

## FAQ on the AAU Sexual Assault Climate Survey

### Who is on the AAU Survey Design Team?

Dr. Bonnie Fisher, a nationally recognized expert on sexual assault, has been hired by Westat to work closely with the AAU-Westat team to shape the content and analysis of the sexual assault climate survey. Her participation is a primary reason AAU retained Westat, and she is looking forward to working with us. Her article published in 2000 is one of the most widely cited publications on precisely this topic: how sensitive data on sexual assault can be to the type of measurement employed.

Dr. Fisher<sup>1</sup> will work very closely with the AAU multi-disciplinary [survey design team](#) to develop a rigorous and reliable survey instrument. The AAU team is led by Sandra Martin, Professor and Associate Chair for Research, Department of Maternal and Child Health, Associate Dean for Research, Gillings School of Public Health, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Dr. Martin's research, teaching, and public health service focuses on the public health problems of sexual and domestic violence, including sexual violence on campuses. She was involved as a co-investigator on the Campus Sexual Assault Study (led by Chris Krebs of RTI). She has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed manuscripts, as well as book chapters and reports, on a wide range of violence related concerns, including sexual violence; her research has been funded by multiple sources, including NIH, CDC, DOD, WHO and state and local funders; and she has experience in the practice world, serving on the group at UNC-Chapel Hill which substantively revised the university's policies and procedures on campus sexual misconduct.

Overall, the survey team includes a number of recognized experts on survey design and methodology, as well as leaders directly responsible for dealing with sexual assault, issues of gender, health, student affairs, etc. The team has significant and specific expertise on these issues. It is a multidisciplinary team that, combined with the Westat team, brings to bear the expertise needed to craft and administer this survey.

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<sup>1</sup> **Bonnie Fisher, Ph.D.**, the Director of Distance Learning and Professor at the School of Criminal Justice at the University of Cincinnati, is the proposed co-principal investigator. Professor Fisher received her doctorate in Political Science from Northwestern University. Dr. Fisher was the principal investigator for four federally funded research projects involving the victimization of college students, the sexual victimization of college women, violence against college women, and campus-level responses to a report of sexual assault. She is currently the co-principal investigator on National Institute of Justice and National Institutes of Health-sponsored research grants. Her research interests include issues concerning the sexual violence against women, repeat victimization, fear of crime, the measurement of victimization, injury detection of rape victims, and the court's use of digital images in the prosecution of rape cases.

## **How will the survey be developed?**

The starting point for discussions within the survey design team is the survey instrument developed by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, which was included in the [notalone.gov](http://notalone.gov) April 2014 Report. Dr. Victoria Banyard was the primary author and the survey has been viewable in the public domain for many months now. That survey instrument was recently piloted by Rutgers University. AAU and Westat are in conversation with Rutgers staff about the revised instrument and lessons learned. AAU expects Westat and the survey team to make necessary adjustments to the survey questions.

## **What is the breakdown of the estimated cost per institution?**

This kind of rigorous, scientific survey is expensive because of the complexity of the instruments and the large number of students whom universities want to reach. Here is a breakdown of the estimated \$85,000 cost per institution. The estimates below are based on 40 institutions participating in the survey.

- An estimated \$68,000 for the Westat team to (1) work directly with participating universities to implement the various tasks associated with the project, including survey promotion, obtaining student sampling data, and survey launch; (2) analyze university data and produce university specific reports; and (3) provide incentives for student participation (the portion of the \$68,000 attributable to these incentives is \$15,000).
- The remaining approximately \$17,000 is a percentage of the overall costs for the Westat team to develop and implement the survey and related procedures, including sampling, data analysis, reporting and communication plans.
- The final actual costs will vary depending upon the number of institutions participating, sample response rates, and additional costs incurred on an as-needed basis.

The total includes a series of deliverables, including but not limited to:

- a copy of the final survey instrument
- a survey toolkit to help with promotion of survey participation
- survey programming and launch, including outreach and reminders to students throughout open survey period
- helpdesk services throughout survey period to provide university-specific resource information to students
- individual data analysis and reports
- final data files.

## **How was the level of customization in Module III decided?**

AAU and Westat have engaged in extensive discussions about survey uniformity (the one-size-fits-all approach) vs. tailoring. Survey uniformity offers a means to generate standardized prevalence estimates, which is critical in order to better understand the extent of sexual violence across a wide number of campuses. However, tailoring surveys so that they are specific to each

campus is also appealing because it will allow campuses to probe questions concerning their own campus initiatives, etc. Therefore, the AAU survey team hopes to incorporate both questions in common for all institutions and questions that can be modified by each institution. There will be more uniformity and less modifiability in this first AAU survey. However, if the project continues beyond this survey, it will allow for more variability.

AAU and Westat are exploring the possibility of schools adding a link at the end of the survey to a home-based survey to allow schools to add additional questions to meet specific compliance needs and allow for additional customization. The schools would be solely responsible for this portion of the survey and Westat would not be responsible for data collection or analysis.

**Is the April implementation date flexible?**

Yes. While the survey administration period will be the same for all participating institutions, Westat will be able to stagger the survey launch date to accommodate universities' academic calendars.

**Will Institutional IRBs be able to modify the survey instrument?**

No.