April 10, 2019

EMBARGOED: NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE BEFORE 11 A.M. EDT ON APRIL 10

National Academies Join Colleges and Universities to Launch Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

WASHINGTON -- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine have joined with over 40 colleges, universities, and research institutions to launch an Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education.

The purpose of the action collaborative is to bring together academic leaders and key stakeholders to prevent sexual harassment across all disciplines and among all people in higher education. The action collaborative is designed to be an active space where colleges, universities, and research and training organizations can research and develop efforts that move beyond basic legal compliance to evidence-based policies and practices for addressing and preventing all forms of sexual harassment.

Twenty-eight of the institutions joined the National Academies in founding the action collaborative at the beginning of this year; their statement on founding the action collaborative can be found at www.nationalacademies.org/sexualharassmentcollaborative. These founding members provided the initial support to start work and helped refine the goals and plans for the action collaborative during a meeting in March. In the weeks since, additional colleges, universities, and research institutions have become members, bringing the total membership to 43 institutions.

The action collaborative builds on the National Academies’ 2018 report Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, which found that between 20 percent and 50 percent of female students and more than 50 percent of female faculty and staff experienced sexually harassing behavior while in academia. The report provides a road map with a range of promising practices for preventing sexual harassment, such as using bystander intervention, producing annual reports to convey that reports of sexual harassment are taken seriously and people are held accountable, and combining anti-harassment efforts with programs to promote civility and respect.

“It’s exciting to see academic institutions come together to address sexual harassment in a collective, structural approach to ending long-standing patterns of discrimination,” said Elizabeth Hillman, president of Mills College, a member of the action collaborative’s leadership group, and a member of the study committee that wrote the 2018 report.

The four main goals of the action collaborative are to:
• raise awareness about sexual harassment and how it occurs, the consequences of sexual harassment, and the organizational characteristics and recommended approaches that can prevent it;
• share and elevate evidence-based institutional policies and strategies to reduce and prevent sexual harassment;
• contribute to setting the research agenda, and gather and apply research results across institutions; and
• develop a standard for measuring progress toward reducing and preventing sexual harassment in higher education.
The action collaborative will also deal with the issue of sexual harassment in the context of other damaging behavior, including incivility, bullying, and other forms of harassment such as racial harassment.

“We hope that going forward even more colleges, universities, and other organizations will join us in our efforts,” said Frazier Benya, a senior program officer at the National Academies who is directing the action collaborative. Institutions that are interested in joining or learning more about the action collaborative can contact Dr. Benya at fbenya@nas.edu. Information about the action collaborative, along with letters of commitment from member institutions, can be found at www.nationalacademies.org/sexualharassmentcollaborative.

The members of the action collaborative are listed below, with the founding members in bold:

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University of California Berkeley

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April 5, 2019

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
500 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: The Los Angeles Community College District Commitment Statement in support of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

The National Academies report on *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018)* found that between 20 and 50 percent of women students and more than 50 percent of women faculty and staff experienced sexually harassing behavior while in academia. Research demonstrates that sexual harassment undermines women’s professional and educational attainment and their mental and physical health. It also shows that these consequences are not limited to those experiencing it directly; but that bystanders – both men and women – who experience ambient harassment in their work or education environment are also affected and this in turn affects organizations as employees disengage, withdraw, and leave their work so as not to become the next target.

*The report concludes that system-wide changes to the culture and climate in higher education are needed and provides a roadmap for higher education to make these changes.*

Our mission here at the Los Angeles Community College District is to foster student success for all by providing equitable and supportive learning environments at our nine colleges that serve over 200,000 students annually. This mission is fulfilled only if we actively create diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments that convey sexual harassment is not welcomed or tolerated, and actively work to mitigate or eliminate factors in our environment that contributing to allowing sexual harassment to occur.

To advance efforts to prevent and effectively respond to sexual harassment, the Los Angeles Community College District is proudly joining other institutions and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to form an *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education*. This Action Collaborative will facilitate partnerships and joint action on addressing and preventing sexual harassment.

Together, with the other institutional members of the Action Collaborative, we aim to achieve targeted, collective action toward evidence-based policies and practices at the individual and systems levels for addressing and preventing all forms of sexual harassment and promoting a culture of civility and respect.

The four goals of the Action Collaborative are to:

1. Raise awareness about sexual harassment and how it occurs, the consequences of sexual harassment, and the organizational characteristics and recommended approaches that can prevent it.
2. Share and elevate evidence-based institutional policies and strategies to reduce and prevent sexual harassment.

3. Contribute to setting the research agenda, and gather and apply research results across institutions.

4. Develop a standard for measuring progress toward reducing and preventing sexual harassment in higher education.

**With this letter, the Los Angeles Community College District does hereby commit to support the goals of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education*.**

Sincerely,

Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Chancellor
Los Angeles Community College District
April 11, 2019

Dear LACCD Colleagues –

We are proud to announce that LACCD has joined the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and 27 other colleges and universities to establish an Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. The purpose of the Action Collaborative is to bring together academic leaders and key stakeholders to prevent sexual harassment across all disciplines and among all people in higher education.

The Action Collaborative builds on the National Academies’ 2018 report Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018), which found that between 20 and 50 percent of women students and more than 50 percent of women faculty and staff have experienced sexually harassing behavior while in academia. The Action Collaborative is designed to be an active space where colleges, universities, and research and training organizations can develop and research efforts that move beyond basic legal compliance to evidence-based policies and practices for addressing and preventing all forms of sexual harassment.

The four main goals of the Action Collaborative are to:

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

The Action Collaborative will also deal with the issue of sexual harassment in the context of other damaging behavior, including incivility, bullying, and other forms of harassment, such as racial harassment. This effort builds perfectly on the work the district engaged in last year with the Title IX/Sexual Harassment Task Force chaired by Board Vice President Andra Hoffman.

Achieving these goals is no small task, but we are confident that together we can make our colleges a space where sexual harassment cannot and does not thrive, and where our students, faculty, and staff are able to achieve their goals and ambitions, and reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D.  
Chancellor

Michael Fong  
Board of Trustees President

Andra Hoffman  
Board of Trustees Vice President