

Resolution regarding External Harassment

The vote tallies for this Resolution are

Yes = 67

No = 0

Abstain = 3

DNV =56.

The Resolution

Whereas Cornell faculty and staff are noting an increase in external harassment and threatening communications that undermine their ability to work in an environment of equity, safety and respect, *Whereas* such incidents violate Cornell University's commitments to free and open expression and undermine the well-being of Cornell faculty and staff,

Whereas Cornell University administration's understanding of these incidents through more systematic reporting mechanisms and coordination between various entities responsible for providing support needs to be improved,

Whereas the speed, quality and coordination of support available to individuals who have been targeted by such attacks needs to be strengthened,

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate supports of the work completed by the Working Group on External Harassment on retrofitting the university bias reporting system to collect data and report on emerging patterns;

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate approves the [resource document for faculty and staff](#) and the [resource document for chairs, deans, and directors](#) that provide guidance on how to respond to external harassment;

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate supports the proposed mechanisms outlined in the [overview](#) for effective dissemination of these response procedures through online platforms and training during orientation sessions for new faculty and unit leadership;

Be it further resolved that additional issues remain to be resolved in the coming year with regards to maintaining data on external harassment and strengthening preventive guidance and support as well as creating policies that provide guidance on how to respond to external harassment of students.

Voter Comments

Voters were able to upload comments on their ballot. Below are the comments so obtained.

The Faculty Senate needs to take a much stronger and more preventative stand against targeted harassment than is provided by this very weak and disappointing resolution. Instead of developing the kind of quick, centralized, and coordinated response that is needed for these cases and is even promised in the overview, the resolution sketches out a slow, decentralized, and disorganized approach involving at least a half-dozen actors. The only centralized and coordinated solution appears to be the DIWD's retrofitted bias reporting system, which is neither a neutral nor an investigative tool. While continuing to place the primary burden of dealing with harassment on the targeted individuals, the working group members also appear to have omitted several crucial references to the best practices outlined in the previously-linked resource, "You're Not Powerless in the Face of Online Harassment" (<https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/news/on-having-an-online-presence/online-harassment/>). Beyond documenting harassment and practicing self-care, targeted individuals need to be informed about ways of blocking, muting, and reporting abuse, the necessity of enlisting allies both within and beyond their home institution, and their right to speak out and practice counter-speech under the right conditions. Seeing as we in the Faculty Senate have known for almost six months now about the prevalence of targeted online harassment right here at Cornell and no major steps appear to have been taken to address it, why do we need to keep collecting more data about what we already know, while newly affected individuals keep suffering from our inaction? We need to act quickly and take a firm stand against targeted harassment of faculty, staff, and students, recognizing it as a collective issue affecting the entire university.

I support this resolution and proposed measures. It was not clear, even with all the effort on this, how common these incidents are -- whether it's a few isolated incidents, or commonplace. This should be monitored going forward.

I appreciate the committee's wise efforts, Carl Franck, Physics