NIH Efforts on Changing the Culture of Science to Maximize Talent and End Harassment

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The NASEM report fundamentally changed the conversation in a way long overdue...
Bottom line: it is time for change

Sexual harassment is morally indefensible, unacceptable, and presents a major obstacle that is keeping women from achieving their rightful place in science.

We can do better. We must do better.
NIH Internal Anti-Harassment Actions

OVERSIGHT
NIH Anti-Harassment Steering Committee

POLICIES
Anti-Harassment Manual Chapter & Relationship Policy Statement

TOOLS & RESOURCES
Hotline, Webform, Training, Education, and Additional Resources

PROGRAM
NIH Civil Program Expansion Updates

TIMELINE & COMMUNICATIONS
Anti-Harassment Program Launch Timeline and Campaign
NIH Anti-Harassment Actions

Demonstrating Transparency and Accountability

- February 28th 2019 – Director’s Statement
- Emailed all NIH-funded institutions for assistance combating sexual harassment
- ICs are required to develop independent anti-harassment plans
- NIH co-chairs the NSTC Subcommittee on Safe and Inclusive Research Environments
- Established mechanisms to report concerns about NIH-funded institutions
  - Email: GranteeHarassment@od.nih.gov

Internal Actions
- 2018-2019: 200+ allegations
  - Formal and informal disciplinary actions
  - Training sessions about the anti-harassment program

External Actions
- 2018-2019: Reviewed 100+ incidents/inquiries (50+ institutions)
  - PI replacement/removal from grants, peer review
  - Institutional disciplinary actions
NIH Co-Chairs the SIRE Subcommittee of NSTC JCORE

- Federal coordinating body for sharing practices, challenges, and activities to combat harassment in research
- Focuses on advancing proactive prevention of the conditions and characteristics that lead to a climate in which harassment is tolerated
- Aims to foster an American research enterprise where researchers join, remain, and thrive
Key Definitions

Professional Misconduct

Inappropriate Behaviors
- Harassment/Bullying
- Sexual Harassment
- Unwanted Sexual Attention, including sexual assault
- Sexual Coercion
- Gender Harassment, including discrimination

Research Misconduct
- Falsification
- Fabrication
- Plagiarism
Conceptualizing the Report Recommendations

There is a sense of urgency to address the tip of the iceberg –

The Working Group included **immediately actionable recs**

The Working Group also made many recommendations to change the culture **long-term**
Working Group Report

Recommendations Accepted by NIH Director (Dec. 2019)

• **Recommendations Around Report Themes:**

  1. Increase Transparency and Accountability in Reporting of Professional Misconduct, especially Sexual Harassment
  2. Establish Mechanisms for Restorative Justice
  3. Ensure Safe, Diverse, and Inclusive Research and Training Environments
  4. Create System-wide Change to Ensure Safe, Diverse, and Inclusive Research Environments

What happens next?
Sparkling Introspection – read the ACD report!

- Are some of the values we hold dear in the research enterprise contributing to risk factors for harassment?
  - “Meritocracy”
  - Lab as “family”
  - Apprenticeship system of training

- Are we too willing to forgive bad behavior in exchange for good science/scientific prestige?
  - Academic freedom vs. freedom of behavior

- How does the way we fund research contribute to the culture that is driving women out of science?
  - Concentrating funding
  - “Celebrity” culture of science?
  - Risk averse = maintaining the status quo
  - Root cause issues... alignment w/other ACD WG