

Office of the Provost

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University Discrimination and Harassment Policy Review - January 2021

Dear Members of the Harvard Community,

One of the priorities of this University is to provide an environment where each of us can feel safe to participate fully in the life of the University, whether we are studying, teaching, conducting research, or working in other ways.

Today, as part of this ongoing commitment, we are embarking upon a community-driven effort to examine how we address discrimination and harassment at Harvard. I have invited faculty, students, and staff from across the University's Schools and units to help us to review existing policies and, where appropriate, develop new University-wide policies and procedures concerning three main areas: sexual misconduct, discrimination, and bullying.

The University Discrimination and Bullying Policy Steering Committee and Working Groups, which have been formed in accordance with stipulations made in our negotiations with the Harvard Graduate Students Union, will begin their work over the coming weeks, and there will be opportunities throughout the process for community members to share their input and experiences.

A few notes about the responsibilities of each group:

Sexual harassment

Last August, the University enacted two interim policies and procedures regarding sexual harassment in response to new Title IX regulations from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). The policies are not yet final because the DOE set a deadline for colleges and universities to enact a compliant policy that was too short to allow for substantial input from members of the community. The Title IX Policy and Other Sexual Misconduct Policy Working Group has been charged with revisiting these two interim policies and procedures to ensure they are as effective and inclusive as possible, while remaining compliant with federal law.

Non-Discrimination

The Non-Discrimination Policy Working Group will make recommendations to address forms of prohibited discrimination other than sexual and gender-based harassment. This group will suggest procedures by which such

complaints will be investigated and resolved, and it will also advise on how these policies, as well as mechanisms to address violations, could be made more visible and accessible to members of the Harvard community.

Anti-Bullying

The Anti-Bullying Working Group will recommend University-wide policies and procedures to address complaints about misconduct that do not violate policies against sexual and gender-based harassment or other forms of prohibited discrimination, but which nonetheless may be abusive and/or intimidating to student workers and other members of the Harvard community. In particular, this group will address complaints about power-based harassment and other misconduct by individuals who hold authority over others.

Input from the Harvard community will be an important part of this process, and opportunities to share your thoughts with members of the working groups will be announced over the coming months. The membership and the detailed charges for each group have been posted [here](#), and outreach details will be included on this site once they are available.

I am grateful to the individuals who have agreed to be a part of this important effort and look forward to their recommendations.

Sincerely,

Alan M. Garber AB '77, PhD '82
Provost
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