



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

February 28, 2021

Caltech remains resolute in its commitment to foster and sustain an environment that respects each individual's full humanity and encourages their full inclusion in its educational, research, and extracurricular programs. As an Institute, we continue to reinforce efforts to improve the campus climate and prevent misconduct. In the last year, we have expanded the resources of our Equity and Title IX Office, adding a fifth group member, a Campus Sexual Violence Advocate to ensure that efforts to curtail and address sexual harassment and other sex- and gender-based misconduct are included. We also participated again in the Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct and have been using the results to inform program goals, outreach, and training.

At a national level, Caltech is a founding member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. In this forum we work with our peers to develop strategies to stop sexual harassment and raise awareness of its negative and enduring effects. This is an important commitment. The National Academies report on *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018)* found that between 20 percent 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 Institute's stated mission is to expand human knowledge and benefit society through research integrated with education. We investigate the most challenging, fundamental problems in science and technology in a singularly collegial, interdisciplinary atmosphere, while educating outstanding students to become creative members of society. This mission will be fulfilled only if we actively create diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments that convey sexual harassment is not tolerated and actively work to mitigate or eliminate factors in our environment that contribute to allowing sexual harassment to occur.

This Action Collaborative facilitates partnerships and joint action to address and prevent sexual harassment. Together, with the other institutional members of the Action Collaborative, we are working 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.

Reflecting Caltech's commitment to the work of this Action Collaborative, our institutional representatives participate in national summits and have provided leadership in a working group dedicated to improving institutional responses to sexual harassment in higher education. By exchanging information with member schools about campus initiatives, training, and policies, we all have been able to take steps to improve how we engage with our communities on issues of sex- and gender-based misconduct. As we enter our third year of membership in the Action Collaborative, we continue to support the goals of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education*.