Resolution 13H-2023

NO TITLE

Background: In academia, “Pass the Harasser” is a phenomenon describing how accused sexual harassing professors/deans/administrators may transfer from one institution to another, retire, or go on sabbatical to avoid disclosure. The problem is so common that in 2019 The Chronicle of Higher Education called Pass the Harasser “Higher education’s worst kept secret”.

The institution receiving the alleged harasser may or may not be aware of their misconduct. The “passing” institutions may make the harasser sign confidential NDAs thus protecting the school’s reputation from liability, negative press, and defamation.

The “accepting” school may or may not unwittingly hire the alleged perpetrator, lured by their credentials.

In more recent times, institutions including U. California Davis, U. California San Diego, U. Wisconsin, and University of Illinois have enacted plans to shine a light on the silencing mechanisms that have continuously harmed students, residents, and faculty. Targets and victims of sexual harassment may be terrified of reporting sexual harassment, knowing that they can be retaliated against, losing not just their jobs, but their careers. They are often traumatized for life.

In 2020, the State of Washington enacted the first Stop Pass The Harasser legislation in the United States. State Representative Gerry Pollet and Governor Jay Inslee sponsored what is now state law, requiring institutions to report substantiated findings of sexual misconduct within an employee’s personnel file. Furthermore, these findings must be disclosed at the hiring institution. Colleges and universities must ask about previous sexual misconduct findings prior to hiring. Washington law bans confidential NDAs or the hiding of sexual harassment investigations at institutions.

The premise is to provide transparency and accountability in order to prevent sexual misconduct, bullying and related abuses from happening again at another school, and to provide safer educational atmospheres.

Furthermore, on March 8, 2023, the State of Washington passed Bill #1522 to expand Pass the Harasser disclosure of misconduct which occurs at conferences and association meetings. State Representative Pollet urged that I explain this to ADEA so that our organization understands the ramifications and act upon it. This is a quote from State Representative Pollet: “Half of all higher ed harassment or assault on grad students and faculty occur at conferences or association meetings (per the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine), which is addressed by 1522. ADEA should be moving to adopt reporting and investigation practices that mirror Title IX since Title IX doesn’t apply to the OFF CAMPUS behavior.”

Resolved, that ADEA support “Stop Pass the Harasser” initiatives by recommending that dental schools follow sexual harasser screening processes as set forth in the state of Washington, UC San Diego, UC Davis, U. Wisconsin, and U. of Illinois, making safer learning and teaching environments for students, faculty, and staff.