

**Joint Statement from Columbia University and the Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Commitment Statement in support of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

January 24, 2024

Columbia University with the Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC) is pleased to renew membership in The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. Addressing sexual harassment within higher education and healthcare environments is critical to our mission of providing extraordinary education, providing care to patients, and groundbreaking scientific discovery. The extent of damaging consequences of harassing behaviors recognized in the National Academies 2018 report on Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, make the membership in the collaborative timely and highly relevant.

The National Academies report gathered research showing that substantial numbers of women in the healthcare environment—students, faculty and staff— have experienced sexually harassing behavior and that sexual harassment damages professional development and has lasting negative effects on the mental and physical health of people of all genders. These consequences are not limited to those experiencing sexual harassment directly; ambient harassment affects many individuals in their work and educational environments. As the report observed, this in turn affects institutions when talented students, faculty and staff may disengage from their studies and work or seek to pursue their interests elsewhere. The report concludes that system-wide changes to the culture and climate in higher education and healthcare are needed and provides a roadmap for higher education to make these changes.

Columbia University—one of the world's most important centers of research and learning ---and the Columbia University Irving Medical Center—one of the world's most preeminent centers of healthcare research, education, training and care delivery—renews our commitment to joining the Action Collaborative as part of our commitment to foster an environment free from gender-based discrimination, harassment, all other forms of gender-based misconduct and damaging behaviors.

As part of the Action Collaborative over the past four years, the University and CUIMC have worked together to identify and develop solutions to issues in our ability to equitably support a healthy climate and culture for all. Some of the initiatives that have been launched during our membership in the Action Collaborative have included, but are not limited to:

- Developing tools and resources to support climate assessments in departments,
- Developing best practices guides to support LGBTQ faculty, employees, and students,
- Launch an Office of Professionalism at CUIMC,
- developed innovative curricula and interventions to better support faculty, staff, and students from underrepresented backgrounds,
- Reviewing university-wide policies on addressing damaging behaviors across the community and
- developing tools and mechanisms for assessing the impact and sustainability of these initiatives

We recognize that this work is essential to our mission of equality in career opportunity for faculty, staff, fellows, students and trainees. Creation of an environment free of harassing and damaging behaviors will allow higher

education and healthcare institutions to benefit from the full intellectual power of its entire workforce for the advancement of science and medicine, and ultimately to the benefit of society.

Columbia University and CUIMC's participation in this important Action Collaborative will facilitate additional partnerships and joint action on addressing and preventing sexual harassment. Together with the other institutional members of the Action Collaborative, we aim to generate 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 other damaging behaviors. The five goals of the Action Collaborative are 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.

Sincerely,



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