

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

UC Davis/UC Davis Health

## **Measuring the Prevalence of Sexual Harassment Experienced by Faculty in a Healthcare Environment**

### **Relevant Rubric Area:**

- Evaluation (*Measuring the Prevalence of Sexual Harassment*)

### **Description of Work:**

**Purpose and goals:** In response to the 2018 NASEM report, UC Davis Health (UCDH) formed a Sexual/Gender Harassment Task Force in early 2019. The task force reviewed the NASEM report, evaluated recommendations, and focused our efforts on the need for an institutional climate survey. These ongoing efforts are aligned with the **Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Rubric** under the category of **Evaluation (Measuring the Prevalence of Sexual Harassment)**.

**Methods:** In collaboration with the Sexual/Gender Harassment Task Force, the UCDH Office of Academic Personnel created a Professional Climate Committee (PCC) in the fall of 2019 to analyze sexual/gender harassment experiences among UCDH faculty. The PCC developed the survey and reviewed the survey with members of the UCDH Sexual/Gender Harassment Task Force and PCC, which includes the UC Davis Title IX Officer, Harassment & Discrimination Assistance and Prevention Program Director, key administrators, and faculty members actively engaged in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives throughout UCDH.

The PCC survey was planned for spring 2020, but was postponed due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in fall 2020, we explored the NASEM recommendations in more detail and focused our efforts on surveys that could be used to guide future efforts specific to gender harassment. Upon further review of the literature (Vargas et al., 2019) and recently published information from the NASEM Action Collaborative (Vanderbilt University), a modified version of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ) was chosen.

Given that the survey was administered during a time when many faculty were experiencing an altered work environment (Holland et al., 2021), we modified the SEQ survey instructions to capture any experiences of gender or sexual harassment since joining UCDH, followed by a more targeted window spanning the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 to May 2022). The survey instrument was reviewed with the UCDH Gender/Sexual Harassment Task Force for feedback and reviewed by the UC Davis Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to being administered to the faculty. Survey design, implementation, and analysis was supported by the UC Davis Budget and Institutional Analysis team. The professional climate survey had an anonymous format and ran online from May–September 2022. UC Davis Health System faculty were invited to participate, with occasional follow-up communications to the listserv from the Deans and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Personnel.

**Novelty:** While we have previously surveyed some populations regarding their experience with sexual harassment, we have not implemented surveys exclusively focused on this subject or faculty within the health enterprise. Importantly, the SEQ quantifies experiences of gender harassment, which is defined as verbal and nonverbal behaviors that convey hostility, objectification, exclusion, or second-class status about members of one gender, in addition to experiences of unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion. Below is how the different forms of sexual harassment are asked about in the survey:

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Sexist Hostility/Sexist Gender Harassment - *Unwanted and unwelcomed words, actions, symbols, gestures, and behaviors that are based on sex or gender and are characteristically repetitive.*

- Treated you “differently” because of your sex (for example, mistreated, slighted, or ignored you)?
- Displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials (for example, pictures, stories, or pornography which you found offensive)?
- Made offensive sexist remarks (for example, suggesting that people of your sex are not suited for the kind of work you do)?
- Put you down or been condescending to you because of your sex?

Sexual Hostility/Crude Gender Harassment - *Unwanted and unwelcomed words, gestures, and body language of a sexual nature and characteristically repetitive.*

- Told sexual stories or dirty jokes?
- Made unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters (for example, attempted to discuss or comment on your sex life)?
- Made offensive remarks about your appearance, body, or sexual activities?
- Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature which embarrassed or offended you?

Unwanted Sexual Attention - *Persistent unwanted, unwelcomed, or violating behaviors and gestures of a sexual nature that caused discomfort.*

- Made unwanted attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it?
- Continued to ask you for dates, drinks, dinner, etc., even though you said “No”?
- Touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?
- Tried to touch, fondle, kiss, or grope you?

Sexual Coercion - *Sexually compelled involuntary actions by an individual without regard for their desire or volition by use of force, threat, or authority.*

- Made you feel like you were being bribed with some sort of reward or special treatment to engage in sexual behavior?
- Made you feel threatened with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually cooperative (for example, by mentioning an upcoming review)?
- Treated you badly for refusing to do something sexual?
- Offered you something you wanted at work in exchange for doing something sexual?

## **Current status of work/preliminary results:**

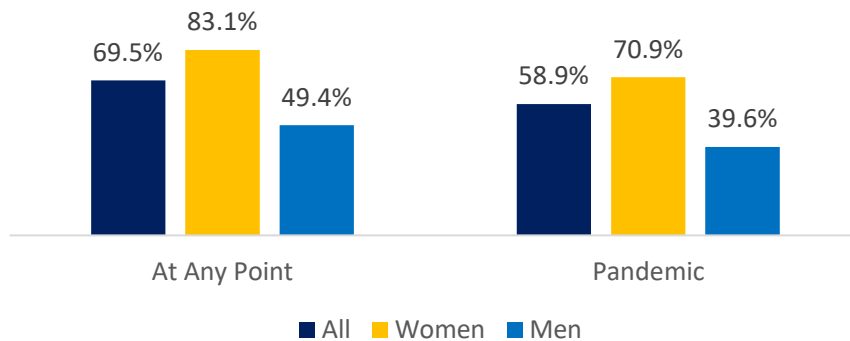
- After data cleaning, the research team retained 537 participants answering one or more questions (57% response rate).
- 55% of respondents answered all quantitative survey questions.
- On average, participants answered 80%.
- Of the 537 total participants, 32.0% identified as men, 44.1% identified as women, and 6% identified as non-binary, preferred to self-describe, or did not respond to the question.

**In the first part of the survey, respondents were asked to evaluate 16 harassment behaviors and rate how often (0 = never, 1 = once or twice, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = many times) the respondent experienced UNWANTED behaviors from UC Davis community members (e.g., students, staff, or faculty) during two time periods: (a) at any point since joining the faculty or (b) during the pandemic (March 2020-May 2022).**

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**Figure 1a. Faculty experiencing gender harassment**

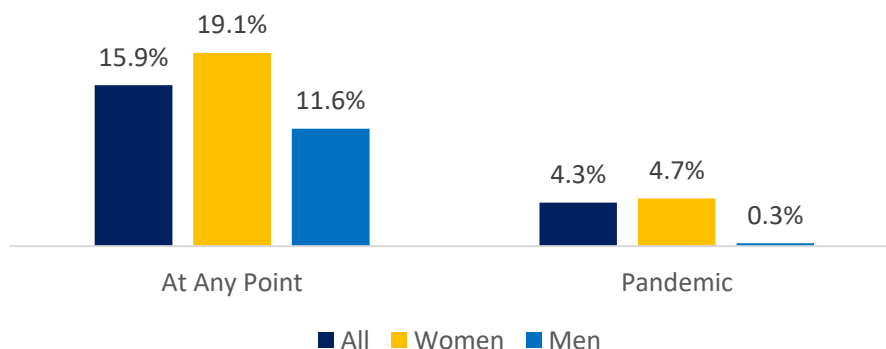
Gender Harassment: Percentage Experiencing  
at Least Once, by Gender Identity and Time  
Period



\* The category "All" includes respondents who identified their gender as non-binary, or who preferred to self-describe or not answer. All (n=438-455). At any point: Women (n=237); Men (n=170). Pandemic: Women (n=230); Men (n=164).

**Figure 1b. Faculty experiencing sexual harassment**

Sexual Harassment: Percentage Experiencing at  
Least Once, by Gender Identity and Time Period



\* The category "All" includes respondents who identified their gender as non-binary, or who preferred to self-describe or not answer. All (n=443-453). At any point: Women (n=236); Men (n=172). Pandemic: Women (n=233); Men (n=167).

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**Table 1a. Percentage of faculty experiencing harassment at least once at any point since joining the faculty**

<b>5 most common types of harassment reported <u>at any time since joining the UCDH faculty</u></b>	<b>Man</b>	<b>Woman</b>	<b>All</b>
Treated you differently because of your sex	25%	76%	55%
Put you down or been condescending to you because of your sex	19%	65%	45%
Made offensive sexist remarks	16%	43%	32%
Told sexual stories or dirty jokes	33%	27%	30%
Made offensive remarks about your body	12%	26%	20%

Note: "All" (n=459–486) includes respondents identifying as non-binary, self-describing, or preferring to skip the question. Men (n=170–171); Women (n=237).

**Table 1b. Percentage of faculty experiencing harassment during the pandemic (March 2020–May 2022)**

<b>5 most common types of harassment reported <u>during the pandemic</u></b>	<b>Man</b>	<b>Woman</b>	<b>All</b>
Treated you differently because of your sex	20%	64%	46%
Put you down or been condescending to you because of your sex	15%	51%	37%
Made offensive sexist remarks	11%	29%	22%
Told sexual stories or dirty jokes	21%	16%	19%
Made offensive remarks about your body	8%	14%	12%

Note: "All" (n=459–486) includes respondents identifying as non-binary, self-describing, or preferring to skip the question. Men (n=167–172); Women (n=235–237).

**Respondents were then asked questions regarding impact and responses of harassment behaviors. These questions were adapted from the UC Davis Inclusion, Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Equity (IDARE) survey:**

**Table 2. Impact of harassment behaviors**

<b>"If you have ever experienced exclusionary behavior or harassment asked about in the previous questions from UCDH community members (faculty, staff, or students), please indicate what (if any) impact these experiences had on your ability to work."</b>	<b>Man</b>	<b>Woman</b>	<b>All</b>
I have directly experienced these behaviors, and it significantly interfered with my ability to work	2%	12%	8%
I have directly experienced these behaviors, and it slightly interfered with my ability to work	5%	21%	14%
I have directly experienced these behaviors, but it did not interfere with my ability to work	13%	24%	18%
I have not directly experienced these behaviors	80%	43%	60%

Note: "Prefer to skip" (n=20) is not displayed. "All" (n=422) includes respondents identifying as non-binary, self-describing, or preferring to skip the question. Men (n=168); Women (n=224).

**Table 3. Observation of harassment behaviors**

<b>"Since joining the UCDH faculty, have you observed—or has anyone confided in you about experiencing—exclusionary behavior or harassment from members of the UCDH community (faculty, staff, students)?"</b>	<b>Man</b>	<b>Woman</b>	<b>All</b>
Yes	41%	48%	44%
No	59%	52%	56%

Note: "All" (n=444) includes respondents identifying as non-binary, self-describing, or preferring to skip the question. Men (n=172); Women, (n=237).

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**Table 4. Impact of harassment behaviors**

"If you have experienced or witnessed exclusionary behavior or harassment asked about in the previous questions at any point since joining the UCDH faculty, how often did you do any of the following in response?" (% doing at least "Sometimes")	Man	Woman	All
Asked others to help.	73%	78%	76%
Stepped in or spoke up	84%	81%	83%
"If you have experienced or witnessed exclusionary behavior or harassment asked about in the previous questions at any point since joining the UCDH faculty, how often did you do any of the following in response?" (% responding "Never")	Man	Woman	All
Took no actions because of concerns about ramifications or retaliation	72%	31%	44%
Took no actions for other reasons	56%	41%	46%

Note: The last two items have negative valence, so the preferred answer is "Never." "All" (n=180–217) includes respondents identifying as non-binary, self-describing, or preferring to skip the question. Group ns= Men, 66–84; Women, 102–132.

**In the final section, respondents were asked about work roles and background characteristics. Response categories for sensitive questions such as sexual orientation and race were randomized to promote inclusion and minimize bias.** Future analysis will apply an intersectional approach to understanding the impact of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity on experiences of gender and sexual harassment.

*Plans for evaluating the success, effectiveness, and/or impact of work:* The survey results have and will serve as the basis for developing and implementing evidence-based policies and practices for efforts related to the **Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Rubric** under the category of **Evaluation (Using Climate Assessments to Inform Action)**. The next phase of our work will focus on **Prevention (Leadership Education and Skill Development; Bystander Intervention Programs; Ally and Ambassador Programs)**. UCDH plans to survey faculty in 2-3 years, relying on the same instrument to allow for longitudinal comparison. We will also make the survey available to the broader UC Davis community and anticipate that it will be administered to additional faculty groups, staff, postdoctoral fellows and trainees, and students so as to ultimately develop innovative and effective prevention strategies.

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## **References:**

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