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# The Impact of Social Situations on College Students' Perceptions of Sexual Consent

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The Impact of Social Situations on College Students' Perceptions of Sexual Consent

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science in Community Health Promotion

by

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University of Arkansas  
Bachelor of Arts in Biology, 2016

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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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## Abstract

The majority of research examining sexual consent among college students focuses on how young adults communicate sexual consent during interactions immediately preceding a sexual encounter. However, preliminary research suggests that college students perceive that individuals begin to communicate sexual consent within social settings (e.g., at a bar) and through nonsexual interactions (e.g., text messaging); this has been labeled “outside the bedroom” consent. In order to further explore “outside the bedroom” consent, college students ( $n = 789$ ) were randomly assigned to read four of sixteen vignettes. Within each vignette, four variables were manipulated: gender of the initiator (male or female), the social setting in which the characters met (bar or library), the communication style used to transition to the home of the initiator (walking home together or exchanging text messages), and the final cue communicated by the characters (nonverbal or verbal) in the moments immediately preceding the sexual encounter. Participants were asked open-ended questions about when they believed the characters first consented to intercourse. Data were coded by two researchers using an inductive approach. Interrater reliability was analyzed via Kappa’s Light; coders were extremely reliable ( $\alpha > 0.90$ ).

Nearly 81 percent of responses ( $n = 4,602$ ) stated the characters consented “inside the bedroom” (i.e., at the home of the initiator). Regardless of the gender of the character, students most frequently stated that the character communicated consent through the use of an explicit verbal cue. Approximately three percent of responses ( $n = 182$ ) were coded as cues occurring “outside the bedroom,” indicating that that participants perceived characters consenting at the bar, library, while walking home, or exchanging text messages. The results are inconsistent with previous literature stating that college students most often use implicit nonverbal cues to communicate consent and that consent negotiations are perceived to begin “outside the bedroom.” Participants’

responses may reflect an exposure to contemporary consent education programs that endorse explicit verbal consent. The potential impacts of consent education programs on college student's perceptions of consent and the methodological implications for future research will be discussed.

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## Introduction

Numerous events in recent years have pushed sexual assault to the forefront of American thought. Allegations of sexual misconduct surround President Donald Trump. Over 15 reports of inappropriate sexual behavior surfaced against Trump during the 2016 presidential election, with 11 women stating that they were sexual assaulted by the President prior to his election (Kurtzleben, 2016). As these allegations built, sexual assault became a focus of the presidential race between Trump and Hillary Clinton (Gersen, 2016).

Outside of the political sphere, cases of sexual assault permeate news headlines as well. Recently, the California judicial system's punishment of Stanford student Brock Turner attracted public outrage. Turner raped a woman while she was incapacitated outside of a college party, and he served only three months in prison for the crime (Grinberg & Shoichet, 2016). The University of Arkansas made national headlines as well when the institution expelled a student-athlete for sexual assault. The original sanction stated that the student was to be expelled after his graduation date. After being criticized for the decision, the university stated that the student would be expelled immediately (Elizabeth Fryberger v. The University of Arkansas-Fayetteville and the Board of Trustees of The University of Arkansas, 2016). The high incidence of sexual assault on college campuses across the United States has been the focus of much of the discussion surrounding sexual violence. While attending college, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men are sexually assaulted (Krebs, Linquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007). In 2011, colleges and universities were charged with the responsibility of resolving complaints of sexual assault and punishing perpetrators (Office for Civil Rights, 2011).

At the center of the sexual assault cases handled by universities is the issue of consent (Beres, 2007). Even in the judicial system, the onus is often on the victim to prove that they did

not consent to sex (Block, 2004). Therefore, a deeper understanding of sexual consent can help address the issue of sexual assault on college campuses. However, the epidemic of sexual assault should be fully understood before the importance of the discussion of sexual consent can be appreciated. The definitions and prevalence of sexual assault, as well as the action taken to reduce the frequency of sexual violence, must first be discussed.

### **Defining Sexual Assault**

The words “sexual assault” and “rape” are used when discussing sexual violence, but the definitions of the terms can be a source of contention. In fact, the definition of rape has evolved over time. In the 1800s, law in the United States defined rape as the sexual penetration of a woman by a man other than her husband (Freedman, 2012). Spousal rape did not become a crime until the year 1979 (Rothman, 2015). During the Jim Crow Era, it was believed that African American women could not be raped (Freedman, 2012). It is now acknowledged that rape can happen to anyone, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or relationship to the perpetrator (National Network to End Domestic Violence [NNEDV], 2015). Although the term rape has a long history of legal use, sexual assault became a legal term in the 1960s (Palmer, 2011). The term gained popularity as a way to emphasize the violence that is inherent in sexual crimes and to combat the belief that only women can be victims of sexual violence (Palmer, 2011). However, the legal differences between sexual assault and rape can be complicated. The legal definitions of sexual assault and rape vary from state to state, with some states using the terms synonymously and other states differentiating between the two terms (Palmer, 2011). In general, sexual assault is used to mean sexual contact that occurs without someone’s consent, and rape is nonconsensual sexual vaginal, anal, or oral penetration (NNEDV, 2015). Rape is therefore a type

of sexual assault. When this paper refers to sexual assault and rape, it prescribes to these general definitions of sexual assault and rape.

### **Prevalence of Sexual Assault**

Between 17% and 22% of women are raped at some point in their lifetime (Black et al., 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). Additionally, approximately 27% of women are victims of nonconsensual sexual contact, and another 13% of women experience sexual coercion (Black et al., 2011). Clearly, sexual assault is a problem in the United States. Certain patterns and risk factors of sexual assault emerge as the prevalence rate of sexual assault is analyzed further.

Typically, most rape cases are classified as acquaintance rape, and the victim is female (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Despite common cultural ideas about rape, around 80% of victims are assaulted by a significant other, friend, family member, or acquaintance (Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, & Townsend, 2015; Sinozich & Langton, 2014); when this occurs, it is called “acquaintance rape.” The majority of sexual assault cases also involve a male perpetrator and a female victim (Black et al., 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). However, it is important to note that transgender individuals and those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual experience even higher levels of sexual assault than heterosexual women (Cantor et al., 2015). In addition, individuals who were assaulted are more likely to be sexually victimized again (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006).

The risk of sexual assault begins at a young age. Almost 25% of women who are raped are victimized before the age of 12, and 48% of male rape victims are assaulted before 12 years old (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). However, individuals aged 18 to 24 years old are at a heightened risk of sexual assault (Black et al., 2011; Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). This category of college-aged individuals involves students and nonstudents,

but there may be certain aspects of the college lifestyle that contribute to high sexual assault rates (Muehlenhard, Humphreys, Jozkowski, & Peterson, 2016). Alcohol use by the perpetrator and/or the victim occurs in many incidences of sexual violence (Testa & Livingston, 2009; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). The majority of rapes in college occur when the victim is incapacitated, and within the college party scene (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006; Testa & Livingston, 2009). Yet, binge drinking in college is normalized by American culture (Armstrong et al., 2006). Over half of college students attend parties at least once a month, and party goers are encouraged to drink heavily (Armstrong et al., 2006; Krebs et al., 2007). College party culture plays a central role in perpetuating heavy alcohol use, sexual double standards, and traditional gender roles (Armstrong et al., 2006; DeSantis, 2007). Furthermore, individuals who drink prior to engaging in sex report feeling less comfortable and safe during the sexual interaction (Jozkowski & Wiersma, 2015). College party culture too often facilitates coercion, uninformed consent, and the victimization of individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol (Muehlenhard et al., 2016).

Around 12% of female undergraduates are the victims of rape, and around 20% are the victims of unwanted sexual touching (Cantor et al., 2015). Freshmen year is a time when women are at the highest risk of sexual assault (Cantor et al., 2015; Cranney, 2015). Because of this, a college woman's freshmen year is sometimes referred to as the "red zone" (Cranney, 2015). Despite the high rates of sexual assault in college, victims who are college students are less likely than nonstudents to report their assault to the authorities (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Less than 15% of college students who were sexually assaulted reported it to the police or campus officials (Krebs et al., 2007). Fear of reprisal is often the reason that victims choose not to report their assault (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Cantor et al. (2015) found that almost a quarter of

students believed that if they were assaulted and reported the incident, retaliation against them was either likely or very likely. The high rates of sexual assault on the college campus, coupled with the lack of trust in the authorities, is very troubling. To fully understand the epidemic of sexual assault, a brief analysis of the actions schools and legislatures take to prevent and punish sexual assault is needed.

### **Disciplinary Action and the Prevention of Sexual Assault on the College Campus**

At the federal level, the Obama administration took many steps to address sexual violence. In 2011, Vice President Joe Biden and the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, implemented guidelines that required colleges and universities to respond to and resolve sexual assault incidences on campus (Office for Civil Rights, 2011). These guidelines, outlined in a “Dear Colleague” letter, stated that sexual harassment and sexual violence are a form of sex discrimination (Office for Civil Rights, 2011). Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 (Title IX) requires that colleges prevent and forbid discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities. Therefore, under Title IX, colleges must address and resolve sex discrimination complaints, including sexual assault (Office for Civil Rights, 2011).

In 2014, President Obama and Vice President Biden took further action to address sexual assault. The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault was created to provide resources to colleges and universities. These resources help universities and colleges conduct campus climate surveys, increase the efficacy of sexual misconduct investigations, and include students in sexual assault prevention programs (White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, 2017). Although the Obama administration prioritized sexual assault prevention, there is speculation about whether the new administration, led by President

Trump and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, will continue this initiative (Reilly, 2017; Wu, 2016).

Furthermore, despite the federal action, many have said that colleges and universities have failed to adequately respond to sexual assault complaints (Lipka, 2015). Colleges can issue a wide variety of disciplinary actions for sexual assault perpetration, including expulsion. However, there are currently over 300 ongoing investigations of universities and colleges for possibly mishandling sexual misconduct cases (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2017). Cantor et al. (2015) found that almost 60% of students felt that their sexual assault complaint would not be taken seriously by their university.

A few states have taken legislative action. Both California and New York passed legislation requiring that universities adopt an “affirmative consent” policy (Craig & McKinley, 2015). Affirmative consent occurs when a person asks for sexual consent, and their partner responds with a verbal yes or unambiguous, enthusiastic body language (Wilson, 2015). Affirmative consent policies are meant to emphasize the importance of consent communication, and they are meant to send a message that universities must handle sexual assault complaints more seriously (Craig & McKinley, 2015).

In addition to legislation, sexual assault prevention campaigns have been implemented at universities across the United States. Some programs seek to raise awareness. The University of Arkansas introduced a campaign called “That’s so 6%” that aims to combat rape culture and dispel common rape myths (RESPECT, 2017). Other initiatives focus on sexual consent. RealConsent is an online program that has been shown to be effective in reducing attitudes and beliefs that contribute to sexual assault (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2017). A large part of the program is designed to increase men’s knowledge of sexual consent.

The “Consent is Sexy” campaign aims to normalize and encourage straightforward communication of sexual consent (Consent is Sexy, 2011). As these programs and other sexual assault prevention programs are implemented across the nation, awareness of the epidemic of sexual assault grows.

The legislation and public health campaigns discussed above are centered around sexual consent. Affirmative consent aims to dictate the appropriate type of sexual consent communication, and public health campaigns aim to emphasize the importance of sexual consent in order to prevent sexual assault perpetration. It is important to focus on sexual assault prevention in college students, because this population has an increased risk of sexual victimization. However, many of these policies and programs have been criticized for being unrealistic. Critics say that straightforward sexual communication is unnatural and that is not the government’s role to dictate sexual communication (Young, 2014). Successful public health programs are in tune to the cultural nuances of the community they serve; they are culturally appropriate and relevant to the community. Therefore, if legislatures and public health officials wish to address consent communication in college students, they should first understand how college students consent to sex. Affirmative consent policies will not be effective unless they address the larger cultural context in which consent negotiations exist (Jozkowski, 2016). A complex understanding of consent communication in college students can lead to more effective sexual assault prevention efforts.

### **The Current Study**

The current study aims to explore the impact of social situations on sexual consent among college students. Young adults are surrounded by college party culture, which encourages students to binge drink and go to parties (Armstrong et al., 2006). College party culture may

affect consent communications in college students. Certain behaviors within a specific social situation, like accepting a drink from a man at a bar, may indicate consent to some college students (Jozkowski & Hunt, 2014). Based on research conducted by Humphreys (2004) and Beres (2014), the current study will examine the extent to which college students view consent as an ongoing process that can begin within social interactions. Specifically, three research questions will be investigated: 1) Do college students perceive that the process of consent begins within social settings? 2) To what extent do college students believe characters' consent negotiations are influenced by specific factors that occur "outside of the bedroom"? 3) What demographic factors of the participants influence how college students perceive consent negotiations?

### **Literature Review**

Consent patterns in college students have been studied previously (see Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Researchers have found that clear patterns emerge during consent negotiations between college students. Typically, college students use nonverbal communication, although differences based on gender, relationship status, and social context exist (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Hall, 1998; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Humphreys, 2007; Jozkowski, Sanders, Peterson, Dennis, & Reece, 2014; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2011). However, before studying the ways in which college students communicate consent to their sexual partners, it is important to understand how college students define sexual consent. Different perceptions of sexual consent will be discussed, and then consent communication patterns in college students will be examined.

## Conceptualizations of Consent

As discussed, the concept of sexual consent is central in the current debates and legislation about sexual assault in the United States (Beres, 2007). However, researchers and theorists often fail to clarify what characterizes consent (Beres, 2007). Instead, many assume that there is a shared understanding of what defines consent. This assumption can be problematic. Although college students, researchers, and sexual assault prevention advocates all agree that consent is required in order for sexual activity to occur, differing conceptualizations of consent exist (Beres, 2014; Jozkowski, Sanders et al., 2014; Muehlenhard et al., 2016). The judicial system itself struggles to agree on what defines consent. There are three broad understandings of sexual consent: consent as an internal state of willingness, consent as an act of explicitly agreeing to something, and consent as a behavior that someone else interprets as consent (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). In order to more fully understand sexual consent, these three conceptualizations will be explored.

**Consent as an internal state of willingness.** Consent is sometimes understood as a mental act. Under this conceptualization, consent is given when the individual internally decides they are willing to engage in sex (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Partners engage in consensual sexual intercourse when they both perceive the other as internally willing to have sex. Some of the ways that college students define consent align with this conceptualization. Young adults emphasize that in order for sex to occur, the partners must be, at the very least, willing to have sex, but it is preferred that partners demonstrate eagerness to engage in sexual activity (Beres, 2014; Jozkowski, Peterson, Sanders, Dennis, & Reece, 2014). An individual's internal state is a key factor in consenting to sex.

However, defining consent solely as an internal state of willingness is problematic. Conceptualizing consent as an internal state overly simplifies an individual's internal feelings.

This conceptualization fails to account for sexual ambivalence. Ambivalence occurs when individuals experience both negative and positive thoughts about something (Thompson, Zana, & Giffin, 1995). Individuals can have reasons for both wanting and not wanting to have sex (Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2005). Individuals can desire sexual activity, but not want certain consequences of sex. This can be due to simple reasons. For example, young women can want to have sex for pleasure or intimacy, but also not want to engage in intercourse because they fear becoming pregnant (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2007). Women also experience ambivalence about sex as the result of cultural norms and gender roles. A sexual double standard exists that encourages men to have casual sex, but degrades women for having sex outside of a committed relationship (Anthony, Osman, & Davis, 1994; Sweeney, 2014). Women who engage in sexual behaviors (e.g., vaginal-penile intercourse) with “too many” men are viewed negatively by both men and women (Anthony et al., 1994; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009; Jozkowski & Hunt, 2014). This double standard often creates ambivalence in young women because they want to have sex, but fear that they will develop a negative reputation (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2007). Sexual ambivalence demonstrates that internal consent is comprised of multiple feelings, including willingness, wantedness, and agreement. It shows that an individual could be willing and simultaneously unwilling to engage in sex. Furthermore, it is ultimately impossible to know the internal feelings of others (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Conceptualizing consent as an internal state of willingness struggles to account for the nuanced, complex, and sometimes contradictory feelings and beliefs individuals have towards sexual intercourse, and it is problematic because the exact internal feelings of others is unknowable (Muehlenhard, 1995/1996). As such, more often we rely on external indicators when conceptualizing consent.

**Consent is an explicit agreement.** Consent can also be defined as the act of explicitly agreeing to certain sexual activities. This definition is epitomized by statements like “I want to have sex with you right now” or “I will have sex with you” (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Explicit consent happens when explicit, clear communication about one's willingness to engage in sexual activity occurs between sexual partners. This is the type of consent that is required under the affirmative consent laws previously discussed. College students believe that explicit communication is most indicative of consent, especially in casual sexual encounters (Lim & Roloff, 1999). However, defining consent solely by the presence of explicit communication is unrealistic because most individuals do not express consent this way (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Despite their endorsement of this conceptualization of consent, young adults also say that explicit communication is not socially acceptable (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Humphreys, 2007; Jozkowski, 2016). Although programs are working towards making explicit consent negotiation more acceptable, an understanding of consent that includes the subtle ways individuals communicate is needed.

**Consent is a behavior someone interprets as willingness.** Consent can also be viewed as a behavior that someone interprets as willingness to engage in sexual activity. This conceptualization views consent as the occurrence of certain behaviors that indicate someone's willingness to have sex. It is similar to the legal concept of implied consent, which is consent that is “indirectly given and indicated by a sign, action or inaction, or a silence that creates a reasonable presumption that one consents” (Block, 2004, p. 51). In contrast to the first conceptualization of consent discussed, this conceptualization depends on behaviors of an individual, not their internal emotions. It also depends on assumptions about what behaviors count as consent (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). College students report a shared understanding of

what behaviors during sexual activity indicate consent; both men and women report understanding subtle refusal and consent cues (Beres, 2007, Beres, 2010; Jozkowski & Hunt, in review; O'Byrne, Hansen, & Rapley, 2008). College students report using a variety of both nonverbal and verbal behaviors to indicate consent, like eye contact, pulling their partner closer, or not resisting a partner's sexual advances (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Hall, 1998; Jozkowski, Peterson et al., 2014; Jozkowski & Wiersma, 2015). This definition of consent allows for the subtle verbal and nonverbal behaviors college students report using to indicate consent.

This conceptualization has unique challenges because it relies on the observer to make inferences about behavior (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Despite complications, college students demonstrate literacy in communicating sexual consent and refusal via nonverbal cues (e.g., Beres, 2010; Kitziner & Frith, 1999). They analyze a wide variety of signals and cues, from body language to verbal statements. Young adults are able to understand when their partner's consent to sex (e.g., Beres, 2010, Humphreys, 2004). However, defining consent as a behavior someone interprets as willingness can be problematic because many have differing assumptions about what behaviors or feelings indicate consent. Some incorrectly believe that sexual wanting, accepting drinks, and certain styles of dress indicate consent (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Jozkowski & Hunt, in review; Muehlenhard, 1995/1996). These differing assumptions problematize defining consent as behavior that someone interprets as willingness (Muehlenhard et al., 2016).

**Consent as external and internal.** Above, definitions of consent were either a psychological act or a behavior. However, other definitions of consent used in research include both conceptualizations (Beres, 2007). Jozkowski, Sanders, et al. (2014) developed consent scales that measure both an individual's internal feelings associated with consent and their

behaviors that indicate consent. The Internal Consent Scale (ICS) measures respondents' feelings of readiness, arousal, safety, comfort, and other mental feelings associated with one's willingness to engage in sex (Jozkowski, Sanders et al., 2014). Alternatively, the External Consent Scale (ECS) focuses on external, observable behaviors or verbal cues that individuals engage in to indicate their consent. This includes behaviors like kissing, touching, and verbal communication (Jozkowski, Sanders et al., 2014). College students recognize that consent is the communication of willingness to engage in sex through the use of certain cues and signals (Beres, 2014). As such, it is not surprising that participant's scores on the ICS and ECS are significantly correlated; thus, engaging in behaviors that indicate sexual consent is associated with mental feelings of consent (Jozkowski, Sanders et al., 2014). The ICS and ECS demonstrate that consent is comprised of both internal feelings and external actions. Understanding that consent is multidimensional is critical to analyzing the variety of methods college students use to indicate consent.

Conceptualizing sexual consent purely as an internal state, explicit communication, or behavior to be interpreted is often problematic. There are differing ideas about what actions or feelings indicate consent, and often, individuals have complicated emotions regarding sexual intercourse. Explicit consent is discouraged by social norms, internal states can be complicated and are unknowable to others, and behaviors can have different meanings to different observers (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). It is important to understand that consent can be both an internal and external act. Although it is unlikely that miscommunication results in sexual assault (Beres, 2010), it is important to understand differing conceptualizations of what behaviors and feelings indicate consent. Some beliefs can perpetuate victim blaming and rape culture, and they must be addressed. The differing assumptions about what behaviors constitute consent is the subject of

much debate and political activism, and with this, standards of behavior are changing (Muehlenhard et al., 2016).

### **Consent Negotiations in College Students**

The ways in which college students conceptualize consent and communicate consent can be different. It is important to explore the ways that students actually consent to sex, not just how they conceptualize sexual consent. In order to create effective policy and sexual assault prevention programs, public health professionals must know both how college students behave and how they think about sexual consent. General patterns in consent negotiations exist, and these patterns are affected by relationship status, gender and the social setting.

In general, consent communication in college students is an ongoing process (Beres, 2014; Humphreys, 2004). College students utilize a variety of subtle nonverbal and verbal cues to indicate sexual interest, and during the course of the sexual encounter, they monitor their partner for signs of discomfort or enthusiasm (Beres, 2010). During the ongoing sexual interaction, consent cues can be classified into five categories: explicit verbal, implicit nonverbal, explicit verbal, implicit nonverbal, and no response signals (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999). Explicit verbal consent occurs when someone verbally states their interest to engage in sex. For example, asking someone “Do you want to have sex?” or stating “I want to have sex with you right now” is explicit verbal communication. This type of consent communication rarely occurs among college students. Direct verbal communication is considered awkward (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Humphreys, 2007). Implicit verbal consent occurs when an individual verbally engages with their partner and implies their interest in sex. They do not mention sex directly. Asking a sexual partner if they have a condom exemplifies implicit verbal consent communication. However, these two types of verbal consent

communication are not utilized frequently. The majority of sexual encounters among college students rely on nonverbal consent communication (Hall, 1998; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2010). A person utilizes explicit nonverbal consent when they engage in explicit sexual activity, like grabbing a condom or touching their partner's genitals, without supplying any verbal statements. Implicit nonverbal consent occurs when an individual touches non-erogenous zones or removes clothing without verbally discussing it. It is subtle nonverbal actions that indicate desire to engage in sex. College students also often engage in implicit nonverbal consent (e.g., Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2010). They use subtle motions like pulling their partner closer or pushing into their partner (e.g., Beres, 2010). Consent is classified as no response if an individual seems interested in sexual activity, but does not say anything verbally. They do not resist sexual advancements. Women report using this type of consent communication more often than men (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Jozkowski, Sanders et al., 2014). It is important to remember that college students can also use a variety of these nonverbal and verbal behaviors to interpret consent from their partner. A sexual encounter can involve multiple styles of consent communication. Nonverbal actions and verbal statements can be used together to indicate consent (Lim & Roloff, 1999; Jozkowski, Peterson, et al., 2014).

**Differences in consent communication based on gender.** Although gender differences in consent communication styles are often small (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Jozkowski, Peterson et al., 2014), there are clear patterns that emerge between genders. Men are more likely than women to use aggressive techniques during consent communication (Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Jozkowski, Peterson et al., 2014). In addition, men report using direct nonverbal behaviors more often than women. (Jozkowski & Wiersma, 2015). Women tend to endorse verbal communication styles more often than men (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Lim & Roloff,

1999). However, women also use no response to indicate consent more often than men (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Jozkowski, Sanders, et al., 2014).

Miscommunication theory posits that these differences in communication style might result in a miscommunication that leads to sexual assault (Abbey, 1982; Abbey, McAusla, & Ross, 1998; Tannen, 1992) Miscommunication theory states that a miscommunication could result from partners not understanding each other's communication style. For example, women might expect to wait for verbal cues to engage in sex, while men are looking to nonverbal cues (Jozkowski, Peterson et al., 2014). Other times, a partner might not understand their partner's subtle messages as a refusal. College students report using subtle, implicit behavior to say no to sex, like saying they have to work the next morning (Beres, 2010; O'Bryne et al., 2008).

However, men and women both demonstrate proficiency in a wide variety of consent communication techniques (Beres, 2010; Beres, 2014). This communication competency indicates that miscommunication is unlikely to result in sexual assault (Beres, 2010). College students understand a wide variety of subtle, nonverbal behaviors (Beres, 2010; O'Bryne et al., 2008; Jozkowski & Hunt, 2014). Claims of miscommunication are much more often used to blame the woman for rape and to reduce the perpetrator's accountability (O'Bryne et al., 2008). For example, in a survey conducted by Jozkowski and Peterson (2013), 12% of men said that they engage in sexual penetration quickly, and if their partner protests, they pretend that it was a mistake.

Gender differences in consent communication are better explained by the traditional sexual script. Traditional gender roles posit that men are constantly desirous of sex, while women only want sex if they are in a committed relationship with their partner (Wierderman, 2005). Within these traditional gender roles, men are positioned as sexual initiators and women

are sexual gatekeepers (Wiederman, 2005). As sexual initiators, men are encouraged to continue with sexual activity until their partner either allows or explicitly refuses it (Wiederman, 2005). It becomes the women's responsibility to say yes or no to sex (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Wiederman, 2005). College students often endorse and follow these gendered sexual roles (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013). While following these gender roles, men escalate sexual activity using direct nonverbal techniques, and women either refuse or allow sex by either direct affirmation or no response (Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Wiederman, 2005). Unfortunately, there are situations in which people may have experienced nonconsensual sex because they believed resisting is useless (Canan, Jozkowski, & Crawford, 2016). This is not surprising given that some men have reported hearing a verbal refusal, but opted to ignore it unless more direct and explicit followed (Jozkowski & Hunt, in review). Gender differences in sexual consent communication do exist.

**Differences in consent communication by relationship status.** Another factor that influences consent communication between college students is the relationship of the sexual partners. Verbal consent is used more often in casual sexual encounters, while individuals in long-term relationships report using nonverbal communicative cues more frequently (Beres, 2014; Humphreys, 2007; Jozkowski & Wiersma, 2015). Individuals in relationships are more likely than single individuals to use direct nonverbal behaviors (Jozkowski & Wiersma, 2015).

**Differences in consent by social context and location.** The final facet of the communication of consent between college students is the social context in which it occurs. While consent within relationships and casual sexual encounters has been discussed, the larger social environment in which many consent negotiations occur has not been discussed. Understanding the larger social environment is critical when analyzing an individual's behavior.

Most rapes on campus occur within the party scene, and are linked to alcohol use by both the perpetrator and the victim (Armstrong et al., 2006; Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013). Therefore, it is important to discuss how college party culture effects consent negotiations among college students.

Drinking and party attendance are considered staples of social life. Students view partying as an integral part of college life, and those who do not participate are often deemed outsiders (Armstrong et al., 2006). The expectation to participate in party culture is created by the media, parents, and peers. Women state that they feel that they are supposed to party in college (Armstrong et al., 2006). Students are motivated to participate in parties to have fun, but also to meet friends and romantic partners (Armstrong et al., 2006).

Despite widespread participation, parties on the college campus are only allowed in privileged spaces. Unfortunately, this often pushes women and other partygoers into gendered, sexualized environments (Armstrong et al., 2006). Sororities are not allowed to host parties with alcohol, and are heavily punished if they break these sanctions (DeSantis, 2007). Likewise, most on-campus residence halls prohibit parties and alcohol use. In contrast, alcohol is readily available at fraternities (Armstrong et al., 2006; DeSantis, 2007). In order to participate in the common party culture, young women, especially if they are under 21 years old, go to fraternity houses (Armstrong et al., 2006; DeSantis, 2007). If they are over 21 years old, they can go to bars to drink alcohol. However, whether in bars or parties, binge drinking is endorsed by college students (Armstrong et al., 2006; Wechsler, Davenport, Dowdall, Moeykens & Castillo, 1994). Consent is affected by this party culture. In both fraternities and bars, women are expected to tolerate some degree of flirtation or even unwanted sexual touching by men (Armstrong et al.,

2006; Graham, Wells, Bernards, & Dennison, 2010). The college party scene pressures women into sexual activity (Armstrong et al., 2006; Muehlenhard et al., 2016).

Some research has shown that college party culture shapes consent negotiations in college students. Women who are drinking are perceived as more sexually interested by men (George et al., 2006). Furthermore, intoxicated men view women as more sexually aroused, even if the woman shows signs of disinterest (Abbey, Zawacki, & Buck, 2005). Verbal consent becomes more important within the college party scene. If a woman has been drinking, her judgement is viewed as less impaired if she verbally consents to sex (Lim & Roloff, 1999). Additionally, within this binge-drinking culture, some consent negotiations appear to begin “outside the bedroom.” That is, consent negotiations are perceived to occur before the immediate sexual encounter. It occurs within a social situation, like a bar or party, through text messages, or during a transition to a private residence (Beres, 2010; Jozkowski & Hunt, in review). For example, some perceive that a woman accepting alcoholic drinks from a man at a bar or dressing “provocatively” signifies a willingness to engage in sex (Jozkowski & Hunt, in review; Muehlenhard, 1995/1996). Of course, women accept drinks from men at bars or parties for reasons other than sexual interest. Women often drink to socialize with others (Armstrong et al., 2006). However, women also report feeling pressured to consent to sex if a man buys them a drink at a bar (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Jozkowski & Hunt, in review). Some young women even assert that if a woman engages in certain behaviors, like sexual talk or accepting alcoholic drinks, for a large proportion of the evening, she must consent to sex (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012).

Other consent cues that occur outside the bedroom may be subtler. College students report analyzing their partner’s eye contact and body language within a social setting in order to

look for signs of sexual interest and consent (Jozkowski & Hunt, in review). These subtle cues in social settings are seen as necessary for communicating consent (Beres, 2010; Jozkowski & Hunt, 2014). As such, students seem to believe that consent negotiations can begin early within the social interaction (Beres, 2010).

Furthermore, consent communication can occur through the acceptance of certain social invitations. Sending text messages late at night, or asking someone to watch a movie, can be seen as an invitation for sex (Jozkowski & Hunt, in review). These implicit invitations may help college students feel less embarrassed if they are rejected (Jozkowski & Hunt, in review). Accepting invitations to go home with someone from a bar or a party is also perceived as willingness to engage in sex (Beres, 2010; Beres, 2014; Burkett & Hamilton, 2012). One female participant even stated that “everyone knows” that going home from a bar with a man indicates sexual interest (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012, p. 820). While college students never directly ask about sexual interest, other social invitations are used to gauge sexual willingness.

It is important to note that these “outside the bedroom” consent cues are perceived differently by men and women. Young men report perceiving women who are drinking alcohol as more sexually interested, regardless of the women's behaviors (DeSantis, 2007; Graham, et al., 2014). College men tend to think that a woman accepting a drink definitely indicates sexual interest, while women state that it may or may not have sexual implications (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Jozkowski & Hunt, 2014).

These “outside the bedroom” consent cues point to the idea that college students view consent as a continuous process that potentially begins in a social setting. This idea is reflected “inside the bedroom” as well. During sexual activity, college students report ongoing consent negotiations (Beres, 2014; Humphreys, 2004). They evaluate their partner’s behavior through the

entirety of the sexual encounter, and they ensure that their partner is comfortable with the activity (Beres, 2010). More research is needed, however, to determine when exactly college students perceive that consent negotiations begin.

Much of the research that examines consent negotiations in college students focuses on behaviors that occur immediately preceding sexual intercourse. These behaviors often occur “inside the bedroom,” meaning in a private location immediately preceding sex. Within the bedroom, it has been shown that college students often use implicit nonverbal behavioral cues to indicate consent. Women are often positioned as a sexual gatekeeper, in which they are supposed to refuse or allow sex. Men play the role of initiators, where they initiate sexual activity and look for consent cues from their partner. However, in order to more fully understand consent communications in college students, researchers need to step “outside the bedroom.”

### **The Present Study**

The aim of the study was to assess the impact of social situations on college students’ perceptions of sexual consent through the exploration of three research questions: 1) Do college students perceive that the process of consent begins within social settings? 2) To what extent do college students believe characters’ consent negotiations are influenced by specific factors that occur “outside of the bedroom”? 3) What demographic factors of the participants influence how college students perceive consent negotiations?

Because little research has examined the phenomena of “out the bedroom” consent, this research study is largely exploratory. However, hypotheses were formed in regards to the first and third research question. The second research question was purely exploratory, and therefore, no hypothesis was formed. In regards to the first research question, it was hypothesized that college students perceive that the process of consent begins within social settings. In order to

examine the third research question, the impact of the participant's gender, sexual history, class standing, and membership to Greek organization on their perceptions of sexual consent was assessed. It was predicted that gender and sexual history would influence the participant's perceptions of sexual consent. Gender differences in consent negotiations have been previously reported (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Jozkowski, Peterson et al., 2014), and sexual experience can provide individuals with a context for consent negotiations. For example, those who have engaged in vaginal-penile sex might better understand, through experience, that college students often adhere to traditional sexual scripts and rely on nonverbal cues. It was not anticipated that Greek membership status and class standing would effect the participant's response. However, first year students are at a heightened risk of sexual assault (Cranney, 2015), and college party culture is largely centered around Greek life (Armstrong et al., 2006). Because membership to Greek organizations and class standing seem to be risk factors in sexual assault, these demographic factors merited exploration.

## **Methods**

### **Procedures and Participants**

A survey containing both open- and closed-ended questions was administered online to college students using Qualtrics Survey Software. In order to be eligible for the study, participants had to be over the age of 18, enrolled in college courses, and have internet access. Participants ( $n = 940$ ) were recruited to take the survey through classrooms, email, word of mouth, newswire, and social media. Most participants were enrolled in elective health and general sociology courses at a large southern university. These courses were chosen in order to sample students from a wide array of fields and avoid biases in student responses related to

course major. All survey responses were anonymous and participation in the study was voluntary.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four versions of the survey (see Appendix A for the complete survey). Therefore, the full sample was divided into four groups based on the version of the survey the participant completed. The randomization and content of the surveys within each group will be further described in the *Measures* section.

Data was collected from 940 participants in total. However, participants were removed from the data set if they did not finish completing the survey. This produced a final sample of 789 participants. Of the four groups, no group contained a significantly higher drop-out rate than the others. All four groups had very similar demographic qualities. In total, about 86% ( $n = 675$ ) of participants were between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. The majority of participants identified as female, heterosexual and white. Almost 75% ( $n = 578$ ) of the sample had engaged in vaginal-penile intercourse at some point during their lifetime, and about 40% of participants were members of a Greek organization (see Table 1 for more demographic details).

Table 1: *Demographic characteristics of participants*

| Characteristic        | Full Sample | Group 1     | Group 2     | Group 3     | Group 4     |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Gender</b>         | n (%)       |
| Man                   | 256 (32.4%) | 60 (30.6%)  | 68 (39.1%)  | 28 (18.5%)  | 100 (37.3%) |
| Woman                 | 529 (67.0%) | 136 (69.4%) | 106 (60.9%) | 123 (81.5%) | 164 (61.2%) |
| Transgender           | 2 (0.3%)    | -           | -           | -           | 2 (0.7%)    |
| Other                 | 2 (0.3%)    | -           | -           | -           | 2 (0.7%)    |
| <b>Age</b>            |             |             |             |             |             |
| 18-22                 | 675 (85.6%) | 170 (86.7%) | 150 (86.2%) | 127 (84.1%) | 228 (85.1%) |
| 23-27                 | 72 (9.1%)   | 21 (10.7%)  | 12 (6.9%)   | 16 (10.6%)  | 23 (8.6%)   |
| 28 or older           | 42 (5.3%)   | 5 (2.6%)    | 12 (6.9%)   | 8 (5.3%)    | 17 (6.3%)   |
| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b> |             |             |             |             |             |
| White                 | 631 (80.0%) | 156 (79.6%) | 125 (71.8%) | 118 (78.1%) | 214 (79.9%) |

Table 1: *Demographic characteristics of participants (Cont.).*

| Characteristic             | Full Sample | Group 1     | Group 2     | Group 3     | Group 4     |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>      |             |             |             |             |             |
| Black/African American     | 57 (7.2%)   | 19 (9.7%)   | 9 (5.2%)    | 13 (8.6%)   | 16 (6.0%)   |
| Latino/Hispanic            | 53 (6.7%)   | 11 (5.6%)   | 11 (6.3%)   | 11 (7.3%)   | 20 (7.5%)   |
| Other                      | 48 (6.1%)   | 10 (5.1%)   | 11 (6.3%)   | 9 (6.0%)    | 18 (6.7%)   |
| <b>Orientation</b>         |             |             |             |             |             |
| Heterosexual               | 737 (93.4%) | 189 (96.4%) | 158 (90.8%) | 143 (94.7%) | 247 (92.2%) |
| Homosexual                 | 14 (1.8%)   | 3 (1.5%)    | 6 (3.4%)    | 2 (1.3%)    | 3 (1.1%)    |
| Bisexual                   | 28 (3.5%)   | 3 (1.5%)    | 8 (4.6%)    | 4 (2.6%)    | 13 (4.9%)   |
| Other                      | 10 (1.3%)   | 1 (0.5%)    | 2 (1.1%)    | 2 (1.3%)    | 5 (1.9%)    |
| <b>Class Standing</b>      |             |             |             |             |             |
| Freshmen                   | 120 (15.2%) | 11 (5.6%)   | 45 (25.9%)  | 13 (8.6%)   | 51 (19.0%)  |
| Sophomore                  | 214 (27.1%) | 65 (33.2%)  | 47 (27.0%)  | 24 (15.9%)  | 78 (29.1%)  |
| Junior                     | 228 (28.9%) | 65 (33.2%)  | 40 (23.0%)  | 52 (34.4%)  | 71 (26.5%)  |
| Senior                     | 294 (37.3%) | 54 (27.6%)  | 37 (21.3%)  | 55 (36.4%)  | 58 ( )      |
| Graduate Level             | 23 (2.9%)   | 1 (0.5%)    | 5 (2.9%)    | 7 (4.6%)    | 10 (3.7%)   |
| <b>Greek Status</b>        |             |             |             |             |             |
| In Greek organization      | 327 (41.4%) | 92 (46.9%)  | 76 (43.7%)  | 55 (36.4%)  | 104 (38.8%) |
| Not in Greek organization  | 462 (58.6%) | 104 (53.1%) | 98 (56.3%)  | 96 (63.4%)  | 164 (61.2%) |
| <b>Sexual History</b>      |             |             |             |             |             |
| Engaged in V-P intercourse | 578 (73.3%) | 147 (75.0%) | 125 (71.8%) | 115 (76.2%) | 191 (71.3%) |
| Never engaged              | 211 (26.7%) | 49 (25.0%)  | 49 (28.2%)  | 36 (23.8%)  | 77 (28.7%)  |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>789</b>  | <b>196</b>  | <b>174</b>  | <b>151</b>  | <b>268</b>  |

Note: V-P intercourse=vaginal-penile intercourse

## Measures

Participants were asked several demographic questions and two closed-ended questions about their sexual history and perceptions of consent (see Appendix A for the complete survey).

Participants were then asked to read through four vignettes describing consensual sexual interactions between a man and a woman. The vignettes described two college classmates, a man and woman, interacting within a public social setting. The man and woman have a friendly conversation within the social setting, and eventually go to a character's private residence. The vignette ends with the characters having consensual intercourse (see Appendix A for the full

versions of the vignettes). Following this basic outline, 16 different vignettes were written in which the following variables were manipulated: the gender of the sexual initiator and gatekeeper, the social setting in which the initiator and gatekeeper met, the communication style that the couple used to transition to the home of the initiator, and the final consent cues given in the bedroom immediately before the characters had sex. The gender of the initiator and gatekeeper had two conditions: 1) female initiator and male gatekeeper or 2) male initiator and female gatekeeper. The initiator and gatekeeper met in one of two locations: the bar or the library. The couple transitioned to the home of the initiator by walking home together or exchanging text messages. The final consent cues communicated between the two characters had two conditions as well: 1) verbal cues and 2) non-verbal cues. The content of the vignettes and the respective variables represented within the vignette are listed in Table 2.

The vignettes were designed so that every possible combination of the variables were represented. Thus, 16 different vignettes were created. The 16 vignettes were divided into four different groups with four vignettes in each group. Within each group, each variable was represented twice. For example, a participant always read two vignettes that contained a female initiator and two vignettes that contained a male initiator. Table 3 provides a summary of the content of each vignette within the four groups and the names assigned to the characters of the vignette.

Table 2: *The wording of the vignette listed by variable.*

| Variable and Condition (C)               | Vignette Wording   |
|--|--|
| Variable: Gender of Initiator/Gatekeeper |  |
| C: Female initiator and male gatekeeper  | Female name and pronouns are substituted for INITATOR, and male name and pronouns are substituted for GATEKEEPER |
| C: Male initiator and female gatekeeper  | Male name and pronouns substituted for INITATOR, and female name and pronouns substituted for GATEKEEPER.        |

Table 2: *The wording of the vignette listed by variable (Cont.).*

| Variable and Condition (C)  | Vignette Wording   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Variable: Location</b>   |  |
| C: Bar                      | It's Saturday night and INITIATOR is at a bar with a few of her/his friends. INITIATOR sees GATEKEEPER enter the bar with a group of his/her friends and goes over to say hello. INITIATOR offers GATEKEEPER a glass of beer from the pitcher she/he ordered and invites him/her to sit with her/him. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. INITIATOR teases GATEKEEPER about his/her last test grade, touches his/her knee, and laughs.   |
| C: Library                  | It's Saturday night and INITIATOR is at the library studying with a few of her/his friends. INITIATOR sees GATEKEEPER at a nearby table with a group of his/her friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, INITIATOR invites GATEKEEPER to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. INITIATOR teases GATEKEEPER about his/her last test grade, touches his/her knee, and laughs.  |
| <b>Variable: Transition</b> |  |
| C: Walk home together       | After a while, [the pitcher is empty, and] INITIATOR leans in and smiles. INITIATOR says, "[I am so tired of studying.] I don't live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?" GATEKEEPER says, "Only if I get to pick the movie." They say goodbye to their friends and leave the [bar] *or* [library] together. On the walk home, INITIATOR grabs GATEKEEPER's hand. GATEKEEPER smiles at INITIATOR. Once they get to INITIATOR's house, GATEKEEPER picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. |

Table 2: *The wording of the vignette listed by variable (Cont..).*

| Variable and Condition (C)            | Vignette Wording   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Variable: Transition                  |  |
| C: Text message exchange              | <p>After a while, [the pitcher is empty, and] GATEKEEPER's friends come over to where he/she is sitting with INITIATOR and pester him/her to leave the [bar] *or* [library] with them. INITIATOR asks GATEKEEPER for his/her number, which GATEKEEPER enters into INITIATOR's phone before he/she leaves with his/her friends.</p> <p>INITIATOR stays [at the bar with her/his friends until closing time] *or* [at the library with her/his friends for a while] and then decides to text GATEKEEPER as she/he is going home. INITIATOR texts, "[I am so tired of studying.] My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? ;)" GATEKEEPER replies, "Only if I get to pick the movie. :)" INITIATOR texts GATEKEEPER his/her address and waits for GATEKEEPER to come over. INITIATOR greets GATEKEEPER at the door with a hug. GATEKEEPER picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together.</p> |
| Variable: Consent Communication Style |  |
| C: Verbal Final                       | <p>INITIATOR snuggles into/up to GATEKEEPER's side and puts his/her arm around him/her. Then INITIATOR looks up/over at GATEKEEPER and kisses him/her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with INITIATOR on top.</p> <p>INITIATOR says, "Should we move to my bedroom?" GATEKEEPER nods and follows her/him into the bedroom. INITIATOR turns to GATEKEEPER and says, "I can get a condom. Do you want to have sex?" GATEKEEPER smiles and says "Yeah." INITIATOR gets the condom and they move to the bed, where they have intercourse.</p>   |
| C: Non-verbal final                   | <p>INITIATOR snuggles into/up to GATEKEEPER's side and puts his/her arm around his/her. Then INITIATOR looks up/over at GATEKEEPER and kisses him/her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with INITIATOR on top.</p> <p>INITIATOR gets up and grabs GATEKEEPER's hand, leading him/her to the bedroom. GATEKEEPER eagerly follows. INITIATOR takes off her/his shirt and pants, and then removes GATEKEEPER's shirt and pants. Once in their underwear, INITIATOR guides GATEKEEPER to the bed where they kiss more. INITIATOR removes INITIATOR's underwear/ boxers and grabs a condom. GATEKEEPER nods and smiles as INITIATOR [puts the condom on himself and] takes off GATEKEEPER's boxers/underwear [and puts the condom on]. They have intercourse.</p>   |

Table 3: *Grouping of sixteen different vignettes*

| Sample Group | Content of vignettes and names assigned   |
|--------------|---|
| 1 (n=196)    | V1: F, B, H, NV (Amanda & Tom)<br>V2: M, L, T, V (Nikki & Aaron)<br>V3: F, L, H, V (Carrie & Kevin)<br>V4: M, B, T, NV (Leah & Ed)        |
| 2 (n=174)    | V5: F, B, T, V (Katie & Mike)<br>V6: M, L, H, NV (Liz & Nate)<br>V7: F, L, T, V (Nikki & Aaron)<br>V8: M, B, H, NV (Amanda & Tom)         |
| 3 (n=151)    | V9: F, B, H, V (Rachel & Brett)<br>V10: M, L, T, NV (Rebecca & Eric)<br>V11: F, B, T, NV (Leah & Ed)<br>V12: M, L, H, V (Carrie & Kevin)  |
| 4 (n=268)    | V13: F, L, H, NV (Liz & Nate)<br>V14: M, B, T, V (Katie & Mike)<br>V15: F, L, T, NV (Rebecca & Eric)<br>V16: M, B, H, V (Rebecca & Brent) |

Note: V=Vignette, F=Female Initiator, M=Male Initiator, B=the characters met at a bar, L=the characters met at a library, H=the characters walked home together, T=the initiator invited the gatekeeper to their house through text message, V=the final consent cue was verbal, NV=the final consent cue was nonverbal.

### Data Analysis

After data were collected, the participants' verbatim responses to the two questions being analyzed were entered into an Excel spreadsheet. Initially, the researchers planned to create a codebook for the data through an emic approach. Following this plan, a small subset of the data was examined in order to assess for similar themes in the data and create a codebook. After this preliminary analysis, researchers decided that a response could be coded by the gender of initiator and gatekeeper, the social setting in which the couple met, and the means of transition to the home of the initiator. For example, a response that stated that consent began when "[the woman] touched his knee [at the bar]" was coded as the participant stating that consent began within the social setting. When a participant stated that a female character consented to sex "when she initiated everything," the response was coded as the participant perceiving that consent began due to the gender of the initiator and gatekeeper. Additionally, the researchers

realized that the themes that emerged within the final consent cue variable matched closely with the codes used in a study conducted by Hickman and Muehlenhard (1999). Therefore, the researchers switched to an etic theory driven approach for the final consent cue variable. When the participant mentioned any behavior that occurred when the characters were at the home of the initiator, the response was coded using the five types of consent cues presented by Hickman and Muehlenhard (1999): 1) explicit verbal, 2) implicit verbal, 3) explicit nonverbal, 4) implicit nonverbal, and 5) no response. Additional codes were also established for when participants' responses were unclear, when the participant stated they did not know when consent began, and when the participant believed the vignette described a nonconsensual interaction. Numerical values were assigned to each of the code categories identified (see Appendix B for the complete codebook and the numerical values assigned to each code).

After finalizing the codebook, two researchers independently coded the data. Because the question being analyzed asked when the characters *first* consented to sex, if the participant answered that two types of consent cues were given, the researchers coded the answer according to the first type of consent cue the participant listed. For example, when a participant stated that the male character consented "when he leads her to the bedroom, was sitting on top of her, took off her clothes, and grabbed a condom," the participant is stating that both implicit nonverbal and explicit nonverbal consent occurred. However, because the first action to occur is the characters going to the bedroom, the answer was coded as implicit nonverbal consent by the researchers. After the data were coded, interrater reliability was run to ensure that the codes assigned to the responses were sufficiently consistent. Kappa's Light was calculated, with all codes having excellent agreement for both the male and female characters of the vignette ( $\alpha > 0.90$ ).

In order to explore each research question, three types of analyses were conducted. First, in order to assess if college students perceive that consent negotiations begin outside the bedroom, the frequencies of codes of responses to all 16 vignettes were calculated ( $n = 2,857$  responses). Next, to determine what specific factors “outside the bedroom” impact consent negotiations, the frequencies of codes were calculated based on the four variables. For example, in order to analyze the impact of the gender of initiator and gatekeeper, the frequencies of codes of responses to the vignettes that contained a male initiator were computed ( $n = 1,421$  responses), as well as the codes of responses to all vignettes that had a female initiator (1,435 responses). To assess the impact of specific social situations, the frequencies of codes to responses to the vignettes in which the characters met at bar was calculated ( $n = 1,420$  responses), and the same was done for all vignettes in which the characters met at the library ( $n = 1,436$  responses). In order to measure the effects of the transition, the frequency of codes of responses to vignettes that contained a texting transition were calculated ( $n = 1,424$ ), in addition to the frequency of codes of responses to the vignettes in which the characters transitioned by walking home together ( $n = 1,424$  responses). The impact of the final consent cue was analyzed by calculating the frequency of codes of responses to the vignettes that contained a verbal final consent cue, and a separate frequency of codes was calculated for the responses to the vignettes with a nonverbal final consent cue. The final phase of analysis sought to evaluate the impact of demographic characteristics on participant responses. Four chi square analyses were conducted in order to evaluate the impacts the participants’ gender, sexual history, class standing, and membership to Greek organization had on their perceptions of sexual consent.

## Results

### **Research Question One: Do college students perceive that the process of consent begins within social settings?**

Across all 16 vignettes ( $n = 5,714$  responses), participants' responses to the question of where consent negotiations began were most frequently coded as the home of the initiator ( $n = 4,602$ ; see Table 4 for a report of the frequencies for all coded locations of consent initiation). Therefore, most responses represented "inside the bedroom" consent. In contrast to our hypotheses, approximately three percent ( $n = 182$ ) of responses, regardless of the gender of the character, cited the transition (either walking home or texting) as the point in which consent occurred. Those that stated consent occurred during the transition often mentioned that the initiator character stated that their roommate was not home. One participant wrote that the female character consented "when she told him to come over because she was home alone." Other participants viewed the invitation to watch a movie as consent. One participant simply wrote, "MOVIE TEXT." Less than one percent ( $n = 26$ ) of responses stated that consent negotiations were initiated in social settings, regardless of venue (i.e., bar or library). Participants that stated that consent occurred within the social setting mentioned a wide array of behaviors. When asked about a vignette in which the characters met at the bar, one participant wrote that the female character consented to intercourse "when she touched [the male character's] knee and leaned in," while a different participant said that the same female character consented when "she asked [the male character] for his phone number." Yet another participant stated that the female character consented "when she bought [the male character] a drink and flirted."

Across the gender of the characters in the vignette, there were virtually no differences in the frequencies of cues interpreted as initial consent communication. Only 3.5% ( $n = 101$ ) of

responses about the female character indicated that she consented through an action that occurred “outside the bedroom” (i.e., either at the bar, at the library, while walking home, or during the text message exchange), and 3.7% ( $n = 107$ ) of responses about the male character indicated that he consented “outside the bedroom.” Some participants did report that the social setting might *imply* consent, but that consent did not clearly occur until the characters were at the initiator’s house. For example, a participant expressed this sentiment when they stated the female character “implied [consent] by inviting [the male character] over, but [consent] was truly indicated when she asked [the male character] for sex.”

As previous literature has focused on “inside the bedroom” consent, a detailed coding framework (i.e., Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999) was used to analyze the responses in which consent occurred once the characters were at the home of the initiator. Because the large majority of participant responses indicated that they believed consent occurred at the home of the initiator and the coding framework allowed for more of a detailed assessment of these responses, these “inside the bedroom” responses yielded a more in-depth analysis. Over 50% ( $n = 3,415$ ) of responses indicated that participants believed the characters consented through either explicit verbal cues or explicit nonverbal cues given at the initiator’s house. Once again, there were no meaningful gender differences between characters in the types of specific “inside the bedroom” consent cues interpreted by participants. Approximately 32% ( $n = 912$ ) of responses about the male character and 32.4% ( $n = 927$ ) of responses about the female character were coded as an explicit verbal cue given at the initiator’s house. Participants often cited that the characters indicated their consent by either asking the participant to have sex, or answering yes when the character in question was asked if they wanted to have sex by the complementary character. One participant even said that after the female character asked the male character if he would like to

have sex, the male character consented “when he answered the awkwardly direct question with a yeah and smile.” In addition, regardless of the characters’ gender, about 25% (1,576) of responses to the question of where consent was initiated were coded as explicit nonverbal cues while at the initiator’s house. Within this category, participants often stated that the characters indicated their consent by grabbing a condom or nodding when the other character grabbed a condom. For example, one participant simply said that the female character consented by “pulling out the condom.” Similarly, regardless of the gender of the characters, around 20% ( $n = 1,084$ ) of responses were coded as implicit nonverbal cues that occurred at the initiator’s house. The responses citing implicit nonverbal cues encompassed a wide range of behaviors. Within one vignette, one participant said that the male character indicated consent “when they were sitting on the couch and he put his arm around her and lean[ed] in to kiss her,” while a different participant stated that consent occurred “when he took his clothes off.”

It is also important to note that a minority of participants viewed the sexual encounter described in the vignette as nonconsensual. For example, for the female characters, 3.0% ( $n = 85$ ) of responses were coded as the character not actually giving consent to intercourse. Slightly fewer, but not statistically significant, responses for the male character (i.e., 2.4% [ $n = 68$ ]) were coded as the character never giving consent. Regardless of the gender of the character, participants’ responses often indicated that the interaction was nonconsensual because the characters drank alcohol. For example, when asked at what point the male character first consented to sex, one participant stated “He did not. Because he is drunk, he cannot give consent.” Other common nonconsensual interpretations were given within the vignettes describing nonverbal consent cues. As one participant simply stated, “[There was] no verbal indication of consent.” To these participants, the absence of verbal consent indicated that the

sexual encounter could not be consensual. When asked at what point the female character first consented, one participant wrote, “She never gave consent, yes she nodded her head but she never gave *verbal* consent” [emphasis added]. Another participant stated the female character “suggested it but never *verbally* consented” [emphasis added]. Even when participants did recognize the nonverbal vignette scenario as consensual, some still stressed that verbal consent did not occur. One participant stated “No verbal consent [occurs] but [she] uses gestures when she smiles and nods to indicate consent.”

Table 4: *Frequencies of codes for the male and female character across all vignettes.*

| Code                                 | Frequency Reported for the Male Character | %    | Frequency Reported for the Female Character | %    |
|--------------------------------------|---|------|---|------|
| Female Initiator and Male Gatekeeper | 24  | 0.8  | 4   | 0.1  |
| Male Initiator and Female Gatekeeper | 1   | 0.0  | 31  | 1.1  |
| Bar                                  | 9   | 0.3  | 1   | 0.0  |
| Library                              | 7   | 0.2  | 9   | 0.3  |
| Walked Home                          | 46  | 1.6  | 48  | 1.7  |
| Texted                               | 39  | 1.4  | 49  | 1.7  |
| Explicit Verbal                      | 912                                       | 31.9 | 927   | 32.4 |
| Implicit Verbal                      | 225                                       | 26.7 | 178   | 6.2  |
| Explicit Nonverbal                   | 762                                       | 26.7 | 814   | 28.5 |
| Implicit Nonverbal                   | 580                                       | 20.3 | 504   | 17.6 |
| No Response from Character           | 62  | 2.2  | 112   | 3.9  |
| Participant Unsure                   | 35  | 1.2  | 36  | 1.3  |
| Insufficient Response Information    | 70  | 2.5  | 76  | 2.7  |
| Nonconsensual Interpretation         | 85  | 3.0  | 68  | 2.4  |
| Total Responses                      | 2,857                                     | 100  | 2,857                                       | 100  |

**Research Question Two: To what extent do college students believe characters' consent negotiations are influenced by specific factors that occur "outside of the bedroom"?**

There were no meaningful differences in the frequency of codes assessing initial consent communication among the characters in the vignettes when comparing across the different demographic characteristics of the characters themselves. The frequency of cues was compared across four character characteristics: 1) the gender of initiator/gatekeeper (female initiator/male gatekeeper vs. male initiator/female gatekeeper), 2) the social location in which they first interacted (bar vs. library), 3) the method used to transition to the home of the initiator (walking home together vs. text message exchange), and 4) the final consent cues used (verbal vs. nonverbal). In all comparisons, the frequency of codes was similar for all characters regardless of gender. The responses to vignettes that described female initiation and the vignettes that described male initiation had almost identical distributions of frequencies. When the vignettes that described the characters meeting at the bar were compared to the vignettes that described the characters meeting at the library, the frequencies of codes were again quite similar. Furthermore, the vignettes in which the characters walked home together and the vignettes where the characters texted later in the night after meeting in the bar or library also contained no meaningful differences in frequency of codes.

When the vignettes that described a final verbal consent cue were compared to the vignettes that described a final nonverbal consent cue, the dominant consent cue cited by participants in both the verbal and nonverbal scenarios was the explicit consent cue (see Table 5 and Table 6). Within the vignettes describing verbal consent, 63.6% ( $n = 906$ ) responses about the female character and 64.6% ( $n = 920$ ) responses about the male character stated that consent occurred through an explicit verbal cue. Despite the fact that explicit and implicit verbal cues

dominated the verbal consent scenarios, an implicit *nonverbal* consent cue was mentioned in about 10% of responses to the verbal scenario. These responses often indicated that consent occurred when the characters moved from the initiators' living room to the initiators' bedroom. One participant simply wrote that the male character consented to intercourse "by following [the female character] to bedroom." In response to the question asking when the female character of the same scenario consented to sex, one participant stated "It's not true in every scenario but I would start having sex in my mind when she brought up the bedroom..." Other participants reported believing that the characters' consent was initiated when the characters were kissing on the couch. In a different scenario, one participant stated that the female character consented [to vaginal-penile intercourse] "when she began to make out with him."

The most frequently coded cue in the responses to the vignettes that described a final nonverbal consent was, interestingly enough, also the explicit cue. Almost 55% ( $n = 765$ ) of the responses about the male character and 50.6% ( $n = 724$ ) about the female character cited an explicit nonverbal cue as the point in which consent occurred. Many believed that grabbing the condom indicated consent. As one participant states, the male character consented to sex when "he grabbed a condom and removed [the female character's] underwear." Within the nonverbal scenarios, almost one third of responses about the characters were coded as an implicit nonverbal consent cue. The implicit nonverbal cues mentioned in the nonverbal scenario were often the same behaviors mentioned in the verbal scenario. For example, in the nonverbal scenario a participant stated that the male character consented "when he led [the female character] to the bedroom." In both the nonverbal and verbal scenario, going to the bedroom was frequently mentioned as a nonverbal cue. Others mentioned that consent occurred when the characters

removed their clothes, which is an implicit nonverbal cue. One participant stated that the male character consented to sex “when he started removing their clothing.”

Table 5: *Comparison of female character in verbal final cue and nonverbal final cue vignettes*

| Code                                 | Frequency Reported for the Female Character in Verbal Vignettes | %    | Frequency Reported for the Female Character in Nonverbal Vignettes | %    |
|--------------------------------------|---|------|--|------|
| Female Initiator and Male Gatekeeper | 1   | 0.1  | 23   | 1.6  |
| Male Initiator and Female Gatekeeper | -   | -    | 1  | 1.7  |
| Bar                                  | 6   | 0.5  | 3  | 0.2  |
| Library                              | 4   | 0.8  | 3  | 0.2  |
| Walked Home                          | 20  | 2.2  | 26   | 1.8  |
| Texted                               | 23  | 3.8  | 16   | 1.1  |
| Explicit Verbal                      | 906   | 63.6 | 5  | 0.3  |
| Implicit Verbal                      | 222   | 15.6 | 3  | 0.2  |
| Explicit Nonverbal                   | 38  | 2.7  | 724  | 50.6 |
| Implicit Nonverbal                   | 134   | 9.4  | 446  | 31.1 |
| No Response from Character           | 12  | 0.8  | 50   | 3.5  |
| Participant Unsure                   | 15  | 1.1  | 20   | 1.4  |
| Insufficient Response Information    | 32  | 2.2  | 38   | 2.7  |
| Nonconsensual Interpretation         | 11  | 0.8  | 74   | 5.2  |
| Total Number of Responses            | 1,424   | 100  | 1,432  | 100  |

Table 6: *Comparison of male character in verbal final cue and nonverbal final cue vignettes*

| Code                                 | Frequency Reported for the Male Character in Verbal Vignettes | %   | Frequency Reported for the Male Character in Nonverbal Vignettes | %   |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----|--|-----|
| Female Initiator and Male Gatekeeper | 11  | 0.8 | 4  | 1.6 |

Table 6: *Comparison of male character in verbal final cue and nonverbal final cue vignettes (Cont.)*

| Code                                 | Frequency Reported for the Male Character in Verbal Vignettes | %    | Frequency Reported for the Male Character in Nonverbal Vignettes | %    |
|--------------------------------------|---|------|--|------|
| Male Initiator and Female Gatekeeper | -   | -    | 20   | 1.7  |
| Bar                                  | 1   | 0.1  | -  | -    |
| Library                              | 4   | 0.3  | 5  | 0.2  |
| Walked Home                          | 17  | 1.2  | 31   | 1.8  |
| Texted                               | 35  | 2.5  | 14   | 1.1  |
| Explicit Verbal                      | 920   | 64.6 | 6  | 0.3  |
| Implicit Verbal                      | 175   | 12.3 | 3  | 0.2  |
| Explicit Nonverbal                   | 49  | 3.4  | 765  | 50.6 |
| Implicit Nonverbal                   | 137   | 9.6  | 367  | 31.1 |
| No Response from Character           | 6   | 0.4  | 106  | 3.5  |
| Insufficient Response Information    | 36  | 2.5  | 40   | 2.7  |
| Nonconsensual Interpretation         | 15  | 1.1  | 53   | 5.2  |
| Total Number of Responses            | 1,424   | 100  | 1,432  | 100  |

**Research Question 3: What demographic factors of the participants influence how college students perceive consent negotiations?**

Chi Square analyses were conducted to determine if specific demographic characteristics of the participants (see Table 1 for a summary of the demographics characteristics) influenced their responses. We compared differences in consent cues across participants' gender, sexual history, class standing, and Greek membership. Participants' class standing and Greek

membership status were not significantly associated with the participant's responses. The gender of the participant did influence how they responded. However, the only code that showed significant differences was "insufficient response information." For questions about the male and female character, male participants wrote unclear responses significantly more frequently than female participants ( $p < 0.05$ ). The sexual history of the participant also influenced responses. In the demographic question, students were asked how often they engaged in vaginal-penile (V-P) intercourse. The responses to this question were placed in two categories: 1) participants who had engaged in V-P intercourse at some point in their lifetime and 2) participants who had never engaged in V-P intercourse. Participants who had engaged in V-P intercourse had responses that were coded as "participant unsure" and "insufficient response information" significantly more often than participants who had not engaged in V-P intercourse. ( $p < 0.05$ ). For example, one participant who had engaged in V-P sex wrote that they were "not sure [the female character] ever actually did" consent to sex. The answers that were coded as "participant unsure" and "insufficient response information" were often short and lacking detail. One participant simply answered "unclear" when asked at what point the female character consented to sex. No other comparisons yielded significant differences on the basis of the participant's sexual history.

### **Discussion**

Overall, in contrast to our hypotheses, the results of the study show that participants did not perceive that consent negotiations begin "outside the bedroom." In addition, college students' perceptions of consent were not influenced by characteristics of the vignette such as the gender of initiator and gatekeeper characters, the location of the social setting, and the communication style used as part of the transition to the home of the initiator. Inconsistent with previous research (e.g., Beres, 2010; Beres, 2014; Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Jozkowski & Hunt, in

review) the overwhelming majority of participants reported that they thought the characters' consent negotiation began once the characters were at the initiator's house. Additionally, participant responses most frequently stated that consent occurred through the character's use of an explicit verbal cue.

These results seem to be inconsistent with previous literature on multiple levels. There is a strong consensus in the literature that college students most often report using implicit and nonverbal cues to communicate consent to sex (Hall, 1998; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2010). Despite this, the participants in the present study most frequently reported that the characters of the vignette consented using explicit cues. In addition, it has been previously established that there are differences in the ways men and women consent to sex (e.g., Hall, 1998; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Jozkowski, Peterson et al. 2014). Men more frequently report using explicit nonverbal behaviors compared to women (Jozkowski & Wiersma, 2015). Yet, in the present study, we found no significant differences in the types of cues students perceived that the male and female characters in the vignette used to communicate consent. More specifically, when the vignettes with a female initiator were compared to the vignettes with a male initiator, no differences emerged in the frequency of consent cues reported by the participant. This is surprising, given that previous work has found that college students' consent communication tends to align with the traditional sexual script (e.g., Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Wiederman, 2005) in which college students endorse men as sexual initiators and women as sexual gatekeepers (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Jozkowski et al., in review; Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Additionally, previous literature has shown that college aged women report feeling pressured to have sex with a man when they go home with him from a social setting (e.g., bar; party) or accept drinks from him while at the social engagement (e.g.,

Beres, 2010; Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Jozkowski & Hunt, 2016). Furthermore, college students also reported believing that text messaging, particularly about hanging out late at night, after being out at a social event/engagement, or to “watch a movie” are actually code for an invitation to have sex (e.g., Bogle, 2008; Jozkowski & Hunt, in review). However, very few participants in the present study reported that they believed the vignette characters initiated consent negotiation while in the social setting (bar or library), during the characters’ transition home together, or via the texting exchanges.

Finally, previous findings indicated that men also report perceiving that when women are consuming alcohol, they are more sexually aroused than women perceive themselves or other women to be (Abbey, Zawacki, & Buck, 2005; George et al., 2006). Such findings seem to translate to consent communication as well. Jozkowski et al. (in review) found that college students reported that women’s consumption of alcohol in a social setting, such as a bar or party, could indicate her interest and potentially consent to engage in sexual activity. Yet, it was surprising to see that in the current study neither the gender of the participant or the gender of the character had an effect on the participants’ perception of sexual consent in the bar scenario. The overall results of this study and its’ contradictions with previous research have important ramifications. First, the implications the results have for sexual assault prevention programs will be discussed, and next, methodological considerations for sexual consent researchers will be explored.

### **Sexual Assault Prevention Programs: Changing Perceptions?**

Due to the increased attention placed on sexual assault by state and federal legislatures (e.g., Craig & McKinley, 2005; Office for Civil Rights, 2011; White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, 2017), programs in which students are educated about the

importance of explicit sexual consent and appropriate consent communication techniques are more widespread on the college campus than they have been in the past (Bennet, 2016). Despite the fact that miscommunication does not seem to be a root cause of sexual assault because college students report accurately understanding numerous indirect, implicit, and/or nonverbal cues as consent (Beres, 2010; O’Byrne et al., 2008; Jozkowski & Hunt, 2014), contemporary consent programs emphasize and promote the “correct” form of consent as explicit and verbal. Indeed, many sexual assault prevention initiatives teach students that consent occurs solely through the use of explicit verbal cues (Jozkowski, Peterson et al., 2014). Popular programs like the “Consent is Sexy” program rely on the idea that a person should explicitly and verbally ask to have sex, and their partner should respond with a verbal “yes” (Consent Is Sexy, 2011; Jozkowski, Peterson et al., 2014).

Given that the majority of participants in our study stated that the characters consented through similar explicit verbal cues, it is possible that the present study reflects the impact of such common, contemporary consent programs. Many responses reflected an awareness of the “correct” definition of consent taught by consent education programs (i.e., explicit verbal consent). For example, in one of the vignettes describing a female initiator with a verbal final consent cue, one participant stated that the female character consented to sex “when she said that she would get a condom. However, technically that is not her saying yes.” Here, the participant implies that even this verbal, though implicit cue (i.e., stating that one can get a condom) is not sufficient, the participant seemed to endorse the importance of the female character providing an explicit verbal affirmation. Responses such as this clearly reflect the ideals taught by consent education programs: consent occurs when a partner verbally says yes to sex. As discussed previously, many nonconsensual interpretations stated that consent did not occur because the

character did not give verbal consent. This category of responses demonstrates an exposure to consent education programs as well. When asked at what point a female character consented to sex, one participant wrote “she did not verbally do so, so it is unclear.” As many consent programs teach, the participant seems to believe that consent must be given verbally. Other participants recognized the nonverbal scenario described in the vignette as consensual but still seemed to endorse the “correct” definition of consent taught by consent education programs. After reading a vignette in which the female character served as the gatekeeper and a nonverbal final cue occurs, another participant stated that in the vignette, “no verbal consent [occurred for the female character] but [she] uses gestures when she smiles and nods to indicate consent.” The participant seems to be aware of the importance of verbal consent, as indicated by the fact that they mentioned it in their response to the open-ended question. Yet, these responses do not seem to reflect how most college students report actually communicating consent. College students report using implicit and nonverbal cues to consent (Hall, 1998; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Vannier & O’Sullivan, 2010). Many participant responses, such as the examples cited above, reflected an exposure to consent education programs, but remain inconsistent with actual consent communication.

Interestingly, participants’ previous sexual history did seem to influence their responses to the vignettes. For example, participants who had previously engaged in V-P sex stated that they were unsure when the characters consented significantly more frequently than those with no history of V-P sex; this finding might also illustrate the impact of consent education programs. Perhaps, among those who have engaged in V-P sex, their sexual histories taught them that sexual encounters typically involve implicit nonverbal consent, despite consent education programs stressing explicit verbal consent. This disconnect might leave the students feeling

unsure of what should “count” in the vignette as consent. On one hand, their experience with V-P sex indicates that consent occurs through implicit and nonverbal cues. On the other hand, their experiences with consent education programs tells them that consent occurs through explicit and verbal cues. Due to the conflicting nature of their sexual history and consent education programs, participants who engaged in V-P sex might not be confident in what behaviors in the vignette they should label as consent. Therefore, perhaps participants who had engaged in V-P were unsure significantly more frequently than participants who had not engaged in V-P sex. However, it is important to note, that only about 7% of responses ( $n = 217$ ), regardless of the participant’s sexual history, were coded as “participant unsure” or “insufficient response information.”

While the results of this study seem to indicate that students have been exposed to consent education programs stressing verbal consent, several other implications should also be examined. It is important to consider that while consent programs might change the way college students *perceive* consent, they may not change the way students *actually* consent to sex. There are inconsistencies between how college students conceptualize consent and the methods they use to consent in reality. Jozkowski, Peterson et al. (2014) found that men and women defined consent in ways that would be consistent with the ideal definition (i.e., verbal, explicit), but also reported utilizing different consent cues. College students also endorse explicit verbal consent (Lim & Roloff, 1999), but at the same time say that is it awkward to be so explicit and thus default or rely on the use of implicit nonverbal cues (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Humphreys, 2007; Jozkowski, 2016). Contemporary consent programs and initiatives could also be drawing attention to the word consent and creating a shared definition consistent with these idealized standards, but not changing the way college students actually consent to sex. As mentioned

previously, the results of this study are inconsistent with the literature that examines *how* college students actually consent to sex. The results of the present study imply that the social location, nature of transition to the home to the initiator, gender of the character and gender of participant did not affect consent communication; nonetheless, college students report that in their actual consent negotiations, these factors matter (Beres, 2010; Beres, 2014; Burket & Hamilton, 2012; Jozkowski & Hunt, 2016). These inconsistencies might be explained by the fact that college students *conceptualize* consent differently than they *communicate* consent.

There is also the possibility that consent education programs are merely changing the way students answer researchers. As the popularity of consent education programs and awareness of the issue of sexual assault grows, the socially acceptable definition of consent is changing, and therefore, social desirability bias might occur. Consent education programs might have created a general “correct” definition of consent (i.e., explicit verbal consent), but it is still unclear if more personal perceptions of consent are changing. Jozkowski and Hunt (2014) found that women report feeling pressured to sleep with men if they accept drinks from them, and Burkett and Hamilton (2012) found that women felt pressured to consent to sex with someone if they went home with that individual. It seems that this pressure to consent to sex would only occur if the person *perceived* the consent communication as beginning when someone accepts a drink or goes home with someone. Furthermore, studies have found that students do perceive accepting an invitation to go home with someone as consent (Beres, 2010; Beres, 2014). The results of the present study may be a result of social desirability bias; the participants believe that they should recite the “correct” definition of consent taught by consent education programs for researchers. The methodological impacts of this possible bias will be discussed further.

## **Methodological Considerations**

An examination of the results has highlighted two issues that need to be considered by researchers: 1) college students' perceptions of sexual consent are different than the methods they use to actually consent to sex, and 2) consent education programs may have created a socially acceptable definition of the word "consent" and therefore, social desirability bias may occur when participants answer questions about their perceptions of sexual consent.

Sexual consent research can help inform sexual assault prevention programs and help create more effective programs (Jozkowski, 2016). Of course, the ultimate goal of these prevention programs is to decrease the rate of sexual assault. Despite the possible impacts sexual consent programs have had on college student's perceptions of sexual consent, the rate of sexual assault in college students has not declined (Muehlenhard et al., 2017). There is a disconnect in the way college students perceive consent and the way they consent to sex in reality (Beres, 2014; Jozkowski, Sanders et al., 2014). Therefore, researchers should use caution when assuming that college student's perceptions of consent are representative of the actual techniques they use to communicate consent. In order to create effective sexual assault prevention programs, it needs to be understood how college students consent to sex in reality. The present study may support the idea that college students perceive consent as occurring "inside the bedroom," when they are given fictitious scenarios, but the results may not be able to conclude if college students begin consent communication "outside the bedroom" in actuality. Future research aimed at further elucidating this issue would be fruitful.

The occurrence of a social desirability bias when asking students about consent also needs to be considered by researchers. This study asked students "At what point did [the male or female character] first indicate their consent to intercourse?" Perhaps, if we had asked "At what

point did [character name] first indicate their interest, agreement, or willingness to engage in sexual intercourse,” we would have yielded different results. In a preliminary study of sexual refusals, our team found differences when asking college students how they communicate their “non-consent” compared to how they communicate their “refusals” (Marcantonio & Jozkowski, unpublished data). Similarly, Rhoads and Jozkowski (2015) found differences when asking college students if they believed they could interpret another person’s *willingness* to engage in sexual activity from a social media profile compared to when they asked students if they could interpret another person’s *consent* to engage in sexual activity from a social media profile. Specifically, when asking college students about “willingness,” 68% of the sample indicated they could make this interpretation from social media. However, when the same question was asked about “consent,” less than half (48%) of the sample answered in the affirmative. These findings suggest that the word consent holds greater weight than other words. As such, if we used alternative wording in future studies, we may find different results that are more consistent with college students’ actual behaviors.

The results of the study indicate that students relied on the definitions of consent taught by common consent programs. The clinical phrasing “consent to intercourse” may have told students that they needed to rely on the formal, socially acceptable definitions taught by consent education programs. To assess student’s true thoughts about consent, more informal phrasing may be appropriate. Instead of directly using the word “consent,” phrases such as “agree to have sex” may be more helpful.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study yielded unexpected findings. There were important merits to this study in that we attempted to provide a more comprehensive examination of consent “outside the bedroom”

with a substantially larger sample size compared to previous studies (e.g., Beres, 2010; 2014; Jozkowski & Hunt, 2016; O’Byrne et al., 2006; 2008). We have already discussed some methodological limitations, such as asking about perceptions of fictions situations compared to actual behaviors and the use of the word “consent,” which may be associated with contemporary social movements and consent education programs. However, there are a few additional limitations worth mentioning. First, although chi square analyses showed the geographic location of the participant’s hometown did not affect their responses, all students were enrolled in a large southern university. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to all college students. As discussed, social desirability might have affected the participants’ responses, despite the fact that the survey was anonymous. As is common with survey data on college campuses, there were also significantly more female respondents than male respondents. Therefore, caution should also be used when generalizing the results to male college students. Finally, although the drop-out rate was low, missing data may have biased the results of the study. About 15% ( $n = 151$ ) of participants did not complete the survey.

To address some of the limitations of this study, future research should be carefully conducted in order to assess “outside the bedroom” consent, but also factor in the weight of the word “consent.” To that end, we recommend researchers be highly selective in terms of word choice when designing their instruments as well as conduct substantial piloting during the instrument development stage. Furthermore, future research should examine the influence of language on college student’s perceptions of consent. Future studies that examine “outside the bedroom” consent should use less formal language. Research should examine if college students answer questions about “consent” and “willingness” differently. This would help assess if consent education programs are changing the way college students conceptualize consent, or if

the programs are merely creating a shared, socially acceptable definition of the word consent. Additionally, because consent education programs might be changing perceptions of consent, researchers should ask participants if they have participated in consent education and sexual assault prevention programs. In an effort to examine differences in how college students *actually* consent to sex and how they *perceive* consent communications, surveys that analyze both students' actual experiences, as well as their perceptions should be conducted as well. Finally, efforts should be made to assess the impacts of "outside the bedroom" consent in other geographic locations and to survey a higher proportion of men, individuals with diverse genders, and individuals with diverse sexual orientations.

### **Conclusions**

Previous research has shown that college students perceive that consent negotiations begin "outside the bedroom." However, the present study did not yield such results. Most participants perceived that the two characters in the vignettes *began* consent negotiations "inside the bedroom," and that the consent negotiations began through the use of explicit verbal communication. In recent years, there has been increased effort to reduce sexual assault through consent education programs, state and federal legislation, and university regulation (e.g., White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault). With this increase in attention, the ways in which college students communicate consent might be changing, or the ways in which college students define the word consent might be changing. The disagreement between this study and previous literature might be the result of this change in mindset. Given the results of this study, it seems that consent researchers must be aware of the possible impacts the media, university programs, and legislation has on college student's perceptions of consent, even though their perceptions do not yet seem to correspond with actual behavior

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**Appendix A**  
**The Survey Instrument**

1. What gender do you identify as?
  - a. Man
  - b. Woman
  - c. Transgender
  - d. Other, please specify
  
2. What is your age in years?
  
3. What race/ethnicity do you primarily identify as?
  - a. White or Caucasian
  - b. Black or African American
  - c. Latino or Hispanic
  - d. Asian or Asian American
  - e. Middle Eastern or Middle Eastern American
  - f. Native American or Alaskan Native
  - g. Bi- or Multi-racial
  - h. Other, please specify
  
4. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?
  - a. Heterosexual/Straight
  - b. Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian
  - c. Bisexual
  - d. Unsure/Questioning
  - e. Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?
  - a. Single and not actively dating
  - b. Single, but casually seeing/ hanging out with one or several people
  - c. In a relationship
  - d. Married
  - e. Divorced
  - f. Widowed
  - g. Another relationship status, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. How would you describe your current sexual relationships status?
  - a. In an exclusive/monogamous sexual relationship (that is, we only have sex with each other)
  - b. In a non-exclusive/non-monogamous sexual relationship (that is, you have a primary partner and one or both of you have sex with other partners)
  - c. Engaging in mainly casual sexual encounters

- d. Not engaging in sexual activity right now
7. What is your current class standing?
- Freshmen
  - Sophomore
  - Junior
  - Senior
  - Super senior (5 or more years)
  - Graduate student
8. Are you a member of a Greek organization (i.e. sorority, fraternity)?
- Yes
  - No
  - I used to be a member of a Greek organization, but I no longer am
  - I plan to join a Greek organization
9. How would you describe the area where you spent most of your childhood?
- Rural (small towns or cities isolated from larger areas or farming communities)
  - Suburban (community near a bigger city, often part of a metropolitan region)
  - Urban (big city – i.e., Austin, Little Rock, Memphis, Tulsa)
  - Megalopolis (extra-large city with an especially diverse population – i.e., New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles)
10. How would you describe the region where you spent most of your childhood?
- Northeast (e.g., Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania)
  - Midwest (e.g., Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)
  - South (e.g., Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, Kentucky, North Carolina)
  - West (e.g., Arizona, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii)
11. The next set of questions refers to the types of sexual behaviors you have engaged in. Please check the box that refers to the most recent time you engaged in the following sexual behavior(s). If you have never engaged in this behavior, you can select "never."

| <b>Behavior</b>  | <b>Past 30 days</b> | <b>Past 90 Days</b> | <b>Past Year</b> | <b>Lifetime</b> | <b>Never</b> |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. I kissed/made out with another person   |                     |                     |                  |                 |              |
| 2. I masturbated alone (stimulated your body for sexual pleasure whether or not you had an orgasm) |                     |                     |                  |                 |              |
| 3. I touched my partner's genitals   |                     |                     |                  |                 |              |
| My partner touched my genitals   |                     |                     |                  |                 |              |
| 4. I gave my partner oral sex  |                     |                     |                  |                 |              |
| 5. My partner gave me oral sex   |                     |                     |                  |                 |              |

| Behavior   | Past 30 days | Past 90 Days | Past Year | Lifetime | Never |
|--|--------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------|
| 6. I had vaginal intercourse (penis into vagina)   |              |              |           |          |       |
| 7. My partner put their penis in my anus   |              |              |           |          |       |
| 8. I put my penis into my partner's anus<br>**If you are female, please write "NA" on the line |              |              |           |          |       |
| 9. While in an exclusive relationship, I had sex with someone other than my partner            |              |              |           |          |       |
| 10. I consented/agreed to sexual activity even though I really didn't want it                  |              |              |           |          |       |

For the next four questions, we will be asking you to read different scenarios. Each scenario is about two college students, one male and one female, engaging in **consensual** vaginal-penile intercourse for the first time with each other. Each pair of college students are in class together and though they have never spent time alone outside of school, they sit next to each other during lecture and are friendly with other (Note: For each version of the survey, students were presented with four of the following sixteen vignettes. They were not given the title of vignette or the variables represented).

Vignette 1: Female Initiator, Bar, Going Home, Verbal Final Cue. (Rachel and Brett)

It's Saturday night and Rachel is at a bar with a few of her friends. Rachel sees Brett enter the bar with a group of his friends and goes over to say hello. Rachel offers him a glass of beer from the pitcher she ordered and invites him to sit with her. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. She teases him about his last test grade, touches his knee, and laughs. After a while, the pitcher is empty, and Rachel leans in and smiles. She says, "I don't live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?" Brett says, "Only if I get to pick the movie." They say goodbye to their friends and leave the bar together. On the walk home, Rachel grabs Brett's hand. He smiles at her.

Once they get to Rachel's house, Brett picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Rachel snuggles into Brett's side and puts his arm around her. Then she looks up at him and kisses him. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Rachel on top. Rachel says, "Should we move to my bedroom?" Brett nods and follows her into the bedroom. Rachel turns to him and says, "I can get a condom. Do you want to have sex?" Brett smiles and says "Yeah." Rachel gets the condom and they move to the bed, where they have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Rachel?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Brett?

At what point did Rachel first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Brett first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Rachel, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Brett, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

#### Vignette 2: Female Initiator, Bar, Going Home, Nonverbal Final Cue (Amanda and Tom)

It's Saturday night and Amanda is at a bar with a few of her friends. Amanda sees Tom enter the bar with a group of his friends and goes over to say hello. Amanda offers him a glass of beer from the pitcher she ordered and invites him to sit with her. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. She teases him about his last test grade, touches his knee, and laughs. After a while, the pitcher is empty, and Amanda leans in and smiles. She says, "I don't live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?" Tom says, "Only if I get to pick the movie." They say goodbye to their friends and leave the bar together. On the walk home, Amanda grabs Tom's hand. He smiles at her.

Once they get to Amanda's house, Tom picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Amanda snuggles into Tom's side and puts his arm around her. Then she looks up at him and kisses him. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Amanda on top. Amanda gets up and grabs Tom's hand, leading him to the bedroom. Tom eagerly follows. Amanda takes off her shirt and pants, and then removes Tom's shirt and pants. Once in their underwear, Amanda guides Tom to the bed where they kiss more. She removes her own underwear and grabs a condom. Tom nods and smiles as Amanda takes off his boxers and puts the condom on. They have intercourse.

#### QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Amanda?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Tom?

At what point did Amanda first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Tom first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Amanda, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Tom, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

#### Vignette 3: Female Initiator, Bar, Text, Verbal Final Cue (Katie and Mike)

It's Saturday night and Katie is at a bar with a few of her friends. Katie sees Mike enter the bar with a group of his friends and goes over to say hello. Katie offers him a glass of beer from the pitcher she ordered and invites him to sit with her. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. She teases him about his last test grade, leans in, touches his knee, and laughs. After a while, the pitcher is empty, and Mike's friends come over to where he is sitting with Katie and pester him to leave the bar with them. Katie asks Mike for his number, which he enters into her phone before he leaves with his friends.

Katie stays at the bar with her friends until closing time and then decides to text Mike as she is going home. She texts, "My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? :)" Mike replies, "Only if I get to pick the movie. :)" Katie texts him her address

and waits for Mike to come over. She greets him at the door with a hug. Mike picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Katie snuggles into Mike's side and puts his arm around her. Then she looks up at him and kisses him. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Katie on top. Katie says, "Should we move to my bedroom?" Mike nods and follows her into the bedroom. Katie turns to him and says, "I can get a condom. Do you want to have sex?" Mike smiles and says "Yeah." Katie gets the condom and they move to the bed, where they have intercourse.

#### QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Katie?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Mike?

At what point did Katie first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Mike first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Katie, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Mike, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

#### Vignette 4: Female Initiator, Bar, Text, Nonverbal Final Cue. (Leah and Ed)

It's Saturday night and Leah is at a bar with a few of her friends. Leah sees Ed enter the bar with a group of his friends and goes over to say hello. Leah offers him a glass of beer from the pitcher she ordered and invites him to sit with her. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. She teases him about his last test grade, leans in, touches his knee, and laughs. After a while, the pitcher is empty, and Ed's friends come over to where he is sitting with Leah and pester him to leave the bar with them. Leah asks Ed for his number, which he enters into her phone before he leaves with his friends.

Leah stays at the bar with her friends until closing time and then decides to text Ed as she is going home. She texts, "My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? :)" Ed replies, "Only if I get to pick the movie. :)" Leah texts him her address and waits for Ed to come over. She greets him at the door with a hug. Ed picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Leah snuggles into Ed's side and puts his arm around her. Then she looks up at him and kisses him. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Leah on top. Leah gets up and grabs Ed's hand, leading him to the bedroom. Ed eagerly follows. Leah takes off her shirt and pants, and then removes Ed's shirt and pants. Once in their underwear, Leah guides Ed to the bed where they kiss more. She removes her own underwear and grabs a condom. Ed nods and smiles as Leah takes off his boxers and puts the condom on. They have intercourse.

#### QUESTIONS:

What the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Leah?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Ed?

At what point did Leah first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Ed first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Leah, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Ed, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

Vignette 5: Female Initiator, Library, Going Home, Verbal Final Cue. (Carrie and Kevin)

It's Saturday night and Carrie is at the library studying with a few of her friends. Carrie sees Kevin at a nearby table with a group of his friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, she invites him to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. She teases him about his last test grade, touches his knee, and laughs. After a while, Carrie leans in and smiles. She says, "I am so tired of studying. I don't live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?" Kevin says, "Only if I get to pick the movie." They say goodbye to their friends and leave the library together. On the walk home, Carrie grabs Kevin's hand. He smiles at her.

Once they get to Carrie's house, Kevin picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Carrie snuggles into Kevin's side and puts his arm around her. Then she looks up at him and kisses him. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Carrie on top. Carrie says, "Should we move to my bedroom?" Kevin nods and follows her into the bedroom. Carrie turns to him and says, "I can get a condom. Do you want to have sex?" Kevin smiles and says "Yeah." Carrie gets the condom and they move to the bed, where they have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Carrie?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Kevin?

At what point did Carrie first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Kevin first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Carrie, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Kevin, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

Vignette 6: Female Initiator, Library, Going Home, Nonverbal Final Cue. (Liz and Nate)

It's Saturday night and Liz is at the library studying with a few of her friends. Liz sees Nate at a nearby table with a group of his friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, she invites him to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. She teases him about his last test grade, touches his knee, and laughs. After a while, Liz leans in and smiles. She says, "I am so tired of studying. I don't live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?" Nate says, "Only if I get to pick the movie." They say goodbye to their friends and leave the library together. On the walk home, Liz grabs Nate's hand. He smiles at her.

Once they get to Liz's house, Nate picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Liz snuggles into Nate's side and puts his arm around her. Then she looks up at him and kisses him. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Liz on top. Liz gets up and grabs Nate's hand, leading him to the bedroom. Nate eagerly follows. Liz takes off her shirt and pants, and then removes Nate's shirt and pants. Once in their underwear, Liz guides Nate to the bed where they kiss more. She removes her own underwear and grabs a condom. Nate nods and smiles as Liz takes off his boxers and puts the condom on. They have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Liz?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Nate?

At what point did Liz first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Nate first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Liz, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Nate, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

Vignette 7: Female Initiator, Library, Text, Verbal Final Cue. (Nikki and Aaron)

It's Saturday night and Nikki is at the library studying with a few of her friends. Nikki sees Aaron at a nearby table with a group of his friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, she invites him to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. She teases him about his last test grade, touches his knee, and laughs. After a while, Aaron's friends come over to where he is sitting with Nikki and pester him to leave the library with them. Nikki asks Aaron for his number, which he enters into her phone before he leaves with his friends.

Nikki stays at the library with her friends for a while and then decides to text Aaron as she is going home. She texts, "I am so tired of studying. My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? ;)" Aaron replies, "Only if I get to pick the movie :)" Nikki texts him her address and waits for Aaron to come over. She greets him at the door with a hug. Aaron picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Nikki snuggles into Aaron's side and puts his arm around her. Then she looks up at him and kisses him. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Nikki on top. Nikki says, "Should we move to my bedroom?" Aaron nods and follows her into the bedroom. Nikki turns to him and says, "I can get a condom. Do you want to have sex?" Aaron smiles and says "Yeah." Nikki gets the condom and they move to the bed, where they have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Nikki?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Aaron?

At what point did Nikki first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Aaron first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Nikki, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Aaron, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

Vignette 8: Female Initiator, Library, Text, Nonverbal Final Cue (Rebecca and Eric)

It's Saturday night and Rebecca is at the library studying with a few of her friends. Rebecca sees Eric at a nearby table with a group of his friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, she invites him to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. She teases him about his last test grade, touches his knee, and laughs. After a while, Eric's friends come over to where he is sitting with Rebecca and pester him to leave the library with them. Rebecca asks Eric for his number, which he enters into her phone before he leaves with his friends.

Rebecca stays at the library with her friends for a while and then decides to text Eric as she is going home. She texts, “I am so tired of studying. My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? ;)” Eric replies, “Only if I get to pick the movie :)” Rebecca texts him her address and waits for Eric to come over. She greets him at the door with a hug. Eric picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Rebecca snuggles into Eric’s side and puts his arm around her. Then she looks up at him and kisses him. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Rebecca on top. Rebecca gets up and grabs Eric’s hand, leading him to the bedroom. Eric eagerly follows. Rebecca takes off her shirt and pants, and then removes Eric’s shirt and pants. Once in their underwear, Rebecca guides Eric to the bed where they kiss more. She removes her own underwear and grabs a condom. Eric nods and smiles as Rebecca takes off his boxers and puts the condom on. They have intercourse.

#### QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Rebecca?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Eric?

At what point did Rebecca first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Eric first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Rebecca, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Eric, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

#### Vignette 9: Male Initiator, Bar, Going Home, Verbal Final Cue. (Rachel and Brett)

It’s Saturday night and Brett is at a bar with a few of his friends. Brett sees Rachel enter the bar with a group of her friends and goes over to say hello. Brett offers her a glass of beer from the pitcher he ordered and invites her to sit with him. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. He teases her about her last test grade, touches her knee, and laughs. After a while, the pitcher is empty, and Brett leans in and smiles. He says, “I don’t live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?” Rachel says, “Only if I get to pick the movie.” They say goodbye to their friends and leave the bar together. On the walk home, Brett grabs Rachel’s hand. She smiles at him.

Once they get to Brett’s house, Rachel picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Brett snuggles up to Rachel’s side and puts his arm around her. Then he looks over at her and kisses her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Brett on top. Brett says, “Should we move to my bedroom?” Rachel nods and follows him into the bedroom. Brett turns to her and says, “I can get a condom. Do you want to have sex?” Rachel smiles and says “Yeah.” Brett gets the condom and they move to the bed, where they have intercourse.

#### QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Rachel?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Brett?

At what point did Rachel first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Brett first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Rachel, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Brett, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

Vignette 10: Male Initiator, Bar, Going Home, Nonverbal Final Cue. (Amanda and Tom)

It's Saturday night and Tom is at a bar with a few of his friends. Tom sees Amanda enter the bar with a group of her friends and goes over to say hello. Tom offers her a glass of beer from the pitcher he ordered and invites her to sit with him. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. He teases her about her last test grade, touches her knee, and laughs. After a while, the pitcher is empty, and Tom leans in and smiles. He says, "I don't live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?" Amanda says, "Only if I get to pick the movie." They say goodbye to their friends and leave the bar together. On the walk home, Tom grabs Amanda's hand. She smiles at him.

Once they get to Tom's house, Amanda picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Tom snuggles up to Amanda's side and puts his arm around her. Then he looks over at her and kisses her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Tom on top. Tom gets up and grabs Amanda's hand, leading her to the bedroom. Amanda eagerly follows. Tom takes off his shirt and pants, and then removes Amanda's shirt and pants. Once in their underwear, Tom guides Amanda to the bed where they kiss more. He removes his boxers and grabs a condom. Amanda nods and smiles as Tom puts the condom on himself and takes off her underwear. They have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Amanda?

What in the the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Tom?

At what point did Amanda first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Tom first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Amanda, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Tom, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

Vignette 11: Male Initiator, Bar, Text, Verbal Final Cue. (Katie and Mike)

It's Saturday night and Mike is at a bar with a few of his friends. Mike sees Katie enter the bar with a group of her friends and goes over to say hello. Mike offers her a glass of beer from the pitcher he ordered and invites her to sit with him. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. He teases her about her last test grade, leans in, touches her knee, and laughs. After a while, the pitcher is empty, and Katie's friends come over to where she is sitting with Mike and pester her to leave the bar with them. Mike asks Katie for her number, which she enters into his phone before she leaves with her friends.

Mike stays at the bar with his friends until closing time and then decides to text Katie as he is going home. He texts, "My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? :)" Katie replies, "Only if I get to pick the movie. :)" Mike texts her his address and waits for Katie to come over. He greets her at the door with a hug. Katie picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Mike snuggles up to Katie's side and puts his arm around her. Then he looks over at her and kisses her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Mike on top. Mike says, "Should we move to my bedroom?" Katie nods and follows him into the bedroom. Mike turns to her and says, "I can get a condom. Do you want to

have sex?” Katie smiles and says “Yeah.” Mike gets the condom and they move to the bed, where they have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Katie?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Mike?

At what point did Katie first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Mike first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Katie, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Mike, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

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Vignette 12: Male Initiator Bar, Text, Nonverbal Final Cue. (Leah and Ed)

It’s Saturday night and Ed is at a bar with a few of his friends. Ed sees Leah enter the bar with a group of her friends and goes over to say hello. Ed offers her a glass of beer from the pitcher he ordered and invites her to sit with him. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. He teases her about her last test grade, leans in, touches her knee, and laughs. After a while, the pitcher is empty, and Leah’s friends come over to where she is sitting with Ed and pester her to leave the bar with them. Ed asks Leah for her number, which she enters into his phone before she leaves with her friends.

Ed stays at the bar with his friends until closing time and then decides to text Leah as he is going home. He texts, “My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? ;)” Leah replies, “Only if I get to pick the movie. :)” Ed texts her his address and waits for Leah to come over. He greets her at the door with a hug. Leah picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Ed snuggles up to Leah’s side and puts his arm around her. Then he looks over at her and kisses her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Ed on top. Ed gets up and grabs Leah’s hand, leading her to the bedroom. Leah eagerly follows. Ed takes off his shirt and pants, and then removes Leah’s shirt and pants. Once in their underwear, Ed guides Leah to the bed where they kiss more. He removes his boxers and grabs a condom. Leah nods and smiles as Ed puts the condom on and takes off her underwear. They have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Leah?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Ed?

At what point did Leah first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Ed first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Leah, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Ed, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

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Vignette 13: Male Initiator, Library, Going Home, Verbal Final Cue. (Carrie and Kevin)

It's Saturday night and Kevin is at the library studying with a few of his friends. Kevin sees Carrie at a nearby table with a group of her friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, he invites her to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. He teases her about her last test grade, touches her knee, and laughs. After a while, Kevin leans in and smiles. He says, "I am so tired of studying. I don't live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?" Carrie says, "Only if I get to pick the movie." They say goodbye to their friends and leave the library together. On the walk home, Kevin grabs Carrie's hand. She smiles at him.

Once they get to Kevin's house, Carrie picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Kevin snuggles up to Carrie's side and puts his arm around her. Then he looks over at her and kisses her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Kevin on top. Kevin says, "Should we move to my bedroom?" Carrie nods and follows him into the bedroom. Kevin turns to her and says, "I can get a condom. Do you want to have sex?" Carrie smiles and says "Yeah." Kevin gets the condom and they move to the bed, where they have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Carrie?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Kevin?

At what point did Carrie first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Kevin first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Carrie, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Kevin, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

Vignette 14: Male Initiator, Library, Going Home, Nonverbal Final Cue. (Liz and Nate)

It's Saturday night and Nate is at the library studying with a few of his friends. Nate sees Liz at a nearby table with a group of her friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, he invites her to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. He teases her about her last test grade, touches her knee, and laughs. After a while, Nate leans in and smiles. He says, "I am so tired of studying. I don't live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?" Liz says, "Only if I get to pick the movie." They say goodbye to their friends and leave the library together. On the walk home, Nate grabs Liz's hand. She smiles at him.

Once they get to Nate's house, Liz picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Nate snuggles up to Liz's side and puts his arm around her. Then he looks over at her and kisses her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Nate on top. Nate gets up and grabs Liz's hand, leading her to the bedroom. Liz eagerly follows. Nate takes off his shirt and pants, and then removes Liz's shirt and pants. Once in their underwear, Nate guides Liz to the bed where they kiss more. He removes his boxers and grabs a condom. Liz nods and smiles as Nate puts the condom on and takes off her underwear. They have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Liz?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Nate?

At what point did Liz first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Nate first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Liz, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Nate, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

Vignette 15: Male Initiator, Library, Text, Verbal Final Cue. (Nikki and Aaron)

It's Saturday night and Aaron is at the library studying with a few of his friends. Aaron sees Nikki at a nearby table with a group of her friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, he invites her to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. He teases her about her last test grade, touches her knee, and laughs. After a while, Nikki's friends come over to where she is sitting with Aaron and pester her to leave the library with them. Aaron asks Nikki for her number, which she enters into his phone before she leaves with her friends.

Aaron stays at the library with his friends for a while and then decides to text Nikki as he is going home. He texts, "I am so tired of studying. My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? ;)" Nikki replies, "Only if I get to pick the movie :)" Aaron texts her his address and waits for Nikki to come over. He greets her at the door with a hug. Nikki picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Aaron snuggles up to Nikki's side and puts his arm around her. Then he looks over at her and kisses her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Aaron on top. Aaron says, "Should we move to my bedroom?" Nikki nods and follows him into the bedroom. Aaron turns to her and says, "I can get a condom. Do you want to have sex?" Nikki smiles and says "Yeah." Aaron gets the condom and they move to the bed, where they have intercourse.

QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Nikki?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Aaron?

At what point did Nikki first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Aaron first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Nikki, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Aaron, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

Vignette 16: Male Initiator, Library, Text, Nonverbal Final Cue. (Rebecca and Eric)

It's Saturday night and Eric is at the library studying with a few of his friends. Eric sees Rebecca at a nearby table with a group of her friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, he invites her to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. He teases her about her last test grade, touches her knee, and laughs. After a while, Rebecca's friends come over to where she is sitting with Eric and pester her to leave the library with them. Eric asks Rebecca for her number, which she enters into his phone before she leaves with her friends.

Eric stays at the library with his friends for a while and then decides to text Rebecca as he is going home. He texts, “I am so tired of studying. My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? ;)” Rebecca replies, “Only if I get to pick the movie :)” Eric texts her his address and waits for Rebecca to come over. He greets her at the door with a hug. Rebecca picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. Eric snuggles up to Rebecca’s side and puts his arm around her. Then he looks over at her and kisses her. They continue kissing for a while and eventually are laying on the couch with Eric on top. Eric gets up and grabs Rebecca’s hand, leading her to the bedroom. Rebecca eagerly follows. Eric takes off his shirt and pants, and then removes Rebecca’s shirt and pants. Once in their underwear, Eric guides Rebecca to the bed where they kiss more. He removes his boxers and grabs a condom. Rebecca nods and smiles as Eric puts the condom and takes off her underwear. They have intercourse.

#### QUESTIONS:

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Rebecca?

What in the scenario led you to believe that it was consensual for Eric?

At what point did Rebecca first indicate her consent to intercourse?

At what point did Eric first indicate his consent to intercourse?

If you were Rebecca, how would you know that Brett was consenting to intercourse?

If you were Eric, how would you know that Rachel was consenting to intercourse?

**Imagine you are with a person whom you would like to have sex with.** Using the scale below, to what extent would you interpret the following behavior as your partner’s indication of consent to sexual intercourse? **For each, consider only the specific behavior or action being mentioned.**

1: Definitely not indicating consent to sexual intercourse

2: Probably not indicating consent to sexual intercourse

3: Probably indicating consent to sexual intercourse

4: Definitely indicating consent to sexual intercourse

- Your partner shares alcoholic drink(s) with you at a bar or party
- Your Partner accepts an alcoholic drink you have purchased/gotten for them a bar or party
- Your Partner purchases/gets a drink for you at a bar or party
- Your Partner sits close to you at a bar or party
- Your partner sits close to you in a social setting (e.g., friends hanging out; study group)
- Your Partner invites you to sit close to them at a bar or party
- Your partner invites you to sit close to them in a social setting (e.g., friends hanging out; study group)
- Your Partner accepts your invitation to sit close to you at a bar or party
- Your partner accepts your invitation to sit close to you in a social setting (e.g., friends hanging out; study group)

- Your Partner acts flirty/engages in flirtatious behavior with you (e.g., he/she touches your legs and/or arms, teases you, smiles at you)
- Your Partner asks for your phone number
- Your Partner gives you their phone number
- Your Partner invites you over to their house to watch a movie
- Your Partner accepts your invitation to come over to your house to watch a movie
- Your Partner sends you text messages toward the end of the night
- Your Partner replies to your text messages very quickly after you text them at the end of the night
- Your Partner walks you home to your house after you have spent time together socially
- Your Partner walks home with you to your house after you have spent time together socially
- Your Partner starts cuddling with you while watching a movie
- Your Partner seems okay with you starting to cuddle with them while watching a movie
- Your Partner begins kissing you
- Your Partner seems okay with it when you start kissing them
- Your Partner gestures to move to the bedroom after the two of you have been cuddling or kissing
- Your partner suggests verbally to move to the bedroom after the two of you have been cuddling or kissing
- Your Partner seems to agree when you verbally suggest moving to the bedroom after cuddling or kissing
- Your Partner follows you when you gesture to move to the bedroom after the two of you have been cuddling or kissing
- Your Partner offers to get a condom while the two of you are kissing
- Your Partner agrees with your offer to get a condom while the two of you are kissing
- Your Partner removes their clothing while the two of you are kissing
- Your Partner removes your clothing while the two of you are kissing
- Your Partner seems okay with it when you start to remove their clothing while the two of you are kissing
- Your Partner asks you verbally if you want to have sex with them
- Your Partner provides a verbal affirmation in response to you asking if they want to have sex with you
- Your Partner gets on top of you when the two of you are making out
- Your Partner seems okay with it when you get on top of them while the two of you are making out

## Appendix B The Codebook

Table 7: *The codes used for participant responses that corresponded to variables*

| Situation/Behavior in vignette cited in the participant's response   | Corresponding Variable           | Number Assigned |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|
|  | <b>Initiator/Gatekeeper</b>      |                 |
| Female Initiator/Male Gatekeeper   | Female Initiator/Male Gatekeeper | 1.1             |
| Female Initiator/Male Gatekeeper   | Male Initiator/Female Gatekeeper | 1.2             |
|  | <b>Location</b>                  |                 |
| It's Saturday night and INITIATOR is at a bar with a few of her/his friends. INITIATOR sees GATEKEEPER enter the bar with a group of his/her friends and goes over to say hello. INITIATOR offers GATEKEEPER a glass of beer from the pitcher she/he ordered and invites him/her to sit with her/him. They talk while drinking beer, smiling at each other. INITIATOR teases GATEKEEPER about his/her last test grade, touches his/her knee, and laughs.   | Bar                              | 2.1             |
| It's Saturday night and INITIATOR is at the library studying with a few of her/his friends. INITIATOR sees GATEKEEPER at a nearby table with a group of his/her friends and goes over to say hello. Since they're both studying for a big exam in their mutual class, INITIATOR invites GATEKEEPER to sit at a table to study together. They quiz each other and make jokes about the professor. INITIATOR teases GATEKEEPER about his/her last test grade, touches his/her knee, and laughs.  | Library                          | 2.2             |
|  | <b>Transition</b>                |                 |
| After a while, [the pitcher is empty, and] INITIATOR leans in and smiles. INITIATOR says, "[I am so tired of studying.] I don't live far from here and my roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place?" GATEKEEPER says, "Only if I get to pick the movie." They say goodbye to their friends and leave the [bar] *or* [library] together. On the walk home, INITIATOR grabs GATEKEEPER's hand. GATEKEEPER smiles at INITIATOR. Once they get to INITIATOR's house, GATEKEEPER picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together. | Walk Home                        | 3.1             |

Table 7: *The codes used for participant responses that corresponded to variables (Cont.).*

| Situation/Behavior in vignette cited in the participant's response   | Corresponding Variable           | Number Assigned |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>After a while, [the pitcher is empty, and] GATEKEEPER's friends come over to where he/she is sitting with INITIATOR and pester him/her to leave the [bar] *or* [library] with them. INITIATOR asks GATEKEEPER for his/her number, which GATEKEEPER enters into INITIATOR's phone before he/she leaves with his/her friends.</p> <p>INITIATOR stays [at the bar with her/his friends until closing time] *or* [at the library with her/his friends for a while] and then decides to text GATEKEEPER as she/he is going home. INITIATOR texts, "[I am so tired of studying.] My roommate is out of town. Do you want to come watch a movie at my place? ;)" GATEKEEPER replies, "Only if I get to pick the movie. :)" INITIATOR texts GATEKEEPER his/her address and waits for GATEKEEPER to come over. INITIATOR greets GATEKEEPER at the door with a hug. GATEKEEPER picks a movie, and they sit on the couch together.</p> | <p>Transition</p> <p>Texting</p> | <p>3.2</p>      |
|  | <p>Consent Communication</p>     |                 |
| <p>Straight forward verbal statements expressing agreement or desire to engage in sexual behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I really want to have sex with you.</li> <li>• I really want to do "the nasty" with you.</li> </ul> <p>Straight forward, verbal requests asking another person if they want and/or agree to engage in sexual behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you like to have sex with me?</li> </ul> <p>Affirmative verbal agreement stated in response to another characters straight forward, verbal request for sexual behavior. Responses of "yes," "of course," "definitely" or other affirmative statements to another person's explicit verbal request.</p>  | <p>Explicit Verbal</p>           | <p>4.1</p>      |
| <p>Verbal statements that imply a desire to engage in sexual activity but do not use the word sex or other close synonyms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think we should move this to the bedroom.</li> <li>• I think we should get a condom</li> </ul> <p>Verbal requests asking another person if they want and/or agree to engage in sexual behavior that do not include the explicit use of the word sex or other close synonyms, but imply engagement in sexual behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you like to see my pole?</li> </ul> <p>Responses of "yes," "of course," "definitely" or other affirmative statements to another person's implicit verbal request.</p>  | <p>Implicit Verbal</p>           | <p>4.2</p>      |

Table 7: *The codes used for participant responses that corresponded to variables (Cont.).*

| Situation/Behavior in vignette cited in the participant's response  | Corresponding Variable       | Number Assigned |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------|
|   | <b>Consent Communication</b> |                 |
| Nonverbal actions which are explicitly sexual (i.e. touching of breasts and genitals).<br>OR<br>Nonverbal affirmations given in response to explicit nonverbal or verbal sexual requests.<br>OR<br>Nodding head yes to getting a condom   | Explicit Non-Verbal          | 4.3             |
| Subtle nonverbal behaviors or actions that imply interest in engagement in sexual behavior. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touching on the arm/leg or other non-erogenous zone.</li> <li>• Removing clothing without saying anything verbally.</li> <li>• Smiling, winking, or eye contact made in a sexual/sensual way.</li> <li>• Going into a bedroom with someone or nodding to go to the bedroom</li> <li>• Kissing</li> </ul> | Implicit Non-Verbal          | 4.4             |
| Individual appears to be interested in engaging in sexual behavior but does not say anything verbally. The individual does not physically resist the sexual activity<br>OR<br>Letting someone take off their clothes  | No Response                  | 4.5             |

Table 8: *The codebook used for other participant responses*

| Content of participant response   | Code Title                        | Number Assigned |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| The participant said they were unsure when the character consented to sex or other similar responses. | I don't know; not sure            | 5               |
| The participant's response was unclear and could not be understood the researchers.                   | Insufficient response information | 6               |
| Participant states that the character did not consent to sex.   | Nonconsensual Interpretation      | 7               |

## Appendix C IRB Approval Letter



February 2, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kristen Jozkowski  
Mary Hunt

FROM: Ro Windwalker  
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 16-01-467

Protocol Title: *Consenting to Sex in Social Settings*

Review Type:  EXEMPT  EXPEDITED  FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 02/01/2016 Expiration Date: 01/31/2017

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscpl/index.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

**This protocol has been approved for 2,000 participants.** If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).