CASE STUDY LIBRARY

4. The Distressing Annual Meeting

Case Study 4 falls within several categories: incidents at conferences; incidents during conferences, but off-site; incidents involving people who are too big to fail; and incidents involving structural inequity, i.e., a combination of structural/cultural/institutional barriers that create the inequity."

A biracial, gender non-conforming, recent Ph.D. applying for a university fellowship attends a society annual meeting, arranged by the society's in-coming President, who is also chair of the department offering the fellowship, to vet leading candidates. The Ph.D experiences microaggressions and bias—comments/questions that are dismissive, demeaning, stereotyped, "old-school," and inattentive to identity needs.

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Introduction: How to Use the Case Study and Supplemental Materials

The "Case Study" Documents

Section 1 of this document contains only the "**Facts**" of the case study with related "**Pause & Process**" questions, which also segment the facts into digestible chunks.

Section 2 of this document analyzes the facts. It repeats within gray boxes the relevant "Facts" for each segment and its associated "Pause & Process" questions within light grey boxes. Additional content supports individual analysis and/or group discussion, including suggested:

- **Responses** to the "Pause & Process" questions and related analysis of that section of the fact pattern;
- **Actions to Prevent or Remedy** harm that could have been taken; and
- **Review** items – resources and tools that can be used when considering what actions to take.
  These resources and tools can be found on the Consortium webpage: **Societies Consortium on Sexual Harassment in STEMM.** The Compendium of Existing Resources is available publicly. Model policies and tools require members to log in. In addition, members can find resources and peer support by visiting the **Consortium LinkedIn Platform (CLIP**) -- A members-only space for collaboration and thought-partnership.

Using the Documents

(1) **Individual learners: Read Section 1 *before* reading Section 2's "Response" and "Action" steps**. Consider each "Pause & Process" question; it may be helpful to record your thoughts. Then, go to Section 2 to review the analysis. Do the offered responses reflect your own thoughts and experiences? Are there any differences between your experiences and those of individuals in the case study? Do your views, or the offered responses, change if the aim is to create a field where people of all identities and stages of career are welcomed and able to thrive?

For additional resources and actions an individual can take, refer to the following **Supplemental Materials**:

Section 5. Reflection Questions for Individual Action

Section 6. National Support Resources

Facilitators of group learning sessions: Each Case Study is designed for flexible use and provides options. A Case Study can be **segmented into bite-size chunks—one for each group of "Pause & Process" question(s)—to create a stand-alone 1-2 hour learning experience.** A note at the start of Section 2 identifies several "Pause & Process" segments that can also be **chunked together to create a 2-3 hour learning experience**. Include the "Introduction" in any chunk to set the stage (the facts and background on each main character to help participants develop empathy). Another option is to combine these short learning experiences **into a workshop series conducted over time, but that is not required.**

Some societies may want to start using a Case Study with one or two stakeholder groups (e.g., an ethics committee, leadership team, or a student group) and then expand out to include other stakeholders.

Facilitators are advised to give Section 1 (or the introduction and the segment(s) you will be addressing in your session) to participants as a stand-alone pre-read to prepare for group discussion and/or role playing. We advise not providing a preview of Section 2 (the analysis).

Section 2 is a Facilitator-only resource if the Case Study is used for group discussion. Review "Responses" to the "Pause & Process" questions ***in advance*** of facilitating a discussion for guidance on the scope of issues and how a group might examine them. Review suggested "Actions" for discussion ideas and steps societies and institutions can take to enhance their policies and practices to create more inclusive and equitable climate and culture within their organizations and fields more broadly.

Also review -- **Section 3. Facilitator Preparation and Practices (Supplemental Material)**—which provides additional guidance on up-front methods for establishing inclusive learning in group discussions, as well as some recommended practices for facilitating potentially difficult discussions.

Section 1. Facts and Scope of Issues

Section 1 details the events that took place during the case study and provides "Pause & Process" questions at key intervals, inviting the learner to consider the facts and events from a variety of perspectives, with a lens of empathy and reduced defensiveness, and to identify actions that might have prevented or mitigated the associated harms. We encourage learners to take a few moments for each question; it may be helpful to record your thoughts. In Section 2, we discuss and recommend actions for each Pause & Process question.

FACTS, Part 1 – Introduction:

Meet Dr. Smart. Tyler Smart, is a 30 year old, recent PhD graduate who is bi-racial, whose preferred pronouns are "they/them," and who is on a short list for a post-doctoral fellowship to be awarded by the Department of Civil Engineering (C-Eng. Department) at Tech University (TU). Dr. Smart has always wanted to be a scientist. Both of their parents have graduate degrees; their father, who is Black, has a PhD in transportation engineering. Dr. Smart (Junior) didn't identify to themselves as a girl or a boy and was an "outsider," even to the "nerds," in high school. For many years, they were bullied for being a "weirdo," and "tom boy." In college, Dr. Smart spent considerable time privately exploring their gender-identity and facing anxiety about being "outed," while maintaining a 4.0 average in their classes.

Dr. Smart's parents have grown to support Dr. Smart's non-binary identity. But, as a black scientist—always having been the "only one" and having to perform better than everyone else to be recognized as "good enough"—Dr. Smart's father counseled them against coming out publicly. When Dr. Smart joined the student chapter of Out in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (oSTEM) and came out in their first year of graduate studies, they were one of only two people of color in their graduate department and the only person who was gender non-conforming. While Dr. Smart generally dresses in conservative, male clothing, they are often addressed by colleagues as she instead of they and are sometimes asked "are you a woman or a man"—even when they choose to wear a name badge with their pronouns.

With the support of other gender non-binary scientists, Dr. Smart gained confidence and developed their communication skills. They earned their PhD and gained recognition and stellar recommendations from their Ph.D. program advisor and the research director of the civil engineering company that funds the research project addressed in their dissertation – the effective management of water resources in predominantly Black neighborhoods. Dr. Smart aspires to advance a diverse work force judged on the merit of their work—and seeks recognition that new perspectives born of diverse experiences is meritorious and, in fact, critical to avoid stagnation of science.

What happened at the conference?

TU's C-Eng. Department Chair, Professor King, a 63 year old, white, straight male, is also the president-elect of the American Civil Engineering Association (ACEA). Professor King made plans to vet the TU C-Eng. top fellowship prospects, including Dr. Smart, by arranging and having TU pay for them to attend ACEA's annual conference where they'd meet (and he'd get input from) prominent people in the field. Dr. Smart didn't know what to expect, as is typical for anyone in a new professional experience, but they had also previously been avoided by colleagues uncomfortable with their non-conforming gender identity and knew that some venues were unsafe for them. At the same time, they were encouraged by ACEA's well-publicized mission to advance a vibrant and diverse community for excellence in engineering fields, and excited to network at a society meeting, knowing that society contacts provide job opportunities, and that

advancement in the field depends on relationships with senior engineering faculty. Dr. Smart's anticipatory excitement dissipated during the meeting, however, and they wrote in their journal about the experience.

Pause & Process

1. **From Dr. Smart's, ACEA's, and TU C-Eng.'s perspectives,** what are the potential benefits and pitfalls of regulating or not regulating networking, and other employment interviews and opportunities at society meetings or events?
2. From **Dr. Smart's perspective,** did ACEA's stated mission help them to understand what conduct norms they could expect at the meeting?
3. Why did Dr. Smart write about their experiences in a journal rather than discuss their concerns with a colleague or mentor, or report their concerns to ACEA?

FACTS, Part 2 -- Day One – Morning (excerpted from Dr. Smart's Journal): I met with Professor King and Dr. Crow, ACEA's Chief Research Officer, another white male, after the opening plenary. After introducing myself and asking a few questions about the plenary, Dr. Crow asked me about my graduate school research. He said he knows my dissertation chair, Professor Powers, who is well respected for "high quality research." He remarked, "It's interesting that Powers was your dissertation chair. He must have wanted to try something different." Professor King then shared that TU's C-Eng. Department's search for a post-doctoral fellow who'd be "the right fit" had lasted more than nine months. When I asked what the right fit would be, he said, "Our postdocs work very closely with each other, the Department's faculty, and colleagues in ACEA activities. We just know the right person when we see him."

Pause & Process

4. **From Dr. Smart's perspective**, what is the likely impact of Dr. King's statement: "We know the right person when we see him"? What message does that selection criterion convey about the climate and culture—and about merit?
5. **From the perspectives of ACEA, TU C-Eng., and the field**, would the impact on Dr. Smart be different if Professor King responded, "In addition to excellent research skills we are looking for a candidate who brings innovative perspectives and has demonstrated a strong ability to work collaboratively with their peers in the research laboratory"?

FACTS, Part 3 -- Day One – Lunch: I started feeling more relaxed at my lunch with current TU C-Eng. Department postdocs, Jane, a white woman, and John, a white man—who are also ACEA early career peer reviewers. They seemed very interested in my research. However, after I shared the outcomes and my expectations for further research, John asked me if I'd ever done any substantive work. I found this shocking, after my overview, and because among recent doctorates, my research has been noticed for its potential in the field. I stated that my research is clearly substantive, but that I'm open to doing different types of research in the future. He then proceeded to explain to me the tenets of "quantitative research," as reflected in ACEA's reviewer orientation, which matched all the elements of my dissertation. I decided not to push the issue, however, as I might be working with John in the future if I were selected for the fellowship. After lunch, as Jane and I walked to the next session, she said John is "old school" and works with a professor who is a "dinosaur," but they're "harmless." Then, she touched my hair and commented, "I love what POCs can do with their hair." I was taken aback and pushed my hair behind my ears. Jane said she wished her hair could be styled into "different exotic, cool" styles.

Pause & Process

6. **From Dr. Smart's perspective**, what might be the impact if Jane interrupted John, "Sorry to stop you, John, but I'd like to learn more from Dr. Smart—she's one of Dr. King's top candidates for the fellowship and has done exceptional research." Impact from John's perspective? Would the impact be different if Jane were able to say to Dr. Smart, "there are some "old school" types in the engineering department, but there are increasing opportunities for early career professionals to bring new ideas and influence policies."
7. **From ACEA's and TU C-Eng.'s perspective**, is it ever appropriate at a professional event to touch another person's hair? Is it ever appropriate to comment on a person's appearance (e.g., "I love your hairstyle")? Should either answer be different based on the person's race? Gender? Whether the person is a "work friend"?

FACTS, Part 4 -- Day One – Drinks in the lobby after the meeting: I met with the head of the ACEA Directorate for Civil Engineering, Dr. Head, and the volunteer chair of the ACEA Annual Meeting Program Committee, Professor Vol, who is also tenured in the TU C-Eng. Department – both are white and male. I introduced myself and shared that my pronouns are they/them; Dr. Head and Professor Vol did not share their pronouns and kept referring to me as she/her. After exchanging pleasantries, I expressed my admiration of ACEA's leadership in providing early career peer review training opportunities. No one responded, but Professor Vol asked me if I was married. He warned me the TU C-Eng. Department expects 110% commitment by postdocs, and in addition to fellowship research, postdocs are expected to attend dinners, lectures, and events in the evenings and on weekends to assist senior faculty. Dr. Head added that taking on ACEA peer review responsibilities on top of all that requires "superman" intellect and time management. I noticeably cringed at the "superman" comment. He then asked if I took a break before continuing my graduate studies to help with family difficulties because there was an unexplained gap between my undergraduate and graduate studies. Before I could explain that I attended a renowned writer-in-residence program to work on a novel about a gender-exploring teen, he expressed admiration for women of color for their loyalty to their families. While Dr. Head and Professor Vol asked me questions about my research. Each time I tried to explain my methodology they cut me off or turned the conversation to their work. Professor Vol also mused out loud that it wasn't clear where my research would "fit" in the usual annual meeting program. At that point, Professor Vol invited me back to his hotel room to continue discussing whether there might be a place for me to present at a future meeting. Dr. Head then said, "you continue talking," and excused himself to attend another gathering. I felt uncomfortable with Dr. Vol's invitation, and unsure whether this is where serious research conversations happened at society meetings. It would certainly be helpful to my career if I presented my research at an annual meeting. Ultimately, while conflicted, I declined as it had been a very long day and my discomfort prevailed.

Pause & Process

8. **From Dr. Head's and Dr. Vol's perspectives**, did ACEA's mission statement help them to understand professional and inclusive conduct norms and expectations or the importance of society leaders role modeling such conduct?
9. **From ACEA's perspective**, would its mission statement help it determine if a society member was acting at odds with its stated aims for diversity and inclusion? Would it have been helpful to have posters of conduct "Dos and Don'ts"? How about a meeting/conference policy prohibiting society business from taking place in hotel rooms or other non-public spaces?
10. **From Dr. Smart's perspective**, what might be the impact if Dr. Head instead interrupted Dr. Vol, took him aside and said, "Come on, my friend, business meetings don't belong in hotel rooms—that would

make anyone in Dr. Smart's position extremely uncomfortable and won't do anything but cause trouble for you"—and then came back to say to Dr. Smart, "I wish I could stay, but I know Dr. Vol wants to continue the conversation right here or in the hotel lounge." Impact from Dr. Vol's perspective?

FACTS, Part 5 -- Day Two – In between morning meetings: I asked at the registration table about a gender-neutral restroom. The ACEA staff looked at me and said, "I'm sorry, this conference center doesn't do that. You can use the girl's room down the hall."

Pause & Process

11. **From Dr. Smart's perspective**, what might be the impact if the staff member had said instead, "I am so sorry for the inconvenience, I will talk to the hotel and make sure a gender-neutral bathroom is available within the half-hour?"
12. **From ACEA's perspective,** could/should the society have waited until it was asked to make arrangements? Does it matter if no one who registered identified as a gender non-conforming person?
13. **From Dr. Smart's and ACEA community's perspectives,** what might be the impact if ACEA had indicated in meeting materials that they chose a venue for the annual meeting with awareness of the safety of all participants?

FACTS, Part 6 -- Day Two – Lunch & Meeting with Professor and Students: I ate in the crowded hotel lobby café with Professor King, as well as TU's Associate C-Eng. Department Head, a Hispanic cis-gender man. Out of the blue, he asked me if I would be comfortable serving as a mentor for the Black students in ACEA's student section. I looked a little shocked, as I do not identify as Black. Apparently, Professor King thought I didn't understand the question because he then shared that ACEA has a history of racial unrest due to the paucity of Black students and faculty in engineering who often feel alienated during ACEA activities. Professor King noted the one Black graduate student in TU's C-Eng. Department would also appreciate me as a mentor. I felt that serving as a mentor might be a prerequisite for my selection as a postdoc and having opportunities in ACEA, so I reservedly said, "Um, ok. Sure." Professor King laughed as he warned, "Get ready to have all the women and students of color knocking at your door."

During a networking session at the conference, I finally met with TU C-Eng. Department Distinguished Professor Grant, who is a leader of a subspecialty program at TU C-Eng. in my field—water engineering research. He introduced me to a group of his students and expressed great interest in my research and its applicability to his work. I felt honored. But then he said, "Dr. Smart, is young and fresh out of graduate school, but she has done some very interesting research that will help Black people." I shared that my pronouns are they/them. I also explained my research focuses on data from predominantly Black neighborhoods because engineering solutions in an area of heightened challenge would have major impact society-wide.

Several students checked their phones frequently throughout, and one student asked, "Does this count as real research?" Another student suggested the people in marginalized neighborhoods are responsible for their inadequate water resources despite my research demonstrating purposeful structural inequities prevent access to sufficient clean water. Professor Grant was silent. At the end of the lunch, Professor Grant patted me on the back and said, "Tough crowd. These kids, and our field, take no prisoners." I was upset that Professor Grant did not correct the students or use their questions as a teachable moment. He then asked me if I'd join a panel discussion he was organizing at ACEA's next meeting on the impact of the election of Kamala Harris on ecological studies. None of my research concerns ecological studies or political science; however, I told him I would participate.

Pause & Process

14. Can you identify the comments that reflect identity-based, stereotyped assumptions about Dr. Smart? What would you expect their effect to be on Dr. Smart? Should their effect be assessed individually or cumulatively? Does it matter who made the comments? How would these experiences at the conference have affected your interest in the field if you were in Dr. Smart's shoes?
15. Is legal compliance, while necessary, enough to create inclusive and equitable climate and culture in fields? Is a pronouncement of welcome—or even "zero tolerance" for harassment—in a society's or institution's policy enough? What aims and key content define an effective ethics policy? What associated action is needed?
16. Given Dr. Smart's position as an early career professional, how could the behavior they encountered impact their career trajectories? What special concerns and challenges arise when considering early career professionals—generally and who have marginalized identities?
17. Were there any ways that Dr. Smart could have raised a generalized concern? Had they done so, what could ACEA and TU C-Eng. have done in response?
18. Had the society and department each provided and advertised the availability of a confidential advisor (e.g., an ombudsperson or ally), how might that have changed Dr. Smart's experience?
19. From ACEA's perspective, if no one is reporting concerns about their experiences at society meetings, can ACEA assume nothing problematic is occurring? How could ACEA assess experiences without relying on reporting alone?
20. This case study detailed experiences at a society meeting, how could the harms Dr. Smart experienced be amplified in other settings or situations?

Section 2. Discussion & Suggested Responses

Identity-based harassment and bias can have disparate and devastating impact on individuals who are early in their careers[1] or have less social capital in a field (disproportionately, but not always, women, women of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, or people who identify as members of other marginalized groups in STEMM). Our analysis and discussion of this case study examines points throughout the experiences detailed to shine a light on – and create understanding and empathy for -- the various perspectives involved in the case study. Power differentials are often at play in instances of sexual harassment, assault, and intersecting racial and gender-based harassment. However, peers and those in earlier stages of education or career can also cause harm.[2]

It is important to consider the case study from two perspectives (1) What happened, and what was done well or could have been done better in relation to these facts? and (2) In light of the **Section 4 Elements** what actions can be taken beyond the case at hand to advance a more inclusive, equitable and ethical climate and culture in the institution, society, and field.

[1] "Early career" can include post-doctoral scholars, residents, non-tenure track faculty/researchers, untenured tenure-track faculty (e.g., assistant professor), and other professionals with less power. Graduate and undergraduate students are also included, although their positions are distinct. Within this group, there are differences in the experience and agency of each role in relation to the others that may influence the effect on them of others' misconduct and the response.

[2] In discussing these power differentials, the analysis uses terms such as "a mid-career professional." This is a person who has past entry-level and, for faculty, typically has been tenured (i.e., tenured associate professors). A "late-career professional" is generally a person who has been promoted to top tenured faculty ranks and/or has gained honors or other substantial renown and influence in a field (e.g., tenured full professors, distinguished professors, endowed professors, emeritus professors and researchers with world renown and top honors).

NOTE: For group facilitators creating a single, stand-alone learning experience, consider using:

(1) Introduction + Facts centered on "Pause & Process" questions 1, 4 and 5; or
(2) Introduction + Facts centered on "Pause & Process" questions 2, 8, and 9; or
(3) Introduction + Facts centered on "Pause & Process" questions 4 and 6; or
(4) Introduction + Facts centered on "Pause & Process" questions 10 and 16

ANALYSIS, Part 1 – Introduction:

Meet Dr. Smart. *Tyler Smart, is a 30 year old, recent PhD graduate who is bi-racial, whose preferred pronouns are "they/them," and who is on a short list for a post-doctoral fellowship to be awarded by the Department of Civil Engineering (C-Eng. Department) at Tech University (TU). Dr. Smart has always wanted to be a scientist. Both of their parents have graduate degrees; her father, who is Black, has a PhD in transportation engineering. Dr. Smart (Junior) didn't identify to themselves as a girl or a boy and was an "outsider," even to the "nerds," in high school. For many years, they were bullied for being a "weirdo," and "tom boy." In college, Dr. Smart spent considerable time privately exploring their gender-identity and facing anxiety about being "outed," while maintaining a 4.0 average in their classes.*

Dr. Smart's parents have grown to support Dr. Smart's non-binary identity. But, as a black scientist—always having been the "only one" and having to perform better than everyone else to be recognized as "good enough"—Dr. Smart's father counseled them against coming out publicly. When Dr. Smart joined the student chapter of Out in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (oSTEM) and came out in their first year of graduate studies, they were one of only two people of color in their graduate department and the only person who was gender non-conforming. While Dr. Smart generally dresses in conservative, male clothing, they are often addressed by colleagues as she instead of they and are sometimes asked "are you a woman or a man"—even when they choose to wear a name badge with their pronouns.

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What happened at the conference?

TU's C-Eng. Department Chair, Professor King, a 63 year old, white, straight male, is also the president-elect of the American Civil Engineering Association (ACEA). Professor King made plans to vet the TU C-Eng. top fellowship prospects, including Dr. Smart, by arranging and having TU pay for them to attend ACEA's annual conference where they'd meet (and he'd get input from) prominent people in the field. Dr. Smart didn't know what to expect, as is typical for anyone in a new professional experience, but they had also previously been avoided by colleagues uncomfortable with their non-conforming gender identity and knew that some venues were unsafe for them. At the same time, they were encouraged by ACEA's well-publicized mission to advance a vibrant and diverse community for excellence in engineering fields, and excited to network at a society meeting, knowing that society contacts provide job opportunities, and that advancement in the field depends on relationships with senior engineering faculty, particularly in a smaller sub-specialty such as water management. Dr. Smart's anticipatory

excitement dissipated during the meeting, however, and they wrote in their journal about the experience.

1. From Dr. Smart's, ACEA's, and TU C-Eng.'s perspectives, what are the potential benefits and pitfalls of regulating or not regulating networking, and other employment interviews and opportunities at society meetings or events?

RESPONSE:

- Participation in networking opportunities at society meetings and events can be a highly valuable tool. It may provide less seasoned or marginalized members the opportunity to meet leaders in the field across institutions, discover research opportunities, develop professional relationships with peers and potential mentors, and, as in this case, provide a convenient opportunity for candidates to informally interview for specific advancement opportunities.
- Inequities are created when students and post-docs do not feel they have agency to object to harmful conduct. This threat is exacerbated where, as here, interview opportunities that are pivotal for advancement require individuals to attend a society meeting at their own expense—or if ad hoc interviews (outside of the formal process) occur at a meeting for those who happen to attend, rather than being set in advance. In this case study, Dr. King arranged for TU C-Eng. to sponsor attendance for top candidates—what if only those with the financial ability or other sponsorship could attend the conference? What criteria defined top candidates?
- There is also the significant potential for such opportunities to instead blur boundaries of the trusting and respectful relationship between faculty, or other advisors, and students that are critical to academic responsibility and professional conduct.
- More broadly, career support or advancement often is enhanced by allies from shared or complementary communities with different spheres of influence. Some communities are of those in power, others are of those who are marginalized. In addition, all communities have the power to be both inclusive and excluding. For example, in this case study the water engineering community is small and specialized which may work to enhance career opportunities but may also exacerbate any inequities for those wanting to join the community. As another example, The oSTEM community may be quite helpful to Dr. Smart but members may not have much contact with, or influence with, members in water engineering. Both communities are important. Marginalized voices contribute new and innovative perspectives of value but must be able to fully participate. They also may need a separate space to build community and support. Dominant communities have the benefit of long experience. But they can become stagnant, diminishing excellence in a field, if they aren't open to new perspectives and ideas. They need to be aware of how their power can exclude others and cause harm, as well as acting to repair and prevent further harm. Mutual benefit can be gained by appreciating what all voices can offer.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- **It is essential to continually establish, communicate, and orient individuals to the core equitable and inclusive aims, policies, and conduct norms of the society**—with concrete examples of expected/inclusive vs. prohibited/harmful conduct at every level (staff, volunteer leaders, members, presenters) and in all activities (formal and informal). Here volunteer leaders (and decision makers for advancement opportunities) were among the perpetrators of exclusionary and inequitable behavior.
- **It is important for universities and societies to prioritize elevating understanding about conduct that constitutes harassment and why it is harmful to everyone—as well as the responsibility that accompanies academic freedom.** This requires policies, as well as engaging members of the community in difficult conversations. Incorporating case studies and role playing in orientation,

department meetings, retreats, and other programs can help people "walk in others' shoes" and :internalize learning.

- **It is important to be clear that a conduct policy applies wherever and whenever actions may affect the organization's mission, program, or its community members**, to provide specific examples of what is expected and what can go wrong, and to emphasize vigilance and erring on the side of caution when in doubt about the inclusive or harmful effect of conduct. Be clear that the person in the more powerful role will be accountable if there is a misunderstanding.
- **Including people from a diversity of backgrounds, generations, and stages of career,** with equal voices, in key aspects of society leadership, decision making, and meeting planning can be quite helpful to surface issues that may be hampering excellence. For example a younger generation of scientists can explore with an older generation such paradigms as, "it has always been done this way," or "we had to pay our dues, now it's your turn," or "this field is too rigorous for women to succeed." They can identify barriers, that might be oblivious to others, but that exclude talented women or people of color or of non-binary gender. Such inclusive collaboration can help to identify some paradigms that are clearly harmful to individuals, and excellence and integrity of the field, by excluding talent and creating stagnation—as well as other paradigms that are valid in some respects, such as valuing experience and hard work, but harmful when creating barriers to new voices with new ideas who, for example, did not previously have access.
- **Strategies include**: leaders from dominant groups modeling inclusive, ethical and equitable conduct and active intervention to stop contrary conduct; challenging the system, not individuals, with concrete examples of harm to individuals, the society, and fields; demonstrating how change positively impacts all members; and (but not only) ethical messages about "doing the right thing."
- **Anonymous climate surveys of participants at society activities or meetings can elevate understanding by leaders and planners** about how these activities are experienced by those who are not in a society's or department's dominant identity group. Without the personal experience, it can be difficult to "walk in someone else's shoes," even for those who intend to be supportive. Reporting back to members with a transparent assessment of problems identified in self-assessment, and the responsive actions initiated, communicates accountability for change.
- **Well-structured mentoring programs can build trust, communication, empathy, career support and role modeling** between a mentor and mentee. Moreover, mentoring students from diverse backgrounds builds excellence in STEMM by growing the available talent pool, broadening the range of perspectives and expertise, and enhancing competition, collaboration, and creativity to solve the world's biggest problems.

REVIEW:

- **Section 4. Elements** to learn more about effective practices to elevate and infuse equity principles
- Visit the **Consortium LinkedIn Platform (CLIP)** -- A members-only space for collaboration and thought-partnership for members of the Societies Consortium
- Societies Consortium Compendium of Existing Resources (**Compendium**) (access **Compendium** under Consortium's **Library**/Practical Implementation Tools)/Understanding the Compendium/click on to access: Sexual Harassment of Women, Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (**NASEM June 2018 Report**)
- **Outcome Vision & Research Framework** document (Consortium adaptation, for societies, of outcome-actions from **NASEM's June 2018 Report** and key research from the Report related to the Consortium's strategic plan) (access from Consortium's **Homepage**/About/Key Documents)
- Societies Consortium Roadmap Towards Excellence and Integrity in STEMM (**Roadmap**), particularly Stage 1 -- "First Steps: Starting Somewhere" (access **Roadmap** from Consortium's **Homepage**/Latest News/May 28, 2020 entry)

- Societies Consortium 5-Step Slide Guide (**5-Step Guide**) with more detailed guidance on first steps to create basic inclusive conduct expectations and some informal process (access **5-Step Guide** through **Roadmap**/Stage 1 (click on **5-Slide Guide** link in gray box))
- **Compendium**/Data & Self-Assessment resources
- **Compendium**/Surveys
- **Compendium**(**National Academies June 2018 Report**), Chapter 6, Changing the Culture and Climate in Higher Education/Diffusing Power Structure and Reducing Isolation
- **Compendium**/Mentoring, in particular, **National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine's (NASEM's) report: The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM**

2. From Dr. Smart's perspective, did ACEA's stated mission help them to understand what conduct norms they could expect at the meeting?

RESPONSE:

- Despite ACEA's stated "mission to advance a vibrant and diverse community for excellence in engineering fields," there are no concrete examples or conduct norms to give this pronouncement meaning. People in a range of roles, stages of career, influence, and experiences in the field and society-at-large are likely to attribute widely different meaning left to their own perspectives and interpretations. Meeting organizers, leaders, and participants at in every role and stage of career had no guidance on how they should act or might expect to be treated. This failure contributed to the treatment of Dr. Smart outlined in the remainder of the case study below, including that ACEA's and TU C-Eng.'s measures of excellence are evidently influenced by stereotyped assumptions, biases, and an "old boys network."

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- By contrast, an **adequate policy demonstrates an entity's commitment to inclusion as an inextricable element of excellence by reflecting this principle in definitions of merit** — and in the decision-making process — when offering educational and mentoring opportunities, funding internships, determining research agendas and funding, selecting leaders and honorees, and more.
- **Such policy aims and elements must be broadly known, owned, shared, and accessible to leaders and all other stakeholders,** including their application to all professional activities, and in all settings involving the society's mission. Concrete "Dos" and "Don'ts" and short-form participant guides and instructions -- disseminated in many forms before and during a conference -- are critical.
- Other ways to **demonstrate and socialize the community's inclusive norms, as well as to build visibility and community for LBQTQ+ and other minoritized scientists**, include clear statements of welcomeness and inclusion in meeting materials and at the beginning of plenary sessions; including presenters who identify as LBGTQ+ or from other minoritized communities; incorporating welcoming DEI activities throughout the conference with titles and a focus on accomplishments of, and issues for, minoritized communities (e.g., diversity "mixers" during breaks or an event that amplifies diverse voices from the field and attendees); providing opportunities for members to publish essays about their experiences as a minoritized member of the science community; offering name badges, or other means, through which members can identify their gender pronouns, and offering badges to identify those that pledge to support LBQTQ+ inclusion. Be mindful that creating these initiatives should not be the responsibility only of those already burdened by exclusion and that the value and effort involved in the work is recognized.
- **Facilitated conversations, integrating mindful listening practices, can often be an effective first step to help the broader community understand conduct and comments that are inclusive or harmful** and impacts on members of a minoritized community. Feeling excluding from a group, community, club, etc. is a fairly universal experience. Trained, skilled facilitators can, for example, help people

explore their own experiences of feeling excluded, which can result in understanding and empathy for others, even when others' specific experiences of exclusion are based on different factors. An internal or external expert in facilitating inclusive conversation can train others to cost-effectively reach the broader community.

REVIEW:

- **Societies Consortium Model Ethics/Conduct-Harassment Policy** (access under **Library**/Model Policies, or through **Roadmap**/Stage 2: "Choose Your Adventure: Policy Development"/Meetings & Conduct Ethics Policies (click on link to documents in gray box))
- **Societies Consortium Model Honors and Awards Policy** (access under **Library**/Model Policies, or through Roadmap/Stage 2/Model Honors & Awards (click on link to document in gray box))
- **Roadmap**/Stage 1**/**Dos & Don'ts ((click on in gray box to access)
- **Roadmap/**Stage 1/Meetings & Ethics/Conduct Short Form Policies, including sample Participants' Guide; Societies Consortium September 16, 2019 Members Convening Conduct Ground Rules *(sample of short form guidelines for meetings used at the Consortium's Annual Convenings)* (click on link to documents in gray box)
- **Societies Consortium 11/27/19 Hot Topics Webinar:** How to Design Inclusive Society Meetings (access under **Library**/Practical Implementation Tools)
- **Societies Consortium 7/28/22 Hot Topics Webinar:** Increasing visibility, building community and supporting LGBTQ+ members (access under **Library**/Practical Implementation Tools)
- **Compendium**/Meetings C. Members' Inclusive Meetings Initiatives
- **Compendium**/Intersectionality, Identity-Based and LBGTQ+ Initiatives, Research and Other Resources
- **Compendium**/Bias Research & Resources
- **Compendium**/Training

3. Why did Dr. Smart write about their experiences in a journal rather than discuss their concerns with a colleague or mentor, or report their concerns to ACEA?

RESPONSE:

- As outlined further in the case study, Dr. Smart was very much on their own -- without helpful peers, trained allies and confidential advisors, reporting options, or written guidance to help them navigate repeated harmful experiences.
- The conduct of overlapping members of ACEA and TU C-Eng. caused Dr. Smart to reasonably believe that the harmful behavior was the "norm" at society meetings and within the TU C-Eng. Department. They reasonably concluded it would have undermined their prospects and been futile to object—which was reinforced by Jane, the ACEA early career peer reviewer and TU C-Eng. postdoc, who characterized harmful comments made by her postdoc colleague—who was modeling those of his faculty supervisor — as "merely old-school" and "harmless."

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- **Reporting policies should be readily accessible and include a range of reporting and resolution options** (anonymous, informal, and formal), provide for confidential guidance, and prohibit retaliation. Examples of informal assistance and confidential guidance include readily identifiable and available trained allies and ombudspersons, who are present at conferences – both at formal and informal events.
- **A key lever for prevention – including encouraging reporting – is to change any reality and perception** (even if the perception isn't accurate) that a society or institution tolerates harassment or won't enforce policies when leaders or distinguished researchers are the perpetrators. The benefits for targets of reporting must outweigh the perceived risks, considering the experience of people in a range of roles within the existing power structure. Adopting and consistently applying adequate conduct policies and norms -- with guidance and options for raising and resolving conduct concerns -

- are foundational. Making these policies and options widely, publicly known—by regularly reporting out to the community about their existence and aims, as well as the frequency, type, and serious response made to anonymized incidents-—can improve perceptions.

- **Provide support services focused on gender and racial equity**. Highlighting such resources in meeting materials and in prominent places at a meeting can be helpful for participants experiencing harmful behavior and demonstrates the societies commitment to participants' inclusion and wellbeing.

REVIEW:

- **Section 4. Elements** to learn more about effective practices for communicating policies and options
- **5-Step Guide**, Step 3 -- Create and communicate Ways to Raise Concerns (and accompanying, linked Consortium Resources)
- **Societies Consortium Model Template -- Reporting Out on Conduct Concerns** and accompanying Design Guide (access under **Library**/Practical Implementation Tools)
- **Section 6. National Support Resources**

ANALYSIS, Part 2 -- Day One – Morning (excerpt from Dr. Smart's journal):

I met with Professor King and Dr. Crow, ACEA's Chief Research Officer, another white male, after the opening plenary. After introducing myself and asking a few questions about the plenary, Dr. Crow asked me about my graduate school research. He said he knows my dissertation chair, Professor Powers, who is well respected for "high quality research." He remarked, "It's interesting that Powers was your dissertation chair. He must have wanted to try something different." Professor King then shared that TU's C-Eng. Department's search for a post-doctoral fellow who'd be "the right fit" had lasted more than nine months. When I asked what the right fit would be, he said, "Our postdocs work very closely with each other, the Department's faculty, and colleagues in ACEA activities. We just know the right person when we see him."

4. From Dr. Smart's perspective, what is the likely impact of Dr. King's statement: "We know the right person when we see him"? What message does that selection criterion convey about the climate and culture—and about merit?

RESPONSE

- Any one harmful "off-handed" comment – if it had been isolated – would have been wrong but might have been countered by an overall positive and inclusive experience. Unfortunately, the cumulative effect of incidents and overall climate was disrespectful and exclusionary. Persistent harassment and discrimination (even if "only" micro-aggressions) has an insidious way of foreclosing opportunities.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- **Criteria and expressions of merit matter.** Prepare leaders to be clear on the expertise and conduct that are valued by the society or institution. An "old school, part of the club" message is exclusionary. Initiatives discussed in Pause & Reflect Question 2 above can also serve to reduce harmful impact of isolated comments.

5. From the perspectives of ACEA, TU C-Eng., and the field, would the impact on Dr. Smart be different if Professor King responded, "In addition to excellent research skills we are looking for a candidate who brings innovative perspectives and has demonstrated a strong ability to work collaboratively with their peers in the research laboratory"?

RESPONSE:

- Comments by interviewers or those in positions of power that reinforce to candidates that their skills and talents are pivotal to positionality will provide greater assurance that interview processes are free of bias.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- **Gender-neutral, job-related work requirements can reduce biased and stereotyped descriptions** of a job or the "right" candidate. Be sure to orient leaders and everyone participating in an interview.
- A gender-neutral statement from Dr. King, focused on specific, job-related work requirements such as "innovative perspectives" and "collaboration" skills, would have conveyed that new ideas and a diversity of backgrounds are valued and that Dr. Smart and others beyond those who are "old school" could be competitive candidates for the fellowship position.
- TU and ACEA could have trained and mentored governance and administrative leaders, post-docs, students, and staff to elevate their understanding of conduct that is inclusive or harmful, as well as the role many people play in the formal and informal aspects of recruitment and the potential damage of "off-handed" comments – particularly in cumulative effect. This may have required engagement with the Consortium's case studies or assistance from an outside expert to train internal leaders who could then train and mentor others.

REVIEW:

- **Compendium**/Bias Research & Resources and Training
- **Compendium**/Training

ANALYSIS, Part 3 -- Day One – Lunch:

I started feeling more relaxed at my lunch with current TU C-Eng. Department postdocs, Jane, a white woman, and John, a white man—who are also ACEA early career peer reviewers. They seemed very interested in my research. However, after I shared the outcomes and my expectations for further research, John asked me if I'd ever done any substantive work. I found this shocking, after my overview and because, among recent doctorates, my research has been noticed for its potential in the field. I stated that my research is clearly substantive, but that I'm open to doing different types of research in the future. He then proceeded to explain to me the tenets of "quantitative research," as reflected in ACEA's reviewer orientation, which matched all the elements of my dissertation. I decided not to push the issue, however, as I might be working with John in the future if I were selected for the fellowship. After lunch, as Jane and I walked to the next session, she said John is "old school" and works with a professor who is a "dinosaur," but they're "harmless." Then, she touched my hair and commented, "I love what POCs can do with their hair." I was taken aback and pushed my hair behind my ears. Jane said she wished her hair could be styled into "different exotic, cool" styles.

6. From Dr. Smart's perspective, what might be the impact if Jane interrupted John, "Sorry to stop you, John, but I'd like to learn more from Dr. Smart—she's one of Dr. King's top candidates for the fellowship and has done exceptional research." Impact from John's perspective? Would the impact be different if Jane were able to say to Dr. Smart, "there are some "old school" types in the engineering department, but there are increasing opportunities for early career professionals to bring new ideas and influence policies?"

RESPONSE:

- Peer colleagues, while not necessarily in a position of authority, can engage in harmful conduct that interferes with others feeling respected and their sense of belonging. John and Jane play an important

role as peers in demonstrating whether ASEA's mission and aims to promote diversity and inclusion for excellence are operationalized—as well as in reflecting the climate and culture at TU C-Eng. But they too lacked concrete policy, guidance, and training on how to advance these aims in practice and in understanding what behavior is harmful. With guidance, Jane might have been equipped to counter rather than excuse her male peer's dismissive perspective on Dr. Smart's research.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- It is not always easy, even with peers, to speak up in the face of misconduct, particularly when the perpetrator is a faculty member. **But peers can play an important role in demonstrating a university's mission and aims to promote diversity and inclusion**—as well as in reflecting the desired climate and culture at the institution. To contribute to these aims and protect themselves when systems fail, students and early career professionals require concrete policy, guidance, and training on what behavior is expected and inclusive vs. harmful and unacceptable and how to respond effectively when those standards aren't met. Concrete examples, case-studies, and hands-on role-playing may be very helpful.
- The training and mentoring discussed in Pause & Process Question 5 could have been extended to post docs and students, particularly those involved in the interviewing process. Including people from a diversity of backgrounds and stages of career, with equal voices, in key aspects of society leadership, decision making, and meeting planning, can systematically surface and ameliorate problematic behavior and "old school" ideas.
- **Ally and bystander training can be effective in empowering peers to speak up to support one another.**

REVIEW:

- **Compendium**/Training A. Advocate and Ally Training
- **Compendium/**Training B. Bias Training/Trainers
- **Compendium**/Training C. Bystander Training/Trainers
- **Compendium/National Academies June 2018 Report**, Chapter 6/Reducing Bias and Responding to Harassment—Including Bystander Intervention

7. From ACEA's perspective, is it ever appropriate at a professional event to touch another person's hair? Is it ever appropriate to comment on a person's appearance (e.g., "I love your hairstyle")? Should either answer be different based on the person's race? Gender? Whether the person is a "work friend"?

RESPONSE:

- Touching another person's hair is an invasion of personal space and has no place in a professional setting. Commenting on a person's appearance is also rarely appropriate—regardless of the race and gender of those involved. If a person is unaware of a clearly unintended open zipper or some other mishap, privately inform them to help them avoid embarrassment. If two people know each other well and are "work friends," it may be appropriate for one to compliment the other—"love your hairstyle" or "great suit." But, even then, do not comment on body parts or size and avoid stereotyped comments based on identity. Also, an intended compliment made privately will be received differently than one several people can hear. If there is any doubt about consent, do not comment.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- It is not enough to have a stated mission or aims for inclusion**. It is essential to include relatable, concrete examples of both inclusive and harmful behavior** (Dos and Don'ts). For example, specific examples could demonstrate the distinction between asking questions that evidence curiosity and respect for different traditions, rather than convey stereotyped biases and assumptions. ("The print

and colors of your shirt are beautiful—it reminds me of one that I admired at an exhibit on African textiles" is very different than making assumptions about the taste of people of a racial group.) Other examples could demonstrate the important expectation to respect personal boundaries.

Review:

- **Roadmap**/Stage 1**/**Dos and Don'ts

ANALYSIS, Part 4 -- Day One – Drinks in the lobby after the meeting:

I met with the head of the ACEA Directorate for Civil Engineering, Dr. Head, and the volunteer chair of the ACEA Annual Meeting Program Committee, Professor Vol, who is also tenured in the TU C-Eng. Department – both are white and male. I introduced myself and shared that my pronouns are they/them; Dr. Head and Professor Vol did not share their pronouns and kept referring to me as she/her. After exchanging pleasantries, I expressed my admiration of ACEA's leadership in providing early career peer review training opportunities. No one responded, but Professor Vol asked me if I was married. He warned me the TU C-Eng. Department expects 110% commitment by postdocs, and in addition to fellowship research, postdocs are expected to attend dinners, lectures, and events in the evenings and on weekends to assist senior faculty. Dr. Head added that taking on ACEA peer review responsibilities on top of all that requires "superman" intellect and time management. I noticeably cringed at the "superman" comment. He then asked if I took a break before continuing my graduate studies to help with family difficulties because there was an unexplained gap between my undergraduate and graduate studies. Before I could explain that I attended a renowned writer-in-residence program to work on a novel about a gender-exploring teen, he expressed admiration for women of color for their loyalty to their families. While Dr. Head and Professor Vol asked me questions about my research. Each time I tried to explain my methodology they cut me off or turned the conversation to their work. Professor Vol also mused out loud that it wasn't clear where my research would "fit" in the usual annual meeting program. At that point, Professor Vol invited me back to his hotel room to continue discussing whether there might be a place for me to present at a future meeting. Dr. Head then said, "you continue talking," and excused himself to attend another gathering. I felt uncomfortable with Dr. Vol's invitation and unsure whether this is where serious research conversations happened at society meetings. It would certainly be helpful to my career if I presented my research at an annual meeting. Ultimately, while conflicted, I declined as it had been a very long day and my discomfort prevailed.

8. From Dr. Head's and Dr. Vol's perspective, did ACEA's mission statement help them to understand professional and inclusive conduct norms and expectations or the importance of society leaders role modeling such conduct?

RESPONSE:

- ACEA was not fulfilling its role as a standard-setter in the field or a standard bearer in its own operations for integrity, public trust, and excellence. Key ACEA leaders also were not serving as positive role models for professional, ethical, inclusive, and equitable conduct – which in turn perpetuates unhealthy conduct, climate, and culture in upcoming generations.
- Leaders at TU C-Eng. and ACEA perpetuated or ignored and normalized what should have been obviously wrong and harmful conduct and created undue pressure on Dr. Smart to choose between two evils. For example, Professor Vol asked about Dr. Smart's marital status and then proposed that Dr. Smart go to Professor Vol's hotel room to continue discussing options for Dr. Smart to present their research at an annual meeting. Dr. Head excused himself immediately after this proposition so Dr. Vol and Dr. Smart could "keep talking" in Dr. Vol's hotel room. Dr. Head did not intervene (as he should have) to suggest (and, if necessary, insist) the discussion continue in public areas of the hotel. Dr. Head's actions indicated to Dr. Smart that going to Dr. Vol's hotel room was normal and expected.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- Adequate policy and training, mentoring, and regular meeting orientation, with specific examples and role-playing, in advance of the meeting, as well as concrete and broadly disseminated guidance (Do's and Don'ts) before and during the meeting, might have helped prevent the harmful actions of Professor Vol and Dr. Head.
- These actions might also have guided Dr. Smart on conduct that is and is not acceptable. If not, allies would have at least helped Dr. Smart to navigate the situation without as much fear of adverse repercussions on their career.

REVIEW:

- **Compendium**/Civility & Diversity Research and Initiatives
- **Compendium**/Mentoring, including **National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM**

9. From ACEA's perspective, would its mission statement help it determine if a society member was acting at odds with its stated aims for diversity and inclusion? Would it have been helpful to have posters of conduct "Dos and Don'ts"? How about a meeting/conference policy prohibiting society business from taking place in hotel rooms or other non-public spaces?

RESPONSE:

- Pronouncements in mission statements ring hollow, establish unrealistic goals (that are not taken seriously), and do not change conduct or hold people accountable. Robust and specific policies that incorporate aims and standards, address preventative measures, as well as responsive actions when standards aren't met, are needed along with (1) concrete examples of expected and prohibited conduct to achieve the stated aims; (2) broad dissemination and highlights to elevate understanding and broad ownership; and (3) serious preventative and response actions, applied consistently to everyone, regardless of role and stage of career. None of these requirements were met in the case study.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- ASEA cannot determine conduct at odds with its mission or hold its members accountable based on broad, ill-defined pronouncements. There must be supporting policies, clear definitions, and guidance on the specific kinds of conduct that is expected and will advance its mission or is prohibited and will undermine it. To be enforceable, policy must be broadly disseminated and understandable. Otherwise, a society is encouraging disputes, and accountability is hard to achieve.
- While an exhaustive list is neither recommended, nor possible, specific examples of some expected and prohibited conduct (Dos and Don'ts) are key (e.g., a clear statement prohibiting society business from taking place in hotel rooms or other non-public spaces). Clear definitions of key terms (with examples) are also important. These create clear boundaries when conduct might otherwise be "obvious" to some, but is not understood by all, as unprofessional behavior.

REVIEW:

- **5-Step Guide**
- **Roadmap**/First Stage**/**Dos and Don'ts
- Societies Consortium Model Glossary of Key Terms (**Model Glossary**) (access under Library/Model policies)

10. From Dr. Smart's perspective, what might be the impact if Dr. Head instead interrupted Dr. Vol, took him aside and said, "Come on, my friend, business meetings don't belong in hotel rooms—that would make anyone in Dr. Smart's position extremely uncomfortable and won't do anything but cause trouble for you"—and then came back to say to Dr. Smart, "I wish I could

stay, but I know Dr. Vol wants to continue the conversation right here or in the hotel lounge." Impact from Dr. Vol's perspective?

RESPONSE:

- With such role modeling and support Dr. Smart would not have been faced with the unreasonable and stressful choice between accepting networking in a hotel room or potentially losing career opportunities. Dr. Vol would have been made to understand the inappropriateness of his request which would also have lessened Dr. Smart's fear of adverse consequences. While they should not have been put in this difficult position, they did take action in the moment. Not only did Dr. Smart wisely decline Professor Vol's toxic invitation to his room, though possibly at significant cost, they also attempted to express discomfort in many situations by reiterating their pronouns, defending the quality of their scholarship, and using body language to evidence discomfort. However, while their cues were not subtle, their cues did not result in any perpetrator adjusting conduct or acknowledging harm. Unfortunately, ACEA did not offer any support and Dr. Smart's actions couldn't alone address the misconduct.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- It *is* clearly the responsibility of academic and professional societies, IHEs, and other research entities to have policies, practices and norms in place that effectively demonstrate harmful conduct which is prohibited. It is also essential to have practices and procedures in place intended to prevent vulnerable situations before they occur.
- Mentoring and supervisory strategies that eliminate the concentration of power in a single person can help diminish abuse of power dynamics, as well.

REVIEW:

- **Compendium**/Mentoring

ANALYSIS, Part 5 -- Day Two – In between morning meetings:

I asked at the registration table about a gender-neutral restroom. The ACEA staff looked at me and said, "I'm sorry, this conference center doesn't do that. You can use the girl's room down the hall."

11. From Dr. Smart's perspective, what might be the impact if the staff member had said instead, "I am so sorry for the inconvenience, I will talk to the hotel and make sure a gender-neutral bathroom is available within the half-hour?"

RESPONSE:

- The importance of gender-neutral bathrooms should have been understood and respected (but wasn't) in light of ACEA's stated mission.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- ACEA's meeting staff can make it a priority when selecting venues for society meetings and activities that the facility provides gender-neutral restrooms. This should not depend on whether any individual's registration indicates a need; it should be a core requirement for the venue.
- Where the facility already chosen fails to offer such restrooms, the society can still make advance arrangements. For example, if the facility has only 2 single-person bathrooms that are designated "men'' and "women," bathroom signage can be covered over with "all gender" designations. If there are more than two, multi-unit bathrooms, signage on one multi-unit bathroom can be replaced with an "all gender" designation. Less favorable accommodations (a hotel room on a floor nearest the conference) could be made available in an emergency with an acknowledgement of the lack of adequate facilities, a non-defensive explanation of how the emergency arose, and a solution for better preparation in the future.

12. From ACEA's perspective, could/should the society have waited until it was asked to make arrangements? Does it matter if no one who registered identified as a gender non-conforming person?

RESPONSE:

- It should be common practice for organizations to make plans for facilities use for all persons who attend events. Planning should take into consideration accessibility for all.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- While it is helpful if individuals identify as gender non-conforming, it should not be incumbent on participants to identify for needs to be anticipated. **Ensuring that all facilities, including bathrooms, are accessible to all is the responsibility of meeting conveners**. It is helpful to have a subcommittee of meeting conveners who review facility use for those who may have physical accessibility needs in addition to needs that are associated with gender identity. Additionally ensure that signage is clear and that all who are involved with providing direction for attendees are aware of needs. It is advisable to include such information in all materials that attendees will have so that individuals need not ask for "special" accommodations on site.

REVIEW:

- **Compendium**/Meetings B. Members' Inclusive Meetings Initiatives
- **Compendium**/Meetings C. Other Inclusive Meeting Resources
- **Compendium**/Intersectionality, Identity-Based, and LBGQT+ Initiatives, Research and Other Resources

13. From Dr. Smart's and ACEA community's perspectives, what might be the impact if ACEA had indicated in meeting materials that they chose a venue for the annual meeting with awareness of the safety of all participants?

RESPONSE:

- As Dr. Smart's journal indicated, LBGTQ+ individuals face particular fears when attending a conference. As evidenced by a swath of recent legislation and acts of violence, many states and localities are openly hostile to the rights of LBQTQ+ individuals. Even without such legislation, some jurisdictions may be known to be unwelcoming to some individuals.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY:

- **Societies should choose meting venues that are safe and welcoming to all members**. Having a diversity of voices on meeting planning committees can be effective to surface and prevent potential problems. Some societies have adopted policies to exclude holding meetings in jurisdictions with laws that discriminate against LBGTQ+ people or on other bases. Where it may be cost-prohibitive to change locations for a long-planned meeting, the society should be transparent about their decision while making clear the society's aims for inclusion, and providing additional resources to members who may face harassment or discrimination. In cases where safety is a concern, the society can offer a virtual option for members to attend.

REVIEW:

- **Compendium**/Meetings B. Members' Inclusive Meetings Initiatives
- **Compendium**/Meetings C. Other Inclusive Meeting Resources
- **Compendium**/Intersectionality, Identity-Based, and LBGQT+ Initiatives, Research and Other Resources

ANALYSIS, Part 6 -- Day Two – Lunch & Meeting with Professor and Students:

I ate in the crowded hotel lobby café with Professor King, as well as TU's Associate C-Eng. Department Head, a Hispanic cis-gender man. Out of the blue, he asked me if I would be comfortable serving as a mentor for the Black students in ACEA's student section. I looked a little shocked, as I do not identify as Black. Apparently, Professor King thought I didn't understand the question because he then shared that ACEA has a history of racial unrest due to the paucity of Black students and faculty in engineering who often feel alienated during ACEA activities. Professor King noted the one Black graduate student in TU's C-Eng. Department would also appreciate me as a mentor. I felt that serving as a mentor might be a prerequisite for my selection as a postdoc and having opportunities in ACEA, so I reservedly said, "Um, ok. Sure." Professor King laughed as he warned, "Get ready to have all the women and students of color knocking at your door."

During a networking session at the conference, I finally met with TU C-Eng. Department Distinguished Professor Grant, who is a leader of a subspecialty program at TU C-Eng. in my field—water engineering research. He introduced me to a group of his students and expressed great interest in my research and its applicability to his work. I felt honored. But then he said, "Dr. Smart, is young and fresh out of graduate school, but she has done some very interesting research that will help Black people." I shared that my pronouns are they/them. I also explained my research focuses on data from predominantly Black neighborhoods because engineering solutions in an area of heightened challenge would have major impact society-wide.

Several students checked their phones frequently throughout, and one student asked, "Does this count as real research?" Another student suggested the people in marginalized neighborhoods are responsible for their inadequate water resources despite my research demonstrating purposeful structural inequities prevent access to sufficient clean water. Professor Grant was silent. At the end of the lunch, Professor Grant patted me on the back and said, "Tough crowd. These kids, and our field, take no prisoners." I was upset that Professor Grant did not correct the students or use their questions as a teachable moment. He then asked me if I'd join a panel discussion he was organizing at ACEA's next meeting on the impact of the election of Kamala Harris on ecological studies. None of my research concerns ecological studies or political science; however, I told him I would participate.

14.`Can you identify the comments that reflect identity-based, stereotyped assumptions about Dr. Smart? What would you expect their effect to be on Dr. Smart? Should their effect be assessed individually or cumulatively? Does it matter who made the comments? How would these experiences at the conference have affected your interest in the field if you were in Dr. Smart's shoes?

RESPONSE:

- The extent and range of unprofessional and non-inclusive conduct experienced by Dr. Smart included racial, ableist and gender stereotyping; diminishment of their academic abilities; heightened expectations for performance given their perceived race; suggestions that Dr. Smart's career options and goals would be impacted on the basis of their perceived gender and race; disregard of their pronouns, and gender identity; and the Society administrative team's dismissal of Dr. Smart's request for a gender-neutral restroom.
- While arguably some of the individual comments or questions, particularly by peers and taken alone (for example, John questioning the seriousness of Dr. Smart's research, and Jane's comments about Susan's hair because of their perceived race) might be considered trivial, the cumulative effect of the conduct Dr. Smart experienced created an excluding and unwelcoming environment.
- Dr. Smart's attempted to express discomfort by reiterating their pronouns, defending the quality of their scholarship, using body language to evidence discomfort, and by declining Dr. Vol's proposition. However, Dr. Smart's actions did not cause those with greater power to adjust their behavior or

acknowledge any harm caused. This raises concerns that those with greater power were unaware of their impact on those with lesser power, or of their responsibility to be role models for inclusive and professional conduct.

- The conduct Dr. Smart experienced may be particularly harmful where, as here, the perpetrators of the excluding and demeaning conduct are leaders of a small field of science. Dr. Grant as a leader in the field likely has an outsized impact on the small water engineering field. Moreover, Dr. Smart may not have many options to find other scientists to network and collaborate with to advance their career.
- Making assumptions about racial identity and imposing mentoring and other duties based on a person's identity is inequitable. The evidence is equivocal on the value of same-race and same-gender mentoring relationships; other deeper-level similarities, across cultural differences, may be more effective. Moreover, a person who is burdened by inequity should not be required to "fix" the problem. Dr. Smart experienced a toxic situation that appeared to be part of ASAE's and the TU C-Eng.'s culture. They may reasonably have felt a need to forgo a professional opportunity to end the harm.

REVIEW:

- **Compendium/National Academies June 2018 Report**, Chapter 6, Changing the Culture and Climate in Higher Education/Diffusing Power Structure and Reducing Isolation
- **Compendium**/Bias Research & Resources and Training
- **Roadmap/**Stage 1**/**Dos & Don'ts
- **Compendium**/Mentoring/NASEM report: The Science of Effective Mentoring

15. Is legal compliance, while necessary, enough to create inclusive and equitable climate and culture in fields? Is a pronouncement of welcome—or even "zero tolerance" for harassment—in a society's or institution's policy enough? What aims and key content define an effective ethics policy? What associated action is needed?

RESPONSE:

- The conduct of people in a range of roles at both ACEA and TU C-Eng. raise questions of legal compliance here, particularly where TU was considering Dr. Smart for employment and if ACEA receives federal funding (e.g., for research or programming). However, such a finding is not necessary to conclude that Dr. Smart experienced biased, unprofessional, and diminishing conduct contrary to ACEA's stated mission of inclusion for excellence.
- Policy standards, guidance, training, and enforcement that satisfy, but exceed, bare legal requirements are necessary to create professional, ethical, inclusive, and equitable conduct, climate, and culture.

REVIEW:

- **Section 4. Elements** for additional information on best aims and evidence for the creation of policy beyond legal compliance.

16. Given Dr. Smart's position as an early career professional, how could the behavior they encountered impact their career trajectories? What special concerns and challenges arise when implementing policies in incidents involving early career professionals?

RESPONSE:

- Students and early career professionals are highly dependent on the good will of professors, advisors, and mentors as they seek to advance in academics and careers. The effect can be exacerbated for those from marginalized communities whose families may lack the social and professional connections—and whose relationships with mentors may be limited—to help them access opportunities.
- Limited, competitive research opportunities are necessary to succeed, and are often largely controlled by one professor who can enhance or derail a student's or early career professional's prospects.
- While the limited number of opportunities speaks to the importance of faculty, post-doc, resident, and student mentorship and sponsorship, it also creates significant potential for abuse of power and requires

high ethical standards, including clear boundaries between professional and personal and degrees of influence.

- Leaders or "stars" in the field can have an outsized role in decision-making.

ACTIONS TO PREVENT OR REMEDY

- Diminishing the power of single faculty members by providing central funding for student and early career professional enrichment opportunities, including meeting attendance, and providing mentoring committees rather than single mentors, can help minimize abuse of power by an individual. Assuring that mentoring committees include a broad diversity of experiences and identities of people can contribute to practices that are effective for all students—not only those with more social capital.

REVIEW:

- **Compendium/National Academies June 2018 Report**, Chapter 6, Changing the Culture and Climate in Higher Education/Diffusing Power Structure and Reducing Isolation
- **Societies Consortium 3/24/22 Hot Topics Webinar:** Engaging student and early career members in society leadership (access under **Library**/Practical Implementation Tools)

17. Were there any ways that Dr. Smart could have raised a generalized concern? Had they done so, what could ACEA and TU C-Eng. have done in response?

RESPONSE:

- The overarching aim of responding to conduct concerns is to advance professional, ethical, inclusive, and equitable conduct, climate, and culture for the excellence and integrity of the entity's and field's communities and contributions going forward. Also important is to determine and address the needs of those most directly affected by the harm. The kind and extent of response will differ depending on the nature of the concern and available information.
- Where imposing consequences is the desired response, at a minimum the society or institution must already have in place: well understood aims and conduct expectations; some degree of process (even informal) with identified decision makers; and authority granted for some limited types of consequences that can be taken in response to a violation of specific conduct expectations.
- Punishment alone (or at all) and a full-blown investigation are not always the best way to achieve those aims — though such actions are sometimes necessary for safety or when those who caused harm will not accept responsibility.[3] In other words, there are circumstances when it will be important not to get bogged down in process, and making technical determinations of policy violations, as they will not best serve the aims of the policy.
- This is where community building becomes an essential tool to stem the harm caused (even if unintentionally) by people in many roles within a society's or institution's community. This tool elevates broad understanding *and evidence* of the nature and harmful impact of gender and racial stereotyping, disrespect, and other harassment and bias. Even without the benefit of facts sufficient for an investigation, formal finding, or direct engagement of people involved in a specific incident, identifying a generalized concern enables an entity to focus on building, and raising awareness and broad ownership of, inclusive values and norms of conduct in the entity's community.
- When basic facts are known, even without a lot of details, or a formal investigation and finding (i.e., who was most directly involved, what general kind of misconduct and harm occurred, and what are the affected and involved individuals' needs), community building can also foster ownership of the harm by the person

[3] If a report of misconduct is not credible because it is physically impossible for the bad act to have occurred (e.g., there is certainty that the person alleged to be present wasn't), the action is to make that credibility determination. If there is clear evidence of a bad faith report, the response will focus on the reporter.

who caused it, with an accountable commitment not to repeat it, and restore healthy working relationships.

- In Dr. Smart's case, if the basic facts had been available, a full investigation and punitive action would not likely have been necessary or helpful — so long as those who caused harm were authentically willing to learn the necessary lessons and commit to redress the harm caused and prevent a repeat.

REVIEW:

- **5-Step Guide**/Step 4 -- Create an Informal Resolution Process With Inclusive Community Building Aims and Practices (and accompanying, linked Consortium Resources)
- **5-Step Guide**/Step 5 -- Obtain Society Board Authorization for Basic Response Actions When Needed for Safety, Non-disruption (and accompanying, linked Consortium Resources)
- **Societies Consortium Model Informal Resolution Process** (access under **Library**/Model Policies, or through **5-Step Guide**/Step 4/Consortium Resources, or through **Roadmap**/Stage 2/Investigation/Resolution Resources (click on linked documents in gray box))
- **Societies Consortium Pyramid Tool** (interactive chart aligning possible responsive action with type of process required and aligned consequences) (access through **5-Step Guide/**Step 5/Consortium Resources, or through **Roadmap**/Stage 2/Investigation/Resolution Resources
- **Societies Consortium Model Investigations, Resolutions and Consequences Policy Guide** (access under **Library**/Model Policies, or **Roadmap**/Stage 2/Investigation/Resolution Resources)
- **Roadmap**/Stage 3: "Navigate Change: Community Building"
- **Societies Consortium First Annal Members Convening/**Important Characteristics of Community and Restorative Actions (access under **Library**/Societies Consortium Guiding Documents)
- **Model Glossary/**Restorative Actions
- **Compendium**/Community Building and Restorative Action Resources and Initiatives

18. Had the society and department each provided and advertised the availability of a confidential advisor (e.g., an ombudsperson), how might that have changed Dr. Smart's experience?

RESPONSE:

- Had there been mechanisms to safely report the concerns, community building with the involved individuals — the faculty and leaders, post docs, staff, and Dr. Smart – in addition to action to ensure Dr. Smart's fellowship application would not be adversely affected, these could have elevated understanding, minimized ongoing harm to Dr. Smart, and helped to stem harm to other targets in the future.
- Having an ombudsperson can also ensure that incidents can be prevented. Ombudspersons can help engage in planning to increase the likelihood for success for participants.

REVIEW:

- **Compendium**/Ombuds Programs
- **Compendium/National Academies June 2018 Report**, Chapter 6, Changing the Culture and Climate in Higher Education/Diffusing Power Structure and Reducing Isolation, Ombuds Office

19. From ACEA's perspective, if no one is reporting concerns about their experiences at society meetings, can ACEA assume nothing problematic is occurring? How could ACEA assess experiences without relying on reporting alone?

RESPONSE:

- **Society leaders and Boards should not rely on lack of reporting to conclude absence of problems.** Permitting anonymous reporting and conducting anonymized climate surveys of members and meeting participants can be effective ways for Boards to determine and communicate to their communities the actual occurrence of, and harm caused by, exclusionary, unprofessional, unethical, and inequitable conduct.

Reporting out to members with transparency about problems identified by these assessment tools and actions taken or planned to address the problems leads to accountability for change.

- But encouraging, and implementing effective, reporting is not enough**. Each report should have a response**. If a society has a good process, takes effective action, and reports back to its community about the kinds and frequency of misconduct and the kinds of response (even without specific details to protect privacy), the community will internalize that prohibitions against unprofessional and unethical conduct are seriously enforced. With that confidence, others are more likely to report concerns.

REVIEW:

- **Compendium**/Data & Self-Assessment resources;
- **Compendium**/Surveys
- **Societies Consortium 1/28/21 Hot topic Webinar:** Data rich self-assessment processes as context for prioritizing equity and inclusion (access under **Library**/Practical Implementation Tools)

20. This case study detailed experiences at a society meeting, how could the harms Dr. Smart experienced be amplified in other settings or situations?

RESPONSE:

- Without undermining the uniqueness of each society's and institution's mission and policies, fundamental inclusive conduct standards and expectations in common can significantly affect climate and culture across entities and a field.
- Due to the overlapping roles of individuals in society and academic department leadership, harms in one setting are amplified. Many of the perpetrators in this case study had leadership roles at ACEA and TU C-Eng., expanding the impacts of their exclusionary and inequitable treatment of Dr. Smart across the society's events and the university's postdoc selection process. Their example acclimated upcoming generations (C-Eng. post docs and students) to harmful norms.
- Conversely, effective policy, concrete guidance (Dos and Don'ts), and awareness-raising about harmful vs. inclusive conduct for leaders in one setting can positively impact and encourage inclusive role-modeling by them in other settings, as well. When role modeling is reinforced by similar guidance and awareness raising for those in a wide range of roles, everyone is held accountable regardless of role, and accountability is broadly recognized, climate and culture changes.