



## **NATIONAL SURVEY OF SANCTIONING PRACTICES FOR STUDENT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>**

A collaboration between the University of Michigan's Office of Student Conflict Resolution and Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center, The Center for Effective Public Policy's Center for Sex Offender Management, and the Association for Student Conduct Administration

### **Briefing Sheet and Key Findings<sup>2</sup>**

- More than 80% of respondents reported that sexual misconduct matters were addressed at their respective institutions during the 2012-2013 academic year.
- Across institutions, the number of student sexual misconduct matters addressed, including sexual assaults, varied considerably.
  - Just over 50% of respondents reported addressing 5 or fewer sexual misconduct matters during the 2012-2013 academic year and only 1% reported addressing greater than 50.
  - Almost 15% of respondents reported that more than 10 sexual misconduct matters were addressed at their institutions during that same time period.
- Roughly half of the respondents indicated that between 1-5 students at their respective institutions were found responsible for sexual assault during the 2012-2013 academic year, with another 6% reporting that 6-10 students were found responsible for sexual assaults at their individual institution during this time frame. Similar figures were reported for the number of students found responsible for sexual harassment.
- Nearly all (96%) of the respondents reported that their colleges or universities have a written policy for addressing such matters. Just over 25% indicated that their institutions have minimum sanctions that apply to specific types of sexual misconduct.
- Sanctioning decisions were most commonly made by consulting the range of options available under institutional policy and by referring to past sanctions in similar cases.

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<sup>1</sup> Data were collected via electronic survey in December 2013 and early January 2014. Of the 2,606 college/university representatives who received the survey, 384 responded. Respondents were fairly evenly distributed throughout the nation. Nearly 2/3 represented public institutions and the remainder represented private institutions. Institutions of varied student population sizes were well-represented.

<sup>2</sup> Initial findings were reported by University of Michigan staff members Jay Wilgus, Holly-Rider Milkovich, and Stacy Vander Velde at the Association for Student Conduct Administration's annual conference on February 6, 2014. A full report of the findings will be available by April 1, 2014. For additional information, please contact the survey administrators at [sanctioningsurvey@umich.edu](mailto:sanctioningsurvey@umich.edu).

- Fewer than 10% of sanctioning decisions were informed by a written sanctioning guide developed for student sexual misconduct matters.
- Campus/community safety was rated as the chief priority for sanctioning decisions in sexual assault cases. This was followed by deterrence, education, reparation, rehabilitation, and retribution. Similar results were found as priorities for sanctioning in sexual harassment cases.
- The vast majority (79%) indicated that they do not assess the effectiveness of their approaches to sanctioning in such cases.
  - Just under 25% reported that they assess student complainants' satisfaction with the *process* used to address sexual misconduct matters, and only 25% reported assessing the complainants' satisfaction with the *outcome*. These findings were similar with respect to assessing respondents' satisfaction with the sanctioning process or outcome.
  - Less than 20% reported collecting follow-up information from the complainant to determine whether they remained and graduated from the institution after reporting the misconduct to the institution.
  - Fewer than 30% indicated that they gather follow-up information about students found responsible for sexual misconduct to identify if they engage in further sexual behavior problems during their time at the institution.
- The majority of respondents indicated that their respective institutions need, desire, or would benefit from high levels of training, technical assistance, or support in each the following areas:
  - The impact of sexual misconduct on victims/survivors;
  - The needs and interests of victims/survivors of sexual misconduct;
  - The diversity of individuals who commit acts of sexual misconduct;
  - Research-informed approaches to sanctioning students found responsible for sexual misconduct;
  - Restorative justice practices that may be appropriate for sexual misconduct matters; and
  - Information from the sexual abuser/sex offender management field that may inform sanctioning approaches in student sexual misconduct cases.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents (83%) indicated that their respective institutions would benefit from national guidelines or model policies/practices for sanctioning students who are found responsible for sexual misconduct, but that national mandates were not desirable.

Taken together, these data highlight the need for additional support, assistance, and guidance for stakeholders at institutions of higher education in addressing student sexual misconduct and creating appropriate sanctions or interventions for students who are found responsible for sexual misconduct. In addition, the findings provide federal, state, and local leaders, researchers, and practitioners with tangible recommendations for further action and inquiry. The administrators of this survey look forward to further contributions to the ongoing conversation about preventing and responding to student sexual misconduct at institutions of higher education.