

Dear Members of the Rice Community:

Last spring, Rice University administered the Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct to all undergraduate and graduate students. Rice was one of 33 institutions that participated in this effort. We write today to share with you the responses of Rice students who took part in the survey.

In addition to gathering important, up-to-date information about the health and welfare of our students, the university had four main goals in asking students to complete this survey:

- To assess our campus climate and the prevalence of sexual assault 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 and harassment prevention, education and awareness programs, and to provide the best services to survivors of sexual assault and harassment; and,
- To better understand these issues and the climate at Rice within the national context.

We thank all of the students who participated in this important initiative.

The results, described in part below, are the product of analyses by Westat, the independent social science research firm engaged by the AAU to help design, administer and analyze the survey. Links to the complete survey instrument and additional survey results by can be found on the [SAFE website](#).

While the Rice community has worked over many years to create a culture of care on our campus, the 2019 survey results show that many of our students continue to experience interpersonal violence, including sexually harassing and assaultive behaviors. Among undergraduate students, 22.6% percent of female students and 5.2% percent of male students who responded to the survey report having experienced some form of non-consensual sexual contact since entering Rice. That contact ranged from unwelcome kissing or touching to, in about 11 percent of cases for undergraduate women, sexual assault involving penetration and attempted penetration. Among graduate students, 6.9% percent of female students and 0.6 % percent of male students who responded to the survey report having experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact since entering Rice.

These numbers are deeply concerning and require a thoughtful and determined response that builds upon our ongoing efforts to promote a safe and healthy campus environment. Sexual harassment and assault, gender-based violence, or relationship violence, in any form, will not be tolerated. Rice has already implemented a number of significant measures to help combat interpersonal violence through The SAFE Office, including the Critical Thinking in Sexuality (CTIS) workshops, training modules for faculty and staff on these topics, and the great work of the [STRIVE](#) (Student Transforming Rice into a Violence-Free Environment) Liaisons. One

positive outgrowth of these efforts is that 89.6% percent of students who took the survey reported that they feel supported by one another, and nearly half took direct forms of bystander intervention in response to situations of concern. This reassures us of your and Rice's commitment to our "Culture of Care."

We must and will do more, however. Going forward, we will use the survey results to inform campus conversations and efforts to improve our campus culture. We welcome and will actively solicit community engagement on these issues as we continue to refine and expand our efforts to prevent sexual violence and harassment in our community.

Dean of Undergraduates Bridget Gorman and Interim Provost and Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Seiichi Matsuda, with support from the SAFE Office, will continue to partner with student leaders and STRIVE Liaisons to create more programming and supportive services for students.

As leaders of this community, we pledge that the university will steadfastly invest and persist in its commitment and efforts to combat sexual assault, harassment 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.

Regards,

David W. Leebron
President

Seiichi Matsuda
Interim Provost