

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

May 1, 2023

Public Statement of the University of Massachusetts Lowell Commitment to the Prevention of Sexual Harassment

UMass Lowell has made a strong commitment to promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for all faculty, staff and students. We are thus excited to be a Member of the Action Collaborative on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in Higher Education of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

The Action Collaborative works to encourage and support system-wide changes across higher education to prevent and address sexual harassment experienced by all people in higher education and to deal with the issue in the context of other damaging behaviors including other forms of harassment (such as racial harassment), discrimination, bullying, and incivility. We welcome our membership in the Action Collaborative as a way to deepen further our commitments by learning from other institutions, and we welcome opportunities to share information about initiatives we have adopted.

UML's commitment has involved an honest assessment of the issue of sexual harassment on our campus and in-depth analyses of institutional policies and practices to address and prevent the problem. As a result of our multi-year dedication to the issue, UML adopted a formal public statement of values related to DEI issues: <https://www.uml.edu/social-justice-inclusion/values-statement.aspx>

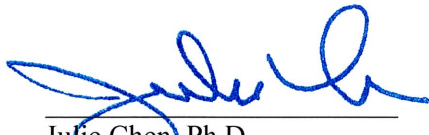

UML Actions to put our values into practice:

- We received a 5-year National Science Foundation Institutional Transformation Grant to address systemic biases and increase the representation and advancement of women in academic STEM. The goals of the UML program (called WAVES - Women Academics Valued and Engaged in STEM) have been three-fold: 1) disrupt microaggressions (through awareness campaigns, bystander training, and survey-feedback cycles, 2) provide mentoring and alternative support mechanisms for faculty from under-represented groups (e.g., collaborative mentoring and linking junior faculty with external mentors), and 3) promote equity and accountability (e.g., anti-bias personnel decision-making procedures, equity consultations with departments). Our peer-lead bystander training has been a signature component of this program predicated on the belief that such practices help establish norms that are critical to the prevention of harassment. <https://www.uml.edu/research/advance/>
- In fall 2021, UML institutionalized the work of WAVES by creating an ADVANCE Office for Faculty Equity. The mission of the OFE is: "to promote an equitable, inclusive, and empowering environment in which all faculty receive support, resources and opportunities in order to thrive at UMass Lowell." This office is faculty-driven with funding and support from the Provost's Office. Support for this Office has enabled the university to expand practices that are vital to the prevention of harassment. <https://www.uml.edu/Academics/Provost-office/Faculty-success/advance/>

- The Chancellor's Office initiated two major task forces, both including broad representation of varied campus constituencies, to address the issue of sexual/gender-based harassment on campus. The first, convened in 2019-20 produced a significant set of recommendations for change <https://www.uml.edu/prevent/task-force/>. A Task Force on Gender and Sex-Based Discrimination Prevention was established to follow up on the initial TF report and has released their report and recommendations. <https://www.uml.edu/social-justice-inclusion/gender/>

Our pledge:

As a Member of the Action Collaborative, our institution is committed to advancing and contributing to the Action Collaborative's shared goals to: 1) facilitate and inform action on preventing and addressing harassment; 2) share and elevate evidence-based policies and strategies for reducing and preventing sexual harassment; 3) advance research on sexual harassment prevention, and gather and apply research results across institutions; 4) raise awareness about sexual harassment and its consequences, and motivate action to address and prevent it; and 5) assess progress in higher education toward reducing and preventing sexual harassment in higher education.


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