

Resolution # 71-08

**The Graduate and Professional Student Association
(GPSA)
The Pennsylvania State University**



of the 71st Assembly
November 10th, 2021

Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,

**Support of the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition's
Sexual Misconduct Survey Recommendations**

(Decided: [Y / N / A])

Nature of the Situation:

On October 5, 2021, the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition released a critical analysis of the 2018 Sexual Misconduct Survey Report.¹ This critical analysis detailed criticisms of the survey process and instrument; scrutinized the ways results were reported; and proposed several recommendations for future survey administrations. Key concerns detailed in this report surrounded the survey's failure to address the experiences of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students appropriately,² the failure to release comprehensive survey data, and the time it took to release the 2018 Survey Report — *three years*.³

The recommendations made by the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition include the recommendation that Penn State begin participating in the Association of American

¹Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition. (2021, Oct. 5). A Critical Analysis of the 2018 Sexual Misconduct Survey Report. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from geneqcoalition.org

²Ibid, p. 5-6.

³Ibid, p. 3-4.

1 Universities (AAU) Sexual Misconduct Survey and include questions about sexual
2 misconduct and power-based personal violence in future iterations of the Penn State
3 Campus Climate Survey.⁴

4
5 The AAU is composed of 66 leading research universities.⁵ In June 2014, the AAU
6 began to design a campus climate survey using the survey instrument developed by
7 the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.⁶ Since then,
8 the survey has been administered twice — in 2015 and in 2019 — with its primary
9 goal to “provide participating institutions of higher education with information to
10 inform policies to prevent and respond to sexual assault and misconduct.”⁷

11
12 As the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition outlined, many of our peer institutions
13 participated in the AAU survey. In 2019, participants included the University of
14 Pittsburgh, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities),
15 Iowa State University, the Ohio State University, the University of Wisconsin
16 (Madison), and the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).⁸ According to the
17 Coalition, participation in this survey would enable greater university transparency:

18
19 “If Student Affairs Research and Assessment is so understaffed that
20 completing a sexual misconduct climate survey report requires over
21 three years (including 15 months pre-COVID), it is integral that we
22 seek alternatives to enable greater university transparency. Many of
23 our peer institutions, including Ohio State, the University of Wisconsin,
24 and the University of Pittsburgh, participate in the AAU’s sexual
25 misconduct campus climate survey. This survey was administered in
26 2015 and in 2019. Penn State should commit to participate in the next
27 iteration of this survey to expedite the sharing of survey results and
28 remove the bias that occurs when surveys are administered
29 internally.”⁹

30
31 Further, the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition noted their belief that participation in
32 the AAU survey is insufficient and introduced the second facet of this
33 recommendation:

34
⁴Ibid, p. 20-21.

⁵Association of American Universities. (2021). Who We Are. *Association of American Universities*. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from aau.edu

⁶Association of American Universities. (2015, Sep. 3). Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct: Frequently Asked Question. *Association of American Universities*. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from aau.edu

⁷Association of American Universities. (2015, Sep. 21). AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (2015). *Association of American Universities*. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from aau.edu

⁸Association of American Universities. (2018, Oct. 4). Press Release: 233 Universities to Participate in AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct. *Association of American Universities*. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from aau.edu

⁹Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition. (2021, Oct. 5). A Critical Analysis of the 2018 Sexual Misconduct Survey Report, p. 20. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from geneqcoalition.org

1 “We acknowledge, however, that the AAU’s survey does not cover all
2 of our recommendations nor provide a comprehensive analysis of
3 every factor we think should be considered to address sexual
4 misconduct at Penn State. This fact, in combination with the success of
5 Penn State’s 2020 Community Climate Survey indicates an additional
6 opportunity. We believe the framework created by the Office of
7 Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research (OPAIR) can be
8 leveraged to survey students on sexual misconduct and interpersonal
9 violence. As such, we recommend that Penn State, between
10 administrations of the AAU survey, integrate questions about sexual
11 misconduct and interpersonal violence into subsequent community
12 climate surveys.”¹⁰
13

14 The method of surveying — participating in the AAU’s Survey and still administering
15 internal surveys — is one that peer institution Ohio State engages in, completing an
16 internal survey every year between the 2015 and 2019 AAU surveys.¹¹
17

18 The Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition notes that “the recommendations that we
19 made in our open letter apply to the questions we would like to see integrated into
20 community climate surveys.”¹² These recommendations are:
21

- 22 ● Empower a diverse group of students from student advocacy organizations
23 and student governments and staff from the Gender Equity Center, the
24 Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, and the Paul Robeson Cultural
25 Center¹³ to participate in the creation and approval of the survey instrument.
 - 26 ● Ensure the survey instrument assesses the experiences of students with
27 marginalized identities, especially students with disabilities and students who
28 are intersex, LGBTQ+ (especially trans and non-binary students), and BIPOC
29 in an inclusive and meaningful way. The survey should assess the following:
 - 30 ○ students’ knowledge of available confidential resources
 - 31 ○ students’ familiarity with the Title IX reporting processes at Penn State
 - 32 ○ students’ understandings of consent, rape culture, and other pertinent
33 topics
 - 34 ○ the prevalence of misconceptions and myths about sexual violence
 - 35 ○ the prevalence of sex work amongst Penn State students¹⁴
- 36
37

¹⁰Ibid, p. 21.

¹¹Ohio State University. (2019, Oct. 15). Ohio State Releases Latest Campus Climate Survey Results. *The Ohio State University*. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from news.osu.edu

¹²Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition. (2021, Oct. 5). A Critical Analysis of the 2018 Sexual Misconduct Survey Report, p. 21. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from geneqcoalition.org

¹³ The PRCC was not included in the initial Open Letter, but after critical conversations following the release of the letter, the Coalition endorses their inclusion.

¹⁴Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition. (2021, Oct. 5). A Critical Analysis of the 2018 Sexual Misconduct Survey Report, p. 21. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from geneqcoalition.org

1 **Recommended Course of Action:**

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3 The Graduate and Professional Student Association, on behalf of the graduate and
4 professional student body at University Park, endorses the Schreyer Gender Equity
5 Coalition’s recommendations that are listed above: Penn State should participate in
6 the AAU’s sexual misconduct survey, integrating questions about sexual misconduct
7 into future iterations of community climate surveys between the AAU administrations
8 — these questions and the process of creating these questions should align with the
9 Coalition’s recommendations.

10
11 The GPSA acknowledges the importance of the research and advocacy work of the
12 Schreyer Gender Equity Coalitions.

13

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Kelling
Graduate Council Student Caucus Chair

President _____ Affirm
Veto

The Graduate and Professional Student Association