



AAU is deeply committed to providing our members with the tools necessary to create an environment in which students, staff, and faculty can fully participate in the campus community, free from gender-based harassment, sexual harassment, and other sexual misconduct, as well as free from retaliation for reporting such misconduct. To demonstrate this commitment, AAU has worked with its members over the last six years to gather research on the issue on our campuses and continues to work with our members to identify practices that can help address sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in all of its forms from our institutions.

In 2015 and then again in 2019, AAU conducted the largest survey of sexual assault and sexual misconduct among university students which sought to understand the experiences of more than 150,000 undergraduate and graduate students on our campuses. While these studies highlighted the deep problem of sexual assault facing those on our campuses, it also shed light on an issue that until recently had limited data: that of sexual harassment of graduate students. Our 2019 study showed that, while assault rates for graduate students were low, harassment rates were very high amongst all graduate students, at 20 percent. Furthermore, for graduate and professional women who reported being sexually harassed, 24 percent reported that their harasser was a faculty member.

Such findings led AAU to form the AAU Advisory Board on Sexual Harassment in the Academy. The board is composed of senior administrators, experts, and other campus leaders from AAU member campuses. Board members have met since early 2019 to identify promising and innovative practices that our campuses can implement such as sharing information on substantiated findings of sexual harassment during the faculty hiring process, educating the community about the availability and mechanisms of the reporting and discipline process, efforts to rebuild a sense of community after findings of harassment, changing structures of advisor and advisee, as well as other efforts that go beyond compliance and work to create a welcoming and safe environment for all student, faculty, and staff.

AAU is excited about the opportunity to join this partnership with the National Academies' Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education as we work together to address sexual harassment throughout the academic environment. Through such a partnership, we hope our efforts will be strengthened by learning of other efforts that have addressed harassment. We look forward to this partnership.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara R. Snyder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Barbara R. Snyder
President, Association of American Universities