

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

**Utah State University**

**Utah Women & Leadership Project**

**Relevant Rubric Area(s):**

- Anti-Sexual Harassment Education
- Addressing Gender Harassment and Disrespect
- Transparency and Communication
- Climate Survey/Measuring Prevalence
- Sharing the Results/Data from Evaluation

**Description of Work:**

The Utah Women and Leadership Project (UWLP) began in 2009 as a “research endeavor focused on increasing the rates of women in Utah attending and graduating from college.” In 2011, it transitioned to a focus on moving Utah forward on social change for women. Its mission became to “strengthen the impact of Utah girls and women.” As part of that mission, the UWLP produces research, creates resources, and convenes trainings and events on a variety of topics, including sexual harassment, women’s economic status, women’s leadership, and women’s work experiences.

The UWLP is uncommon in the higher education space (and nationally) and its work has been enhanced since moving to USU in 2020. USU is Utah’s only land-grant institution, making it a central provider of education and community services in the state. The UWLP is also the main partner for women’s work in Utah as part of the governor’s One Utah Roadmap, in the “Equality and Opportunity” section. Staff at the project routinely connect nationally and globally with other organizations focused on positively impacting girls and women.

Within the past year, the UWLP released a [5-part series of research and policy briefs](#) about Utah women’s experiences with sexist comments and responses (briefs 38, 39, 40, 42, and 43). The data is from an online survey conducted in 2020 that had 839 participants. As part of the survey, participants answered questions related to their perceptions of sexism in Utah and in an open response section were asked to share up to four examples of sexist comments they had heard. When describing their examples, participants were encouraged to include any responses they made to the sexist comment, where the comment was made, and the person who made it. Brief one covered the study overview and summarized the data’s four main themes, which were addressed in the next four briefs: inequity and bias, objectification, stereotypes, and undervaluing women.

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The UWLP also recently released two one-page handouts about [what to do if someone is being sexually harassed](#) or [experiencing gender discrimination in the workplace](#). Both handouts include a definition of those behaviors; examples of the behaviors; strategies for navigating or addressing the behaviors; and how to report the behaviors to the workplace and state/national organizations. Additional resource links are provided at the end of the handouts.

The research and policy briefs and information handouts are used for trainings and discussions to help people learn more about sexual harassment. They regularly circulate on social media and are cited in news articles and other media coverage about the topic. Efficacy of the research briefs and educational materials is typically assessed through clicks on the UWLP website, views on social media posts and news articles, attendance at trainings and discussion events, and informally through word of mouth.

Potential next steps for the sexist comments research and policy briefs and sexual harassment and gender discrimination information handouts will mostly focus on increasing their circulation within Utah communities. More broadly, the UWLP will continue to conduct research and provide education on topics connected to sexual harassment. Information snapshots are currently being released on the UWLP website about the status of Utah women from various ethnic groups (such as black women and Asian women). Ongoing collaborations with relevant USU professionals and community organizations will continue to be a key part of the project's work.

The UWLP's research and policy briefs and information handouts are consistent with the recommendations found in the "evaluation," "prevention," and "response" sections of the 2022 Rubric on Areas of Work for Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education because they demonstrate strategies for measuring the climate and prevalence of sexual harassment and publicly sharing results from that work. The project itself is a method for communicating about what gender harassment/discrimination is, how to address it when it occurs, and the policies and resources that are available to people beyond the institutional level. It demonstrates that higher education institutions can positively impact not only how sexual harassment is addressed within their internal communities, but also the broader community.

**Website for further information (if applicable):** <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/>

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