

Rose Dufour
U.S National Science Foundation
U.S Academic Research Fleet
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Civility at Sea

Buenos Dias y gracias para la oportunidad a presentatar Civilidad en el mar- Civility at Sea.

I'm here today to speak to you about the climate of civility at sea aboard the U.S Academic Research Fleet. I thought I would start off sharing a story that happened to me some 30 (ish) years ago when I went out on my first major research cruise. My experience wasn't unique (sadly, some 58% of women have experienced some type of harassment in the sciences, second only to the U.S. military at 68 %, ¹ according to a study done by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences) nor was my experience as bad as what other women in the field of oceanography have endured over the years. We have come a long way in terms of making strides to be more inclusive and provide avenues of protection for reporting and dealing with harassment, as well as protection from retaliation. We now recognize that the issue of protection from harassers isn't just for women but must cover both genders, sexual orientation, and ethnicity/religion. In the last decade many of our efforts were geared more at a "judicial interpretation" of U.S laws which incentivized institutions to create policies and training on sexual harassment that focused on symbolic compliance in order to avoid liability, and not actually on preventing sexual harassment. Economically, twenty-two U.S. public universities (and university systems) paid out more than \$10.5 million in settlements related to sexual-harassment claims in 2016 and '17, according to a Wall Street Journal review of recent settlements. ²

The #MeToo movement, and other societal pressures have pushed the tide to real prevention and I'm hopeful that this generation will reap the rewards of these changes. However, as with any pendulum swing, there will be some cases that turn misunderstandings into causalities (loss of jobs, careers, lawsuits, etc), but hopefully we can course correct in a fair manner.

¹ In a survey conducted by the University of Texas System (Swartwout 2018), about 20 percent of female science students (undergraduate and graduate) experienced sexual harassment from faculty or staff, while more than a quarter of female engineering students and greater than 40 percent of medical students experienced sexual harassment from faculty or staff. The Pennsylvania State University System conducted a similar survey and found similar results with 33 percent of undergraduates, 43 percent of graduate students, and 50 percent of medical students experiencing sexual harassment from faculty or staff. Other survey data reveal similarly high rates of sexual harassment of students and faculty in our colleges and universities. These data should not be surprising considering that the academic workplace (i.e., employees of academic institutions) has the second highest rate of sexual harassment at 58 percent (the military has the highest rate at 69 percent) when comparing it with military, private sector, and the government (Ilies et al. 2003).

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² WSJ-Schools Pay Millions in Sexual-Harassment Settlements- June 6, 2018 <https://www.wsj.com/articles/schools-pay-millions-in-sexual-harassment-settlements-1528277400>

My story:



I am dating myself here, but my first cruise was before the days of internet at sea and the prominence of Title IX, a U.S. Federal civil rights law that handles sexual equality, or Offices of Equity and Inclusion were commonplace on university campuses. It was back in the day when you went to sea and were truly isolated from shore, in my case 40+ days. Being one of three women onboard the ship out of a compliment of 50, it was apparent very quickly that I was stepping onboard uncharted waters in terms of my comfort zone. There was no mention during the safety briefing of how to handle any unwelcome attention or conversely how to deal with the lack of a "safety net", and honestly, I don't think anyone thought in those terms. This vessel, along with most in the ARF followed the traditional chain of command - the captain and chief scientist, were your only resources. I was greeted by the salty ship's Captain with one sole conversation *"women are bad luck at sea, and this will likely be the last time we talk"*, and it was. The chief scientist (CS) turned out to be what I will coin as a "professor with perceived privileges". Strangely, during the first week, the CS moved from his spacious stateroom to a cabin next to mine in a lower deck where it was rather isolated from the others. One of my assignments was to wake the Chief Scientist up for his watch, which required that I enter his stateroom. That daily task was stomach retching to me. Returning from watch one night I noticed peep holes in the bulkhead between our rooms (which I quickly taped up!). My predicament seemed to be getting out of control, and I didn't feel I had anyone of authority to turn to. I had the constant feeling of being cornered by the CS, and I wasn't the only one aware of this unwelcomed pursuit. I managed to get myself on an opposite watch from the CS by trading my slot with a fellow shipmate, but there was still no way of avoiding him completely. After some 30 days of dodging him at meals, in the lab, on the deck, the Argentine observer, a Naval Commander, pulled me aside and told me he learned of the professor's intentions to change his travel in order to follow me after the cruise (I had made plans to travel in South America which was known to him since I was required to turn-over my passport and my travel itinerary). The commander's actions we now label as, *see something say something*. He kindly offered his home with his wife and children as a safe place to stay while I dealt with rearranging my travel. When I returned to my institution I didn't file a complaint, or even share this episode of "harassment" with anyone, I did what most women did back then, I stayed silent.

I know now that this was not the way to handle such a situation, and as you will see in the video that I'll show shortly, not speaking up allows for the *continuum of harm*. Unfortunately, several years later it was revealed that this same professor and a new captain were engaged in a mutual arrangement involving female graduate students. Suffice to say, the investigation was long and ugly. I don't mean to single out chief scientists or captains, because harassments come in many forms. However, the mere fact we are talking and sharing these stories proves that we have come a long way in our awareness and education around these sensitive issues.

What we are doing in the U.S. ARF:

All these years later, as the NSF ship operations program director, I'm now in position to help/guide/fund efforts and policy for the U.S. Academic Research Fleet with regard to harassment. NSF is the cognizant agency for oversight of the ARF², which is comprised of 18 ships, owned by either U.S. Federal Agencies or U.S. State academic institutions. With this Fleet comes great diversity and 18 unique ways of addressing harassment issues onboard these vessels. However, under the UNOLS umbrella we have created a committee called MERAS (Maintaining an Environment of Respect Aboard Ships) which tries to provide broad high-level policy guidance to operators, much like the safety committee, in order to coordinate our collective efforts that align with University procedures but highlights the sensitivities of operating onboard ships in a "hyper-environment". The ARF is also in strong alliance with our Federal partners, like NOAA, in finding common threads to bring awareness and tools to our sea-going participants. This sort of broader consensus approach provides a stronger message that we will not tolerate an atmosphere where any participant feels marginalized, isolated and/or harassed. And ultimately, an environment free of harassment makes for a safer vessel.

² The NSF Director has provided the following No (144)

The National Science Foundation (NSF) [does not tolerate sexual harassment, or any kind of harassment](#), within the agency, at grantee organizations, field sites, or anywhere NSF-funded science and education are conducted. The 2,000 American colleges, universities and other institutions that receive NSF funds are responsible for fully investigating complaints and for complying with federal non-discrimination law.

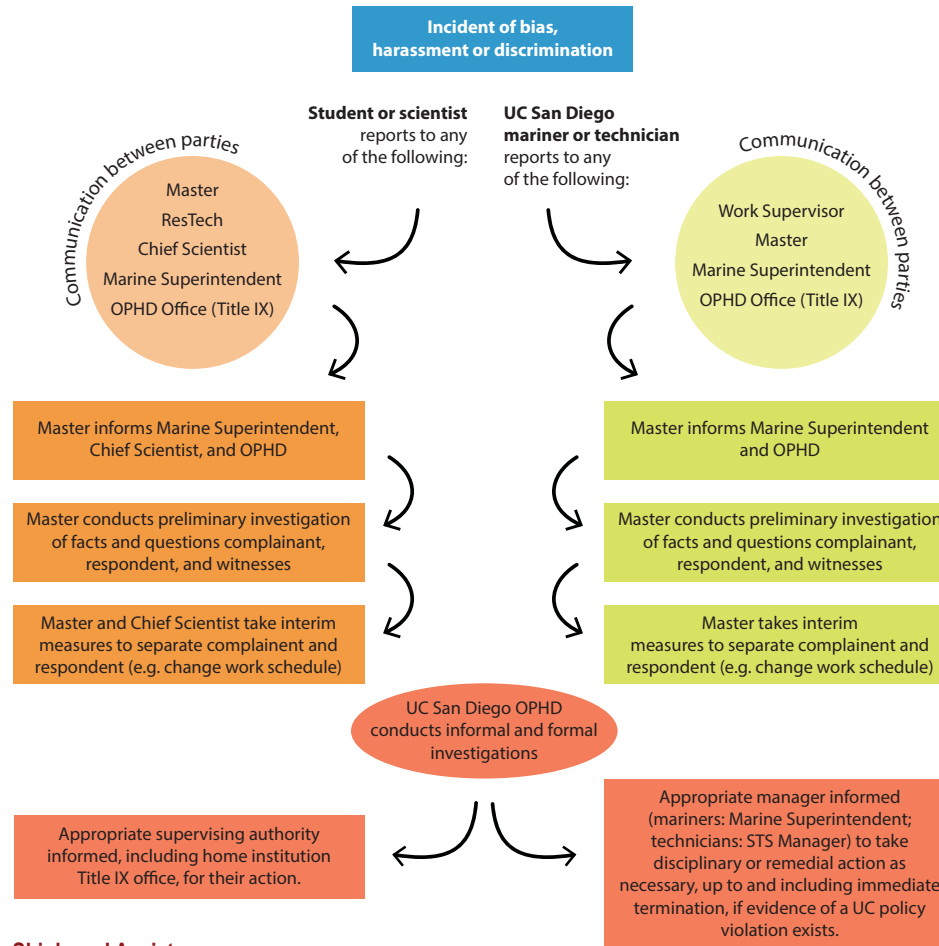
As the primary funding agency of fundamental science and engineering research in the United States, NSF is committed to promoting safe, productive research and education environments for current and future scientists and engineers. We consider the Principal investigator (PI) and any co-PI(s) identified on an NSF award to be in positions of trust. The PI and co-PI and all grant personnel must comport themselves in a responsible and accountable manner, including during the performance of award activities conducted outside the organization, such as at field sites or facilities, or during conferences and workshops.

U.S. Federal Agency/UNOLS/MERAS Activities:

- Educational/Informational Video Series:
 - **Module 1:** U.S. Federal partners and UNOLS have worked on an educational video. This short Module 1 video, coordinated and funded by NOAA, focuses on defining harassment and provides some suggestions on how to handle harassment, but we also try to promote a positive message of "civility". Our goal is to show this short video on most ships within the Federal Oceanographic Fleet (NOAA, NSF, USAP). Because the video rights will be owned by the Federal agencies, we are able to provide greater access to view the video before sailing. I would love your feedback on how best to ensure our foreign participants understand the video's message. Perhaps a transcript of the video(s) ahead of time would give our foreign participants time to get any needed clarifications.
 - **Module 2:** Funded by NSF, ARF will continue with a Module 2 video that will be specific to our Fleet, with a holistic story - from the time in-port spent on loading the ship to the after-cruise events, and topics in between. Namely we will try to highlight some specific examples, and how best to handle various possible scenarios. MERAS is currently working a script.
 - **Module 3:** will focus on the ship's reporting methods, presented as a poster with specific phone numbers, web sites, etc.

Preventing Harassment & Discrimination at Sea: Complaint Resolution Flow Chart

We support UC San Diego's Principles of Community, and our mission reflects the University's commitment to maintaining a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism. We join others at UC San Diego in embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential ingredients of academic excellence in higher education.



Shipboard Assistance:

Contact the captain, restech, chief scientist or your work supervisor

Off-Ship Assistance:

Marine superintendent: Zoltan Kelety - zkelety@ucsd.edu - 858-534-1643

OPHD Title IX Coordinator: Carol Rogers - ophd@ucsd.edu - 858-822-3702

Report bias: reportbias.ucsd.edu

Sexual Assault Resource Center: sarc.ucsd.edu

- **Other activities:**

- MERAS is addressing hazing ceremonies such as equator crossings, first submersible dives, after cruise celebrations, etc. We would like to replace the traditional maritime “hazing” activities with a more positive and less stressful milestone recognitions (such as awards).³



- MERAS is evaluating 3rd party help-lines so participants have an option of a non-conflicted reporting avenue, such as RAINN <https://www.rainn.org/about-national-sexual-assault-telephone-hotline>
- NSF has instituted a zero-tolerance policy where PI awards will be suspended if harassment has occurred. This is complicated, and each case will be reviewed carefully so that those supported under the award can continue to fulfill the science missions.
- Through our ship inspection program, we are able to see how the safety and harassment information is presented.
- One final thought –if ship’s crew and science compositions start to look more like society this may help bridge divisions. I’d like to challenge the UNOLS Ship Operating Institutions to start making our ships and management more reflective of our culture. Currently we don’t have any women as Marine Superintendents, nor any permanent women ship captains, so perhaps we should borrow Spain’s campaign #más mujeres

(share video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxK3tE8tZqc>

³ “Ceremonies can provide a much-needed diversion from work and foster team building, but simultaneously provide avenues for sanctioned abuse. It is understandable to be weary of such exercises, especially with newsworthy incidents coming from fraternities and military institutions.

Many of us come from a privileged background, but approaching the maritime experience from a marginalized group, not yet feeling welcome and with a history of experiencing systematic abuse the idea of a crossing ceremony, even the most well intentioned, can drive people away or trigger memories of traumatic experiences. Which is antithetical to the goals of MERAS.”

