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Sexual Assault Campus Climate Surveys: Insights from the First Wave

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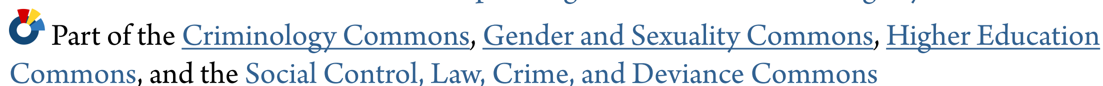
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Abstract
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Keywords
campus climate survey, campus violence, sexual assault, victimization, Title IX

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SEXUAL ASSAULT CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEYS: INSIGHTS FROM THE FIRST WAVE

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ABSTRACT

One tool to help institutions of higher education (IHEs) to address campus sexual assault is the campus climate survey (CCS); yet little is known about the CCS implementation process. This study used a mixed methods approach to examine the implementation process of CCSs deployed during the 2015/16 academic year at 244 IHEs throughout the United States. Quantitative results indicate CCSs were designed primarily by the Title IX officer and campus administration; assessed victimization rates and knowledge about campus resources; and were voluntary. Qualitative findings generate concerns surrounding generalizability, participation rates, validity of data, and suggestions for improvement for future CCSs.

KEYWORDS

campus climate survey, campus violence, sexual assault, victimization, Title IX

One in four. One in five. From the earliest methodologically innovative research on campus sexual assaults (CSAs), research reports consistently high rates of sexual victimization among college students and in particular high rates of sexual violence perpetrated against female college students (Cantor et al., 2015; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Krebs, Lindquist, Berzofsky, Shook-Sa, Peterson, Planty, Langton, & Stroop, 2016; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007; Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2016). Although a much smaller proportion, men too are at heightened risk to be victimized by sexual assault on college and university campuses[1] (Budd, Rocque, & Bierie, *in press*; Flack et al., 2007; Krebs et al., 216; Krebs et al., 2007; Palmer,

[1] In this research, we use college and university interchangeably. When we refer to institutes of higher education, this includes colleges and universities.

McMahon, Rounsaville, & Ball, 2010). Federal and state officials, researchers, and the public urge colleges and universities around the United States to address CSAs.

Contemporarily, one of the most fundamental challenges facing institutions of higher education (hereafter, IHEs) is how to gauge the extent of sexual assault on their campus. An accumulation of evidence supports that the vast majority of victim/survivors[2] do not report their sexual assault to campus officials nor to campus or local law enforcement (Cantor et al., 2015; Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Krebs et al., 2007; Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Truman & Langton, 2015). This lack of reporting leaves colleges and universities with an inherent gap in knowledge on the extent of sexual assault that is occurring at their own institutions, especially if mandates stemming from law and the courts are to improve prevention and response to CSAs, and, ultimately, to foster a campus environment that is free from hostile sexual harassment (that is, Title IX (Cantalupo, 2014). In order to promote effective institutional responses to CSAs, universities must first uncover what are more often than not the hidden figures of CSA.

In 2014, the White House Task Force (WHTF) in their *Not Alone* report challenged universities to do just that. They recommended that universities conduct campus climate surveys (CCSs) to assess sexual assault prevalence and the characteristics of sexual victimization on their campuses (WHTF, 2014a & 2014b). These recommended surveys were to gather data on student's general perceptions of the university campus climate, their experiences with victimization and sexual assault, and their understanding of university resources and programming in relation to sexual violence, dating/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking. While in 2017 the U.S. Department of Education withdrew prior policy guidance on Title IX (specifically, in regard to IHEs' investigatory and adjudication processes), left untouched was the guidance from the WHTF on CCSs.

Whereas guidance on the CCS from the current administration could change, there is a movement toward CCS institutionalization, which can be seen at various levels. There are IHEs that are very visible in their efforts to implement CCSs (e.g., University of Kentucky and Rutgers University), while also providing guidance and consultation to other IHEs. Separate legislative movements at the federal level (that is the Campus Accountability and Safety Act or CASA) and state levels are underway to make sexual assault climate surveys mandatory (McCaskill & Capito, 2015; Richards & Kafonek, 2016). In addition, there is a call from scholars recommending the use of mandatory climate surveys to assess student's experiences with sexual violence (Cantalupo, 2014). Despite these trends, little research currently exists on sexual assault CCSs themselves, with a notable exception, Wood, Sulley, Kammer-Kerwick, Follingstad, & Busch-Armendariz, (2016), whether they are being deployed, and how IHEs proceed with the process and implementation of a sexual assault CCS on their own campuses.

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[2] There is no ideal terminology to identify a person who has been the target of sexual assault. While the term "victim" is used in criminology (notably victimology) and crime statistics, the terms "victim" and "victimization" also are interpreted as potentially negative and stigmatizing, especially in therapeutic and prevention/response usage, whose practitioners seem to prefer the term "survivor" for its empowering connotation. In an effort to recognize both that some criminal victimization has occurred, but also to acknowledge the resiliency of those who are targeted in sexual assaults, in this article we use the term "victim/survivor."

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The Movement toward Campus Climate Surveys

Decades of research shows that victim/survivor reporting of sexual assault, including reporting CSAs to university officials or police, has always been low for a multitude of reasons (Fisher et al., 2003; Krebs et al., 2016; Koss et al., 1987; Rennison, 2002). To illustrate, Krebs and colleagues (2007) surveyed 5,446 female undergraduates at two IHEs. Of the female respondents who were victim/survivors of forced sexual assault (n=131) or incapacitated sexual assault (n=526; that is., sexual assault involving alcohol or drugs or the sexual assault occurred when the victim/survivor was sleeping), the majority reported informally to friends or family. Pertaining to formal reporting (that is, to the college or university), 55 victim/survivors reported to a victim, crisis, or health center, and only 12 students reported to campus police or campus security (Krebs et al, 2007). Given these trends in reporting, which are consistent in a wide variety of studies using various sampling procedures, it is no surprise that the best method to identify the scope of CSAs is the CCS (WHTF, 2014a & 2014b).

Large scale sexual assault campus climate surveys.

Thus far, two groups have conducted large scale sexual assault CCSs, which included a large number of universities in their sample: the Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey of Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (Cantor et al., 2015); and the Campus Climate Survey Validation Study (CCSVS; Krebs et al., 2016). The AAU administered the Campus Climate Survey of Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct survey in the spring 2015 to assess sexual assault and misconduct within 27 IHEs. This CCS measured the extent of nonconsensual sexual contact and the extent of sexual harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence. The survey recorded who was victimized by sexual assault or misconduct and reporting behaviors (that is, formal and/or informal). Last, it asked general campus climate questions surrounding sexual assault and misconduct.

Important to uncovering the hidden figure of CSAs is the research process. The AAU study included IRB approval from either Westat, the external research firm, or the IHE that participated, although seven universities indicated that the CCS did not constitute human subjects research (Cantor et al., 2015). The participants were told via informed consent that they could opt not to take the survey due to potential participant distress (Cantor et al., 2015), meaning that potential respondents were not required to open the questionnaire if they chose to opt out. Information was given to respondents prior to opening the survey and at survey completion for resources on campus and at the national and community level (that is, 24-hour crisis hotlines, counseling). Incentives included $5.00 gift cards to Amazon if the student completed the survey (either guaranteed or by a random sample of students), 20 prizes for $50 Amazon gift cards, an entry into a $500.00 cash lottery for regardless of whether they completed the survey, or combinations thereof. One school offered no incentive plan, but did allocate 10 prizes of $100 each (Cantor et al., 2015). Westat sent up to four reminder e-mails (Cantor et al., 2015). The survey's overall response rate was 19.3%.

Unique to this survey was that it was the first to deploy the same methodology/survey across a large number of IHEs (Cantor et al., 2015). This way IHEs could be compared; for example, were there IHE characteristics (that is, public versus private) that influenced the prevalence of CSAs across these differing institutions? Findings indicated there were large variations across the universities, although the average prevalence of sexual assault or sexual misconduct across all 27

IHEs was "similar or slightly higher" than past self-report victimization surveys (Cantor et al., 2015).

The second study, the CCSVS, was conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Akin to the AAU study, the BJS goal was to develop an online survey with standardized methodology so that the survey could be used across IHEs and also be used to compare IHEs (Krebs et al., 2016). BJS administered its survey to nine IHEs in March 2015. The goal of the survey was to assess undergraduate students' sexual victimization experiences (that is, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, coerced sexual contact), experiences with intimate partner violence, and also to assess sexual assault and sexual harassment in relation to the campus climate (Krebs et al., 2016).

They contracted with RTI International, a nonprofit research organization, to conduct the self-report surveys (Krebs et al., 2016). RTI International, like Westat, obtained IRB approval. Less clear is the IRB process at the institutional level. Krebs and colleagues (2016) only describe IRB approval at the institutional level "if required." Therefore, it is hard to tell if all, some, or none of the IHEs themselves went through their own internal IRB process. Recruitment e-mails did contain an informed consent page, but resource information was only provided at the end of the survey if respondents answered a prompt that they wanted to view the list of support services (Krebs et al., 2016). Incentives included a $25 gift card, although they conducted incentive experiments at four schools to see if a certain amount was more effective than others (Krebs et al., 2016). The survey incentive experiment led them to suggest a $20-$30 survey incentive for respondents. They sent five reminder e-mails. Their overall response rate was averaged across the nine schools equating to a 54% response rate for females and a 40% response rate for males (Krebs et al., 2016).

Because of timing of these two surveys, it could be argued that the CCSVS is also one of the first sexual assault CCS to deploy the same methodology/survey across a large number of IHEs. Their findings indicate that the prevalence rate for completed sexual assault committed against female undergraduate students during the 2014-2015 academic year was 10.3%, which was the average across the nine IHEs. Given these were both well-funded multi-site research endeavors, there is vast detail available about how the research team conducted their study, ranging from their IRB approval process, how students were recruited, and so on.[3] Therefore, within these projects, the implementation process of the sexual assault CCSs is accessible through their publicly available research reports. These gripping findings provide our best evidence available of a problem, which remains woefully understudied.

Based on a report prepared by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight (2014), using a random sample of IHEs, fewer than 20% of IHEs had conducted a sexual assault CCS. Therefore, overall, 84% nationally did not conduct a CCS—approximately 80% of the largest public schools and 88% of the largest private schools. Although these percentages are high, some colleges and universities have begun to pilot their own CCSs—about 16% if one extrapolates from the U.S. Senate Subcommittee report. Given the focus on developing best

[3] For a full description of their research methods and implementation processes, please see their final reports at http://www.aau.edu/Climate-Survey.aspx?id=16525&terms=sexual+assault and http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsftr.pdf.

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practices to address CSAs, we need to learn more about IHEs that have or are planning to launch their own internal sexual assault CCSs and what their process looks like so that we can begin to develop best practices and learn from others.

The Current Study

Whereas CCSs are one way for IHEs to assess how various facets within the institution and the institutional community influence student life and student learning (Cantalupo, 2014; Henry, Fowler, & West, 2011; WHTF, 2014a & 2014b; Wood, et al., 2016), little is known about sexual assault CCSs in terms of the implementation process of these surveys at the institutional level (that is, colleges and universities designing and implementing their own in-house surveys versus large nationally funded research endeavors that survey multiple IHEs).[4] Therefore, this research attempts to answer the call from Wood and colleagues (2016) and begins to build empirical knowledge on the sexual assault CCS implementation processes. This study advances the knowledge about CCSs in three primary ways, by addressing the following research questions:

> **Research Question 1**: At what stage were IHEs with implementing their sexual assault campus climate survey?
>
> **Research Question 2**: What were the IHEs processes in order to plan and execute the sexual assault campus climate survey?
>
> **Research Question 3**: What are some of the strengths and limitations of the current process of measuring CSAs?

METHOD

Study Design

In order to answer the research questions, we conducted a descriptive study using a survey of Title IX officers. This process is similar to approaches used in prior work to assess perceptions of and responses to CSAs with campus stakeholders, such as campus administrators and women's center staff (Amar, Strout, Simpson, Cardiello, & Beckford, 2014; Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2005; Strout, Amar, & Astwood, 2014). We received IRB approval from our home institution before beginning the research process.

Sample

We invited Title IX officers from IHEs to participate in this study, because they have a specific federally mandated role on college campuses in relation to addressing CSAs, and they are typically one formal reporting mechanism for incidents of CSA (Richards, 2016). There was no contact page that listed all of the current Title IX officers in the U.S. from which we could generate our sample population; therefore, we manually constructed an e-mail list of IHE Title IX officers using the U.S. Department of Education's Campus Safety and Security website (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). State by state, this entailed looking up each individual Title IX

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[4] Exceptions include IHEs such as the University of Kentucky and their Campus Attitudes Toward Safety survey distribution packet, which gives great detail about their survey process and the survey itself (Center for Research on Violence against Women [CRVAW], 2014).

officer's contact information. In total, this resulted in obtaining the name and contact information for 1,810 registered Title IX officers. We ultimately invited all 1,810 Title IX officers to participate in this research, even though the report by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight (2014) indicated more than three fourths of their national sample had not conducted a CCS. In short, there was no reasonable way to distinguish which colleges and universities had conducted a sexual assault CCS versus those who were (or were not) planning to conduct a sexual assault CCS in upcoming years.

Survey Measures

The authors created the survey questions using the Violence Against Women You Are Not Alone toolkit[5] (Not Alone, 2016). This toolkit provides specific recommendations about the CCS process and questions that should be used in the sexual assault climate survey itself. The survey questions developed for this research therefore aided in assessing what aspects of these recommendations were used by IHEs.

The survey asked if the participant's institution conducted a CCS in the 2014/2015 academic year. In addition, the questions addressed who was involved in the planning process, the perceived amount of institutional support during the process, if external consulting was used, the types of questions included on the survey, the process for inviting students to take the survey, the incentives used to entice students to take the survey, how data was collected, and the response rate of the survey. Through open-ended questions we also assessed Title IX officers' perceptions of the strengths and limitations of their sexual assault CCSs.

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualtrics, an online survey platform, was used to administer the survey as well as collect and store the data. Data collection occurred from April through June of 2016. During this time, one follow-up reminder was sent to the potential respondents. In order to maintain respondent anonymity, we did not collect identifiable information such as institution name, location, or information that could lead to identification of the Title IX officer (that is, gender, age, or years in position).

Quantitative analysis

Given the limited amount of research on sexual assault CCSs implemented at the institutional level, in combination with the descriptive nature of the study, the closed-ended survey questions were analyzed using frequency distributions and percentages.

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[5] The www.notalone.gov website is no longer available. Investigation of Internet archives available via the Wayback Machine (http://web.archive.org) indicated that the notalone.gov site first appeared around 4/29/14 and was accessible until approximately 9/21/16. For an example of the site, see https://www.justice.gov/ovw/protecting-students-sexual-assault. Starting at approximately 10/01/16, the notalone.gov site referred visitors to the following web site posted by the United States Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW): https://www.justice.gov/ovw/protecting-students-sexual-assault. As of this article's publication, the OWV site refers as follows: "Resources and materials from NotAlone.gov are now accessible on www.ChangingOurCampus.org, an online resource center supported by the Office on Violence Against Women. Some NotAlone.gov resources also are available below, under Resources" (https://www.justice.gov/ovw/protecting-students-sexual-assault#resources).

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Qualitative analysis

Respondents were asked to respond to four open-ended prompts: (1) please describe the strengths of your institution's CCS; (2) please describe any areas where you see room for improvement in your institution's CCS; (3) please describe the revisions you made or will make to the CCS prior to its next administration; and (4) please identify points of difficulty throughout the construction, dissemination, or analysis of your CCS. Qualitative data were analyzed by two reviewers, one of the authors, and one external reviewer. The first three open-ended questions were organized into five categories: dissemination; process/development; data gathering; data analysis; and other. The fourth question was categorized into five categories: question and survey length; participation rates; validity of questions and analysis; external issues; and other. Reviewers initially placed participant responses into the category that they felt was most appropriate (*n* = 169 comments). Reviewers then met to discuss any differences in categorization and examine possible trends, which emerged from the "other" category. Data reported within this manuscript reflect categories and trends that were unanimously agreed upon by the reviewers.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Description of Title IX Officers and their Survey Status

Sample

In total, 244 Title IX officers responded to the survey, with a non-response rate to this question of 48%. These officers worked at a variety of institutions ranging from residential campuses (19.5%, *n* = 46), commuter campuses (6.8%, *n* = 16), private campuses (16.9%, *n* = 40), to public campuses (10.6%, *n* =25), plus non-response (48.0%, n=117). These IHEs also granted various levels of degrees: doctoral degree granting (9.7%, *n* = 23), master's degree granting (19.9%, *n* = 47), bachelor degree granting (25.4%, *n* = 60), associate degree granting (5.1%, *n* = 12), and/or technical degree granting (1.3%, *n* = 3).[6]

Implementation stage

In order to answer research question one, we queried Title IX officers on just where their institution was in the process of implementing and executing a sexual assault CCS. A little over a third of the respondents (36.4%, *n* = 86) conducted a sexual assault climate survey in the 2014/2015 academic year. An additional 17.8% (*n* = 42) did not conduct one in the 2014/2015 academic year, but said they planned to deploy one in the 2015/2016 academic year. Approximately 11.9% (*n* = 28) would be deploying sometime after the 2015/2016 academic year. A small percentage of Title IX officers indicated that their IHE had not started the planning process (5.1%, *n* = 12), and the remainder did not respond (31.1%, n=76). To learn more about the sexual assault CCS process from IHEs that had either deployed or were planning to deploy a sexual assault CCS, the following two sections – the planning state and execution stage – answer research question two.

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[6] Title IX officers could check any of the characteristics that applied to their IHEs. This strategy was used to protect respondent's and the IHE's identity. The authors note a high rate on non-response to such measures, which is likely related to respondents' hesitancy to provide details that might allow for speculation about their institutional identities.

Questionnaire Development

Who was involved?

Given that IHE response to CSAs is multifaceted and involves various stakeholders on and off campus (Karjane et al., 2005; Richards, 2016; Center for Research on Violence against Women [CRVAW], 2014), it is pertinent to know who was involved in planning the sexual assault CCSs. Of the Title IX officers whose institutions launched a survey in the 2014/2015 year, approximately 51.2% of the respondents reported that they, as the Title IX officer, were primarily responsible for planning the survey. A quarter indicated that the campus administration was responsible for the planning of the survey. A minority (8.1%) of Title IX officers indicated that faculty researchers were primarily responsible for the planning of the survey.

Given that stakeholder support seems to be an important factor when attempting to conduct a sexual assault CCS (McCarthy, 2016; CRVAW, 2014), Title IX officers reported on their perceptions of the levels of support they received from different entities on campus (that is, the IHE's president, provost, deans). They could indicate full support, partial support, or no support, including identifying if a specific entity was uninvolved. Approximately 82.8% (n = 72) reported full support from the university/college president. Few Title IX officers reported that the university/college president was uninvolved (8.0%, n = 7). The Title IX officers also felt supported by the university/college provost (full, 60.9%, n = 53; partial, 9.2%, n = 8; no support, 3.4%, n = 3), although about 17% (n = 15) stated the provost was uninvolved. University and college deans were also perceived to be supportive of the sexual assault CCSs (full, 60.9%, n = 53; partial, 12.6%, n = 11; no support, 2.3%, n = 2), although again about 17% (n = 15) indicated no involvement from the Deans.

Designing the survey

A wide variety of campus actors were involved in designing the sexual assault CCSs at these IHEs. About 82% of the Title IX officers were involved in designing the survey, but others involved in design decisions ranged from campus administration (69%), committees (30%), faculty researchers (24%), to graduate (13%) and undergraduate (17%) students.

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Table 1. Participants involved in designing the campus climate survey.

Role	Percent	*n*
Title IX Officer	81.6%	71
Campus Administration	67.8%	59
Committee Decision	29.9%	26
Campus Sexual Assault Office	26.4%	23
Faculty Researchers	24.1%	21
Graduate Students	12.6%	11
Undergraduate Students	17.2%	15
Other	26.4%	23
N/A	<1%	1

Note. Percentages add up to more than 100% because participants could select more than one response.

Use of external services

Title IX officers reported on the use of external consulting companies that universities contracted with to help them construct their survey. Approximately 38% of the Title IX officers indicated that they used an external consulting company to assist them with the construction of the survey. An additional 18%, approximately, indicated that they used a private research firm. The participants were also asked if a regional campus partnership was included in constructing the sexual assault CCSs and 31% of the Title IX officers reported regional campus inclusion in this process.

Questions on the climate survey

Of particular interest related to survey construction was the development of the questionnaire itself. Title IX officers reported on the different types of questions they either asked or were planning to ask on their survey, including whether the survey used gender neutral terminology. Almost 68% of Title IX officers said that their sexual assault CCSs used gender neutral language (e.g., "individual" instead of his or her). A vast majority of Title IX officers reported that their survey included questions gauging student's knowledge of university policies and resources. Approximately three-fourths of Title IX officers reported including questions on victimization, intimate partner violence, and locations of the assaults. Some IHEs included existing measures that they had used in other prior campus surveys (33%) and a small minority (7%-12%) took questions from survey instruments that were used in other externally funded projects (that is, Koss' SES, the CDC National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey). Less than half of the Title IX officers reported that their surveys included questions that identified whether students were involved in athletics or Greek life. Pertaining to socio-demographics, while respondent's sex and race and/or ethnicity were captured in

most of the survey questionnaires, only about half of the Title IX officers said their survey asked if a student was an international student.

Table 2. Questions Included on the IHE Campus Climate Survey

	Percent	*n*
Questions used gender neutral terms	67.8%	59
General questions		
Questions about general knowledge of University policies and resources	85.1%	74
General measures of perception of campus climate (i.e., rape myth acceptance and bystander attitudes/behavior)	78.2%	68
Measures of campus violence		
Questions about victimization	77.0%	67
Questions about intimate partner violence	75.9%	66
Questions about the location of assault	74.7%	65
Use of existing measures		
Survey questions that were previously used on your campus	33.3%	29
Questions from Koss' sexual assault experience survey	11.5%	10
Questions from the 2010 Centers for Disease Control National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey	11.5%	10
Questions from Krebs' Campus Sexual Assault Survey	6.9%	6
Capturing high risk groups		
Questions about athletic involvement	49.4%	43
Questions about Greek life involvement	36.8%	32
Capturing socio-demographics		
General questions about sex/gender	83.9%	73
Questions about race/ethnicity	73.6%	64
Questions identifying if a student is an international student	51.7%	45

Note. Percentages add up to more than 100% because participants could select more than one response.

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Table 3. Usage of Recommended Questions from the Not Alone Toolkit.

	All	Most	Some	None
University questions				
Perception of Leadership, Policies, and Reporting	12.6% (*n*=11)	18.4% (*n*=16)	10.3% (*n*=9)	5.7% (*n*=5)
Sexual Assault and IPV Climate Questions				
Sample Questions Assessing Number of Victim/Survivors of Sexual Violence	9.2% (*n*=8)	19.5% (*n*=17)	11.5% (*n*=10)	5.7% (*n*=5)
Sexual Violence Follow Up Questions	8.0% (*n*=7)	9.2% (*n*=8)	16.1% (*n*=14)	8.0% (*n*=7)
Sample Contexts and Disclosure Questions	9.2% (*n*=8)	10.3% (*n*=9)	10.3% (*n*=9)	10.3% (*n*=9)
Contextual Perceptions of Sexual Assault	10.3% (*n*=9)	18.4% (*n*=16)	5.7% (*n*=5)	13.8% (*n*=6)
Rape Myth Acceptance	8.0% (*n*=7)	12.6% (*n*=11)	8.0% (*n*=7)	8.7% (*n*=10)
Intimate Partner Violence	13.8% (*n*=6)	13.8% (*n*=12)	9.2% (*n*=8)	8.7% (*n*=10)
Bystander Questions				
Bystander Readiness to Help	12.6% (*n*=11)	16.1% (*n*=14)	8.0% (*n*=7)	5.7% (*n*=5)
Bystander Confidence	11.5% (*n*=10)	13.8% (*n*=12)	9.2% (*n*=8)	13.8% (*n*=6)
General Questions				
General Demographic Questions	8.7% (*n*=10)	20.7% (*n*=18)	10.3% (*n*=9)	4.6% (*n*=4)
General Climate Questions	12.6% (*n*=11)	20.7% (*n*=18)	10.3% (*n*=9)	4.6% (*n*=4)

Note. Percentages add up to more than 100% because participants could select more than one response.

Given the White House Task Forces' report, Title IX officers were asked to provide information about their use of the questions that were recommended in the Not Alone Toolkit. There was wide variation in the use of the recommended questions. For example, when assessing bystander readiness to help, about 13% used all of the questions, 16% used most of the questions, 8% used some of the questions, and 6% used none of the questions. On the other hand, in relation to the

bystander confidence questions, 12% used all of the questions, 14% used most of the questions, 9% used some of the questions, and 14% used none of the questions. Table 3 presents the different sections from the Not Alone Toolkit and whether the Title IX officers reported that their institution used all, most, some, or none of those recommended questions.

Protecting human subjects

Almost 50% of Title IX officers reported that their sexual assault CCSs had received approval from their Institutional Review Board. Cover letter protections also included statements that the survey was voluntary (85.1%, n = 74), although some institutions did require that students take the survey (14.9%, n = 13). Given that students may be unaware of reporting processes or where to locate sexual assault resources at their IHEs, almost 80% of Title IX officers reported that their IHE's survey included sexual assault resources and also information on how to report a CSA (about 70%).

Table 4. Protections for Human Subjects.

	Percent	*n*
Role of Institutional Review Board		
Consultation with the university Institutional Review Board	44.8%	39
Approval of the university Institutional Review Board	46.0%	40
Content of survey cover letter		
A reminder that the survey is voluntary	85.1%	74
A statement that the survey is required	14.9%	13
Other information provided to survey respondents		
Information providing campus sexual assault resources	77.0%	67
Information on how to report a sexual assault on campus	69.0%	60

Note. Percentages add up to more than 100% because participants could select more than one response.

The Execution Stage

Collecting data

Given there are various ways to collect data, such as on-line surveys, face-to-face interviewing, and telephone surveys (e.g., CATI), Title IX officers reported their IHE's selected method to survey their students. A majority of the respondents said that their institution used online surveys (87.4%, n = 76). A very small number of institutions relied on in-person interviews (4.6%, n = 4). None of the Title IX officers reported that their institution used telephone interviews.

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Table 5. Methods Used to Recruit Student Respondents

	Percent	*n*
Invitation from campus administration/leadership	54.0%	47
Invitation from Title IX Officer	41.4%	36
Invitation from student leadership	19.5%	17
Fliers	13.8%	12
Follow-up emails	52.8%	46
Other	14.9%	13

Note. Percentages add up to more than 100% because participants could select more than one response.

Methods of recruitment

The institutions that deployed climate surveys used a variety of methods to invite their students to participate. About half of the Title IX officers said their campus used an invitation from campus administration or leadership, although invitations were also sent from Title IX officers themselves (41.4%) and to a lesser extent there was recruitment efforts by student leadership (19.5%). To bolster response rates, Title IX officers also reported whether or not their IHE used incentives to recruit students. An almost equal number of respondents indicated that they used gift cards (32.2%) or no incentive (33.3%). A few Title IX officers provided other incentives (that is, chocolate, extra credit, food, parking pass). In addition, a small percentage (4.6%) of Title IX officers indicated that the students were required to complete the survey or else face a registrar's hold on the student's account.

Response rate

For the IHEs that deployed their sexual assault CCSs, the average response rate was 27.74%. The range for response rates was as low as 6% and as high as 98% (*SD* = 19.99).

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Common themes emerged from the qualitative analysis that provided valuable insights on IHEs' methods of dissemination, concerns about response rates and student representativeness, and the importance of viewing campus sexual assault from a longitudinal perspective and not as a "snapshot." The following sections breakdown the results based on the initial set of four questions posed to survey respondents on the subtopics of CCS strengths, CCS areas for improvement, anticipated revisions of the CCS, and the points of difficulty during the CCS process.

Survey Strengths

Respondents noted multiple strengths with regard to the dissemination process, including the strength of communication regarding the survey, a strong response rate, and the ease of administration. Throughout survey process and development, respondents report that they felt the questions they used were based on

empirical evidence, were comprehensive and previously vetted (for example, questions from the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium's Sexual Assault Survey), and that a clear strength was having faculty and staff work together to create a thorough, comprehensive survey. Throughout the process of data gathering, the thoroughness of questions was again noted as a strong point, as was the broad range of questions, accessibility of the survey online, and its conciseness. Strengths of data analysis included the manner in which the analysis enables administration to make informed decisions, and that the methodology was rigorous. Lastly, respondents felt that general strengths of the survey itself include the fact that it allowed them to establish a benchmark, or snapshot of the current campus climate and that it identified areas to focus on that were not expected; in particular, domestic abuse.

Areas for Improvement

Many respondents noted that whereas the data garnered from the survey was strong, there were multiple areas for improvement, particular with survey development and data gathering. For example, respondents felt a need to improve the wording of some questions (in some cases, it was noted that they were unable to customize or add questions), a need for more financial support, and a need to include questions on bystander intervention. Respondents also noted the need for a higher response and completion rate, that the survey was too long, the importance of the use of incentives, and that questions used from previous surveys needed to evidence more inclusion and gender-neutrality. Few suggestions for improvement were noted for dissemination and data analysis.

Revisions

Approximately 65% of respondents (representing 43 institutions) reported intentions to make revisions prior to the next administration of the CCS. Consistent with the aforementioned discussion, revisions were to be primarily focused on the survey process and development and data gathering, with little focus on dissemination and data analysis. Respondents report that they will be changing the wording of multiple questions to show inclusiveness and gender neutrality, using external surveys instead of the survey they created (*It's On Us* was noted), switching their external consultant company, a plan to make the surveys shorter, changing and adding incentives, and including an introduction page that describes campus services and how to make reports.

Points of Difficulty

Respondents noted that there were many points of difficulty, or barriers with regards to survey length, participation rates, the validity of questions and analysis and external issues such as the pressure to report, transparency of the findings, and administrative support. Respondents reported finding it difficult to determine the number, breadth, and depth of questions to include, survey fatigue of the student population, and consideration of embedding their CCS into a larger campus survey supported by the University. Additionally, respondents reported concern about the validity of their findings due to a lack of filtering that resulted in limited analysis, suspecting students were not candid in reporting their findings and a lack of generalizability due to a low response rate. Lastly, respondents noted difficulty working with an external consultant, the timing for approval and concerns surrounding the University Institutional Review Boards, balancing the time necessary

to conduct a thorough analysis with the urgency felt to report findings to the government or University administration, and the lack of administrative support and acceptance that "this is a necessary action" of the College/University.

As to CCS response rates, Title IX officers reported a wide range of completion rates from single digits to almost a perfect 100% response rate. Given the importance of response rates in the ability to generalize to the campus and student population, future studies on CSAs using the CCS might improve response rates by including pre-contacts (that is, contacting potential participants ahead of time and informing them that the survey will be sent soon); multiple contacts (that is, sending multiple reminder emails); personalizing emails (e.g., including the potential participant's name; Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000); and considering length, ordering, and format (that is., survey design; Fan & Yan, 2010). These recommendations are especially salient since the majority of Title IX officers reported using online surveys which tend to have lower response rates than mail or paper based surveys (Fan & Yan, 2010). More recent research using online communities suggests that the authority of the sender and appealing to their sense of community do not improve response rates whereas pleas for help in the email invitation do (Petrovcic, Petric, & Manfreda, 2016). Here, we saw follow-up e-mails were only used a little over 50% of the time to recruit student respondents. Although our data cannot speak to the content of those follow-up e-mails, follow-up emails in general and the framing of seeking help from students could potentially bolster response rates. IHEs should carefully consider the multiple strategies to increase response rates (pre-contact, invitation, survey design, and survey completion; Fan & Yan, 2010) when designing their CCS methodology as using more methods does not necessarily translate into increase response rates (Fan & Yan, 2010; Petrovcic et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important to determine which methods are more successful for that particular IHE.

Qualitative data analysis from this study also suggested the importance of appropriate dissemination tactics, which can include both strong support from administration or incentives for participants. For example, one respondent stated that "administrative support and acceptance that this is a necessary action" was crucial to strengthening their survey response rate. Participants also reported using innovative incentives needing support by administration. These included extra credit, parking passes, bookstore gift cards, and other forms of gift cards. Moreover, 'ideal' monetary incentives may hinge on IHE's support and also monetary resources. Recall, the CCSVS BJS study conducted a survey incentive experiment and found the ideal survey incentive was $20-$30. Given institutional resources, this amount may not be feasible, of course.

Qualitative analysis shows that the survey serves as a tool of discovery, enabling Universities to identify points of intervention and new areas to focus on. For example, one respondent noted that the survey "identified that domestic abuse was an area of interest for educational sessions." A second respondent reported learning "the extent and characteristics of sexual assault on our campus, perceptions students have about climate and education; and qualitative themes are particularly helpful to us in identifying campus-specific priorities going forward in prevention and response." In another case, it helped the campus "confirm many suspicions" thus giving the University the capability to direct resources and/or programming, apply for grants, and so on, based upon empirical data sources. This can be confirmed by one respondent's statement that "data was used to help inform decisions."

It is also important to note that the survey itself can serve as an information point, through which an IHE can educate participants. Many respondents noted that they felt that the survey could serve as a platform, per se, for information dissemination. For example, one respondent stated that it would make "resources available for students" in the next offering of the survey, and another stated that they would be adding an "introduction page that describes services and how to make reports at our University." Yet another respondent noted that it was going to "identify more specific information about how to report, policy awareness, etc." as a revision that they had made to their survey prior to its next dissemination.

Notably, the qualitative data suggest the majority of respondents found this to be an important effort that must be continued. While many noted that this survey can serve as a baseline measure of their campus safety, others said that this was a good way to learn where to direct their programmatic efforts. Ultimately, many noted the broader impact from better understanding CSAs and felt that the widespread nature of the survey would enable IHEs to better examine "national comparison data," to help "identify national trends" and consideration of joining "a larger consortium for comparative data."

Perhaps the most important contribution of this study were the discussions of survey weaknesses and anticipated revisions, which culminate in what could be deemed as 'lessons learned.' This is particularly salient because the findings are not only generalizable to all surveys, but are also directly applicable to all surveys examining gender-based assault and violence. Participants noted for example, that survey improvement and revisions needed to have a stronger focus on "gender identification," more "emphasis on how someone intervened (bystander intervention), wording questions to allow "to break down each sexual assault. So if they were assaulted twice (one by student one by professor), the question doesn't break down between the two incidents" and the need for "more inclusion, gender neutrality." Another participant also responded that "we did not ask detailed questions about the nonconsensual experiences disclosed. So while we know the nature of the behavior, we didn't collect, by whom, or where, etc." Other participants noted the need to include "more inclusive language, thoughtful options, and gender-neutral language" and "more questions about drugs, drinking, dating, and sexual violence."

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to provide further insights into the implementation of CCSs at IHEs. This research therefore surveyed Title IX Officers across the United States, who play a critical role in IHEs in addressing and responding to interpersonal violence, such as dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking. Similar to previous estimates (U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight, 2014), very few of the Title IX officers who responded indicated that their institution conducted a CCS during the 2014/2015 year. However, across those who conducted a CCS and those who were planning to conduct a CCS, a variety of people at IHEs were involved in the process with the Title IX officer, typically campus administrators being the most commonly cited. Consistent with the recommendations in the literature (e.g., McCarthy, 2016; CRVAW, 2014), and even more promising, is the report by Title IX officers that there was broad support across the IHEs for the CCSs. Given the resources needed to design, implement, and gauge CSAs, without institutional support this could become an extremely challenging endeavor.

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Few Title IX officers reported faculty involvement in the CCS process. Consistent with the recommendations of the Not Alone toolkit (2016), it would benefit IHEs to involve more faculty members in the CCS process, particularly those who specialize in research methodology (that is, survey design and analysis) and corresponding substantive areas such as school violence, interpersonal violence with a focus on sexual assault, and alcohol studies. Whereas we argue faculty involvement is critical, more so would be the collaboration between faculty, administration, and other key stakeholders. Different IHE offices, and corresponding stakeholders, each have their own mission and role in addressing CSAs, and these roles and missions may leave them operating independently, and possibly in isolation from each other. Successful collaboration may mean that invested stakeholders may need some type of central hub for coordination (that is, a research center) to foster the formation of these partnerships. In addition, stakeholders may need to shed their "master status" (Hughes, 1945) in order to transform into a team of stakeholders who all develop and share corresponding goals and a shared mission to address CSAs. A critical first step would be collaboration on the CCS.

Limitations

Because there is a lack of prior research that examines the process of IHEs' implementing a sexual assault CCS at the institutional level (e.g., in-house surveys versus inclusion in a well-funded study, for example, by the AAU or BJS), the present study is descriptive in nature and should be interpreted as such. In addition, although the survey includes almost 250 Title IX officer's insights on this process, its overall response rate is approximately 14%. This may be in part due to a few reasons. First, the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight (2014) suggests that a small percentage of IHEs were conducting CCSs at the time of our data collection. Second, there is the trend related to e-mail surveys. The Qualtrics platform sent out e-mails to survey respondents and research suggests that since the late 1980s, response rates for surveys that are e-mailed have significantly decreased (Dabbish & Kraut, 2006; Fan & Yan, 2010; Sheehan, 2001). Therefore, even though these findings provide new insights on how IHEs are conducting their sexual assault CCSs, they cannot be extrapolated to all universities across the U.S. In addition, the Campus Safety and Security website that we used to create the sample population did not always have the correct information. For example, almost 90 survey e-mails were returned as undeliverable due to invalid e-mail addresses. It is also unknown how often the Campus Safety and Security website is updated. Therefore, we may not have had access to all current U.S. Title IX officers contact information.

CONCLUSION

CSAs continues to be a pressing social problem. Although IHEs have taken steps to uncover the hidden prevalence rates of CSA through use of the CCSs, based on this study and others there is still much work to be done. Future research should continue to investigate the CCS implementation process, including the critical role of collaboration between faculty, Title IX officers, and administration. In addition, given that IHEs vary in size and resources, care should be taken to understand the nuances in implementation that may be challenging for smaller institutions versus larger institutions. Implementing a CCS may be even more demanding for small(er) IHEs that may lack internal capacity (that is, funding or personnel) while they try to accomplish this critical task designed to uncover the "dark figure of

CSAs" in order to address campus and student safety. Finally, even with changing guidance from the Department of Education on CSAs in 2017, IHEs should continue to strive to better understand CSAs on and off their campuses by using CCSs. This analytical tool will continue to aid IHEs in prevention efforts that can be implemented to decrease CSAs and response efforts to improve services and support systems for victim/survivors.

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