



*NEWS*

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**The International Ombudsman Association’s Commitment Statement in Support of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

**Seattle, WA (12 June 2019)**—The International Ombudsman Association (IOA), along with other esteemed organizations, has partnered with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to form an *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education*. This Action Collaborative aims to achieve targeted, collective action toward evidence-based policies and practices for addressing and preventing all forms of sexual harassment and promoting a culture of civility and respect.

A 2018 NASEM report on *Sexual Harassment of Women* 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 the professional and educational attainment and mental and physical health of people of all genders. It also shows that these consequences are not limited to those experiencing it directly. Bystanders of all genders 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 *Sexual Harassment of Women* 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.

The IOA hereby commits to support the goals of the NASEM Action Collaborative of:

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

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**About IOA:** The International Ombudsman Association is a member-led, professional association committed to supporting organizational ombuds worldwide. The Association's nearly 900 members help others safely navigate conflict and change in corporations, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, government entities, and non-governmental organizations across the globe. IOA provides professional development, networking, mentoring, and other resources, as well as a robust and engaging annual conference. Learn more at [ombudsassociation.org](http://ombudsassociation.org).