

# Harassment

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part of an employees personnel file and are not open to inspection.

Sexual harassment grievances filed through the University Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity have declined since 1994, when 10 were filed. In the last year, however, Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) reported a 20 percent increase in calls to its 24-hour support and crisis hotline. In addition, the U.S. Department of Justice reports an increase in sexual violence, while other crimes

have decreased.

There are basically two kinds of sexual harassment, Moore said. The first kind — trading grades for sexual favors — used to be the most common. These are the “go out with me or you’ll fail my class” types of sexual harassment, he said.

Now the most common kind of sexual harassment is the creation of a hostile environment through offensive comments or materials.

“I admonish [University employees] not to engage in these behaviors,” Moore said.

In addition, Moore reminds faculty members that they should be reporting any incidences of sexual harassment to his office.

“I advise them — strongly advise them — that if a student comes to them with these things, that they can and should be reporting these things to us,” he said.

Moore noted that the severity of the sexual harassment grievances he sees has declined along with the number of grievances. Moore’s office recorded three sexual harassment grievances in 1999 and one thus far in 2000, but “it’s still very underreported — that’s common knowledge across the country,” he added.

There are many reasons for victims of sexual harassment to remain silent. Associate Dean of Stu-

Efforts to rid the University of sexually hostile environments have tended to overlook comments and materials that could be offensive to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students.

Chicora Martin, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Educational and Support Services Program, said that she encourages University professors to always assume that there is an LGBT individual in their classroom.

“You have professors who don’t realize the climate they’re creating,” she said. “A professor could be talking about an effeminate man in history, and maybe he begins to talk with a lisp or bend his wrist. They’ve just alienated one or more of their students.”

Making anti-gay jokes and perpetuating stereotypes are the two most common ways a hostile environment can be created in the classroom, Martin said.

She said many LGBT students are not very likely to report sexual harassment.

“A student is more likely to drop a class or switch professors than to go through grievance procedures,” she said.

Students Laura Blake Jones, said victims of sexual harassment often have lots of difficult things to deal with including emotional, health and academic problems as a result of their ordeal. Making a formal complaint is not always high on the person’s list of priorities.

“There’s a whole myriad of things that people need support around,” she said. The Office of Student Life is one of many resources on campus and off that provide support for victims of sexual violence, including harass-

ment. “We’re trying to work on under-reporting,” she said. “It’s a fine line between wanting underreporting to go away and respecting a student who wants to not report for various reasons.”

Victims of sexual harassment are often sought out by alleged perpetrators because they may be vulnerable, accessible or lack credibility, said Sheryl Eyster, associate director of the Office of Student Life.

Students who are sexually harassed often suffer academically; their self-esteem suffers, too, she said. “It really does impact their ability to be successful,” she said.

Martin said she is working with a Bias Response Team to develop formal ways to report and respond to all types of bias-type speech.

In addition, she is holding a workshop in November on how to create an inclusive classroom. For more information, contact Martin at 346-1134.

**Many resources are available on campus and in the community for victims of sexual harassment, as well as those interested in learning more about how sexual harassment can be prevented:**

- Sexual Assault Support Services, 24-hour crisis line (541) 343-7277 or 1-800-788-4727
- University Department of Public Safety, 24-hour emergency help, 346-5444
- Office of Student Life, 346-3212
- Office of Student Advocacy, 346-3722
- Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity, 346-3123

Sexual harassment cases often come down to “he said, she said” scenarios. In this situation, decisions are often made based on the credibility of the parties involved, she said.

Hilary Berkman, director of the Office of Student Advocacy, an ASUO program, said her office can provide assistance to students who have been sexually harassed and are trying to prepare their cases.

In addition, the OSA can refer victims interested in taking action against the University to outside agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Bureau of Labor and Industries or private attorneys in the area who specialize in civil rights cases.

Katie Antos, community education coordinator for SASS, said that victims of sexual harassment who come forward are often blamed for what has happened. They’re not rewarded for reporting and they fear that nothing will happen to the harasser.

But Antos said asking why people choose not to report sexual harassment is the wrong approach. People are failing to ask key questions such as, “Why does the offender harass? And what is it about our society that makes it okay to harass?”

“This is a significant social problem, and it’s one we need to talk about,” she said.

Antos suggests that people raise their awareness about sexual harassment, become aware of stereotypes and stop sexist jokes. She added that people should “never support the idea that someone is to blame if they’ve been harassed.”



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## Calendar

Monday, Oct. 9

**Exhibition:** Painting by John Flenor and Aaron Foster; multi-media by Simrat Khalsa. 10 a.m.—4 p.m. LaVerne Krause Gallery, Lawrence Hall, 1190 Franklin Blvd. Free. Reception 7-9 p.m.

**Information Technology Workshops:** The IT Curriculum offers computer and Internet training for everyone on campus, novice to advanced. No preregistration needed. Rooms 144, 235, 267B and Studio A, Knight Library, 1501 Kincaid St. Free.

**Presentation:** Chad Smith, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, holds a community meeting for all area Cherokees at 4:30 pm and a public lecture at 7:30 pm. 175 Knight Law Ctr. Free.