

2023 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Vol Voices Research Survey

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. Evaluation: Measuring the Prevalence of Sexual Harassment

Description of Work:

The Vol Voices research survey was the University of Tennessee's (UT) next step in our ongoing commitment to creating and maintaining a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment free from sexual harassment (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking), sexual exploitation, and retaliation. UT last conducted a comprehensive campus climate survey of all students in spring 2017. The University of Tennessee system-wide survey was conducted by Rankin & Associates Consulting and focused on more than sexual harassment.

The goal of the Vol Voices research **survey was to assess** the perceptions and experiences of our own students and employees. The information gathered will help to **inform policy, shape prevention, and assist us with targeted interventions.**

The survey is based on an instrument created by the Administrator Researcher Campus Climate Collaborative (ARC3). There are two versions of the ARC3 surveys – one for students and one for employees. These surveys were developed for US higher education institutions by expert researchers in sexual harassment and interpersonal violence in collaboration with Title IX professionals, campus law enforcement, advocates, counselors, and student affairs personnel. UT utilized the ARC3 surveys (student and faculty/staff respectively) to develop the Vol Voices research survey. UT developed two versions of the survey: one for students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) and another for employees – both based on the ARC3 instruments. The survey instruments were reviewed, and feedback was received from Title IX Prevention Team members, the Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS), faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate student stakeholders. The University of Tennessee's Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved the survey. The survey was completely voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. The survey provided information about local, community, and national resources.

The initial email invitation to the UT community to participate in the Vol Voices research survey was from the University's Chancellor at the beginning of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, April 2022. The student survey was open through May 10, 2022, and the employee survey was open through May 21, 2022. All students and employees were invited to participate in the research survey. We wanted every community member to have the opportunity to provide their experience and perceptions. Follow-up emails were sent to all students and employees. The research survey was promoted via tabling events, social media, campus listservs, and to student and employee groups. Students and employees could also access the research via a

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QR code. SWOPRS monitored completion rates, and there was additional outreach to colleges and departments with lower response rates.

The Office of Title IX developed a comprehensive website for the UT community to visit if they had questions about the research survey.

Students were eligible to win one of thirty VolCard gift cards. Each week, five winners were selected. The earlier a student completed the research survey, the higher the value of the gift card and the more chances they had to be selected. Students did not have to complete the research survey to be eligible to enter the drawing.

SWORPS took multiple precautionary measures to protect confidentiality. Group data were not reported for groups of fewer than five individuals because they may be small enough to compromise confidentiality. Instead, groups or other measures were combined to eliminate identifiable demographic information. No one at the Office of Title IX or other university administrative offices could see individual responses. SWORPS destroyed all research survey records after the study ended.

SWORPS developed separate student and employee reports for the Office of Title IX, and the Office of Title IX developed key finding reports for campus-wide distribution. Data for each college/departments was provided to the Office of Title IX. Research survey key findings were shared at a campus-wide Town Hall in April 2023. The Town Hall was promoted via employee mailers, digital displays, social media, and listserv promotion. Looking forward, the Office of Title IX will share college/departments level data (as available) with the appropriate campus leadership. The Key Findings Reports were posted on the office website for campus/ community access.

Website for further information (if applicable): www.titleix.utk.edu

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