

RESEARCH REPORT

Promising Practices for Addressing Harassment in the STEM Workplace

How to Lead in Today's Environment

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The Urban Institute





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Promising Practices for Addressing Harassment in the STEM Workplace

Overview

With support from the Rockefeller Family Fund, on October 30, 2019, the American Geophysical Union, in partnership with the Urban Institute and the National Women's Law Center, hosted a convening on best practices to address sexual harassment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workplaces. The Aspen Institute Forum on Women and Girls also served as a supportive partner. The science and technology fields often share characteristics that create risk factors for harassment, which can lead to a loss of valuable talent and a persistent gender gap in fields that are increasingly important to our future (National Academies 2018). Although many organizations promote training and education to encourage women and people of color to enter STEM fields, participants agreed that STEM employers need to do more to share knowledge and evidence on what works to prevent harassment to create work environments where workers from underrepresented backgrounds can thrive. The panels and discussions throughout the day focused on how institutions can create stronger practices and organizational climates that do not tolerate harassment. The convening built upon a June 2019 event hosted at the Urban Institute in collaboration with the National Women's Law Center on *What Works at Work: Promising Practices to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment in Low-Wage Jobs* as well as an October 2018 event hosted by the Aspen Institute Forum on Women and Girls titled *Sustaining the Movement: Changing the Culture Promising Practices Across Sectors to Stop Sexual Harassment*. Although the research is still evolving on what truly works as a "best practice" to end harassment, many organizations have been experimenting with new and innovative practices to shift culture and change behavior.

This report highlights five promising practices and key takeaways coming out of the convening discussion to help organizations create a culture where harassment is not tolerated.

1. *Evaluate organizational climate and risk factors* for harassment to end a culture of silence and understand the scope and nature of concerns.

2. *Create multiple safe avenues for workers to come forward* and raise concerns of harassment. With consent of the individuals, champion those who do come forward to support employees and normalize reports.
3. *Provide regular tailored and interactive training* that reinforces organizational values and encourages behavioral change to prevent and intervene when harassment occurs or other social biases are witnessed. Reinforce training throughout the year.
4. *Increase transparency*, both within and outside the organization, to demonstrate that employees use the complaint mechanisms and that the organization will take appropriate disciplinary and other actions in response to concerns.
5. *Establish clear mechanisms to promote accountability* and develop change management plans to implement organizational cultural changes.

Although this report focuses on STEM fields, sexual harassment is a problem in many industries, and the promising practices identified have applicability to other fields as well. The report concludes with three recommendations for next steps:

- developing collaboratives to share knowledge and support innovation
- creating spaces for future convenings and knowledge sharing
- supporting research on promising practices and cultural change efforts

Organizational Characteristics in STEM Fields

The convening began with a discussion of the research finding that the prevalence of sexual harassment in a workplace is best predicted by the workplace's organizational climate.¹ Research has shown that even men who do not display a propensity to harass are more likely to harass when exposed to materials and organizational climates tolerant of harassment (Pryor, LaVite, and Stoller 1993). Thus, an environment that tolerates harassment can encourage sexual harassment. Participants shared that STEM fields demonstrate risk factors for harassment, including significant power disparities, high-value employees, lack of diversity, isolation, a lack of boundaries between work and personal lives, a belief in "meritocracy," and a lack of attention to social welfare concerns.

Frazier Benya from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine kicked off the meeting, sharing key findings from a recent report, *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine* (National Academies 2018).

Benya shared a visual depiction of the public awareness surrounding the term “sexual harassment” using an iceberg as a metaphor (figure 1). Although people often only think of sexual harassment as coercion or unwanted sexual attention, other insidious forms of harassment often hide beneath the surface. Gender harassment, which includes “verbal and nonverbal behaviors that convey hostility, objectification, exclusion, or second-class status about members of one gender” is the most prevalent form of sexual harassment (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016, 9–10). One study of women working in a factory and at a university found that 54 to 60 percent of women had experienced behaviors that meet the criteria for gender harassment (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016, 42). Yet, sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention are reported to institutions at much higher rates than gender harassment (National Academies 2018, 42). Stronger policies and education across organizations are needed to ensure employees understand the full spectrum of behaviors that can lead to harassment.

FIGURE 1
Iceberg Metaphor



Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Science and engineering fields have long struggled with diversity and inclusion. Many more men than women hold positions in science and engineering occupations, and almost 70 percent of employed scientists and engineers are white (NCSES 2019). Women who enter STEM fields often leave at far higher rates than comparable men, further homogenizing the already male-dominated field (Preston 1994). Significant wage gaps persist in STEM fields, with men earning considerably more than women, and white and Asian scientists and engineers earning considerably more than Black and Latinx scientists and engineers (NCSES 2019). These disparities are heightened as people progress in their careers, with many participants noting that science and engineering fields are even more dominated by white men at the leadership level. Asian Americans, while highly represented in technical jobs, are notably underrepresented at the highest levels (EEOC 2016, 2). Pay gaps are also higher in STEM fields that have lower concentrations of women, such as engineering and computer science (Micheltore and Sassler 2016).

In addition to being male dominated, particularly at the leadership level, STEM fields share other risk factors for sexual harassment. STEM fields are often strongly hierarchical, with young scientists and students relying on those in the top positions for career opportunities and tenure decisions. Hierarchical fields that privilege “superstar” performers often see greater misuses of power, including harassment (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016, 24). One panelist described this issue as the “lionization of the talented jerk.” Many STEM fields, particularly in newer tech occupations, often promote a “macho culture,” which can alienate women and tolerate harassment.² In her presentation on inequality in the culture and climate of STEM, panelist Erin Cech of the University of Michigan discussed meritocratic ideals and “schemas of scientific excellence.” In this STEM culture, people assume certain characteristics to be universal markers of professional excellence, such as assertiveness and risk taking.

These characteristics influence hiring, promotion, and funding decisions, yet these characteristics may reflect gender, racial or ethnic biases and are often not correlated with professional productivity.³ Belief in this so-called meritocracy, which may be rooted in bias, leads to a hierarchy that is well respected but lacks diversity, a combination that makes those lower in the hierarchy more vulnerable to harassment.

Moreover, many scientists experience pressure to work all the time, surrendering boundaries between their work lives and their personal lives (National Academies 2018, 54). Much scientific work takes place in relative isolation, such as late hours in the lab and research at remote field sites or

other locations away from the home institution. These factors can increase the risk of workplace harassment, as scientists spend more time and share more space with coworkers. Finally, science fields are often apolitical, meaning that people in the field may be less concerned with solving problems like harassment and lack of diversity.⁴ Some STEM students have even become more apathetic to social welfare concerns over the course of their science education.⁵

Participants discussed the importance of responding appropriately to reported incidents of harassment because harassment can have detrimental effects not only for the target of harassment but for others within the organization. Benya urged participants to consider workplace sexual harassment as a public health issue. Targets of sexual harassment are more likely to report symptoms of depression, stress, and anxiety and generally impaired psychological well-being. Furthermore, when harassment results in stigmatization and the loss of employment opportunities, the effects on the target can be socially and financially devastating. Organizations are also negatively affected by harassment, which can harm bystanders, coworkers, and work groups, in addition to individual targets (National Academies 2018, 78). Studies have found that regardless of whether people consider the behaviors they have experienced to be sexual harassment, they report similar negative consequences (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016, 10). Anecdotally, many women in STEM have shared stories of harassment, assault, and retaliation.⁶ Surveys report similar results, finding that the share of women in STEM fields experiencing harassment ranges from 20 percent to 64 percent (National Academies 2018, 56–65).

Given the risk factors in STEM fields, the prevalence of harassment, and the fact that harassment often goes unreported, participants agreed on the critical need for STEM workplaces to focus on actions to prevent and respond to harassment. Inadequate responses to harassment not only harm people who have been or may be harassed but may cause people to leave the field, causing a brain drain and the loss of valuable workers. A study by the Kapor Center found that a significant number of women and people of color who left careers in tech and computer science did so after experiencing harassment and discrimination (Scott, Klein, and Onovakpuri 2017). This convening aimed to elevate the challenges organizations confront and promising practices for surmounting them.

Five Promising Practices and Key Takeaways

The convening provided an opportunity to share knowledge and innovative practices for preventing and responding effectively to sexual harassment in STEM fields. In several panels and breakout

sessions, experts from diverse fields (e.g., science and technology, academia, business, nonprofits, government, and the legal profession) kicked off animated discussions exploring these promising practices. Three panels focused on Today's Challenges and Innovative Practices, Technology as Part of the Solution, and Organizational Accountability. Participants then reflected on these panels and shared their experiences during afternoon breakout sessions. Attendees discussed challenges in their workplaces, new practices employers have implemented, and promising practices for strengthening reporting procedures, preventing retaliation, and creating accountability.

Coming out of the meeting, participants identified five promising practices:

1. *Evaluate organizational climate and risk factors* for harassment to end the culture of silence and understand the scope and nature of concerns.
2. *Create multiple safe avenues for workers to come forward* and raise concerns of harassment. With consent of the individuals, champion those who do come forward to support employees and normalize reports.
3. *Provide regular tailored and interactive training* that reinforces organizational values and encourages behavioral change to prevent and intervene when harassment occurs. Reinforce training throughout the year.
4. *Increase transparency*, both within and outside the organization to demonstrate that employees use the complaint mechanisms and that disciplinary and other actions are taken in response to concerns.
5. *Establish clear mechanisms to promote* accountability and develop change management plans to implement organizational cultural changes.

Assessing Organizational Climate and Risk Factors

Organizations are working to understand their workplace climate and engage workers to be a part of solutions through climate surveys, focus groups, worker organizations, and tech-enabled reporting systems.

Organizational Climate Surveys

Organizations are increasingly using climate surveys to understand the nature and scope of concerns about sexual harassment and to benchmark progress. Organizational leaders may struggle to gauge

their organization's culture and climate when sexual harassment is significantly underreported. Lack of institutional understanding about employees' experiences and perceptions makes harassment harder to address, and it makes it less likely that people will come forward. Using anonymous surveys, employers can gain valuable data to begin addressing this problem (National Academies 2018, 155). Repeating surveys over time can provide metrics to measure progress and create accountability mechanisms to ensure that change continues after new approaches are adopted (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016, 33).

C.K. Gunsalus of the National Center for Professional and Research Ethics at the University of Illinois highlighted an innovative climate survey that heavily integrates technology. The Survey of Organizational Research Climate (SOURCE), developed by Thrush and Martinson, is available to research organizations and is described further in box 1. The SOURCE is currently available for assessing research integrity environments and will enter pilot field testing for extension topics addressing harassment and other organizational justice issues this spring and summer. Through the online results analysis engine available through the University of Illinois, this web-based survey tool can evaluate research workplaces on integrity, along the seven scales outlined in box 2.

BOX 1

The Survey of Organizational Research Climate



- Web-based tool for understanding results
- Analysis for institution; individual units within it; by roles
- Ability to interact with data in multiple ways
- Accessible data
- Data summary at different levels

Source: C.K. Gunsalus, National Center for Professional and Research Ethics.

The survey collects confidential responses from participants and analyzes whether these responses correlate with self-reported behavior in research. In addition to enabling confidential institution- specific reports on departments, colleges, and the campus as a whole, de-identified data

are compiled in a national comparison database to enable benchmarking across organizations. This permits departments to evaluate their climate with respect to comparable units in the same discipline or institution and provides incentives for change in institutions that find their climate to be worse than

BOX 2

The Survey of Organizational Research Climate Coverage



Source: C.K. Gunsalus, National Center for Professional and Research Ethics.

that of peers. It also identifies “bright spots” where practices are highly effective, so they can be studied and disseminated.

Many participants wondered how to implement similar tools on a larger scale. Consortia of institutions, states, and local governments can encourage the use of climate surveys. In 2015, the Maryland state legislature passed a law requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to develop a statewide climate survey. Now all institutions of higher education in Maryland must provide a report on incidence of sexual harassment, how students feel about their institution’s environment, and how sexual misconduct is handled on campuses (Maryland Higher Education Commission 2018).

Effective surveys use behaviorally specific questions rather than questions tied to legal definitions. As noted in the Report of the Co-Chairs of the Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission (EEOC) Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace, people are more likely to report that they experienced or witnessed behaviors that are considered sexual harassment than to label what they experienced or witnessed as sexual harassment (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016, 12). This is because people have varying ability or willingness to label oneself as someone who experienced sexual harassment and have varying understandings of what sexual harassment entails. A person's estimation of whether sexual harassment occurred is subjective. Behaviorally specific questions are a more objective way to assess prevalence. Further, anonymity is important to ensuring accurate responses to climate surveys. People are more likely to report incidents if they know responses will not be tied to their name. Climate surveys can make institutions more aware of the problems their students or employees face, and publicizing the results can demonstrate institutional accountability and transparency.

Engaging Workers in Solutions

Maya Raghu of the National Women's Law Center raised an important question at the start of the convening: How can we best incorporate and center input from workers? Rather than implementing changes through a top-down approach, what are effective methods to empower workers to help develop and implement responses to harassment? Including workers in decisionmaking throughout the organizational response to harassment will counteract power imbalances that often drive sexual harassment in the first place. In addition to climate surveys, several participants discussed holding focus groups or discussion forums with employees to learn about employees' experiences with and perceptions of organizational practices and responses.⁷ This can also ensure that outcomes are fair and that actions taken hold people accountable, regardless of their position in workplace hierarchies. Employers can also empower workers to be active bystanders by providing them with the tools and support to disrupt harassment when they see it.

Julie Flowers of Chevron shared a story in the breakout sessions about her organization's recent launch of a new diversity and inclusion program called "Elevate" to address gender and other identity issues, as well as women's and men's networks to discuss issues and share resources on gender and harassment in the workplace.⁸ Both programs educate employees and managers and help employees learn about their coworkers' experiences. Workers also can organize collectively to empower themselves to prevent and address sexual harassment in the workplace. At the National Academies' 2019 Public Summit on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education, panelist Emily Myers discussed unionization and worker collective action in addressing sexual harassment at the University of Washington. There, unionized workers and students improved grievance procedures to be trauma-

informed, developed and paid for peer-led trainings, added nondiscrimination language and just cause protections for postdoctoral students, and created a system of secondary mentors that shifted university power dynamics. Employers can encourage worker empowerment on harassment by supporting collective action.

Assessing Diversity and Inclusion in Preventing Harassment

As part of their organizational assessment, employers should analyze diversity and inclusion across leadership and work units and develop strategies to strengthen representation and inclusion. Employers can create an environment where employees feel safe coming forward by implementing meaningful diversity and inclusion measures (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016, 31). Creating a diverse workforce and leadership as well as a culture of inclusion can make people feel supported and valued in the organization. This can create conditions that enable workers to come forward if they experience harassment. Panelist Ally Coll of The Purple Campaign spoke about the importance of building and rebuilding diversity in the workplace, particularly with a focus on intersectionality, given that people with intersecting marginalized identities are often most targeted.

Creating Reliable, Safe, and Effective Avenues for Workers to Come Forward

Organizations have been exploring innovative methods to provide reliable structures for safe and effective reporting of concerns. In her opening presentation, Frazier Benya shared a study by Cortina and Berdahl (2008), which showed that only a quarter of targets of sexual harassment in the workplace formally report the incident to their employer, and even fewer pursue a legal investigation. Studies have shown that students report harassment at even lower rates, sometimes below 5 percent (Rosenthal, Smidt, and Freyd 2016; Hill and Silva 2005). The fact that so few come forward to report harassment suggests they feel unsafe or uncomfortable doing so. Organizations can create a trusted environment for people to come forward when they experience harassment, with multiple channels for reporting outside of a chain of command. Many participants emphasized that employers too frequently rely on standard legal compliance models when preventing and responding to harassment. Because these models have proven ineffective in protecting employees and alerting the organization of problems, employers have been deploying new practices to make it safe for people to come forward to report harassment.

Championing Those Who Come Forward and Preventing Retaliation

Having effective and worker-focused complaint procedures is a start, but if organizations want to encourage people to come forward, they must not only prevent retaliation but support those who come forward. Camille Olson of the law firm Seyfarth Shaw shared a sobering statistic: when surveyed six months after reporting harassment, the majority of respondents who had previously reported harassment said they would never come forward again. The research shows workers who come forward with concerns actually fare worse: they leave the organization sooner, face barriers to advancement, and often feel like they have ended their careers.⁹ Participants agreed that organizations must better support workers facing harassment, not only to help those who have already come forward but to signal to those who have yet to report harassment that the organization will support them and take them seriously if they do come forward.

One approach is to characterize those who come forward in a more positive light. Several participants shared a simple technique for normalizing reporting and changing the narrative surrounding those who report: using different words to describe the people and the process.¹⁰ Describing someone who comes forward as a person seeking resources or help, rather than as a “victim” or “complainant,” lifts up the person who comes forward to report harassment. Changing language to raising “issues” or “concerns” rather than “complaints” may be more comfortable for some. In addition, employers that are transparent and share data on the types of concerns or complaints raised can help normalize reporting. These shifts can increase employees’ comfort level with reporting and champion those who come forward.

Organizations shared efforts to shift organizational culture to respect and support people willing to come forward to share their experiences, recognizing that when workers are willing to raise hard issues, it makes the organization stronger by providing the opportunity to take positive action, rather than letting problems escalate. When organizations fail to protect workers who report harassment from retaliation, they not only hinder a single person’s career (in addition to other consequences for that person) but discourage others from reporting in the future (National Academies 2018, 173). Fears of retaliation are often rooted in reality. Studies have found that the majority of employees who reported workplace harassment were met with retaliation (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016, 16). Panelists emphasized that employers not only must have anti-retaliation protections but must ensure those protections are meaningful and widely known throughout the organization. Often, organizational leaders receive little training on the range of actions—such as avoiding interacting with people who have made complaints—that can contribute to a climate of retaliation and deter people from raising concerns in the future. Additionally, leaders and supervisors should go beyond ensuring non-

retaliation to affirm that employees are protected and supported and to check back with people to confirm they are not experiencing retaliatory behavior. Ensuring effective trainings for managers and employees to prevent retaliation include explaining everything that retaliation can look like and role playing situations so people understand how retaliation might play out. Encouraging people to think about different types of retaliation may prevent and raise awareness of the issue.

Panelist Camille Olson of Seyfarth Shaw recommended that organizations collect data that document how companies treat employees who report and how these employees fare over time in the organization. By tracking this information (e.g., pay, performance evaluations, promotions, and tenure) compared with the general employee population, employers can identify problem areas. When employers document that there is no difference in how employees raising concerns fare in their job opportunities, these data can be shared with employees to encourage employees to come forward with concerns in the future.

Finally, increasing institutional transparency about the process and consequences of filing a report would help champion those who come forward (if they are comfortable doing so) and normalize the process of reporting. Those who have faced harassment may feel alone if they have not heard that others have come forward and that the organization responded with action and consistency. Without such information, employees may feel isolated and less likely to report harassment.

Ombuds Programs

Offering employees choices among multiple avenues to raise concerns can create a trusted complaint process.¹¹ Many participants expressed the value of an organization providing a designated, confidential, and well-trained office or person to listen to concerns and provide resources to employees. Several panelists and participants cited ombuds programs as a method of supporting targets of harassment and encouraging employees to come forward. An ombuds program provides a confidential and neutral third party who can liaise between the target of harassment, the perpetrator, and the organization's leadership. According to members of the International Ombudsman Association, ombuds are distinct from human resources professionals in that they can more easily honor the target's agency.¹² Ombuds listen and can help targets identify their options, analyze the pros and cons of their options, and strategize about how they may want to proceed. Given the confidential, informal, and impartial nature of the role, targets can share what they feel comfortable sharing, knowing that it does not commit them to anything, and they retain control over what

happens next.¹³ And from the perspective of their employers, ombuds can surface issues that otherwise would not have been raised while maintaining the confidentiality of their communications with the targets.¹⁴ Trained ombuds can also encourage the organization to ensure that investigations are trauma-informed. Targets of sexual harassment may be traumatized by their experience, and having to relive it through an investigation can be harmful. Being aware of this and employing appropriate techniques for dealing with trauma can make reporting systems more accessible.

Megan Clifford of Argonne National Laboratory shared her organization's successful experience in implementing an organizational ombuds office as an independent, informal, impartial, and confidential resource for members of the Argonne community to raise concerns. Laboratory director Paul Kearns and the Argonne leadership team established the ombuds office after receiving results from a 2017 climate survey that indicated that one quarter of employees were afraid to speak up about concerns, such as harassment. Argonne's organizational ombuds explained that it was important to have the buy-in of leadership, legal counsel, and human resources to implement the ombuds office, especially given confidentiality concerns. The Argonne leadership team garnered the support of all three groups by helping them understand the office's benefits. Employees and leadership have embraced the office favorably. In addition, Argonne's leadership team agreed to establish core values to address the climate survey feedback and foster a safe, welcoming, diverse, and inclusive environment.

Technology Platforms for Raising Concerns and Stopping Misconduct

Technology can create new avenues to stop unwanted behavior and obtain an early warning about the nature and scope of concerns. Some employers have embraced tech-enabled third-party complaint and ombuds processes that can use anonymous and aggregated data to reveal trends and identify systemic issues within an organization. These systems can supplement existing complaint procedures by providing independent and confidential resources for workers to explore options for resolving concerns.

Panelist Lisa Gelobter discussed her work with tEQuitable, a third-party, confidential ombuds platform that companies can use to address bias, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace. Given that about 90 percent of people who say they have experienced harassment never take formal action to report harassment, such as filing a charge or a complaint (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016, 6), tEQuitable provides an informal channel to give employees a confidential, trusted way to address problems and get professional guidance. Thus far, tEQuitable has found that employees prefer to self-

serve, activating digital resources and tools, before talking to a real person. The platform also provides usage data and found that, within the first three months of launch, 20 percent of employees are visiting the platform.¹⁵ In addition to helping employees, the platform helps the company make organizational change by collecting data and reporting trends to company management. The platform quantifies systemic issues ranging from subtle, insidious slights to severe, overt discrimination and harassment and provides prevention strategies and actionable recommendations.¹⁶

Although these technology tools can provide robust data, participants also raised concerns about the impact of not using people to collect incident information. More data on the effectiveness of in-person interactions compared with digital reporting would be valuable. Participants also expressed concerns about ensuring that workers' privacy is protected even when data are aggregated, which is why tEQuitable adheres to a strict minimum cell size when reporting data to protect users' confidentiality.

One benefit of tech platforms is that they can be used to report incidents through an app, leading to timely data from users that companies can analyze to understand the scope and nature of problems and develop tailored response systems. In 2018, Uber leadership engaged with RALIANCE, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, and the Urban Institute to develop a new taxonomy to collect, categorize, and report on sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual assault experiences on the Uber rideshare platform.¹⁷ The taxonomy provided a research-informed categorization system to classify users' reports of such incidents. Applying this taxonomy, Uber released its first *US Safety Report* in December 2019, reporting for the first time the prevalence of sexual assault riders and drivers experienced (Uber 2019). Other companies can use this data-informed approach as a starting point to develop consistent mechanisms for appropriate discipline and preventive measures. Where supervisors, employees, and students are provided tools and given a chance to practice behaviors, they will feel more comfortable speaking up and are more likely to raise concerns.

Effective Training

High-Quality Training beyond Compliance

To create an inclusive culture that does not tolerate harassment, several participants underscored the need to promote respect and civility in the workplace, which can prevent smaller problems of disrespect from escalating toward larger problems of harassment. Stephanie Goodwin of Wright State

University and Inclusion Works explained that focusing on civility and respect in training is one of the most effective practices for preventing harassment, because it allows people to enter conversations about bias and harassment from a position of respectful dialogue. Many panelists and participants drew attention to the limited effectiveness of typical workplace anti-harassment trainings, which often focus on liability and compliance. Goodwin discussed promising practices for anti-harassment, anti-bias, and bystander intervention training. Following up on the convening, on March 4, 2020, the American Geophysical Union hosted an open training entitled, Speaking Up: How Bystanders can Change the Conversation in STEMM led by Goodwin. This training model incorporated workshops with actors who perform scenes where harassment or other problematic behavior occurs. Employees are given the opportunity to pause, discuss the scene, rewind, and see what might happen differently if different actions were taken. This kind of training helps people understand and practice different ways they can speak up. Effective trainings often focus more on behavior than laws, discuss workplace civility and respect, and help people learn how to identify problematic behavior and intervene.¹⁸

In addition, high-quality training is essential to ensure that there is a safe environment for employees to come forward to report harassment. If employees are not adequately trained on the resources and procedures that prevent and address harassment, they will not come forward when they experience or witness harassment.

FIGURE 2

Lockheed Martin Ethics Awareness Training

ETHICS AWARENESS TRAINING 2019

CASE #2 – JUST MAKE IT GO AWAY

Tiffany Monica Matt Rafael Sharon

Summary: Two years ago Tiffany was sexually assaulted by Matt. In fear, Tiffany took a position across the country, but now Matt has been brought in to head her division. Tiffany is still afraid and is reluctant to report, but Monica helps her come forward. When Matt's actions are reported and his employment is terminated, Tiffany's manager, Rafael, opts out from being in a one-on-one meeting with female colleagues. Sharon helps Rafael adjust his attitude.

Addressing Harassment in STEMM Workplace AGU Oct 2019 © 2019 Lockheed Martin Corporation. All Rights Reserved. LOCKHEED MARTIN 118

Source: Blair Marks, Lockheed Martin.

Blair Marks of Lockheed Martin gave an example of a creative training model that her company uses in its ethics and compliance education. The overall training program is multidimensional, including computer-based compliance training, short-burst awareness serials, a “police blotter” featuring anonymized real cases, and annual ethics awareness training.¹⁹ The annual ethics awareness training for all employees uses video to present scenarios with ethical dilemmas employees might encounter in the workplace and can be used both in person and with remote workers.²⁰ Groups discuss the issues they spot in the scenarios and how the characters in the videos could effectively address those issues. This allows employees to engage in critical thinking about real workplace dilemmas without breaking confidentiality and ensures a meaningful learning experience for the entire company. Although employers in all fields should consider innovative approaches to training, science and technology organizations can play to their strengths by incorporating relevant technology that could improve training outcomes.

Another example of a collaborative action plan is the Safe Spaces & Workplaces Initiative, which Rachael Wong shared with us after the convening.²¹ The program, which launched shortly after the convening, seeks to “engage and partner with employers to create respectful workplaces,” including combatting workplace sexual harassment in Hawaii. The initiative has planned three distinct phases: listening and learning, building the model, and activation. Leaders have planned partners and actions for each phase of the initiative. The listening and learning phase has already begun, and the initiative’s leaders have found significant evidence of workplace sexual harassment in Hawaii.²² Moving forward, the Safe Spaces & Workplaces Initiative plans to collaborate with local partners to develop and share tools, resources, and training in this space.

Practicing Institutional Transparency

Determining how transparent organizations should be about their history of complaints and responses to sexual harassment is complex, and for many organizations, the debate is ongoing.²³ It is difficult for organizations, particularly those reliant on positive public opinion, to reveal past misconduct. Historically, employers have been concerned about liability and anonymity and have been unlikely to be truly transparent. Transparency has started to gain more traction as a promising practice. Organizations have found that transparency helps employees understand the complaint processes, supports trust building, and assures workers that the organization will hold people accountable for misconduct. Many panelists agreed that more research is needed on transparency to

determine how to explain corrective actions, what to tell different parties, and the impact of greater transparency.²⁴

Clear and Well-Understood Policies and Procedures

An easily understood anti-harassment and reporting policy that employees understand is an important first step in a transparent reporting process. Lengthy, complicated, and confusing policies can undermine effectiveness if employees struggle to understand and track the progression and outcomes of reporting procedures. In her presentation, Lisa Gelobter explained that allowing employees to review policies and clearly defined escalation procedures in a secure third-party environment makes them feel more comfortable coming forward with a complaint. If employers make these policies easily accessible, they can demystify the process and make it less intimidating for their employees. Appropriate anti-harassment policies should also be “quickly and easily digested and clearly state that people will be held accountable for violating the policy” (National Academies 2018, 177). Panelists also emphasized that policies need to be clearly upheld and implemented at all levels of the workplace.²⁵

Organizations can also increase transparency by sharing their own policies with the public. Panelist Ally Coll shared an example of public transparency. The Purple Campaign is developing a certification program that recognizes employers that are addressing workplace harassment by establishing organizational policies to effect change. The certification increases transparency because it publicly highlights companies that are improving their culture and responding appropriately to sexual harassment. The Purple Campaign is working with four major companies to evaluate the effectiveness of the certification program. This model illuminates a promising practice that could increase transparency between organizations and outside stakeholders while providing incentives for companies to go beyond compliance requirements in their harassment policies.

The word “trust” came up frequently at the convening. Many employees lack trust in their organization’s investigation processes, perhaps because of prior negative experiences, and therefore say they would not come forward if they were harassed.²⁶ To send the message that sexual harassment will not be tolerated, the institution must show that it investigates complaints within a reasonable time frame and holds employees who harass other employees accountable. Regular reporting is an effective way to demonstrate this commitment. Panelist Teresa Hutson shared her recent experience at Microsoft, where the CEO promised more transparency after hearing a chain of complaints by people who said they did not trust the organization to handle reports. Microsoft will

now publish annual reports aggregating any harassment- or discrimination-related concerns they hear, which builds confidence and faith in their human resources department and investigators among employees.²⁷ These reports include insight into the outcomes and impacts of any complaints and investigations. Participants agreed that institutions should reflect on policies and practices by providing reports that anonymize basic information but convey how many reports are investigated and what the outcomes are. The results of investigations and any disciplinary action should be shared widely, including with the targets and the employees who reported the behavior, bystanders, and organizational leaders.

Regular Reporting of Incidents and Outcomes



Teresa Hutson discusses Microsoft's plan to address harassment, including annual reporting. Source: American Geophysical Union.

Several participants also discussed the benefit of more transparency extending publicly, beyond the institution itself. One breakout group discussed a recent Johns Hopkins University announcement concerning the dismissal of two faculty members for sexual harassment. The university disclosed the investigation and conclusions.²⁸ Public-facing reporting extends the model of institutional transparency, allowing people outside the organization to learn about and build trust in the

organization. Additionally, public reporting helps identify trends in sexual harassment complaints that can help employers become more comfortable with the idea of a spike in complaints after a renewed focus on harassment prevention.²⁹

Another example of public transparency is the Maryland Higher Education Commission's requirement, highlighted earlier, to issue a report that includes institution-level data on incidents of sexual assault and other sexual misconduct (Maryland Higher Education Commission 2018). This enables the state government and the public to better hold each institution accountable.

Institutional transparency goes hand in hand with accountability, which is why many convening participants mentioned the two practices together. It is easier to hold organizations accountable when there is transparency about what is occurring within the organization.

Creating Institutional Accountability

Organizer and moderator Jenny R. Yang, senior fellow at the Urban Institute and former chair of the EEOC, kicked off a session on organizational accountability with a strong message: "The most harmful thing employers can do is create a complaint process without first figuring out next steps for accountability."³⁰ Ensuring the appropriate next steps has been a common problem. Accountability was another topic that many participants felt merited more study.³¹ Ensuring accountability requires that employees who commit harassment are held accountable for their actions. Equally, if not more importantly, however, is holding the institution accountable for changing the culture in which the harassment occurred.

Proportionality of Responses

Several participants raised the issue of how to hold people accountable without being overly punitive.³² Institutions must carefully consider appropriate disciplinary actions and consequences. Panelist Chai Feldblum, former EEOC commissioner and cochair of the Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace, laid out an example of keeping outcomes of investigations proportional to the incident of misconduct that occurred. Feldblum, who is now with the law firm Morgan Lewis, created a matrix of responses for different types of misconduct, some of which are as severe as termination. These matrices apply regardless of a person's position, which ensures that even high-ranking "superstars" are held accountable for harassment.³³ Another panelist, Camille Olson, explained that accountability needs to become a part of the company culture, such as through

regular performance reviews, wherein employees and leaders would be penalized for different types of misconduct, including harassment. Consequences could also be a part of considerations for hiring, promotion, or tenure. Panelist Frazier Benya brought up a new process at the University of California, Davis, for hiring tenure-track faculty that allows the university to access previous employment records concerning findings of responsibility in harassment claims.

Proportionality of response may also mean considering not only punishments but positive nudges. Several participants brought up the question of when restorative justice models may be appropriate.³⁴ Examples of rehabilitation-focused measures include opportunities to learn, empathize, and recognize and value differences, and they might involve focus groups with professional facilitators, participation in restorative justice circles, and empathy training (National Academies 2018, 145). Panelist Ally Coll pointed out that generally, people who are accused have legal incentives to deny any wrongdoing, and applying a restorative justice model is a good way to provide people incentives to admit when they have done something wrong. If people feel they will be rehabilitated rather than punished, they may be more likely to work with the organization rather than just denying misconduct.

Another promising practice is rewarding and recognizing people who display especially positive behaviors and interactions in the workplace that reflect the organization's values. In one breakout session, Megan Clifford from Argonne National Laboratory shared Argonne's experience of affirming positive behavior. After engaging employees in interactive discussion forums, which featured structured small- and large-group activities designed to elicit ideas, Argonne defined a set of behaviors that reflect the organization's core values. A campaign soon followed to recognize employees for positively demonstrating the values through their actions. During the campaign, colleagues recognized one another for their positive behavior, and those who were recognized received pins or stickers to display on their badge lanyards or in their work areas.³⁵ Recognizing and rewarding positive behavior is one way of holding employees accountable without overly focusing on punishment and violations.

Overcoming the “Pass the Harasser” Phenomenon

The “pass the harasser” phenomenon drew attention in breakout sessions. Pass the harasser occurs when an employee commits sexual harassment, resigns quietly, and gets a new job at a different institution without information about prior misconduct coming to light. In one breakout session, Frazier Benya brought up an example of academic institutions tackling this problem. Last year, the

University of Wisconsin (UW) System publicly launched a new policy against passing the harasser on to unwitting institutions. The system will disclose substantiated misconduct findings when contacted for employee reference checks.³⁶ The system also put checks in place to guard against being passed someone else's harassers by asking all new employees to state if they have ever been found responsible for harassment.³⁷

In 2018, the UW System, charged by its board of directors, implemented a new policy, which standardizes the content of personnel files, defines when and with whom personnel files are shared, ensures appropriate documentation of sexual violence and sexual harassment in personnel files, ensures consistent disclosure of violations of sexual violence and sexual harassment policies to hiring institutions, and ensures that UW officials inquire about sexual violence and sexual harassment during the hiring process.³⁸ In addition, UW convened a work group that contributed to the development of the policies and provided additional recommendations. In doing research to develop the policies, the work group found that defamation suits resulting from one institution passing on information about a previous employee's record on harassment were rare and not a cause for significant concern.³⁹ Benya explained that UW's experience, which has so far been successful, indicates that efforts to stop passing the harasser are both feasible and important.

Holding an institution accountable to changing culture can be difficult and will require an intentional change management strategy. Sharing information across organizations on effective change strategies is critical to advancing knowledge in the field.

Recommendations for Future Actions

Developing Collaboratives to Share Knowledge and Support Innovation

Implementing change requires planning, organization, and determination by collaborative groups. Panelist Frazier Benya described one example of a well-developed action collaborative: the National Academies' Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. The National Academies convenes over 60 higher education institutions and research organizations to engage, learn, and take action to prevent sexual harassment. The Action Collaborative raises awareness, shares policies and strategies, sets research agendas, and develops standards for measuring progress. They have also established leadership, advisory, and work groups that commit to take action within organizations and engage the community within their organizations and in higher education more broadly. This model can be expanded to different types of organizations and can be used to bring

multiple employers together or within a single organization. The collaborative hosts public events, such as the 2019 Summit, where panelists and participants discuss sexual harassment in higher education and share promising practices.⁴⁰

Private-sector institutions can also collaborate to develop plans toward solving organization-specific issues of harassment. Panelist Ally Coll, president and cofounder of The Purple Campaign, shared the work her organization is doing to help firms develop action plans to prevent and address harassment. They are developing a certification program in collaboration with four major tech companies. Certification provides incentives for companies to “go above and beyond compliance requirements,” and working directly with The Purple Campaign helps them put that into action.⁴¹ Examples of collaboration like The Purple Campaign can also lay the groundwork for further collaboration with other public- and private-sector groups.

BOX 2

The Purple Campaign’s Recommended Action Goals

- Establish a set of shared norms
 - Ensure effective employee training
 - Improve internal reporting systems
 - Create fair investigation and adjudication procedures
 - Measure success and make improvements
 - Address the intersectionality of workplace harassment
-

Creating Opportunities for Future Convenings and Knowledge Sharing

In the survey following the convening, the most common feedback was that participants wished the meeting could have continued longer because there was so much to discuss. A follow-up convening is recommended to further explore the complex issues and practices at play in this space. Anne Mosle, co-director of the Aspen Institute Forum on Women and Girls, which held the cross sector convening that sparked this meeting, reiterated Aspen’s intention to continue those efforts to engage business, the sciences, academia, medicine, journalism, the entertainment industry, the military, and the

philanthropic and non-profit world to share insights, strategies, research, and ideas on these complex issues and practices. Particularly, many research questions deserve more attention and collaborative thought. Future convenings could focus on research issues such as best practices for studying what works and implementing evidence-based decisionmaking.

As a continuation of this work, the Urban Institute and other convening partners are exploring the possibility of assembling an online library of resources and information on helpful practices for preventing sexual harassment that would be available to the public and will continue the knowledge sharing from this convening.

Support for Research on Effectiveness of Actionable Practices

Finally, many people shared their experiences dealing with and developing responses to workplace sexual harassment, but there is a great need for more evidence and analytical research on harassment. There are many avenues for future research, which will help organizations develop best practices for preventing and responding to harassment. One area where research is needed is on effective metrics to measure and track progress on harassment prevention. Research on whether workplaces are measuring progress on harassment at all, how workplaces are measuring their progress, and data on how those organizations are improving would be a valuable starting place.

Additionally, more research is needed on reporting trends after enacting a new policy or implementing measures to change workplace climate. Though the goal of such changes would be to reduce harassment, it is likely that reports of harassment will rise for a while because employees increasingly trust the organization to handle harassment. But after some time, one would hope that reports would decline again, reflecting less harassment occurring after the organizational climate changes. We understand little about what trends in reporting actually occur after implementing changes, and research would help organizations know what to expect and what goals to set.

Once metrics to measure progress are identified and expectations of initial trends are understood, a clear area where research is needed is in measuring the effectiveness of different practices. Such research would help organizations determine which practices are most useful in which scenarios, allowing them to tailor to their organization's needs and reduce harassment by the greatest amount. Understanding which practices are most effective is critical in successful implementation of change, and there must be research into this topic.

With effectiveness research and resource sharing, organizations can understand which of the many promising practices discussed here work best and focus on resolving workplace sexual harassment. Even as improvements are made, we must continue to share, innovate, try new practices, and generate evidence of what works.

Appendix. Convening Agenda

Best Practices and Approaches for Addressing Harassment in the STEM Workplace: How to Lead in Today's Environment

Date: October 30, 2019

Location: AGU Headquarters 2000 Florida Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009

Time: 8:15 am – 5:00 pm

Designed for STEM industry and tech sector leaders, this interactive forum, consisting of a total of approximately 50 high-level officials and subject matter experts, will share leading practices and latest research on preventing and responding to sexual harassment in STEM, while also addressing interrelated issues, and existing research needs.

The forum is sponsored through funding by Rockefeller Family Fund and is organized by AGU, the Urban Institute, the National Women's Law Center. The Aspen Institute Forum on Women and Girls also joins us as a supportive partner.

Agenda

8:15 am: Networking Breakfast Available

9:00 am: Welcome / Goals and Introductions (*Hosts: Robin Bell, AGU President; and Billy Williams AGU Vice President for Ethics Diversity and Inclusion*)

9:30 am: Today's Challenges, Latest Research and Innovative Practices (*Moderator: Anne Mosle, Vice President, Aspen Institute*)

- Latest Research and Key Findings and Recommendations from The National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine. - Frazier Benya, Senior Program Officer, National Academy of Sciences
- Understanding Inequality in the Culture and Climate of STEM Work Environments: Results from the STEM Inclusion Study - Erin Cech, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Michigan
- Anti-harassment and D&I Training – Foundational Models, What's Working and What's Not - Stephanie Goodwin, Director of Faculty Development and Leadership, Wright State University,
- Corporate View / Challenges and Leading Approaches from the Tech Sector - Teresa Hutson, Deputy General Counsel, Microsoft

11:00 am: Technology as part of the Solution: Leveraging Technology to Help Impact Change (*Moderator: Emily Martin, Vice President, National Women's Law Center*)

- Emerging New Comparative Work Climate Survey Tools for Departmental Assessments – C.K. Gunsalus, Director of the National Center for Professional and Research Ethics, University of Illinois
- Anonymous Data, Complaint Accountability and Trusted Effective Response: Using AI to Help Leverage Organizational Resources - Lisa Gelobter, Founder and CEO of tEquitable

- Use of Technology to Empower Survivors and to Influence Civil Behavior - Angela Hall, Associate Professor, School of Human Resources and Labor Relations, Michigan State University
- Technology Developments and High Impact Applications from the STEM Industry Sector - Blair Marks, Vice President, Ethics and Business Conduct, Lockheed Martin

12:30 p.m. Lunch Available

12:45 pm: Working Lunch: Keynote Interviews and Moderated Discussion – Organizational Accountability (Moderator: Jenny Yang, Senior Fellow, the Urban Institute)

- Ally Coll, President and Co-founder of the Purple Campaign
- Chai Feldblum, Partner and Director of Workplace Culture Consulting at Morgan Lewis, Past Commissioner of the U.S. EEOC
- Camille Olson, Chairperson of the United States Chamber of Commerce's Equal Employment Opportunity ("EEO") Subcommittee

1:45 pm: Break Out Sessions: Beyond Legal Compliance: Corporate and Institutional Leadership—Sharing What Works (*Moderator: Maya Raghu, Senior Counsel, National Women's Law Center*)

Voluntary Sharing Corporate Practices and Leverageable Lessons for STEM Professionals: Discussion and Report Back, Break-out Sessions

- Topics will be informed by the questions attendees identify during their introductions as the most important questions for us to discuss today.

2:30 pm Report Back from Breakout Sessions

3:15 pm: Key Reflections and Going Forward - All (*Moderated by Planning Team: Jenny, Maya, Emily, Billy*)

- Research Needs and Key Take-aways: Suggestions for Next Steps and Potential Future Forums
- Wrap up – Closing Comments

4:00 pm: Networking Social Hour

Planning Committee

- Jenny R. Yang, Senior Fellow, Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population, the Urban Institute; Past Chair and Commissioner of the U.S. EEOC
- Maya Raghu, Director of Workplace Equality and Senior Counsel, National Women's Law Center
- Emily Martin, Vice President for Education and Workplace Justice, National Women's Law Center
- Billy M. Williams, Vice President for Ethics Diversity and Inclusion, AGU

Notes

- ¹ Frazier Benya, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.
- ² Sharyn Tejani, National Women's Law Center.
- ³ Erin Cech, University of Michigan.
- ⁴ Erin Cech, University of Michigan.
- ⁵ Erin Cech, University of Michigan.
- ⁶ "Stories," #MeTooSTEM, accessed March 25, 2019, <https://metoostem.com/stories/>; Elephant in the Valley, <https://www.elephantinthevalley.com/>.
- ⁷ Breakout groups 1,2, and 4.
- ⁸ Julie Flowers, Chevron.
- ⁹ Camille Olson, Seyfarth Shaw.
- ¹⁰ Camille Olson, Seyfarth Shaw.
- ¹¹ Camille Olson, Seyfarth Shaw.
- ¹² Jessica Kuchta-Miller and Chuck Howard, International Ombudsman Association.
- ¹³ Jessica Kuchta-Miller and Chuck Howard, International Ombudsman Association.
- ¹⁴ Jessica Kuchta-Miller and Chuck Howard, International Ombudsman Association.
- ¹⁵ Lisa Gelobter, tEquitable.
- ¹⁶ Lisa Gelobter, tEquitable.
- ¹⁷ Janine Zweig and Emily Tiry, "Three Lessons Businesses Can Learn from Uber's Collecting and Reporting Sexual Assault Data," *Urban Wire* (blog), Urban Institute, December 6, 2019, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/three-lessons-businesses-can-learn-ubers-collecting-and-reporting-sexual-assault-data>.
- ¹⁸ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "New Training Program on Respectful Workplaces," press release, October 4, 2017, <https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/10-4-17.cfm>.
- ¹⁹ Blair Marks, Lockheed Martin.
- ²⁰ Blair Marks, Lockheed Martin.
- ²¹ See the website for Safe Spaces and Workplaces at <https://www.safespacesandworkplaces.com/>.
- ²² Rachael Wong, Safe Spaces and Workplaces.
- ²³ Ruchika Tulshyan, "More Companies Need Transparency on Sexual-Harassment Cases," *Seattle Times*, April 17, 2019, <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/more-companies-need-transparency-on-sexual-harassment-cases/>.
- ²⁴ Chai Feldblum, Morgan Lewis.
- ²⁵ Chai Feldblum, Morgan Lewis.
- ²⁶ Teresa Hutson, Microsoft.
- ²⁷ Teresa Hutson, Microsoft.

- ²⁸ Breakout group 5.
- ²⁹ Ally Coll, The Purple Campaign.
- ³⁰ Jenny Yang, Urban Institute.
- ³¹ Welcome and introductions session.
- ³² Jenny Yang, Urban Institute.
- ³³ Chai Feldblum, Morgan Lewis.
- ³⁴ Breakout groups 3 and 5.
- ³⁵ Megan Clifford, Argonne National Laboratory.
- ³⁶ Quinn Williams, University of Wisconsin System.
- ³⁷ Quinn Williams, University of Wisconsin System.
- ³⁸ Quinn Williams, University of Wisconsin System.
- ³⁹ Quinn Williams, University of Wisconsin System.
- ⁴⁰ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education: 2019 Public Summit. Available at <https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/11-19-2019/action-collaborative-on-preventing-sexual-harassment-in-higher-education-2019-public-summit>.
- ⁴¹ Ally Coll, The Purple Campaign.

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Jenny R. Yang is a senior fellow in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute where she is developing a new Workplace Equity Initiative. As structural and technological changes transform work, she is working to revitalize our country's workplace laws and employment practices to build a future that advances opportunity for all to work with dignity. She served as chair, vice chair, and commissioner of the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) from 2013 to 2018. Under her leadership, the Commission launched the Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace to identify innovative solutions to prevent harassment at work. Yang led efforts to tackle systemic barriers to opportunity, including enhancing the EEOC's annual data collection to include employer reporting of pay data and studying the EEOC's systemic work over the past decade, culminating in the public report *Advancing Opportunity: A Review of EEOC's Systemic Program*. Yang created new procedures for public input on guidance documents to promote transparency and launched digital systems to facilitate online charge information.

Yang is also a strategic partner with Working IDEAL, where she assists employers in comprehensive harassment prevention efforts, independent investigations, and in the design and implementation of employment practices to promote diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity.

Batia Katz is a research assistant in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, where she researches workforce development. Katz's previous research experience includes studying the science labor market, the impact of personality traits on employment outcomes, and gender and family in the workforce. Katz graduated with high honors from Haverford College, where she earned a BA in economics.

Best Practices and Approaches for Addressing Harassment in the STEM Workplace: *How to Lead in Today's Environment*

**October 30, 2019
Washington, DC**

Forum Attendees

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Ally Coll

The Purple Campaign

Andrea Camp

The Aspen Institute

Andrea Gilliam

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