

# **2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

## **Argonne National Laboratory**

### **Psychological Safety Intervention**

#### **Relevant Rubric Area(s):**

1. Prevention: Identifying and Reinforcing Community Values.
2. Prevention: Other Efforts to Address or Prevent Sexual Harassment
3. Response: Trauma-Informed Programs and Practices
4. Remediation: Other Efforts to Remediate Harm from Sexual Harassment

#### **Description of Work:**

Argonne National Laboratory is a national laboratory operated for the U.S. Department of Energy, specializing in science and engineering research. Employing over 3,400 people, Argonne delivers innovative research and technologies. As part of its effort to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive culture, Argonne conducted a proactive DEIA Audit in 2022 which revealed that many employees felt they did not have a voice in decision making and leaders were reluctant to consider employee feedback. The goal of this work is to understand the root cause of employees' reluctance to speak up and to develop an action plan to increase employee voice throughout Argonne.

To achieve this goal, in 2024 Argonne launched a psychological safety intervention, engaging a cross-functional team together with external consultants to:

- Assess current sentiment toward psychological safety,
- Understand the drivers of lower psychological safety and identify targeted interventions to improve psychological safety in the near and long term, and
- Collaborate with internal stakeholders to design an assessment methodology, conduct internal assessment, and implement action steps to improve sentiment across the Lab.

This intervention was grounded in social science research and uses valid and reliable survey questions designed by seminal researchers in this area (Garvin, D. A., Edmondson, A. C., & Gino, F. (2008). "Is Yours a Learning Organization?" *Harvard Business Review*, 86(3), 109-116.). The intervention includes four stages: investigate, ideate, innovate, and iterate. The project is currently in the investigation stage. This stage includes a review of past survey data, research of best practices, interviews with stakeholders for historical context, and a survey of a sample population, which have all been completed. Argonne had 297 participants complete the survey across 10 demographic categories. Next steps will include focus groups based on the survey outcomes, alignment of themes and insights to best practices, and the development of a high-level summary and strategy.

This stage will be followed by the ideate stage, which includes the design, prioritization, validation and selection of sprint solutions. Viable solutions will then be piloted in the innovate stage, with an aim to reach the iterate stage, where the solution is scaled, by the end of September 2024.

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This work is part of Argonne’s overall Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) strategic plan for 2024. Argonne submits a DEIA plan annually to the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Science. The plan outlines the Laboratory’s DEIA goals and the actions it will take to achieve them to create organizational change through continuous improvement. The DEIA Office partners with the Laboratory’s Project Management Office to develop a detailed project plan and work schedule each year for execution of the plan. The laboratory’s leadership team has joint accountability for successful execution of the entire plan, as well as responsibility for execution within their organizational lines. This structure ensures that the findings and solutions of this project will be incorporated into the operations of Argonne in the future, creating sustained organizational change.

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