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Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

2018 Sexual Assault Beliefs and Experiences Survey Findings

Keene State College has provided leadership within the University System of New Hampshire around sexual violence prevention for decades. This ranges from creating the campus Coordinator of Sexual Violence Prevention position 20 years ago, to administering the Sexual Assault Beliefs and Experiences Survey (SABES) in 2015--the first sexual misconduct survey conducted on a University System of New Hampshire campus, to recently securing a $300,000 U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women Campus Grant.

KSC created the SABES in 2015 through a multidepartment collaboration with the support of the President's office following recommendations from the White House. This locally-developed online survey asks questions that assess perceptions of the College's response to reports of sexual violence, knowledge of key aspects of the Sexual Misconduct Policy, likelihood of taking actions to prevent or stop acts of sexual violence, and experience with sexual violence. Data from this survey have helped Keene State shape its robust sexual violence prevention efforts, addressing the real needs of our students, and provided inspiration and rationale for the Office on Violence Against Women Campus Grant.

During the Fall 2018 term, Keene State College once again invited all students to respond to the SABES. We obtained responses from 616 students--486 who identified as women (26% of the 2018 female student body), 125 as men (8% of male students), and five who selected non-binary or "other." The percentage of female participants experiencing sexual violence involving force or incapacitation (15%) was nearly half of the rate reported by women in a national survey of U.S. college and university students (26%). This and other findings from this survey are presented below. Findings included in this report will inform the College's response to sexual misconduct and development of prevention programming. Although sexual violence continues to plague our communities and our campuses, Keene State continues to model courageous commitment, creativity and transparency in efforts to change this.

Report prepared by George Smeaton, Ph.D., Director for Institutional Effectiveness and Institutional Research, Forrest Seymour, MSW, Assistant Director of Emotional Health Programming & Outreach and Coordinator of Sexual Violence Prevention, and Kelli Jo Armstrong, MSW, Interim Title IX Coordinator, November 2019

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Key Findings 3
Methods 5
Survey Measure 5
Participants 5
Procedures 6
Detailed Findings 6
Sexual Violence Prevention and Intervention Attitudes and Perceptions 6
Overall perceptions of key aspects of SMP 6
Effect of Attending a Sexual Violence Prevention Presentation on Item Agreement 8
Sexual Violence Prevention and Intervention Action Likelihood 9
Prevalence of Sexual Violence 10
Students experiencing sexual violence as defined by SMP 10
Comparisons with Findings from National Studies of Campus Sexual Violence 11
Change since 2015 in Sexual Violence Prevalence 12
Sexual Violence Experienced by LGBQ and Asexual Students 13
Transgender Participant Findings 14
Aspects of Experience with Non-Consensual Sexual Contact 14
Year in School or another Academic Period When the Incident Occurred 14
Location 15
Perpetrator Characteristics 16
Coercive Tactics Used to Gain Non-Consensual Sexual Contact 17
Incident Reporting Findings 18
Reporting Options Identified by Participants 18
People to Whom Survivors Disclosed Incidents of Sexual Violence 19
Gender Differences in Perceptions of Results of Reporting 20
Reasons Incidents Were Not Disclosed 20
Recommendations 23
Conclusion 25

KEY FINDINGS

Note: for detailed information on the findings below, click on the blue hyperlink headings.

- **Sexual Violence prevention and intervention attitudes and perceptions.**
  - ***Overall perceptions of key aspects of KSC's Sexual Misconduct Policy (SMP).*** Approximately 90% of respondents agreed that (a) KSC clearly communicates that sexual assault is not acceptable, (b) they understand the SMP as a whole, (c) they understand the meaning of consent in the SMP, and (d) they know what behaviors constitute sexual assault in the SMP. Fewer agreed that the College provides appropriate resources for sexual violence survivors (69%), they know which offices provide such support (63%), the College handles sexual assault complaints fairly (60%), and less than half (49%) agreed that they know where to file a report of sexual assault at KSC.
  - ***Effect of attending a sexual violence prevention presentation on perceptions of SMP components.*** Consistent with findings from 2015, students attending one or more sexual violence prevention presentations such as "No Zebras, No Excuses" expressed significantly more awareness of policy components such as definitions of consent and sexual assault, and reported more favorable perceptions of how the college responds to reports of sexual violence.
  - ***Sexual violence prevention and intervention action likelihood.*** Approximately 90% of participants indicated that it is very likely that they would challenge a friend who told them they had sex with someone who was passed out, challenge a friend who plans to give alcohol or other drugs to get sex, and ask a friend if they need to be walked home from a party. The 2018 "Very Likely" likelihood averages for each item exceeded those from 2015.
- **Prevalence of sexual violence.**
  - ***Students experiencing sexual violence as defined by SMP.*** While enrolled at KSC, 23% of women--up from 19% in 2015, and 7% of men reported an experience meeting the requirements for sexual violence specified in the SMP (unwanted acts of sexual touching, oral sex, sexual intercourse, anal sex, or sexual penetration with a finger or object).
  - ***Comparisons with findings from national studies of campus sexual violence.*** The three most recent national studies of sexual violence in higher education examined nonconsensual sexual contact involving either physical force and/or incapacitation. They found that 19-26% of female students experienced this form of sexual assault. By contrast, 15% of KSC's 2018 female sample reported an incident of this nature.

- **Aspects of initial experience with non-consensual sexual contact.**
    - ***Incident timing.*** Of those experiencing sexual violence, 58% reported that the incident took place during their freshman year.
    - ***Incident setting.*** More incidents took place on campus (49%) than off-campus in the KSC vicinity (39%).
    - ***Perpetrator characteristics.*** Perpetrators were known by 67% of those experiencing sexual violence, and 85% reported that the perpetrator was a KSC student. Among women, 96% of perpetrators were male, but among the eight men who experienced sexual violence, seven reported female perpetrators.
    - ***Tactics used to gain non-consensual sexual contact.*** Perpetrator tactics noted most frequently by women who experienced sexual violence included verbal pressure (46%) and the use of intoxicants to incapacitate (44%). Since 2015, the percentage reporting verbal pressure declined from 52% to 46%, but the percentages increased for use of intoxicants (38% to 44%) and physical force or restraint (9% to 31%).
- **Incident reporting findings.**
    - ***Reporting options identified by participants.*** When asked to state the person(s) or office(s) to whom they could report an act of sexual violence, 47% provided an appropriate reporting option—down from 50% in 2015.
    - ***Persons or offices survivors disclosed experiences of sexual violence.*** Six percent of sexual violence survivors reported the incident to KSC's Campus Safety. Survivors most frequently disclosed incidents to a friend (63%), or a roommate (37%).
    - ***Gender differences in perceptions of results of reporting.*** Consistent with the findings from 2015, in 2018, men were significantly more likely than were women to agree that KSC would take a report of sexual assault seriously (87%--men; 75%--women), and that the college holds sexual assault perpetrators responsible for their actions (74%--men; 59%--women).
    - ***Reasons for Not Disclosing.*** Reasons sexual violence survivors selected for not reporting incidents of sexual violence included the belief that the incident was not serious enough to merit a report (52%), being embarrassed or ashamed (46%), and assuming that their report would not be believed (24%). Only 10% indicated that they did not know how to report the incident.

METHODS

Survey Measure
Designed by the College in 2015, and revised in 2018, The Keene State College SABES contains 35 questions that examine the following topics:

- Student perceptions of the College's response to reports of sexual violence, and their knowledge of key aspects of the College's Sexual Misconduct Policy.
- Ratings of students' own likelihood of taking actions to prevent or stop acts of sexual violence.
- Measures of experience with sexual violence. These measures include items assessing
    - Experiences with unwanted sexual contact and sexual assault while enrolled at KSC
    - Coercive tactics used by perpetrators of sexual violence to obtain unwanted sexual contact
    - Year in school or other academic term during which the incident occurred
    - Incident location
    - Perpetrator characteristics
    - Knowledge of reporting options
    - Whether or not the incident was reported and to whom
    - Reasons those experiencing sexual violence do not report incidents
    - Demographic information

Participants
We obtained responses from 616 students--486 who identified as women (26% of the 2018 female student body), 125 as men (8% of male students), and five who selected non-binary or "other." Twelve students identified as transgender. This included three of the men, four of the women, and the five who selected non-binary or "other." Because there were too few transgender students to examine separately, references to "men" and "women" in this report include all students who identify with one of those genders regardless of whether or not that was their birth gender. The percentage of students identifying as women who completed the survey exceeded the 23% rate obtained in the 2015 AAU national Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (Cantor, et al., 2015).

Although, the sample we obtained was representative of the student body with respect to year in school, women made up 79% of the sample as compared with 55% of the student body (Table 1). Nevertheless, because the nature of many of the items requires reporting from men and women separately, the sample's gender make up had little effect on the findings.

Table 1: Comparisons of Sample and Student Body Demographic Percentages

Demographic Group	Sample Percentage	Fall 2018 Student Body Percentage
Women	79%	55%
Year in School		
Freshman	38%	36%
Sophomore	23%	21%
Junior	19%	22%
Senior	19%	21%

Procedures

Students were emailed a link to a website hosted on GoDaddy.com that contained the study's consent form, a link to the online survey, and instructions for redeeming the participation incentive. In addition to the email invitation and subsequent reminder emails, reminders to complete the survey were distributed throughout the residence halls and were place on tables in the Dining Commons. Data collection began on October 8, 2018 and ended on November 12, 2018. As an incentive to participate in the survey, all students received a code that enable them to obtain 50 Hootie's Award Points. Hootie's Rewards is the College's rewards app that informs the KSC community of on-campus events that support student well-being and awards student attendance with points that are redeemable for prizes. Fifty points are worth approximately $5.00 of merchandise.

DETAILED FINDINGS

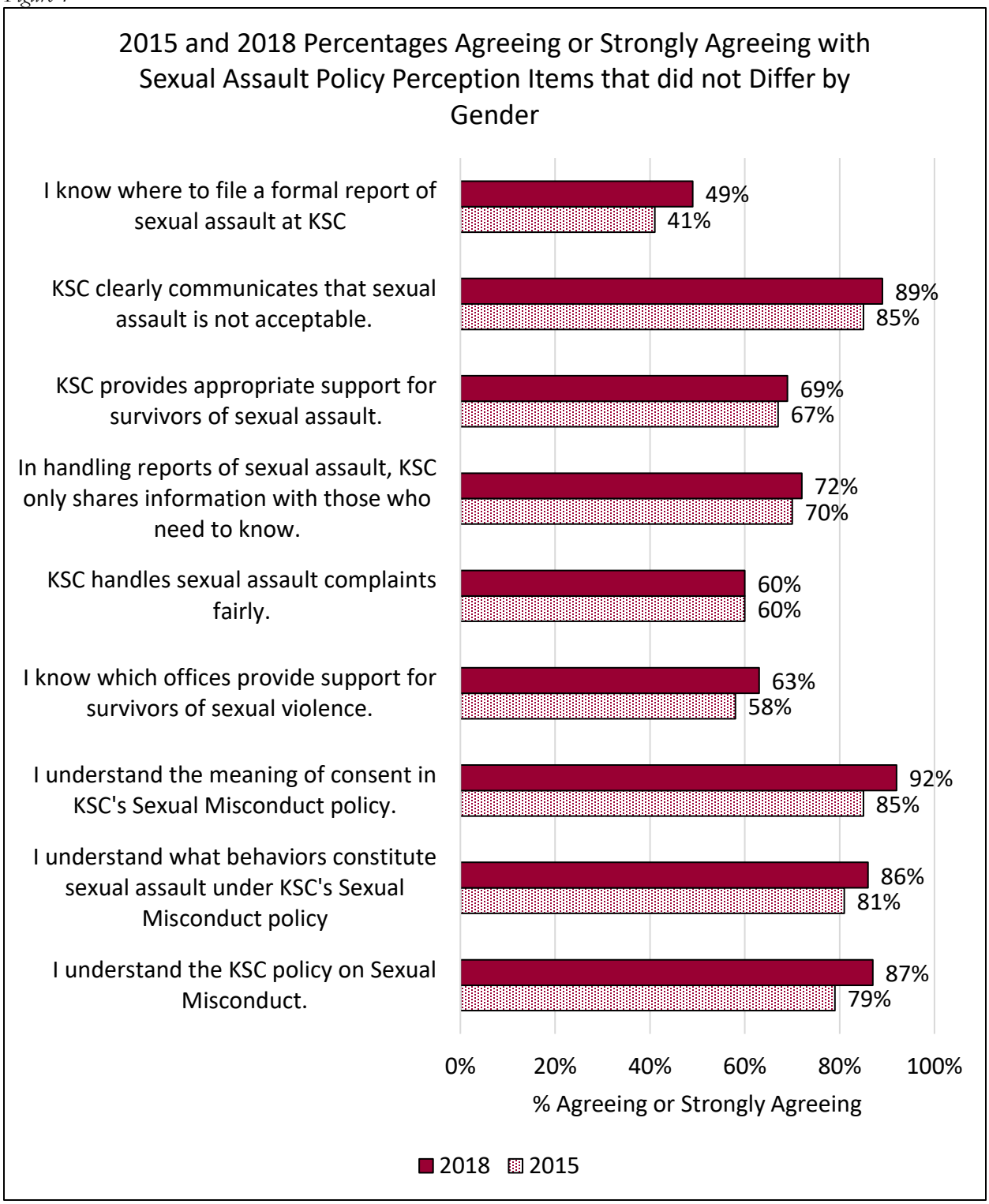
Sexual Violence Prevention and Intervention Attitudes and Perceptions

All participants rated their agreement with a set of statements relating to their understanding of the College's Sexual Misconduct Policy (SMP) (https://www.keene.edu/administration/policy/detail/handbook/sexual-misconduct/), and their perceptions of how the College responds to reports of sexual violence. In addition, they were asked to rate how likely they would be to take each of a set of actions that could prevent acts of sexual violence from taking place.

Overall perceptions of key aspects of SMP

Both men and women reported high levels of agreement with many of the statements that described perceptions of the College's stance on sexual violence (Figure 1). Approximately 90% agreed that KSC clearly communicates that sexual assault is not acceptable, and that they understand the SMP as a whole, the meaning of consent in the SMP, and what behaviors constitute sexual assault in the SMP. The only statement to which less than half (49%) responded with agreement was "I know where to file a report of sexual assault at KSC." Other items with relatively low agreement percentages were "KSC provides appropriate support for survivors of sexual assault" (69%), "I know which offices provide support for survivors of sexual violence," (63%), and "KSC handles sexual assault complaints fairly," (60%). Finally, the percentage agreeing with each statement in 2018 was higher than those from 2015.

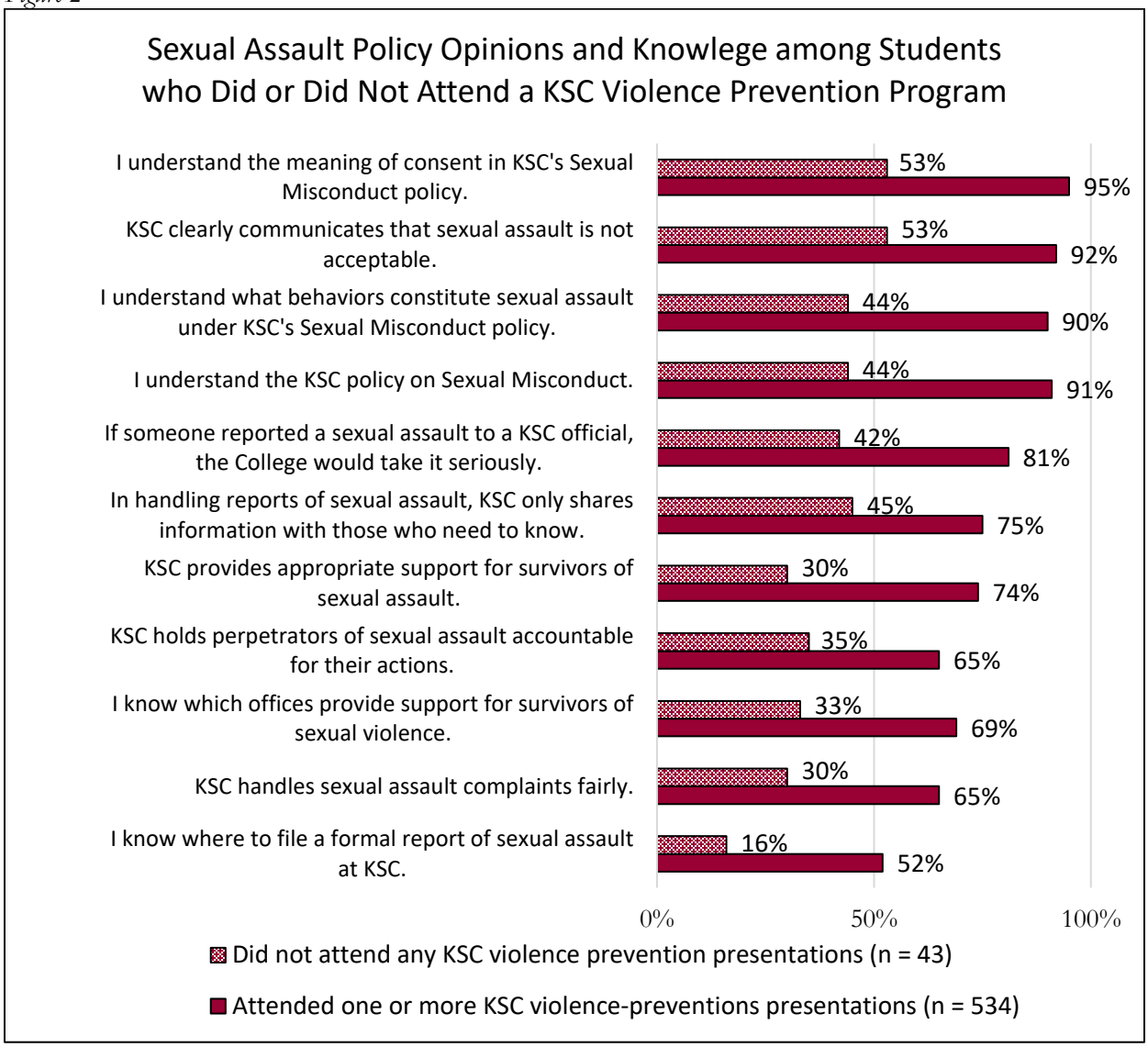
Figure 1


2015 and 2018 Percentages Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Sexual Assault Policy Perception Items that did not Differ by Gender
I know where to file a formal report of sexual assault at KSC
49%
41%
KSC clearly communicates that sexual assault is not acceptable.
89%
85%
KSC provides appropriate support for survivors of sexual assault.
69%
67%
In handling reports of sexual assault, KSC only shares information with those who need to know.
72%
70%
KSC handles sexual assault complaints fairly.
60%
60%
I know which offices provide support for survivors of sexual violence.
63%
58%
I understand the meaning of consent in KSC's Sexual Misconduct policy.
92%
85%
I understand what behaviors constitute sexual assault under KSC's Sexual Misconduct policy
86%
81%
I understand the KSC policy on Sexual Misconduct.
87%
79%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%
% Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing
2018
2015

Effect of Attending a Sexual Violence Prevention Presentation on Item Agreement

The 2015 survey found that students who attended a sexual violence prevention program such as "No Zebras, No Excuses" were more likely to agree with the statements included in Figure 1. As illustrated in Figure 2, we obtained the same finding in 2018. In each case, students who attended at least one presentation were much more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statements. For most of the items, the agreement percentage for attendees was double that of non-attendees. Although this finding may be due in part to differences between these groups of students other than whether or not they attended one of these programs, the size of these group differences suggests that it may also be a direct outcome of program attendance.

Figure 2



Note: Agreement percentage differences for all items are statistically significant ($p < .001$).

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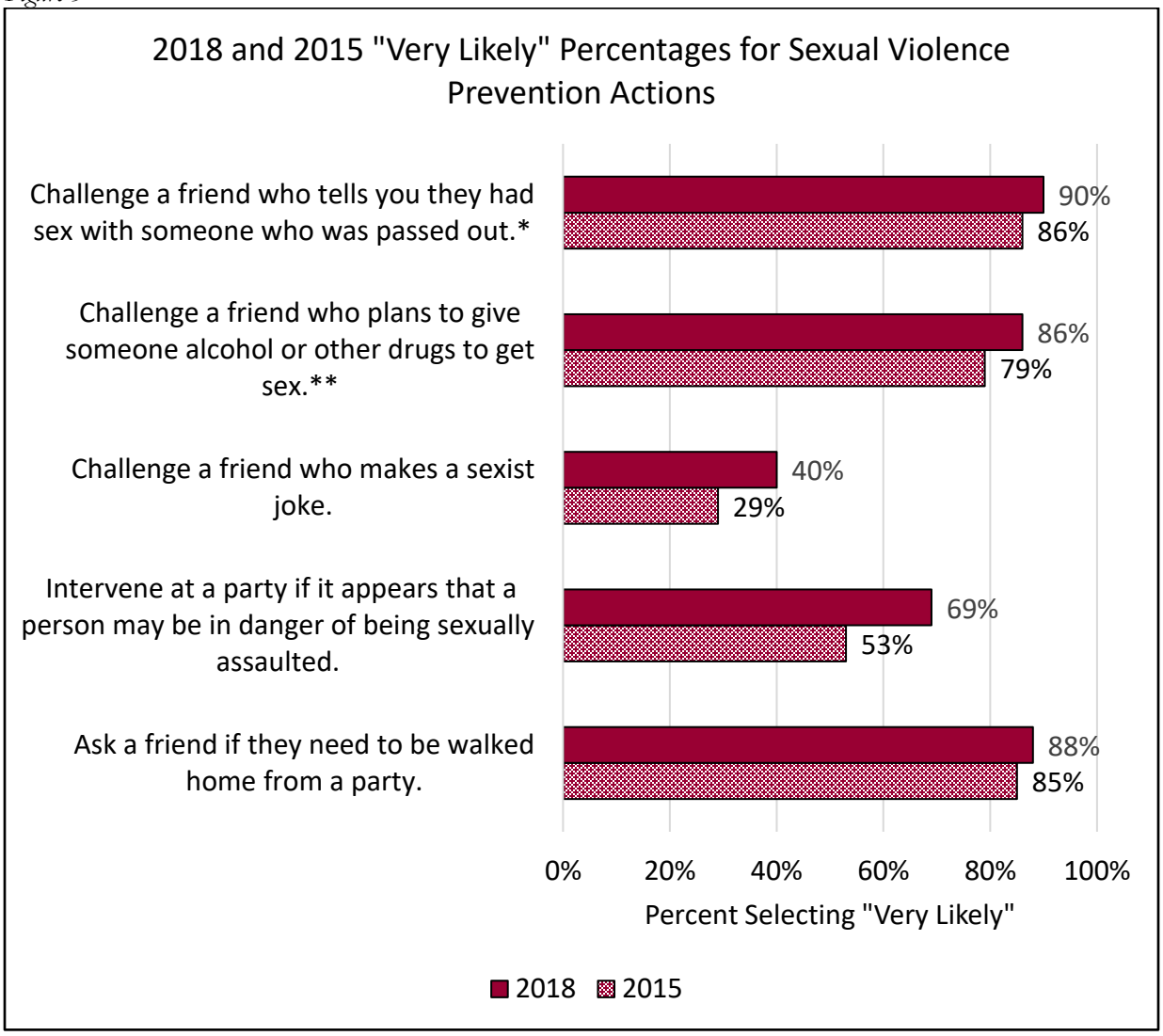
Sexual Violence Prevention and Intervention Action Likelihood

Participants rated how likely they would be to perform each of a set of actions that could prevent sexual violence. Approximately 90% of participants indicated that it is very likely that they would challenge a friend who told them they had sex with someone who was passed out, challenge a friend who plans to give alcohol or other drugs to get sex, and ask a friend if they need to be walked home from a party. Although less than half (40%) indicated they would challenge a friend who makes a sexist joke, this percentage is considerably higher than the 29% who provided that response in 2015. Similarly, for every other action except asking a friend if they need to be walked home after the party, the percentage of participants selecting "Very likely" was significantly higher in 2018 than it was in 2015 (Figure 3).

Figure 3



*Item reworded in 2018. Worded as, "Criticize a friend…" in 2015.
**Item reworded in 2018. Worded as "Confront a friend…" in 2015.

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Prevalence of Sexual Violence

The survey explained to students that the set of questions pertaining to personal experiences with sexual violence would ask them to report details pertaining to experiences that involve "non-consensual or unwanted sexual contact," occurring "since you first enrolled at Keene State College." The instructions then defined unwanted sexual contact as follows:

> The questions in this section refer to five types of unwanted sexual contact:
>
> - Forced touching of a sexual nature (forced kissing, touching of private parts, grabbing, fondling, rubbing up against you in a sexual way, including over your clothes)
> - Oral sex (someone's mouth or tongue making contact with your genitals or your mouth or tongue making contact with someone else's genitals)
> - Sexual intercourse (someone's penis being put in your vagina)
> - Anal sex (someone' penis being put in your anus)
> - Sexual penetration with a finger or object (someone putting their finger or an object in your vagina or anus)

Findings from these questions are summarized below.

Students experiencing sexual violence as defined by SMP

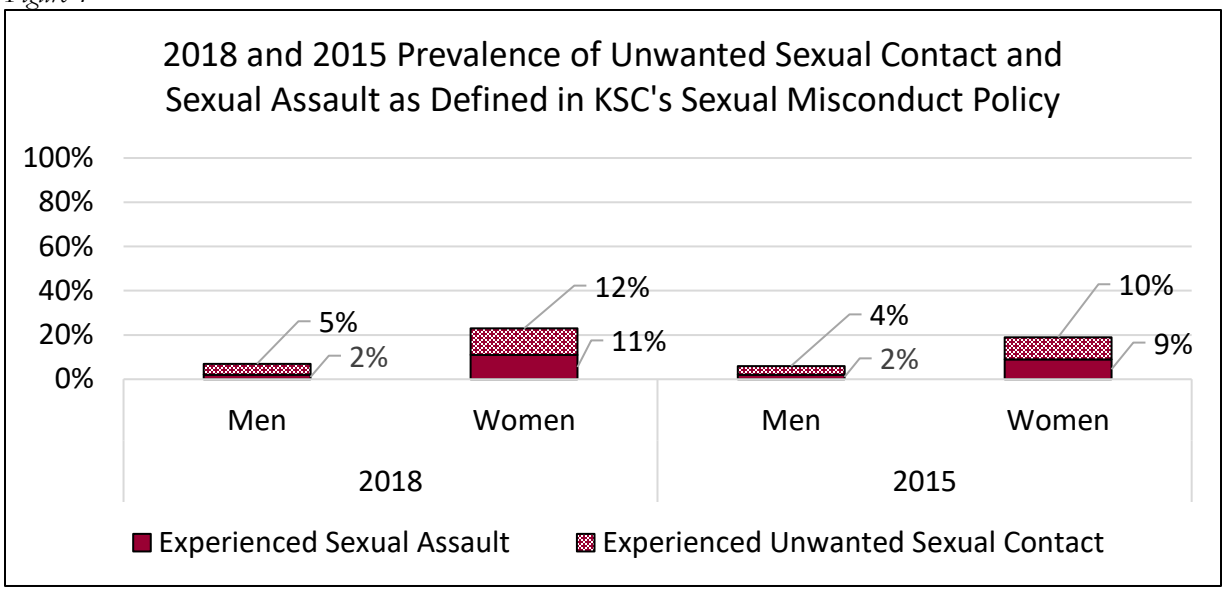
The Keene State College SMP (https://www.keene.edu/administration/policy/detail/handbook/sexual-misconduct/), defines sexual violence as follows: "Sexual Violence is a form of sexual harassment. It is a physical sexual act perpetrated without consent. Such acts include, but are not limited to, unwanted sexual contact and sexual assault (rape)."

Further, it provides specific definitions for two forms of sexual violence:

> **Unwanted Sexual Contact** - intentional contact or touching of the intimate parts of another, whether directly or through clothing, or the intentional exposure of intimate parts of self, without consent. Intimate parts may include but are not limited to breasts, genitals, buttocks, groin, or mouth.
>
> **Sexual Assault** - having, or attempting to have sexual intercourse or sexual contact with another by force or threat of force; or without consent; or where that person is incapacitated. This also includes sexual penetration, however slight, of another person, without consent (rape). Sexual penetration may be vaginal, anal, or oral, and may involve the use of a body part or object.

Of the 486 women and 124 men who provided a response to the item assessing experience with unwanted sexual contact, 23% of female students, and 7% of male students indicated they had one or more experiences of sexual violence that met the SMP's criteria for unwanted sexual contact or sexual assault (Figure 4).

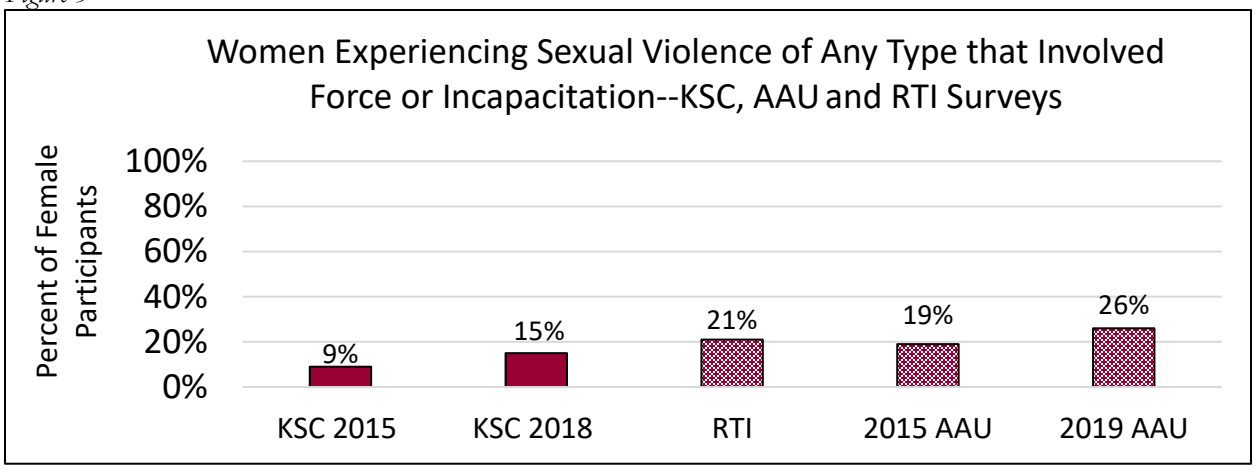
Figure 4



Comparisons with Findings from National Studies of Campus Sexual Violence

Findings from three large national surveys: the 2015 AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (Cantor et al., 2015), the 2019 AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (Cantor et al., 2019), and the Research Triangle Institute's (RTI) International Campus Climate Survey Validation Study (Krebs et al., 2016), provide benchmark data on the prevalence of sexual violence on U.S. college campuses. The 2015 AAU study obtained national data from over 150,000 students attending 27 U.S. colleges and universities, the 2019 AAU study surveyed over 180,000 students from 33 institutions, and the RTI collected data from over 50,000 students from nine colleges and universities. All three studies defined sexual violence as *nonconsensual sexual contact involving force or incapacitation*. As illustrated in Figure 5, fewer KSC women experienced this type of sexual violence in 2018 (15%) than women from either AAU study, or the RTI study. It should be noted, however, that unlike KSC's SMP, *these studies did not classify incidents involving only verbal pressure as sexual violence*. This is why the percentages for KSC women are lower in Figure 5 than in Figure 4.

Figure 5



Change since 2015 in Sexual Violence Prevalence

For both men and women, a greater percentage reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact and sexual assault in 2018 than was the case in 2015 (Figure 4). Because the percentage of KSC's men who completed the survey was very low, the increase obtained for them could be the result of chance fluctuation. For women, however, this increase is more noteworthy. Further, the percentage of women reporting at least one incident of sexual violence involving force or incapacitation increased by from 9% in 2015 to 15% in 2018, a difference of 67% (Figure 5).

There are two possible explanations for these increases. First, the portion of students experiencing sexual violence while enrolled at KSC has increased since 2015 and/or second, the percentage of students willing to disclose such experiences on a survey has increased over that period. Although an increase in acts of sexual violence is possible, there is evidence that national events and local actions may have influenced how students responded to this survey.

National events—the "Me Too" Movement. In October of 2017, the "Me Too" movement came to prominence on social media (Khomami, October 20, 2017). Since that time, there is evidence that the movement has increased incident reporting. As illustrated in Figure 5, the percentage of women experiencing sexual violence involving force or incapacitation increased from 19% in the first AAU survey to 26% in the 2019 post- "Me Too" version of the survey. Further, Clery Report data indicate that the total number of sex crimes reported at Ohio State University increased by 50% between 2016 and 2017 (Filby, October 2, 2018). Institutions are also reporting an influx of reports of past incidents of sexual violence that took place as many as 50 years ago. For example, Michigan State University received reports of 22 sexual violence complaints pertaining to incidents from 1998 or earlier in the first half of 2018, but received reports of only nine similar cases in the previous five years (Binkley, October 13, 2018).

Local actions. Increases in the percentage of survey respondents who disclose incidents of sexual violence may also be partially an outcome of the success of KSC's sexual violence prevention efforts. Findings from both 2015 and 2018 indicate students who participated in one or more of KSC's sexual violence prevention programs were much more confident in their understanding of SMP definitions of consent and sexual violence. As the percentage of respondents who participated in one of these programs increased from 83%

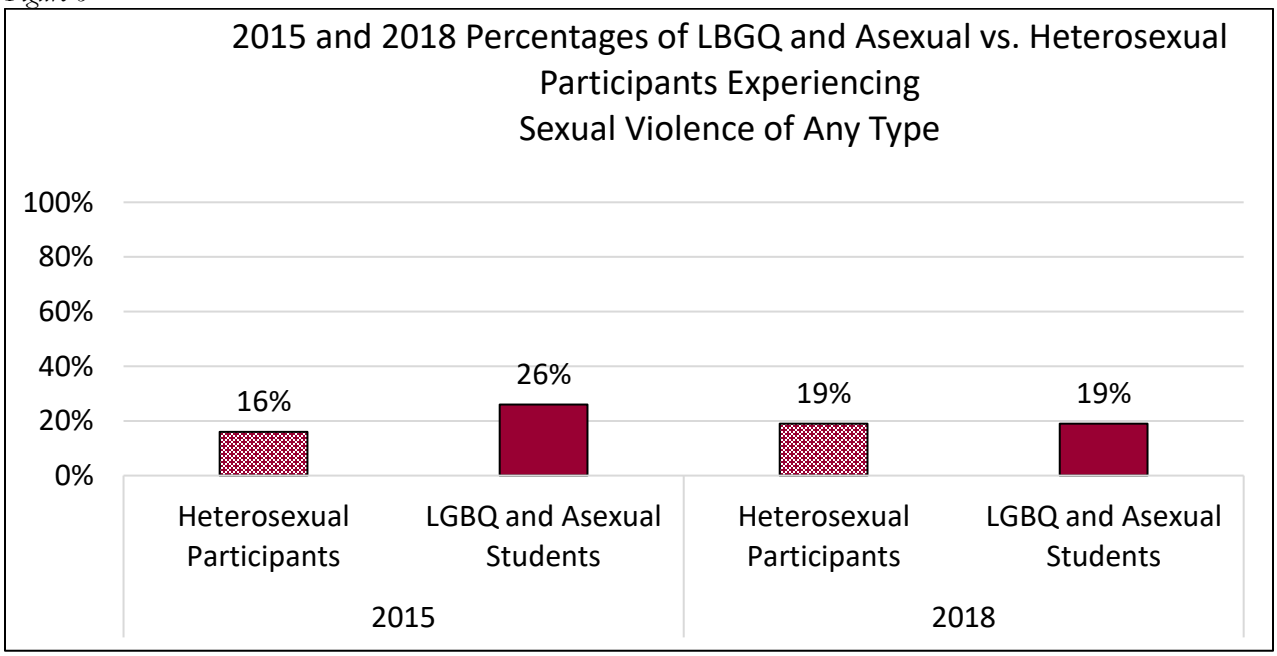
in 2015 to 93% in 2018, greater awareness of these aspects of the SMP fostered by participation could have contributed to increases in sexual violence prevalence obtained from the current survey.

Sexual Violence Experienced by LGBQ and Asexual Students

National studies have found that members of the LGBQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning) community are far more likely to experience sexual violence than the heterosexual population. According to a 2010 report by the Centers for Disease Control (http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cdc_nisvs_victimization_final-a.pdf), 44% of lesbian women and 61% of bisexual women experience, rape, physical stalking, or physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime, compared with 35% of heterosexual women. Moreover, a recent study conducted at the University of Michigan found that students reporting lesbian, gay, or bisexual sexual orientations were at 2.5 times greater risk than heterosexual students (https://publicaffairs.vpcomm.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2015/04/Complete-survey-results.pdf).

Of the 616 students who provided a sexual orientation on the KSC survey, the most frequent responses were heterosexual/straight (75%), bisexual (13%), and asexual (5%). Three percent identified as lesbian and 1% as gay. Given the relatively small number of students reporting an orientation other than heterosexual, it was not possible to compare levels of sexual violence across each individual orientation. As a result, we compared the percentage students with a heterosexual orientation who experienced sexual violence of any type with the combined percentage of those reporting all other sexual orientations. In 2015, LGBQ survey participants were significantly more likely than their heterosexual peers to report an experience of sexual violence (26% vs 16%), but in 2018 the prevalence for both groups was 19% (Figure 6).

Figure 6



Note: *2015 Chi square* of difference in percentages = 13.32, $p < .001$.

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Transgender Participant Findings

In response to the item, "I consider myself to be a transgender individual," 12 participants responded with "yes." Of these, three experienced some form of sexual violence (23%). Although this suggests that transgender individuals may experience a risk of sexual violence comparable to that of women, this sample is far too small to draw any meaningful conclusions from these findings.

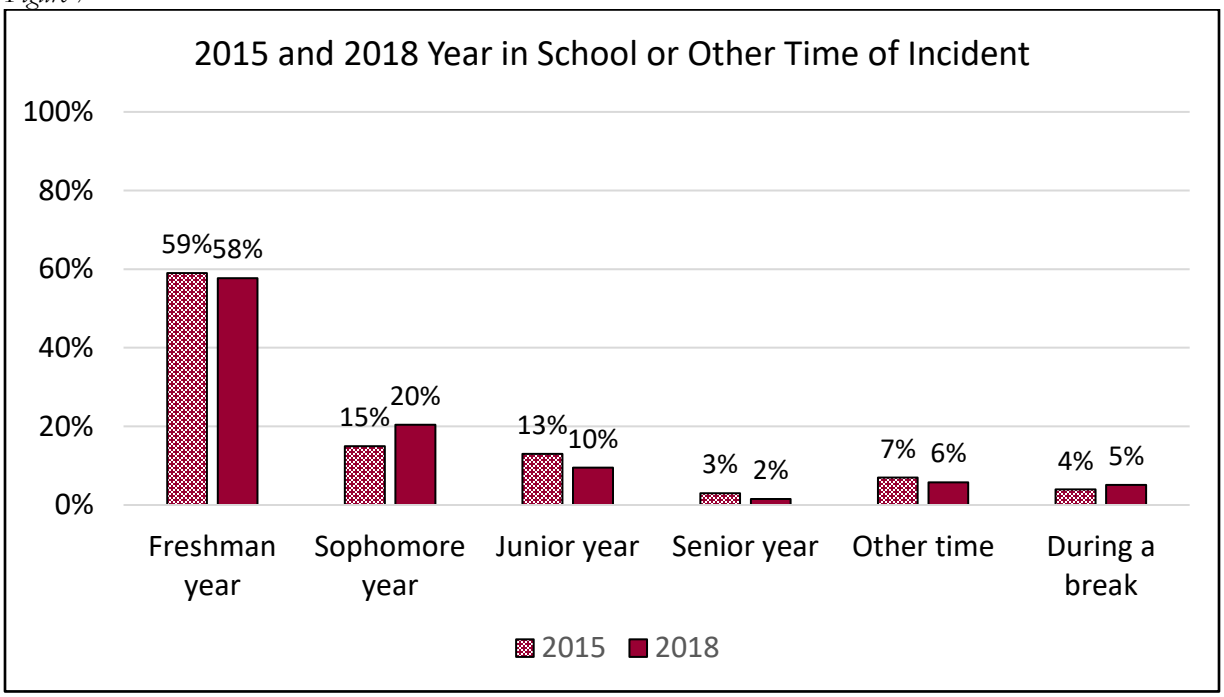
Aspects of Experience with Non-Consensual Sexual Contact

Those who indicated that they had experienced one of these forms of unwanted sexual contact were asked a series of follow-up questions about the setting of the most recent incident, characteristics of the perpetrator, and the coercive tactics used by the perpetrator.

Year in School or another Academic Period When the Incident Occurred

For over half (58%) of those experiencing sexual violence, the incident took place during the freshman year (Figure 7). This finding is consistent with results from the 2015 AAU study, which reported that the risk of experiencing sexual violence involving force or incapacitation was highest during the freshman year. With the exception of the sophomore year, the percentages for each year in school obtained in 2018 were largely consistent with the 2015 percentages. The portion who experienced an incident of sexual violence during the sophomore year increased from 15% in 2015 to 20% in 2018, a difference of 33%.

Figure 7



Note: percentages reported are of the total of those who experienced any type of unwanted sexual contact.

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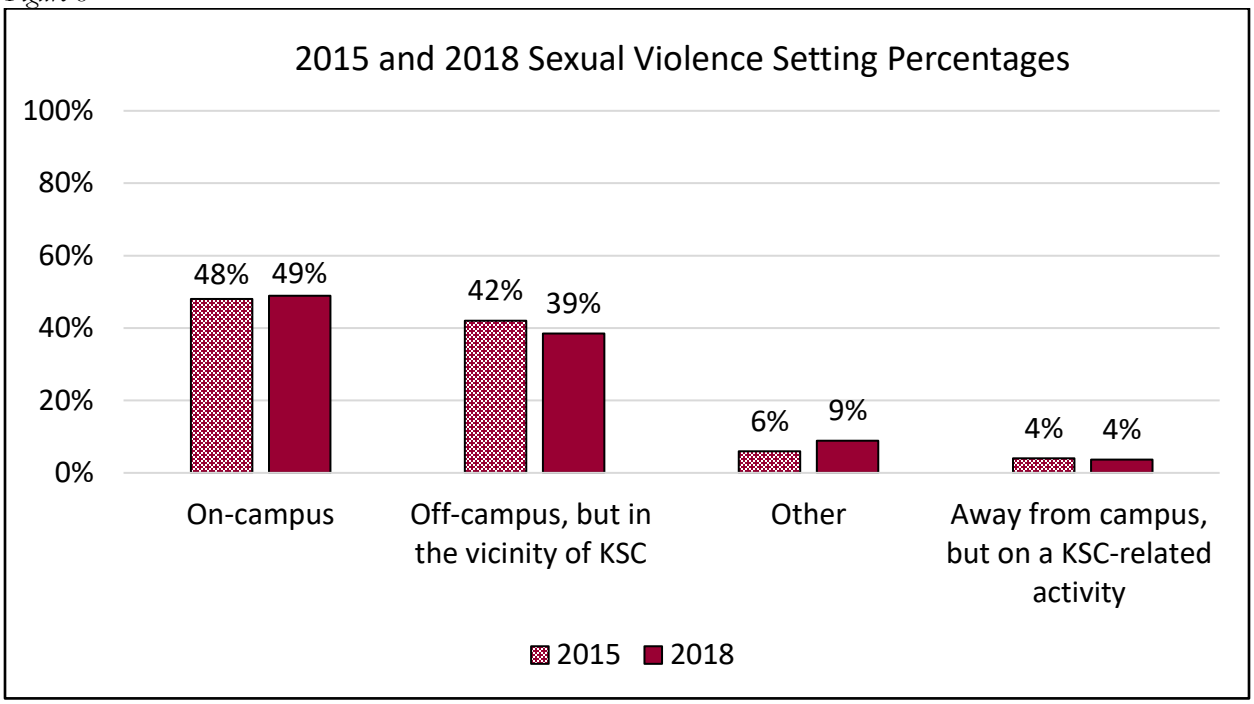
Location

Figure 8 illustrates that the most common setting reported in 2018 for unwanted sexual encounters was on-campus (49%), followed by off-campus, but in the vicinity of KSC (39%). The percentages obtained in 2018 for each setting were largely the same as those obtained in 2015.

Following each location choice, the survey asked participants to write in as much detail regarding the setting that they were comfortable disclosing. Common off-campus setting responses included off campus parties (12), fraternity houses (4), in or outside of Keene bars (4), and houses of friends or the assailant (4). On-campus settings reported most frequently include a residence hall room or on-campus apartment (hall not specified) (22), specific residence hall rooms: a residence hall—Holloway-6, Owl's Nest-5, LLC 4, and Carle-2. Other residence halls noted included Butler, Huntress, Monadnock, and P2. Finally, common locations for those selecting "Other," included work and hometown settings.

Figure 8



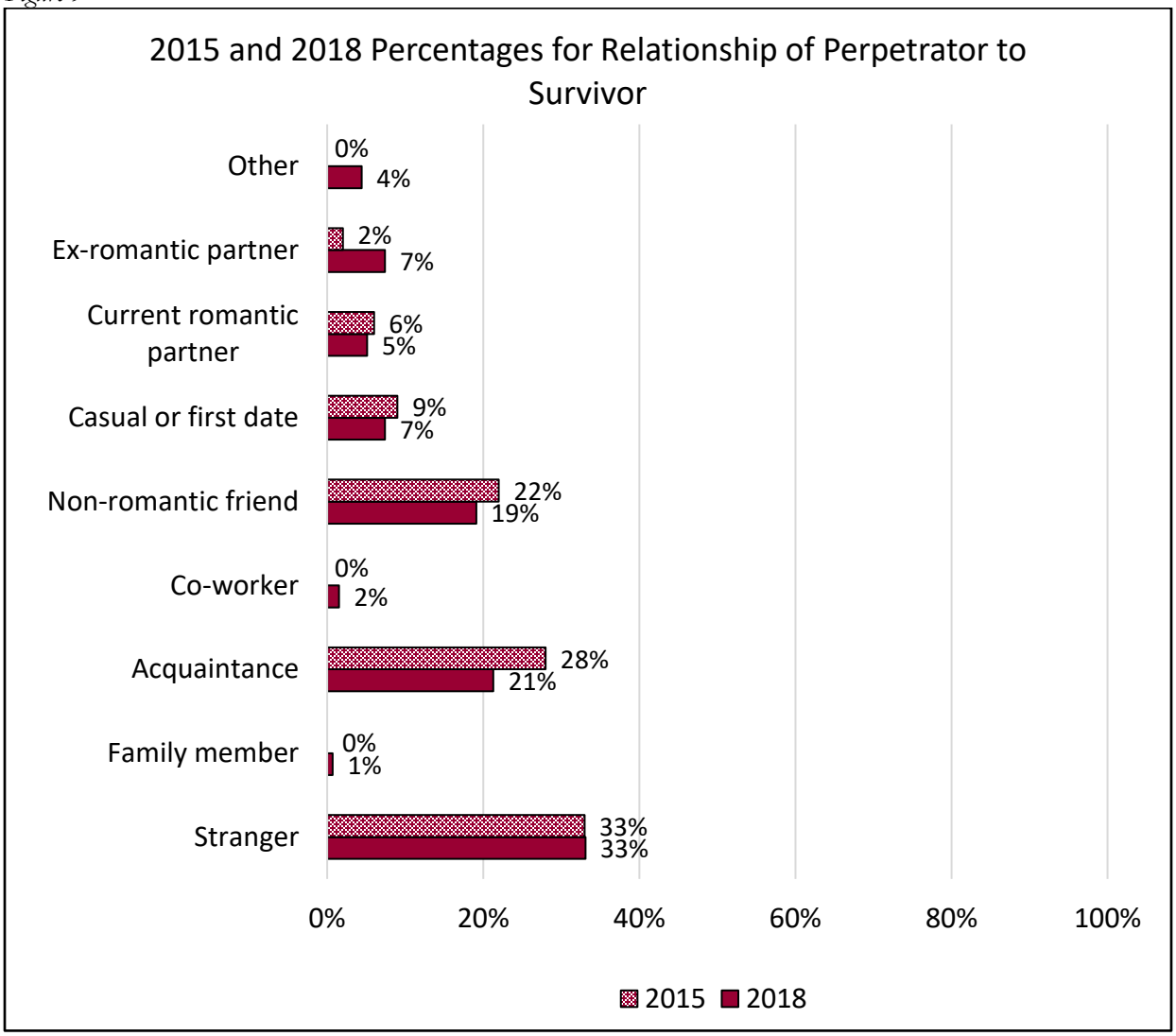
Note: percentages reported are of the total of those who experienced any type of unwanted sexual contact.

Perpetrator Characteristics

Relationship of perpetrator to survivor. About one third of survivors (33%) said that the perpetrator was a stranger (Figure 9). Survivors also frequently reported that the perpetrator was an acquaintance (21%) or a non-romantic friend (19%). Combining all of the categories of perpetrators known to the survivor, this group comprises 67% of the responses to this item. The 2018 and 2015 percentages for each relationship type were very similar.

This finding is inconsistent with a finding from a national survey that 84% of survivors of sexual violence knew their attacker (Warshaw, 1994). It is possible that some survivors categorized perpetrators encountered at bars or parties as "strangers." Future versions of this survey could determine if this is the case by adding a "pick-up/hook-up/one-nighter met at a bar or party" choice to this survey question.

Figure 9



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Relationship of perpetrator to KSC. In 2018, 85% of perpetrators were themselves KSC students. This is an increase over the 80% identified as students in 2015. No survivors indicated that the perpetrator was a KSC employee.

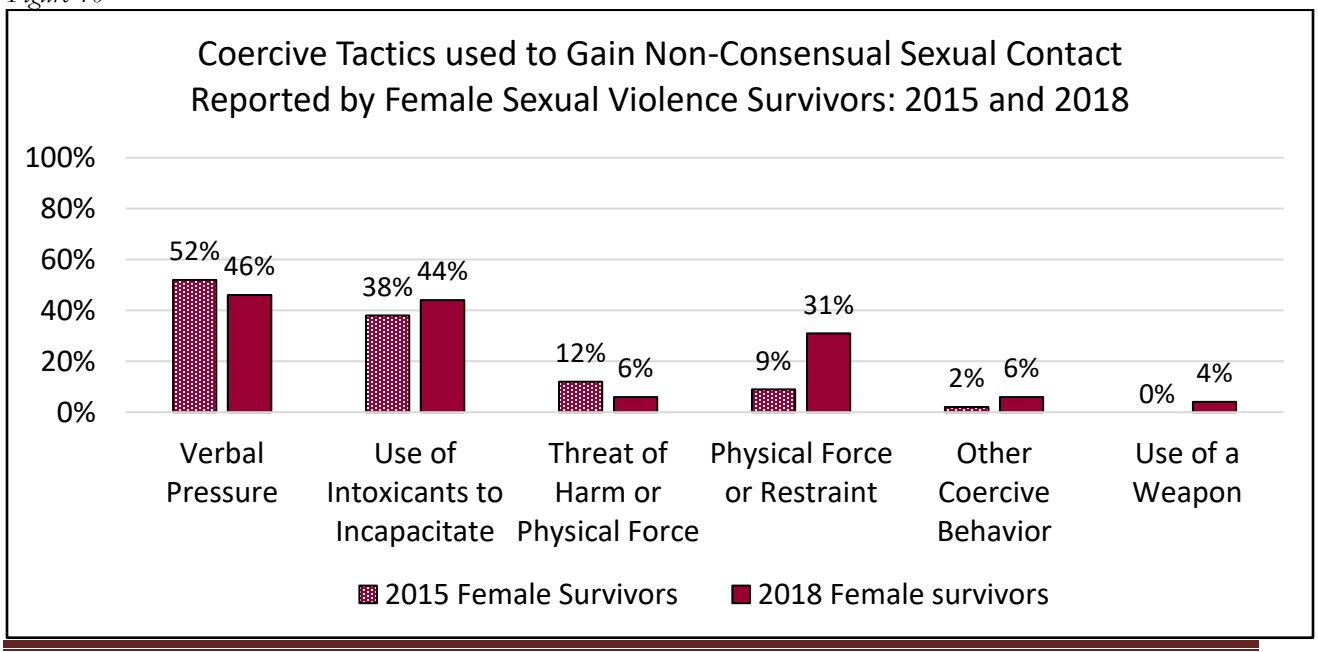
Perpetrator gender. Nearly all women who experienced sexual violence reported male perpetrators (96%); the remaining 4% reported a female perpetrator. Among the eight men who experienced sexual violence, seven reported that the perpetrator was a woman, and the other reported a man. These findings are largely consistent with those obtained in 2015. Although the number of men who report experiencing acts of sexual aggression carried out by women is small, this finding demonstrates that men and women can be perpetrators and survivors of sexual assault. The stereotype that all survivors of sexual assault are women makes it difficult for male survivors to report incidents and to seek support services. As one man noted in response to the question, "If you did not tell anyone, can you explain why not," "I'm a guy, who would take me seriously?"

Coercive Tactics Used to Gain Non-Consensual Sexual Contact

Eighty-five percent of sexual violence survivors reported that the perpetrator used one or more coercive tactics. As summarized in Figure 10, the tactics most frequently reported by female survivors were verbal pressure (46%), and the use of intoxicants to incapacitate (44%). Too few male respondents experienced sexual violence to generate a meaningful report of the coercive tactics used by their perpetrators.

There were several noteworthy differences between the 2015 and 2018 tactic findings. The use of verbal pressure and threat of harm declined, but the use of (a) intoxicants to incapacitate, (b) other coercive behavior, and (c) physical force or restraint increased. Of these changes, the finding for physical force is most striking. The percentage experiencing the use of this tactic more than tripled from 9% to 31%. Finally, another change worthy of note is that no respondents reported use of a weapon in 2015, but four women reported this in 2018.

Figure 10



The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment provides evidence to inform decision-making and leads the College's efforts to assess student learning.

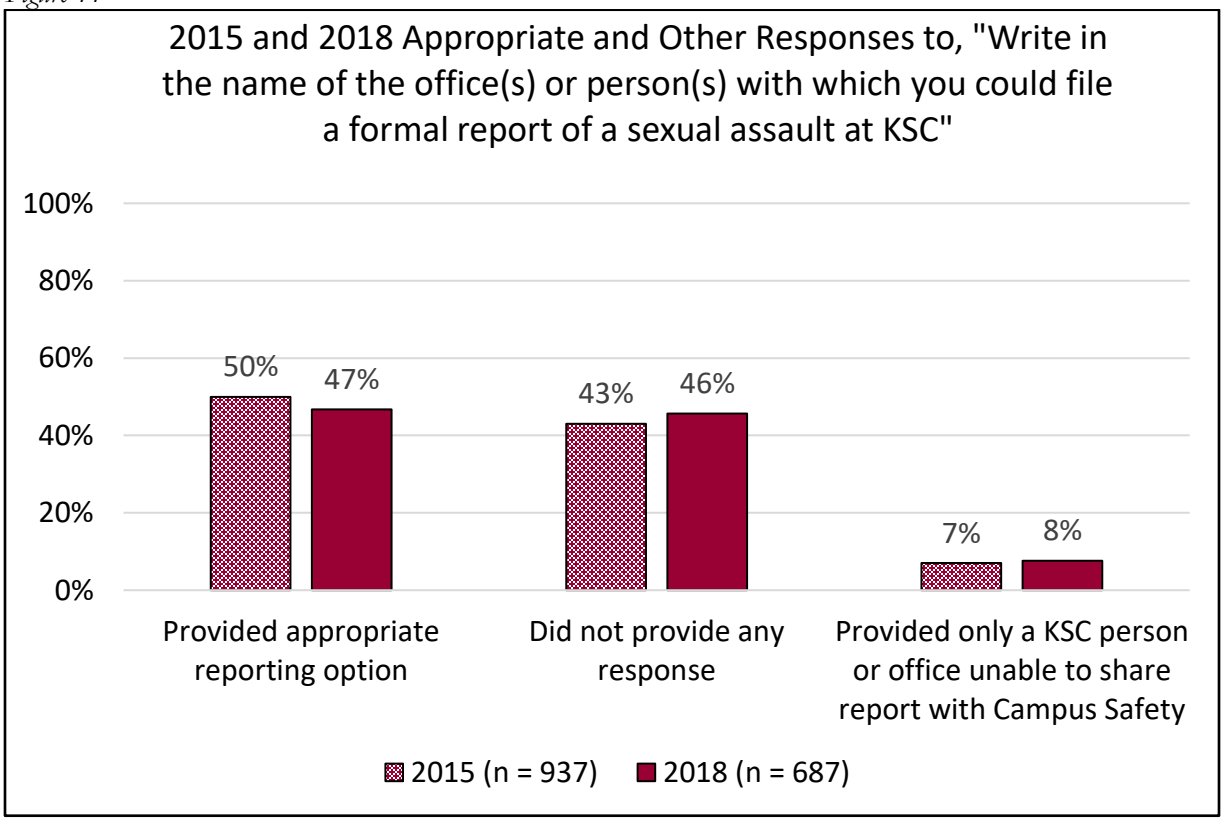
Incident Reporting Findings

Consistent with findings from national studies indicate that sexual violence is underreported on college campuses (https://www.notalone.gov/assets/report.pdf), in 2015, only 52% of respondents were able to provide one correct response to the question, "Write in the name of the office(s) or person(s) with which you could file a formal report of a sexual assault at KSC." To assess the effectiveness of efforts to clarify reporting procedures taken since that time, the 2018 survey included the same question. In addition, the survey included items assessing how often those who experienced sexual violence actually used appropriate reporting options, and reasons for why many did not use them.

Reporting Options Identified by Participants

Half of the 2018 participants provided at least one appropriate response to question, "Write in the name of the office(s) or person(s) with which you could file a formal report of a sexual assault at KSC" (Figure 11). The remainder either reported no response (46%), or named an office or person unable to share the report with Campus Safety (8%). In comparison with the 2015 responses, fewer 2018 participants provided an appropriate response and slightly more provided no response. The portion giving an office or individual unable to share the report with Campus Safety was largely unchanged.

Figure 11



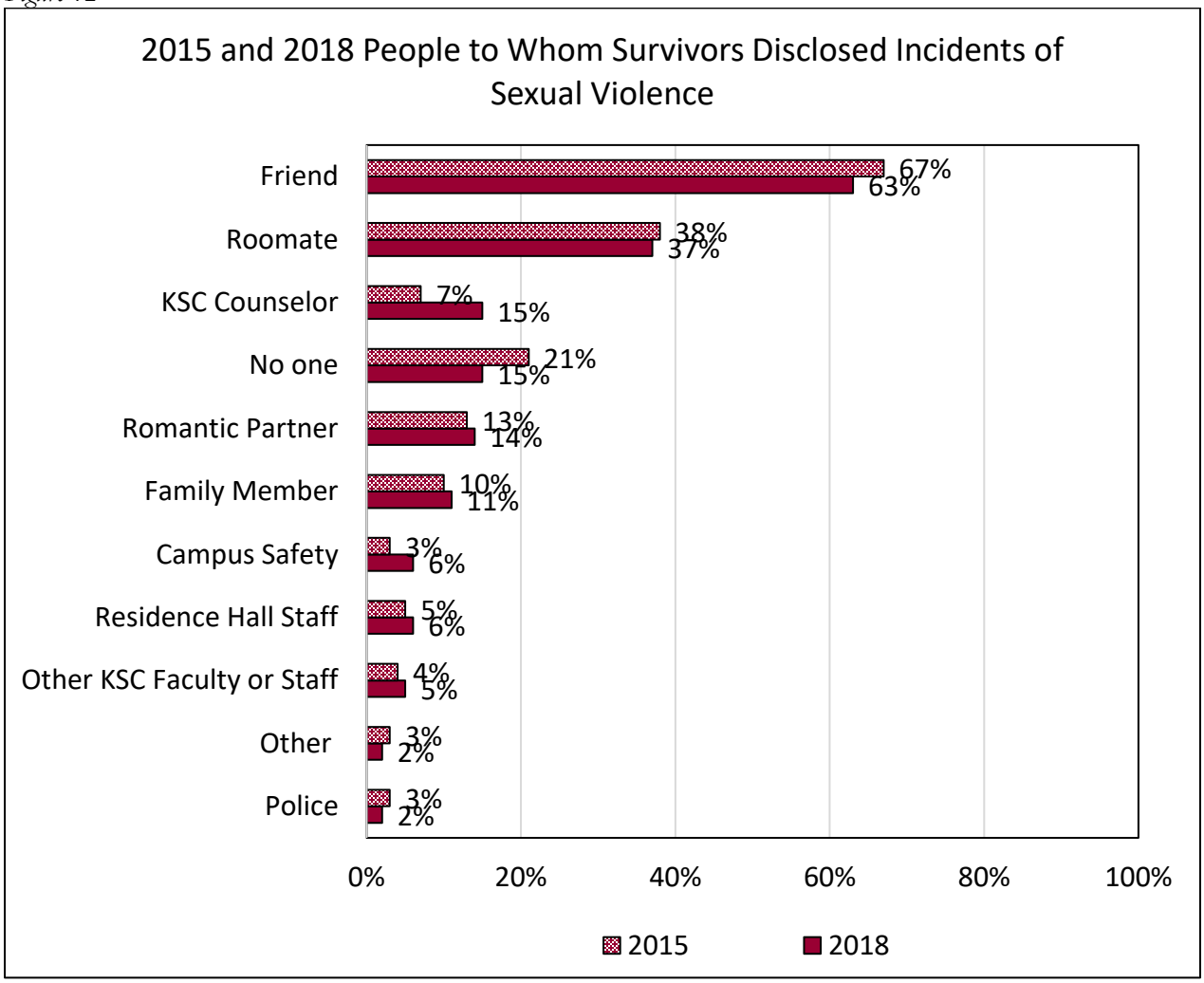
Note: appropriate responses included Campus Safety, KSC employees obligated to share the incident with Campus Safety (all employees except Counseling and Health & Wellness staff), and the Keene Police Department.

People to Whom Survivors Disclosed Incidents of Sexual Violence

The survey also asked those who experienced sexual violence, "Who did you tell about the incident?" Figure 12 summarizes responses to this item. Most common 2018 choices were friend (63%) and roommate (37%). The percentages obtained for each choice in 2018 and 2015 were largely the same with two exceptions. The percentage disclosing to a KSC counselor more than doubled from 7% to 15%, and the percentage who told no one declined from 21% to 15.

Consistent with findings from 2015, survivors infrequently used reporting options specifically noted in the Sexual Misconduct Policy. These include KSC counselor (15%), Campus Safety (6%), residence hall staff (6%), other staff or faculty member (5%), and Keene Police (2%). Taken together, the findings summarized in Figures 11 and 12 demonstrate that many students continue to be aware of the appropriate reporting options, but few of those in a position to use them do so.

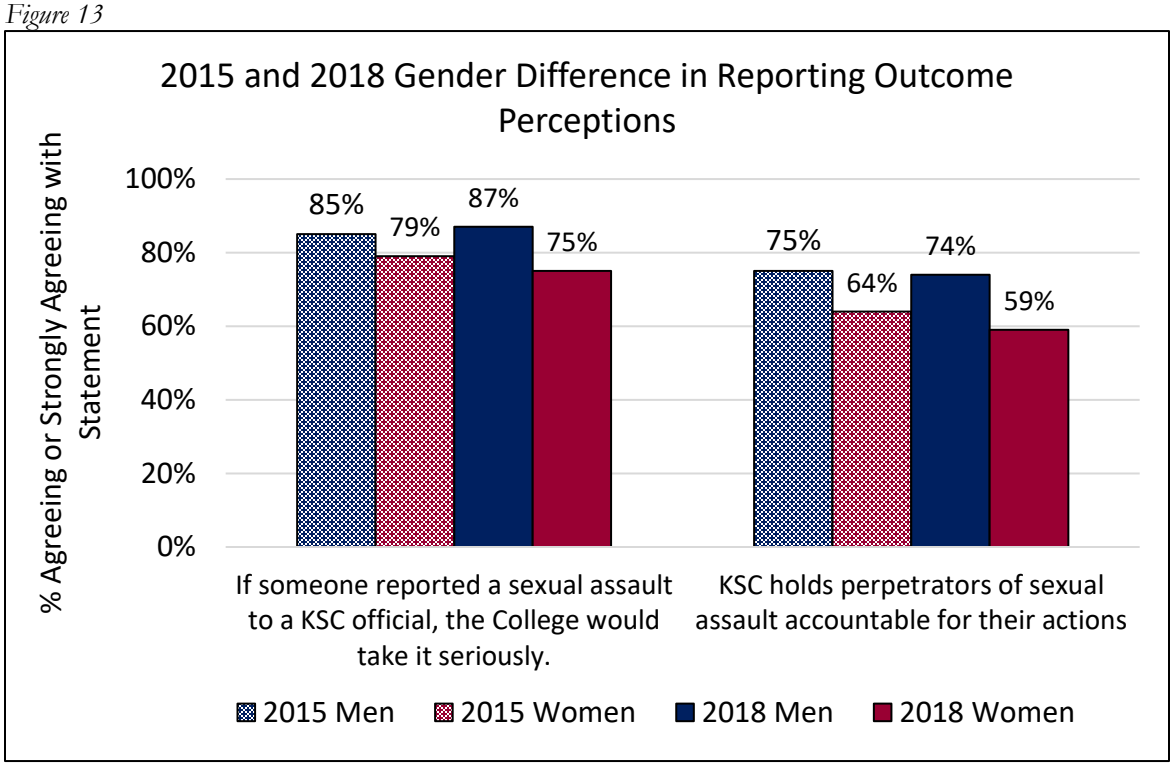
Figure 12



Gender Differences in Perceptions of Results of Reporting

Consistent with the findings from 2015, in 2018, men were significantly more likely than women to agree or strongly agree that KSC would take a report of sexual assault seriously (87%--men; 75%--women), and that the college holds sexual assault perpetrators responsible for their actions (74%--men; 59%--women) (Figure 13). For men, the 205 and 2018 percentages were nearly equal, but for women, both percentages declined in 2018.

Figure 13



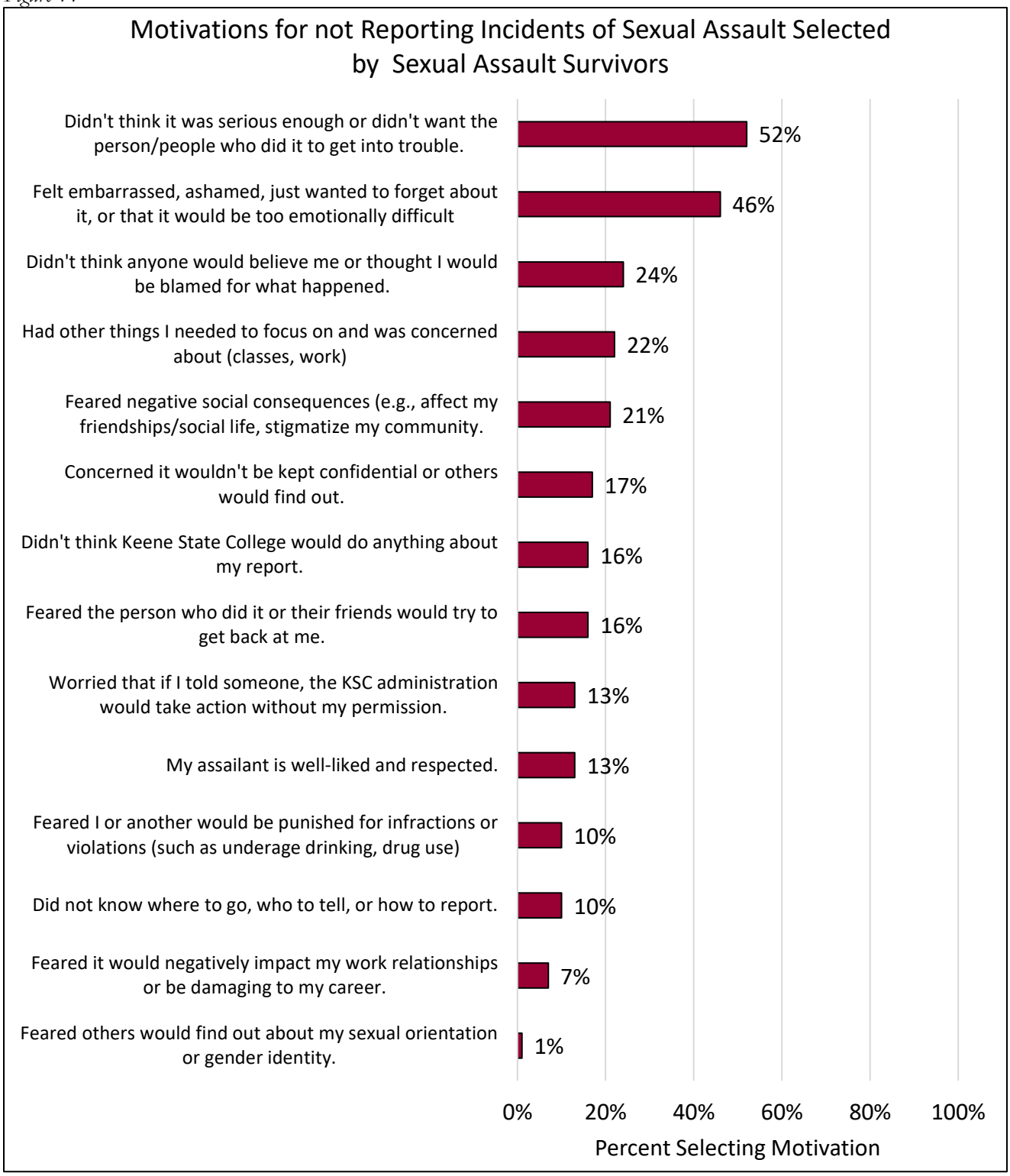
NOTE: for both 2015 and 2018 the gender difference in agreement percentage was statistically significant, $p < .05$.

Reasons Incidents Were Not Disclosed

The 2018 version of the survey asked survivors who did not formally report the incident if each of a list of common motivations for not reporting incidents applied to them. Over half (52%) indicated that they did not feel the act was serious enough to merit reporting. Nearly the same percentage (46%) reported being too embarrassed or ashamed to report. Other frequently selected motivations included the perception that their report would not be believed (24%), having too many other issues requiring attention (22%), and fear of negative social consequences (21%). Only 10% indicated that they did not know how to report the incident.

Taken together, these findings indicate that attitudinal and emotional concerns pose the greatest barrier to reporting acts of sexual violence. Even if a promotional campaign could increase the percentage able to identify an appropriate reporting option to 100%, without addressing the key motivations noted in Figure 14, the percentage of incidents formally reported to Campus Safety is not likely to change.

Figure 14


Motivations for not Reporting Incidents of Sexual Assault Selected by Sexual Assault Survivors
Didn't think it was serious enough or didn't want the person/people who did it to get into trouble.
52%
Felt embarrassed, ashamed, just wanted to forget about it, or that it would be too emotionally difficult
46%
Didn't think anyone would believe me or thought I would be blamed for what happened.
24%
Had other things I needed to focus on and was concerned about (classes, work)
22%
Feared negative social consequences (e.g., affect my friendships/social life, stigmatize my community.
21%
Concerned it wouldn't be kept confidential or others would find out.
17%
Didn't think Keene State College would do anything about my report.
16%
Feared the person who did it or their friends would try to get back at me.
16%
Worried that if I told someone, the KSC administration would take action without my permission.
13%
My assailant is well-liked and respected.
13%
Feared I or another would be punished for infractions or violations (such as underage drinking, drug use)
10%
Did not know where to go, who to tell, or how to report.
10%
Feared it would negatively impact my work relationships or be damaging to my career.
7%
Feared others would find out about my sexual orientation or gender identity.
1%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%
Percent Selecting Motivation

To give greater insight into motivations for deciding against reporting provided in Figure 12, the survey included asked, "If you did not tell anyone, can you explain why not? What might have helped you to be able to tell someone?" The themes emerging from participant responses were very consistent with the findings summarized in Figure 14.

Did not feel that the act merited reporting (13 responses).

- "It wasn't a big deal to me and I know it wouldn't happen again."
- "If it was something more serious, like rape, then I would have probably told someone. But girls have to deal with unwanted touching and groping at parties all the time."
- "I thought it was normal because they were my partner at the time."

Afraid of consequences of reporting (nine responses).

- "I started to tell my RA, but he told me he was required to report it if I told him so I stopped. I didn't want to create drama in the hallway and make his friends dislike me."
- "I was scared that if anyone talked to him he or his friends would confront me."
- "I may have lost my job, been asked to leave. He was a supervisor."

Embarrassed or ashamed of reporting (six responses).

- "I was embarrassed and did not want attention to be drawn to me. I also thought it was my fault."
- "I was embarrassed and did not want to negatively affect my social life or have attention drawn to me."

Report would not be taken seriously (four responses).

- "I'm a guy, who would take me seriously? I'm supposed to be like WOOO sex I can't be like oh no I got assaulted."
- "Didn't tell anyone that works for the college because a friend reported an assault before and the no repercussions happened to the assailant."

Report would not be believed (four responses).

- "No one believes you anyways."
- "Who would believe me? I'm still with him. It would show that I'm weak. I don't know what could have helped me to tell someone."
- "I decided not to report because I knew the case itself was difficult to legally prosecute."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings from the 2018 SABES, Interim Title IX Investigator, Kelli Jo Harper, and Coordinator of Sexual Violence Prevention, Forrest Seymour, recommend taking the actions listed below to minimize the incidence of sexual assault.

These recommendations are also incorporated as elements of the initiative to be supported by the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women Campus Grant and reflect the language and structure of the grant's strategic planning and implementation process. All recommendations are grounded in an understanding of how sexual violence occurs on the Keene State campus and what works in campus prevention efforts as evidenced in the data from the both the 2015 and 2018 survey. The rationale for these recommendations as outlined in the grant proposal is as follows:

The findings summarized above underscore the importance for KSC to develop a strategic plan to institutionalize sexual and interpersonal violence programming that will reach the entirety of the undergraduate student population, faculty, and staff. In addition to reducing the incidence of sexual violence, survey results highlight a need for increasing awareness of victim services, specifically MCVP: Crisis & Prevention Center, the community's local victim services provider. While the SABES data is specific to unwanted sexual contact and sexual assault, it is nonetheless indicative of victim services gaps related to interpersonal violence and stalking.

Promising results obtained by both the 2015 and 2018 SABESs include consistent findings that students who attended one or more sexual and interpersonal violence prevention training expressed significantly more awareness of consent, bystander intervention, KSC policies, and support services for victims. Although any rate of sexual misconduct is unacceptable, and an increase is disheartening, these data reveal both the areas that need attention and suggest that existing prevention strategies are effective, all of which informs this proposal.

1. *Develop and implement a strategic sexual violence prevention plan for Keene State College*. Components of this plan should include
    a. Forming a Coordinated Community Response Team to ensure collaboration across the campus and within the Keene community particularly towards identifying and holding offenders accountable.
    b. Establishing an ongoing comprehensive strategic planning process for sexual violence prevention involving all internal and external partners.
    c. Expanding Active-Bystander training to all students annually, particularly student leaders.
    d. Creating a Student Liaison Council ensuring investment in sexual violence prevention programming by crucial student constituencies including student-athletes, diverse students, LGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities, student members of fraternities and sororities, and 1st-year students.
    e. Launching an expanded Peer Education Program including a Sexual Violence Prevention Theater Initiative to aid in implementing Active-Bystander trainings.

f. Instituting a Survivorship Program offering innovative and effective supports to sexual violence survivors.

g. Providing expanded staff & faculty training particularly for Campus Safety staff and Conduct board members.

h. Launching a coordinated social media campaign supporting all elements of this program.

i. Initiating a bi-annual regional campus sexual violence prevention training conference.

2. *Establish and expand partnerships and collaboration.*

a. External partnerships. This includes partnerships with the local victim services provider, MCVP: Crisis & Prevention, and the Keene Police Department, towards more efficient and effective sexual violence prevention.

b. Internal collaborations. There is a need for improving and expanding collaborations between internal partners involved in sexual violence prevention. These include the Counseling Center, Department of Athletics, Office of Transitions and Parent Programs, Office of Student Involvement (including the Greek Life Program), Office of Residential Life & Housing Services, Office of Disability Services, Title IX Office, Office of Student Conduct, Department of Campus Safety, Office of Human Resource Management, and the Diversity and Multiculturalism Office.

CONCLUSION

Findings from the 2018 SABES provided evidence of the positive impact of the College's sexual violence prevention programming. Nearly all students agreed that that KSC clearly communicates that sexual assault is not acceptable, that they understand (a) the SMP as a whole, (b) the meaning of consent in the SMP, and (c) what behaviors constitute sexual assault in the SMP. Moreover, the percentage agreeing with each of these statements in 2018 was higher than it was in 2015, and the percentages obtained from students who participated in sexual violence prevention programs such as "No Zebras, No Excuses" were far higher than those from non-participants.

Although the percentage of women who experienced nonconsensual sexual contact increased from 2015 to 2018, the current rate is still well below rates reported in national surveys, and the increase is consistent with the 2015-2019 increase reported for the AAU survey. Furthermore, this change may also be an outcome of KSC's prevention programming. More students participated in such programs in 2018 than in 2015, and findings from both years indicate that program participants were much more confident than non-participants in their understanding of SMP definitions of consent and sexual violence. As a result, students may have been more likely to correctly define an incident as nonconsensual sexual contact in 2018 than was the case in 2015.

However, findings from the survey did identify important directions future programming efforts should take. Less than half of participants correctly identified a person or office to whom they could report an incident of sexual violence-a three percentage-point decline from 2015, and only 41% agreed with the statement, "I know where to file a formal report of sexual assault at KSC,"—an eight percentage-point decline from 2015. This indicates that actions taken to boost reporting option awareness have not been effective and new approaches are needed.

The findings also indicated that even if reporting option awareness were to reach 100%, the percentage of incidents that survivors report is not likely to change without addressing key attitudinal barriers to reporting. Future prevention programming must challenge the belief that acts of nonconsensual sexual contact are not serious enough to merit reporting, that survivors would be blamed for such violence, and that reporting will result in negative social consequences.

Resources provided by the $300,000 U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women Campus Grant recently awarded to Keene State College will enable important new programming initiatives that will build upon the successes of the College's current efforts, and will permit new directions for sexual violence prevention that will address the findings from this study.

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