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# Athletic trainers' or athletic training students' perceptions of sexual harassment by student-athletes in the collegiate setting

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Athletic Trainers' or Athletic Training Students' Perceptions of Sexual Harassment by  
Student-Athletes in the Collegiate Setting

Amber Mackenzie Simmons

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

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## **Dedication**

This research is dedicated to the Athletic Training staff members at Kent State University and James Madison University. Your guidance, knowledge, and support have shaped me into the athletic trainer I am today.

To my mom and sister—you both have shown me unconditional love and support throughout my education. Without you two, I would not be the driven person I am today.

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## **Abstract**

Sexual harassment is an issue that occurs in healthcare professions and on college campuses nationwide. Athletic trainers employed at the collegiate setting are healthcare professionals who work in close conjunction with student-athletes, which may predispose a risk of a sexual harassment occurrence. A study was conducted to investigate the sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students by student athletes at the collegiate setting. A Qualtrics survey, containing closed- and open-ended questions, was sent out to 297 CAATE-accredited athletic training program directors; the athletic training staff at these institutions were also sent the survey as well. The program directors were asked to send the survey to the students currently enrolled in the program. Quantitative data were analyzed using Qualtrics and the qualitative data were analyzed using themes and coding. The study revealed that athletic trainers and athletic training students were sexually harassed by student-athletes on at least one occasion. 40% of the respondents stated being sexually harassed by a student-athlete, and 59% observed sexual harassment of a member of the athletic training staff on at least one instance.

*Keywords:* athletic trainers, athletic training students, sexual harassment, collegiate setting, student-athletes, Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education, National Athletic Trainers' Association, preventive measures.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Although many laws and policies have been made to reduce the occurrence of sexual harassment, the issue has remained in a variety of workplaces. Sexual harassment behaviors may include, “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature” (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1990, p. 1-4). Healthcare professionals tend to be at a high risk to these behaviors, due to the unique nature of the patient-provider relationship. Not only have certified athletic trainers been harassed, but it is also suspected that athletic training students have also been verbally or sexually abused in the athletic training room or at practices, games, or other competitions. Velasquez (1998) discovered that 20 to 30% of undergraduate college female athletic training students have reported some type of sexual harassment, and 25% of the entire athletic training population has been sexually harassed in one way or another.

Unfortunately, there has been no recent research that shows how frequently student-athletes sexually harass athletic trainers and athletic training students, which may stem from the positive stigma that surrounds collegiate athletes. Collegiate athletes tend to be treated as superior in comparison to other students on campus, potentially due to the revenue that athletics creates for the university. Many Big 10 schools generate over \$100,000,000 in revenue from college athletics (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2015). If the college athletes are being suspended and expelled for their crimes, their respective sports team may not be able to create as much money, thus harming the school's financial gain.

There have been several articles in the news recently that have shown how corrupt the politics of collegiate athletics can be in situations involving sexual harassment and other crimes. Jesse Matthew, who was arrested for the murder of University of Virginia student Hannah Graham, was a former football player at Liberty University who played from 2000-2002 (Flaherty, 2014). After sexual allegations were made against him, Matthew was removed from Liberty University, but no charges were filed. He then transferred to Christopher Newport University in January 2003, but was soon expelled from the university after another sexual allegation was made, but again, no charges were filed.

Similar to the previous situation, Tra'Von Chapman, a quarterback for the University of Pittsburgh, barely made it through pre-season before he was removed from the team and university after assaulting his girlfriend (O'Brien & Harris, 2013). Even though charges were filed, he was able to transfer to Ashland University to play football, and now is the second string quarterback at the University of Akron. Basketball player, Brandon Austin, was removed from Providence College after accusations of gang-raping a female at a party (Alger, 2014). He then transferred to the University of Oregon, but was accused of sexual harassment again, and was kicked out of the university before the season started. For the rest of his NCAA eligibility, he played at Northwest Florida State College on full scholarship. Also, David Eisenhauer, a cross-country runner at Virginia Tech, was recently arrested for the abduction and murder of a thirteen-year old child (Weil, 2016). While it is uncertain whether he has previous charges against him, this one offense has robbed another individual of life, as well as broken the hearts of the whole community.

Over the past few years, Baylor University has been under serious allegations after it was reported that multiple sexual harassment claims were not handled correctly and were brushed under the rug; the administration at the university stated that no charges could be filed because it turned into a, “he-said, she-said” dilemma (Lehman, 2016). Tevin Elliott, a football player at Baylor, was sentenced to federal prison for 20 years for two convicted rapes, amongst other uncharged violations. These crimes were overlooked by the university, and did not become litigations until the victims reported them to the city police. After Elliott was imprisoned, another football player, Sam Ukwuachu, was convicted of sexual assault of his former girlfriend, a member of the soccer team. Prior to playing at Baylor, Ukwuachu was member of the football team at Boise State University; however, he was released from the team for repetitive violations of the team rules. During Ukwuachu’s trial, his ex-girlfriend from Boise State, a track athlete, talked about his abusive and violent nature toward her, but she claimed she did not report it to anyone while on campus.

The close physical relationship between athletic trainers and student-athletes may predispose athletic trainers to becoming victims of sexual harassment by student-athletes. Collegiate athletic trainers tend to be on-site at all times, making them a reliable resource for student-athletes regarding a multitude of problems. Once a close relationship is established, the student-athletes and the coaches gain a sense of comfort with the athletic trainer. As this relationship progresses, the student-athletes will talk about anything that comes to mind, regardless of the inappropriate nature. According to Velasquez (1998), athletes’ “comments, jokes, conversations, and physical contact may be perceived as

offensive or unwelcome” by athletic trainers (p. 173). Once this line is crossed, sexual harassment has already occurred.

Sexual harassment in the athletic training room can create a number of problems between the sports teams and the athletic training staff. Schlabach and Peer (2008) said, “violation of sexual boundaries has a devastating result on the professional therapeutic relationship, as well as the professional collegial relationship” (p. 157). Once sexual harassment has occurred, the trust is shattered in the relationship, thus making care of athletes a challenge. Athletic trainers and athletic training students may start to feel uncomfortable treating the athletes, which may create an unsafe learning and working environment. According to Curtis, Helion, and Domsohn (1998), athletic training students started to feel disrespected and humiliated after the first instance of sexual harassment occurred.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students in the collegiate setting. Sexual harassment in athletics has proved to be similar to sexual harassment in any other workplace (WomenSport International, 2014). Athletic trainers are in close contact with the entire athletic department—athletic directors, coaches, managers, and student-athletes. While many published articles examined cases of sexual harassment perpetrated by coaches, there has been little research conducted that demonstrates sexual harassment experienced by athletic trainers or athletic training students.

The present study first defines the term “sexual harassment,” and discusses the two different types of sexual harassment that are used by the Equal Employment

Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The term, “sexual harassment”, has been used to cover a wide range of occurrences, actions, and behaviors, thus making it hard to restrict the definition to one specific action. This section also reflects on examples of sexual harassment that have been discussed in the literature on healthcare professionals. The second section of the study covers literature examining sexual harassment experienced by athletic trainers and student-athletes. Many athletic trainers have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, but they were not aware that they were victims (Shingles & Smith, 2008). To conclude the study, the preventive measures are examined that are enacted at universities to reduce sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination from occurring.

Like other healthcare professions, athletic training needs to be free from sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination; the athletic training room has been an area where the staff and students are expected to act with the utmost professionalism (Velasquez, 1998). By allowing these negative situations to occur, the athletic trainers’ performance in the athletic training room may start to deteriorate.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The athletic training population has been at risk for sexual harassment at the collegiate level. Due to the close relationships and work environment in the athletic setting, athletic trainers and athletic training students are exposed to an environment, such as locker rooms or bus trips, where sexual harassment, discrimination, and bullying frequently occur. Prior to this study, there was minimal research on this issue because few studies considered athletic trainers or athletic training students as a victim population of sexual harassment by student-athletes.

## **Research Questions**

This study addresses the following questions:

- How do athletic trainers/athletic training students define the term, “sexual harassment”?
- What percentages of the population of athletic trainers/athletic training students have been sexually harassed by student-athletes?
- What types of sexual harassment behavior have athletic trainers/athletic training students experienced?
- Are athletic trainers/athletic training students aware of the sexual harassment policy at their institution, and is it being enacted?

## **Significance**

Any workplace should be free of sexual harassment, no matter what the setting. Unfortunately, research has shown sexual harassment as an existing issue that continues to negatively affect individuals in a variety of institutions. Healthcare professionals, such as physicians, nurses, chiropractors, and physical therapists, have reported being victims of sexual harassment behaviors while providing care to patients. Likewise, studies have shown that student-athletes experience sexual harassment in the collegiate setting, either by coaches or by peers. Athletic trainers are healthcare professionals that work in close relation to their student-athletes, which could put them at high risk for becoming victims of sexual harassment.

Existing research has examined the high frequency of sexual harassment and bullying in the athletic setting between student-athletes and the coaching staff. However, little research has been conducted to investigate sexual harassment in athletic training

settings. Athletic trainers work in the same setting, but minimal research has shown how sexual harassment may affect their work environment. For this reason, the present study examined the effects of sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students when working with the student-athletes.

According to the Brake and Burton Nelson (2013), all institutions are obligated to have a policy against sexual discrimination posted in a visible place, in accordance with Title IX. Sexual harassment is also included in this policy. However, not all athletic training programs have discussed their sexual harassment policy with employees or students, potentially due to the stigma that sexual harassment entails. In one study, only 67% of the athletic trainers who were surveyed were aware of a policy for sexual harassment at their institution (Velasquez, 1998).

The present study investigated the prominence of sexual harassment in the collegiate athletic training environment. The evidence of a high frequency of sexual harassment between student-athletes and athletic trainers may push institutions to develop more strict policies. Velasquez (1998) stated it best by saying, “If your institution does not have a sexual harassment policy, are you leaving the door open to future civil liability?” (p. 174).

### **Research Gap**

While there has been a significant amount of research on sexual harassment in athletic training, there were few articles written on this topic in the last twenty years. Nevertheless, it is speculated that the issue of sexual harassment in athletic training has continued to be a problem in a variety of settings. With regard to the athletic environment, most articles addressed the sexual harassment of student-athletes. The



close-knit relationship between collegiate athletes and the coaching staff breeds a sense of familiarity, which could lead to sexual harassment of athletes throughout their college years. Athletic trainers typically have a similarly close relationship to the athletes and coaching staff, but little research has been conducted to examine whether sexual harassment is an issue in athletic training.

There has been an abundance of recent articles discussing the effects of sexual harassment on an assortment of healthcare professionals, including nurses, medical school students, physicians, and physical therapists. However, even though athletic trainers are healthcare professionals, there has been little current literature on sexual harassment of this population.

The goal of this research was to determine the frequency of sexual harassment in the athletic training profession at the collegiate setting. The results of this study could be extremely important in creating a safe work and learning environment for athletic trainers and athletic training students. Sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination can all negatively affect the athletic trainers and athletic training students. In the athletic training room, Gillette (2000) stated that “discrimination...will compromise the learning environment and impair the well being and emotional development of students” (p. 1). By researching the occurrence of sexual harassment within athletic training, the incidence of sexual harassment in any athletic training setting may hopefully be reduced.

## Key Term Definitions

Table 1

### *Key Terms and Definitions*

<b>Sexual Harassment</b>	“Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.”(Velasquez, 1998, p.171) Can include threats, intimidation, or verbal abuse (Velasquez & Drummond, 2003)
<b>Discrimination</b>	Treating someone differently or unfairly based on their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. (Gillette, 2000, p. 3-4)
<b>Bullying</b>	“A behavior that goes beyond simple rudeness and incivility...frequently involves subtle or covert acts, rather than direct violence” (Weuve, Pitney, Martin & Mazerolle, 2014, p. 706)
<b>Harassment</b>	“Any unwelcome conduct that based on a protected class under the federal civil rights laws that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment” (Weuve et al., 2014, p. 707)
<b>Athletic Trainers</b>	Healthcare professionals who work in a variety of athletic settings and provide the following services—prevention, emergency care, clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention, and rehabilitation (NATA, 2015)
<b>Athletic Training Students</b>	Collegiate students who are enrolled in a CAATE (Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education) program to pursue the career of athletic training (NATA, 2015)
<b>Student-Athletes</b>	Collegiate students who are participating in any form of athletic team within a university (NCAA, 2015)
<b>Collegiate Setting</b>	An institution where people go to achieve a degree for their career; can either be Division I, II, or III, or a community college (NATA, 2015)

## Brief Overview of the Study

Surveys were sent via email to Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)-accredited athletic training program directors across the nation, as well as to the certified athletic trainers employed at the institutions. The program director was instructed to disperse the surveys to the athletic training students currently enrolled

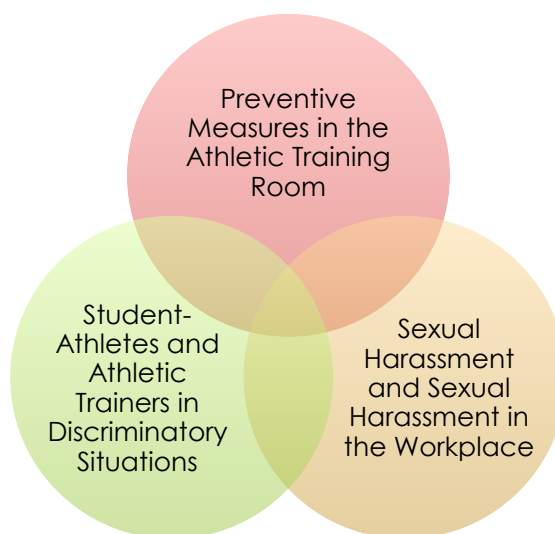
in their respective programs. The survey asked questions about situations where sexual harassment occurred in the athletic training environment, resulting in the victimization of athletic training students or athletic trainers. The survey also asked the athletic training students and athletic trainers to define sexual harassment in their own words, and give examples of situations that fall under sexual harassment. The survey asked the athletic training students and athletic trainers to answer questions about the sexual harassment policy within their institution. Finally, the survey asked athletic training students and athletic trainers to discuss, if applicable, the situation where sexual harassment occurred, and what resulted from the offense. The survey results were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures. The results examined the types of sexual harassment that exist in the athletic training room, and whether the student-athletes are the main population exhibiting these negative behaviors.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The literature review to follow has been organized by the following themes: the definition of sexual harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace, athletic trainers and student-athletes who have been in discriminatory situations, and preventive measures for sexual harassment in the athletic training room. The literature used in this review is comprised of peer-reviewed articles, scholarly articles, and textbooks. When searching for literature, the databases that were used include EBSCO, Pubmed, Medline, and CINAHL. Multiple combinations of search phrases were used including athletic training, athletic trainers, athletic training students, harassment, sexual harassment, healthcare professions, healthcare professionals, discrimination, collegiate settings, and student-athletes.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The three main components that were examined to gain understanding of the occurrence of sexual harassment in the collegiate setting between athletic trainers/athletic training students and student-athletes is illustrated in Figure 1. The present study investigated how often sexual harassment occurs between student-athletes and athletic trainers/athletic training students at the collegiate setting, and what type of behaviors and actions are the most prevalent. In particular, this study focused on how sexual harassment affects the professional healthcare setting of athletic training and what preventive measures are currently being employed to prevent sexual harassment.



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework*

### **Theoretical Framework**

The two learning theories that have frequently been used when researching the athletic training population are social cognitive theory and sociocultural learning theory. Bandura's social cognitive theory states that "human behavior is extensively motivated and regulated by the ongoing exercise of self-influence" (1991, p.248). While interaction is highly important in social cognitive theory, it is not the most prominent way that individuals learn. Individuals must learn how to take in the environment and behavior of others, while constructing their own meaning as they learn or use the skill.

Also, social cognitive theory is based on the assumption that behavior modeling plays a huge role in the learning environment (Schunk, 2012). Athletic training students have typically learned by observing the skill demonstrated by a professor or athletic trainer, and then creating their own construct on how to perform the skill. The athletic trainer or professor is seen as a model in the athletic training student's learning experience, which is reflected in their clinical environment. If there is a high rate of sexual harassment in the clinical experience, it may become difficult for the athletic

training student to learn from his or her preceptor, or model. By not having an optimal learning environment, the behavior modeling may not be taught effectively, thus limiting the information that athletic training students can accommodate in their own memory.

In regard to sexual harassment, if a student-athlete or coach has acted in an undesirable way with an athletic trainer or athletic training student and no repercussions occurred, then the behavior is more likely to be repeated again. By observing this behavior, other student-athletes will notice there are no consequences for inappropriate behavior, and they may soon start to pick up the behavior, as well.

In regard to Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory, athletic training has been an ideal environment to show its effectiveness. In the classroom, sociocultural learning theory is based on the assumption that learners may respond favorably to interaction between peers and teachers, as well as the cultural influences surrounding them (Vygotsky, 1978). Sociocultural theory emphasizes that the information learned in the classroom must be practiced outside the classroom for learning to occur (Peer & McClendon, 2002). Due to the hands-on nature of the field of athletic training, the skills must be practiced and applied in the learning environment to enhance retention of the information. Athletic training students must be able to perform these skills in the athletic training room, or their education may not be as beneficial. It may be impossible for maximal learning to occur without interaction between the student-athletes and athletic training students. Because of this, the relationship between the student-athletes and the athletic training staff should be free of any discriminations or issues. If sexual harassment has occurred, the athletic training students may feel hesitant to practice the skills learned on the student-athlete, which will further compromise their learning environment.

Within sociocultural learning theory, the zone of proximal development is considered in mastering new, challenging skills. Vygotsky has used the zone of proximal development to demonstrate the difference in learning alone, in comparison to what may be learned with support of another peer or classmate (Vygotsky, 1978). The assumption behind the zone of proximal development is that an athletic training student will have a more beneficial and advantageous learning experience when he or she is mentored and supported by a preceptor, student-athlete, classmate, or other athletic trainer. Also, the athletic training student should be challenged to move into the higher end of the zone of proximal development, to reach his or her full learning potential during clinical experiences (Peer & McClendon, 2012). If an athletic training student has encountered sexual harassment behaviors by a student-athlete and no action is taken, the athletic training student may not feel supported by the athletic training staff and students. Without this support, the athletic training student will likely not attempt the greater learning challenges associated with the higher end of their zone of proximal development, resulting in an inadequate learning experience. Because athletic training skills rely heavily on hands-on practice, the reluctance to perform these behaviors on a student-athlete will reduce the information learned during their clinical experiences.

### **Sexual Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

In 1990, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defined sexual harassment as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature” (US EEOC, p. 1-4). While this is the definition that was constructed by the government decades ago, there were several additional behaviors, terms, and actions that have been added to it throughout the years. Gillette

(2000) also included “mistreatment through offensive language, sexual humor, and exclusion based on gender” (p. 5) in his study on sexual harassment within athletic training. Velasquez and Drummond (2003) added on to the definition as well; they included “offensive pictures and posters, and unwelcome pinching and fondling” (p. 21). Expanding the definition of sexual harassment has helped identify different aspects of this offense that were not originally included. Also, the expanded definition allowed for an inclusion of a variety of types of behaviors that people may not associate with the term.

There have been other aspects of sexual harassment that have become more prevalent over the past few years that are now associated with the definition. Fitzgerald, Swan and Magley (1997) added to this term by including gender harassment and generalized insulting sexist behaviors. Additionally, hazing and homophobia can also now be included (Marks, Mountjoy & Marcus, 2012). Creating an unwelcome or uncomfortable environment, based on a person’s gender, can cause issues in any workplace, which is why it is regarded as sexual harassment. It has been obvious through research that the initial definition of sexual harassment provided by the EEOC does not encompass all aspects that are now associated with the offense.

While sexual harassment has been a generalized term, there were two different types stated by Title IX: hostile-environment sexual harassment and quid pro quo (Brake & Burton Nelson, 2013). Hostile-environment sexual harassment has covered a wide array of different actions that have caused issues within the workplace. In 2013, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) gave examples of this type of harassment: “posting of sexually suggestive pictures, consistently telling ‘dirty’ jokes,



tolerating sexual remarks, and allowing the use of derogative terms with sexual connotation” (p. 1). Hostile-environment sexual harassment tends to happen more frequently and has typically been observed as a minor offense. Given that most of the aforementioned behaviors have become common in society, not many people have viewed them as a form of sexual harassment. However, repeated offenses, derogatory comments and actions have created an uncomfortable environment for those receiving the harassment.

On the other hand, the type of sexual harassment that can involve some form of exchange for a sexual favor is known as *quid pro quo*. Velasquez and Drummond (2003) gave examples of *quid pro quo* harassment, which included, “an employer or supervisor offering an employee a salary increase, job, or a promotion in exchange for a sexual favor” (p.21-22). Additionally, examples of *quid pro quo* can be the contrary of the previously mentioned behavior. A supervisor may withhold a raise or benefits from an employee if they do not agree to engage in sexual behaviors. *Quid pro quo* is based on the assumption that misuse of power and status can provoke this type of sexual harassment to occur (Gardner & Johnson, 2001). This misuse of power has not only been unethical, but also illegal and should not be tolerated in the workplace.

Throughout the literature, every study presented had varying definitions of what “sexual harassment” entailed. This has been a huge dilemma for reporting issues within athletic training; once the actions of sexual harassment or abuse occur, it may be hard for certain people to determine what falls under this definition. According to Shingles and Smith (2008), many athletic trainers that were sexually harassed did not realize the behavior that was enacted on them was a case of sexual harassment; they justified it as,

“boys will be boys” (p.105). Velasquez (1998) also added that it is hard to properly detect sexual harassment because it is based on the victim’s perspective, which can differ in every situation. One athletic trainer may find it uncomfortable if a student-athlete walks into the athletic training room and gives them a hug, while another athletic trainer may experience it as a sign of gratitude. While it may seem that an innocent gesture such as a hug is a small example of sexual harassment, the persistence of this unwanted behavior can cause an obvious threat to an individual’s integrity (Lamar & Viola, 2012). If this type of uncomfortable environment is associated with athletic training, it can also be seen as a threat to the profession as a whole.

Another issue of sexual harassment has been the variance between the offender’s perceptions of the actions and behaviors encompassed by the term. Lamar and Viola (2012) stated that an individual’s discernment continues to weaken what constitutes a behavior that is considered sexual harassment. Based on a person’s upbringing and the social norms he or she has been accustomed to, each individual may define sexual harassment differently. This inconsistent definition of sexual harassment has created uncomfortable situations, as individuals are oblivious of their sexually offensive actions.

If presented with an offensive case in the workplace, it has been important to be able to differentiate between sexual harassment and bullying. Bullying and any form of harassment tend to share similar characteristics, but there has been one major difference that allowed individuals to distinguish between the two concerns. Bullying has been expressed as an issue involving the relationships among a group of people, and any form of harassment has been defined as an issue involving a human’s rights (Weuve et al., 2014). Given the similarities between bullying and harassment, it has been important to

be aware of what can separate the two offenses. Knowing the distinction between the two can help to decide on the proper policies and procedures for handling the potential issues.

In addition, the stigma that surrounds sexual harassment has caused people to not want to report the crime to authorities. Sexual harassment generally has been a private crime, and many victims have not wanted to come forward and discuss what has happened to them. Crosset, Ptacek, McDonald, and Benedict (1996) stated, “fear, trauma, public stigma, and institutional indifference discourage women from speaking openly about their victimization” (p.168). There have been many cases that discussed how the women was to blame for the sexually heinous crime that was committed against her; this thought of “victim shaming” alone can discourage one from wanting to report a crime. It will be challenging to change the way that sexual harassment is viewed in society without removing the humiliation that is associated with the offense.

Regardless of whether the sexual harassment is intentional or unintentional, the consequences of the behaviors and actions on the victim will be the same (Marks et al., 2012). An offender who stated an inappropriate joke may not have realized the impact that it had on bystanders, but a lack of education in sexual harassment is not an excuse to commit these behaviors. Another important factor in sexual harassment is that the worst offense is typically not the first offense suffered by the victim. By the time an individual reports an offense to authorities, it most likely was not the first time he or she has been sexually harassed. The term, grooming, is defined as sexual abuse that often starts off small and prepares the individual in minor steps that lead up to the sexual activity (Brake & Burton Nelson, 2013). By stopping the sexual harassment early, it will help prevent more serious cases from occurring.

In any workplace, sexual harassment has been an issue that occurs frequently. In healthcare professions, there may be an increased rate of sexual harassment due to the unique patient and caregiver relationship. Mushtaq, Sultuna and Imtiaz (2015) stated that workers in the medical field have been “greatly vulnerable to sexual harassment due to their dependency and close interaction with opposite gender patients” (p. 675). While there has been little research conducted that examines sexual harassment of athletic trainers by patients, there has been an abundance of research displaying the prominence of this issue with nurses, physical therapists, chiropractors, and physicians, who share a similar relationship with patients as do athletic trainers (Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Gleberzon, Statz, & Pym, 2015; Lamar & Viola, 2012; Marks et al., 2012; Mushtaq et al., 2015).

Given the close nature of relationships between healthcare professionals and patients, there may be a predisposition of being exposed to sexual harassment. In DeMayo’s (1997) study, which surveyed physical therapists nationwide, 86% reported unwelcome sexual behavior towards them while working, and 63% of that population were patients. A similar study conducted by Schneider and Phillips (1997) revealed that 75% of the 1064 female family physicians surveyed reported some type of sexual harassment by their patients at least once throughout their career. As of 2013, registered nurses were employed in 2.6 million jobs, and 17 out of 20 had been sexually harassed in one form or another (Lamar & Viola, 2012). The prevalence of healthcare professionals who have experienced some form of sexual harassment while working with patients is extremely high, and needs to be reduced and ultimately prevented to create better working conditions.

Gleberzon et al. (2015) studied a group of chiropractors to examine the prominence of sexual harassment within their workplace. There were a wide range of sexual harassment behaviors that were experienced by the chiropractors including, “chatter of a sexual nature, offensive jokes, suggestive or insulting sounds, improper gowning procedures, comments about a patient’s appearance or sexual orientation, inquiries about their sex life, [and] sexual fantasies” (p. 112). Athletic trainers have comparable relationships with patients as do chiropractors and may be put in similar situations when caring for a patient. It is hypothesized that athletic trainers may be put in the same situation and may undergo the sexual harassment behaviors mentioned above.

If a person has experienced sexual harassment and does not take corrective action to prevent it from occurring, several mental health issues may begin to arise. Mushtaq et al. (2015) stated, “nurses who experience sexual harassment are expected to suffer from depression 3-8 times more than the women who were not harassed” (p.675). If sexual harassment ended up leading to depression for an individual, this will cause issues in both his or her professional life and personal life. Other psychological problems can include stress, anxiety, withdrawal from society, and post-traumatic stress disorder (2012). If an athletic training student has begun to experience these negative side effects while in clinical rotations, it may be detrimental to the overall learning experience. A student may not effectively learn in an environment that feels unsafe or unwelcome due to sexual harassment behaviors.

Sexual harassment has caused an array of issues that can affect the individual (Valente & Bullough, 2004; Mushtaq et al., 2015; Hamlin & Hoffman, 2002). Not only has this problem been detrimental to the mental well being of a victim, it can also cause

problems with overall job performance. If an athletic trainer continues to treat a student-athlete who has previously harassed him, it may affect the athletic trainer's concentration, which in turn may affect the care of the student-athlete (2004). Additionally, athletic trainers may start to be affected by poor motivation, diminished attention, and a decreased consideration for work, which could result in unsatisfactory patient care as an outcome of these behaviors (Mushtaq et al., 2015). Also, healthcare professionals who are experiencing sexual harassment from a patient may begin losing satisfaction in their jobs, causing increased absenteeism that could lead to turnover (2015). If a healthcare professional must continue to care for his or her offender, or be in the same work environment, the professional may start exhibiting signs of low morale and higher rates of attrition at work (Hamlin & Hoffman, 2002). The head athletic trainer may need to administer serious disciplinary actions, such as removal from the clinical site or the program, due to the compromised care of the patients.

Workers in the medical field are encouraged to take necessary precautions when interacting with patients due to the high potential for sexual harassment. While many studies only focused on women in healthcare, it has been seen as a global issue that negatively affects the physical and mental health of all workers (Mushtaq et al., 2015). Lamar and Viola (2012) stated that reports of sexual harassment and bullying have continued to be on the rise in female dominated professions. As most studies have focused solely on women, it has made it a challenge to determine if professions that have an equal number of male and female workers are experiencing sexual harassment at a similar rate. All healthcare professionals, including athletic trainers, physical therapists, chiropractors, nurses, and physicians, have been strongly encouraged to be attentive to

the relationships with patients and other members in the department (Mitchell, 2005). Since sexual harassment has been one of the most litigated claims across the nation, healthcare professionals have needed to be aware of the boundaries of the relationships that they are forming with their patients (2005). Not only has it been important for healthcare professionals to be cautious of creating a comforting relationship, but also it has been essential that patients realize how their behavior can be misconstrued and interpreted in a negative fashion. Unfortunately, patients typically do not err on the side of caution when communicating with healthcare professionals, which may lead to an uncomfortable relationship.

### **Sexual Harassment in Athletic Trainers and Student-Athletes**

On college campuses nationwide, sexual assault and harassment have been widespread problems that have negatively affected a person's physical health, personal relationships, mental health, and academic achievement (Schwartz, McMahon, & Broadnax, 2015). Being a victim of sexual harassment can cause many short-term and long-term effects on the individual, and it may not be certain that he or she will recover from the offense. While no statistics were found on the percentage of male students who were sexually assaulted on campus, about 25% of women were victims of an attempted or completed rape during their college years (Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2005). That number was alarmingly high as it only pertained to rape, and not the other forms of sexual harassment that can be enacted on a person.

At the collegiate level, the examination of student-athletes enduring sexual harassment in sports has been a popular topic that has received extensive research. The media typically has depicted the coach as the most common offender in sexual

harassment of student-athletes, but research has not supported that assumption in collegiate sports (Marks et al., 2012). A student-athlete's teammates or fellow peer athletes on the campus were the number one offenders in committing sexual harassment crimes against student-athletes. Because of the prominence of student-athletes sexually harassing each other, it is likely that the behavior may be directed toward other students.

Fasting, Brackenridge, and Walseth (2007) have acknowledged that females can be the offenders in crimes of sexual harassment and males are sometimes the victims, but in most cases, the perpetrator has been a male. A previous study conducted by Fasting, Brackenridge, and Sundgot-Borgen (2003) found that 45% of the 553 female athletes experienced sexual harassment by a male student-athlete and 15% by a fellow female student-athlete. Fasting et al. (2007) conducted a smaller study involving 25 female student-athletes, where there were 27 experiences reported of sexual harassment from male student-athletes. However, there were 59 incidences reported of sexual harassment behaviors initiated by an authoritative figure, mostly a male coach. This study analyzed sexual harassment through the course of a student-athlete's career, which could be the cause of the accelerated rate of harassment incidences involving a coach.

Research has shown a "culture of athletics" that may cause student-athletes, specifically males, to engage in more violent and inappropriate behaviors. (Jackson & Davis, 2000). This culture has been comprised of scholarship or professional-level athletes that were involved in sports that promoted a "focused, physically dominant, entitled, and often sheltered lifestyle" (p. 591). Many collegiate and professional athletes have been enrolled in that sport for a majority of their lifetime, and may have difficulty differentiating between their athletic lives and their personal lives. Student-athletes who



are committed to their sport may want to be involved in competition at all times, and in universities, male student-athletes tend to compete in the realm of sexual prowess, or who has the most ‘notches on the bedpost’ (2000). Because certain student-athletes only identify themselves by the sport they play, it may cause a challenge for them when functioning outside of sport participation.

Additionally, student-athletes tend to be treated as more superior than the rest of the student body, and this can create an ego issue that allows them to act in any way that they want. In NCAA Division I schools, student-athletes have more resources than the typical student, including better medical care, tutoring services, and monetary support from scholarships (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Because of these advantages, student-athletes were treated as high-class individuals in the athletics department and were more likely to get away with serious offenses and crimes. Benedict and Klein (1998) found that an arrest most likely resulted out of the 217 criminal complaints filed against collegiate and professional athletes. However, the athletes were less likely to get convicted, “perhaps due to the...political realities of professional athletics (1998, p. 132). Research has shown that athletes do get arrested for the crime, but are not typically charged with the offense. Because athletes have been able to get away with these offenses, they may feel that the behavior is acceptable and can be performed again.

An article by *Student Affairs Today* stated that “when student-athletes misbehave, they may be suspended or dismissed from their teams or have their scholarships reduced or eliminated” if an offense is committed. (2013, p. 11). However, these offenses can often turn into lawsuits. While the crimes are not always discussed, it has appears that a major issue must occur for a civil litigation to be filed.

The athletic department staff members can be subject to an increased possibility of sexual harassment because of the close relationship with the student-athletes. An athletic team has included the coaching staff, the student-athletes, the athletic trainer, athletic training students, and the equipment staff as integral parts of the team. These members may be in close relation to each other and in constant communication. Because of these relationships, there have been certain situations that created an environment where there may be an increased risk of sexual harassment, such as a locker room, traveling to events, or hotel rooms (Marks et al., 2012). Also any type of environment that may include alcohol, such as team socials, initiations, or year-end events, can increase the likelihood of an offense occurring. As a result of this affiliation between staff and athletes, all members of the athletic community were typically invited to all team events to increase the “team-building” experience, expanding the risk of sexual harassment involving all associates.

Marks et al. (2012) discussed the four steps that typically lead to a relationship where sexual harassment may occur. These included, “targeting the victim, building trust and friendship, developing control and loyalty, and building and securing secrecy” (p. 907). If a student-athlete has been experiencing sexual harassment, there are detrimental consequences that can affect his athletic and academic performance, including dropping courses, worsening grades, and poor performance in sport.

Athletic trainers may work with a multitude of different individuals, including medical staff, student-athletes, coaches, and equipment staff. If conflict has arisen in the relationship, it can adversely affect the job performance of the athletic trainer (Weuve et al., 2014). Because of this close relationship, athletic trainers tend to be extremely

flexible with coaches and student-athletes within their particular sport. Unfortunately, this can lead to bullying and sexual harassment. Some coaches may be trying to prove themselves to others, and can take out their anger and frustration on the athletic trainer. This hierarchical pyramid where athletic trainers tend to fall near the bottom can give coaches and student-athletes the sense that they are constantly in control.

Clinical experiences have been a significant part of learning in athletic training programs nationwide, and if the clinical experiences are compromised by sexual harassment, it will have a damaging effect on an athletic training student's education. While there were few studies that have examined this relationship, some have shown athletic trainers and athletic training students may be victims of sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination. Gillette (2000) reported some alarming numbers in a study involving graduate students in athletic training; out of the 981 students interviewed, 117 reported discrimination in the workplace. Seventy-two percent of the female athletic trainers and 16% of the male athletic trainers in this study reported at least one occurrence of sexual discrimination and harassment. The study also showed that of the 39 athletic training students surveyed, all respondents reported at least one incidence of sexual harassment. These incidences typically occurred in the relationships with student-athletes and/or coaches.

Gillette's (2000) study surveyed 260 athletic training students. One hundred fifty-seven (60.38%) of the students indicated that they were victims of sexual harassment or discrimination. The most common behaviors were offensive language directed towards them, experienced discomfort in the presence of sexual humor, and unwanted sexual advances (2000). Velasquez's (1998) list included, "unnecessary touching, patting,

hugging, or brushing against a person's body; remarks of a sexual nature regarding a person's clothing or body and remarks about a sexual or activity" (p. 173) to the list of behaviors that fall under sexual harassment.

In 2008, Shingles and Smith conducted a study examining female certified athletic trainers who had been sexually harassed throughout their career. Their results showed that 64% of the female certified athletic trainers had been sexually harassed, either as a student or as a professional. The female athletic trainers all viewed sexual harassment similarly; if they recalled being inappropriately touched or working in a hostile environment, it was viewed as sexual harassment. However, if the harassment consisted of verbal exchanges or did not create a threatening environment, it was not perceived as an offensive behavior.

Shingles and Smith (2008) reported specific details of events from the female athletic trainers, including being inappropriately grabbed, touched, and rubbed by student-athletes. Other accounts of sexual harassment included male athletes telling the female athletic trainers that they were not supposed to be in the athletic training room, which is a clear example of gender discrimination. One respondent revealed that she was sexually molested while asleep on the bus coming home from a football game, but never reported the offense to anyone. Unfortunately, only two of the twenty-five female athletic trainers ever pursued filing a report against the offender; the others "rationalized away the abusive, inappropriate, unprofessional behavior that occurred in the athletic training room without challenging the behavior" (p.106).

In the past, when sexual harassment occurred, athletic training students typically did not report the offense. Gillette (2000) stated that most students "ignored the behaviors

because they...thought that there would be repercussions for verbally addressing the issue and therefore they did not want to risk their chances of being successful in the program” (p. 13). Most athletic trainers also felt the same way; they were scared that the report would negatively affect their job and responsibilities. In Gillette’s article, one female athletic trainer stated that if she reported the sexual harassment to the head athletic trainer, it would lead to a “lack of opportunity to receive clinical experience with sports of the opposite sex” (p. 13). It was unfortunate that the fear of the consequences stood in the way of reporting a sexual offense.

### **Preventive Measures in Athletic Departments**

Across college campuses nationwide, sexual harassment has continued to be a serious concern, even with the preventive measures that are established on an organizational and Federal level (Brake & Burton Nelson, 2012). While the NCAA has focused solely on student-athletes, it has been obvious that they are not the only victims of sexual harassment on campus. All students have been put at risk of suffering from sexual harassment because of the current approach universities and organizations have taken when being presented with an issue. While policies have provided guidance on how to handle claims when they arise, it would be more effective to initiate preventive measures that would reduce the number of sexual harassment occurrences. After discussing what an employer could do to reduce sexual harassment in the workplace, Gardner and Johnson (2001) stated, “prevention is the first, last, and primary line of defense against sexual harassment; in fact, prevention is the cure” (p. 9).

According to Marks et al. (2012), the “sports medicine health professional has an integral role to play in the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse in sport” (p.905),

but it has been unclear who is supposed to protect these healthcare professionals from sexual harassment. There have been several ways that athletic trainers can work to restrict the occurrence of sexual harassment to promote a better work and learning environment. Creating a detailed policy that is tailored specifically to each institution can help increase awareness of sexual harassment behaviors, in addition to including the correct personnel to contact. Through proper education and training, all members of the athletic department would be able to effectively recognize behaviors of a victim who is being sexually harassed and how to report it. Also, certified athletic trainers can be used as positive role models to mentor undergraduate and graduate students, which will give them a trusted individual to share these issues with if a situation does arise.

According to law, every institution must have a policy for handling sexual harassment in the workplace. This policy usually follows guidelines mandated by the Federal government. Velasquez (1998) stated, “a policy should be strongly worded to include both the institutional definition of sexual harassment and the clear message that this behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated” (p. 174). A clearly worded, specific policy will leave no room for ambiguity that could potentially lead to confusion. It has also been important to go beyond the scope of the Federal guidelines, and create a more detailed, stringent institution policy. The Federal guidelines are used for prevention in an organization, but they may not offer the specificity necessary to take action to eradicate the issue (Lamar and Viola, 2012). Because of this, it has been essential to create guidelines that are specific to the athletic training profession, including the athletic training room and travel procedures.

While it may be frightening to adhere to the policy and report the offender, it has been imperative to report the offense to a person in authority to allow for it to be properly handled. In regard to sexual harassment policy training, it has been critical to educate the victims that it is essential to follow the institution's policy, and that it is not enough to just tell a friend of the situation that happened. (Gelpi, 2015). If the policy is not followed correctly, there may be a possibility the claim could be discarded in the event of legal action. The policy will eventually lead to reporting the offense to the institution's Title IX coordinator (O'Brien, 2014). The Title IX coordinator will be able to assist with following the policy properly, and ensuring that the sexual harassment claim is handled according to the rulebook.

Even though all institutions have a sexual harassment policy, this does not always mean that the policy has been communicated to all the athletic trainers and athletic training students. In addition, the policy needs to be posted in a visible place that is easily viewable by everybody. The effectiveness of a policy may diminish if the athletic trainers and athletic training students are not educated on it, and if they are unsure where to look for the information. Gillette (2000) stated that only 92 of the 145 respondents involved in a sexual harassment claim were aware of a written policy at their institutions. If members of the athletic department were unaware of the sexual harassment policy, it could reduce the likelihood that issues will be reported. While strides are being made in the handling of sexual harassment, it has been unclear whether the information on how to handle the situation has been successfully transmitted to the students in a way that they can use it (Schwartz et al., 2015). A policy will not be effective if it is not communicated to the athletic departments and is not accessible to those who may need it. Because of this, the

universities must make this information readily available to those who may need it during their time at college (2015).

Designing an informal procedure may also be beneficial when small occurrences of sexual harassment arise. While the sexual harassment policy at the institution is the formal procedure put into effect, it may be necessary to also have an informal plan as well (Velasquez, 1998). The informal policy can be something as simple as a meeting with the individual to discuss why the behavior was inappropriate, or a suspension from the athletic team. If necessary, a more serious punishment can be incorporated into the informal policy, as well. If the offense in the athletic training room is viewed as minor, it is important to tell the student-athlete or coach that inappropriate comments or language will not be tolerated. Stopping this behavior when it first occurs will help reduce the chance of inappropriate language and acts being committed again.

Instituting a sexual harassment prevention program has been shown as one of the best ways to combat sexual harassment. Edwards (2000) stated, “it is our duty as professionals to educate all coaches, athletes, and parents to the specific criteria that constitute sexual harassment and to stop acceptance of this unethical and illegal behavior” (p.23). Educating the athletic department on sexual harassment can clear up any discrepancies that may occur. This training should be mandatory for coaches, athletic trainers, administrative directors, and student-athletes. All members of the staff must be on the same page to commit to procedural and organizational changes required in an institution to eliminate sexual harassment.

The NCAA recommended that schools “should consider conducting annual training on the [sexual harassment] subject using actual cases from the athletics world”



(2013, p.2). If athletic departments required all staff members to attend in-service training at the beginning of the school year, the addition of sexual harassment education could easily be incorporated into the orientation. Completing sexual harassment training annually will enable all staff members to be informed about up-to-date information and any changes that may have been implemented over the past year.

During sexual harassment training, the content should be inclusive of all relevant information, including a clear definition of sexual assault, resources for survivors, options for reporting, sanctions for violation of the policy, a policy statement prohibiting retaliation, and information on all available actions for the survivor (Karjane et. al, 2005; Krivoshey, Adkins, Hayes, Nemeth, & Klein, 2013). Training the entire staff will help educate all individuals involved on what is considered sexual harassment and what should be done following an occurrence. Annual training will allow staff members to clear up any discrepancies in the process of handling sexual harassment claims, and will also educate the personnel on the rules and boundaries that should not be crossed in order to create an environment free of sexual harassment (Volkwein-Caplan, Schnell, Devlin, Mitchell, & Sutura, 2002). Student-athletes, coaches, athletic trainers, and other administrative personnel may view sexual harassment behaviors differently, so it is essential to cover all behaviors that may be potentially offensive.

Establishing a respectful and professional relationship with coaches and athletes was considered another preventive measure in combatting sexual harassment. Mazerolle, Borland and Burton (2012) found that harmonious relationships occurred when the “female athletic trainer ‘stood up for herself’ to gain some respect” (p. 695). When athletic trainers establish clear boundaries from the beginning, coaches and student-

athletes will realize that sexual harassment behaviors are not acceptable in the athletic training room, or in any other athletic training setting. If undergraduate and graduate students observe this type of respect in the athletic training room, it will provide them with an example of the appropriate way to establish relationships.

Incorporating strong mentors into the athletic training room may offer yet another preventive measure. Mazerolle et al. (2012) found that undergraduate students had a beneficial learning experience when they worked with a certified athletic trainer who is confident, strong-willed, and committed to the job. They observed that certified athletic trainers with these characteristics did not seem to run into issues with the coaching staff or student-athletes. Because a majority of the learning experiences in athletic training come from clinical rotations, it has been imperative to have strong role models who display positive behaviors and relationships in the athletic training profession. Mazerolle et al.'s (2012) study is consistent with Curtis et al. (1998) who discussed the importance of certified athletic trainers in an undergraduate student's learning experience, and how they will help shape their students' behavior in the future.

The head athletic trainer or supervising athletic trainer must be able to provide proper supervision to prevent the inappropriate behavior from occurring in the athletic training room (Velasquez, 1998). The head athletic trainer may be the employee who oversees all athletic trainers and athletic training students, while ensuring that the athletic training room remains a safe learning and working environment. If a student or staff member was going through a bad experience, the head athletic trainer should initiate an intervention to resolve the problem (Mazerolle et al., 2012). While the certified athletic trainers sometimes fail to stop inappropriate jokes or offensive language, they must halt

the behavior and report it to a coach or the head athletic trainer (Velasquez & Drummond, 2003). Inaction informs the student-athletes that these actions are accepted.

Because of the nature of the student-athlete and athletic trainer relationship, it has been important to set ground rules to maintain healthy working conditions. Healthcare professionals tend to form a close bond with their patients because of close personal contact; this means that extra steps must be taken to ensure the relationship is free from any misconceptions. Gleberzon et al. (2015) reported several preventive measures that can be incorporated when working closely with a patient; these included being clear about the professional nature about the relationship, establishing boundaries, informing colleagues of any event, and considering legal action. Incorporating these methods into practice will be advantageous in maintaining a healthy student-athlete and athletic trainer relationship in the college setting.

In any organization, having a clear policy for handling sexual harassment in conjunction with other preventive measures will help create a better work environment. Employing standards for all employees to follow may decrease the likelihood that these behaviors will occur and may ensure there is more comfort in reporting the issue. When the organizational department implemented policies and procedures for dealing with sexual harassment issues, women were more likely to respond assertively to any unwanted attention that they may receive (Gruber and Smith, 1995).

Not only will the individual benefit from such training, but also the organization as a whole will be more educated and prepared to handle any sexual harassment situation that may arise. Jackson and Davis (2000) created a sexual harassment prevention program and included the following as reasons for conducting such training: “decreased

incidence rates of assault, decreased institutional liability, increased sensitivity of athletic departments to assault issues, and positive role modeling” (p. 593). The aforementioned reasons will create a more positive reputation for the institution as a whole, as well as decrease the legal concerns that emerge when a sexual harassment claim is filed.

If head athletic trainers and other administrators are not proactive in handling instances of sexual harassment, legal action may be taken, leaving the university open to a lawsuit. This type of negligence is known as negligence under the tort law, and states that “employers owe employees a duty of care to prevent damage being suffered” (Mathews and Bismark, 2015, p. 190). The administrative personnel may also be found liable for not protecting the other employees involved in the situation if the offender is allowed to pursue the same behavior. However, through proper education and preventive measures, sexual harassment occurrences may be decreased, thus reducing the chance of a civil lawsuit.

The existing literature examined has underlined many important aspects about the existence of sexual harassment in regard to collegiate settings, healthcare professions, and college athletics. Even with preventive measures in universities and workplaces, sexual harassment has still occurred frequently, causing negative effects for the victim. In the methodology chapter to follow, the survey instrument created for this study will be outlined. The survey began with demographic questions, and then followed with a section that examined sexual harassment. Then, the survey examined the number of respondents who were aware of the sexual harassment policy at their institution, and provided respondents with the opportunity to describe any sexual harassment experiences. The

survey, data collection procedures, and data analysis are discussed in the methodology chapter.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

The present research study employed survey research to examine the perceptions of the sexual harassment of the athletic training staff and students by student-athletes in the collegiate setting. Survey research was used for a multitude of reasons. First, an online survey allowed for data to be collected nationwide at CAATE-accredited institutions. Second, the respondents were able to complete the survey at their own convenience, potentially increasing the response rate. Finally, the online survey maintained anonymity of the respondents, which is imperative to studies on sexual harassment.

Many instances of sexual harassment have been researched in other healthcare professions; however, there have only been a few studies that examine its frequency within the profession of athletic training. In any setting, many occurrences of sexual harassment have led to an uncomfortable and unsafe learning and working environment. Not only has this been inappropriate for the certified athletic trainers, but it also has provided the athletic training students with an uncomfortable learning atmosphere. This study helped determine the types of sexual harassment that have taken place in the athletic training environment and the effects that these actions have on certified athletic trainers and athletic training students.

Previous research studies have attempted to examine sexual harassment in the profession of athletic training (Curtis et al., 1998; Gillette, 2000; Shingles & Smith, 2008; Velasquez, 1998; Velasquez & Drummond, 2003). However, one major problem was evident in almost every article—not many athletic trainers or athletic training students knew the definition of sexual harassment, or what behaviors were considered acts of

sexual harassment. The present survey asked participants to define sexual harassment, and to identify the behaviors they associate with the term. This helped achieve a common ground on which to base the study; it would be impossible to conduct research on sexual harassment if the participants were unsure of the definition. Other questions relating to the frequency of sexual harassment were included in the survey in order to accurately determine the percentage of respondents who experienced sexual harassment. Also included in this survey, was the discussion about preventive measures; athletic trainers need to be implementing prevention policies to ensure that sexual harassment does not occur in the workplace.

Mixed methods research was chosen as the most appropriate way to gather information in this survey. Not only were statistics important, but gaining actual stories from the participants was essential to this study. The survey was sent to the program directors and athletic trainers at CAATE-accredited athletic training programs nationwide. Within the programs, program directors distributed surveys to the athletic training students and their completion of the survey was voluntary.

### **Research Design**

Using mixed methodology, the perceptions of certified athletic trainers and athletic training students who have experienced sexual harassment by student-athletes were examined. The information collected for this research study was a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data.

The main data collection method for this study was the survey sent to the program directors and certified athletic trainers who were employed at CAATE-accredited institutions. The program directors were also encouraged to send the survey to the

students in the program. The quantitative data collected included the percentages of athletic trainers and athletic training students who experienced sexual harassment in the collegiate setting. Other quantitative data included the frequency of sexual harassment at the institution, and the number of respondents who were aware of the sexual harassment policy. The demographic information was also displayed quantitatively.

The qualitative data obtained allowed for a greater understanding of the specific instances of sexual harassment that occurred. The respondents were asked to state their own definition of sexual harassment, and what behaviors they included in this term. Also, respondents were asked to explain, in detail, the sexual harassment behavior that they witnessed or experienced. Following this, there were open-ended questions that inquired about the response to the incident, and any adverse effects resulting from sexual harassment. The qualitative data allowed for collection of in-depth stories, which was essential to understanding student-athletes' sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students in the collegiate setting.

### **Sample**

This study included all undergraduate athletic training programs currently accredited by CAATE. The survey was sent to the program director at all accredited athletic training programs, with the request that he or she send it to the students in the program. All certified athletic trainers employed at these institutions were also sent the survey. Because both athletic training students and certified athletic trainers work with student-athletes, it was imperative to obtain all viewpoints on sexual harassment in the athletic training room. Taken directly from CAATE's website, there were 332



undergraduate athletic training programs nationwide (CAATE, 2015). There are different levels of accreditation according to the CAATE website, which is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Accreditation levels of athletic training programs*

Active-in good standing
Active-progress report due
Degree change pending
Voluntarily withdrawing accreditation
Not admitting students
Probation-academic

For this study, the schools were eliminated if they were voluntarily withdrawing accreditation, not admitting students, or were on academic probation. This choice was made with the understanding that the program did not have students to send the survey to, which would have been a limitation to the study. This resulted in the elimination of eleven schools, leaving 321 CAATE-accredited athletic training programs as potential survey recipients.

Out of the 321 CAATE-accredited athletic training programs, there were 297 schools that were NCAA institutions and 24 schools that were National Association of Intercollegiate Athletic (NAIA) institutions. Because the NCAA is the largest collegiate sport association, the schools are separated into three different divisions, based on the size of the institution and enrollment. However, NAIA is a separate collegiate association, comprised of a smaller population of schools, which are not separated into divisions. There was a question on the survey that asked respondents to provide the division of the school where they were employed or enrolled. This was only applicable to NCAA schools because NCAA institutions are separated into divisions while NAIA

schools are not. All demographic questions had to be answered completely to move on to the next part of the survey. Since the athletic trainers and athletic training students in the NAIA institutions were not able to answer the question on the division of their school, they were unable to complete the survey.

In addition to the 297 program directors, the survey was also sent out to 3,020 certified athletic trainers who were employed at the institutions. Out of the 3,020 athletic trainers, 112 were employed at NAIA institutions, which restricted them from completing the survey because they were unable to fill out the demographic question asking about the division of their institution. Therefore, only the 2,908 athletic trainers employed at NCAA institutions were able to complete the survey. The athletic trainers were either clinical athletic trainers, academic faculty, or graduate assistants. The number of students to which this survey was sent is unknown. Because student e-mails were not available, it was not possible to individually invite all of the athletic training students at the accredited schools.

Non-random sampling was chosen to address the unique context of the study; purposive sampling was also implemented. These methods were chosen because there is little recent information on sexual harassment in collegiate settings. By sampling the staff members and students at CAATE-accredited universities, it was possible to see how this population is affected personally and academically.

## **Population**

Currently, there are 8,636 athletic trainers employed at colleges or universities (NATA, 2016). Each athletic training program admits a different number of students each year, so the number of students enrolled varies month to month. Right now, there are

8,979 athletic training students who are a member of NATA; however, this does not accurately depict all athletic training students. Of the athletic training population, 80.78% are white or Caucasian, followed by Hispanic athletic trainers, which represent 4.58%. The next highest percentage is black athletic trainers (3.74%); Asians or Pacific Islanders make up 3.48% of the total population of athletic trainers. All other ethnicities account for 3.06% of the athletic training population, and 4.37% chose not to specify their ethnicity. All certified athletic trainers and athletic training students were invited to participate, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. The sample was limited to participants who are currently employed or gaining an education in the collegiate setting.

### **Instrumentation**

For this study, all participants were asked to complete an online survey that was administered through Qualtrics. The survey consisted of eighteen questions, including multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, sliding scale, and short answer. The first section of the survey consisted of five demographic questions. These questions included the current status of the individual, the division of the institution, age, gender, and previous sport rotations. Following this, there was a section that collected information about the respondent's personal definition of sexual harassment, how often it occurs at his or her institution, and whether he or she believes it is a serious issue at their institution. Also, in this section, respondents were asked if they were ever victims of sexual harassment, whether they observed another individual being sexually harassed, and what occurred during these instances.

The next part of the survey examined whether the participants were aware of the sexual harassment policy at their institution. If they were aware, they were asked if they had witnessed the policy be put into effect when an instance of sexual harassment occurred at their university. The final part of the survey consisted of questions that would allow for a more in-depth description of the sexual harassment instance they witnessed or experienced. These questions asked about their responses to the sexual harassment offense, how it affected the work or learning environment, and whether it was reported to anyone. Additional questions asked whether the respondent found it necessary to take further action to avoid harm by the perpetrator, and what, in the respondent's mind, would have been the ideal resolution to the sexual harassment offense.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

To ensure the questions were valid and reliable, the questions were administered to a small number of athletic trainers as a pilot study. Pilot testing the survey with persons from the sample population enabled me to check the clarity of each question and ensure that the questions reflected the original research questions. Pilot testing also helped ensure that the questions being asked did not lead the participants to answer in a way that would reinforce the hypothesis of the survey. At the conclusion of the pilot test, the respondents made suggestions to improve the face validity. Content validity was improved by re-writing certain sections to ensure the research questions were being answered. Once the questions had been pilot tested and adjusted, the survey was validated and was then dispersed to the program directors and the certified athletic trainers at CAATE-accredited institutions.

The reliability of the questions was confirmed during the pilot testing as well.

After the pilot test, the athletic trainers were asked to deliver feedback on how accurately the survey questions answered the research questions. These suggestions were implemented to ensure that the survey questions were reliable and valid. The instrument for this study had not been previously used; however, the survey was constructed so that future research studies could reuse it.

The data collection began with the sending of the survey via e-mail in the beginning of January 2016 to the certified athletic trainers and program directors of CAATE-accredited athletic training programs. Within this e-mail, there was information on the purpose of the study and detailed instructions on how to take the online survey. The survey remained open for two weeks, and no reminder e-mail was sent out. Participation was optional for all athletic training students and certified athletic trainers, but the consent letter underscored the importance of the survey in dealing with the serious issue of sexual harassment.

The survey was closed after two weeks and 642 responses were received. The data analysis process began once the survey was closed. Due to the sensitive nature of sexual harassment, anonymity and confidentiality were maintained. Certain respondents included recognizable information in their completed surveys, and this information was immediately deleted from their answers to ensure anonymity of their responses.

### **Data analysis**

There are two different ways that data were analyzed during this mixed-methods study. The first method involved categorical data, which was useful in showing the frequency of a specific answer to a question in a large set of data. Due to the high number of respondents, categorical data were used in analyzing and displaying the quantitative

questions. The first section of questions on demographic information used the tools in Qualtrics to display the categorical data. All other quantitative questions displayed the frequency of each category in a table or bar graph using either Qualtrics or Microsoft Word. This allowed for a visual image of the number of responses for each question to easily see which category had the highest frequency. The data were also split to show the difference between certified athletic trainers and athletic training students. The mean was calculated to show the average number of times a certified athletic trainer or athletic training student had either witnessed or been a victim of sexual harassment by a student-athlete in the collegiate setting. Finally, the percentage of athletic training students and athletic trainers who were aware of the policy and had seen it implemented was also shown through categorical data.

A second method of data analysis was used for the qualitative data. Each qualitative question was viewed in its entirety, and then overarching themes were pulled out. By using coding, similar situations were grouped together to observe the frequency of the behavior in the collegiate setting. For example, if many participants stated that “inappropriate touching” was included in the definition of sexual harassment, that term was coded by the number “1”. By giving certain words or behaviors a different code, it was easy to see how often the instances occurred. Specific stories provided by respondents were also included in the data analysis to show serious cases of sexual harassment by student-athletes on athletic trainers or athletic training students.

### **Justification of Statistical Techniques**

An online survey was used to conduct this mixed-method research study, and included open-ended and closed-ended questions. The use of an online survey enabled a

greater number of participants to gain access to the survey questions, thus resulting in a larger collection of data than if an in-person survey method were used. Since the study attempted to address all CAATE accredited universities, an online survey was the best and most feasible way to reach all athletic training students and certified athletic trainers at the accredited programs included in the study.

### **Threats**

Throughout the study, there were a few threats encountered that had negative effects of the study. These threats included a high dropout rate, an unknown response rate, and the accidental elimination of the NAIA institutions in the demographic questions. A description of each will be discussed below.

While there were 642 responses to this survey, only 442 were completed. All 642 respondents answered the demographic questions, but the number of complete responses decreased as participants progressed in the survey. The decrease in answers may be attributed to the fact that sexual harassment is a sensitive subject that many do not wish to discuss. It also may be due to a lack of interest in the survey. In addition, there was a 30% dropout rate during the two-week period the survey was open for completion. The high dropout rate may have resulted from respondents opening the survey, but not completing any of the questions. The high dropout rate, in conjunction with many incomplete surveys, was a threat to number of responses for the data collection.

Also, the unknown response rate was a threat for this survey. An elevated response rate is viewed as an important indicator of the success of a survey and the results produced. However, because of the context of this study, the response rate could not be determined. The survey was sent to all certified athletic trainers and program

directors at CAATE-accredited institutions, with the request that program directors send the survey to the athletic training students currently enrolled in the program. The number of students who received the survey is unknown. With this unknown number of students, an accurate response rate cannot be determined. The lack of response rate may be a threat to the overall success of the study.

The accidental and unintentional elimination of the NAIA institutions was a small threat to the survey. Because the NAIA institutions were not able to answer the demographic questions, the athletic trainers and athletic training students were not able to proceed with this survey. This restricted 112 certified athletic trainers and 4 program directors from completing the survey. An unknown number of students were also unable to accurately participate in the survey. This is a threat because it prevented participants from an entire association from answering the questions regarding sexual harassment in the collegiate setting. The oversight of the NAIA institutions may have reduced the number of responses to the survey, thus limiting the generalizability of the data collected.

### **Protection of human subjects**

Throughout the study, all participants were made aware that their responses would be completely anonymous. The survey was entirely voluntary, and no individual was forced to participate. Sexual harassment is a sensitive subject, so there was no force or coercion in insisting the respondents complete the survey. In the consent form, there were links to websites that would provide help to participants in the event that this survey created negative emotional effects. These links were offered to allow participants to seek help if the survey caused any type of emotional or mental health issue.

All information obtained was protected in a variety of ways. The survey was



conducted through Qualtrics, and was password protected. All information used for the statistical analysis was stored on a personal laptop that was also password protected. In addition, FileVault was activated on the personal laptop during data analysis, and this also encrypted the data and was password protected. All statistical documents were password protected as well. The documents were backed up on a portable hard drive, which required a password to access. I was the only individual who accessed the information, and was the only person to know the password for Qualtrics, the personal laptop, FileVault, and the portable hard drive. At the end of the research study, all information was deleted from the computer, documents, and the hard drive.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

The present research study investigated student-athletes' sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students in a collegiate setting. In this section, the quantitative and qualitative findings are presented. For each question, the response rate will be discussed, as well as a breakdown of what the results illustrated from the survey.

At the close of the survey, there were 642 total responses, and 442 complete responses. The survey was sent to all athletic trainers and program directors at CAATE-accredited institutions. The program directors were asked to send the survey to the athletic training students currently enrolled in the athletic training program. It was not possible to determine the response rate because the number of students who received and participated in the survey was unknown.

The total number of responses varied with each question. The first five questions, which contained demographic information of the participants, received 642 responses. Questions 6-8 had 503 responses, and question 9 had 502 responses; question 10 had 500 responses. Question 11 asked respondents to explain, in detail, the sexual harassment behavior that occurred. Because it was not applicable to all respondents, only 304 responses were collected for this question. Question 12 had 502 responses. Question 13 asked respondents to answer if they were aware of their institution's policy against sexual harassment and had witnessed it in effect, which limited the responses to 291. The remainder of the survey asked qualitative questions about a specific instance or instances where a student-athlete sexually harassed an athletic trainer or athletic training student. Because fewer respondents had experiences to share, the responses continued to decline. Question 14 had 326 responses, question 15 had 259 responses, and questions 16 and 17

had 247 and 242 responses respectively. The final question had 249 responses. The total number of responses is depicted in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

*Number of Responses*

<b>Question(s)</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
1-5	642
6-8	503
9	502
10	500
11	304
12	502
13	291
14	326
15	259
16	247
17	242
18	249

Although there were 642 responses survey, only 442 were fully completed. This 30% dropout rate indicated that participants opened the survey, but did not complete any of the questions. On the day the survey was opened, 434 surveys that were started. Ninety-two surveys were started on the second day, and the numbers drastically decreased throughout the duration of the two-week period.

This research design was a mixed methods survey in order to gather both quantitative and qualitative data related to athletic trainers' personal experiences of sexual harassment by student-athletes. The quantitative questions were used to collect demographic information, percentages, and frequency of behaviors. The qualitative questions allowed participants to enter their own definition of sexual harassment, as well as reflect on their own experiences of these behaviors.

## Demographics

The first set of data collected in this survey related to respondents' demographic information. The current status of the respondent was the first question asked in the survey. The survey was sent out to athletic trainers and program directors at CAATE-accredited institutions, and the program directors were asked to send the survey out to the students currently enrolled in the program. The status of the participants was important in knowing if athletic training students received the survey through their program director. The division of the institution was also collected and analyzed to see if there was a higher frequency in Division I, Division II, and Division III colleges. Gender was an extremely important demographic question when dealing with sexual harassment. Many view females as the main victims of sexual harassment, but this question indicated how often males experience sexual harassment as well. There was a wide range of ages responding to the survey, which showed a distinction between how different generations respond to sexual harassment. Overall, the demographic information allowed for a better understanding of the background of the participants. Following are the questions included in the survey and the data obtained for each question.

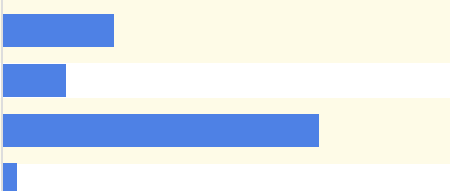
### **Q1: What is your current status? Check all that apply.**

There were 642 responses for this demographic question. The options were undergraduate student, graduate student, certified athletic trainer, and program director. Many graduate students and all program directors are certified athletic trainers, so they were able to select more than one answer for this question. Because of this, the percentages of responses do not add up to be 100%. There were 161 undergraduate students, 91 graduate students, 454 certified athletic trainers, and 21 program directors

that partially or fully completed this survey. The majority of the respondents were certified athletic trainers (n=342) who were not graduate students or program directors, but rather worked clinically in the field with at least one sport team. The distribution of the current status of the participants is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

*Current status of the participant*


#	Answer		Response	%
1	Undergraduate Student		161	25%
2	Graduate Student		91	14%
3	Certified Athletic Trainer		454	71%
4	Program Director		21	3%

**Q2: What division is your institution?**

The division of the institution was important in understanding if there was a difference between Division I, Division II, and Division III student-athletes committing sexual harassment behaviors. Of the 642 responses for this question, the greatest percentages of respondents were employed or enrolled at a Division I institution (59%). Twenty-three percent of participants were enrolled or employed at a Division II institution, and 18% at a Division III university. The fact that Division I schools have larger athletic training staffs and a higher enrollment in their CAATE-accredited athletic training programs contributed to the larger number of responses. The distribution of divisions is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

*Division of the institution*

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Division I		379	59%
2	Division II		146	23%
3	Division III		117	18%
	Total		642	100%

**Q3: What is your current age?**

Six hundred and forty-two participants responded to the demographic question on age. The age of 19-21 represented the highest in this survey with 131 responses. The second highest age range was 22-24 year olds with 115 responses, followed by 108 responses from participants between the ages of 25-27 years. Starting with age 28, the number of respondents greatly decreased and fluctuated through the age of 77. Because there were few responses between the ages of 52-77, they were grouped together in one category. The median age of the respondents was 26, which showed that the majority were currently college students or recent graduates. The mean was 29.47, demonstrating that this survey was completed mostly by respondents under the age of 30. A few factors may have contributed to the low age of respondents. First, younger athletic trainers or athletic training students may have an increased awareness of sexual harassment, causing them to have interest in the survey. Second, the younger generations may also have experienced more sexual harassment by student-athletes due to their close proximity in age. Third, athletic trainers who fell in the age range of 40-77 may have been in the profession for a while, and have experienced the behaviors so often that it no longer bothers them. A breakdown of the range of ages is shown in Figure 2.

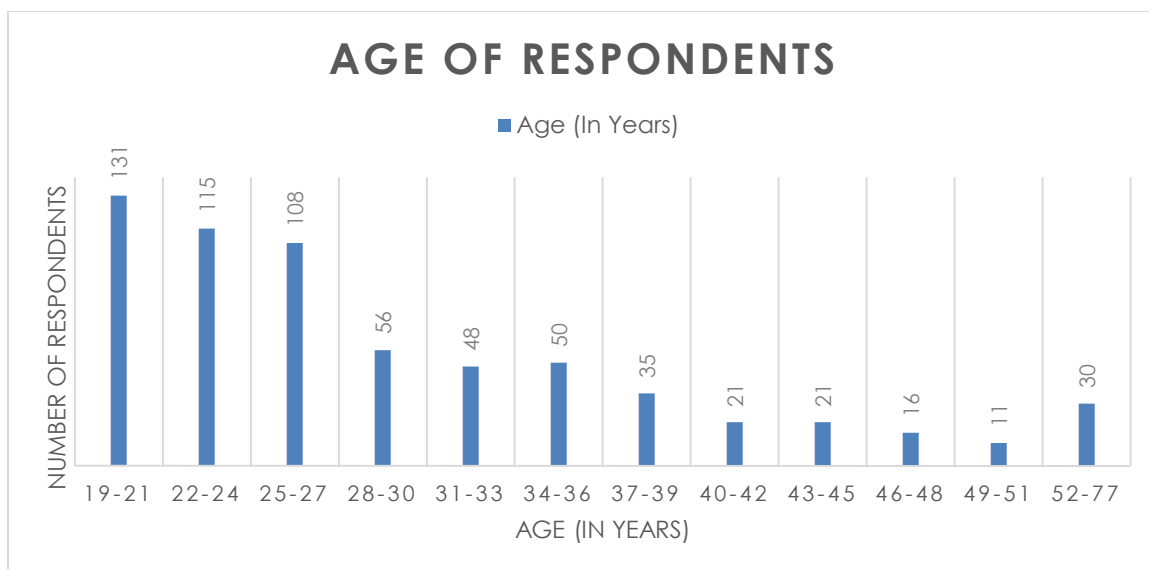


Figure 2: Age of respondents

#### Q4: What is your gender?

Of the 642 responses to the demographic question asking about gender, 65% were females and 35% were males. Athletic training is a predominately female profession, which may have led to the higher participation when compared to males. Also, females may have experienced more sexual harassment than males, causing them to be more interested in this survey. The distribution of gender is shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

#### Gender of participants

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Female		415	65%
2	Male		227	35%
3	Other		0	0%
	Total		642	100%

**Q5: What sports have you worked with? Please specify the gender of the team.**

Question 5 examined the sports teams that each athletic trainer or athletic training student has worked with in the past. This was an open-ended question and participants were asked to type out all sports teams by gender with which they have worked. There were 642 responses for this question; however, only 611 were recorded. Thirty-one responses were discarded due to the participant either stating that he or she worked all sports or that it was not applicable to his or her job. Of the variety collected, only the top five sports of each gender are shown in the graph, representative of common sports that are offered at most institutions.

The responses of the female athletic trainers and athletic training students are depicted in Figure 3. After the discarded responses, there were 398 answers recorded from females. The most worked sport for females was football with 269 responses. Following that, women's basketball was the second most common, with 178 responses. Figure 3 shows that female athletic trainers and athletic training students work almost equally with male and female sports. This cross-gender relationship could be a precursor to female athletic trainers and athletic training students being sexually harassed by student-athletes.

The responses of the male athletic trainers and athletic training students are shown in Figure 4. There were 213 responses recorded from males after the incomplete answers were discarded. Similarly to the females, male athletic trainers and athletic training students worked most with football (143 responses). The next most commonly worked sports were women's basketball, women's soccer, softball, women's track and women's



volleyball. Males working with female student-athletes can also predispose the athletic trainers or athletic training students to being sexually harassed in the collegiate setting.

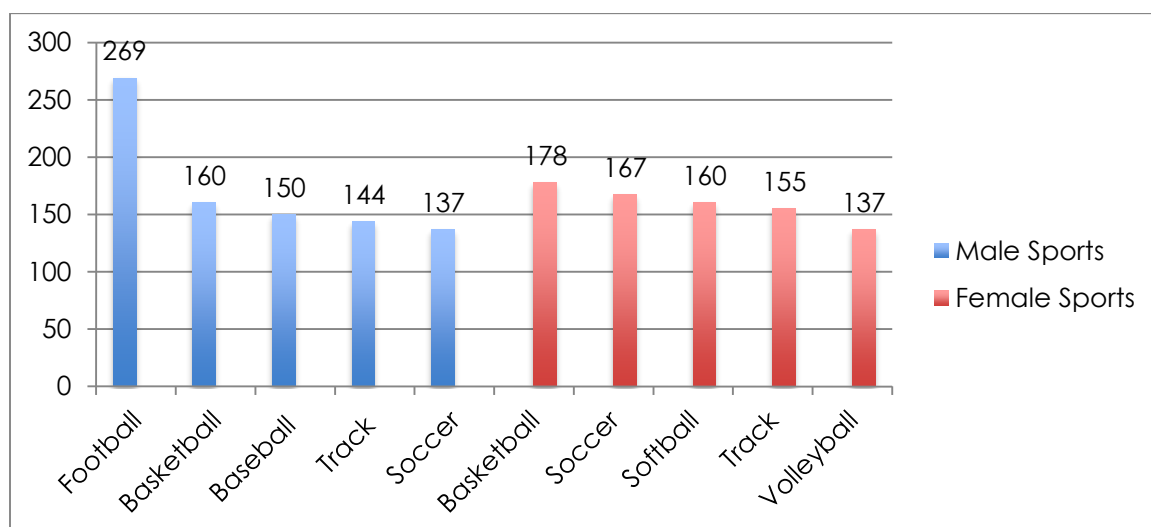


Figure 3. Sports that female athletic trainers and athletic training students have worked

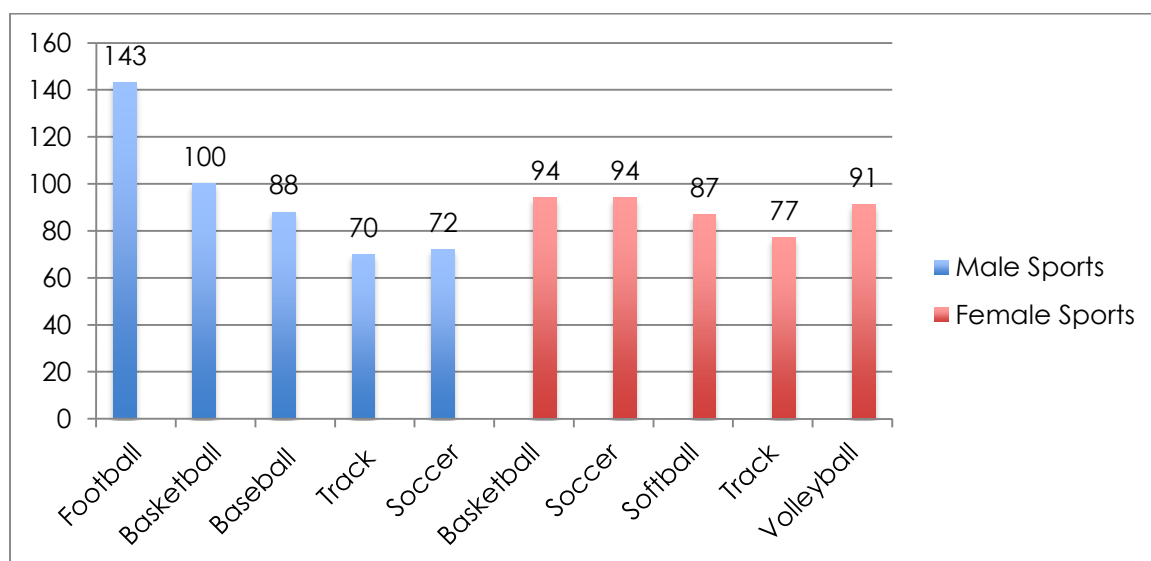


Figure 4. Sports that male athletic trainers and athletic training students have worked

### Sexual Harassment Questions

After the demographic information was collected, the survey continued on to a section that asked questions pertaining to sexual harassment. This section was comprised of six questions that collected both qualitative and quantitative data. The questions asked

participants to define sexual harassment and rank the frequency of sexual harassment occurring at their institution. Respondents were also asked if sexual harassment was an issue at their college and whether they had ever witnessed or experienced sexual harassment by a student-athlete. If the respondent answered affirmatively to witnessing or experiencing sexual harassment, he or she was then asked to state what happened during that situation. The purpose of this section was to see how athletic trainers and athletic training students defined the term sexual harassment, and to examine how often it happens at their institution.

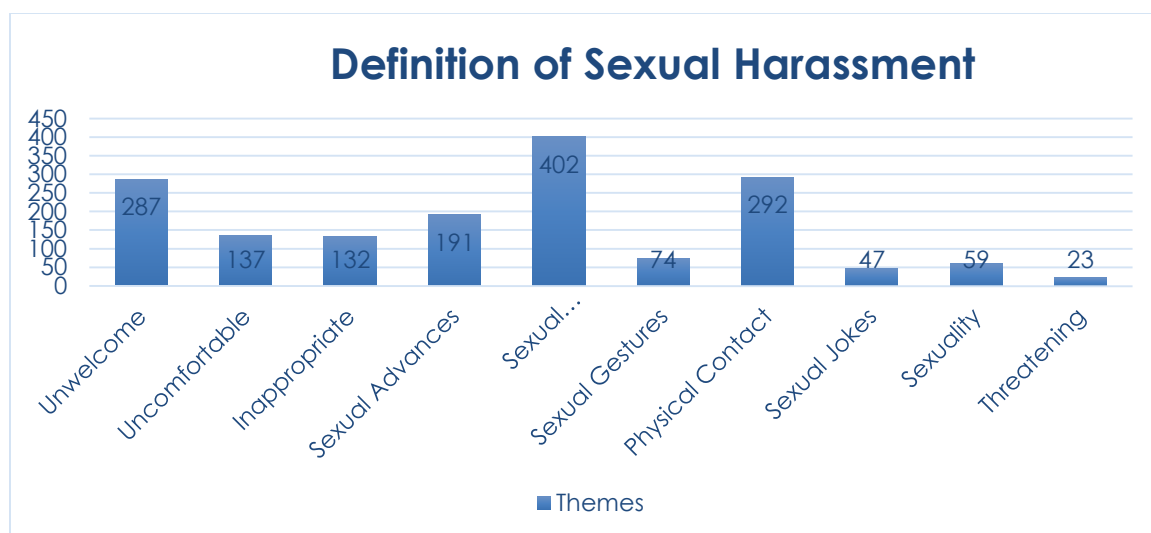
**Q6: What is your definition of the term, “sexual harassment”? Include examples of behaviors that you believe fall under this term.**

In this question, there were 503 responses, which is 139 responses lower than the demographic questions. This question asked respondents to define sexual harassment in their own words, including behaviors that they believe fall under the term. This was an open-ended question allowing participants to input their own opinions without being guided to answer in a biased way. After the survey was closed, the responses to this question were viewed to find common themes in the definition of sexual harassment. Many of the responses from the survey included more than one theme, which is why the total number depicted in the graph is higher than the response number.

The most frequently stated theme was “sexual comments” with 402 responses, which showed up in 80% of the answers. “Sexual comments” can include catcalling, inappropriate jargon, or pet names that are unwelcome. The reason this theme is so high may be due to the wide array of statements that can fall under this term. Following “sexual comments,” “physical contact” is the second highest ranked theme with 292

responses, or 58%. “Physical contact” can include improper hand placement, kissing, hugging, or any touching that is not welcome. Close behind “physical contact,” 267 respondents included the theme, “unwelcome,” in their definition of sexual harassment. Whether the sexual harassment is verbal or physical, any unwelcome behavior usually sent a red flag to the victim.

In defining sexual harassment, the behavior, “sexual advances,” was stated by 191 respondents (38%) followed by the term, “uncomfortable,” with 137 responses (27%). One hundred and thirty-two participants indicated the word “inappropriate,” which was 26% of the responses; “sexual gestures” were included in the definition for 74 responses (15%). “Comments about an individual’s sexuality” were noted in 59 answers (12%). Examples of this included not wanting care from a specific gender or telling a woman that athletic training is a man’s profession. Forty-seven responses indicated “sexual jokes” as a behavior of sexual harassment; this represented 9% of the responses. The last theme was the term, “threatening;” only 23 respondents (5%) included the use of threat or coercion to receive sexual favors as a form of sexual harassment. The information on the definition of sexual harassment is depicted in Figure 5.



*Figure 5: Definition of sexual harassment*

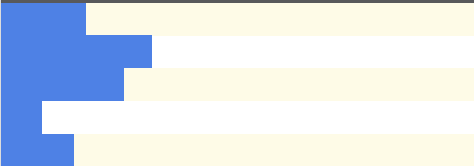
**Q7: Based on your own personal definition, how many occurrences of sexual harassment behavior have you witnessed within the athletic training room or another athletic training location?**

Question 7 asked respondents to select, from the options shown, how many occurrences of sexual harassment behavior they have witnessed in the athletic training room or another athletic training location. The participants had the option to choose from the following answers: 0 occurrences, 0-2 occurrences, 3-7 occurrences, 7-10 occurrences, or more than 10 occurrences. Of the 503 responses to this question, 18% percent of participants stated that they have never witnessed sexual harassment. Thirty-two percent answered to witnessing sexual harassment less than two times, and 26% indicated witnessing sexual harassment behavior on 3-7 occasions. Nine percent stated having observed sexual harassment 7-10 times, and the most startling of all the numbers is that 16% had witnessed it on more than 10 occasions. Among the responses, 82% indicated witnessing sexual harassment at least once in the athletic training room or

athletic training setting. This was important to the overall study by showing the number of athletic trainers and athletic training students who have observed sexual harassment during their employment or education at these institutions on at least one occasion. The high frequency may be detrimental to the work or learning experience of the athletic trainers or athletic training students involved. A breakdown of the answers is illustrated in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

*Occurrences of sexual harassment*

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Never		90	18%
2	0-2		160	32%
3	3-7		131	26%
4	7-10		44	9%
5	10+		78	16%
	Total		503	100%

**Q8: On a scale of 1-10 (1 being not frequently, 10 being very frequently), please rate the following question: Sexual harassment occurs at my institution.**

There were 503 responses for question 8, which asked how often sexual harassment occurs at the institution where the athletic trainer or athletic training student was enrolled or employed. This question was displayed on a sliding scale, with 1 indicating that sexual harassment does not occur frequently and 10 indicating that sexual harassment does occur very frequently. The mean of this data set was 2.35, depicting that sexual harassment happens at most institutions, but not very often. The standard deviation of 1.92 was somewhat large for the small range of numbers, demonstrating the variability in responses for the question being asked. This question was significant to the study because it showed how serious of an issue sexual harassment is throughout the entire

sample, but that it is not something that happened on a consistent basis. This information is shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

*How often sexual harassment happens at the institution*

#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Responses
1	Sexual harassment happens at my institution.	0.00	10.00	2.35	1.92	503

**Q9: Do you feel as if you have been subjected to any sexual harassment behaviors?**

There were 502 responses for question 9, showing a one participant loss from the previous three questions. This question asked participants to state if they had been subjected to any sexual harassment behaviors. The question had three options for answers—yes, no, and choose not to respond. Because of the personal nature of sexual harassment, it was necessary to give participants an option not to respond to this question. Forty percent of participants responded affirmatively to being subjected to sexual harassment behaviors, while 59% stated they had not experienced these types of behaviors. One percent chose not to answer. This question was extremely important for this study, as it examined the number of athletic trainers and athletic training students who had been sexually harassed by student-athletes. The percentage of respondents that have experienced these types of behaviors was alarmingly high. This means that two out of every five athletic trainers or athletic training students have been victims of sexual harassment. The distribution of answers for this question is shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

*Victim of sexual harassment*

#	Answer		Response	%
1	No		294	59%
2	Yes		203	40%
3	I choose not to answer		5	1%
	Total		502	100%

**Q10: Have you witnessed sexual harassment of an athletic trainer or athletic training student in any athletic training setting? (practice, athletic training room, road trips, etc.) If yes, please indicate what your status was during that time (undergraduate student, graduate student, certified athletic trainer).**

There were 500 responses for this question, which was slightly lower than the previous question. This question asked respondents if they had observed sexual harassment of an athletic training student or athletic trainer in any athletic training location. Fifty-nine percent of participants stated that they had observed sexual harassment of another athletic training student or athletic trainer, while 41% responded negatively to witnessing this type of event. It is startling that over half of the respondents have witnessed another person in the athletic training room or other athletic training location being sexually harassed. The responses from this question are depicted in Table 3.8.

If the respondents chose yes to having observed sexual harassment of another athletic training student or athletic trainer, there was a field for them to enter what their status was when they observed this occurrence. Because the respondent was able to enter his or her own answer, many indicated more than one status in their response. There were

263 responses entered in to this field for this question. One hundred and sixty-five respondents indicated observing sexual harassment as an undergraduate student, while 62 witnessed these behaviors as a graduate student, and 116 as a certified athletic trainer. The number of undergraduate students who have the observed sexual harassment of a classmate or preceptor is shockingly high; witnessing sexual harassment behaviors during their education can cause a negative attitude toward the athletic training profession. This differed from the previous question in that it examined how often respondents observed sexual harassment rather than how often they experienced it. The distribution of status is shown in Figure 6.

Table 3.8

*Observed sexual harassment in an athletic training location*

#	Answer		Response	%
1	No		205	41%
2	Yes		295	59%
	Total		500	100%

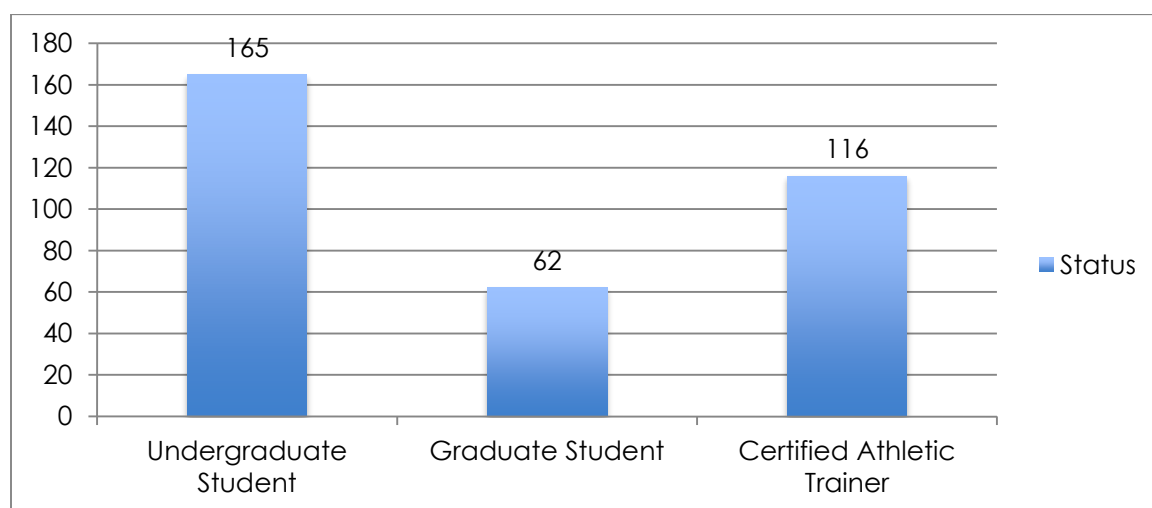


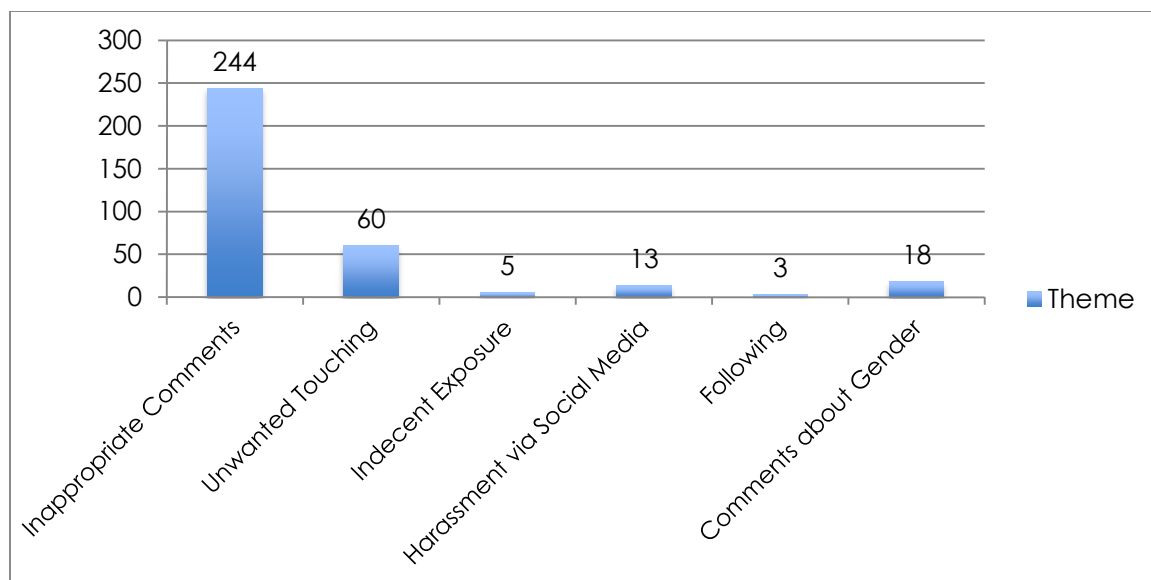
Figure 6. Status of respondent when sexual harassment was observed



**Q11: If you have seen any of the aforementioned behaviors, please explain in detail what occurred.**

This question had 304 responses, which is fewer than the responses in previous questions. This may be caused by respondents not wanting to answer the question, or that not all respondents had an experience to explain. Respondents were asked to explain, in detail, the sexual harassment they either witnessed or experienced. After reading through the responses, multiple common themes were chosen due to the frequency of the sexual harassment behaviors reported. Because it was an open-ended question, many responses fell under multiple themes, resulting in 344 behaviors described.

The types of sexual harassment experienced by athletic training students and athletic trainers varied widely. Of the 304 responses, 244 stated “inappropriate comments,” including unwanted compliments and comments about sexual tendencies, as the main examples of sexual harassment by student-athletes. Sixty respondents stated “unwanted touching” by the student-athlete, and 18 indicated experiencing “derogatory comments due to gender.” Thirteen participants stated that they had been “harassed through social media,” five experienced “indecent exposure” in the athletic training setting, and three reported being “followed or stalked” by a student-athlete. The frequency of sexual harassment behaviors were reported by athletic training students and athletic trainers are shown in Figure 7.



*Figure 7.* Sexual harassment behaviors experienced by athletic trainers and athletic training students

Each theme will be discussed in greater detail using direct quotations from the participants. Some respondents did not go into great detail with their answers, and simply just stated one of the themes. However, other respondents gave more personal stories about in-depth occurrences that happened to them.

**Inappropriate Comments.** There were 244 total responses that indicated “inappropriate comments” of a sexual nature. Included in this section were any comments about sexual tendencies or inappropriate remarks made toward athletic training students and athletic trainers by student-athletes. The comments showed sexual harassment behaviors toward both genders. The following were direct quotations of sexual harassment behaviors that were included in the theme of “inappropriate comments:”

- “Athletic training students were asked to go back to an athlete’s hotel room, dorm room, or apartment.”

- “Male athlete kept making crude and sexual remarks across the room to the female athletic training student about her body.”
- “Athlete once threatened to give me herpes.”
- “One male student-athlete made inappropriate comments to a female athletic training student who bent down to pick an object off the field, telling her, ‘I know something else you can do while you’re down there’.”
- “Being cornered in the athletic training room by a football player telling me what he was planning to do with me sexually.”
- “Hearing comments about the athletic training uniform and the ‘things I would do to her’.”
- “Being called names like ‘dirty [name]’, ‘free-trial’, etc.”
- “Football players singing a song about an athletic training student’s butt and how they would like to get with her. Lacrosse team referring to athletic training student as ‘big tit [name]’.”
- “Football athlete attempting to get athletic training student’s phone number because he thought she would have sex with him.”
- “When supervising a pool workout, I had a female student-athlete asked me if I prefer she wore a thong. She also asked me what I would do if she came out of the pool naked.”
- “There was a men’s lacrosse player who continually made comments to one of my peers about hooking up with her at practice and asking her to come to their parties. He would tell her that he was going to make out with her on the practice field and hook up with her in the field house.”

- “An athlete pointed toward his groin and mouthed ‘come get this’.”
- “Comments about my body, conversations about sexual activity, questions about my sexual behavior/preferences/partners.”
- “I told a men’s basketball player that I would not clean up after him because I was not his mother, he winked at me and said, ‘I know, but you can still call me Daddy’.”
- “An athlete slapping his crotch, saying ‘get in there real good, it needs to be ready for later’ when referencing an athletic training student stretching his adductors.”
- “Prior to a game, several collegiate male basketball players were discussing some girls on campus, including an athletic training student (she was not present) and one made a comment about ‘pitching a tent’ when describing his reaction to her.”

**Unwanted touching.** There were 60 responses that indicated “unwanted touching” as a sexual harassment behavior that was experienced by an athletic trainer or athletic training student. This section covered any comments about “unwanted touching”, including hugging, kissing, or touching of inappropriate body parts. The comments showed sexual harassment behaviors towards both genders of athletic training students and athletic trainers. The following were direct quotations of sexual harassment behaviors that were included in the theme of “unwanted touching:”

- “I myself have had my butt grabbed by a field hockey player while I was an undergraduate student.”
- “I have been slapped on the buttocks by female athletes on more than two occasions.”
- “I was touched inappropriately during my time at football.”

- “Unwanted flirting and kissing.”
- “Unwanted touching, whether it be a leg graze or a back rub, ‘accidentally’ touching breasts or butt.”
- “Athlete purposely skimmed my breast in the athletic training room.”
- “An athlete hugged another athletic training student and said that he hoped he would be seeing her later and gave her his room number.”
- “A football player grabbing a fellow athletic training student’s butt. A football player walking up and rubbing my shoulders from behind, uninvited or wanted.”
- “Female student was bent over at the waist getting tape out from under a cabinet, an athlete walked past and smacked the butt of the female student.”
- “One athlete who did kiss me on the cheek.”
- “Players spanking females athletic training students as they walked by.”
- “Rubbing shoulders, stroking of hair, putting an arm around someone’s shoulder, hugging.”
- “Male football player reached for a water bottle from student athletic trainer and intentionally touched female’s buttocks. While receiving treatment from a female student athletic trainer, male basketball player tried to rub her vagina over her pants.”

**Indecent exposure.** Five respondents indicated experiencing “indecent exposure” from a student-athlete. “Indecent exposure” included showing inappropriate body parts during treatment or in the athletic training room. The comments showed sexual harassment behaviors toward both genders of athletic training students and athletic

trainers. The following were examples of sexual harassment behaviors that were included in the theme of “indecent exposure.”

- “A male athlete with a groin injury tried to make his genital area more exposed than necessary to see if I would look.”
- “Football players were running into my athletic training room naked and asking if I liked what I saw.”
- “I had a student-athlete over expose himself during treatment.”
- “After telling a male athlete that he could not change clothes in the athletic training room, he got completely naked in the corner of the room and he said, ‘you can look if you want to’.”

**Harassment via social media.** There were thirteen respondents that stated they had been “harassed through social media” by a student-athlete. The athletic trainers and athletic training students responded that pictures had been taken of them and sent to other athletes, as well as inappropriate comments being posted about them on social media sites. The comments displayed in this section represent answers from both genders. The following were examples of “sexual harassment through social media” that were experienced by athletic trainers and athletic training students:

- “Picture of another athletic training student’s butt was taken and posted on Snapchat by an athlete.”
- “Anonymous athlete on a male team tweeted a sexual comment about the female athletic training student working with them.”
- “There was a Facebook page for students at the institution at which I am currently employed where they could anonymously post about their college experiences.

One of the anonymous posts was from a student-athlete who described in graphic detail how they wanted a sexual relationship with one of our female athletic training students.”

- “Male athletes were taking pictures of female athletic training students.”
- “Athlete sending inappropriate messages on social media.”
- “Inappropriate use of social media (student-athlete was caught Snapchatting a picture of me with an inappropriate comment).”
- “As I was giving a quad massage to a football player, the player secretly Facetimed his friend, videoing me giving the massage. His reasoning was that he wanted to show off to his friend that a good looking girl gives him massages.”

**Following.** There were only three responses that indicated student-athletes “following” the athletic training students or athletic trainers as a form of sexual harassment. However, the seriousness of this issue was the reason for inclusion in this question. Athletic trainers and athletic training students stated feeling very uncomfortable and threatened in situations where student-athletes were following them outside of the athletic training room. Both genders were represented in this question. The next section of quotations were examples of “following” that athletic trainers and athletic training students viewed as sexual harassment:

- “Male student-athlete pursued and followed female athletic training student through a building after she told him no.”
- “Athlete mentioned he was going to follow me to my room late at night for special treatment.”

**Comments about gender.** Eighteen athletic training students and athletic trainers stated “comments about gender” as a form of sexual harassment. All of the respondents in this theme were female. No male athletic training students or athletic trainers reflected experiences of being belittled due to their gender. Examples in this section included denying care because of gender or making stereotypical comments about gender. The following were examples of “comments about gender” that were perceived as sexual harassment:

- “Many jokes were made by the players about how she should fit the stereotype of a woman from the past. Many jokes were made about women only being good for certain sexual behaviors.”
- “Male athletes putting female athletic trainer down because we aren’t as smart as male athletic trainers.”
- “Athlete refusing to be treated by a female athletic trainer, believing they were not as qualified as a male athletic trainer.”
- “Football players would ‘joke’ or make vulgar connotations to myself and fellow athletic training students. They would comment on how the only thing girls were good for was making them sandwiches and being on our backs.”
- “I was told that I would not get certain jobs due to the fact that I was a woman.”
- “I’ve seen the inappropriate use of homophobic or gender specific slurs.”
- “I have been in this profession for 21 years and when I started, it was a ‘man’s profession’. There were many comments to me when I was a student or just starting out that a ‘pretty little thing’ like you needs to be home and pregnant, not working in a sweaty football locker room.”



## **Policy Questions**

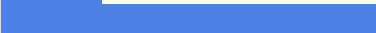
Following the section of sexual harassment, the survey proceeded to ask two questions about the policy at the institution. These two questions collected quantitative data. The purpose of this section was to determine if athletic trainers and athletic training students were aware of the sexual harassment policy at their institution. If the participant knew the policy, he or she was then asked whether the policy had ever been put into effect when a situation involving sexual harassment occurred. Athletic trainers and athletic training students may not know how to report sexual harassment behaviors if the policy is not well known. If athletic trainers and athletic training students are educated on the policy at their institution, they may be more likely to report the offense; this may lead to a lower frequency of sexual harassment behaviors.

### **Q12: Do you know your institution's current policy for dealing with sexual harassment?**

Question 12 asked respondents if they were aware of the current sexual harassment policy at their institution; there were 502 responses to this question. Seventy-nine percent of respondents stated that they were aware of their institution's policy, while 21% responded that they were not aware of their institution's policy. If they do not know the sexual harassment policy, athletic trainers and athletic training students will not be able to use the correct process to report behaviors. It would be impossible to properly handle sexual harassment cases if one did not know the institution's policy. While the majority of respondents were aware of the policy, it is imperative that all athletic trainers and athletic training students are educated on how to report sexual harassment if the issue happens to arise. The results from this question are illustrated in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9

*Awareness of sexual harassment policy*

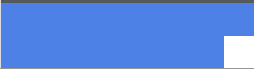
#	Answer		Response	%
1	No		107	21%
2	Yes		395	79%
	Total		502	100%

**Q13: If you are aware of your current policy, have you witnessed the policy be put into effect when an issue of sexual harassment has arisen?**

There were 291 responses for question 13, which was the lowest response rate in the survey to this point. This may be due to the fact that not all respondents have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment by a student-athlete, so this question was not applicable to them. This question asked respondents whether they had ever witnessed the policy being put into effect when an issue of sexual harassment occurred. Forty-seven percent of participants stated that they witnessed the sexual harassment policy being enacted, while 53% indicated the policy was not used when sexual harassment occurred. Over half of the respondents who experienced or witnessed sexual harassment by a student-athlete did not follow the proper reporting procedure, which means that the offenders were not punished for their actions. If student-athletes are not disciplined for sexual harassment, they may not realize that their behaviors are inappropriate. The issue of sexual harassment will not be halted until the policy is enacted for each case. Distributions of the findings are displayed in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10

*Enactment of sexual harassment policy*

#	Answer		Response	%
1	No		155	53%
2	Yes		136	47%
	Total		291	100%

**Sexual Harassment Occurrence**

The last section of this survey asked respondents to answer a series of questions if they had witnessed or experienced sexual harassment by a student-athlete. Questions 14-18 were used to gain an in-depth description of the sexual harassment situation witnessed or experienced. All questions in this section were open-ended, which allowed the respondents to include all relevant information for each question. This section asked athletic trainers and athletic training students to indicate their response to the incident, and how it affected their education or employment. There was a question that asked whether anyone was informed that the sexual harassment incident that had taken place, one question that asked whether respondents took further action to avoid harm by the perpetrator, and a final question that inquired how the athletic trainer or athletic training student would have like to see the situation resolved.

**Q14: What was your response to the incident?**

There were 326 answers to the open-ended question on the participant's response to the incident. After reading through the answers, multiple common themes were chosen due to the frequency of responses to the sexual harassment incident. The responses were sorted to determine how participants reacted to the sexual harassment behavior from a student-athlete. The purpose of this question was to see how athletic trainers and athletic training students reacted after experiencing sexual harassment.

The most frequently reported answer (122 responses) stated coaches talked to the athlete. Seventy-nine participants claimed that they ignored the behavior, and brushed it off as if it did not happen. Ninety respondents reported the behavior, but this was not always done through the proper chain of command through the Title IX department. Of the ninety athletic trainers and athletic training students who reported the sexual harassment, only six went through the Title IX coordinator at their institution. Most respondents stated that they told their preceptor or another athletic trainer about the incident; this is not the proper step that one should take when dealing with sexual harassment. Seventeen participants indicated they were embarrassed or upset about the sexual harassment, which resulted in them not reporting it to anyone. In six cases, the athletic training student was moved to a different site to avoid further harm by the perpetrator. Eighteen respondents stated that the student-athlete was kicked out of the athletic training room, but this was not a permanent dismissal. A breakdown of the results is depicted in Figure 8.

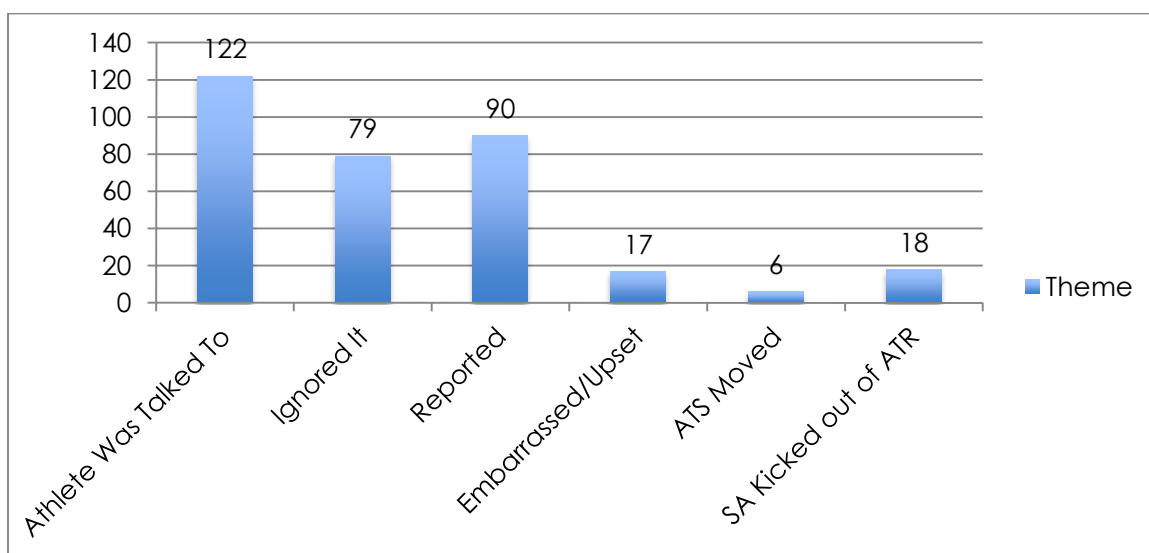
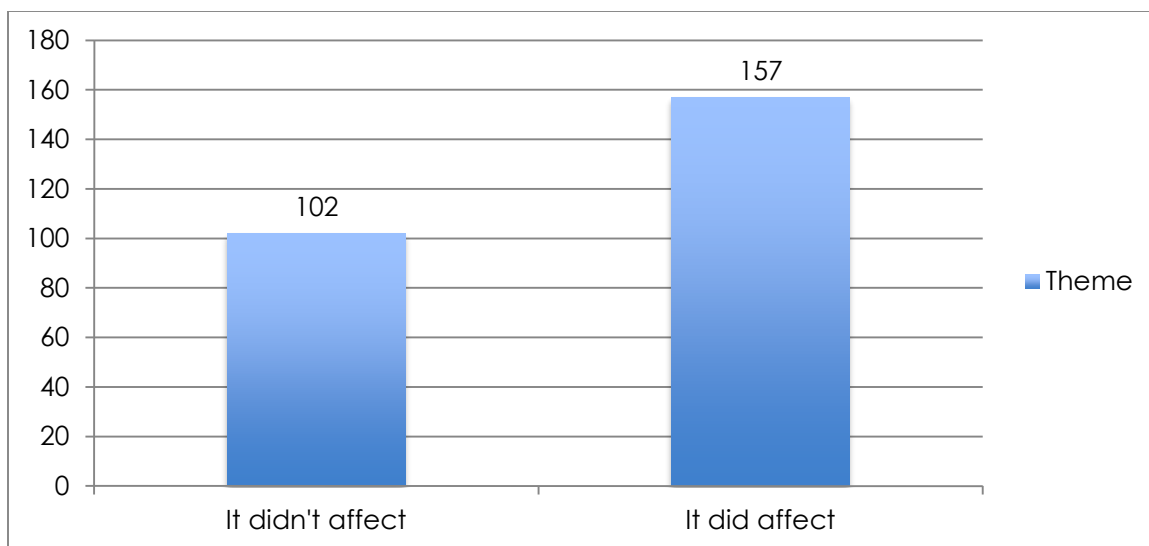


Figure 8. Responses to sexual harassment incident

**Q15: How did this situation of sexual harassment from a student-athlete affect your education, work-life, or clinical experience?**

This question had 259 responses, and asked participants to answer if the situation of sexual harassment affected their education, work-life, or clinical experience. Many of the athletic trainers and athletic training students responded to this question with a “yes” or “no” answer, so there was not much background context. After looking through all of the responses, the answers were sorted into two themes—the situation either affected or did not affect their education, work-life, or clinical experience. The purpose of this question was to see if sexual harassment by a student-athlete was affecting the work or education of athletic trainers and athletic training students. Out of the 259 responses, 102 stated that there were no negative effects after the sexual harassment occurred. However, 157 respondents reported that the sexual harassment behavior did affect their work or educational experience. The athletic trainers and athletic training students who reported that sexual harassment impacted their education or work claimed that it created an uncomfortable environment in the athletic training room. This sense of discomfort can lead to an unfavorable learning and working environment, which is detrimental to athletic trainers and athletic training students. A breakdown of the responses is shown in Figure 9.

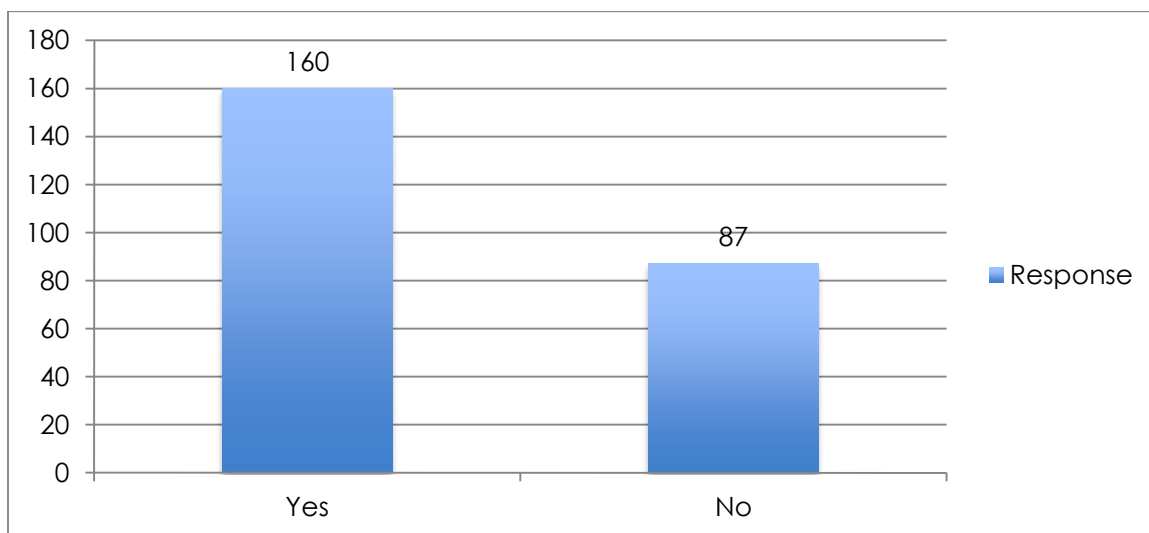


*Figure 9.* Frequency of athletic trainers and athletic training students whose work-life, education, or clinical experience was affected by sexual harassment

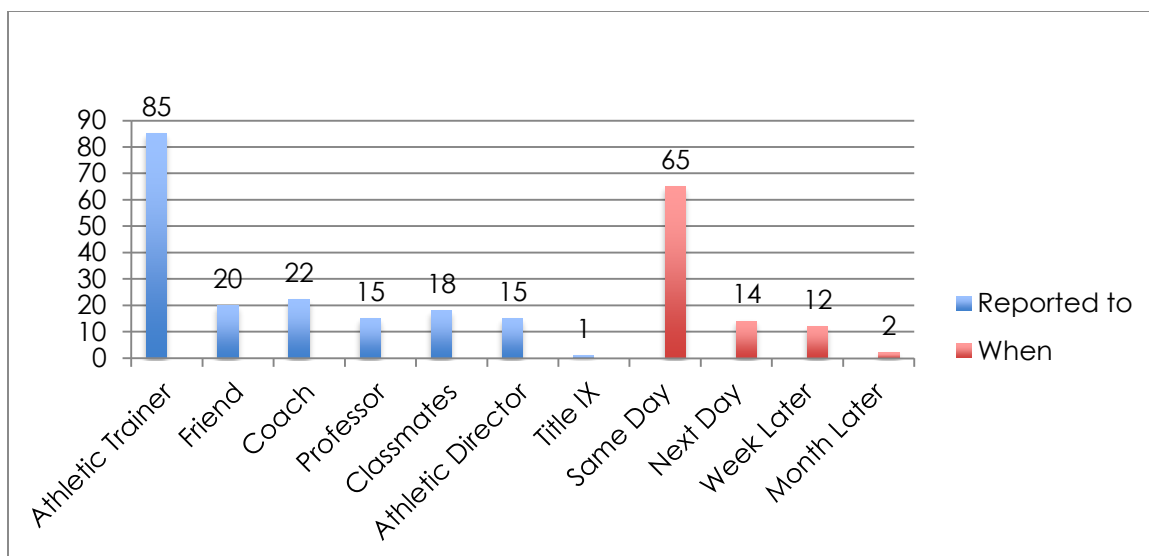
**Q16: Did you tell anyone about the incident? If so, who and when (immediately after, week after, etc.)?**

Question 16 asked respondents to indicate whether they told anyone about the sexual harassment occurrence. If the respondent stated affirmatively to reporting the incident to another individual, he or she was asked to whom it was reported to and when. There were 247 total responses for this question, decreasing in the number of responses from the previous questions in the survey. The purpose of this question was to gain insight as to whether victims of sexual harassment were reporting the incidents to anyone, and whether the proper chain of command was followed. This question was also used to see if occurrences of sexual harassment were being reported in a timely manner. Out of the 247 responses, 160 athletic trainers and athletic training students indicated that they did inform another person about the incident. Eighty-seven participants did not report the sexual harassment behavior to another individual. This is illustrated in Figure 10.

While the number of respondents that did report to another person is high, the person the incident was reported to was usually an athletic trainer, classmate or friend. Only one person indicated reporting to Title IX, which differs from the response to question 14. In question 14, six participants stated the occurrence was reported to Title IX. This difference may be due to the reduced number of responses in this question. Sixty-five athletic trainers or athletic training students claimed to report the sexual harassment behavior within the same day. This was the highest response for this part of the question, illustrating that a majority of athletic trainers or athletic training students who have experienced sexual harassment behaviors are reporting them to someone in a timely fashion. However, without going through the proper chain of command, the sexual harassment behaviors are not being reported to the right individuals to handle this serious issue. The distribution of answers for this part of the question is depicted in Figure 11.



*Figure 10.* Frequency of athletic trainers and athletic training students who reported the sexual harassment occurrence to another individual



*Figure 11.* Distribution of whom the athletic trainers and athletic training students reported the sexual harassment to and when it was reported

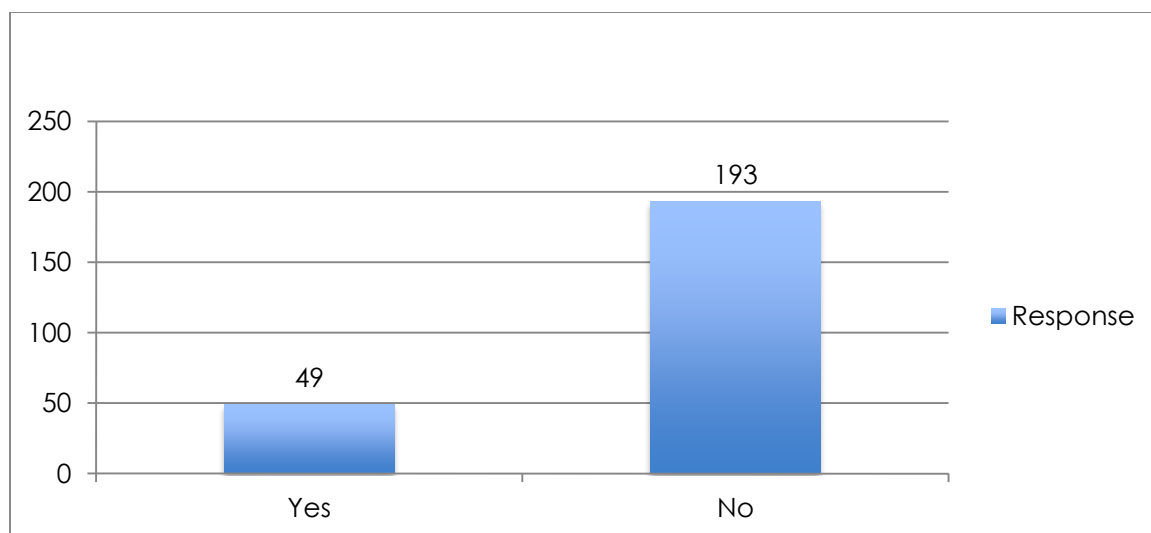
**Q17: Did you take further action to avoid harm by the perpetrator? (switching clinical sites, switching sport assignments, etc.)**

Question 17 had 242 responses. This was another open-ended question, and many responded with a “yes” or “no” answer, which is depicted in Figure 12. However, some participants did include the action taken to ensure that the victim and perpetrator were not working together anymore. Forty-nine respondents reported taking further action, while 193 respondents did not make any changes to their clinical or work assignment. The purpose of this question was to see how many athletic trainers or athletic training students had to make changes to their clinical or work assignments due to sexual harassment.

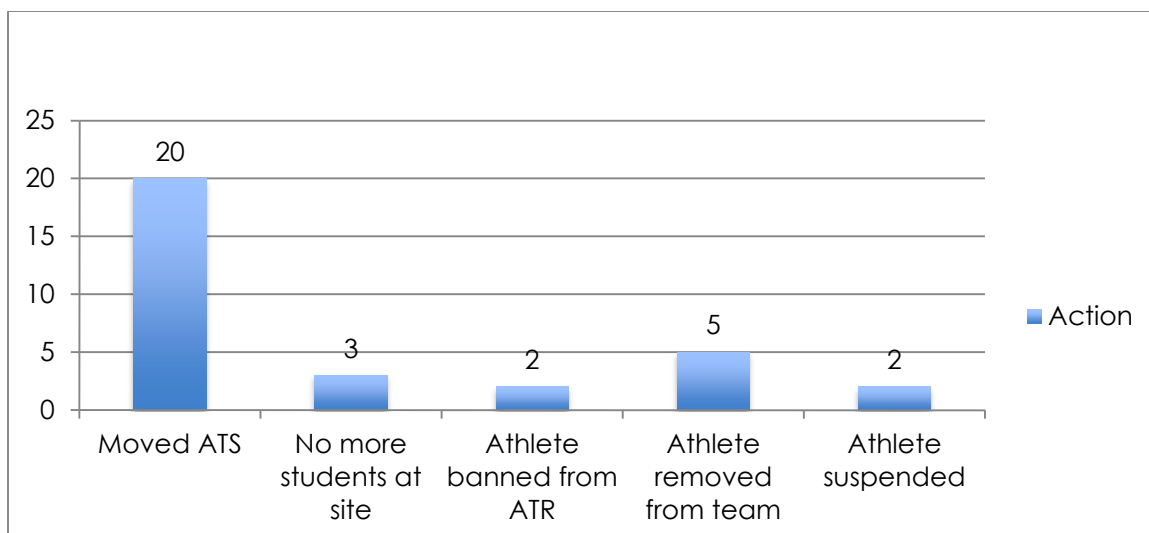
Thirty-two athletic trainers and athletic training students reported the action taken to avoid further harm by the student-athlete who had sexually harassed them. The highest response was that the athletic training student was removed from the clinical site and placed elsewhere. Three respondents stated that athletic training students were no longer



allowed at that clinical site. Five participants reported that the student-athlete was removed from the sport; two participants reported that the student-athlete was banned from the athletic training room, and two stated that the student-athlete was suspended. Out of the 32 actions taken, only 9 negatively affected the student-athlete. The most alarming aspect from this question is that twenty athletic training students had to be moved from their clinical site to avoid harm by the student-athlete who had sexually harassed them. Instead of punishing the student-athlete for their actions, the athletic training students were placed with a different sport to avoid the sexual harassment from occurring again. The breakdown of actions that were taken to avoid further contact with the student-athlete is illustrated in Figure 13.



*Figure 12.* Frequency of how many athletic trainers or athletic training students took action to avoid further harm by their perpetrator



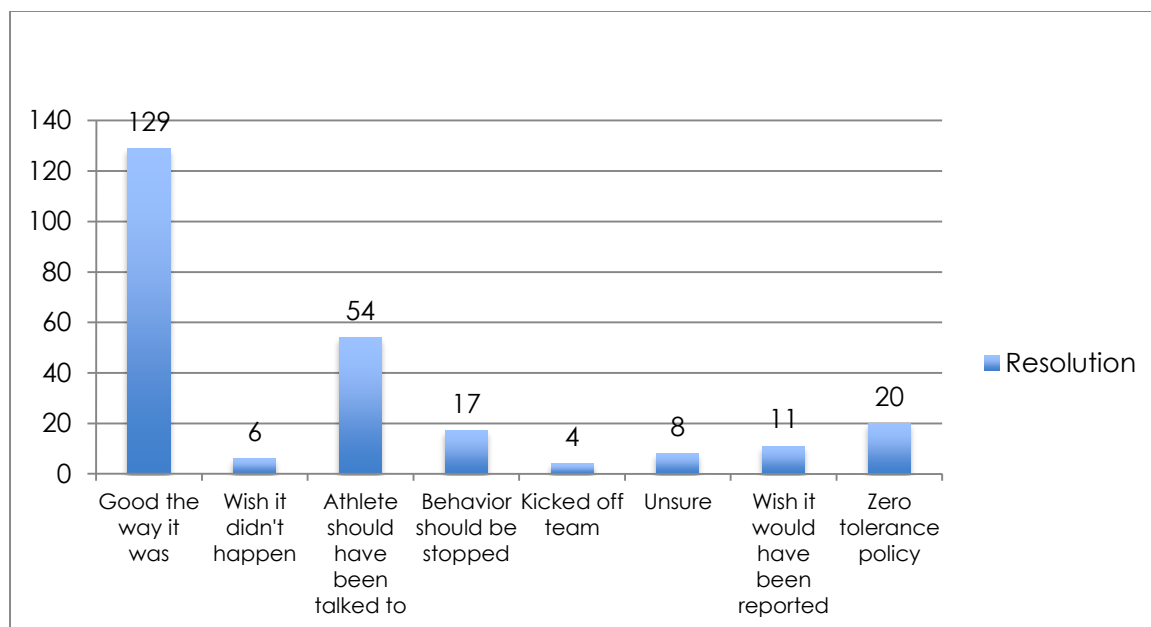
*Figure 13. Action that was taken to avoid further harm by perpetrator*

#### **Q18: How would you like to see the situation resolved?**

The final question in the survey asked participants how they would have liked to see the situation resolved after the sexual harassment occurred. There were 249 responses to this open-ended question. After reading through the responses, multiple common themes arose due to the frequency of the ideal resolution that was stated. Eight behaviors occurred multiple times in the responses. Fifty-two percent of respondents (129 responses) stated that the sexual harassment situation was handled well. The next highest resolution, 54 responses, stated that the athlete should have been verbally reprimanded for their inappropriate behavior. Twenty participants reported that a zero tolerance policy, with increased education of the issue, should be implemented at their institution.

Seventeen athletic trainers and athletic training students wished that the behavior would be stopped in the athletic training room, and 11 stated that they wished they would have reported the sexual harassment to administration. Eight participants were unsure of how they would have liked to see it resolved, 6 claimed that they wished it did not happen, and 4 respondents wanted the athlete to be kicked off the team for their actions. While

slightly over half of the respondents were happy with the manner in which the situation was handled, 48% were not satisfied with the resolution. There needs to be a more efficient policy put into effect to ensure that more athletic trainers and athletic training students are satisfied with the way sexual harassment is handled at their institution. A breakdown of the results for this question is displayed in Figure 14.



*Figure 14.* How athletic trainers and athletic training students would have liked the situation to be resolved

In this section, the findings of the survey were presented and discussed. The survey was constructed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The mixed methodology allowed for the research questions to be answered effectively. The following section presents an analysis of the results, implications, suggestions for future research, and conclusions.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

In this final chapter, the overview of the key findings from the survey is discussed. Following a discussion of the findings, the limitations of the study, implications, recommendations for future studies, and final conclusions are discussed. Prior to this study, few research articles examined sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students by student-athletes. This study attempted to fill the gap in the literature to gain an understanding of the frequency and types of sexual harassment behaviors that athletic trainers and athletic training students may experience while working in the collegiate setting. The survey was sent to all athletic trainers at CAATE-accredited institutions in good standing, and also to the program directors at those institutions. The program directors were asked to send the survey out to all students currently enrolled in the athletic training programs. The survey collected data on the definition of sexual harassment, the frequency of these behaviors, and whether the sexual harassment policy was known, and used in sexual harassment cases.

### **Overview of Key Findings**

The results were analyzed after the survey was closed, and there were several important findings from this research. To interpret the findings of this survey, it is necessary to revisit the initial research questions and discuss each question individually.

#### **How do athletic trainers/athletic training students define the term, “sexual harassment?”**

Respondents had a variety of definitions of sexual harassment. Many stated that sexual harassment only included unwelcome sexual comments and physical contact. Four hundred and two respondents indicated “sexual comments” as part of sexual harassment,

“physical contact” was stated by 292 respondents, and “unwelcome” was indicated by 267 respondents. However, many other terms and behaviors fall under Title IX’s definition of sexual harassment, including sex discrimination, or the potential for sexual harassment to interfere with learning or work. Because athletic trainers and athletic training students may not fully understand the definition of sexual harassment, they may be experiencing these behaviors without knowing it. Without proper education on the definition of sexual harassment, athletic trainers and athletic training students may not be able to identify these occurrences.

**What percentages of the population of athletic trainers/athletic training students have been sexually harassed by student-athletes.**

The results of the survey also indicated that a large percentage of athletic trainers and athletic training students have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment by a student-athlete. Forty percent of the respondents stated they were victims of sexual harassment, and 59% responded that they had witnessed the sexual harassment of another athletic trainer by a student-athlete. These numbers show that student-athletes were using inappropriate behaviors with athletic training students and athletic trainers, either in the athletic training room, traveling, or any other athletic training setting. The status of the athletic training healthcare professional did not affect the frequency; athletic training students, graduate students, and certified athletic trainers all had experienced or witnessed sexual harassment by student-athletes. However, the status of an athletic training student had the highest response rate out of all the members in the athletic training staff.

**What types of sexual harassment behavior have athletic trainers/athletic training students experienced?**

There was a wide range of sexual harassment behaviors that directed toward athletic trainers and athletic training students by student-athletes. The most common behavior was inappropriate comments, including talk about sexual behavior, catcalling, and unwanted compliments, with 244 responses. Many athletic trainers and athletic training students also experienced unwanted physical contact (60 responses) and derogatory statements about gender (18 responses). Lower responses were recorded for indecent exposure (5 responses) and harassment through social media (13 responses) as other behaviors of sexual harassment that were reported during this study. The key findings show that in the collegiate setting, student-athletes have sexually harassed the athletic training staff in a multitude of ways.

**Are athletic trainers/athletic training students aware of the sexual harassment policy at their institution, and is it being enacted?**

Finally, the research illustrated that a majority of the respondents (79%) were aware of the sexual harassment policy at their institution. Even though many respondents were knowledgeable of the policy, it was not always put into effect when a sexual harassment behavior occurred. Only 47% of respondents stated that the sexual harassment policy was enacted and followed when an instance of sexual harassment occurred. It is important that all athletic trainers and athletic training students become educated on the policy and comply with it, when necessary. If violations by student-athletes are not reported, it is likely that the behavior may not stop, and athletic trainers

and athletic training students may continue to be sexually harassed in the collegiate setting.

### **Implications**

After analyzing the key findings of the research, it was apparent that sexual harassment affects athletic training students and athletic trainers in the collegiate setting. Student-athletes have exhibited sexual harassment behaviors toward the athletic training staff at practice, in the athletic training room, and other locations. These behaviors need to be halted after the first offense to ensure that they do not occur again. However, research showed that most cases of sexual harassment were not reported, using the correct procedure. Inaction informs student-athletes that their behavior may be acceptable.

Incorporating strong mentors in the athletic training room can help reduce the occurrence of sexual harassment by student-athletes. Previous research showed that having confident, strong-willed role models increased the likelihood that the athletic training students would adopt those personality characteristics as well. Also, the athletic training students would observe how their mentors were handling conflict in any athletic training setting, which would show a positive representation of professionalism in handling arguments and discrepancies. If the mentor is prohibiting sexual harassment from occurring, then the athletic training student may learn from example and stop the behaviors as well. By having preceptors as strong role models, the athletic training students may become more confident and strong-willed in their decisions, increasing the chance that they will not tolerate discriminatory behaviors.

Also, research showed a need for increased education on sexual harassment. Many athletic trainers and athletic training students were not fully aware of the behaviors that fall under the term of sexual harassment, potentially causing the athletic training staff to experience sexual harassment without knowing it. By expanding the education on this topic, athletic trainers and athletic training students will have an increased awareness of these behaviors, and become better at identifying them. Education also needs to be incorporated into youth and adolescent athletics. If the sexual harassment behaviors are halted at a young age, it may help prevent them from occurring in high school and collegiate athletics. Punishing and disciplining sexual harassment at a young age can help the athletes realize that the sexual harassment behaviors are not acceptable, which will hopefully reduce the likelihood that the behaviors will continue to occur throughout the duration of their athletic career. While it is important to continue education on sexual harassment throughout high school and collegiate athletics, the most effective way to handle the behaviors is to put an end to them within youth athletics.

A need for a stronger policy, in conjunction with increased education on the policy, was indicated through the findings and the literature. The sexual harassment policy needs to be covered with all members of the athletic training staff; it is imperative that all staff members understand and are able to follow the policy so that it can be enacted in the case of sexual harassment. The policy should be tailored to each institution, including the department and persons to reach in the case that sexual harassment does occur. Along with the education on policy, the members of the athletic training staff need to be encouraged to follow through the proper procedures when sexual harassment behaviors are witnessed or experienced. Because of the negative stigma that



revolves around sexual harassment, many do not report the behavior out of fear or humiliation. The athletic trainers and athletic training students need to be informed that reporting the offense is the correct step to take, and that they should not be afraid to take proper action.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations in this study. First, some program directors may not have had an interest in the study, which would have resulted in them not passing the survey down to the students in the program. Lack of interest could have also been an issue with the certified athletic trainers. If the participants did not find the study appealing, it was likely that the survey would not be completed. Second, because of the study's topic, participants may not have been willing to answer questions regarding sexual harassment. Even though confidentiality was maintained, some participants may have gone through a traumatic experience, which could have caused them not to respond to the survey. In contrast to the previously mentioned limitation, victims of sexual harassment may have been the only ones to participate in the study. When the survey was sent out, the program directors and certified athletic trainers may not have participated, due to having no past experience with sexual harassment.

Third, the survey did not include all possible collegiate settings in the sample, which was another limitation. In the demographic section, there was a question that asked in what division the respondent was currently employed, and the responses included Division I, Division II, and Division III. However, there were other smaller collegiate divisions that were not included in the options provided. The only other association that was included in the sample, besides the NCAA, was the National Association of

Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Out of the 308 schools that received the survey, 24 schools belonged to the NAIA, and could not have completed this survey correctly. In the 24 schools, there were 112 athletic trainers who were sent the survey. This is a limitation that caused a smaller response rate.

### **Threats**

There were several potential threats to internal validity in this study. These included subject characteristics, mortality, location, maturation, history, and the attitude of subjects (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015). In regard to subject characteristics, each athletic training student and certified athletic trainer had a variety of different characteristics that could affect the study. The subjects were of different ages, came from a variety of educational backgrounds, and were divided between genders. In addition, there was no consistency in the religions, political viewpoints and ethnicities of the study's participants. Due to the multitude of backgrounds, each participant had the potential to view sexual harassment differently, which led to a range of answers.

Mortality typically occurs if the desired sample size was not reached by the survey, so it posed a risk to this study. Mortality also occurs when the respondents answer part of the survey, but do not complete it in entirety. In this survey, a sizable percentage only completed the demographic questions, raising a potential mortality threat. Because the research was conducted nationally, there was a chance for a location threat. Each athletic training program may have different sexual harassment policies at their institution. By not having consistency with sexual harassment policies, each respondent's answer may reflect different punishments at their institution. The subjects' attitudes were a potentially serious threat to the internal validity in this study. The athletic

trainers and athletic training students may not have had interest in the survey after starting it, causing them to drop out before completion. The participants may have also viewed the study as irrelevant and quickly answered the questions.

There was the potential risk of researcher bias, but an effort was exerted to reduce the risk as much as possible. The data collected by the survey were submitted electronically, which reduced the amount of face-to-face communication. The survey was the same for all subjects, consisting of identical questions. The data were also analyzed with the same techniques for all the responses. The responses from the open-ended questions were coded to enable quantitative data analysis; this also increased the risk of researcher bias. To reduce this bias, I worked with my committee members to ensure that my process of coding did not alter the results.

Referring to previous studies and asking questions that were formerly asked enhanced reliability. While there was not a single prior study that completed the exact research carried out in the present study, there were a variety of prior studies that addressed certain aspects of sexual harassment. The reliability was improved by referring to the survey questions that were found reliable in the past.

The results of this study will not be generalizable beyond the athletic training population working in a collegiate setting. If there were only a few responses, the data would not have been valid and reliable, which would diminish the generalizations to any setting. However, since there was an appropriate number of responses to the survey, the data were significant to the collegiate setting. The results may be generalized to certified athletic trainers and athletic training students who work with college athletes. The results of this study may not be applied to other professional settings, such as a hospital or clinic,

as the patients in these settings are not similar to collegiate athletes.

### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

In general, future studies should be conducted examining the sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students to gain a better understanding of the frequency of these behaviors. Creating a similar research study to this one will be beneficial to the athletic training profession showing sexual harassment as a severe problem affecting the workplace and education of athletic trainers and athletic training students. While there is an abundance of literature that examines sexual harassment in other healthcare professions, there are few recent research articles that conducted studies on the athletic training profession.

While this study focused on sexual harassment by student-athletes, few respondents included answers discussing their experience with the coaching staff at their institution. For this reason, I recommend that a study in the future be conducted to examine the sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students by all members of the athletic department. Many research articles reported high rates of sexual harassment from coaches to student-athletes, but there are no articles that specifically examine coaches' sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students.

I also recommend that the present study be conducted at all colleges where athletic trainers are employed. This present survey was only sent out to the colleges that currently had CAATE-accredited programs in good standing that were admitting students. However, this is a small representation of the number of colleges that have athletic trainers working with collegiate athletics. By sending the survey to all

universities, there would be a larger sample of athletic trainers, but would not include input from any of the athletic training students.

In addition, future studies should be conducted analyzing sexual harassment of athletic trainers in a variety of settings. Athletic trainers are employed at physical therapy clinics, high schools, secondary schools, occupational clinics, industrial settings, and many more. An expanded study in different workplaces will show whether sexual harassment of athletic trainers occurs in all settings, and not solely in collegiate athletics.

Another recommendation for future studies is to examine the sexual harassment policy at each institution and see whether it is effective in the work environment. Each institution is mandated by Title IX to have a sexual harassment policy, but there are many universities that are not in compliance currently. Despite these regulations, there are 140 sexual harassment cases at 124 institutions currently under investigation (Title IX and Sex Discrimination, 2015). It will be hard to combat sexual harassment without an efficient policy in place, so future studies need to research the policies at institutions to ensure compliance.

Future studies should also be conducted to examine best practices for sexual harassment training. Many athletic trainers and athletic training students may not know the full definition of sexual harassment, which makes it hard to determine when these issues occur. Formal training should be conducted at the beginning of the school year to educate all student-athletes, athletic trainers, athletic training students, and other members of the athletic department about sexual harassment. In conjunction with this training, a sexual harassment prevention program should be incorporated into orientation at the beginning of the school year. This prevention program should include real-life

examples of sexual harassment, mock scenarios, and proper steps to take. By increasing the education about sexual harassment, while incorporating preventive measures, the frequency of these behaviors may start to decrease.

## **Conclusions**

The findings of this study indicated that sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students by student-athletes is a serious issue that occurs frequently in the college setting. The percentage of athletic trainers and athletic training students who have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment was disturbingly high. Forty percent of respondents indicated that they were victims of sexual harassment, and 59% reported that they witnessed sexual harassment of another athletic training student or athletic trainer. These high percentages show that sexual harassment by student-athletes is an issue in the collegiate setting that needs to be addressed. The sexual harassment behaviors that occurred include “inappropriate comments”, “unwanted”, “physical contact”, and “derogatory comments about gender”. These types of behaviors can be detrimental to the education and employment of athletic trainers and athletic training students at the collegiate level.

The research also illustrated that many athletic trainers and athletic training students did not understand the complete definition of sexual harassment. Without a complete understanding of the term’s definition, athletic trainers and athletic training students may have experienced these behaviors without knowing they were being harassed. With more education at a younger level, the rate of reported sexual harassment may increase as well because athletic trainers and athletic training students would be more aware of sexual harassment behaviors. The education needs to begin in youth sports

so the behaviors can be eradicated before entering high school and collegiate sports. The present research indicated that most athletic trainers and athletic training students who responded were aware of the sexual harassment policy at their institution. However, to combat sexual harassment, all members of the athletic training staff must be educated on the policy.

Future studies should continue to examine the sexual harassment of athletic trainers and athletic training students at the collegiate level, as well as other workplace settings. Studies should be conducted at all colleges, high schools, and secondary schools nationwide. With these findings and recommendations, athletic trainers will be able to be employed in the collegiate setting without having their work impacted by sexual harassment from student-athletes. The rate of sexual harassment experienced by the athletic training staff should decrease with increased education and awareness, targeting youth and adolescent athletics. By combatting these behaviors early, it should prevent sexual harassment from occurring in collegiate athletics, thus allowing athletic training students and athletic trainers to have better clinical and educational experiences.

## Appendix A: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol

### James Madison University Human Research Review Request

#### FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Exempt:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Protocol Number:	1 <sup>st</sup> Review: _____	Reviewer: _____
Expedited:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IRB: <u>16-0237</u>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Review: _____	Reviewer: _____
Full Board:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Received: <u>10/22/15</u>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Review: _____	

<b>Project Title:</b>  <b>Project Dates:</b> (Not to exceed 1 year minus 1 day)	<u>Perception of Sexual Harassment from Student-Athletes on Athletic Trainers or Athletic Training Students in the Collegiate Setting</u>  From: <u>12/01/15</u> To: <u>05/01/16</u> MM/DD/YY MM/DD/YY				
<b>Minimum # of Participants:</b> <b>Maximum # of Participants:</b>	<u>50</u>  <u>150</u>				
<b>Funding:</b>   <b>Incentives:</b>  Must follow JMU Financial Policy:	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40%;"> <b>External Funding:</b>  <b>Internal Funding:</b>   <b>Independently:</b> </td> <td style="width: 10%;"> <b>Yes:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <b>Yes:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <b>Yes:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </td> <td style="width: 10%;"> <b>No:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <b>No:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <b>No:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> </td> <td style="width: 40%;"> <b>If yes, Sponsor:</b> _____  <b>If yes, Sponsor:</b> _____    <b>Will monetary incentives be offered?</b> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <b>If yes: How much per recipient?</b> _____ <b>In what form?</b> _____         </td> </tr> </table> <a href="http://www.jmu.edu/financemanual/procedures/4205.shtml#394IRBApprovedResearchSubjects">http://www.jmu.edu/financemanual/procedures/4205.shtml#394IRBApprovedResearchSubjects</a>	<b>External Funding:</b> <b>Internal Funding:</b>  <b>Independently:</b>	<b>Yes:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>If yes, Sponsor:</b> _____ <b>If yes, Sponsor:</b> _____  <b>Will monetary incentives be offered?</b> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>If yes: How much per recipient?</b> _____ <b>In what form?</b> _____
<b>External Funding:</b> <b>Internal Funding:</b>  <b>Independently:</b>	<b>Yes:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>If yes, Sponsor:</b> _____ <b>If yes, Sponsor:</b> _____  <b>Will monetary incentives be offered?</b> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>If yes: How much per recipient?</b> _____ <b>In what form?</b> _____		
<b>Responsible Researcher(s):</b> <b>E-mail Address:</b> <b>Telephone:</b> <b>Department:</b> <b>Address (MSC):</b>  <b>Please Select:</b>	<u>Amber Mackenzie Simmons</u> <a href="mailto:Simmo3am@dukes.jmu.edu">Simmo3am@dukes.jmu.edu</a> <u>(330)-819-5099</u> <u>Adult Education/Human Resource Development</u> <u>6913</u> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty  <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator/Staff            Member         </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Student  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student         </td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator/Staff Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student		
<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator/Staff Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student				
<b>(if Applicable):</b> <b>Research Advisor:</b> <b>E-mail Address:</b> <b>Telephone:</b> <b>Department:</b>	<u>Dr. Diane Wilcox</u> <a href="mailto:wilcoxdm@jmu.edu">wilcoxdm@jmu.edu</a> <u>(540)-568-6707</u> <u>Learning, Technology, and Leadership Education</u>				



**Address (MSC):** 3325E Memorial Hall

**Investigator:** Please respond to the questions below. The IRB will utilize your responses to evaluate your protocol submission.

1. ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** Does the James Madison University Institutional Review Board define the project as **research**?

The James Madison University IRB defines "research" as a "systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge." All research involving human participants conducted by James Madison University faculty and staff and students is subject to IRB review.

2. ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** Are the human participants in your study **living** individuals?

"Individuals whose physiologic or behavioral characteristics and responses are the object of study in a research project. Under the federal regulations, human subjects are defined as: living individual(s) about whom an investigator conducting research obtains:  
(1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual; or (2) identifiable private information."

3. ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** Will you obtain data through **intervention** or **interaction** with these individuals?

"Intervention" includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (e.g., measurement of heart rate or venipuncture) and manipulations of the participant or the participant's environment that are performed for research purposes. "Interaction" includes communication or interpersonal contact between the investigator and participant (e.g., surveying or interviewing).

4. ☐ **YES** ☒ **NO** Will you obtain **identifiable private information** about these individuals?

"Private information" includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, or information provided for specific purposes which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (e.g., a medical record or student record). "Identifiable" means that the identity of the participant may be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information (e.g., by name, code number, pattern of answers, etc.).

5. ☐ **YES** ☒ **NO** Does the study present **more than minimal risk** to the participants?

"Minimal risk" means that the risks of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. Note that the concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk as well as risks to employability, economic well being, social standing, and risks of civil and criminal liability.

#### **CERTIFICATIONS:**

For James Madison University to obtain a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, **all** research staff working with human participants must sign this form and receive training in ethical guidelines and regulations. "Research staff" is defined as persons who have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research and includes students fulfilling these roles as well as their faculty advisors. The Office of Research Integrity maintains a roster of all researchers who have completed training within the past three years.

Test module at ORI website <http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml>

Name of Researcher(s) and Research Advisor	Training Completion Date
Amber Mackenzie Simmons	01/31/2015
Diane Wilcox	01/16/2015

By signing below, the Responsible Researcher(s), and the Faculty Advisor (if applicable), certifies that he/she is familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human research participants from research risks. In addition, he/she agrees to abide by all sponsor and university policies and procedures in conducting the research. He/she further certifies that he/she has completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years.

Principal Investigator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reine Wilf

Faculty Advisor Signature

10/21/15

Date

Submit an electronic version (in a Word document) of your **ENTIRE** protocol to [researchintegrity@jmu.edu](mailto:researchintegrity@jmu.edu).  
Provide a **SIGNED** hard copy of the Research Review Request Form to:  
Office of Research Integrity, MSC 5738, 601 University Boulevard, Blue Ridge Hall, Third Floor, Room # 342

### Purpose and Objectives

Please provide a lay summary of the study. Include the purpose, research questions, and hypotheses to be evaluated. (Limit to one page)

The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of sexual harassment of athletic trainers or athletic training students in the collegiate setting. Athletic trainers are in close contact with the entire athletic department—athletic directors, coaches, managers, and student-athletes. While there are many articles published examining cases of sexual harassment displayed from coaches, there is little research done that demonstrates sexual harassment experienced by athletic trainers. Athletic training is a healthcare profession that needs to be free from sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination. Wolohan (1995) stated that athletic administrators need to be more proactive in putting a stop to sexual harassment in educational settings, but it is unclear if the administrators are specifically protecting student-athletes and not those who work with them. If these negative situations occur, the athletic trainers' performance in the athletic training room can be hindered. I believe that there are many cases of sexual harassment that do occur in the athletic training room, but there has been minimal research done in the past few decades to support this hypothesis. The main purpose of this study is to examine what types of sexual harassment arise within the athletic training profession, and what is currently being done to prevent these situations from occurring.

In regards to sexual discrimination in an educational setting, Title IX is a defining document that is required for all staff members at James Madison University, including the academic and athletic departments. All universities that are included in this study are required by law to follow Title IX policies and report incidents of sexual harassment to a Title IX officer/coordinator or to the Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices. At James Madison University, the Athletic Training Program follows the protocol that is noted in the JMU Student Handbook. If an athletic training student is a victim of sexual harassment, he or she is to report the occurrence immediately to the supervising athletic trainer, the Athletic Training Program Director, the Director of Sports Medicine, and/or to the Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices (JMU AT Program Handbook, 2015). The victim of sexual harassment will then be referred to a Title IX Officer or to the Office of Affirmative Action to further investigate and handle the offense. It is important to note that if the alleged victim does not want to follow through with the charge of sexual harassment, the Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices will typically respect that choice, unless there is a sufficient reason to disdain their wishes (JMU Student Handbook, 2015).

This study will first define the term “sexual harassment,” and discuss the two different types of sexual harassment that are used by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Next, the study will reflect on examples of sexual harassment that have been discussed in the literature. Sexual harassment covers a

wide range of occurrences, actions, and behaviors, thus making it hard to restrict the definition to one specific action. Many athletic trainers have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, but were not aware that the actions enacted on them were considered sexual harassment. The study will conclude by discussing the preventative measures and policies that are in place at institutions, and if they are being followed.

The research questions are as follows:

- How do athletic trainers/athletic training students define the term “sexual harassment”?
- What percentages of the population of athletic trainers/athletic training students have been sexually harassed by student-athletes?
- What types of sexual harassment behavior have athletic trainers/athletic training students experienced?
- What is the current punishment for sexual harassment within the collegiate setting and is it being enacted on student-athletes?

### **Procedures/Research Design/Methodology/Timeframe**

The participants in this study will consist of athletic training students currently enrolled in a Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)-accredited athletic training program. Currently, there are 275 CAATE-accredited athletic training programs in the United States. Other participants will include certified athletic trainers working at the collegiate level. There are almost 8,000 athletic trainers that work at a college or university currently. All participants that fall under these two categories will be able to answer the survey, regardless of age, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status. Participants will be at least 18 years of age.

The survey will be sent out to all the program directors at CAATE-accredited athletic training programs via email. The survey will also be sent to certified athletic trainers at the collegiate setting via email as well. The survey is voluntary. If the participant wishes to provide this information, he or she will also participate in a telephone interview

The research will be conducted throughout the duration of the 2015-2016 school year. The survey will be administered in Spring 2016. The survey will be an anonymous, web-based Qualtrics survey distributed to program directors and certified athletic trainers via email. The program directors will be asked to distribute the survey to the students in their athletic training program. It is anticipated that the survey should take ten-fifteen minutes to complete. The email to the program directors will include a consent form with a cover letter requesting voluntary consent for participation in the survey. A direct link to the Qualtrics survey will also be included. Within the survey, two methodologies will be used to collect data. Both quantitative and qualitative responses will be collected; the use of a Likert scale and open-ended questions will be utilized in this study.

Potential benefits from participation in this study include distinguishing how often sexual harassment occurs from student-athletes on certified athletic trainers or athletic training students. By determining the frequency of this happening at the college level, the serious issue of sexual harassment can be handled in a more appropriate manner by implementing the institution's policy.

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life. The possible risk that may arise from involvement in this study is discussing an emotional issue. Throughout the duration of this study, if the participant starts to feel uncomfortable at any time, they will have an option to withdraw from the study and all information will be discarded.

Will data be collected from any of the following populations?

- ☐ Minors (under 18 years of age); Specify Age \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prisoners
- ☐ Pregnant Women, fetuses, or neonates
- ☐ Cognitively impaired persons
- ☐ Other protected or potentially vulnerable population
- ☒ Not Applicable

Where will research be conducted? (Be specific; if research is being conducted off of JMU's campus a site letter of permission will be needed)

James Madison University  
Adult Education/Human Resource Development  
Memorial Hall 3310, MSC 6913  
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

Will deception be used? If yes, provide the rationale for the deception. Also, please provide an explanation of how you plan to debrief the subjects regarding the deception at the end of the study.

No

What is the time frame of the study? (List the dates you plan on collecting data. This cannot be more than a year, and you cannot start conducting research until you get IRB approval)

For this study, the time frame will range from the time of the IRB approval through May 01, 2016. The research will begin January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The survey will be issued to the program directors via e-mail no later than January 11<sup>th</sup> 2016. This will ensure timely that the participants have time to fill out the survey and submit it back by February 1st, 2016.

## Data Analysis

How will data be analyzed?

Data will be analyzed within Qualtrics.

How will you capture or create data? Physical (ex: paper or tape recording)?  
Electronic (ex: computer, mobile device, digital recording)?

The data from the survey will be stored in Qualtrics.

Do you anticipate transferring your data from a physical/analog format to a digital format? If so, how? (e.g. paper that is scanned, data inputted into the computer from paper, digital photos of physical/analog data, digitizing audio or video recording?)

No

How and where will data be secured/stored? (e.g. a single computer or laptop; across multiple computers; or computing devices of JMU faculty, staff or students; across multiple computers both at JMU and outside of JMU?) If subjects are being audio and/or video-taped, file encryption is highly recommended. If signed consent forms will be obtained, please describe how these forms will be stored separately and securely from study data.

Data will be stored and analyzed within Qualtrics, the online survey instrument that will be utilized for this research project. Only the committee chair and the researcher will have access to this information. Any statistical information being analyzed for report purposes will be stored on one personal laptop computer that is password protected. The statistical documents that are utilized will be password protected as well. In addition to keeping the computer password protected, the laptop will utilize FireVault by encrypting the data automatically. Only the researcher will have the password to access data secured by FireVault. All participants will be kept anonymous.

Who will have access to data? (e.g. just me; me and other JMU researchers (faculty, staff, or students); or me and other non-JMU researchers?)

Only the researcher and the committee chair will have access to this data.

If others will have access to data, how will data be securely shared?

Data will be stored and analyzed within Qualtrics, the online survey instrument that will be utilized for this research project. Only the committee chair and the researcher will have access to this information. Any statistical information being

analyzed for report purposes will be stored on a personal laptop computer that is password protected. The statistical documents that are utilized will be password protected as well.

Will you keep data after the project ends? (i.e. yes, all data; yes, but only de-identified data; or no) If data is being destroyed, when will it be destroyed, and how? Who will destroy the data?

No, all data will be destroyed after the research is completed. Once the research study is published, all data will be destroyed. The committee chair and the member will destroy all information that is stored on a password protected, hard-drive. The hard-drive will be wiped clean and discarded.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Who is the audience to be reached in the report of the study?

In this study, the audience to be reached in the report is the researcher's committee members. The committee members are three graduate faculty members within the AHRD/LTLE graduate school. The members are as follows:

Dr. Diane Wilcox—Committee Chair

Dr. Jamie Frye—Committee Member

Randy Snow —Committee Member

How will you present the results of the research? (If submitting as exempt, research cannot be published or publicly presented outside of the classroom. Also, the researcher cannot collect any identifiable information from the subjects to qualify as exempt.)

The results of this research study will be presented to a Research Review Committee in a formalized classroom setting. A “defense” of the research and the resulting findings will be presented to the committee members that are listed above.

How will feedback be provided to subjects?

The program directors and certified athletic trainers will all receive a consent form in the email containing the survey. The program director will be the person responsible for administering the survey to the athletic training students, so copies of the consent form will need to be made and distributed. It is required that all participants are given a copy of the consent form before completing the survey. On the form, the researcher's email address will be printed to allow for the participants to contact the researcher if any questions or concerns arise. If the participants choose to find the results from the study after it is completed, they can use the email address to contact the researcher.

**Experience of the Researcher (and advisor, *if student*):**

Amber Mackenzie Simmons has an undergraduate degree in Athletic Training from Kent State University. I am currently pursuing my master's degree in Adult Education and Human Resource Development at James Madison University. I have completed coursework in Research Methods (Quantitative and Qualitative), Foundations of Human Resource Development, Instructional Design, Design and Digital Media, Learning Theories, and Performance Analysis. This is the researcher's first study, and Dr. Diane Wilcox will be guiding and advising the process.

Dr. Diane Wilcox is the head of the Adult Education/Human Resource Development program at James Madison University. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Business Management from the College of William and Mary. She has her master's degree and Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. While earning her Ph.D., she completed her dissertation on "The Use of Animation with Instruction and Feedback in Fractions Software for Children." Dr. Wilcox has produced several publications over the past ten years, entailing a variety of articles and a book. She also has conducted multiple presentations over best practices, working with adults, and a multitude of other topics.



### **Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study**

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Mackenzie Simmons from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of sexual harassment of athletic trainers or athletic training students in the collegiate setting. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her master's thesis.

### **Research Procedures**

This study consists of a survey that will be administered to individual participants through e-mail. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to assessing perceptions of sexual harassment by student-athletes in an athletic training setting.

### **Time Required**

Participation in this study will require 10-15 minutes of your time.

### **Risks**

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life). However, the investigator perceives that a possible risk to the study would be discussing an emotional issue. If the participant happens to feel uncomfortable at any time during the survey, the participant will be allowed to withdraw and all of their information will be discarded. If the participant starts to experience negative feelings of emotion, the following resources are available to offer assistance:

Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA) [www.atixa.org](http://www.atixa.org)

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg107.html>

The US Department of Justice Title IX <http://www.justice.gov/crt/title-ix>

Consult your institution's Title IX Coordinator/Officer

### **Benefits**

Potential benefits from participation in this study include distinguishing how often sexual harassment occurs from student-athletes on certified athletic trainers or athletic training students. By determining the frequency of this happening at the college level, the serious issue of sexual harassment can be handled in a more appropriate manner by implementing the institution's policy. There are no direct benefits to the participants.

### **Confidentiality**

The results of this research will be presented during a thesis defense. While individual responses are obtained and recorded anonymously and kept in the strictest confidence, aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. No identifiable information will be collected from the participant and no identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. The researcher

retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. At the end of the study, all records will be destroyed.

### **Participation & Withdrawal**

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. However, once your responses have been submitted and anonymously recorded you will not be able to withdraw from the study.

### **Questions about the Study**

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Mackenzie Simmons  
Adult Educ/Human Resource Dvlpmt  
Education  
James Madison University  
Simmo3am@dukes.jmu.edu

Dr. Diane Wilcox  
Learning, Technology, and Leadership  
James Madison University  
Telephone: (540) 568-6707  
[wilcoxdm@jmu.edu](mailto:wilcoxdm@jmu.edu)

### **Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject**

Dr. David Cockley  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
James Madison University  
(540) 568-2834  
[cocklede@jmu.edu](mailto:cocklede@jmu.edu)

### **Giving of Consent**

I have read this cover letter and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

[http://jmu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_3E6QvUwLFEMRHaR](http://jmu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3E6QvUwLFEMRHaR)

<u>Mackenzie Simmons</u>	<u>11/24/15</u>
Name of Researcher (Printed)	Date

<u>Mackenzie Simmons</u>	<u>11/24/15</u>
Name of Researcher (Signed)	Date

*This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol #16-0237.*

## Appendix B: Survey Instrument

### Demographic Information

This section is designed to collect basic demographic information. No identifying information will be collected during this part of the survey. You must answer the next five questions to proceed with the survey.

1. What is your current status? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Undergraduate student
- ☐ Graduate student
- ☐ Certified athletic trainer
- ☐ Program director

2. What division is your institution?

- ☐ Division I
- ☐ Division II
- ☐ Division III

3. What is your current age?

---

4. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other

---

5. What sports have you worked with? Please specify the gender of the sport's team.

### Sexual Harassment Questions

6. What is your definition of the term, “sexual harassment”? Include examples of behavior that you believe fall under this term.

7. Based on your own personal definition, how many occurrences of sexual harassment behavior have you witnessed within the athletic training room or another athletic training location?

Never	0-2	3-7	7-10	10+
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being not frequently, 10 being very frequently), please rate the following question.



9. Do you feel as if you have been subjected to any sexual harassment behaviors?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ I choose not to answer

10. Have you witnessed sexual harassment of an athletic trainer in any athletic training setting? (practice, athletic training room, road trips, etc.). If yes, please indicate what your status was during that time (undergraduate student, graduate student, certified athletic trainer).

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_

11. If you have seen any of the aforementioned behaviors of sexual harassment, please explain in detail what occurred.

### Policy Institution Questions

12. Do you know your institution's current policy for dealing with sexual harassment?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

13. If you are aware of your current policy, have you witnessed the policy be put into effect when an issue with sexual harassment has arisen?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Not applicable

The following questions will allow the researcher to gain an in-depth description if you have witnessed/been a victim from a student-athlete while in the collegiate setting.

14. What was your response to the incident?

15. How did this situation of sexual harassment from a student-athlete affect your education, work-life, or clinical experiences?

16. Did you tell anyone about the incident? If so, who and when (immediately after, week after, etc.)?

17. Did you take further action to avoid harm by the perpetrator? (switching clinical sites, switching sport assignments, etc.)

--

18. How would you have liked to see the situation resolved?

--

## References

- About NCAA. (2015, February 1). Retrieved from <http://www.ncaa.org/about>
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