

# Climate Surveys: An Inventory of Understanding Sexual Assault and Other Crimes of Interpersonal Violence at Institutions of Higher Education

Violence Against Women  
2017, Vol. 23(10) 1249–1267  
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sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/1077801216657897  
journals.sagepub.com/home/vaw



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## Abstract

Sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking are complex crimes and have been a major focus of national attention at institutions of higher education (IHEs). To grasp the extent and nature of these crimes on campuses, institutionally specific climate surveys are being developed and endorsed by the federal government and conducted at IHEs. These climate surveys differ in content and length. This article describes 10 different climate surveys and outlines the variables measured in each tool. Next steps for assessing climate surveys are discussed.

## Keywords

sexual assault, campus climate survey, measurement, dating violence

Sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking crimes have recently become the focus of climate or environmental assessments at institutions of higher education (IHEs). IHEs are responsible for addressing these forms of violence under federal protection established in Title IX. IHE administrators and violence

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researchers have begun to systematically benchmark these rates on their campuses for a variety of reasons, including gaining a greater understanding of their campuses, creating safety programs, and complying with recommendations by the White House, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), and those anticipated through legislation from U.S. Congress. Institutional surveys conducted over the last two decades have recorded varying rates of attempted and completed sexual assault experienced by college women. In one survey, 27% of participants experienced an attempted or completed sexual assault (the Sexual Victimization of College Women survey; see Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000), as opposed to 19% of participants in another study (the Campus Sexual Assault Study; see Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007). More recently, the Association of American Universities (AAU) surveyed students at 27 IHEs and found, on average, 11.7% of students, including 23.1% for female undergraduates, experienced nonconsensual sexual contact by force or incapacitation (AAU, 2015a). The AAU (2015) study also found that 9.8% of previously or currently partnered students have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) since starting at their IHE. The range of prevalence of IPV among college students is estimated between 10-50% (Kaukinen, 2014), illustrating variance in the approach to the measurement of these forms of violence. Nearly 47% of women who experience IPV are victimized for the first time between the ages of 18 and 24 (Black et al., 2011; Busch-Armendariz, Cook Heffron, & Bohman, 2011). A national survey of college students found that 62% reported sexual harassment (Hill & Silva, 2006). Similarly, when studying perpetration, Sorenson, Joshi, and Sivitz (2014) conducted a survey of college students and concluded that 54% know a man who had done something meeting the criteria for sexual assault. More recently, Swartout et al. (2015) found that about 11% of male college students perpetrated rape either before or during college. Variation of victimization and perpetration prevalence in campus samples has been inconsistent in part because of the different methodology and measurement approaches used.

Current research focuses not only on understanding the number of victims<sup>1</sup> and offenders but also what happens in the aftermath of the trauma. High rates of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking at IHEs have not yielded equally high rates of reports, either to campus or local law enforcement, or to campus officials. Although more than 60% of college victims disclose the incident to a friend, only 2-18% of victims report the assault to law enforcement or campus officials (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Sudderth, Leisring, & Bronson, 2010). Although nonstudent females aged 18-24 were 1.2 times more likely to be the victims of sexual assault, students are less likely to report the sexual assault than nonstudents (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). In part, this may be due to a lack of knowledge about where and to whom an individual should report a sexual assault or IPV, as well as the fear and lack of knowledge about campus officials' reactions to such reports and treatment of victims (Cantalupo, 2011). Lack of knowledge about the outcome and reaction to reporting creates a conundrum. As Cantalupo (2011) notes, "If the cycle is to be broken and the violence is to be ended, survivors need to report. Yet survivors cannot be expected to report unless they are treated better when they do" (p. 219).

In light of the evidence revealing high levels of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking among students, federal legislation has been introduced over the last 2 years to complement and alter the existing mandates in the Clery Act, the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWRA), and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act, all of which have undergone revision in the last several years to include recommendations for improved institutional response and more protections for victims of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking. Proposed new legislation and amendments to existing protocols have been suggested to increase specificity, rigor, and use of crime data collected on campuses (Cantalupo, 2014; Duncan, 2014; McCaskill & Capito, 2015). One major component of these proposed changes are institutionally specific measures, also called campus climate surveys, which would be used to assess prevalence, rates or incidences, knowledge, and attitudes/responses to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking (Cantalupo, 2014; McCaskill & Capito, 2015). Many IHEs across the country are undertaking campus climate survey efforts, though some surveys may be focused on sexual assault only and may not include other forms of violence. Surveying students offers IHEs the opportunity to gauge climate and estimate prevalence. However, it could lead to potential missteps when applying the research to practice because of generally low survey response rates among college students and the need to understand the complex culture of undergraduate and graduate students. Toward these ends, we analyzed an available sample of 10 surveys to describe shared and divergent components of climate surveys addressing sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking at IHEs.

## **Legislative Context of the Measurement of Sexual Assault, Dating/Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Stalking on Contemporary IHE Campuses**

The measurement of prevalence and incidence of violence on campus has been historically problematic for IHEs for several reasons. First, there is the issue of chronic underreporting. Second, there is concern among administrators about the appearance of high crime rates if improved responses to crime increase the number of victimization reports (Cantalupo, 2011; Silbaugh, 2015). In an opinion piece, Friedman (2014) argued that low report rates are not an accurate representation of a likely larger problem of sexual assault on a campus. Students should be more concerned about the commitment to addressing violence of an IHE with low report rates, not high ones. The increased focus on the assessment and reporting of sexual violence prevalence on campus is, in part, politically motivated. The Obama Administration has made a concerted effort to address some of the problems with current legislation such as the Jeanne Clery Act, and has increased pressure on IHEs to be proactive and accountable for sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking on campus through the creation of a new taskforce, the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (WHTF; Cantalupo, 2011; Duncan, 2014; Silbaugh,

2015). There are three enacted pieces of legislation—Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Jeanne Clery Act, and the Campus SaVE Act—as well as one currently under consideration, the Campus Accountability and Safety Act (CASA), which have shaped the measurement approach to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking on IHE campuses.

### *Title IX*

Title IX is overseen and enforced by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). OCR considers sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking as forms of discrimination (Block, 2012). Title IX applies to all schools, including IHEs (Cantalupo, 2014). As part of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, Title IX prohibits exclusion, denial, and discrimination in schools on the basis of gender. An act is a Title IX violation if it limits the ability of a person to receive the full benefit of their educational experience (Silbaugh, 2015). Although often used to access athletic programs, Title IX was also established to protect students who had sexual violence and harassment-related experiences during college (Block, 2012; Marshall, 2014). The DOE has the ability to remove funding and/or subject the IHE to an OCR investigation if a public institution fails to provide these protections (Block, 2012). The results of these investigations are difficult for members of the campus community to access, resulting in a lack of information, which could help to improve practices and increase knowledge (Cantalupo, 2014; Duncan, 2014). Students are often unaware of complaint procedures and the outcome of reporting efforts (Duncan, 2014). Under current legislation, IHEs have not been incentivized to collect and report accurate statistics about the scope of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking on campus, especially because they compete with other IHEs for enrollment and tuition dollars (Silbaugh, 2015).

### *Clery Act*

Named after Jeanne Clery, a college student murdered on a campus, the Clery Act mandated IHEs to maintain a public crime log and create an annual public report with campus crime statistics (Ahn, 2010; Duncan, 2014; Marshall, 2014). Crimes that occur on campus or adjacent to campus in public spaces must be reported (Duncan, 2014). Although Clery contributed to a growing awareness of the roles of universities to promote safety, many experts in the field believe that a lack of specific reporting requirements and a narrow focus on what can be counted in Clery reports have distorted its potential effectiveness (Ahn, 2010; Cantalupo, 2011). Clery-reportable crime definitions are modeled after the FBI Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and not state law (Cantalupo, 2011). UCR uses a narrow definition of rape, whereas state laws generally use broader behaviors to define not only rape but also sexual assault, both completed and attempted. An analysis at one IHE comparing Clery reports for sexual violence with an anonymous survey of students revealed over six times more assaults were reported on the survey than official Clery reports (Gardella et al., 2015). Concerns

about inconsistencies prompted an empirical review of reporting behaviors at IHEs before, during, and after Clery audits. Yung (2015) found that when IHEs experienced routine Clery audits, reporting increased by 44%, but returned to pre-audit levels after completion of the intervention from the federal government, suggesting schools decrease compliance when not as closely watched.

### *Campus SaVE*

The Campus SaVE Act was part of the VAWRA of 2013. Among its many provisions, Campus SaVE established that dating and domestic violence and stalking must be included in Clery reports (Marshall, 2014). It also mandated universities to provide information to their students about prevention of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking on campus (Duncan, 2014). Campus SaVE incorporated new protocols about investigations, treatment of victims and offenders, information sharing, and confidentiality (Duncan, 2014; Marshall, 2014). Campus SaVE has been both criticized and applauded for enforcing the use of the *preponderance of evidence* standard in the campus judicial process for complaints of sexual assault and misconduct. Critics argue that this evidence standard may limit due process for alleged offenders or respondents.

### *CASA*

The CASA was recently reintroduced in the U.S. Senate with revisions related to due process for alleged offenders. The current bill mandates a biennial campus survey of students, ongoing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between law enforcement and universities, the creation of confidential advisors for victims of violence, and the publication of an annual security report. The survey of students must include prevalence of sexual violence, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking; assessment of student knowledge of IHE policy and procedure related to conduct; whether an incident that occurred was reported, and to whom it was reported; whether referrals were made and to whom the referrals were made; an assessment of contextual factors (i.e., force, incapacitation, coercion); whether the accused is a student; whether the victim reported to state or local police; and why the victim chose to report or not to report an incident (McCaskill & Capito, 2015). If it passes, CASA will mandate campus climate surveys on each IHE campus every 2 years, which will change current Clery and Campus SaVE measurement standards.

### *Campus Climate Surveys*

With no standard definition, the concept of campus climate incorporates a large range of behaviors, environmental factors, and occurrences that promote or hinder student safety, acceptance, and ability to learn (Henry, Fowler, & West, 2011). Climate surveys have been conducted in campus settings to gauge student beliefs and experiences about race, gender, and sexual orientation (Henry et al., 2011). Endorsed by The White

House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (WHTF; 2014), campus climate surveys are a means to assess experiences, attitudes, and behaviors related to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking focusing on sexual assault, which occur in the lives of students attending an IHE. Surveys conducted by a researcher or faculty member to determine prevalence and incidence of sexual violence are not particularly new. Lott, Reilly, and Howard (1982) assessed prevalence and attitudes of sexual violence at one east coast IHE. Climate surveys often differ among universities and colleges because of their large scope and their institutional support and use. The content and process of surveys vary, as does the political engagement of students, faculty, and administrators.

Although IHE surveys typically include demographic questions about students and general climate questions to examine students' perceptions of the IHE's policies, climate surveys include prevalence of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking assessment questions, context and disclosure questions, bystander attitudes and behavior items, and rape myth acceptance questions (Cantalupo, 2014). Campus climate surveys help to uncover unreported crimes, assess the quality of response by the institution, as well as student knowledge of resources, and evaluate IHE efforts. Climate surveys actively address issues and concerns with reporting by providing an active, wide-reaching and often anonymous platform for students to report their experiences (Cantalupo, 2014). A survey of 15 IHEs that conducted climate surveys found potential for change in policy and response to sexual assault, though few IHEs widely published the reports (Cantalupo, 2014). This article describes the content of 10 climate surveys.

## Method

### *Research Questions*

This research was guided by five questions:

**Research Question 1:** What is the origin of campus climate surveys?

**Research Question 2:** How were campus climate surveys developed, administered, and analyzed?

**Research Question 3:** Who created them and for what purpose(s)?

**Research Question 4:** What is the range of content and constructs measured?

**Research Question 5:** What are the anticipated lessons learned from collecting this information from students?

### *Data Collection Procedures*

Two methodological steps resulted in including 10 climate surveys in this research. Step 1 involved network of violence researchers. The authors are involved in the White House *Not Alone* efforts, as well as one of the national collaborations among research and academic experts to develop a climate survey (Administrator Researcher

Campus Climate Consortium, or ARC3), and have attended conferences and working groups about sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking on campuses. An initial list of six surveys was gathered through these networks. Step 2 involved database searches. The authors systematically used four databases (EBSCO, Lexus Nexus, ProQuest and Google Scholar), the Google search engine, and academic listservs for violence researchers to compile additional campus climate surveys. The search terms included *climate survey*, *institutional survey*, and *institution-specific research*. Only surveys publically available (e.g., on the Internet) or that were shared with the authors explicitly for the purposes of this current research were included in this article. Surveys were eligible for inclusion if the tool was administered at an IHE and measured sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, or stalking that occurred in the lives of currently enrolled students at IHEs. In recognition of the growing national conversation about climate studies and measurement tools, our major aim was to inventory and describe the surveys at the time of this writing. Many of these surveys are currently in the field testing phase and/or findings are in the peer review process. Therefore, a comparative analysis between surveys was premature, although the “Discussion” section of this article indicates some early preferences. As additional data become available a next important step for the field will be to engage in this critical analytical discussion.

Descriptive variables were used to evaluate and compare survey demographics, attitudes and behaviors, victimization, perpetration, contextual and reporting information, and associated factors and potential outcome variables. In instances where only one survey measured a particular construct, it was not included in tables 4 and 5. Narrow questions were combined to create larger constructs. The constructs are broad categories of information. Survey creation and use were also assessed and described. In nine of 10 surveys, the research team confirmed survey content with its original creators.

### *Variables of Assessment*

*Surveys.* Table 1 outlines 10 surveys by the institution or organization, name, and principal investigator (PI) or chair.

### *Survey Creation and Use*

*Single or multiple entity origin.* Table 2 outlines the implication, availability, cost, number of questions, and time allotted to each survey. iSpeak and University of Oregon (UO) surveys were created by a single institution; in other words, a set of researchers at each of these universities created the survey (McMahon, Stepleton, & Cusano, 2014; University of Oregon, 2015). Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) consulted with representatives from their campus communities during the development and planning of surveys (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2014; B. Sabri, Johns Hopkins University, personal communication, February 16, 2015). AAU, ARC3, Campus Attitudes Toward Safety Survey

**Table 1.** Summary of Surveys by Institution and PI.

Institution	Survey name	PI/chair	Abbreviation <sup>a</sup>
Association of American Universities	Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault & Sexual Misconduct	David Cantor, co-PI at Westat; Bonnie Fisher, co-PI at University of Cincinnati; Sandra Martin, chair of Survey Design Committee at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, institution-specific PI	AAU
Administrator-Research Campus Climate Collaborative	Survey of Campus Climate Regarding Sexual Misconduct	Kevin M. Swartout, institution-specific PI	ARC3
University of Kentucky	Campus Attitudes Toward Safety Survey (C.A.T.S.)	Diane Follingstad	C.A.T.S.
Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium	Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey	Charles Blaich	HEDS
Rutgers University	Campus Climate Survey: iSpeak	Sarah McMahon	iSpeak
Johns Hopkins University	It's On Us Hopkins	Jacquelyn Campbell, Bushra Sabri	JHU
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Community Attitudes on Sexual Assault	Not available	MIT
White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault	Promising Practice Examples for a Campus Climate Survey	N/A	WHTF
University of Chicago	Sexual Misconduct Survey: Attitudes, Knowledge and Experience	William Greenland, co-PI; Ronald A. Thisted, co-PI	UC
University of Oregon	Sexual Violence and Institution Behavior Campus Survey	Jennifer J. Freyd	UO

Note. PI = principal investigator.

<sup>a</sup>Abbreviation used to refer to survey in subsequent tables.

(C.A.T.S.), the University of Chicago (UC) (2015), and WHTF were collaborative efforts that involved the input of professionals, researchers, and stakeholders representing various institutions and organizations (D. Follingstad & J. Chahal, University of Kentucky, personal communication, May 19, 2015; J. Hammat, University of Texas at Austin, personal communication, March 11, 2015; Office on Violence



**Table 2.** Survey Cost and Length.

Survey	Implementation location (school)	Public availability	Cost	No. of questions	Average length of time in minutes
AAU	27 schools	Yes	US\$85,000 <sup>a</sup>	Varies	20-30
ARC3	Multiple	Yes	No cost	245-310	20-30
C.A.T.S.	Lexington, Kentucky	Yes	US\$113,420 <sup>b</sup>	105	15-20
HEDS	Crawfordsville, Indiana	Yes	US\$500- US\$1,600 <sup>c</sup>	Varies	15-20
iSpeak	New Brunswick, New Jersey	Yes	No cost	131	15-20
JHU	Baltimore, Maryland	Yes	Unknown	Approximately 115	20-30
MIT	Boston, Massachusetts	Yes	No cost	Varies	10-15
WHTF	Multiple	Yes	No cost	159	20-30
UC	Chicago, Illinois	Yes	Unknown	144	Unknown
UO	Eugene, Oregon	Yes	Unknown	Varies	30

<sup>a</sup>AAU is a climate survey solution delivered by Westat, including the design, the program, the fielding, the data, the tabs, and the report.

<sup>b</sup>C.A.T.S. also requires partial funding for faculty and data manager.

<sup>c</sup>HEDS institutions—US\$500 minimum. Institutions not in HEDS—US\$1,600 minimum.

Against Women, 2014; University of Oregon, 2015). This information is unavailable for the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS, 2015).

*Use of existing validated measures.* ARC3, iSpeak, JHU, WHTF, UO, UC, and AAU surveys use existing validated measures, such as the Sexual Experiences Survey by Koss et al. (2007). The measures may have been adapted and potentially altered. It is unknown whether the HEDS and MIT surveys used validated measures.

*Administered by third party.* Surveys were assessed by whether institutions used a third party to package, administer, and/or analyze surveys. The AAU survey was administered by the research firm, Westat. UC survey was administered in partnership with other institutions through a social research organization. It is unknown to what degree ARC3 and HEDS would qualify for this category, because ARC3 is a group of researchers and administrators, and HEDS is an organization, not an IHE. Rutgers University (iSpeak), JHU, MIT, and UO administered their own surveys. The University of Kentucky (C.A.T.S.) used its own resources and personnel to administer the survey (25,000+). C.A.T.S. is the only survey of this group administered as a requirement for students to provide feedback to the administration under the rubric of an internal quality improvement project while protecting confidentiality (i.e., honest broker providing only deidentified data) and privacy/choice (i.e., every item allowed for “choose not to answer”).

**Table 3.** Survey Creation and Use.

Survey	AAU	ARC3	C.A.T.S.	HEDS	iSpeak	JHU	MIT	WHTF	UC	UO
Multiple entity origin	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Use of existing validated measures	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Administered by third party	✓	N/A		✓				N/A	✓	
Use by multiple institutions	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	

Note. No check mark means either no or unknown.

*Use by multiple institutions.* Table 3 outlines the survey origin, content, measures, and use. The AAU survey was implemented at 27 institutions (AAU, 2015). C.A.T.S., iSpeak, ARC3, and WHTF surveys were made available to the public and may be used by other institutions. The authors and contributors to these four surveys provide additional guidance on administration and planning, and recommendations for successful implementation and data analyses. JHU survey authors provided the surveys to the authors as a result of ongoing dialogue around campus climate surveys. HEDS, JHU, MIT, UC, and UO surveys were accessed online.

### Survey Descriptions

*Demographics.* All the surveys included demographic components, but the number of these questions varied considerably. Inclusion criteria for demographic variables required that variables were present in more than one survey. Table 4 outlines the demographic variables. While the vast majority of the surveys asked about gender identity, sexual orientation, and race and ethnicity, only a small portion asked about age and disability status. Common demographic questions included citizenship outside of the United States (citizenship status, country of origin, international student status), living situation (on campus, off campus, specific dormitory), and the general use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs not connected to an act of violence. Additional questions about student life and status assessed student classification (undergraduate, graduate, or PhD student) or student status (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), the length of time at the IHE (number of semesters or years in school), and membership in IHE organizations or campus groups. Some climate surveys were administered by the institutional research entity of their IHE, which collected demographic information not represented in their climate survey. Other variables may have been assessed (e.g., income) that are not presented here.

*Attitudes and perceptions.* Table 4 also outlines questions that explore individual perceptions, attitudes, and in some cases, behaviors. These included questions that assessed the general campus climate, such as belonging, community, and relationships with others relating to school. More specific climate questions addressing the IHE and its safety, and peer and individual attitude and response to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking, in particular to sexual assault,

**Table 4.** Comparison of Surveys.

Survey tool	AAU	ARC3	C.A.T.S.	HEDS	iSpeak	JHU	MIT	WHTF	UC	UO
Demographics										
Age	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Race and ethnicity	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Citizenship outside United States	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
Gender identity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sexual orientation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disability	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	
Academic and social life										
Relationship status	✓		✓			✓	✓			
Living situation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) (general)		✓	✓			✓				✓
Student classification/status	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Length of time at institution	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Member of school organization	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Campus climate attitudes and perceptions										
General campus climate questions		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Campus climate questions on safety and violence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sexual misconduct reporting knowledge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sexual misconduct training experience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Bystander and peer attitudes and perceptions										
Bystander scales	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Rape myth scales							✓	✓	✓	✓
Peer experiences	✓		✓		✓		✓			✓
Peer norms		✓	✓				✓			

were asked in the vast majority of the surveys sampled. Most surveys included questions about student knowledge of reporting and help-seeking procedures on campus, and the extent of information students received in trainings or public awareness materials about sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking.

In addition, Table 4 outlines questions assessing bystander and peer attitudes and perceptions. Bystander scales were common in surveys, while fewer surveys had rape myth acceptance scales. Several surveys asked about peer experiences of violence, which were disclosed to the participant. In a few surveys, peer norms questions measured peers' attitudes and behaviors around dating and sexual experiences, including assessment of consent, coercion, and violence.

**Table 5.** Victimization, Assault Characteristics, Perpetration, Outcome Variables, and University Assessment.

Survey	AAU	ARC3	C.A.T.S.	HEDS	iSpeak	JHU	MIT	WHTF	UC	UO
Victimization and assault characteristics										
Past victimization					✓	✓	✓			✓
SA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SH	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
IPV	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Stalking	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	
Contextual info about victimization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reporting info about victimization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Perpetration										
SA perpetration		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
SH perpetration		✓	✓							✓
IPV perpetration		✓	✓			✓				
Stalking perpetration		✓	✓							
Outcome variables and university assessment										
Academic performance	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
Physical health	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
Mental health	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
ATOD use after victimization	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓
Assess university service and response to reported victimization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. IPV = intimate partner violence, SA = sexual assault, SH = sexual harassment.

*Victimization, perpetration, contextual, and reporting information.* Table 5 outlines victimization, assault characteristics, perpetration, outcome variables, and university assessment measures. Some surveys asked about past trauma experiences, including sexual assault and other experiences that happened before college. Every survey had questions assessing incidents of sexual violence victimization while at the specific IHE where the survey was conducted. Victimization questions relating to dating or domestic violence and sexual harassment were also common. Although some surveys did not measure IPV, they did measure the extent to which sexual violence occurred in the context of a relationship with a former or current intimate partner. Stalking victimization measures

were less frequent. The approach and detail given to asking victimization questions varied, though many surveys used one of two commonly used scales: the Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss et al., 2007) and the Campus Sexual Assault Survey (Krebs et al., 2007). Common contextual questions across surveys related to acts of violence, including the location (on or off campus, specific campus property), perpetrator (relationship to perpetrator, perpetrator's relationship to the institution), when and how many times violence occurred, and voluntary or forced use of alcohol or drugs before and at the time of the assault. Nearly every reviewed survey asked about reporting decisions after the incident, including to whom the victim reported (family, friend, faculty) and reasons the victim chose not to report. The time frame used when asking for recall of victimization and perpetration experiences varied across the surveys, with "past 12 months" and "since you enrolled" being the most common choices. Questions about perpetration were less common, though several surveys sought to assess the number of sexual violence incidents. Perpetration of sexual harassment, dating/domestic violence, and stalking were less commonly measured.

*Outcome variables and IHE assessment.* Many of the surveys reviewed assessed variables that are best described as outcome variables. Common measures included questions about academic status, mental health measures including assessment of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and physical health measures as a direct result of the victimization. Questions about alcohol, tobacco, or drug use following or related to assaults appeared on a handful of surveys. Conceptions of peer norms and behaviors were often asked, as well as assessment of peer disclosure of violence. Two surveys had academic variables with questions about participant grade point average (GPA) and assessment of school performance.

Nearly all surveys asked about assessment of IHE response to incidents of violence, and some asked evaluative questions about existing services to prevent and address dating and domestic violence. A majority of surveys asked questions to assess the IHE service used and the quality of the response received after reporting a victimization.

*Survey data collection and survey instrument availability.* All measures were distributed through web-based mechanisms. The average participant time of each survey is unknown, though documented estimates ranged from 15-30 min. Several of the surveys were based off the template produced by the White House Task Force, with modifications and additions for institution-specific questions. Several IHEs published reports and survey tools on their websites, and others indicated future release dates of their reports. Other tools were available for a fee from for-profit research groups. Several tools were customizable for specific institutions, but the range of custom options was large. Since the initial analysis for this article, several tools have been revised, including Rutgers iSpeak, HEDS, and the UO tool. In addition, the White House Task Force survey tool was used as the template for a new, more comprehensive survey tool recently developed, piloted, and validated by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in partnership with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International (Krebs et al., 2016).

## **Discussion**

It was important to inventory the current climate studies being implemented across IHEs. Measurement of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking is complex and IHEs are being pressured by proposed CASA legislation to implement climate surveys. If passed, the CASA legislation will require IHEs to implement biennial campus climate surveys within 1 year of its enactment (McCaskill & Capito, 2015). Moreover, if CASA or similar legislation passes, IHEs will be compelled to use climate surveys to assess the problem of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking on campus.

Campus climate surveys could help to better assess and improve various programs on campus that aim to address violence. Silbaugh (2015) argues that Title IX takes a law enforcement or individual responsibility approach, as well as a public health or population and prevention approach, to address sexual violence on campus. She advocates for greater use of a public health approach to addressing Title IX violations, in particular reoccurring interventions, bystander programs, and a multi-system-level approach that is not solely perpetrator focused. This approach is a break with the one-time freshman training many IHEs have adopted and, although endorsed by many experts, it has not been rigorously evaluated (Silbaugh, 2015). It is possible that campus climate surveys could have program or intervention evaluative components that could contribute to collective knowledge about the effectiveness of a variety of public health approaches used to address sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking. These benefits would be in addition to the criminal justice-related aspects of surveys that capture data about incidences, prevalence, context, and reporting behaviors. Already several surveys in our sample have utilized a mixed approach using bystander behavior scales and survey questions about institutionally specific programs, along with information about acts of violence.

Continued exploration of campus climate surveys may yield new insight into the area of human subject safety and ethical survey administration. The ARC3 group included guiding principles for development of student-focused climate surveys. Consent processes may vary across institutional review boards. Protocols to respond to adverse reactions to survey questions may also vary across IHEs. In addition, support during the survey process (such as a help desk or information from a sexual assault or dating/domestic violence hotline) may also vary. Questions asked are sensitive in nature, yet research conducted by Cook, Swartout, Goodnight, Hipp, and Bellis (2015) shows asking questions about adverse sexual experiences is generally safe and does not cause harm. A national undertaking of biennial campus climate surveys through the potential CASA legislation necessitate a great deal of discussion around the best ways to handle human subject safety and ethical concerns that affect student participants and campus communities.

The data collected by various IHEs have the potential to be used for meta-analysis or secondary data review that could offer a scope of information about prevalence, attitudes, and behaviors related to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual

harassment, and stalking that has not been possible before. Surveys that use reliable and valid measures for use with campus populations show promise for easy comparison across samples, providing important information about prevalence and incidents and a chance to benchmark and track progressive campus community and culture change. It is possible that the sheer existence of the biennial survey will increase curiosity and awareness of campus services, policy, and support. Because all campuses are unique, comparison of methods and measurement tools in a variety of campus settings will aid our understanding as researchers about the cultural and developmental relevance of not only measurement tools but also methodological approaches to improve research about sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking on campus. Future comparison of tools should also explore how the measurement of prevalence of victimization and perpetration is approached, including what behaviors and actions “count” as sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking.

Campus climate survey development, administration, analysis, and assessment are being undertaken by single universities, for-profit companies (sometimes in collaboration with researchers at IHEs), and by at least one large group of university researchers and administrators. These university researchers are considered to be experts in various fields related to violence survey research, and are situated within distinct campus communities. While some IHEs in the sample chose to make their survey instrument publically available, others were available by request for free. However, dozens of IHEs used surveys from fee-based research groups, such as AAU, Modern Think, HEDS, or the Association for School Conduct Administration (ASCA), and these surveys were not available for review.

An important next step is to collectively and collaboratively analyze the existing surveys and their implementation processes. Future inquiry should assess the quality of various climate survey tools and their application in an assortment of campus settings. Evaluation of surveys could include secondary analysis of response rates, results, and fielding approaches. Analysis of different climate surveys might explore the motivation behind choosing particular surveys or measurement tools. In addition, violence researchers and experts should analyze the reliability and validity of climate tools for use with diverse undergraduate and graduate populations. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) Campus Climate Survey Validation Study (Krebs et al., 2016) is currently a good starting point given the rigor of their piloting and analysis process.

To better understand the utility of campus climate surveys, analysis of specific measures that have been adapted and altered must be conducted. Collaborative efforts are already underway using ARC3 and Rutgers University’s surveys. In fall 2015, the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (IDVSA) launched the Cultivating Learning and Safe Environments (CLASE) at 13 of 14 campuses in the University of Texas System. The CLASE climate study will measure many of these components, including the personal and economic impact of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking on campus. Furthermore, it would be naive not to consider cost, adequate sources of funding, and institutional support as measures of success. This would be a helpful contribution to the field, particularly with regard to

potential passing and implementation of CASA legislation, which requires biennial campus climate surveys. The expert group could provide a report to the DOE, which may have an influential role in campus climate survey facilitation. A natural extension of campus climate work is to explore the role, perceptions, and experiences of faculty, administration, and staff addressing sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking prevention, intervention, and reporting issues on their campuses. More information is needed about the role faculty in particular play in the response to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking in the lives of students.

The dedicated community of researchers, administrators, practitioners, and advocates has mobilized to address the epidemic of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking on campus. They are working to create avenues for systematic benchmarking that do not cause harm and are based in a solid empirical foundation. Next steps in the process of measuring climate around sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking involve assessing how to use these data to improve programs, policies, and student safety. In addition, pilot testing of various tools will indicate major learning that will refine the approach to measuring climate. As we look to assessing the quality of various climate tools, it is paramount to include student perspectives and experiences when taking climate surveys, and also to consider the research and practitioner assessment of measurement approaches. National dialogue about these forms of violence on campus has been further opened; it is our obligation to use this momentum to work toward improved prevention and intervention efforts to increase campus and community safety.

### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### **Funding**

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### **Note**

1. A note about language: Throughout this report, survivors of sexual assault may be referred to as “victims” or “survivors.” The authors recognize that individuals have likely survived a combination of physical, emotional, and sexual trauma. As researchers, our aim is to honor every person’s choice in language to describe themselves and to name their experiences.

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