

Northwestern University

Commitment Statement in support of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

December 5, 2023

Northwestern University's mission is to foster excellent teaching, innovative research and the personal and intellectual growth of its students in a diverse academic community. To fully live up to this mission, we must cultivate a culture that is anchored in empathy, respect, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Therefore, it is our duty to work effectively to address and prevent all forms of discrimination and harassment in Northwestern's community – including sexual harassment.

In 2019, the University joined other institutions and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to form the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. We have pursued – and will continue to pursue – evidence-based policies and practices to address and prevent all forms of sexual harassment at every level of our institution. Research shows that sexual misconduct not only undermines people's professional and educational attainment and their mental and physical health, but also causes bystanders to disengage, withdraw, and leave their work or educational environment to avoid becoming targets themselves. There is no place for such harmful behavior at Northwestern, and we will work vigilantly to eliminate it.

To live up to its mission and protect its community, Northwestern has implemented system-wide change. We believe that to make the world better, we must start with our own community, actively promoting a culture of civility and respect for everyone.

Northwestern will continue to advance the important goals of the Action Collaborative:

- Raise awareness about sexual harassment and how it occurs, the consequences of sexual harassment, and the organizational characteristics and recommended approaches that can prevent it.
- Share and elevate evidence-based institutional policies and strategies to reduce and prevent sexual harassment.
- Contribute to setting the research agenda, and gather and apply research results across institutions.
- Develop a standard for measuring progress toward reducing and preventing sexual harassment in higher education.

In alignment with the goals of the Action Collaborative, below are several key initiatives that Northwestern has developed through its [Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance](#):

- Published a policy on [Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#) and a policy on [Title IX Sexual Harassment](#), available on the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance website.
- Created a [landing page](#) on the website devoted to sexual misconduct response and prevention. Resources include options for getting help, including emotional support, medical attention and physical safety; filing a report; and helping others in need.
- Recognizing that education is the best tool for the prevention and elimination of sexual misconduct, the University's Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance and Center for Awareness, Response, and Education ([CARE](#)) have created online and in-person educational offerings on topics related to sexual misconduct response and prevention, healthy sexuality, bystander intervention, and more. Furthermore, staff and faculty are trained in recognizing sexual misconduct and acting according to an established set of guidelines.

Northwestern University remains committed to supporting goals of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education.