

Graduate Colloquium Abstract

Title of Presentation: My Mother and Hers: A Dissection of the Communicative Evolution of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Name of presenter: Elizabeth Bowers

Statement of intent/purpose: Focusing specifically on sex and gender-based harassment and discrimination, the evolution of communication has been detrimental to the progress of anti-workplace harassment movements. The aim of this research is to determine how if at all the evolution of communication has impacted workplace sexual harassment/discrimination movements, practices, policies, and laws.

Brief description of the evidence used in the research or project: In an analysis of other scholarly research, I dissect the evolution of communication surrounding and forming anti-workplace sexual harassment/discrimination movements, practices, policies, and laws. The communication of and between parties is considered, in addition to the organization's culture and policies that form sexual harassment practices. I also discuss historical communication and context and the intertwining of legislative development in relation to sexual harassment in the workplace.

Brief description of examples used in the presentation: I have developed a small poem related to this topic, titled "Drowning: My Mother and Hers". Through prose, I spin a tale of society's communication to women about their place and rights in the workplace, as well as that used through the intergenerational struggle of fair and just treatment for women and feminine people in the workplace.

Summary of conclusions: Evidence indicates that sexual harassment in the workplace is not uncommon and has not decreased with time. Beyond reporting and addressing, organizations must establish policies that clearly outline the lack of tolerance of harassing behaviors. Organizations must make sure employees are aware of the policies as well as of the consequences that will be imposed and should follow up appropriately on accusations of harassment. This accountability and follow through on policy will nurture an organizational culture that is not only free of sexual harassment but anti-sexual harassment.

Duration: 15-20 minutes to present, plus time for questions/discussion.

Modality: Any, in person preferred.