**2023 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in
Higher Education**

Boston University

Partnering in the Development of the Ethical Transparency Tool

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. Response: Improved communication and increased transparency

Description of Work:

Purpose and goals

Boston University has been an active contributor to the development of a conduct transparency tool - the Ethical Transparency Tool (ETT) - as a member of the Societies Consortium on Sexual Harassment in STEMM's Advisory ETT Working Group since 2019. The Consortium (second "M" for medicine) is a collective of over 100 academic and professional disciplinary societies co-originated by AAAS, AAMC, AGU, and EducationCounsel. As part of its core mission of ethics and inclusion, the Consortium, with practical guidance from its Advisory ETTWorking Group, has been collaboratively developing the ETT to support AAU's harassment prevention principles and the recommendations of NASEM's June 2018 report on sexual harassment of women in academic science, engineering, and medicine by creating a norm of transparency about **findings** of misconduct, wherever it occurs, across the education-research ecosystem of institutions of higher education, societies and other research organizations.

ETT is designed to concretely advance climate and culture of inclusion, integrity, and excellence by easing access to findings of sexual, gender, and racial (as well as financial, licensure, and scientific/research) misconduct—while recognizing that the existence of a finding does not mean that a person cannot learn, change conduct, and regain trust. As one tool in an organization's toolbox, ETT can be used when desired, within the organization's own policies and processes. Its design preserves independence of policy- and decision-making, treats everyone and sensitive information ethically, reduces whisper campaigns and legal and enterprise risks, and enhances efficiency. The entity that made or adopted a finding discloses it **directly** to the ETT-participating organization that requests disclosure. ETT automates requests for and consents to disclosures—which can be used ecosystem-wide (not just by one entity for one transaction)—and provides a check-the-box form that make disclosures easier to provide and obtain. But ETT never receives the disclosures and does not create a "shame list" or central conduct records repository. ETT is now preparing for a pilot; interested institutions and societies can learn more and join the pilot at the Societies Consortium's website.

What we did and how it was done

Boston University is one of five research universities on the Advisory ETT Working Group, along with four societies and three higher education and research organizations. Jean Morrison,

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Provost and Chief Academic Officer, and Suzanne Kennedy, Associate Provost for Special Projects & Emerging Priorities, represent Boston University on the working group. The group has been meeting monthly over several years to advise on operational practicality and stakeholder interests. As an original member of the group since in 2019, Provost Morrison has played a leading role in advising on the interests of institutions of higher education and advocating for the creation of healthy climates that end unwittingly passing the harasser, with sensitivity to ethical treatment and benefits for everyone. Ralph Pisaturo, a Boston University IT professional, developed a detailed Business Requirements Document for the ETT database and set the stage to develop the database.

How the work is new

The three key design elements make the Ethical Transparency Tool an effective means to share misconduct findings information. First, the tool allows for institutional independence in policy- and decision-making as it does not guide or dictate outcomes. Second, ETT automates a person's consent authorizing disclosures of limited data (existence, kind, and date of finding).Third, ETT automates and facilitates disclosure requests but is not a repository for disclosures.

Current status of the work

The ETT will launch a pilot phase in mid 2023, with an inaugural group of societies and institutions of higher education.

Website for further information (if applicable): https://www.bu.edu/belonging-culture-survey/

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