

**Year 2 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

Cornell University

“STOP” (Stop the Passing of Serial Harassers)

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

Embedding the Values of Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect into Recruitment, Hiring, Admissions, Retention, Promotion, and Advancement; Improved Communication and Increased Transparency

Description of Work:

In fall 2020, Cornell’s Action Collaborative team identified STOP as the focus for its work in the 2020-21 academic year. The purpose of this work was: (1) to recommend whether Cornell should consider such a policy; and (2) if recommending consideration of such a policy, to identify issues and propose next steps.

Over the past year, Cornell’s Action Collaborative team researched the University’s current hiring policies and practices, learned about STOP policies at other institutions through participation in the NASEM subgroup meetings and other discussion with peers, and discussed with Cornell HR experts the opportunity for Cornell to move in a similar direction. The team determined that crafting and building support for such a policy at Cornell would require the input of several key stakeholders, including Human Resources, the Office of University Counsel, the Faculty Senate, and the Employee Assembly. The team thus advanced a proposal to Cornell’s leadership to form an ad hoc stakeholder committee to answer specific questions to inform Cornell’s decision about a STOP policy.

The questions for the committee are:

1. (a) Should Cornell require applicants for faculty and some staff positions for disclosure of past findings of sexual misconduct (i.e., adopt a STOP policy)? (b) Should findings related to other kinds of misconduct also be requested, such as discrimination or research misconduct?
If yes to #1 (a):
2. What positions should this policy apply to? Positions that require unsupervised student interaction?

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3. How will findings of past misconduct by a job applicant be handled and who will guide the process? Would the Title IX coordinator be involved, perhaps with the appropriate Dean or senior manager?
4. How will the process used to determine misconduct at the prior institution be evaluated and how will differences in process at the prior institution and Cornell be taken into account?
5. How will the job applicant be able to respond?
6. What is the potential for unwanted effects, such as the potential for a chilling effect on diversity due to bias in investigation outcomes? Is this somehow the opposite of “ban the box”?
7. Should this policy be applied retroactively? For example, to hires within the window to file a complaint at Cornell?
8. How should this policy apply to Cornell Tech and Weill Cornell Medicine?

University leaders recently approved the Cornell Action Collaborative team’s proposal. The next step is for the chair (from Cornell’s Action Collaborative team) to form and convene the committee in the fall 2021 semester. The committee’s charge will be to answer the Cornell Action Collaborative team’s proposal questions and gather any additional information the committee believes relevant to the University’s decision about adopting a STOP policy at Cornell.

This work is new for Cornell in the sense that there is no such policy and there has been no systematic or centralized effort through the University and shared governance to explore the feasibility of such a policy. Stakeholders representing faculty, staff, and potentially students as well as Human Resources and other administrative units will be asked to serve on the committee. Further, the stakeholders will engage their constituents through the Faculty Senate, Employee Assembly, Student Assembly, Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, and the Human Resources Council.

For this next stage of this work, based on the committee’s charge, impact will be evaluated in terms of the extent and depth of discovery and discourse resulting from the committee’s work. The committee’s deliverable will be a report to University leadership addressing the questions set forth in the committee’s charge (#1-8 above).

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The Action Collaborative Rubric refers to STOP policies in the Prevention section under “Embedding Values of Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect into Recruitment, Hiring, Admissions, Retention, Promotion, and Advancement” as a hiring strategy which takes into account and gathers information about harmful behavior by an applicant at a prior institution. STOP policies also are noted in the Response section as a means of improving communication and increasing transparency.

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