FAQ
AAU Campus Climate Survey on and Sexual Assault and Misconduct

1. What is the AAU?

The Association of American Universities, founded in 1900, is a consortium of 62 of the leading research universities in the United States. “AAU member universities collectively help shape policy for higher education, science, and innovation; promote best practices in undergraduate and graduate education, and strengthen the contributions of leading research universities to American society.”

2. Why did Rice choose to participate in the 2019 AAU survey, rather than administer an updated version of the 2015 Survey on Unwanted Sexual Experiences (SUSE)?

The questions in the Survey on Unwanted Experiences (SUSE) focused almost entirely on incidents of sexual misconduct; the AAU survey, by contrast, gathers data on many elements that shape campus climate, including sexual harassment and varieties of interpersonal violence. Following the administration of SUSE, community-wide conversations inspired intensified efforts at Rice to enhance the culture of care, improve education and understanding of healthy and consensual behaviors, and combat sexual misconduct. The AAU survey offered the opportunity not only to update our understanding of the levels of sexual violence on campus but also to examine the impact of these efforts and initiatives, and to understand both in the context of national trends. Finally, under federal law, all institutions of higher learning are required to conduct a climate survey.

3. How does the AAU survey differ from the 2015 Survey on Unwanted Sexual Experiences?

The Survey on Unwanted Sexual Experiences was largely incident driven, whereas the AAU survey gathers information about many elements concerning campus climate, how students access health and wellbeing services, and how students care for one another. Like the SUSE, the AAU survey includes questions about incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault. While a few of the questions are similar, the questions in the AAU survey differ in scope and content from those in the SUSE. Consequently, the results of the two surveys cannot be accurately compared.

4. Who created the survey instrument?

The AAU hired Westat, an independent social science research firm, to create the survey. Westat then collaborated with a team of experts and scholars from the AAU and its member universities. Additionally, a draft survey instrument, based on the 2015 AAU Campus Climate Survey, was submitted to the 33 participating universities, which were encouraged to provide feedback and input. At Rice, the Office of the Provost met with SA, GSA, and STRIVE

1 https://www.aau.edu/who-we-are
representatives to review the draft survey, compiled a set of questions and suggestions, and submitted those to Westat for consideration.

5. How many Rice students participated in the AAU survey?
   Over 830,000 students at 33 institutions were invited to participate in the survey, and 181,000 students completed it. At Rice, all full-time undergraduate, graduate, and professional students were invited to take the survey. 71.6 percent of undergraduates and 63.8 percent of graduate and professional students completed the survey. This compares very favorably to the average of 20.4% of undergraduates and 24.5% of graduate students who completed the survey at other institutions.

6. Are survey responses confidential?
   When a respondent completed the survey, the link between their responses and their email and IP addresses was broken so that no one will be able to connect the respondent’s email or IP address with their survey responses. Only Rice’s research team has access to Rice students’ responses for further analysis. Westat is legally bound to destroy the survey responses once they send the results and report to Rice. Rice’s survey results will be published in summary form, so no individual’s responses can be identified. However, if in the process of analyzing survey data, the university learns about child abuse or a threat of harm to a respondent or others, Rice is obligated to report these findings to the authorities.

7. What will Rice do with the results of the survey?
   Collection and analysis of campus survey data are integral to the community’s ability to identify areas of need and also the things we are doing well. The results will be used to better understand the climate at Rice, the extent of sexual assault and misconduct among students, and student perceptions and uses of programs and services currently being offered. This information will be used to assess and enhance the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, and programs related to preventing and/or responding to sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other forms of interpersonal violence at Rice.

8. What has changed at Rice since 2015, when the Survey on Unwanted Sexual Experiences was administered?
   • Most notably, students asked for the creation of a class, required of all undergraduates, that would be devoted to education about sexual violence prevention and support, healthy relationships, and consent. As a result, The CTIS Workshops were created and implemented beginning in fall 2017; also created was an optional, semester-long LPAP that addresses many other related topics.
   • The SAFE Office: Interpersonal Misconduct Prevention and Support (formerly Office of Sexual Violence Prevention and Title IX Support) was expanded to include a third professional staff member. SAFE Office services were also enhanced to include
assistance with Crime Victims Compensation and post-assault forensic exams, and Office staff developed a new set of targeted trainings for faculty, staff and students. Finally, in fall 2019, the SAFE Office was relocated to enhance confidentiality and facilitate collaboration with Student Health Services.

- **Students Transforming Rice Into a Violence-Free Environment** (STRIVE) has been fully implemented with over 30 undergraduate and graduate liaisons on campus trained to assist students with access to on and off-campus resources.
- During Rice’s orientation week, new students are introduced to services on campus, including The SAFE Office and Student Judicial Programs, and all new students participate in facilitated discussions about consent.
- The Student Judicial Program office was rebuilt in 2018. Director Emily Garza and Associate Director Carrie Willard were selected for their special expertise in responding to domestic and sexual violence and their use of trauma-informed, non-adversarial methods of interviewing.
- Staff in all wellbeing, counseling, judicial, and SAFE offices routinely go through continued education training.
- **The Montrose Center**, a LGBTQI specific community center, became a community partner of Rice University, specifically their Anti-Violence Program. Staff from the program routinely provides training for students and staff at Rice.
- The SAFE Office developed a list of targeted trainings that are hosted in the Magister’s houses and individual sessions of the CTIS workshops are also offered in these series.

9. **What actions is Rice taking in response to the results of the survey?**

Rice will continue its commitment to addressing sexual harassment and sexual violence through continued programming, engagement with student groups, the promotion of resources, and outside Rice community engagement.

This year, The SAFE Office was both renamed and relocated to a more private space; Rice has partnered with the non-profit Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners to provide forensic kits on campus; and, the mandatory CTIS Workshop added a 6th session in which students are trained by staff in Student Judicial Programs about the Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Moving forward, staff in The SAFE Office will continue to build programming around bystander intervention and topics that are important to the community, many of which can be found on [https://safe.rice.edu/programs/programs-and-trainings](https://safe.rice.edu/programs/programs-and-trainings). SAFE Office staff are now liaisons to a specific set of Colleges for the Office and are creating a placard training program which serves to educate the community about survivor support. The SAFE Office staff and Title IX Coordinators will also work closely with STRIVE and the SA Committee on Interpersonal Violence Policy to identify any other needs the campus may have.

As the regulations change from the Department of Education, Rice University will do a policy review to match the requirements and will continue the commitment of serving our students in the best, most effective way.
10. Why does the AAU survey not employ the more common definition of LGBTQIA students?

   For gender, respondents were asked to choose among eight response options that best described how they identified themselves. Using responses to this question, students were classified into one of four groups: 1) woman; 2) man; 3) transgender woman, transgender man, nonbinary or genderqueer, questioning, or not listed (TGQN); and 4) decline to state (those who specifically chose the option to decline to state their gender).

   TGQN students were grouped together in the AAU study to allow for meaningful statistical analysis. A very small percentage (1.3%) of Rice respondents selected a gender category other than “man” or “woman.” Because the TGQN cohort is so small, publishing estimates for individual non-male/female gender categories disaggregated by undergraduate versus graduate students would not yield statistically stable results and could undermine respondent confidentiality.

   The Glossary of Terms for the AAU Survey can be found here: Glossary

11. Several questions in the survey asked if respondents had experienced nonconsensual sexual touching or penetration. How is this counted?

   If a respondent reported both penetration and sexual touching in the same incident, the penetration was counted. This hierarchy rule conforms to the counting rules established by the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program and used by schools in disclosing their annual crime statistics required under the Clery Act (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013).

   These eight categories are: woman, man, trans woman, trans man, nonbinary or genderqueer, questioning, not listed, and decline to state. The AAU Survey uses the acronym TGQN to encompass the following: trans woman, trans man, nonbinary or genderqueer, questioning, and not listed.

   Act Hierarchy Rule: 34 CFR 668.469(c)(9)