



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

Virginia Tech is honored to join the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education as a crucial step in our ongoing efforts to develop a framework for sustainable climate and cultural transformation on our campus.

The Action Collaborative is guided by the [2018 National Academies report, Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#), which concluded that system-wide changes to the culture and climate in higher education were needed and provided a roadmap for pursuing these changes.

Virginia Tech envisions a campus community free from discrimination and harassment in which all members of our community can thrive. Sexual harassment is inconsistent with the university's commitment to excellence and to a community in which mutual respect is a core value as articulated in the [Virginia Tech Principles of Community](#). As I have stated previously, sexual violence and misconduct strikes at the heart of the community we aspire to be and defies the core values that guide our strategic vision.

Virginia Tech joins a peer community focused on developing evidence-based policies and practices at the individual and systems level that work to address and prevent sexual harassment and promote a culture of respect in higher education. We are actively engaged in this work and have committed the necessary time and resources to advance the following shared goals of the Action Collaborative:

- Facilitate and inform action on preventing and addressing sexual harassment
- Share and elevate evidence-based policies and strategies for reducing and preventing sexual harassment
- Advance research on sexual harassment prevention, and gather and apply research results across institutions
- Raise awareness about sexual harassment and its consequences, and motivate action to address and prevent it
- Assess progress in higher education toward reducing and preventing sexual harassment in higher education

Membership in the Action Collaborative aligns with the mission of Virginia Tech's Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative, which advances a sustainable model for cultural transformation that recognizes sexual and gender-based violence prevention as a shared responsibility of the entire Virginia Tech community.

Over the next four years, we commit to supporting and advancing the following key initiatives that align with the shared goals of the Action Collaborative:

- Partnering with the authors of Sexual Citizens to implement their Space Toolkit at a large research university
- Implementing alternative resolution procedures for Title IX and sexual misconduct cases
- Using a cohort model to train leaders in restorative justice practices to help cultivate a campus climate that responds to conflict with clarity and compassion
- Piloting initiatives focused on developing policies to avoid "passing the harasser"
- Developing resources and implementing strategies to aid in preventing harassment in field and lab settings
- Redesigning mandatory harassment prevention training to include active intervention modules

Our engagement with the Action Collaborative will be led by Kelly Oaks, associate vice president for equity and accessibility, and Barbara Lockee, associate vice provost for faculty affairs. Katie Polidoro, director of Title IX compliance/Title IX coordinator, will serve on the Action Collaborative's Response Working Group.

Virginia Tech is well-positioned to share and implement knowledge gained by our participation with the Action Collaborative through our human resources framework and university wide engagement in [InclusiveVT](#), which represents our institutional and individual commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence.

Virginia Tech is proud to commit to the goals of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education and working to make our campus safer for our community.



Timothy D. Sands, President



Date