**Woman Harassment Cell**

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**RECOMMENDATION 1: Create diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments.**

1. Academic institutions and their leaders should take explicit steps to-achieve greater gender and racial equity in hiring and promotions, and thus improve the representation of women at every level.
2. Academic institutions and their leaders should take steps to foster greater cooperation, respectful work behavior, and professionalism at the faculty, staff, and student/trainee levels, and should evaluate faculty and staff on these criteria in hiring and promotion.
3. Academic institutions should combine anti-harassment efforts with civility-promotion programs.
4. Academic institutions should cater their training to specific populations (in academia these should include students/trainees, staff, faculty, and those in leadership) and should follow best practices in designing training programs. Training should be viewed as the means of providing the skills needed by all members of the academic community, each of whom has a role to play in building a positive organizational climate focused on safety and respect, and not simply as a method of ensuring compliance with laws.
5. Academic institutions should utilize training approaches that develop skills among participants to interrupt and intervene when inappropriate behavior occurs. These training programs should be evaluated to determine whether they are effective and what aspects of the training are most important to changing culture.
6. Anti–sexual harassment training programs should focus on changing behavior, not on changing beliefs. Programs should focus on clearly communicating behavioral expectations, specifying consequences for failing to meet these expectations, and identifying the mechanisms to be utilized when these expectations are not met. Training programs should not be based on the avoidance of legal liability.

**RECOMMENDATION 2: Address the most common form of sexual harassment: gender harassment.**

Leaders in academic institutions and research and training sites should pay increased attention to and enact policies that cover gender harassment as a means of addressing the most common form of sexual harassment and of preventing other types of sexually harassing behavior.

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**RECOMMENDATION 3: Move beyond legal compliance to address culture and climate.**

Academic institutions, research and training sites, and federal agencies should move beyond interventions or policies that represent basic legal compliance and that rely solely on formal reports made by targets. Sexual harassment needs to be addressed as a significant culture and climate issue that requires institutional leaders to engage with and listen to students and other campus community members.

**RECOMMENDATION 4: Improve transparency and accountability.**

1. Academic institutions need to develop—and readily share—clear, accessible, and consistent policies on sexual harassment and standards of behavior. They should include a range of clearly stated, appropriate, and escalating disciplinary consequences for perpetrators found to have violated sexual harassment policy and/or law. The disciplinary actions taken should correspond to the severity and frequency of the harassment. The disciplinary actions should not be something that is often considered a benefit for faculty, such as a reduction in teaching load or time away from campus service responsibilities. Decisions regarding disciplinary actions, if indicated or required, should be made in a fair and timely way following an investigative process that is fair to all sides.[2](https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/6.xhtml#frontmatter07_pz26-8)
2. Academic institutions should be as transparent as possible about how they are handling reports of sexual harassment. This requires balancing issues of confidentiality with issues of transparency. Annual reports, that provide information on (1) how many and what type of policy violations have been reported (both informally and formally), (2) how many reports are currently under investigation, and (3) how many have been adjudicated, along with general descriptions of any disciplinary actions taken, should be shared with the entire academic community: students, trainees, faculty, administrators, staff, alumni, and funders. At the very least, the results of the investigation and any disciplinary action should be shared with the target(s) and/or the person(s) who reported the behavior.
3. Academic institutions should be accountable for the climate within their organization. In particular, they should utilize climate surveys to further investigate and address systemic sexual harassment, particularly when surveys indicate specific schools or facilities have high rates of harassment or chronically fail to reduce rates of sexual harassment.
4. Academic institutions should consider sexual harassment equally important as research misconduct in terms of its effect on the integrity of

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[2](https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/6.xhtml#frontmatter07_AqSF) Further detail on processes and guidance for how to fairly and appropriately investigate and adjudicate these issues are not provided because they are complex issues that were beyond the scope of this study.

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research. They should increase collaboration among offices that oversee the integrity of research (i.e., those that cover ethics, research misconduct, diversity, and harassment issues); centralize resources, information, and expertise; provide more resources for handling complaints and working with targets; and implement sanctions on researchers found guilty of sexual harassment.

**RECOMMENDATION 5: Diffuse the hierarchical and dependent relationship between trainees and faculty.**

Academic institutions should consider power-diffusion mechanisms (i.e., mentoring networks or committee-based advising and departmental funding rather than funding only from a principal investigator) to reduce the risk of sexual harassment.

**RECOMMENDATION 6: Provide support for the target.**

Academic institutions should convey that reporting sexual harassment is an honorable and courageous action. Regardless of a target filing a formal report, academic institutions should provide means of accessing support services (social services, health care, legal, career/professional). They should provide alternative and less formal means of recording information about the experience and reporting the experience if the target is not comfortable filing a formal report. Academic institutions should develop approaches to prevent the target from experiencing or fearing retaliation in academic settings.

**RECOMMENDATION 7: Strive for strong and diverse leadership.**

1. College and university presidents, provosts, deans, department chairs, and program directors must make the reduction and prevention of sexual harassment an explicit goal of their tenure. They should publicly state that the reduction and prevention of sexual harassment will be among their highest priorities, and they should engage students, faculty, and staff (and, where appropriate, the local community) in their efforts.
2. Academic institutions should support and facilitate leaders at every level (university, school/college, department, lab) in developing skills in leadership, conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, and de-escalation, and should ensure a clear understanding of policies and procedures for handling sexual harassment issues. Additionally, these skills development programs should be customized to each level of leadership.
3. Leadership training programs for those in academia should include training on how to recognize and handle sexual harassment issues, and how to take explicit steps to create a culture and climate to reduce and prevent sexual harassment—and not just protect the institution against liability.

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**RECOMMENDATION 8: Measure progress.**

Academic institutions should work with researchers to evaluate and assess their efforts to create a more diverse, inclusive, and respectful environment, and to create effective policies, procedures, and training programs. They should not rely on formal reports by targets for an understanding of sexual harassment on their campus.

1. When organizations study sexual harassment, they should follow the valid methodologies established by social science research on sexual harassment and should consult subject-matter experts. Surveys that attempt to ascertain the prevalence and types of harassment experienced by individuals should adopt the following practices: ensure confidentiality, use validated behavioral instruments such as the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire, and avoid specifically using the term “sexual harassment” in any survey or questionnaire.
2. Academic institutions should also conduct more wide-ranging assessments using measures in addition to campus climate surveys, for example, ethnography, focus groups, and exit interviews. These methods are especially important in smaller organizational units where surveys, which require more participants to yield meaningful data, might not be useful.
3. Organizations studying sexual harassment in their environments should take into consideration the particular experiences of people of color and sexual- and gender-minority people, and they should utilize methods that allow them to disaggregate their data by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity to reveal the different experiences across populations.
4. The results of climate surveys should be shared publicly to encourage transparency and accountability and to demonstrate to the campus community that the institution takes the issue seriously. One option would be for academic institutions to collaborate in developing a central repository for reporting their climate data, which could also improve the ability for research to be conducted on the effectiveness of institutional approaches.
5. Federal agencies and foundations should commit resources to develop a tool similar to ARC3, the Administrator Researcher Campus Climate Collaborative, to understand and track the climate for faculty, staff, and postdoctoral fellows.

**RECOMMENDATION 9: Incentivize change.**

1. Academic institutions should work to apply for awards from the emerging STEM Equity Achievement (SEA Change) program.[3](https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8.xhtml#frontmatter07_Av-) Federal agen

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[3](https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8.xhtml#frontmatter07_AQjC) See <https://www.aaas.org/news/sea-change-program-aims-transform-diversity-efforts-stem>.

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1. cies and private foundations should encourage and support academic institutions working to achieve SEA Change awards.
2. Accreditation bodies should consider efforts to create diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments when evaluating institutions or departments.
3. Federal agencies should incentivize efforts to reduce sexual harassment in academia by requiring evaluations of the research environment, funding research and evaluation of training for students and faculty (including bystander intervention), supporting the development and evaluation of leadership training for faculty, and funding research on effective policies and procedures.

**RECOMMENDATION 10: Encourage involvement of professional societies and other organizations.**

1. Professional societies should accelerate their efforts to be viewed as organizations that are helping to create culture changes that reduce or prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment. They should provide support and guidance for members who have been targets of sexual harassment. They should use their influence to address sexual harassment in the scientific, medical, and engineering communities they represent and promote a professional culture of civility and respect. The efforts of the American Geophysical Union are especially exemplary and should be considered as a model for other professional societies to follow.
2. Other organizations that facilitate the research and training of people in science, engineering, and medicine, such as collaborative field sites (i.e., national labs and observatories), should establish standards of behavior and set policies, procedures, and practices similar to those recommended for academic institutions and following the examples of professional societies. They should hold people accountable for their behaviors while at their facility regardless of the person’s institutional affiliation (just as some professional societies are doing).

**RECOMMENDATION 11: Initiate legislative action.**

State legislatures and Congress should consider new and additional legislation with the following goals:

1. Better protecting sexual harassment claimants from retaliation.
2. Prohibiting confidentiality in settlement agreements that currently enable harassers to move to another institution and conceal past adjudications.
3. Banning mandatory arbitration clauses for discrimination claims.
4. Allowing lawsuits to be filed against alleged harassers directly (instead of or in addition to their academic employers).
5. Requiring institutions receiving federal funds to publicly disclose results

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1. from campus climate surveys and/or the number of sexual harassment reports made to campuses.
2. Requesting the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health to devote research funds to doing a follow-up analysis on the topic of sexual harassment in science, engineering, and medicine in 3 to 5 years to determine (1) whether research has shown that the prevalence of sexual harassment has decreased, (2) whether progress has been made on implementing these recommendations, and (3) where to focus future efforts.

**RECOMMENDATION 12: Address the failures to meaningfully enforce Title VII’s prohibition on sex discrimination.**

1. Judges, academic institutions (including faculty, staff, and leaders in academia), and administrative agencies should rely on scientific evidence about the behavior of targets and perpetrators of sexual harassment when assessing both institutional compliance with the law and the merits of individual claims.
2. Federal judges should take into account demonstrated *effectiveness* of anti-harassment policies and practices such as trainings, and not just their *existence*, for use of an affirmative defense against a sexual harassment claim under Title VII.

**RECOMMENDATION 13: Increase federal agency action and collaboration.**

Federal agencies should do the following:

1. Increase support for research and evaluation of the effectiveness of policies, procedures, and training on sexual harassment.
2. Attend to sexual harassment with at least the same level of attention and resources as devoted to research misconduct. They should increase collaboration among offices that oversee the integrity of research (i.e., those that cover ethics, research misconduct, diversity, and harassment issues); centralize resources, information, and expertise; provide more resources for handling complaints and working with targets; and implement sanctions on researchers found guilty of sexual harassment.
3. Require institutions to report to federal agencies when individuals on grants have been found to have violated sexual harassment policies or have been put on administrative leave related to sexual harassment, as the National Science Foundation has proposed doing. Agencies should also hold accountable the perpetrator and the institution by using a range of disciplinary actions that limit the negative effects on other grant personnel who were either the target of the harassing behavior or innocent bystanders.

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1. Reward and incentivize colleges and universities for implementing policies, programs, and strategies that research shows are most likely to and are succeeding in reducing and preventing sexual harassment.

**RECOMMENDATION 14: Conduct necessary research.**

Funders should support the following research:

1. The sexual harassment experiences of women in underrepresented and/or vulnerable groups, including women of color, disabled women, immigrant women, sexual- and gender-minority women, postdoctoral trainees, and others.
2. Policies, procedures, trainings, and interventions, specifically their ability to prevent and stop sexually harassing behavior, to alter perception of organizational tolerance for sexually harassing behavior, and to reduce the negative consequences from reporting the incidents. This should include research on informal and formal reporting mechanisms, bystander intervention training, academic leadership training, sexual harassment and diversity training, interventions to improve civility, mandatory reporting requirements, and approaches to supporting and improving communication with the target.
3. Mechanisms for target-led resolution options and mechanisms by which the target has a role in deciding what happens to the perpetrator, including restorative justice practices.
4. Mechanisms for protecting targets from retaliation.
5. Approaches for mitigating the negative impacts and outcomes that targets experience.
6. Incentive systems for encouraging leaders in higher education to address the issues of sexual harassment on campus.
7. The prevalence and nature of sexual harassment within specific fields in science, engineering, and medicine and that follows good practices for sexual harassment surveys.
8. The prevalence and nature of sexual harassment perpetrated by students on faculty.
9. The amount of sexual harassment that serial harassers are responsible for.
10. The prevalence and effect of ambient harassment in the academic setting.
11. The connections between consensual relationships and sexual harassment.
12. Psychological characteristics that increase the risk of perpetrating different forms of sexually harassing behaviors.

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**RECOMMENDATION 15: Make the entire academic community responsible for reducing and preventing sexual harassment.**

All members of our nation’s college campuses—students, trainees, faculty, staff, and administrators—as well as members of research and training sites should assume responsibility for promoting civil and respectful education, training, and work environments, and stepping up and confronting those whose behaviors and actions create sexually harassing environments.