



## HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES

### **Campus Climate on Sexual Violence Survey**

#### **Summary of 2021 Administration**

#### **Background**

The Office of Title IX Programs and Compliance completed the bi-annual survey of the Hobart and William Smith Colleges campus community to understand the campus climate regarding sexual violence further and to comply with New York's "*Enough is Enough*" 129-B legislation. In spring 2021, Hobart and William Smith Colleges' (the Colleges) students, faculty, and staff were invited to participate in a climate study – a survey through which they could share their perceptions of the strengths and challenges of the Colleges as an educational program, activity, and workplace. Identified strengths from the results included clear procedures, consistent training, a culture of care among faculty and staff, and prevention programs. Identified challenges included communication, lack of trust, and concerns regarding safety on campus. To better understand these issues and create an environment of transparency and openness, this executive summary will provide detailed results of the quantitative and qualitative findings of the experiences of those who participated in this survey.

The office contracted the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (2019) to administer to students, and for the first time to faculty and staff, an anonymous online survey. The HEDS Climate Survey asks students, faculty, staff, and administrators about their perceptions of their institution's climate, how their institution responds to sexual assaults, and whether they have experienced unwanted sexual contact or sexual assault. The survey for faculty and staff had additional questions that addressed the following: How well they know their institution's procedures for reporting incidents of sexual violence, whether they have talked with victims of sexual violence, and whether they have reported these incidents. The climate survey aims to help institutions assess the quality and impact of their programs and the strengths and weaknesses of their campus climate. The survey was available for six weeks, between February 1, 2021, and March 15, 2021. The 2021 data provided by HEDS can be found here: <https://www.hws.edu/offices/title-ix/survey-data-and-resources.aspx>.

#### **Administration**

The online surveys were sent out to 1,436 HWS students in the spring of 2021, utilizing student email addresses. A reminder was sent out on multiple occasions. Students were defined as all students who were enrolled in at least one credit during the Spring 2021 semester. Interestingly, 274 students opened the survey, and only 179 students completed the survey (12% response rate). As a result, the findings are not statistically significant and cannot be generalized to the entire population. The results of this climate survey will be used to assess possible trends among the student population. In 2018, 317 students participated in the survey, whereas in 2017, 347 students participated in the campus climate survey. Comparatively, our response rate was 17% in the spring 2019 administration of the survey.

After surveying the students in 2017, 2018, and 2019, TIXO staff chose to refrain from administering a survey in 2020. The lower response rates in 2021 may correlate to the pandemic academic year(s), students' shifting priorities, and the lived reality on campus during the COVID crisis. Further, NY State Education Law 129b stipulates that institutions must conduct at least a biannual climate survey.

## Demographic Information

Table 1. Demographics

Category	Number of Surveyed	Number of Responses	Response Rate
Faculty and staff	502	196	39%
Undergraduate Students	1,436	179	12%

Table 2. Undergraduate Students<sup>1</sup>

Undergraduate Students	Survey Respondents
Undergraduates Living on Campus	57%
Enrolled Fulltime	98%
<b>Class Year</b>	
First Year	1%
Sophomore	33%
Junior	37%
Senior	29%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%

<sup>1</sup> HEDS asked demographic questions to develop a better sense of diversity at HWS. However, responses are anonymous. Personal information, including name, email address, student or employee identification number, and IP address, are excluded. HEDs developed these questions about identity, background, and affiliation to HWS that are not questions HWS would typically ask. These questions develop a picture of how different people experience our campus. Data is not used to identify individuals.

Asian	9%
Black or African American	4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%
White	89%

Additionally, online surveys were sent to faculty and staff members during this timeframe. Faculty included all categories of faculty, such as full-time tenured and tenure track, full-time non-tenure track, and affiliate faculty. Staff included all professional and classified staff members. For the inaugural cohort, 502 faculty and staff were invited. Of this number, 235 HWS personnel opened the survey.

The results of this climate survey may be used to assess trends among the faculty/staff population. Interestingly, 196 faculty and staff completed the survey (39% response rate). As a result, the findings are statistically significant and can be generalized to the entire population. Since this is the first year to survey faculty and staff, there is no internal comparative data of a climate survey on sexual violence at HWS.

Table 3. Faculty and Staff

<b>Faculty and Staff</b>	<b>Survey Respondents</b>
Length of Employment	0-5 years: 32% 6-10 years: 24% More than ten years: 45%
Female	58%
Faculty	47%

## **Results**

### **Undergraduate Students**

The following section will describe results from the student portion of the 2021 HEDS Undergraduate Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey.

#### ***Perceived Risk of Sexual Assault***

The survey asked undergraduate student respondents various questions regarding their perceived risk of sexual assault. Overall, 17% of women and 45% of men agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: *I do*

*not believe that I or one of my friends is at risk for being sexually assaulted on campus, off campus at an event or program connected with this institution, or at a social activity or party near campus.* Additionally, the survey asked participants: *I believe that students at this institution would intervene if they witnessed a sexual assault.* From this question, 35% of women and 62% of men agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

### ***Perceptions of Institutional Response to Sexual Assault***

The survey asked undergraduate student participants what the institutional response might be if someone reported a sexual assault. Overall, 38% of women and 78% of men agreed or strongly agreed that *Campus officials would take the report seriously.* However, participants were asked if *campus officials would conduct a careful investigation to determine what happened,* and only 26% of women and 62% of men agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Additionally, only 14% of women and 58% of men agreed or strongly agreed that *campus officials would take action against the offender(s).* The data may suggest a lack of confidence among women regarding careful investigation and actions against the offender.

### ***Unwanted Sexual Contact***

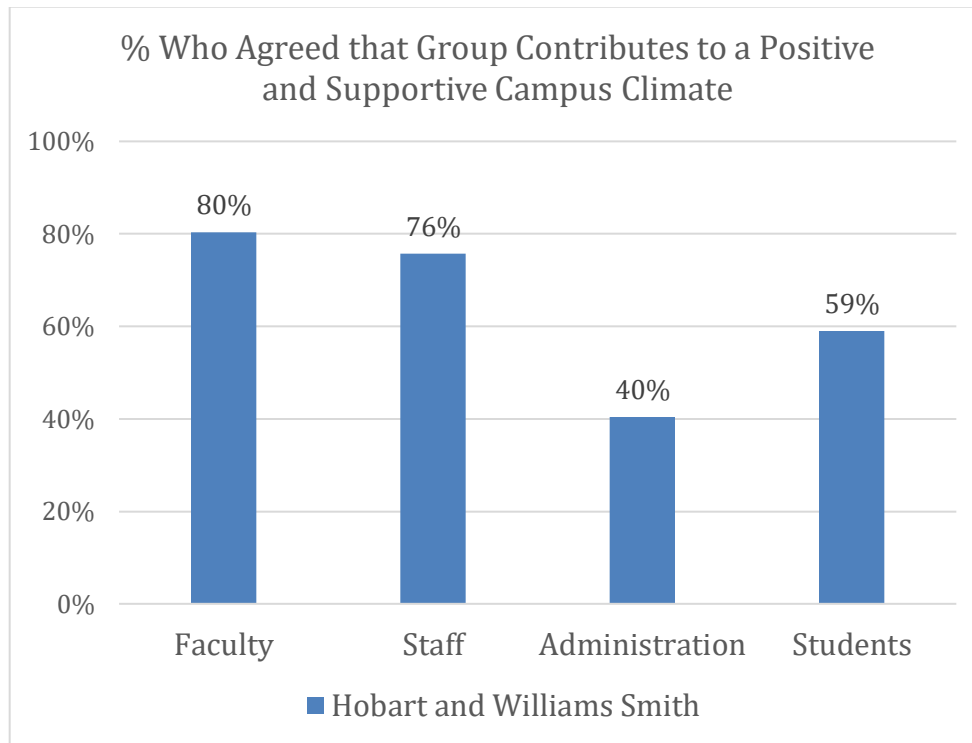
Regarding unwanted sexual contact, the survey asked undergraduate student participants if they experienced high levels of unwanted sexual contact. Overall, 22% of women and 2% of men reported that they experienced unwanted verbal behavior, nonverbal behaviors, or unwanted brief physical contact often or very often.

### ***Campus Climate***

The HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey asked undergraduate student participants to assess the general climate at HWS. For example, the following statements are a sample of those questions.

- Faculty, staff, and administrators respect what students think
- Faculty, staff, and administrators on this campus treat students fairly
- Faculty, staff, and administrators at my institution are genuinely concerned about students' welfare
- Students at my institution are genuinely concerned about the welfare of other students

First, the survey asked students about the extent to which different groups contribute to a positive and supportive climate at HWS. 61% agree, and 21% strongly agree that faculty contributes to a positive and supportive climate at HWS. Additionally, 60% agree, and 17% strongly agree that staff contributes to a positive and supportive climate at HWS. However, 20% neither agree nor disagree with this question. At the same time, 33% agree, and 22% strongly agree that the administration contributes to a positive and supportive climate at HWS. Lastly, 46% agree, and 31% neither agree nor disagree that students contribute to a positive and supportive campus climate at HWS. Please refer to the data for the entire breakdown of the campus climate survey responses in detail: <https://www.hws.edu/offices/title-ix/survey-data-and-resources.aspx>.



Secondly, undergraduate students were asked about their views on the general climate at HWS. 55% agree that faculty, staff, and administrators respect what students at HWS think. 58% agree that faculty, staff, and administrators are genuinely concerned about students' welfare. 47% agree, and 28% neither agree nor disagree that faculty, staff, and administrators at HWS treat students fairly. Overall, students who experienced higher levels of unwanted sexual contact, attempted sexual assault, and who have been sexually assaulted were less likely to agree with the general campus climate questions.

### ***How Often Did Students Experience Sexual Assault?***

One hundred seventy-five (175) students answered the question, *"Since starting at your institution, have you been sexually assaulted while you were (a) on campus; (b) off campus at an event or program connected with your institution, including study abroad and internships; or (c) at a social activity or party near campus, such as at an apartment, restaurant, or bar?"*

- Of the 175 students who responded to this question, twenty-eight (16%) said they had experienced sexual assault, and hundred and thirty-seven said they did not experience sexual assault. Ten were uncertain if they had experienced sexual assault.
  - Of those who responded, two identified as men, twenty-five as women, and three identified otherwise. One man experienced multiple sexual assaults, and ten women experienced multiple assaults. The two men experienced a total of four sexual assaults. The twenty-five women experienced a total of forty-four sexual assaults.
  - Further, participants in this survey indicated that one in twenty-three male students experienced sexual assault, one in five female students experienced sexual assault, and one in three female seniors experienced sexual assault.

## ***Bystander Intervention***

Hobart and William Smith College implement bystander training to reduce the number of sexual assaults. The HEDs survey asked participants who experienced sexual assault to provide details about bystanders for one of their assaults.

- Participants in this survey responded that bystanders were present in 46% of incidents (13 out of 28).
  - Of these incidents, bystanders intervened in 23% of the incidents for which they were present (3 out of 13).

## **Faculty and Staff**

The following section will describe results from the employee portion of the 2021 HEDS Faculty and Staff Survey of Campus Climate for Sexual violence.

### ***Campus Climate***

For the first time, Hobart and William Smith College surveyed faculty and staff regarding their perception of the campus climate and sexual assault. For example, the following statements were asked about the views of faculty and staff on the general climate at HWS.

- Faculty, staff, and administrators respect what students at HWS think.
- Faculty, staff, and administrators respect what other employees at HWS think.
- Faculty, staff, and administrators at HWS are genuinely concerned about students' welfare.
- Faculty, staff, and administrators at HWS are genuinely concerned about each other's welfare.
- Students at HWS are genuinely concerned about the welfare of other students.
- I feel valued in the environment in which I work.
- I feel close to people on this campus.
- I feel like I am a part of the HWS community.
- I feel safe on this campus.

79% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that faculty, staff, and administrators respect what students at HWS think. 64% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that faculty, staff, and administrators respect what other employees of HWS think. 94% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that faculty, staff, and administrators are genuinely concerned about students' welfare. 68% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that faculty, staff, and administrators are genuinely concerned about each other's welfare. At the same time, 66% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that students at HWS are genuinely concerned about the welfare of other students.

Further, 66% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they feel valued in their work environment. Similarly, 55% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they feel close to people on campus, and 60% agreed or strongly agreed that they are a part of the HWS community. Finally, 88% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they are safe on campus.

### ***Institutional Response to Report of Sexual Violence***

The HEDs survey asked faculty and staff about their views on what might happen if someone reported an incident of sexual violence to an official at HWS. For example, the following questions were asked:

- Campus officials would take the report seriously
- Campus officials would support and protect the person making the report

- Campus officials would conduct a careful investigation in order to determine what happened
- Campus officials would take appropriate action against the offender(s)

Overall, 90% of faculty and staff agreed or strongly agreed that campus officials would take the report seriously. Additionally, 80% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that campus officials would support and protect the person making the report. Also, 82% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that campus officials would conduct a careful investigation to determine what happened. Finally, 63% of campus officials agreed or strongly agreed that they would take appropriate action against the offender(s). However, 24% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that HWS would take appropriate action against the offender(s).

### ***Confidence in Ability to Respond***

The HEDs survey asked faculty and staff participants three questions about their confidence in the institution's ability to respond to sexual violence. Overall, 58% of participants are confident or very confident that they can effectively and appropriately support students who have experienced sexual violence. Interestingly, 37% of participants indicated they were somewhat confident in their ability to respond. Further, 76% of participants stated that they are confident or very confident they could respond to students according to HWS' official procedures if they are made aware of a student who experienced sexual violence. Finally, 66% of participants indicated that they are confident or very confident in their ability to respond according to HWS' official procedures if they are made aware of staff, faculty, or administrator who may have experienced sexual violence. At the same time, 25% of participants stated that they are somewhat confident in responding to staff, faculty, and administrators who may have experienced sexual violence.

### ***Campus Training Efforts***

The HEDs survey asked faculty and staff participants about the campus training efforts conducted by HWS staff. The survey asked participants if they received information or education from HWS about the following:

- (a) What sexual violence is and how to recognize it
- (b) HWS' confidential resources for sexual violence
- (c) Who on campus is required to report instances of sexual violence to campus authorities
- (d) How to report an incident of sexual violence
- (e) The procedures for investigating incidents of sexual violence

Overall, 91% indicated yes to receiving information about what sexual violence is and how to recognize it. 90% indicated yes to receiving information about HWS' confidential resources for sexual violence. 88% indicated yes to receiving information on who is a responsible employee. 89% indicated yes to receiving information on reporting incidents of sexual violence.

- Finally, 64% of participants indicated yes to receiving information on the procedures for investigating incidents of sexual violence.
  - Those who indicated yes received an additional question about the information and education they received on sexual violence.
    - 51% of those who indicated yes suggested that they remember most of the information or education from HWS about sexual violence.
    - At the same time, only 38% of those who indicated yes suggested that they are confident, and 35% are somewhat confident that HWS can create a safe environment for students who have experienced sexual violence.

### *Interactions with People who Have Experienced Sexual Violence*

The HEDs survey asked faculty and staff participants about their interactions with people who have experienced sexual violence. The following table demonstrates the frequency of questions related to interactions with people who have experienced sexual violence.

*Table 4. Frequencies*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Talked with a student about sexual violence that the student experienced	33%	67%
Talked with a student about sexual violence that the student was accused of or perpetrated	15%	85%
Witnessed a student experiencing sexual violence	1%	99%
Made a report to the Title IX coordinator or other campus authorities about a student who experienced sexual violence	16%	84%
Made a report to the Title IX Coordinator or other campus authorities about a student who perpetrated sexual violence	3%	97%



Next, the HEDs survey asked faculty and staff participants if they had engaged in the following behaviors on campus.

*Table 5. Frequencies*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Talked with a member of the faculty, staff, or administration about sexual violence that they experienced	14%	86%
Talked with a member of the faculty, staff, or administration about sexual violence that they were accused of or perpetrated	4%	96%
Witnessed a member of the faculty, staff, or administration experiencing sexual violence	3%	97%
Made a report to the Title IX coordinator or other campus authorities about a member of the faculty, staff, or administration who experienced sexual violence	3%	97%
Made a report to the Title IX coordinator or other campus authorities about a member of the faculty, staff, or administration who perpetrated sexual violence against another member of the campus community	3%	97%

***Unwanted Sexual Behavior***

The HEDs survey asked faculty and staff participants about unwanted sexual behavior. The questions asked if the respondent had experienced unwanted sexual behavior. The data compares frequencies of unwanted sexual behavior by gender. Among men at HWS, 81% never experienced unwanted verbal sexual behaviors, and 91% never experienced unwanted nonverbal sexual behaviors. At the same time, women reported that 74% never experienced unwanted verbal sexual behaviors, and 91% never experienced nonverbal sexual behaviors.

## *Sexual Violence*

Regarding sexual violence, the HEDs survey asked faculty and staff participants if anyone had engaged in non-consensual sexual contact, non-consensual sexual touching, and non-consensual sexual penetration. 97% of the participants reported no that someone had engaged in touching of a sexual nature without their consent during any aspect of their work at HWS. 96% of the participants reported having never experienced any other form of sexual violence during any aspect of their work at HWS.

### **Identified Recommendations**

The recommendations below are the culmination of this executive summary, review of the results, and in consultation with the Office of Title IX Programs and Compliance – these recommendations cross boundaries between trust, communication, safety, and training expressed in the findings. While this is not an exhaustive list of all that can be done to address HWS’ campus climate regarding sexual violence, the Office of Title IX Programs feels it is an excellent place to begin this work to transform our response, develop education, and ensure prevention of sexual harassment on campus.

The overarching goals for the next few years are strengthening awareness through training, posting education campaigns to raise awareness, increasing trust between the Title IX office and the campus community, and strengthening Campus Climate results to reach a response rate of 50% of students and 50% of faculty and staff. Additionally, there seems to be a need for faculty and staff to become more confident in their ability to recognize, report, and provide resources to complainants as responsible employees.

#### Perceptions of Safety and Campus Climate

- Continue to focus on new students and parents, minimizing stigma and fear around reporting
- Conduct a prevention poster campaign to raise awareness of Title IX protections, policies, and processes
- Focus on where students should go if they need help around sexual misconduct, including potentially passive education in bathrooms

#### Title IX Training

- Develop an interactive in-person Title IX training to supplement online training
- Develop a new hire orientation for staff that addresses sexual harassment and provides an overview of Title IX
  - New faculty orientation is currently in progress in each semester
- Provide further professional development and educational training on student conduct and Title IX processes for faculty and staff

#### Title IX Programming

- Continue offering fall and spring-focused events on sexual assault awareness and prevention, bystander intervention training, domestic abuse support, identifying and avoiding high-risk behaviors, understanding sexual orientation, and inclusive language involving sexual identity
- Include student and community organizations with Title IX support and information at prevention and awareness events offered each semester

## References

The Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium. (2019). *HEDS Undergraduate Sexual Assault Campus*

*Climate Survey*. [Data Set]. Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium.

<https://www.hedsconsortium.org>.