

Sent: Friday, January 05, 2018 11:35 AM

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Subject: [all_cos] **Statement from Dean Joaquin Ruiz**

Importance: High

*****Message Sent on Behalf of Dean Joaquin Ruiz*****

To the members of the College of Science community:

Over the past few months, I have been disturbed by revelations of sexual harassment that have come to light across the country. I know it likely happens here in within the College of Science and across the University of Arizona campus too. This situation demands our attention. I want to take this moment to reiterate my personal commitment to making the College of Science a safe and supportive environment for everyone.

Sexual harassment and assault are acts of aggression that violate our fundamental expectations of respect and equality. For those who are the targets of sexual harassment, the experience can have a lasting impact on their self-confidence and career aspirations, leaving them feeling demeaned, dehumanized and powerless. In many cases, coming forward to report abuse is equally traumatizing. People who have taken action after enduring sexual harassment have felt silenced, ignored or ostracized.

Our community of science is vulnerable to the abuse of power. We work in an environment that brings people together from a broad range of ages and backgrounds, often working long hours in relative isolation with little direct oversight. Some of these individuals have power over others to dictate working conditions and often, the power to make or break a career. We must build a culture where the abuse of power through coercion, harassment and assault is simply unthinkable, unimaginable, at any time, and in any context.

We in the College of Science are not alone in this fight. The University of Arizona Office of Institutional Equity (<http://equity.arizona.edu/>), with the full support of President Robbins, is committed to creating and maintaining a work and learning environment that is safe, inclusive and free of discrimination and harassment. They have worked hard to create a process to deal with harassment when it happens in a consistent, fair, and transparent way. I would urge anyone who has experienced, or is aware of, sexual harassment in the workplace to reach out to the Office of Institutional Equity for help. The University's policy strictly prohibits retaliation against an individual for reporting perceived discrimination or harassment.

Within our College of Science, I recognize there is much more we need to do. In the coming months, you will hear more about our efforts to review and strengthen our policies on sexual harassment, increase our community's awareness of the problem, and develop effective training strategies to ensure that everyone understands what constitutes sexual misconduct, how to intervene against it and how to respond effectively to someone who has been harmed by it. As a community, we must make sure that those who seek help are actually helped.

But we don't have to wait. We can begin this cultural change right now by making a personal commitment to mutual respect, fairness, and integrity in the workplace. I challenge each of you to pledge your commitment to help build a community of science where all individuals can learn, work, and achieve their full potential in an environment of safety, support, and encouragement. Together let's make the College of Science, and the University of Arizona, a truly great place to work.

Joaquin Ruiz
