

A Woman's Story in IT at UC Berkeley

SYSTEMIC HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Vanessa Kaskiris
UCCSC Davis
August 15, 2018

WHO IS

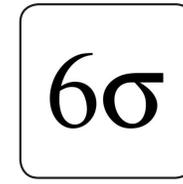
VANESSA KASKIRIS?



MASTER'S DEGREE



AGILE CERTIFIED



SIX SIGMA GREEN BELT

- » Currently employed in Educational Technology Services (ETS) at UC Berkeley as a Senior Technical Project Manager.
- » Designed, built, and launched successful commercial software and applications for over 18 years.
- » Deeply enjoy and am passionate about my career in technical project management.
- » Supported a Nobel laureate astrophysicist while I completed my Master's degree.

The following presentation contains references to my experiences in IT at UC Berkeley.

THIS PRESENTATION IS

NOT

- » An attack on the University
- » Proving that I was systematically discriminated and harassed—I already did that!
- » Proving that IT leadership and IT's HR Director received numerous harassment indicators—I already did that, too!

THIS PRESENTATION

IS

- » An analysis of the effects of workplace sexual harassment
- » An evidence-based reference guide for you
- » A strong case for systemic change and accountability
- » Constructive ways that you can be a part of this change

”

*When a woman tells the truth, she creates
the possibility for more truth around her.*

Adrienne Rich

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

DEFINED

A.

Any unwanted behavior
directed at an individual
because of their gender.

Source: Sexual Harassment of Women Climate... (2018, June) National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

B.

A form of discrimination composed of three categories of behavior:

- 1 GENDER HARASSMENT** Verbal and nonverbal behaviors that convey hostility, objectification, exclusion, or second-class status about members of one gender
- 2 UNWANTED SEXUAL ATTENTION** Verbal or physical unwelcome sexual advances, which can include assault
- 3 SEXUAL COERCION** When favorable professional or educational treatment is conditioned on sexual activity.

Source: Sexual Harassment of Women Climate... (2018, June) National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

C.

Sexual harassment becomes illegal when it creates a hostile environment...that is “severe or pervasive” enough to alter the conditions of employment, interfere with one’s work performance, or impede one’s ability to get an education.

Source: Sexual Harassment of Women Climate... (2018, June) National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

EFFECTS OF

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. Increase in risk for serious health issues
2. Self-blame and guilt
3. Wage inequity
4. Increase in emotional instability
5. Decline in job satisfaction
6. Withdrawal from organization
7. Decline in organizational commitment
8. Increased job stress
9. Decline in productivity or performance
10. Loss of promotion
11. Short and long term unresolved trauma
12. Halted advancement opportunities
13. Character assassination
14. Trolling
15. Loss of financial stability
16. Internalization and depression

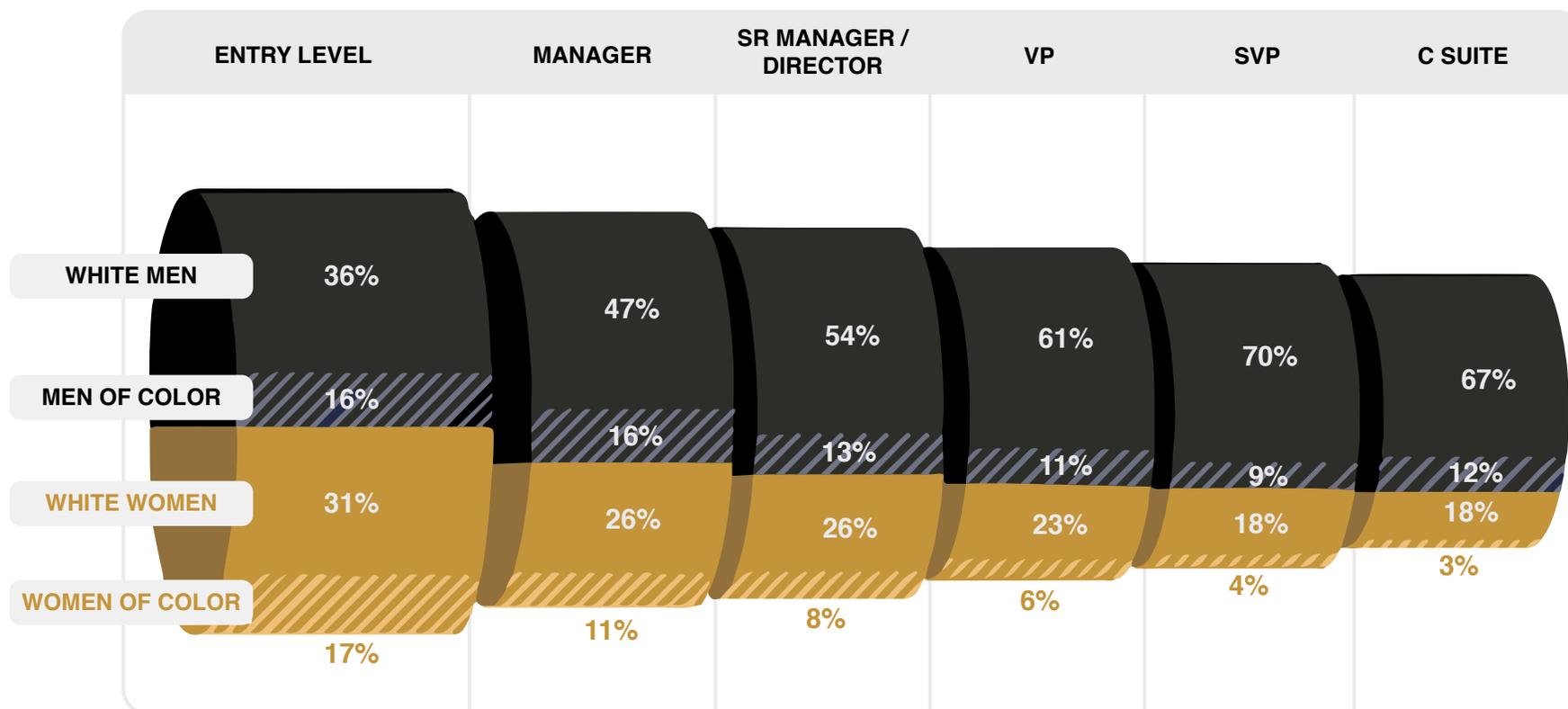
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You may lose your job, you may lose opportunities for advancement, you may lose friends—you absolutely will lose time and money.

Vanessa Kaskiris

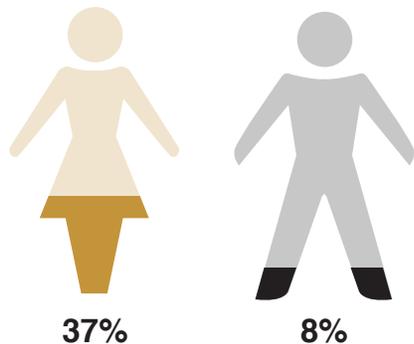
Quote from Huffington Post article March 16, 2018

REPRESENTATION IN THE CORPORATE PIPELINE BY GENDER AND RACE

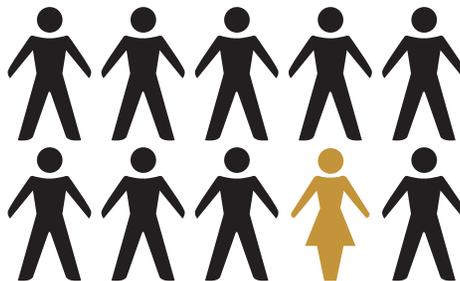


Source: Women in the Workplace, 2018, McKinsey and LeanIn

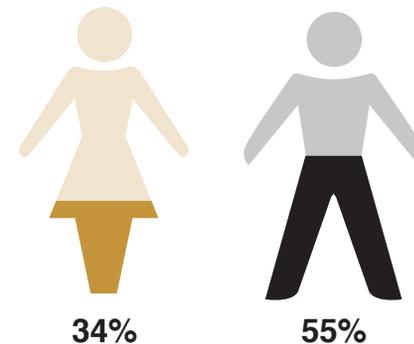
MEN THINK THEIR COMPANY IS DOING BETTER ON GENDER DIVERSITY



My gender has played a role in missing out on a raise, promotion, or chance to get ahead.



Nearly 50% of men think women are well represented in leadership organizations where only one in ten senior leaders is a woman.



In this company, disrespectful behavior toward women is often or always addressed quickly.

Source: Women in the Workplace, 2018, McKinsey and LeanIn

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

THRIVES

- » When there is a perceived tolerance for it
- » In male-dominated environments
- » In hierarchical **power** structures
- » When there is only symbolic compliance with Title IX
- » When leadership does not aggressively reduce and eliminate it



”

*I knew that it was **bad**,
but I didn't know **how bad** it was.*

Colleague

Post-Pando Article Publication

WHAT

MOTIVATES

GENDER HARASSMENT?

- » Gender harassment is expressing hostility toward women - the goal being insult, humiliation, or ostracism.*

Source: Holland and Cortina, 2016

PATTERNS

FOR
GENDER HARASSMENT

- » In the **hostile environment** form of sexual harassment, coworkers often exhibit a **pattern** of hostile sexist behavior toward **multiple targets** over an **extended** period of **time**

Source: Holland and Cortina, 2016



SILENCE
IS DAMAGING



INVESTIGATION
FINDINGS

1.

- » The preponderance of the evidence substantiates that **Respondent A contributed to the creation of a hostile work environment on the basis of sex** in violation of PPSM 12. Respondent A's system for determining project assignments and access to systems was subjective and was not applied consistently. Female employees credibly described complaining about access issues and Respondent C and having their complaints dismissed by Respondent A.

Source: Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (OPHD) formal investigation finding

2.

- » The preponderance of the evidence substantiates that **Respondent C contributed to the creation of a hostile work environment on the basis of sex** in violation of PPSM 12. Respondent C had a role in access decisions. In addition, the weight of the evidence supported that **Respondent C created hurdles for his female peers when they approached technical projects** and that **he made comments** to Witness 6 (male) **that supported that his treatment of his female colleagues was because of their sex.**

Source: Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (OPHD) formal investigation finding

3.

- » The **females uniformly described their time** in [team] as sufficiently **hostile, frustrating, and/or upsetting** that they chose to leave the unit.

Source: Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (OPHD) formal investigation finding

4.

- » Overall, the **evidence supports** that the issues in [team] created **a hostile work environment based on sex.**

Source: Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (OPHD) formal investigation finding

A person wearing a light blue suit jacket and a patterned tie is seated at a wooden table. They are holding a gold-colored smartphone in both hands and looking at the screen. A white coffee cup on a saucer is on the table in front of them. The background is a blurred interior setting with wood paneling.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH
**OMBUDS
OFFICE**



MY EXPERIENCE WITH
OPHD

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO

OPHD

1

**RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS.**

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

1

RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS

2

**KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
AND PROMOTION OF MEN ONLY BY MEN**

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

1

RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS.

2

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
AND PROMOTION OF MEN ONLY BY MEN

3

GENDER-BASED SALARY INEQUITY

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

1

RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS.

2

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
AND PROMOTION OF MEN ONLY BY MEN

3

G

4

**RESTRICTED INVOLVEMENT IN TEAM
PROJECTS**

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

1

RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS.

2

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
AND PROMOTION OF MEN ONLY BY MEN

3

G

5

INEQUITY IN EXPECTATIONS FOR
PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN THE OFFICE

4

R
PROJECTS

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

1

RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS.

2

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
AND PROMOTION OF MEN ONLY BY MEN

3

6

**PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
PREVENTED**

4

Promote

5

INEQUITY IN EXPECTATIONS FOR
PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN THE OFFICE

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

1

RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
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2

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
AND PROMOTION OF MEN ONLY BY MEN

3

G

4

F
F

7

**EXCESSIVE NON-TECHNICAL ASSIGNMENTS
TO FEMALES ONLY - NO MEN HAVE THESE
ASSIGNMENTS.**

5

INEQUITY IN EXPECTATIONS FOR
PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN THE OFFICE

6

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
PREVENTED

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

1

RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS.

2

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
AND PROMOTION OF MEN ONLY BY MEN

3

G

8

INEQUITY IN PERSONNEL DECISIONS

4

R
PROJECTS

5

INEQUITY IN EXPECTATIONS FOR
PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN THE OFFICE

6

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
PREVENTED

7

EXCESSIVE NON-TECHNICAL ASSIGNMENTS
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MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

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RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS.

2

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
AND PROMOTION OF MEN ONLY BY MEN

3

CONTRIBUTION

9

**EXCLUSION FROM KEY PROJECT
DECISIONS**

4

PROJECTS

5

INEQUITY IN EXPECTATIONS FOR
PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN THE OFFICE

6

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
PREVENTED

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EXCESSIVE NON-TECHNICAL ASSIGNMENTS
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8

INEQUITY IN PERSONNEL DECISIONS

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

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8

INEQUITY IN PERSONNEL DECISIONS

10

HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT

JECT

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

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RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS.

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PROJECTS

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PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN THE OFFICE

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PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
PREVENTED

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EXCESSIVE NON-TECHNICAL ASSIGNMENTS
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8

INEQUITY IN PERSONNEL DECISIONS

11

**NON-COMPETING KEY CAMPUS
LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

10

HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT

PROJECT

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

1

RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
ESCALATING DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS.

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KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
AND PROMOTION OF MEN ONLY BY MEN

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4

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INEQUITY IN EXPECTATIONS FOR
PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN THE OFFICE

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PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
PREVENTED

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EXCESSIVE NON-TECHNICAL ASSIGNMENTS
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ASSIGNMENTS.

8

INEQUITY IN PERSONNEL DECISIONS

12

**GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN
CONNECTION WITH PERSONNEL
AND LAYOFF PROCESSES.**

10

11

NON-COMPETING KEY CAMPUS
LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

MY FORMAL
ASSERTIONS TO
OPHD

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RETALIATION IN RESPONSE TO ME
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KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, MENTORING
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3

GENDER-BASED SALARY INEQUITY

4

RESTRICTED INVOLVEMENT IN TEAM
PROJECTS

5

INEQUITY IN EXPECTATIONS FOR
PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN THE OFFICE

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PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
PREVENTED

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INEQUITY IN PERSONNEL DECISIONS

9

EXCLUSION FROM KEY PROJECT
DECISIONS

10

HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT

11

NON-COMPETING KEY CAMPUS
LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

12

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN
CONNECTION WITH PERSONNEL
AND LAYOFF PROCESSES.

”

[She] can't do her job.

[The meeting] only made her look stupid.

Riff Khan, Colleague

post meeting with Vanessa Kaskiris and Ben Gross

”

If I didn't see it, it didn't happen.

Ben Gross
Supervisor

”

*Vanessa was doomed from the beginning...
Riff spent a lot of time complaining about her.*

Witness 6

”

*IMO - you're doing a great job
managing this super-difficult project!*

Riff Khan

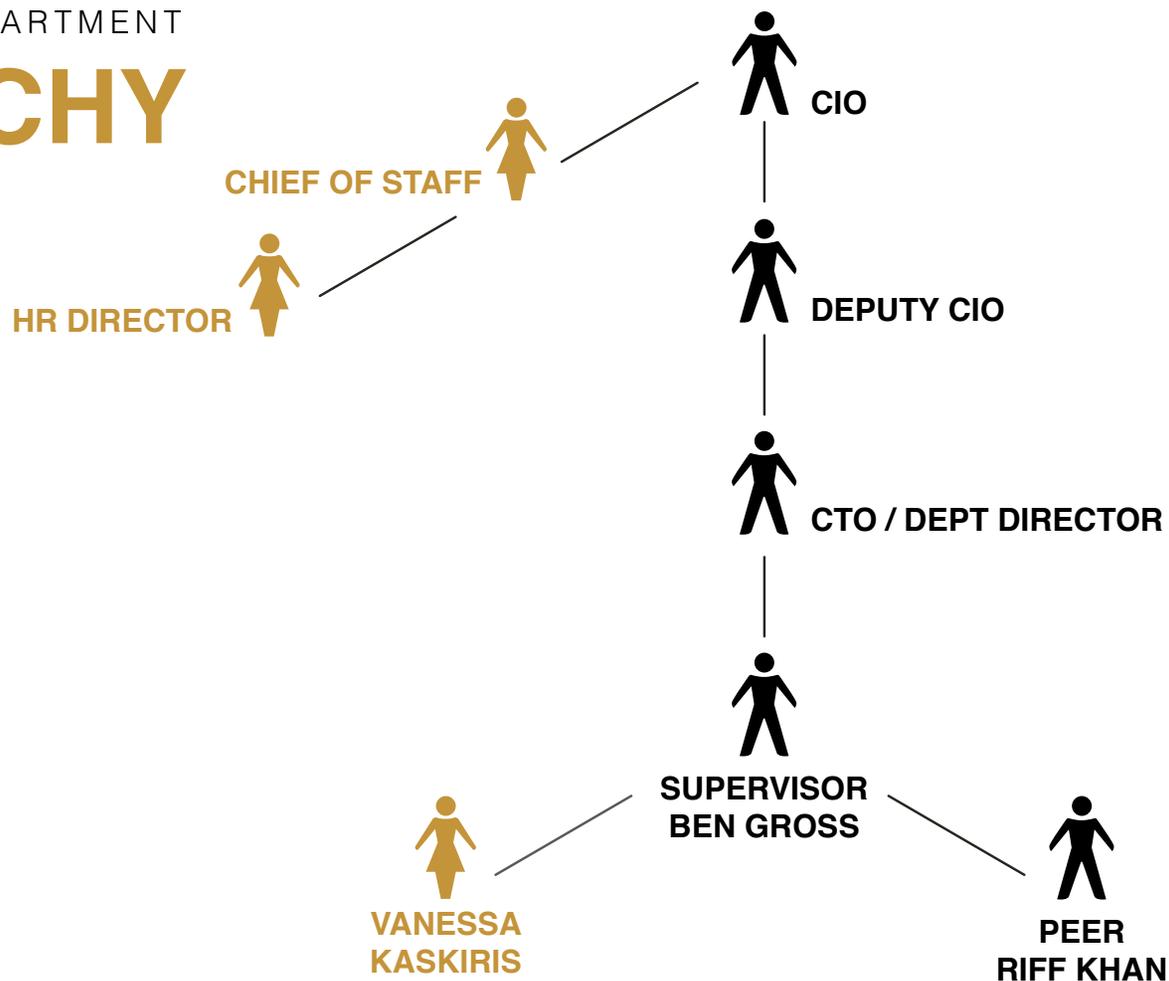
Derisive written comment to Vanessa while mocking her behind her back

A pair of black-rimmed glasses with clear lenses is positioned horizontally across the middle of the frame. The glasses are resting on a document with Finnish text, which is slightly out of focus. The background shows a blurred office environment with shelves and papers. The overall lighting is soft and professional.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH
WHISTLEBLOWER

UC BERKELEY IT DEPARTMENT

HIERARCHY



A man in a dark grey suit and white shirt is shown from the chest up. He is covering his mouth with his right hand, with his fingers spread. He is wearing a watch on his left wrist. The background is dark and out of focus.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE

**CTO /
DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR**

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE

DEPUTY CIO



A photograph of a person in a white dress shirt sitting at a wooden desk. The person is wearing a black watch on their left wrist and has their hand near their face. On the desk in front of them is a spiral-bound notebook with a pen resting on it. The background is a blurred office setting with vertical blinds.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE

CIO

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE

CHIEF OF STAFF



A person wearing a white blazer and a blue top is sitting at a wooden desk. They are holding a smartphone in their left hand. In front of them is a silver laptop. The text "MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE" is written in a small, black, sans-serif font on the back of the laptop. Below it, the words "DIRECTOR" and "OF HR" are written in a large, bold, gold-colored sans-serif font. To the left of the laptop, there is a white coffee cup. To the right, another smartphone is lying on the desk.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE

**DIRECTOR
OF HR**

”

*The team tends to have one or two women at a time.
The woman stays a few months, then is "spit out."*

Witness 5



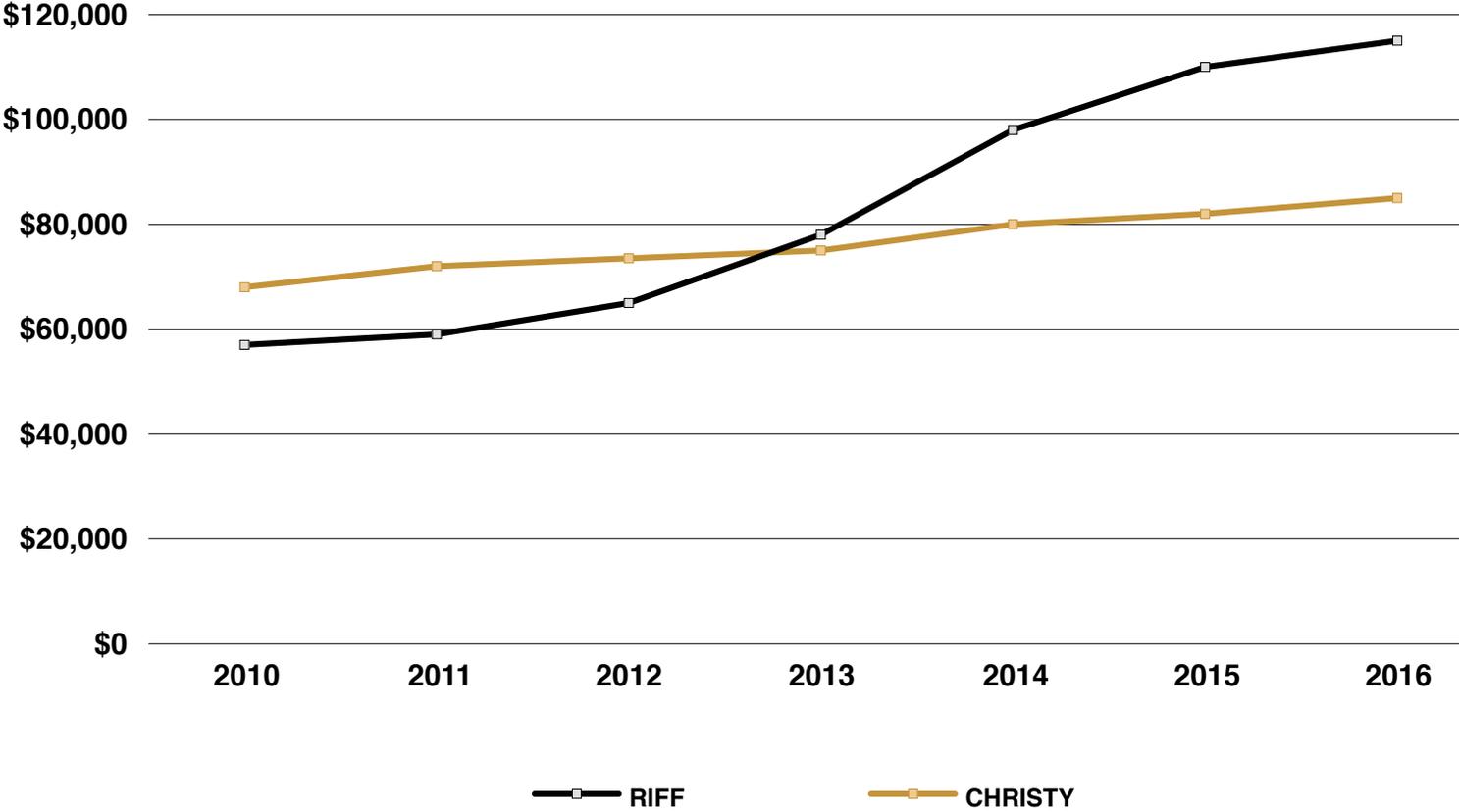
ALLIES & RETALIATION

WHAT DOES

SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION

LOOK LIKE?

ACTUAL
GENDERED SALARY COMPARISON



Source: UC Wages

”

*...the most potent **predictor** of **sexual harassment**
is organizational climate—the degree to which
those in the organization **perceive** that **sexual
harassment is or is not tolerated...***

Sexual Harassment of Women

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018

IS IT AT UCB ADDRESSING
**SYSTEMIC
HARASSMENT?**



IST CULTURE ASSESSMENT

- A.** Post-Pando articles, IST initiated an 18 month engagement with a firm called Civility Partners
- B.** Civility Partners conducted interviews with a randomly selected pool of 30 staff members - with zero accounting for gender and/or minority representation
- C.** The firm conducted interviews with **all** of leadership
- D.** Civility Partners owner, Catherine, could only make herself available to talk with me on a holiday by phone with her assistant also on the call
- E.** She indicated that none of my feedback would be included in her assessment and report

IST EQUITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVE

- » Liz Marsh, Larry Conrad's Chief of Staff, is co-leading this initiative
- » After attending 2 meetings, I observed that there is a lot of energy focused on getting participants to contribute ideas
- » There have been no concrete actions suggested or promised by Liz or leadership
- » When I volunteered that an anonymous reporting tool could be piloted to create safe space, Liz indicated that she would contact me to discuss. She didn't contact me yet.
- » To learn more about the initiative, visit:
<https://technology.berkeley.edu/equity-inclusion>

HOW COULD UCB
GET IT RIGHT?



ZERO
TOLERANCE

HIRE MORE

WOMEN

ENCOURAGE
REPORTING

ELIMINATE SYMBOLIC

COMPLIANCE

3RD PARTY

OVERSIGHT

WHAT DO I FOCUS ON **NOW?**

- A.** I continue to speak with University officials about my experiences.
- B.** I continue to speak with journalists about my experiences.
- C.** I continue to participate in events and initiatives for change.
- D.** I am an active member of the Women in Tech Initiative @ UC witi.berkeley.edu
- E.** To follow my ongoing work, please visit: www.uctimesup.com
- F.** If you'd like to talk in person, I am available.



”

Tell your story. Shout it. Write it. Whisper it if you have to. But tell it. Some won't understand it. Some will outright reject it. But many will thank you for it. And then the most magical thing will happen. One by one, voices will start whispering, 'Me, too.' And your tribe will gather. And you will never feel alone again.

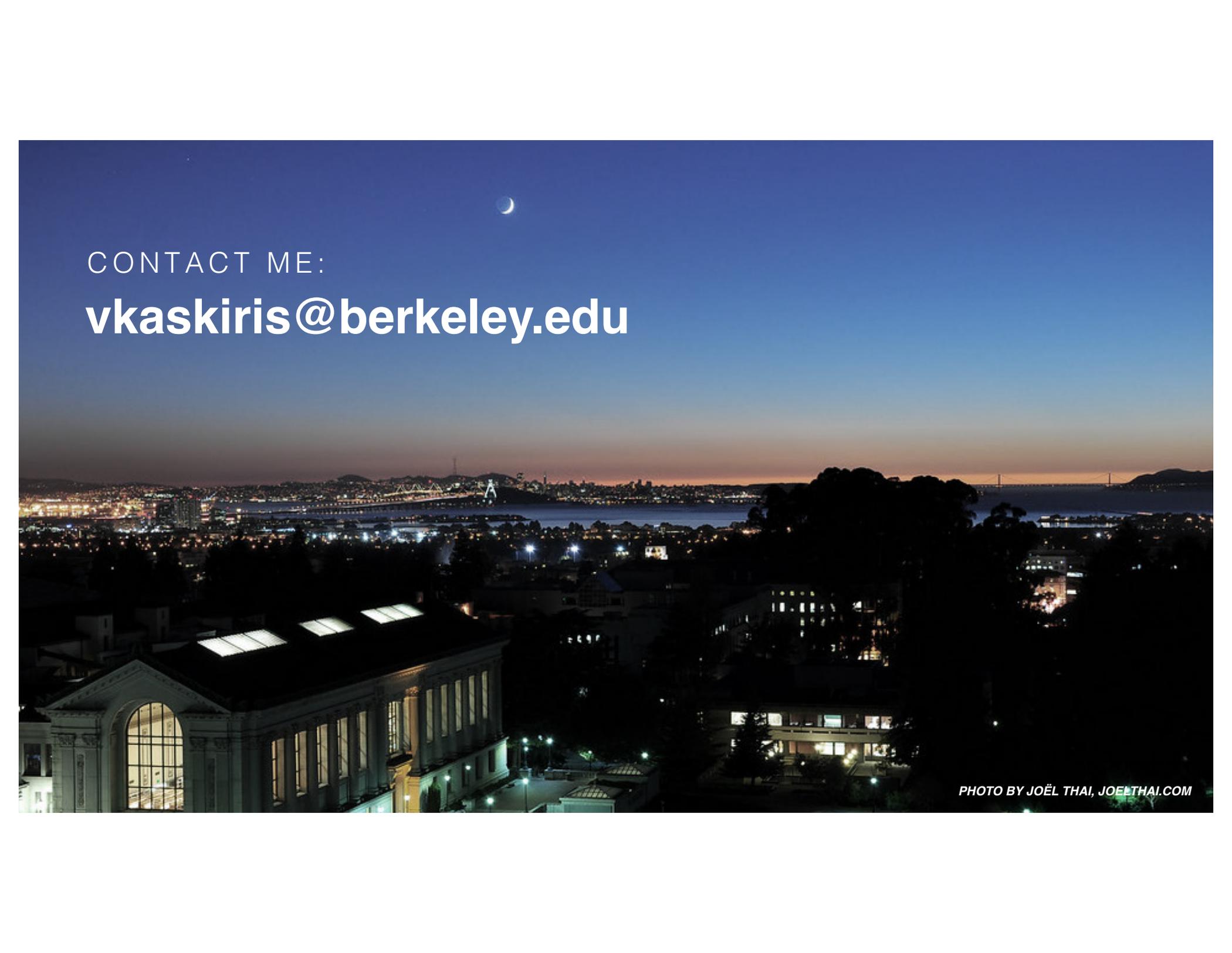
L.R. Knost

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PHOTO BY JOËL THAI, JOELTHAI.COM

