

## Leadership in Academic Climate Excellence (LACE)



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The #metoo and #TimesUp movements have spread from Hollywood to the Supreme Court. As political scientists we specialize in the study of power, and so are uniquely qualified to address issues of power inequalities in organizations. We also are equipped with the tools to identify, document, and address power relations and power disparities, through data collection, analysis, and dissemination. And we have the methods for data, accuracy, transparency, and confidentiality.

The political scientists of this hackathon group are committed to promoting a positive academic climate for faculty and students that allows all members of political science departments to thrive in our departments, on our campuses and beyond. Central to our concerns are gender, racial, and sexual harassment and assault, reporting inconsistencies, process of response, consequences, and enforcement related to incidents. We believe that these can be addressed effectively only through addressing the broader issues of climate. There are many ways to transform academic climate to be more inclusive and respectful, but often the most effective transformations require organic approaches in which all members of a unit are engaged. Moreover, approaches that draw on instructive and constructive approaches, rather than punitive approaches, can be more effective.

With these lessons in mind, and the tools we already have in hand as political scientists, we propose the following recommendations. Top among these is establishing a certification process, led by the APSA, that develops a set of guidelines to encourage departments to take initiatives to improve climate and to render those initiatives and their impacts more visible to the broader APSA community: LACE (Leadership in Academic Climate Excellence). Positive certification can be used by departments to advertise themselves to prospective job candidates and students as a positive place to work and study.

1. We recommend to APSA the development of a certification process, modeled in LEED, that will set in place positive incentives for the development of positive academic climates among all its member institutions. We suggest the name LACE: Leadership in Academic Climate Excellence. Academic units that meet the standards set out by LACE will be given positive ratings -- a signal to prospective job candidates and students that can be mentioned in job ads and recruitment literature -- that the unit has sought to create an environment that is hospitable to individuals of all kinds.

We suggest the oversight body for this ASPA LACE program be integrated with the ASPA status committees, as a standing committee or part of an existing committee.

We suggest that the certification process include the following components:

1. Departmental buy-in into the APSA-backed regularly implemented standard survey of:
  - a) faculty; response rate of at least 75%
  - b) graduate students; response rate of at least 75%

- c) Undergraduate majors; response rate of at least 10%
- 2. Establishment of multiple channels for survivors and bystanders to report incidents of sexual harassment or other forms of misconduct
- 3. Conduct bystander training for departmental members once every three years.
- 4. Transparent reporting of the results and handling of sexual assault and harassment reports yearly, going back at least ten years
- 5. Tracking and transparent reporting of hiring, tenure, promotion, and retention by rank, race, gender, sexual orientation yearly, going back at least ten years.
- 6. Gender and diversity analysis of undergraduate and graduate syllabi (for example using genderizer).

We now describe several of these checklist items in more detail as separable recommendations.

2. Develop a climate survey of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates (which could be implemented as part of LACE (#1 above))

- a. Survey data includes (climate, recruitment, retention, promotion, individual student and faculty attitudes on sexual harassment and assault, levels of trust in institutions, perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment or assault, willingness to become active bystanders, etc)
- b. Report out aggregated data
- c. Include professional organization memberships: organized sections, conferences, and perhaps job market experience

3. Require bystander awareness and reporting training

- a. Sexual harassment is an element of the broader climate. We need to support and improve the climate bottom up, through the community. It reinforces and builds social norms and social enforcement.
- b. Bystander training is shown to be highly effective. [data??]
- c. Bystander may be able to report incidents of sexual misconduct
- d. Develop an APSA grievance procedure to offer another entry point for reporting.
- e. Tie outcomes of grievance hearings to consequences, including APSA-levied penalties including banning from meetings, and refusing to publish in APSA journals

4. Information Transparency

- a. Report aggregate information about incidents that includes:
  - i. Roles of those involved (faculty, grad students, undergraduates, staff)
  - ii. Type of incident
  - iii. Outcomes: the consequence or punishment. Public knowledge of outcomes is crucial for trust in the system.

- b. Although incident reporting ideally would happen at the university level, departments can lobby for it

We also recommend the following:

5. Adoption of an incident reporting tool discipline-wide. Callisto is an excellent platform.
  - a. Keep a record of disciplinary actions that move with the perpetrator when the perpetrator moves from one university to another
6. Basic guidelines for chairs
  - a. Bear in mind the problem that delegation means that a community might become complacent; this is a cultural problem that can only be solved through a community
  - b. Need multiple pathways of reporting (more on this below)
7. Sponsor a campaign similar to the NCAA "It's on Us" series of ads (NASPA also has some materials that might be of interest, specifically their "Culture of Respect" campaign)
  - a. Leading scholars in the field make public statements (videos, tweets, etc.) saying that they believe that reporting sexual harassment is important
  - b. Departments talk about their best practices for how they handle sexual harassment cases
  - c. Perhaps a twitter campaign #whenI'mdean where our community can suggest how they'd change culture or how harassment would be punished (ie, broaden the hack!)
8. Investigate and disseminate restorative justice best practices
  - a. Model from Dalhousie U?
  - b. Bear in mind that restorative justice
    - i. Requires Complete buy-in
    - ii. Works best horizontally---when perpetrator & survivor are at the same level
    - iii. Some senior status people might use restorative justice to dodge punishment
9. At APSA meetings, there should be a telephone/text hotline for receiving sexual harassment and assault reports, by an expert trained in trauma, etc.
10. APSA should consider disciplinary tools such as disallowing APSA membership, disallowing participation in APSA conferences, and disallowing publication in APSA journals. These are tools that APSA has that universities do not have. APSA also has fewer conflict of interest issues than universities, which have the incentive to discourage complaints and protect faculty.

**Here are lingering issues and considerations:**

1. Grievance procedures must have multiple points of entry to eliminate bottlenecks

2. Mandated training has backfired, breeding resentment. The LACE system encourages local adoption, adaptation, innovation and initiation.
3. Mandated reporting can have [negative and positive repercussions](http://genderpolicyreport.umn.edu/gender-policy-dialogues/).  
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- Key problem in many universities' interpretation with legal requirements governing reporting: faculty are compelled to report any incident they hear about. Suppresses early discussion and guidance, probably ultimately depresses reporting.
4. Many departments have a "whisper network"---everyone in the network knows whom to avoid. Is there a way to make this public? How do we avoid defamation, or descending into the dismal depths of polisci rumours (<https://www.poliscirumors.com/>).
5. APSA can't do everything, but can do something, especially about serial perpetrators who move from one university to another. No more blank slates.
6. NSF has considered cutting off funding to PIs found guilty of sexual misconduct.
  - a. Need to make sure that graduate students who are dependent on the funding are not negatively affected
7. Need to end bottlenecks where one person can pocket grievances.
8. Confer on best practices and recommended practices from other disciplines,<sup>1</sup> APSA status committees, APSA #RESPECT.



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/member-docs/report-on-professional-climate>