

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

UC Berkeley

Infusing Respect into Academic Review

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): 1, 2, 8, 16

Description of Work:

Overview and purpose. The biggest impact we as a campus can have on SVSH is preventing it. Preventing SVSH requires culture change and is a community responsibility. The same kinds of efforts that prevent sexual harassment also work to prevent bullying, incivility, hazing, discrimination, exclusion of members of marginalized communities.

This multi-part project aims to infuse principles of healthy climate and the prevention of harassment, bullying, and other abusive behavior into all of the areas in which faculty and academic programs are assessed, so that diversity, equity, and inclusion appear consistently in evaluation criteria from the point of hire throughout an academic career. Persuading faculty that respectful interactions are an integral part of excellence in the core academic mission of teaching, research, and service, is a key step in establishing healthy, inclusive climate as a social norm. The project includes developing tools for reviewers (chairs, deans, others) to reward positive contributions to climate and to identify, document and address areas for improvement.

Method. Audit and update the assessment criteria in each of ten areas of review, focusing on making the following explicit and conspicuous:

- Awareness: educate faculty regarding what positive contributions that are expected and negative contributions that are discouraged, so faculty are aware of expectations
- Incentivization: reward positive contributions to climate
- Documentation: identify and document positive and negative contributions by faculty
- Support: encourage faculty to address any negative contributions (in order to be, and be considered, fully successful as a faculty member)

All areas of this project have involved stakeholders, including practitioners working in the field of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, faculty leadership, and administrators.

Eight areas of review. The eight areas of review, below, include both mandatory reviews (e.g., upon hiring, reappointment, or tenure assessments) as well as other milestones in a successful faculty career.

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1. Faculty hiring (*Status: this work is largely complete, and viewable on the website of the Office for Faculty Equity and Welfare. Questions continue to be asked about the manner in which DEIB contributions are assessed: via a separate dedicated statement that is reviewed separately from the rest of the application, or in a more holistic integrated manner.*)

Review published faculty hiring procedures to ensure that the hiring process is informed by clear criteria regarding the potential contributions of the candidate to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Ensure, by monitoring active searches, that DEIB assessments are part of every hiring decision.

2. Faculty merit and promotion (*Status: this work is in progress.*)

Review published procedures and workshop materials for preparing faculty personnel cases and making decisions regarding advancement, to ensure that the process is informed by clear criteria regarding a candidate's contributions to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. DEIB should be clearly articulated as part of excellence in teaching, research, and service. Consistent criteria should be used at all stages of a faculty member's career, from assistant professor reappointment cases to tenure to advancement into the highest ranks of the professoriate. Making criteria clear is the first step; the second step is increasing awareness on the part of the faculty, chairs, deans, and senior administrators, so that all reviewers are equipped to make these assessments. Compliance with university-mandated sexual harassment training should also be checked, and enforced, as part of submitting a personnel case.

3. Academic Program Review (*Status: this work is in progress.*)

The periodic review, including by an external committee, of academic departments is an excellent opportunity to assess the climate in the department. Departments should be given clear guidelines for the preparation of their self-study materials that include tools for evaluating department climate. Departments should be given clear instructions for writing a plan to improve any climate issues that emerge from this study. External review committee should be informed of the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging and supporting in asking questions about climate in their meetings with different departmental constituencies. Finally, university reviewers who receive the academic program review documents and make recommendations for the future should explicitly discuss DEIB. If a department is suffering from serious climate issues, these should be addressed before the department is given permission to move forward with growth plans or new initiatives. One way of doing this would be to engage with the "Prevention Toolkit," described in Work Plan #3.

4. Appointments to leadership positions (*Status: this work has not yet begun.*)

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Faculty who are appointed to leadership positions, such as department chair, dean, important university committees, or senior administrative positions should be expected to have acute awareness of the importance of DEIB and a strong record of supporting it. Questions about awareness and the record should be part of any nomination letter and decision process. Giving a known bully a position of institutional power is a capitulation to unhealthy climate, signalling that unwelcome behavior is tolerated at the highest levels.

5. Awards and endowed chairs (*Status: this work is partially complete.*)

Teaching awards, mentoring awards, research awards, and endowed chairs are bestowed on the highest-performing faculty. Contributions to DEIB should be considered part of excellence in whatever area the award is based. Those choosing which faculty to elevate with award opportunities should know to inform themselves about the faculty member's record in this area. Giving a known bully a big public award is a capitulation to unhealthy climate, signalling that unwelcome behavior is tolerated at the highest levels.

6. Teaching evaluations (*Status: this work is in progress.*)

It can be hard to obtain information about how a faculty member interacts with students: is a particular candidate a wise and supportive mentor, or a demeaning bully? Anonymous teaching evaluations at the end of a class can be a way of obtaining this information, as the risk of retaliation is relatively low. But teaching evaluations must ask the relevant question. It is important to include in every student teaching evaluation a question about whether the class climate was inclusive and welcoming. In-person observation can be another way of assessing class climate, but is more costly in terms of time; the presence of an observer can also cause participants to modulate their behavior.

7. Syllabi and course websites (*Status: this work is partially complete.*)

Part of making healthy classroom climate a social norm is stating, over and over, that respectful interactions - even during vigorous debate - are expected and valued. Class syllabi and course websites are an excellent vehicle for this. The goal of this subproject is to ensure that every syllabus has a personal statement from the instructor about the importance of classroom climate, as well as a list of resources to support students who need accommodations or are facing obstacles to success in the class.

8. Academic department websites (*Status: this work is partially complete.*)

Academic department websites are an excellent medium for conveying the message that the department expects and values a healthy, respectful environment. The goal of this subproject is to ensure that every academic department website has a statement from the department chair about the importance of healthy climate, the steps the department is

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taking to ensure that members of the department are welcomed and feel that they belong, and resources to support students and employees who are facing obstacles to success.

Consistency with NASEM recommendations. This project directly aligns with the NASEM recommendation #1 ensuring that faculty hiring, merit, and promotion procedures are informed by clear criteria regarding candidates' contributions to a respectful, equitable, inclusive, and diverse climate. This also aligns with NASEM's recommendation #16 because it educates department chairs about directly addressing negative behaviors and reinforces that bullying, harassing, and demeaning or disrespectful behavior can be incorporated into the assessment of performance reviews. These efforts include example areas in which faculty can demonstrate their contributions to diversity and equal opportunity, highlighting behaviors that are to be recognized and rewarded, not just focusing on negative behaviors to avoid. This aligns with NASEM's recommendation #2. This project aligns with the NASEM recommendation #8 by uplifting our institution's stated values and creating mechanisms to reinforce these values.

Novelty. Beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year, this project is new for our campus. While we are aware that some campuses, including UC Davis and Rutgers University, are doing similar work based on a NASEM Action Collaborative session on considering behavior in promotion and tenure, this work appears to be newer in the higher education space.

Evaluation. Evaluation will vary by subproject. This is a work in progress.

Involving stakeholders. Auditing all processes that connect in any way with academic review necessarily requires the cooperation of many stakeholders, who have to buy in and agree to make the requisite changes. We have had successful collaborations thus far with administrators in academic personnel and academic program review, as well as cooperation from faculty in the Academic Senate.

Next steps for the work. *(see status updates for each component, above.)*

Learn More. To learn more, email Sharon Inkelas at svshadvisor@berkeley.edu.

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