



**UniSAFE**  
ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

## **Case stories**

**Facilitating change:  
A guide to using case  
stories in co-creation  
activities for addressing  
gender-based violence**

**UniSAFE Toolkit**



## Case stories

# Facilitating change: A guide to using case stories in co-creation activities for addressing gender-based violence

Developed and compiled by **Yellow Window**

This document is part of a toolkit developed under the UniSAFE Project “Gender-based violence and institutional responses: Building a knowledge base and operational tools to make universities and research organisations safe”, available here: <https://unisafe-toolkit.eu/home/>

Find out more: <https://unisafe-gbv.eu>

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**UniSAFE Consortium Partners:**



# Introduction

Case stories can serve as a powerful tool to examine real-case scenarios shedding light on complexities and challenges faced in addressing gender-based violence. In the context of UniSAFE's co-creation workshops, a selection of case stories has been curated to facilitate meaningful discussions and foster the dialogue for addressing gender-based violence in an institutional context. They have been tested by experts to identify gaps in addressing gender-based violence within research and higher education institutions and develop corresponding solutions. These case stories have been carefully gathered from publicly available articles and sources to ensure their relevance and accuracy and they have been translated using DeepL followed by human review to guarantee quality translations.

This guide is meant as a comprehensive reference document tailored for all who intend to use participatory techniques in co-creation workshops to explore gender-based violence in their institution. It addresses a variety of professionals in research and higher education institutions to help them review and develop policies and build skills. The target group of this guide is those acting as change facilitators, practitioners, managers in charge of policy development as well as trainers and lecturers.

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# Guidance for case stories

## How to approach the case stories:

Participants will have the opportunity to analyse, discuss and learn from the presented cases while they will be encouraged to identify key touchpoints, examine institutional responses and propose strategies for addressing gender-based violence. By engaging with these real-life scenarios, participants can apply critical thinking and leverage collective expertise to develop tailored solutions to their specific organisations related to addressing the 7Ps framework presented by the UniSAFE project. The case stories can also be used as ice-breaking activities for training addressing gender-based violence.

To ensure confidentiality of participants during discussions and provision of appropriate support mechanisms throughout the workshop, read the **“Guidelines for creating a safe space for discussion and dialogue in a training session on gender-based violence (online & offline)”**, [available here](#).



# Instructions for case story 1

This particular case story serves as a depiction of the challenges faced by higher education institutions in effectively addressing gender-based violence. It highlights the critical role universities play in providing support, ensuring accountability, and fostering a safe environment for all.

By examining the journey of the victim-survivor and the responses of the institution in this case, workshop participants can gain valuable insights into the complexities and gaps that exist within their own organisation. The aim is to collectively identify shortcomings, propose meaningful solutions, and develop strategies to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

Throughout the co-creation workshop, participants will analyse the various touchpoints where the survivor interacts with the institution and vice versa. By understanding the experiences, actions, and decision points of both the victim/survivor and the institution, the workshop participants will be better equipped to identify areas where improvements are needed. This, in turn, will enable them to develop practical and impactful solutions that enhance support mechanisms, strengthen policies, and foster a culture of safety, respect within their institution.

**Description:** This case story presents a distressing incident where a student who had completed their master's degree and was preparing for a PhD was raped during a congress abroad. The case focuses on the prolonged delay in obtaining a final rape conviction for a professor, despite the institutional efforts to address the situation. The case highlights a series of events spanning over 12 years, during which rumours, complaints, and incidents of inappropriate behaviour were reported. It examines the steps taken following the news of the professor's conviction which started a polemic among the media and politicians regarding the adequacy of the institutional response, leading to a point where a Minister made the decision to block subsidies for a university celebration.

Source: De Standaard (25 October 2022), translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) with human control.

## **Ps that can be covered:** Protection, Prosecution and Policies

### **Practical details**

- Proposed duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes
- Number of participants: 15-20 participants
- Materials required: For an online workshop, a collaborative tool with a board such as MIRO is proposed. For a face-to-face workshop, a flipboard, sticky notes and markers are proposed.
- Journey map template, available [here](#).

### **Workshop Instructions**

Preworkshop preparation is recommended. Participants will be provided with the case story beforehand to read and familiarise themselves with the details ensuring a productive workshop.

- Divide the participants into small groups (of 5-6 participants each).
- In their respective groups, ask participants to develop a journey map for both the victim/survivor and the institution based on the provided case story. They should identify the touchpoints where the victim/survivor interacts with the institution and vice-versa.
- After completing the journey map for the victim/survivor and institution, each group should present their findings to the larger group in a plenary session.
- Once all groups have shared their journey maps, encourage them to add layers for other stakeholders, such as bystanders, trust persons, and the perpetrator. This step helps identify additional touchpoints and interactions that may have been overlooked initially.
- Collaboratively identify the areas where the journey map reveals challenges and propose solutions to address those issues. This may involve suggesting changes to policies, procedures, or communication strategies to improve the survivor's experience and increase accountability for the institution and other involved stakeholders.
- Finally, create three journey map posters summarising the findings and proposed solutions from each group. These posters will serve as references for future discussions and actions related to the case story.



## Instructions for case story 2

The particular case story raises questions about the handling of transgressive behaviour in the workplace and the need for clear rules, procedures and support systems, while it raises questions about second chances, the balance between prosecution and rehabilitation and the regulation of a clear code of conduct for all the institutional members. This case story is also an opportunity to critically analyse the media coverage of gender-based violence incidents. Throughout the co-creation workshop, participants can be encouraged to critically analyse the case story and identify the institutional shortcomings and the challenges to address effectively transgressive behaviours. This approach will facilitate a comprehensive and focused discussion to drive positive change within the institutional context.

**Description:** This case story focuses on the controversy surrounding one professor at a prestigious university in a European city. The professor was dismissed for alleged transgressive behaviour which attracted significant media attention. The university terminated the professor's employment due to accusations of repeated transgressive behaviour. A closer examination of the disciplinary file, reviewed by Knack magazine, reveals a lower number of complaints than initially reported by newspapers. The case story focuses on the professor's arguments while also shedding light on the impact of a trial by media and the institutional challenges in dealing with such cases.

Source: Knack (27 September 2022), *translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) with human control.*

**Ps that can be covered:** Protection, Prosecution and Policies

### Practical details

- Proposed duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes
- Number of participants: 15-20 participants
- Materials required: For an online workshop, a collaborative tool with a board such as MIRO is proposed. For a face-to-face workshop, a flipboard, sticky notes and markers are proposed.
- Create boards (physically or online) in two levels placing the problems on the bottom and the solutions at the top. Use blue sticky notes for the solutions and red sticky notes for the problems. The use of different coloured sticky notes will facilitate the visual separation of the identified problems and the proposed solutions.



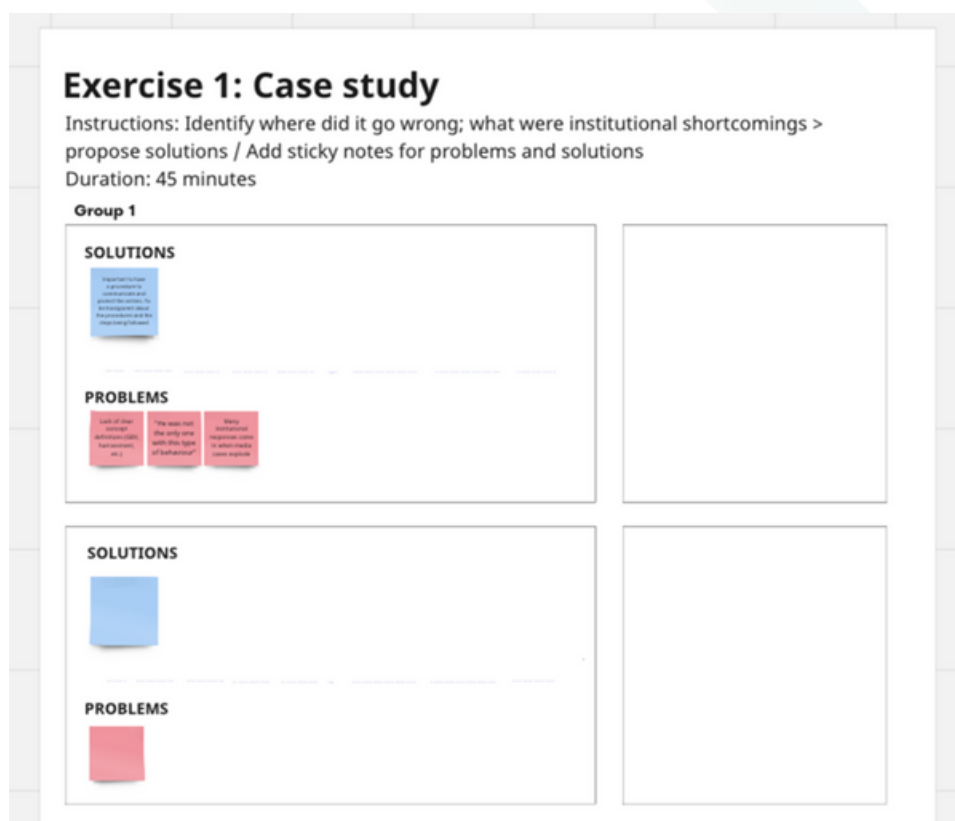


Figure 1. Example of a MIRO board

## Workshop Instructions

Pre-workshop preparation is recommended. Participants will be provided with the case story beforehand to read and familiarise themselves with the details ensuring a productive workshop.

- At the beginning of the workshop, divide participants into small groups (of 5-6 participants each) and provide each group with a board. Participants will use blue sticky notes to identify and document institutional shortcomings below the line on the board (see Figure 1). These shortcomings may include policy gaps, communication breakdowns, lack of support systems, or any other issues identified in the case story.
- Allocate 75 minutes for each group to collaboratively identify and discuss the institutional shortcomings within their assigned case story. Participants should engage in a constructive dialogue, leveraging their diverse perspectives and expertise.
- Following the presentation of institutional shortcomings, encourage participants to propose potential solutions. Participants should use blue sticky notes to document their proposed solutions above the line on the board. Emphasise the importance of practical and actionable solutions that address the identified shortcomings.

- After the group work session, reconvene as a whole group for a 15-minute plenary session. Each group will present their findings and share the identified institutional shortcomings with the larger group. Participants should focus on discussing the problems and challenges encountered in the case story.
- As the workshop progresses, the boards will serve as visual representations of the institutional shortcomings and proposed solutions. Encourage participants to review and reflect on the collective insights and solutions generated on the boards.

During the workshop, participants will engage in group discussions focusing on the provided case story. The discussions will take place in sub-groups. The facilitators can use the following guiding questions to support participants in identifying gaps in the case story and suggesting solutions:

- What are the key institutional responses and actions taken by the institution in handling the case of the dismissed professor? Are there any shortcomings or issues in these responses?
- What measures could institutions take to ensure that transgressive behaviour in the workplace is effectively addressed and that victims/survivors are adequately supported and taken seriously?
- What can be done to support the victims/survivors of transgressive behaviour in the aftermath of such incidents? How can institutions provide appropriate support and mitigate the long-term psychological effects on the victims/survivors?
- What lessons can be learned from the case and the institutional responses to ensure a more robust and comprehensive policy on transgressive behaviour within academic institutions? How can these policies be implemented effectively to prevent similar incidents in the future?
- How can awareness and education about transgressive behaviour be increased within academic institutions to prevent and address these issues effectively?
- What is the role of the media and how can the institution handle the public coverage to mitigate the risks for the victims/survivors?



## Instructions for case story 3

This case story sheds light on an incident of sexual assault on a university campus providing an opportunity to discuss collaborative problem-solving to address concerns regarding safety and protection. Throughout the co-creation workshop, participants can be encouraged to explore the impact of the incident on the victim/survivor and the broader university community, focusing on the trauma experienced by the victim/survivor and the subsequent challenges she faces in her academic journey. Participants will examine the institutional responses to the incident and analyse the existing security measures in place on campus and expand to propose solutions and prevention measures to enhance the safety and well-being of all the members of the institution.

**Description:** This case story presents the case of a 21-year-old student that was sexually assaulted on the university campus. The assault took place on an unlit path near the buildings where the victim attended practical work as part of her studies. The victim's father expressed outrage at the lack of security measures and the failure of the university's security service to intervene during the assault. The traumatic event has had a profound impact on the victim's mental health and has disrupted her ability to continue with her studies and prepare for upcoming exams. The institution assures that surveillance agents are present on campus, and they are working with the police to ensure safety. Measures to improve security, such as reinforced patrols and new risk analyses, are being implemented to create a safe environment for all members of the university community.

Source: Libre Belgique (4 January 2023), translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) with human control:

**Ps that can be covered:** Protection, Prosecution and Policies

### Practical details

- Proposed duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes
- Number of participants: 15-20 participants
- Materials required: For an online workshop, a collaborative tool with a board such as MIRO is proposed. For a face-to-face workshop, a flipboard, sticky notes and markers are proposed.
- Create boards (physically or online) in two levels placing the problems on the bottom and the solutions at the top. Use blue sticky notes for the solutions and red sticky notes for the problems (see Figure 1). The use of different coloured sticky notes will facilitate the visual separation of the identified problems and the proposed solutions.

## Workshop Instructions

Pre-workshop preparation is recommended. Participants will be provided with the case story beforehand to read and familiarise themselves with the details ensuring a productive workshop.

- At the beginning of the workshop, divide participants into small groups (of 5-6 participants) and provide each group with a board. Participants will use blue sticky notes to identify and document institutional shortcomings below the line on the board. These shortcomings may include policy gaps, communication breakdowns, lack of support systems, or any other issues identified in the case story.
- Allocate 75 minutes for each group to collaboratively identify and discuss the institutional shortcomings within their assigned case story. Participants should engage in a constructive dialogue, leveraging their diverse perspectives and expertise.
- Following the presentation of institutional shortcomings, encourage participants to propose potential solutions. Participants should use blue sticky notes to document their proposed solutions above the line on the board. Emphasise the importance of practical and actionable solutions that address the identified shortcomings.
- After the group work session, reconvene as a whole group for a 15-minute plenary session. Each group will present their findings and share the identified institutional shortcomings with the larger group. Participants should focus on discussing the problems and challenges encountered in the case story.
- As the workshop progresses, the boards will serve as visual representations of the institutional shortcomings and proposed solutions. Encourage participants to review and reflect on the collective insights and solutions generated on the boards.

During the workshop, participants will engage in group discussions focusing on the provided case story. The discussions will take place in sub-groups. The facilitators can use the following guiding questions to support participants in identifying gaps in the case story and suggesting solutions:

- Do you identify shortcomings in the prevention approach of the institution? Which?
- How do you think the institution should address the concerns raised by students about the lack of security on campus?
- How can the institution work with the police/security services to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future?

- What kind of policy changes do you think should be put in place to prevent similar incidents in the future? Which recommendations would you make?
- What preventative measures can be organised for city campuses (given the case story)? (i.e., hot spot mapping to identify and monitor unsafe areas in and outside campus; lighting; security cameras etc.).
- How can the university be held accountable when the perpetrator is not part of the community (student/staff)?
- What support should be provided to the victim and her family in the aftermath of the assault? / Which support could help to mitigate long-term psychological effects of such an assault on the victim?



## Instructions for case story 4

This case story focuses on addressing the allegations of sexual harassment involving a famous geologist. The allegations were made by two former graduate students. Throughout this co-creation workshop, participants are encouraged to delve into the profound impact of the assault on the victim/survivor and the wider university community. The focus is on comprehending the survivor's trauma and the ensuing challenges they confront in their academic journey. The workshop aims to assess the institution's response to the incident, analyse existing security measures for offsite/off-campus activities, and suggest solutions and prevention strategies to enhance the safety and well-being of all members of the university.

**Description:** This case story revolves around disturbing allegations of sexual harassment within a research expedition in Antarctica, involving a prominent scientist and former graduate students. The allegations detail instances of harassment, bullying, and derogatory behaviour directed towards female team members during remote research trips, and highlight the impact of power dynamics in isolated environments.

Source: Home News ScienceInsider (6 October 2017)

**Ps that can be covered:** Protection, Prosecution and Policies

### Practical details

- Proposed duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes
- Number of participants: 15-20 participants
- Materials required: For an online workshop, a collaborative tool with a board such as MIRO is proposed. For a face-to-face workshop, a flipboard, sticky notes and markers are proposed.
- Journey map template, available [here](#).

### Workshop instructions

Pre-workshop preparation is recommended. Participants will be provided with the case story beforehand to read and familiarise themselves with the details ensuring a productive workshop.

- Divide the participants into small groups (of 5-6 participants each).

- In their respective groups, ask participants to develop a journey map (see more on participatory techniques reading this guide from SUPERA project) for both the victim/survivor and the institution based on the provided case story. They should identify the touchpoints where the victim/survivor interacts with the institution and vice-versa.
- After completing the journey map for the victim/survivor and institution, each group should present their findings to the larger group in a plenary session.
- Once all groups have shared their journey maps, encourage them to add layers for other stakeholders, such as bystanders, trust persons, and the perpetrator. This step helps identify additional touchpoints and interactions that may have been overlooked initially.
- Collaboratively identify the areas where the journey map reveals challenges and propose solutions to address those issues. This may involve suggesting changes to policies, procedures, or communication strategies to improve the survivor's experience and increase accountability for the institution and other involved stakeholders.
- Finally, create three journey map posters summarising the findings and proposed solutions from each group. These posters will serve as references for future discussions and actions related to the case story.



## Instructions for case story 5

This case story delves into the renewed controversy surrounding a director who has faced allegations of sexual harassment. These allegations have sparked media attention and activism from women's rights advocates. In this workshop, participants are invited to explore the implications of the allegations on both the victim/survivor and the broader academic community. The case raises questions about the institute's response to the allegations, the implementation of workplace harassment laws, and the role of student activism in advocating for accountability and change.

**Description:** This case story revolves around the controversy surrounding the recent promotion of a director, despite allegations of sexual harassment made against him. The allegations stem from his tenure as the director of a prestigious institute, where two female employees have accused him of repeated sexual harassment. An internal investigation at the institute later concluded that his actions constituted harassment, but no disciplinary action was taken.

Source: Home News ScienceInsider (12 February 2016)

**Ps that can be covered:** Protection, Prosecution and Policies

### Practical details

- Proposed duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes
- Number of participants: 15-20 participants
- Materials required: For an online workshop, a collaborative tool with a board such as MIRO is proposed. For a face-to-face workshop, a flipboard, sticky notes and markers are proposed.
- Create boards (physically or online) in two levels placing the problems on the bottom and the solutions at the top. Use blue sticky notes for the solutions and red sticky notes for the problems (see Figure 1). The use of different coloured sticky notes will facilitate the visual separation of the identified problems and the proposed solutions.

### Workshop instructions

Pre-workshop preparation is recommended. Participants will be provided with the case story beforehand to read and familiarise themselves with the details ensuring a productive workshop.



- At the beginning of the workshop, divide participants into small groups (of each 5-6 participants) and provide each group with a board. Participants will use blue sticky notes to identify and document institutional shortcomings below the line on the board. These shortcomings may include policy gaps, communication breakdowns, lack of support systems, or any other issues identified in the case story.
- Allocate 75 minutes for each group to collaboratively identify and discuss the institutional shortcomings within their assigned case story. Participants should engage in a constructive dialogue, leveraging their diverse perspectives and expertise.
- Following the presentation of institutional shortcomings, encourage participants to propose potential solutions. Participants should use blue sticky notes to document their proposed solutions above the line on the board. Emphasise the importance of practical and actionable solutions that address the identified shortcomings.
- After the group work session, reconvene as a whole group for a 15-minute plenary session. Each group will present their findings and share the identified institutional shortcomings with the larger group. Participants should focus on discussing the problems and challenges encountered in the case story.
- As the workshop progresses, the boards will serve as visual representations of the institutional shortcomings and proposed solutions. Encourage participants to review and reflect on the collective insights and solutions generated on the boards.

During the workshop, participants will engage in group discussions focusing on the provided case story. The discussions will take place in sub-groups. The facilitators can use the following guiding questions to support participants in identifying gaps in the case story and suggesting solutions:

- How do you perceive the institute's handling of the sexual harassment allegations against R.P? What strengths and weaknesses do you identify in their response?
- What potential factors might explain the lack of disciplinary action against R.P despite the internal investigation's findings?
- How can student activism influence institutional accountability and promote a culture of transparency and change?
- What strategies can institutions adopt to ensure a safer working environment and encourage employees to come forward with allegations of sexual harassment?



# Annex: Case stories

## Case story 1

### **For years there had been signs, yet FD remained untouchable**

*Source of the original article: De Standaard (25 October 2022), translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) with human control.*

Even though it did not come to a formal complaint against FD (64) for rape until March 2018, rumours about the man had been circulating for years. In the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, the professor's conviction, after that he raped one of his students at a congress in European city in July 2016 comes as a shock, but not a surprise.

'By the mid-1990s, FD was already a cowboy through and through,' says a senior teacher at the faculty. 'Rumours about him ranged from favouritism to extra exam questions for extra marks. Signals to the examination committee were not followed up then.' A complaint by two students, who went to the examination board for unprofessional behaviour a few years before the facts, led to a conversation with the professor in question.

### **'Toxic atmosphere'**

'He was very loose with women. Everyone knew which type he fell for. He took those women with him to conferences or dinners,' adds a - former colleague of the professor of education. 'At a conference dinner, I felt very uncomfortable when he suddenly came up to me and became handsy. He could make you feel very special, but afterwards run off with the success of your research,' says the woman, who wishes to remain anonymous.

FD would have liked to contact young and handsome students, organised weekends with them and did not fail to participate in student activities in the evenings or drop by student parties. FD's behaviour did not take place in a vacuum. The man had a network, say several people we contacted, and close friends on the faculty. The atmosphere is described as "toxic" and led to an outflow of mostly young female colleagues.

According to several witnesses, FD made full use of his network to isolate and bully people who were critical of his behaviour. The middleman, to whom FD's victim had told her story in 2016, was said to have been hit particularly hard. She stepped up to the faculty trustee and the dean at the victim's request that same year, but both demarches met with little success. The victim was not yet ready to formally file a complaint.

### **Momentarily detained**

For years, the woman still had to work with the man and mentor students. Even after September 2018, when FD was suspended and even briefly detained, his friends were ready to intimidate her: 'There were numerous attempts by the perpetrator and his network to damage her career,' says a female colleague who was also working there at the time, but has since left. 'Her professional functioning became impossible. There was no one in the faculty to protect her, although she took ethically correct actions, knowing what she knew at the time.' Eventually, the woman would leave the faculty for another job, as would six of her female colleagues.

Why weren't questions raised earlier about FD's career? His behaviour frames an atmosphere of abuse of power within the faculty. 'And it is defined by men who have power and are very dominant,' says a woman who was openly antagonised and left the university. 'I raised the issue with the personnel department, but it concerned a renowned prof. There was understanding, but nothing happened.'

One of the professors from the faculty put it this way: 'Your whole career depends on peer-to-peer reviews, it is the colleagues who determine your success. No one wants to be known as a problem.' Another puts it this way: 'As a professor, you shouldn't worry too much. We are well protected. And that's actually really not okay.'

### **'Guilty omission'**

This unapproachability caused frustration not only among victims and colleagues. Other faculty members also watched with dismay. 'In several cases, I heard: 'We are aware, but we cannot do much. The problem will die out. We are waiting for the professor's emeritus,'" says a man no longer affiliated with the university. He is not very positive about the future. 'There is a broad sense of unwillingness to fundamentally change anything. If profs who are not adequate to enforce things internally today are at the helm again, I have little faith in them.'

## **Unions at the university also remain suspicious.**

'The university keeps hiding behind legal restrictions or obligations, but does not intervene when numerous worrying signals are given. I find that a guilty omission,' says a professor of medieval history and trade unionist at the FGTB. 'Against university's custom, something is moving today, but it's too little, too late.'

## **Good intentions, proper procedures, yet 12 years wait for trial**

*Source of the original article: De Standaard (27 October 2022) translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) with human control.*

According to the government commissioner, the university did what it had to do, in the case of professor FD. Yet after the initial rumours, it was a 12-year wait until a final rape conviction.

FD was promoted to PhD in educational technology in 1991, not much later he was permanently appointed at the university. He is also given a teaching assignment at another university in another European city. From the beginning, he is known as a 'cowboy' at the university. Rumours of favouritism, subjective evaluations and inappropriate behaviour soon spread.

### **2010 to 2016: rumours without consequences**

In March 2010, several complaints come to the ombudsperson for staff at the university: there is talk of inappropriate behaviour by FD towards female students, unwanted touching and remarks and requests to hold work meetings in the female students' quarters. The ombudsperson tries to convince the female students to file a complaint, but due to lack of evidence and because of their dependence on the professor, they dare not take the step. The ombudsperson informs the dean, and engages FD himself, who denies everything. He receives several warnings.

One of his master's students reports to De Standaard that between 2014 and 2016, she had repeated clashes with FD, who was her thesis supervisor at the time. When FD tried to meet up with her outside the university, she distanced herself from him. Fearing repercussions and lack of evidence, the woman does not go to the university.

### **2016-2018: no complaint, talks**

In July 2016, FD rapes one of his female students during a conference in a European city. The victim had previously complained about FD's behaviour to her "programme counsellor".

Even after the rape, she confides in her programme counsellor. In October 2016, the latter, with the victim's consent, stepped up to the faculty's confidant. In that conversation, and the two that followed, it is agreed that the programme counsellor will talk to the student in the hope that she will file a complaint. This ultimately does not happen. The faculty's confidential adviser is investigating any similar complaints against FD. He comes home from a barren trip.

In September 2016, several months after the rape, professor FD decides to take an "oxygen period". He does not teach for several months.

The dean is informed of the facts. The exact date when this happens is unknown, but based on documents that De Standaard was able to look into, we can conclude that the dean was aware at least since mid-January 2017.

In the following months, the programme counsellor, the dean, the faculty's confidential advisor and the university's central ombudsperson meet several times. More than once, they try to find out what internal procedures the university can use to go to justice. Meanwhile, FD continues to bombard his victim with messages.

In September 2017, the central ombudsperson goes to FD with the allegations. In doing so, he does maintain the anonymity of the victim and the person who reported it. Probably for the first time, FD now knows that his secret is in danger of coming out. He denies in all languages. Around that time, he does step down as managing director of a European association for research on learning and instruction.

## **2018-Today: the train leaves, but sputters**

In January 2018, the victim's parents contacted the Rector. Five days later, they are received at the Rector's office, with the university's ombudsperson also present. The parents urge the university not to take any brusque steps, given the vulnerability of their daughter who is suffering greatly from what has happened to her. A month later, the university contacts the victim directly, hoping to convince her to file a complaint. In March, she finally steps up to the police. The investigation kicks off fairly quickly, but at the request of the public prosecutor, the university keeps the case secret.

The programme counsellor of the past stays in touch with the dean and ombudsmen, but is struggling herself. After all, she has to continue teaching with FD and supervising doctorates. According to several anonymous witnesses, the woman was afraid of FD, which would have a serious impact on her further career.

In the following months, the university repeatedly asks the public prosecutor and later the investigating judge when they can take disciplinary sanctions. These ask her to be patient so as not to "hypothecate the investigation," the government commissioner's report reads. In the end, they get September 14 as the final date. That day, FD is suspended from duty, but this is not widely communicated.

A few days later, FD is picked up for questioning for the first time. Later, a search also takes place.

## **2022: finally on trial**

Even after FD was arrested and suspended, he continued to teach, especially across the country. Until May 2021, he taught at another university. There, they were flabbergasted over the past few days. Until a few days ago, FD was one of the speakers at a prestigious speakers academy. There, he gave his last lecture during 2021. He also continued to lecture and write contributions in the country. The university was aware of this. It seems they did not do anything about it.

Finally, FD will not appear in court until October 2022. The four years between complaint and trial are due in part to the slowness of justice, but also to the corona crisis and the various delaying tactics of FD's defence.

## Case story 2

### **MeToo in Belgium: was dismissed professor DT the victim of a trial by media?**

*Source of the original article: Knack (27 September 2022), translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) with human control.*

**Late last year, the university fired archaeology professor DT for transgressive behaviour. Knack was able to look into the file and talk to the professor. He is aware to be guilty, but also makes pertinent comments on the devastating effect of a trial by media and how we as a society deal with this.**

Earlier this year, in the wake of the Bart De Pauw case (a mediatised MeToo case at Flemish State television), a series of MeToo scandals at Flemish universities also came to light. DT's story seems to fit into that series. On 28 January 2022, the newspaper De Morgen reported that the 49-year-old archaeology professor - in the paper he is called DT. - had been fired by the university he was working at for repeated transgressive behaviour.

For years, he had allegedly sexually approached female students. 'He always picked out the young, promising students,' De Morgen said. A total of as many as 23 women are said to have made complaints against DT through different services at the university and the Institute for Gender Equality. It speaks of a pattern of flirtatious behaviour, advances and sexual contact seeking, blurred norms and abuse of power. 'The complaints are always the same: DT sends inappropriate messages to female students, praises them, shares personal stories. Sometimes this culminates in a sexual relationship. Anyone who rebuffs his advances is harassed and made to suffer.'

#### **Nineteen complaints**

That version of the facts is subsequently, sometimes literally, reproduced by other media, such as Het Laatste Nieuws, De Standaard, Het Nieuwsblad and Bruzz. Only: that version of the facts is not correct. The university set up a three-member disciplinary committee and their report, which Knack was able to see, shows that the number of complaints about sexually transgressive behaviour against DT is considerably lower. You could also question whether that qualification covers the load with some of the complaints.

***"I understand very well now that, given the power difference, it was not wise to discuss intimate topics with students." DT***

Altogether, the file against DT contains 19 complaints. Five of them come from (former) colleagues who were involved in a professional conflict with the man who for many years was considered the primus and driving force of the small department of Art Sciences and Archaeology. Six complaints come from students, colleagues and external persons who, although not involved themselves, state that they were aware of the facts.

## **Disciplinary offences**

Of course, this does not mean that nothing is going on: the file contains seven complaints that do directly relate to inappropriate and sexually oriented messages or overly amicable dealings - think having a drink together, eating together, compliments and intimate conversations - with female students and researchers. Sources at the university mention more relationships, but the file itself mentions three sexual relationships with female (former) students.

One witness tells in her complaint that 15 years ago, as a student, albeit at that time no longer in the same department but in teacher training, she had a sexual relationship with the man that lasted three weeks. Another, pivotal testimony comes from an ex-student who today is a professor at the same department of Art Science and Archaeology. The relationship led to a marriage, lasted 10 years and ended in a fighting divorce. After the break-up, DT started another fairly long-term relationship with a student. Those relationships are heavily weighted by the disciplinary committee. Relationships with students, the committee judges, are contrary to deontology and 'the dignity of the office'. DT was in a 'relationship of authority' with these women. For this reason, according to the committee, the facts do not belong exclusively to the private sphere. The committee calls them (punishable) disciplinary offences, and one of the reasons for the professor's dismissal.

## **Consciousness of guilt**

For the first time since his dishonourable dismissal, DT wants to respond publicly. He realises today that in his position, given the power imbalance, he should have kept his distance from students. 'I struggled with the hierarchical difference associated with my position. I entered into personal conversations, very open and frank, with students and students alike. That could just as easily be about that person's region of origin or something we had in common. Sometimes the conversations went too far. Some students had a hard time with that and in those conversations I was indeed sometimes intrusive. That is the fundamental guilt insight that I do have today. And I was completely unaware of that for a very long time. This also applies, in a different way, to my relationships with female students.'



Although those led to normal relationships and even marriage, and the power relations between me and my partners were made transparent, I now realise that I should have assessed it differently.' In making that assessment, he was not helped by his university. 'My first relationship, with the woman I subsequently married, I immediately reported to the then dean. He saw no harm in it as long as, obviously, I would not grade her exams and research. When I started a relationship with a student again after my divorce, which caused me a lot of grief, I didn't think about risking my job by doing so. I had already gone through the process once and the university had supported me in it. Even then, I immediately opened up to the then dean. And she too just accepted it, until two years ago anyway.'

Sources at the university do not contradict DT on that last point. 'You might expect a professor, given his position of power, not to establish relationships with students,' says someone well acquainted with the dossier. 'But it does happen and DT is certainly not the only one. In fact, we once had a rector here who did exactly the same thing. The university has no regulations prohibiting or attaching conditions to relationships between professors and students. As a result, some are punished for it and others are not. That is pure arbitrariness.'

## **Fighting divorce**

The disciplinary committee that expelled DT, did not only stumble over his relationships with female students. As mentioned, a total of seven (former) students also reported suggestive, inappropriate communication that, the committee said, was perceived by those involved as "intimidating". A crucial role in this file is played by one of DT's PhD students. Her testimony is consistent with the image of a manipulative professor who abuses his power to overstep boundaries of young women who depend on him for their academic course. "Manipulate? In the extremely competitive environment that a university has become, every professor tries to win the best students for his field of research." DT.

For instance, the PhD student reports that DT invited her for a walk during the first lockdown. He also allegedly asked her to help with his move. He allegedly further made comments about her 'attractive sister'. The student testified that the relationship with her supervisor was initially amicable, but after far-reaching boldness from DT, she had decided to only communicate with him in a strictly professional manner from now on. From then on - June 2020 - things went awry, according to the student, and DT allegedly made threats about her further career. His former PhD student is not telling the whole story, DT believes.

As for the move – it seems a detail but it comes up extensively in the disciplinary file: on this, witnesses state that the doctoral student helped out of her own accord and extremely cheerful, and also stayed for dinner afterwards. In his defence, a document of more than 120 pages, DT writes that the conflict with his doctoral student began in the professional sphere, and that the friendship soured for that reason. He backs up this claim with e-mails and chats. Namely, his student wanted to apply for a scholarship to study in the United States. 'I responded negatively to that,' says DT. 'I wanted her to concentrate on her PhD first. Her tray was full. She couldn't accept that, so we got into an argument. It is true that I lost my self-control in that conflict. Indeed, I communicated angrily at the time.' Because of that conflict, the student went to the ombudsperson. In an interrogation by the disciplinary committee, the ombudsman stated that the student showed him e-mails in which DT had engaged in 'word-for-word transgressive behaviour'.

According to the same interview, the student did not need further assistance from the ombudsman; she would take 'further steps' herself. 'But the student apparently did not feel sufficiently heard,' a source said, 'and started looking for supporters. Those women started knocking on the doors of others who had ever had an issue with DT. That is how that disciplinary file was compiled, and it also explains the amalgam of very different accusations.' Sex life Indeed, the file contains very diverse complaints. Most have nothing to do with sexually transgressive behaviour. 'It seems that a number of colleagues who still had accounts to settle have hooked their wagon on this train,' says a source at the university. So that does not alter the fact that there are complaints in the file involving serious transgressive behaviour towards students – verbal behaviour, that is, no physical offences. These are, for example, questions about someone's relationship status or sex life, or unsolicited outpourings about his own relationship. The disciplinary committee puts it this way: 'It involves repeated attempts at, and unwanted pursuit of, intimacy, posing privacy-invading acts, which are experienced by the female student as, varying from annoying to frightening.' To illustrate, the disciplinary committee cites a conversation between DT and a student whose supervisor he was. In a conversation on the way to an interview, the professor discussed the topic of polyamory with his student. DT does not dispute that the conversation took place. But in his defence, he argues that the student was co-hosting a public debate on polyamory at the time. DT was married at the time, proving quite conclusively that his then-wife was not averse to the idea. 'I was in such a relationship at the time and only wanted to testify from there in the context of that activity,' his defence states.

## **Too friendly**

This makes little impression on the disciplinary committee. His retort is interpreted as a lack of guilt and an attempt to minimise the facts. From the disciplinary committee's report: 'Professor DT does realise that he was "wrong", but, characteristically, nevertheless reduces such behaviour to a "too amicable", too "friendly" attitude'. He does not see, at least not adequately, that such behaviour viewed from the point of view of the student concerned is perceived not merely as "too amicable" but as intrusive, threatening and undesirable.' 'I now fully understand that, given the power difference, it was not wise to discuss intimate topics with students or even fellow researchers,' says DT. 'But neither was it more than talking about my and their relationships. It wasn't that I wanted a relationship with those women. Only: when I supply that in my defence, it is put away as minimising.'

## **Hotel rooms**

The disciplinary file against DT also contains allegations that raise questions about the intentions of the persons reporting. For instance, the then dean of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy mentions hotel rooms that DT allegedly booked at the university's expense for adventures with female students. The latter can be easily verified and is manifestly false, DT's defence shows. 'The rooms were booked for foreign judges of a doctoral committee,' he says. The then dean did not want to respond to the questions we put to her. But in her statement to the disciplinary committee, she says she had known about problems related to colleague DT for quite some time. Think of his second relationship with a student and the way, she said, he would "manipulate" students to choose him as a supervisor. The question then arises why she did not raise the alarm earlier. Why did she only testify about that problem when it had been raised by many others?

## **Wonder boy**

Other sources at the university also report that DT was called to order long before this case got rolling, which puts the latter into perspective. 'The only time I was called to order was by the then dean. But that was about the previously approved relationship with my ex-wife and setting up Facebook groups with students. The latter is what everyone at university does by now. 'The dean who eventually filed a complaint never made an issue of my relationship with the student until others started collecting complaints against me,' DT says. "The university has no regulations on relationships between professors and students. Some are punished for it, others are not."

Anonymous source at the university. 'And about that manipulation? In the extremely competitive environment that a university has become, every professor tries to win the best students for his field of research. I never picked anyone away from anyone else. The students who came to me simply had a keen interest in the Middle Ages, which have been experiencing a strong revival in recent years, thanks in part to series like Game of Thrones. For the then dean to talk about manipulation is something I see as damaging.' DT notes that he has always worked well with his dean. 'As recently as 2018, when I was promoted to full professor, the same dean called me the wonder boy of the faculty. That her opinion changed so suddenly, I can only explain from my conflict with my ex: a young, exceptionally gifted researcher, who had already won several scientific prizes as a top talent. She was a particularly interesting profile for the university and our faculty. Apparently, they had to choose: her or me. Eliminating me was the easiest option. I think that also explains why neither the dean nor the other complainants responded to the university's request for mediation.' Labelled as Outlaw DT accuses the disciplinary committee of carelessness and bias. Nevertheless, he concluded a settlement agreement with the university shortly after the verdict. This implied that he waived appeal proceedings and agreed to leave the university. 'I had no more energy for an appeal,' he says. 'I was devastated, felt flattened. A settlement, where I was assured discretion, and thus the prospect of a new job, seemed to me the only way out. Ideally, I would have stayed at university. Other sanctions were possible. They could have temporarily taken me away from my teaching assignments. I was certainly willing to do that. Incidentally, the university has done so with professors who committed financial fraud or who delivered a doctoral thesis with plagiarism.' 'I didn't touch students, push them against a door or rape them. But saying that puts me in a catch 22. When I defend myself, I seem to want to downplay my mistakes. While I do and sincerely realise that I was at fault, and what needed and should be done differently. Remediation is also something I really pursue, I have extra counselling for it from a sexologist. At the same time, it is very difficult not to defend myself. If I don't defend myself, it seems like I just agree to everything I am charged with in the file.' 'With the settlement agreement, I also attached an expression of regret to the complainants. From what those complainants, angry because the university did not want to publicise my resignation, later stated in the press, I deduce that that letter of regret was never delivered to them. Then I wonder: did the university really have an interest in the matter? Or did they just want to get rid of it as quickly as possible?'

## Second chance

DT could have already started a new professional life. But then a firmly thickened and partial version of the case was leaked to the media in late January. Just about every Flemish media reported that he was fired after complaints from 23 women. Since then, DT applied for a job dozens of times. Time and again, potential employers snapped at what could be found about him with a simple Google search. 'Everyone deserves a second chance,' declared the late rector, when asked why the university had been keen to keep the DT case under wraps. The rector knew the file. She also knew that in terms of timing, the disciplinary committee's decision roughly coincided with the ruling in the highly mediatised Bart De Pauw case (see above). Media coverage of the DT case would mean a professional death sentence for the man. Even though there was no criminal prosecution or trial. 'Bart De Pauw may be better off. He has been legally convicted and can now pay his debt to society,' says DT. 'I didn't. I only got a trial by media and from that you never know when it stops. When has someone paid enough? Every time I go to apply, I get the lid on it. My right of defence seems non-existent. It feels like a lifelong outlaw status, with no possibility of defence.'

## The how and the why professor

DT, kicked out because of MeToo scandals, gets to speak in these pages for the first time since his much-discussed dismissal. This does not mean that Knack wants to exonerate the man or condone transgressive behaviour. What it does mean, based on the disciplinary file that Knack was able to look at, is that media coverage of the case does not match the facts. Consequence? Permanent damage to reputation based on incorrect newspaper reports, on top of dismissal following internal disciplinary proceedings. In this sense, the DT case is not only a MeToo story but also an interesting example of trial by media. Knack approached the female victims at the centre of the case, as well as the then dean of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, but they did not wish to comment. The DT case is also relevant because of the question of how a society deals with perpetrators who are fired for transgressive behaviour in the workplace, but who have not legally or criminally committed a crime, and have not been prosecuted. It is understandable that victims want assurances that such an offender cannot simply start again in another workplace.

At the same time, like the late university rector, one might ask whether DT does not deserve a second chance. How can we organise that as a society? And when has someone who has not received legal punishment been punished enough? What this case also shows is the crucial importance of good hotlines, flow of information and clear rules and procedures.

Complainants blamed the lax attitude of the university in the case and felt they were not taken seriously. Moreover, DT' colleagues had turned a blind eye for years to his attitude towards female students, which was widely known at the university. They apparently saw no merit in it. Perhaps it is also not easy to lead the faculty's "golden boy", the prof who brought in a lot of research money, to slaughter. Much of this case involves intimate relationships between two consenting adults. But following the DT case, one might also wonder whether relationships between teaching staff and students, unthinkable at American universities, should not at least be more strictly regulated.

## **Low awareness**

In a written response, the university acknowledges that "despite all procedures and good intentions, the way in which the university dealt with complaints about transgressive behaviour was not sufficient to help the victims, give satisfaction and tackle such practices at the root". For several months, the university has been working on a new comprehensive policy on transgressive behaviour. University rector, on the DT case: 'At the time of the facts, there was too little alertness in the organisation to assess signals according to their seriousness and to react appropriately. Therefore, it was not established that there was a pattern with the perpetrator that continued for years. Only after complaints were filed and addressed in 2020 - through the previously isolated facts - did the systemic nature of transgressive behaviour become clear. In December 2021, the professor was dismissed by the university, following proceedings before the disciplinary committee initiated by my predecessor. The process leading up to it was too slow. That should not have happened. We are tackling that with our new policy on transgressive behaviour on the ground.' De Morgen responds: "He always picked out the young, promising students" is a quote from one of the victims. The Knack article suggests that this is an analysis by De Morgen. It is not.' 'The article in Knack claims that the number of complaints is actually lower than we reported. That is not correct. We referred to the total number of reports, which came in to various bodies. That the number of complaints before the disciplinary committee (19 according to Knack's reporting) is lower than the total number of reports (23 according to our information) is not illogical.' 'Knack suggests that De Morgen released an exaggerated and partial version of the dossier on the basis of which a trial by media would then have taken place. However, we can substantiate all the facts cited in our articles by multiple sources.'

## Case story 3

### **21-year-old student raped on university campus last Wednesday, suspect arrested: "The trauma will affect our daughter all her life".**

*Source of the original article: Libre Belgique (4 January 2023) translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) with human control.*

The event occurred at around 8.45pm on Wednesday 28 December on an unlit path on the campus. An investigation is underway. An investigating judge has been appointed. The suspect has been placed under arrest.

A 21-year-old student was sexually assaulted on a path on the university campus on Wednesday 28 December at around 8.45pm. The case occurred only a few meters from the buildings where she usually takes part in practical work as part of her studies.

"The assailant, whose act clearly appears to be premeditated, is aware of the lack of security measures on the Campus. He waited for a prey along the main path used by students to get to the study premises made available to them by the university during this period of revision of exams," lamented the victim's father. " He grabbed my daughter on this path and then dragged her for several meters in total darkness. The rape, which was extremely serious, particularly despicable and sordid, lasted for some time without any camera spotting the drama and without any university security service intervening, despite the victim's screams throughout the assault."

"She returned to our home, (close by), at around 9.15pm. She was screaming, bleeding, her clothes torn. She collapsed on the floor. I immediately understood that she had been raped," the father continued. "I ran to the site to try to catch the guy but he had already escaped.

His wife immediately called the ambulance, which dropped the victim off at the Centre for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse.

The deep psychological trauma will affect her all her life. In addition, our daughter no longer leaves our house. She has anxiety attacks, insomnia, panic fears. Given the violence of the events, how can our daughter go back to school on this campus with any confidence? Another dramatic consequence is that she is unable to continue to prepare for her university exams, which she should have sat from 9 January 2023.

"Some of the exams will take place near the buildings where the attack took place. The students who will be sitting their exams in January will clearly not be safe on the campus," the father continued. "We insist on the responsibility of the university for not ensuring the safety of its students. Indeed, the campus has already been the subject of several denunciations by other students who are concerned about the lack of security and the risk of aggression."

A police investigation is underway and an investigating judge has been appointed. The victim has taken a lawyer to defend her interests. A suspect has been arrested.

The national public prosecutor's office has taken over the case. "We can confirm that an investigation is underway and that a suspect has been placed under arrest. In the interest of the investigation no further comment will be made", explains the spokesperson of the public prosecutor's office.

The university assures that surveillance agents are permanently present on campus. "As soon as they were informed of the attack, the university authorities contacted the victim. Security guards are present on our campuses on a daily basis and security arrangements are reinforced during events. While the investigation is underway, we cannot give any further information", the spokesperson for the university concluded.

### **Internal communication to all staff and students (6 January 2023)**

Dear members of the university community,

A student at our university was the victim of a terrible sexual assault on 28 December 2022 on the campus. We have contacted her directly to show our support and to offer her the necessary help.

Thanks to the collaboration between the University's security services and the police, a suspect from outside the University was arrested.

Sexual violence is intolerable. Like you, I am shocked. Like you, I am sad. Like you, I am angry. When one member of our community is affected, the whole University is affected.



As you know, we have been pursuing a proactive policy for several years to curb such violence, both in terms of prevention and support, and we will continue to fight this battle as long as it is necessary.

Our university campuses must be safe places for everyone. As they are open to the urban space, we have to take measures to limit the risks. We have security guards on campus and work with the police to ensure our safety. There are also surveillance cameras and the lighting on the campus was recently renovated on the marked paths. It goes without saying that a campus such as ours, which is undergoing major renovation, is subject to particular vigilance.

Our security services patrol 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can be reached at any time on [number] or via the yellow emergency phones located outside on all our campuses. If you are a victim or witness of violence, do not hesitate to call them.

A new risk analysis is underway and, in the meantime, rounds will be reinforced at the campus. Our services also remain in close contact with the police of our municipalities to secure the surroundings of our campuses.

Your safety and well-being are at the heart of our concerns and will remain so. The various University departments responsible for these matters, as well as your representatives, are at your disposal if necessary.

For my part, I am committed to doing my utmost to ensure that every member of our community feels safe on campus.

Yours sincerely,  
Rector

### **Students' federation protests against insecurity on campus after university student sexually assaulted**

Source of the original article: RTBF, 10 January 2023, translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) with human control.

After the sexual assault of a student on December 28 on the campus of the university, the Federation of students and the Student Administrators' Office of the university are giving their full support to the victim. They are organising a rally on Tuesday 10 January at 6.30pm on the campus. It is time for female students to be safe on their campus, demands the Federation.

“This attack is part of a wider context of sexist and sexual violence on our campuses” it said in a statement: “If the liberation of the word has allowed more victims to express themselves and to put forward the very many testimonies of aggressions suffered by female students, the responses given have absolutely not been up to the challenge.

Nearly one in five female students suffers an attempted assault during her studies, a far too high proportion, one victim being one too many.”

### **A general climate of insecurity**

The president of the Students’ Federation reacts to this aggression and evokes the context of insecurity that prevails on the university's campuses:

“Female students do not always feel safe. And in general, students cannot live their lives on campus without fear. There are no more dangers at the university, but here we talk about it more, we denounce aggressions more easily”, says the president.

She added: “The feeling of insecurity is present everywhere in the city, especially in the evening. When I go out in the city in the evening, I turn on the torch of my mobile phone in the areas where the public lighting is switched off because of the energy crisis. That’s why we are symbolically organising this torch action. There are more than 150 municipalities that do the same thing and this excludes women and minorities from the public space and this is not normal. We should be able to go home at night or party like everyone else, in safety.

### **Fighting insecurity**

The president continues: “We have to recognise that the academic authorities say they are ready to make efforts with more surveillance and more guards on the campus. The case of this young girl has received a lot of media attention because of the violence of the act, but assaults are happening more regularly,” she said.

“They all need to be treated in the same way. This requires a better service provided by the university to the student community and a better public service to make our spaces, spaces where we feel good”.

## University's reaction

The university authorities reacted in a statement: "Sexual violence is intolerable. When one of the members of our community is affected, it is the whole university that is concerned. For several years now, the university has been pursuing a proactive policy to curb this violence, both in terms of prevention and support, and we will continue to fight this battle as long as it is necessary," the institution said.

"Our university campuses must be safe places for everyone. As they are open to the urban environment, we have to take measures to limit risks. Surveillance officers are on duty and work with the police to ensure our safety. Surveillance cameras are also present and the marked paths are illuminated. Our security guards are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can be reached at any time by telephone or via the yellow emergency phones located outside on all our campuses," the university explains.

## Reinforced measures

The academic authorities indicate that new risk analyses are underway and that patrols will be reinforced at the campus: "Our services also remain in close contact with the police of our municipalities to secure the surroundings of our campuses.

The safety and well-being of the members of the university community are at the heart of our concerns and will remain so. Everything is being done to ensure that everyone feels safe on campus.

## Case story 4

### **Disturbing allegations of sexual harassment in Antarctica levelled at noted scientist**

*Two women allege their team leader bullied them at remote research sites years ago. Now they are taking action*

Source of the original article: Home News Science Insider (6 October 2017)

The University is investigating sexual harassment complaints made against a prominent Antarctic geologist by two of his former graduate students. The women allege that David M., then an assistant professor, harassed them during different research expeditions starting 2 decades ago, while they were isolated in small groups in the Antarctic. In supporting documents and interviews, several other women report similar treatment from David M. in that period.

The first complainant, Jane W., now an associate professor at the an Institution, alleges that David M. repeatedly shoved her down a steep slope, pelted her with rocks while she was urinating in the field, called her a "slut" and a "whore," and urged her to have sex with his brother, who was also on the trip.

The second complainant, Doe (a pseudonym), who was in Antarctica for two austral summers during this era, reports that David M. called her a "c--t" and a "bitch" repeatedly. She alleges that he promised to block her access to research funding should she earn a Ph.D. She abandoned her career dreams and left academe.

A third woman, Hillary T., a high school teacher, describes her experience in a supporting letter filed with university investigators. "His taunts, degrading comments about my body, brain, and general inadequacies never ended," she writes. She claims David M. tried to exhaust her into leaving Antarctica. "Every day was terrifying," she says in an interview with Science.

Jane W. writes that she waited to file her complaint with the university until October 2016, shortly after she received tenure, for fear of professional reprisal from David M. before she had established herself as a scholar. Several of the women involved and two male witnesses say they feel guilty about not speaking out at the time, guilt that fuels their desire to speak now.

"This is one of the only real regrets I have in my whole life," says Adam L., who as a graduate student was in Antarctica with Jane W. and Hillary T. "I had the chance to stand up for people. And I didn't."

Science is unaware of any additional formal complaints from more recent students. David M. supervised two women who earned Ph.D.s in 2009 and 2016. Both women, contacted repeatedly by Science, declined to comment on their experiences with him.

David M., 55, now a department chair at the University, declined by email to be interviewed or to provide his written rebuttal to Jane W.'s complaint. Other documents related to the investigation suggest that he denies the allegations. He was scheduled to be honored as a fellow of the Geological Society of America (GSA) at the society's meeting in Seattle, Washington, this month, but last week his name was removed from the GSA website listing of new fellows.

Some other women who have worked with David M. at the university and in the field stoutly defend his character. Emily J., who as a 21-year-old undergraduate worked with David M. and others in Antarctica in 2002, says she never witnessed or experienced sexual harassment from him. "I ... sincere[ly] support ... him as an upstanding and professional individual," says Emily J., a senior staff geologist at a consulting firm headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida. She has filed a letter of support for David M. with the university.

The allegations come at a time of heightened attention to sexual harassment and gender discrimination in science. Scientists are also becoming more attuned to the potential dangers women face in isolated field camps, where they may depend on senior men for food, water, and shelter. In one online survey published in PLOS ONE and covered by Science in 2014, 71% of 512 female respondents reported being sexually harassed during field work; 84% of them were trainees.

The allegations against David M. raise the question of whether women can successfully press complaints many years after allegedly abusive incidents. "I have seen claims up to 4 years after the last incident had happened. But I haven't seen anything with quite that amount of time," says Alexandra T.R., an attorney with Hopkins Way in Phoenix who specializes in gender discrimination.

Alexandra T.R., who read Jane W.'s complaint at Science's request, says the case likely "will be a fairly important part of a larger conversation schools are having about 'What are we required to do?' and 'What is the right thing to do?'"

## Two portraits of a man

Those who know David M. describe him as often charming and charismatic, a very good scientist, and an excellent teacher. He made his name documenting landscape evolution in Antarctica's McMurdo Dry Valleys, and he is known as an experienced field geologist, making more than 30 research trips to the frigid continent.

Jennifer B., 33, a science communicator based in Somerville, Massachusetts, who was a field assistant for David M. in 2012, recalls her first, windy night in Antarctica, when she and her tentmate had set up their tent with only small rocks holding down the guy lines. "In the middle of the night, we heard some rustling around outside of the tent. It was Dave lugging and placing giant boulders atop our small, scrawny ones, and tightening the guy lines."

David M. also made his mark on the university's campus, winning two teaching awards including, in 2004, one of the university's highest teaching prizes. In 2014 he was named a professor of a prestigious institute; his \$1 million, 5-year award is part of a program to improve science teaching. David M. was "an excellent professor," says Rachel W., now a law student at BU. She took a class with David M., who was also her undergraduate academic adviser, and she worked for him as a lab assistant on campus in 2011-12. She told Science he was a "great boss ... eager for my input."

The allegations against David M. in the complaints and supporting documents paint a different picture, and read like a riveting survival novel unfurling in unforgiving, isolated terrain. In her complaint, Jane W., now 40, describes her first Antarctic field season as a master's student starting in December 1999, when she was 22.

David M., Jane W., Adam L., and David M.'s brother Jeffrey, who was working as an assistant, lived and worked in the arid, boulder-strewn Beacon Valley and in the shadow of 2470-meter PivotPeak. They slept in unheated tents in temperatures as low as  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$ , walked long distances in rugged terrain, and dug deep holes to find ancient ice and volcanic ash. Dropped by helicopter with supplies, for weeks the four had only radio contact with the main base at McMurdo Station.

Jane W. alleges that David M., her thesis adviser, then 37, greeted her daily with the words: "Today I'm going to make you cry." He slept in his own tent and Adam L. in the cook tent, leaving Jane W. to share a tent with David M., she writes. According to Jane W., David M. told her repeatedly that his brother had a "porn-sized" penis, and said she should have sex with him and feel lucky for the opportunity.

One week, Jane W. alleges, David M. "decided that he would throw rocks at me every time I urinated in the field. "She cut her water consumption so she could last the 12-hour days far from camp without urinating, then drank litres at night. She says she developed a urinary tract infection and urinary incontinence, which has since recurred. When blood appeared in her urine, she alleges, David M. prohibited her from going back to McMurdo for treatment.

"Most days," Jane W. writes, "I would listen to long discussions about how I was a 'slut' or a 'whore.'" When she disagreed, she alleges, "he would call me a liar and say, 'There's no place in science for liars, is there J? Is there J?'" repeating the phrase for up to 20 minutes.

As they neared camp near the end of one arduous day, Jane W. alleges in the complaint that David M. waited above her on a steep slope. He said, "I noticed someone hasn't cried today," grabbed her by the backpack and threw her down the slope, she writes. She climbed up twice more; each time, she claims, he shoved her down again, leaving her bruised, with an injured knee and a twisted wrist.

Be about to teach her something, Jane W. allowed him to pour volcanic ash, which includes tiny shards of glass, into her hand. She had been troubled by ice blindness, caused by excessive ultraviolet light exposure, which sensitizes the eyes. She says she leaned in to observe, and David M. would be really painful—and it was," she writes.

Adam L., a glacial geologist who worked at a University in Fargo until he emigrated to Canada last year, corroborates this anecdote in a written letter to the university. He writes that after David M. blew ash in Jane W.'s eyes, she "yelled and cursed in pain. While she was doubled over, [David M.] looked back at the other members of the field party and gave us a comical expression that I interpreted as meaning 'oops, that went a little too far.'" Adam L. letter also says that he saw David M. grab and push Jane W. at least twice.

Adam L. had also been in Antarctica with David M. the previous season, when Hillary T. was there with a National Science Foundation (NSF) program called Teachers Experiencing Antarctica and the Arctic. Hillary T. writes in a letter supporting Jane W.'s complaint that she had not yet cleared the rotors of the helicopter that dropped them at their field site when "I was aggressively grabbed by David M. and wheeled around, while he yelled and called me a 'dumbass, lazy c--t ... who did not know that we had to set up camp immediately."

She alleges in her letter that David M. failed to teach her or include her, the only woman present, in the research. "Talk during [group] meals ... always included relentless, snickering mentions of my advanced age (I was 43), my small breasts, and other failings, always initiated by David M. All my attempts to steer the conversation to science were shut down."

Adam L.'s letter supports much of Hillary T.'s account. He writes that David M. repeatedly said to the other men that an older woman in the field "will slow us down." He adds in his letter: "On multiple occasions while walking without Hillary T., David M. made grotesque sexual comments about her body." At other times, Adam L.'s writes, David M. "clearly stated that he did not believe women should be field geologists."

Andrew L., then a student at another university, was also in the field that season and was interviewed by the university investigators last year. Contacted by Science, Andrew L. says he also remembers David M.'s mealtime disparagement of Hillary T. and her body. David M.'s relationship with Hillary T. was "not positive," says Andrew L., now a climate scientist at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research in Auckland, New Zealand. However, he says: "I did not necessarily attribute [this] to her being a woman as much as ... an outsider."

Doe, a third woman, alleges that she was harassed by David M. in field seasons in the late 1990s, in a supporting letter for Jane W. bring that she later converted into a formal complaint on her own behalf. (She authenticated this letter in an email to Science, and requested anonymity.) When she was a student at university, she writes, David M. told her "less than two weeks into my graduate career, that I was lazy, less than intelligent, and incapable of meeting even the basest expectations." She adds in the letter that, "My every action or social interaction was scrutinized and remarked upon, usually with a belittling comment, followed by ... that blinding smile that he deployed to make it seem as if he hadn't just cut you to the core. ... I began to believe the things he told me."

Once in Antarctica, the abuse escalated, Doe writes. "He repeatedly called me a 'c--t,' among many other insults ... (bitch being the most common) that were invoked on a daily basis or more. ... He would crow that he could say absolutely anything he wanted to because we were 'in his domain.'"

David M. told her that if she completed her Ph.D., he and another scientist would ensure she never got NSF funding, Doe alleges. (NSF is the major source of funding for Antarctic field research.)



"I distinctly remember standing there, aghast, in my red down jacket and black wind pants, watching my career and life plans dissolve as Dr. David M. smiled triumphantly at me," she writes.

Four women who all worked in the Antarctic with David M. at different times report him saying close variations of the same words: "I'm going to break you down and build you up in my image."

## **Keeping quiet**

Nearly all of the women say they considered reporting the abuse at the time. Doe met with then-department chair Carol S. after returning to the university to discuss filing academic charges against David M. D's letter alleges that Carol S., noting David M.'s "sizeable" reputation and funding, "asked me if it wouldn't just be easier on me to complete my degree and leave. I was astonished, deflated, and, I believed at that time, left without recourse."

Carol S., who has since retired, wrote in an email that she could not comment on the ongoing investigation. She wrote that she would have "dealt quickly and decisively" with allegations "approaching the seriousness indicated" in Doe's letter.

Doe writes that "it took years, literally, to overcome the damage to my self-worth. I slowly ... rebuilt a career grounded in scientific inquiry" outside academe. She writes in her complaint: "For [many] years I have carried the weight of knowing" that she stayed quiet "rather than speaking up and saving those who would follow me from the torment and anguish I had experienced."

Hillary T. writes that she contacted one of the directors of NSF's polar program for teachers upon her return, and was promised "a private, confidential meeting with an administrator." The meeting did not materialize, and she did not pursue her complaint, she tells Science, because David M.'s alleged treatment had "knocked me for a loop psychologically....I wimped out." When she spoke to other teachers on NSF's behalf, she relayed only the positive aspects of her experience.

Back at the university, Jane W., too, did not speak up. She writes in her complaint that, "I believe that I would not be where I am today if I had said something" at the time.

In 2002, as Jane W. finished her master's degree with David M., another professor asked her to write a letter of evaluation for David M.'s tenure and promotion file. She alleges that David M. threatened to ruin her career if she did not write a positive letter. She wrote one. "I kept it to the science because he is a very good scientist," she tells Science.

To avoid David M., Jane W. switched her Ph.D. research to the Arctic and moved to another university. She promised herself that when she got tenure, she would speak out.

## **Speaking out**

In July 2016, Scripps hired Jane W. as a tenured associate professor. She filed a Title IX complaint with the university in October 2016. Title IX is the 1972 law that prohibits discrimination based on sex at universities that receive federal funding. Institutions can lose federal funds if they do not comply with the law. (Jane W. also filed complaints with NSF and NASA, which fund David M.'s research, in December 2016. However, Title IX complaints against individuals are typically handled first by the institutions where the alleged harassment occurred.) Schools are unlikely to dismiss a years-old complaint out of hand, says Alexandra T.R., the Title IX lawyer, "but rather to ask 'Did a hostile environment occur at that time?' and 'Is there reason to suspect there is a hostile environment happening now?'"

The university's Equal Opportunity Office has interviewed numerous people, elicited a 200-page rebuttal from David M., and received at least four letters in his support plus at least five letters supporting Jane W. It has also begun investigating Doe's complaint, which was filed 7 months later, in May. The University told Jane W. last month that it expects to finish its report soon. The university declined to discuss the investigation with Science, citing privacy concerns.

Jane W. had also sent her complaint to GSA in December, because David M. edits a GSA publication. The society declined to comment, or to say why David M.'s name was removed as a GSA fellow.

David M., contacted repeatedly by Science, wrote in an email: "The University's investigation into these allegations is ongoing. I have cooperated fully in that investigation. I do not wish to compromise the integrity of that investigation by making any comments before the investigation has been completed."

David M.'s defenders tell Science they do not recognize the man described in the complaints.

"I find the allegations against David M. of physical abuse, verbal abuse, and sexual harassment beyond comprehension given my field experiences with him in Antarctica as a female" in 2008 and 2012, Jacquelyn H., chairperson of the earth science department at Los Angeles Valley College in California, wrote in an email. "The time I spent doing field work in Antarctica with David M. continues to be the best experience of my professional life."

Others praised his character. David M. is "a person completely absent the stain of misogyny or unchecked anger," wrote Berglund, who in addition to working with David M. in Antarctica, administers the HHMI-supported university's science education program that he leads. Shivani E., 26, a second-year Ph.D. student in David M.'s lab who has not been to Antarctica, says she was "completely shocked" by the allegations. "Nothing that I have heard lines up with the man that I know." She calls David M. "kind and genuine."

Some scientists note that extreme isolation and the absence of institutional support at remote camps create conditions where abuse can flourish. "On campus, I can go speak to a trusted faculty member, the department chair, the ombudsperson," says Meredith H., an atmospheric chemist at Brown University and co-principal investigator on a \$1.1 million NSF grant aimed at curbing sexual harassment in the geosciences. "Who do you go talk to when you are in the field?"

Adam L., who earned his Ph.D. with David M., noted in his letter: "In the office and classroom setting, David M.'s behaviour toward women was much less outrageous ... he was careful and measured in his tone when others were present." He adds that he never again saw from David M. "the extreme behaviour" of those early seasons, and says David M.'s "attitude shifted to simply being distrustful" of women.

What is an institution's responsibility when confronted with decades-old sexual harassment complaints? "The evidence is that the people who perpetrate this kind of behaviour, it's a pattern," Hastings says.

Billie D., a professor of English at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio and an expert on sexual harassment on college campuses, argues that even if an abuser has changed over time, they are not absolved of responsibility for acts committed decades ago. "I have a moral responsibility to the young people I teach," she says. "I don't care if I did damage 10, 20 years ago: What I do today and what I did yesterday matters."

In concluding her complaint against David M., Jane W. writes that her goal is to prevent "another young, female student bearing the brunt of his misogyny." She added, in an interview with Science: "I just don't want it to happen again."

## Case story 5

### **Former climate czar in hot water again over sexual harassment allegations Media and activists protest RP's promotion**

Source of the original article: Home News ScienceInsider (12 February 2016)

The former chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), RP, is once again in the crosshairs of the Indian media and women's rights activists. The reason: his recent promotion at a prestigious institute Delhi despite allegations that he sexually harassed a female colleague.

RP, 75, served as the director of the institute and director-general from April 2001 until his promotion on Monday to executive vice chairman. He is facing charges of sexual harassment made against him in February 2015 by a 29-year-old institute employee who has since resigned from her position. RP denied the allegations and stepped down from IPCC last year. Last May, an internal investigation at the institute concluded that his alleged actions constituted harassment, according to Indian media outlets. The institute has not commented on these reports, and it has taken no disciplinary action against him.

His promotion this week sparked a media uproar—and elicited a fresh set of allegations. On Wednesday, a second former institute employee released a statement alleging that RP repeatedly sexually harassed her at the institute from 2003 to 2005. She claims to have quit her job after complaining in vain about the harassment to a senior colleague. Her lawyers, Ratna Appender and Vrinda Grover, last February filed a police report on her behalf. "We wanted the police to take action, which they haven't done so far," Appender says.

More than 20 students due to graduate at university's convocation next month released a statement yesterday that they would refuse to accept their degrees from RP "We decided as a student body we couldn't stay silent," said ELR, a master's student.

RP is on voluntary leave from the institute and has opted out of the graduation ceremony, he told Science Insider in an email. "I have a large amount of writing to do, which is the reason for this decision, and I would also focus on several other pending matters," he wrote. He and the institute's spokesperson have not responded to Science Insider's requests for comments regarding the fresh allegations.

In 2013, India passed the Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act and Rules, which requires all employers to address allegations of sexual harassment. The institute has failed in its legal obligations to provide a safe working environment, Grover asserted to the Business Standard. The Institute should take disciplinary action against RP, contends BR, another student who has refused to accept her degree from him. "He may have voluntarily taken leave," she says. "But why is it still voluntary? We want to see some action. We want to see him held accountable."

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