

# Chemists speak out on sexual harassment in academia

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Sexual misconduct on college campuses is an age-old problem that continues to plague students and faculty, and is now the subject of renewed debate. It can traumatize those who are harassed, and change the course of people's careers. The cover article in *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, shares how sexual harassment has affected chemistry students and faculty, and what universities and scientific societies are doing about it.

C&EN Senior Editors Linda Wang and Andrea Widener report the personal experiences of several women who were sexually harassed as chemistry students or junior faculty by professors and administrators senior to them. The outcomes of such experiences can differ widely. Some leave academia for industry or give up the sciences altogether, while others endure. What many of these stories have in common is silence. The majority of women and men who are harassed don't report the incidents for a variety of reasons, including shame and fear of retribution.

But tolerance for [sexual harassment](#) in the sciences is starting to erode. Some universities and science departments are establishing new training and support networks for faculty and students. There is also proposed legislation that would require universities to report all substantiated findings of harassment to federal agencies that have awarded the harasser money. To deter misconduct at scientific conferences, host organizations, including the American Chemical Society, have meeting

policies that explicitly address the issue.

**More information:** "Confronting sexual harassment in chemistry,"  
[cenm.ag/sexual-harassment](http://cenm.ag/sexual-harassment)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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