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# More than a quarter of BU women victim of assault, survey finds

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By **Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

More than one-quarter of undergraduate women at Boston University who responded to a survey said they have been the victim of unwanted sexual contact since enrolling at the college, according to results of a university-administered survey released Thursday.

The findings from Boston's largest university are similar to previous surveys about sexual violence on college campuses, including [results released earlier this week](#) from a major survey of students from 27 colleges around the country, including Harvard and six other Ivy League institutions.

"It is very disturbing that so many of the students completing the survey have experienced sexual assault," BU president Robert A. Brown wrote in a campuswide letter Thursday.

"Our community's well-being depends on adherence to principles of individual responsibility, mutual respect, and trust," he continued. "We must redouble our efforts to reinforce these principles and prevent those choices and behaviors that harm members of our community or others."

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The survey was administered in the spring; 22 percent of the 27,086 undergraduate and graduate students who were sent the survey responded. Some specialists have said the results of such surveys might be somewhat skewed because victims of sexual assault may be more likely to complete the questionnaire.

The survey defined “unwanted sexual contact” as either nonconsensual touching of a sexual nature — such as kissing, grabbing, or fondling — as well as penetration.

The BU survey found, similar to other campus surveys, that in most cases: alcohol or drug use was often involved in incidents of sexual misconduct; the victim knew their assailant; and few reported the incident to campus officials or police.

A majority of survey respondents who reported experiencing sexual misconduct, 63 percent, said that the incidents occurred off campus.

Still, 94 percent of students surveyed said they feel safe on campus.

Brown said the university plans to survey students again this coming spring.

BU and other colleges around the country in recent years have been grappling with ways to address campus sexual violence, including by creating more resources for victims, developing new awareness and education program for students, and establishing committees to study other ways to tackle the issue.

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