Survey details likelihood of rape

Female grad students at the UO are less likely than undergrads to be assaulted

BY DIANE DIETZ
The Register-Guard

Female graduate students at the University of Oregon are significantly less likely than female undergraduates to be raped while in school, according to the latest “campus climate” survey.

While 13 percent of UO female undergraduate students surveyed reported they were raped, just 4 percent of female graduate students reported being raped.

That was among the more encouraging news in the survey results presented by UO psychology professor Jennifer Freyd on Monday at the 20th International Summit & Training on Violence, Abuse & Trauma in San Diego.

The survey also found that 38 percent of female graduate students reported that a faculty member harassed them with behaviors such as telling sexual jokes, making offensive remarks about a student’s appearance or being condescending to a female student because of her sex.

“It’s always so disconcerting to see such high numbers,” said Robin Holmes, UO vice president for student life, in response to the survey findings. “But anecdotally, it fits with the experiences that I have had with talking to graduate students or talking to my staff who provide support to graduate students.”

Female law students, in particular, reported the highest rates — 57 percent said they had been harassed by faculty or staff.

“It’s all part of a climate they’re swimming in,” Freyd said. “Whatever we call it, it’s not a good thing. It’s not a healthy thing.”

Freyd and her co-authors surveyed 1,334 randomly selected UO undergraduate and graduate students from May 26 to June 5. No margin of

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SURVEY RESULTS

Here are some results from the UO 2015 Sexual Violence Survey conducted by 1,334 randomly selected UO undergraduate and graduate students online from May 26 to June 5. The questions are about their on-campus experiences.

Percent of female students reporting that they feel safe on or around the UO campus:
- 48 percent undergraduate, 47 percent graduate students

Percent of female students reporting they’ve experienced sexual penetration without consent:
- 13 percent of undergraduates, 4 percent of graduate students

Percent of female students who’ve experienced attempted or completed vaginal, oral or anal contact without consent:
- 20 percent undergraduate, 8 percent graduate students

Percent of female students experiencing sexual harassment by other students:
- 58 percent undergraduate, 53 percent graduate students

Percent of female students reporting they’ve experienced sexual assault by other students:
- 60 percent, 56 percent of females

Source: Jennifer Freyd

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error was immediately available.

The extensive online survey probed students’ experiences and their perceptions. Students who took the 30-minute sur-
vey were rewarded with a $15 Amazon gift cer-
tificate. The UO paid for the rewards and also for a
graduate student to work on the survey, Freyd said.

The Freyd survey is associated with a national Adminis-
trator Researcher Campus Climate Collabo-
ration, or ARCC, that involves researchers from 20 U.S. university campuses.

In addition, the UO is participating in a sur-
vey by the Association of American Universities, a nonprofit higher educa-

tion trade group, which linked UO student to an online questionnaire in April.

A sampling of partici-
pants got a $5 gift card and the rest were entered into a drawing for $500.

The AAU covered sim-
ilar ground as the Freyd survey, with questions about sexual assault, sex-
ual harassment, relation-
ship violence and stalking on campus.

More than 28 campuses

nationwide participated in the AAU survey, which was adminis-

tered by a private Maryland-based re-
search firm. The cost per campus was $85,000.

“We will be able to benchmark ourselves in comparison with other insti-
tutions,” Holmes said.

That survey has been controversial in large part because the AAU said it would release the results only in aggregate form. But UO officials say they will publish the universi-

ty’s portion as it becomes available in mid-September.

Holmes said both sur-
veys will provide invaluable data to admin-
istrators in charge of re-
ducing the incidence of assault on campus.

“It’s really going to help us to focus our efforts,” she said.

The Freyd results would indicate that the university has a distance to go to make its students feel safe and confident on campus.

Only 48 percent of female undergraduates (49 percent) and 56 percent of female graduates (57 percent) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement: “On or around this campus, I feel safe from sexual vi-

olence.”

“To me, these numbers are tragic,” Freyd said.

There is a huge cost in feeling unsafe. Women are bearing this cost all the time. It’s using up men-
tal space and emotional resources.”

Many undergraduate students said they were “not at all aware” of the university’s anti-discrimi-
nation and sexual ass-
sault response programs and personnel. About one-
third of students were igno-
rant, for example, of the university’s contracted ser-
dices with the Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) agency.

“Efforts have been made,” but those efforts need to be more engag-
ing and pertinent to stu-
dents so they don’t tune out, Freyd said.

Jennifer Gómez, Ma-
rina Rosenthal, Alec Smidt and Carly Parmitzke Smith also worked on Freyd’s survey.

Changes on campus

Since early 2014, when the White House an-
nounced a national push to end campus sexual ass-
sault — and the UO was in the scene of a high-pro-
file incident involving three basketball players and a freshman woman — the UO officials have made dozens of changes on campus.

The university has completed 49 of 108 rec-
ommendations that three independent committees made in the wake of the alleged assault and na-

tional criticism of the ad-
mistration’s response.

The university hired a consultant to start work on the recommendations. The university added a new sexual assault preven-
tion specialist and an affir-
mative action investigator.

The university hired a recruiting firm to fill a new position — an asso-
ciate vice president — in charge of Title IX, includ-
ing compliance with fed-
eral rules on sexual assault prevention.

The university hopes to have the new seat filled in winter term. Title IX is the federal law that guards against discrimination on the ba-

sis of sex.

The university commis-
sioned an external review of UO fraternities and so-
orities after Freyd’s ear-
lier survey found that sorority members are sig-
ificantly more likely than other students to be raped or experience other unwanted sexual contact.

The university also de-
serted some campus traditions and associated with the university’s contracted services with the Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) agency.

Freyd said.

But she said that exercising has also helped her feel well through treat-

ments for her first and second cancers.

“My outlook on it is, I got 30 years of life left, I do.”

A second cancer means doctors have to be careful about when to get treatment. Freyd’s doctor has told her not to take the treatment she might otherwise take because of her risk of a third recurrence.

“I do think it will re-
duce what I’ve had as an as-
saults. I do,” Holmes said.

New UO President Mi-
chael Schill in September

will appoint an ongoing advisory group to recom-
mend continued and im-
proved efforts to reduce sexual assault.

“I’ve been really just absolutely blown away with the amount of en-
gagement that President Schill has demonstrated right away,” Holmes said.

Freyd presented her findings to Schill in the past month, Hol-

mes said.

“He asked really good questions and we spent more than an hour,” she said.

“I’m very heartened by some of the changes (he) is making.”

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