



SOCIETIES CONSORTIUM

ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN STEMM

An initiative to advance professional and ethical conduct, climate & culture

CASE STUDY LIBRARY

Case Study 3. After-Conference Socializing Goes Sideways

Case Study 3 addresses: incident(s) during conferences, but off site, including use of alcohol.

A female society board member, and tenured professor, attends an annual conference, accompanied by selected students, as their faculty advisor. The group celebrates the faculty members' successful research presentation with dinner and drinking. The faculty member and some reluctant students accompany other students who plan an outing to a gay bar with a notoriously sexually explicit cabaret show. Hotel staff notice the inebriated group when they return to the hotel and notify society staff who implement a response protocol.

Case Study 3. Volume II

- I. Facts and Scopes of Issues
- II. **Facilitator Guide: Reflections**
- III. Facilitator Guide: Analysis

Overview – Facilitator Guide: Reflections

This guide, which provides “pause & process” questions raised by Case Study 1’s facts, is for review by facilitators to prepare for group discussion and may be used during facilitation. Each of its color-coded segments corresponds with the same color-coded segment of Case Study 1, Volume I (Facts and Scopes of Issues) and Volume III (Facilitation Guide- Analysis). These questions invite the facilitator to prepare to encourage learners 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.

1 Introduction

Pause & Process

1. **From the students’, Dr. Jones’, and AOS’ perspectives,** did AOS’ Policy and Code of Conduct help them to understand what conduct norms they could expect at the meeting or during (or concurrent with) the events and activities surrounding the meeting?

2 The Evenings’ Events

Pause & Process

2. **From the students, university and AOS’ perspectives,** did the students experience sexual harassment? Did any students play a role in harassment?

Do your answers depend on Dr. Jones asking to join the group? Or the fact that Dr. Jones indicated that the activities were “on the university”? Or that the students attended the meeting with the sponsorship of the university?

3 More of the Evenings’ Events

Pause & Process

3. Were the students in a position to object to the outing, **or the events that occurred once at the bar? Why didn’t the students report what had happened?**
4. **What might have been the impact** if a few students planned the outing and invited other students—but Dr. Jones was never involved?
5. **What might have been the impact** if a few students banded together to object to the outing, or to leave once the sexualized show started, or when Professor Jones’ performance began?

4

After the Incident

Pause &
Process

6. **From the students', university's, and AOS' perspectives**, did policies and conduct codes help them determine if a student, faculty or society member was acting at odds with their respective policies and aims? Was there any aspect that could have been clearer? If so, would that affect how the institutions should respond? Prevent recurrence?
7. **From AOS' perspective**, if no one is reporting concerns about their experiences at society meetings, can AOS assume nothing problematic is occurring? How could AOS assess experiences without relying on reporting alone?
8. **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?
9. **Given the students' positions as early career professionals**, how could the behavior they encountered impact their career trajectories? What special concerns and challenges arise when considering early career professionals—generally and those of marginalized identities?
10. This case study detailed experiences in association with, but not at, a society meeting. **How could the harms to the students be amplified in other settings or situations?**