

# STUDENT CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY

## BRIEF 1: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

### INTRODUCTION

In fall 2014 the University of North Alabama (UNA) administered a Student Campus Climate Survey. The purpose of the survey was to provide UNA with critical information regarding our campus climate, campus resources, and experiences of our students. Based on the findings of the survey, the UNA Title IX Education and Prevention Advisory Board developed and implemented a series of recommendations.

Beginning in fall 2015, all freshman and transfer students were required to take a First-Year Experience (FYE) course that contained a mandatory Title IX/Bystander Intervention training. In addition to requiring the Title IX/Bystander Intervention training in all FYE courses, the training was also made available on request to all campus entities (e.g., registered student organizations). The Title IX portion of the training included information about Title IX policies and procedures regarding incidents of power-based violence (e.g. what is power-based violence, how to report an incident, confidential resources, procedures for investigating). The Bystander Intervention portion of the training included information about how to engage in active bystander behaviors, specifically behaviors that would prevent power-based violence in risky situations.

In fall 2016, UNA administered a second Student Campus Climate Survey to examine the impact of the Title IX/Bystander Intervention trainings on campus climate. This is the first brief in a series of four that presents key findings from the 2016 survey. The focus of this brief is on data pertaining to UNA students' perceptions of the general campus; perceptions of campus leadership, policies, and reporting practices as they relate to sexual assault, rape myth acceptance, bystander attitudes, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or questioning (LGBTQ) students' perceptions of campus climate as it relates to sexual minorities. The full report is available at [una.edu/titleix](http://una.edu/titleix)

### SAMPLE

A total of 1,457 surveys were completed. The median age of participants was 22 years old. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the sample identified as female, 24% identified as male, and approximately 2% identified as transgender or other. The class standing of participants was as follows: 37% freshman, 18% sophomore, 17% junior, 21% senior, 6% graduate student, and 1% special student. The racial composition approximated the racial makeup of the University.

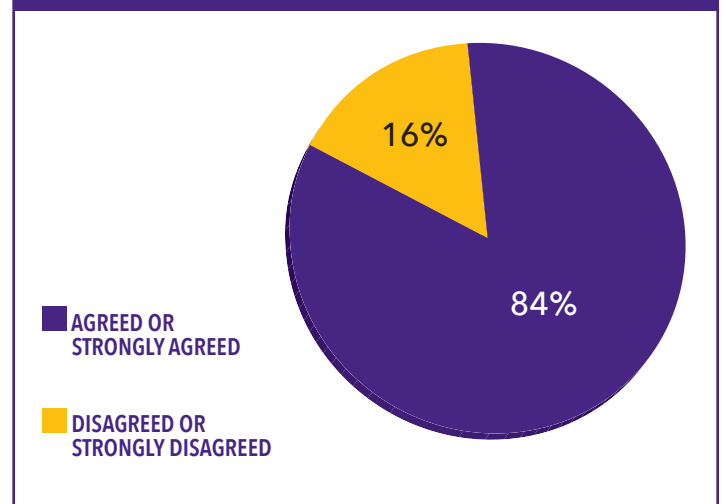
### MEASURES

Perceptions of the general campus climate were assessed using the School Connectedness Scale and the Trust in the College Support System Scale. Perceptions of campus leadership, policies, and reporting practices relating to sexual assault were assessed using adapted versions of the Department of Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey and the Carleton College Campus Climate Survey. Rape myth acceptance was assessed using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. Bystander attitudes were assessed using the Bystander Attitudes Scale. Students who identified as LGBTQ were directed to a series of questions that assessed their perceptions of UNA's climate as it relates to sexual minorities.

### PERCEPTIONS OF GENERAL CAMPUS CLIMATE

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents (84%) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with statements indicating they felt valued and connected to the university, faculty, and administration, while 16% "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with those statements. Students in the 2016 survey reported significantly higher school connectedness than students in the 2014 survey, and the difference between their scores was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

**FIGURE 1.**  
VALUED AND CONNECTED TO THE  
UNIVERSITY, FACULTY, AND ADMINISTRATION



## BRIEF 1: Perceptions and Attitudes

Forty-six percent (46%) of survey respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with statements indicating the university system does enough to protect students’ safety and provides a good support system for students who experience difficulties. In comparison, only 38% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with these statements in the 2014 survey. Therefore, students in the 2016 survey reported significantly higher trust in the college support system than students in the 2014 survey, and the difference between their scores was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

### PERCEPTIONS OF CAMPUS LEADERSHIP, POLICIES, AND REPORTING PRACTICES

Nearly 80% of survey respondents indicated that if they were to report a sexual assault they believed our campus authorities would be “very likely” or “moderately likely” to take the report seriously, protect the safety of the person making the report, and take appropriate corrective action. Students in the 2016 survey reported significantly higher confidence in the campus reporting system than students in the 2014 survey, and the difference between their scores was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

Seventy percent (70%) of survey respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with statements indicating that if they or a friend were assaulted they would know where to get help and that they understand UNA’s formal reporting procedures. Students in the 2016 survey reported significantly higher awareness of UNA’s resources than students in the 2014 survey, and the difference between their scores was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

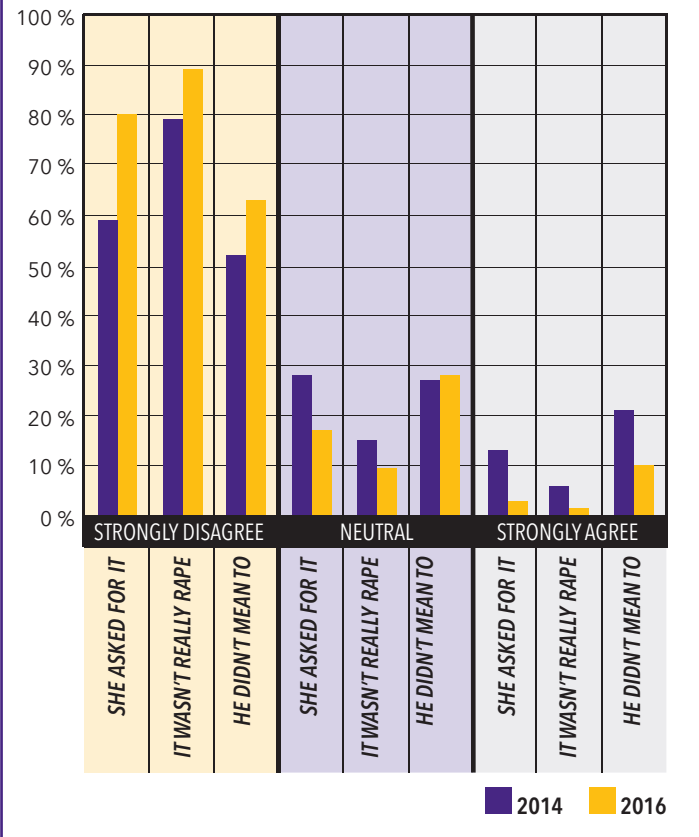
### RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE

It is critical to examine rape myth acceptance in any college community, because rape myths blame victims and minimize their experiences, justify the actions of perpetrators, and discourage victims from reporting and seeking help (King & Roberts, 2011).

Students in the 2016 survey were significantly more likely to reject rape myth attitudes than students in the 2014 survey, and the difference between their scores was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). The difference in students’ scores was found in the overall RMA scale and the following RMA subscales: She asked for it; It wasn’t really rape; and He didn’t mean to. See Table 1 for a comparison of the RMA scores that were significantly different between the 2014 and 2016 survey.

Table 1. Comparison of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale and its subscales between the 2014 and 2016 samples.

TABLE 1.  
RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE

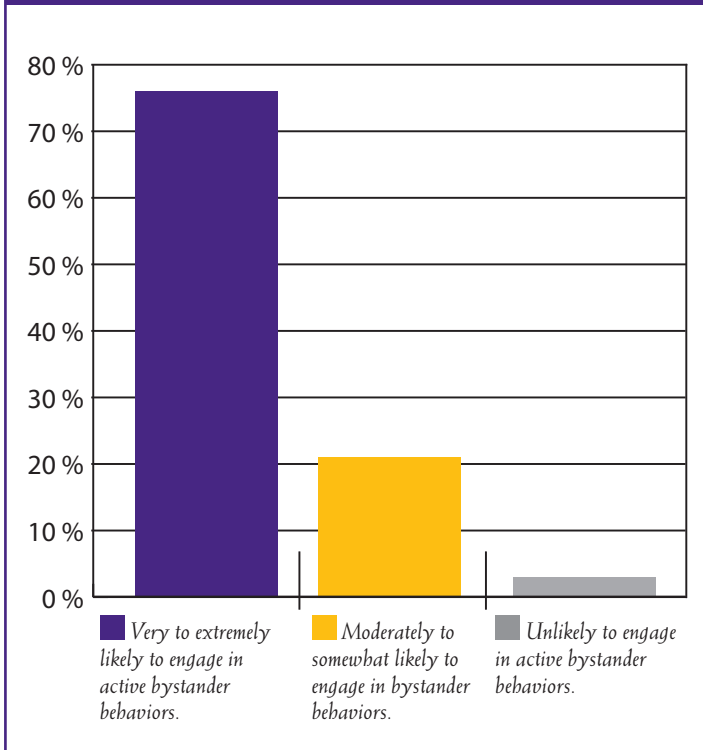


### BYSTANDER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Bystander attitudes refer to individuals’ perceptions and actions when they are present in risky situations that could lead to sexual assault as well as their beliefs about their responsibility to raise awareness and prevent sexual assault in their community (Banyard, 2008).

The majority of respondents (76%) indicated that they would be very to extremely likely to engage in active bystander behaviors. Twenty-one percent (21%) indicated they were moderately to somewhat likely to engage in active bystander behaviors. Only 3% indicated that they would be unlikely to engage in active bystander behaviors. Students in the 2016 survey were significantly more willing to engage in active bystander behaviors than students in the 2014 survey, and the difference between their scores was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

**FIGURE 2.**  
BYSTANDER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS



**CAMPUS CLIMATE FOR SEXUAL MINORITY STUDENTS**

A recommendation from the UNA Title IX Education and Prevention Advisory Board was to include questions in the 2016 Student Campus Climate that would assess lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or questioning (LGBTQ) students' perceptions of campus climate as it relates to sexual minorities. Students who identified as LGBTQ were directed to a series of questions that assessed their perceptions of UNA's climate in regards to sexual minorities.

A total of 122 respondents completed the questions pertaining to campus climate for sexual minorities. The mean age of respondents was 22 years old (median age=20 years old; SD=5.57). Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the sample identified as female (N=82), 21% identified as male (N=25), 2% as transwoman (N=3), 2% as transman (N=3), and 7% as other (N=9). Forty-six percent (46%) identified as bisexual (N=56), 23% as homosexual (N=28), 16% as other (N=20), 11% as questioning (N=13), and 4% as heterosexual (N=5).

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents reported feeling very to mostly comfortable/safe on campus; 21%

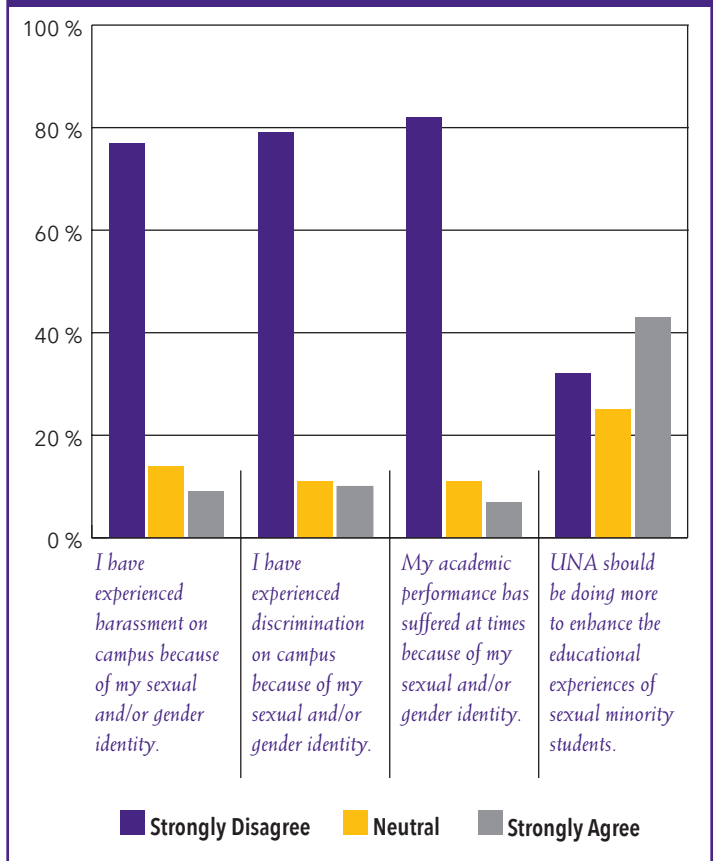
reported feeling somewhat comfortable/safe, somewhat uncomfortable/unsafe; and 12% reported feeling very to mostly uncomfortable/unsafe on campus.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents reported feeling that our campus was completely to mostly tolerant/accepting of sexual minorities; 21% reported feeling the campus was somewhat tolerant/accepting, somewhat intolerant/unaccepting; and 12% reported feeling the campus was completely to mostly intolerant/unaccepting.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly agree; 5 = strongly disagree) with statements assessing the campus climate for sexual minorities. See Table 2 for a breakdown of students' responses.

Table 2. LGBTQ Participants' Agreement with Statements Regarding the Campus Climate for Sexual Minorities.

**TABLE 2.**  
CAMPUS CLIMATE FOR SEXUAL MINORITIES



### CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

A comparison of the 2014 and 2016 samples provides evidence of the positive impact of Title IX programming on UNA's campus, including:

- ▶ a statistically significant increase in every measure of general campus climate. In comparison to the 2014 sample, students in the 2016 sample reported:
  - more connection to the university, faculty, administration, and their fellow students
  - more trust in the university system and its processes for protecting students' safety
  - more confidence that if they were to report a sexual assault that campus authorities would take the report seriously, protect the safety of the person making the report, and take appropriate corrective action
  - more knowledge of the resources on campus that address sexual assault and its formal reporting procedures
- ▶ a significant decrease in rape myth acceptance.
- ▶ a significant increase in bystander attitudes.

Based on these findings, it is strongly recommended that UNA continue its Title IX programming and initiatives on campus. Specifically, UNA should continue (1) the mandatory requirement of providing Title IX/Bystander Intervention education in all First-Year Experience (FYE) courses, (2) the mandatory online training program, Haven, and (3) provide several campus-wide education events throughout each academic year that focus on the prevention of power-based violence and increasing awareness of campus resources for victims.

The 2016 survey included questions that assessed lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or questioning (LGBTQ) students' perceptions of campus climate as it relates to sexual minorities. Findings indicated that the majority of LGBTQ students thought that UNA could do more to enhance the educational experiences of sexual minority students. It is recommended that follow-up focus groups be conducted with sexual minority students on campus to develop programming recommendations.

### PROJECT COLLABORATORS

The principal investigator for the Student Campus Climate Survey was UNA faculty member, Dr. Amber Paulk from the Department of Sociology and Family Studies. Her co-principal investigators were UNA faculty members Drs. Andrea Hunt and Yaschica Williams, also from the Department of Sociology and Family Studies. The UNA Title IX Education and Prevention Advisory Board reviewed both the 2014 and 2016 surveys and subsequent technical reports. The advisory board includes UNA's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Tammy Jacques; UNA faculty, staff, and students; representatives from UNA Student Counseling Services; the UNA Police Department; and local community partners. Both the 2014 and 2016 surveys were approved by UNA's Human Subjects Review Committee.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact UNA's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Tammy Jacques, at [tmwells@una.edu](mailto:tmwells@una.edu) or **256.765.4223**.

### REFERENCES

- Banyard, V. (2008). Measurement and correlates of prosocial bystander behavior: The case of interpersonal violence. *Violence and Victims, 23*, 83–97.
- King, L., & Roberts, J. (2011). Traditional gender role and rape myth acceptance: From the countryside to the big city. *Women & Criminal Justice, 21*, 1-20.