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Understanding Workplace Bullying in Higher Education

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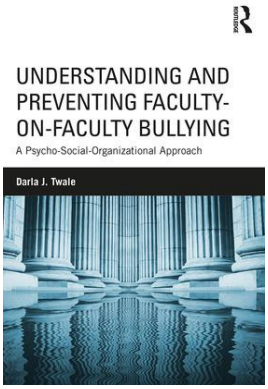

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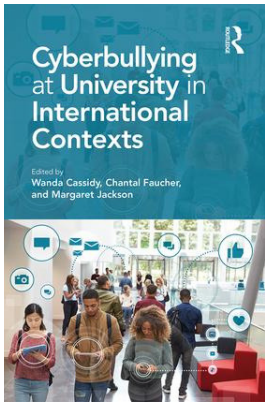

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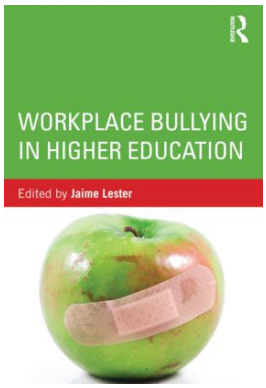

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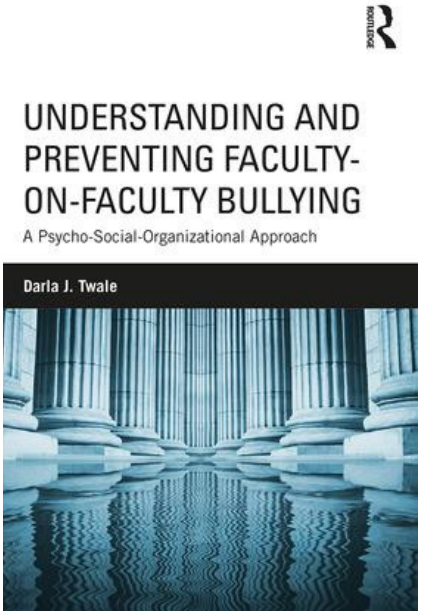

Chapter 2: Bullying in academe

From: *Understanding and Preventing Faculty-on-Faculty Bullying*

by Darla J. Twale

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BULLYING IN ACADEME

Farnham (1999) and Altbach (2005) acknowledged that changes to the academic profession worldwide indicate changes in the nature of faculty work and in turn, faculty interpersonal relationships, interactions with their students, and rapport with the administration that oversees faculty affairs. These changes include but are not limited to diversification, entrepreneurialism, corporatization, rapid technology growth, social media, government regulations, productivity expectations, scarce resources, accountability issues, professional autonomy, shared governance, and academic freedom. To some degree globally, the academic profession has moved from a well-defined core of elite scholars to a more peripheral faculty who have for university financial concerns penetrated that gradually declining, highly guarded, elite core. In the U.S. especially, this translates to more adjunct faculty and part-timers, increasing non-tenure-stream fulltime faculty positions, short-term faculty contracts, and significant pay disparities between newer faculty configurations and the long-established elite core. As a result, the academic profession sacrifices some autonomy and academic freedom as university leadership becomes more capitalistic, corporatized, and market driven. According to the labor process theory, incivility and bullying can occur as a result of this market-driven, capitalistic worker relationship (Beale & Hoel, 2011; Hollis, 2017).

Still, academics dismiss as real workplace incivility and bullying for multiple reasons: Well-educated, civilized professionals situated in an urbane and democratic environment immune from such irresponsible behavior would be unlikely to engage in such aggressive behavior. Second, shifting academic expectations often instigate a feeling of faculty disconnection from the institution and from peers. The isolation associated with academe may not permit regular, sustained social interaction of faculty colleagues, especially with adjuncts and part timers. Third, academics

would be unlikely to label themselves as weak and vulnerable given their credentials. Fourth, ivory towers could not *possibly* be thought of as harboring toxic work climates with menacing bullies and uncivil tormentors. Furthermore, faculty may no longer have that sense of *fit* they felt when hired into their academic department. As a result, stress arises. So does uncertainty. New negative behaviors and dormant ones begin to surface in the work setting. Often these shifts become the negative response to unsettling change that manifests itself in incivility and bullying (Ribando & Evans, 2015). In fact, aspects of academe show it to be a potential environment that easily spawns and sustains bullying over long periods of time, so much so that departmental bully cultures become engrained.

Academic work settings pose their own set of circumstances, challenges, and expectations for which faculty, staff, and students must deal. The scholarly literature indicates that the expectations of the academic profession may be partly to blame. Accounts of his first year on the tenure track in a small American college chronicled by James Lang (2005) help to illustrate the dynamics which can lead to incivility and bullying.

Observations of a Novice Faculty Member

In recalling his first year on the tenure track at a private college, Lang (2005) discovered his expectations and his reality were not always aligned. For instance, he noted he did not engage in conversation with his colleagues about their teaching and research obligations and expectations for fear of appearing foolish or naïve. In addition, Lang remembered having little social life off campus. When it came to the service function, he received little guidance on how much or how little to undertake as an untenured faculty member. Because no one observed his classroom teaching his first semester, Lang received no feedback or guidance on grading standards, nor how well or how poorly he presented himself or his material to his students.

Serving on a search committee raised further questions, but Lang (2005) hesitated to ask his chair or colleagues. He acknowledged differing opinions of committee colleagues as they argued for their favored candidate. Lang mentioned how personal interviews and professional dossiers only revealed so much of a candidate's personality. This caused apprehension at the thought of hiring someone who may not turn out to be a good *fit* for the department.

In hiring a new faculty member, Lang (2005) recalled, "we cast our votes for either a department that would continue to replicate its current values or one that would head in a new direction, the endpoint of which was not entirely clear" (p. 96). Being the minority supporter for a junior colleague placed Lang in jeopardy among senior faculty majority voters. His ethical beliefs and convictions might interfere with his tenure vote in a few years. As his academic year progressed, he assessed that it *at least* went well for him in his classroom while he still ruminated over the outcome of his search committee service. Meanwhile, Lang

tried to make sense of the "cross- and undercurrents of department intrigue and just to try to take everything at face value" and feared being sucked "back into the vicious cycle of departmental politics" (p. 109).

Lang (2005) rendered some astute observations during his first year. Departmental and mission direction conflicted somewhat and that conflict manifested itself in social control mechanisms within the department. By virtue of the tenure vote, Lang realized senior faculty maintains control over junior faculty. This supports what Lucas (1996) meant by tenure as social control. Efforts by junior faculty to rebel and push a more democratic agenda, no matter how well-meaning, stood to jeopardize the future of the yet-to-be tenured. Lang mused about his senior colleagues: "It will never FEEL to us [junior faculty] the way it [social control] was INTENDED by you [senior faculty]" (p. 133).

Distracted by being a first-year-tenure track faculty member, Lang (2005) lived in his own fantasy world, not having the time or psychic energy to examine department relations or ways of doing things more realistically. True colors lost their veil and remained muted no more. This unveiling only made Lang realize how much more he *needed* to know about his colleagues than he did, the depth of the department/academic culture, and the extended time he would need to really uncover and know the *whole* truth. Lang concluded that his best offense in the department entailed proceeding "with my head down, my mouth shut, and my eyes and ears wide open" (p. 137). In any institution, and the university is no exception, much *is* veiled purposefully and much operates in the shadows from the consumers who study there, from the tax-payers who indirectly fund the enterprise, and the faculty, staff, and administration who choose not to peek under the veil (Damrosch, 1995).

Lang's (2005) end-of-the-year view of his situation contrasted dramatically with his initial, September perception of his new department. He described his department in September as "a thriving cultural and intellectual community" (p. 137). During the course of the academic year, however, Lang realized the limits to his own professional autonomy as well as the uncertainty of his destiny as a permanent fixture of the college six years hence. He attributed the civility and cordiality initially displayed by his departmental colleagues to simply minimizing any disputes which ultimately resulted in divisiveness. This approach glossed over the issues rather than resolved them. However, throughout the first year, Lang remained cautious and often silent about his early evaluations of the departmental culture and climate. He contemplated whether to stay or to seek a faculty position elsewhere. Lang's revelations through lived experience and reflection opened his eyes to a reality he never imagined when he prepared for this career. This reality *is* very typical or more normative than any of us realized as we recall our own journeys.

Twenty-first Century Academe

Today's market-driven universities expect high output or deliverables from each faculty member. Therefore, academic environments under this pressure can

become competitive, perhaps even toxic, places that pose emotional, physical, and social concerns for faculty incumbents. According to the labor process theory, incivility and bullying can occur as a result of a market-driven, capitalistic worker relationship (Beale & Hoel, 2011). In fact, capitalism harbors bullying behaviors because there is a push for workers to succeed at whatever cost it takes in order to be rewarded by the institution (Branch & Murray, 2015). In addition, it is normal and often encouraged that faculty move into entrepreneurial opportunities through their research endeavors. While these opportunities could prove more lucrative for a faculty member, it adds extra pressure to the job, especially if it involves partnerships with nonacademic entities (Zabrodska, Linnell, Laws, & Davies, 2011). Given this push for increased institutional output, negative behaviors can arise.

The institution, however, would seem to have a vested interest, if not an economic stake, in minimizing incivility and bullying, if not eliminating them altogether. The coupling of high individual performance with big rewards and ample resources would all but eliminate bullying. However, the financial situations of most public colleges and universities and some private ones expect high individual performance *but* offer fewer comparable rewards and resources. Tough financial times in higher education can exacerbate the workplace tension that leads to bullying (Hollis, 2017). More likely, faculty struggling over grains of sand provides the necessary entre for incivility and bullying to take hold in an academic department.

Uniqueness of the Faculty

Faculty represents their "university's most important capital asset" because the university could not fulfill its mission without a stable, tenured faculty (Lombardi, 2013, p. 63). Ultimately, the university's reputation rests with the quality of its faculty and the concomitant investment the institution makes in their faculty to ensure that quality. More importantly, the structure of the university confounds the issue as faculty *owns* their university's means of production. As a result, faculty often perceives their position as self-employment rather than as reporting to a line supervisor (Lukes & Bangs, 2014).

As owners of the means of production, each faculty member comes equipped with a unique set of skills and knowledge unlike any other colleague. Furthermore, department chairs/heads do not manage a department but rather in academe, they *oversee* these unique human knowledge possessors. Therefore, chairs/heads must ensure that their faculty receives the support, encouragement, materials, and resources they need in order to be able to carry out their teaching, research, and service obligations. Therefore, to tenure faculty symbolizes that the university has made an investment in and commitment to these valuable means of production by extending a lifetime contract to worthy professors. In return, the university anticipates a return on investment through a steady workforce semester after

semester that performs credible teaching, research, and service to the institution (and profession) in fulfillment of the university mission. These factors represent several unique features among the general workforce which does not offer such guarantees as lifetime employment. In addition, most non-academic workers do not own the means of production, the owner of the business does. Doctors and lawyers, like faculty, own their means of production, but not all may be privy to lifetime employment (Lombardi, 2013).

According to Armstrong (2012), "the conflicts and animosities that arise within the academy are problematic because they demand the quality of our professional lives" (p. 85). Traditionally, faculty must be poised to express truths as dictated by their socialization, training, experience, and research. Faculty regularly engages in dialog and debate in class, at faculty meetings, committee meetings, and professional conferences, and with individual colleagues, administrators, practitioners, and doctoral students, so at least a culture of argumentation should not be foreign to faculty. In fact, in order to enter fulltime faculty ranks, defense of thesis/dissertation research serves as a mandatory ticket or union card to a tenure-track position. However, because academic resources and stakes tend to be low, the fighting over grains of sand may still become intense and heated. Unfortunately, hierarchical patterns of faculty rank and status may take hold over horizontal ones. In fact, "the association of the art of verbal warfare with intellectual prowess has ancient roots in history" (Armstrong, p. 88).

Therefore, faculty voice often resembles more a cacophony rather than a symphony (Campbell, 2000). Burgan (2006) describes "the professoriate as a power center that can be stubborn, demanding, and indifferent to change" (p. 40). Ginsberg (2011) described the faculty collective as "far from perfect"; in fact, faculty "can be petty, foolish, venal, lazy, and quarrelsome" (p. 201). Williams (2016) expressed that "in a marketplace of ideas, the knowledge of dominant social groups will triumph over that of less powerful sections of society, irrespective of the intellectual merit of the ideas proposed" (p. 14). In other words, the loudest voice and the most political of operatives will often triumph over what is in the best interest of the department and institution. The uniqueness of the faculty-university relationship accounts for faculty voice, but it may also be traced back to faculty selection practices.

Faculty selection processes, while dependent upon professional experience and expertise as well as future potential, often favors instead collegial *fit* (Campbell, 2000). Damrosch (1995) referred to this practice as *homosocial reproduction*. In fact, hiring practices and tenure votes ensure that departmental factions can unobtrusively gain dominance in a department as illustrated in Lang's (2005) experience. Social Darwinism eventually begins to dictate the personality and composition of an academic department as either fostering positive growth or harboring negative behaviors. The department can become tolerant at least temporarily of questionable uncivil behaviors or until some intervention brings bad behavior to light (Braxton, Proper, & Bayer, 2011; Farrington, 2010). However, faculties tend to

self-isolate and live somewhat solitary existences, perhaps giving the impression to colleagues and administrators that academic life is wonderful. Owning the means of production and gaining lifetime employment associated with the academic life of the mind guarantee a wonderful professional career. However, this may not be the experience for *all* faculty members.

Faculty Life in Academic Departments

The academic department is the basic campus unit. Unfortunately, the department tends to be "opportunistic, territorial, and sometimes provincial" (Burgan, 2006, p. 113) as well as bureaucratic and hierarchical. An academic department *should* be "a community of equals" dedicated to furthering and transmitting the values of the academic discipline/profession (Altbach, 2005, p. 153). Instead, the department often serves to "enforce conformity through the threat of exclusion" by its ability "to constrain external input and curb internal dissent" (Williams, 2016, p. 115).

For instance, faculty who ever so slightly fall outside the cultural departmental normative expectation, who sit on the ambitious side of the *cutting edge*, who fail to match a stereotyped professional mold, or whose ideas are deemed *too radical* compared to the mainstream may come under careful scrutiny by colleagues. These faculty may become marked as different, difficult, and/or suspicious, and become vulnerable targets for bullies and mobs (Finkelstein, 2009; Horton, 2016).

Faculty tends to be self-managed rather than closely supervised or micromanaged, preferring instead a hands-off administrative approach. Over time, faculty develops the self-discipline needed to identify and execute annual performance goals in line with department/college/university expectations and accept personal responsibility for achieving those goals each academic year (Arthur, 2011; Nielsen, 2013). However, this tradition may possess a downside.

Each academic department develops over time its own social, economic, and political system based upon its professional values and its own provincial way of acting and thinking. The faculty trains new entrants to identify with the prevailing norms, attitudes, and values of the departmental culture. Not everyone embraces the departmental culture, however. Marginalized faculty members may never quite adopt the prevailing norms, perhaps as a result of taking a peripheral vantage point. These ostensive challengers to the prevailing departmental norms face conflict and criticism, pressure to conform, or greater marginalization and exclusion which may render them vulnerable to bullies (Williams, 2016).

Faculty-on-Faculty Interaction

Departments exist with contingencies of professionals with varying abilities. Some faculty members demonstrate great ability and potential and must coexist with colleagues who possess lesser drive and ability. Academic professions follow

patterns where the lesser abled, which often constitutes a majority, must protect their interests against a much smaller contingency of the highly adept or what faculty and administrators refer to as faculty *stars*. According to Hermanowicz (2013), "the result is a complex creation of a seemingly sociological pathology wherein the normal are transfigured into the deviant (p. 364)." Therefore, he posits the "marginalization of the adept arises through an elaborate process of social subversion by one or more members of the lesser able" (p. 364). The highly adept stars may be bullied into silence and powerlessness despite the fact that their work, according to institutional rubrics, deserves rewards and accolades and because it contrasts with the accomplishments of their lesser abled colleagues.

Bully behavior may be perpetuated when the vast majority of the middle of the pack of the lesser abled chooses silence or passivity in the hopes of not being targeted specifically by the bully/mob. Bullies prosper in a culture or conspiracy of silence (McKay, Huberman, Fratzl, & Thomas, 2008), therefore faculty and the department chair must not "support an insular protected stratum, and perpetuate the culture of silence" (De Luca & Twale, 2010, p. 2). Bullies silence targets and often the bully culture perpetuates the practice by withholding information and communication so the target disengages and refrains from open communication for fear of reprimand and ridicule (deWet, 2014; Parker, 2014) despite a stellar scholarly record.

Hermanowicz (2013) theorized that departments with changing, shifting, or ambiguous goals may be described as likely fertile ground for uncivil or bully behaviors in its ranks. He further postulated that elite institutions and programs rarely have ambiguous goals and tend to hire highly adept faculty. In fact, these elite departments strive to field a team of accomplished, proven scholars. Lower tiered institutions or departments may have to settle for the best candidates that apply, or more likely, the ones who provide the best *fit* with the existing faculty and departmental culture. In the long run, Hermanowicz argued that the latter hiring practice helps the department/college/institution further a comfortable level of ordinariness. Arthur (2011) aligned with the person-organizational fit theory and established that hiring candidates that display congruence with department/college/campus norms and values, and are most equipped to enhance and succeed in the organization, will likely remain for an extended period of time and be less likely to display deviant behaviors to faculty peers. At first blush, Arthur's suggestion that a faculty hire to what closely fits the norm would be less likely to display deviant behavior toward peers seems contradictory, based on Hermanowicz' logic that the prevailing social culture dictates who fits and who does not. In bully cultures, the espoused values and norms once held by faculty can easily be replaced by a new social construction of reality that embraces an alternative set of values.

Therefore, should a highly adept scholar take a position where mediocrity evolves into the norm, he/she could ultimately encounter the singular wrath of a bully or the collective wrath of the lesser-abled mob. Consequently, the administration tends to listen to the inept majority rather than the singular voice

of the newly targeted faculty member exclaiming that it does not recognize the potential for deviant behavior in its midst. Most likely, the administration tends to be largely unprepared to help the target. In addition, if the status quo echoed in the strong voices of the majority *benefits* the administration, then the administration simultaneously drowns out the singular voice of the targeted faculty. On the flip side, marginalization from the rest of the department occurs under a veil of secrecy so it may be almost impossible for a *willing and able* administrator to get at the truth. Eventual departure of the targeted star performer only serves to validate and further legitimize the voices of the departmental majority. It also preserves and strengthens a bully culture (Hermanowicz, 2013).

Often the highly adept faculty members escalate their scholarly efforts in myriad ways off campus, showing up the less abled majority in their department. However, these resulting actions often cause the bully or mob to further alienate their more productive star colleague(s). While the social distancing between the greater and lesser abled grows wider, it rarely stops the already adept from sinking to the level of the lesser abled. Meanwhile the lesser abled camouflage their animosity toward the adept colleague(s) or label the highly adept star(s) as troublemaker, complainer, disgruntled, or distant (Hermanowicz, 2013).

Hermanowicz (2013) clarified that adept colleagues become bully targets because they support the institutional mission and goals, and seek and often receive scarce resources and rewards because they have demonstrated eligibility *for* these rewards. Therefore, rivalry between and within departments takes the form of bargaining for scarce resources on campus and professional reputations and rankings among the same academic departments across higher education. Gaining coveted academic capital can boost highly adept faculty's placement in the pecking order, but may concurrently undermine faculty collegiality and professionalism within the academic department through raised suspicions and unhealthy competitiveness with their lesser-abled colleagues (Burgan, 2006).

However, the inept majority often shares in the same rewards as the highly adept, but often rarely earned. Marginalization of the adept enhances the lower status of the lesser abled which proves easier to accomplish than the lesser abled *actually* performing on a higher scholarly level, and/or teaching and performing service more effectively. Setting a low piecemeal rate for the lesser abled is clearly the faster, shorter route to feeling better about one's personal and professional self than raising it to match the star's rate of productivity. By returning to the dignity of the gentleman's *C*, the lesser abled achieve their highest calling that is averageness and celebrate accordingly. As long as the lesser abled view themselves as being the department's most favorite instructor, overindulging in the service function and doing sequential stints on the university parking committee and the departmental tech committee, these lesser-abled faculty can maintain a respectable position among peers across campus. The department rewards these faculty members and reinforces the acceptance of mediocrity while ignoring the plight of highly adept colleagues who actually uphold institutional values. Note that not every

bully target falls into the highly adept category and may be harassed irrespective of institutional goals. These targets may be singled out by bullies or mobs on the basis of an idiosyncratic personality characteristic or stereotypical gender or racial trait the bully or mob finds threatening (Hermanowicz, 2013).

Faculty Interaction with Department Chairs/Heads and Deans

The duty of the department chair/head "to connect an aggregation of autonomous individuals into a functioning unit" resembles the unimaginable task of herding cats (Bennett, 1998, p. 133). Faculty members also fear relinquishing their individuality to the departmental collectivity. At the same time, campus administrators find themselves caught between duty and loyalty to the organization and one's administrative supervisors and trying to maintain affinity with one's former faculty peers and be accountable to and reconciled with one's moral standards and conscience (Bandura, 2016). Administrators often find themselves in a precarious position.

As illustrated in Figure 2.1, departmental leadership style can affect how chairs/heads/deans address incivility and bullying. For instance, chairs/heads may manage their departments according to how *they* preferred to be managed as faculty members. If they preferred a laissez-faire, hands-off leadership style as faculty, they could adopt that style as chair. However, a hands-off approach to departmental management provides an opportunity for faculty to exacerbate incivility or bullying, making that often preferred style very counterproductive. Although targets may function superficially in a laissez-faire department, they find the departmental leadership style may not be conducive to helping them solve the problems brought on by incivility and bullying (Nielsen, 2013). Faculty would prefer not to have an authoritarian or authoritative chair/head who micromanages the department and makes unrealistic demands.

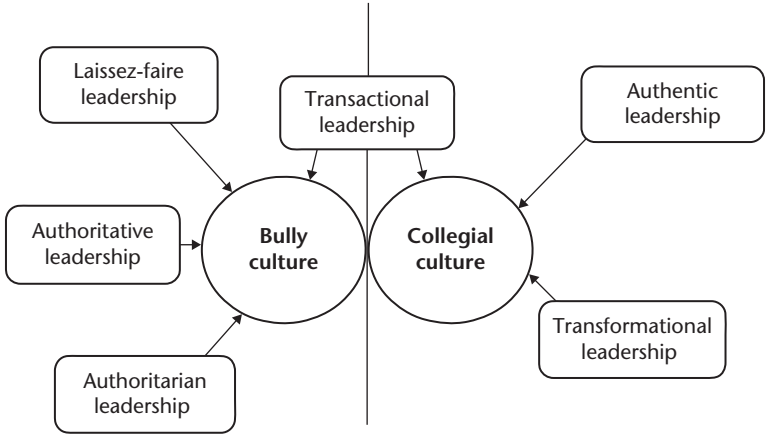

FIGURE 2.1 Institutional Culture/Climate and Leadership Style

New departmental chairs/heads may choose instead to exercise a transactional leadership style and view their role with former faculty colleagues as an exchange process. In other words, the faculty performs the labor and the chair/head offers a mix of rewards and sanctions to ensure task accomplishment. So long as the department functions to the chair's satisfaction, transactional leaders see no cause to intervene, especially if incivility and/or bullying by the chair achieves results (Barrow, Kohlberg, Mirabella, & Roter, 2013). This style may promote a collegial environment before bullying becomes a permanent fixture. Authentic and transformational leadership styles will be addressed in Chapter 8.

In some instances, department chairs may be bullied from administrators above them in the hierarchy. As such, they might be reluctant to report an inability to resolve issues among their own faculty to their dean. Instead, they may seek to resolve bullying issues by simply glossing over problems rather than admit weakness or the lack of skill to deal with their problems. Because the department *head* sits at the pleasure of the dean, to acknowledge that a problem such as bullying exists in the department/school/college could jeopardize the transactional head's standing with his/her supervisor. As an elected department *chair*, admission of being bullied could also challenge his/her standing with the faculty he/she now oversees. In addition, transactional leaders may own few constructive tools in their administrative toolbox to combat problems as serious as bullying. In all likelihood, the transactional chair/head might employ a sanction that would increase the effects of a bully culture or create a mobbing effect rather than eliminate it (Barrow et al., 2013).

Chairs/heads/deans may encourage greater productivity as a result of a drifting mission which may not be feasible to fulfill given current departmental leadership, resources, and personnel. For instance, a load that favors teaching with minimal expectations for publications in refereed journals could, with a mission drift, begin to reward faculty for double the publications but fail to alter course loads to allow time to accomplish that. The added workload pressure to publish more, however, receives few rewards in terms of merit raises, more travel allotments, or periodic course releases (Beale & Hoel, 2011). Mission drift can be an invitation to begin the downward spiral that ultimately could lead to a bully culture.

Bullies from among the faculty or the administration rarely self-disclose and admit they are bullies. When bullies possess seniority and/or high rates of professional productivity that render themselves indispensable to the department/school/college/university, bully tolerance prevails (Le Mire & Owens, 2014).

The Particular Case of Academic Departments of Nursing

Disengagement and departure in departments of nursing tend to be higher than any other academic department on campus. In fact, more articles on incivility and bullying come from the scholarly literature published in professional nursing journals than in any other field/discipline (Lim & Bernstein, 2014; Peters, 2014).

The phenomenon appears also to be global in nature and longstanding. In fact, nursing incivility dates back to Florence Nightingale's day as illustrated in her letters to family members. Due to the patriarchal hospital setting where nurses traditionally hold little power, their recourse extends to exercising power over members of their own profession. Nurses' perceived *and* actual institutional oppression turns inward and in some ways mimics how doctors and hospital administrators treat them. Nurses project this oppression subsequently onto their peers. In the nursing profession, one setting [hospital, doctor's office, classroom, academic department] reinforces the other, so each needs to be reformed if incivility and the bully culture are to cease (Peters, 2014). Unfortunately, horizontal, peer-to-peer violence appears to be on the rise in nursing programs. Ultimately this encourages a toxic climate, which in turn affects job satisfaction, performance, and productivity and perhaps the ability to attract experienced practitioners to the academic setting.

In their study of an Iranian nursing faculty, Heydani, Hossieni, and Moonaghi (2015) found that incivility and conflict among professors of nursing arose out of bewilderment about department culture and its norms. Furthermore, little could be gleaned about the culture from regular peer interaction. Han and Ha's (2016) examination of Korean nurses as well as Iglesias and Becerro de Benyoa Vallejo's (2012) study of Spanish nurses showed bullying affected participants' self-esteem. Nurses with lower self-esteem reported more instances of bullying. In addition, continued bullying kept their self-esteem low to the point where nurses redirected their hurt toward peers.

Increases in incivility among faculty teaching in nursing programs affects the constancy of tenured faculty needed to teach a growing pool of nursing candidates at all degree levels. These disturbing behaviors also affect how nursing students are socialized into the nursing profession. Nursing faculties need to serve as good role models and mentors, so that incivility and bullying does not spread to future generations of nursing professionals. If incivility pervades the clinical hospital settings as well, students nurses will receive further reinforcement of uncivil behavior directed at peers. From these nursing professionals comes the faculty who will teach in university programs and who will risk repeating the cycle of socializing negative behaviors to novices (Peters, 2014). Curtailing incivility and bullying in nursing needs to focus on academic socialization and professionalization processes, role modeling and mentoring, and the academic climate of nursing departments (Lim & Bernstein, 2014; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001).

The next section explores several tenets associated with the academic profession: autonomy, shared governance, professionalism, tenure, collegiality, academic freedom, and peer review. Indeed these principles separate the life of the mind from other professions, but in no way do they shield the membership from incivility and bullying. Instead, aspects of these principles alone or in concert may provide the fertile ground for negative workplace behaviors to seed and blossom.

Autonomy

Higher education faculty self-governs their professional lives but administrators expect faculty to temper that with accountability. As owners of the means of production discussed earlier, faculty possesses dominance over their subject matter and research, but agrees to produce output or deliverables in accordance with expected rewards that further their discipline/profession and support the institutional mission.

Although faculty must declare individual research agendas and typically teach class alone, their sense of belonging to a work group affects positively their work quality and subsequent output. Ironically, "academic professionalism alienates, separates, and sets apart—isolating those in the professoriate from each other", often sparking more competition than cooperation (Bennett, 1998, p. 48). Alienation may follow. Therefore, the isolation and autonomy needed to accomplish personal research agendas must be paired with communal activities such as shared governance, mentoring, and research collaboration (Bennett). Failing to belong to the group may result in a decline in individual well-being, work group social relations, and institutional productivity (Leiter, Laschinger, Day, & Oore, 2011). Because of the autonomous nature of the professoriate, bullying becomes easy to disguise. In addition, victimization often tends to be dismissed (Le Mire & Owens, 2014).

Faculty's ability to self-govern and pursue their own research separates them ideologically, if not physically, perhaps from colleagues. On the other hand, close administrative supervision of faculty may increase the possibility and perception of lessened job autonomy. And the personal loss of autonomy renders any academic vulnerable to further attacks by aggressive colleagues (Williams, 2016). To the extent to which faculty possesses or perceives job autonomy provides them with greater stress coping mechanisms. Rousseau, Eddleston, Patel, and Kellermanns (2014) argued that autonomy helps to temper stress in targets, which may help them avoid aggressive colleagues and/or provide them with perceived or actual professional capital.

Academic Freedom

Higher education sits poised upon a three-legged stool—academic freedom, tenure, and shared governance—where these components comprise a critical relationship that defines and separates academics from other professions. Without the guarantee of job security provided by tenure, faculty could not participate in shared campus governance, hire colleagues, establish a curriculum, freely teach the truths of their discipline/field, or research controversial ideas and problems. Tenured faculty must also uphold academic freedom in order for shared governance to function effectively. Increasingly the basic tenets of academic freedom, tenure, and shared governance tolerate mounting threats, especially from greater administrative oversight, economic downturns which eliminate tenure-track positions, and the

corporatization of academe. In turn, these threats affect how the faculty governs itself and acknowledges collective voice for or against such issues (Nelson, 2010).

Conformity in academe equals success, while departing from the cultural norm often translates to failure or some form of punishment. Yet academic freedom calls faculty to search for the empirical truth not the socially constructed normative truth of the dominant group. The notion of groupthink reins in peers whose ideas stray from the work cultural norm as well as the disciplinary/professional cultural norm. Unfortunately, when we lean to one side, we fail to continue to gather objective data or knowledge from the side less frequently chosen (Williams, 2016). Faculty objective remains to ensure the academic freedoms of its ranks to teach and research in the direction that truth takes them because academic freedom protects scholarship from unwarranted scrutiny (Campbell, 2000). In other words, faculties "establish permissible limits of academic freedom" for themselves (Finkelstein, 2009, pp. 724–725).

For all its benefits, however, academe freedom can be manipulated to have negative consequences. To be fair, incivility, bullying, aggression, and cyberbullying should be added to this list of threats to academic freedom, as the formation of a bully culture forces academe's three-legged stool to wobble and tilt. An engrained bully culture in academe often allows tenured faculty to abuse tenured and untenured colleagues. Bullies can assert negative behaviors they justify as falling under the auspices of exercising one's academic freedom. A nonresponsive administration to bullying inadvertently demonstrates what it values and uses academic freedom to justify that stance as well (Nelson, 2010).

Shared Governance

Faculty should not be regarded as employees of the university. They own the means of production. Faculty also participates in the governance structure of the institution, a tie that should bind all departmental faculties together. For example, faculty elects department chairs [not department heads], selects faculty colleagues, constitutes the faculty senate, makes committee recommendations that broadly affect campus policy, and provides input to search committees recommending department heads, college deans, university provosts, and presidents (Burgan, 2006). In academe, faculty colleagues are tasked with working together as a function of shared governance despite their personal likes/dislikes and similarities/differences. Campus-wide committees bring together faculty from different fields/disciplines each with their own professional persona. Because these groupings assemble colleagues with dissimilar interests and goals, the perceptions of behavior in these social gatherings may or may not be read accurately by participants or outside observers (Standen, Paull, & Oman, 2014).

Nelson (2010) acknowledged that "few administrators can prevail against a faculty as a whole that acts in concert" (pp. 40–41). In other words, "sufficient faculty solidarity is a nearly irresistible force and can be used to guarantee proper

forms of shared governance" (p. 41). However, a bully culture can operate parallel to and at cross purposes with true faculty solidarity and shared governance. Faculty senates may wish to address the incivility and bullying issues and stipulate policy against it. However, outcomes may be a function of the varying degree of power vested in each campus' senate body (Burgan, 2006; Minor, 2004; Nelson, 2010).

Nelson (2010) advocated that because faculty upon hire unfortunately often knows little about academic freedom, tenure, or shared governance, either through insufficient graduate student socialization or insufficient novice faculty mentoring programs, the administration may find ways to erode faculty participation in campus governance. Therefore, faculty-on-faculty bullying willingly assists administrators in their efforts by diverting attention and resources to things other than the faculty business of the university. Faculty also fails to act in concert to further shared governance. Subsequently, toxic departmental cultures/climates give administrators fodder for usurping power from the faculty shared governance domain. Faculty targets dealing with bullying tend to offer little additional effort to the university mission as they struggle to survive physically, socially, and emotionally.

Investments in the academic profession, such as conference presentations, publications, grant-writing, and consultation, far outweigh faculty investment in shared campus governance and committee service at the departmental, college, or university level. Reward structures favor the former, however, not the latter. While academic professionals share a responsibility in campus governance, their focus shifts to elements of the reward structure which leads to tenure and promotion, a singular rather than collective enterprise. Because prospective and novice faculty socialization embraces preparation for teaching and research in one's field/discipline, the service function tends to take a back seat and is typically not considered part of a graduate school curriculum preparing candidates for academic positions (Hamilton, 2002). Because of the focus toward individual tenure rather than shared faculty pursuits, negative workplace behaviors tend to increase and remain undetected even though faculty tenure and shared governance depend upon some collective faculty interaction and collegiality (Damrosch, 1995).

The Tenure and Promotion Process

To obtain tenure junior faculty must demonstrate competency in teaching, research, and service as stipulated in faculty handbooks. Typically, faculty excels in one area while displaying satisfactory competence in the other two. At research universities, the handbook may tout the importance of teaching, but faculty knows intuitively they must publish. Without acknowledged scholarly publications, teaching accolades alone or meritorious service on multiple university committees will not gain tenure. This conundrum can cause competition and jealously on two different planes. Some competitive departments expect junior faculty to secure publication in the *right* journals, without which tenure becomes illusive. On the other hand, over-productive junior faculty can show up the less productive

faculty and become easily targeted as rate busters (Hermanowicz, 2011; Keim & McDermott, 2010).

Tenure and promotion committees typically practice closed, confidential deliberations or open access proceedings. In the former system, faculty candidates are not privy to chair/head, dean, or promotions and tenure committee written evaluations and deliberations. While chairs and deans or individual senior faculty may express support to the candidate verbally, the formal tenure committee's summative evaluation may never be seen by or disclosed to the candidate. Therefore, the anonymity of the tenure and promotion process may perpetuate untruths or become a forum to even grudges. Sworn to secrecy and protected by confidentiality, promotion and tenure committee members keep their own statements and the deliberations of the collective body hidden from view. The junior faculty candidate receives perhaps only a yes or a no regarding his/her tenure and promotion outcome. Ultimately, under these circumstances the university could be extending life-long employment to civil as well as uncivil candidates depending on the composition of the promotion and tenure committee and the impartiality of their deliberations (De Souza, 2011; Irani-Williams, Campbell, & Denton, 2013).

The Effects of Tenure on Bullying

Tenure encourages and protects faculty, but it could also be a factor that spawns incivility. While academic freedom permits faculty expression, not all types of expression by tenured or untenured faculty may be deemed socially acceptable. Bullying or mobbing in academe to force someone out of the institution may not always be possible, especially if the person holds tenure. In addition, tenure committees may block a highly qualified targeted professor from achieving tenure (Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 1999; Peters & King, 2017). Wilshire (1990), who lauds academic freedom, also regards tenure as having the potential to be counterproductive in academe. Long-tenured senior faculty, secure in their positions, may contemplate how much they stand to lose career-wise at this stage in their life. In this contemplation, they risk becoming defensive by safeguarding personality interests and professional identity, challenging new disciplinary truths and directions, and questioning demographic changes which threaten homosocial reproduction. Consciously or unconsciously, senior faculty may exhibit negative behaviors that may deprive junior faculty of their right to academic freedom. They can also use their tenure vote to stop candidates who oppose them ideologically/philosophically and who would alter the direction of the department they built over the course of decades (Lang, 2005).

Hollis (2015) postulated that "those who had earned the right to a lifetime appointment also had the propensity to abuse that power in dealing with junior faculty or staff without tenure" (p. 8). Bad behavior *can* hide behind tenure. When bullies hold tenure, they can be difficult to change or unseat (Lucas, 1996).

Notelaers, Vermunt, Baillien, Einarsen, and De Witte (2011) suggested that when bullies work in fields such as academe, where tenured faculty cannot be easily terminated, enjoy lifetime career benefits, and have nice pension plans, they feel safe and powerful enough in their rank and status to attempt to bully others. It might result from receiving one's doctorate from a prestigious institution; securing highly sought after grants to fund one's research, graduate students, and travel; or building one's stellar publication record (Gurney, 2015). Notelaers et al. also postulated that targets who become trapped victims might be perceived by others as receiving enough compensation, perks, or benefits to more than compensate for the agony they encounter. Targets would beg to differ!

However, tenured faculty members who *are* bullied have the option of 'retiring on the job,' that is, disengaging and retreating in order to cope with their undesirable circumstances, or as Hermanowicz (2013) suggested, retreating to achieve higher levels of productivity. Untenured colleagues by contrast are more likely to address the problem differently or seek employment elsewhere (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). This adds to the pool of colleagues who turn a blind eye to the problem in favor of saving themselves from the plight of the targeted.

Bullying may serve as an unlikely administrative avenue to force a targeted faculty member to leave when other actions, mechanisms, or workplace characteristics like tenure stand in the way. Bullies may apply pressure, thinking this is the only *legitimate* way to move dead or rotting wood from the department (Waldron & Kassing, 2011). *Nothing* justifies bullying.

Faculty who hold longtime tenure may be desensitized to the negative behaviors and aspects of the prevailing departmental culture and climate. In academe, the greater prevalence of isolation to accomplish established goals may keep some faculty insulated, detached, and depersonalized from the culture as well. But here the assumption becomes a self-imposed work silo rather than a response to bullying. However, newly hired junior faculty tends to spot these problems more clearly, but may or may not understand all the dynamics and/or possess the resources or political standing to address them. Their precarious position in the department renders them vulnerable *despite* their knowledge. As a result, junior faculty may discuss the situations among themselves, but rarely find it wise to publically expose the conundrums they witness to senior colleagues or administrators. In addition, seasoned faculty may view the same culture and climate differently because they know how to maneuver through and around the challenges. From a tenured faculty perspective, acting on bullying may be deemed futile, not be cost effective in terms of valuable time and effort, and/or sadly not be perceived as a problem in the first place (Bandura, 2016; Heames & Harvey, 2006; Okurame, 2013; Twale & De Luca, 2008).

Academic Professionalism

Professionalism or acting professionally presupposes the self-discipline necessary to carry out one's acquired and valued skill. In other words, academic professionalism

determines whether faculty accomplishes professional goals, professionally or in a professional manner. Faculty needs to focus on how to accomplish professional goals as much as what are the goals they wish to fulfill (Wilshire, 1990). As a professor of higher education administration graduate programs, I made professionalism part of the curriculum so the socialization or professionalization process per se became less structured. In a sense, I learned the information to teach it more so than to practice it. Professionalism tended not to be a structured part of my curriculum as a doctoral student. When I realized I needed to know more and quickly, I realized professionalization needed to be addressed in the curriculum.

Academic disciplines/professions each maintain a code of ethics. Codes of ethical conduct formulated by individual professional/scholarly societies presumably outline acceptable professional practice guidelines/standards and attempt to censure negative members who deviate from those standards. In the professions, the central tenet is the "shared orientation to 'success', whether material or nonmaterial, as judged by the prevailing normative standards" of that particular profession (Dingwall, 2008, p. 3). Therefore, gatekeepers establish the guidelines for professional conduct. Conformity in academe equals success, while departing from the cultural norm often translates to some form of punishment (Williams, 2016). These codes appear to work more effectively in the health and medical professions, more so than other fields and disciplines where they may sit on a back burner. Under these assumptions, faculty in other fields might be disinclined to include the codes in new faculty mentoring practices and graduate student socialization processes when they probably should (Braxton et al., 2011).

As a result, prospective or novice faculty members receive little in the way of "grounding in the tradition of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance," especially in American institutions (Hamilton, 2002, p. 60). Typically, professors receive their socialization and professionalization within their discipline/field not the academic profession or the academic culture in general, either its expectations or its subtle nuances. As a result, few faculties identify with academe per se but rather identify as sociologists, psychologists, biologists, historians, mathematicians, chemists, linguists, educators, doctors, lawyers, or engineers, for instance. This identification, although justifiable, distances faculty from their academic role in favor of identification with their profession. Multiple codes of conduct associated with each professional area further establish professional enclaves and create ideological rifts and curricular challenges that may spawn negative attitudes and biases toward colleagues in other professional areas that could lead eventually to incivility.

Collegiality and Community

A culture of collegiality or a collegial community exists in the academic department on the basis of cooperative faculty interaction and collective responsibility to

the profession and the institution. Community is paramount in academe. Without it as a guideline, faculty becomes cynical, ill-tempered, childish, uncooperative, pompous, and even vicious (Bennett, 1998).

Poor collegiality or inadequate departmental citizenship negatively affects faculty colleagues, and departmental morale and productivity. Therefore, citizenship in the department affects member behavior: Good citizens contribute to departmental effectiveness while poor citizens either do not contribute to it or knowingly detract from it. However, one's conduct should not interfere with a colleague's ability to perform work and/or participate in shared governance, or fulfill the department's mission. Unfortunately, bullies and bullied targets who once exhibited good citizenship may begin to display antisocial behaviors that eventually render them poor departmental citizens (Desrumaux, Machado, Przygodzki-Lionet, & Lourel, 2015). While poor collegial behavior may not be protected in society by the free speech amendment, faculty collegiality should remain normative in an academic setting and at professional research conference gatherings (Seigel & Miner-Rubens, 2010).

In faculty tenure handbooks, collegiality may or may not be considered along with teaching, research, and service expectations. Addressing collegiality in the tenure process poses mixed reactions for and against inclusion because professional areas conduct themselves differently, hence, collegiality may be interpreted differently across professions and disciplines. Therefore, if collegiality becomes part of the tenure process, faculty collegiality must be periodically reviewed and remediated if necessary in the same manner as teaching, research, and service (Seigel & Miner-Rubens, 2010).

Collegiality and civility may not be exactly the same thing, however they are related. The difference may be in the identification of a target who falls slightly outside normative expectations for the faculty role in that profession or particular department. In other off campus or non-educational settings, the target's behavior may not be viewed as problematic, but because tenure and promotion decisions begin at the department level and are voted on by department members, uncivil or poor collegial behavior becomes magnified (Seigel & Miner-Rubens, 2010). As lauded research performers and large grant recipients, tenure candidates display an attractive, sought-after quality needed in competitive departments. Hence, administrators and even faculty colleagues may choose to explain away uncivil behaviors as simple faculty idiosyncrasies rather than view them as potentially harmful, destructive recurring actions (Irani-Williams et al., 2013).

On the positive side, Bennett (1998) acknowledged that "the collegium is only as good as the interaction of its members" (p. 124). Reciprocally, good academic citizens create a good collegial atmosphere. Over time, bullying will affect quality outcomes in teaching, research, and service, meaning the extent of collegiality can directly or indirectly affect faculty productivity (Ruhupathy & Maquad, 2015).

Peer Review

The peer review vetting process remains engrained and pervasive in the academic profession. Faculties regulate and monitor themselves through dissertation defense, refereed journals, search committees, university and academic presses, conference proceedings, and tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review committees (Armstrong, 2012; Finkelstein, 2009).

Faculty socializes students and new faculty into the profession similarly through peer review so that the process perpetuates itself. Therefore, given Armstrong's (2012) natural culture of argumentation, new members need to be socialized in order to survive as faculty. However, uncivil or negative behaviors may exist in areas not associated with peer vetting academic processes. In addition, given the peer review culture, faculty may not readily *recognize* uncivil behavior as such, claiming that actions toward colleagues fall in the realm of peer review as normal, standard operating procedure. This causes administrators to inadvertently explain away any negative behaviors toward peers. Intellectual critique, however, should be easily distinguishable from referred ongoing, targeted physical, social, and emotional abuse.

How Incivility and Bullying Lead to Dysfunction

Given aspects of academic freedom, tenure, shared governance, and faculty ownership of the means of production, bullying has easily crept into academe causing dysfunctional, toxic environments to grow (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). For example, in a study of African faculty, Apayden (2012) discovered that a lack of administrative integrity led faculty to adopt a cynical attitude with regard to their university. Diminished job autonomy and academic freedom can potentially increase workplace deviance, which usually runs counter to the faculty ethos (Alias, Rasdi, Ismail, & Samah, 2012). However, the glossing over of acts of incivility, bullying, and mobbing only leads to increased dysfunction within the department because they never directly receive the attention necessary to immediately halt or remediate the dysfunction (Laursen & Roque, 2009).

Academics can pursue their teaching and research interests with relatively little impunity. Administrators can exercise their authority and perhaps their power with or without total faculty compliance. This may result from the faculty perception that administrative candidates may be less qualified or less capable in these roles than they were as tenured faculty colleagues. Mieczkowski (1995) contended that under these circumstances, the door to dysfunctional and toxic behavior is always cracked open. The door slowly widens and the knee-jerk reaction would be to close it and fix the problem quickly. Often however, the opposite happens. Administrators ignore the problem, protect the perpetrator, discredit the target, and/or reframe the mounting dysfunctionalities as something other than what it really is, bullying. Eventually, Mieczkowski warned, the administration forms a protective stratum that likely and inadvertently includes other top level administrators,

human resources professionals, the legal department, and/or board members and alumni. Even those on campus who acknowledge the dysfunction, but do nothing, involuntarily aid and abet any administrative, faculty, and staff ally. Whistleblowers, altruistic in their intentions, will likely be defeated or encounter grave penalties for their valiant efforts.

The attraction and gravitational pull of the academic profession often produces disillusionment and dissonance among entering novice faculty as they move deeper into their department and professional area (Bennett, 1998). For some novices, getting the initial lay of the land seems to mirror walking gingerly through an active minefield. As a result, faculty newcomers may feel isolated and fail to acculturate into their department (Mendez, Bauman, & Guillory, 2012).

Dysfunction also arises from personal insecurities and jealousies that increase isolation rather than promote community. Attention to negative behaviors, tension, and conflict requires action by the total collegium. Bennett (1998) noted that "with the help of good citizens and academic leaders, collegia become places where intellectual and social virtue is acquired and exercised" (p. 34). For faculty in academe, Bennett said, "suspicion and resistance come more quickly than openness" (p. 37).

Academic leaders possess the capacity to push agendas that can hinder relational community. For instance, encouraging 'mission drift' to further individualistic administrative aspirations jeopardizes group unity and further rewards competition among faculty (Bennett, 1998). Furthermore, inadequately trained department chairs/heads must resolve faculty conflicts, prevent dysfunction, and untangle ambiguities, but they often receive little training to do so. Leaders must model collegiality, set the departmental climate controls, as well as understand the subtle nuances of the department culture and strive for faculty inclusiveness. However, despite elevation in administrative authority, chairs/heads remain (tenured) faculty colleagues with members of the department they now administrate. They remain in the frontline and should be responsible for reining in their uncivil colleagues, but that appears easier said than done (Cipriano, 2011).

Summary

Campus departments compete for scarce institutional resources. Pecking orders dictate power structures within the institution. Peer review simultaneously generates social distance and political stances. Zero sum distribution favors one faculty or program over another and the desire to protect one's accumulated academic capital. Ultimately, social Darwinism prevails in a competitive academe (Bennett, 1998). Failures in academic professionalism such as mean-spirited behavior and contempt for colleagues threaten academic life. Campus structuring and cultural enclaves across campus contribute to these failures. Autonomy and isolation accomplish work-related tasks but often at great cost. Resistance to community and perpetual malcontents afflicted with self-absorption keep campus departments

from cross pollinating. Conflict arises across faculty generations and ideologies in segmented fields and subfields which form within the same department (Bennett). The stage is set for incivility and bullying amidst normal taken-for-granted academic principles and practices in an otherwise invigorating profession.

McCarthy and Mayhew (2004) referred to faculty-on-faculty bullying as a category they labeled *internal violence*, a chronic malady not an acute one. Faculty-on-faculty bullying can over time provide the bully with increasingly greater power to significantly imbalance a department (Branch & Murray, 2015). What may begin as incivility, turning to subtle, covert bullying eventually, escalates in frequency or intensity and becomes more overt in nature so that colleagues begin to notice. Faculty peers may be of the same rank and status, but other professional characteristics authenticate their intragroup status. For instance, inclusion in top tier journals versus lower tier journals or practitioner publications, positions on prestigious boards or committees, cumulative dollar amounts of research grants received, frequency of conference keynote speeches, and other accolades that can ascribe power and status to faculty apart from faculty rank and tenure separate faculty from one another.

Chairs, deans, provosts, and even presidents may "serve as close-range targets for discontented faculties" (Campbell, 2000, p. 157). No one is immune from bullying. Although *Professors Behaving Badly* characterized faculty-graduate student misconduct, Braxton et al. (2011) alluded to instances where faculty debased colleagues verbally to other faculty and to their graduate students. Until academics begin to realize that faculty-on-faculty bullying is a reality which poses consequences for them, their profession, and their livelihood, little can be done to address it. While the first two chapters attempted to summarize the fundamental aspects of workplace bullying particularly in academe, the next section delineates antecedents, aspects, and effects of bullying from three separate but thoroughly interrelated perspectives: personal/psychological, social, and organizational.

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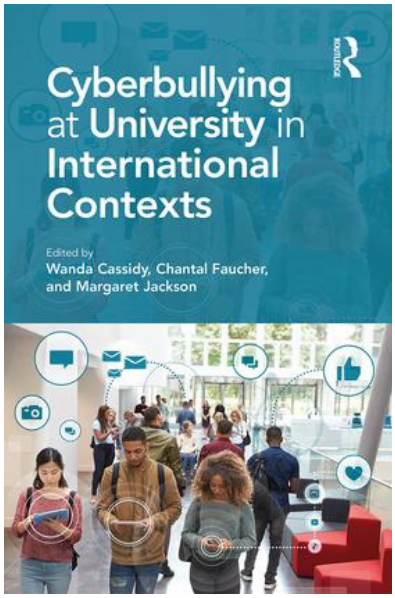

Chapter 9: Student-to-faculty targeted cyberbullying

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9

STUDENT-TO-FACULTY TARGETED CYBERBULLYING

The impact on faculty

Lida Blizard

Introduction

This chapter explores the impact that student-to-faculty targeted cyberbullying can have on faculty members. These findings were captured in a mixed-methods study conducted at one Canadian university in 2012. The study found that targeted faculty members experienced negative physical, emotional, relational, and occupational effects in the aftermath of being cyberbullied by students. The classroom constitutes the *workplace*: in which faculty members are responsible to uphold institutional policy, engage students in meaningful learning experiences, and manage tensions that arise in the process. While teaching is a rewarding experience, student-faculty conflicts are inevitable given that faculty members' decision-making can have an effect on students' academic outcomes. While some students may choose to collaborate with faculty in resolving these differences, others may retaliate by posting about their teachers online.

Some scholars argue that cyberbullying can be motivated by a perceived injustice or for simple entertainment (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; McKay, Arnold, Fratzl, & Thomas, 2008). In a landmark Canadian court case (*Prigden v. University of Calgary*, 2012), two undergraduate students were expelled for creating a Facebook polling site that rewarded peers for posting slanderous comments about a targeted instructor. Remarkably, whether enticed by peer pressure or the notoriety of posting harmful remarks (e.g., allegations of incompetence, defamatory comments), students engaged in the contagion of vengeful activity for several weeks. Although 10 students were prosecuted and found guilty of non-academic misconduct, two students appealed to the higher courts arguing that the university was not exempt from the standards set by the country's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Ultimately, the courts sided with the students, and their

perceived constitutional right to freedom of expression prevailed (see also Jackson, Faucher, & Cassidy, this volume). The targeted faculty member later resigned from the university and relocated to another country.

Literature

In terms of workplace safety for faculty, at the time of this study, the academic bullying literature reported that between 18% and 32% of post-secondary faculty members had been bullied (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; McKay et al., 2008); yet, minimal research had explored cyberbullying within the tertiary sector (Baldridge, 2008; DeSouza, 2010; Lampman, 2012), with even fewer studies focused on a student-to-faculty cyberbullying trajectory (Eskey, Taylor, & Eskey, 2014; Minor, Smith, & Brashen, 2013). Even so, student-faculty cyberbullying research reported relatively high prevalence rates, ranging between 12% (Faucher, Jackson, & Cassidy, 2014) and 17%, to 45% (Eskey et al., 2014; Minor et al., 2013; Smith, 2007; Vance, 2010).

The detrimental impact of cyberbullying on targeted individuals has been well-documented across the workplace bullying, K–12 bullying, and, to some extent, in the post-secondary face-to-face bullying literature (Beran, Rinaldi, Bickham, & Rich, 2012; Cassidy, Jackson, & Brown, 2009; Eskey et al., 2014; Na, Dancy, & Park, 2015; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012; Shariff, 2008). Additionally, on the academic front, studies on faculty-targeted incivility (Lampman, 2012; Luparell, 2004) and cyberbullying directed toward faculty members (Blizard, 2014; Clark, Werth, & Ahten, 2012; Eskey et al., 2014; Faucher et al., 2014; Minor et al., 2013) have exposed the detrimental impact of bullying on teachers. Yet, despite the harm endured by the target, the literature confirms that victims (whether adolescents or adults) tend to avoid reporting the incident, believing either that it will not solve the problem, or else may result in further retaliation (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2012; Blizard, 2014). Furthermore, research conveys that student-faculty conflict can be pervasive – placing students, faculty members, and the overall learning community at risk of harm (Clark et al., 2012; Frey Knepp, 2012; Luparell, 2004; Twale & DeLuca, 2008).

Purpose

This study was undertaken to develop a greater understanding of this phenomenon – that is, evaluating the extent to which student-to-faculty cyberbullying takes place – including the nature of the experience, the impact on targets, and the support measures needed to cope with cyberbullying incidents. The importance of addressing this issue is two-fold: first, in terms of the individual welfare of faculty members, who may inadvertently be placed at risk while fulfilling their roles; and, second, in how this may affect the occupational health and safety of the overall campus community.

Method

This two-phase mixed-methods study employed online survey and individual interview methods to capture faculty members' experiences of cyberbullying by students. Purposeful convenience sampling was used to survey approximately 1,040 faculty members from within one Canadian university. Both the online survey and interview questions were adopted, and then modified, from previously validated research instruments. The online survey included both closed and open-ended responses. Throughout this study, *cyberbullying* was defined as an electronically mediated message(s) perceived by the targeted individual as containing aggressive, intimidating, derogatory, defamatory, sexist, harassing, or bullying language (Blizard, 2014).

Results

Study participants

From the 36 survey respondents (3.5% of total surveyed), 22 faculty members declared having experienced student-to-faculty cyberbullying at least once in their teaching career, 19 of whom endured at least one "serious" incident that had a negative effect on them. Four of these respondents (three females, one male) volunteered to participate in a one-on-one individual audio-taped interview, which ranged in length from 60 to 90 minutes. Recognizing that interviewees were taking a risk in disclosing, and potentially reliving, painful memories of their cyberbullying experiences, great care was taken to provide a safe, comfortable, supportive environment during the interview process. The recordings were transcribed, member-checked with participants to verify credibility and trustworthiness of the transcript text, then coded using a descriptive coding process (Saldaña, 2009). Pseudonym codes were used to preserve anonymity and confidentiality of the participants' information.

Although this study assessed various aspects of faculty members' cyberbullying experiences (e.g., message content, prevalence, impact, support needed, recommendations), this discussion focuses on the self-declared impact of cyberbullying on targeted individuals. Notably, cyberbullied faculty members (n = 22) were primarily female (68%), over 40 years of age (84%), held Canadian citizenship by birth (72%), spoke English as their first language (97%), held full-time status, and had greater than 10 years' teaching experience within the post-secondary sector. That targeted instructors were predominantly female converges with prior studies of cyberbullying and workplace bullying (Cassidy, Faucher, & Jackson, 2014; Lampman, 2012), post-secondary bullying (Keashly & Neuman, 2010), and post-secondary cyber-harassment (Vance, 2010). The findings diverge, however, from studies of student incivility (Alberts, Hazen, & Teobald, 2010; Alexander-Snow, 2004), whereby young, low-rank, non-white faculty members were more likely to be targeted.

Additionally, "student dissatisfaction with grades" (79%, n = 19) and "student misconduct issues" (32%, n = 19) served as the most common precursors to cyberbullying, while email and online evaluation sites were the most prevalent platforms utilized by students to target faculty members. From a list of options, respondents most commonly described the cyberbullying messages they received as "disrespectful", "aggressive or rude", "defamatory", and "demeaning". The nature of the messages parallel findings from prior studies of post-secondary incivility (Alberts et al., 2010; Clark et al., 2012; DeSouza, 2010) and cyberbullying (Eskey et al., 2014; Minor et al., 2013). Knowing the precursors, the platforms, and the content of cyberbullying messages contributed to developing greater understanding of the impact that cyberbullying had on targeted faculty members, findings which were enriched by affording respondents the opportunity to describe and elaborate on their experiences in open-ended responses and in the interviews.

Impact of cyberbullying

Physical and emotional impact

The following discussion focuses on the data obtained from respondents (n = 19) who declared having a "serious" cyberbullying incident that resulted in detrimental effects. Of this group of respondents, most (80%) were cyberbullied "once or twice", and suffered detrimental physical and emotional effects (e.g., difficulty sleeping, significant anxiety or distress, felt depressed, increased irritability, sudden emotional responses, difficulty concentrating) following the incident. In addition, approximately 50% of the respondents reported fear and avoidance symptoms (e.g., fear of the aggressor, fear of being alone with the aggressor, tried to avoid thinking about it), which is understandable considering the profane, aggressive content of some messages received. Both the survey respondents (hereafter referred to as SR) and the interview participants (hereafter referred to as IP) articulated the inflammatory nature of such messages:

> An anonymous email was sent . . . address line was "fuk (my first and last names) @yahoo.ca" . . . claiming I marked students too hard . . . threatening how students would treat me if they found me walking alone down the street. . . . I was extremely shaken by this email.
>
> *(SR 8)*

> I received several messages referring to me as a bitch.
>
> *(SR 9)*

> Angry email messages . . . it was very upsetting. . . . [I] felt threatened . . . shocked . . . didn't know what to do. . . . I was just trying to help the student.
>
> *(IP Andrew)*

> The email messages . . . threatened to call the press, threatened to file a legal complaint . . . tried to intimidate me into changing the grade . . . to me that is bullying.
>
> *(IP Carol)*

Furthermore, even a single egregious comment posted to a faculty polling site (e.g., accessible to the public) or an online faculty evaluation site (e.g., accessible to administrators) was deemed harmful to those who were targeted:

> I was away on vacation . . . sitting in a coffee shop . . . opened the online evaluation . . . read one of the comments and I was shocked. . . . I really felt physically ill . . . I felt the tears coming. A woman sitting across from me leaned over [said]. "Oh no . . . you've just received some really bad news". . . . I just got up and left . . . couldn't stop thinking about it . . . lost sleep over it . . . bothered me . . . tremendously.
>
> *(IP Debbie)*

> The online faculty evaluation comments were mean . . . unsubstantiated . . . intended to hurt . . . and they did.
>
> *(IP Debbie)*

> "Rateyourprofessor.com" . . . if a student wants to get back at a faculty member they can write a horrible review . . . on the site for everyone to see . . . it can be psychologically damaging.
>
> *(IP Andrew)*

This study also found that student aggression can transcend online platforms and escalate to in-person altercations. For instance, both Andrew and Barbara were recipients of numerous "angry email messages" that escalated to incidents of "shouting and berating" them in-person. Whether male or female, the emotional toll of cyberbullying on targeted faculty members became vividly clear during the individual interviews. Physical and emotional responses varied among participants, and, while most appeared calm at the onset of the interview, some individuals became more emotional and anxious (e.g., fidgeting, struggling to speak, tearful) while sharing their stories:

> (Crying) I was fine until this interview and now all of those emotions came back up. . . . I'm reliving it again as I talk about it.
>
> *(IP Debbie)*

> (Fidgeting, looking at the floor) It was very upsetting. . . . I felt threatened . . . shocked.
>
> *(IP Andrew)*

> (Crying) . . . one bad comment after so many years of positive feedback had such an effect on me.
>
> *(IP Debbie)*

Interestingly, some respondents attempted to minimize or normalize their cyberbullying experience, even while describing the harm inflicted upon them:

> I thought I was over-reacting . . . it wasn't as bad as what happens to other people. . . . I didn't think I was affected, but I was affected (tearful). . . . I have a lot of experience. . . . I should be able to handle it.
>
> *(IP Debbie)*

Compelling findings from this study emerged when participants were asked to identify, from a checklist, the type and duration of negative effects (e.g., physical, emotional, relational, and occupational) that occurred from their cyberbullying experience. The study found that one cyberbullying incident can be highly detrimental to targeted individuals such that some faculty members reported multiple negative effects (five or more) that persisted from "a few days" to "more than one year" (e.g., "sleep disturbances", "felt significantly anxious or distressed", "felt depressed", "increased irritability", "sudden emotional responses when reminded of the event", "had difficulty concentrating", "stress-related illnesses", "tried not to think about the incident", "avoided making contact with the aggressor", "afraid to be alone with the aggressor"). More disturbingly, others experienced greater than nine of the aforementioned negative effects for longer than one year, including thoughts of retaliation (21%) and thoughts of self-harm (5%). These findings pose concern, since some participants would have been experiencing these detrimental effects while attempting to fulfill their teaching role, as well as the unfavorable consequences for the campus community should thoughts of retaliation or self-harm be acted upon.

Notably – while this was not a psychological focused study – upon further review of the literature, similarities were noticed between the study's findings and the *American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) criteria for Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). According to the DSM-5 criteria, ASD occurs when an individual has been directly exposed to a stressful or traumatic experience with a pattern of symptoms that persist for three days to one month following the event, whereas symptoms that last beyond one month constitute PTSD (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). As such, faculty members who reported more than nine negative effects that persisted for one week to one month may have experienced ASD-like effects. Likewise, participants who reported multiple negative effects that lasted longer than one month in the form of: intrusion (e.g., "I couldn't stop thinking about it", "I'm reliving it again as I talk about it"), avoidance (e.g., "I tried not to think about it"), alterations in mood or cognition (e.g., "I was very bothered by it", "I felt threatened . . . shocked"), and arousal (e.g., "I lost sleep over it"), bear

similarities with the DSM-5 criteria for PTSD. In light of these findings, it is important to consider how targeted faculty members, afflicted with such effects, were able to cope with the experience or interact with students thereafter.

Relational and occupational effects

In addition to the emotional and physical effects discussed, this study found that cyberbullied faculty members (n = 19) predominantly encountered detrimental effects in their relationships with students (74%), followed by colleagues (37%), and Deans or administrators (37%). For example, Andrew stated: "I was unsure how to interact with that student and other students after the [email] incident", while Carol explained: "My encounters with cyberbullying tell me that getting involved too close with students can work against you". Professional ramifications included loss of desire to go to work (68%), loss of productivity (53%), and where victims felt like quitting (53%). Likewise, some participants lost confidence in their ability to: manage student conflict (47%), work with students (42%), or continue teaching students (37%). Respondents explained the perplexity of being cyberbullied while fulfilling one's teaching responsibilities:

> I doubted my ability as a teacher . . . lost confidence . . . it was really upsetting . . . didn't know what to think at the time . . . trying to make decisions and you don't know what to do.
>
> *(IP Andrew)*

> The first time . . . I didn't know what to do . . . felt a tremendous amount of emotions . . . thought I had to reply . . . they just came back with more aggressive emails.
>
> *(IP Carol)*

The adverse relational and occupational effects reported in this study are not new, as similar findings have been reported in former academic and workplace bullying research (Celep & Konalki, 2013; Lampman, 2012; Lampman, Phelps, Bancroft, & Beneke, 2009; Luparell, 2004; Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007; McKay et al., 2008; Namie, 2003).

Interview testimonials illuminated the value participants placed on building a positive, supportive relationship with students to help them succeed. Emotions surfaced (e.g., tears, raised voices, trembling) as interviewees explained how invested they were in providing feedback to assist students in learning, as well as how "surprised", "shocked", "shattered", "threatened", or "defenseless" they felt upon discovering that they had been cyberbullied:

> I meet with the students . . . discuss their marks . . . give constructive feedback to prepare them for . . . their upcoming semester. . . . The student wrote

> that I was the worst teacher they ever had . . . I was lazy. . . . I was shocked . . . my confidence was shattered.
>
> *(IP Debbie)*

> Just because you have a good thing with a student doesn't mean they won't come back on you. . . . I decided to keep distance. . . . I don't want to be hurt.
>
> *(IP Carol)*

Although one interviewee was targeted with very angry email messages from a student, she was able to put it in perspective of a learning experience for the student, while maintaining a distance emotionally:

> I received some angry, angry, angry email messages from the student . . . believing that it is not about me is my survival mechanism . . . students' attempts to bully are just opportunities for them to learn . . . if they bully they haven't learned.
>
> *(IP Barbara)*

Implications of reporting cyberbullying incidents

In this study, cyberbullied faculty members predominantly consulted with colleagues (84%), an immediate supervisor (74%), or friends (74%), while fewer reported the incident to an administrator (37%). Furthermore, most respondents (79%) held the opinion that students at their institution can cyberbully faculty members with impunity. When faculty members are unsure of what constitutes cyberbullying – or whether it will be beneficial to report such incidents – they may choose to suffer in silence. Those who chose not to report their cyberbullying experience reasoned that complaints would not be taken seriously; targets would be viewed as incompetent; or, worse, may result in further retaliation by students or administrators:

> I didn't report it . . . didn't know who to report it to . . . or if there was any point.
>
> *(SR 19)*

> I did not report it . . . had fear of further victimization. Administrators may not act on it, or if they do . . . may be detrimental to the faculty member who reports it.
>
> *(SR 23)*

> You just can't tell people about these kinds of incidents . . . you have to be really careful about who you tell and what you say.
>
> *(SR 22)*

Regardless of whether cyberbullying incidents are reported, participants were clear that faculty members should be supported in their ability to manage conflict with students. They should not feel at fault when targeted by students:

> When teachers are hired they should have training . . . it is important to know that faculty members are supported when they feel threatened . . . they shouldn't feel as though they have done something wrong.
>
> *(IP Andrew)*

Discussion

Limitations

The first limitation of this study pertains to the low response rate (N = 1040) from the online survey (3.5%, n = 36) and the interviews (.38%, n = 4), which could be attributed to the narrow 30-day implementation period imposed by the university, the sensitive subject matter, faculty members' uncertainty of what constitutes cyberbullying, or faculty members' concern with what might be done with the findings. Yet, while some faculty members may have been wary about sharing (and potentially reliving) intimate details of their cyberbullying experience, others chose to participate as an opportunity to effect change:

> I realized in reading your research proposal that I too had been a victim of cyberbullying and that this was a great opportunity to participate.
>
> *(IP Carol)*

Second, due to the unique focus – a limited number of faculty members at one institution – the findings are not generalizable across the institution (nor to other institutions). However, despite the low response rate to the online survey, the research process was enriched during the interviews by hearing the intimate details and observing the emotional impact of faculty members' cyberbullying experiences. Participants' testimonials gave voice to the detrimental impact of student-to-faculty targeted cyberbullying, advancing the literature in this way.

Implications and recommendations

The negative impacts of cyberbullying reported in this study parallel former studies of workplace bullying (Hoel & Einarsen, 2011; Namie, 2003), post-secondary bullying (Lampman, 2012; McKay et al., 2008), and cyberbullying (Beran et al., 2012; Cassidy, Faucher, & Jackson, 2014). For example, fear of the aggressor (Beran et al., 2012; Lampman et al., 2009; Lampman, 2012), loss of concentration, increased anxiety, stress-related illnesses, depression (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007; Namie, 2003), and suicidal ideation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010) have been reported in the bullying and cyberbullying literature. Participants' reluctance to

take action may be intertwined with the complexity of detrimental effects being processed, the level of confidence in pursuing administrative or legal action, and the trepidation of revisiting painful memories.

The type and duration of detrimental effects reported by study participants that resemble the DSM-5 criteria for ASD and PTSD suggests that some participants may have experienced ASD- and PTSD-like effects in the aftermath of being cyberbullied. Although the survey instrument was not designed to capture ASD or PTSD effects – nor pose a question to establish whether ASD or PTSD symptoms existed prior to the study – these findings warrant further investigation in future research. Furthermore, it is important to consider how targeted faculty members process or heal from the aforementioned negative effects, given the plausibility that left untreated, and with repeated exposure, detrimental effects may worsen (Namie, 2003). Of equal consideration is the question of how faculty members who reported symptoms of fear and avoidance toward the aggressor might interact with students thereafter, especially when under stress. For instance, the communications literature informs us that teachers who exhibit positive mannerisms toward students (e.g., smiling, calmness, warmth) can positively influence students' attitudes toward their instructors and the tone of civility within the classroom (Kearney, Plax, & Wendt-Wasco, 1985; Klebig, Goldonowicz, Mendes, Neville Miller, & Katt, 2016; Miller, Katt, Brown, & Sivo, 2014).

Student-teacher interactions are further compounded by the element of grading and the power that faculty have to impact students' success in both the short and long term. Knowing that students' dissatisfaction with grades was a leading precursor to cyberbullying affords the opportunity for faculty to discuss grading practices. This also connects students with support services upon notice of academic or personal struggles. When tensions arise, it may be beneficial to acknowledge students' distress, as well as equipping students with skills to better cope with their stressors.

Based on this study's findings, it is not surprising that the participants (n = 22) decided that the top-three priority measures needed to address this issue were: (1) cyberbullying education for faculty (75%); (2) followed by clearly written, well-communicated cyberbullying policies (65%) including sanctions to deter cyberbullying (43%); and (3) support for targeted individuals such as counseling and focus groups (30%). Cyberbullying education for students was also stressed by interviewees, to ensure students would be able to recognize and understand the ramifications of cyberbullying. At the time of this study (2012), the gaps in post-secondary cyberbullying research, institutional policy, and cyberbullying education programs left faculty members to manage cyberbullying incidents on their own. In the absence of knowledge on how to recognize, prevent, or manage cyberbullying, targeted individuals were left exposed and vulnerable to harm. The importance of further research was aptly captured in the following excerpts:

> This is really important research . . . needs to get out in the open to assist faculty members in how to manage it when it happens.
>
> *(IP Debbie)*

> Your study is long overdue. It will improve this institution and the practice for faculty for years to come.
>
> *(IP Carol)*

As a result of the findings from this study, the institution advanced their development of cyberbullying policies and procedures, provided education for faculty members and students (e.g., embedding cyberbullying into curriculum), and increased support services (e.g., cyberbullying focus groups) to assist targeted individuals in their pathway to healing. Furthermore, the institution also enhanced opportunities for students to engage in activities that promote self-care (e.g., yoga, meditation, mindfulness) designed to optimize students' resilience and their ability to cope with academic stressors.

Significance

This study provided a platform for cyberbullied faculty members to give voice, reflect upon, and be acknowledged for their individual cyberbullying experiences – knowing that their testimonials could generate evidence to effect change. Consistent with prior bullying and cyberbullying literature, this study found that cyberbullied faculty members who encountered at least one incident of bullying via electronic media experienced detrimental physical, emotional, relational, and occupational effects. With the growing number of cyberbullying cases that have come before the courts, the proliferation of online platforms to engage in such behaviors, and the damage that can be inflicted upon targeted individuals, a greater body of cyberbullying research is needed. Further exploration into the impact on victims, as well as refinements to survey instruments that capture psychological effects, could illuminate the extent of harm and the support measures most imperative to healing. Finally, the voice of students in this trajectory cannot be understated, as this would broaden the scope of understanding student-to-faculty targeted cyberbullying for students and faculty members alike.

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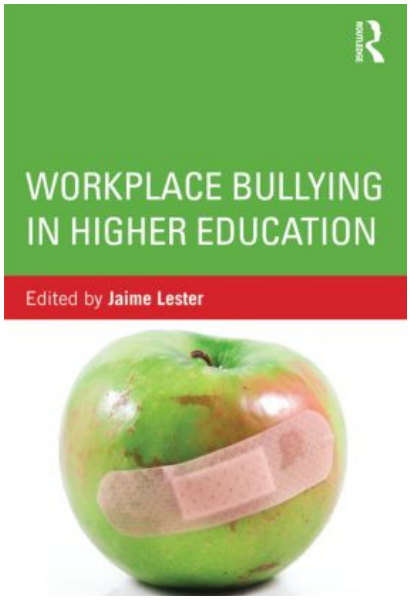

Chapter 9: Moving Beyond Awareness and Tolerance: Recommendations and Implications for Workplace Bullying in Higher Education

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MOVING BEYOND AWARENESS AND TOLERANCE

Recommendations and Implications for Workplace Bullying in Higher Education

Carrie Klein and Jaime Lester

Higher education institutions, at their best, are environments in which individuals engage in respectful discourse in order to expand perspectives and further knowledge and learning within and beyond their communities. However, the nature, structure, and context of higher education, particularly the competition and confrontation inherent in the academy, can often work against this collegial ideal, fostering an environment in which bullying behavior can thrive. As stated repeatedly in this text, reporting of bullying in higher education is on the rise. In the last 20 years, researchers have explored the types, meaning, and motivations involved in the bullying process. The purpose of this book is to take that research further by providing academic managers, administrators, and human resources professionals with the information and tools they need not only to understand the nature and impact of bullying behavior within the academic setting, but also to underscore both the legal and ethical issues surrounding it and the historical and current practices utilized to address bullying behavior.

As Keashly and Neuman (Chapter 1) note, "bullying appears to be an unfortunately familiar aspect of academic settings," and its victims and perpetrators can fall anywhere on the institutional scale, including tenure, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty, administrators, and staff. The effects of workplace bullying have an equally broad impact, according to Taylor, including reducing organizational learning and creativity; imperiling financial efficiency; reducing productivity; creating an "unhealthy and revolving workforce"; and acting, in extreme and rare cases, as a precursor toward workplace violence. To limit liability, improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and foster employee well being, higher education leaders must understand the causes, impacts, and possible solutions to workplace bullying.

By delving further into the realm of workplace bullying in academe, leaders can begin to reimagine and refocus their institutions toward greater understanding, engagement, and civility. This chapter will review the strategies and best practices proffered by the book's authors for addressing workplace bullying on the individual, unit, and institutional levels. Recommendations for future research will be suggested and a listing of resources that offer information on new policies and practices will be provided.

Institutional Strategies

Regardless of how bullying is defined (as repeated and persistent harassment, torment, abuse, or criticism) or whether it is perpetrated by a single person or by a group (mobbing), the practice has a negative impact on all levels of an institution. Because of the broad impact of bullying, it is the responsibility of everyone—the individual, the unit, and the organization—to work to ensure that opportunities for bullying are minimized and that a climate of respect is promoted. The literature suggests a number of strategies that can be employed to reduce the incidents and impacts of bullying, which are reviewed throughout this book. Among the most effective of these practices are those that focus on education, support, and transformation of climate and culture, versus those that place blame, punish, or ignore bullying behavior. The following section reviews the authors' recommendations for what works in understanding and addressing workplace bullying in higher education. We also provide additional recommendations that were not included in the book chapters, but are worthy of consideration.

The Individual

Bullying often begins with the individual. The actor (bully) commits repeated negative acts, including criticism, torment, harassment, abuse, etc., that work to belittle, distress, or demean the target (victim) of the actor's aggression. The bullying process involves both the actor and the target, but the target feels the impact of bullying most prominently. Additionally, any individuals witnessing this behavior are also impacted. Keashly and Neuman note that targets of bullying behavior and those who witness such behavior often engage in a number of interventions to ameliorate their situations, with varying degrees of success. Surprisingly, the strategy that has traditionally been supported by human resources (HR) professionals and leaders, formal reporting, was found, along with direct confrontation, to be the least effective way to manage the actor's aggression. Furthermore, those in positions of power or influence had little impact in reducing or ending the negative behavior. So what strategies do work on the individual level? The most effective means of coping with workplace bullying is for targets to use their own support systems to process what is happening to them, reduce stress, and avoid the actors involved in the bullying event. Although this may be easier said than done,

partnerships between academic leadership and higher education HR professionals can aid this process through collaborative education and support of the individuals involved.

Education and support should include clear definitions of what constitutes workplace bullying, its causes, and the resources available for combating it. Taylor recommends that HR professionals become well versed on American Association of University Professors (AAUPs) definitions and limitations of collegiality, tenure, and academic freedom, so that they can convey the distinctions between "collegial debate, conflict and bullying." These distinctions are especially important for faculty and staff to understand, so that they can appreciate the difference between healthy academic debate and civil discourse, which furthers knowledge, versus unhealthy instances of harassment and bullying, which can emerge when debate and conflict are allowed to go unchecked. The statements may also serve to promote discussion within and across constituent groups. Higher education institutions are often structurally and culturally divided, with varying expectations for behavior. These discussions can help to bridge cultural divides and help to define the differences between respectful and collegial debate and bullying behaviors. By learning more about the nuances of the academic workplace, both the actors and targets involved in potential bullying are able to recognize and label the behavior, so that it can be effectively addressed.

Supporting the individual and helping to create a common understanding is important to address bullying; yet, the individual who is victimized has immediate needs. Harber, Donini, and Parker recommend the "no blame approach" to bullying interventions—bringing witnesses, actor(s), and the target together to work collectively and anonymously (in the case of the actor) to address the situation and support the target. This work, in conjunction with direct support of the targeted individual, allows the target support from a number of angles, provides the chance to "talk out" the issue in a group and in private, and gives the HR professional a better understanding of how the individual deals with conflict, so that they can provide them with better resources for future interactions with workplace aggressors.

Understanding what resources are available and how to use them is another key strategy for individuals wanting to address bullying in the workplace. Gallant states that, while the primary responsibility to address bullying lies in the individual, they often do not have the needed skills or understanding of what to do, what resources are available, and to whom they should talk. HR professionals can steer actors, targets, and witnesses toward resources available to combat some of the causes and repercussions of workplace bullying—competition for resources, organizational uncertainty, and stress, to name a few. Beyond offering clear lines of communication and policies related to workplace bullying, Harber, Donini, and Parker recommend using the "no blame approach" with counseling and coaching by HR staff. The coaching model provides tools that can help individuals rethink conflict as opportunity, reduce stress related to bullying circumstances, develop a plan for dealing with conflict, establish support networks, and understand their

rights (Harber, Donini, & Parker, Chapter 8). Coaching can also extend beyond the target's experience. Including actors and witnesses of workplace bullying in the coaching process is vital to changing how bullying is viewed in higher education.

Witnesses are, by definition, involved in bullying events and are often part of a target's support system. Most importantly, when they know how to handle workplace bullying, witnesses are key to curtailing it. This "power of the peer" (Keashly & Neuman, Chapter 1), to step in to limit bullying behavior and act as a sounding board, helps targets make sense of their experiences. Furthermore, with each buffering act, report, or denouncement of inappropriate behavior, individuals help shape the culture and climate of their departments and campuses toward a more civil and collegial state of being. Conversely, when witnesses do not assist, the campus climate suffers. To empower both the witness and the target and to engage everyone—actor, target, and witness—in civil interactions, Gallant recommends a code of conduct that "articulates shared values and ethical standards" be employed for all members of a campus community. Sallee and Diaz support this perspective and would add the necessity of training for individuals in diversity, inclusion, and campus climate to support campus codes, as members of marginalized groups are bullied at higher rates than non-marginalized members of the academic community. An effective code of conduct requires leadership by individuals who do not stand by while abuse occurs (despite the shifting and fluid nature of academic management). Gallant espouses this view, stating that in order to have an ethical culture and climate of social justice, "what leaders do is more important than what they say" and that addressing bullying immediately "affects societal forces by creating an ethical academy."

The Unit and Its Leadership

Workplace bullying, while felt most prominently by the individuals involved, also impacts institutional units. Again, education and support are vital to counteracting bullying in the various departments in colleges and universities, as are unit leaders. Thus, unit leadership must work to be aware of workplace bullying; to develop the skills to address it from a managerial perspective; to provide training and resources to their faculty and staff members; to diminish its occurrence and force; and to, as Harber, Donini, and Parker state, " walk the walk" and set a standard of civility for their campuses.

Leadership at the unit level in higher education, especially in academic departments, is challenging. Tenure and the shifting nature of departmental leadership, especially, make addressing instances of workplace bullying difficult. As Lester (2009) noted, organizations with a high rate of leadership change, like those of academic departments, are often ripe for workplace bullying to emerge. The independent nature of faculty, coupled with a management system in which department chairs move in and out of authority roles, creates a hierarchy

that lacks stability and promotes uncertainty both for management and subordinates. Compounding the consistent change and organizational uncertainty inherent in academic units is the lack of management expertise held by most faculty chairs and the highly competitive nature of a system in which prestige, resources, and promotions are limited. These pressures can create an environment in which individuals begin to engage in bullying behavior for their own perceived survival.

Indeed, at its core, bullying is a survival mechanism. Actors engaged in bullying behavior are often driven by aggression, a primal strategy on the fight-or-flight spectrum for negotiating an environment that is plagued with stress, intimidation, and lack of resources. Given the "elitist, hierarchical," decentralized, pressure-filled and increasingly resource-deprived structure of higher education (Fratzl & McKay, Chapter 4), workplace bullying as response by certain members of the academic community is not surprising. However, there are ways to mitigate the occurrence and impact of this response.

Department leads must address bullying directly, taking reports of incidents seriously and working with those involved—actor, target, and any witnesses—to ameliorate the situation. As Taylor notes, managers may be reluctant to report bullying, as they are disinclined to admonish other autonomous faculty members, may worry that such reports may reflect poorly on their management, or because they have not been trained in policies and procedures related to bullying. Department chairs (who are generally plucked from the ranks of their colleagues to fill the role, regardless of their management experience) often receive little to no management training in human resources-related issues. Yet, despite a lack of management education or support, these individuals are tasked with leading colleagues (whose ranks to which they will eventually return), with a limited understanding of how to approach and resolve workplace bullying issues or the resources available to them or those they supervise.

Therefore, to overcome these aspects of academic unit leadership, chairs must work collaboratively with the HR professionals of their institutions. Through these collaborations, leaders can not only gain a greater understanding of how bullying affects individuals and organizations, how it is often the structure and context of higher education that allows for workplace bullying to emerge, and the legal ramifications of bullying left unchecked, but can also build the confidence to deal effectively with acts of bullying that may occur under their watch. When department leaders receive training, Harber, Donini, and Parker argue that they are more likely to understand the difference between bullying and a lack of collegiality, as well as the limits of academic freedom. Additionally, when unit leaders and HR professionals have a clear grasp of both AAUP's and their institution's policies and procedures regarding bullying, they will have the tools to appropriately address instances of workplace bullying and view these occurrences, not as a reflection on their management but as opportunities to improve the academic discourse and culture of their units and institutions (Taylor, Chapter 2).

This education and support regarding the limits of academic freedom, the effects of workplace bullying, and the resources to combat unacceptable behavior on campus should extend not only to members of each department, but should also be promoted and presented during faculty senate or academic council meetings, and in staff senate and union meetings, so that the responsibility of addressing and reducing workplace bullying becomes a shared endeavor by all members of the institution. Gallant notes that by engendering an environment of cooperation versus competition, specifically among faculty, the overall institutional culture can begin to shift toward a more ethical state of being and the propensity for workplace bullying will be reduced (Gallant, Chapter 7).

Equally important to the training unit members receive related to workplace bullying is the consistency with which they apply what they have learned. As Stone points out, the ability to be consistent when dealing with workplace bullying is critical. When implementing action against the actor in a bullying event, especially when claims of retaliation come into play in a legal scenario, the courts look to consistency of action toward employees by the institution and its departments when determining liability (Stone, Chapter 6). Stone states that employment contracts should specifically outline the institution's policies related to bullying, tenure, and academic freedom. Having a clearly articulated anti-bullying policy provides institutions and its members with a "fair and just mechanism for addressing violations to codes of conduct" (Gallant, Chapter 7). Although there is currently no federal law prohibiting bullying in the workplace, institutions can use state anti-bullying laws to help guide the construction of their anti-bullying policies and codes of conduct (Stone, Chapter 6; Harber, Donini, & Parker, Chapter 8). Among federal laws that are useful in informing policy creation are the Civil Rights Act of 1964, American with Disabilities Act of 1993, Age Discrimination Act of 1967, and Occupational Safety and Health Act, all of which work to protect special classes and members of marginalized groups that have historically been the target of bias or harassment (Stone, Chapter 6; Harber, Donini, & Parker, Chapter 8). This is particularly important, as the targets of bullying are often members of marginalized groups.

In order to limit bullying of marginalized individuals in the workplace, Sallee and Diaz encourage establishing a climate and culture of inclusivity. Unit heads should provide training on different identity groups to all of its members and for faculty, in particular, to actively participate on diversity committees and consider cluster hires of members of marginalized groups (Sallee & Diaz, Chapter 3). Sallee and Diaz also support the promotion of faculty instruction in the area of social justice, whether explicitly a part of or woven into the context of their courses.

When department chairs and campus administrators act as role models, they are pivotal in reducing instances of workplace bullying in their institutions for all members of the community. Their action sets the climate and shapes the social and cultural structure on their campuses (Gallant). HR professionals can support the work of these individuals by promoting inclusive thought and action through

cross-departmental collaborative efforts (Sallee & Diaz, Chapter 3). When working in concert, individuals change the climate and cultures of their institutions, creating a more just climate and culture and an environment in which workplace bullying is diminished institution-wide.

The Institution

The theme of creating a more socially just climate and culture to combat workplace bullying is relevant to the individual, to the unit, and to the university as a whole. Although institutions of higher education are often viewed as bastions of social justice, they often "reproduce the social inequalities stemming from the larger society, especially in terms of socioeconomic class and race" (Starobin & Blumenfeld, Chapter 5). Furthermore, Starobin and Blumenfeld argue that the characteristics of institutions (community college, research university, residential campus, etc.) and their circumstance (geography, homogeneity, etc.) play a role in the inequities, biases, and propensity for bullying to emerge on campus. Therefore, institutional leaders should understand the interplay between their school's structure and its climate when working to understand workplace bullying.

Gallant; Harber, Donini, and Parker; Taylor; Sallee, and Diaz; and Keashly and Neuman all strongly recommend the importance and effectiveness of shifting campus culture toward a climate of civility and ethicality. Education and support are again important for institutional-level change. Civility or anti-bullying campaigns appear to be effective, shifting perspectives in how community members are (or are not) to be treated. Yet, as effective as these campaigns can be, they are often limited by their scope. Many civility campaigns on university campuses are developed in student affairs offices and geared toward student-to-student interactions. A cursory review online of campus civility campaigns shows that most are housed in offices of residence life or deans of students offices. Among the campaigns with a large online presence are those at Rutgers University, CalPoly, SCU San Marcos, and the University of Memphis, which do include members of the campus community beyond students in order to change the conversation regarding bullying on their campuses. However, these campaigns are limited in that, despite campus-wide participation (via committees), the images and focus of these campaigns are still heavily weighted toward student populations. This biased focus can limit a campaign's impact, as it is possible that faculty and staff will view them as irrelevant to their specific situations.

In order to be truly effective, civility campaigns must be inclusive of faculty at staff at their inception. Civility campaigns should be developed in concert with human resources, student affairs, deans of students, and ombudsman offices, and with the support of faculty and staff senates, so that they are not deemed as a student-only issue. Furthermore, the creation of these campaigns should be backed up by an educational effort geared specifically toward higher education faculty, staff, and leadership. These members of the community should be present,

along with students, in images, promotions, and publications related to these campaigns. By underscoring clear policies, procedures and communication lines, faculty and staff, in addition to students, can understand what action to take in the event bullying occurs. Consequently, they become champions of civility on their campuses.

The need for inclusivity extends to the creation of codes of conduct on college and university campuses. Gallant; Sallee; Taylor; Fratzl and McKay; and Harber, Donini, and Parker all recommend instituting a code of conduct to implement and sustain cultural change, as bullying is less prevalent when codes of conduct are promoted on campuses (Gallant, Chapter 7). By creating a code of conduct with rules and policies that forbid bullying and are "honest, transparent and accountable to higher order principles, . . . ethical standards and shared values" are thus articulated. These standards and values guide the frame in which community members view workplace bullying (Gallant, Chapter 7).

As with civility campaigns, to be truly effective, all members of the campus community must see themselves in their institution's code of conduct and understand that the code applies to every individual, not just to a particular group (e.g., students). This "requires faculty and staff involvement, support and even endorsement" (Harber, Donini, & Parker, Chapter 8) of codes of conduct, so that they will be uniformly adopted as official campus policy, introduced at employee orientation and promoted online and through campus civility campaigns. CalPoly, the University of Connecticut, and Cornell University all have codes of conduct that are geared toward and reflective of their communities, as a whole. CalPoly's code, "Statement of Commitment to Community" not only specifically states that it is for faculty, staff, and students and is a clearly articulated code of ethics, but also has been adopted by the institution's academic senate (CalPoly, n.d.).

Implementation of civility campaigns and codes of conduct is a first step in shifting campus cultures toward more ethical and just states of being. However, to understand their effectiveness, campus leaders should periodically get a sense of the climate on their campuses. Sallee and Taylor, and Harber, Donini, and Parker recommend gauging the climate as it relates to workplace bullying through campus audits and using the data collected to develop and augment initiatives related to increasing civility. By gathering data through surveys and reporting records, HR professionals can help shape the conversation with departments and individuals around workplace bullying and work to change the culture of their institutions. Gallant supports the use of ethical audits, which "review the structures, processes, climate and culture" as well as the role and prevalence of workplace bullying, in order to create an "integrous, caring cultural climate."

Through education and support, these best practices can be implemented successfully on college and university campuses. As collaborations, trainings, civility campaigns, codes of conduct, and cultural audits are conducted, the awareness of the perils of workplace bullying will begin to grow. More importantly, the culture of campus communities can begin to shift to a more respectful, civil and ethical

state of being. Continued research into the causes and possible solutions to workplace bullying will be vital in supporting this shift.

Future Research

In the past decade, researchers have begun to look at the causes, nature, and frequency of bullying in higher education. Initial information has shed light on how the structure and context of academe can promote bullying behavior. However, more needs to be done to understand how bullying occurs and what are effective means to combat its prevalence on campus. In the beginning of this book, Lester recommends a large-scale study on workplace bullying similar to the work of The Workplace Bullying Institute. This study would examine the nature and prevalence of workplace bullying and fill the gap in the literature found by Keashly and Neuman (Chapter 1). Different definitions, a focus on campus case studies, and small sample sizes do not provide comparative statistics; simply, we do not know how prevalent workplace bullying is in higher education and how bullying differs across institutional types, for example.

Starobin and Blumenfeld argue that campus type plays a significant role in the type of bullying present on college and university campuses. The argument that different institutional types (based on the Carnegie Classification System™) create "enabling structures for bullying" should be further investigated (Starobin and Blumenfeld, Chapter 5). Doing so will help researchers develop models for forecasting potential types of bullying that may be present on a specific type of campus and will aid campus leaders in understanding more fully the social ecology of their schools and the potential biases that are inherently integrated in their institutional structures. A study that compares the factors known to precipitate bullying, such as leadership changes, across multiple institutional types will help to illuminate how bullying manifests and will lead to interventions that are directed toward specific campuses and their unique qualities.

As was discussed earlier, bullying is present in higher education and reporting of bullying has increased. However, whether or not bullying events have increased and what motivates actors in bullying scenarios is still in question. Keashly and Neuman argue that bullying's prevalence and nature "remain empirical questions to be tested," as is the assumption that the structure of higher education creates a hot zone for bullying behavior to flourish (Keashly & Neuman, Chapter 1). In addition to suggesting further research into these areas, they suggest investigation of the link between exposure and experience in a workplace bullying event, as well as further understanding of what motivates or compels an actor to engage in bullying behavior, so that it can be constrained by leadership. Fratzl and McKay encourage this research angle by suggesting that more attention needs to be paid to the catalysts of an actor's aggression and bullying behavior. Greater research into the experiences of witnesses and targets would also be useful, as it would establish a more complete picture of the bullying and could offer insight into how

individuals effectively negotiate the experience. Specifically, more information is needed on whether or not allowing the targets involved to label the behavior actually helped improve their outlook.

Finally, Keashly and Neuman also suggest that the effectiveness of techniques used to ameliorate workplace bullying be further investigated. Understanding what responses actually work versus what has been traditionally offered provides a better road map for campus leaders. Researchers should look not only at the formal mechanisms that Keashly and Neuman recommend, but also at what aspects, if any, of civility campaigns, codes of conduct, and anti-bullying policies are successful in managing bullying behaviors. A basic but important question is: do these interventions make a measurable impact in the rates of bullying?

Conclusion

Workplace bullying in the academic community is nothing new, and reports of bullying behavior have increased over the last decade. Left unanswered, these behaviors can negatively impact higher education institutions—driving out qualified members, creating hostile work environments, and reducing productivity. Managers must begin to think and talk openly about how to address instances of workplace bullying on their campuses. This book provides an opening for campus leaders to begin a conversation with their colleagues on how they can work together to create a more open and productive institution with an ethical climate that promotes civil interactions among faculty, staff, and students. This chapter has many recommendations of how campuses can begin to address bullying and how researchers may begin or continue to understand the phenomenon of workplace bullying in higher education.

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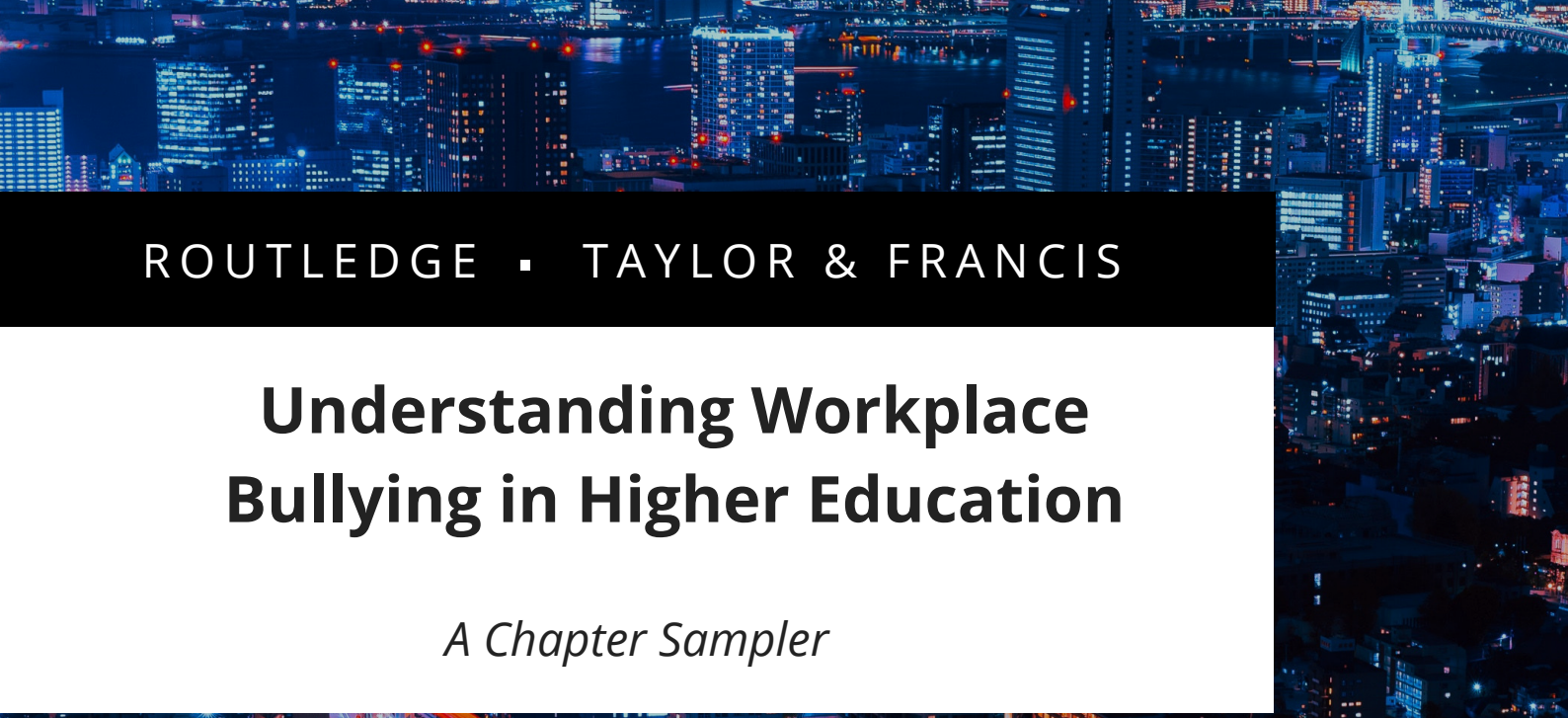

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