

**Year 3 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

Argonne National Laboratory

Creation, Publication, and Rollout of Code of Conduct

Relevant Rubric Area(s): Identifying and Reinforcing Community Values, Embedding with Research Integrity, Improved Policies, Procedural Justice

Description of Work:

In March 2022, Argonne for the first time published a code of conduct applicable to everyone in Argonne’s community—employees, collaborators, contractors and visitors. The purpose of the code is to link Argonne’s mission and values to standards of professional conduct—including the prevention of sexual and gender harassment. The code reinforces the shared values, expectations, and norms of the Argonne community and facilitates discussions of ethics and conduct, empowering members of Argonne’s community to handle issues or dilemmas they may encounter in their work, including speaking up when issues arise.

Creation: The code of conduct project came out of the Argonne Action Collaborative Steering Committee, which is responsible for implementing actions stemming from Argonne’s membership in the NASEM Action Collaborative. The steering committee is composed of leaders from all parts of Argonne, including administrative (operations) staff as well as those working in various scientific and engineering disciplines, chosen to leverage the strengths of different groups, overcome internal barriers, and foster collaboration across the organization. The steering committee identified the creation and rollout of a new, comprehensive, and accessible code of conduct as one of its first goals.

To meet this goal, the steering committee worked with internal subject matter experts to identify key substantive areas, relying on the 2018 NASEM report and Action Collaborative materials for best practices. After creating an initial draft of the code of conduct—limited to one page to for accessibility—the steering committee shared it with various internal stakeholders. Stakeholders included management but also included other important internal stakeholders who may not have been historically involved in management policymaking, such as employee resource groups, union representatives, and employees who volunteered to act as part of the steering committee’s action collaborative change network. Steering committee representatives provided the draft code to these stakeholders, held listening sessions to solicit their feedback, and explicitly incorporated that feedback into the code.

After incorporating this feedback, the steering committee presented the final version of the code to senior Argonne leadership for approval. This process was not only inclusive and

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participatory, achieving buy-in and consensus from many different parts of Argonne, it created a better code of conduct by incorporating important feedback from diverse stakeholders.

Content: The code incorporates many best practices for the prevention of sexual and gender harassment, including the following:

- **Broad applicability:** The code explicitly applies to anyone who is employed by, collaborating with, doing business with, or even just visiting Argonne. The code also explicitly states that it is applicable to all work, whether at Argonne’s site, online, or anywhere else.

- **Reinforcement of shared community values:** The code incorporates Argonne’s core values of impact, integrity, respect, teamwork, and safety. These lay the groundwork for the expectations of behavior discussed in the code, including Argonne’s commitment to preventing both harassment and retaliation against those who speak up. The code also incorporates Argonne’s research code of conduct, which directly identifies harassment as a violation of research integrity.

- **Importance of speaking up:** The code empowers anyone to speak up and report any issue that arises. It incorporates both formal and informal mechanisms for reports and directs employees to Argonne’s annual investigations report for details and transparency about Argonne’s human resources investigation process. The code also includes Argonne’s commitment to taking corrective action to equitably remedy violations when they occur.

Rollout: Argonne rolled out the code of conduct live at an all-hands meeting of the entire organization. Argonne’s Laboratory Director (chief executive) introduced the code presentation, made by one of the leaders of the Argonne Action Collaborative steering committee, presenting it as an important deliverable from the work of that committee. The presentation also covered the diverse stakeholder participation that contributed to the content of the code. The presentation concluded by encouraging Argonne employees to give a “shout out” (a formal Argonne program related to the recognition of positive behaviors) for conduct that exemplifies the code. Following the all-hands meeting, Argonne announced the code in a written communication from the Laboratory Director, updated its annual ethics training to incorporate the code, and updated various internal and external websites to include references and links to the code.

Next steps: Argonne’s rollout of the code is ongoing. Future planned actions include providing interactive information sessions that include scenarios directly related to how the code applies

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to everyday work at Argonne. Argonne will also continue to identify opportunities to talk about the expectations of the code and fully integrate it into all of Argonne's work.

Website for further information (if applicable): <https://www.anl.gov/argonne-code-of-business-ethics-and-conduct>.

Point of Contact Name: Dan Raker

Email Address for Point of Contact: draker@anl.gov