

Sexual harassment

Problem plagues both women, men

By LORI PUTNAM
Of the Emerald

In one women's bathroom on campus is a short list of professors who allegedly sexually harass female students.

But because sexual harassment is such a touchy issue, the transition from bathroom-wall scribble to an affirmative action complaint often is shunned.

Under the Civil Rights Act, sexual harassment is considered sexual discrimination. Although many admit it's a

ing sexual harassment is its broad definition.

Defined by the University as any "unwanted and repeated sexual remarks and behavior," harassment can be anything from crude joking to rape.

McFadden says "repeated" in the definition is important because a comment may be harassment to one person and a compliment to another. "All of us are socially inept some of the time."

Women should tell men when

not respond is considered un-masculine.

Despite the difficulties in defining and reporting sexual harassment, the University has what is considered a good weapon to stop harassment — a formal and informal internal grievance system.

Complaints usually are resolved through an informal procedure. A staff member talks to the accused offender without identifying the student who made the complaint. No one at the University has filed a formal sexual harassment grievance in two years, McFadden says.

The affirmative action office will sponsor a workshop on sexism and sexual harassment in the spring, and McFadden says Acting University Pres. Paul Olum will re-issue a memo on sexual harassment to all professors and staff members.

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'Harassment is a power play and an abuse of authority.'

problem on campus, no one knows its scope.

Affirmative action director Bean McFadden says she can't tell if harassment problems at the University are increasing or decreasing.

Members of the Eugene Women's Council and the Rape Relief Hotline also say they are unsure of the extent of sexual harassment in the Eugene area.

Regardless, sexual harassment is considered a serious problem that can — and does — affect students.

National studies indicate women are embarrassed to report sexual harassment incidents. Several myths keep women from reporting harassment, the reports show, including the idea that harassment is a personal matter between a man and a woman. According to this view, working women or students who "can't handle the heat should return to the kitchen."

Another myth is that women must have done something provocative to bring on the harassment. But McFadden says sexual harassment has nothing to do with sex or romance.

"Sexual harassment," she says, "is a power play and an abuse of one's position of authority."

Another problem with report-

they're offended or uncomfortable by a comment, McFadden advises.

But this solution isn't perfect.

According to one report, men and women are socialized to believe women are coy and like to play "hard to get."

Secondly, women who face harassment from men in authority positions may not be in a position to refuse sexual advances. Working women with children may not have the option of quitting a job because of harassment.

Sexual harassment can also come from classmates, co-workers and clients who can use subtle pressure to make the classroom or office uncomfortable.

Co-workers can use harassment as a power tool. It's a way for a man to reduce a woman he sees as potential competition to a cute girl or sex object, the study says.

And harassment is not limited to women. University GTF Dan Henry says he has been harassed by women, once by a student.

"One woman told me I would be damned to hell if I didn't have intimate relations with her," he says.

Women can make a man feel guilty if he refuses her advances, Henry says, because to

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