

Creating Momentum to Rise Above the Floor of Compliance

Sexual Harassment at a Large Private University, with a Focus on Faculty

2011



Carol Marchetti
cemsma@rit.edu



Margaret Bailey
mbbeme@rit.edu



Stacy DeRooy
Stacy.Derooy@rit.edu

Present

Future Desired State

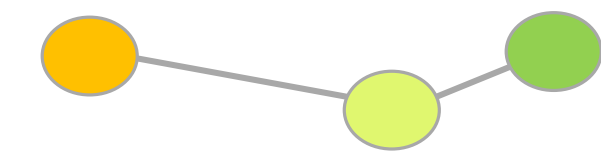
Sexual Harassment

The United States Congress enacted Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to prohibit sex discrimination in education programs and activities offered by entities receiving federal financial assistance.

In 2011 the Obama Administration released new guidelines related to sexual assault and Title IX.

The guidelines changed the requirements and processes regarding student-on-student sexual violence, but also required universities to assess all prevention programs and initiatives.

Since 2011 when the first (part-time) Title IX Coordinator was designated at RIT, departments have begun to work together on campus to "connect the dots." While the Title IX Coordinator is responsible for compliance oversight, it became a cross campus initiative.



In 2015 the first full time Title IX Coordinator was hired at RIT. Since that time she has been coordinating efforts to raise awareness and move the needle.

- Diversity and Inclusion
- AdvanceRIT
- Student Affairs
- Public Safety

All play a role regarding enhancing prevention, awareness and response.

At RIT, the Title IX office is housed within the Office of Compliance and Ethics, overseeing university compliance with laws and policies, including disclosure and reporting. It also conducts investigations and provides training and workshops to the RIT community.

It's the Culture

The 2018 report on sexual harassment by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine outlines three forms of sexual harassment:

- 1. Gender Harassment** (sexist behavior such as remarks, hostilities, objectification, exclusion or marginalization)
- 2. Unwanted Sexual Attention** (verbal or physical sexual advances)
- 3. Sexual Coercion** (preferably treatment conditioned on sexual activity)

Gender harassment is the most common form of sexual harassment. Repeated incidences of gender harassment can have consequences as significant as single incidences of sexual coercion. And when gender harassment is tolerated in an environment, it opens the door for more aggressive and egregious behaviors.



NSF AdvanceRIT Project (#1209115)

GOAL: Increase representation and advancement of women faculty. Funded in 2012, \$3.8 million received to date

AdvanceRIT Project Includes:

- Connectivity Series
- Connect Grants & Partnership Grants
- Implicit Bias Education Workshops
- Allies and Advocates Program
- NSF Faculty Data Indicators
- Dual Career Assistance Program
- Salary Equity Study & Dissemination
- Social science research – women of color and deaf and hard of hearing women faculty, lived experiences

Program achievements can be found at:

<https://www.rit.edu/nsfadvance/advance-rit-project-outcomes>

AdvanceRIT is now embedded within the Office of the Provost!

Secrets to Success.....

- Strengthen & Shape Motivation – shaped by feminist leadership



"Reimagining our Careers and Campus Culture"

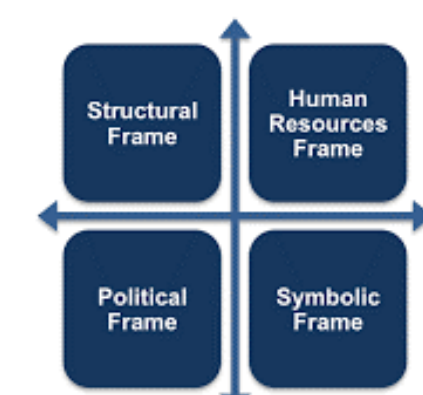
Reshape institutional culture and practice to promote a more inclusive and equitable working and learning environment at RIT while supporting the resilience, conviction, and courage of women faculty.

- Create and Develop High Functioning Team



Team of tenured faculty and senior administrators from across the university built through communication practices, leadership development experiences, coaching, ground rules, annual retreats, external consultants.

- Use Tools as a Guide!!!!



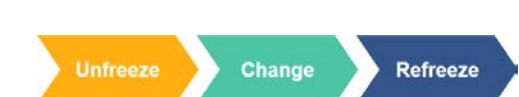
Bolman & Deal

Combination of tools...

- Supported the team in creating strategy, establishing project administration, executing initiatives, and evaluating the project.
- Encouraged development of new "frames" or "lenses" through which to view RIT to increase "vision" and broaden perspectives of people engaged on the project.
- Helped the team understand why some interventions were so much thornier than others.



Kotter Change Process Model



Kurt Lewin's Change Theory



Initiatives grounded in the work of AdvanceRIT have created momentum towards change with regard to prevalence, reporting, and prevention of sexual harassment.

Faculty Governance

- Formed in 2017, the Women's Caucus of the Academic Senate promotes issues of concern to women and strives to increase participation of women in university governance.
- 2019-2020 executive committee of 3 women and 2 men steered Senate meeting agendas to include items regarding sexual harassment and discrimination.



Outcomes include:

- Academic Senate request for campus sexual harassment data led to an annual report released to the RIT community.
- Senate presentation on revisions to Title IX and changes in New York State harassment and discrimination, law.
- Closer scrutiny of policy revisions, with input from the Women's Caucus and other campus constituents, have led to ad hoc committees for a deeper dive into policies to promote ideal behavior rather than dictating compliance.

Campus Workshops

AdvanceRIT workshops focus on retention and advancement of faculty as well as organizational learning and development. From 2012 - 2019, we offered 50 unconscious bias-related events with a total of 500 unique women attendees and 350 unique men attendees. Examples of offerings include:

- Six large-scale annual workshops by the Michigan Players from the University of Michigan's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT), focused on departmental climate, faculty search, promotion & tenure deliberations, campus inclusion for students, **sexual harassment**, and student mental health concerns – each workshop explores power, privilege and unconscious bias.
 - See details on "Changing the Dialogue and Thinking on Campus Regarding Sexual Harassment through a University-level Workshop Series for Academic Leaders, Staff, and Faculty – Moving the Needle Parts I and II" (poster XXXXXX).
- Four years of annual bystander awareness & action workshops, often including various forms of theater, have been facilitated by Tina Chapman DaCosta from RIT's Diversity Theater <https://www.rit.edu/diversity/diversity-theater> and Professor Maureen Scully https://www.umb.edu/csp/about/team/bios/maureen_scully from the U Mass, Boston have been offered to the faculty, staff, and academic leaders within RIT, at both the college-level and the university-level.
 - See details on "Supporting a College-level Environment that Values Civility and Respect through Annual Bystander Awareness and Action Workshops" (poster XXXXXX).
- Software Engineering Workshops were offered for various audiences (first year students, design team coaches, faculty) titled "Vibrant Learning Environment within Software Engineering" for first-year students in RIT's Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences Software Engineering Department. Read about participation feedback and evaluation results [here](#).



The Student Voice

- In fall 2019, the co-chairs of the RIT President's Commission on Women conducted five focus group discussions over dinner with current RIT women students. This qualitative study explored the lived experiences of women students.
 - The topic – "building a university culture that maximizes the wrap-around success of its women students" – delved into choosing the right school (prospective students); being comfortable and academically successful in that school's culture (current students); and finding professional success after graduation (alums).
 - A total of 34 students from various colleges across the university, a mix of both undergraduate and graduate students, participated.



Memorable Quotes

Regarding Safety

- We should be able to tell prospective women students (honestly) that "It doesn't matter what kind of woman you are, you will be safe."
- "It's important that women know that it is safe and that women feel that RIT is working hard at increasing inclusion. Our campus needs to feel safe."
- Women need a "buddy system."

Regarding Comfort

- "Prospective students will be looking for community, collaboration, and comfort."
- "RIT shouldn't be so hard for women."
- One student had to learn to remind herself "Kristina, be you."
- From a woman of color: "I feel super uncomfortable here." And from another: "I experienced culture shock my first year because of how *white* this campus is."
- "I could never tell my parents how hard it has been for me here."
- Withdrew from CS I because "I got tired of fighting."

Regarding Faculty

- "You can't teach faculty to care."
- "Male professors don't pick up on classroom climate issues. Professors need to make the classroom feel safe."
- "Male professors praise students differently based on gender."
- Physics major: "my confidence degraded over time....The faculty promote a male dominated culture through their actions, even at public speaker seminars."

Towards a Better Future

- When asked what gender parity would feel like on campus, one woman thought that it would result in, "a better overall culture since there would be more men who knew women better. It would raise their awareness."

Current State

Data

Now in its third year, the Title IX Office releases an annual report on Sex Discrimination. Data overlaps from state (NYS Education Law 129-B, Enough is Enough) and federal Clery data reporting requirements which both have different jurisdictional requirements, making it difficult for consumers to delineate and understand why there are differences in the numbers. Neither require colleges to report out on the more prominent problem of sexual harassment which is reported on in the annual report. While there is currently not a climate survey established for employees, we know that reports of incidents increased 16.6% from 2018 to 2019. A campus wide taskforce on the state of Sexual Harassment and Discrimination is exploring implementing and institutionalizing an employee survey.

Student Experiences within the previous year from the Biennial Student Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey:

- 2018- 155 respondents claim to have experienced sexual violence with 16 reporting to RIT
- 2020-125 respondents claim to have experienced sexual violence with 14 reporting to RIT

| Sexual Harassment | 2018 | 2020 |
|---|------|------|
| Made sexist remarks or jokes in your presence | 54% | 46% |
| Said crude sexual things to you | 22% | 20% |
| Sent offensive sexual content via email, text or social media | 14% | 12% |
| Bribed for a romantic or sexual relationship | 6% | 6% |

RIT Title IX

2019 Third-Party Reports of Sexual Harassment including Sexual Violence

A total of 26 reports were received from:

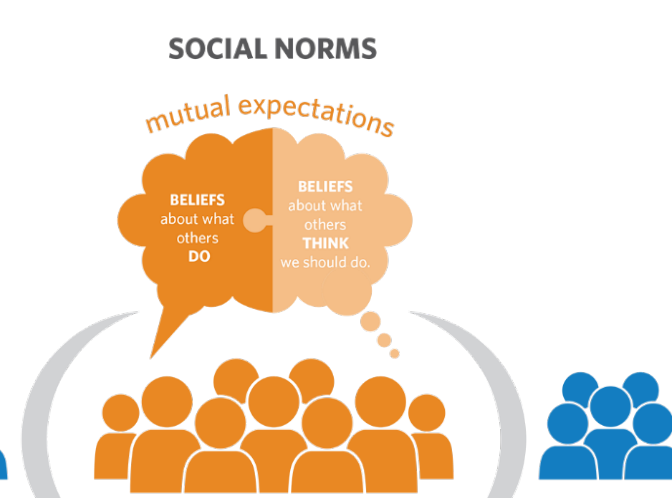
- Residence Life (RA, RC, Community Leaders): 3 (11.5%)
- Staff Members: 1 (3.8%)
- Friends: 7 (26.9%)
- Faculty: 11 (42.3%)
- Advisor: 2 (7.69%)
- SBCT: 1 (3.8%)
- Co-worker: 1 (3.8%)

Policy

- The new Title IX Regulations released on May 6, 2020 have led the university to create a Title IX Policy on Sexual Harassment for Faculty, Staff and Students. A cross campus implementation planning team was formed to collaboratively work through the needed changes. At RIT, the existing Student Policy on Sexual Misconduct and Employee Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination remain in effect and complement the Title IX Policy on Sexual Harassment.

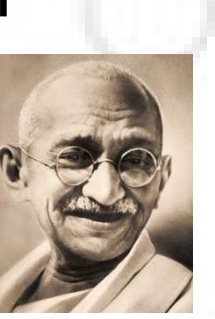
Working to Create New Norms

- As a result of our campus-wide workshops and groups such as the Advocates & Allies, there is a growing chorus of voices joining the campus conversation.
- Subject matter experts from across divisional and college lines are coming together to share perspectives and "connect the dots" regarding the prevalence and solutions of sexual harassment on campus. One such forum is an ad hoc committee on Sexual Harassment charged by the Academic Senate, the Provost, and the President that is looking to extend policies and practices to include pro-active and preventive mechanisms.



Advanced Campus Environment

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.



~Mahatma Gandhi

RIT

RIT's Core Values

- Student Centeredness
- Professional Development and Scholarship
- Integrity and Ethics
- Respect, Diversity and Pluralism
- Innovation and Flexibility
- Teamwork and Collaboration.

Achieving Harmony

- Robust educational efforts will link the university's core values with workplace environment expectations through our policies and practices.
- Development and accountability of academic leaders at all levels will be rigorous, with emphasis on continuous improvement and building community.
- Rich conversations will continue to explore outcomes, policy, practices, and metrics to answer questions such as "what does the future desired state look like?" and "how do we know if we are moving in the right direction?" and "are we there yet?".
- We encourage a culture of listening, acknowledging, collaborating, and personal responsibility.



→ Sexual Harassment Minimized