

Sept. 21, 2015

Dear Members of the Rice Community:

Last spring, Rice University took an important step toward learning more about the health and welfare of our students by administering the Survey on Unwanted Sexual Experiences (SUSE) to all undergraduate and graduate students. The university had four main goals in asking students to complete this survey:

- To gain a better understanding of the prevalence and nature of sexual violence and other forms of sexual misconduct experienced by Rice students;
- To reinforce the university's commitment to fostering a safe environment free from sexual assault and harassment;
- To inform our efforts to improve sexual assault prevention, education and awareness programs, and to provide the best services to survivors of sexual assault; and
- To provide baseline data for ongoing assessments of the campus climate and the prevalence of sexual assault and other forms of sexual harassment at Rice.

The survey was developed in collaboration with the University of Chicago and Stanford University. We write today to share the results of the Rice survey with you. The results, described in part below, are the product of analysis by an independent research corporation, the National Opinion Research Council (NORC). The full survey and survey results prepared by NORC can be found on the Project SAFE website at <http://safe.rice.edu/>.

While we have worked hard over many years to create a culture of care at Rice, the results shown in the survey are simply unacceptable. Nineteen percent of female students and 5 percent of male students who responded to the survey report having experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact during their time at Rice. That contact ranged from unwelcome kissing or touching to, in about 3 percent of cases, sexual assault involving penetration. These numbers are deeply concerning and demand an immediate and determined response. Sexual assault, gender-based violence, or relationship violence, in any form, will not be tolerated at Rice.

Rice has already implemented a number of significant measures to help combat sexual violence: partnering with the Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) to create Project SAFE, establishing the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, and working with students to revise the Sexual Misconduct Policy, to name just a few. In the days and weeks ahead, Dean of Undergraduates John Hutchinson and Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Seiichi Matsuda, with support from the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, will partner with student leaders to organize conversations across campus to discuss additional steps we may take in response to the SUSE findings.

These steps are the beginning of what must be a comprehensive and sustained effort by the entire Rice community. As leaders of this community, we pledge that the university will redouble its commitment and efforts to combat sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct both now and in years to come. We urge each of you to join in this critically important endeavor.

Sincerely,

David W. Leebron
President

Marie Lynn Miranda
Provost

Summary of Rice University Survey on Unwanted Sexual Experiences (SUSE)

SUSE RESPONSE RATE

A total of 5,585 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students were invited to participate in the survey. The overall response rate was 72.3 percent, which includes 2,034 respondents who fully completed the survey (36.4 percent) and 2,003 respondents who indicated “I have not experienced this while at Rice” (35.9 percent). See Table 1. Only respondents are included in the further analysis of the data in this summary report.

Table 1. Final response rates

Subpopulation	Sex	Number Responding			Number not responding				
		Total	Completed survey	Indicated no experiences	Total	Refused	Did not open survey	Gave consent, did not enter any data	Total in population
Undergraduate	<i>Female</i>	1279 (74.1%)	704 (40.8%)	575 (33.3%)	448 (25.9%)	432 (25.0%)	1 (0.1%)	15 (0.9%)	1727
	<i>Male</i>	1169 (63.5%)	524 (28.5%)	645 (35.0%)	672 (36.5%)	654 (35.5%)	6 (0.3%)	12 (0.7%)	1841
	<i>Total</i>	2448 (68.6%)	1228 (34.4%)	1220 (34.2%)	1120 (31.4%)	1086 (30.4%)	7 (0.2%)	27 (0.8%)	3568
Graduate and Professional	<i>Female</i>	583 (82.6%)	327 (46.3%)	256 (36.3%)	123 (17.4%)	114 (16.1%)	2 (0.3%)	7 (1.0%)	706
	<i>Male</i>	1006 (76.7%)	479 (36.5%)	527 (40.2%)	305 (23.3%)	297 (22.7%)	2 (0.1%)	6 (0.5%)	1311
	<i>Total</i>	1589 (78.8%)	806 (40.0%)	783 (38.8%)	428 (21.2%)	411 (20.4%)	4 (0.2%)	13 (0.6%)	2017
Grand Total		4037 (72.3%)	2034 (36.4%)	2003 (35.9%)	1548 (27.7%)	1497 (26.8%)	11 (0.2%)	40 (0.7%)	5585

Among the nonresponders, 1,497 (26.8 percent) of invited students chose not to participate by selecting “I do NOT wish to complete this survey”; 11 students (0.2 percent) did not open the survey at all.

SURVEY DESIGN

Based on the university's Sexual Misconduct Policy, which includes a definition of consent, the survey asked participants if they had experienced any of six types of behaviors without their consent since coming to Rice, regardless of where the event had occurred or whether it involved another member of the Rice community. For each of the six behaviors, respondents were also asked to indicate whether the behavior was attempted but not completed, or completed. Questions about attempted behavior were included with the goal of gaining insight into aspects of campus culture, such as students' knowledge and understanding of consent and prohibited behaviors.

All respondents who indicated at least one attempted or completed behavior were asked follow-up questions about the tactic or tactics used by the perpetrator. These questions were included to help learn more about the nature of sexual misconduct experienced by members of the Rice community and will inform improved education and prevention efforts. For instance, the survey asks if the perpetrator had caught the respondent "off guard," taken advantage of the respondent when he or she was drunk or high, or used physical force. Detailed results from this portion of the survey are available in the full NORC report at <http://safe.rice.edu>. The survey also included questions about the equally important concern of dating and relationship violence.

Table 2 aggregates certain kinds of sexual contact without consent. More detailed survey results are available in the full NORC report. In reviewing the table, note that because each student could report more than one kind of experience, the percentages in table columns cannot meaningfully be added together. In addition, the results presented in the NORC report represent the percentages for survey respondents. The overall prevalence of these events across the Rice University student population may be different, depending on the experiences of the nonresponders. In addition, it may not be possible to draw comparisons of the percentages found in this survey with those from similar surveys recently conducted at other universities because the questions and analyses are not identical.

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE:

Please note that many of the questions in the survey employ explicit language, including names of body parts and descriptions of sexual behaviors. The survey also included questions about various forms of sexual violence. The table that follows includes some of the explicit language from the survey. Readers who find this disturbing or upsetting will find alternative information on the Project Safe website at <http://safe.rice.edu>.

Table 2. Aggregate counts of respondents who experienced at least one unwanted sexual experience (completed) by gender of victim and student level

	Gender of victim	All Student Responses (Graduate and Undergraduate)	All Undergraduate Student Responses	All Graduate Student Responses
One or more of the following three behaviors (completed): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone kissed me without my consent Someone touched, fondled, or rubbed up against the private areas of my body (breast/chest, crotch or butt) without my consent Someone removed some of my clothes without my consent 	<i>Female</i>	345 (18.5%)	305 (23.8%)	40 (6.9%)
	<i>Male</i>	106 (4.9%)	86 (7.4%)	20 (2.0%)
	<i>Total</i>	451 (11.2%)	391 (16.0%)	60 (3.8%)
One or more of the following three behaviors (completed): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone put a penis or inserted fingers or objects into my vagina or anus without my consent Someone performed oral sex on me or made me give them oral sex without my consent Someone put my penis or fingers in their vagina or anus, or made me put objects in their vagina or anus without my consent 	<i>Female</i>	93 (5.0%)	85 (6.6%)	8 (1.4%)
	<i>Male</i>	23 (1.1%)	17 (1.5%)	6 (0.6%)
	<i>Total</i>	116 (2.9%)	102 (4.2%)	14 (0.9%)
One or more of the six behaviors listed on the survey (completed): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone kissed me without my consent Someone touched, fondled, or rubbed up against the private areas of my body (breast/chest, crotch or butt) without my consent Someone removed some of my clothes without my consent Someone put a penis or inserted fingers or objects into my vagina or anus without my consent Someone performed oral sex on me or made me give them oral sex without my consent Someone put my penis or fingers in their vagina or anus, or made me put objects in their vagina or anus without my consent 	<i>Female</i>	352 (18.9%)	310 (24.2%)	42 (7.2%)
	<i>Male</i>	107 (4.9%)	87 (7.4%)	20 (2.0%)
	<i>Total</i>	459 (11.4%)	397 (16.2%)	62 (3.9%)