# 2024 Sexual Harassment, Assault and Relationship Experience (SHARE) Survey

Northern Illinois University (NIU) is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy campus and learning environment that challenges and inspires students to be academically and personally successful. As part of our ongoing commitment, NIU assesses at regular intervals the campus climate and responsiveness to the campus community’s needs. In spring 2024, we administered the Sexual Harassment, Assault and Relationship Experience (SHARE) Survey as part of our efforts.

The SHARE survey provides NIU with the ability to better understand students’ knowledge of and experiences with sexual and gender harassment, domestic violence, stalking, sexual violence, reporting options and support resources. We use survey results to enhance our campus policies, procedures, education and support resources for students. The following are actionable steps the university is working toward that are informed by this survey and other campus stakeholders:

* Increase and enhance prevention education training and programming with focus on knowledge and awareness of consent, domestic violence, stalking, sexual and gender harassment.
  + Updated new and returning student sexual misconduct training to increase awareness of campus and community resources.
  + As part of the 2021 Department of Justice Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant awarded to NIU, efforts to address sexual violence prevention and education for traditionally underserved communities continued. This included developing partnerships and conducting focused workshops and programs on sexual and domestic violence prevention in collaboration with NIU Athletics, culturally based student organizations and cultural and resource centers.
  + Began partnership with Active\* Consent from University of Galway to increase education related to consent, digital harassment and relationship violence.

* Increase awareness of campus and community resources.
  + Combined Prevention Education efforts with Safe Passage (community partner).
  + NIU’s Title IX office attended preventing sexual misconduct semester trainings with students.
* Review of organizational structures, policies and procedures.
  + Campus Community Response Team (CCRT) is reviewing and identifying areas of improvement with reporting, procedures and education.

## Survey Background

On August 6, 2021, Illinois legislators signed into law an amendment to the [Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act](https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=3672&ChapterID=18). Public Act 102-0325 (ILCS 155/35) mandates institutions of higher education to conduct annual, anonymous campus climate surveys administered to all students on the topic of sexual misconduct. ILCS 155/35 aims to assess and address students’ experiences, outcomes regarding their experiences and perceptions of sexual violence on college campuses. To create a unified reporting mechanism and to assist institutions in achieving this objective, the law required the formation of a [Task Force on Campus Sexual Misconduct Climate Surveys](https://www.ibhe.org/ibhe-SMCSTF.html) that reports to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The task force’s responsibility was to develop and recommend a base survey along with subsequent recommendations regarding implementation. The statute further outlines the base survey requirements and institutions’ ability to add supplemental questions.

While Northern Illinois University conducted the SHARE survey previously, we implemented in 2024 the new survey instrument created by the Task Force. As such, no direct year-over-year comparisons are available.

## Survey Administration

Northern Illinois University administered the SHARE survey to students from February 6, 2024, through March 12, 2024. The survey was sent to all students enrolled in at least one credit hour in the following academic terms: Spring 2024, Fall 2023 and Summer 2023. Participants were required to be at least 18 years of age and physically located in the United States while completing the survey. According to the Task Force on Campus Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey, a task force from the Illinois Board of Higher Education, guidance on who qualifies as a student for the purposes of the base survey was utilized. Students younger than 18 and dual enrollment students were not invited to complete the survey. All full- and part-time students at least 18 years old, including those taking a leave of absence or recently withdrawn from NIU within the last year, were provided the opportunity to take the survey. As a result, a total of 16,945 current or former students were invited to participate. Per the Task Force on Campus Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey’s [Base Survey Recommendations and Implementation Plan](https://chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https:/www.ibhe.org/assets/files/SMCSTF/2024/Task_Force_Base_Survey_and_Implementation_Plan_Only_Updated_Jan_2024.pdf), only students who completed up to at least survey question 33 of the base survey, are considered completed and can be used in the reporting and analysis.

Survey Completion Status Number of Surveys

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Surveys partially completed | 1,620 |
| Surveys completed | 1,030 |

Various methods to recruit survey participants included direct emails, social media, tabling, university announcements, digital media boards, postcards and posted fliers. A [webpage](https://www.niu.edu/prevention-education-outreach/student-engagement/share-survey.shtml) was developed to provide students with information about the survey, a personal contact for questions, information about resources available and a direct link to the survey. Information about the survey was provided to various faculty, staff and student groups.

At the end of the survey, respondents had the option to register for an incentive drawing. Fifty students completing the survey received $20 Huskie Bucks[[1]](#footnote-2) cards and five students each week received a bag with NIU merchandise. Contact information for the incentives was completed on a form separate from the survey responses to maintain anonymity of responses.

## Survey Methods

Student privacy and security were the primary concerns when administering the survey instrument. Respondents used a single-sign-on process that directed them to the Survey Monkey instrument. No personally identifiable information was retained in the survey responses. Respondents were presented with the required informed consent that included notifying respondents that the survey was voluntary and that they could skip any question.

The survey was offered in English only. NIU utilized the entire state’s optional consent module. The base survey contained seven questions that were modifiable by institutions. NIU modified questions to align with university or campus community names (i.e., DeKalb, Sycamore, Health Services).

## Data Analyses

The data was analyzed using SPSS statistical analysis software. NIU used the chi-square test to test for significant differences between demographic groups. Reported differences were statistically significant at the p<0.05 level unless otherwise noted. Frequencies of the responses to each question were produced. Crosstabs of questions by demographic variables (e.g., age, gender) were produced.

### SHARE Survey Summary

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The following are key outcomes of the SHARE Survey that assisted in the formation of university goals and action plans.

Student Awareness of Campus Resources:

* 86.2% of students agreed they were aware of the function of one or more resources related to sexual misconduct.
* 63.2% of students reported knowing where to make a report of sexual misconduct.

Information about/Actions against Sexual Misconduct:

* 92.9% of students saw information about, discussed or acted against sexual misconduct.
* 68.2% reported seeing crime alerts about sexual misconduct.
* 84.4% of students reported receiving at least one type of written or verbal information about sexual misconduct from NIU.

Student Understanding of Consent​:

* 85.1% of students agree with the statement, “Consent must be given at each step in a sexual encounter.”
* Students reported that they provide consent in nonverbal and verbal ways, with more than half (54.1%) of respondents agreeing with the statement, “Typically, I communicate sexual consent to my partner using nonverbal signals and body language.”

Sexual Misconduct Characteristics:​

* 46.4% of students indicated one or more experiences with sexual and gender-based harassment.
* 9.1% of students indicated one or more experiences with sexual violence.

Location Sexual Misconduct Occurred: ​

* Most incidents occur off campus at an apartment, restaurant, bar or other location​.

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Sexual Misconduct Academics and Support:

* Those who experienced sexual misconduct were more likely after to be academically disengaged and to be less sure of support from the university and peers.
* However, students overall felt that their peers would support them if they experienced or reported sexual misconduct​.

Perceived Response:

* 75.2% of respondents agreed that friends/peers would help them get information of any kind about coping with sexual misconduct.
* 64.8% of respondents agree that NIU meets the needs for support and accommodations.
* 60.7% agreed that NIU ensured that they were treated as an important member of the institution.

Reporting Sexual Misconduct:

* Most students who experienced sexual misconduct reported the incident, ranging from 66.4% for sexual and gender harassment to 73.9% for dating and domestic violence.
* 86.2% of respondents agreed they are aware of the function of at least one reporting resource related to sexual misconduct.

Obstacles to Reporting Sexual Misconduct: ​

* Students who experienced sexual and gender harassment or stalking were most likely to avoid reporting or to seek resources because they were unsure if the actions were “serious enough.”
* Two-thirds of individuals who did not report their incidents of domestic, dating or sexual violence believed they could “handle it themselves” or “felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult.” ​

Institutional Response​:

* Of those who did disclose to an NIU resource, the most used NIU resources were:​
  + On-campus counseling​.
  + Campus Public Safety/Security​.
* More than half felt that NIU provided support after an experience with sexual misconduct.
* Relatively few students felt that NIU would explicitly punish them or treat them differently because of their sexual orientation, gender, disability, race or ethnicity. However, they were more likely to agree that NIU would respond inadequately, make it difficult to report or create an unwelcoming atmosphere.​

1. Huskie Bucks is a pre-paid debit account for students, faculty and staff connected to their OneCard. Huskie Bucks can be used at designated locations on and off the DeKalb NIU campus. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)