

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

March 27, 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 professional and educational attainment as well as 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. This, in turn, affects organizations as employees disengage, withdraw, and leave their work to avoid becoming 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 to make these changes.

The University of Minnesota is committed to changing ourselves and the culture of the academy to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct. Responsibility for long-term culture change to prevent sexual misconduct belongs to all members of our community: faculty, staff, students and alumni. Since launch of the President's Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct (PIPSM) in May 2017, the U of M has approached this issue from a public health perspective. PIPSM focuses on sustained action to promote a healthy culture; training and skills building for social norms correction; communications and modeling expected behavior; and building accountability into systems. PIPSM envisions a University of Minnesota community that promotes a culture of health and wellness in relationships, commitment to the welfare of others, protection of human rights and due process, and that is free from sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To advance efforts to prevent and effectively respond to sexual harassment, the University of Minnesota 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 collaborative 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 Minnesota **hereby commits to support the goals of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education.***