

Gender-Based Violence Research Lab 2022-2023 Whitepaper Report



Professor Dana Cuomo, Professor Susan Hannan, Katy Bednarsky,
Cate Cheng '25, Madison Dennehy '24, Meredith Forman '24, Imane Halal '23,
Annika Murray '23, Tara Taggart '23, Abigail Zea '24

This report is part of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Research Lab Whitepaper Series, a collection of reports produced by Professor Dana Cuomo (Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies) and Professor Susan Hannan (Psychology).

The GBV Research Lab is a feminist research lab with interdisciplinary research projects centered on examining and addressing issues of gender-based violence at Lafayette College and across the Lehigh Valley.

The GBV Research Lab also prioritizes training Lafayette students in feminist and community-based research design, methods and analysis.

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Introduction

The Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Research Lab advanced three projects during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Each project supports the lab's two-prong goal of: 1) examining and addressing issues of gender-based violence on campus, and 2) mentoring Lafayette students in feminist and community-based research design, methods, and analysis.

Seven students worked as research assistants for the GBV Research Lab during the 2022-2023 academic year, collaborating together in small teams on the lab's projects and providing essential assistance in research design, data collection, and data analysis. Each research assistant contributed writing to this whitepaper.

The GBV Research Lab also worked in close collaboration with Katy Bednarsky, Student Advocacy and Prevention Coordinator, who played an active and essential role on the research team and projects.

In what follows, we report on each of the GBV Research Lab's projects, all of which are in various stages of execution.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Programming: Evaluation & Assessment Analysis

This longitudinal project coordinates the evaluation and assessment of sexual misconduct prevention programming at Lafayette College.

The project's primary objective is to track and analyze evaluation and assessment data over time to establish evidence-based sexual misconduct training and prevention programming in support of a campus culture free of sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking and harassment.

To date, the project has focused on evaluating and assessing the *Empowered Consent: Preventing Sexual Assault, Relationship Violence and Stalking at Lafayette College* program.

The Empowered Consent program is an evidence-based prevention workshop tailored for first year students, now in its second year of implementation.

Members of the GBV Research Lab developed the program during the 2020-2021 academic year (see Cuomo et al 2021) and debuted the program during First Year Orientation in August 2021 (see Mayer et al 2022).

In this year's report, we highlight changes made to the timing and delivery of the program, along with analysis of the program's post-assessment surveys.

Changes to the Program

Changes to the Empowered Consent program include the facilitation, delivery, and logistical coordination. PAVE, under the supervision of the Student Advocacy and Prevention Coordinator, were tasked with the facilitation of the Empowered Consent program.

Peer educators were recruited and onboarded during the spring 2022 semester and trained in the fall of 2022 during the first week of classes. Total training time amounted to approximately 30 hours, including asynchronous recorded sessions, a national certification program, and in-person training.

The training was grounded in evidence-based, public health models of prevention and practice informed strategies of engagement. In addition to providing skills-based training and improving peer educators' foundational knowledge, the training also included mock facilitation practice of the Empowered Consent program. Once peer educators completed training, they immediately began facilitating programs to first year students.

Program delivery shifted to dosing throughout the beginning weeks of the semester. Session scheduling and logistics were executed in collaboration with Student Involvement and the Lafayette Extended Orientation (LEO) Program. LEO student leaders and their first year groups attended the Empowered Consent program starting the second week of September and ending after the third week of October, when make-up sessions occurred.

A total of 29 workshops were delivered to the class of 2026.

Empowered Consent Program Assessment

There are two survey assessments for the Empowered Consent program. Immediately after concluding the program, first year students complete a survey that asks them to provide information about what they learned during the program and aspects of the program that they found most and least helpful.

First year students are then invited to complete a second survey approximately six months later that assesses information that they have retained from the presentation and skills from the training that they have since used.

Methodology

The immediate and follow up surveys were administered through Qualtrics and include both quantitative and qualitative questions.

We used the quantitative software program JASP to compare descriptive statistics for each of the survey questions. We used the qualitative software program Atlas.ti to support the qualitative analysis, which included developing inductive codes to analyze thematic content from the qualitative responses.

574 first year students attended the Empowered Consent program and were eligible to complete the immediate and follow up surveys.

Immediate Survey

498 first year students completed the immediate survey, reflecting a 86.8% response rate.

Survey questions focused on assessing specific aspects of the program (e.g., bystander intervention skills and how to respond to a disclosure), and participants' knowledge regarding content and resources related to gender-based violence before and after the program.

Means and standard deviations were gathered for each response, in addition to the frequencies for the numbers on the rating scale.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Programming

As *Figure 1* illustrates, students entered the program with baseline knowledge about the program’s topics, indicating increased knowledge and ability regarding each of the program’s primary topics after the training.

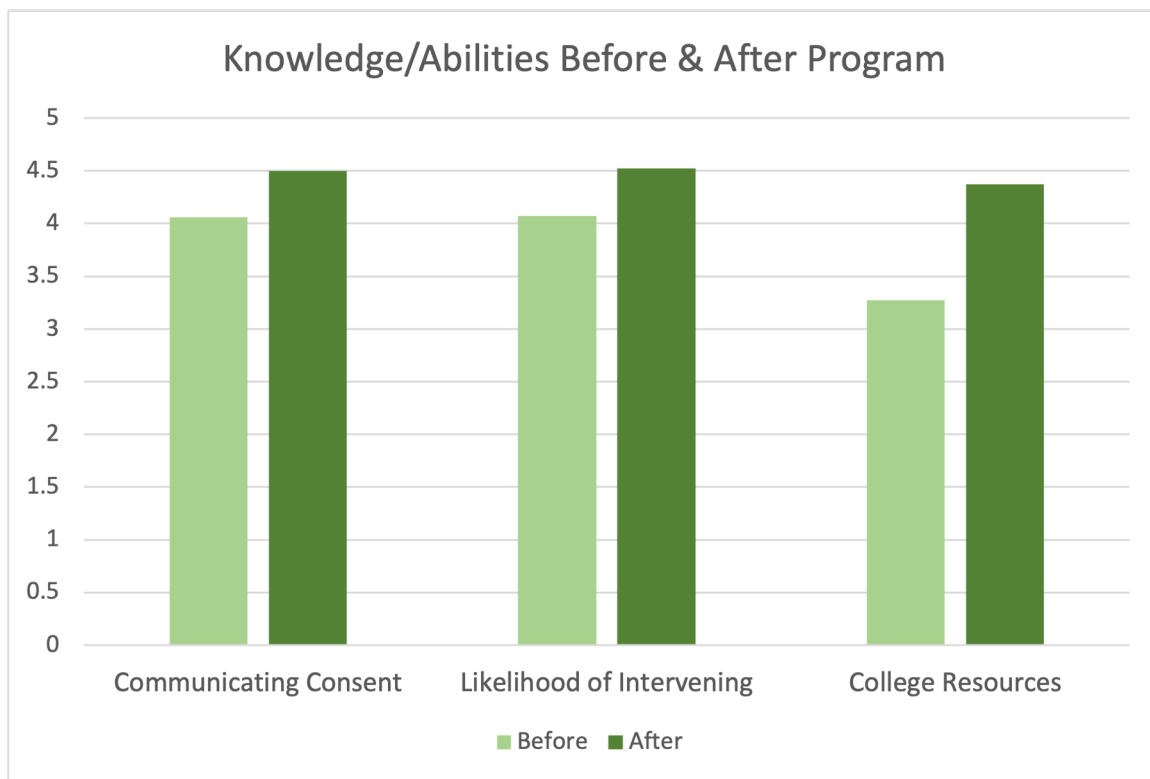


Figure 1: Mean scores (using a rating scale of 1-5) from questions that assessed participants’ knowledge of how to communicate consent, likelihood of intervening as an active bystander, and knowledge of college resources.

Of the 498 first year students who completed the immediate survey, 326 responded to the qualitative question that asked them what was most helpful/interesting about the program and 281 students responded to the question that asked them what was least helpful/interesting about the program.

Of those 281 students, 114 students responded with N/A. Eighteen students provided a response to the prompt that asked for additional feedback.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Programming

What was Most Helpful?

In response to the question “what was most helpful” about the training, students emphasized each of the program’s learning objectives in some capacity.

The most frequent topic that students identified as “most helpful” concerned the program’s focus on introducing students to available **college resources** for support following an experience of gender-based violence. Students also identified the program’s discussion about **consent** as helpful, including what it is and how to give/receive it. Students also addressed the training’s focus on **how to respond to a peer’s disclosure** of an unwanted sexual experience and an introduction to **bystander intervention skills** as helpful topics.

Additionally, participants regularly cited specific acronyms introduced in the training, such as “CARE” and “FRIES”, which refer to bystander intervention and aspects of consent respectively, indicating that participants were recalling information from the program. Participants also indicated that specific elements of the program’s delivery supported their learning, including the tailored **scenarios and Lafayette-specific examples**, as well as the **peer-led and discussion-based** format of the program.

What was Least Helpful?

While fewer students offered responses to the question “what was least helpful” about the training, one of the common responses concerned participants who found certain topics to be repetitive from other trainings that they participated in during First Year Orientation (FYO), specifically information about alcohol statistics and party culture.

Although infrequent, a few participants noted that aspects of the training were triggering for them, which we highlight as a reminder that there are first year students who are entering college having already been impacted by the program’s content.

It is important to note that 114 participants said that “*nothing*” or “*N/A*” was least helpful about the program.

Additional Feedback

Although there were few participants (n=18) who responded to the prompt asking for additional feedback, we include here the most common responses, which identified interest in more discussion of power dynamics surrounding Greek life, and requesting more inclusive language surrounding LGBTQ+ and racial identities.

Follow-up Survey

Students were invited to participate in a follow up survey approximately six months after completing the Empowered Consent program. The follow up survey assesses what knowledge students retained and what skills they have used since the program. The follow up survey also prompts students to provide feedback for improving future iterations of the program.

574 first year students received an invitation to complete the survey and 113 students responded, reflecting a 19.7% response rate. 42 participants provided responses to the short answer questions.

As noted in *Figure 2*, participants reported using a variety of entities for support and resources since participating in the training, the most common being friends or other Lafayette students. The likelihood of students relying on their peers for support following an incident of gender-based violence reinforces the significance of campus-wide prevention programs. Students are more likely to turn to each other, making it important for all students on campus to be aware of resources and how to support a friend.

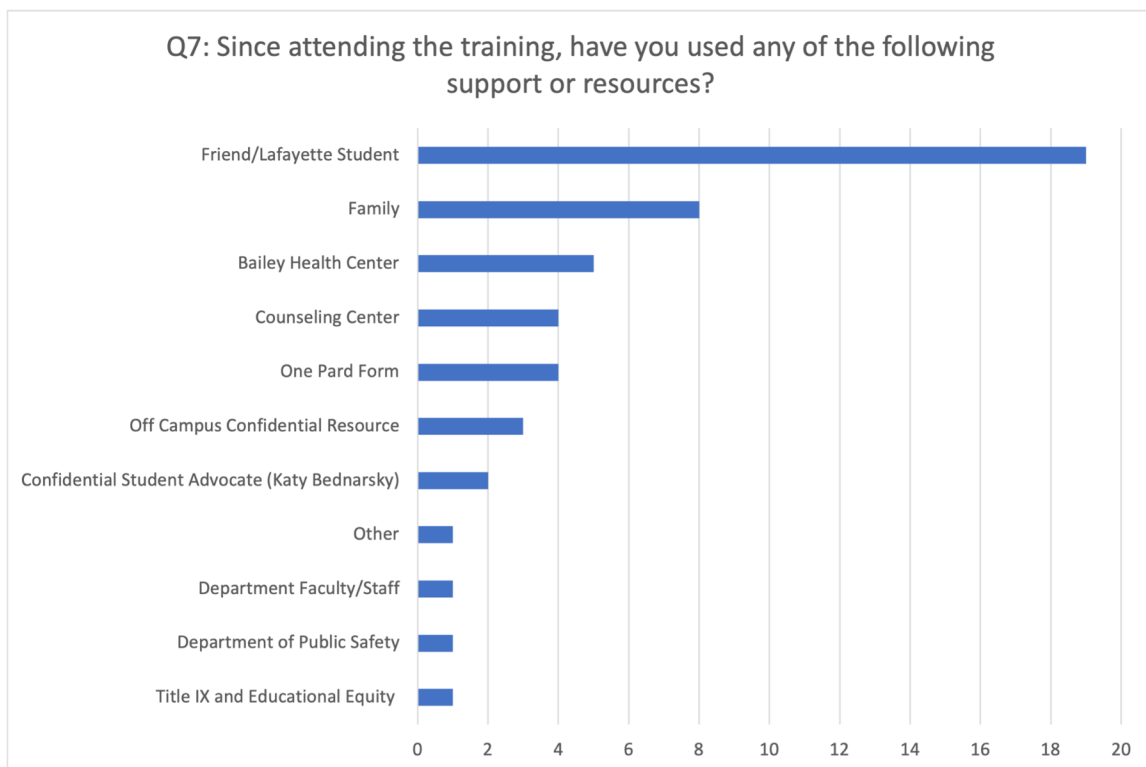


Figure 2: Usage of various campus support and resources since attending the training.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Programming

As noted in *Figure 3*, students reported witnessing and/or experiencing various kinds of gender-based violence harms, including *coercion or pressure to engage in sexual activity* and *control and manipulation within a relationship*.

Here we want to emphasize the significance of students identifying coercion and control as problematic behaviors, which are often minimized or overlooked as part of the continuum of gender-based violence.



Figure 3: Types of gender-based violence harm witnessed and identified since attending the training.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Programming

Figure 4 identifies skills introduced in the training that participants have since incorporated or used. Here we note the range of skills that participants have used, including a diversity of bystander intervention approaches, along with actions that support cultural change more broadly, such as communicating consent and supporting friends following a disclosure.



Figure 4: Skills circumnavigating gender-based harm that have been reportedly utilized since the training.

Figure 5 emphasizes participant perspectives regarding how seriously they believe various campus entities take issues of harassment, equity, and inclusion and whether participants believe that the college can effectively respond to issues of harassment.

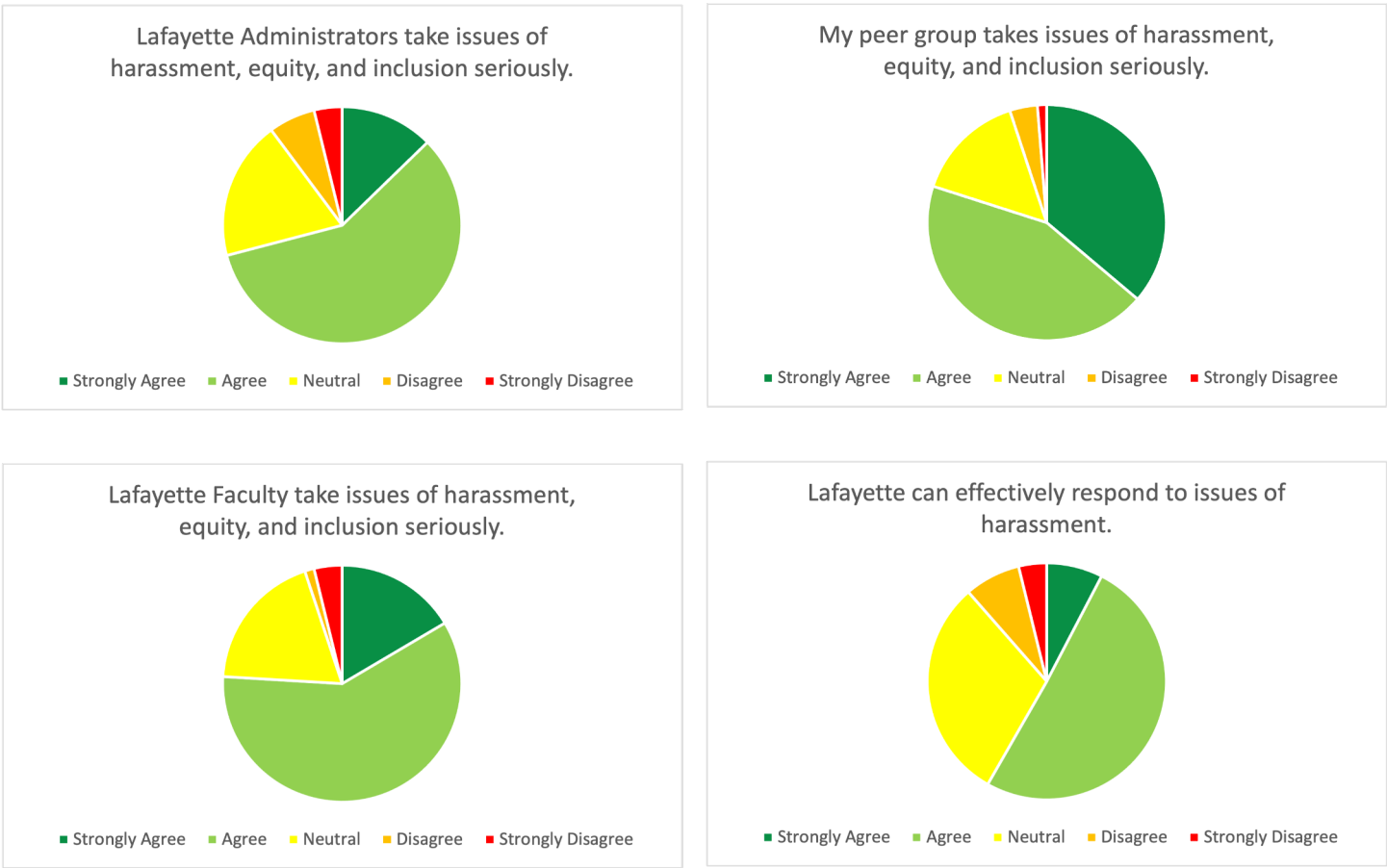


Figure 5. Participants' assessment of campus entities' commitment to issues of harassment, equity, and inclusion.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Programming

Of the 113 first year students who completed the follow up survey, 42 provided responses to the qualitative questions, which focused on what information students retained from the initial training and recommendations for future trainings.

What did you learn from the training?

Consistent with the quantitative responses, participants highlighted an increase in using and applying skills that they learned in the training, such as bystander intervention and increased knowledge and awareness of college resources.

In addition, participants noted a feeling of shared responsibility in preventing sexual assault, explaining “It’s on all of us”.

What else would you recommend as additional training?

Participant responses to this question centered on two areas. Students identified wanting reminder resources or “booster training” sessions throughout their first year, specifically additional information on how to support a friend after a disclosure of an unwanted sexual experience.

Students also identified interest in receiving more information about college resources and that Title IX processes should be more accessible, noting that reporting options (such as confidential resources or mandated reporters) were unclear and would benefit from more explanation.

Recommendations

In its second iteration, the Empowered Consent program continues to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from first year students who indicate that the program is informative, and that they are retaining knowledge and skills regarding gender-based violence that the program introduces.

Recommendation 1: Learning Objectives & Content

Moving forward, we recommend that the program's learning objectives and content remain the same, with topics continuing to focus on the following: definitions of sexual assault/domestic violence/stalking, how to communicate consent, bystander intervention strategies, information about available support resources, and how to respond to a disclosure.

We recommend reviewing the program for opportunities to add additional examples and scenarios attentive to intersectional experiences across gender, sexuality and racial identities.

We recommend incorporating additional information into the Empowered Consent program regarding unhealthy and toxic relationships or encouraging student participation in a 2.0 training on this topic, as students commonly reported in the follow up survey that they had witnessed control or manipulation within an intimate relationship.

We also recommend that the structure and presentation style remain peer-led, discussion-based, and facilitated within small groups to encourage participation among participants.

Recommendation 2: Logistical Delivery

The primary change between the 2021 and 2022 delivery of the Empowered Consent program concerned its timing. In 2021, the delivery of the Empowered Consent program occurred during First Year Orientation (FYO) and in 2022, first year students received the program over a six week period after the semester started, extending into late October.

Feedback from the 2021 surveys indicated that FYO is an overwhelming weekend full of information in which the content of the Empowered Consent program can be lost amidst the other activities. This, coupled with the logistical challenges of training and bringing Peer Anti-Violence Educators back to campus before the start of the semester, reinforces the benefits of the 2022 approach.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Programming

However, moving forward, we recommend scheduling the Empowered Consent program within the first four weeks of the semester, with the goal of all first year students receiving the program by the end of September.

This scheduling takes into account the logistical challenges that FYO presents, but also prioritizes providing students with information and resources necessary to support their safety during the time period in which first year students are most vulnerable to experiencing assault.

Recommendation 3: Dosing

We also recommend developing “booster” sessions or materials that can be distributed to first year students throughout the fall and spring semesters.

These booster sessions and/or materials should reinforce the primary training topics and skills that students are using as indicated by the follow up survey, such as bystander intervention, supporting a friend after a disclosure, intervening in an unhealthy relationship, and reminders about college resources/Title IX processes.

Recommendation 4: Additional Assessment

Finally, the Empowered Consent immediate and post surveys offer important insight to not only the information and skills that first year students are learning and retaining from the prevention program, but also their perspectives regarding how seriously campus stakeholders take issues of harassment.

We encourage future campus climate surveys to incorporate similar questions to gauge student perspective on these issues across class year.

Harm Mapping Project

The Harm Mapping Project examines the geography of gender-based violence on campus. Specifically, the project's objectives are twofold: 1) to better understand the spaces and places that students have experienced gender-based harms and/or feel vulnerable to experiencing such harms, and 2) provide recommendations to campus leadership regarding ways to modify the built environment to help prevent future harms from occurring.

To date, sexual and gender-based violence prevention scholarship has primarily focused on preventing sexual and gender-based violence through bystander intervention educational programming and/or alcohol and other drug awareness programming.

This project contributes to a growing body of prevention literature that is focused on the geographies of harm and how the built environment contributes to enabling harm to occur (see Mahoney et al 2022; Meredith et al 2020).

Methodology

The design for this project began in the spring of 2023 with the support of Student Advocacy and Prevention intern Olivia Barcia '22.

As we prepared the geographic parameters of the project, we conducted a preliminary assessment of existing data on gender-based violence at Lafayette using a data triangulation tool developed by Decker et al 2021, including a review of Title IX reports, police reports, and campus security (Clery) reports.

With the support of research assistants Libby Mayer '22 and Imane Halal '23, we also conducted an analysis of the Anti.Violence.Laf Instagram account and facilitated informal discussions with students during the summer of 2022 to further define the project's geographic focus.

We then worked with Sarah Beck, Visual Resources Curator and John Clark, Data Visualization and GIS librarian, to design the project's map. The IRB approved the project in September 2022 and data collection began in October 2022.

Data Collection

Data collection entailed a participatory mapping exercise and a brief survey, facilitated by lab research assistants (Annika Murray '23, Tara Taggart '23 and Abigail Zea '24).

Participants were provided with a two-sided piece of poster-sized paper. The front of the paper included a map of campus. The back of the paper included a short survey with demographic and short answer questions.

To complete the participatory mapping exercise, participants were provided with instructions and stickers to mark where on the campus map they have experienced or feel vulnerable to experiencing sexual and/or gender-based harm.

Different color stickers indicated different types of harm (see *Figure 6 "Categories of Harm"* below). Participants who had not experienced harm or who did not feel vulnerable to experiencing harm left the map blank. Participants also had the option of labeling the map with additional locational or contextual detail (e.g.: "dorm room" or "feels more vulnerable at night").

After completing the mapping exercise, participants then completed the brief survey and short answer questions on the back of the paper. Participants were provided with privacy barriers while completing the participatory mapping exercise.

All Lafayette students over the age of 18 were eligible to participate. We were interested in recruiting a representative sampling of the student body, taking into account student identities across gender, sexuality and racial identities, class year, international students, student-athletes and Greek Life affiliated-students.







Categories of Harm	Color
Verbal and Non-Touch Harassment (e.g.: Cat calling, staring, sexist comments, microaggressions such as misgendering and stereotyping, emotional/verbal abuse)	 Black
Unwanted Touching (e.g.: Groping, Fondling, Kissing)	 Forest Green
Sexual Assault (e.g.: Non-consensual and/or forced oral and penetrative sexual activity)	 Teal
Physical Assault (e.g.: Hitting, punching, kicking, strangulation)	 Lavender
Stalking (e.g.: monitoring, following, showing up uninvited, unwanted gifts)	 Yellow
Feeling vulnerable to experiencing harm	 Red

Figure 6: Categories of Harm. These are the categories of harm and corresponding sticker colors that participants considered when completing the participatory mapping exercise.

To assist in our goal of a representative sample, we recruited participants primarily through classes and athletic teams. We contacted 33 faculty members and 4 coaches by email with information about the project. 21 Faculty members and 4 coaches invited our research team to share information about the project with their students.

Between October 19 - December 4, 2022, the research team visited 35 classes representing interdisciplinary programs and all academic divisions and 5 athletic teams to facilitate data collection. The research team also staffed two tabling sessions at the library to recruit additional participants.

509 students participated in the project, representing 18.65% of the total student population (2729 total students).

Data Entry

In spring 2023, the research team entered all the Harm Mapping data into a Qualtrics survey that we created for data analysis. The data from each map, including the location and number of stickers, map labeling, the demographic survey and short answer responses, were manually entered and reviewed by research assistants Tara Taggart '23 and Imane Halal '23.

This was a lengthy and time consuming process that lasted nearly the entire 15 week semester.

Notably, this was also an emotionally heavy process, as the research assistants were encountering hundreds of incidents of gender-based violence as they entered the mapping data. We were mindful about self care and taking breaks from data entry. We were also reflective about the trust that participants placed in us when sharing their experiences of harm on campus, and our role through this project to help make the campus a safer place for future students.

Next Steps

Data analysis will occur during the summer of 2023. We anticipate distributing findings to the campus community during the 2023-2024 academic year. We will also use findings from the first phase of this project to inform subsequent phases of data collection to occur during the 2023-2024 academic year.

The Impact of Institutional Responses on Unwanted Sexual Experiences on Campus: A Longitudinal Study

The aim of this project is to assess potential changes in students' perceptions of institutional betrayal (or support) following an unwanted sexual experience on campus. Institutional betrayal has been defined as wrongdoings perpetrated by an institution upon individuals dependent on that institution, including failure to prevent or respond supportively to wrongdoings (e.g., sexual assault) committed within the context of the institution (Freyd, 2018).

We also aim to assess psychological reactions (e.g., posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, depression symptoms) following unwanted sexual experiences that occur on campus, and to examine the possible interactions among perceived institutional betrayal (or support), unwanted sexual experiences, and subsequent psychological reactions.

While previous research has shown that perceived institutional betrayal exacerbates psychological suffering following unwanted sexual experiences, no study to date has measured baseline perceptions of institutional trust (i.e., perceptions about an institution before or immediately upon establishing a relationship with said institution).

Assessing students' baseline perceptions of institutional trust will help to establish potential changes in perceptions of said institution following exposure to an unwanted sexual experience on campus.

The design for this project began in the spring of 2023 with support from three research assistants (Cate Cheng '25, Madison Dennehy '24, and Meredith Forman '24). Research assistants were responsible for conducting a review of the literature, assisting with project design and hypothesis formulation, preparing the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application, and preparing for data collection.

Methodology:

This is a survey-based, longitudinal project that will be administered through Qualtrics. All first-year, non-transfer Lafayette students (who are over the age of 17) will receive an email invitation to participate in the first wave of the study ("Time 1") during the first week of August 2023 (prior to students arriving on campus).

The purpose of surveying first-year students before they arrive on campus is to capture students' baseline perceptions of institutional trust. Students who participate in Time 1 will be invited to participate in four subsequent time points throughout the course of their 4 years at Lafayette. The Time 2 survey will be administered at the end of the Spring 2024 semester, the Time 3 survey at the end of the Spring 2025 semester, the Time 4 survey at the end of the Spring 2026 semester, and finally the Time 5 survey at the end of the Spring 2027 semester.

Each time point will contain similar questionnaires and will take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete. Participants will be compensated with a \$20 dollar Amazon gift card for each time point they complete.

This project was approved by the Lafayette IRB on May 30th, 2023. Data collection will begin in August 2023.

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