

Changing organization culture with women in leadership

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Abstract—This paper focuses on the important role women in leadership positions play in reducing sexual and gender harassment. The need for this paper is clear based on recent reports documenting the continuing high rate of sexual and gender-based harassment in medical school environments. Sexual and gender-based harassment thrives in male-dominated environments. The Committee on the Status of Women in Medicine (SWIM) at the Yale School of Medicine (YSM) has made significant progress in addressing these issues over the past 5 years. However, challenges persist. We describe our plans and strategies in this paper. Chief among our recommendations is to increase diversity in leadership at YSM. Specific strategies to achieve this goal are described, including benchmarks to assess progress.

Index Terms—diversity, sexual and gender-based harassment, women in leadership.

The time to act is now. The Yale School of Medicine (YSM) is in good financial condition; we have a strong Deputy Dean for Diversity and Inclusion (Dr. Darin Latimore); and we are a superb medical school. YSM is now poised to

become a leader in the recruitment and retention of diverse leadership.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Importance of Diversity

When the number of women reaches a critical mass in leadership positions, typically over 30-35%, organizational culture changes. Women are more likely to notice and challenge sexism than male leaders.¹ As noted in a recent *Harvard Business Review* article “Male-dominated management teams have been found to tolerate, sanction, or even expect sexualized treatment of workers.”² Thus, organizations with a high number of women in leadership positions tend to be those in which harassment is less likely to occur. Harassment results in substantial costs to academic organizations and medical facilities including reputation, productivity, employee turnover, and legal costs⁷ (Figure 1).

- **Reputation.** Academic organizations and medical facilities with a legacy of harassment have difficulty recruiting faculty, staff, upper-level trainees (postdocs, clinical fellows, etc.), and students. They

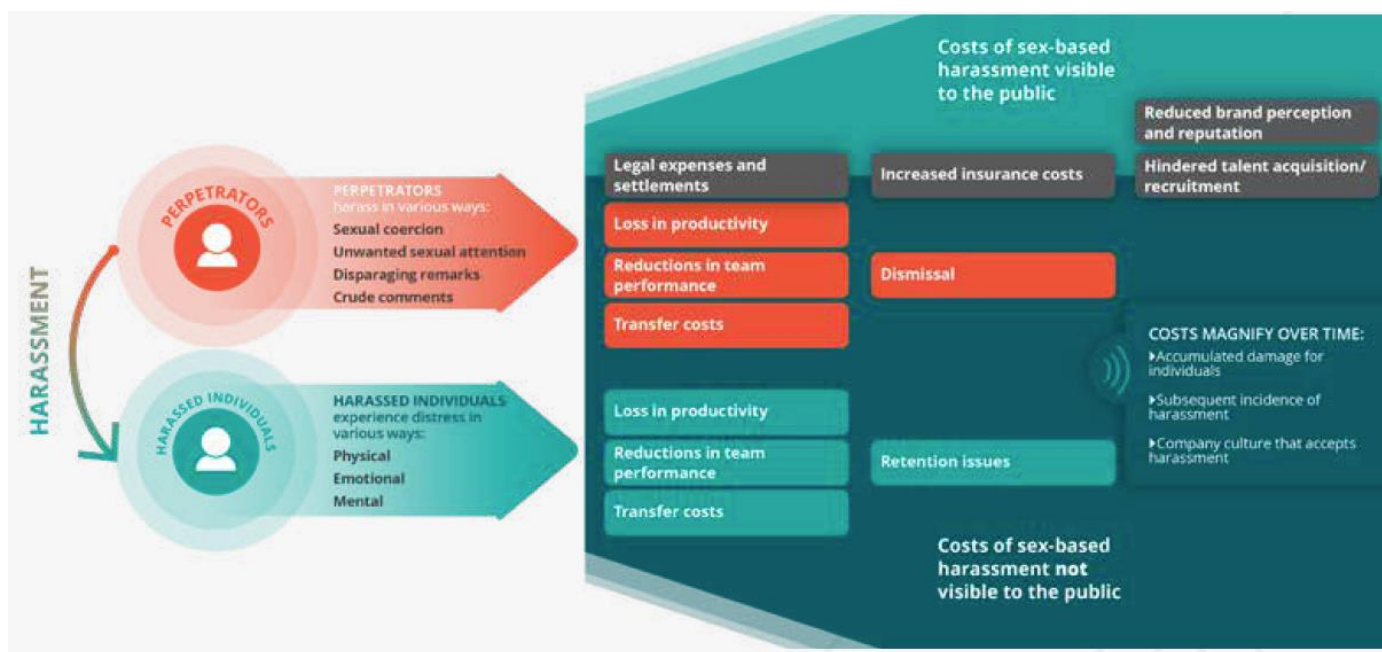


Figure 1. Harassment results in substantial costs to all organizations and medical facilities including reputation, productivity, employee turnover, and legal costs. Source: *The Costs of Sex-Based Harassment to Businesses: An In-Depth Look at the Workplace*; International Center for Research on Women.

also have difficulty filling leadership positions with external candidates. In addition, these organizations lose alumni, philanthropy, and industry champions who provide the bulk of their financial support.

- **Productivity.** Harassment is associated with decreases in motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and performance for the targeted individual, teams, and the organization as a whole.⁷ The negative effects of harassment extend to teams and organizations because individuals in these groups witness or hear about the harassment which damages process, disrupts activity, and negatively impacts performance.⁷ Harassment also causes significant increases in employee absences.⁷ Productivity in the workplace increases with gender diversity. Companies with more women on their boards outperform those with few or no women according to a 2016 McKinsey Study³. (Ethnic/racial diversity increased performance even more.)
- **Employee turnover.** Targets of harassment are 6.5 times more likely to change jobs versus individuals who have not been targets.⁷ Organizations that tolerate harassment have increased employee turnover in general.⁷ Replacing employees is expensive. The cost of employee turnover can be up to 213% of the employee’s annual salary.⁷
- **Legal costs.** Typically, financial payouts in harassment settlements are undisclosed. However, the potential legal costs of tolerating harassment for academic organizations and medical facilities is highlighted in high-profile sexual harassment cases in other industries.⁸

II. THE PROBLEM: SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED HARASSMENT

While sexual harassment policies exist at YSM, persistent reports and complaints of sexual harassment at YSM documented by SWIM and through our Title IX officers prompt this White Paper to re-evaluate current measures (**Figure 2**).

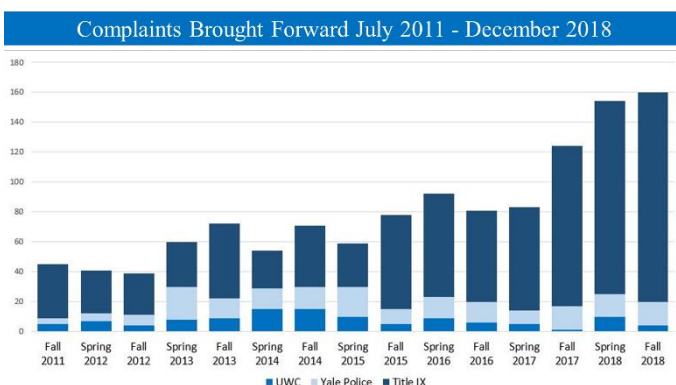


Figure 2. Harassment complaints brought forward at Yale University, including YSM, July 2011 through December 2018. Source: Title IX Office, Office of the Provost, Yale University.

Further, the 2018 report⁴ “Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences,

Engineering, and Medicine” by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NAEM) documents systemic harassment of women in academia, frequently unreported, with particular problems in medicine.

The NAEM report describes the following categories of sexually harassing behavior (**Figure 3**):

- (1) gender harassment (verbal and nonverbal behaviors that convey hostility, objectification, exclusion, or second-class status about members of one gender),
- (2) unwanted sexual attention (verbal or physical unwelcome sexual advances, which can include assault), and
- (3) sexual coercion (when favorable professional or educational treatment is conditioned on sexual activity).

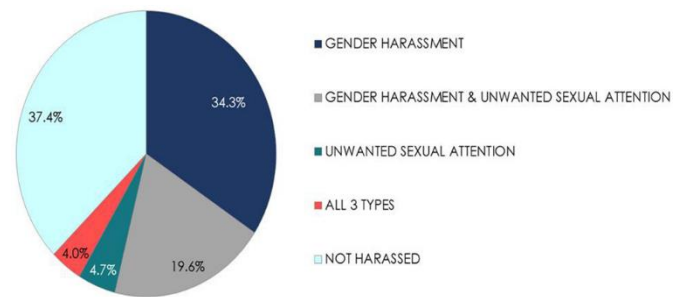


Figure 3. Percentage of types of sexual harassment experiences among female university employees. Source: NAEM Report, adapted from Schneider, Swan, S., Fitzgerald, L. F. (1997). *J Appl Psych*, 82.

Harassing behavior can be either direct (targeted at an individual) or ambient (a general level of harassment in an environment).

III. THE SOLUTION

SWIM proposes two major initiatives to improve the climate and reduce sexual harassment at YSM.

1. Promote more women into leadership positions at YSM.
2. Introduce specific measures to reduce the exposure of the YSM community to sexual and gender harassment, and provide support for leadership at YSM when confronting offenders.

1. Promote more women into leadership positions:

Hire and promote more women into leadership positions so that critical levels of leadership (especially Department Chairs and heads of Institutes) are held by women at YSM by January 1, 2021.

We also highly endorse more women in positions of Division Chiefs and Program Directors. Organizational culture changes with greater than 30-35% women in leadership roles.^{1,3} The number of female chairs at YSM increased from 11% (3/28) to 14% over the last 30 years (**Table 1**). These numbers do not put YSM in a position of leadership for U.S. Medical Schools.

Thus, YSM needs to increase women in leadership positions to critical levels by 2021 as a primary goal.

Table 1. *Department chairs by school and gender from 2016-2017. *MB&B department is listed in YSM and FAS. For the purpose of this report, it is counted in FAS. Source: Women and Men Faculty. Yale University A View of 2016-2017.*

School	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Public Health	2	3	5	40%
Faculty Arts & Sciences	13	26	39	33%
Engineering	1	4	5	20%
Medicine*	3	24	27	11%
Total	18	56	76	24%

- a. **Recruiting efforts:** Adopt the Mansfield rule piloted in the legal sector. In 2018, 44 major law firms utilized the Mansfield rule calling for women attorneys and attorneys of color to comprise 30% of their candidate pools for leadership and governance roles, equity partner promotions, and lateral positions. Early data indicate that these programs have been successful both in law firms and legal departments of businesses.⁵
 - a. Include the Deputy Dean of Diversity and Inclusion in forming the search committees for leadership positions, rather than introducing this Deputy Dean into an already-formed committee to provide training or guidance.
 - b. When YSM is turned down by our first choice for a candidate that will increase our diversity for a position, keep looking.
 - c. Tackle biases that prevent accurate evaluation of women as leaders.
- b. **Retention efforts:** Be active and proactive.
 - a. Form a committee to address the large number of senior women leaving YSM. Include in this committee’s work a discussion of how YSM might improve retention efforts for women.
 - b. Require accountability regarding improvements in climate, with concrete evidence of progress toward these goals from Department Chairs. Hold chairs accountable financially. Chairs should be compensated or penalized based on each of these objectives.
 - c. Identify women at YSM for leadership positions. Take advantage of the pool of talented women that we are training in our medical and graduate schools. Provide resources to recruit, groom, and retain women in leadership positions.
 - d. Establish clear guidelines and systems for compensation that apply to all departments, and be transparent with these goals and systems.
 - e. Establish a committee consisting of the Dean,

Deputy Dean of Diversity and Inclusion, SWIM and MORE leadership as well as representatives from junior faculty that meets annually to

- i. evaluate our progress at improving diversity at the leadership levels;
- ii. review positions that vacate to determine ways in which we can best achieve our goals.

c. **Sustainability:**

- a. **Term limits** for Department Chairs. We suggest limit time to 2 consecutive terms. However, the Department Chairs may rotate back on as Chairs after at least one term off. It is also suggested that there be similar term limits for Division Chiefs.
- b. **Succession planning** to allow individuals who are interested in leadership positions to obtain experience.

2. **Introduce benchmarks for successful reduction of sexual and gender-based harassment:**

SWIM proposes the following specific measures to reduce the exposure of employees at YSM to sexual harassment:

Hiring and promotion: Consider sexual misconduct investigations or discipline and past record regarding diversity when under consideration for promotion to Chair, to head of institutes or Centers, Endowed Chairs, or performance awards and when seeking new employment at YSM.

- a. **Faculty conduct:** Faculty found guilty of sexual misconduct are to be excluded from positions of power such as advising students or sitting on thesis or Appointments & Promotions committees.
 - **Follow-up.** Develop a system of monitoring conduct in the workplace for individuals found guilty of sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct often occurs in a pattern of repeated offences. It is critical to ensure that the workplace is kept safe from individuals repeating such offences.
- b. **Institutional climate:** Refrain from honoring faculty found guilty of sexual misconduct for their scientific achievements, such as monetary awards or publishing medical or scientific results in Yale Medicine. Honoring these faculty sends the message to the women and men of the YSM community that YSM does not consider sexual misconduct a significant issue.

IV. CONCLUSION

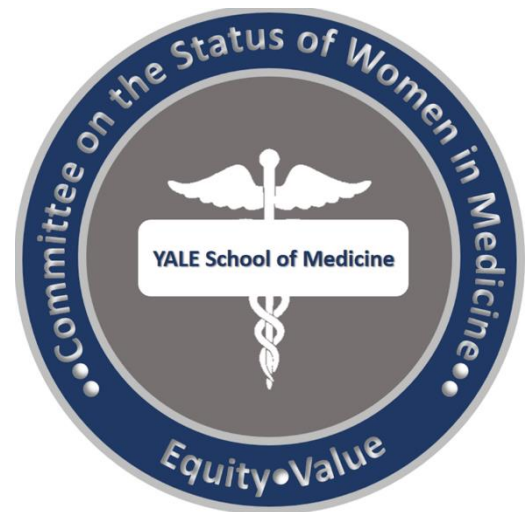
Now is an extraordinary time to address sexual and gender-based harassment at YSM. As stated earlier, YSM is strong, and is a signatory to TIME’S UP Healthcare. National scientific organizations have shown their seriousness in this effort, with recent announcement from the National Academy of Science (NAS), National Science Foundation (NSF), and National

Institute of Health (NIH) to hold individuals who harass others at work accountable. SWIM has had years of experience working on these issues and can lead this effort. We look forward to working with new partners at YSM, including MORE and TIME'S UP Healthcare.

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We would like to thank the following individuals, committees, and organizations for their support, collaboration, and commitment to changing the culture to one that is diverse, inclusive, and harassment intolerant.

- **Deputy Dean Darin Latimore, MD**
<https://medicine.yale.edu/dei/>
- **Women's Faculty Forum**
<https://wff.yale.edu/>
- **University-Wide Committee on Sexual Harassment**
<https://uwc.yale.edu/>
- **Title IX office, Office of the Provost, Yale University**
<https://provost.yale.edu/title-ix/reports>
- **Associate Dean Merle Waxman, Ombudsman and Director of the Office of Women in Medicine**
https://medicine.yale.edu/profile/merle_waxman/



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