

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

**The University of Chicago**

## **Creation of a Workshop/Training Tool Targeting Principal Investigators in Lab Settings**

### **This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s):**

- Prevention: Leadership Education and Skill Development.

### **Background:**

The University of Chicago is unique in that unlike most major research universities, the College (undergraduate) student population, although it has grown significantly, remains smaller than the University's graduate student population, with the graduate student population comprising about 55 percent of the total student population.

Additionally, the following information is from a University of Chicago report compiled using the most recent AAU Climate Survey, which helped identify challenges for graduate and professional student experiences.

For both graduate and undergraduate students, fellow students perpetrate most sexually harassing behaviors. However, graduate students are more likely than undergraduates to also experience harassing behaviors from faculty. For example, 10% of graduate student women at UChicago report harassing behavior from faculty versus 7% of undergraduate women. Experiences of sexual harassment from faculty members can have a profound effect on graduate students, especially those in the sciences, often work in a lab setting. Students who experience sexual harassment in a lab or from either their lab mates or their PI may have no other choice than to leave the lab and either start a new line of research or apply to a different PhD program. Additionally, graduate students depend on their PIs/advisors for career advice and networking. The nature of the relationship between graduate students and their advisors/PIs can make reporting sexual harassment difficult or impossible.

Formal and informal interactions with members of The University of Chicago's graduate communities, it has been highlighted that many, especially new, PIs feel overwhelmed with the many responsibilities of the logistics of running a lab, managing their academic and administrative roles, supervising and mentoring the graduate students in their lab, among other duties, such as reporting to funders, etc. Some PIs report that managing climate was not on their radar as a key responsibility and it certainly was "not part of any training they received to be a PI." This information led us to consider that people are more likely to act when they feel prepared to do so and when they feel like their institution has given them the skills to act. To that end, CARES, Prevention Education and Outreach began to develop an educational offering, focused on new PIs that emphasizes skill building to address and build safer and more inclusive lab culture and climate.

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## **Purpose and Goals:**

U-Chicago CARES (The Center for Awareness, Resolution, Education and Support) works to create an environment at the University where everyone feels that they belong and are invited to learn and contribute within a safe and respectful university community.

U-Chicago CARES (The Center for Awareness, Resolution, Education and Support) develops educational tools to focus on populations within the university community for sexual harassment prevention education, which goes beyond awareness raising and includes focused skill-building for community members, such as lab and unit leaders.

## **Actions Taken:**

- Needs assessment. Speaking with graduate students and in many cases, with administrative staff for the purpose of information gathering and being able to craft relevant educational offerings to interested units. This was done in conjunction with opportunities to provide prevention workshops to graduate student groups in consultation with the admins who invited CARES in to present.
- Expanding Prevention Education and Outreach team to include an Assistant Director position, which is filled and has increased the bandwidth of the Education and Outreach office to do more in-depth work with graduate divisions.
- The CARES website was redeveloped to reflect creation of a Prevention Education focus for graduate units and all other response resources within the CARES center.
- The development of a PI Education offering has gone together with the division-specific, Year-long Curriculum with active and passive strategies to prevent sexual harassment in Graduate and Professional units submitted as our Description of Work last year.

## **PI Workshop Outline:**

Using the recommendations, outlined in the 2018 report and the Action Collaborative's 2022 Rubric Section on Prevention - Leadership Education and Skill Development<sup>1</sup>, what follows is an outline of the PI Workshop Offering. The outline is presented as part of the larger Year-Long Curriculum when working with divisional units. It will also be used to work with individuals and sub-units within departments/areas, including labs.

The educational offering will be adapted to address the specific climate issues and needs of the PIs within each area CARES Prevention Education and Outreach works to train their PIs.

- Introduction to NASEM/ Work of the Action Collaborative and U Chicago's role in the NASEM work.
- Background on Issue and related issues(s) from a national, Higher Education perspective.
- Defining sexual harassment: federal and state statutes, professional organization standards, The University of Chicago policy.

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[https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/26741/2022\\_Rubric\\_on\\_Areas\\_of\\_Work\\_for\\_Preventing\\_Sexual\\_Harassment\\_in\\_Higher\\_Education.pdf](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/26741/2022_Rubric_on_Areas_of_Work_for_Preventing_Sexual_Harassment_in_Higher_Education.pdf)

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- Recognizing sexual harassment
- Harassment of a non-sexual nature but often combined with sexual harassment. (e.g., related to race, disability, sexuality, or religion).
- Leading by Example - Using Your Leadership to Set the Tone in your Lab.
- Communicating Clear Expectations for Behavior and Respectful, Civil Interactions in The Lab
- Leadership that Takes Nothing for Granted: Clearly communicating the policies and procedures for addressing sexual harassment and other forms of harassment, discrimination, and misconduct (e.g., related to race, disability, sexuality, or religion)
- Reporting Responsibilities and Resources – Preparing responsible parties to handle a notification or disclosure of sexual harassment.
- How to Contact/Who to Speak to in the CARES.
- Beyond Liability - How to create a culture and climate to reduce and prevent sexual harassment.
- Compliance Is the floor, not the ceiling – Accountability for those participating in harm and Support for those harmed.
- Listening Skills
- De-escalation Skills
- Bystander Intervention Skills
- Alternative Resolution Resources via CARES

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