Deliverable – Complaints and Reporting Policy
Bushkill Bunch pod
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This document is the result of the Bushkill Bunch pod's investigation of a variety of organization/institution's policies for handling complaints of racism and harassment. We describe the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes for our ideal institution. Members of the pod will be working to customize policies for each of our individual institutions/organizations. Red text indicates sections we will continue to refine and formalize as a pod.

Access to Policies

- Policies should be easy to locate (on the front page of an institution's website, posted on bulletin boards, sent out in regular emails). How to access policies should be mentioned during regular lab/institution/classroom meeting times (not simply during the first days of orientation/onboarding of new staff).

Reviewing Policy

- The harassment reporting policy should be reviewed annually at a minimum.
- Cultural surveys, regularly and after wide-spread reports/high-profile incidents, will be conducted.
    - Leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve.
- Mechanisms of reporting complaints should be made very clear, posted on bulletin boards, sent in monthly emails, and discussed monthly in classroom settings / lab meetings / etc.

Process For Changing Policy

- Institution-wide votes will be held on an annual basis to determine the efficacy of harassment/complaint reporting policies
- Team of people to talk to if the complainant feels their situation was not adequately addressed
    - If an investigation into an incident of harassment shows that the policy is inadequate it should be reviewed and changed
        - Mechanisms here-- continue to discuss options!

Reporting Harassment Statistics

- Harassment report numbers should be published annually and compiled by HR or the DEI office.

- If it is possible to report the nature of a complaint while maintaining anonymity the report should include the nature of the complaint (racial, sexual, etc…) - continued discussion

Mechanisms For Reporting Complaints, Bias, Microaggressions, Harassment, and Overt Racism

- Reporting will be done through an online form with the option of submitting anonymously. The form should be user friendly for ease of filing a complaint, and easily accessible. Paper forms should also be available in various rooms/outside offices.
  - A liaison with disability services will be available to anyone wishing to file a report and needs assistance (scribe/translation/braille etc.). This liaison will maintain confidentiality.
- Specific methods of reporting complaints will be expanded upon by each pod member for deliverables tailored to each of our respective institutions, as this point is difficult to address for our communal "ideal institution" based on factors such as size of the institution, etc.

Levels of Reporting

- Reporting complaints in our institution could take place at a global or local level. The level of the complaint can depend on a number of factors. (This is also highly dependent on factors such as institution size, etc; pod members will tailor accordingly).
  - A global complaint could take place when the type of harassment is covered by a departmental/large organization type policy (more legal definitions of harassment, like WHOI example). A local complaint could cover things that would have traditionally slipped through the cracks of a large institution.
  - The individual reporting the complaint decides which route to take. In some cases a local complaint may be appropriate; if anonymity is an issue or the local representative is involved, it might be appropriate to make a global complaint. The individual(s) dealing with the complaint might feel it is necessary to escalate it to a global format depending on the details. This should only be done with the reporting person's consent.

Confidentiality

- The names of people involved in all complaints (both global and local) must be kept confidential. (or only if they request it?) - pod will continue discussion
- Records will be maintained by HR or a DEI office.

Who Reviews Complaints

- The names of people who review complaints will be made public.

- The group of potential reviewers will be made up of as diverse and large a group as possible. They will represent different parts of the organization (junior and senior or students/faculty or staff/management) as well as a mix of genders/ethnicities.
  - A minimum of five people will be involved in the decision-making process, and as many people who aren't white men as is possible
    - ^ continued discussion- how to do this without having BIPOC doing more work than white people?
  - How will we set this up and/or keep ourselves accountable for this? Continued discussion
- Reviewers change (maximum term of two years in a row).
- If a complainant feels that appropriate action has not been taken they are encouraged to provide the name of someone to act as an additional reviewer. This can continue if they feel the same way X number of times? Continued discussion

Training For Review Board Members

- Individuals involved in reviewing complaints must receive training prior to being involved in a complaint investigation.
  - The training should involve a system for establishing awareness of when the review board needs outside council.
  - The training must be regularly revisited, not held once prior to their participation
  - What kind of training?

Training of Individuals

- All members of the organization are expected to work towards a harassment-free environment. Training will be ongoing and become a part of the culture of the organization.
- Think of workplace safety as an analogy: everyone doing a job is supposed to follow safe work procedures. It isn't only when there is an accident that people get safety training it happens everyday. EDI will be treated like this. It will be discussed regularly, not just during the first day on the job or at a special seminar.
  - How do we remain accountable for this? Set up a schedule: weekly/monthly/etc. lab/organization meetings in smaller groups to discuss either different topics, or recent events and how they apply to the lab, etc.

Police Involvement

- The police will not be brought into the investigation by the organization.
  - If the complainant wishes to involve the police they should report the incident directly to the authorities.

Advocacy

- Individuals may be accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization in any part of the reporting process. The advocate should be anyone the individual selects freely and feels safe with (friend, family member, or anyone else from their personal life).

Outcomes

- Outcomes will be determined by a review board made up of as diverse and large a group as possible. They will represent different parts of the organization (junior and senior or students/faculty or staff/management) as well as a mix of genders/ethnicities. The reviewers should change with time (maximum term of two years in a row, however can serve multiple terms).
- In general the progression of punishments for harassment will be 1) warning, 2) unpaid suspension (length of time dependent upon judgment by review board), and 3) termination.
- The review board has the authority to escalate punishment based on the severity of the harassment.
    - Metric for this?

Resources Available For Complainants

- Counselors or advocates (legal support?), especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender.

    - Counselors or advocates will be in contact with the department the report was brought up against, and have regular conversations with the complainant to monitor social-emotional health. The counselor/advocate will be trauma-informed and culturally aware so they may act in the best interest of the reporting person, if necessary.
    - When the complaints are on a large scale (legal and potentially reputationally damaging for the organization) the people providing support and guidance should be arms-length from the organization in order to make sure that they are advising in good faith, and not just keeping the organization's interests in mind.

- Automatic or upon request? (continuing conversation) investigation into potential impacts of harassment/topic of complaint on grades or evaluations

- This includes protection of the complainant against retaliation/repercussions, accomodations for continuing work/courses, and the option for pass/fail or outside assessment.

- ○ Complainant can request that the complaint be confidential among the faculty/administration, if the anonymity of the complainant is in jeopardy (for increased protection of the complainant)

    - ○ As a pod, we are concerned about the confidentiality of complaints made by BIPOC students, faculty, staff, and employees who may be vulnerable to exposure even when complaints are filed anonymously. We will look to other pods' deliverables for suggestions and make changes accordingly.

Resources Available to Groups Raising Concern and Proposing Change

- Petitions of a specific number of signatures (institution size dependent) trigger a town hall, meeting with organizational leadership, or policy change. What is the follow-up process for town halls and meetings?
    - ○ Follow-up procedure/protocol should be transparent so members of the organization know what to expect. Deliverables will be used to hold those involved in the town hall accountable to take action.
    - ○ The review board comes back into play and holds them accountable???
    - ○ Working groups or committees with power to change or propose changes to policy????
- The eventual decision will be made by a committee/board. Results of each vote will be public (unless the complainant wishes to maintain confidentiality).

Examples of Organizations We Have Drawn From

- Basin research group. Lab/group: Code of conduct
- WHOI: large institution: Harassment Policy
- Geological Society of America: large institution: Code of Ethics and Policy for Handling Potential Ethical Violations
- Society of Exploration Geophysics: Large international society, Harassment Policy
- Software Underground: Grassroots online geoscience community, Code of Conduct
- Lafayette College: College wide policies, "Notice of Nondiscrimination" "One Pard Universal Reporting Form"