

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

University of Michigan

RESPECT IN STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE (RISE)

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): #2, #16, #3, #4, #8).

Description of Work:

1. Purpose and Goal

The purpose of [Respect in Striving for Excellence \(RISE\)](#) is to provide resources, programming, and community building activities that focus on promoting respect and inclusivity in the academic department climate. This program includes a 2-hour workshop for academic leaders, regular opportunities for workshop participants to interact with one another and problem-solve collectively, and a central resource of tips, tools, and references related to managing climate. This program produced by U-M's [ADVANCE](#).

RISE focuses broadly on incivility or “bottom of the iceberg” harassment behaviors directed to members of marginalized groups (not just gender). The RISE workshop has several elements. First, it provides evidence about the harmful effects of incivility in the academic workplace. Second, we introduce [eight levers](#) that leaders can use to cultivate a climate of respect within their units. Third, participants break up into small groups to workshop how to handle specific forms of incivility in their departments using these levers. The workshop is developed and led by an interdisciplinary group of faculty members. Some portions of the workshop are led by UM's [CRLT Players](#), a U-M group that uses theater to support discussion and learning around inclusivity and bias in higher education.

At present, we have piloted RISE with different groups of academic leaders. Ideally, RISE workshops should be offered to entire leadership teams within units—for example, the department chair, associate chairs, executive committee, chief administrators and/or staff managers would attend a workshop together. This ensures that any structural changes or interventions are supported by the entire leadership team in the department.

In addition to the workshop, the RISE program provides a variety of resources on creating a climate of respect and inclusion in academic departments. This includes information on how to promote anti-harassment policies at a professional organization, best practices for creating a positive climate, and references for studies on the effects of climate. RISE also communicates with participants regularly with various topics related to positive climate—such as work-friendly practices, or remote work accommodations. The program further sets up informal chats or informal gatherings of former workshop participants to engage in collective problem solving.

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2. Alignment with NASEM report recommendations

RISE is consistent with several recommendations from the NASEM report.

RISE is a program to promote civility and respect (recommendations #2 and #16). Participants of the RISE workshop are leaders of academic departments, and the program is designed to raise leaders' awareness and develop leaders' skills to manage climate (recommendation #3). RISE introduces leaders to eight levers to shift climate; some levers entail structural changes, and some levers are drawn from bystander intervention strategies. Leaders are in many settings where they observe acts of incivility and disrespect, and they are in a unique position to intervene (recommendation #4). Some of the levers focus on using space, language, and other artifacts to reinforce community values (recommendation #8).

3. Current Status

The RISE workshop has been piloted several times—to different leadership groups, of different size audiences—and the feedback has been very positive. RISE will be presented to one of its largest audiences this coming Fall (about 200 participants in one setting). There will be adjustments made to the program as it moves from an in-person to online format to preserve the interactive, discussion-focused nature of the program.

4. Novelty of Program

RISE is new to U-M, and the workshop was first presented less than a year ago. The eight levers to shift climate is based on literature from management (rather than from higher education specifically).

5. Evaluation

Effectively managing climate is an issue faced by many department chairs, and the demand for programming to meet this need is great. Participants' feedback of the RISE workshop is very positive. The only comment for change was participants' desire to have a longer program, so that they have more time to collectively work on "real life" climate challenges in their departments. (The RISE workshop is designed as a 2-hour workshop, but several workshops have to be cut down to 1.5 hours because of scheduling and time constraints.)

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6. Involvement of Stakeholders

The program is designed by an interdisciplinary group of academic leaders representing different schools and colleges at U-M. The program is targeted to a similar audience representing all 19 schools/colleges in U-M. ADVANCE, who developed the program, has worked with deans of various schools to find opportunities to offer RISE to leaders.

7. Next Steps

RISE is still a relatively new program. We plan to increase the frequency of workshops as well as availability of resources. There will be opportunities to present the program to leadership teams, rather than individual leaders.

8. Contact Information

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