

# A More Inclusive U

A look at the prevalence of bullying, relational aggression, and exclusion among undergraduate students—and what we can do about it.

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Members of the PEL team would like to thank the President's Emerging Leaders program for the opportunity to undertake this project which challenged each of us to grow in our understanding of the University and gain new perspectives of ways to cultivate a sense of inclusion in our work. In addition, we want to acknowledge the unwavering support of Dave Dorman who encouraged us as we used this opportunity to identify our strengths and challenges, both professionally and personally, and then dared us to boldly explore new ways of working, thinking, and understanding ourselves.

Lastly, we would like to thank the students, faculty, and staff who were gracious, authentic, and generous in sharing their time and experiences in the hope of creating a more inclusive future at the University of Minnesota.

## Executive Summary

Through exploratory interviews of faculty and staff, and focus group discussions with students, a team from the President's Emerging Leaders (PEL) program worked to discover the frequency, severity, and characteristics of bullying at the University of Minnesota. Bullying behavior can encompass a broad array of actions but generally involves repetition, an imbalance of power between the bully and the target and the intent to cause harm to the target.

As a result of this project, the PEL team discovered that the term "bullying" does not resonate with undergraduates; however, students are familiar with the broader concept of exclusion. Students described bullying in relation to social power and control. In comparison, students described exclusion as occurring around personal identity and perceived differences. The students reported that a positive sense of belonging mitigated their feelings of exclusion. In addition, students articulated that the roles of the bully and the target can be fluid and that the characteristics or actions which incite a bullying episode can be highly varied and contextual.

In response to the sense of exclusion that was shared by the students the PEL team spoke with, we have created five recommendations. These recommendations outline centralized, intentional, and proactive steps that can be taken by the University of Minnesota community to decrease the incidences of bullying and exclusion at the University.

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## Introduction

This report documents the results of a project conducted by five participants of the 2010-11 President's Emerging Leaders Program (PEL) at the University of Minnesota. The members of our project team share a common interest in the broad topic of culture change, a curiosity about methods of shaping the shared ways of thinking, values, and procedures within groups, and the desire to better understand the leadership challenges of implementing culture change at an organizational level. The goal of this project was to better understand how the University of Minnesota could address culture change by exploring a topic of particular concern to the University community. Through discussions with the co-chairs of the Coalition for a Respectful U, the team decided to investigate the topic of bullying among undergraduate students at the University of Minnesota.

## Methods of Inquiry

The methods of investigation into this topic were exploratory in nature. When approaching the topic of bullying among undergraduate students, the team did not know the frequency, severity or characteristics of bullying at the University of Minnesota. As a result, the goal of this project was to provide insight into this issue in order to create recommendations for future study and programming at the University.

Our inquiry into bullying among undergraduate students included using primary and secondary research methods. The team began its work by reviewing the literature on bullying as well as interviewing University of Minnesota faculty members with expertise on bullying among American youth. The team also conducted a scan of recent news media on the topic of bullying to gauge whether this topic had a presence in popular media discourse. An environmental scan was conducted of Big Ten Conference Universities, including the University of Minnesota, to document what, if any, programs or policies exist related to the topic of bullying (see Appendix A: Selected Results of Environmental Scan of Big Ten Universities). In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with University of Minnesota staff and focus groups were conducted with undergraduate students to learn whether and how bullying was a problem at the University of Minnesota (see Appendix B: Interview and Focus Group Questions).<sup>1</sup>

## Background

For some, the term bullying may conjure up memories of the elementary schoolyard or the middle school lunch room. In attempting to define bullying in the context of higher education, the PEL team was not convinced that this term would resonate within a University environment. However, preliminary

The goal of this project was to better understand how the University of Minnesota could address culture change by exploring a topic of particular concern to the University community.

<sup>1</sup> Interviews and focus groups were conducted with approximately twenty-five undergraduate students, faculty, and staff at the University of Minnesota representing a variety of departmental units, including: Counseling and Consultative Services, Office of Equity and Diversity, Student Conflict Resolution Center, Athletics, and Housing and Residential Life.

conversations with University staff and the Coalition for a Respectful U convinced the team that these behaviors, whatever they may be called, were occurring at the University. For the purposes of our project, the PEL team turned to others for a definition of bullying. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration website [StopBullying.gov](http://StopBullying.gov) sums it up well.<sup>2</sup> Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying involves:

- **Imbalance of Power:** people who bully use their power to control or harm and the people being bullied may have a hard time defending themselves;
- **Intent to Cause Harm:** actions done by accident are not bullying; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm; and
- **Repetition:** incidents of bullying happen to the same person over and over by the same person or group.

Part of what makes it difficult to define bullying is that it can take many forms beyond just physical aggression (e.g. verbal: teasing, name-calling; social: purposely leaving people out of groups, spreading rumors). Research has shown that verbal and social aggressions, or relational aggression, can be just as harmful as physical aggression (Cullerton-Sen and Crick, 2005; personal communication, April 2011).<sup>3</sup> With the advent of the internet and social media, cyber-bullying, or bullying over the Internet, has introduced a new medium for bullying. Bullying has even grabbed the attention of the United States Congress, where recent legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA) would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to require schools and districts receiving federal funds to adopt codes of conduct specifically prohibiting bullying and harassment of students.<sup>4</sup>

The bulk of media coverage and academic literature on bullying focuses on the experiences of children and youth in the primary and secondary school age ranges. However, the recent tragic incident of a Rutgers University student who was bullied and later committed suicide, has prompted at least some media attention about its prevalence at the University level. The undergraduate years of college capture an important time in a person's psychological and social development as they transition from high school to college – and from youth to young adulthood. But bullying among undergraduate students is different than in K-12 educational settings because students are of majority age and subject to a different legal framework (Sieben, 2011).<sup>5</sup>

Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying involves:

- Imbalance of Power
- Intent to Cause Harm
- Repetition

<sup>2</sup> See [www.stopbullying.gov/topics/what\\_is\\_bullying/](http://www.stopbullying.gov/topics/what_is_bullying/) for more information on the definition of bullying.

<sup>3</sup> Cullerton-Sen, C. & Crick, NR (2005). Understanding the Effects of Physical and Relational Victimization: The Utility of Multiple Perspectives in Predicting Social-Emotional Adjustment. *School Psychology Review* 34(2), 147-160.

<sup>4</sup> See [www.govtrack.us/congress/legislation.xpd](http://www.govtrack.us/congress/legislation.xpd) for more information on the Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2011, 112th Congress, H.R. 1648 & S. 506.

<sup>5</sup> Sieben, L. (2011, March 10). At White House summit on bullying, officials explore challenges for colleges. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, accessed online March 21, 2011.

## Significant Findings

As the team interviewed students, faculty, and staff across the University, the conversations with students focused on interactions between undergraduates on and near campus. Students were asked to define bullying based on behaviors they have observed and describe incidents fitting that definition. They were asked about the prevalence of bullying and also asked to describe what types of people tend to fall into the categories of bully or target. In addition, students were asked to describe what happens when an incident occurs. During the interviews, faculty provided expertise on the topic of bullying and relational aggression, which helped the PEL team create a framework for thinking about and understanding the experiences and observations shared by the students. The University staff members that were interviewed all work directly with students, often in direct support roles. These staff members were asked for their observations about undergraduate behavior and trends over time. Several themes emerged as a result of these conversations:

### **1. The term “bullying” does not resonate with undergraduates, but the broader concept of exclusion does.**

When asked to describe the way that undergraduates at the University of Minnesota treat one another, the students that the PEL team spoke with described a range of behaviors, from acts of aggression and exclusion at one end of the spectrum, to a sense of belonging — particularly for students who find their “niche” — at the other end. Overall, bullying is not part of the vocabulary used to describe the undergraduate experience.

However, one challenge is that bullying is difficult to track in a higher education environment like the University of Minnesota. This is in part because many students are uncertain whether to label relational aggression and more broadly, acts of exclusion, as bullying. More serious forms of bullying are generally labeled by the students as harassment. While incidents of bullying do occur, particularly in contexts such as residence halls — which are populated primarily by undergraduates still transitioning to adulthood — students readily identified gossip and insensitive language as commonplace forms of exclusion rather than labeling these as bullying behaviors.

The students felt the term “bullying” connoted immaturity and the type of behavior more commonly associated with high school in which individuals and groups jockey for power and social status by ostracizing others. The cases the students described that most closely resembled bullying — acts of overt and repeated aggression — tended to happen within groups and in more defined social contexts (between roommates, among students in residence halls, among members of a social group).

Because college-age students have more freedom to choose their associates (unlike high school where young people are “captive” to a group of peers

Students were asked to define bullying based on the behaviors they have observed and describe incidents that fit that definition.



based on their year in school), the sense among the students the PEL team interviewed is when bullying behavior carries over into the college environment, it is diluted as students become more independent and expand their social networks.

As one researcher interviewed by the PEL team identified the widespread perception that bullying is something that happens during the early college experience, if at all, because “older students have more mobility in peer groups; they can choose to escape by choosing different groups.” One student who is involved with a student group echoed that sentiment. “I felt most excluded during my first year. It took a while, but once I started making connections, I felt that way less.” Anecdotal evidence points to the first year, as students transition from high school to college, as prime time for addressing bullying. The first year provides the critical opportunity for redirecting student behavior and promoting values that support a more inclusive University community and a more supportive undergraduate experience.

**2. Bullying is about power and control while exclusion happens around identity and “difference.” A sense of belonging mitigates feelings of exclusion.**

One researcher describes the dynamic involved in bullying as power differences between the bully and the target. That can mean different things depending on context and scale. Within a social group or residence hall, bullying can take the form of an “in group” excluding an individual who is in some way different. It can also take the form of anonymous posts online, insults and slurs left on residence hall door whiteboards, and also in conversation. One student described gossip as a dominant form of aggression for college-aged students. “Spreading rumors is a form of bullying at this age level. Saying malicious things, spreading rumors, spreading confidential information, making observations, that’s the way to hurt someone in college.”

The pressure to conform to the norms of the group has a powerful impact on student actions, especially early in their undergraduate experience. One staff member who counsels students said: “Young people come with a value system but encounter pressure among upperclassmen to conform and engage in superficial behavior. Feelings of isolation are typical.” A student who was interviewed affirmed that observation. “I don’t know if it’s less about knowing themselves, but younger students will change beliefs and values depending on the group. They will subvert their own interests and values [to fit into a group]. Those students who are unwilling or unable to adapt their value systems face a challenging social landscape at the University of Minnesota until they develop, mature, and gain the skills to find the support they need.”

**3. Those experiencing bullying and those doing the bullying depend on the context.**

The targets of bullying do not fall neatly into a single category, just as the

“ felt most excluded during my first year. It took a while, but once I started making connections, I felt that way less. ”



reasons students engage in aggression toward others cannot be easily categorized or explained. The students who were interviewed described broad categories encompassing socioeconomic background, race, gender, sexuality, and specific categories including students who are overtly religious, transgender students, and international students as targets for bullying. Students also noted the differences that seem to trigger bullying can be varied and fluid; from an extreme passion for Japanese animation in one situation to the way a student dresses in another. “Appearance is a big one,” one student reported. “It’s tied into sexuality because it means that someone doesn’t fit a standard of beauty.” Based on student descriptions, we found there was no one type of person or even group that is consistently targeted for bullying.

Those who engage in bullying behavior do not fit a single profile and may remain anonymous, as in incidences of online bullying and in residence halls. Some of the language students and staff used to describe students who have been observed engaging in bullying behavior includes “immature,” “low coping skills,” “poor direct communication,” and “coming from an environment with different norms.” In some cases, students’ insensitivity to the way those norms translate, or fail to translate, in the environment of higher education, may mean they are genuinely unaware that their language or humor is inappropriate in the context of the University.

Norms apply to groups, as well as to individuals, and can contribute to bullying as a form of group power dynamics. As one student explained, “small subsets of students, formed based on identities and other factors, may start to share a lot of the same ideas around things that can separate them from what the campus population, as a whole, feels about how people treat each other.”

Based on the comments of the students the PEL team interviewed, perceptions of the prevalence of bullying and relational aggression varied based on gender. Women were more likely to consider bullying a problem, especially if gossip and insensitive language were included within the definition. One of the researchers interviewed underscored this finding, explaining that while men were as likely to be bullies as women, women were the targets of bullying — especially relational aggression — much more often. In addition, men associate bullying with physical acts of aggression and are more likely to engage in that type of behavior, whereas bullying among college-aged students is rarely physical.

One encouraging finding which emerged as a result of the interviews was the extent to which students felt a sense of belonging and community seemed to correlate with a lower assessment of the prevalence of bullying. “Being part of a student group provides a sense of community,” explained one member of a student group who was interviewed. “The environment is relaxed and family-like. We don’t notice bullying because we surround ourselves with students in the group.” The students the PEL team interviewed who were involved in student groups were less inclined to consider bullying a problem than the other students we spoke with, though they did identify the broader theme of inclusion/exclusion as an issue.

“**B**eing part of a student group provides a sense of community”



Over time, overt acts of aggression and bullying are increasingly happening online. Often, “cyberbullying” is used to extend and amplify in-person relational aggression with relative impunity. Staff, faculty, and students sounded a unified chorus in this regard. They described an unhealthy increase in the use of online media and also a belief that it is impossible to “disconnect.” They also expressed that online bullying behavior has few immediate consequences, but has an impact that can be even more harmful than in-person conflict.

#### **4. The University of Minnesota (like other Big Ten schools) does not have a comprehensive approach.**

Bullying on campus has become a widely discussed issue which has received renewed interest and attention with high-profile cases, such as Tyler Clementi’s death at Rutgers University in Fall 2010. As a result, state and federal lawmakers are actively crafting legislation that would force public universities to enact anti-bullying policies. Currently at the University of Minnesota, acts of aggression and harassment that might reasonably be described as “bullying” are covered by the Student Conduct Code. However, explicit anti-bullying language or policies are largely absent at an institutional level.

One staff member interviewed by the PEL team noted with concern that “creating anti-bullying policies could have the unintended effect of tying the issue to specific identities and profiles.” This can be problematic given the fluid and constantly evolving nature of bullying’s initiators, targets, and topics. The same staff member identified the challenge in this way: “If you make a statement like: queer students are often targeted by fraternity members, that allows those involved in subtler acts of exclusion to abdicate responsibility for the problem.” Author Alexandra Robbins underscores this idea in her book *The Geeks Shall Inherit the Earth* (Hyperion, 2011).

State and federal lawmakers are actively crafting legislation that would force public universities to enact anti-bullying policies.

One thing that hasn’t been discussed much in the bullying debate is that schools often address bullying with little Band-Aid campaigns. They try to address it on a case-by-case basis. But the schools themselves often have traditions or policies that in and of themselves point students to which ones should be elevated in the hierarchy and which ones should be lowered down the ladder. For example, whom do schools highlight at pep rallies? Athletes and cheerleaders. They are making those students visible, and one qualification for popularity is visibility. That brings up another issue -- politicians are always complaining about the lack of scientists produced in this country. Well, if schools celebrated student scientists the same way they celebrate student athletes, then more students might be encouraged to pursue science. Instead, science is geeky, and schools are partly responsible for painting it that way.

One method to address bullying without resorting to the creation of a rubric of prohibited behaviors and protected groups is the creation of an honor code.



An honor code does not exist at the University of Minnesota and may offer a framework for inclusive behavior among undergraduates (as opposed to a baseline for which behaviors are not to be tolerated). One student suggested that the University needs to more effectively and powerfully articulate values and expectations. Another student added that creating a more inclusive University community ultimately depends not just on articulating those values but reflecting them. “It’s a matter of who is valued at the U ... who gets into funding and space allocation, which fuels divisive behavior and hierarchies among groups.”

## Recommendations

The University of Minnesota, like other Big Ten schools, aspires to foster a culture of inclusion, where the contributions of all students, staff, and faculty are honored, and no one is left out on the margins. Several areas within the University are working to find new ways to celebrate the diverse viewpoints and contributions within our community. During the 2007 fall semester, the Student Conflict Resolution Center conducted a survey of all University of Minnesota-Twin Cities graduate students regarding the prevalence, manifestations, and effects of academic incivility. In addition, this survey also explored barriers to seeking assistance, and the level of satisfaction with interventions, when the behavior was reported.<sup>6</sup> In the fall of 2010, the Civil Service/Bargaining Unit Women’s Action Network (CSBU WAN), launched the RESPECT campaign to provide opportunities for people to describe what respect means to them.

In order to be effective, the message must be communicated early, often, and across a number of venues.

The PEL team has created five recommendations which call for a centralized, intentional, and proactive approach to bullying, exclusion, and relational aggression at the University of Minnesota. In order to be effective, the message must be communicated early, often, and across a number of venues. By addressing an array of contributing factors, including individual, peer and group-level, institutional, community, and societal factors, we can design strategies to manage the convergence of these factors that has led to a culture supportive of bullying and relational aggression.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention advocates a comprehensive approach. Specifically, the Higher Education Center endorsed a set of principles for violence prevention because of the unique cultures of different institutions. These principles for guiding violence prevention strategies are: prevention-focused, comprehensive, planned and evaluated, strategic and targeted, research-based, multi-component, coordinated and synergistic, multi-sectoral and collaborative, and supported by infrastructure, institutional commitment, and systems.<sup>7</sup>

6 See [www.sos.umn.edu/stafffaculty/Survey\\_Summary\\_AcadInc\\_UMNTC.pdf](http://www.sos.umn.edu/stafffaculty/Survey_Summary_AcadInc_UMNTC.pdf) for a summary of the findings of the Student Conflict Resolution Center’s survey.

7 See [www.higheredcenter.org/prevention](http://www.higheredcenter.org/prevention) for more detailed information about prevention strategies.

## Suggested Agency for Coordination and Support for the Recommendations

To ensure that these recommendations are coordinated, synergistic, and supported by infrastructure, institutional commitment, and systems at the University of Minnesota, we encourage these recommendations to be implemented and supported at the system-wide level. As a result of the success of the Provost's Committee on Student Mental Health in addressing mental health issues among students in a holistic way and the Higher Education Center's strategies, the PEL team recommends a parallel approach for addressing bullying and relational aggression. By locating this valuable work at a system-wide level, it indicates to the University of Minnesota community that this issue affects students in and out of the classroom, and that a comprehensive approach can most effectively address this issue.

## Guiding Principles for the Recommendations

The recommendations of the PEL team are aspirational in nature. Rather than focus on how to "fix" bullying or outlaw exclusion, we look to broad-based solutions that call on students to stretch themselves, to increase their emotional and social intelligence as they build their intellectual capacity. Ultimately, these recommendations are possible pathways to a more inclusive campus community where students and others value differences as sources of strength rather than as detriments. To that end, the PEL team's recommendations share several guiding principles:

- There are no bystanders. Greater inclusiveness requires participation by all.
- Strategies to combat bullying must be sensitive to the student's cognitive developmental stage, be grounded in psychological and psychosocial development theory, and focus on social and emotional development.
- Initiatives to address the problem of bullying specifically – and exclusion more broadly – must incorporate a holistic approach that asks students to look at the world from different perspectives.

Recommendations are possible pathways to a more inclusive campus community.

## Suggested Action Steps

**1. Survey undergraduates to get a more complete snapshot of bullying and exclusion on campus. Use the results to develop best practices and guidelines for units.**

In 2007, the Student Conflict Resolution Center surveyed all University of Minnesota -Twin Cities graduate students to determine the scope, manifestations, and effects of academic incivility within the graduate student population. Nearly 1,800 graduate students responded. Of those, 19 percent



reported being harassed and 78 percent of those harassed did not report the situation to anyone at the University. We recommend implementing a similar survey of the undergraduate population and using the findings to shape best practices and inform the design of training and development goals.

**In practice:** Produce of a set of guidelines for both addressing exclusionary behavior and fostering inclusion for students, faculty, and staff.

## **2. Adopt a University-wide honor code that articulates values that support inclusion.**

Currently, behavior that would tend to be classified as bullying and harassment are addressed in the Student Conduct Code. We propose the creation of a University-wide Honor Code that would explicitly articulate standards of inclusion and civility for the University community and raise expectations for students, faculty, and staff. Incoming first-year students would agree to abide by the code upon entry to the University of Minnesota.

Introduce students to the concept of inclusion and build a sense of shared values.

**In practice:** Draft an honor code that could be used in Orientation, Welcome Week, and other venues to frame discussion around a culture of inclusion.

## **3. Get students thinking, talking about, and taking responsibility for shaping exclusion, inclusion, and campus culture early in their University experience.**

Develop workshops and trainings that offer incoming first-year students opportunities for social and personal growth. Ask students to consider their own identities, norms, and assumptions. Use the question “What type of community do you want at the University of Minnesota?” as a focal point.

**In practice:** Introduce students to the concept of inclusion and build a sense of shared values during Welcome Week using images and video taken during student workshops modeled on A More Inclusive U workshops (see video included with report). The workshops could be offered to undergraduates each year as part of an ongoing effort to raise awareness around inclusion and exclusion at the University.

## **4. Develop a grassroots, student-focused campaign around the idea of creating an inclusive campus community.**

Develop tools and collateral to disseminate messages of inclusion both in print and online. A number of campaigns (Green Dot, It Gets Better, the Dignity Movement, etc.) have effectively created a sense of solidarity and community around shared values. A similar effort could be adopted at the University of Minnesota.

**In practice:** A campaign could include location-based social media where allies could “check-in” and students in need could find them on campus,



as well as door decks, magnets, and buttons that visually signal students' involvement as an ally.

### **5. Expand appreciation for differences by building on the introduction of the StrengthsQuest assessment.**

Beginning in fall 2011, all incoming first-year students will take a StrengthsQuest assessment, which will identify a student's five talent "themes" as well as guide them on how they might use those talents to achieve academic, career, and personal success. The University of Minnesota could expand on that model to foster a broader understanding of how the unique strengths of each person are valuable.

**In practice:** Academic courses could incorporate social/emotional intelligence. Student programming that emphasizes social/emotional intelligence-building could be offered to first-year students.

**T**he sense of exclusion is commonplace on campus.

## **Conclusion**

While bullying and aggression seem rare in the classroom, the sense of exclusion is commonplace on campus. The scope of the PEL team's project was limited and focused on undergraduate students; however multiple students, faculty, and staff mentioned that bullying behaviors occur within and across all groups at the University. The presence of bullying among graduate students was confirmed in a 2007 survey conducted by the Student Conflict Resolution Center.

Students often do not receive overt messages of inclusion or the sense of community beyond the gloss of a shared coursework, and in some cases they receive messages of exclusion in the form of faculty bias and the insensitivity of fellow students. As one staff member explained: "If I'm getting subtle messages that I am different or not okay, then I need overt messages to counter that."

In order to address issues of exclusion, the University of Minnesota can adopt a positive strategy that is sensitive to the social and emotional development of its students. An effective strategy to encourage inclusiveness needs to be holistic and requires participation by all members of the University community. Once engaged, community members will be challenged to imagine what an inclusive University looks like, and called to action in the creation of an inclusive, supportive community of learning.



# Appendices



## Appendix A: Selected Results of Environmental Scan of Big Ten Universities

An environmental scan was conducted of Big Ten Conference Universities to document what, if any, programs or policies existed related to the topic of bullying. Team members conducted the environmental scans by searching the University web site by searching for the term bullying and pairing it with other words such as athletic, housing, policy, support, etc. Below are selected findings from several Big Ten Universities:

### University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

- March 2011 Event: No More Bullying: Stepping Up and Speaking Out, put on by the Counseling Center Paraprofessional Program.
- U of I Professors Dorothy Espelage and Philip Rodkin, both of the College of Education, were among seven experts invited to help shape U.S. national policy and create an educational website on bullying managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services in partnership with the Department of Education and the Department of Justice.

### Indiana University

- Student Ethics and Anti-Harassment Programs – their mission is to foster an accepting, safe, and civil environment which supports the academic process and student affairs goals through:
  - An educational campus judicial system
  - A network of supportive resources for targets of bias-motivated incidents and other types of abuse
  - Leadership and resources to enhance multicultural understanding.

### University of Iowa

- The University of Iowa has a website on Conflict Management that is intended as a resource about effective conflict management for all members of the University of Iowa community. A section of this website is dedicated to providing resources on workplace bullying.
- 2009 IPRO Report on Cyberbullying [The IPRO (Iowa Policy Research Organization) is a University of Iowa undergraduate student research group that prepares original policy research reports at the request of Iowa State Legislators and other public officials.]

### University of Michigan

- February 2011 Anti-Bullying Conference - The Michigan Student Assembly, alongside the College Democrats at the University of Michigan, and the Michigan Democratic Party's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) and Allies Caucus, hosted an anti-bullying action conference on behalf of all students.



## Appendix B: Interview and Focus Group Questions

### Moderator Guide-Student Focus Group

#### Opening Questions

(Establish connection with the group, ground the conversation, begin to understand the language being used by students, establish what behaviors students see as “acceptable” and “unacceptable”)

1. Thinking about your own experiences since you have been a student at the University of Minnesota, how would you say students treat each other here?
  - a. What about student online interactions—such as on Facebook or Twitter—how do these interactions online compare with in-person interactions?
2. How would you categorize the behaviors you see? (e.g. respectful, kind, competitive, aggressive)
  - a. Please give specific examples of the behaviors you categorized.

#### Definition of Bullying

(Transition to Topic of Bullying - Explain our particular interest in bullying and our operating definition, making sure to highlight the term “repeated” as well as mention other terms used to describe these behaviors, like incivility or harassment.)

3. Are you aware of behaviors like this at the U?
  - a. Please describe a behavior that you have observed while a student at the U that you would consider bullying.

#### Frequency, Tactics, and Targets of Bullying

4. How common is bullying among students at the U?
  - a. Is this based on your own observations or just what you think is going on?
5. What kind of bullying is most common at the U? (Check for whether this is what’s observed or what they think)
  - a. Please give specific examples (Probe for context).
6. Who is typically the target of bullying? (Check for whether this is what’s observed or what they think)
  - a. Please give specific examples (Probe for context).
7. Who is typically the bully? (Check for whether this is what’s observed or what they think)
  - a. Please give specific examples (Probe for context).

#### Reporting and Institutional Response

8. Where and How on campus would you report an incident of bullying?
9. What kinds of actions and consequences would you expect when bullying is reported at the U?

#### Other

10. What else would you like to share about this topic that we haven’t already covered in our conversation?



## Interviewer Guide - Staff Interviews

### Opening Questions

(Begin to understand the language being used by staff to describe student behavior, establish what behaviors staff see as “acceptable” and “unacceptable”)

1. How would you categorize the kinds of behaviors you see today among undergraduate students? (e.g. respectful, kind, competitive, aggressive?)
  - a. Please give specific examples of the behaviors you categorized.
2. What about student online interactions—such as on Facebook or Twitter—how do these interactions online compare with in-person interactions?

### Definition of Bullying

(Transition to Topic of Bullying - Explain our particular interest in bullying and our operating definition, making sure to highlight the term “repeated” as well as mention other terms used to describe these behaviors, like incivility or harassment.)

3. Are you aware of behaviors like this at the U?
  - a. Please describe a behavior that you have observed while a staff member at the U that you would consider bullying.
4. Have you had any previous training around the issue of bullying?

### Frequency, Tactics, and Targets of Bullying

5. How common is bullying among students at the U?
6. What forms of bullying are most prevalent at the U?
  - a. Please give specific examples (Probe for context)
7. Who is typically the target of bullying?
  - a. Please give specific examples (Probe for context)
8. Who is typically the bully?
  - a. Please give specific examples (Probe for context)

### Reporting and Institutional Response

9. Where and How on campus would you report an incident of bullying?
10. What kinds of actions and consequences would you expect when bullying is reported at the U?

### Solutions

11. Have you seen an effective solution to bullying? (This could be anywhere, not just at the U.)

### Other

12. What else would you like to share about this topic that we haven’t already covered in our conversation?

