

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

Michigan State University

**Leadership Series: Creating and Sustaining a Respectful Work
Environment Series**

Relevant Rubric Area(s): Leadership Education and Skill Development.

1. Description of Work: Leadership series *Creating and Sustaining a Respectful Work Environment Series*

Effective systemic culture change to ensure a safe and respectful work and learning environment includes change at all levels. Leadership at all levels of an institution affect the culture. At Michigan State University, we have a new President (2019) and a new Provost (2020) with new visions of accountability as we rebuild trust within our community. A new leadership series, *Creating and Sustaining a Respectful Work Environment Series*, was created in 2020 for front-line academic administrators (chairs/school directors) and higher level supervisors to develop skills and increase knowledge of our frontline supervisors to address inappropriate behavior at the onset, create a safe and respectful working and learning environment and require accountability of leadership.

The series of workshops was a collaboration across campus of many of the offices addressing aspects of sexual harassment within the campus culture: Presidential Advisors on addressing relationship violence and sexual misconduct issues (MSU Police Department and Psychology Department); Prevention, Outreach, and Education; Academic Human Resources, Office of Employee Relations, Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives; Office of Civil Rights, Office of Intuitional Equity; Office of General Counsel; Academic Advancement Network, and Office of Organizational and Professional Development. The cross-collaboration committee provided varied perspectives and created a comprehensive learning plan.

At MSU, we are working on changing the culture to create a safe and respectful environment. Leadership embraced changes to the MSU culture. The community is the university and leaders intentionally facilitating and determining community norms, but they need the community support. Accountable academic leadership, such as deans, associate deans, chairs/directors, must understand the role of culture in everyday interactions and the role of the leader to intervene in breaches of the norms.

Background

Michigan State University (MSU) is in the midst of improving the culture after a catastrophic institutional failure of leadership to create a safe and inclusive campus. In 2019, MSU launched the Know More @ MSU campus-wide survey. Key findings from the survey include: 1)

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

undergraduate students experienced high rates of sexual harassment, both male and female; 2) faculty and staff of all genders experienced some form of workplace incivility throughout their careers at MSU; and 3) traditionally marginalized community members experienced some form of sexual or relationship violence. These marginalized populations include women, people with disabilities, bisexual people, and transgender people.

(<https://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2019/msu-releases-campus-survey-results>). To address the findings in the Know More survey, the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) Expert Advisory Workgroup developed a recently released RVSM Strategic Plan that includes leadership development and institutionalized accountability.

2. The MSU Leadership series is consistent with the findings and recommendations of the 2018 NASEM report and/or an area of the Rubric

The goals align with the leadership and skill development rubric and included all of the factors in the rubric in our sessions.

- Ensure a clear understanding of policies and procedures for handling sexual harassment issues, and cases where sexual harassment combines with other forms of harassment or discrimination (e.g., related to race, disability, or religion)
- Provide skills on setting expectations for behavior
- Prepare individuals in various levels of leadership on how to handle a notification of sexual harassment
- Teach how to take explicit steps to create a culture and climate to reduce and prevent sexual harassment—and not just protect the organization against liability
- Develop conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, and/or de-escalation skills

The *Creating and Sustaining a Respectful Work Environment Series* include four sessions: Setting the Tone: An Introduction to Changing Climate and Culture; Assessing the Climate in your Unit; Building a Positive and Inclusive Work Environment; and Management of OIE Cases: Process & Responsibilities. MSU is developing new sessions to continue the work for developing leaders to have the skills necessary for influencing culture change at MSU.

Session 1: Setting the Tone: An Introduction to Changing Climate and Culture

To create lasting change, one must first understand the context they are working in. In 2019, MSU administered the “Know More” survey to faculty, staff and students to gauge their perceptions of the current institutional climate, particularly related to relationship violence and sexual misconduct (RVSM). A brief presentation of these survey results will provide participants with insights into key issues related to RVSM, identity-based harassment, and broader concerns that are affecting the MSU community. Using this as

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

a foundation, the session will then explore the power (both real and perceived) that leaders hold, ways leaders can role-model/tone-set positive environments, and why it is important to identify behaviors or situations that could be potentially harmful or disrespectful. Finally, a panel of university leaders who have been working at changing the climate in their units will share their experiences and lessons learned.

Session 2: Assessing the Climate in your Unit

Workplace climate can be directly linked to productivity, job satisfaction and retention. As the leader, the ability to assess the climate in your unit can help prevent conflict, support team wellbeing, and increase effectiveness in accomplishing unit goals. This workshop will outline a climate assessment toolkit that can be employed immediately within your unit.

Session 3: Building a Positive and Inclusive Work Environment

Part presentation and part theatrical case study, this session will explore what it takes to move a unit forward in becoming a more inclusive and respectful place for working and learning.

Session 4: Management of OIE Cases: Process & Responsibilities

This session is designed to provide leaders (executive managers, deans, directors, chairs, and supervisors) an overview of how to manage the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) process when there is an active OIE case. This session serves to increase understanding of the OIE process (from the administrator perspective), the administrator's role, the importance of working closely with Academic Human Resources and/or Employee Relations throughout the process, and mechanisms to address misconduct related to reports made to OIE.

3. The current status of the work

The Leadership Series is ongoing. We are working with the cross-campus collaborators to design additional sessions for Academic Year 2021-2022. We will be offering some of the modules created for Academic Year 2020-2021 again as the target audience was incoming chairs that had participated in our mandatory New Administrator Orientation (NAO). Since the sessions were moved to be completely virtually, the series was open to all members of the university community. We had a range of 96-143 participants for each session. We will expand the communication and notice to all chairs/directors/higher level supervisors, not new administrators.

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

4. This work is new for our organization (created, implemented, or revised since 04/10/20).

5. Evaluation of the leadership series, *Creating and Sustaining a Respectful Work Environment Series*

Evaluations were done by the participants. The cross-collaboration committee¹ reviews the evaluations and they assist in guiding the development of future session. The ultimate metric of success is the reduction of behavioral issues or departments or divisions that have multiple behavioral complaints made to the Office of Institutional Equity that do not rise to the level of a Title IX or Title VII, but are still addressed at the initial situation and conflict point. Every day intervention is the goal by developing skills of the frontline leaders to address conflict and unprofessional behavior.

6. Stakeholder involvement

The stakeholders such as the executive leadership are involved in the series by setting the tone both in the training and in all communications, in policy development, and addressing individual behavioral situations. We have discussed presenting the overall program to the President's Council and the Dean's Council. Many deans participated in one or more session in the virtual space. Accountability is entwined with the relationships and behavior of all the leadership on campus. Executive leadership must be role models and have high expectations of their leaders.

7. Next Steps

The Leadership Series is ongoing. We are working with the cross-campus collaborators to design additional sessions for Academic Year 2021-2022. The session may include Trauma-Informed resources and skills for leaders and conflict resolution skills training. We will be offering some of the modules created for Academic Year 2020-2021 again as the target audience was incoming chairs that had participated in our mandatory New Administrator Orientation (NAO). We would like to expand the communication and notice to all chairs/directors/higher level supervisors.

8. Links to more information about the *Creating and Sustaining a Respectful Work Environment Series effort*

Main link to leadership series:

¹ Presidential Advisors on addressing relationship violence and sexual misconduct issues (MSU Police Department and Psychology Department); Prevention, Outreach, and Education; Academic Human Resources, Office of Employee Relations, Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives; Office of Civil Rights, Office of Institutional Equity; Office of General Counsel; Academic Advancement Network, and Office of Organizational and Professional Development.

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

<https://aan.msu.edu/leadership-development/creating-and-sustaining-a-respectful-work-environment-series/>

Session 1: Setting the Tone: An Introduction to Changing Climate and Culture

- [Recorded Session 10/09/20](#)
- [Know More Survey Overview PPT](#)
- [Bystander Intervention PPT](#)
- WorkLife [“Toward a Respectful Workplace”](#) Website
- Link to October 20 WorkLife Conference [“Toward a Positive Work Environment”](#)

Session 2: Assessing the Climate in Your Unit

- [Recorded Session 10/23/20](#)
- [Assessing Your Climate PPT](#)
- [Climate Assessment Toolkit](#) PDF
- [Climate Assessment Toolkit](#) Word Document
- [Participant Questions with Answers](#) Word Document

Session 3: Building a Positive and Inclusive Work Environment

- [Recorded Session 11/20/20](#)
- [Building a Positive and Inclusive Work Environment PPT](#)

Session 4: Management of OIE Cases: Process & Responsibilities

- [Management of OIE Cases PPT](#)
- [List of Acronyms from Session](#)
- [OCR/OIE/RO Related Policies](#)
- [Resources Related to Harassment Notification Requirements-Sponsored Programs Administration](#)
 - [Harassment Reporting Requirements by Agency/Entity in Brief](#)
- [MSU Union Contracts](#)
- [Handbooks and Policies for University Employees](#)
- [Support Staff Rules Governing Personal Conduct of Employees Policy](#)
- [elevateU class on Navigating Difficult Conversations at MSU](#)

Deans Community Norms Group (2018-2020)

<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/07/11/eight-deans-michigan-state-university-outline-three-imperatives-cultural-change;>

Deans Initiative on Community and Culture at MSU

College of Social Science Community Code of Conduct

<https://socialscience.msu.edu/about/academic-integrity.html>

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

College of Arts and Letters Culture of Care

<https://cal.msu.edu/about/culture-of-care/culture-of-care-task-force-report-april-2019/>

Website for further information (if applicable): <https://aan.msu.edu/leadership-development/creating-and-sustaining-a-respectful-work-environment-series/>

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