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Academic Bullying: Is it a Problem on Your Campus

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Academic Bullying: Is it a Problem on Your Campus?

Bullies aren't just on the playground or in the halls of the local high school. Workplace bullying is a form of aggression that can affect organizational climate, job productivity, and job satisfaction. AAUP has identified "bullying" as one of the top ten issues for faculty members and higher education with workplace bullying occurring at an alarming rate in colleges and universities. According to Workplace Bullying Institute data and legal expert Sarah Morris, 37% of adult Americans are affected by workplace bullying. Any person in a position of power can abuse that power with acts of bullying. Even though bullying is usually perpetrated by individuals, the climate of bullying can flourish in an organization if there is passive or active perceived support. Chairs, managers and key personnel must respond appropriately and assertively to any instance of bullying.

The legal ramifications and economic impact of bullying as well as resultant faculty psychological and physiological effects are of immediate concern to academic chairpersons. Financial costs through lower productivity, absenteeism, high staff turnover, and other losses associated with poor faculty and staff morale within the department and college must be considered. The chair is usually the one to deal with the aftermath which makes this presentation relevant.

Recommendations for chairs in preventing and identifying bullying will be presented. During the presentation the following will be discussed:

- Definition of bullying in the academic setting
 1. What is bullying in higher education?
 2. What does a faculty or administrative bully look like?
 3. When does the bullying end?
- Effects of bullying on faculty/organization
 1. Psychological effects
 2. Physiological effects
 3. Economic effects
 4. Career effects
- Personal observations of bullying experienced by the presenter
- Examples of other cases
- What can chairs/leaders do? Recommendations for action
- Results of an informal poll (survey) of conference attendees on bullying either observed or experienced
- Questions and comments by the audience