

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

Argonne National Laboratory

Quarterly Forums Series for Senior Leaders and Supervisors

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

Prevention: Leadership Education and Skill Development

Description of Work:

In January 2021, Argonne National Laboratory's Leadership Institute implemented the Quarterly Forums program to enhance communication, collaboration, and leadership development on key topics connected to challenges faced by the Laboratory, opportunities for growth, and support of future strategic success.

The Quarterly Forums series was initially scoped to include a Quarterly Leadership Forum (QLF) with a target audience of Argonne's Extended Leadership Team (ELT), a group of approximately 75 attendees.



During the process of developing and socializing the concept across the Laboratory, additional opportunities were identified to add a Quarterly Supervisor Forum (QSF) for those outside the ELT with people management responsibilities and a Quarterly Employee Forum (QEF), open to all individual contributors. The rollout of the Quarterly Forums program in January/February 2021 consisted of a total of five sessions: one QLF and two each of the QSF and QEF.

Rather than focusing on a series of isolated topics, the Quarterly Forums series is designed as an annual program aligned with the calendar year and focused on a problem statement or challenge identified by Laboratory leadership as a potential area for collaboration and improvement among the various audiences. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, and the Lab's enhanced focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the theme of *How Do We Foster a Culture of World-Class Inclusion?* emerged as the focus for the inaugural 2021 Quarterly Forums series.

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As the design of the 2021 series evolved toward an executable plan, a progressive set of individual topics emerged. Each topic built on the previous topic to provide the conceptual framework and robust dialogue necessary to close the annual program with a plan for action to improve Argonne’s culture of inclusion. Each of the three audience levels (Leadership, Supervisors,

Employees) of the forums dealt with the same topics but with an approach tailored to the attendees’ individual responsibilities and opportunities to contribute.

A target goal for the Quarterly Forums was to ensure that the sessions were not a didactic, presentation-driven training format. Instead, the focus was on a collaborative dialogue among leaders and colleagues to address key themes related to the topic in question and to act toward improving behaviors related to diversity, equity and inclusion. Each session began with a “primer” activity, such as a video clip, to spark discussion and encourage participation among the attendees, getting them thinking meaningfully about the topic at hand. The Quarterly Forums proved an excellent opportunity to engage Argonne’s leadership as facilitators and dialogue drivers for the sessions. Each quarter, five members of the ELT were engaged to lead the discussion on their assigned topic, sharing their thoughts, experiences, and research to spark a generative dialogue among audience members on how Argonne can continue to move its culture of inclusion forward in a positive direction. Each session closed out with breakout discussions in small groups with the group members addressing targeted, action-oriented questions and sharing the results of their discussions with the larger group.

A significant portion of the ELT attended each of the first two QLF sessions; the QSF and QEF sessions averaged 25-40 attendees each, resulting in meaningful, engaging, and insightful dialogue among the participants. Feedback provided through post-program surveys was overwhelmingly positive – the most recent sessions received an average score of 4.4 out of 5 as to whether the attendees would recommend attendance at the forum to others. Specific feedback comments from across the sessions on what attendees found particularly useful or beneficial include:

- “The ability to have open and honest conversation with fellow supervisors.”
- “The experiences of the management speaker of her real-life reality as a female in the engineering field and how she encountered obstacles and opportunities.”
- “Dialogue format helped crystallize the messages.”

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At the close of each annual Quarterly Forums program, the Leadership Institute will engage Argonne's leadership to determine the coming year's annual Quarterly Forums theme. This engagement will ensure the relevance of leadership development through dialogue on key topics that are of strategic significance to Argonne.

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