

5-1-2021

Examining Predictors of Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct

Megan Giovannini

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations>



Part of the [Criminology Commons](#), [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Giovannini, Megan, "Examining Predictors of Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct" (2021). *UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones*. 4148.
<https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations/4148>

This Thesis is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Thesis in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Thesis has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

EXAMINING PREDICTORS OF STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY RESPONSES
TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

By

Megan Giovannini

Bachelor of Arts – Criminal Justice
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2019

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the

Master of Arts – Criminal Justice

Department of Criminal Justice
Greenspun College of Urban Affairs
The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 2021



Thesis Approval

The Graduate College
The University of Nevada, Las Vegas

April 9, 2021

This thesis prepared by

Megan Giovannini

entitled

Examining Predictors of Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual
Misconduct

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts – Criminal Justice
Department of Criminal Justice

Gillian Pinchevsky, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Chair

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D.
Graduate College Dean

Joel Lieberman, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Emily Troshynski, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Patricia Cook-Craig, Ph.D.
Graduate College Faculty Representative

ABSTRACT

The prevalence of college students' experiences with sexual violence has been well documented (e.g., Cantor et al., 2015; Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000; Krebs et al., 2007), along with the negative consequences associated with sexual victimization (e.g., Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009). Court cases, student disclosures, and media coverage have brought more attention to university responses to sexual misconduct and have attempted to hold universities accountable. The purpose of this study is to examine predictors of student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct, therefore adding to the existing literature. It is among one of the first to examine predictors of perceptions across a full sample of students and survivors of different forms of sexual violence. The Multi-College Bystander Efficacy Evaluation (mcBEE) survey was used to analyze perceptions of students who were enrolled at nine U.S. institutions of higher education to determine what predicts perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct for students in general, survivors of non-contact sexual violence, and survivors of contact sexual violence. This approach allows for further insight into the ongoing, serious problem of campus sexual violence and ways in which universities can begin to address factors that lead to ill perceptions in hopes of bettering the students' well-being.

Keywords: sexual misconduct, student perceptions, university responses

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ultimately, I am a product of the people that I have had the joy of working with over the last few years. I could easily spend numerous pages expressing my gratitude to each and every person in my life who has helped me get here.

First and foremost, I want to thank Dr. Gillian Pinchevsky for her continued support throughout this entire process. I never would have imagined where she would help guide me when I asked her to be my chair. She poured an immense amount of time into guiding me in the correct direction, providing me helpful feedback, and meeting with me week after week. She believed in me throughout the entire process and I can truly never thank her enough for everything that she has done for me and the countless hours she invested into my development and progress.

To my committee, Dr. Joel Lieberman, Dr. Emily Troshynski, and Dr. Patricia Cook-Craig, I owe so much to you all. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this journey with me and for continually providing me with feedback. I value all of you and your contributions truly helped build myself and this project into something much bigger.

Next, thank you to my incredible husband, Logan Giovannini. These last few years have not been easy but I cannot thank you enough for believing in me and encouraging me to continue on this path. Long distance is not easy but you have continued to support me, motivate me, and remind me of the much larger picture. You've been my rock through this, so thank you.

Lastly, I want to thank my friends and family. I could not have done this without any of you. Everyone has offered me an immeasurable amount of support throughout this process, more than I could have ever asked for. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	x
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION	1
The Current Study	3
CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON COLLEGE STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND UNIVERSITY RESPONSES	5
Prevalence of Sexual Violence Experienced by College Students	5
Non-Contact Sexual Victimization	5
Contact Sexual Victimization	6
Prevalence of College Student’s Sexual Violence Perpetration	8
Non-Contact and Contact Sexual Violence Perpetration	8
Impact of Sexual Victimization on Survivors	9
Federal Legislation Mandating University Responses	11
Title IX	11
Clery Act	13
Campus SaVE Act	14
University Responses to Sexual Misconduct	15
Prevention Programs and Trainings Offered	15
Policies, Services, and Resources	16
University Non-Compliance with Federal Legislation	17
Student Help-Seeking Tendencies	18

Formal and Informal Supports	18
Barriers to Help-Seeking	20
Student Perceptions of University Responses	22
Student Confidence in Universities	22
Institutional Betrayal	24
Perception Differences Between Survivors and Non-Survivors	25
Services and Resources Offered	26
Perceptions of University Responses	27
Summary of College Student Experiences of Sexual Misconduct and University	
Responses	27
The Current Study	28
Research Questions	29
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY	30
Measures	30
Dependent Variable	30
Student Perceptions	30
Predictors in Full Sample Analyses	32
Sexual Victimization Experiences	32
Sexual Violence Perpetration	33
Rape Myth Acceptance	33
Exposure to Messages About Sexual Misconduct	34
Bystander Intervention Training	34
Individual Characteristics	35

Age	35
Gender Identity	35
Sexual Orientation	35
Ethnicity and Race	36
Student Enrollment Status	36
Living Location	36
Membership In Organizations	37
Predictors in Survivor-Specific Analyses	37
Victimization Impact Measures	37
University-Specific Impact	37
General Impact	38
Help-Seeking Measures	38
General Help-Seeking	38
University-Affiliated Help-Seeking	39
Other Help-Seeking	39
Victimization Characteristics	39
Perpetrator	39
Location	40
Analytic Strategy	40
CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS	44
Descriptive Statistics	44
Institutions of Higher Education	44
Full Student Sample	45

Survivors of Non-Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample	46
Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample	49
Research Question 1	49
Overall Student Perceptions	50
University Would Support the Person Making the Report	53
University Would Support the Person Accused	55
University Would Provide Accommodations to Support the Person Making the Report	55
University Would Take Action to Address Factors That May Have Led to the Sexual Assault	56
University Would Label the Person Making the Report a Trouble Maker	57
If the Person Accused of Sexual Misconduct Was a University Athlete, the University Would Not Take the Case Seriously	58
If the Person Accused of Sexual Misconduct Was in a High Status or Otherwise Powerful Fraternity, the University Would Not Take the Case Seriously	59
If the Person Accused of Sexual Misconduct Was in a Position of Power or Authority, the University Would Not Take the Case Seriously	60
If the Person Accused of Sexual Misconduct Was From a Wealthy or Politically Connected Family, the University Would Take the Case More Seriously	61

Summary of Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct.	62
Linear Regression Analyses	63
Research Question 2	63
Research Question 3	64
Survivors of Non-Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample	64
Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample	65
Summary of Regression Analyses	67
CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	68
Discussion of the Results	68
Research Question 1	68
Research Question 2	75
Research Question 3	81
Implications	89
Limitations	93
Future Research	96
Conclusion	99
APPENDIX	100
REFERENCES	106
CURRICULUM VITAE	121

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Descriptives of Institutions of Higher Education	45
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics	48
Table 3. Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct. Percentage of Students Who Perceived Each Statement to be Likely/Very Likely	52
Table 4. Survivor Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct Based on Location and Perpetrator. Percentage of Students Who Perceived Each Statement to be Likely/Very Likely	54
Table 5. Linear Regression Predicting Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct; Full Sample	64
Table 6. Linear Regression Predicting Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct; Survivor Sub-Samples	66

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

It has been widely reported that sexual victimizations are commonly experienced by college students, with roughly one in five college women having been sexually assaulted¹ since entering college² (Cantor et al., 2015; Krebs et al., 2007; Krebs, Lindquist & Barrick, 2011; Krebs et al., 2016; Muehlenhard, Peterson, Humphreys & Jozkowski, 2017). College students experience a wide-range of sexual victimizations from non-contact sexual violence (e.g., sexual harassment) to contact sexual violence (e.g., rape,³ nonconsensual touching), each associated with substantial impacts to those affected (Pinchevsky, Magnuson, Augustyn & Rennison, 2020). Although many college students experience sexual victimization, their reporting rates and service utilization remain very low (Ameral, Palm Reed & Hines, 2017; DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017; Fisher et al., 2003; Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010; Moore & Baker, 2018; Sabina & Ho, 2014; Spencer et al., 2017; Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017; Walsh et al., 2019). Furthermore, previous research has found that students may not have faith in their universities to appropriately respond to sexual victimization (Cantor et al., 2015; Cantor et al., 2020; Holland & Cortina, 2017; Mennicke, Geiger & Brewster, 2019; Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020; Orchowski, Meyer & Gidycz, 2009).

Students' perceptions of their university's ability or willingness to appropriately respond to sexual misconduct may help explain some of the disconnect between the number of students who experience sexual victimization and the number who seek out services at the university.

¹ In these studies, sexual assault is used to cover a wide range of attempted or completed unwanted contact sexual victimizations such as forced touching, oral sex, sexual intercourse, anal sex, and any kind of sexual penetration.

² Within the current study, the terms university, college, and institution of higher education are used interchangeably, unless otherwise noted.

³ For the purposes of this paper and unless stated otherwise, the terms "rape" and "sexual assault" will be used synonymously to mean vaginal, anal, or oral penetration of a person without their consent.

Student survivors have expressed that they fear for their safety after reporting, are concerned that the offender will not actually be punished, or believe that the university will not actually help them or even care about their experiences (Holland & Cortina, 2017). Further, survivors' confidence in universities and their faith in reporting systems is questionable based on the justifications that they give for not reporting experiences with sexual misconduct (Cantalupo, 2010). In addition, research has found that students who identify as gender (i.e., transgender male, transgender female, genderqueer, gender nonconforming) and/or sexual minorities (i.e., gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, questioning) report lower levels of support and institutional connection than other students, which further isolates them and widens the disconnect with their university (Mennicke, Geiger & Brewster, 2019; Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020; Seabrook, McMahon, Duquaine, Johnson & DeSilva, 2018). Positive perceptions are crucial for students to seek help – formal or informal – so increasing confidence is essential to maintain the well-being of student populations.

Additionally, recent court cases have done little to encourage positive perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. The 2015 criminal case, *People v. Turner* (i.e., Brock Turner incident at Stanford University), shifted an increased focus to sexual misconduct on college campuses and what can be done to help survivors feel heard and protected. The case outcome resulted in cries of outrage as survivors and advocates felt that justice had not been adequately served given the short sentence received by Mr. Turner and the treatment of the victim in the case (Collins & Dunn, 2018). Although *People v. Turner* may be one of the most widely known cases of campus sexual assault, it is certainly not the only one. High profile cases have put a microscope on institutions of higher education, creating a lens for students to view their university's ability to protect them.

The concerns of sexual violence experienced by college students have not fallen on deaf ears. The rising conversation regarding sexual violence has reached many institutions and communities, with university communities being just one of them. Despite steps that universities have taken to address sexual misconduct on their campuses, critics argue that their efforts are lackluster, incomplete, and do little to address the issue (Fisher, Hartman, Cullen & Turner, 2002). While college students are a high-risk population, it has been argued that college campuses are also a breeding ground for sexual misconduct (Streng & Kamimura, 2017), as they have been criticized for creating a “rape culture” that normalizes inappropriate sexual activity among students. The most common examples of this are the normalization of coercive and alcohol facilitated sex (Collins & Dunn, 2018; Mennicke, Bowling, Gromer & Ryan, 2019; Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984).

Although some research has attempted to understand student perceptions of their university’s responses to sexual misconduct, additional research is necessary. It is also important to further consider the perceptions of survivors of sexual violence. Given that there are high victimization rates, low reporting rates, and a lack of formal help-seeking, concerns about the well-being of students are growing. Being able to identify key indicators of student perceptions can help address a gap in the literature, may help increase formal help-seeking tendencies, and can improve university responses.

The Current Study

The current study uses data from a victimization survey, the Multi-College Bystander Efficacy Evaluation (mBEE), to examine student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. More specifically, the current study is guided by three main research questions:

Research Question 1: How do students perceive university responses to sexual misconduct?

Research Question 2: What predicts student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct?

Research Question 3: How do survivors' experiences impact their perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct?

The remainder of the thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter Two discusses the literature surrounding student perceptions of university responses, with specific focus on prevalence rates of sexual violence among college students, the impact of victimization on survivors, federal legislation mandating university responses, university practices in response to sexual misconduct, student help-seeking tendencies, and an overview of preliminary research on student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. Chapter Three discusses this study's methodology, including an introduction of mcBEE and the measures and analytic techniques used to answer the research questions. Chapter Four presents the results. Chapter Five provides a discussion of the findings, linking them back to what is known from the existing literature, followed by a discussion of implications, limitations, directions for future research, and then a conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON COLLEGE STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND UNIVERSITY RESPONSES

In order to fully understand the complexity and history behind student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct, it is first necessary to explore what is known about the prevalence of sexual violence experienced by college students and current university responses to address it.

Prevalence of Sexual Violence Experienced by College Students

Since the 1980s, increased attention has been given to college students' experiences with sexual violence. Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski (1987) completed the first nationally representative study in this area, finding that in the six months preceding the survey, 38 out of 1,000 college women had experienced a completed or attempted rape (in accordance with the Uniform Crime Report definition at that time). This study was a significant catalyst for conversation about sexual violence experienced by college students. Since then, many studies have been conducted on college student sexual victimization experiences, yielding valuable information about the range of sexual victimizations experienced, including non-contact sexual victimization and contact sexual victimization.

Non-Contact Sexual Victimization

Some studies have examined the prevalence of non-contact sexual victimization, including sexual harassment, experienced by college students (e.g., Cantor et al., 2020; Coker et al., 2016; Pinchevsky et al., 2020).⁴ Within the recent Association of American Universities

⁴ Sexual harassment refers to "behaviors with sexual connotations that interfered with an individual's academic or professional performance, limited the individual's ability to participate in an academic program, or created an intimidating, hostile, or offensive asocial, academic, or work environment" (Cantor et al., 2020, p. v).

(AAU)'s Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (Cantor et al., 2020) that surveyed students across 33 institutions of higher education, 41% of students had experienced some form of sexually harassing behavior since entering college. The most frequently experienced behaviors were insulting jokes and offensive comments regarding somebody's body or sexual activities (Cantor et al., 2020). Of the students who had experienced sexually harassing behavior, a little less than half of them stated that the behavior led to a hostile environment, had limited their involvement in programs, or had interfered with their academic or professional performance. For both undergraduate and graduate students, the perpetrator was most likely to be a fellow student. Graduate students were victimized by faculty members at a higher rate than undergraduate students (5.5% of undergraduate students, 24% of graduate students; Cantor et al., 2020).

Additionally, Fisher, Cullen, and Turner (2000) outlined numerous forms of verbal and visual sexual victimizations that fall into the non-contact sexual victimization category. They found that visual sexual victimization (e.g., being shown pornography without consent, being observed naked without consent, and being shown another person's body without consent) was not very common among college students (6% of female students), while verbal sexual victimization (e.g., catcalling, sexist remarks or comments, obscene phone calls, false sexual rumors) was more common (50% of students).

Contact Sexual Victimization

Contact sexual victimization is a broad term used in this study to describe rape, unwanted sexual touching, and sexual coercion (i.e., unwanted sexual contact as a result of pressure, threatening non-physical harm, or promising rewards; Cantor et al., 2020). Several studies have examined the prevalence of contact sexual victimizations among the college student population.

Fedina, Holmes & Backes's (2016) systematic review of the literature exploring victimizations within the last seven months or since students entered college found that upwards of 8% of female students have experienced completed rape,⁵ nearly 4% have experienced attempted rape, and over 20% have experienced unwanted sexual contact. Further, they reported that upwards of 14% have experienced incapacitated rape, 32% have experienced sexual coercion, and as many as 44% of female students have experienced a broadly defined version of rape/sexual assault (Fedina et al., 2016).⁶ While their systematic review provides excellent insight into prevalence rates, they note that their estimates are influenced by the different methodologies, time periods, and definitions that are used across the studies they examined (Fedina et al., 2016).

The AAU study examined contact sexual violence by explicitly looking at the prevalence of nonconsensual sexual contact⁷ by physical force or the inability to consent and nonconsensual contact by coercion or without ongoing consent among college students. They concluded that across 33 institutions of higher education, nearly 13% of students had experienced nonconsensual sexual contact by physical force or the inability to consent since enrolling at their school. Gender differences emerged, with the percentage being significantly higher for women and gender minorities (i.e., students who identified as transgender woman, transgender man, nonbinary/genderqueer, gender questioning, or who noted that their gender was not listed) than

⁵ Fedina, Holmes, and Backes (2016) refer to completed rape as “forcible vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse using physical force or threat of force” (p. 86), attempted rape as “attempted vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse using physical force or threat of physical force” (p. 86), unwanted sexual contact as “attempted or completed kissing, fondling, petting, or other sexual touching sexual using physical force, threat of physical force, verbal coercion, or a combination of these but excluding vaginal, anal, and oral intercourse” (p. 86), incapacitated rape as “completed vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse while intoxicated or while on drugs” (p. 86), and sexual coercion as completed unwanted sexual contact or completed oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse achieved by nonviolent actions (intimidation, lying, threats).

⁶ Fedina, Holmes, & Backes (2016) note that a number of studies looked at broad definitions of rape or sexual assault where the terms were used synonymously to mean a range of experiences that encompass actions discussed previously (e.g., attempted/completed rape, unwanted sexual contact, incapacitated rape, sexual coercion).

⁷ The AAU study defines nonconsensual sexual contact as penetration and sexual touching without consent (Cantor et al., 2020).

men. Specifically, just over 20% of both students identifying as women and gender minorities reported nonconsensual sexual contact since entering college. These rates are alarming because the AAU study also reported that the rate of experiencing this form of victimization had increased by 3% from 2015 to 2019 for undergraduate women (Cantor et al., 2020). Additionally, nearly three-quarters of women stated that the perpetrator of their victimization was a fellow student (Cantor et al., 2020). Sexual coercion was experienced least frequently by students, and 10-15% of women and TGQN students (i.e., students who identified as transgender woman, transgender man, nonbinary/genderqueer, gender questioning, or who noted that their gender was not listed) reported experiencing nonconsensual sexual contact without ongoing consent (Cantor et al., 2020).

Prevalence of College Students' Sexual Violence Perpetration

In order to fully understand sexual misconduct on college campuses, it is also important to examine sexual violence perpetration among college students. While the research in this area is more limited, the existing literature proves helpful in providing a larger context of campus sexual misconduct.

Non-Contact and Contact Sexual Violence Perpetration

Much like sexual victimization rates, the prevalence of perpetration on college campuses ranges from study to study (Walsh et al., 2019). In one sample of 197 college students, 14% had self-reported perpetrating a sexual assault⁸ within a one-year time frame while enrolled at an urban commuter university (Abbey & McAuslan, 2004). Abbey and McAuslan (2004) assert that their findings are consistent with that of other college and general community samples. More

⁸ Abbey and McAuslan refer to sexual assault as being inclusive of many forms of sexual violence. Their measure includes “physically forced sexual contact (e.g., kissing or touching), verbally coerced intercourse, and any acts that constitute rape” (p. 747).

specifically, they explain that studies that look specifically at self-reported rape⁹ perpetration find a perpetration rate of 6-15% among male students, while studies that examine more broad terms of sexual assault perpetration range from 22-57% of male students (Abbey & McAuslan, 2004; Abbey, McAuslan & Ross, 1998; Calhoun, Bernat, Clum, & Frame, 1997; Koss et al., 1987; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984; Senn, Desmarais, Verberg, & Wood, 2000). Further, Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski (1987) concluded that the rate of perpetration for male college students was 34 per 1,000 for “unwanted oral, anal, and vaginal intercourse attempts and completions” (p. 168) during a six-month period.

Numerous studies have argued that there is a cultural context on college campuses that condones coercive and alcohol-facilitated sexual behavior among students (Collins & Dunn, 2018; Mennicke, Bowling, Gromer & Ryan, 2019; Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984). Further, a 2012 study found that being in a fraternity “indirectly predicted sexual assault through alcohol consumption and illegal drug use” (Franklin, Bouffard, and Pratt, 2012, p. 1474).¹⁰ Within rape cultural contexts, there is a significant amount of peer support for sexual violence among college men populations (Schwartz, DeKeseredy, Tait & Shahid, 2001). While the existent culture on college campuses has the potential to condone situations or actions that contribute to sexual violence, it does not take into account the widespread impact of such actions, especially on survivors.

Impact of Sexual Victimization on Survivors

⁹ Within these studies, rape refers to “attempted or completed vaginal, anal, or oral sexual intercourse obtained through force, through the threat of force, or when the victim is incapacitated and unable to give consent” (Abbey & McAuslan, 2004, p. 747).

¹⁰ Franklin, Bouffard, and Pratt (2012) define sexual assault as “attempted rape, completed rape, threats or force that resulted in sexual contact, alcohol-induced rape” (p. 1465).

Sexual victimization rates experienced by college students are of extreme concern because of the short- and long-term consequences experienced by survivors. Overall, survivors of sexual victimization experience a larger prevalence of physical and mental health problems compared to non-survivors (Follette, Polusny, Bechtyle & Naugle, 1996). Specifically, survivors are more likely to develop posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety (Ahrens, Stansell & Jennings, 2010; Black et al., 2011; Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009; Jordan, Campbell & Follingstad, 2010). All of these mental health concerns also lend themselves to higher rates of suicidal ideologies among survivors (Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009; Chang & Hirsch, 2015; Chang, Yu, Jilani, Fowler, Yu, Lin, & Hirsch, 2015; Jordan, Campbell & Follingstad, 2010). Some survivors also develop negative coping styles that worsen their ability to recover from a victimization and project further harm onto their post-assault psychological health (Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009; Chang & Hirsch, 2015). As an example, some survivors develop an avoidance coping style which may aide them in avoiding stress and negative consequences short-term, but the maladaptive coping style often leads to longer recovery times and increased long-term depression and PTSD symptomology (Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009).

Sexual victimization has also been linked to poor performances in school and other professional settings (Cantor et al., 2020). Compared to students who have not been sexually victimized, research suggests that survivors have lower grade point averages (GPAs) and take longer to complete their degree (Jordan, Combs & Smith, 2014; Mengo & Black, 2016). More specifically, Pinchevsky and colleagues (2020) found that among students who had experienced sexual victimization, almost one in five reported that it interfered with their academic or professional performance. This was especially pronounced among survivors who had

experienced contact sexual victimization (i.e., unwanted sexual contact, rape, and sexual coercion), but those who experienced non-contact sexual harassment were more likely to disclose that the victimization resulted in intimidating or uncomfortable environments at the survivor's university (Pinchevsky, Magnuson, Augustyn & Rennison, 2020). In other words, sexual victimization often results in an environment that is not conducive to learning and hinders the student's ability to excel.

As previously stated, one in five students experience sexual assault¹¹ while in college (Cantor et al., 2015; Krebs et al., 2007; Krebs, Lindquist & Barrick, 2011; Krebs et al., 2016; Muehlenhard, Peterson, Humphreys & Jozkowski, 2017). The true impact of sexual victimization is multi-faceted and often affects all aspects of a survivors' life. This, paired with the increase in the number of students who believe sexual misconduct is problematic at their school over the past several years (Cantor et al., 2020), creates a need for universities to step in and take accountability.

Federal Legislation Mandating University Responses

In an attempt to address growing concerns regarding the prevalence of sexual violence among the college student population, federal legislation has been enacted that requires universities to respond and address sexual misconduct. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act), and the Campus SaVE Act are among the most commonly cited pieces of legislation that attempt to hold universities accountable.

Title IX

¹¹ In these studies, sexual assault is used to cover a wide range of attempted or completed unwanted contact sexual victimizations such as forced touching, oral sex, sexual intercourse, anal sex, and any kind of sexual penetration.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, overseen by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), is one of the most well-known and oldest federal legislation that addresses campus peer sexual violence and offers protection to survivors (Cantalupo, 2011; Coray, 2016). Title IX is a civil rights law that protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities that receive federal funding, and includes protections against sexual harassment, assault, and violence. It creates a call for action from institutions of higher education to stop the harassment from taking place, prevent any future occurrences, and remedy any negative effects experienced by any parties involved (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017).

To encourage compliance with Title IX, the OCR issued a "Dear Colleague" letter in 2011 under the Obama Administration that was meant to clear any misconceptions regarding institutional obligations about responding to sexual misconduct. The Dear Colleague letter outlined responsibilities of institutions of higher education, attempted to ensure the protection of survivors, created an increased call to action for enforcing the rights of survivors, and articulated the steps that schools must take in order to adequately prevent sexual discrimination (Ali, 2011; Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017). Further, it initiated a shift from "clear and convincing" evidence to "preponderance of the evidence," which significantly lowers the burden of proof for sexual misconduct cases (Anderson, 2019).

More recently, the Trump Administration announced new changes to Title IX mandates in 2017 which went into effect in 2020. Some of these changes include increased protections for the accused and it has been criticized for taking power away from survivors in a time where they should be feeling empowered and given extra protections (Collins & Dunn, 2018). These changes were made on the basis of beliefs that campus sexual assault investigations are generally

unfairly biased against accused students (Anderson, 2019). Although the true effects of these new implementations are not evident yet, the debate and controversy continues. In fact, in early March 2021, President Biden announced a 100-day review of the Education Department's regulations and policies to ensure that all recent changes comply with antidiscrimination policies, more specifically Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

While Title IX was introduced to help hold institutions more accountable for what occurs on their campuses, there are arguments that it is problematic for numerous reasons. Critics of Title IX assert that survivors are “at the mercy of an investigative process that is simultaneously navigating other priorities” (Collins & Dunn, 2018, p. 379). In other words, survivors' rights and well-being may be pushed aside in favor of the institutions' reputation, future enrollment rates, and support from stakeholders (Cantalupo, 2010; Cantalupo, 2011; Collins & Dunn, 2018; Yung, 2015). Critics also argue that Title IX does nothing more than provide guidance on how to respond to sexual based discrimination and victimization (Ali, 2011; Lhamon, 2014). Holland and Cortina (2017) explain that Title IX guidance states that all university employees that interact with students and have the potential to experience disclosures need to receive trainings that will help them respond to sexual misconduct disclosures. While Title IX stresses the importance of this, it does not always happen because it is guidance, not law. The fact that it is only guidance leaves ambiguity and each school must decide how they would like to implement recommendations.

Clery Act

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act) was passed in 1990 with an expansion in 1998 (Fisher, Hartman, Cullen & Turner, 2002). The Clery Act was enacted as a result of lobbying efforts by the parents of Jeanne

Clery, a Lehigh University student who was raped and murdered in her on-campus dorm room. The legislation called for more transparency about crime that occurs on or directly around the university. Additionally, it sought to create a new standard for universities by mandating that those that receive federal aid must keep accurate counts of the number of incidents and then complete annual crime and safety reports for events that occur on their campuses, university-owned buildings, and areas directly adjacent to the university (Duncan, 2014). The 1998 expansion covered the inclusion of new crimes (arson and manslaughter), and included new requirements (geographical breakdowns, daily crime logs, and new record keeping requirements; Fisher, Hartman, Cullen & Turner, 2002). This was done to increase availability of different kinds of campus-crime related statistics that would be easily accessible by students and families (Fisher, Hartman, Cullen & Turner, 2002).

Critics argue that the Clery Act, more so than anything else, was symbolic for “doing something” because it did not actually fix the problem of campus sexual misconduct or crime in general (Fisher, Hartman, Cullen & Turner, 2002). Critics also point out that annual security reports only include certain crimes reported to campus authorities and are limited by the geographic location of the incident (e.g., on campus, in areas directly adjacent to campus; Fisher, Hartman, Cullen & Turner, 2002). Further, some assert that the Clery Act creates unrealistic expectations that can be difficult for universities to meet because the legislation puts the burden on universities to create and comply with unfunded mandates (Fisher, Hartman, Cullen & Turner, 2002).

Campus SaVE Act

The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE Act) is a part of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act that President Obama signed into law in 2013

(Duncan, 2014). In an attempt to codify provisions of the Dear Colleague Letter, the Campus SaVE Act creates new requirements for institutions to follow when it comes to reporting and preventing sexual offenses. For example, within the annual security reports that are mandated by the Clery Act, universities must also include instances of stalking, dating violence, domestic violence and they must report on the kinds of prevention programs they use (Duncan, 2014).

Directives address new and recommended procedures when it comes to investigating student disciplinary hearings, necessary components of prevention programs, and they highlight the rights of the victim and accused. Much like legislation that preceded the Campus SaVE Act, it has been met with mixed opinions about whether it is a step in the right direction toward university accountability (Duncan, 2014).

University Responses to Sexual Misconduct

Despite the enactment of federal legislation that has attempted to hold universities responsible for adequately responding to sexual misconduct, the reality is that non-compliance exists in some contexts and there is wide variation in university responses (Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2005; Richards, 2019).

Prevention Programs and Trainings Offered

Institutions of higher education vary in the prevention programs and trainings on interpersonal violence that they offer. For example, some universities have mandatory trainings only for faculty and security personnel, some offer optional trainings for students, or they offer different types of awareness and/or prevention programs (Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2005). However, it is not clear if all programs are high-quality or reach students in the intended manner. For example, in a national sample, only about one-third of students indicated that they were very/extremely knowledgeable about the definition of sexual assault (Cantor et al., 2020). Such a

large portion of students being unaware of the definition of sexual assault suggests that awareness programs need to be altered to address this ever-growing concern to increase awareness among students. In addition, prevention programs can send the wrong message to students if not well thought-out. Universities have the potential to place themselves in a position where they unintentionally condone victim blaming by placing an over-emphasis on the victim's responsibility to avoid situations that could lead to a sexual victimization (Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2005).

Policies, Services, and Resources

Universities vary in the reporting policies across institutions; the two most commonly used are confidential and anonymous reporting. Karjane, Fisher, and Cullen (2005) found that 86% of the schools in their sample offered confidential reporting while only 46% offered anonymous reporting. However, access to anonymous reporting has increased from 2002 to 2019 by nearly 30% (Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2002; Richards, 2019). Additionally, a large portion of schools do not have sexual assault policies that list procedures on how survivors should report to police on and off campus (Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2002) and about 30% of the policies do not outline exactly which employees could appropriately handle student disclosures (Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2005; Richards; 2019). Providing survivors with the opportunity to make their own informed decisions on how and when they would like to report is crucial for them to maintain power. Reporting policies become problematic when they are not clear or available to students because it makes survivors' options very limited (Streng & Kamimura, 2017).

Services that are offered to survivors of sexual violence also vary across schools. For example, the majority of universities offer on-campus counseling services, police services, medical services, and advocacy groups for survivors of sexual violence (Sabina, Verdiglione &

Zadnik, 2017). Less commonly found services are legal services, academic services, community referrals, off-campus police services, and on-campus housing services for survivors (Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2002; Sabina, Verdiglione & Zadnik, 2017). According to Richards (2019), 65% of the 820 institutions of higher education in her sample provided on-campus counseling resources for survivors of sexual assault. It is clear that variation exists across universities.

University Non-Compliance with Federal Legislation

Despite federal legislation enacted to address the responses of institutions of higher education to sexual misconduct, variation remains in schools' compliance with mandates and responses to sexual misconduct (Coray, 2016; Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2005). For example, Yung found that the number of incidents reported on university annual security reports were higher during audit periods than any prior submissions, thus highlighting the fact that some universities are not correctly reporting the number of incidents in their annual reports for numerous reasons (e.g., trying to uphold reputations; Yung, 2015). Additionally, nonconsensual sexual intercourse and nonconsensual sexual contact were reported to Title IX coordinators at double the rate of what was presented in annual security reports, which suggests that the annual reports that institutions of higher education publish are not accurate accounts of the number of incidents (Richards, 2019).

Digging even deeper, Cantalupo (2011) examined specific court cases where schools were found to not be in compliance with federal mandates. Survivors have taken action against their schools due to delayed starts to their investigations, knowingly admitting athletes with histories of sexual violence perpetration, biased investigations that protect the accused more than the survivor, doing nothing to address the allegation, or taking little to no disciplinary actions against perpetrators of sexual misconduct (Cantalupo, 2011). Additionally, some schools lack

visible Title IX coordinators which has the potential to hinder students from having easy access to their options and protections under Title IX (Richards, 2019). All of these examples demonstrate the lack of compliance, which no matter how small, are concerning and may impact student reporting behaviors and confidence in their university. Ultimately, the lack of consistency in policies across universities creates the need for further federal guidance that actually holds universities accountable and responsible (Sabina, Verdiglione & Zadnik, 2017).

Student Help-Seeking Tendencies

University responses to sexual misconduct have the potential to hinder help-seeking intentions among the college student population. Help-seeking tendencies are extremely complex and students frequently turn to numerous forms of support to help them through their experiences with sexual violence.

Formal and Informal Supports

Help-seeking is often broken down into formal help-seeking (and formal supports) and informal help-seeking (and informal supports). Formal supports are the formal resources or services that are available for victims through police, campus official notification, or resources offered through community nonprofits and universities. Generally, formal help-seeking is less common than informal help-seeking. Specifically, there are very low overall rates of campus survivor resource utilization and there is very little disclosure to campus formal supports (Sabina & Ho, 2014; Stoner & Cramer, 2019). In a study examining college students' reporting habits, less than 5% of completed and attempted rapes were reported to police, with an even lower percentage reported to campus officials (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen & Turner, 2003).

Although formal support utilization is relatively low across among college students, it is important to understand why students do choose to turn to these kinds of supports. Research

suggests that if students believed they experienced a crime, defined their experience as rape, or had greater distress or PTSD symptomology after the assault, then they were more likely to turn to formal supports for help (Graham, Mallinson, Krall & Annan, 2020; Stoner & Cramer, 2019). The most commonly used university-affiliated resource for survivors is mental health counseling, which supports the notion that survivors are seeking help to address severe symptoms (Cantor et al., 2020; Graham, Mallinson, Krall & Annan, 2020). Additionally, there is a positive relationship between students who are associated with student organizations and their use of formal resources. More specifically, students who are involved in campus groups are more likely to utilize formal resources (Mennicke, Bowling, Gromer & Ryan, 2019). This is due, in part, to the bonds and trust that can be formed between students and their universities if they are involved with organizations. This is not the case for all students, however. For example, students identifying as a part of a sexual minority group (i.e., gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, questioning) report lower levels of institutional support and feelings of college connection than other students (Mennicke, Geiger & Brewster, 2019; Seabrook, McMahon, Duquaine, Johnson & DeSilva, 2018).

When a survivor does not want to formally report their victimization to law enforcement or campus officials, they often use alternative forms of coping. This usually means that survivors lean on friends or family members in order to manage their experiences (Holland & Cortina, 2017). Typically, survivors disclose to informal help providers first, even if they do not formally report (Ahrens, Campbell, Ternier-Thames, Wasco & Sefl, 2007; Fisher, Daigle, Cullen & Turner, 2003). More specifically, about two-thirds of completed or attempted rape survivors tell another person about the incident (Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000). The use of informal supports relates to the concept of coping on one's own and survivors' desire to not have to deal with the

formal processes of reporting or disclosing their victimizations to many others (DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017).

Other reasons why students may not use formal supports and instead choose to turn to informal supports include knowledge of resources and fear of responses. First, students have to actually be familiar with what is available to them in order to utilize formal services (DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017; Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010). Second, students tend to expect more negative reactions from formal than informal supports (Ahrens, Campbell, Ternier-Thames, Wasco & Sefl, 2007). Some survivors explain further that “not seeking help was a form of self-protection against system personnel and processes they had perceived as harmful” (Patterson, Greeson & Campbell, 2009, p. 130).

Barriers to Help-Seeking

There are numerous barriers to help-seeking that prevent students from seeking help for their victimizations. One of the most common barriers to reporting is the negative social norms that are associated with disclosures of victimizations. Survivors often report feeling shame, guilt, self-blame, and perceive that they are subjected to harmful labels when it comes to their victimizations (Khan, Hirsch, Wamboldt & Mellins, 2018; Sabina, Verdiglione & Zadnik, 2017). Feelings of shame and self-blame make it less likely that survivors will report because they may not want their families to find out, especially in instances of attempted or completed rape (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen & Turner, 2003). Similarly related are confidentiality concerns or the fear that the news of their victimization will circulate throughout the college (Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2002).

One of the most common causes of barriers to help-seeking intentions among college students are rape myths and the beliefs that they can instill in persons. As described by Burt

(1980), rape myths are “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists” (p. 217). Common rape myths include: women often lie about rape, only women with certain reputations get raped, most women can fight off an attacker, and victims “ask for it” (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). These are just a few examples, but rape myths paint a large (and false) picture as to what a “real” rape survivor looks like and they often disempower survivors especially when they do not meet those stereotypes.

Instances of unacknowledged rape (i.e., not labeling one’s victimization as rape when legally, it is) is another common barrier to help-seeking that stems from the acceptance of rape myths (Ameral, Palm Reed & Hines, 2017; Cantor et al., 2020; DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017; Fisher, Daigle, Cullen & Turner, 2003). This is especially concerning since Wilson and Miller (2016) found that the prevalence of unacknowledged rape across survivors was about 60%. Individuals are less likely to label their victimization if it does not match the expected components of what many consider “real rape” (e.g., violent act that produces injuries, involves a stranger, the survivor fights back or resists the interaction; Kahn, 2004; Littleton, Rhatigan & Axsom, 2007). More specifically, rape survivors who score high in rape myth acceptance may be less likely to acknowledge that what had happened to them was a rape (Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009; Schwarz, Gibson & Lewis-Arévalo, 2017). Overall, “real rape” scenarios are often thought of as rape and all other incidents that do not match those expectations are not considered being rape, despite meeting legal definitions (Holland & Cortina, 2017; Mennicke, Bowling, Gromer & Ryan, 2019; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004; Spencer et al., 2017; Zinzow & Thompson, 2011).

Finally, other situational factors also have influence over student help-seeking intentions. If the survivor was using any substances, such as drugs or alcohol, at the time the incident

occurred or if they had personal connections with the offender, then they are less likely to report to the police or campus authorities (Schwarz, Gibson & Lewis-Arévalo, 2017). Survivors that were intoxicated at the time of their victimization typically have more self-blame for the incident occurring and feel like it was their fault for drinking (Schwarz, Gibson & Lewis-Arévalo, 2017).

Alcohol or drug use during the time of the incident proves to be a significant barrier to help-seeking if the university does not have amnesty policies (i.e., amnesty policies are those which protect survivors from disciplinary action when they disclose experiences with sexual misconduct that occurred within a context that involved drugs or alcohol; Richards, 2019; Schwarz, Gibson & Lewis-Arévalo, 2017). Further, if the perpetrator is someone that the survivor knows, they may be more likely to believe that the incident was not a crime or that harm was even intended (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen & Turner, 2003).

Student Perceptions of University Responses

The disconnect in survivors' use of formal supports – particularly within the campus-setting – is clear. Ensuring that all students have positive perceptions of university responses is important because positive perceptions are related to increased help-seeking intentions (Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020). Due to this, it is necessary to understand student perceptions of their universities to determine why there appears to be such little trust and confidence in many cases.

Student Confidence in Universities

Research highlights that students often lack confidence in their university and reporting systems in general to adequately respond to and support survivors. Specifically, survivors fear that they will not actually do anything, that the offender will not be punished, and that formal supports will not care or help survivors (Holland & Cortina, 2017). Both survivor and non-

survivor female students also assert that they do not believe that their university will prioritize them over the institution's reputation (Marques, Couture-Carron, Frederick & Scott, 2020). Students who do not report their sexual victimizations cite that they have little faith in their university reporting systems, which suggests that more needs to be done to address growing concerns (Cantalupo, 2010).

Prior research indicates that certain sub-groups of students generally hold more negative perceptions of their universities. Specifically, students who identify as sexual and gender minorities (i.e., gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, questioning, sexual orientation not listed; transgender male, transgender female, genderqueer, gender nonconforming), students who live off-campus, and students with disabilities have less confidence in their university (Kirkner, Plummer, Findley & McMahon, 2020; Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020). In a study of 181,752 students across 33 institutions of higher education, Cantor and colleagues (2020) found that nearly 66% of students believed it was very or extremely likely that university officials would take reports of sexual victimization seriously. However, there were significant gender differences: Roughly 74% of men thought it was very or extremely likely, while only 53% of women and 43% of TGQN (i.e., students who identified as transgender woman, transgender man, nonbinary/genderqueer, gender questioning, or who noted that their gender was not listed) students reported it was very or extremely likely officials would take reports seriously. Further, 50% of all students believed it was very or extremely likely their university would conduct a fair investigation (56% of men, 40% of women, and 27% of TGQN students; Cantor et al., 2020). Students who identified as a sexual minority also experience lower levels of institutional connection and perceive that they have less institutional support (Mennicke, Geiger & Brewster, 2019). These findings further highlight long-standing concerns that universities are not doing an

adequate job protecting all students or are unable to further address sub-populations that are higher risk. Sub-groups such as students who identify as gender and sexual minorities already feel alienated, and their overall confidence in universities reflect this reality (Mennicke, Geiger & Brewster, 2019; Seabrook, McMahon, Duquaine, Johnson & DeSilva, 2018).

Student survivors also have little confidence in university-affiliated services and many assert that they are not helpful (Graham, Mallinson, Krall & Annan, 2020; Marques, Couture-Carron, Frederick & Scott, 2020). Female students have expressed that they have a distrust for campus security, lack of confidence in services offered, and state that going straight to the police would be a better option than reporting to their university (Marques, Couture-Carron, Frederick & Scott, 2020). Negative perceptions also extend past student survivors in some instances. In a study examining perceptions of sexual assault education, some students went as far as to assert that university sexual assault educational programming is “valueless” and does little to help because the problem is too large to be fixed by a training, others do not take it seriously, or it is irrelevant (Worthen & Wallace, 2017).

Institutional Betrayal

Students’ lack of confidence in their school may stem, in part, from institutional betrayal. Institutional betrayal refers to perceptions that institutions are complicit in creating environments that facilitate sexual misconduct and are less likely to help survivors feel supported and safe (Mennicke, Bowling, Gromer & Ryan, 2019; Smith & Freyd, 2013). It occurs when a university “deliberately or unknowingly causes harm to an individual who trusts or depends on that institution to keep them safe or treat them fairly” (Stader & Williams, 2017, p. 198). More specifically, institutional betrayal can come from failing to prevent abuse, normalizing abuse

contexts, having difficult reporting procedures or inadequate responses, supporting cover-ups and misinformation, and punishing victims or whistleblowers (Smith & Freyd, 2014).

Betrayal trauma theory asserts that the intense, negative psychological impacts of traumatic events stem from betrayal that is a result of attachment relationships that the individual views as being essential to survival (Smith & Freyd, 2013). Betrayals are considered more detrimental and blindsiding when they come from a close entity, rather than a stranger. Usually, an institution is not the entity that was the direct perpetrator, but the institution still plays their own role prior to and after a student is victimized. More specifically, institutions of higher education are complicit in creating environments that condone sexual violence (Smith & Freyd, 2014). This creates the need for universities to improve not only their response to sexual violence but also their prevention of it. Any role that they play in condoning sexual violence may lead to severe consequences for the survivor.

A betrayal that comes from an institution that a student relies on to protect them can cause adverse effects for the student and their health. When a student decides to come forward, they trust that their university will support and care for them. Social support from friends, family, and important others (e.g., institutions that students rely on) facilitate sexual assault survivors' recovery, so reactions from these important others are crucial (Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009). By disclosing their victimization, survivors risk disbelief, refusals of help, and blame (Smith & Freyd, 2014). For many survivors, experiencing institutional betrayal has the same physical effects as interpersonal abuse and some survivors report higher levels of post-traumatic symptoms when they experience institutional betrayal (Ahern, 2018; Smith & Freyd, 2013; Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017).

Perception Differences Between Survivors and Non-Survivors

Research suggests that survivors and non-survivors of sexual violence have different perceptions of the helpfulness of available services, confidence in their universities to help them, and views on mandatory reporting policies (i.e., “responsible employee” or “compelled disclosure” policies at institutions of higher education that require certain employees to report disclosures of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator despite the wishes of the survivor); the latter policies are quite common across campuses (Holland, Cortina & Freyd, 2018). While research in this area is somewhat limited, some insight can be gained from some prior literature.

Services and Resources Offered

Research has found significant differences between actual utilization of services from survivors and anticipated use of services from non-survivors within the university context. In a study of 234 students at one university, 97% of non-survivors reported they would (hypothetically) use any form of campus resource, while only 22% of survivors indicated actual use of any kind of campus resource after their victimization (Nasta, Shah, Brahmanandam, Richman, Wittels, Allsworth & Boardman, 2005). This is likely related to the fact that survivors of sexual violence have less confidence in sexual assault programs and resources than non-survivors (Burgess-Proctor et al., 2016). Additionally, survivors indicate that there needs to be more formats of dissemination of information on university campuses; recommendations include texting or chatting forums that allow complete anonymity (Potter et al., 2016; Sabri et al., 2019).

Survivors and non-survivors also hold different views of mandatory reporting policies. A number of studies have found differences in perceptions of mandatory reporting between persons with and without prior sexual victimization experiences (Amin, 2019; Holland, 2019; Newins et al., 2018). Student survivors were more than twice as likely as non-survivors to state that learning about mandatory reporting decreased their likelihood of disclosing to university

personnel and they would not disclose their experiences to a faculty member at a school that had mandatory reporting policies (Newins et al., 2018).

Perceptions of University Responses

Research suggests that survivors have different opinions about university responses to sexual misconduct than other students (Cantor et al., 2020; Orchowski, Meyer & Gidycz, 2009). Of the respondents in the AAU study, roughly 45% of those who reported being a survivor of nonconsensual sexual contact by force or inability to consent believed it was very likely that university officials would take their report seriously, while nearly 65% of all the students thought it was very likely that university officials would take reports seriously. When it came to fair investigations, the AAU Climate Survey concluded that a little less than 30% of survivors thought that officials would lead a fair investigation, compared to 50% of all the students. Further, survivors are much less likely to have confidence in university officials' reactions to victimization disclosures than the general student population (Cantor et al., 2020). There are also notable perception differences between survivors and non-survivors. For example, Orchowski and colleagues (2009) found that compared to college women without a history of sexual victimization, those with a past history of sexual victimization perceived they were less likely to report sexual misconduct to campus agencies.

Overall, research suggests that survivors hold more pessimistic views of their university. In fact, studies have found that students explicitly state that their lack of trust stems from their prior negative experiences with their university resources (Marques, Couture-Carron, Frederick & Scott, 2020). While this is the case, little is known about why survivors hold these perceptions or how perceptions vary based on type of victimization.

Summary of College Student Experiences of Sexual Misconduct and University Responses

As discussed above, previous research has explored the existence and prevalence of sexual assaults on college campuses, the complex help-seeking behaviors of students, including reasons for the lack of reporting of sexual victimizations, and the role that programming and campaigns play in preventing or creating awareness on college campuses. Past research has also explored university responses to sexual misconduct and the mandates that they should be operating under to hold them more accountable.

The issue that arises in previous research is the relatively limited number of studies that specifically focus on students' confidence in their universities and their likelihood of appropriately responding to sexual misconduct. Namely, this issue stems from the lack of research that examines key predictors of student perceptions.

The Current Study

The current research study aims to better identify the factors that impact student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. This research is important because there is a great need for students to feel comfortable, connected to, and safe within their university because they spend numerous years there. Universities have the responsibility to provide educational experiences for students and they are obligated to ensure that those educational experiences are not disrupted by experiences such as victimization. Further, institutional inability to prevent or respond appropriately to sexual victimization can lead to institutional betrayal, which may result in increased posttraumatic symptomology for survivors (Smith & Freyd, 2013). Some research suggests that students are more likely to report their experiences to university officials when they have trust in them, so institutions that are not adequately handling sexual misconduct on their campuses are only furthering the distrust (Moore & Baker, 2018; Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020). More research needs to be conducted in

this area in order to fill in the gaps in the extant literature to understand student perceptions to improve student well-being on their campuses.

Research Questions

The current study examines student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct using a sample of 13,046 students across 9 institutions of higher education in the United States. The study is guided by three primary research questions:

Research Question 1: How do students perceive university responses to sexual misconduct?

Research Question 2: What predicts student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct?

Research Question 3: How do survivors' experiences impact their perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The current study utilizes data from the Multi-College Bystander Efficacy Evaluation (mcBEE). McBEE was a multi-campus victimization survey effort developed to assess bystander training programs and their efficacy in reducing violent behaviors and increasing prevention behaviors on college campuses across the country. Twenty-four institutions of higher education across the United States participated in the mcBEE survey. Data collection efforts began in 2016 and ended in 2019.¹²

Participating universities could choose to offer students the opportunity to complete the full mcBEE survey or a mini mcBEE survey; the latter was limited to sexual violence rates, information on bystander interventions, and student demographics. Eligible student participants were undergraduate students ages 18-24 who were enrolled in at least one in-person class. This study examines data from students enrolled across nine U.S. institutions of higher education that were offered the opportunity to complete the full mcBEE survey in 2019 (n = 13,046).

Measures

A description of the dependent variable and predictor variables included in this study is provided below. More information about each measure can be found in the Appendix.

Dependent Variable

Student Perceptions

Nine questions from mcBEE were used to gain more detailed insight into and measure *student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct*. More specifically, respondents

¹² These data were collected by a University of Kentucky based team, and funds were provided by Bystander Program Adoption & Efficacy to Reduce SV-IPV in College Community. Funding source: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Cooperative Agreement U01 CE002668. (Multi College Bystander Efficacy Evaluation).

were given statements that described how a university might handle a student report of sexual misconduct. Students were informed that sexual misconduct refers to “physical contact or non-physical contact of a sexual nature in the absence of clear, knowing and voluntary consent” and examples include “gender-based harassment, stalking, dating violence and sexual violence.” Students were asked to indicate the likelihood of their university to: support the person making the report, provide accommodations to support the person making the report (e.g., housing or schedule changes), take action to address factors that may have led to the sexual misconduct, label the person making the report a trouble maker, not take the case seriously if the person accused of sexual misconduct was a university athlete, not take the case seriously if the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a high status or powerful fraternity, not take the case seriously if the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a position of power or authority (e.g., faculty member), and take a case more seriously if the person accusing someone of sexual misconduct was from a wealthy or politically connected family. In the survey, student perceptions were coded 1 = very unlikely, 2 = unlikely, 3 = neutral, 4 = likely, and 5 = very likely.

A composite score was generated to create a measure of student’s overall confidence in university responses. When necessary, some questions were reverse coded (i.e., the university would support the person accused; the university would label the person making the report a trouble maker; if the person accused of sexual misconduct was a university athlete, the university would not take the case seriously; if the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a high status or otherwise powerful fraternity, the university would not take the case seriously; if the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a position of power or authority, the university would not take the case seriously; if the person accusing someone of sexual misconduct was

from a wealthy or politically connected family, the university would take the case more seriously), such that higher scores on the composite score reflect greater confidence in the university to appropriately respond to sexual misconduct (potential range = 9 – 45; Cronbach’s α = .82).

Predictors in Full Sample Analyses

Sexual Victimization Experiences

For the purposes of this study, several forms of sexual victimization were consolidated into two categories: *non-contact sexual violence* and *contact sexual violence*. Participants were asked a series of behaviorally-specific questions about their victimization experiences, both ever and since Fall 2018. The current study examines victimizations that occurred since Fall 2018¹³ because it can help narrow experiences down to include only those that occurred while in college. Three of the questions refer to non-contact sexual victimization (e.g., if someone at the university had made sexual remarks, told jokes, or stories that were offensive that ultimately led to an uncomfortable environment); five of them refer to contact sexual victimization – or sexual victimizations that involve some form of physical contact (e.g., if someone had used physical force to achieve sexual penetration or oral sex with them); A complete description of the questions used are in the Appendix.

If students answered yes to any of the questions categorized as non-contact sexual victimization, they were coded as having experienced non-contact sexual victimization (0 = no or yes but not since Fall 2018; 1 = yes since Fall 2018). If students answered yes to any question categorized as contact sexual victimization, they were coded as having experienced contact sexual victimization (0 = no or yes but not since Fall 2018; 1 = yes since Fall 2018).

¹³ In this study, the phrases “since Fall 2018” and “in the past year” are used interchangeably.

Sexual Violence Perpetration

Participants were also asked questions that gauged the extent of sexual perpetration behaviors since Fall 2018; three questions focused on non-contact sexual violence perpetration and five questions measured contact sexual violence perpetration. Once again, only incidents that occurred in since Fall 2018 were examined. See the Appendix for a complete list of questions used.

This variable was coded similarly as sexual victimization experiences, such that if a student answered yes to any question referring to non-contact sexual violence perpetration, then they were coded as having *perpetrated non-contact sexual violence* (0 = no or yes but not since Fall 2018; 1 = yes since Fall 2018). Students who answered yes to any of the contact sexual violence perpetration questions were coded as having *perpetrated contact sexual violence* (0 = no or yes but not since Fall 2018; 1 = yes since Fall 2018).

Rape Myth Acceptance

Five survey statements comprised a scale for respondents' *rape myth acceptance*. As an example, respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree that "if someone agrees to have one type of sex it is ok to assume that they agreed to other forms of sex" and "both people should make sure that the other person clearly agrees to have sex". A complete list of questions used to measure rape myth acceptance can be found in the Appendix. Respondents were asked to indicate much they agreed with each statement using a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). A composite score was generated to measure rape myth acceptance among students and when necessary, some questions were reverse coded. Higher scores reflect greater acceptance of rape myths (Cronbach's $\alpha = .68$), and lower scores represent more accurate knowledge about sexual consent (potential range = 5 – 25).

Exposure to Messages About Sexual Misconduct

Students were asked to respond to a number of statements about *exposure to messages about sexual misconduct while at their university*. For example, students were asked if they had seen posters about sexual misconduct, seen crime alerts, discussed the topic of sexual misconduct with a friend, or discussed it in a class in the past year while at their university. In addition, a variable that indicates whether or not the respondent had heard about any bystander intervention program while at their university was added into the exposure to messages variable (0 = no; 1 = yes). Based on students' responses, a variable was created summing the number of messages students were exposed to and knowledge about bystander intervention programs; higher values reflect greater exposure to messages about sexual misconduct (potential range = 0 – 14). For the specific question and options, see the Appendix.

Bystander Intervention Training

Students were provided with a list of commonly known bystander intervention training programs (e.g., Green Dot, It's On Us) and asked to identify which programs they received training on (of the ones they had heard of) while at their university. If the respondent indicated that they had heard of the training, then they were asked how many times they received training as a follow up question (0 = never, 1 = once, 2 = multiple times). The individual training program variables were dichotomized into dummy variables (0 = never, 1 = yes, received training) in order to generate a composite score of trainings received, with higher scores indicating more trainings in different programs. The composite score was then dichotomized so that respondents who scored at least one were coded as having *received bystander intervention training during their time at their university* (0 = no trainings received; 1 = yes, at least one

training received). Students who had not heard of any bystander intervention programs were coded as not having received any training.

Individual Characteristics

In this study, individual characteristics refer to the participants' age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, enrollment status (e.g., full, part-time), living location, and membership in organizations. Additional information about each of these variables is included in the Appendix.

Age. Respondents' *age* was measured as a continuous measure. For the current study, an age variable was chosen over a year in school variable (i.e., first year, sophomore, junior, senior, other). The year in school variable gave respondents the option to specify what they meant if they selected "other". Some respondents indicated that they were not sure what year they were in or if their year in school was dependent on the number of credit hours they had completed. Therefore, the age variable was much cleaner and fewer assumptions had to be made to place respondents into categories.

Gender Identity. Respondents were also asked to identify their gender (i.e., woman, man, transgender man, transgender woman, genderqueer or gender nonconforming, questioning, or those whose gender was not listed). Because the majority of the sample identified as either a woman or man (98%), the other categories were combined into a separate category. Therefore, gender was collapsed into *female* (0 = no; 1 = yes), *male* (0 = no; 1 = yes), and *another gender identity* (0 = no; 1 = yes). The reference category in this study was *male*.

Sexual Orientation. Respondents were also asked about their sexual orientation (i.e., heterosexual/straight, gay or lesbian, bisexual, asexual, questioning, orientation not listed).

Because the majority of the sample identified as *heterosexual* (82.8%), the other sexual orientations were combined into one category (0 = another sexual orientation; 1 = heterosexual).

Ethnicity and Race. Respondents were presented with two questions assessing their ethnicity (i.e., whether they were Hispanic/Latino) and their race (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Other – please specify). For race, respondents were advised to choose all that apply. For purposes of this study, a series of dummy variables were computed to capture race and ethnicity. If the respondent selected Hispanic, they were coded as *Hispanic – Any Race* (0 = no; 1 = yes) regardless of their race. If the respondent *only* selected White, such that they did not select any other racial group and did not select Hispanic, they were coded as *White Non-Hispanic* (0 = no; 1 = yes). The same process was followed when coding for *Black Non-Hispanic* (0 = no; 1 = yes) and *Asian Non-Hispanic* (0 = no, 1 = yes). Finally, respondents who identified that they were biracial, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or another race were coded as *Another Race* (0 = no; 1 = yes). Roughly 5% of the sample was biracial, while less than 1% fell into each of the other categories (i.e., 0.5% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.2% were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 0.9% were another race). The reference category in this study was *White Non-Hispanic*.

Student Enrollment Status. Students were also asked to select whether they were attending their university full-time, part-time, or other. Because the majority of the sample was attending full-time (94.7%), a measure of *full-time* was created (0 = no; 1 = yes).

Living Location. Respondents were asked about their living situation while in school (i.e., residence hall/dormitory; fraternity/sorority house; other university housing; off campus).

For the current study, the focus was given to those living on *campus/university-affiliated property* (0 = no; 1 = yes).

Membership In Organizations. Finally, the survey asked respondents if they were involved in different kinds of organizations (e.g., student religious group, intercollegiate athletic team, health education group, or a community service organization). A complete list of organizations can be found in the Appendix. For this study, the number of groups a student selected was summed and used to represent the level of involvement in organizations, with higher scores indicating greater *group membership* (potential range = 0 – 14).

Predictors in Survivor-Specific Analyses

Two of the research questions focus specifically on sub-samples of respondents who indicated they had experienced sexual victimization while attending their university. Therefore, all of the variables that are utilized in the full sample analyses are included in the survivor-specific analyses, but a number of additional variables have been added that allow for more insight into survivor experiences.

Victimization Impact Measures

Students who indicated they had experienced sexual victimization were asked a number of follow-up questions about the consequences of the participant's victimization. For the survivor-specific analyses, three questions were used to determine the impact that the victimization had on respondents' experiences at the university and six questions were used to determine a general impact that the victimization had on them.

University-Specific Impact. A *university-specific impact* measure was created for both the non-contact sexual violence sub-sample and the contact sexual violence sub-sample. Respondents were asked if the victimization interfered with their academic/professional

performance, created an intimidating environment, or limited their ability to participate in activities/programs (each measured as 0 = no; 1 = yes; 2 = don't know). In the current study, these were dichotomized into dummy variables (0 = no/don't know; 1 = yes). These were then summed, such that higher scores indicate more of a negative impact (potential range = 0 – 3).

General Impact. A measure of *general impacts* was created for both the non-contact sexual violence sub-sample and the contact sexual violence sub-sample. Respondents were asked to identify general impacts that the victimization experience had on them (e.g., if they tried hard not to think about their experience, turned assignments in late, gotten worse grades, or missed classes/work). These were then summed, with higher scores indicating more of a negative impact (potential range = 0 – 6). To view the complete list questions that were used to measure university and general impacts, see the Appendix.

Help-Seeking Measures

Survivors were asked to identify different actions students did or did not take after their victimization. Students were given slightly different choices to choose from for non-contact and contact sexual victimization experiences.

General Help-Seeking. For the non-contact sexual victimization analyses, the help-seeking measure included a measure of *general help-seeking* (0 = no; 1 = yes). Survivors were asked to select whether they sought help from or disclosed their experiences to a range of formal and informal supports, including a friend or family member, resident advisor, a hotline, police, or a counselor. If the survivor sought help from at least one resource, they were coded as having engaged in *general help-seeking*. These responses were unable to be split into university-affiliated/other categories because mcBEE asked respondents to only disclose experiences with

non-contact sexual violence that were in relation to the university, therefore only *general help-seeking* is included.

University-Affiliated Help-Seeking. For the contact sexual victimization analyses, survivors were asked to select whether they sought help from or reported to a range of supports, including resident advisor, university police, faculty/staff at the university, a family member, a hotline, or a counselor. If respondents identified seeking help from at least one university-affiliated resource, they were coded as having engaged in *university-affiliated help-seeking* (0 = no; 1 = yes).

Other Help-Seeking. If respondents identified seeking help from at least one other, non-university-affiliated resource, they were coded as having engaged in *other help-seeking* (0 = no; 1 = yes). Refer to the Appendix for a complete list of help-seeking options that fell into each category.

Victimization Characteristics

Participants were asked two questions that described some of the characteristics of their victimization(s): who the perpetrator was and where the incident occurred. For the current study, the perpetrator of the incident and the location were each consolidated into two categories: university-affiliated perpetrators/locations and other perpetrators/locations.

Perpetrator. In the survivor-specific model for contact sexual victimization, both the perpetrator and location were included in the analysis. The perpetrator was only included in the analysis for the survivors of contact sexual violence sub-sample.¹⁴ Students were asked their relationship to the person responsible for the incident and were asked to check all that apply

¹⁴ The perpetrator is only included in the analysis for contact sexual victimization. For the questions specific to non-contact sexual victimization, students were asked to indicate victimizations that occurred by “a student OR someone employed by or otherwise associated with the university.” As a result, it is assumed that all perpetrators of non-contact sexual victimization were affiliated with the university.

(teacher/advisor; co-worker/boss/supervisor; friend; someone affiliated with the university such as a student, teaching assistant, staff, or faculty; other; don't know). If the student selected "someone affiliated with the university such as a student, teaching assistant, staff, or faculty," they were coded as having experienced a victimization by a *university-affiliated perpetrator* (0 = no; 1 = yes).

Location. The location was computed for both the survivors of non-contact sexual violence sub-sample and survivors of contact sexual violence sub-sample. For the location of the incident(s), students were asked where the event(s) occurred and were asked to select all that apply (on university property; in your dorm or apartment; at a party or social event; in a public place; other; don't know). If the student selected "on university property", they were coded as having experienced a victimization that occurred on/at a *university-affiliated location* (0 = no; 1 = yes).

Analytic Strategy

The analyses for this project are focused at the individual-level. Although students are clustered within schools, there are only nine schools that are included in the sample. This prevents the analysis of the data using multi-level modeling. Nevertheless, some descriptive statistics about the schools (e.g., size of school, commuter/residential) will be provided that can allow for some added context and insight to the findings.

The analytic approach for this thesis is multi-faceted to answer each of the three primary research questions. Research question 1 asked how students perceive university responses to sexual misconduct. This research question is answered by providing descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies) to highlight how students view university responses. Descriptive statistics for perceptions of the overall sample, those who experienced neither victimization nor perpetration

since Fall 2018, survivors, perpetrators, and survivors based on the location of the victimization and the perpetrator are provided.

Research question 2 asked what predicts student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. To answer this question, a linear regression was used to regress the dependent variable on the predictor variables mentioned previously. The main dependent variable – student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct – ranged from 9 to 45, therefore a linear regression was modeled. All assumptions associated with running a linear regression were met.

Research question 3 asked how the experiences of survivors of sexual violence impact their perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. To answer this question, analyses were run separately on the two groups who experienced sexual victimization: those who experienced non-contact sexual violence and those who experienced contact sexual violence. The decision to separate the groups was made because research suggests that contact sexual victimization is one of the most severe traumas that a survivor can experience and is associated with larger negative impacts on academic performances (Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009; Pinchevsky, Magnuson, Augustyn & Rennison, 2020). Examining contact sexual violence and non-contact violence separately can provide further insight into different categories of sexual violence that groups together types of sexual violence in a meaningful way that may influence student perceptions. Again, a linear regression was used because the dependent variable ranged from 9 - 45. For both the survivors of non-contact sexual violence sub-sample and the survivors of contact sexual violence sub-sample, all assumptions associated with running a linear regression were met.

The initial dataset of students who had the opportunity to complete the full mcBEE survey at the nine institutions included 13,046 students. However, the inclusion criteria for this study resulted in some of those students being dropped from the sample. Because mcBEE aimed to survey undergraduate students ages 18-24 who were enrolled in at least one in-person class, students who reported not meeting these requirements were removed. Specifically, 33 respondents were excluded because they were outside of the 18-24 age range and 23 additional students were removed from the sample because they had indicated that they were in graduate school or had graduated prior to taking the survey. Therefore, after accounting for the inclusion criteria, 12,990 undergraduate students ages 18-24 remained.

In the *full sample* ($n = 12,990$), 530 students (4.1 percent) were missing data on at least one of the predictor variables included in this study. An additional 300 students were missing data on the dependent variable. Therefore, the final analyses for the *full sample* were based on 12,160 students (total missing is 6.3 percent of the sample). For the sub-samples (students who experienced non-contact sexual victimization; students who experienced contact sexual victimization), the same process was conducted. In the sub-sample of students who reported *non-contact sexual victimization* ($n = 2,770$), 88 students ($n = 3.2$ percent) were missing data on at least one of the predictor variables included in this study. An additional 49 students were missing data on the dependent variable. Therefore, the final analyses for the *non-contact sexual victimization sub-sample* were based on 2,633 students. In the sub-sample including only students who reported *contact sexual victimization* ($n = 660$), 39 students ($n = 5.9$ percent) were missing data on at least one of the predictor variables included in this study. An additional 15 students were missing data on the dependent variable. Therefore, the final analyses for the *contact sexual victimization sub-sample* were based on 606 students.

Analyses were conducted to assess whether students who were missing data and ultimately excluded from analyses were significantly different than those who were included in the samples. On the *full sample*, independent sample t-tests were run to compare the mean score of the outcome variable (i.e., perceptions) between those with missing data on the predictor variables included in this study and those who did not have missing data. In addition, given the focus on victimization experiences, the two groups (those with and without missing data) were compared on past year non-contact sexual victimization experiences and past year contact sexual victimization experiences using chi-square analyses. Within the full sample, there were no statistically significant differences on the outcome variable found between those with and without missing data, and no significant differences between those missing and not missing data and their experiences with non-contact sexual victimization in the past year and contact sexual victimization in the past year ($p > .05$). For both the non-contact and contact sexual victimization sub-samples, no statistically significant differences were found between those missing data and those not missing any data on the outcome variable ($p > .05$).

Therefore, a listwise deletion was used to appropriately address missing data within the sample. The final sample sizes for analyses in this study consist of 12,160 respondents for the full sample of students, 2,633 respondents for the non-contact sexual violence sub-sample, and 606 respondents for the contact sexual violence sub-sample.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

Institutions of Higher Education

Although the analyses of this study were focused at the individual-level, information about the colleges that the students are clustered within is provided in Table 1. Approximately 55% of the students in the sample attended one of the five commuter schools, while roughly 45% attended one of the four residential schools. Over half of the students attended one of the five schools that held between 19,000 and 30,000 undergraduate students, followed by about 25% that attended one of the three schools that had less than 19,000 undergraduate students, and roughly 15% who attended one school with more than 30,000 undergraduate students. Four of the schools were located in the midwest/west (nearly 32% of students in the sample), three were located in the northeast/south (about 42% of students in the sample), and two were in the midwest/south (roughly 26% of students in the sample). All of the schools in the sample were located in metropolitan counties. More specifically, five schools were in metropolitan areas with a population over one million, three schools were located in areas with a population between 250,000 to one million, and one school was in an area with a population fewer than 250,000. See Table 1 for all descriptive statistics on the institutions of higher education that students in this study were enrolled in during the Fall 2018 – Spring 2019 academic year.

Table 1. Descriptives of Institutions of Higher Education

	Number of Schools	Percentage of Students
Total	N = 9	N = 12,160
Type of School		
Commuter	5	54.5%
Residential	4	45.5%
Size of Undergraduate Population		
<=19,000	3	26.6%
>19,000 & <=30,000	5	58.1%
>30,000	1	15.2%
Region		
Midwest/south	2	25.7%
Midwest/west	4	32.1%
Northeast/south	3	42.2%
County Location		
Metro with >1 million population	5	54.5%
Metro with 250,000 to 1 million	3	32.0%
Metro with <250,000	1	13.5%

Full Student Sample

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for students in the full sample (n = 12,160), sub-sample of survivors of non-contact sexual violence (n = 2,633), and sub-sample of survivors of contact sexual violence (n = 606). The descriptive statistics for the full sample are provided in the first column of Table 2 and are discussed below.

For the full sample, students were between the *ages* of 18 to 24, and on average, were 20 years old. Over half of the respondents were *female* (roughly 64%), a little over 34% were *male*, and 2% identified as *another gender identity*. The majority of the sample identified as *heterosexual* (approximately 83%). Nearly 20% of the sample were *Hispanic – any race*, roughly

55% were *White Non-Hispanic*, almost 6% were *Black Non-Hispanic*, nearly 13% were *Asian Non-Hispanic*, and 7% were *another race*. The vast majority of students were attending their university *full-time* (nearly 95%), and 34% lived on *campus/university-affiliated property*. *Group membership* ranged from zero to eight organizations, with students indicating they were members of one *group*, on average.

Roughly 22% of the full sample had experienced at least one *non-contact sexual victimization* since Fall 2018, while about 5% had experienced *contact sexual victimization* since Fall 2018. Additionally, 12% of students reported *non-contact sexual victimization perpetration* and a little less than 1% of the sample reported *contact sexual victimization perpetration*. *Rape myth acceptance* ranged from 5 to 25, with an average *rape myth acceptance* score of roughly seven. Respondents had been exposed to an average of nearly four *messages about sexual misconduct* while at their university, and nearly 40% had received *bystander intervention training*.

Survivors of Non-Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample

The descriptive statistics for the sub-sample of survivors of non-contact sexual violence ($n = 2,633$) are provided in the second column of Table 2 and are discussed below. Of those that experienced non-contact sexual victimization since Fall 2018, nearly 76% identified as *female*, 21% as *male*, and 4% with *another gender identity*. Just under 72% of the sample identified as *heterosexual* and the average *age* was approximately 20 years old. About 19% of the sub-sample were *Hispanic – any race*, nearly 62% were *White Non-Hispanic*, almost 4% were *Black Non-Hispanic*, about 8% were *Asian Non-Hispanic*, and roughly 8% were *another race*. The majority of survivors of non-contact sexual victimization were *full-time* students (roughly 96%), about 36% lived *on campus or on university-affiliated property*, and approximately 49% had received

bystander intervention training. On average, respondents in this sample had one *group membership*, a *rape myth acceptance* score of roughly six, and had been exposed to an average of around five *messages about sexual misconduct* while at their university.

Since Fall 2018, roughly 13% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence had also experienced *contact sexual victimization*, nearly 19% disclosed *non-contact sexual violence perpetration*, and a little over 1% reported *contact sexual violence perpetration*. For the *university-specific impact* (i.e., the victimization interfered with their academic/professional performance, created an intimidating environment, or limited their ability to participate in activities/programs for university-specific impacts; range from 0 to 3), student survivors recorded an average of one impact. Students also reported an average of one *general impact* (i.e., missed classes or work, felt detached from others, tried hard not to think about it, turned in assignments or exams in late, gotten worse grades; range of 0 – 6) as a result of the non-contact sexual victimization. Further, about half of the respondents engaged in *general help-seeking* and a little less than half of respondents had experienced a victimization that occurred on a *campus/university-affiliated location*.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	Full Sample	Survivors of Non-Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample	Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample
Total	N = 12,160	N = 2,633	N = 606
Student perceptions	30.66	28.57	28.33
Sexual victimization experiences			
Non-contact sexual victimization	21.8%	-	54.8%
Contact sexual victimization	5.1%	12.8%	-
Sexual violence perpetration			
Non-contact sexual violence perpetration	12.0%	18.9%	18.0%
Contact sexual violence perpetration	0.9%	1.3%	5.0%
Rape myth acceptance	6.84	6.49	6.46
Exposure to messages about sexual misconduct	3.77	5.04	5.19
Bystander intervention training	39.8%	48.5%	51.3%
Individual characteristics			
Age	20.20	20.19	19.93
Gender identity			
Female	63.9%	75.5%	86.1%
Male	34.1%	20.6%	11.2%
Another gender identity	2.0%	3.9%	2.6%
Sexual orientation			
Heterosexual	82.8%	71.9%	71.3%
Another sexual orientation	17.2%	28.1%	28.7%
Race			
Hispanic – any race	19.8%	18.5%	21.1%
White Non-Hispanic	54.6%	61.6%	62.0%
Black Non-Hispanic	5.8%	3.9%	5.0%
Asian Non-Hispanic	12.8%	8.4%	4.1%
Another race	7.0%	7.6%	7.8%
Student enrollment status			
Full-time	94.7%	95.8%	95.7%
Living location			
Campus/university-affiliated property	34.0%	36.2%	41.3%
Membership in organizations	0.93	1.20	1.27
Victimization impact measures			
University-specific impact	–	1.07	1.43
General impact	–	1.26	2.23
Help-seeking measures			
General help-seeking	–	50.4%	–
University-affiliated help-seeking	–	–	10.9%
Other help-seeking	–	–	64.0%
Victimization characteristics			
Perpetrator			
University-affiliated perpetrator	–	–	33.3%
Other perpetrator	–	–	66.7%
Location			
University-affiliated location	–	47.9%	15.7%
Other location	–	52.1%	84.3%

Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample

The descriptive statistics for the sub-sample of survivors of contact sexual violence (n = 606) are provided in the third column of Table 2 and are discussed below. Among survivors of contact sexual violence, the majority were *female* (just over 86%), a little over 11% were *male*, and nearly 3% identified as *another gender identity*. A large percentage of the sample identified as *heterosexual* (roughly 71%) and were nearly 20 years old in *age*. A little over 21% of the sub-sample were *Hispanic – any race*, 62% were *White Non-Hispanic*, 5% were *Black Non-Hispanic*, approximately 4% were *Asian Non-Hispanic*, and roughly 8% were *another race*. The vast majority of the sample were *full-time* students (nearly 96%), roughly 40% lived *on campus or on university-affiliated property*, and a little over half had received *bystander intervention training* while at their university. On average, these students had a *group membership* in at least one organization, a *rape myth acceptance* score of roughly six, and had been exposed to an average of five *messages about sexual misconduct* while at their university.

Out of the 606 that experienced contact sexual victimization, nearly 55% had also experienced a *non-contact sexual victimization* since Fall 2018. Further, 18% reported *non-contact sexual violence perpetration* since Fall 2018, while 5% had disclosed *contact sexual violence perpetration* since Fall 2018. On average, survivors recorded an average of one *university-specific impact*, while they reported an average of two *general impacts* as a result of the contact sexual victimization. Nearly 11% of survivors of contact sexual violence indicated they had engaged in *university-affiliated help-seeking*, and 64% disclosed that they engaged in *other help-seeking*. Further, about 16% of the victimizations occurred at a *university-affiliated location* and a little over 33% of the victimizations involved a *university-affiliated perpetrator*.

Research Question 1: How do students perceive university responses to sexual misconduct?

Tables 3 and 4 provide information about students' perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. Specifically, the average score of student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct (range of 9 – 45) is included, as is how students perceived nine individual statements about university responses to sexual misconduct to be likely/very likely. The aforementioned information is split into the following groups: full sample, students who reported no sexual victimization or perpetration since Fall 2018, survivors of non-contact sexual violence since Fall 2018, survivors of contact sexual violence since Fall 2018, persons who perpetrated non-contact sexual violence since Fall 2018, persons who perpetrated contact sexual violence since Fall 2018, survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed a university-affiliated perpetrator since Fall 2018, survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was not affiliated with the university since Fall 2018, survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed a university-affiliated location since Fall 2018, survivors of non-contact who disclosed the event did not take place on university-affiliated property since Fall 2018, survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed a university-affiliated location since Fall 2018, and survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the event did not occur on university-affiliated property since Fall 2018.

Overall Student Perception

Across all of the sub-samples in the study, students who had no disclosure of victimization or perpetration since Fall 2018 had the most confidence in the university to appropriately respond to sexual misconduct (mean = 31.37), followed by the full sample of students (mean = 30.66), persons who disclosed non-contact sexual violence perpetration (mean = 30.12), persons who disclosed contact sexual violence perpetration (mean = 28.79), survivors of non-contact sexual violence (mean = 28.57), and survivors of contact sexual violence (mean =

28.33). In sum, survivors of non-contact sexual violence and contact sexual violence reported, on average, the lowest confidence in the university response to sexual misconduct, while those who reported no victimization or perpetration behaviors since Fall 2018 reported the greatest confidence in the university response.

For the survivor sub-samples based on the location of the incident and perpetrator, survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not take place on university-affiliated property had the most confidence in the university's ability to respond to sexual misconduct (mean = 29.44), followed by survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not take place on university-affiliated property (mean = 28.58), survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was not associated with the university (mean = 28.35), survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was affiliated with the university (mean = 28.28), survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident occurred at an university-affiliated location (mean = 27.62), and survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did take place on university-affiliated property (mean = 26.98). Overall, survivors who disclosed that the location of the incident or the perpetrator were affiliated with the university had less confidence in university responses than survivors who disclosed that the incident location and perpetrator were not associated with the university.

Table 3. Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct. Percentage of Students who Perceived Each Statement to be Likely/Very Likely.

	Full Sample	Non-Survivors and Non-Perpetrator	Survivors of Non-Contact Sexual Violence	Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence	Non-Contact Sexual Violence Perpetrator	Contact Sexual Violence Perpetrator
Total	N = 12,160	N = 8,267	N = 2,633	N = 606	N = 1,463	N = 113
Student perceptions (Average)	30.66	31.37	28.57	28.33	30.12	28.79
University would support the person making the report.	64.2%	66.1%	57.4%	56.6%	65.0%	51.3%
University would support the person accused.	33.1%	33.7%	31.2%	32.2%	33.8%	36.3%
University would provide accommodations to support the person making the report. For example, make changes in academic schedules, housing or other safety accommodations.	67.9%	69.7%	61.8%	60.4%	68.0%	58.4%
University would take action to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault.	63.6%	67.3%	52.9%	53.4%	61.3%	50.4%
University would label the person making the report a trouble maker.	15.0%	14.6%	16.1%	17.5%	16.1%	23.9%
If the person accused of sexual misconduct was a university athlete, the university would not take the case seriously.	28.2%	23.1%	42.5%	45.4%	33.9%	33.6%
If the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a high status or otherwise powerful fraternity, the university would not take the case seriously.	24.5%	19.9%	37.6%	40.3%	28.6%	25.7%
If the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a position of power or authority (for example a faculty member, coach, administrator or police), the university would not take the case seriously.	23.3%	18.7%	36.7%	36.8%	28.6%	26.5%
If the person accusing someone of sexual misconduct was from a wealthy or politically connected family, the university would take the case more seriously.	33.3%	29.4%	43.8%	44.6%	39.6%	34.5%

University Would Support the Person Making the Report

Respondents were asked to indicate the likeliness they believed the university would support the person making the report. The sample of students who were non-survivors and did not disclose perpetration since Fall 2018 agreed most with this statement: roughly 66% indicating that it was likely/very likely. Students who disclosed non-contact sexual violence perpetration had the second most confidence, with 65% indicating it was likely/very likely, followed by roughly 64% of the full sample, a little over 57% of the survivors of non-contact sexual violence sub-sample, nearly 57% of the survivors of contact sexual violence sub-sample, and approximately 51% of those who had engaged in contact sexual violence perpetration.

For the survivor sub-samples specific to the location of the incident and the perpetrator, survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not take place on university-affiliated property (roughly 61%) had the most confidence in this statement. This group was followed by nearly 59% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed an university-affiliated perpetrator, slightly under 58% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not occur on a university-affiliated location, approximately 55% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was not affiliated with the university, about 53% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did occur on university-affiliated property, and nearly 51% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did take place at a university-affiliated location.

Table 4. Survivor Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct Based on Location and Perpetrator. Percentage of Students Who Perceived Each Statement to be Likely/Very Likely.

	Contact SV with University-Affiliated Perpetrator	Contact SV without University-Affiliated Perpetrator	Non-Contact SV with University-Affiliated Location	Non-Contact SV without University-Affiliated Location	Contact SV with University -Affiliated Location	Contact SV without University-Affiliated Location
Total	N = 202	N = 404	N = 1,261	N = 1,372	N = 95	N = 511
Student perceptions (Average)	28.28	28.35	27.62	29.44	26.98	28.58
University would support the person making the report.	58.9%	55.4%	53.3%	61.2%	50.5%	57.7%
University would support the person accused.	31.7%	32.4%	29.9%	32.4%	31.6%	32.3%
University would provide accommodations to support the person making the report. For example, make changes in academic schedules, housing or other safety accommodations.	61.9%	59.6%	57.5%	65.6%	54.7%	61.5%
University would take action to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault.	51.9%	54.3%	46.5%	58.6%	50.5%	54.1%
University would label the person making the report a trouble maker.	18.3%	17.1%	17.0%	15.2%	21.1%	16.8%
If the person accused of sexual misconduct was a university athlete, the university would not take the case seriously.	45.5%	45.3%	48.0%	37.5%	47.4%	45.0%
If the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a high status or otherwise powerful fraternity, the university would not take the case seriously.	36.1%	42.3%	42.7%	32.9%	41.1%	40.1%
If the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a position of power or authority (for example a faculty member, coach, administrator or police), the university would not take the case seriously.	34.7%	37.9%	42.4%	31.4%	38.9%	36.4%
If the person accusing someone of sexual misconduct was from a wealthy or politically connected family, the university would take the case more seriously.	48.0%	42.8%	48.4%	39.6%	51.6%	43.2%

University Would Support the Person Accused

Respondents were asked to indicate if they believed the university would support the person accused of sexual misconduct. Students who disclosed contact sexual violence perpetration were the most likely to believe that the university would support the person accused (roughly 36%), followed by nearly 34% of those that indicated non-contact sexual violence perpetration. Roughly 34% of persons who experienced neither victimization nor perpetration believed universities were likely/very likely to support the person accused. Finally, approximately 33% of the full sample, just over 32% of survivors of contact sexual violence, and 31% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence indicated that they believed universities were likely/very likely to support the person accused.

For the survivor sub-samples specific to the location of the incident and the perpetrator, survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the location of the incident was not university-affiliated, survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was not associated with the university, and survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not take place on university-affiliated property were all the most likely to perceive this statement to be true, with just over 32% of each indicating it was likely/very likely. This was followed by slightly under 32% of survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated the perpetrator was affiliated with the university and survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident occurred on university-affiliated property. Survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident occurred on university-affiliated property had the least amount of confidence, with nearly 30% indicating it was likely/very likely.

University Would Provide Accommodations to Support the Person Making the Report

Respondents were asked to indicate the likeliness of the university providing accommodations to support the person making the report. The students who indicated not being survivors and had no perpetration experiences since Fall 2018 were most likely to believe that the university would provide accommodations to support the person making the report (nearly 70%). Roughly 68% of those that disclosed non-contact sexual violence perpetration believed universities would be likely/very likely to provide accommodations, followed by just under 68% of the full sample, about 62% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence, roughly 60% of survivors of contact sexual violence, and finally, approximately 58% of students who indicated contact sexual violence perpetration.

For the survivor sub-samples specific to the location of the incident and the perpetrator, survivors of non-contact sexual violence who reported the incident did not occur on university-affiliated property were the most likely to perceive this statement to be likely/very likely (roughly 66%). Approximately 62% of both survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was university-affiliated and survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the location of the incident was not university-affiliated perceived this statement to be likely/very likely, followed by about 60% of survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated the perpetrator was not university-affiliated, roughly 58% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident occurred on university-affiliated property, and nearly 55% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident occurred on university-affiliated property.

University Would Take Action to Address Factors That May Have Led to the Sexual Assault

Respondents were asked to indicate if they believed the university would take action to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault. Students who experienced neither

victimization nor perpetration were the most likely to agree with this statement, with just over 67% indicating it was likely/very likely. The full sample of students held the second most confidence with roughly 64% indicating it was likely/very likely, followed by just over 61% of the students who disclosed non-contact sexual violence perpetration since Fall 2018, roughly 53% of survivors of contact sexual violence, nearly 53% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence, and slightly over 50% of students who disclosed contact sexual violence perpetration.

For the survivor sub-samples specific to the location of the incident and the perpetrator, survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not take place on university-affiliated property were the most likely to perceive this statement to be true, with nearly 59% indicating it was likely/very likely. This was followed by roughly 54% of both survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated the perpetrator was not university-affiliated and survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated the incident did not occur on university-affiliated property, nearly 52% of survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated the perpetrator was university-affiliated, approximately 51% of survivors of contact sexual violence who reported the incident occurred on university-affiliated property, and about 47% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclose the incident occurred on university-affiliated property.

University Would Label the Person Making the Report a Trouble Maker

Respondents were asked to indicate the likelihood the university would label the person making the report a trouble maker. Students who disclosed contact sexual violence perpetration since Fall 2018 were the most likely to believe that the university would label the person making the report a trouble maker (nearly 24%), followed by just under 18% of survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated it was likely/very likely. Just over 16% of students who disclosed

non-contact sexual violence perpetration and survivors of non-contact sexual violence believed it was likely/very likely, 15% of the full sample, and nearly 15% of students who experienced neither victimization nor perpetration believed it was likely/very likely the university would label the person making the report a trouble maker.

For the survivor sub-samples specific to the location of the incident and the perpetrator, survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident occurred on university-affiliated property were the most likely to perceive this statement to be likely/very likely (just over 21%), followed by roughly 18% of survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated the perpetrator was university-affiliated, around 17% of both survivors of contact sexual violence who reported the perpetrator was not affiliated with the university and survivors of non-contact sexual violence who indicated the incident occurred on university-affiliated property, and nearly 17% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not occur on university-affiliated property. Survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not occur on university-affiliated property were the least likely to perceive this statement to be true, with roughly 15% indicating it was likely/very likely.

If the Person Accused of Sexual Misconduct Was a University Athlete, the University Would Not Take the Case Seriously

Respondents were asked to indicate if they thought the university would not take the case seriously if the person accused of sexual misconduct was a university athlete. Survivors of contact sexual violence were the most likely to perceive that the university would not take the case seriously if the perpetrator was a university athlete, with just over 45% indicating it was likely/very likely, followed by roughly 43% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence, nearly 34% of students who disclosed non-contact sexual violence perpetration, roughly 34% of

students who indicated contact sexual violence perpetration, and just over 28% of the full sample. Students with neither victimization nor perpetration experiences were the least likely to believe that the university would not take the case seriously if the person accused of sexual misconduct was a university athlete, with just over 23% indicating that it was likely/very likely.

For the survivor sub-samples specific to the location of the incident and the perpetrator, survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident occurred on university-affiliated property were the most likely to perceive this statement to be true, with 48% indicating it was likely/very likely. Approximately 47% of survivors of contact sexual violence who reported the incident occurred on university-affiliated property believed this statement to be likely/very likely, followed by roughly 46% of survivors of contact sexual violence who reported the perpetrator was university-affiliated, about 45% of both survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was not university-affiliated and survivors of contact sexual violence who reported the incident did not occur on university-affiliated property, and approximately 38% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence who indicated the incident did not occur on university-affiliated property.

If the Person Accused of Sexual Misconduct Was in a High Status or Otherwise Powerful Fraternity, the University Would Not Take the Case Seriously

Respondents were asked to indicate the likeliness of the university not taking the case seriously if the person accused was in a high status or otherwise powerful fraternity. Survivors of contact sexual violence were the most likely to perceive that the university would not take the case seriously if the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a high status of powerful fraternity, with just over 40% indicating it was likely/very likely. Survivors of non-contact sexual violence indicated the second most support for this statement with nearly 38% stating it

was likely/very likely, followed by approximately 29% of students who disclosed non-contact sexual violence perpetration experiences, roughly 26% of students who disclosed experiences with contact sexual violence perpetration, and slightly under 25% of the full sample. Students who had neither victimization nor perpetration experiences showed the least amount of support for this statement, with nearly 20% indicating it was likely/very likely.

For the survivor sub-samples specific to the location of the incident and the perpetrator, survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident occurred on university-affiliated property were the most likely to believe this statement to be true, with nearly 43% indicating it was likely/very likely. Just over 42% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was not university-affiliated believed this statement to be likely/very likely, followed by roughly 41% of survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated the incident occurred on university-affiliated property, slightly over 40% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not occur on university-affiliated property, approximately 36% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was university-affiliated, and nearly 33% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not take place on university-affiliated property.

If the Person Accused of Sexual Misconduct Was in a Position of Power or Authority, the University Would Not Take the Case Seriously

Respondents were asked the likelihood of the university not taking the case seriously if the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a position of power or authority. Survivors of contact and non-contact sexual violence showed the most support for this statement, with nearly 37% of both sub-samples indicating it was likely/very likely. Approximately 29% of students who disclosed non-contact sexual violence perpetration indicated it was likely/very likely,

followed by roughly 27% of students who disclosed experiences with contact sexual violence perpetration, slightly over 23% of the full sample, and nearly 19% of students with neither victimization nor perpetration experiences.

For the survivor sub-samples specific to the location of the incident and the perpetrator, survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident took place on university-affiliated property were the most likely to perceive this statement to be true, as roughly 42% indicated it was likely/very likely. Nearly 39% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident took place on university-affiliated property perceived the statement to be likely/very likely, followed by just under 38% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was not university-affiliated, roughly 36% of survivors of contact sexual violence who reported the incident did not take place on university-affiliated property, approximately 35% of survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated the perpetrator was university-affiliated, and roughly 31% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence who indicated the incident did not take place on university-affiliated property.

If the Person Accusing Someone of Sexual Misconduct Was From a Wealthy or Politically Connected Family, the University Would Take the Case More Seriously

Finally, respondents indicated if they believed the university would take the case more seriously if the person accusing someone of sexual misconduct was from a wealthy or politically connected family. Survivors of contact sexual violence were the most likely to perceive this statement would be true, with roughly 45% indicating it was likely/very likely. Survivors of non-contact sexual violence were the second most likely sub-sample to perceive this statement to be true (nearly 44%), followed by just under 40% of students who disclosed non-contact sexual violence perpetration, approximately 35% of students who disclosed contact sexual violence

perpetration, and just over 33% of the full sample. Students with neither victimization nor perpetration experiences were the least likely to perceive the statement to be true, with roughly 30% indicating it was likely/very likely.

For the survivor sub-samples specific to the location of the incident and the perpetrator, survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident took place on university-affiliated property were the most likely to perceive this statement to be likely/very likely (roughly 52%), followed by approximately 48% of both survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident took place on university-affiliated property and survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was university-affiliated. Just over 43% of survivors of contact sexual violence who indicated the incident did not occur on university-affiliated property perceived this statement to be likely/very likely, followed by slightly under 43% of survivors of contact sexual violence who disclosed the perpetrator was not university-affiliated, and roughly 40% of survivors of non-contact sexual violence who disclosed the incident did not occur on university-affiliated property.

Summary of Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct

There was notable fluctuation on how students perceived the nine individual statements about university responses to sexual misconduct to be likely/very likely across the full sample and sub-samples. Generally, survivors of non-contact sexual violence and contact sexual violence held the most negative perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct, while students who had neither experiences with victimization nor perpetration held the most confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. In addition, survivors who disclosed the incident occurred on university-affiliated property or the perpetrator was university-affiliated generally held more negative perceptions of university responses than survivors who disclosed

the incident did not take place on university-affiliated property or the perpetrator was not university-affiliated.

Linear Regression Analyses

Research Question 2: What predicts student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct?

Table 5 presents the results of the linear regression predicting students' perceptions of university responses for the full sample of students ($n = 12,160$; $F(18, 12141) = 61.98$, $p \leq .001$, $\text{adj. } R^2 = .083$). A number of variables significantly predicted student perceptions. Both *survivors of non-contact sexual violence* ($b = -2.17$) and *survivors of contact sexual violence* ($b = -1.29$) had less confidence in universities to respond to sexual misconduct, along with students who disclosed *non-contact sexual violence perpetration* ($b = -0.42$). Further, students who had higher *rape myth acceptance* scores ($b = -0.25$) had less confidence in university responses. Although students who received *bystander intervention training* ($b = -0.33$) had less confidence in university responses, students who received more *exposure messages about sexual misconduct* had more confidence in university responses ($b = 0.08$). Students who identified as *another gender identity* ($b = -2.46$) or *female* ($b = -1.48$) had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct than *males*. Respondents who were *Asian Non-Hispanic* ($b = -0.98$), *another race* ($b = -0.91$), *Black Non-Hispanic* ($b = -0.90$), and *Hispanic Any Race* ($b = -0.79$) had less confidence in university responses when compared to *White Non-Hispanic* students. Lastly, students who identified as *heterosexual* ($b = 2.32$) had more positive perceptions than students who identified as *another sexual orientation*, while students who were older in *age* ($b = -0.23$) held more negative perceptions of university responses.

Table 5. Linear Regression Predicting Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct; Full Sample

	Full Sample b (SE)
Sexual victimization experiences	
Non-contact sexual victimization	-2.17** (0.14)
Contact sexual victimization	-1.29** (0.26)
Sexual violence perpetration	
Non-contact sexual violence perpetration	-0.42* (0.17)
Contact sexual violence perpetration	-0.86 (0.58)
Rape myth acceptance	-0.25** (0.02)
Exposure to messages about sexual misconduct	0.08** (0.02)
Bystander intervention training	-0.33** (0.12)
Individual characteristics	
Age	-0.23** (0.04)
Gender identity	
Female	-1.48** (0.12)
Another gender identity	-2.46** (0.42)
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual	2.32** (0.15)
Race	
Hispanic – any race	-0.79** (0.15)
Black Non-Hispanic	-0.90** (0.24)
Asian Non-Hispanic	-0.98** (0.17)
Another race	-0.91** (0.22)
Student enrollment status	
Full-time	-0.26 (0.25)
Living location	
Campus/university-affiliated property	0.18 (0.13)
Membership in organizations	-0.08 (0.05)
Adjusted R ²	0.083 (6.04)

* = $p \leq .05$

** = $p \leq .01$

Research Question 3: How do survivors' experiences impact their perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct?

Survivors of Non-Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample

The first column of Table 6 presents the results of the linear regression predicting students' perceptions of university responses for survivors of non-contact sexual violence. The model in which perceptions of survivors of non-contact sexual violence was regressed on the predictors was significant ($n = 2,633$; $F(21, 2611) = 13.70$, $p \leq .001$, adj. $R^2 = .092$). Students

who disclosed non-contact sexual violence experiences had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct if they experienced higher amounts of *university-specific impacts* ($b = -0.74$) and *general impacts* ($b = -0.29$) as a result of their experiences. Additionally, students who disclosed experiencing an event that occurred at a *university-affiliated location* ($b = -1.07$) had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. Students who were older in *age* ($b = -0.31$) and those that had higher *rape myth acceptance* ($b = -0.15$) had less confidence in university responses, while students who had more *exposure to messages about sexual misconduct* had more confidence in university responses ($b = 0.13$). Further, students who identified as *another gender identity* ($b = -2.14$) or *female* ($b = -0.85$) had more negative perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct than students who identified as *male*. Students who were *Hispanic – any race* ($b = -0.64$) also had more negative perceptions of university responses than *White Non-Hispanic* students. Lastly, students who identified as *heterosexual* ($b = 1.97$) had higher scores than those who identified as *another sexual orientation*.

Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample

The model, as shown in the second column of Table 6, that regressed perceptions of survivors of contact sexual violence on the predictors was statistically significant ($n = 606$; $F(23, 582) = 3.23, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .078$). Survivors of contact sexual violence who also experienced *non-contact sexual victimization* ($b = -1.23$) held more negative perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. In this sub-sample, survivors that were older in *age* ($b = -0.50$) and experienced more *general impacts* from the incident ($b = -0.40$) had less confidence in university responses. Lastly, survivors who identified as *heterosexual* ($b = 2.49$) held more

positive perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct than survivors who identified as *another sexual orientation*.

Table 6. Linear Regression Predicting Student Perceptions of University Responses to Sexual Misconduct; Survivor Sub-Samples

	Survivors of Non-Contact Sexual Violence Sample b (SE)	Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sample b (SE)
Sexual victimization experiences		
Non-contact sexual victimization	–	-1.23* (0.58)
Contact sexual victimization	-0.36 (0.38)	–
Sexual violence perpetration		
Non-contact sexual violence perpetration	-0.04 (0.32)	-0.44 (0.74)
Contact sexual violence perpetration	-0.45 (1.11)	-0.37 (1.28)
Rape myth acceptance	-0.15** (0.06)	-0.04 (0.12)
Exposure to messages about sexual misconduct	0.13** (0.05)	0.03 (0.11)
Bystander intervention training	-0.39 (0.26)	-0.42 (0.60)
Individual characteristics		
Age	-0.31** (0.09)	-0.50* (0.21)
Gender identity		
Female	-0.85** (0.32)	-0.96 (0.91)
Another gender identity	-2.14** (0.71)	-2.45 (1.88)
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	1.97** (0.29)	2.49** (0.61)
Race		
Hispanic – any race	-0.64* (0.32)	-0.98 (0.67)
Black Non-Hispanic	-0.42 (0.63)	-0.74 (1.22)
Asian Non-Hispanic	-0.79 (0.45)	-0.79 (1.35)
Another race	-0.83 (0.46)	-1.14 (0.99)
Student enrollment status		
Full-time	-0.08 (0.62)	-0.24 (1.31)
Living location		
Campus/university-affiliated property	0.38 (0.28)	0.45 (0.61)
Membership in organizations	-0.11 (0.11)	-0.38 (0.21)
Victimization impact measures		
University-specific impact	-0.74** (0.16)	-0.21 (0.34)
General impact	-0.29** (0.10)	-0.40* (0.20)
Help-seeking measures		
University-affiliated help-seeking	–	1.15 (0.91)
Other help-seeking	–	0.15 (0.59)
General help-seeking	-0.29 (0.27)	–
Victimization characteristics		
Perpetrator		
University-affiliated perpetrator	–	0.51 (0.58)
Location		
University-affiliated location	-1.07** (0.25)	-1.10 (0.76)
Adjusted R ²	0.092 (6.16)	0.078 (6.31)

* = $p \leq .05$

** = $p \leq .01$

Summary of Regression Analyses

In sum, the regression analyses provide insight into predictors of student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. The majority of the predictors were statistically significant in predicting the outcome variable within the full sample, but that did not necessarily hold true for the survivor sub-samples. Within the survivor sub-samples, there were more predictors that were statistically significant for the survivors of non-contact sexual violence sub-sample than the survivors of contact sexual violence sub-sample. Specifically, ten predictors were statistically significant for the survivors of non-contact sexual violence sub-sample, while only four were statistically significant in predicting perceptions of the survivors of contact sexual violence sub-sample.

Across all of the models, a number of variables were statistically significant in predicting students' perceptions in at least two of the models (i.e., *survivors of non-contact sexual violence*, *age*, students who identified as *heterosexual*, *general impacts* experienced from the event, students who were *Hispanic – any race*, students who identified as *female* or *another gender identity*, *rape myth acceptance*, and *exposure to messages about sexual misconduct*), while only a few predictors remained statistically significant in predicting student perceptions across all of the models (i.e., *age* and students who identified as *heterosexual*).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion of the Results

This study aimed to better understand student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. By utilizing data from mcBEE, the study explored perceptions of students enrolled in nine institutions across the United States, including different sub-samples of students (e.g., survivors of sexual misconduct, persons who disclosed perpetration). Of primary interest was understanding the predictors of perceptions for the entire sample and predictors of perceptions for survivors of non-contact and contact sexual violence. This study adds to the existent literature by examining nine different indicators of student perceptions, rather than only a general measure. Further, it is among the first to examine predictors of student perceptions across a full sample of students and compare perceptions across sub-samples who are survivors of different forms of sexual violence.

Whenever possible, this discussion section provides direct comparisons to extant research to provide explanations as to the findings in this study. Because there are so few research studies in this area, direct comparisons may be limited. Speculation for the findings will be provided, however, because the survey did not specifically ask students to explain *why* they held certain perceptions of university responses, possible explanations are just that: speculation. The findings of the study allow for policy recommendations that can begin to address the growing gap between universities and their student population and eventually result in more supportive and safer environments for students.

Research Question 1: How do students perceive university responses to sexual misconduct?

The first research question aimed to determine how different sub-samples of students perceived university responses to sexual misconduct. Ultimately, students do hold fairly positive perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. On a scale of 9 – 45, the full sample of students had an average score of 30.66 for perceptions. Similar results were found in the AAU Campus Climate survey, with roughly 66% of students indicating it was likely/very likely campus officials would take reports of sexual assault seriously (Cantor et al., 2020). Although all of the students in the sample indicated relatively positive perceptions, there were noticeable differences in perceptions once the full sample was broken down into survivors of non-contact and contact sexual violence, students who disclosed non-contact and contact sexual violence perpetration, and students who reported neither victimization nor perpetration, as well as when examining if the incident occurred on university-affiliated property or if the perpetrator was university-affiliated.

The results of the overall student perceptions confidence measure showing differences between the sub-samples were similar to differences found in previous research (Cantor et al., 2015; Cantor et al., 2020). On average, in this study, survivors of any form of sexual violence had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct than other sub-samples, while students with no disclosures of perpetration or victimization since Fall 2018 had the most confidence. This notion of survivors and non-survivors having different perceptions is supported by prior research. Orchowski and colleagues (2009) found college women who disclosed a history of sexual victimization perceived they would be less likely to report future incidents to any campus agency than college women with no history of sexual victimization. While Orchowski and colleagues' study did not go into depth about why survivors perceived they would be less likely to report, it highlights that survivors have different perceptions than non-

survivor students. Further, previous studies have concluded that survivors are more wary of mandatory reporting policies, view the value of campus services to be low, and have overall less confidence in their university (Amin, 2019; Burgess-Proctor et al., 2016; Holland, 2019; Holland, Cortina & Freyd, 2018; Nasta, Shah, Brahmanandam, Richman, Wittels, Allsworth & Boardman, 2005; Newins et al., 2018).

The finding that survivors typically hold less confidence in their university to adequately respond to sexual misconduct is in line with the concept of betrayal trauma theory and institutional betrayal. In a sample of 345 college women, Smith and Freyd (2013) concluded that institutions have the potential to inflict additional trauma and harm onto survivors of sexual violence. The college women in their sample who indicated experiencing institutional betrayal had increased anxiety, increased traumatic symptoms, and were more likely to dissociate following the event. Given that institutional betrayal is so prevalent (Smith & Freyd, 2014), it is reasonable to assume that some of the survivors in both the survivors of non-contact and contact sexual violence sub-samples experienced it themselves, thus resulting in their decreased confidence in university responses when compared to non-survivor students. Of course, this was unable to be tested directly in the current study because there were no measures of institutional betrayal. However, if a survivor experienced institutional betrayal by their university, then it would be plausible to suspect that they would have less confidence in the university's ability to address and respond to sexual misconduct. According to betrayal trauma theory, students who experience institutional betrayal likely experience more severe negative impacts, thus increasing the disconnect and distrust between survivors and their university.

In addition, the current study found that survivors who disclosed the incident occurred on university-affiliated property or the perpetrator was university-affiliated generally had less

confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct than survivors who experienced a victimization that did not occur on university-affiliated property or perpetrated by someone university-affiliated. Similar findings exist within past literature. In fact, studies have found that students explicitly state that their lack of trust stems from their prior negative experiences with their university resources (Marques, Couture-Carron, Frederick & Scott, 2020). In a similar vein, survivors who experienced a victimization that occurred on university-affiliated property or perpetrated by an individual associated with the university may perceive that the university was unable to prevent or adequately respond to the incident. Survivors' direct experiences with sexual misconduct that occurred on university-affiliated property or perpetrated by someone affiliated with the university may have led to their more negative perception of university responses to sexual misconduct. Of course, this latter point is speculation, as the survey did not ask respondents specifically why they perceived the university response in the light that they did; the results are simply associations.

The current study also found differences in student perceptions across the nine different measures that made up the dependent variable (student perceptions). The first theme relates to how students perceive university responses to powerful or influential persons (e.g., athletes). Overall, students who were survivors of non-contact and contact sexual violence were the most likely to perceive that the university would not take the case seriously if the person *accused* was powerful or influential (e.g., athlete, powerful fraternity, position of authority), while the university would take the case seriously if the person *accusing* another was powerful or influential (e.g., from a wealthy or politically connected family). This finding is supported by both existent literature and noteworthy cases involving inadequate university responses. Marques and colleagues (2020) explain that students do not have confidence in their university to

appropriately respond to sexual misconduct because they do not believe that their university will prioritize them over the institution's reputation. That is, survivors may perceive that the university may not take the case seriously when the perpetrator is someone important or powerful because the university would rather protect their own reputation, enrollment rates, and income. Therefore, the university may not have survivors' best interests as their top priority. This is also further supported by results from the AAU Climate Survey which concluded that student non-survivors generally hold more positive perceptions than student survivors. More specifically, 45% of survivors thought it was very likely the university would take the report seriously, while roughly 65% of non-survivors thought it was very likely they would take the report seriously (Cantor et al., 2020). It is important to note that student perceptions of university responses to influential or powerful persons may also be a result of perceptions related to institutional and societal reactions and responses when someone powerful is accused of sexual misconduct in general rather than just in a university setting. However, this is unable to be proved or explored further in the current study.

There are also a number of noteworthy cases where these exact concerns have played out (i.e., institutional responses to powerful or influential persons). Specifically, the Larry Nassar case at Michigan State University (MSU) is a clear example where the university was strongly criticized for not responding appropriately to reports of sexual misconduct based on who the accused individual was in society and in the university itself. In 2018, over 150 female student athletes disclosed sexual assault perpetrated by Nassar when he was an osteopathic medicine practitioner. While Nassar was responsible for assaulting the young women, they also disclosed the traumatization that they consistently experienced as a result of the inadequate response from MSU administration and staff (Méndez, 2020). As another example, Florida State University

(FSU) was sharply criticized for its handling of a report against Jameis Winston, who was the school's football quarterback at the time. A fellow student had accused him of sexually assaulting her in 2012, yet little was done by FSU. In 2018, the survivor sued FSU for its inability to address her Title IX complaint in regards to Winston. While FSU settled, they never admitted any liability. These are just two examples of university responses to sexual misconduct when it involves a powerful or influential person and helps provide an example of why survivors have less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct.

The second theme that was pulled from the nine individual statements about student perceptions relates to the university's ability to offer support to the survivor. This theme encompasses student perceptions on the likelihood of the university supporting the person making the report or the accused, offering accommodations to the person making the report, and labeling the person making the report a trouble maker. Students who disclosed contact sexual violence perpetration had the least amount of confidence in the university to support the person making the report and offer accommodations, while they had the most confidence that the university would support the person accused and label the person making the report a troublemaker.

To my knowledge, no studies have examined perceptions of individuals who have disclosed sexual violence perpetration. Nevertheless, there is research that suggests a campus culture exists that condones coercive and alcohol-facilitated sexual behavior among students (Collins & Dunn, 2018; Mennicke, Bowling, Gromer & Ryan, 2019; Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984). Further, peer support for sexual violence among college men exists within the cultural contexts that can be found on college campuses (Schwartz, DeKeseredy, Tait & Shahid, 2001). This campus culture and peer support for sexual violence may empower those individuals with a

perpetration history and has the potential to create an environment that naturally supports the accused more than the survivor. Additionally, students who indicated perpetrating contact sexual violence since Fall 2018 could have personal experience where they saw the university not support the person making the report; this is speculation and cannot be confirmed with the current data.

Further, there is an existent, yet incorrect, perception that women routinely falsely accuse others of sexual misconduct (Ferguson & Malouff, 2016; Lisak, Gardinier, Nicksa & Cote, 2010; Lonsway, 2010). This harmful view creates doubt about the truthfulness of individuals who come forward to make a report of sexual misconduct. Survivors typically hold self-doubt and blame, so if they are met with disbelief when they come forward to report their experiences, then it opens the door for re-traumatization which only furthers their psychological harm (Khan, Hirsch, Wamboldt & Mellins, 2018; Sabina, Verdiglione & Zadnik, 2017; Smith & Freyd, 2014). This false perception also creates an inaccurate view that perpetrators are being wrongly accused; thus it could influence student perceptions about university responses (Weiser, 2017).

Lastly, students who disclosed contact sexual violence perpetration experiences, followed by survivors of both non-contact and contact sexual violence, had the least amount of confidence in the university to take action to address factors that could have led to the sexual misconduct. While universities have attempted to address sexual misconduct experienced by students, critics argue that their efforts are lackluster, incomplete, and do little to address the issue (Fisher, Hartman, Cullen & Turner, 2002). Universities have demonstrated non-compliance with federal mandates, falsely reported incidence numbers on annual security reports, have been sued for inadequately addressing Title IX cases, and have been criticized for a lack of available or visible policies (Cantalupo, 2011; Coray, 2016; Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2005; Richards, 2019; Yung,

2015). There is a chance that survivors and students who disclosed contact sexual violence perpetration had directly experienced or witnessed the university not address factors that led to the incident or they know others who experienced it.

Altogether, the results of Research Question One were congruent with past research. Students who disclosed neither experiences with victimization or perpetration typically held the most confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct, while student survivors of both non-contact and contact sexual violence tended to have the least amount of confidence. Interestingly, students who disclosed experiences with contact sexual violence perpetration held perceptions about university responses to sexual misconduct that, in some ways, nearly matched those of survivors.

Research Question 2: What predicts student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct?

The second research question aimed to predict perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct using the full sample of students. The variables included in the model accounted for just over 8% of the variation in student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. Even after controlling for other variables, students who were survivors of non-contact sexual violence and survivors of contact sexual violence had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. As previously mentioned, these findings support prior literature (Cantor et al., 2015; Cantor et al., 2020; Orchowski, Meyer & Gidycz, 2009) and highlight the relevance and potential application of betrayal trauma theory and institutional betrayal to understanding student perceptions. Survivors' experiences impact their confidence in university responses, which is discussed in more depth to address the third research question.

Interestingly, perpetration of non-contact sexual violence was statistically significant in predicting student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. Students who disclosed non-contact sexual violence perpetration since Fall 2018 had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. There is not a lot of research that exists on perceptions of students who disclose perpetration experiences. Thus far, the majority of research has focused more on survivor experiences and perceptions in an attempt to improve the relationship between universities and the students that they serve. However, it is possible – although cannot be confirmed with this data – that this finding may be a result of the direct experiences that these students have had with university responses to sexual misconduct.

Further, students who identified as another gender identity or female had less confidence in university responses than students who identified as male. This finding is similar to that of prior research. Roughly 74% of all of the male students in the AAU study believed it was very/extremely likely that campus officials would take reports of sexual misconduct seriously, compared to only 53% of women and 44% of TGQN students (i.e., students who identified as transgender woman, transgender man, nonbinary/genderqueer, gender questioning, or who noted that their gender was not listed). A similar pattern was found when respondents were asked if they believed officials would conduct a fair investigation, with roughly 56% of male students indicating it was very/extremely likely, 40% of women, and just over 27% of TGQN students indicating it was very/extremely officials would conduct a fair investigation.

Typically, students who identify as female experience higher sexual victimization rates (Coulter, et al., 2017; Krebs et al., 2016; Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020) than males, so it is plausible that they have more negative perceptions because they have more personal experiences with university responses to sexual misconduct. This same sentiment also holds true for students

who do not identify as female or male. Individuals who identify as another gender identity experience sexual violence at a higher rate than both females and males (Coulter, et al., 2017; Griner et al., 2020; Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020). Further, previous research has found students who identify as another gender identity have less confidence in university responses than students who identify as female or male (Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020). Students who do not identify as female or male face additional risks when navigating everyday life, let alone disclosing experiences of sexual violence to formal supports. These students have more to risk and most likely have more fears regarding institutional responses, therefore, it makes sense that they would have less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct.

Students who identified as heterosexual held more confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct than students who identified as another sexual orientation. This finding is supported by existent literature. Mennicke and colleagues (2019) found students who do not identify as heterosexual report feeling less institutional support than students who identify as heterosexual. The authors also found that students who experienced sexual minority discrimination reported lower levels of connection with their university (Mennicke, Geiger & Brewster, 2019). Students who identify as another sexual orientation are also at an increased risk of experiencing sexual violence as compared to students who identify as heterosexual (Blosnich & Bossarte, 2012; Coulter, et al., 2017; Krebs et al., 2016; Martin et al., 2011; Schulze & Perkins, 2017). Research suggests that individuals who do not identify as heterosexual fear navigating systems that are heteronormative, which becomes increasingly problematic when it comes to sexual violence because they face being outed, ostracizing themselves, or marginalizing (i.e., individuals or groups that are cast aside due to being outside of the “norm” or the majority) their community further (Ollen, Ameral, Palm Reed & Hines 2017). These students already

perceive that they have less institutional support, so whether they experience a sexual victimization or not, they are still more likely to have less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct than students who identify as heterosexual.

Students who were Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Asian Non-Hispanic, or another race had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct than students who were White Non-Hispanic. This finding is not surprising given results from similarly situated studies that examine racial and ethnic perception differences of other institutions, such as the criminal justice system. For example, Hurwitz and Peffley (2005) concluded that African American citizens have far more negative perceptions of the fairness of the criminal justice system than White citizens. Further, Esqueda and colleagues (2019) found university students who were ethnic minorities (i.e., American Indian or Native American, mixed ancestry, Asian or Asian American, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, or another race) held more negative perceptions of the criminal justice system than White students. Research suggests that individuals who are not White Non-Hispanic generally hold more negative perceptions of institutions, therefore they may feel more marginalized by institutions in general. Thus, this may result in less confidence in any institutional response.

As the age of a student increases, the confidence in universities adequately responding to sexual misconduct decreases. Some plausible explanations for this relationship are provided. As students progress through school and get older, they may come into contact with fellow students who had negative experiences with university responses to sexual misconduct. They may become more aware and observe more situations around them where the university did not adequately respond. After being exposed to classmates' experiences and witnessing inadequate responses themselves, students may also become more aware of instances where university

responses are discussed on social media or the mass media. Over half of the students in the sample attended a school located in a metropolitan county with a population over one million and had an undergraduate population between 19,000 and 30,000 students, therefore the chance that they knew survivors or were exposed to responses to sexual violence were high. Overall, as a student gets older, they may be exposed to more examples of universities inadequately responding to sexual misconduct, therefore they begin to hold more pessimistic views.

Higher rape myth acceptance was associated with less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. This finding was interesting, because the nature of the relationship was not expected. However, because students who hold higher endorsements of rape myths also tend to have more experiences with sexual violence perpetration (Trottier, Benbouriche & Bonneville, 2021), students who disclosed non-contact or contact sexual violence perpetration may have personal experience with university responses to sexual misconduct, and their perceptions may be a result of watching a survivor try to navigate the university response. In fact, in this study, students who reported non-contact and contact perpetration had higher rape myth acceptance scores than those who did not report perpetration in the past year (results not shown). Mennicke and colleagues (2019) assert some survivors do not report experiences with sexual violence because they perceive that they would receive poor service due to formal supports that endorse or accept rape myths. In a similar vein, students who hold higher rape myth acceptance may believe that universities hold the same views about rape myths that they do, and therefore may perceive that the university response is not victim-centered. This is pure speculation and cannot be tested with the current data. However, this will be further expanded upon in the section that includes recommendations for future research.

Students who received more exposure to messages about sexual misconduct while at their university had more confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. Previous research supports this finding. In a sample of 1,047 undergraduate students, McMahon and Seabrook (2019) examined the impact that exposure to messages about sexual violence had on proactive bystander tendencies. In their study, respondents were asked to respond to 21 statements about on-campus exposure. Overall, McMahon and Seabrook (2019) found that students who had been exposed to more messages about sexual violence participated in more positive bystander activities. While this is not directly related to perceptions, it still supports the notion that there are positive outcomes when universities put effort into creating proactive awareness of sexual violence. In the current study, this particular finding highlights the importance of university prevention efforts to address and respond to sexual violence. If a student has received numerous exposure messages while at their university, then they may be more likely to perceive that the university is taking the issue more seriously; therefore, they may place more trust and confidence in them.

Respondents that indicated they had received bystander intervention training had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. To the extent of my knowledge, no studies have looked at this specifically. However, the directional relationship could be a result of an increased awareness of sexual misconduct after receiving bystander intervention training. If a student was not familiar with the issues related to sexual misconduct experienced by college students, then the bystander intervention training could make their views more pessimistic as they become more aware of the issues. It is plausible that students would become more critical of university responses to sexual misconduct if they receive training because they put themselves in a position to begin thinking about what can be done to address sexual misconduct and respond

appropriately to it. Unfortunately, this is purely speculation and cannot be examined further with the current study. However, studies suggest that after receiving Green Dot training, undergraduate students were more likely to report observing bystander actions than students who were untrained, and violence perpetration rates were lower among men who attended campuses that had intervention trainings (Coker et al., 2011; Coker et al., 2015). This has the potential to support the argument that it is possible students become more aware and critical of what is going on around them. Further, over half of students in the current study attended a university with an undergraduate population between 19,000 and 30,000 students and located in a county with a population over one million, which means that students located in large cities and schools may be more likely to be observe events that would decrease perceptions.

Research Question 3: How do survivors’ experiences impact their perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct?

Research Question 3 aimed to examine predictors of student perceptions of university response to sexual misconduct within survivor sub-samples. The models focused on survivors of non-contact sexual violence sub-sample predicted roughly 9% of the variation in perceptions, and nearly 8% of the variation in perceptions of survivors of contact sexual violence. Some of the predictors impacting perceptions in the full sample were also significant in the sub-samples. When this occurred, and if no additional discussion was warranted, only the findings are presented here (i.e., no discussion about the findings to avoid unnecessary repetition).

Survivors of contact sexual violence had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct if they also disclosed being a survivor of non-contact sexual violence. Unfortunately, repeat sexual victimizations of any form of sexual violence are common, with nearly half of survivors experiencing a revictimization (Daigle, Fisher & Cullen, 2008; Walsh, et al., 2020).

Research suggests that survivors are at the highest risk for a repeat victimization shortly after an incident; therefore, time is of the essence when institutions respond to reports of sexual violence (Daigle, Fisher & Cullen, 2008). If a survivor reports an experience with sexual violence and the university does not quickly and adequately address the factors that contributed to the incident, then the survivor may hold more negative views of their institution. Survivors who experience multiple sexual victimizations during their time at a university may be more cynical in regards to university responses because the university was not able to protect them or prevent a repeat victimization. Interestingly, a similar relationship was not found for survivors of non-contact sexual violence. This may be because a larger percentage of survivors of contact sexual violence indicated also experiencing non-contact sexual violence (nearly 55%) than survivors of non-contact sexual violence also experiencing contact sexual violence in the same time frame (roughly 13%).

Like the model with the full sample of students, older survivors of both non-contact and contact sexual violence held more negative perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. Results from the AAU study demonstrated a student's year in school is related to their risk of experiencing sexual violence; more specifically, undergraduate women were more likely to experience nonconsensual sexual contact by physical force or the inability to consent was during their first year at the school. Although the current study examined sexual violence experiences since Fall 2018, it would make sense that older students in the sample would hold less confidence. This finding may be a result of older survivors being more familiar with their school and what steps they have seen them take in the past. Older students could have been attending the school for numerous years, therefore they may know other survivors who have been disappointed by their school's response. Thus, they may have less confidence in

universities to adequately respond to sexual misconduct based off of actions they have observed. Unfortunately, in this study, limited data was available to assess how many victimizations someone experienced and the impact of these victimization on perceptions.

Survivors of non-contact sexual violence who identified as female or another gender identity had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. This finding is supported, indirectly, through prior research. The existent literature has shown that students who identify as female or another gender identity typically experience sexual violence at higher rates than males (e.g., Coulter, et al., 2017; Krebs et al., 2016). Females and students who identify as another gender also may have more negative perceptions because they have more personal experiences with sexual violence victimization or they may be aware of more people who have been personally impacted by sexual violence. These students also have differing views about the problem of sexual assault and sexual misconduct at their schools. In the AAU study, roughly 20% of men thought sexual assault was very/extremely problematic at their school, 36% of women, while nearly 45% of TGQN students indicated it was very/extremely problematic (Cantor et al., 2020). While this finding from the AAU study is not specific to survivors of non-contact sexual violence, it is still indicative of the increased awareness of sexual violence that students who identify as female or another gender identity possess. In this study, survivors of non-contact sexual violence (but not contact sexual violence) who identified as a female or another gender identity had less confidence in their universities' response to sexual misconduct than males, which may be a reflection of being subjected to increased sexual violence rates, subsequently being more aware of the problem of sexual violence, and therefore being more critical of what institutions are doing to address the reoccurring problem.

Survivors of non-contact sexual violence and survivors of contact sexual violence who identified as heterosexual held more confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct than students who identified as another sexual orientation. This finding is supported by existent literature. Specifically, Mennicke, Geiger, and Brewster (2019) concluded that students who identified as a sexual minority had lower perceptions of institutional support than students who identified as heterosexual. However, they did not find any perception differences of institutional support between sexual minority students who were survivors or non-survivors. While the same results were not found in the current study, it is further evidence that, in general, students who identify as sexual minorities have less confidence in their university, regardless of whether they had experienced victimization. Universities are furthering the distance between themselves and marginalized students, in this case students who identify as having another sexual orientation.

Survivors of non-contact sexual violence who were Hispanic had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct when compared to survivors that were White Non-Hispanic. Mookerjee and colleagues (2015) found Hispanic women who were survivors of intimate partner violence held similar views of formal supports as Non-Hispanic women did. However, Hispanic survivors found it difficult to rely on informal supports due to socio-cultural influences (e.g., fearing family reactions), which made them unable to tap into the resources of their social networks. The Hispanic women expressed that they would rather move away or leave in order to avoid dealing with formal supports in relationship to their experiences (Mookerjee, Cerulli, Fernandez & Chin, 2015). This is further evidence that Hispanic individuals have different cultural pressures and expectations than those of White Non-Hispanic individuals, which may result in less confidence in institutions, and which could subsequently carry over into a distrust in university responses. In addition, it is important to note that the other race and

ethnicity variables were no longer significant in the survivor sub-samples. There is a possibility that simply experiencing a victimization transcends race or ethnicity differences in perceptions. This may also hold true for the race or ethnicity of survivors of contact sexual violence, as none of those variables predicted their perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct.

Survivors of non-contact sexual violence that had higher rape myth acceptance had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. Rape myths place a lot of blame on the survivor and emphasize the actions that they did or did not take leading up to a victimization (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). When a victimization does not meet the expected components of what many consider “real rape” (e.g., violent act that produces injuries, involves a stranger, the survivor fights back or resists the interaction; Kahn, 2004; Littleton, Rhatigan & Axsom, 2007), then the survivor is less likely to label their victimization. Survivors of rape who score high in rape myth acceptance may be less likely to acknowledge that what had happened to them was a rape (Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009; Schwarz, Gibson & Lewis-Arévalo, 2017), therefore they may place more blame on themselves for the incident that occurred. Survivors may have more negative perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct because they may fear that the university will also blame them for what occurred, rather than the perpetrator. However, it is important to note that rape myth acceptance was found to be a predictor only in the survivors of non-contact sexual violence sub-sample, not for survivors of contact sexual violence. Nevertheless, similar sentiments can be applied to survivors of non-contact sexual violence. LeMaire, Oswald, and Russell (2016) found female survivors of rape with more tolerance of sexual harassment held beliefs that sexual harassment was unavoidable and that it is a less serious offense (LeMaire, Oswald & Russeel, 2016). Thus, it is possible that the endorsement of rape myths could be associated with greater tolerance of sexual harassment.

If a survivor of non-contact sexual violence views sexual harassment as inevitable or a less serious offense, they may believe that the university holds similar sentiments and will never be able to adequately respond to or prevent sexual harassment. Therefore, survivor endorsement of rape myths may be associated with less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. Of course, this possibility is simply speculation and could not be tested with the current data.

For the survivors of non-contact sexual violence sub-sample (but not survivors of contact violence), those that had been exposed to more messages about sexual misconduct had more confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. Similar to what was found in the full sample, this may be indicative of the effort that survivors perceive their university is putting into creating awareness or preventing sexual violence experienced by college students. In this study, the messages about sexual misconduct that students would have been exposed to were all directly related to what the university has distributed or what they offer to create more awareness. Survivors who are exposed to more messages at their university may believe that the university is truly putting an effort in, therefore they have more confidence in universities to address sexual misconduct. The same effect was not found for survivors of contact sexual violence, however. It is possible that survivors of contact sexual violence remain more skeptical of university responses, regardless of the messages they see on campus. In fact, some survivors of sexual assault (i.e., students who had experienced contact sexual violence at least once since the age of 14) indicated their university's sexual assault self-defense course was "unnecessary" because they already had existing knowledge regarding sexual assault and can already defend themselves (Burgess-Proctor et al., 2016). Studies show that survivors of contact sexual violence do not have a lot of faith in university efforts, therefore it may not matter how many messages they are exposed to.

Survivors of non-contact sexual violence that experienced more university-specific impacts (i.e., if the event created an intimidating environment, interfered with their academic/professional performance, limited their ability to participate in programs/activities) had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. This finding falls in line with existent research. Specifically, research suggests that institutional connection is an important factor in survivors' decisions to formally report or disclose their experiences (Mennicke, Geiger & Brewster, 2019). Within their study, Mennicke and colleagues (2019) measured institutional connection by asking respondents to respond to a number of statements (i.e., if they felt close to people at the university, if they were happy there, if they feel like a part of the university community, if they feel safe there, if teachers treat students fairly). If survivors experience more university-specific impacts, then it is likely that they would report less institutional connection. Therefore, survivors may have more of negative perception of university responses to sexual misconduct especially if they do not feel safe at their university or they feel alienated as a result of their experience with sexual violence. Unexpectedly, however, this same effect was not observed for survivors of contact sexual violence, which indicates that survivors of contact sexual violence have different experiences.

Further, survivors of non-contact sexual violence and survivors of contact sexual violence that experienced a higher number of general impacts (i.e., missed classes or work, felt detached from others, tried hard not to think about it, turned in assignments or exams in late, gotten worse grades) from the experience held less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. Research suggests that if survivors had greater distress symptoms after the assault or if PTSD symptomology was severely high, then they were more likely to turn to formal supports for help (Graham, Mallinson, Krall & Annan, 2020; Stoner & Cramer, 2019). If a survivor reports greater

disruptions to their life as a result of the experience, then they may be more likely to suffer severe consequences when trying to cope with what they have been through. With more survivors considering seeking help from formal supports, they may reflect on their university's inability to prevent the victimization from occurring, therefore they may believe that the university will not be able to properly help them after the event.

When it came to the location, survivors of non-contact sexual violence had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct if the event occurred at a university-affiliated location. Past studies demonstrate students do not always believe they can report an instance of sexual misconduct to their university if it did not occur on campus because students are not sure if it is considered a university problem that they can address (Spencer et al., 2017). Therefore, when an incident does occur on campus or an affiliated location, students may believe it is within the university's responsibility to respond appropriately. If the university does not respond adequately, or if they do not respond at all, then survivors may be more likely to have less confidence in university responses. Their negative perception may be further validated when incidents are persistent or they observe their friends encounter the same problem because it reinforces the idea that the university is not putting in an effort to make a change. This was only observed for survivors of non-contact sexual violence (not survivors of contact sexual violence), therefore, it is possible simply experiencing a more intrusive form of sexual violence (contact sexual violence) transcends the location of the incident.

In sum, this study was among the first to examine predictors of student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct across different sub-samples. Specifically, it compared perceptions between survivors of different forms of sexual violence, students who disclosed experiences with different forms sexual violence perpetration, and students who disclosed neither

victimization nor perpetration experiences. From the findings, it is clear that student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct vary based on students' personal experiences with sexual violence. Further, there appear to be unique experiences between survivors of non-contact sexual violence and contact sexual violence that impact their perceptions of university responses. Below, implications of the results are provided.

Implications

There are several policy implications that can be taken from the results of this study. This study repeatedly found that as students get older, they have less confidence in university responses. This suggests that more needs to be done to address the problem of sexual violence as early as possible, especially for first year students. Prior research asserts that college students are most likely to be victimized during their first year at a university (Cantor et al., 2020), so the more effort that can be put into prevention efforts, resources, and awareness campaigns for that population, the better. There are a number of universities that require first year students to complete sexual assault prevention or awareness programs, which prove to be helpful, at least in the short term. As an example, Bonar and colleagues (2019) examined a sexual assault prevention program at one public midwestern university campus that is required for all first year students. After receiving the group-based educational program, students indicated they were more aware of campus resources and had more favorable changes in attitude, which suggests that trainings targeted at first year students are important. Moreover, prevention efforts need to be spread throughout a student's time at the university because the impacts of a victimization are never over – more needs to be done to address the needs of survivors, no matter how long services are needed.

While the current study did find that students do hold a fairly high amount of confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct, there were clear differences across the different sub-samples of students based on their experiences with victimization or perpetration. Survivors consistently held less favorable views of university responses to sexual misconduct, therefore this study adds to the literature that calls for a more trauma-informed, victim-centered response to campus sexual violence. McCauley & Casler (2015) assert trauma-informed responses promote “empowerment and recognizes that sexual assault may impact everything about survivors moving forward” (p. 585). Not only is it important to ensure that survivors are empowered, studies have found that students explicitly state that their lack of trust stems from their prior negative experiences with their university resources (Marques, Couture-Carron, Frederick & Scott, 2020). Since help-seeking intentions are already low on university campuses, it is important to improve student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct because they appear to be associated with help-seeking intentions (Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020).

Additionally, findings suggest that there was an apparent disconnect between marginalized populations and universities, whether they were survivors or not. This further supports the need of universities to take action to bridge the disconnect with students who identify or are a part of certain populations (i.e., students who identified as another gender identity, another sexual orientation, and students who were not White Non-Hispanic). Students who were members of marginalized populations, like the ones listed above, held more negative perceptions than their counterparts who were White Non-Hispanic, heterosexual, or male. Further, prior research has found that students who do not identify as male or female experience higher rates of sexual violence, have less confidence in university responses to sexual

misconduct, and are less likely to report experiences with sexual violence because they fear they will be further ostracized by institutional responses (Ollen, Ameral, Palm Reed & Hines, 2017).

Similar sentiments are held by all marginalized populations – they have more to risk, or lose, in confiding in formal supports than other students. Students who are a part of vulnerable populations have more needs and fears than students who are White Non-Hispanic, identify as heterosexual, and male (Mookerjee, Cerulli, Fernandez & Chin, 2015; Ollen, Ameral, Palm Reed & Hines 2017). Within the United States, the number of undergraduate students who were White decreased from nearly 70% in 1995-1996 to 52% in 2015-2016, while all other racial and ethnic group enrollment increased during the same time periods (Espinosa, Turk, Taylor & Chessman, 2019), thus showing that university campuses are becoming increasingly more diverse.

Therefore, universities need to make a more conscious effort to support and tailor their approaches to target students who are more marginalized and underserved to help improve connections and perceptions of institutional support (Coulter, et al., 2017; Gómez, 2021; Griner et al., 2020; Mennicke et al., 2019; Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020; Sabina, Verdiglione & Zadnik, 2017; Schultz et al., 2016). Thus, the current study adds to the existent research that asserts the need to make a conscious effort to protect all students in order to increase disclosure rates and confidence levels (Mushonga, Fedina & Bessaha, 2020).

In addition, these findings call for more university efforts to increase connectedness with their students. Previous research suggests that institutional connection is an important factor in survivors' decisions to formally report or disclose their experiences (Mennicke, Geiger & Brewster, 2019). Not only can an increase in connection with the university potentially improve student well-being by connecting students with formal supports, but it can also lead to a more supportive, safe, and inclusive environment for students. The ability for students to form bonds

with peers, mentors, and faculty or staff at the university allows for more meaningful connections. This can be done by encouraging communication and collaboration within classes and emphasizing the importance of empathy.

Such a recommendation is especially important in light of research related to betrayal trauma theory and institutional betrayal. Although Freyd's (1996) betrayal trauma theory was initially developed to explain the logic behind forgetting childhood abuse, it has been adapted to explain the traumatic results of betrayal in numerous contexts, with sexual violence being one of them (Smith & Freyd, 2014). Betrayal trauma theory is used as the backbone to explain why institutional betrayal is so traumatic for survivors of sexual violence and it can explain the impact of the betrayal on subsequent distrust in institutions from marginalized populations.

This study focused on universities, but the concept of institutional betrayal and the theoretical framework presented in betrayal trauma theory applies within a much larger context: the results of this study can be applied to the larger picture of institutions in general. It is a reoccurring theme within this study and across the existent literature that certain populations harbor distrust in institutional responses more-so than others (i.e., survivors, those who are not male, those who do not identify as heterosexual, those who are not White). The systematic failure to protect and address the needs of those who are most at risk for experiencing sexual violence are prevalent across many contexts. For example, the recent case of Vanessa Guillén and the United States Army in Fort Hood, Texas provides further insight into the systematic shortcomings of the United States Military. Guillén was a Hispanic, female survivor of sexual harassment who went missing in Fort Hood, Texas. As more information emerged about her disappearance, it became apparent that she was failed by an institution that had an obligation to protect her. Fort Hood and the United States Military came under immense criticism for creating

an environment that enabled soldiers to fear career consequences and reprisal for reporting instances of sexual violence and for betraying the family of Guillén as they searched for answers regarding her disappearance. In this example, the institution was not forthcoming and transparent and is among just one example of the systematic failures that exists within U.S. institutions. Utilizing this theoretical framework to make the proper adjustments to institutions will be the first step in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, survivors of sexual violence, and those that have increased chances of experiencing sexual victimizations.

Limitations

Although the current study sheds light on predictors of student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct, there are limitations that are worth mentioning. One of the most noteworthy limitations of this study was its inability to examine institutional variables that could have better predicted student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. Due to only having nine universities that students were clustered in, the analyses were focused on the individual level. Smith and Freyd (2014) list some of the common institutional characteristics that have most frequently been associated with abusive contexts and accusations of furthering trauma in survivors. For example, institutions that have inflexible membership requirements, prestige associated with membership, priorities that lie with institution reputations, deny responsibility, and have an inability to change are the most likely to create contexts that result in institutional betrayal. Theoretically, students' lack of confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct should fall onto the shoulders of the university. Universities should be held accountable to ensure that students feel protected and heard.

Second, people's perceptions are simply that: perceptions. By only asking about perceptions, we cannot fully understand *why* these perceptions exist. The current study examined

student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct, but a negative perception may not always be a direct result of what the university is or is not doing. In other words, perceptions are complex and to truly understand why they exist, we need further information from respondents themselves.

This study did find that survivors generally have more negative perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct, but the exact reasons for why remain largely speculation. There are a multitude of explanations that were unable to be explored in the current study that could explain why students feel the way they do. For example, it is possible that students are lacking confidence because of policies at the university, the way that universities handle issues of importance to students, or even resources offered. The current study found that survivors who disclosed events perpetrated by someone affiliated with the university or on university-affiliated property had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. Thus, another possible explanation why survivors have less confidence could relate to negative experiences on university-affiliated property or individuals associated with the university.

In relation, the current study could not assess why students are lacking confidence in their universities. Although the current study attempted to explain why survivors have more negative perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct and how exactly their experiences impact their perceptions, the current study was unable to confirm exactly why they have less confidence. There are a multitude of other explanations that were unable to be explored in the current study that could explain why students feel the way they do. For example, it is possible that students are lacking confidence because of policies at the university, the way that universities handle issues of importance to students, or even resources offered.

Third, although the study often attempts to explain some of the findings through the lens of betrayal trauma theory and institutional betrayal, this theory and concept cannot be tested by the current data. Instead, these frameworks were used as a way of thinking about some of the findings within this study. However, it should be recognized that betrayal trauma theory and institutional betrayal are based on people's lived experiences, rather than speculation about their perceptions. Therefore, some of the speculation linking the findings in the study to betrayal trauma theory and institutional betrayal may be a leap and should be further examined.

Fourth, this study relies on secondary data. One of the guiding research questions in this study focused specifically on perception differences between students who were survivors of non-contact sexual violence and students who were survivors of contact sexual violence. Because respondents were asked slightly different follow-up questions about their experiences depending on the victimization they experienced, analyses could not be compared directly. For example, respondents were asked to only disclose non-contact sexual violence experiences that were perpetrated by someone at the university, while respondents were asked to disclose all experiences with contact sexual violence, whether the perpetrator was associated with the university or not. Further, respondents were asked to respond to different help-seeking statements for non-contact sexual violence and contact sexual violence. As an example, for help-seeking statements following an experience with non-contact sexual violence, respondents were only asked to indicate if they talked with a resident advisor. For the help-seeking statements for contact sexual violence, respondents were asked to indicate if they had talked to a resident advisor, staff or faculty associated with the university, or if they reported the event to university police. Differing statements for non-contact sexual violence and contact sexual violence made it difficult to compare the predictors of perceptions between the two sub-samples directly.

Additionally, with some answer choices, respondents were given the opportunity to “check all that apply”, which at times made methodological decisions challenging. For example, when students were asked about the identity of the perpetrator of contact sexual violence, respondents were given the options of (1) teacher or advisor, co-worker, (2) boss or supervisor, (3) a friend, (4) someone affiliated with the university such as a student, teaching assistant, staff or faculty, (5) other, and (6) don’t know. Options such as “teacher or advisor” could be interpreted to mean someone at the university or could refer to a teacher outside of the institution (e.g., teacher of yoga practice), while the option “someone affiliated with the university such as a student, teaching assistant, staff or faculty” clearly indicates affiliation with the university. Unfortunately, some statements were worded in a way that left the interpretation up to the individual respondent, which had the potential to skew the data and results.

Future Research

The predictors included in this study accounted for only slightly over 8% of the variation in perceptions for the full sample of students, just over 9% of the variation for survivors of non-contact sexual violence, and nearly 8% of the variation for survivors of contact sexual violence. While the models in the study were statistically significant, future research should examine different perceptions in order to account more of a variation in student perceptions. One way to accomplish this is to examine more institutional level predictors of student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. This approach will also allow for the use of the theoretical framework from betrayal trauma theory. Determining the exact role that institutions play in influencing student perceptions will allow them to properly make changes to their policies to better suit the needs and expectations of survivors and non-survivors alike. While some research has examined the influence that institutional factors have on the prevalence of

campus sexual violence across different universities (e.g., Martin, 2016; Moylan & Javorka, 2020), to my knowledge, there are none that examine predictors of student perceptions about university responses to sexual misconduct.

One of the limitations of this study was the notion that one's perceptions can be impacted by the complexity of their experiences. There was nothing within this study could explicitly demonstrate that student perceptions of university responses were a direct result of what the universities were or were not doing. Therefore, future research should connect student perception data to institutional responses. More specifically, future research should examine what each individual school is doing to address or respond to sexual misconduct (e.g., policies, programs, resources in place) and how student perceptions differ across schools that have different responses. This can help bridge the gap by examining why exactly students lack confidence in university responses and what can be done to further improve university responses.

In addition, the current study examined only nine dimensions of student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct. Although these nine statements provide increased insight into facets of student perceptions, there are many more components to university responses to sexual misconduct that were not addressed. Student perceptions are complex and university responses cover a wide range of areas (e.g., prevention efforts, services offered, available sexual misconduct policies, transparency in resources). Future research should examine predictors of student perceptions on an outcome variable that encompasses more of university responses to sexual misconduct.

The current study found that messaging seems to work. More specifically, students that were exposed to more messages about sexual misconduct while at their university had more confidence in university responses. Generally, campus sexual violence programming has focused

on students who identify as heterosexual, yet students who do not identify as heterosexual tend to experience sexual violence at higher rates (Ollen, Ameral, Palm Reed & Hines 2017). Previous research asserts that sexual assault programming should not be one size fits all, yet that is typically what can be found on college campuses (Martin, 2015). In addition, Anderson and Whiston (2005) found high risk populations did not necessarily have a change in attitude after receiving education programming that was more geared towards entire student bodies, therefore they call for more research to examine high risk populations' thoughts about programming. This further supports the need for future research to examine effective programming for high-risk populations that already typically have lower perceptions of universities (i.e., survivors, students who do not identify as male, students who do not identify as heterosexual, students who are ethnic or racial minorities). Ultimately, if messaging works, then one size fits all programming need to be tailored or adapted to target high risk student populations.

The current study is among one of the first to compare the perceptions of survivors of different forms of sexual violence. More research needs to be focused in this area to determine the influence different types of sexual violence have on perceptions. Further, future research should examine perception differences between survivors who reported to their university, as compared to reporting to the police, or not reporting at all. This can help determine if the survivors' perceptions are a direct result of their poor experience with the university response or if outside factors are more influential in their perceptions. Future research should also examine perceptions of students who disclose sexual violence perpetration experiences and the overlap between the two.

Lastly, this study reported an unexpected relationship between rape myth acceptance and student perceptions. Specifically, within the full sample and survivors of non-contact sexual

violence, students who endorsed more rape myths had less confidence in university responses to sexual misconduct. While the current study speculated about the nature of the relationship, it was not further explored in this study. It seems that there may be a more nuanced explanation for this relationship that future research can explore.

Conclusion

Sexual misconduct experienced by college students and the ways that universities respond has increasingly become the focus of researchers, advocates, and policy makers. It is crucial to examine student perceptions of university responses to sexual misconduct, especially when students expect to be in a safe environment where they are free to learn without any interferences; federal legislation (i.e., Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972) also dictates this requirement.

For many students, it is their first time away from home and their first true sense of freedom in a setting that is new to them. The last thing students should be concerned about is being sexually victimized while furthering their education, yet unfortunately, research tells us that sexual misconduct is an all too familiar experience for many students. Students have a right to be protected against sexual violence, and if they do experience a victimization, then it is within the university's obligation to respond appropriately to help and support the survivor. Ultimately, sexual violence experienced by college students continues to be a problem that is not always adequately being addressed, as evidenced by numerous court cases and disclosures. While institutions, in general, have attempted to address the issue, the increasing amount of movements from survivors demanding change speaks to the true volume of the issue and the need to address it appropriately across all institutions to enhance survivors' well-being.

APPENDIX

Measures of Variables Included in Analyses

Variable	Min-Max
Student perceptions	9 – 45
1. University would support the person making the report.	
2. University would support the person accused.*	
3. University would provide accommodations to support the person making the report. For example, make changes in academic schedules, housing or other safety accommodations.	
4. University would take action to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault.	
5. University would label the person making the report a trouble maker.*	
6. If the person accused of sexual misconduct was a university athlete, the university would not take the case seriously.*	
7. If the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a high status or otherwise powerful fraternity, the university would not take the case seriously.*	
8. If the person accused of sexual misconduct was in a position of power or authority (for example a faculty member, coach, administrator or police), the university would not take the case seriously.*	
9. If the person accusing someone of sexual misconduct was from a wealthy or politically connected family, the university would take the case more seriously.*	
Sexual victimization experiences	
Non-contact sexual victimization	0 – 1
1. Made sexual remarks or told jokes or stories that were insulting or offensive so that it limited your performance, participation in programs, or created an uncomfortable environment?	
2. Made inappropriate or offensive comments about your or someone else's body appearance or sexual activities so that it limited your performance, participation in programs, or created an uncomfortable environment?	
3. Emailed, texted, tweeted, phoned, or instant messaged offensive sexual remarks, jokes, stories, pictures or videos to you that you did not want so that it limited your performance, participation in programs, or created an uncomfortable environment?	

Contact sexual victimization	0 – 1
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used physical force or made threats of physical force against another student to have sex? 2. Used physical force or threats of physical force in an unsuccessful attempt to make another student have sex? 3. Sexually penetrated or have had oral sex with another student who was unable to consent or stop what was happening because they were passed out, asleep, or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol? 4. Had sex with another student involving penetration or oral sex without their active, ongoing voluntary agreement? 5. Had sex with another student involving penetration or oral sex by threatening or promising rewards such that they felt they must comply? 	

Sexual violence perpetration	
Non-contact sexual violence perpetration	0 – 1
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Made sexual remarks or told jokes or stories that may have been or were insulting or offensive to another student? 2. Made inappropriate or offensive comments about another student's body or someone else's body appearance or sexual activities? 3. Emailed, texted, tweeted, phoned, or instant messaged offensive sexual remarks, jokes, stories, pictures or videos to another student that they probably did not want? 	

Contact sexual violence perpetration	0 – 1
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used physical force or made threats of physical force against another student to have sex? 2. Used physical force or threats of physical force in an unsuccessful attempt to make another student have sex? 3. Sexually penetrated or have had oral sex with another student who was unable to consent or stop what was happening because they were passed out, asleep, or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol? 4. Had sex with another student involving penetration or oral sex without their active, ongoing voluntary agreement? 5. Had sex with another student involving penetration or oral sex by threatening or promising rewards such that they felt they must comply? 	

Rape myth acceptance	5 – 25
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both people should make sure that the other person clearly agrees to have sex.* 2. Even if some sexual activity has started, either person has the right to change their mind and stop.* 3. If someone agrees to have one type of sex it is OK to assume they have agreed to other forms of sex. 	

4. If you have had sex with someone in the past, you can assume that they have agreed to have sex with you now.
5. If someone seems interested in you sexually, but then becomes so drunk or high that they can't talk to you, it is not okay to have sex with them.*

Exposure to messages about sexual misconduct 0 – 14

1. Discussed sexual misconduct / rape in a class
2. Discussed the topic of sexual misconduct with friends
3. Discussed sexual misconduct with a family member
4. Attended an event or program about what you can do as a bystander to stop sexual misconduct
5. Attended a rally or other campus event about sexual misconduct or sexual assault
6. Seen posters about sexual misconduct (for example raising awareness, preventing rape, defining sexual misconduct)
7. Seen or heard campus administrators or staff address sexual misconduct
8. Seen crime alerts about sexual misconduct or sexual assaults
9. Read a report about sexual violence at the university
10. Visited a university website with information on sexual misconduct or sexual assault
11. Volunteered or interned at an organization that addressed sexual misconduct / assault at the university
12. Seen or heard about sexual misconduct in a student publication or media outlet
13. Taken a class to learn more about sexual misconduct or assaults
14. Have you heard of any bystander intervention programs during your time at the university?

Bystander intervention training 0 – 1

1. Alcohol EDU
2. Bringing in the Bystander
3. Care Advocates
4. Green Dot
5. Haven
1. It's On Us
2. Step Up
3. Think About It
4. Another bystander training program you completed

Individual characteristics

Age 18 – 24

Gender identity

Female 0 – 1

Male	0 – 1
Another gender identity (Transgender man, transgender woman, genderqueer or gender nonconforming, questioning, gender not listed)	0 – 1
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual	0 – 1
Another sexual orientation (Gay or lesbian, bisexual, asexual, questioning, orientation not listed)	0 – 1
Race	
Hispanic – any race	0 – 1
White Non-Hispanic	0 – 1
Black Non-Hispanic	0 – 1
Asian Non-Hispanic	0 – 1
Another race (Biracial, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or another race)	0 – 1
Student enrollment status	
Full-time	0 – 1
Living location	
Campus/university-affiliated property	0 – 1
Membership in organizations	0 – 14
1. Honor society or professional group related to your major	
2. Media organization	
3. Fraternity or sorority	
4. Political group	
5. Social action group	
6. Student government	
7. Community service organization	
8. Intercollegiate athletic team	
9. Intramural or club athletic team	
10. Student religious group	
11. Health education group	
12. Racial minority or ethnic organization	
13. Sexual minority organization (LGBTQ)	
14. Reserve Officers' Training Corps	

Victimization impact measures	
University-specific impact	0 – 3
1. Interfered with your academic or professional performance?	
2. Limited your ability to participate in activities or programs at the university?	
3. Created an intimidating or uncomfortable environment for you?	
General impact	0 – 6
1. Tried hard not to think about it?	
2. Felt detached from others, activities, or your surroundings?	
3. Missed classes or work?	

4. Turned in assignments or taken exams late, or were you unable to complete assignments or take exams?
5. Gotten worse grades?
6. Thought about leaving the university?

Help-seeking measures

- | | |
|--|-------|
| General help-seeking (Survivors of Non-Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample) | 0 – 1 |
| 1. Talked with a friend or family member? | |
| 2. Talked with a resident advisor? | |
| 3. Talked with a counselor, therapist, or other mental health provider? | |
| 4. Called a hotline or got online information? | |
| 5. Contacted police or other authorities? | |
| 6. Made a formal report or pressed charges against the person responsible? | |
| University-affiliated help-seeking (Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample) | 0 – 1 |
| 1. Talked with a staff or faculty associated with the university? | |
| 2. Talked with a resident advisor? | |
| 3. Reported event to university police? | |
| Other help-seeking (Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample) | 0 – 1 |
| 1. Talked with a friend or family member? | |
| 2. Talked with a counselor, therapist, or other mental health provider? | |
| 3. Called a hotline or got online information? | |
| 4. Contacted police or other authorities? | |

Victimization characteristics

- | | |
|---|-------|
| Perpetrator | |
| University-affiliated perpetrator (Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample) | 0 – 1 |
| 1. Someone affiliated with the university such as a student, teaching assistant, staff or faculty | |
| Other perpetrator (Survivors of Contact Sexual Violence Sub-Sample) | 0 – 1 |
| 1. Teacher or advisor | |
| 2. Co-worker, boss or supervisor | |
| 3. Friend | |
| 4. Other | |
| 5. Don't know | |
| Location | |
| University-affiliated location | 0 – 1 |
| 1. On university property | |
| Other location | 0 – 1 |
| 1. In your dorm or apartment | |
| 2. At a party or social event | |

3. In a public place
4. Other
5. Don't know

* = Reverse coded

REFERENCES

- Abbey, A., & McAuslan, P. (2004). A longitudinal examination of male college students' perpetration of sexual assault. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 72*(5), 747–756.
- Abbey, A., McAuslan, P., & Ross, L. T. (1998). Sexual assault perpetration by college men: The role of alcohol, misperception of sexual intent, and sexual beliefs and experiences. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 17*(2), 167–195.
- Ahern, K. (2018). Institutional Betrayal and Gaslighting: Why Whistle-Blowers Are So Traumatized. *The Journal of Perinatal & Neonatal Nursing, 32*(1), 59-65.
- Ahrens, C.E., Campbell, R., Ternier-Thames, K.N., Wasco, S.M., & Sefl, T. (2007). Deciding whom to tell: Expectations and out- comes of rape survivors' first disclosures. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 31*, 38–49.
- Ahrens, C.E., Stansell, J., & Jennings, A. (2010). To tell or not to tell: The impact of disclosure on sexual assault survivors' recovery. *Violence and Victims, 25*, 631–648.
- Ali, R. (2011, April 4). *Dear colleague letter*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.
- Ameral, V., Palm Reed, K., & Hines, D. (2017). An analysis of help-seeking patterns among college student victims of sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 886260517721169*.
- Amin, D. M. (2019). Students' awareness, knowledge, and perceptions of mandatory reporting of sexual victimization on college campuses. VCU Scholars Compass.

- Anderson, P. C. (2019). The Evidentiary Standard in Collegiate Sexual Assault Proceedings During the Trump Administration. *The Journal of Gender, Race, and Justice*, 22(1), 107-125.
- Anderson, L. A., & Whiston, S. C. (2005). Sexual assault education programs: A meta-analytic examination of their effectiveness. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29(4), 374-388.
- Black, M., Basile, K., Breiding, M., Smith, S., Walters, M., Holt, M., & Stevens, M. (2011). *National intimate partner and sexual violence survey*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Blosnich, J., & Bossarte, R. (2012). Drivers of disparity: Differences in socially based risk factors of self-injurious and suicidal behaviors among sexual minority college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 60, 141–149.
- Bonar, E. E., Rider-Milkovich, H. M., Huhman, A. K., McAndrew, L., Goldstick, J. E., Cunningham, R. M., & Walton, M. A. (2019). Description and initial evaluation of a values-based campus sexual assault prevention programme for first-year college students. *Sex Education*, 19(1), 99-113.
- Burgess-Proctor, A., Pickett, S., Purdie, M., Hamill, T., Kirwan, M., & Kozak, A. (2016). College women's perceptions of and inclination to use campus sexual assault resources: Comparing the views of students with and without sexual victimization histories. *Criminal Justice Review*, 41(2), 204–218.
- Burt, M. R. (1980). Cultural myths and supports for rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 38(2), 217-230.
- Campbell, R., Dworkin, E., & Cabral, G. (2009). An ecological model of the impact of sexual assault on women's mental health. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 10, 225–246.

- Cantalupo, N. C. (2010). How should colleges and universities respond to peer sexual violence on campus? What the current legal environment tells us. *Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 3, 52–87.
- Cantalupo, N. (2011). Burying our heads in the sand: lack of knowledge, knowledge avoidance and the persistent problem of campus peer sexual violence. *Georgetown Law Faculty Publications and Other Works*. 634.
- Cantor, D., Fisher, B., Chibnall, S., Harps, S., Townsend, R., & Thomas, G. (2015). Report on the AAU campus climate survey on sexual assault and misconduct.
- Cantor, D., Fisher, B., Chibnall, S., Harps, S., Townsend, R., & Thomas, G. (2020). Report on the AAU campus climate survey on sexual assault and misconduct. Retrieved from: [https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/AAU-Files/Key-Issues/Campus-Safety/Revised%20Aggregate%20report%20%20and%20appendices%201-7_\(01-16-2020_FINAL\).pdf](https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/AAU-Files/Key-Issues/Campus-Safety/Revised%20Aggregate%20report%20%20and%20appendices%201-7_(01-16-2020_FINAL).pdf)
- Calhoun, K. C., Bernat, J. A., Clum, G. A., & Frame, C. L. (1997). Sexual coercion and attraction to sexual aggression in a community sample of young men. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 12, 392–406.
- Chang, E. C., & Hirsch, J. K., (2015). Social problem solving under assault: Understanding the impact of sexual assault on the relation between social problem solving and suicidal risk in female college students. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 39(3), 403-413.
- Chang, E.C., Yu, T., Jilani, Z., Fowler, E.E., Yu, E. A., Lin, J., & Hirsch, J.K. (2015). Hope under assault: Understanding the impact of sexual assault on the relation between hope and suicidal risk in college students. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 34, 221–238.

- Coker, A. L., Cook-Craig, P. G., Williams, C. M., Fisher, B. S., Clear, E. R., Garcia, L. S., & Hegge, L. M. (2011). Evaluation of Green Dot: An active bystander intervention to reduce sexual violence on college campuses. *Violence against women, 17*(6), 777-796.
- Coker, A. L., Fisher, B. S., Bush, H. M., Swan, S. C., Williams, C. M., Clear, E. R., & DeGue, S. (2015). Evaluation of the Green Dot bystander intervention to reduce interpersonal violence among college students across three campuses. *Violence against women, 21*(12), 1507-1527.
- Coker, A. L., Follingstad, D. R., Bush, H. M., Fisher, B. S. (2016). Are interpersonal violence rates higher among young women in college compared with those never attending college? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 31*(8), 1413-1429.
- Collins, V., & Dunn, M. (2018). The invisible/visible claims to justice: Sexual violence and the university camp(us). *Contemporary Justice Review, 21*(4), 371-395.
- Coray, E. (2016). Victim protection or revictimization: Should college disciplinary boards handle sexual assault claims? *Boston College Journal of Law & Social Justice, 36*(1), 59.
- Coulter, R W., Mair, C., Miller, E., Blosnich, J. R., Matthews, D. D., & McCauley, H. L. (2017). Prevalence of past-year sexual assault victimization among undergraduate students: Exploring differences by and intersections of gender identity, sexual identity, and race/ethnicity. *Prevention Science, 18*(6), 726-736.
- Daigle, L. E., Fisher, B. S., & Cullen, F. T. (2008). The violent and sexual victimization of college women: Is repeat victimization a problem? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 23*, 1296–1313.

- DeLoveh, H. L., & Cattaneo, L. B. (2017). Deciding where to turn: a qualitative investigation of college students' helpseeking decisions after sexual assault. *American journal of community psychology, 59*(1-2), 65-79.
- Duncan, S. H. (2014). The devil is in the details: Will the Campus SaVE Act provide more or less protection to victims of campus assaults? *Journal of College and University Law, 40*(3), 443.
- Espinosa, L. L., Turk, J. M., Taylor, M., & Chessman, H. M. (2019). Race and ethnicity in higher education: A status report.
- Esqueda, C. W., Schlosser, M. J., Delgado, R. H., & Garcia, D. O. (2019). Perceptions of the criminal justice system by minority and majority group university students: The role of ethnic identity. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice, 17*(1), 1-15.
- Fedina, L., Holmes, J. L., & Backes, B. L. (2016). Campus sexual assault: A systematic review of prevalence research from 2000 to 2015. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse, 19*(1), 76-93.
- Ferguson, C. E., & Malouff, J. M. (2016). Assessing police classifications of sexual assault reports: A meta-analysis of false reporting rates. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 45*, 1185–1193.
- Fisher, B., Cullen, F., Turner, M., & National Institute of Justice. (2000). The Sexual Victimization of College Women.
- Fisher, B., Daigle, L., Cullen, F., & Turner, M. (2003). Reporting sexual victimization to the police and others: Results from a national-level study of college women. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 30*(1), 6-38.
- Fisher, B., Hartman, J., Cullen, F., & Turner, M. (2002). Making campuses safer for students: the clery act as a symbolic legal reform. *Stetson Law Review, 32*, 61-897.

- Follette, V. M., Polusny, M. A., Bechtle, A. E., & Naugle, A. E. (1996). Cumulative trauma: The impact of child sexual abuse, adult sexual assault, and spouse abuse. *Journal of traumatic stress, 9*(1), 25-35.
- Franklin, C. A., Bouffard, L. A., & Pratt, T. C. (2012). Sexual assault on the college campus. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 39*(11), 1457–1480.
- Freyd, J. (1996). *Betrayal trauma : The logic of forgetting childhood abuse*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Gómez, J. M. (2021). Gender, campus sexual violence, cultural betrayal, institutional betrayal, and institutional support in U.S. ethnic minority college students: A descriptive study. *Violence against Women, 1077801221998757*.
- Graham, A. C., Mallinson, R. K., Krall, J. R., & Annan, S. L. (2020). Sexual assault survivors' perceived helpfulness of university-affiliated resources. *Violence against Women, 107780122095217*.
- Griner, S. B., Vamos, C. A., Thompson, E. L., Logan, R., Vázquez-Otero, C., & Daley, E. M. (2020). The intersection of gender identity and violence: Victimization experienced by transgender college students. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 35*(23-24), 5704-5725.
- Hayes-Smith, R., & Levett, L. (2010). Student perceptions of sexual assault resources and prevalence of rape myth attitudes. *Feminist Criminology, 5*(4), 335-354.
- Holland, K.J. (2019). Examining responsible employees' perceptions of sexual assault reporting requirements under federal and institutional policy. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 19*(1), 133-149.

- Holland, K., & Cortina, L. (2017). "It happens to girls all the time": Examining sexual assault survivors' reasons for not using campus supports. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 59*(1-2), 50-64
- Holland, K. J., & Cortina, L. M. (2017). The evolving landscape of title ix: Predicting mandatory reporters' responses to sexual assault disclosures. *Law and Human Behavior, 41*(5), 429-439.
- Holland, K. J., Cortina, L. M., & Freyd, J. J. (2018). Compelled disclosure of college sexual assault. *American Psychologist, 73*(3), 256.
- Hurwitz, J., & Peffley, M. (2005). Explaining the great racial divide: perceptions of fairness in the U.S. criminal justice system. *The Journal of Politics, 67*(3), 762-783.
- Jordan, C. E., Campbell, R., & Follingstad, D. (2010). Violence and women's mental health: The impact of physical, sexual, and psychological aggression. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 6*, 607-628.
- Jordan, C. E., Combs, J. L., & Smith, G. T. (2014). An exploration of sexual victimization and academic performance among college women. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 15*(3), 191-200.
- Kahn, A. S. (2004). 2003 Carolyn Sherif award address: What college women do and do not experience as rape. *Psychology of women quarterly, 28*(1), 9-15.
- Khan, S.R., Hirsch, J.S., Wamboldt, A., & Mellins, C.A. (2018). "I didn't want to be 'that girl'": The social risks of labeling, telling, and reporting sexual assault. *Sociological Science, 5*, 432-460.

- Karjane, H., Fisher, B. S., & Cullen, T. (2002). *Campus sexual assault: How America's institutions of higher education respond* (Final Report, NIJ Grant # 1999-WA-VX-0008). Newton, MA: Education Development Center.
- Karjane, H., Fisher, B., Cullen, F., & National Institute of Justice. (2005). *Sexual assault on campus: What colleges and universities are doing about it* (Research for practice). Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.
- Kirkner, A., Plummer, S.-B., Findley, P. A., & McMahon, S. (2020). Campus sexual violence victims with disabilities: disclosure and help seeking. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.
- Koss, M.P., Gidycz, C.A., and Wisniewski, N. (1987). The scope of rape: Incidence and prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization in a national sample of higher education students. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology*, 55(2), 162–70.
- Krebs, C., Lindquist, C., Warner, T., Fisher, B., & Martin, S. (2007). *The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) study: Final report*. National Institute of Justice. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>
- Krebs, C. P., Lindquist, C. H., & Barrick, K. (2011). The Historically Black College and University Campus Sexual Assault (HBCU-CSA) study (Document No. 233614). Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/233614.pdf>
- Krebs, C., Lindquist, C., Berzofsky, M., Shook-Sa, B., Peterson, K., Planty, M., ... Stroop, J. (2016). Campus Climate Survey Validation Study: Final technical report. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsfr.pdf>

- LeMaire, K. L., Oswald, D. L., & Russell, B. L. (2016). Labeling sexual victimization experiences: The role of sexism, rape myth acceptance, and tolerance for sexual harassment. *Violence and Victims, 31*(2), 332-346.
- Lhamon, C. (2014, April 29). *Questions and answers on title ix and sexual violence*. United States Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/qa-201404-title-ix.pdf>
- Lisak, D., Gardinier, L., Nicksa, S. C., & Cote, A. M. (2010). False allegations of sexual assault: An analysis of ten years of reported cases. *Violence Against Women, 16*, 1318–1334.
- Littleton, H. L., Rhatigan, D. L., & Axsom, D. (2007). Unacknowledged rape. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 14*(4), 57-74.
- Lonsway, K. A., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (1994). Rape myths. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 18*(2), 133-164.
- Lonsway, K. A. (2010). Trying to move the elephant in the living room: Responding to the challenge of false rape reports. *Violence Against Women, 16*, 1356–1371.
- Marques, O., Couture-Carron, A., Frederick, T. J., & Scott, H. (2020). The role of trust in student perceptions of university sexual assault policies and services. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education/Revue canadienne d'enseignement supérieur, 50*(2), 39-53.
- Martin, S. L., Fisher, B. S., Warner, T. D., Krebs, C. P., & Lindquist, C. H. (2011). Women's sexual orientations and their experiences of sexual assault before and during university. *Women's Health Issues, 21*, 199–205.
- Martin, C. (2015). Sexual violence training is not a one-size-fits-all approach: Culturally sensitive prevention programming for international students. *Journal of Campus Title IX Compliance and Best Practices, 4*.

- Martin, P. Y. (2016). The rape prone culture of academic contexts fraternities and athletics. *Gender & Society, 30*, 30–43.
- McCauley, H. L., & Casler, A. W. (2015). College sexual assault: A call for trauma-informed prevention. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 56*(6), 584-585.
- McMahon, S., & Seabrook, R. C. (2019). Impact of exposure to sexual violence prevention messages on students' bystander behavior. *Health Promotion Practice, 20*(5), 711-720.
- Méndez, X. (2020). Beyond Nassar: A transformative justice and decolonial feminist approach to campus sexual assault. *Frontiers (Boulder), 41*(2), 82-104.
- Mengo, C., & Black, B. M. (2016). Violence victimization on a college campus: Impact on GPA and school dropout. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 18*(2), 234–248.
- Mennicke, A., Bowling, J., Gromer, J., & Ryan, C. (2019). Factors associated with and barriers to disclosure of a sexual assault to formal on-campus resources among college students. *Violence against Women, 1077801219889173*.
- Mennicke, A., Geiger, E., & Brewster, M. (2019). Interpersonal violence prevention considerations for sexual minority college students: Lower campus connection, worse perceptions of institutional support, and more accurate understandings of sexual consent. *Journal of Family Violence, 1-13*.
- Mookerjee, S., Cerulli, C., Fernandez, I. D., & Chin, N. P. (2015). Do Hispanic and Non-Hispanic women survivors of intimate partner violence differ in regards to their help-seeking? A qualitative study. *Journal of Family Violence, 30*(7), 839-851.

- Moore, B. M., & Baker, T. (2018). An exploratory examination of college students' likelihood of reporting sexual assault to police and university officials: Results of a self-report survey. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 33*(22), 3419–3438.
- Moylan, C. A., & Javorka, M. (2020). Widening the lens: An ecological review of campus sexual assault. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 21*(1), 179-192.
- Muehlenhard, C. L., & Linton, M. A. (1987). Date rape and sexual aggression in dating situations: Incidence and risk factors. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 34*, 186–196.
- Muehlenhard, C. L., Peterson, Z. D., Humphreys, T. P., & Jozkowski, K. N. (2017). Evaluating the one-in-five statistic: Women's risk of sexual assault while in college. *The Journal of Sex Research, 54*(4-5), 549–576.
- Mushonga, D., Fedina, L., & Bessaha, M. (2020). College student perceptions of institutional responses to sexual assault reporting and general help-seeking intentions. *Journal of American College Health : J of ACH, Ahead-of-print (Ahead-of-print)*, 1-7.
- Nasta, A., Shah, B., Brahmanandam, S., Richman, K., Wittels, K., Allsworth, J., & Boardman, L. (2005). Sexual victimization: Incidence, knowledge and resource use among a population of college women. *Journal of Pediatric Adolescent Gynecology, 18*, 91-96.
- Newins, A. R., Bernstein, E., Peterson, R., Waldron, J. C., & White, S. W. (2018). Title IX mandated reporting: The views of university employees and students. *Behavioral Sciences, 8*(11), 106.
- Ollen, E. W., Ameral, V. E., Palm Reed, K., & Hines, D. A. (2017). Sexual minority college students' perceptions on dating violence and sexual assault. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 64*(1), 112-119.

- Orchowski, L. M., Meyer, D. H., & Gidycz, C. A. (2009). College women's likelihood to report unwanted sexual experiences to campus agencies: Trends and correlates. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 18(8), 839–858.
- Patterson, D, Greeson, M, & Campbell, R. (2009). Understanding rape survivors' decisions not to seek help from formal social systems. *Health & Social Work*, 34(2), 127-136.
- Peterson, Z. D., & Muehlenhard, C. L. (2004). Was it rape? The function of women's rape myth acceptance and definitions of sex in labeling their own experiences. *Sex Roles*, 51(3/4), 129-144.
- Pinchevsky, G. M., Magnuson, A. B., Augustyn, M. B., & Rennison, C. M. (2020). Sexual victimization and sexual harassment among college students: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35(6), 603-618.
- Potter, S., Edwards, K., Banyard, V., Stapleton, J., Demers, J., & Moynihan, M. (2016). Conveying campus sexual misconduct policy information to college and university Students: Results from a 7-campus study. *Journal of American College Health*, 64(6), 438-447.
- Rapaport, K., & Burkhart, B. R. (1984). Personality and attitudinal characteristics of sexually coercive college males. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* (1965), 93(2), 216–221.
- Richards, T. (2019). An updated review of institutions of higher education’s responses to sexual assault: results from a nationally representative sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 34(10), 1983-2012.
- Richards, T. (2019). No evidence of “weaponized Title IX” here: An empirical assessment of sexual misconduct reporting, case processing, and outcomes. *Law and human behavior*, 43(2), 180.

- Sabina, C., & Ho, L. (2014). Campus and college victim responses to sexual assault and dating violence: Disclosure, service utilization, and service provision. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 15*(3), 201–226.
- Sabina, C., Verdiglione, N., & Zadnik, E. (2017). Campus responses to dating violence and sexual assault: Information from university representatives. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 26*(1), 88-102.
- Sabri, B., Warren, N., Kaufman, M. R., Coe, W. H., Alhusen, J. L., Cascante, A., & Campbell, J. C. (2019). Unwanted sexual experiences in university settings: Survivors' perspectives on effective prevention and intervention strategies. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, & Trauma, 28*, 1021–1037.
- Schultz, K., Cattaneo, L.B., Sabina, C., Brunner, L., Jackson, S., & Serrata, J.V. (2016). The key role of community connectedness in healing from trauma. *Psychology of Violence, 6*, 42–48.
- Schulze, C., & Perkins, W. (2017). Awareness of sexual violence services among LGBTQ-identified college students. *Journal of School Violence, 16*(2), 148-159.
- Schwartz, M. D., DeKeseredy, W. S., Tait, D., & Alvi, S. (2001). Male peer support and a feminist routing activities theory: Understanding sexual assault on the college campus. *Justice Quarterly, 18*(3), 623-649.
- Schwarz, J., Gibson, S., & Lewis-Arévalo, C. (2017). Sexual assault on college campuses: Substance use, victim status awareness, and barriers to reporting. *Building Healthy Academic Communities Journal, 1*(2), 45-60.

- Seabrook, R. C., McMahon, S., Duquaine, B. C., Johnson, L., & DeSilva, A. (2018). Sexual assault victimization and perceptions of university climate among bisexual women. *Journal of Bisexuality, 18*(4), 425–445.
- Senn, C. Y., Desmarais, S., Verberg, N., & Wood, E. (2000). Predicting coercive sexual behavior across the lifespan in a random sample of Canadian men. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 17*, 95–113.
- Smith, C., & Freyd, J. (2013). Dangerous safe havens: Institutional betrayal exacerbates sexual trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 26*(1), 119-124.
- Smith, C., & Freyd, J. (2014). Institutional Betrayal. *American Psychologist, 69*(6), 575-587.
- Spencer, C., Mallory, A., Toews, M., Stith, S., & Wood, L. (2017). Why sexual assault survivors do not report to universities: A feminist analysis. *Family Relations, 66*(1), 166-179.
- Stader, D., & Williams-Cunningham, J. (2017). Campus Sexual Assault, Institutional Betrayal, and Title IX. The Clearing House: *A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 90*(5-6), 198-202.
- Stoner, J., & Cramer, R. (2019). Sexual violence victimization among college females: A systematic review of rates, barriers, and facilitators of health service utilization on campus. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 20*(4), 520-533.
- Streng, T., & Kamimura, A. (2017). Perceptions of university policies to prevent sexual assault on campus among college students in the USA. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy, 14*(2), 133-142.

- Trottier, D., Benbouriche, M., & Bonneville, V. (2021). A meta-analysis on the association between rape myth acceptance and sexual coercion perpetration. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 58(3), 375-382.
- Walsh, K., Choo, T., Wall, M., Hirsch, J. S., Ford, J., Santelli, J. S., . . . Mellins, C. A. (2020). Repeat sexual victimization during college: Prevalence and psychosocial correlates. *Psychology of Violence*, 10(6), 676-686.
- Walsh, K., Sarvet, A. L., Wall, M., Gilbert, L., Santelli, J., Khan, S., . . . & Mellins, C. A. (2019). Prevalence and correlates of sexual assault perpetration and ambiguous consent in a representative sample of college students. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 0886260518823293.
- Wilson, L. C., & Miller, K. E. (2015). Meta-analysis of the prevalence of unacknowledged rape. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 17(2), 149-159.
- Worthen, M. G. F., & Wallace, S. A. (2017). Intersectionality and perceptions about sexual assault education and reporting on college campuses. *Family Relations*, 66(1), 180–196.
- Yung, C. R. (2015). Concealing Campus Sexual Assault: An Empirical Examination. *Psychology, Public, Policy, and Law*, 21, 1-452.
- Zinzow, H. M., & Thompson, M. (2011). Barriers to reporting sexual victimization: Prevalence and correlates among undergraduate women. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 20, 711–725.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Megan Giovannini, B.A.

a.megan.grace@gmail.com

Education

2019 – Present M.A. Criminal Justice, University of Nevada – Las Vegas

2015 – 2019 B.A. Criminal Justice, University of Nevada – Las Vegas

Employment

2019 – Present Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Criminal Justice

- Internship screener for the Department of Criminal Justice
- Assisted in leading in-class activities and discussion
- Taught an online course and updated all course content/material for GSC 300: Community Resilience

2018 – 2019 Accountant, Captivation Dance Affiliates

- Managed all accounts
- Updated bookkeeping and managed all invoices/payments

2017 – 2019 Assistant Manager, Judy's Dance Shoppe

- Supervised hiring processes and employee operations
- Managed inventory levels

Research Experience

2020 – Present Research Associate, Mandatory Reporting at Institutions of Higher Education

- Principle Investigators: Kathryn Holland & Gillian Pinchevsky

2018 - 2019 Research Assistant, Sexual Assaults in Night/Day Clubs

- Tourism Safety and Crowd Science Lab

2017 – 2018 Research Associate, NSF Grant # 1625808

- Principle Investigators: Joel D. Lieberman & Terance D. Miethe

Awards and Honors

2018-2019 Kriss Drass Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award