



*University of Alaska Commitment Statement in support of the National Academies of Sciences,  
Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher  
Education*

June 18, 2019

The National Academies report on [\*Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine \(2018\)\*](#) found that between 20 and 50 percent of women students and more than 50 percent of women faculty and staff experienced sexually harassing behavior while in academia. Research demonstrates that sexual harassment undermines the professional and educational attainment and mental and physical health of people of all genders. It also shows that these consequences are not limited to those experiencing it directly; but that bystanders – people of all genders – who experience ambient harassment in their work or education environment are also affected and this in turn affects organizations as employees disengage, withdraw, and leave their work so as not to become the next target. The *Sexual Harassment of Women* report concludes that system-wide changes to the culture and climate in higher education are needed and provides a roadmap for higher education to make these changes.

The University of Alaska inspires learning, and advances and disseminates knowledge through teaching, research, and public service, emphasizing the North and its diverse peoples. The University of Alaska system comprises three separately accredited universities (University of Alaska Anchorage, University of Alaska Fairbanks and University of Alaska Southeast) with 13 community campuses and extended learning centers across the state of Alaska. In Alaska, sexual assault and harassment are a significant problem. The university is deepening its focus on evolving as an institution in a way that ensures a respectful environment with an underpinning of safety, equity, and opportunity for all students, faculty, staff, researchers and guests to our campuses and field study sites. This mission will be fulfilled only if we actively create diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments that convey sexual misconduct is not tolerated and actively work to mitigate or eliminate factors in our environment that contribute to allowing sexual harassment to occur.

To advance efforts to prevent and effectively respond to sexual harassment, University of Alaska is joining other institutions and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to form an *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education*. This Action Collaborative will facilitate partnerships and joint action on addressing and preventing sexual harassment. Together, with the other institutional members of the Action Collaborative, we aim to achieve targeted, collective action toward evidence-based policies and practices at the individual and systems levels for addressing and preventing all forms of sexual harassment and promoting a culture of civility and respect. The four goals of the Action Collaborative are to:

- Raise awareness about sexual harassment and how it occurs, the consequences of sexual harassment, and the organizational characteristics and recommended approaches that can prevent it.
- Share and elevate evidence-based institutional policies and strategies to reduce and prevent sexual harassment.
- Contribute to setting the research agenda, and gather and apply research results across institutions.
- Develop a standard for measuring progress toward reducing and preventing sexual harassment in higher education.

**The University of Alaska system hereby commits to support the goals of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education*.**