



# What Happens in the Field? Preliminary Results of the SEAC Sexual Harassment Survey



The SEAC Sexual Harassment Survey is still active. Scan the code or go to [https://jfe.qualtrics.com/form/SV\\_a4](https://jfe.qualtrics.com/form/SV_a4) to participate

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## Introduction

Sexual harassment is a major issue facing field researchers today.<sup>1</sup> Results of a recent survey of biological anthropologists showed women trainees are most often targeted by senior male colleagues; that men trainees are more often targeted by peers, and that sexual harassment policies and obvious reporting mechanisms are infrequently encountered in such situations.

Within SEAC, gender issues have been a recurring theme, both in interpretations of archaeological analysis and within the field itself.<sup>2</sup> In this light, the SEAC Sexual Harassment Survey was created. This survey should be perceived as a continuum of earlier important research, a next step in quantifying the presence and rate of sexual harassment within our field.

This is not an easy question to address. Within SEAC, we pride ourselves on our collegiality, particularly toward those without power, that is, students. There may be reluctance to address these difficult issues which are not so easily discussed, but it is important for multiple reasons. First, sexual harassment is wrong. Second, if it is present, it is harmful to our organization. It undermines not only our attempts at collegiality, but it may be actively curtailing the careers of some SEAC members. By undertaking this survey, SEAC sends a clear message that they are concerned about this topic and want to ensure that all members are welcome in the organization.

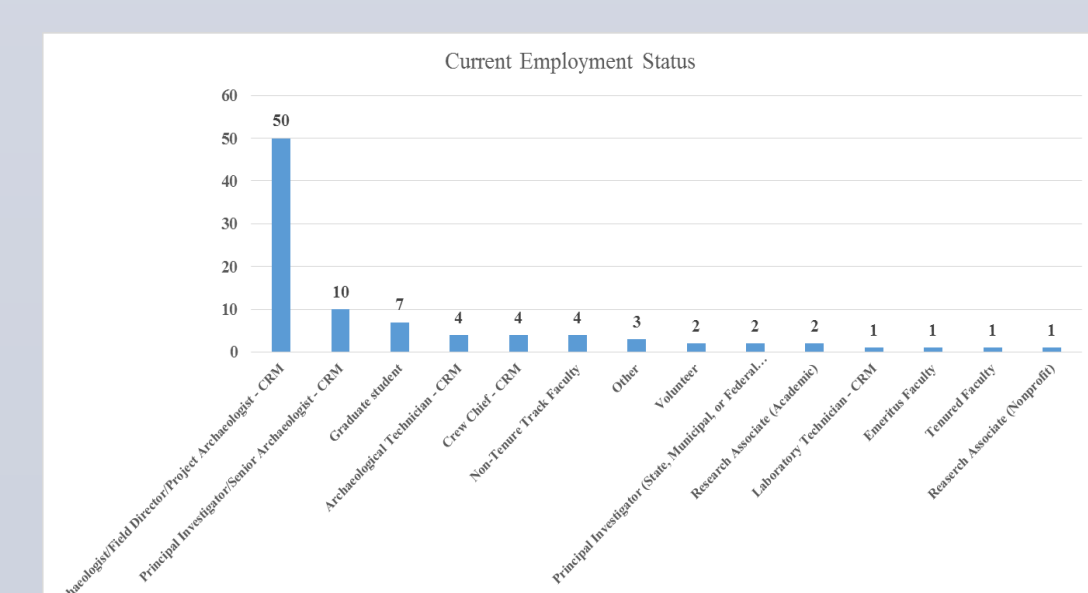
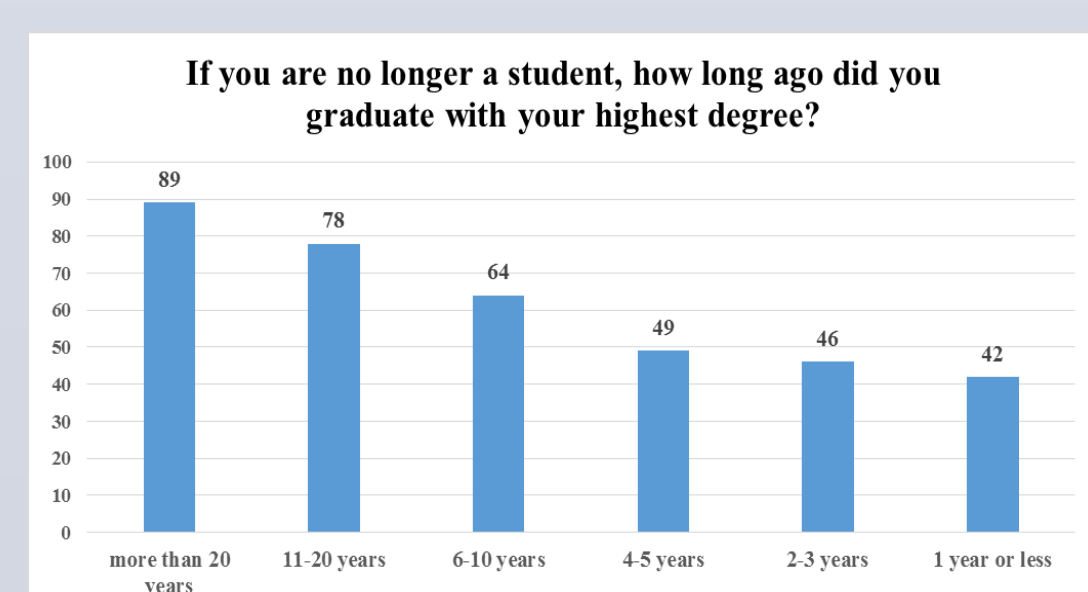
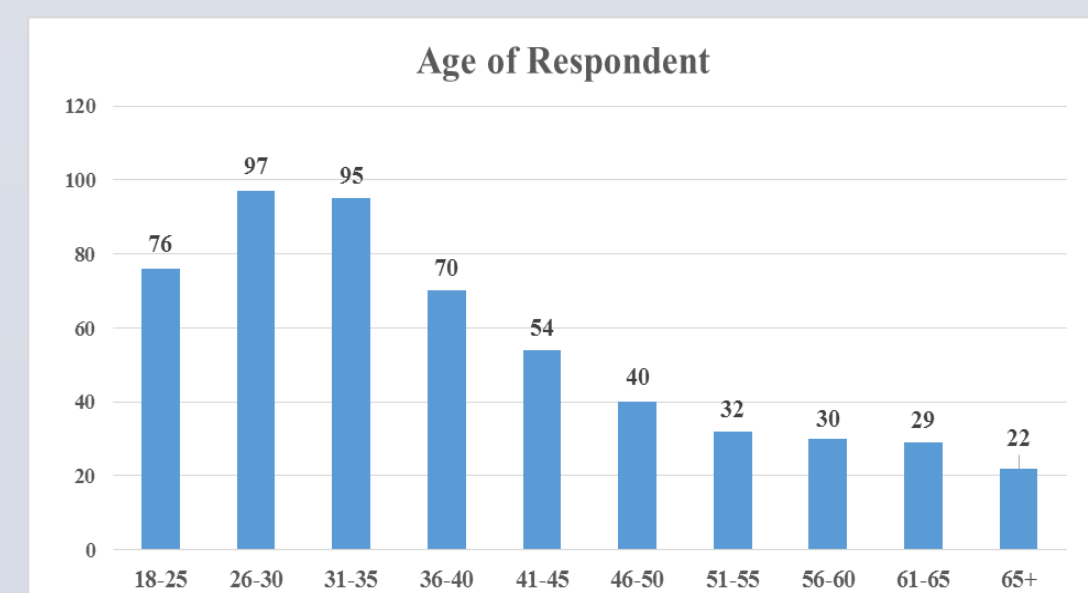
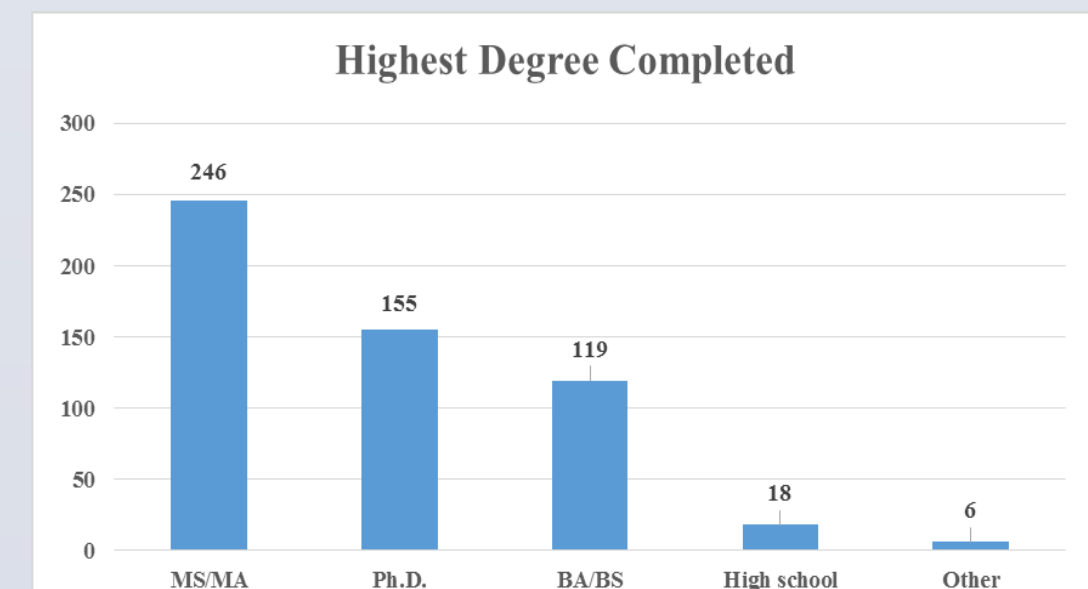
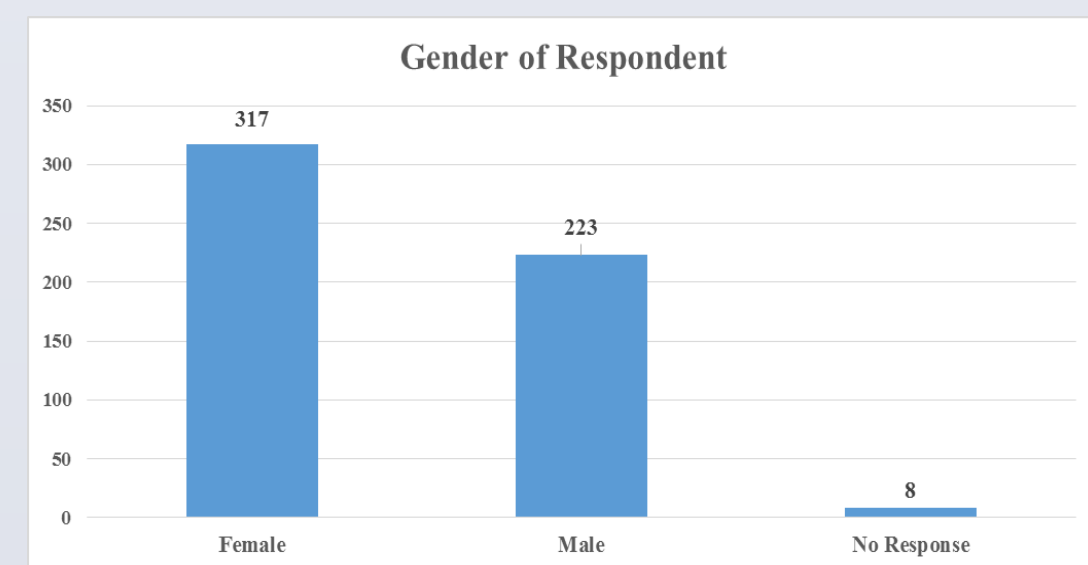
## Methods

In order to allow the SEAC Survey data to be comparable to that gathered by the Survey on Academic Field Experiences (SAFE)<sup>1</sup>; this survey was based on theirs with the authors' permission. The survey was distributed to committee members, who modified it to reflect the needs of SEAC and to generate data to answer specific questions. In addition, experts on measuring sexual harassment in the workplace and administering surveys were consulted in the preparation of the survey.

The American Cultural Resources Association Board granted permission to use their employment categories. The survey was beta-tested, sent to five male and five female archaeologists with extensive fieldwork experience not in the Southeast; additional modifications were made based on their responses. IRB approval was granted in September 2014 by the University of Mississippi. Survey data is owned by the Southeastern Archaeological Conference.

The survey opened in September 2014, and will stay open until November 20, 2014. As of November 8, over 590 people had responded. Participants were solicited through email sent to members of SEAC; information was also posted on the SEAC website. Additional respondents were garnered through contacting large CRM companies who work primarily in the Southeast and all professional archaeology societies in the Southeast were requested to share information about the survey. Finally, all universities and colleges who do fieldwork in the Southeast were contacted. In order to take the survey, respondents need to self-identify as having done fieldwork in the Southeast, but do not need to be current members of SEAC.

## Biographical Profile of Respondents



## Survey Design

The two primary questions for this survey are:

1. DOES SEXUAL HARASSMENT OCCUR (OR HAS IT OCCURRED IN THE PAST) IN SOUTHEASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY?

2. IF YES, WHAT IS THE RATE AT WHICH SEXUAL HARASSMENT OCCURS?

Other questions are aimed at identifying other possible areas of concern:

*Has the rate of sexual harassment changed over time?*

Specific questions were used to identify these data. These included: age of respondent, amount of time since last degree earned, and amount of time the person self-identified as an archaeologist. Combined with field school data, this allows us to see any change in the rate of sexual harassment over time.

*What is the larger context in which sexual harassment occurs?*

For this question, we understood that harassment occurs in a wider cultural context. In order to identify the context within field settings, we asked survey takers to answer questions about field tasks and domestic tasks that occur in the field and in field houses, and in both field school and non field school settings.

We recognize that asking about domestic arrangements concerning non-field school settings is not relevant to current CRM practices, where employees receive per diem for lodging and meals; however, this was not always the case, particularly in the early days of CRM; this adds to information about change over time.

We asked about the presence of codes of conduct at field settings, which are also part of the cultural context of sexual harassment, or lack thereof.

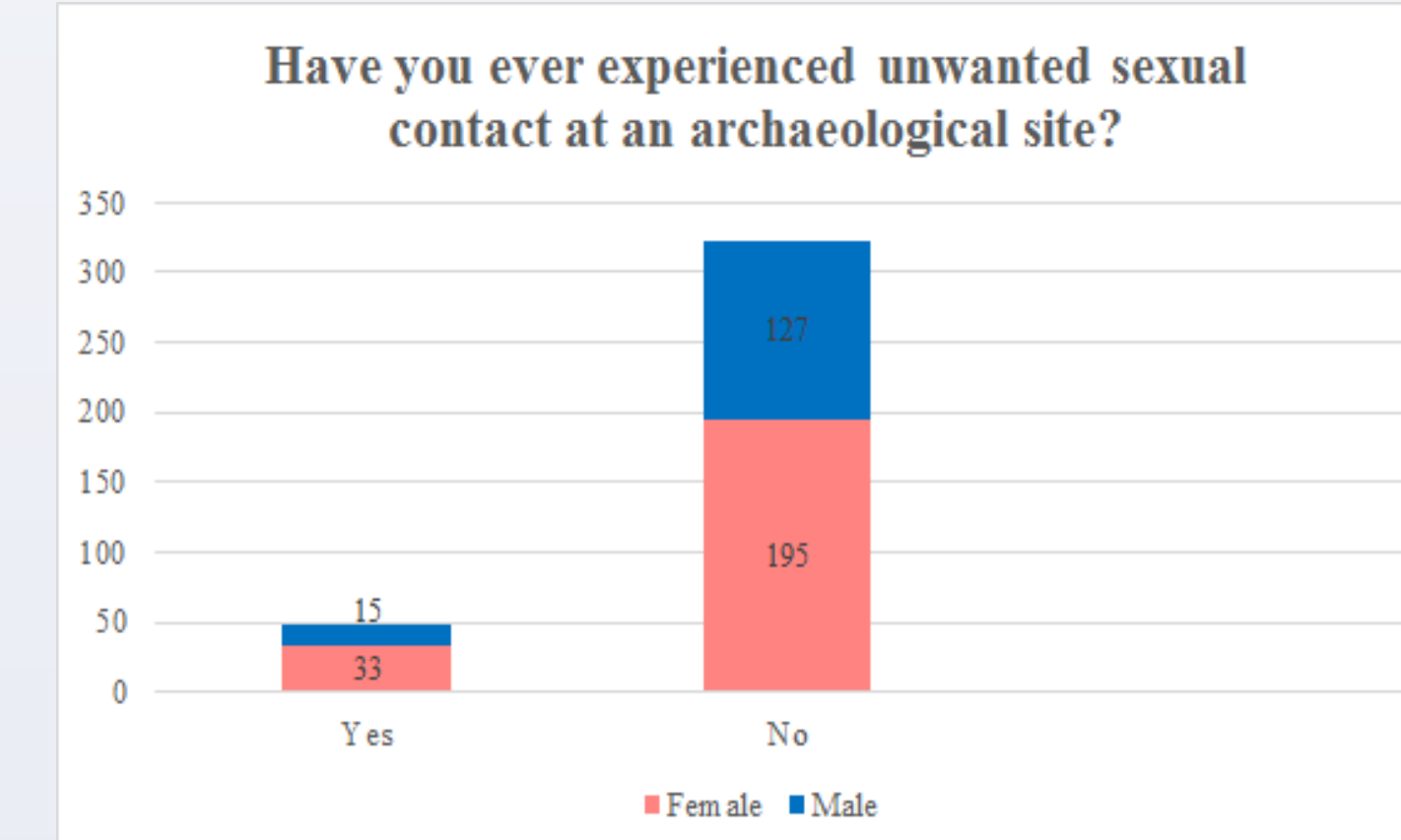
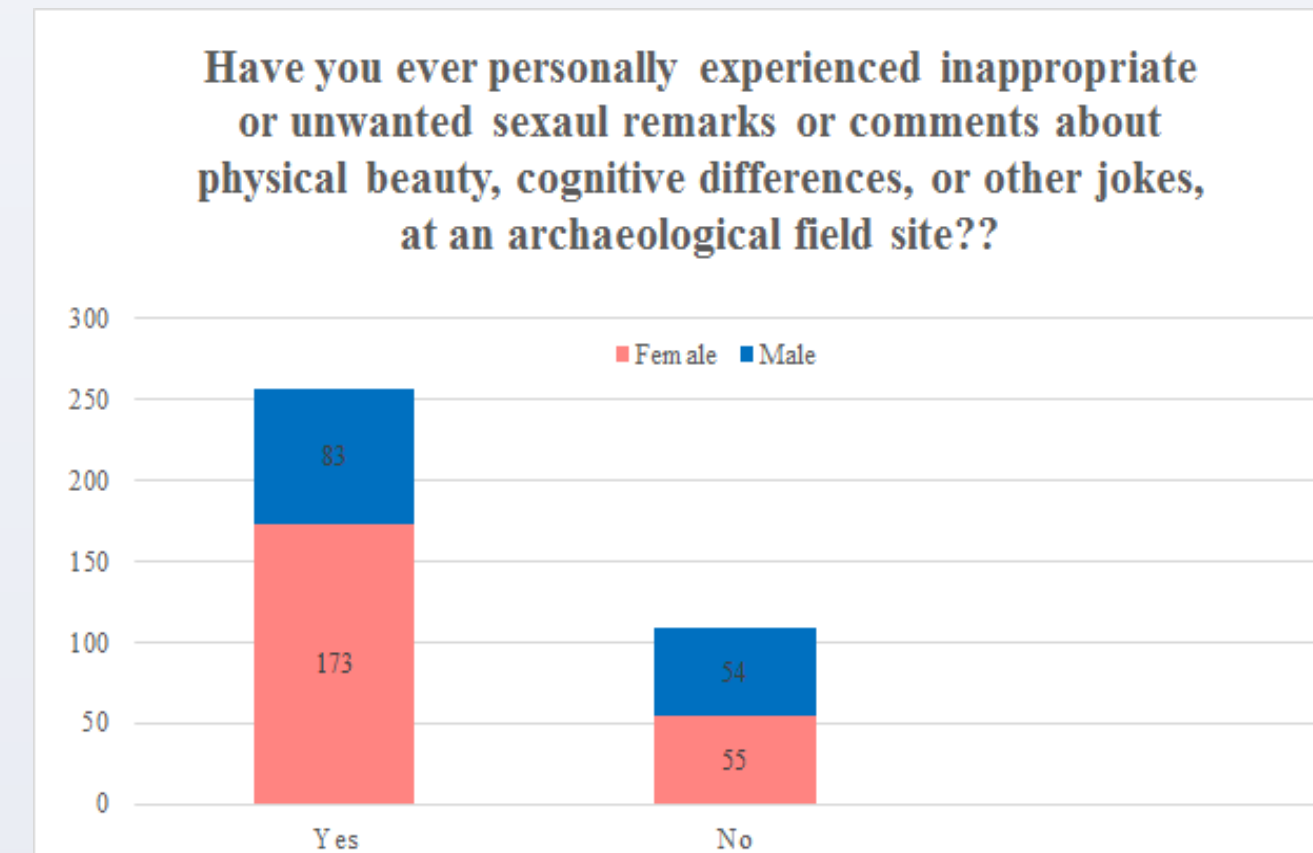
Related to this, we wanted to know if cultural context of sexual harassment is related to sexual assault occurring in the field. Therefore, we asked respondents about incidences of sexual assault, as well as the manner in which such incidences were resolved, if at all.

**Are there any effects of sexual harassment on individuals' careers?**

This survey is also designed to determine any effects on career trajectory caused, in part or whole, by incidences of sexual harassment or sexual assault. Questions at the end of the survey are designed to identify any effects, as well as identify the types of effects.

## Results

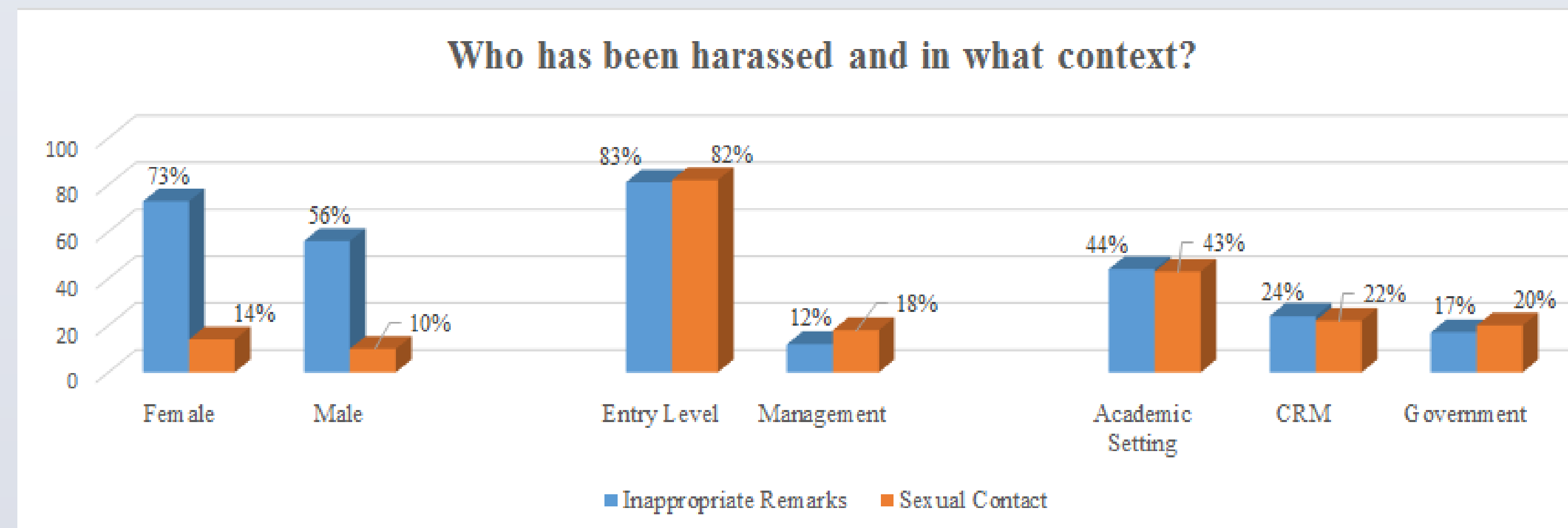
### 1. Does Harassment and Unwanted Sexual Contact Occur?



### 2. Has the frequency of harassment changed through time?

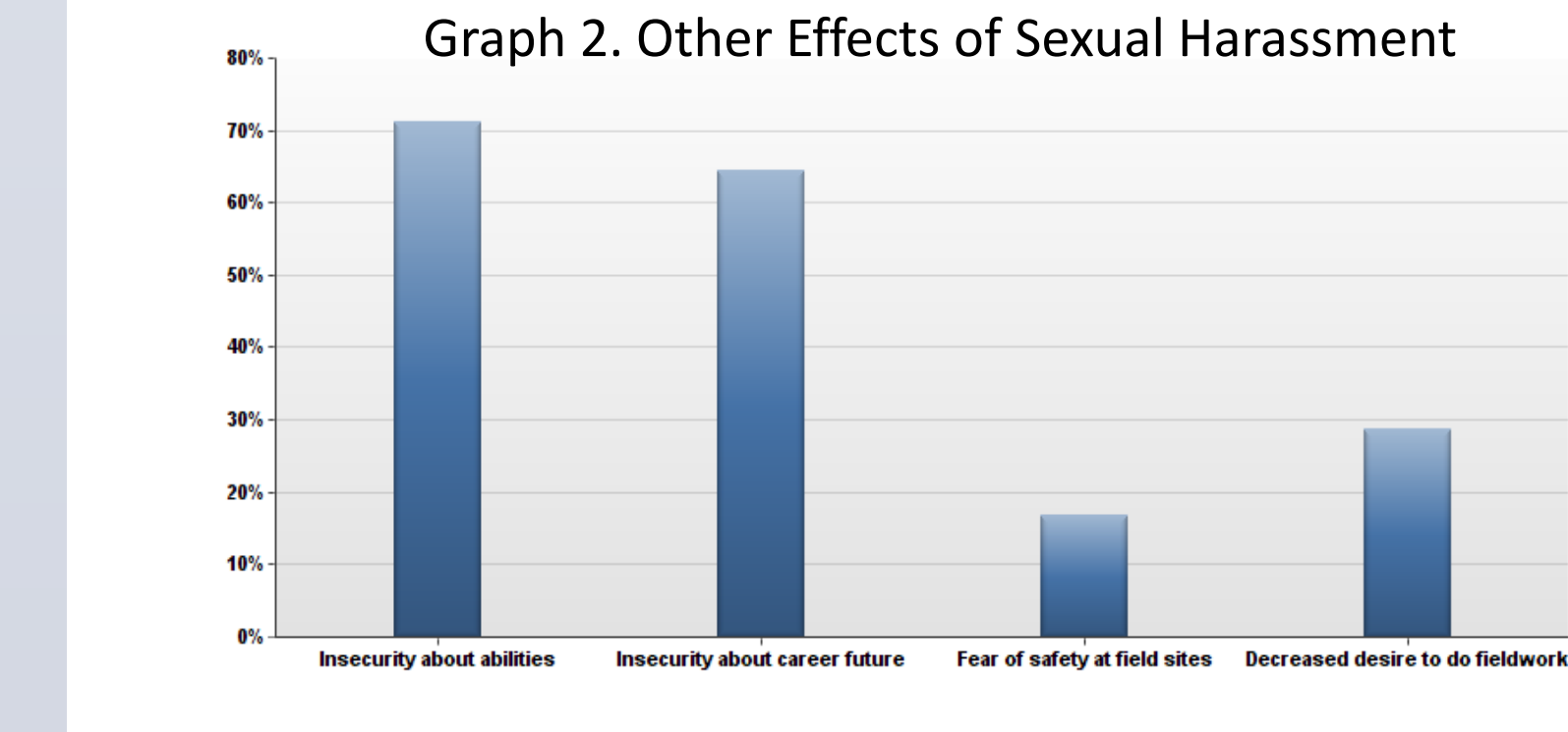
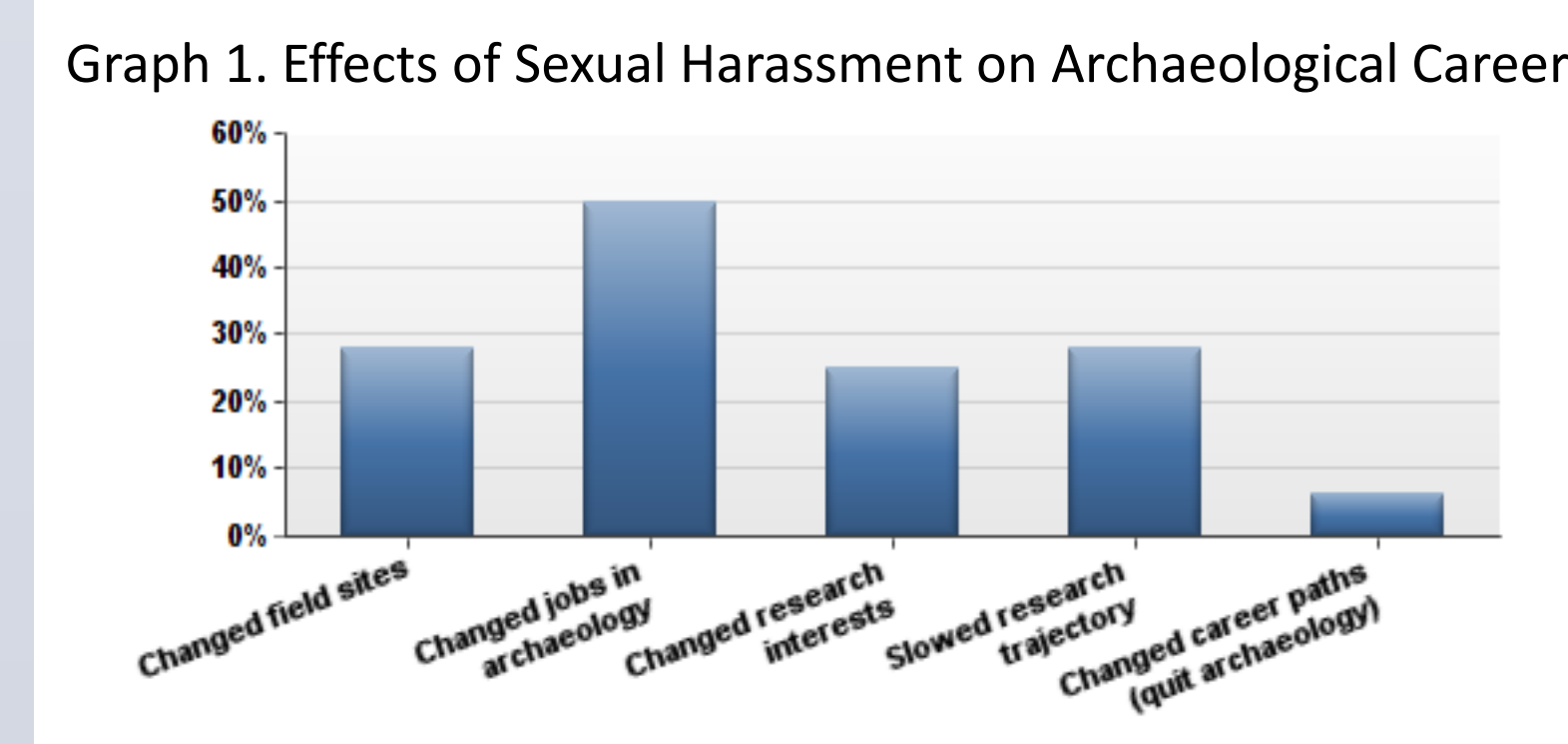
There are no strong trends indicating that the rate of harassment has changed significantly through time based on how long ago field work occurred for individuals who responded "yes" to having experienced inappropriate comments or unwanted contact. Individuals who participated in field work 20 or more years ago indicate the lowest rate of inappropriate remarks (50%), but there is no clear trend in more recent field work experiences. There is a consistent decline over the past 15 years in the percentage of individuals who have experienced unwanted contact, but the range is relatively small (9%-18%).

### 3. Who has been harassed and in what contexts does harassment occur?



### 4. Does harassment affect people's careers?

Sexual harassment has directly affected a few individuals' careers in Southeastern Archaeology (13%) and more respondents (28%) (Graph 1) reported that sexual harassment has negatively impacted their careers in other ways (Graph 2). The graphs below show the types of effects and their frequency for those that responded yes to these questions.



### 5. Do reporting structures and policies of conduct exist?

Survey responses indicate that the presence of codes of conduct and sexual harassment policies at field schools is low (26% for codes of conduct and 15% for sexual harassment policies). Many individuals reported that they did not know if codes of conduct (23%) or sexual harassment (31%) policies were in place for the field school, indicating that there is an overall lack of communication about behavioral and reporting policies.

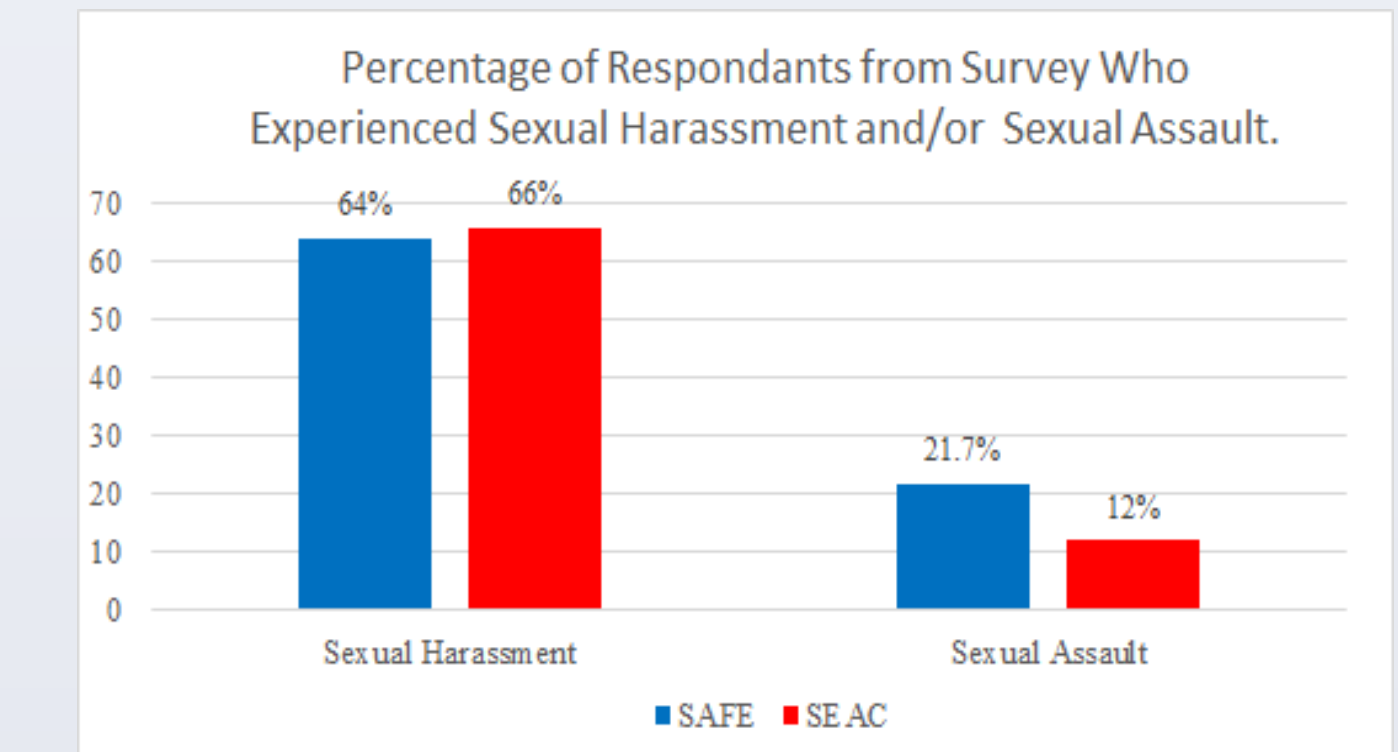
## References

<sup>1</sup>Clancy RBH, Nelson RG, Rutherford JN, Hinde K. (2014) Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault. *PLoS ONE* 9(7): e102172. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0102172  
<sup>2</sup>Claassen, Cheryl, Michael O'Neil, Tamara Wilson, Elizabeth Arnold and Brent Lansdell. (1999) Hearing and Reading Southeastern Archaeology: A Review of the Annual Meetings of SEAC from 1983-1995 and the Journal Southeastern Archaeology. *Southeastern Archaeology* 18:85-97. Bardolph, Dana N. (2014) A Critical Evaluation of Recent Gendered Publishing Trends in American Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 79(3): 522-540.  
<sup>3</sup>Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. (2012) Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military. [www.sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY12\\_Dod\\_SAPRD\\_Annual\\_Report\\_on\\_Sexual\\_Assault\\_Volume\\_One.pdf](http://www.sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY12_Dod_SAPRD_Annual_Report_on_Sexual_Assault_Volume_One.pdf)  
<sup>4</sup>Newman MA, RA Jackson, DD Baker. (2003) Sexual Harassment in the Federal Workplace. *Public Administrative Review* 63:4:472-483  
<sup>5</sup>Planty, M, L Langton, C Krebs, M Berzofsky, H Smiley-McDonald. (2013) Special Report: Female Victims of Sexual Violence, 1994-2010. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvv9410.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvv9410.pdf)

## Discussion & Conclusions

This study shows that women in Southeastern archaeology, disproportionately experience sexual harassment and assault. 68% of respondents who experienced sexual harassment and 67% of respondents who experienced unwanted sexual contact in the field were women, although men were not immune from these experiences. This trend in data has been noted in other studies as well.<sup>1,3,4</sup>

These data reflect patterns observed by the SAFE team.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to SAFE, however, the SEAC survey produced data reflecting both academic and non-academic contexts, and it had more equitable response rate from men and women (77.5% female SAFE; 58% female SEAC).



In both surveys, a majority of respondents reported experiences with sexual harassment. The SEAC study returned a lower percentage than the SAFE study for unwanted sexual contact in the field, and the SEAC percentage is significantly lower than national statistics.<sup>5</sup>

Survey results also indicate that early career archaeologists are the most vulnerable to sexual harassment and assault. The SAFE survey team predicted that sexual harassment and assault experienced during this formative stage may discourage field research and undermine one's ability to succeed in professional science.<sup>1</sup> Female trainees are more likely to be harassed than male trainees and this may be linked to attrition rates of women in field-based sciences. The SEAC Sexual Harassment survey is able to speak directly to this issue: over a quarter of respondents reported negative impacts of sexual harassment on their career, including changing field sites, research trajectories, and jobs within archaeology.

The majority of respondents reported a lack of awareness of sexual harassment policies and codes of conduct. Likewise, the percentage of respondents with knowledge of a mechanism for reporting sexual harassment or assault was low. *Whether actual or perceived, lack of policies and reporting mechanisms has alarming effects: of the respondents who answered "yes" to having been the victim of unwanted sexual contact in the field, 71% did not report the incident.* In addition, some of the respondents who identified as volunteers indicated having had personal experience with sexual harassment. These data are particularly worrying and should prompt us to begin examining the parameters within which we are placing potentially vulnerable members of our field—students, those new to field work, and potentially those who are not represented by a institutions, such as volunteers.

While there is no way to ensure that everyone on a field site takes care not to offend, or makes others feel uncomfortable or unwelcome, it is clear that, as a field, we are falling far short of offering our students, volunteers, and employees a safe field experiences. By failing to provide codes of conduct, sexual harassment policies, and clear mechanisms of reporting, we also are creating a climate of impunity for those who are taking advantage of their peers and subordinates. Efforts to confront this problem with and beyond the crafting of written policies will require reflection and discussion by the SEAC community.

As we continue to parse out data obtained in this study, we hope to provide additional insights regarding the contexts and demographics of sexual harassment and unwanted sexual contact. But, we point out that based on similar trends in sexual harassment and unwanted sexual contact, the SAFE team advocated "adopting principles of community, role-modeling, and embracing the collective action of support and respect" as a preliminary solution.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps more so than the broad groups sampled in that study, we in SEAC have an opportunity to put these words into action. As a relatively small, tightly knit organization, we can hold each other accountable, and, as a community, ensure that the diverse members of our Southeastern archaeological community do not number sexual harassment and assault among their field experiences.