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**REPORT ON THE
FACULTY SEXUAL HARASSMENT SURVEY
AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**

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Introduction

This report describes the results of the 2019 Sexual Harassment Survey of Faculty administered at Vanderbilt University. Faculty responses to Sexual Harassment Survey items provide data that will inform efforts to prevent and respond to gender harassment and related misconduct at Vanderbilt.

Vanderbilt University administered its first sexual harassment survey of Vanderbilt University-employed faculty in spring 2019. This institutional effort was informed by findings and recommendations released in the [National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine Sexual Harassment of Women Consensus Study Report](#) in 2018. Additionally, Vanderbilt partnered with the [Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education \(COACHE\)](#) to conduct a survey to identify both areas of success and challenges facing faculty in 2016 and will do so again in 2020. These faculty surveys serve as the basis for developing and implementing evidence-based policies and practices to support University faculty.

As part of the Provost's Initiatives and Action Items following the COACHE 2016 survey findings, the [Women of Vanderbilt Initiative](#) was established to develop progressive and innovative solutions and practices to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to succeed, no matter what gender they identify with. This faculty report is responsive to that initiative and will be provided to the established linked committees to further advise the Provost.

The Sexual Harassment Survey has several goals:

- Estimate the prevalence of sexual harassment of all forms for faculty at Vanderbilt.
- Assess the distribution of sexual harassment across groups of faculty.
- Compare faculty reports of sexual harassment to those of post-doctoral fellows (who completed the same instrument), to those of staff (who will complete the same instrument at a later date), and of undergraduate and graduate students (who completed the 2019 AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct).
- Provide a baseline for future surveys of faculty.

This report summarizes the survey's findings along with background on the survey's design. The report does not seek to provide a definitive analysis of the results but rather a meaningful overview. The Office of Faculty Affairs and the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, both in the Office of the Provost, will work with and support school and college deans and the Provost's Sexual Misconduct Prevention Committee's efforts to respond to the survey, including reporting out more extensive analyses.

Methodology

Selecting the Instrument

In 2018, the Office of the Provost decided to survey faculty about sexual harassment. The Office for Faculty Affairs in the Office of the Provost, in collaboration with the leadership of the Provost's Steering Committee on Initiatives Focusing on the Status of Women (now the Provost's WAVE Council), determined that there was no well-established faculty survey of experiences of sexual harassment. This finding is consistent with that reported by the National Academies in their 2018 study (National Academies 2018, 39). The National Academies of Science, Medicine, and Engineering report, however, cited and analyzed results from longitudinal studies based on an instrument used by the U.S. military.

The Department of Defense has been a leader in researching sexual harassment, developing a behavioral instrument that has been used regularly by the U.S. military and other organizations (Lancaster 1999). The Department of Defense Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ-DoD) has been closely studied and evaluated by scholars (Fitzgerald et al. 1999). The standard SEQ-DoD has 23, five-option items divided into four subscales that measure four facets of sexual harassment: sexist hostility (sexist behavior), sexual hostility (crude or offensive behavior), unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. Respondents are asked if they had experienced the listed behaviors in the past 12 months.

Vanderbilt chose to use a more recently developed version of the survey known as the SEQ-DoD-s. University of Illinois psychologists developed a shorter version of the survey based on item response theory (Stark et al. 2012). The resulting 16-question survey retains four questions for each facet of sexual harassment. It drops questions that were found to be redundant or failed to solicit meaningful responses. (All cited sources are available in Appendix 2.)

Survey Content and Mode of Administration

The survey measures four facets of sexual harassment: sexist behavior, crude or offensive behavior, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. Each type of sexual harassment was measured using four questions. Respondents were asked to limit their answers to the last three years or since they arrived at Vanderbilt, whichever is shorter, and to only report incidents that have occurred at Vanderbilt and involved members of the Vanderbilt community. The full instrument (Appendix 1) was approved for implementation by the Vanderbilt Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The Sexual Harassment Survey was administered as a web survey by a third-party vendor, AnswerKey Technologies. Row-level, identifiable response data is maintained by AnswerKey Technologies exclusively to maintain anonymity. Each page of the web survey included links to general questions as well as resources such as University support centers and services and national rape crisis hotline

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numbers. Web survey pages also included the third-party vendor's Help Desk phone number to aid participants who needed technical assistance.

The survey was administered to all full-time, active Vanderbilt University-employed Vanderbilt faculty. Vanderbilt annually conducts a November census of faculty appointments. The 2018 census included 1,498 full-time, active Vanderbilt University-employed Vanderbilt faculty. Emeriti, part-time, and VUMC-employed faculty members were excluded from the survey population. The Office of the Provost as well as other offices and academic leaders reached out to participants to encourage them to complete the survey. A news story as well as reminders about the survey were posted on MyVU. Participants were not incentivized at the University or school/college level to complete the survey.

Survey Procedures

The Sexual Harassment Survey was launched on April 2, 2019. Email invitations to participate in the survey were sent to faculty's university email addresses through AnswerKey on the first day of data collection. An email from Susan Wentz, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, was sent prior to the first email notifying faculty about the survey. To prompt completion of the survey before the deadline, reminder emails were sent from AnswerKey, university deans, and vice provosts. The survey closed on April 30, 2019.

Response Rates

Overall, 60.3% of faculty responded. The response rate was above 50% in all schools and colleges. The overall and school-level response rates are much higher than typical response rates for a survey of this type, and it provides greater confidence in the results as approximating the experiences of the population of faculty.

Response Rate by School

More than half of the faculty in each school and college responded to the survey as reflected in Table 1. The response rate ranged from a low of 51.0% in Law to a high of 68.9% in Blair.

Arts & Science	61.4%
Basic Sciences	53.3%
Blair	68.9%
Divinity	60.0%
Engineering	62.5%
Law	51.0%
Nursing	62.3%
Owen	63.3%
Peabody	60.4%

Response Rate by Race/Ethnicity

The survey asked respondents to identify their race or ethnicity. Overall, 96.4% of faculty respondents responded to this question. Table 2 compares the distribution of survey respondents to that of the full faculty as of the November 2018 census, which is reported in the [2018 Annual Report on the Faculty](#). (The census reflects identity at the time of appointment.) The distribution of respondents by race/ethnicity is comparable to the distribution of the full faculty.

Table 2. Faculty Response Rate by Race/Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Categories	Respondents	All Faculty
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%	0.2%
Asian	7.9%	8.9%
Black or African-American	4.3%	5.5%
Hispanic/Latinx	4.2%	4.2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races	2.8%	0.4%
White	80.5%	80.2%

Response Rate by Gender

The survey asked respondents to identify their gender. Overall, 98.5% of faculty responded to this question. Table 3 compares the gender distribution of survey respondents to the gender distribution of the full faculty as of the November 2018 census, which is reported in the [2018 Annual Report on the Faculty](#). As with race and ethnicity, gender is recorded at the time of appointment. Gender had, until very recently, been presented as a binary category. Thus, it is not possible to compare the number of respondents who selected “another identity” on the survey to the number of faculty who may have chosen that category if it had been available at the time they were appointed. Female faculty were somewhat more likely than male faculty to complete the survey.

Table 3. Faculty Response Rate by Gender

Gender Categories	Respondents	All Faculty
Man	50.6%	56.8%
Woman	48.6%	43.2%
Another Identity	0.8%	<i>Not available</i>

Results: Rates of Prevalence by Type of Sexual Harassment

This section describes the results along the four facets of sexual harassment measured by the survey:

1. Sexist Behavior
2. Crude or Offensive Behavior
3. Unwanted Sexual Attention
4. Sexual Coercion

Each topic was measured using four questions. Respondents were asked to respond to each question according to the frequency of their experience of that type of behavior. Frequency was measured using a Likert scale of “Never”, “Once or Twice,” “Sometimes”, “Often”, or “Very Often.”

The first set of tables reports the behavior index scores for each of the four areas to allow comparison across the types of sexual harassment. (The behavior index score is based on an aggregate of all responses in a category.) The second set of tables focuses more closely on each type of sexual harassment, reporting out the frequency of responses for each question within a facet of sexual harassment.

The majority of faculty responses were that they had never experienced behaviors classified as sexist behavior, crude or offensive behavior, unwanted sexual attention, or sexual coercion. As reflected in Table 4, the most common form of sexual harassment reported was sexist behavior, with 22% of all responses reporting at least one instance. (The table may report zero percent frequency even though a positive number of affirmative answers were given because the number was so relatively small as to round to 0.0%.)

Table 4. Distribution of Responses by Type of Sexual Harassment: All Faculty

In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally?
(Percentages are based on aggregate responses to questions within each category.)

	Never	Once or Twice	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Sexist Behavior	78.0%	10.4%	8.4%	2.3%	0.8%
Crude or Offensive Behavior	89.9%	7.2%	2.4%	0.4%	0.1%
Unwanted Sexual Attention	96.7%	2.6%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%
Sexual Coercion	99.7%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%

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Faculty of color reported similar experiences as those reported by white faculty. (A respondent who identified as any race other than (or in addition to) white was classified as faculty of color.) Table 5 presents the results which show that sexist behavior remains the most common type of sexual harassment with 18.2% affirmative of all responses from faculty of color indicating at least some experience of the behavior.

Table 5. Distribution of Responses by Type of Sexual Harassment: Faculty of Color*					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally? (Percentages are based on aggregate responses to questions within each category.)</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Sexist Behavior	81.8%	9.6%	7.0%	1.3%	0.3%
Crude or Offensive Behavior	90.7%	6.7%	2.4%	0.1%	0.0%
Unwanted Sexual Attention	96.0%	3.4%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%
Sexual Coercion	99.6%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

*Faculty of color is defined as all respondents who self-identified in this survey as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or Two or More Races.

Table 6 presents the responses of women faculty who report higher percentages of prevalence than the general professoriate. Nearly 35% of women faculty’s responses were that at least one instance of sexist behavior by a Vanderbilt community member had occurred during the past three years, for example, and 5.5% of responses indicated that sexist behavior occurred often or very often during that period.

Table 6. Distribution of Responses by Type of Sexual Harassment: Women Faculty					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally? Percentages are based on aggregate responses to questions within each category.)</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Sexist Behavior	65.1%	15.3%	14.1%	4.0%	1.5%
Crude or Offensive Behavior	86.0%	10.0%	3.3%	0.6%	0.1%
Unwanted Sexual Attention	95.0%	4.2%	0.7%	0.0%	0.1%
Sexual Coercion	99.4%	0.5%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%

Results: Distribution of Responses by Question

Each type of sexual harassment was measured using four distinct behavioral questions. This section looks at each question organized by harassment category. The results are presented in two forms to allow for easier interpretation of the results. The first is a table with relative frequency of answers for each question. The first version of the table includes the responses for all faculty. The second ~~table~~ reports version sets forth the results for women faculty who reported sufficiently different rates than those reported by men to merit a breakout by gender in this summary report. The second is a bar chart that identifies the statistical average in each prevalence category to identify areas in which faculty responses approach the mean within that group.

Sexist Behavior Questions

Sexist behavior was measured by asking respondents about four specific behaviors as reflected in Table 7. The breakdown by question shows meaningful variability that can also be seen by looking at Figure 1. Table 7.1 presents answers from women faculty, showing that the majority of women had been treated differently because of their sex at least once during the past three years at Vanderbilt and roughly 12% had been treated differently often or very often.

Table 7. Distribution of Responses to Sexist Behavior Questions					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally?</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Some-times	Often	Very Often
Treated you “differently” because of your sex (for example, mistreated, slighted, or ignored you)	63.6%	15.0%	14.7%	5.2%	1.6%
Made offensive sexist remarks (for example, suggesting that people of your sex are not suited for the kind of work you do)	81.6%	9.2%	7.3%	1.3%	0.6%
Displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials (for example, pictures, stories, or pornography which you found offensive)	93.8%	4.6%	1.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Put you down or was condescending to you because of your sex	73.2%	12.9%	10.2%	2.6%	1.1%

Table 7.1. Distribution of Responses to Sexist Behavior Questions: Women Only					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally?</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Some-times	Often	Very Often
Treated you “differently” because of your sex (for example, mistreated, slighted, or ignored you)	40.7%	22.0%	25.5%	9.3%	2.6%
Made offensive sexist remarks (for example, suggesting that people of your sex are not suited for the kind of work you do)	71.2%	15.0%	11.0%	1.9%	0.9%
Displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials (for example, pictures, stories, or pornography which you found offensive)	91.8%	5.6%	1.9%	0.5%	0.2%
Put you down or was condescending to you because of your sex	56.8%	18.7%	18.2%	4.2%	2.1%

Sexist Behavior

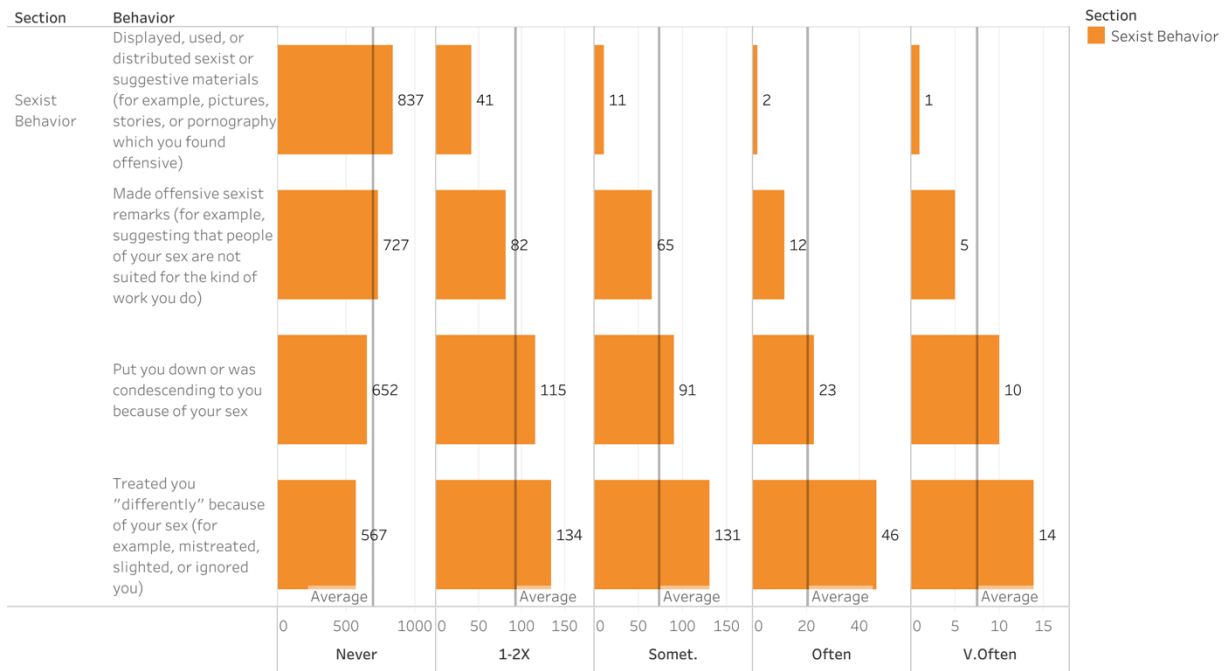


Figure 1. Sexist Behavior

Crude or Offensive Behavior Questions

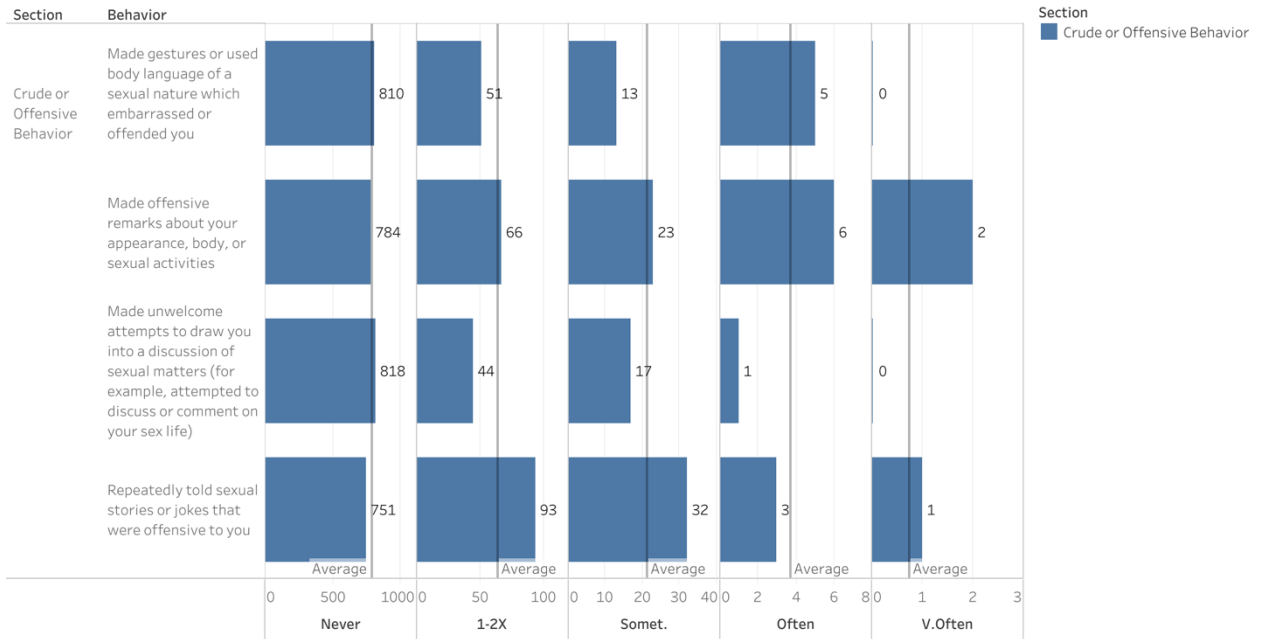
Crude or offensive behavior was measured by asking respondents about the four specific behaviors listed in Table 8. Figure 2 provides a graphical depiction. Women faculty’s responses are presented in Table 8.1.

Table 8. Distribution of Responses to Crude or Offensive Behavior Questions					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally?</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Some-times	Often	Very Often
Repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you	85.3%	10.6%	3.6%	0.3%	0.1%
Made unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters (for example, attempted to discuss or comment on your sex life)	93.0%	5.0%	1.9%	0.1%	0.0%
Made offensive remarks about your appearance, body, or sexual activities	89.0%	7.5%	2.6%	0.7%	0.2%
Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature which embarrassed or offended you	92.2%	5.8%	1.5%	0.6%	0.0%

Table 8.1 Distribution of Responses to Crude or Offensive Behavior Questions: Women Only					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally?</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Some-times	Often	Very Often
Repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you	81.6%	13.2%	4.7%	0.2%	0.2%
Made unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters (for example, attempted to discuss or comment on your sex life)	91.0%	6.6%	2.1%	0.2%	0.0%
Made offensive remarks about your appearance, body, or sexual activities	83.3%	10.8%	4.5%	1.2%	0.2%
Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature which embarrassed or offended you	88.2%	9.2%	1.9%	0.7%	0.0%

Figure 2. Crude or Offensive Behavior Questions

Crude or Offensive Behavior



Unwanted Sexual Attention Questions

Unwanted sexual attention was measured by asking respondents about the four specific behaviors listed in Table 9. Figure 3 provides a graphical depiction of frequency against average. Women faculty responses are set forth in Table 9.1.

Table 9. Distribution of Responses to Unwanted Sexual Attention Questions					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally?</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Some-times	Often	Very Often
Made unwanted attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it	96.5%	2.7%	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%
Continued to ask you for dates, drinks, dinner, etc., even though you said “No”	97.6%	1.5%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%
Touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	93.8%	5.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Made unwanted attempts to stroke, fondle, or kiss you	99.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 9.1. Distribution of Responses to Unwanted Sexual Attention Questions: Women Only					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally?</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Some-times	Often	Very Often
Made unwanted attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it	95.3%	4.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%
Continued to ask you for dates, drinks, dinner, etc., even though you said “No”	96.7%	2.1%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	89.9%	8.7%	1.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Made unwanted attempts to stroke, fondle, or kiss you	98.1%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Unwanted Sexual Attention

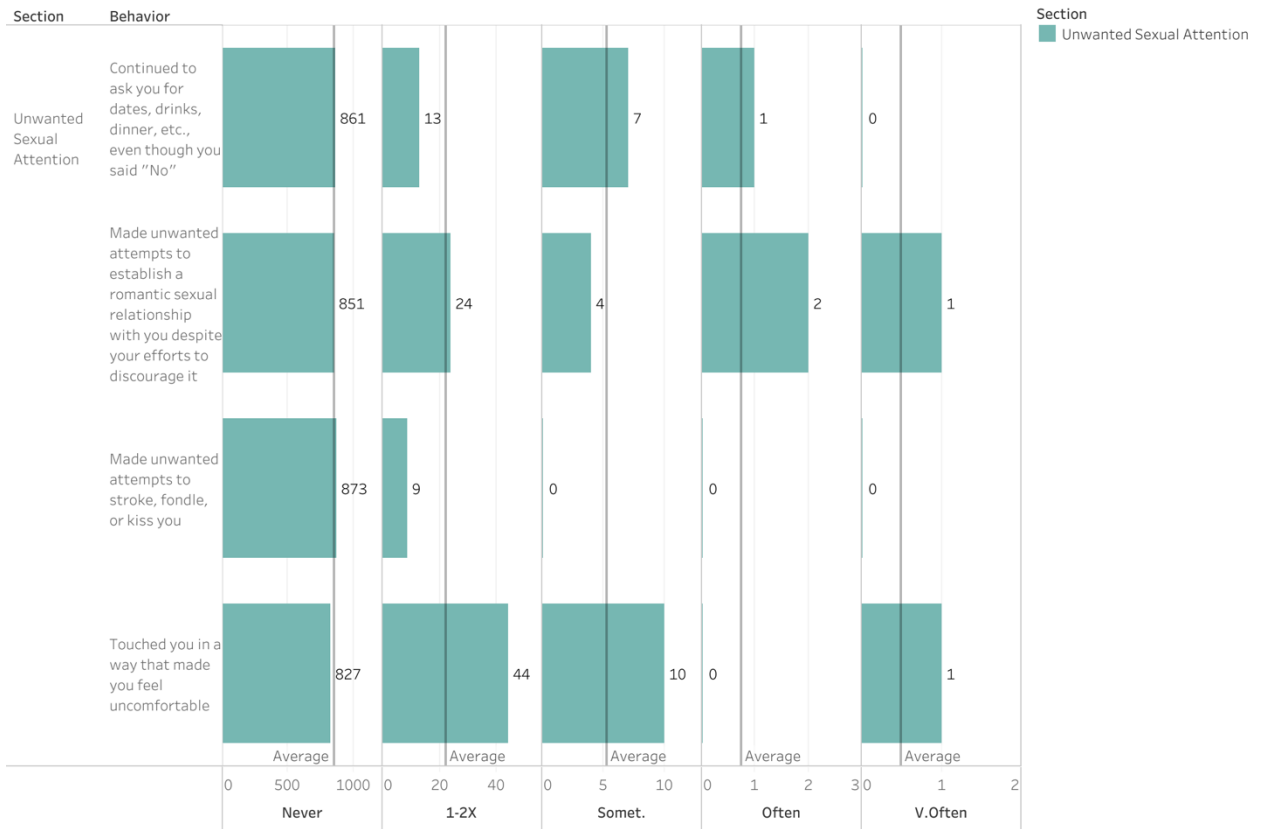


Figure 3. Unwanted Sexual Attention Questions

Sexual Coercion Questions

Sexual coercion was measured by asking respondents about the four specific behaviors listed in Table 10. Figure 4 provides a graphical depiction of frequency against average. Table 10.1 reports the responses for women faculty. These are the most extreme harassing behaviors such that even a low incidence rate is nevertheless a very serious concern.

Table 10. Distribution of Responses to Sexual Coercion Questions					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally?</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Some-times	Often	Very Often
Made you feel like you were being bribed with some sort of reward or special treatment to engage in sexual behavior	99.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Made you feel threatened with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually cooperative (for example, by mentioning an upcoming review)	99.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Treated you badly for refusing to have sex	99.9%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Implied faster promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative	99.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%

Table 10.1. Distribution of Responses to Sexual Coercion Questions: Women Only					
<i>In the past three years that you have been at Vanderbilt University (or, for those with less than 3 years of experience, since you arrived), has anyone at the university ever done the following to you personally?</i>					
	Never	Once or Twice	Some-times	Often	Very Often
Made you feel like you were being bribed with some sort of reward or special treatment to engage in sexual behavior	99.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Made you feel threatened with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually cooperative (for example, by mentioning an upcoming review)	99.1%	0.7%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Treated you badly for refusing to have sex	99.8%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Implied faster promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative	99.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%

Sexual Coercion

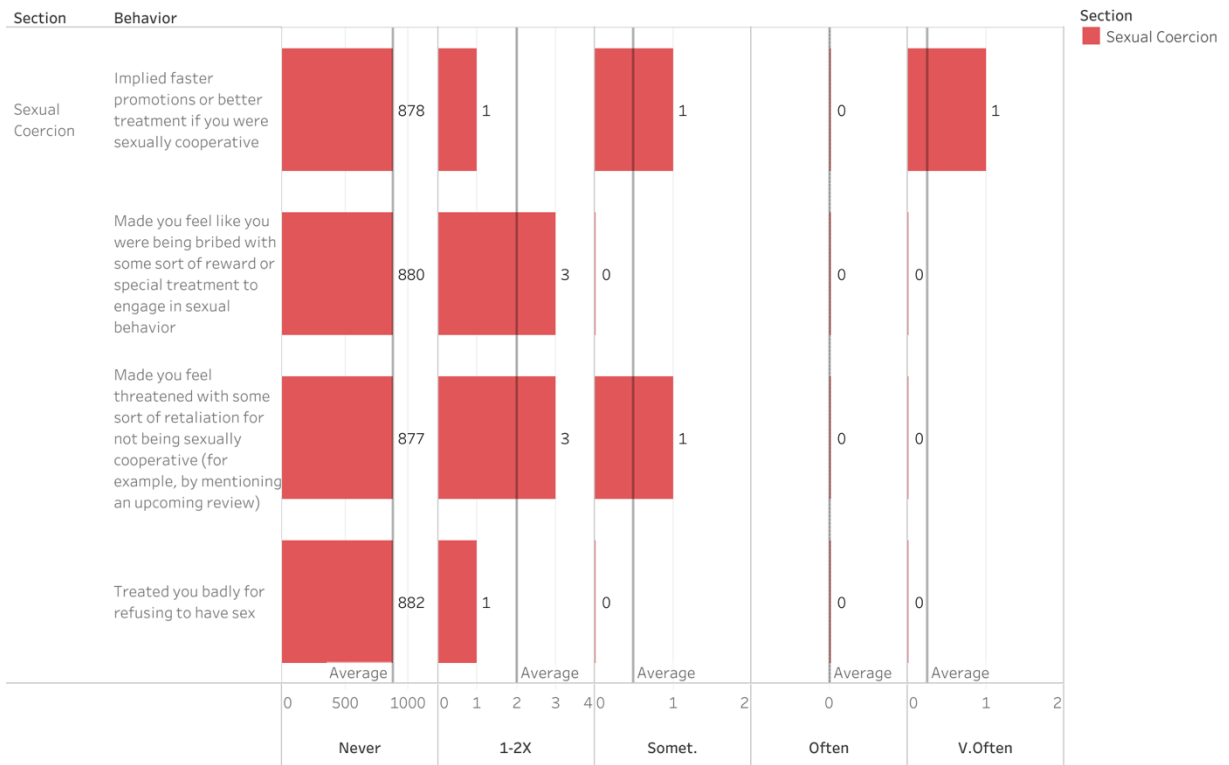


Figure 4. Sexual Coercion Questions

Next Steps

Implementing a sexual harassment survey and compiling this summary report are only the initial steps in the process of understanding and responding to sexual harassment of faculty at Vanderbilt. However, both are vitally important steps because they help to ensure that the University focuses its efforts on the demonstrated concerns and intentionally seeks to address them.

The response to the survey results will come from many leaders and groups across campus including:

- [The Provost's Sexual Misconduct Prevention Committee](#) (PSMPC) will advise the Provost and collaborate with colleges and schools to develop recommendations following the release of this report. The PSMPC supports evidence-based policies and practices for addressing and preventing all forms of sexual misconduct. The PSMPC includes faculty members from all Provost-reporting schools. The Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, the Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives, and a faculty member on the Steering Committee on Initiatives Affecting Women serve *ex officio*.
- Colleges and schools will also be able to use this information and recommendations to inform their own work at the school and departmental levels.
- Faculty can engage in dialogue about how the responses may reflect challenges they face in their own work and learning spaces.

Finally, the survey is part of a broader project at the University to consider the ways that gender harassment harm our faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows, and students, and undermine our mission of learning, discovery, and service. That ongoing effort will strengthen the University as we move forward.