

Year 1 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of California, Merced

Informal Conflict Resolution Team

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): 13 & 17

Description of Work:

1. The purpose and goals of what you did or what you are doing, and how you did it.

Creating a network of confidential and private conflict resolution resources (Ombuds, Graduate Division's Academic Counselor, Vice Provost for Faculty's Case Manager and Human Resources Engagement Coach) to help students, staff and faculty navigate options to resolve a variety of issues at an early stage and informal level, including those related to sexual harassment and gender discrimination. The network will be connected through formal meetings in which team members will regularly share best practices and emergent themes. Given that the new DOE rules will likely chill reporting and adjudication of formal sexual harassment complaints, informal resources will be critical for complainants to use to process what they are experiencing and be supported in potential informal resolution of the issue. By employing resources in multiple offices across the university, opportunities for outreach are expanded and students, staff and faculty are more likely to bring issues forward since they have options in whom to consult.

2. How it is consistent with the findings and recommendations of the 2018 NASEM report (as outlined within the Rubric).

#13 Providing Anonymous and Non-mandatory Reporting Resources and Tools

#15 Improved Communication and Increased Transparency

#16 Addressing Gender Harassment and Other Bad Behaviors:

#17 Increased or Enhanced Confidential Resources and Support Services

3. The current status of the work: in the process of finalizing a plan/action, currently being implemented, or implemented.

The Informal team has begun to meet in the summer, 2020. The group will outline goals and metrics based on the types of informal cases they are receiving, with a focus on early (informal)

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intervention approaches and generalized prevention strategies for the campus community. Early conversations have identified the following potential areas of focus for this group:

1. Ombuds and CARE advocate will run some **focus groups** during AY20-21 with target populations, such as graduate students. This can inform the campus where to target the prevention efforts.
2. **Create a sexual harassment and gender discrimination prevention ambassador program.**
 - Identify and train 10 staff and faculty as “SH prevention ambassadors” to serve as peer-led trainers and additional support resources for complainants and respondents of SH and gender harassment. The ambassadors will be publicized as trainers/resources for individuals and groups across campus
 - Obtain funding for the ambassadors
 - Ambassadors to meet monthly with Informal Conflict Resolution team • Pre & Post Assessment by the ambassadors

4. How this work is either:

- New for your organization (created, implemented, or revised since 04/10/19); or
- New or uncommon for higher ed space (created, implemented, or revised since 04/10/17)

This is a new initiative for UC Merced with initial planning scheduled for summer 2020 through Fall 2020. While we have invested in human resources dedicated to responding informally to a broad range of issues across student, staff and faculty campus populations, we are now focused on pulling these informal resources –both confidential and non-confidential-- together to specifically focus on concerns related to sexual harassment and gender discrimination. Through the creation of a coordinated Informal Conflict Resolution Team, they will begin to meet and develop plans and metrics for how this group can best be used to help mitigate instances of sexual harassment and gender discrimination across the organization.

5. Plans to evaluate the work and/or evaluation results or impacts of the work.

Specific evaluative measures will be developed by the Informal Conflict Resolution Team as they continue to meet in summer 2020 and develop final plans by Fall 2020.

Year 1 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

6. How you involve or are involving stakeholders in the plans and/or work.

The Informal Conflict Resolution Team will initially utilize current staff engagement surveys, graduate student surveys, and student surveys (UCUES), as well as information collected through additional efforts related to any sexual harassment/gender discrimination perceptions or realities across campus, to inform their planning. They will supplement these data with additional focus groups as needed. The ambassador program will recruit broadly from across student, staff and faculty stakeholders.

7. What you envision the next steps for this work to be.

The Informal Conflict Resolution Team will develop their plans and timelines by Fall 2020.

8. Link to more information about the effort and/or contact information for someone to learn more.

- Ombuds Office: <https://ombuds.ucmerced.edu>
- Conflict Resolution Coaching: <https://hr.ucmerced.edu/conflict-resolution>
- Graduate Division Academic Counseling:
<https://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/current-students/academicresources/academic-counseling>
- Vice Provost for the Faculty:
<https://academicpersonnel.ucmerced.edu/about/leadership/vpf>

Website for further information (if applicable): See above Point of Contact Name: N/A Email Address for Point of Contact: N/A
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