



## **Scattered Lunch Talk #1: The CSWA Survey on Workplace Climate and Anti-Harassment Policies**

presenter: **Dr. Christina Richey**,  
*Senior Scientist, NASA HQ and SDSE*

Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
12:30-2:00 pm

Room 318A

Please bring lunch with you.

## **The IAU XXIX GA Women's Scattered Lunch Talks**

organized by:

The IAU Women in Astronomy Working Group

and

The AAS Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy



# The CSWA Survey on Workplace Climate: Initial Results

Christina R. Richey<sup>1</sup>, Kathryn B. H. Clancy<sup>2</sup>,  
Erica Rodgers<sup>1</sup>

1. The AAS Committee of the Status of Women in Astronomy (CSWA), [christina.richey.2@gmail.com](mailto:christina.richey.2@gmail.com).
2. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

With Gracious Support from:

**AAS Committee on the Status of Women**



# Introduction/Motivation

- Workplace climate can promote, or hinder, scientific productivity and innovation. We sought to discover whether scientists in the astronomical community experienced a hostile work environment.
- We also investigated the extent to which negative experiences 1) were motivated by the target's identity (e.g., gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, religion, neurodiversity, or race and ethnicity) and 2) affected the extent to which respondents felt safe in their workplaces.

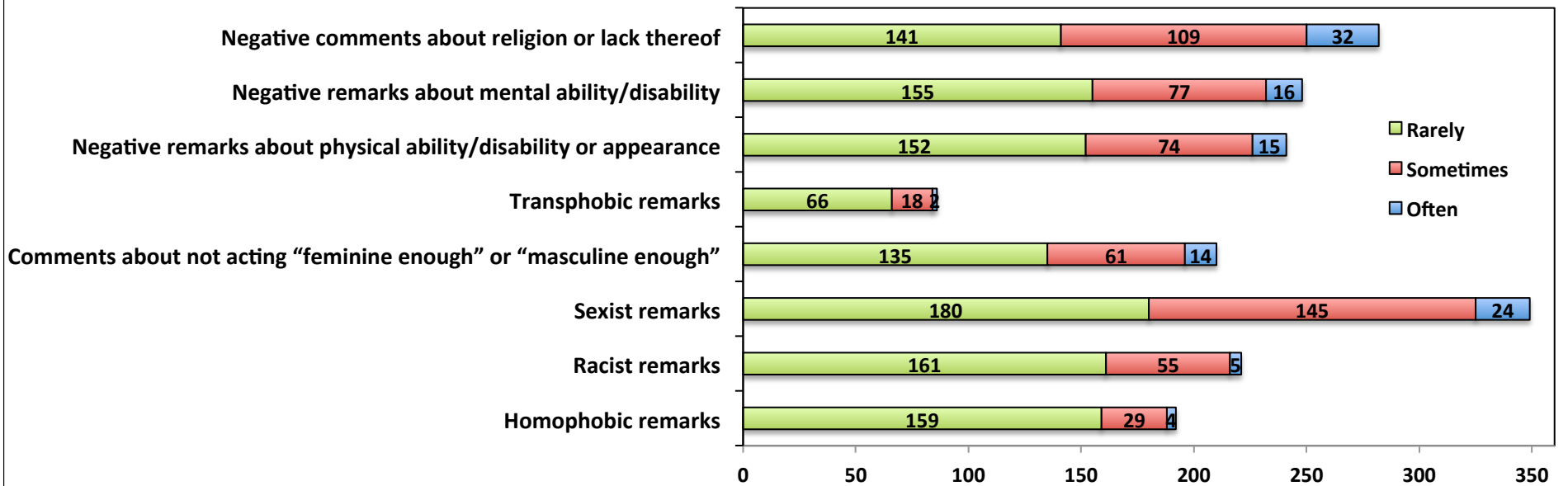


# Methodology

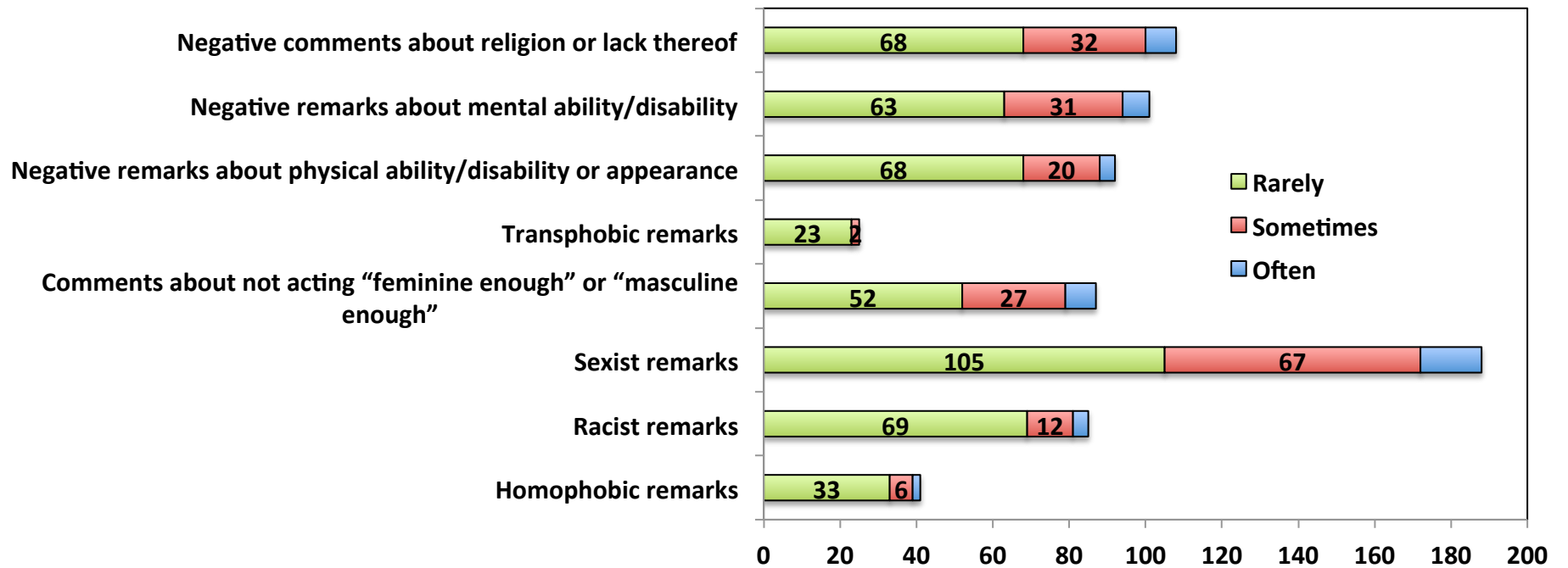
- We recruited 426 participants for an online survey via blog posts, newsletters, and meetings within the Planetary Science and Astronomy communities (e.g., AAS Meeting, AAS Newsletter, Women in Astronomy Blog, Women in Planetary Science Blog, PEN Editor).
- Questions were confined to experiences in their current and previous positions only. We report the preliminary results from respondents' experiences in the last five years.
- We obtained IRB approval (#15354, University of Illinois) for this project.
- Thank you to those who gave their time by responding to our survey. The CSWA also provided funding for this project.

<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>				
<b>Career Level</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Non-binary</b>	<b>Total</b>
Student	85	22	3	100
Other (please specify)	14	10		24
Postdoctoral Position	59	29	1	89
Sr. Staff scientist/Sr. Research scientist/Tenured professor/or Equivalent	62	47		109
Staff scientist/Research scientist/Non-tenured professor/or Equivalent	65	28	1	94
<b>Gender Identity</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Non-binary</b>	<b>Total</b>
Cisgender	280	133	1	414
Transgender	3	2	4	9
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Non-binary</b>	<b>Total</b>
Straight	241	123	1	365
Gay	4	4	1	9
Lesbian	10		2	12
Bisexual	29	3		32
Pansexual	5	1	1	7
Queer	9	3	2	14
Asexual	8	1		9
Questioning or Unsure	8	3		11
<b>Ability Status</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Non-binary</b>	<b>Total</b>
Disabled	7	3	1	11
Able-bodied	200	98	2	300
Neuroatypical	26	12	1	39
Neurotypical	86	36	1	123
Hearing impaired	1	3		4
Visually impaired	2	4		6
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Non-binary</b>	<b>Total</b>
Asian or Pacific Islander	18	6		24
Black or African American	1	3		4
Hispanic, Latino or Latina	20	6	1	27
Middle Eastern or Arab American	1	3	1	5
Multiracial	11	5		16
Native American, American Indian or Alaska Native	1			1
White or European American	249	120	3	372
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Non-binary</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Total # of responses that were not left blank for demographics	<b>285</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>426</b>

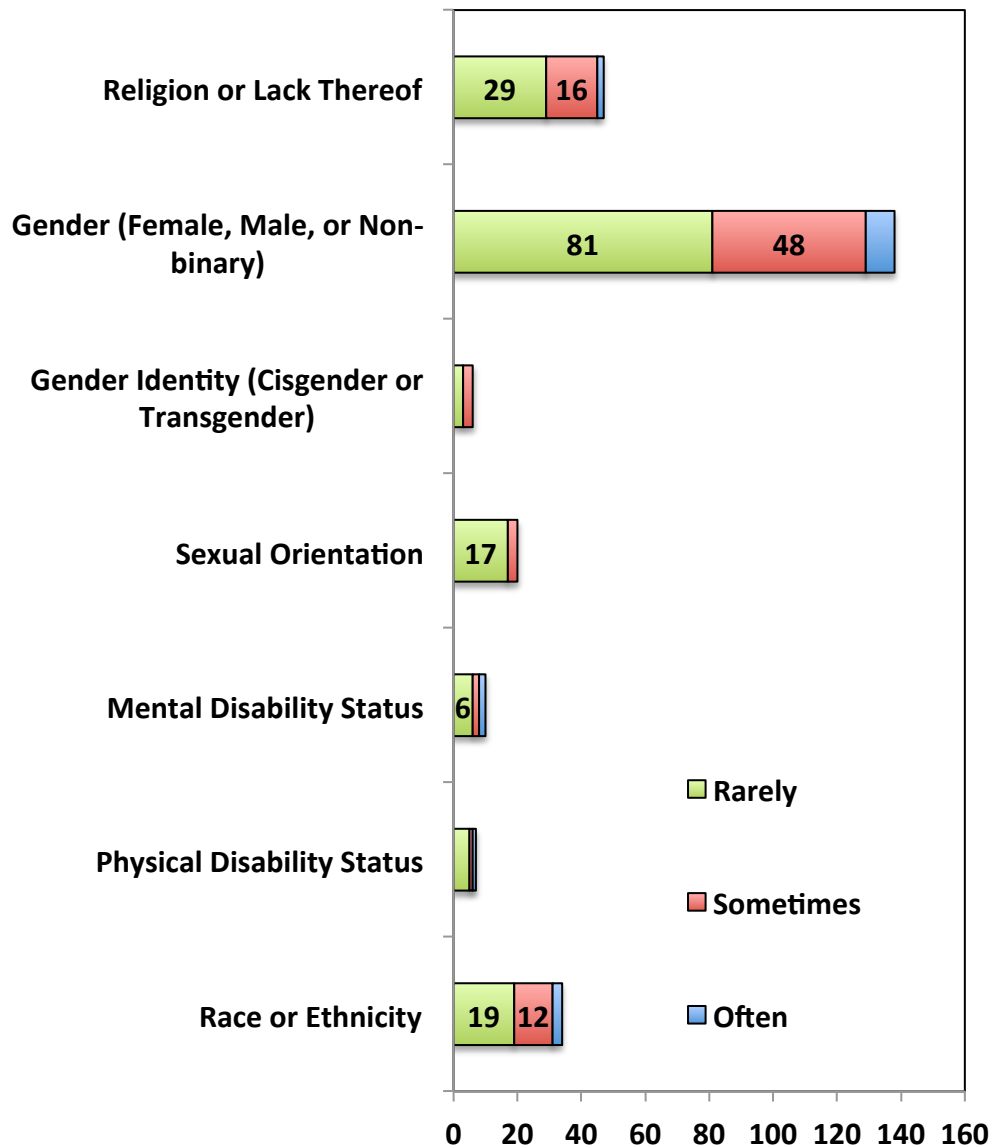
### How often do you hear the following language from your PEERS?



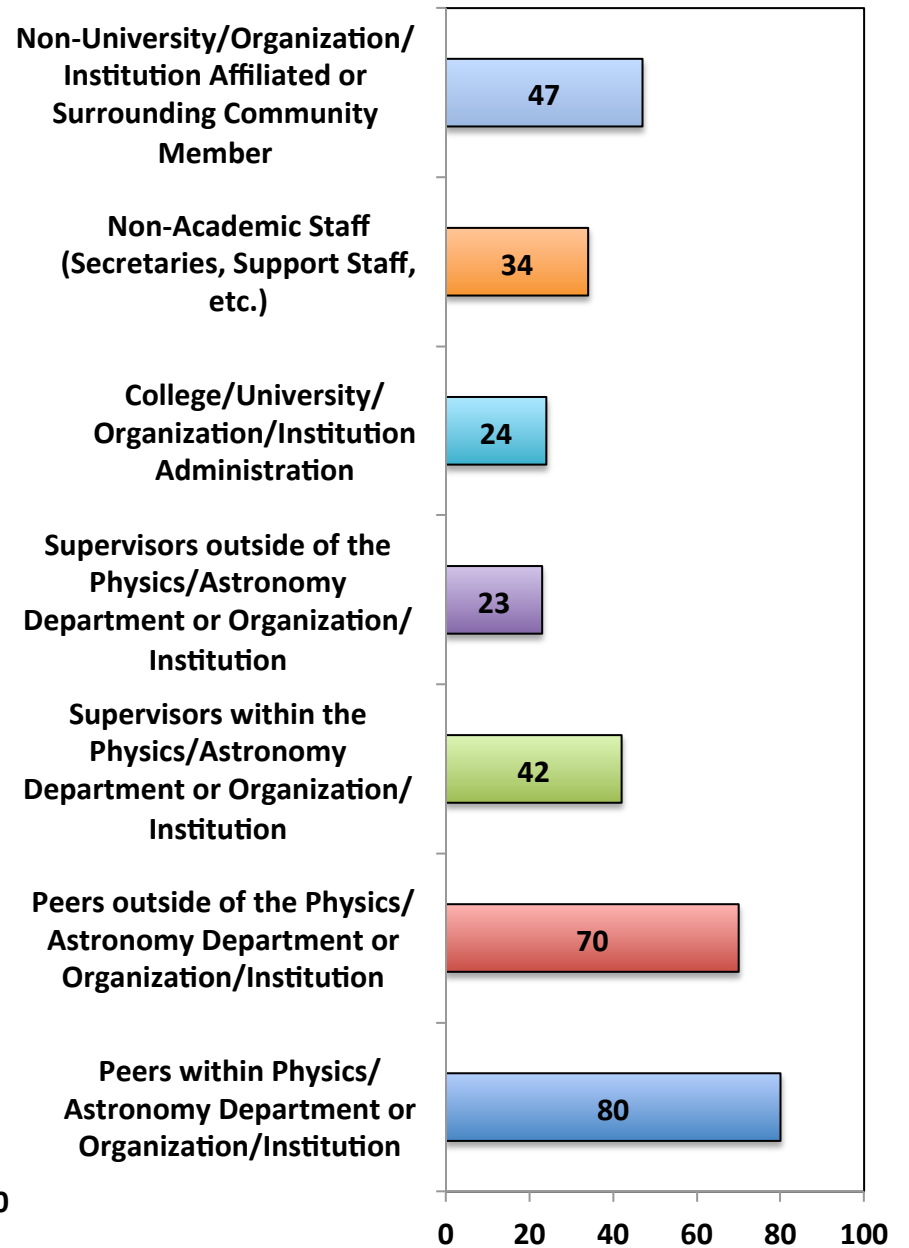
### How often do you hear the following language from your SUPERVISOR?



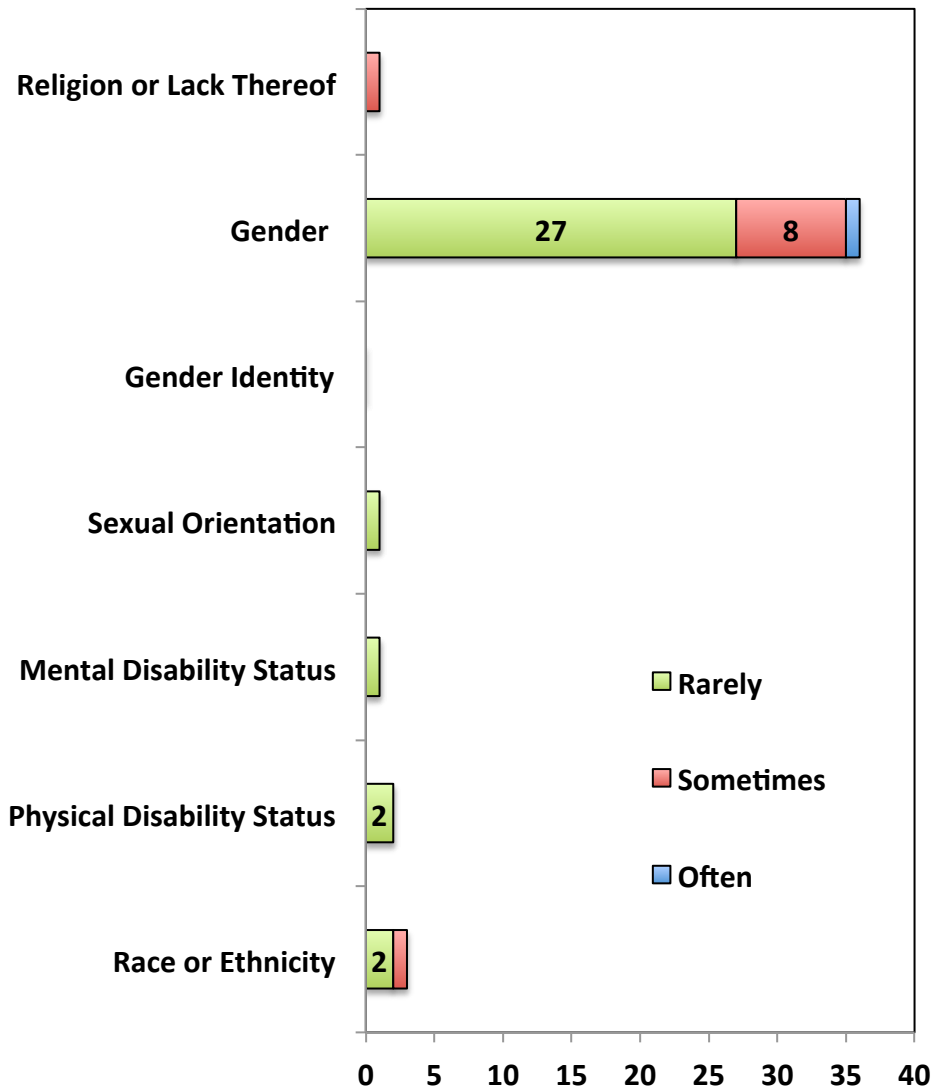
In your current position, how often have you been **VERBALLY** harassed because of the following characteristics?



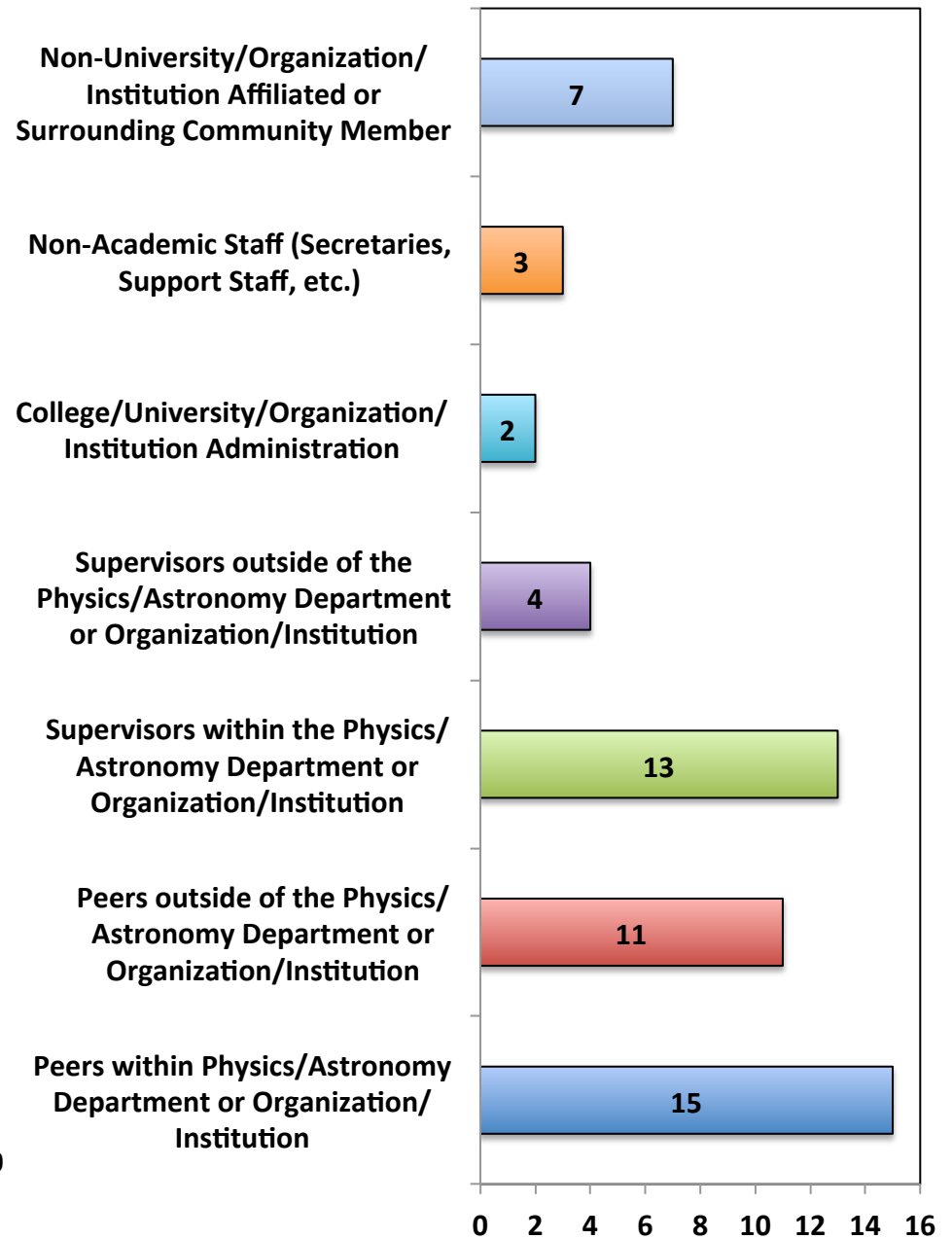
What group(s) was the individual(s) that **VERBALLY** harassed you a member of?



In your current position, how often have you been **PHYSICALLY** harassed because of the following characteristics?

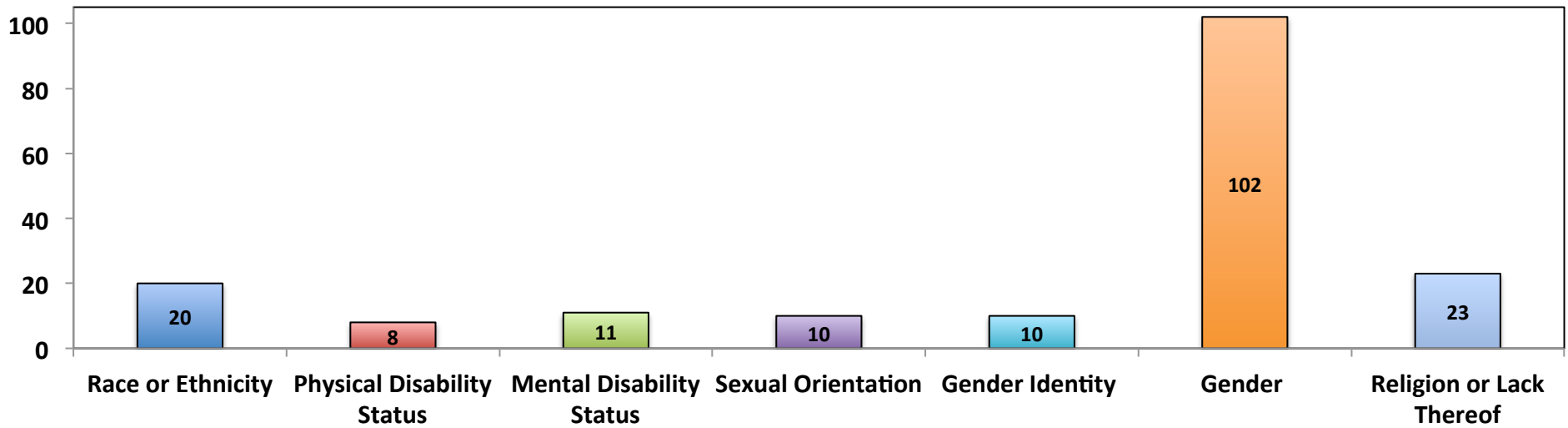


What group(s) was the individual(s) that **PHYSICALLY** harassed you a member of?

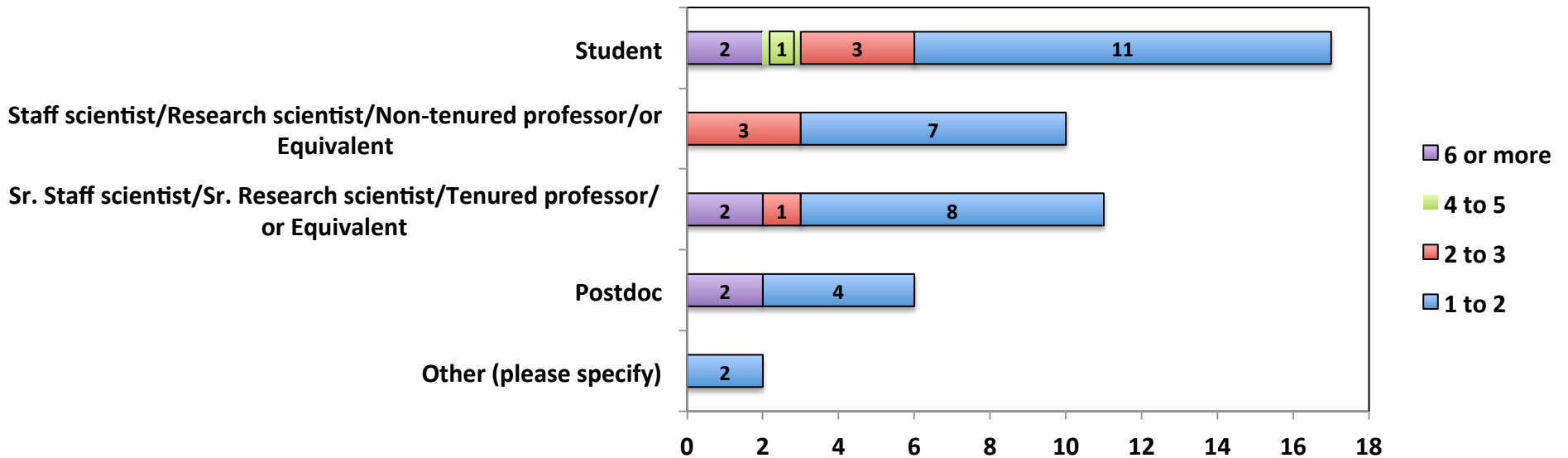




**In your current position, do you feel or have you ever felt unsafe because of any of the following personal characteristics?**



**In your current position, how many classes/meetings/conferences/field work/opportunities/etc. have you skipped per month because of feeling unsafe?**





# Conclusions

- Scientists in the astronomical community experience and witness inappropriate language, verbal harassment, and physical assault.
- Abuses that relate to gender are those that appear in the greatest proportion in this sample.
- Inappropriate comments, harassment, and assault lead to a number of scientists feeling unsafe in their workplaces, and pursuing fewer scholarly opportunities as a direct result of these experiences.



# Follow on Interviews

- Respondents' negative workplace experiences that related to their identities often emerged late in interviews. Respondents would often mention something negative had happened in the workplace, but describe it only vaguely: the feeling of their being a clique, someone being "icky," or "something personal."
- Respondents themselves only recognized these behaviors as occurring in a workplace or learning environment once they shared the details, even though all occurrences were in laboratories, observatories, offices, or study groups. Respondents also rarely named these experiences explicitly as harassment or assault.



# Anti-Harassment Policy: The Workplace & The IAU General Assembly

1. Defining Harassment
2. Defining the Workplace
3. The Not-So-Serious Moments
4. Reporting
5. While at the IAU



# Defining Harassment

- NASA: Any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, based on an individual's race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, status as a parent, gender identity, genetic information, or retaliation...  
when: (1) the behavior can reasonably be considered to adversely affect the work environment or (2) an employment decision affecting the employee is based upon the employee's acceptance or rejection of such conduct.
- NASA:  
[http://odeo.hq.nasa.gov/documents/AntiHarassment\\_FAQs.pdf](http://odeo.hq.nasa.gov/documents/AntiHarassment_FAQs.pdf)
- Caltech:  
[http://hr.caltech.edu/documents/46-citpolicy\\_harassment.pdf](http://hr.caltech.edu/documents/46-citpolicy_harassment.pdf)
- Planetary Science Institute (pg. 31):  
<http://www.psi.edu/sites/default/files/images/AAP%20Minorities%20and%20Women%202013.pdf>



# What does harassment look like?

- Bullying.
- Creating belittling caricatures or objects depicting persons of a particular race, national origin, religion, or other protected category or telling racial or ethnic jokes or stories.
- Teasing, mimicking, or repeatedly commenting on an individual's disability, accent, or other protected category.
- Threatening that rejection of sexual overtures will affect promotions, appointments.
- Making offensive comments, jokes, or suggestions about someone's gender.
- Making obscene or lewd comments, slurs, jokes, epithets, suggestions, or gestures.
- Commenting on someone's body or sexual characteristics.
- Displaying nude or sexually suggestive objects, pictures, images, or cartoons.
- **Continuing prohibited behavior after a colleague has objected.**
- **Laughing at, ignoring, or retaliating against an employee who complains.**



## The Workplace?

- The workplace is NOT just the office, building, or facility you work at. It includes:
  - Field outings
  - Observatory runs
  - Social events hosted by the workplace
  - Conferences
- A coworker who harasses another employee outside of the workplace is still a concern, because this behavior directly leads to a hostile work environment.



# The not-so-serious moments...

- Not all inappropriate behavior is meant to harm. This does **NOT** make the behavior okay. There are several methods for dealing with unwanted attention:
  - Bring the attention back to your research or poster.
  - Make the arm-length rule known.
  - Politely tell the individual they are making you uncomfortable.
  - Remember, determine how uncomfortable you are by your own feelings. Trust your gut instincts.
  - If you see the behavior happening to someone else nearby, help them out by either getting them away from the situation, or, if you're a senior level member, addressing the issue.
  - Tell someone you trust.
  - Don't be afraid to be "that person".
- When the person ignores your statement, continues breaching your personal space, retaliates, or moves along to the next person in line, they are knowingly participating in hostile behavior.





# Reporting

- Read the policy for your university, facility, or business to know what to do.
- Document issues. Keeps all texts, emails, etc. associated with the harassment.
- If others are involved, also have them document.
- You will most likely have to write a statement or give a testimony to the HR/Anti-Harassment Office.
- Efforts will be made as much as possible to ensure privacy in the issue. At no point is the person, university, workplace, etc. allowed to retaliate against a harassment complaint.
- If the person becomes intimidating or threatening in any way, report to the proper authorities (campus security, police).



# While at The IAU General Assembly

- The Anti-Harassment Statement of the IAU:  
“All participants in the IAU General Assembly and its associated activities should enjoy an environment free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. As a professional society, the IAU is committed to providing an atmosphere that encourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas. In pursuit of that ideal, the IAU is dedicated to the philosophy of equality of opportunity and treatment for all members and guests, regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, veteran status, or any other reason not related to scientific merit. Harassment, sexual or otherwise, is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of the IAU and its activities.”



# While at The IAU General Assembly

- The Anti-Harassment Statement of the IAU:  
“Attendees who feel they have been harassed should contact a member of the IAU Executive Committee:  
[http://www.iau.org/administration/executive\\_bodies/executive\\_committee/](http://www.iau.org/administration/executive_bodies/executive_committee/), which includes the General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, President, President-Elect, and Vice-Presidents; there is no requirement or expectation to discuss one’s concern with the alleged offender. All complaints will be treated seriously and be investigated promptly. Confidentiality will be honored to the extent permitted as long as the rights of other are not compromised.”



# Additional Resources

- Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy's Anti-Harassment page:  
<http://www.aas.org/cswa/harassment.html>
- Women in Planetary Science's Blog:  
<http://womeninplanetaryscience.wordpress.com/blogroll/>
- Blog Post by Stephen Rinehart:  
<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2014/03/guest-post-sometimes-being-good-isnt.html>
- Resources when all else fails:  
<http://www.aauw.org/resource/sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace-additional-resources/>