



STOPPING HARASSMENT IN YOUR DEPARTMENT

A Resource for Department Chairs

Responsibilities of Department Chairs

Harassment is an institutional, systemic, and cultural problem within academia. Harassment can be based on age, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, disability, health conditions, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, or parental status (hereafter, simply harassment). Colleges and universities are gendered organizations that are especially susceptible to the power differentials and toxic masculinity that breed harassment. Sexual harassment frequently results from a desire to prove the perpetrator's masculinity, rather than to pursue sexual pleasure/gratification. Even when sexual harassment is motivated, in part, by sexual or romantic interest, it is also always about the abuse of power and status. It happens to men as well as women. People of color and people from sexual- and gender-minority (LGBTQ) report even higher rates of incidences of harassment and microaggression.

Organizational climate is the single most important factor in determining whether harassment is likely to occur (NAS 2018). Department Chairs help determine organizational climate. Ethical leadership starts from the top; as a leader of your department you can take proactive steps to create a climate where everyone feels safe, respected, appreciated, and can work to their fullest potential. It is only under these conditions that individuals and programs can thrive.

Prevention

The best prevention is to create a diverse, inclusive, and respectful environment that promotes gender equity and does not tolerate harassment of any kind (NAS 2018). Be proactive:

- Know your culture: Consider conducting a departmental climate survey or a climate enhancement program.
- Declare that sexual harassment is a form of professional misconduct that is taken seriously and is unacceptable under any circumstances. Sexual harassment has the potential to damage a department's professional integrity, the integrity of scholarship, and the advancement of the discipline as much as research misconduct.
- Promote open conversations in the department about diversity, equity and inclusion, and craft mentoring, recruitment, retention, and advancement policies towards these goals.
- Engage faculty, staff, and students directly about their roles in building a positive, inclusive department climate based on respect and dignity.
- Collectively craft a departmental mission statement that addresses inclusion, diversity, and respect. Be transparent about and accountable to violations of the mission statement.
- Diffuse power dynamics and reduce isolation, for example by reviewing academic advising/mentoring policies and plans.
- Look for model policies and practices in other departments and schools.
- Focus on gender harassment: This is the most common form of sexual harassment. Cultures that are intolerant of gender harassment also prevent other types of harassing behaviors.
- Lead by example: Insist on civility in all department functions.
- Have a clear process: Provide a reporting plan for faculty and students affected by harassment.
- Keep learning: Improve your skills in conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, and de-escalation. Learn how to recognize and handle harassment issues in all its forms, including sexual harassment. Learn what your responsibilities may be as mandatory reporters.

Training Programs for your Department

Conventional sexual harassment training programs have not been shown to prevent harassment. Effective training programs focus on **changing behavior rather than on changing beliefs**, and communicate clear expectations for behavior and sanctions/consequences for failing to meet expectations.

- **Bystander intervention** training helps participants develop skills to interrupt and intervene when inappropriate behavior occurs.
- **Implicit bias** training helps us understand our own hidden schemata and biases.
- **Self-defense/assertiveness** training for students and faculty helps people respond in real time, negotiate conflict, and set professional boundaries.
- **Diversity and inclusion** training fosters inclusive, equitable, respectful, and productive workplaces that support people with different backgrounds.

- **Civility** training focuses on appropriate workplace behaviors and emphasizes respect of individual differences.
- Invite the university's Title IX coordinator (and ombudsperson) to a faculty meeting so that faculty better understand the Title IX office's responsibilities and constraints.

What should you do if you are informed about an incident of harassment?

- Respond respectfully and explain that reporting is honorable and courageous.
- Build in safeguards to protect against retaliation, and assure the person reporting that you will protect them from retaliation.
- Even in cases in which the incident does not strike you as an obvious case of harassment, being receptive rather than resistant to the complainant's concerns is essential to setting the stage for a fair process.
- Explain the options (filing a formal complaint is only one of them).
- Refer the target to on-campus resources, including social, health care, legal, and career/professional services.
- Follow your campus procedures to report the incident to appropriate offices, which may include:
 - Title IX Office/Coordinator
 - Campus Safety/Office of Public Safety
 - Campus Violence Prevention Office
 - Office of the Dean of Students
 - Office of the Ombudsperson
- Work with appropriate campus offices to investigate fairly and in a timely way (with due process for both targets and alleged harassers) and determine sanctions and precautions to protect targets against retaliation or other negative outcomes.
- Choosing not to sanction a perpetrator can have long-term negative consequences on the department's culture and ability to function. Be fair and do not protect known perpetrators from sanction.
- Inform the community of your *general approach* to handling cases and disciplining those who violate policies. At a minimum inform those who filed the report what specific steps/actions you took.

ASA Resources

- ASA Anti-Harassment Policy: <https://www.asanet.org/anti-harassment-policy>
- ASA Code of Ethics: <https://www.asanet.org/code-ethics>

Reports

- National Academies. 2018. Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/shstudy/index.htm>

- EEOC Task force on the Study of Harassment at Work https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/index.cfm

External Resources

While the prevention and management of harassment incidents tend to fall within the purview of campus policy and procedures, incidents of sexual violence and assault may constitute criminal offenses, require medical attention, or raise unique concerns about reporting. As such, you may want to refer individuals to resources and support outside of the college or university.

- AAUP Legal Defense Fund: <http://www.aaupfoundation.org/special-funds/LDF>
- AAUP One Faculty One Resistance: <https://onefacultyoneresistance.org/>
- Sociologists for Women in Society Discrimination and Academic Justice Committee: <https://socwomen.org/about/discrimination-and-academic-justice-committee/>
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center maintains a directory of victim/survivor support organizations, including services for immigrants, non-English speakers, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ individuals: <https://www.nsvrc.org/organizations>

Training and other Resources

- Prevention Innovations Research Center, University of New Hampshire <http://cola.unh.edu/prevention-innovations-research-center>
- APSA website: <https://www.apsanet.org/divresources/sexualharassment>
- ADVANCEGeo Partnership provides bystander intervention training for academic leaders and faculty <https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/about.html> and collects [online resources](#) for the community on relevant research and tested strategies to respond to sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination in academia: <https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/index.html>
- Enhancing Department Climate: A Guide for Department Chairs: <http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/ClimateBrochure.pdf>
- Dealing with Dysfunctional Academic Departments: <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2017/03/22/advice-academic-leaders-handling-troublesome-units-essay>
- Dealing with Unethical or Illegal Conduct in Higher Education: <https://tomprof.stanford.edu/posting/1622>
- Beyond Diversity: Civility Training in the Workplace: <http://marcusmgmt.com/blogs/beyond-diversity-civility-in-the-workplace>

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