

## Statement on Participants in the National Academies' Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Action Collaboratives at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine are coalitions of the willing that commit to tackling a specific challenge with new and innovative solutions. Key stakeholders convene to take action in addressing a systemwide problem through collaboration, experimentation, and the involvement and perspectives of those impacted and affected by the problem. The members of the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education have come together to carry out collaborative work so that we may prevent and better address sexual harassment and other abuse, and support people who experience these abuses. The ultimate purpose of this Action Collaborative is to provide a space for those concerned about preventing sexual harassment to exchange information, ideas, strategies, and tactics.

In undertaking this work, we are motivated first and foremost by the voices of people who have experienced harassment firsthand and are too often silenced as they seek justice and improvements to higher education. Our [recent report on sexual harassment of women](#) calls attention to the prevalence of sexual harassment and the harm it causes, and concludes that systemwide changes to the cultures and climates of organizations are needed to prevent sexual harassment. The report states that the responsibility for addressing these failings should not rest on the individuals who have been harmed by sexual harassment—that is, on targets, victims, or survivors—but rather with the higher education institutions and research organizations. According to our report, these institutions and organizations need to be the ones to commit to making these systemwide changes and to do the work of implementing and evaluating the changes. An organization's membership in this Action Collaborative is not an assessment of whether the organization has created ideal solutions to preventing or addressing sexual harassment or has handled these situations well in the past; rather, membership reflects an organization's willingness to commit to making changes; to financially supporting this collaborative effort; to developing, implementing, and testing innovative practices for preventing sexual harassment and other abuses; to publicly sharing information about their work and the results from it; and to doing all of this during the next four years.

To consider and involve the perspectives of targets of sexual harassment, but to not burden targets, we identified a diverse set of individuals to represent these perspectives on our Advisory Committee and guide our work. Our Advisory Committee, Leadership Group, the representatives from the organizations in the Action Collaborative, and the National Academies staff working on this project include many people who have experienced (or still are experiencing) sexual harassment. Some have spoken publicly about their experiences and some have not. Some are both survivors and researchers of sexual harassment. Some are both survivors and individuals in leadership roles in academia. To support those with sexual harassment experiences and follow the guidance in our own report, we respect these individuals' decisions on how they want to present themselves.

To help ensure that additional perspectives influence and guide our work, we are actively engaging individuals with sexual harassment experiences and elevating their voices at our public events. Member institutions have outlined specific approaches they are using to engage and involve their broad communities—including people who have experienced harassment—in their work with the Action Collaborative, and they will continue to improve upon these efforts. We welcome any and all to [reach out to us](#) to make suggestions for our work and to share experiences to improve the environment in higher education.

There are many efforts underway to address sexual harassment—from community-level advocacy and grassroots groups to efforts within existing large institutions. We consider ourselves privileged to work alongside these efforts in tackling this pervasive and harmful behavior. The Action Collaborative looks forward to brainstorming, identifying, and sharing practices with those working on this topic, and to collaborating with them to create profound and systemic change to prevent sexual harassment and other abuses. Together, we can do better.