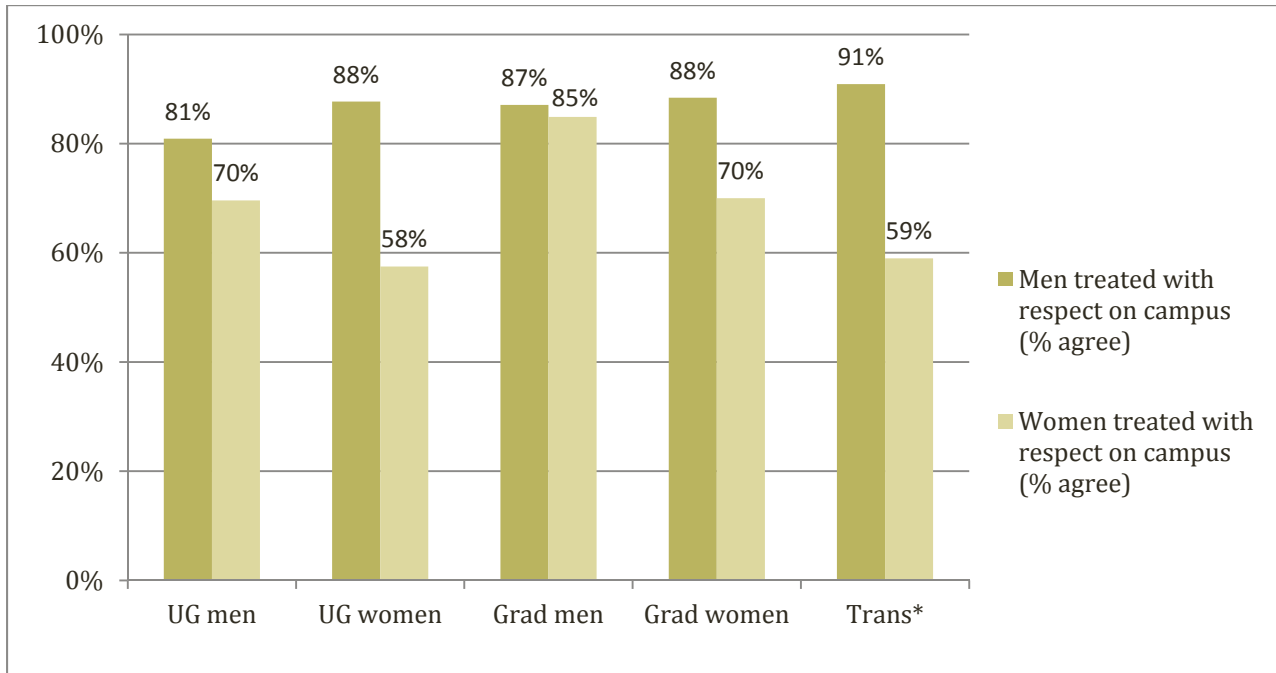
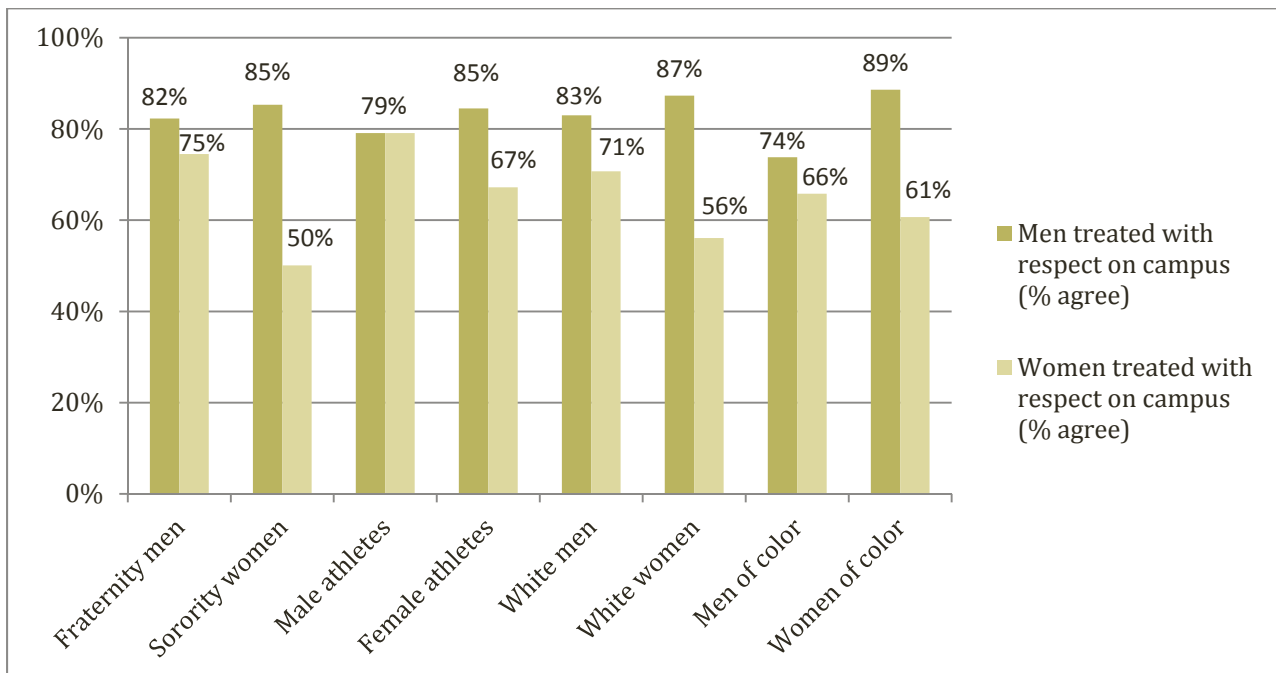


Figure 5. Perceptions of Respect for Men and Women by Sub-populations (Undergrad Only)



Limitations

There is no such thing as a perfect survey instrument. The NSMCCS did not include a number of important items that were of interest to us. The survey did not include questions about sexual orientation, international/citizenship status, or W&M class year. It also told us nothing about the circumstances of the misconduct students had experienced—for example, whether it occurred on campus or elsewhere; whether it was the result of force, coercion, incapacitation or some other means; or whether the perpetrator was a student, staff, or faculty member. We also don't know whether students sought support in the aftermath of an act of misconduct; if so, from whom; and if not, why not. Questions about the grievance process did not tell us what deters students from making a formal report. We acknowledge these limitations and strongly recommend that future surveys include items that will allow the university community to get an even more complete picture of what sexual misconduct looks like at W&M, who is affected by it, and how effectively we as a community respond to it, both formally and informally.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report is simply to present the findings from the survey that was conducted in Fall 2014. It does not represent the full scope of the Campus Climate Subcommittee's work this year, nor does it include a summary judgment of the campus climate or recommendations about what the survey suggests should be improved. A subsequent report will integrate data from this survey with qualitative data generated through a series of focus groups held in Spring 2015 with faculty, staff, and students. Findings from all of the Campus Climate Subcommittee's quantitative and qualitative assessments are being shared with other members of the Task Force, and will inform the recommendations of all four subcommittees, which will be submitted as part of the Task Force's final report at the end of the academic year.

Report prepared by the Campus Climate Subcommittee:

Jodi Fisler (chair), Director of Student Affairs Planning & Assessment

Margie Cook, Associate Director, Center for Student Diversity

Alex Greenspan '15

Peel Hawthorne, Associate Athletic Director for Student Services

Rachael Kaufman '15

Rowan Lockwood, Associate Professor of Geology

Colleen Reynolds '17

Jordan Taylor '15

Marjorie Thomas, Dean of Students