

Sexual Harassment in the Sciences: Response by Professional Societies

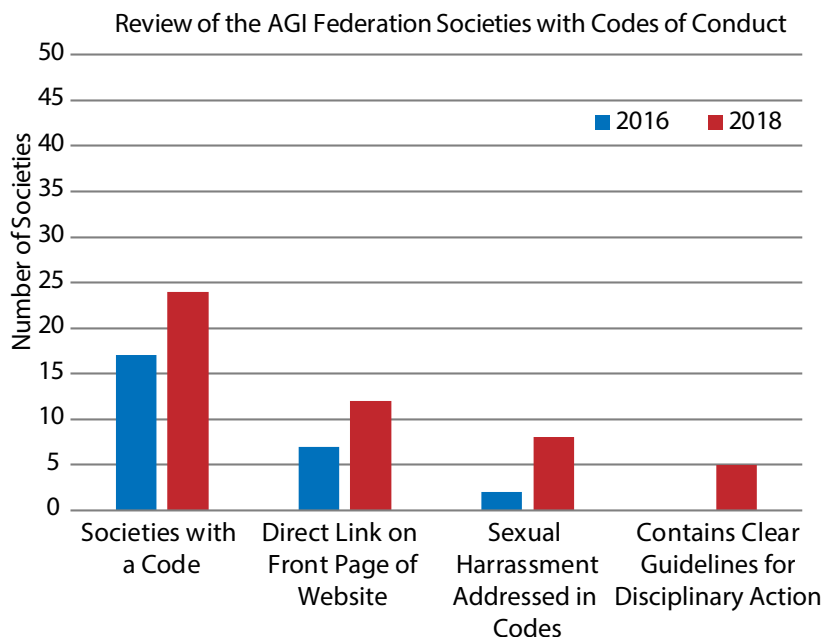
We present follow-up results from a 2016 workshop on sexual harassment and assault in the sciences, convened by the American Geophysical Union (AGU) and funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The workshop included over 60 leaders from government agencies, academia and professional societies and was co-sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the American Chemical Society (ACS), the American Geosciences Institute (AGI), the Association for Women Geoscientists (AWG), and the Earth Science Women's Network (ESWN) (Wendel, 2016).

Participants agreed that professional societies must address the systemic, structural problems that enable harassment in the sciences. Societies should implement transparent and accessible codes of conduct and/or ethics policies ("Codes") that 1) specifically address sexual and other types of harassment, discrimination and bullying and 2) provide clear disciplinary procedures for violations (see AGU Code: <https://ethics.agu.org/policy/>). Recommended practices were disseminated to AGI Federation Societies post-workshop for feedback and review, and will be finalized in Spring 2018.

To determine the impact of these efforts on AGI member society Codes, we visited each member website. We define publicly available Codes as those accessible within three clicks from the main site. If unable to find the Code, we used the website search engine (if available). Some society websites referenced a Code but we could not find it, presumably because of broken links.

In 2016, 17 AGI member societies out of 50 previously surveyed had publicly available Codes. Only 2 specifically addressed sexual harassment. As of January 2018, 24 AGI member societies have a Code (Figure 1). Of these, twelve had a direct link on the front page compared to seven in 2016. Eight of the Codes today address harassment. Five have clear disciplinary actions for sexual harassment violations.

We urge geo-societies to expedite the re-write (or the writing) of their Ethics Codes for members.



Results of the review of the 50 AGI Federation Societies in September 2016 and January 2018. Results shown on the far left are the number of societies that have Codes. The middle left results show which of those Codes can be found through a direct link on the front page of the society website. The middle right results show the number of Codes that specifically address sexual harassment. The far right results reveal the number of Codes that include clear guidelines for disciplinary action for sexual harassment violators.

References

Wendel, J. (2016), AGU-sponsored workshop targets sexual harassment in the sciences, *Eos*, 97, <https://doi.org/10.1029/2016EO059651>. Published on 20 September 2016.

- Blair Schneider (University of Kansas), Mary Anne Holmes (University of Nebraska - Lincoln), Erika Marin-Spiotta (University of Wisconsin-Madison)