



University of Tennessee, Knoxville, commitment statement in support of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

April 1, 2019

The National Academies' report *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 the mental and physical health of people of all genders. It also shows that these consequences are not limited to those who experience harassment 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 road map for higher education to make these changes.

The mission of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is to move forward the frontiers of human knowledge and enrich and elevate the citizens of the state of Tennessee, the nation, and the world. As the flagship campus of the state's preeminent research-based land-grant university, UT Knoxville embodies the spirit of excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, outreach, and engagement attained by the nation's finest public research institutions. This mission will be fulfilled only if we actively create diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments that convey that sexual harassment 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, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 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.

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The action collaborative has four goals:

- 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
- To share and elevate evidence-based institutional policies and strategies to reduce and prevent sexual harassment
- To contribute to setting the research agenda, and gather and apply research results across institutions
- To develop a standard for measuring progress toward reducing and preventing sexual harassment in higher education

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, hereby commits to supporting the goals of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education.



Wayne T. Davis
Interim Chancellor