

Cornell University
The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education
Community Engagement Plan

Cornell University has identified two efforts that will be pivotal to the university's National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) work. These efforts, which are interrelated, are to assess and, as necessary, refashion existing organizational structures and communication mechanisms. The goals are to enhance engagement and two-way communication – to enhance Cornell's NASEM representatives' ability:

- To inform the Cornell community about the goals and findings of NASEM.
- Be informed by diverse members of the Cornell community when conceptualizing and implementing Cornell's action collaborative priorities (currently "Reducing Hiring and Passing on of Serial Harassers" and "Further Developing Robust Confidential and Support Services").

The remodeled organizational mechanisms and communication schemes must be responsive to Cornell's highly decentralized structure and its tradition of shared governance. They will rely on existing structures and traditions and, at the same time, provide new opportunities for diverse constituencies to share their perspectives and expertise and participate in problem solving. We expect to refine our approaches and be nimble as we learn what is effective and as our action collaborative projects change. We will work first on solidifying our organizational structures so that we can use these new structures and allow for broad input as we develop new communication mechanisms.

Organizational Structure to Enhance Engagement and Two-Way Communication

The membership and goals of our organizational structure are yet to be determined, but the structure, at least the preliminary structure, has some certain elements and should achieve certain needs, as identified below:

- The NASEM representatives are the core group that meets frequently. This core group includes staff and faculty and includes members from the Office of Institutional Equity and Title IX and the Provost's Office.
- A small advisory committee to the NASEM representative group through which the core group can begin to socialize issues, get feedback, and build coalitions. Advisory committee members would represent diverse constituents and be expected to consult with them. However, understanding that potential student group members are likely overextended and student group representation changes frequently, we must develop a method for student participation that is not unwieldy for the students and ensures continuity of representation.
- A means to coordinate and collaborate with existing relevant university committees, most importantly, the Cornell Coalition on Sexual Violence Prevention, whose members promote public health strategies to prevent sexual violence, including sexual harassment.

- A means to collaborate with the university's shared governance committees – the faculty senate, employee assembly, and student and graduate student assemblies. The above concerns regarding student involvement pertain here as well.
- A structure that provides for ready input from key constituents, not just the formal shared governance committees identified above. Key constituents include persons who advise and support both complainants and respondents in Policy 6.4 matters. The structure must be inclusive.
- In addition to enduring constituents, there will be constituents that vary with NASEM projects. For example, for the Serial Harassers project, human resources directors would be a project-specific constituency. It may be that project-by-project, we identify specific constituents with whom we need to consult.
- A means to interact with key decision makers. For example, for our “Reducing Hiring and Passing on of Serial Harassers” project, we would want to collaborate with and need to obtain approval from (among others) the “responsible executives” for Cornell’s Institutional Equity and Title IX procedures as well as from the Office of University Counsel. This might be achieved by resurrecting a former committee, the Title IX Executive Committee.
- A means to consult with Cornell faculty and staff experts to try to ensure that our approaches are evidence based and, albeit aspirational, to encourage faculty experts to conduct research and scholarship related to Cornell NASEM initiatives. Our needed subject- matter expertise is likely to vary depending upon the NASEM projects, so rather than develop a standing role and committee seat for experts, we might seek expert involvement on a project-by-project basis. Or we might do both. Regardless, we need a means to learn of such expertise and to institutionalize the best practice of consulting with experts.