UC Berkeley

Academic Department Sexual Harassment Prevention Toolkit

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 18, 23, 25, 26, 28

Description of Work:

Overview and Purpose. The PATH to Care Center toolkit, "Preventing Sexual Harassment in Your Academic Department," is designed to help decision-makers in academic departments create and implement a plan to prevent sexual harassment within their academic community (inclusive of faculty, staff, students, postdoctoral scholars, researchers, vendors, and visitors). The toolkit moves a working group of departmental decision-makers through an efficient, results-oriented process designed to produce a comprehensive plan for preventing harassment. It is based on the best research in the field of sexual violence prevention, as well as specific, recent UC Berkeley research into sexual harassment in the academic context. The toolkit process takes approximately one academic semester.

Since publishing the toolkit in 2019, the PATH to Care Center has socialized it across campus. In spring 2019, the School of Public Health became the first academic unit to pilot it, convening a working group of stakeholders who worked through the toolkit with the assistance of PATH to Care Center staff. In fall 2019 and early spring 2020, the College of Environmental Design implemented the toolkit process and in spring 2020 the College of Engineering implemented it. PATH to Care's goal is to move at least one academic unit through the toolkit working group process each semester.

Consistency with NASEM recommendations. The Prevention Toolkit is consistent with numerous NASEM recommendations in that it is a multi-step toolkit that allows organizational leaders in specific academic ecosystems to identify and develop a roadmap for collective prevention of sexual harassment. Embedded in the toolkit are several components which align with the NASEM recommendations, including recommendations to embed the "values of diversity, inclusion, and respect into hiring, promotion, advancement, and admissions," promote prosocial behaviors for all members of the community, and develop the leadership skills to identify and reinforce community values and intervene to stop harmful behavior. The toolkit assists academic departments with maximizing their own climate surveys and tailoring their prevention efforts to the specific needs and strengths of their community.

Novelty. The toolkit is novel both for UC Berkeley and the higher education landscape. Our initial literature review in 2017 uncovered only one other toolkit targeting academic culture, the Faculty Toolkit for Supporting Efforts on Campus to Address Sexual and Dating

Violence. This toolkit, aimed at individual faculty members, lacks the comprehensive, culture-change approach that makes ours unique. Other unique elements include: being cross-population (the toolkit involves students, faculty, staff, and others), being outcome-driven (the goal is a set of actionable recommendations); and having an environmental focus (for example, examining practices for internships and placements, conference hosting, and other elements not traditionally considered in prevention).

Within the College of Engineering, a cross-population working group used the toolkit to explore opportunities to integrate prevention strategies and developed a set of recommendations for furthering the College's sexual harassment prevention efforts. Subsequently, together with the dean, they developed an action plan for empowering undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, faculty and staff to effect positive change.

Plans for evaluation. The evaluation plan for this work is twofold, encompassing both process and results evaluation. Process evaluation includes:

1. Measuring whether recommendations were actually produced, whether they were adopted, whether they were acted upon

2. Surveying members of the working group to determine if they felt it was a productive use of their time and would be beneficial to the community.

Results evaluation includes:

1. Measuring changes in departmental climate over time through the use of climate surveys

2. Measuring the impact of participating in the toolkit process on the members of the working group.

8 of the 9 members of the College of Engineering working group responded to the survey. They reported that, over the course of the semester, their perception of pro-social norms in the College increased; for example, those "strongly agreeing" with the statements that "Before this group convened, I believed that sexual harassment prevention was important to others in CoE/ Now that this group has finished, I believe that sexual harassment prevention is important to others in CoE" increased from 12.5% to 37.5% and the number "strongly disagreeing" reduced from 12.5% to zero. This increased confidence in the pro-social beliefs of others in the College community is something the research tells us is important to inciting change. Similarly, working group members reported that their own understanding of how to prevent sexual harassment in the College increased dramatically, with the group moving from a majority (62.5%) "limited or no understanding" to majority (87.5%) "good or excellent understanding".

Additionally, the College of Engineering plans to implement an online feedback system for community members to share their experiences and suggestions for improving classroom climate and workplace culture. This virtual drop-box will be monitored by members of the College of Engineering leadership team who influence decisions regarding college and department programs and policies.

Involving stakeholders in the work. Stakeholder involvement was built into this project from the beginning. The working group is constructed to intentionally represent all populations in an academic department: students, faculty, staff, and ideally postdocs and visiting scholars, as well as representations from across disciplines or divisions as appropriate. The group structure with core representation from these groups and additional one-time consultation from group-identified expert "consultants" in the community allows for maximum diversity of stakeholder input without the unwieldiness of scheduling a large group.

Next steps for the work. PATH to Care Center plans to continue to roll out this work with academic units across campus. In particular we are focusing on integrating the toolkit into the Academic Program Review process (mandatory review for each academic program) so that it can reach the maximum amount of academic units.

In the College of Engineering, a cross-population committee will be tasked to ensure progress in implementing the aforementioned action plan during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Learn more. If you would like to learn more about this, please contact the PATH to Care Center at pathtocare@berkeley.edu.

Website for further information (if applicable): pathtocare@berkeley.edu

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