

## MYTHS ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Myth** – Sexual harassment is a woman’s problem and only happens to women who flirt, dress provocatively or otherwise “invite” it.

**Fact** – Sexual harassment most often occurs when someone in power abuses that power; it occurs regardless of how someone looks or acts. Sexual harassment can and does happen to anyone. Nationwide, approximately 10 percent of people who file complaints of sexual harassment are men.

**Myth** – Sexual harassment is no big deal. Anyone who complains has no sense of humor.

**Fact** – Sexual harassment and intimidation aren’t funny. They are degrading and humiliating. The effects of sexual harassment can be negative and long lasting, sometimes ruining careers and undermining academic performance, often causing emotional turmoil. Even people not directly party to the situation can be affected by a hostile and uncomfortable environment created by harassment or intimidation.

**Myth** - Sexual harassment affects only a few students and employees.

**Fact** – Nationwide surveys have shown that as many as 30 percent of all female undergraduate students experience some forms of sexual harassment during their academic careers. As many as 40 percent of female graduate students experience harassment, and over 80 percent of employees say they have been harassed on the job.

**Myth** – If sexual harassment is ignored, it will go away. If the victim “just says ‘No,’” the harasser will stop.

**Fact** – Many harassers are told “No” repeatedly and still continue their behavior. Ignoring harassment is frequently seen as assent or encouragement, a sign that the victim “really likes it.”