

AAAS Leshner Leadership Institute fellows are calling on AAAS to instate a harassment policy that rescinds honors in the case of misconduct.

Edited by Jennifer Sills

LETTERS

Call for new AAAS harassment policy

As fellows of the AAAS Leshner Leadership Institute for Public Engagement with Science ("Public engagement helps scientists tackle global challenges," A. Q. Hoy, Association Affairs, 27 July, p. 372), we are writing to express concern that AAAS (the publisher of Science) continues to honor scientists who have engaged in harassment. Harassment, including sexual and gender harassment, is scientific misconduct, and its effects influence the daily lives of scientists, especially those who are from underrepresented populations. Honoring harassers sends a message to the entire scientific community that a harasser's individual scientific achievements are considered more valuable than their victims as well as more valuable than the severe, widespread effects of a culture of harassment on the careers, livelihoods, and scientific potential of a much broader population.

Currently, no clear mechanism exists for preventing individuals who have damaged science by engaging in harassment from receiving and retaining awards, titles, and honors from AAAS. We urge AAAS to adopt a strong, enforceable policy to address harassment and discrimination, along with other types of scientific misconduct, among honorees (including elected fellows and award recipients).

A meaningful policy would be applied prospectively and retroactively, require disclosure of institutional findings of professional misconduct, establish transparent and accountable procedures to report incidents, and make recommendations for appropriate responses, including revoking honors. Such an awards and honors policy would send a message that behavior that harms, degrades, and discriminates is incompatible with attaining the highest levels of scientific recognition. We would welcome its application to our own and future Leshner cohorts.

We were selected as Leshner fellows for our commitment to public engagement and institutional change. An inclusive scientific community is necessary for fulfilling these goals. By taking a leadership role on this important issue, we believe that AAAS can serve as a model for other institutions and professional societies.

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NOTE

1. An expanded version of our letter and a list of signatories is available at https://sites.google.com/view/timesupaaas.

10.1126/science.aav1680

Improving societies' harassment policies

As Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) professors, teachers, and mentors, we are acutely aware of the harm that can be done by sexual harassment and other discriminatory behaviors, which negatively affect the careers of young scientists and hamper our efforts to diversify the scientific workforce and professoriate. We applaud the recent report on sexual harassment of women, climate, and culture from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and the recommendations therein (1). Scientific societies can play an important role in changing discriminatory culture.

A number of societies have recently implemented or improved codes of conduct. The American Geophysical Union includes harassment as a form of scientific misconduct under its new ethics policy (2, 3). The Society of HHMI Professors has recently changed its policies so that

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membership, either initial or continuing, requires that the person be in good standing at their university or other employer in terms of relevant codes of conduct (4). AAAS (the publisher of Science) is in the process of writing a new policy (5), and there is a petition urging the U.S. National Academy of Sciences to enact such policies as well (5). We encourage all professional societies to do likewise. These steps, if taken by all, will help the scientific community to maintain respect for all members, foster an environment of inclusion, and support a diverse workforce. Ariel Anbar,1 Sarah Elgin,2 Joseph

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REFERENCES AND NOTES

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- 2. M. J. McPhaden, L. Gundersen, B. M. Williams, Eos 98, 10.1029/2017E0082469 (2017).
- 3. E. Davidson, "AGU's revised ethics policy: Where we are 6 months later," From the Prow (2018); https:// fromtheprow.agu.org/agus-revised-ethics-policy-wherewe-are-6-months-later/
- 4. The Society of HHMI Professors, Mission Statement and Rules of Order (2018); www.hhmi.org/sites/default/files/ society_of_hhmi_professors_mission_and_rules_of_ order.approved 2018.i2.pdf.
- M. Wadman, Science 360, 949 (2018).
- The full list of signatories is available as supplementary material.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Full List of Signatories

www.sciencemag.org/content/361/6406/984.2/suppl/DC1

10.1126/science.aav1362

ERRATA

Erratum for the Report "Synapse-specific representation of the identity of overlapping memory engrams" by K. Abdou et al., Science **361**, eaau8829 (2018). Published online 3 August 2018; 10.1126/science. aau8829

Erratum for the Report "Aging and neurodegeneration are associated with increased mutations in single human neurons" by M. A. Lodato et al., Science 361, eaau6185 (2018). Published online 6 July 2018; 10.1126/science.aau6185

OUTSIDE THE TOWER

Science engagement in South Africa

Learners from grades 9 to 12 surrounded our Science Week table in the township Khaye-litsha, an impoverished community near Cape Town in South Africa. We were conducting outreach for our project Cape Citizen Science (http://citsci.co.za/), an initiative to engage nonscientists in plant disease research in a global biodiversity hotspot. "Can plants get sick, too?" we asked, as the students examined unhealthy plants under dissecting microscopes and held Petri plates containing fungal-like organisms up toward the lights. Late in the day, a grade 10 boy named Dylan approached the table and began asking about our work. His hunger to learn and the depth of his questions inspired us to invite him to our lab. He immediately responded, "Can I bring my friends?"

Many researchers in our community met Dylan, Ayebonga, and Ivan during the next year, as they often joined us in our lab to satisfy their curiosity and contribute their time to the scientific process. Their dedication to learning was exemplified by the challenges they overcame to travel to our university; they often spent hours navigat-

occasionally faced financial barriers (although we made sure to

ing the public transit system of the Western Cape Province and reimburse them for their efforts).

On his first visit to the lab, Dylan excitedly informed us that it was his first time looking through a microscope. After a few visits, he told us that he wants to study microbiology at university. We are grateful to know that we helped empower him to make such a critical decision. However, there are thousands of underprivileged learners in South Africa without these oppor-

tunities, whose hunger for knowledge remains unfulfilled and overlooked. We encourage researchers to participate in public engagement programs, especially in countries with emerging economies. Such programs can increase the value and capacity of research beyond science. We also encourage leaders of traditional science projects to open their programs to citizens, especially those without reliable access to quality science education. Together, we can help science enthusiasts (and potential future scientists) develop critical decision-making and problem-solving skills.

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Call for Submissions

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High school students visit a lab after meeting scientists at a public engagement program.



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Science **361** (6406), 984-985. DOI: 10.1126/science.aav1362

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SUPPLEMENTARY http://science.sciencemag.org/content/suppl/2018/09/05/361.6406.984-b.DC1 MATERIALS

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