

**Faculty at Risk:
U.S. Professors Report on Their
Experiences with Student
Incivility, Bullying, and
Aggression**

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Bullying:

What image comes to mind?

A schoolyard scene, with a bigger, stronger, or more popular child menacing a smaller or weaker one.



Sexual Harassment:

What image comes to mind?

An authority figure using a position of power to sexually coerce, intimidate, or extract favors from someone lower in status.



Contrapower Harassment (CPH)

- When a person with more institutional power (like a professor or teacher) is harassed by someone *seemingly* less powerful (like one of his or her students) (Benson, 1984).
- Recent research suggests this is happening frequently, and it is starting long before college.



It begins early...

American Psychological Association surveyed 4,735 teachers across the U.S (Chamberlin, 2010):

- 37% received an obscene or sexual remark from a student
- 27% had been verbally threatened by a student
- 25% had property damaged by a student
- 19% had been intimidated by a student
- 15% had been physically attacked by a student in the past year



High School Culture of Bullying and Aggression

- In 2010, the Josephson Institute of Ethics (www.josephsoninstitute.org) surveyed 43,321 high school students and found that in the last year:
 - 52% had hit someone because they were angry
 - 50% had bullied someone
 - 47% had been seriously bullied, teased, or taunted themselves
 - 33% said violence was a big problem at their school
 - 24% did not feel safe at school
 - 10% had taken a weapon to school at least once

Examples of CPH (Lampman, Crew, Lowery, & Mulder, 2012)

- "Called me a bitch; one threw his bag on the ground and started screaming"
- *"Throwing insults at me in class...like I am not learning shit in this class, waste of money etc."*
- "The student referred to me as a whore in class."
- *"Accused me of discrimination; lied about my behavior; shouted repeatedly at me in class; threatened grievances."*
- "...accused me of favoritism, and damaged my car while at work."
- *"She asked me if this was a class that she needed to 'lay' the teacher to get an A."*
- "...threats of harm to me, my family, & to slash my tires."
- *"Threatened me. Wrote a note on the final test on what would happen if I didn't give him the desired grade."*
- "...student made the comment that if he was not admitted to the nursing program that he would just take a gun and "blow" everyone away."

Why might CPH be increasing?

- ***“...Students are Overwhelmed and Underprepared”*** (Aronowitz, 2011, campustechnology.com)
 - "Students today face new challenges and are increasingly spread thin, whether it's [because they are] working full time, balancing finances, or caring for families. Instructors feel the pressure, too, as they try to do more with fewer resources and teach students who are either ill-prepared for their day's lesson or distracted by other issues."

Why might CPH be increasing?

- **Consumer mentality:**
 - The rising cost of a college education has also fostered a 'consumer attitude' among some students (and parents) who feel they're 'paying customers' who should be 'served up' their desired grades (Delucchi & Korgen, 2002; Lampman et al. 2009).



Why might CPH be increasing?

- **A rise in ‘academic self-entitlement’:**

- “...expectations of high rewards for modest effort, expectations of special consideration and accommodation by teachers when it comes to grades, and impatience and anger when their expectations and perceived needs are not met” (Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farrugia, 2008, p. 1194).



Academic Entitlement

Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia (2008) Survey of 466 undergraduates at a large, public university	% Endorsing
If I have explained to my professor that I am trying hard, I think he/she should give me some consideration with respect to my grade	66.2%
If I have completed most of the reading for a class, I deserve a B	40.7%
If I have attended most classes for a course, I deserve at least a grade of B	34.1%
Professors who won't let me take an exam at a different time because of my personal plans (vacation or other important trip) are too strict	29.9%
Teachers often give me lower grades than I deserve on exams	25.4%
A professor should be willing to lend me his/her notes if I ask for them	24.8%
I would think poorly of a professor who didn't respond the same day to an email I sent	23.5%

Where does this academic entitlement come from?

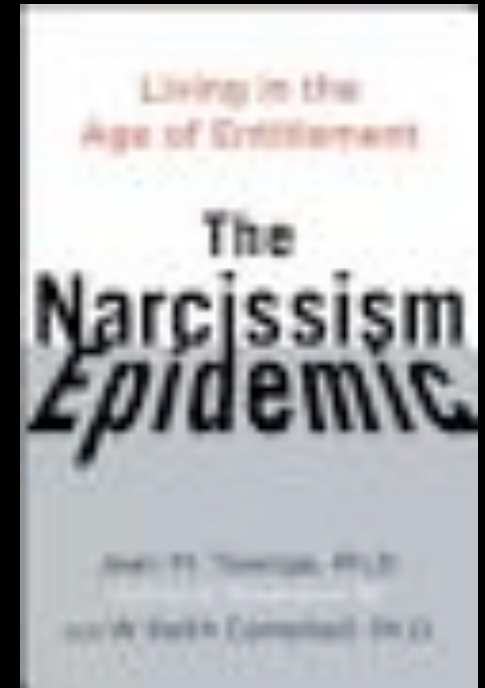
Grade Inflation: B is the new C

- **In past 30 years:**
 - **83% increase in # students w/ A average**
 - **33% now are “straight A students”**
 - **1% improvement in academic performance** (NAEP cited in Twenge & Campbell, 2009)
- **Consequences?**
 - **Expect high rewards for little effort**
 - **Have little experience with failure or critical evaluation of skills so less opportunity to build resilience**
 - **Quite optimistic about future**



Isn't optimism a good thing?

- **Twenge & Campbell (2009):**
 - 50% of HS seniors expect to earn a graduate degree
 - 25% expected to in 1976
 - 9% actually will
 - 75% of HS seniors anticipate a 'professional' job by age 30
 - 20% probably will get there
- That's *unrealistic* optimism
 - Sets students up for failure
 - Leads some to lash out at those who block their goals – namely teachers or professors



Are all faculty equally at risk?

■ Faculty Status

□ According to American Association of University Professors (West & Curtis, 2006) women are underrepresented at higher ranks:

- Only 1 in 4 full professors at US colleges is a woman
- Women are less likely to hold full-time academic positions (despite receiving 1/2 of all graduate degrees)
- Women more likely to be in temporary (not tenure-track) positions
- Less than 1 in 3 tenured faculty are women

■ Likely that women, minorities, and faculty w/ less experience, no PhD, lower rank, no tenure eligibility, or adjunct status are viewed as **lower in status** (Lampman, 2012).



Prescriptive gender norms... (see Rudman & Glick, 2008)

Women expected to be:

- **Communal** (e.g., understanding, accommodating, friendly, sensitive, compassionate, nurturing, and forgiving)



Men expected to be:

- **Agentic** (e.g., assertive, dominant, and unwavering in their demands).

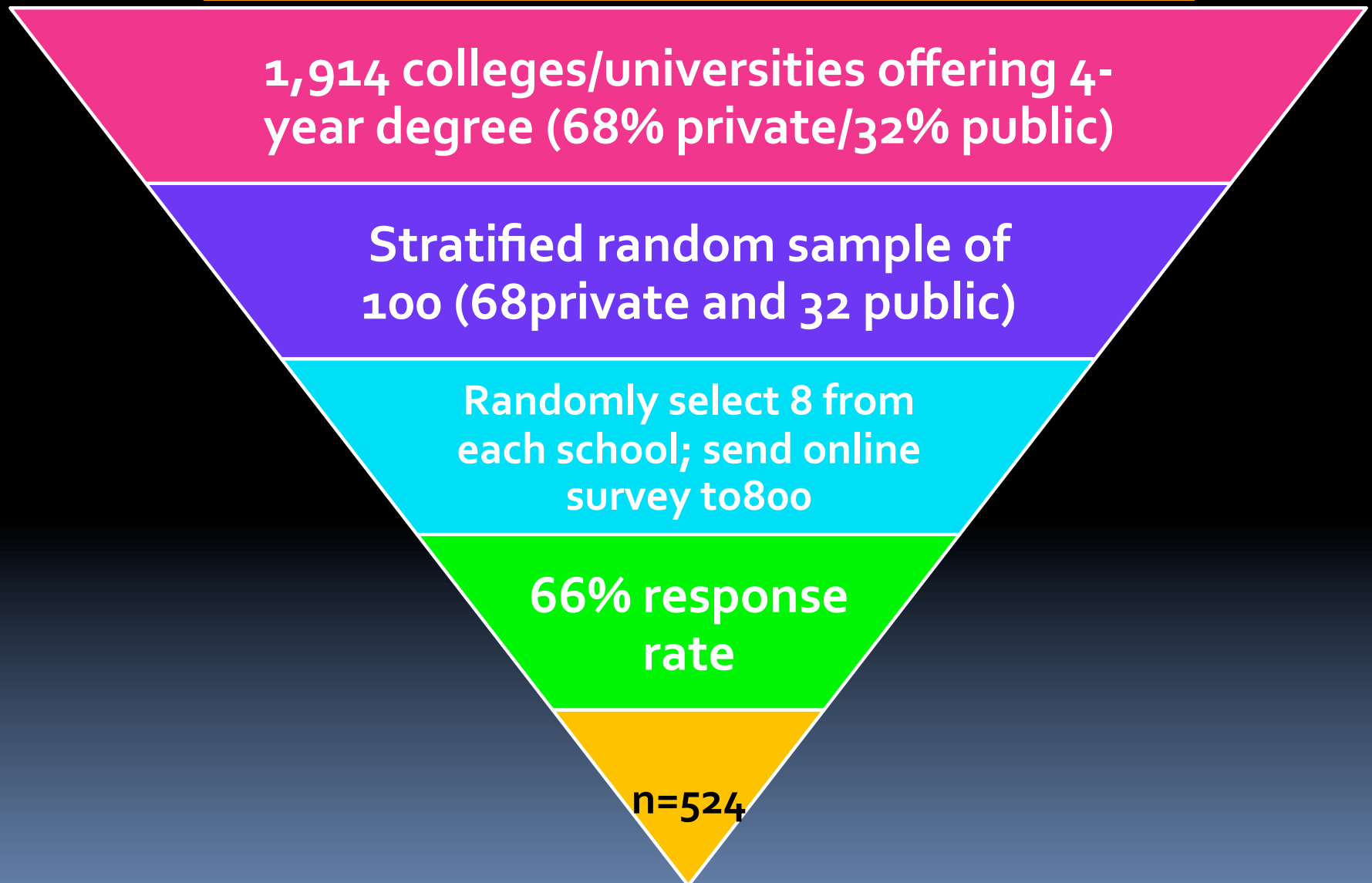


May put women faculty at increased risk when they do not accommodate because they are violating gender norms.

Random Sample of US Professors

(Lampman, 2012)

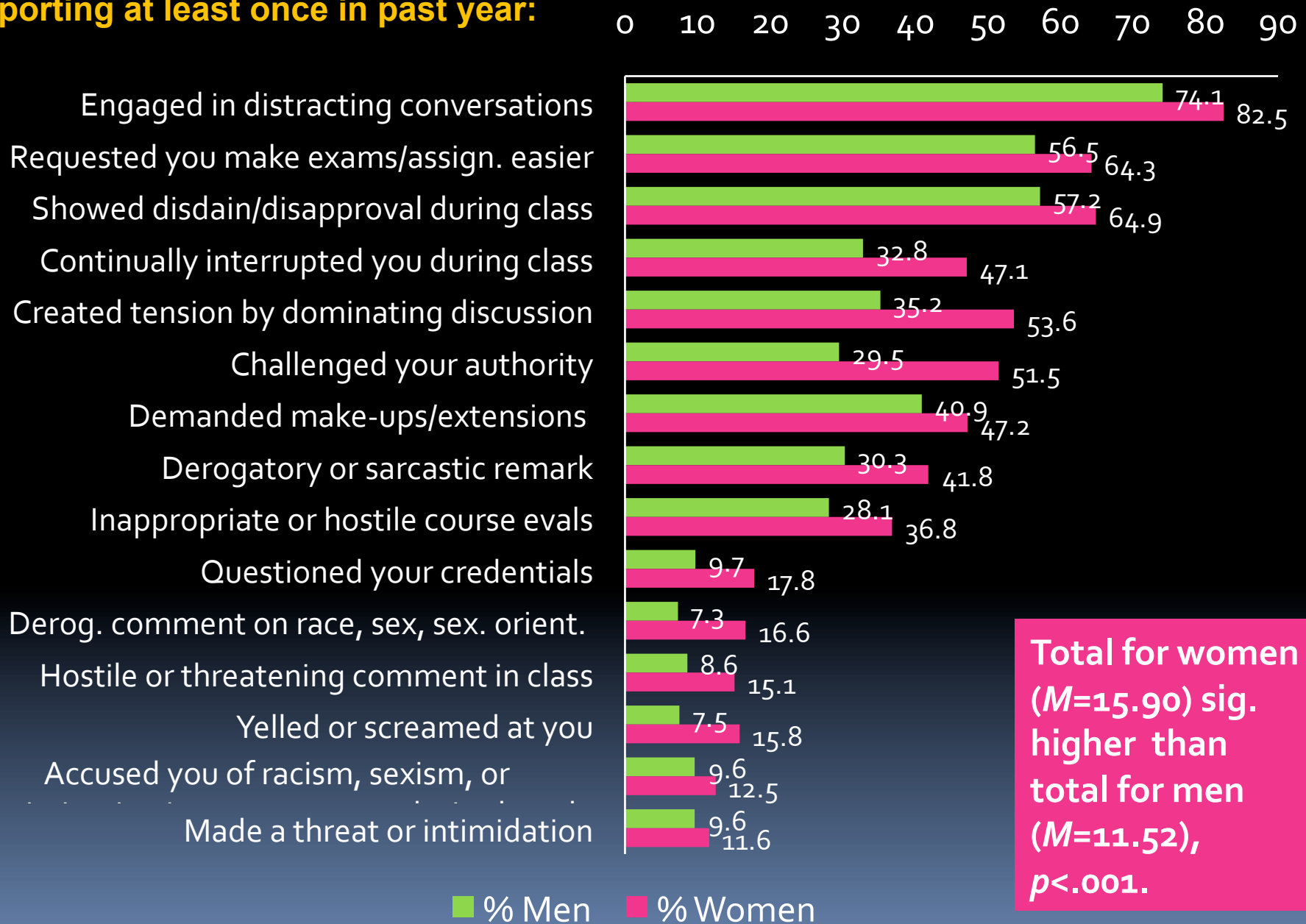
<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation>



Reported Student Incivility-Bullying by Gender

(Lampman, 2012)

% reporting at least once in past year:

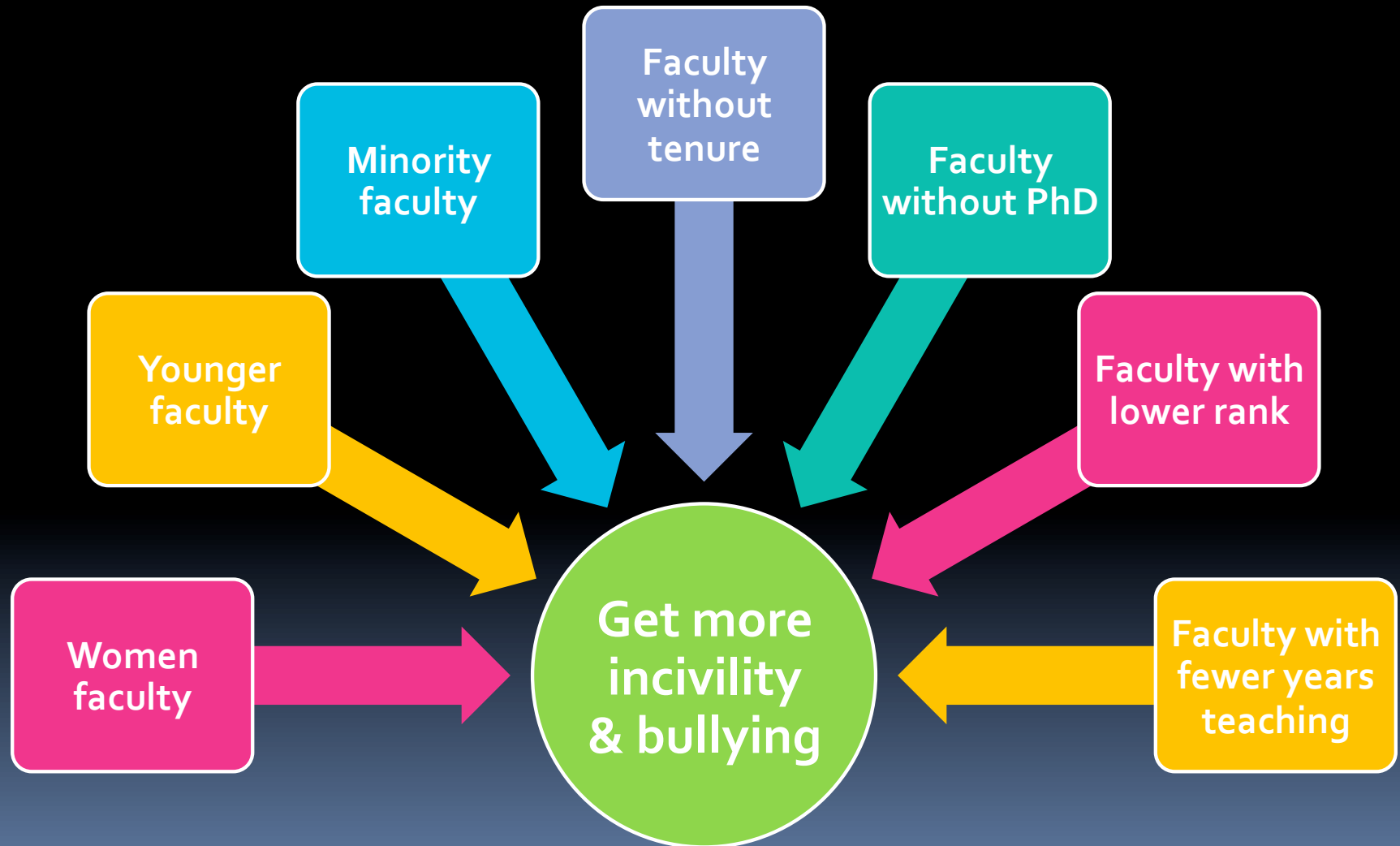


Total for women
($M=15.90$) sig.
higher than
total for men
($M=11.52$),
 $p<.001$.

Significant Predictors of Incivility-Bullying

Bivariate Correlations

(Lampman, 2012)



Significant Predictors of Incivility-Bullying

Multiple Regression Analysis

(Lampman, 2012)



Serious Student Aggression

(Lampman, 2012)

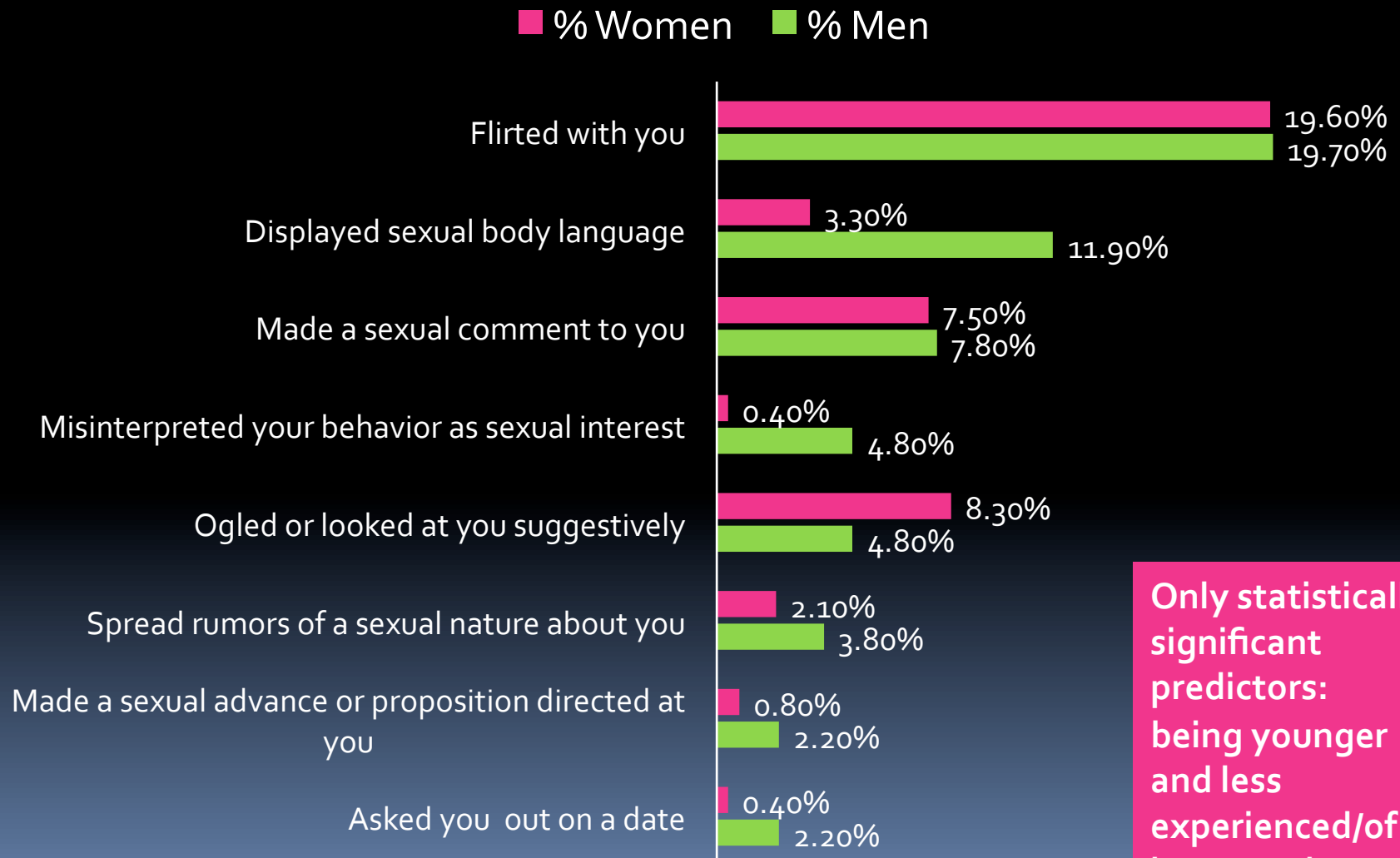
Student behavior occurring at least once in past year	% Faculty
Made a death threat to you or a colleague	1.4%
Threatened physical harm to you	0.4%
Attacked you physically	0.4%
Damaged your personal or university property	2.1%
Attempted to bribe you for a better grade	4.5%
Stalked or followed you	1.2%
Used or threatened to use a weapon against you	0.2%

About 650 faculty members at UAF in 2011:

- 9 faculty would get death threats
- 2-3 threatened with physical harm
- 2-3 would be attacked
- 14 would have property damaged
- 29 would be offered a bribe
- 8 would be stalked
- 1 would be threatened with weapon or worse

Sexual Student Behavior Aimed at Faculty (Lampman, 2012)

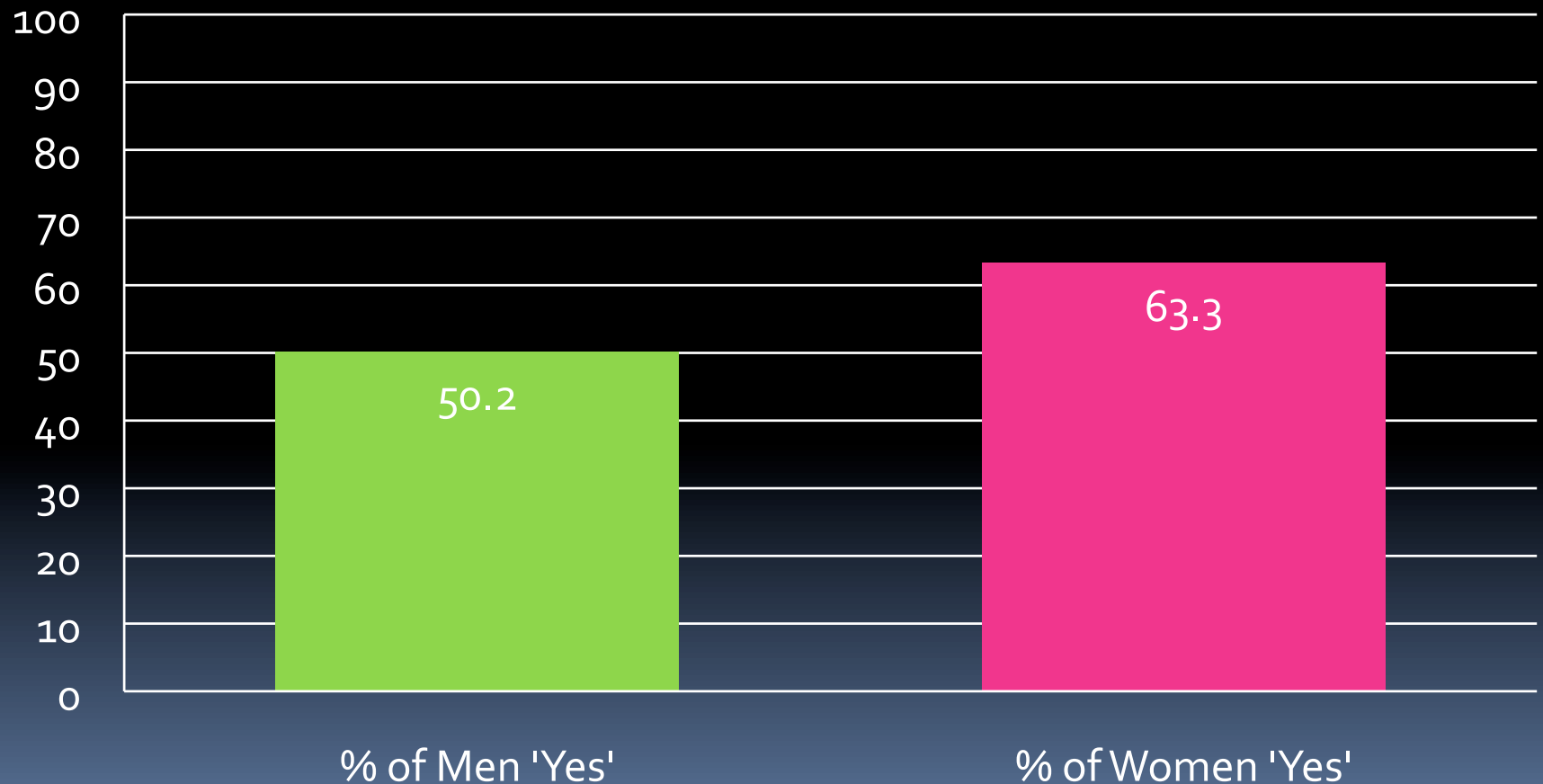
% of faculty reporting behavior at least once in past year



Only statistically significant predictors:
being younger
and less experienced/of lower rank.

Have you experienced a significant incident of student incivility, bullying, aggression or sexual harassment? (N=257e) (Lampman, Crew, Lowery, & Mulder, in progress)

Significantly more women than men said yes, $p < .01$



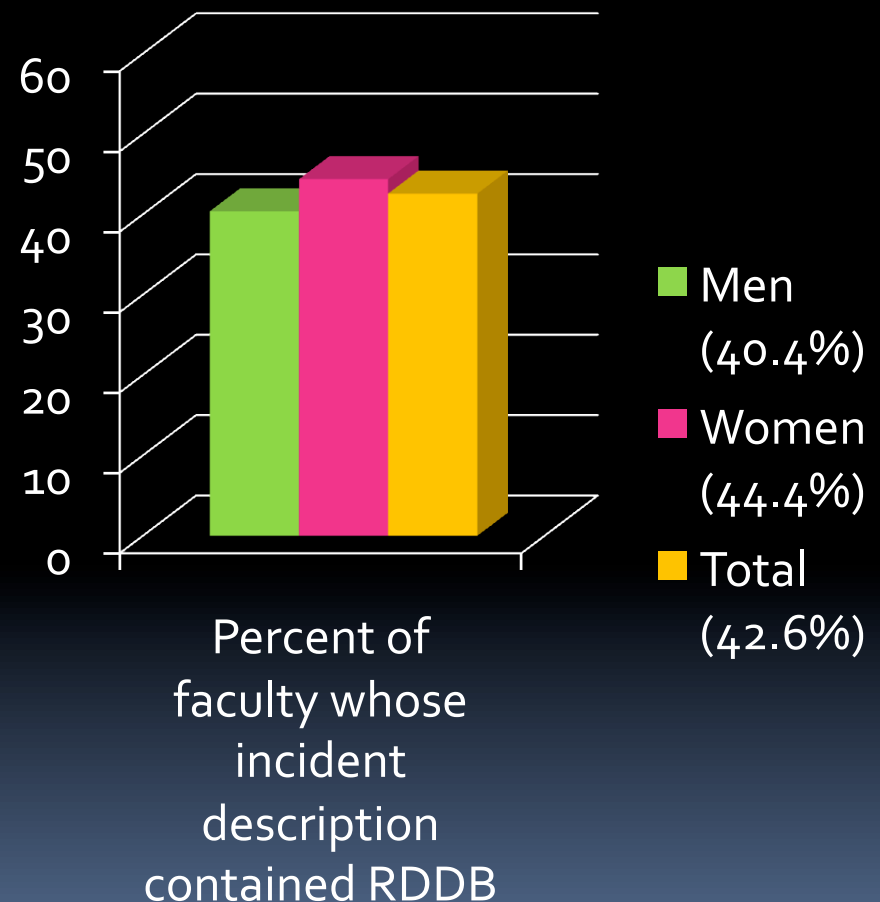
Keyword Analysis of Text

(Lampman, in press; Lampman et al., 2012)

- Respondents described *"most severe incident during their career"* in their own words
- Categorized each response using SPSS Text Analytics for Surveys using keywords/phrases as:
 - Rude, disruptive, or disrespectful behaviors (RDDDB)
 - Hostility, anger, or aggression (HAA)
 - Challenging, arguing, refusing behaviors (CARB)
 - Intimidation, threats, bullying, and accusations (ITBA)
 - Unwanted sexual attention (USA)
 - Sexual harassment (SH)
- Note: an incident could receive more than one code
 -

Rude, Disrespectful, Disruptive Behaviors (RDDDB) (Lampman et al., 2012)

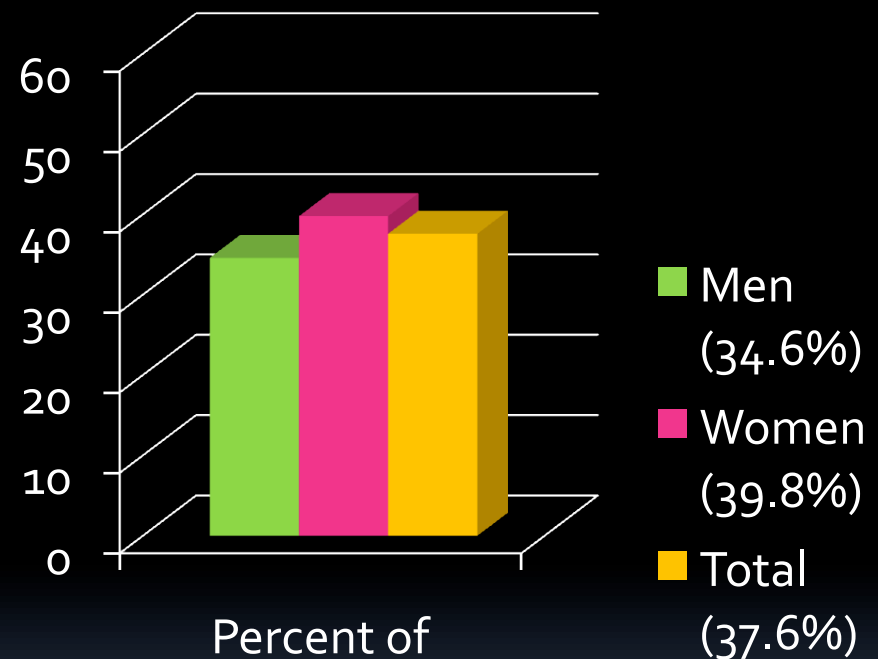
- “Eye rolling, snide remarks loud enough for her peers at her table to hear but low enough that I couldn't hear, “disgust” as a facial expression, said “fuck” loudly...”
- “Very sarcastic and condescending in class.”
- “Two students routinely conversed together during class in loud voices, disturbing the rest of the class.”



Hostility, Anger, Aggression (HAA)

(Lampman et al., 2012)

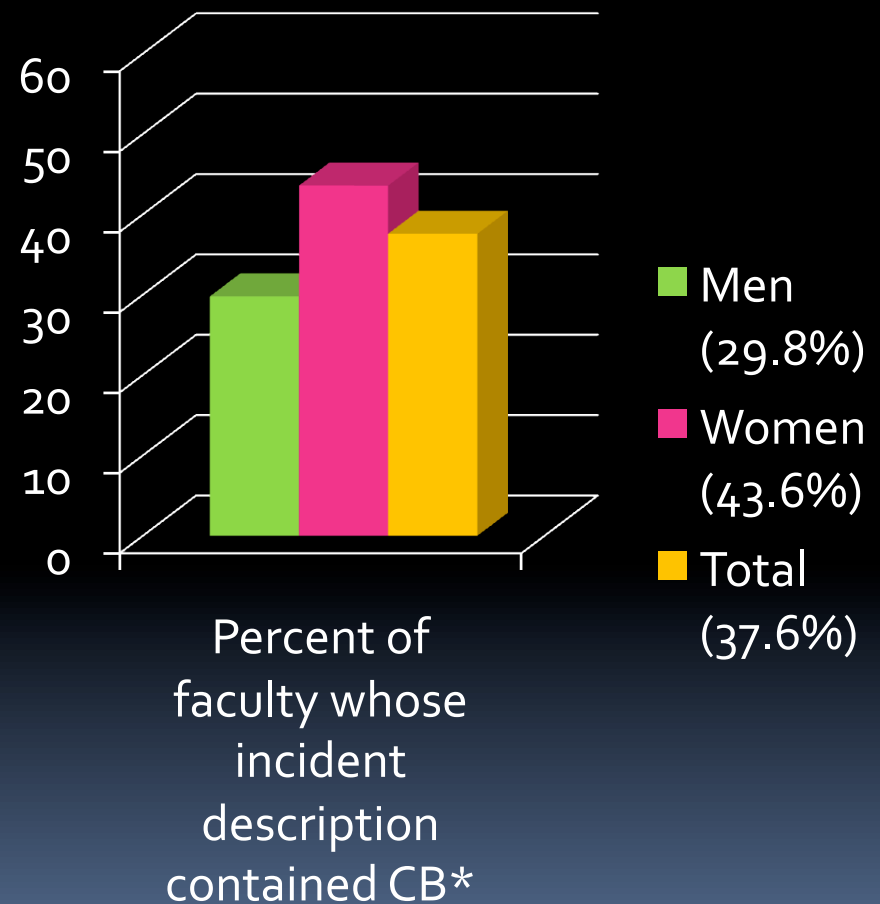
- “Public verbal assault (yelling, spitting, screaming, etc) -- onlookers called police.”
- “Became very verbally angry. Seemed to lack control of anger. Physically red, head and neck veins distended, hands clenched.”
- “Displayed anger and seemed nearly violent when told he must take a quiz despite missing the previous class due to a sporting event (excused).”



Percent of
faculty whose
incident
description
contained HAA

Challenging Behaviors (Lampman et al., 2012)

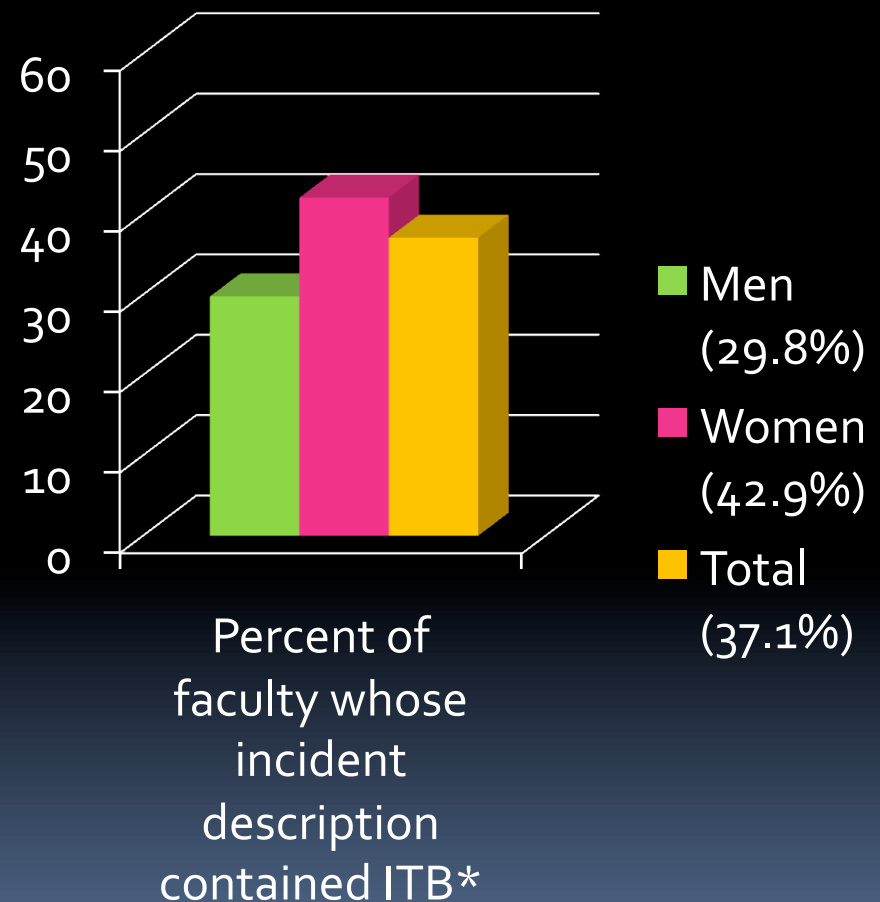
- “Student argued with me regarding a quiz question. I explained why the student's answer was wrong, but the student wouldn't drop the subject and kept arguing.”
- “This was an extremely outspoken student who challenged everything from assignments to his answers on tests. It was obvious the rest of the class saw him outside the norm. Hostile evaluation and questioning of credentials”
- “Explicitly challenged my authority and ability to run class.”



* p<.01; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Intimidation, Threats, Bullying, & Accusations (ITBA) (Lampman et al., 2012)

- "Threatening legal action for not allowing prohibited make up classes, exams, late papers etc."
- "I received a death threat."
- "Threatened physical harm."
- "Student accused me of racism after I caught him in plagiarism for the second time, threatened to call in authorities but did not follow through."
- "Attempting to bully me into changing grade."

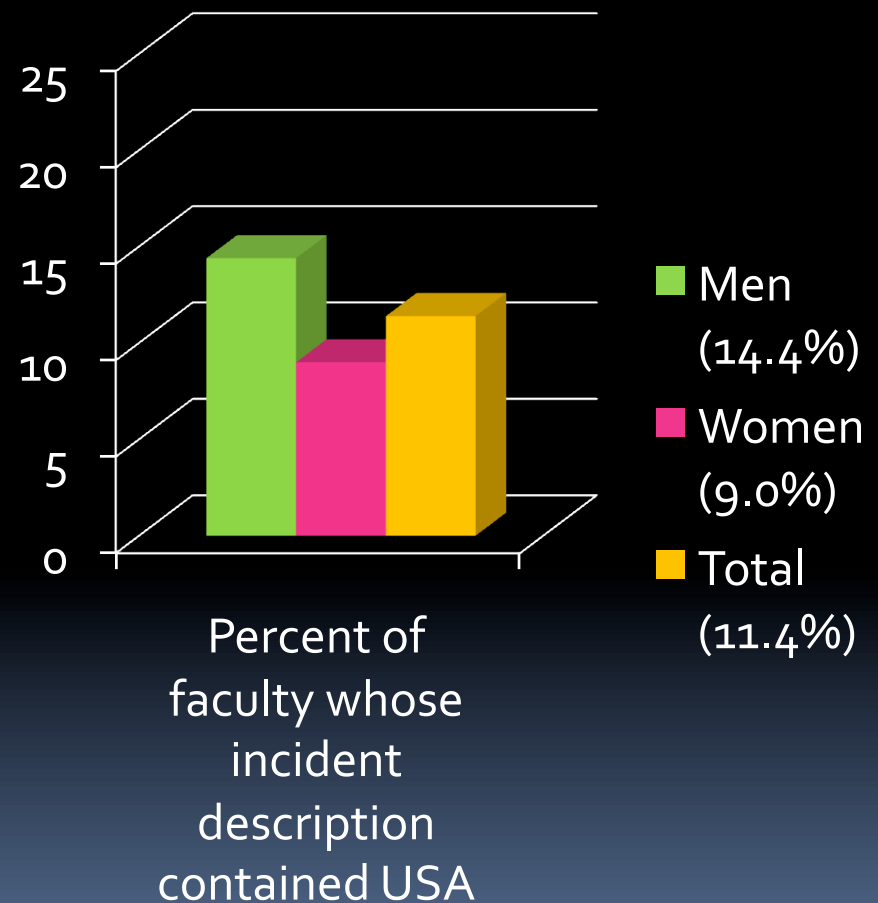


* p<.01; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Unwanted Sexual Attention (USA)

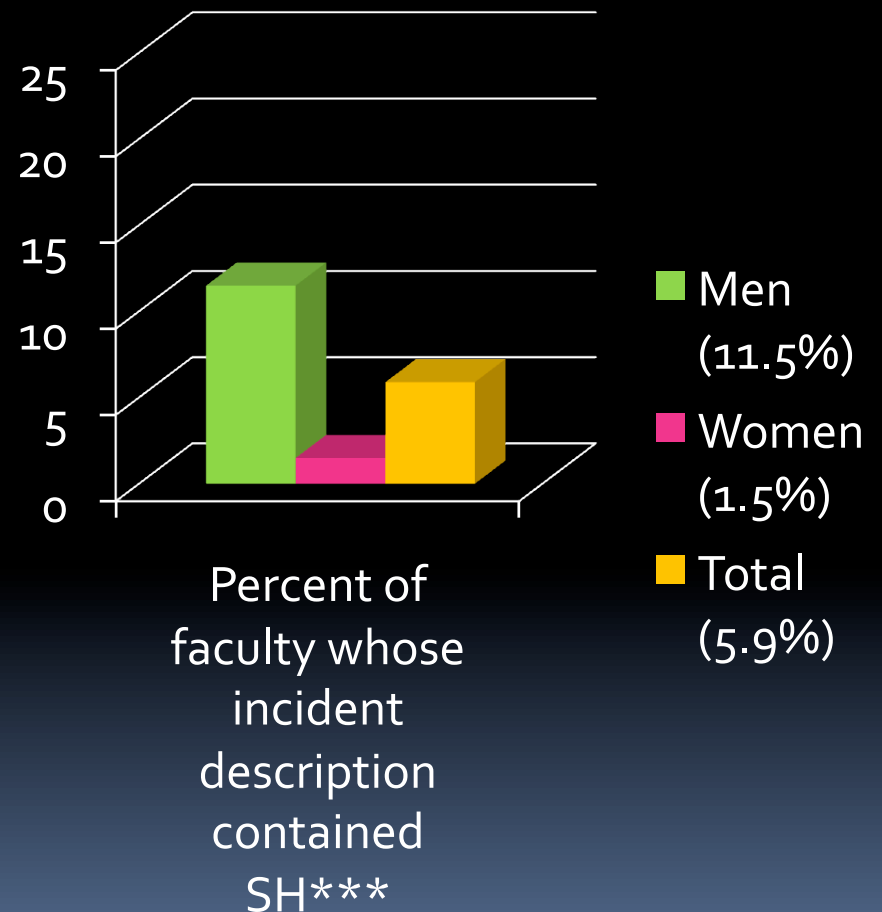
(Lampman et al., 2012)

- "I have been asked out on a date, or told I looked 'hot'..."
- "Student flirted excessively with me."
- "A student 'crush' that included a letter of proposition and flirtatious behavior."



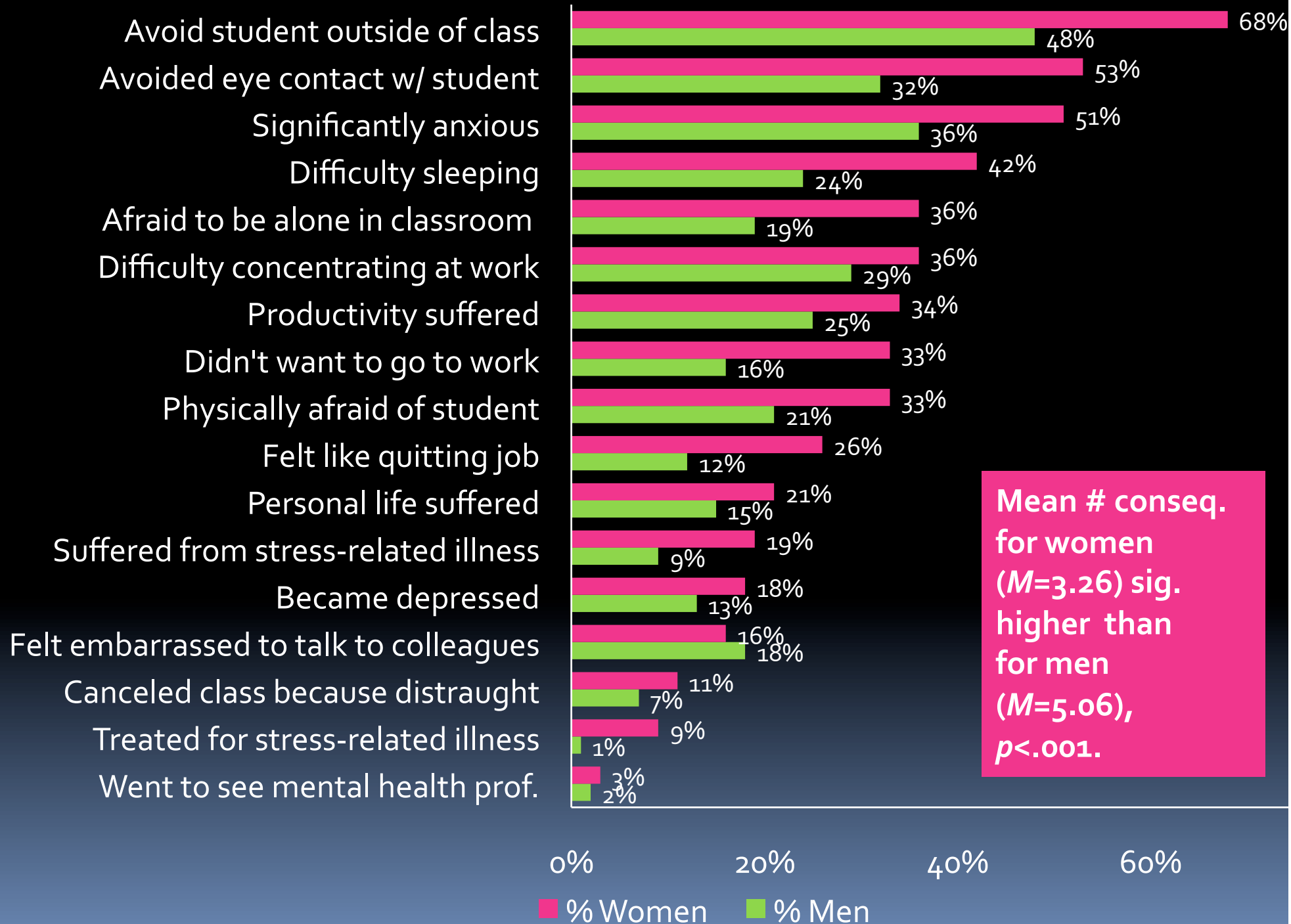
Sexual Harassment (Lampman et al., 2012)

- “She suggested that she would do ANYTHING for a grade...”
- “Disseminated some material with her friends indicating that she found me sexually attractive, fantasizing about sexual activity with me, and indicating that was something she would like to see happen.”
- “Suggestion of sexual favors in return for a good grade.”

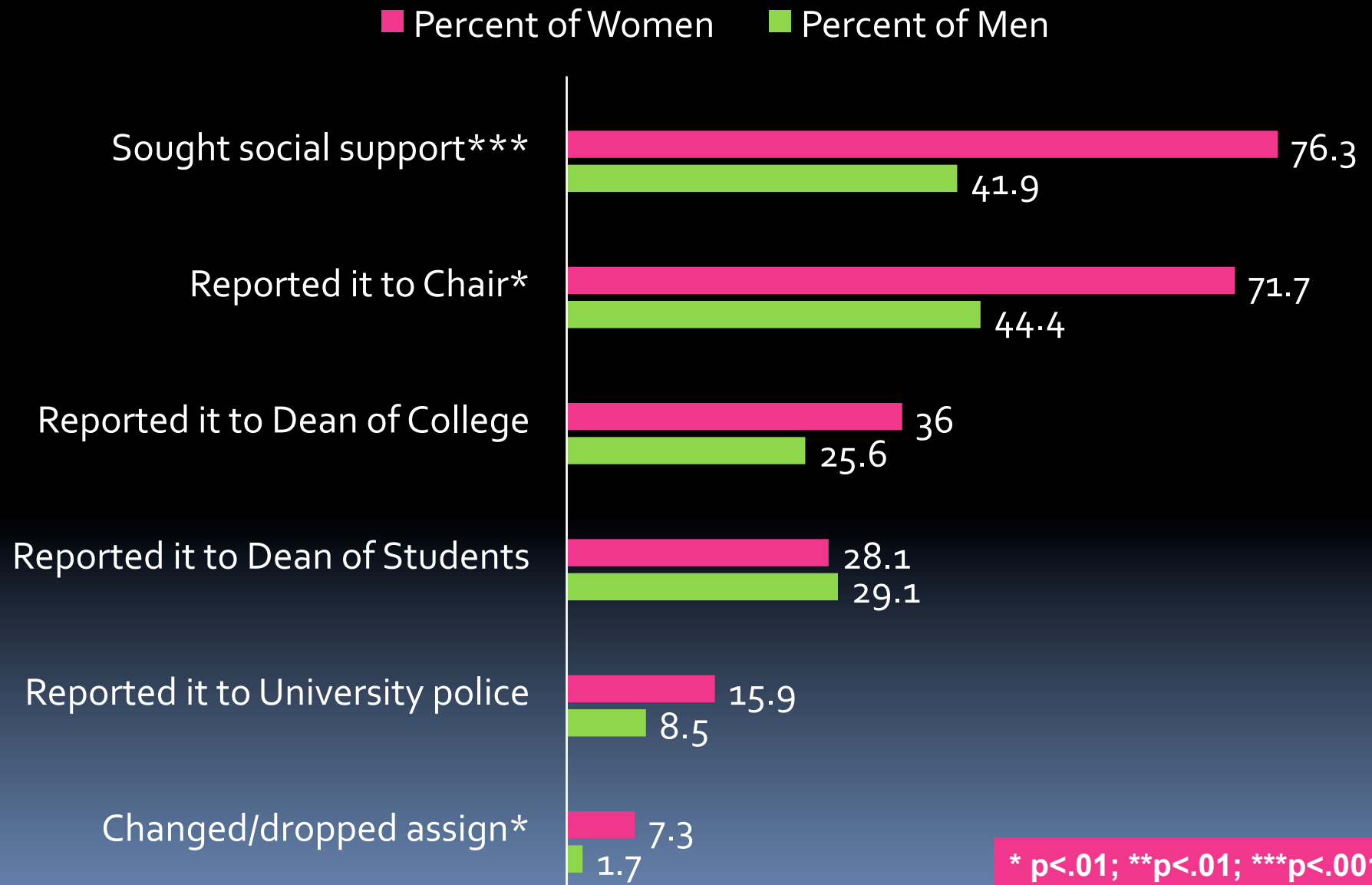


* p<.01; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Negative Consequences of CPH (Lampman et al., 2012)



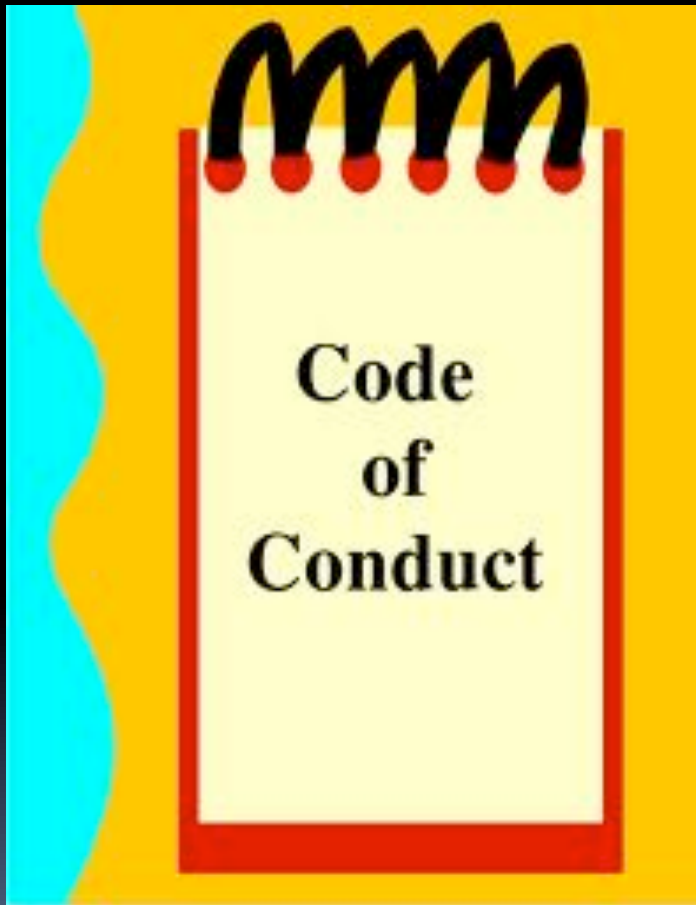
How do Faculty Respond to Most Serious Incident of CPH? (Lampman, in press)



How do Faculty Respond to Most Serious Incident of CPH? (Lampman, in press)

- **Fewer than 1 in 3 report to DOS**
 - Faculty may not know the correct way to report
 - May fear it will affect chances for retention, tenure, promotion
 - But when they do report, fairly satisfied with outcome
- **Reporting to Chair or College Dean may backfire**
 - They are faculty supervisors; can't discipline students
 - They may ask you to change a grade to make it go away
- **Women more likely to take action than men**
 - Experience harsher incidents
 - More open to sharing vulnerability with colleagues
- **Women much more likely to change/drop assignments**
 - What needs to change is student's behavior
 - Women shouldn't feel pressured to 'water down' or drop assignments because they lead to problems

Recommendations for Faculty



■ Code of Conduct

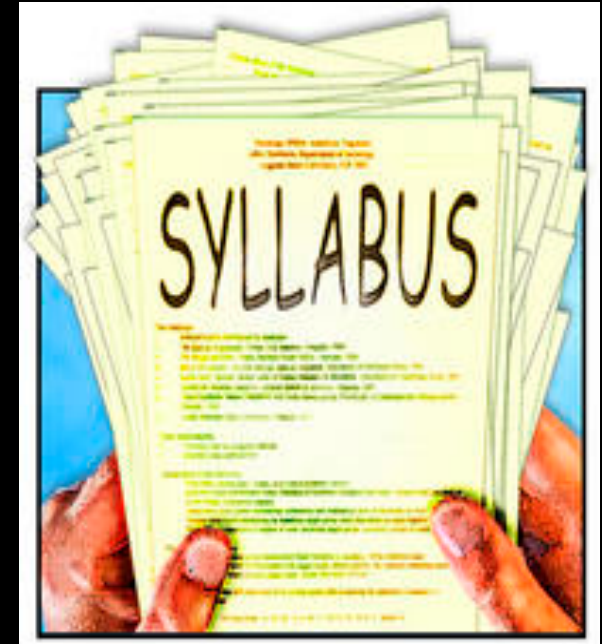
(Morris, 2008)

- Best if students have hand in developing it
- Establish 'ground rules' for class
 - What constitutes civil conduct in class and in electronic communications with faculty and peers?
 - What actions, words, and requests are unacceptable?

Recommendations for Faculty

■ Class Policies

- **Have clear policies (and enforce them):**
 - late work
 - missed exams
 - use of technology in classroom
 - plagiarism
 - grading policies
- **Avoid making special accommodations:**
- *"All students in the class were informed that these were the policies at the beginning of the class and in the syllabus, and it would be unfair to everyone else to give one person an exception."* (Lampman, 2012)
 - Invoking norm of 'fairness' increases likelihood that students will comply with it (Bicchieri & Chavez, 2009)



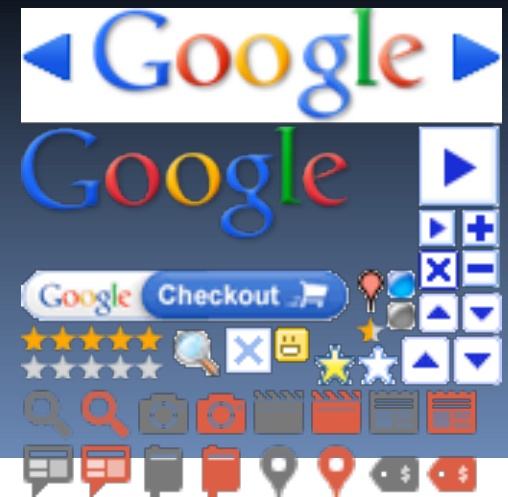
Recommendations for Faculty

Technology and Social Networking

- **Set limits and expectations for access**
 - Students can contact faculty 24/7
 - State how long they can expect to wait
- **Maintain clear boundaries with students**
 - Not a good idea to 'friend' students
 - Avoid using cell or home phone to communicate with students
- **Conduct electronic 'check-up'**
 - Google yourself
 - Report anything damaging; have it removed
 - Also report it to the University



facebook®



Recommendations for Faculty

Responding to CPH

- When instances arise, even if slight, deal with them right away (Schultz, 2008)
 - Calling attention to a student's disruptive behavior is usually enough to keep it from happening again
 - Letting incivility go may be seen as tacit approval of the behavior :
 - They're likely to do it again or cross a further line in the future
 - Incivility is a stepping stone on the continuum of aggression
- Encourage face-to-face meetings rather than email, preferably with another person present



What helps?

- **At UAA, CAFÉ has workshops several times a semester to help faculty learn to deal with CPH**
- **Psychology Undergrad faculty have 'mentoring moments' in our weekly meetings to gather advice and support from colleagues about difficult students**
- **Our Dean of Students Office is incredibly supportive and effective in managing CPH**
 - **But they can't help you if you don't ask for it.**



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