



FOCUS

Professional development articles from
the American Economic Association's
Committee on the Status of Women
in the Economics Profession.

2018 ISSUE I

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About CSWEP

A standing committee of the American Economic Association, the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) is charged with serving professional women economists by promoting their careers and monitoring their progress. CSWEP sponsors mentoring programs, surveys economics departments and freely disseminates information on professional opportunities, career development and how the profession works, both on the web and via free digital subscriptions to the *CSWEP News*. To subscribe, email cswep@econ.ucsb.edu.

CSWEP Focus features articles originally published in the *CSWEP News*.

FOCUS Dealing with Sexual Harassment

Introduction Jennifer Bennett Shinall

As the guest editor for the first issue of the 2018 CSWEP newsletter, I have the task of introducing a topic that, over the past year, has weighed heavily on our minds as economists: sexual harassment. While society more generally has reckoned with this topic through the #MeToo movement, our profession has endured its own reckoning—confronting blatantly sexist statements made by economists towards their female colleagues, uncomfortable discussions about hostility towards women in economics departments, and other difficult questions regarding the persistent gender gap between male and female economists.

This issue of the CSWEP newsletter is dedicated to furthering such honest, if unpleasant, conversations, with the goal of improving our understanding of sexual harassment in the economics profession so that we may work together towards an effective solution. Arguably, these conversations are long overdue; yet far from jumping on the #MeToo bandwagon, CSWEP continues to be an organization ahead of its time. The CSWEP Board decided to dedicate its first issue of the 2018 newsletter to sexual harassment at the beginning of 2017—long before Econ Job Market Rumors and Harvey Weinstein became the

focus of daily discussions. The impetus for the Board's decision was a solitary report of harassment made by a junior faculty member against a senior faculty member after the 2017 AEA meetings. The reporting junior faculty member was me.

On the last day of the 2017 meetings, after presenting a paper during one of the CSWEP gender sessions, I dashed to the Chicago Midway Airport to catch a flight back to Nashville. Because Vanderbilt's semester started the following day, I had decided at the last minute to take a connecting flight home that left right after my session—instead of my originally scheduled direct flight—in hopes of arriving home an hour earlier. As I ran onto the airplane, I thought my decision had paid off. I was upgraded to first class, and I had the second row all to myself. Shortly before the flight crew closed the aircraft door, however, a very intoxicated man stumbled onto the airplane and took the seat next to me.

Gone was my plan to work on my lecture slides for the next day; as soon as he sat down, the man began talking to me—that is, after he ordered another drink from the flight attendant. He volunteered that he had just come from an annual economics meeting; I replied that I had come from the same meeting. It was then that I realized that I would not only have to tolerate him for the rest of the flight, but I would also have to be polite. Although he worked

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at a different university, I knew several of his colleagues well. I was pretenure, and one could never be too careful about upsetting future outside letter writers.

He spent most of the flight boasting about how esteemed he was within his field, and how organizations around the world hired him to take advantage of his expertise. But eventually, he shifted the conversation to me. He asked me when I would go up for tenure, and what I thought my chances were of getting tenure. He told me what a difficult process it was (as if this were news to me), and how most people were not successful. And then he began one of many attempts to put his hand up my dress, as he reassured me that I would land on my feet eventually as long as I made smart decisions. I immediately pushed his hand away, but he was not to be deterred. He repeatedly put his hands on me; he even twice tried to kiss me. I successfully fended him off each time, and I prayed that the plane would land soon.

Perhaps I should have screamed; in retrospect, I regret not doing so. But should screaming have been necessary? The flight attendant saw me pushing his hands away several times, but she did nothing to help me. Instead, she continued to serve him gin and tonics—five in total over the course of an hour and a half flight. We were in plain view of the entire first class cabin, yet no good Samaritans came to my aid. I was humiliated, violated, and, most of all, terrified. He knew who I was, and I was afraid he would follow me off the airplane. My instincts told me to get off the airplane as quickly as I could, which is precisely what I did.

As I ran onto my connecting flight (constantly checking behind me to make sure he was not following me), I acknowledge that most of my sensibilities had left me. I wiped away tears as I contemplated what to do; the first thing that occurred to me was to file a complaint with the airline. While I waited for my second flight to take off, I filed a written complaint on the airline website. Yet over the course of that second flight,

I managed to convince myself that nothing more could be done. Speaking out against the perpetrator was too risky pretenure. He would certainly deny it; he might even blame me as the instigator. If his colleagues believed him, and not me, how would that affect their assessment of me? What if they were my outside letter writers? Besides, I wanted to be famous for the merits of my professional work, not infamous as the girl who cried harassment.

Until I became a victim myself, I confess that I did not fully appreciate the difficulty of reporting sexual harassment. I am a lawyer, as well as an economist, and my research focuses on gender discrimination. I am appointed in a law school, and I teach employment discrimination law for a living. Every year, I lecture the aspiring lawyers in my class on the importance of documenting all work-related improprieties as soon as they arise. If anyone had the wherewithal, the knowledge, and the training to report sexual harassment, it was me.

Luckily, over the years, I have also lectured my husband on the importance of documenting all work-related improprieties. So as soon as he picked me up from the airport and heard my account, my husband turned prior lectures back around on me. I had been assaulted. It was not my fault. If I reported, the perpetrator might still get away with it. But the perpetrator would certainly get away with it if I failed to report. At the very least, I had to do everything in my power to protect this perpetrator's future victims. (And there were certain to be many—if he behaved this way towards junior faculty, how did he behave towards students?)

And so I spent the rest of that evening on the phone, reporting my harasser to every organization with jurisdiction to resolve my claim. I reported my harasser—by name—to the airline, his university, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (which oversees all in-flight crimes). I cannot say that the reporting process was particularly satisfying—I



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was met with constant skepticism, questions about whether I led him on or invited the assault, and even outright disdain by the FBI intake officer. Yet, when I finally allowed myself to go to bed that night, I at least slept with the satisfaction that I had done everything in my power to stand up for future victims.

In the year that has followed my assault, I have, of course, considered whether or how I should have handled the situation differently. But mostly I have reflected on why I—of all people—harbored any trepidation about reporting in the first place. From my own research, teaching, and legal training, I knew the essentiality of reporting. Since the late 1990s, for example, federal law has incentivized employers to develop harassment reporting protocols and, in essence, has punished victims who fail to take advantage of such protocols (even though they might have very compelling reasons for doing so). I might have understood the essentiality of reporting better than most victims; still, increased public attention to sexual harassment over the past three decades has, if nothing else, increased the awareness that the only way to stop a harasser, legally or otherwise, is through reporting.

The statistics on victims reporting harassment remain dismal, however, because reporting work-related sexual harassment remains too costly. Victims of harassment in all occupations continue to face the uncertain—and potentially enormous—costs associated with reputational effects, foregone opportunities, retaliation, and other career impediments. These costs continue to exceed the expected benefits of reporting for victims throughout the labor market.

Although sexual harassment remains a problem in many workplaces, the magnitude of the problem varies dramatically between workplaces. My colleague and coauthor, Joni Hersch, has documented that sexual harassment remains especially pervasive for women in male-dominated arenas,

which characterizes both the economics profession and academia more generally. Nonetheless, I suspect that the current environment of our profession, in which the problem of sexual harassment has been allowed to fester, goes beyond the gender imbalance. Upon further reflection on my own experience, I have developed two additional hypotheses regarding why we find ourselves confronting the troubling events of the past year.

First, the very same qualities that make good economists and good academics are precisely the same instincts that make us terrible at reporting sexual harassment. From the time we enter graduate school (if not before), we are taught that setbacks and negative attention are part of our growth experience, and it is our job to move past setbacks as rapidly as possible. We are instilled with the instinct to presume that our referees and our senior peers are always right, regardless of what they say or do. Negative attention signifies something for us to correct, not something for us to complain about. Without a thick skin and the ability to swallow our pride quickly and efficiently, we are certain to fall short in the promotion and tenure process. I strongly believe that these skills, which I have worked so diligently to hone in the professional environment, were also significant drivers in my hesitation to report. Whenever confronted with anything unpleasant, my instinct is to suppress my emotions, consider how (if at all) I can make future improvements, and quietly move forward.

Second, our profession (as well as academic institutions more generally) straddles organizational lines in a unique manner, which makes sexual harassment prevention and enforcement unwieldy from both a legal and professional perspective. My own experience provides exceptional insight into this point. My harasser worked at another institution. He had no ability to hire me, fire me, or even vote on my promotion and tenure. And yet he had

the ability to influence significantly my future hirings, firings, promotions, and tenure through his ability to be an outside letter writer or, at the very least, to influence other outside letter writers. Nonetheless, from both an institutional and legal perspective, his inability to take *direct* adverse employment actions against me—no matter how significant his indirect power over such actions—made pursuing an action against him quite difficult, if not impossible. I had no right to file a institutional grievance against him, as I would if he had worked at my own university. Moreover, current federal and state sexual harassment laws do not recognize him (or his university) as an actionable party against whom I can bring a legal claim since I work for a different institution.

In the end, my story is not completely hopeless; some punishment and some compensation resulted. The airline compensated me with miles and gift cards. The FAA ordered the flight attendant who failed to assist me—and arguably aided my harasser by overserving him—to attend sexual harassment training; the airline further disciplined her as a result of its settlement with the FAA. But to my knowledge, the one party who did not get punished was my harasser. He remains out there, unscathed due to the loopholes in our current system, free to harass other victims.

Eliminating sexual harassment in our profession will require more than a commitment from our home institutions. It will require cooperation across institutions, and across our profession, to increase victims' reporting, to identify perpetrators, to take appropriate remedial and corrective action against them, and, most importantly, to protect the victims. This issue of the newsletter features the contributions of several scholars who have dedicated considerable thought to how we might begin this process. CSWEP has provided the space for the timely development of such ideas; it is now our responsibility to put these ideas into action. ■

Learning from the Experiences of CSWEP Members

Editor's Note: In preparing this issue, the CSWEP Board put out a call for input about individuals' experiences with sexual harassment and sexual assault. We received a variety of inputs—from cases of inappropriate touching that qualify as assault, to descriptions of the poor climate for women that exists in some academic departments. Some contributors described multiple negative experiences, some only one. Some experiences happened many years ago; some occurred recently. Regardless of when, where, and how these incidents occurred, we believe that a few common themes are apparent, and these anecdotes provide useful lessons about how the economics profession can improve conditions for members of all underrepresented groups. All submissions have been edited for length and content, to preserve anonymity.

Inappropriate Touching

At a job interview, the faculty members with whom I ate lunch (all males) were cracking warehouse jokes. Although that made me uncomfortable, the worst part of the experience was when the department head, when driving me back to the airport, reached over and groped my breasts.

At a dinner honoring a distinguished colleague, the guest of honor sat across the table from me, winking and grinning (and drinking heavily). During the evening, he announced to me (and to my colleagues), "I don't really know who you are, but I like the looks of you." As the dinner adjourned, he came over to me to ask for "just a little kiss," while my senior colleagues looked on. I turned away as he managed a quick peck on my cheek.

At a reception honoring my department head's advisor, we posed for a department photo with the honoree. I was placed next to him in the photo. While posing for the photo, he reached over and grabbed my butt. He also kissed me

on the mouth when saying goodbye after dinner.

During a meeting with the professor for whom I was a TA, he put his hand on my thigh. In future meetings I was careful to position myself so that there was furniture between him and me, so that there was no way that he could touch me.

As the coordinator of my department's seminar series, I was responsible for driving seminar speakers to dinner and back to their hotels. On two separate occasions, a guest speaker grabbed me and forced a kiss on me prior to exiting the car.

A professor who taught a class in my PhD program took the entire class out for food and drinks at the end of the term. The professor inappropriately put his hand on me multiple times during the event. After the event, the professor offered to share a cab with me. I asked another PhD student who lived near me to share the cab as well, to try to keep the professor from trying anything inappropriate. Unfortunately, as soon as we dropped off my fellow graduate student, the professor began touching me again. When we got out of the cab, he pushed me against the wall of a building and forcefully kissed me and touched me. I didn't report it. I didn't know what to do. There continued to be incidents in his office throughout my graduate career.

Unprofessional Behavior

While at the ASSA meetings interviewing for jobs, I was introduced to a professor who was recruiting who offered to provide me with some job market advice in my field. He invited me to his room that evening to talk. As interviewing in hotel rooms was (and is) standard procedure, I did not hesitate to agree. I arrived at his room at the appointed time, dressed in my job market suit. He was casually attired and barefoot. I took a chair next to the desk to take notes. He

made himself comfortable on the bed. He steered the conversation to personal matters. Although I initially went along with it, I realized I had got myself into a bad situation when he asked me, "Are you fulfilled?" I packed up my things dumbstruck and walked out of the room without a word.

As a graduate student just starting to go to conferences, I experienced multiple incidences of men twenty years my senior hitting on me or making inappropriate passes at me. At conferences, I avoid men in elevators and do not meet with men in non-public spaces. I shouldn't have to take meetings in coffee shops because I am afraid of being alone with the men in my profession.

When I was a PhD student, I received a phone call at my apartment early one morning from one of my professors. He was calling to tell me that he was breaking up with his wife. I decided that my best response was to express sympathy for his situation, but not let on that I interpreted his call as an overture for a personal relationship. For months afterwards, I worried that I might face some sort of retaliation for ignoring his apparent invitation.

I was having lunch with a junior female colleague and our department chair (male) in our department's meeting room. At one point during the conversation, the chair told us that one of his ex-girlfriends took his semen specimen and bragged about how high his sperm counts were. In fact, the department chair relayed this story in professional settings on multiple occasions.

In graduate school, we were working problems on the board. The professor asked me to go to the board to solve one. As I was standing in front of the class, he said, "You should be able to solve this one. It's just a standard missionary-style problem." He said this sort of thing frequently. It was particularly humiliating that he said it in front of my peers.

As a graduate student, I had the opportunity to meet with an established faculty member in my field one-on-one. I

Experiences

hoped that I would be able to get feedback on my ideas, insight into the frontier of research in my field, and general career advice. Instead, I came to understand that the true intention of the meeting was to assess whether I was romantically interested in him. I recall having to act dumb and nonreactive to his comments about how he had previously dated a former (undergraduate) student and how jealous she would be if I took him up on his offer.

Departmental Climate

All of the male faculty members in my department go to lunch on a regular basis. Although I have asked to be invited, normally, they do not invite me. In one of my annual reviews, I was told that I was not a good departmental citizen because I didn't go to lunch enough!

When I joined my department, approximately 20% of faculty in the department were female. Departmental procedures seemed to be designed specifically to exclude women. For example, departmental policies and procedures were made in the department's unofficial lunch room by committees on which no women sat. When the women began to ask to join committees and to see committee minutes, the committees first stopped keeping minutes, and then stopped meeting altogether. We understood that some decisions were made in the men's restroom.

Before I applied to graduate school, I went to meet with the chair of a program I was considering. I sat outside of his office waiting for nearly an hour past my appointment time. During this time, the chair walked past me several times without acknowledging my presence. When he finally asked who I was and I told him I was there to talk with him about the PhD program, he was shocked and apologetic, and stated that he could not recall the last time they had a woman in the program, and he thought I was there to apply for the open secretarial position.

My department chair frequently makes inappropriate remarks, such as telling me that one of my legs is equivalent to two of his wife's, and thus, I should act as a body guard to protect his wife from other men; telling one of my male colleagues that he should get married soon, or else he would either have to leave the department or declare that he is gay; and repeatedly encouraging another male colleague to procreate.

When I began my PhD program, I had two children under age 4. The professor to whom I was assigned as a TA/RA told me that he was not going to assign me any work because I should be home caring for my children.

As the only tenured female in the department, I was the one female students (graduate and undergraduate) came to whenever a male tenured faculty member behaved inappropriately with them. My normal practice was to advise them of university policies and procedures. Because I was the one advising students, in the university's eyes, I became the problem. The university expended considerable resources defending the alleged harasser and going after me. I had to hire my own lawyer at considerable cost and lost at least 3 years research time defending myself from the university. Retaliation of this type is an aspect of sexual harassment that has received little coverage.

Consequences

As a part of their stories, many contributors noted that their experiences had far-reaching consequences. A bad job market experience can affect a candidate's behavior in future interviews and reduce the likelihood that she receives invitations for campus visits or job offers. Wariness about interacting with male scholars can cause women to forego opportunities for mentorship and improving their research. Conditions within a department can cause women to leave a good position for a position lower on the career ladder.

Lessons for the Profession

What lessons can we learn from these stories? A few common themes stand out. Graduate students and junior faculty members are particularly vulnerable. The economics job market may create particularly problematic conditions. As one contributor noted, by permitting interviews in hotel rooms (as opposed to conference rooms or the public interview area), the profession is putting people in "potentially very awkward situations." Finally, silence, on the part of both women and men, perpetuates the behavior. In the words of one male contributor, "I regret not directly chastising my colleague, as I tacitly labeled his comments and behavior as acceptable, both to him and the students I was supposed to be mentoring....I continue to regret that by choosing 'a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice,' I am a part of the problem and not the solution." ■

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Using Technology To Fight Sexual Harassment in Economics

Jennifer Doleac

High-profile accusations of sexual harassment by public figures has brought a reckoning with the pervasiveness of harassment and sexism in our society. This reckoning has reached economics as well. Last summer, Berkeley undergraduate [Alice Wu released a paper](#) documenting toxic attitudes towards women on the popular website Econ Job Market Rumors. Spurred in part by Wu's research and the attention it received, this past January, the American Economic Association (AEA) [released a new code of conduct](#) for economists. The profession has acknowledged the extent of gender bias within its ranks and is determined to fight back.

Most striking in recent public conversations about harassment and assault are stories of individual men who offend again and again without consequence. Many have wondered how so many victims could all stay silent for so long. Victims of harassment and assault often do not know that there are other victims, and so worry they will not be believed if they come forward. Victims may also wonder if they sent mixed signals or did not say no forcefully enough, blaming themselves for what transpired. If no one reports, these serial offenders remain hidden and dangerous. How do we encourage victims to report bad behavior when they face great costs and uncertainty?

One approach that is being adopted by colleges and universities to foster reporting of sexual assault is [Callisto](#), a technology-based reporting platform. The platform allows victims to create an account and a written record of an incident (including all relevant details, similar to a police report, while fresh in their minds). They can save that report privately, as time-stamped evidence to submit later if they decide to file an official complaint with their school or local law enforcement. They can also use their school's directory to identify the offender as part of that record. Even more

powerfully, they can opt-in to be notified if anyone else identifies the same offender. The hope is that seeing their own experience corroborated by others will encourage victims of serial offenders to file their reports with authorities—a crucial step if we want current offenders to be punished and future offenders to be deterred.

In economic terms, this platform reduces the expected costs of reporting and increases the expected benefits. Expected costs are reduced because the platform (1) enables victims to produce more credible evidence in the form of a time-stamped record, which can be saved for years until they are ready to come forward, and (2) provides reassurance that other victims might also come forward to corroborate their account if they go public. Expected benefits are increased because the revelation that a perpetrator is a serial offender raises the likelihood that reporting could save others from being victimized in the future.

One could easily imagine adapting Callisto or a similar platform for use in the economics profession. We could link it to the AEA directory to enable the matching feature across reports. (Linking to an official directory makes matches more reliable; the main alternative is matching across write-in fields that would include nicknames and misspellings. The AEA directory would be useful because it includes academics as well as economists in the private sector and government.) Victims who decided to file official reports could send them to the perpetrator's employer, the AEA, or even to the police if they wanted to file criminal charges.

Potentially more valuable, the meta-data generated by such a platform would be valuable to the AEA, CSWEP, and researchers interested in the incidence and reporting of harassment and assault. Without compromising victims' or alleged offenders' privacy, these groups could see how many records are

saved, when they were saved, and if/when they were officially filed with authorities through the system. These data would provide basic information on the prevalence of bad behavior in the profession, trends over time, and the likelihood that incident records are linked to serial offenders. The data would also allow event studies and similar rigorous analyses of how interventions affect incidence and reporting. For instance, do we see a spike in saved incident records after conferences? And do we see an increase in official reporting after public statements by AEA leadership supporting victims? Because of a lack of data, we know very little about what types of interventions work in this context (that is, what works to reduce the incidence of harassment and assault, and what works to increase reporting rates). Data from a Callisto-style reporting platform would represent a selected sample of incidents, but would still be far better than what currently exists—occasional climate surveys and reported crime data.

The emphasis on serial offenders could discourage victims from coming forward until a second person identifies the same offender; whether this happens is an empirical question that could be tested. The benefits of saving time-stamped records as evidence should increase reporting across the board, so hopefully the benefits of the system outweigh any costs.

Callisto is currently available on twelve college campuses. While limited information is publicly available, and rigorous studies have not yet been done, the following statistics are encouraging: Survivors reporting via Callisto reported their assaults three times faster than the national average. And fifteen percent of survivors using the matching system matched with at least one other victim of the same assailant, allowing them to report simultaneously.

A system like this will work best if there are clear consequences for

We Can Act

Lessons learned in Philosophy from the APA ad hoc committee on sexual harassment in the profession

Kathryn J. Norlock

Like economists, philosophers in higher education have long been less than gender-equitable. In philosophy, we were moved to discuss our gender climate generally, and sexual harassment in particular, after a 2010 publication of hundreds of anonymized stories on the website, “What Is it Like to be a Woman in Philosophy?” A series of high-profile sexual harassment allegations followed in the next few years, which received widespread media attention. In 2013, our main professional organization, the American Philosophical Association, struck an ad hoc committee on sexual harassment with the aim of

drafting a best practices report regarding responses to sexual harassment in the discipline. Some of the lessons I learned from chairing that committee and providing that report may offer observations useful to you in economics. Even if it is not news, at least you will find that you have company in the effort to address sexual harassment in a wide field.

Lesson One: Find out your rights and responsibilities as a recipient of the stories of people who will contact you.

The groundwork for our report began before anyone realized a committee

should be formed. In the fall of 2010, philosopher Jennifer Saul (Sheffield University) created the “What Is It Like to be a Woman in Philosophy?” blog. She intended it as an online repository for stories, which she would anonymize before publishing, in order to provide a multiplicity of perspectives from women with a range of experiences, including positive experiences and predictably negative ones. I remember an early email from her, as she built the site, asking me how she ought to categorize and label different accounts. I replied, “I suspect that when you receive the first submissions, the labels and patterns will emerge on their own.” My advice was borne out swiftly when a number of the stories recounted sexual harassment. The descriptions flooded in. Jennifer was inundated with personal accounts and had to adjust her responses to each person based on what she could do to help—or, in some cases, what she could not or should not do to help. After seeing what happened to Jennifer, I learned the importance of understanding my responsibilities as a solicitor of such accounts—a lesson I re-learned as the chair of the ad hoc committee on sexual harassment. Although foreseeable that I would receive stories, serving as chair put me in the position of having to decide when and how to help. Legal advice was necessary, although not sufficient, because my responsibilities were not limited to legalities.

Lesson Two: Get the stories out there. Motivate a culture to shift.

An unexpected lesson was welcome, though: The effects on our colleagues of so many different stories made public was one of heightened concern and receptivity. This concern was apparent even among those who had publicly doubted both the existence of and the severity of gender problems in the profession. The increased appreciation that

Technology

offenders. The AEA has drafted a new code of conduct stating, “Economists have both an individual responsibility for their conduct, and a collective responsibility to promote responsible conduct in the economics profession. These responsibilities include developing institutional arrangements and a professional environment that promote free expression concerning economics. These responsibilities also include supporting participation and advancement in the economics profession by individuals from diverse backgrounds.” Who decides whether someone has violated this code of conduct, and what is the punishment? The AEA and its governing bodies will have to answer this question. But no matter how these cases are adjudicated, justice will be more easily served when the facts are more accessible and faithful to the truth. Having a near-contemporaneous record of events helps towards this goal.

Some may worry that Callisto enables the filing of false reports, or otherwise threatens the privacy of alleged assailants before the facts are considered. There is nothing inherent in the system that changes the way formal complaints

are handled; the goal is simply to encourage more victims to come forward by enabling the creation of more credible evidence. If someone is determined to file a false report, they could do so without Callisto. Meanwhile, recent public conversations suggest that very few actual victims come forward, particularly when harassment occurs in the workplace, due to uncertainty about whether they will be believed, fears of retaliation, and other professional costs. This is precisely the problem we need to address. It will remain up to the AEA and employers to ensure due process for those accused of wrong-doing—a challenge they will face with or without Callisto.

Gender bias and harassment are pervasive social problems that the economics profession cannot solve alone and that cannot be solved overnight. But we can, as a profession, clearly signal that we take this problem seriously. And we can also use technology to make it easier and less costly for victims to report bad behavior. A Callisto-style reporting platform would be a valuable step towards making economics a safer and more welcoming profession for women.

We Can Act

a problem might actually exist across the profession became a crucial step in the development of a formal response. Without that pervasive sense of a problem and a general will to act, forming a committee of the APA might have required more of an argument. Instead, we enjoyed wide support, more than I would have expected. The culture of the profession palpably shifted.

Lesson Three: There is strength in numbers.

Women in philosophy who had experiences with sexual harassment also started talking and writing more—in public and on the internet—sharing past occasions of harassment. Many of us talked with each other, frankly and strategically, about inserting ourselves into conversations regarding sexual harassment more often. We discussed taking leadership positions in discussions that, given the skewed sex-ratio in our field, could easily be overtaken by armchair speculations by the majority, who were unlikely to have palpable experiences with the problem. Some of us with tenure felt that we had the safety and the freedom to be candid about past encounters. It was sometimes difficult, but often fantastic, when colleague after colleague leaned in and added her story to the scale.

Lesson Four: Concerned colleagues in leadership positions are necessary.

Women were also stepping into leadership positions at the APA. Sally Haslanger (MIT) served as the President of the Eastern Division of the APA in 2013; she proposed the formation of a committee to the APA for the purposes of addressing sexual harassment. The colleagues from whom she solicited feedback on a draft committee proposal were constructive and quick, and collaboration on the details of the proposal was part of its success. The group discussed and then deleted references to “investigating” the problem of sexual harassment, knowing that it unintentionally connoted interest in investigating particular perpetrators. As members of the professional organization, we

understood that we were not in the best position to look into complaints. Yet we were less certain whether to continue the work, begun by the anonymous blog, of collecting harassment stories and whether to propose new surveys of the incidence rates. The final proposal made the limited suggestion that the committee may wish to gather information from harassment victims. Once Sally advanced the proposal to the APA, it succeeded quickly—not only because the proposal was supported by multiple concerned colleagues, but also because it had benefited from the labors of these colleagues during the drafting process.

Lesson Five: Clarify the mission early to identify a clear and achievable goal.

For good or ill, I learned a different lesson once the committee was formed and I became the chair: The timeline dictated how much we could achieve. In my case, the committee was formed in the spring of 2013, and a complete draft of the report was due to the board in autumn. Out the window went the tentative ideas to gather meaningful data. The tight timeline was not necessarily bad news; it was due in part to the APA’s interest in having recommendations as soon as possible. Consequently, I requested that the APA board clarify and limit the mission of the committee; the board responded by defining our “deliverables” as “a report recommending best practices regarding sexual harassment in the discipline to be implemented by the APA, philosophy departments in which APA members are employed, and conferences and other professional events hosted by either.” Even then, these deliverables encompassed a rather wide scope for the short timeline and the few people available to work on them. I countered that the aims ought to be scaled back to “a report recommending best practices regarding sexual harassment in the discipline to be implemented by the APA,” and the APA agreed quickly.

Lesson Six: The conversation needed to shift towards preventing harassment in the workplace.

Our committee spent time that summer reading about existing policy, especially focusing on the U.S. Department of Education’s website for the Office of Civil Rights. This website raised my awareness regarding the responsibility to prevent sexual harassment—and not just to respond to complaints—under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. Sexual harassment not only affects the individuals who directly receive harassing behavior, but also individuals who witness the behavior and see themselves as similarly situated. These witnesses may conclude that they too are liable to suffer similar victimization in the future as long as other colleagues support or remain indifferent to it. Thus, harassment’s effects are multiplied when others fail to actively oppose it. Learning this information actually made me more optimistic regarding my charge to define best practices for the profession; it assured me that effective, concrete steps could be implemented by members of the profession to oppose the culture of harassment. Our resulting report focused more on preparing members to be responsive to complaints of a hostile environment as a method of prevention. As the focus of our work changed, the title of our report emerged: “We Can Act.”

Lesson Seven: The profession must raise awareness of grievance procedures and policies.

In the process of writing our report, the committee realized that we had two different sets of recommendations for philosophy departments and for the APA itself. Sorting out these two sets of recommendations was extremely helpful in formulating a coherent report. That same year, the chair of the Equity Committee of the Canadian Philosophical Association provided me with the raw survey data from their organization on gender climate issues. The data unambiguously demonstrated that virtually all identifiable trends regarding gender

Agreeing to write an article for this newsletter issue was much easier than finding the right tone. My first effort, personal and full of fire, shared disturbing accounts of sexual harassment and its damaging impact on my students and peers. It expressed the urgency so many of us are feeling about the need to stop this problem *now*. Then I reviewed the draft and came to a realization: Other authors in this issue have personal stories to tell and I, as an outsider to the economics profession, should take a different role. This article is meant to honor the personal nature of the other articles and place them within an academic frame.

Few among us would deny that academic institutions have a colossal responsibility—moral, legal, and financial—to protect students and employees from abusive and harassing conduct, and to ensure their equal access to education and employment. Individuals who commit sexual harassment in this context put their institutions at risk by eroding safety and access for the people,

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inequities in philosophy could be ameliorated by visible, well-known, accessible prevention policies. Consequently, our first recommendation to departments was to advertise institutional grievance procedures and policies. We further recommended connecting members with an APA ombudsman, who could help resolve conflicts between members and their institutions. Fortunately, I see that the AEA is also considering a similar policy.

I hope this recounting of our lessons learned from philosophy provides CSWEP members with useful information when they encounter sexual harassment, either as a direct victim or a bystander. Concrete steps on everyone's part are possible to defeat harassment in our respective professions. ■

especially the women, who are trying to learn and work there. As psychology professor Jennifer Freyd suggests, institutions betray the people who depend on them and become complicit in perpetuating wrongdoing when they fail to prevent individuals from committing sexual harassment and respond to reports of it in unsupportive ways. Addressing sexual harassment effectively requires courage, transparency, and accountability on the part of academic institutions and the individuals who are positioned to take action against it.

What should academic institutions do to prevent sexual harassment and respond to it decisively? The brief analysis and suggestions I offer here are grounded in research and experience. My perspective has been shaped by a career as a professor of communication studies, the multidisciplinary literature on sexual harassment (including research I contributed to it), five years as a university ombudsperson, accounts of sexual harassment in media and social media, and the lived experiences of my friends, colleagues, and students who have been sexually harassed in academic settings.

Analysis: The Nature of the Challenge

Academic institutions are predisposed to sexual harassment in part because their vertical stratification and task structure provide upper-level employees with both control over resources and a high degree of autonomy. As communication professors Charles Conrad and Bryan Taylor suggested years ago, this task/organizational structure creates dependencies and opportunities for interaction between individuals who differ in power and prestige in remote, secluded settings (e.g., conferences, labs, or field work). When these structural threads are interwoven with workplace values and communication/relationship norms that define access

to women's bodies as a masculine conquest or entitlement—or that are simply indifferent to gender inequality—the resulting fabric is an environment that supports sexual harassment and suppresses victims' dissent.

Sexual harassment is more likely to be committed, and less likely to be reported, when an academic institution or workgroup is numerically dominated by men, particularly at higher levels of power. Men in a male-dominated discipline or department may have created, over time, a long-standing work atmosphere that tolerates sexually harassing behaviors and views them as natural. Most men in such contexts may not have the *intent* to create a hostile environment for women. Some may not consciously realize their communication patterns are sustaining a culture that marginalizes women within the group.

Even when presented with indisputable evidence of sexual harassment on campus, some academic institutions have been reluctant to respond responsibly if the perpetrator is a star employee. The failure to prevent a perennial perpetrator from continuing to commit sexual harassment is likely to result in ongoing costs to the institution and, over time, the value of the individual's contribution may be surpassed by the costs. As human resources consultant and trainer Fran Sepler suggests, these cumulative costs include the effect on individuals who witness the institution's failure to protect victims and who then infer that future victims will not be protected. This will likely reduce willingness to disclose sexual harassment, perpetuating the problem and creating still additional costs. Yet because such costs are difficult to quantify and are seen as less probable than the certain costs of losing a star, institutions allow the harassing behavior to continue.

Addressing Harassment

Suggestions for Addressing Sexual Harassment

To counter the challenges, academic institutions must work to change the structure, culture, and climate of the organization and the groups within it. Although this collaborative effort will be a massive undertaking, requiring institutional transformations too radical to address exhaustively in a brief article, I humbly offer five measures that should be implemented as part of this transformation.

Balance the gender ratio.

When power is relatively balanced among women and men in academic institutions, sexual harassment occurs less often. A strategy for reducing sexual harassment, therefore, is to strive for gender equality within departments, across levels of status, and within the institution overall. Disciplines that have been historically dominated by white males can take steps to affect the gender ratio of students and faculty in their departments. They can collaborate with schools on initiatives to inspire girls and young women to take interest in the discipline's subject matter and its application. They can create undergraduate student organizations and clubs that are discipline-specific and encourage women students to become involved. When hiring faculty and admitting graduate students, they can actively recruit more women into their applicant pools. They can also seek scrutiny from outside the discipline regarding biases in candidate searches, hiring processes, and procedures for review, evaluation, reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

Adopt and apply an effective sexual harassment policy.

Research conducted by professor of management Marcelline Facilier and legal studies professor Charlie Penrod found that as many as half of U.S. colleges and universities have sexual harassment policies that are inadequate in some way. All academic institutions should have an accessible policy, widely disseminated and available on the

institution's website, that defines and prohibits sexual harassment and makes it easy and safe for victims to talk with someone about what happened to them. It should identify both the formal avenues for putting the institution on notice and making official reports, and confidential options that do not automatically trigger a formal investigation. Individuals, such as supervisors, who are required to report sexual harassment, should be identified and clearly distinguished from confidential resources such as counselors, victim advocates, and ombudspersons.

The institution's policy should also provide individuals who are accused of committing sexual harassment with opportunities to obtain information and discuss their perspectives and experiences in a confidential, neutral environment. Equally important, it should identify the training available within the institution regarding the policy, how the training can be accessed, who must attend, and how often it must be completed. The policy should also convey a commitment to stop sexual harassment, to enforce fair and firm consequences for perpetrators, and to share unvarnished, de-identified data with students and employees regarding the number and types of incidents as well as their consequences. Lastly, it should prohibit retaliation against those who report sexual harassment, identify services (such as facilitated dialogues for workgroups) to prevent retaliation when a report is made, and pledge to apply sanctions when retaliation occurs.

Establish an integrated system of formal and informal response options.

To support an effective policy, academic institutions need an integrated dispute and complaint handling system that includes multiple options, both formal and informal, for discussing and reporting sexual harassment. As management professors Mary Rowe and Corrine Bendersky describe, an integrated system for managing disputes and complaints is not simply a multi-step formal

grievance channel. The nature and circumstances of sexual harassment situations vary, and a response or procedure that is helpful in one context may be counterproductive in another. For example, whereas reporting sexual harassment to a particular individual (such as a supervisor or department chair) may be helpful in some situations, a formal procedure that requires this step is unworkable and unsafe for the victim when that individual is the harasser or a close friend of the harasser. Instead of forcing victims to follow a series of pre-established steps, institutions should make an array of rights-based and interest-based options and services available, including formal grievance processes, adjudication, formal mediation, shuttle diplomacy, informal actions within the system that protect the victim's identity, and confidential conversations and coaching in communication and conflict management.

Institutions should have an organizational ombudsperson or other professional whose expertise is in helping individuals to identify all of their options, consider them, and implement the ones that best meet their circumstances and needs. The ombudsperson—who serves in a confidential, neutral, informal, independent role within an organization or institution—has the purpose of assisting individuals in problem-solving and conflict resolution. Because of their role, ombudspersons often hear of sexual harassment that otherwise would not be disclosed to anyone at the institution. Well-timed assistance, early on, can sometimes prevent sexual harassment from escalating or occurring in the first place.

Control of the decision to report sexual harassment to the institution should not be usurped from victims, except when victims (or others) are in imminent danger of physical harm. Mandating reports against the will of victims is disempowering to them and a betrayal, even when well-intentioned. Individuals who consider disclosing what happened to them have fears—often well-founded—of retaliation, lost opportunities, a

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damaged reputation, and destroyed relationships with the educators, advisors, and colleagues they depend on for success. Victims are unlikely to report sexual harassment if they do not trust the institution to respond in a manner that will protect them and make the situation better. If an institution wants victims of sexual harassment to come forward, it must demonstrate its responders' commitment to listen and respond with sensitivity, communicate respectfully without blaming the victim, prevent further harm, and take appropriate action to stop perpetrators from committing sexual harassment now and in the future.

Gather data from students and employees.

Academic institutions should gather data to find out how students and employees currently fare with respect to the problem of sexual harassment and to gather suggestions for ways the institution can improve. Anonymous surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions can provide information about the prevalence of sexual harassment, perceptions of the institution's climate and culture, and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the existing sexual harassment policy and response. Institutions should ask individuals to share their perceptions and experiences regarding the dispute and complaint handling system, their satisfaction with the available resources, and their trust in the ability of leadership and responders to be transparent and hold themselves and perpetrators accountable.

Offer training and dialogue opportunities.

Training designed for employees and students to prevent sexual harassment should convey current legal and scholarly understandings of what comprises harassment and best practices in prevention and response. It should underscore that the institution's sexual harassment policy is supported, authorized, and enforced by the leaders of the institution. However, the training should not be imposed on participants in an entirely top-down fashion or

primarily emphasize avoiding legal liability. Institutions need to offer opportunities for participants from all areas and levels of the institution to discuss the policy, ask questions, and express concerns they may have about the content and implementation of the policy. Providing participants with ongoing opportunities for dialogue enables members of the institution to discuss their fears and concerns about how the policy will be interpreted and enforced.

Institutions should also evaluate the effectiveness of training, including the possibility that both positive and unintended negative effects could occur. In a startling original study, psychology professor Lisa Scherer and I found that a brief, underfunded, one-shot sexual harassment program in an academic institution backfired for male participants. Although the training increased the participants' knowledge about sexual harassment and the institution's policy, the men who participated were significantly more likely than men who had not participated to blame the victim and less likely to indicate they would report sexual harassment to the designated authorities. No such effect was found for women. One of several features of this training that likely contributed to the results was the insufficient time allotted for discussion. Participants in training need opportunities to talk about what they are learning, consider it from multiple perspectives, and work through their thoughts and emotional reactions. It may be helpful to tailor training for different groups of participants based on variables such as beliefs about gender differences or attitudes toward sexual harassment.

Institutions should also provide bystander intervention training to prevent sexual harassment. This type of training can have a unifying effect on an institution's culture because it assumes the participants are on the same side and share a common desire and responsibility to stop sexual harassment. As professors of psychology and socialization Silvia Galdi, Ann Mass, and Mara Cadinu contend, people who witness sexual

harassment are likely to remain passive if they are unable to recognize it or lack the courage and motivation to take action on a victim's behalf. Bystander training is designed to motivate, build skills, increase knowledge, and imbue a sense of empowerment in observers so they will be able to recognize potential wrongdoing and step in to prevent it. A range of intervention strategies are taught in these trainings so individuals can choose an approach that fits their skill level and the situation at hand. For instance, as documented by management professors Lynn Bowes-Sperry and Anne O'Leary-Kelly, a bystander can interrupt a potentially problematic interaction, take a possible perpetrator aside to express disapproval or share information about the institution's sexual harassment policy, or assist a victim with reporting an incident.

Conclusion

People who have been subjected to sexual harassment in academic institutions—primarily women—have been speaking out about what happened to them in record numbers, and more perpetrators—primarily men—are being held accountable. While the movement is encouraging, the voices we have heard also reveal the hideousness and widespread nature of the problem, and victims remain unlikely to disclose sexual harassment unless they can trust their institution to demonstrate accountability and respond in supportive, transparent ways. Inadequate and irresponsible responses by institutions, and the fear of being retaliated against for speaking out, are among the most important reasons sexual harassment remains so often unreported and kept out of public view. Academic institutions have the opportunity and obligation to use the momentum of our time to transform their approach to addressing sexual harassment, fulfilling their responsibility to protect students and employees and to ensure equal access to education and employment.

See page 6 "For Further Reading"