



Improving the Gender Climate at Sea

- **The Committee**
- **Survey**
- **Survey Results**
- **Overview of Recommendations**



The Committee

MIT/WHOI Joint Program Gender Equity *ad hoc* Committee for Research Cruise and Field Program Activities was formed at the request of WHOI's President/Director and MIT's Provost.

Charge of Committee:

- 1. Investigate gender-related issues on research vessels and in field programs**
- 2. Review current policies for addressing gender issues at sea and in the field**
- 3. Make recommendations based on findings**



The Survey

Strategies of MIT/WHOI Joint Program Student Survey:

1. Open forum meetings
2. Anonymous on-line survey
3. Personal meetings

Questions:

- Tailored to sea-going or field-going students
- Focused on unwanted sexual or gender-related conduct
- Anonymity assured
- Asked to describe incident not divulge names
- Questions explored how respondents reacted to incident
- Requested recommendations for improvement



Survey Response

On-line survey:

- **130 students received the survey**
- **48% response rate**
- **60 total responders (34 women, 26 men)**
(all but 4 responders had been to sea or in the field)

Open forum meetings:

- **8 students**
(Although low attendance at forums, discussions were revealing.)



Survey Results

- **Over 50% reported experiencing inappropriate gender or sex-related behavior at sea**
- **Over 20% reported instances of unwanted sexual advances**
- **Committee found evidence of unprofessional behavior onboard WHOI, UNOLS, international, and U.S. government vessels**
- **Students observed unprofessional behavior by crew members, technicians, and other members of the science party**
- **Women reported more incidences than men**
- **Range of responses to behavior (ignore behavior, avoid person, ask person to stop, tell co-worker/friend/family member)**
- **Most chose not to report incidents for various reasons**



Overview of Recommendations

- 1. Provide education for science party at start of every cruise about acceptable sex- and gender-related behavior.**
- 2. Implement procedures to better educate shipboard crew about acceptable behavior.**
- 3. The Joint Program to provide education for students to recognize unprofessional behavior at sea and respond appropriately.**



Overview of Recommendations cont.

- 4. Improve system for reporting inappropriate behavior and sexual attention that could constitute sexual harassment.**
- 5. Publish information on sexual harassment written specifically for the seagoing environment.**
- 6. Bring document to attention of UNOLS Office and Council and recommend that these, or similar, recommendations be implemented for all research vessels of the UNOLS fleet.**

Website: <http://www.whoi.edu/education/committees/committees.html>



Committee Membership

- **Dr. Lauren Mullineaux, Chair (Sr. Scientist, Biology Dept., WHOI)**
- **Dr. Steven J. Lentz (Sr. Scientist, Physical Oceanography Dept., WHOI)**
- **Dr. Edward Boyle (Prof., Earth, Atmosphere, & Planetary Sci. Dept., MIT)**
- **Dr. Alexandra Techet (Assist. Prof., Mechanical Engineering Dept., MIT)**
- **Ms. Cara Santelli (MIT/WHOI Joint Program graduate student)**
- **Mr. David Sutherland (MIT/WHOI Joint Program graduate student)**
- **Ms. Elizabeth Caporelli (Marine Ops Coordinator, Marine Ops, WHOI)**
- **Ms. Kathleen LaBernz (WHOI's HR Mgr. & Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action official)**

Staff for Committee

Ms. Marsha Gomes (Associate Registrar, WHOI)

Ms. Ronni Schwartz (Administrator, MIT/WHOI Joint Program at MIT)