

Bullying at Work on Campus

Higher ed workers bullied more than general workforce

By:

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Bullies aren't just on the playground. In fact, 62 percent of higher ed employees surveyed for a recent study reported witnessing or experiencing bullying in the past 18 months. That's exactly one-quarter more than the 37 percent of the general workforce who report the same, according to Workplace Bullying Institute Data.

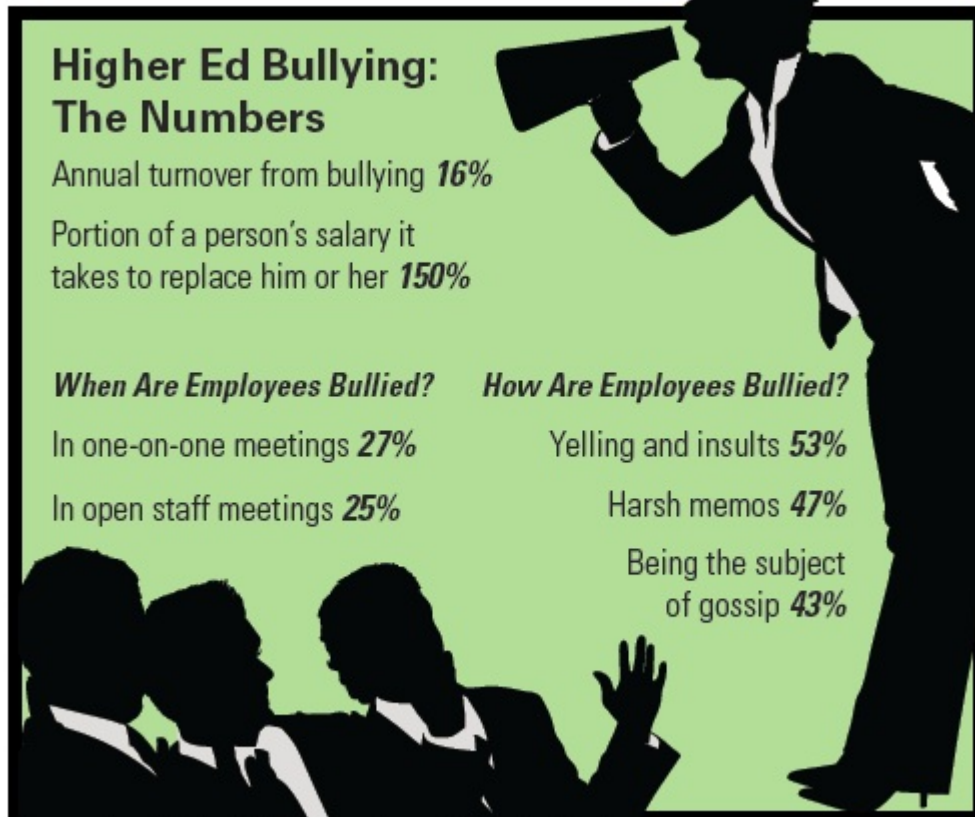
The data was gathered in February and March of 2012 and was discussed in the book "[Bully in the Ivory Tower](#)" (Patricia Berkly, 2012), by Leah P. Hollis, president and lead consultant at diversity training and consulting group Patricia Berkly LLC. Hollis, who has 20 years experience in higher ed as an administrator and faculty member, and her team randomly selected 18 people from across departments and levels at 175 four-year institutions to fill out a 35-point survey about their experiences with bullying in higher education.

The majority of respondents were directors and assistant directors, Hollis shares, noting that provosts, presidents, and vice presidents weren't as interested in filling out the survey. Respondents were asked if they had experienced or had witnessed bullying in the past 18 months, and also if they had witnessed vicarious bullying (i.e., a superior having a subordinate or secretary do their bullying). Hollis says the "ego" factor in higher ed could play a role in the prevalence of bullying on campus.

"In higher education, the culture itself encourages people to be lofty experts in their field, spending a lot of time alone in the library doing research. Someone who has published several wonderful books and conducted research and then gets promoted may not be trained to motivate an assistant director," she says. "Accountability is to academic scholarship, not necessarily team building or leadership."

Clara Wajngurt, professor of mathematics and computer science at Queensborough Community College, City University of New York, worked with Hollis on the research. She is an advocate for creating statewide or campuswide anti-bullying policies, an area she sees as lacking in higher ed.

"In my research on bullying, what comes up is the harassment policies," she says, pointing out that there is a distinction between the two. "Bullying really refers to some negative behavior for an extended period of time; harassment generally deals with a one-time action. There are policies against harassment that pertain across the board, and I would recommend that it would be appropriate to have similar types of policies regarding anti-bullying on campus."



Source: Leah P. Hollis, Ed.D., author of *Bully In The Ivory Tower*

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