

Community Engagement Plan document for the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

MIT aims to engage the community in the Action Collaborative's work through five key stakeholder groups and one initiative: the Institute Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response (CSMPR), the Committee on Women in Science Engineering and Medicine (CWSEM) Working Groups, the Title IX Student Advisory Committee (TIXSAC), PLEASURE peer educators, and the MindHandHeart Department Support Project (DSP). These groups and the DSP represent a diverse cross-section of faculty, student, and staff leadership at MIT; serve as a vital source of feedback on or response to current climate issues; provide input on strategies and efforts to create a safer and more inclusive climate; and help to amplify the Institute's efforts in key areas such as support, education and training, and culture change.

The Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response

CSMPR, chaired by faculty member Dr. Leslie Kolodziejski, provides senior leadership with recommendations designed to encourage a safe and respectful campus environment, oversees an institute-wide approach to prevention, and responds to sexual misconduct and other forms of gender-based discrimination. In previous years, the committee has recommended new policies that were then implemented by MIT, including a consensual relationships policy and required online training for all incoming undergraduate students, graduate students, and employees on topics of sexual assault prevention. As the work of the Action Collaborative continues, the CSMPR will be asked for feedback and kept updated during their monthly meetings.

In order to build upon the required training all employees completed in 2017, CSMPR recommended required ongoing training every two years. A group of faculty, staff, and students developed a menu of training options employees will be able to select from to fulfill their bi-annual training requirement. Following the best practices in the NASEM report, training options will be delivered both in-person and online. Two of the online trainings include information from the NASEM report presented at the summit in November 2018. In addition, the staff who routinely provide workshops and trainings on the topic of gender harassment have incorporated information from the NASEM report, including the iceberg image, to raise awareness of the behavior below public consciousness.

The National Academies Committee on Women in Stem Engineering and Medicine Report Working Groups

In response to the National Academies CWSEM Report and the recommendations it includes for how institutions can more successfully address and prevent sexual harassment, MIT created [four Working Groups](#) tasked with identifying strategies for implementing the CWSEM's recommendations. The working groups focus on: 1) Leadership and Engagement; 2) Training & Prevention; 3) Policies & Reporting; and 4) Academic & Organizational Relationships. Students, faculty, staff, and postdocs from across the institute comprise these four working groups and they are currently engaging with the broader community to develop recommendations to move the Institute forward in its efforts to create a safe and healthy culture at MIT. In fall 2019, the working groups' draft reports will be shared with the community and feedback will be collected in a variety of ways, including through a town hall. Community members will also be invited to reach out to the working groups with ideas and questions. Once the community has had an opportunity to contribute to the working group recommendations, they will be submitted to an advisory board President Reif appointed of senior leaders from across the Institute. The board will review and respond to the reports' recommendations. We anticipate this will result in some immediate actions steps and longer term initiatives.

The working groups' reports will also be discussed at various faculty leadership meetings, including at an all-faculty meeting before the end of the fall semester.

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The Title IX Student Advisory Committee

TIXSAC is made up of undergraduate and graduate students that provide feedback to the Title IX & Bias Response office on topics including policies, trainings, promotional materials, and office procedures. TIXSAC hopes to be a place where students across the Institute can be involved in inclusive and engaging discussions regarding how to better the school community and social spaces. In particular, the Institutional Advocacy subcommittee of TIXSAC will engage in the work of the Action Collaborative because of their focus on advocating for more inclusive and equitable policies and procedures at MIT.

TIXSAC members are represented on the CWSEM Working Groups and provide input on the best way to engage the larger student body. The Title IX and Bias Response Office works to engage other student leaders in gender harassment prevention efforts by hosting regular meetings with representatives of all the “Women In” groups (Women in Chemistry, Women in Physics, etc.). The efforts of the NASEM Action Collaborative and CWSEM Working Groups will be shared with this group of thoughtful student leaders, and their feedback will be brought forward by the NASEM Action Collaborative MIT representatives.

PLEASURE Peer Education Program

PLEASURE peer educators are a group of students rigorously trained by Violence Prevention and Response staff to promote healthy, safe, and respectful campus culture and communities. In addition to leading workshops across the Institute with other students, PLEASURE educators participate in committees, host study breaks and community-wide programming, and encourage culture change within their own communities. As an undergraduate-focused program, PLEASURE offers an important connection to undergraduate student need and is able to provide feedback and insight into how to better support undergraduate students on topics like sexual misconduct and gender-based discrimination.

MindHandHeart Department Support Project

Academic institutions are comprised of many ‘micro-climates’ - departments, labs, centers – each with their own opportunities and constraints in promoting welcoming and inclusive environments. MIT’s MindHandHeart DSP provides the heads of our academic units with data, expertise, and ongoing support to create and implement 1-2 year community action plans. A focus of the effort has been to coordinate the action planning process with promising practices from the NASEM report and with the upcoming recommendations from the CWSEM Working Groups. Sponsored by the Chancellor and Provost, the action plans will be integrated into the external ‘visiting committee’ review process overseen by the MIT Corporation.

Together, these five stakeholders offer MIT an opportunity to engage with faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students across the Institute in meaningful and productive ways. By continuously communicating with these five groups about the happenings of the Action Collaborative, we hope to empower them to serve as leaders in enacting culture change at all levels of the MIT community.