

# Hookup Culture on College Campuses

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## What role do Christian universities play in hookup culture/sexual assault on their campuses?

The purity culture and generally negative attitude regarding anything concerning sexual relations within the Christian tradition has created an atmosphere of confusion/misinformation, shame, ignorance and overall silence on the campuses of Christian universities. Donna Freitas writes that “these colleges often combine monitoring with legislation about sexual activity on campus (including, in some instances, requiring students to sign agreements that, under penalty of expulsion, they will not have sex during their college years)” (Freitas 2015, 219). However, this environment causes many students to feel compelled to “hide their sexual practices not only from friends but also from all adults with whom they come into contact... this stops them from seeking adult advice about sex and helps to create a culture of fear regarding sexual activity and identity on campus” (Freitas 2015, 219).

When students don't feel that they can confide in the people that they trust, this can leave them feeling lost and uninformed. So although hookup culture still exists on religious campuses, the tendency for students to conceal their experiences hinders any opportunities for them to learn about healthy sexual behavior. Students might not even know that they've been sexually assaulted during an encounter. “The *idea* of having boundaries is clear. What that *means* is confusing’... ‘Sex is often seen [by female students] as just stuff that happens to them. Or them trying to please their partner” (Woodiwiss 2013). “For more sexually conservative campuses, the inclination to relegate sexual violence under a broader taboo on sexuality can leave students ill-equipped, naive, or downright misinformed about healthy sexual interaction” (Woodiwiss 2013). In one study, “one-in-three students say that their sexual encounters have been ‘traumatic’ or ‘very difficult to handle’... almost two dozen studies have documented feelings of sexual regret, frustration, disappointment, distress and inadequacy” (Wade 2016).

The hush around talking about sexual experiences perpetuates an environment where sexual assault can happen without consequences. In an attempt to appear as a “safe” campus where sex simply does not happen and everyone practices abstinence, sexual assault is not even acknowledged at some of these religious institutions. “The desire to set themselves apart from the secular world at large has led numerous Christian institutions to pretend that rape is not a problem, even in the most clear-cut of cases” (Anderson 2014). “Many Christian campuses pretend stats don’t apply to them,’ Kate Davelaar, chaplain at Hope College in Holland, Mich., [says]... ‘It’s simply not believed” (Woodiwiss 2013).

Dianna Anderson touches on the idea that “Christian colleges are plagued by accusations at once familiar and strange: College counselors asking rape victims leading questions about their potential guilt, a lack of reporting to authorities, and failure to punish the rapist are all problems known to those who study incidences of rape at colleges and universities” (Anderson 2014). However, “the fundamentalist theology surrounding sexual activity and purity creates another layer of shame and guilt. A theology that positions the colleges as better and safer than their secular counterparts also creates an environment in which a person coming forward about rape risks being seen as ‘impure’ and ‘broken”” (Anderson 2014). For example, when coming forward about being sexually assaulted, a Pensacola Christian College student was expelled for “fornication... [her] expulsion and treatment by the college [was] directly tied to the perceived sin of having sex outside of marriage” (Anderson 2014). At Bob Jones University (BJU), “students who report a sexual assault or rape are put through a ringer of questions about their sexual purity... the impression seems to be that if someone was already engaged in sexual sin, then rape is a kind of natural consequence to such behavior” (Anderson 2014).

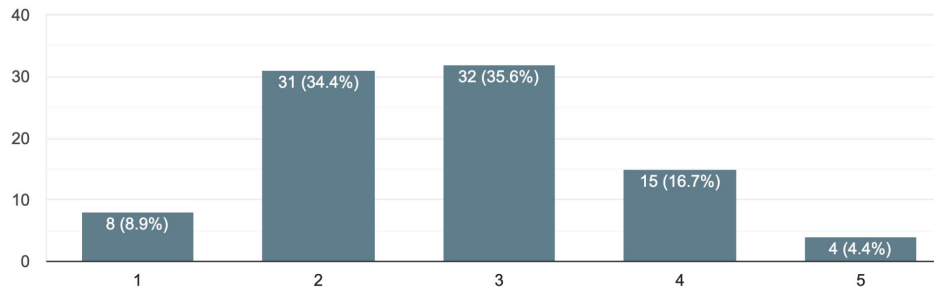
What does hookup culture look like here at the University of Rochester?

I used the “Snapchat” social media platform to promote my google form survey. 90 students in total responded to my survey, and these individuals ranged from undergraduate freshmen to seniors.

Survey respondents were informed that their participation in the survey was completely anonymous.

On a scale from 1-5... How prevalent did you expect hookup culture to be at the University of Rochester before you moved onto campus?

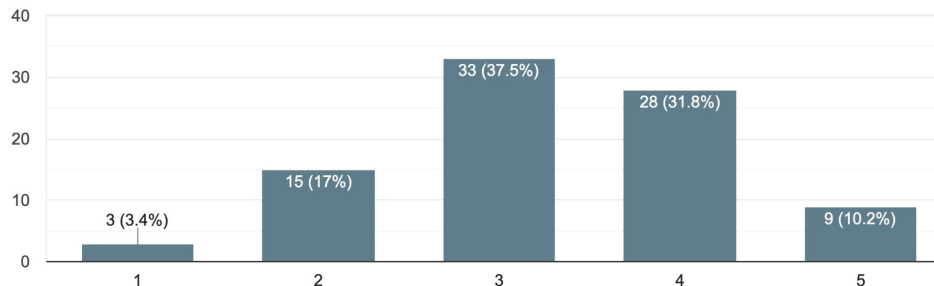
90 responses



\*1 meaning not prevalent and 5 meaning very prevalent

On a scale from 1-5... How prevalent do you believe hookup culture to be at the University of Rochester?

88 responses



While 76.7% of respondents have felt pressure at one time or another to participate in hookup culture, 50% of respondents don't actually desire the casual, emotionless and no-strings-attached sexual interactions that characterize those within hookup culture.

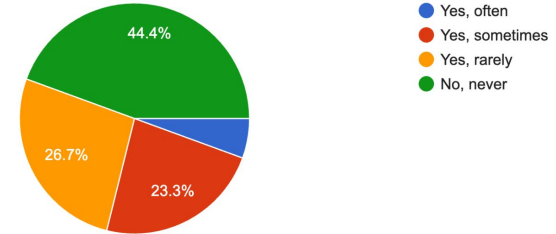
What are you looking for on campus in regard to relationships?

90 responses



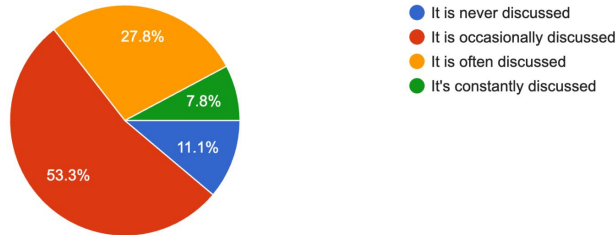
Have you ever felt pressured to participate in hookup culture?

90 responses



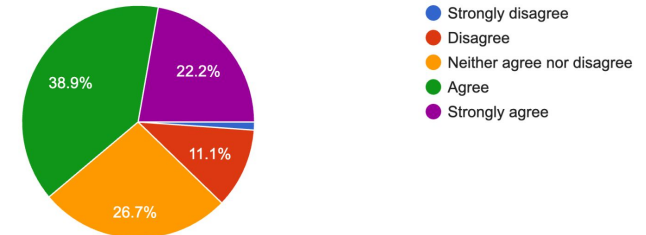
How often does hook up culture come up in conversation between you and friends/peers?

90 responses



From my personal experiences/experiences that I've witnessed... Drugs/alcohol pose a problem in the exchange of consent during a hookup.

90 responses

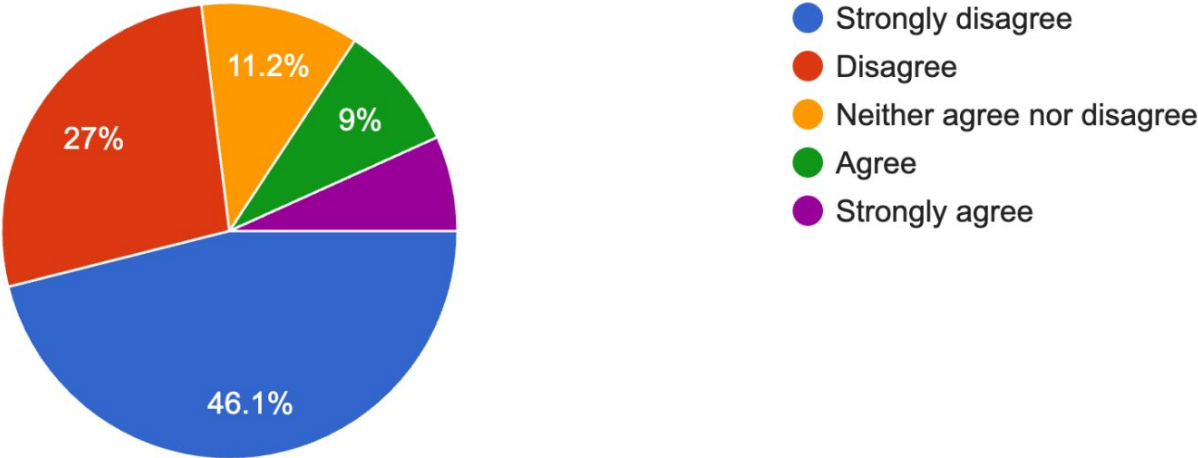


88.9% of respondents revealed that hookup culture is prevalent enough to come up in discussion.

61.1% of respondents agree or strongly agree that drugs and/or alcohol pose a problem in the exchange of consent.

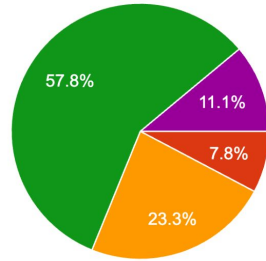
In my personal life... My religion/spirituality hinders my participation in hookup culture.

89 responses



From what I understand... Both parties within a hookup are typically on the same page in regard to consent.

90 responses

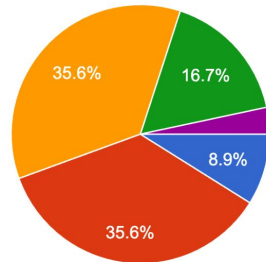


- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

68.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that, in general, there is mutual understanding in terms of consent during a hookup.

From what I understand... Both parties are on the same page moving forward after a hookup.

90 responses



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

44.5 % of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that both parties within a hookup are on the same page moving forward.



## Works Cited

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- Freitas, Donna. *Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance, and Religion on America's College Campuses*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
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- Woodiwiss, Catherine. "'How Far Is Too Far?': Sexuality and Sexual Violence on Christian Campuses." Sojourners, February 26, 2016.