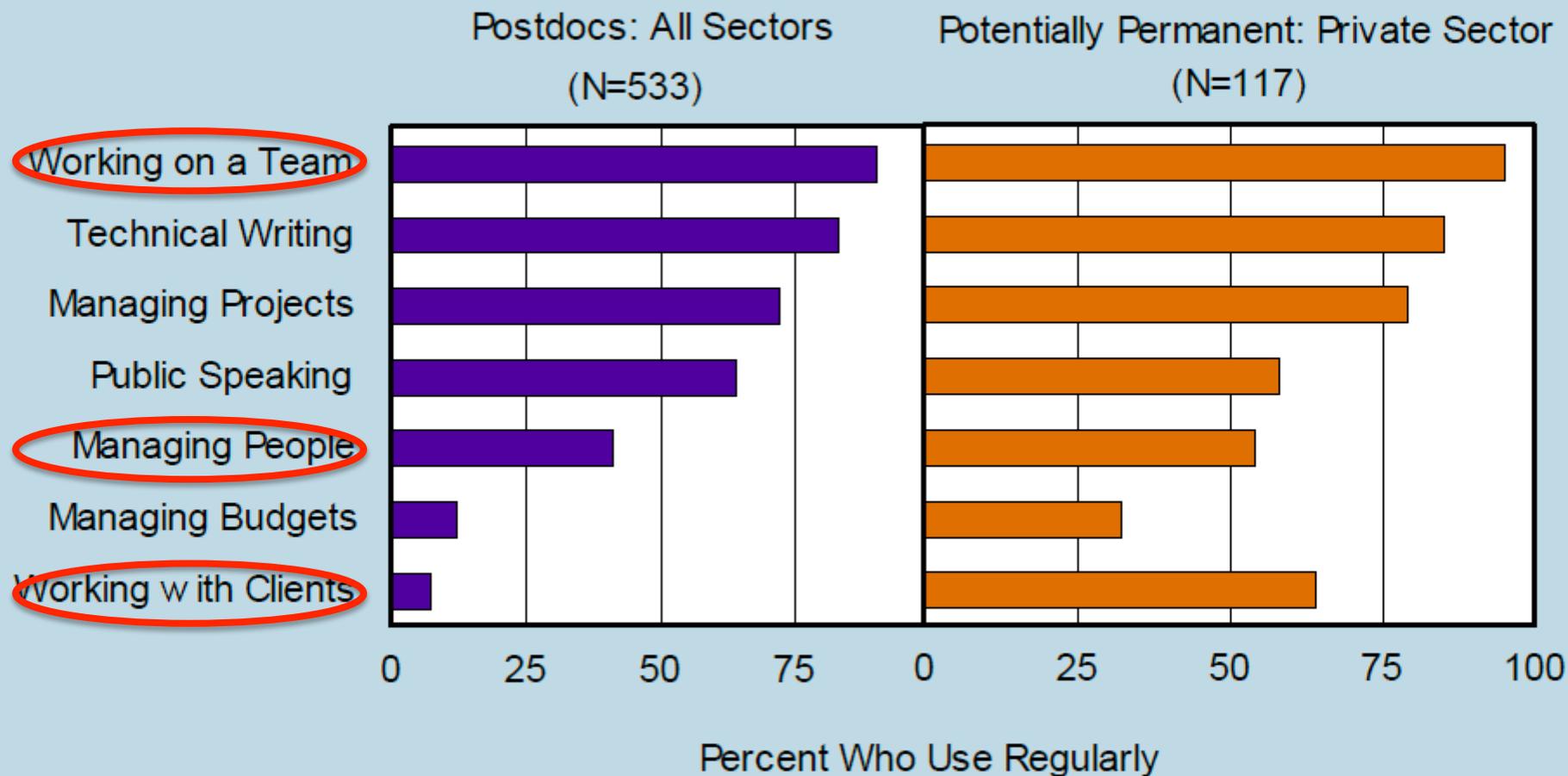


Interpersonal and Management Skills Regularly Used by New Physics PhDs, Classes of 2009 & 2010 Combined



Percentages represent the proportion of physics PhDs who chose “daily”, “weekly” or “monthly” on a four-point scale that also included “never or rarely”. Data only include U.S.-educated physics PhDs who remained in the U.S. after earning their degrees.

Recent instances of sexual harassment in Astronomy

- Geoff Marcy – UC Berkeley
 - Exoplanet researcher, found guilty of violating policy for at least a decade, resigned from Berkeley
 - <http://gizmodo.com/prominent-exoplanet-researcher-found-guilty-of-sexual-h-1735809647>
- Tim Slater – University of Arizona
 - Astronomy education researcher, violated policy ~10 years ago, punished, now at U Wyoming
 - <http://mashable.com/2016/01/12/astronomy-professor-sexual-harassment-university-of-arizona/#6EWNUo8Dxiq7>
- Christian Ott – Caltech
 - Gravitational waves researcher, suspended for 1-year for gender based harassment
 - <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/01/caltech-suspends-professor-harassment-0>

Recent instances of sexual harassment in Astronomy

- All perpetrators are male and white
- All supervised graduate students
- All taught undergraduate courses
- All had complaints filed by multiple people
- None were fired
- Trigger Warning!! The next slides discuss examples.
 - If you need to leave the room at any point, please do! But, please contact me after class.

Geoff Marcy

- Officially found to have violated sexual harassment policy
- Several reports of sexual innuendo and inappropriate touching, mostly directed at undergrads
- Many instances not officially reported because UC doesn't allow reports of what is observed, only what happened to you
- At a post-colloquium dinner, placed his hand on a graduate student's leg, slid his hand up her thigh, and grabbed her crotch
- <http://www.buzzfeed.com/azeenghorayshi/famous-astronomer-allegedly-sexually-harassed-students>

Tim Slater

- Complaints received August 2004
- Slater often told sexually explicit stories and jokes, talked about his personal exploits, commented on the looks of female co-workers and students, had staff meetings at strip clubs, etc.
- Slater told woman who worked for him: “she would teach better if she did not wear underwear”. Once, “he grabbed her underwear through her dress and snapped it, and said ‘You’d look a whole lot better without these on’”.
- When one woman told Slater to stop the sexual talk, she added that she has “a particularly large boyfriend (whom she described as black)” Slater then asked her “if it were true that once you went black, you’d never go back”
- http://speier.house.gov/images/pdf/u-az_investigation_report_redacted.pdf

Christian Ott

- Investigation concluded last september, found him guilty of violations with 2 graduate students
- He blurred the lines between friendship and mentorship, messaging students late at night, sharing insecurities about work
- “Not only was he being demanding in terms of my time, but he was questioning my commitment to the work, and telling me about how it was making him feel, really from an emotional angle.”
- When she complained, he dropped her as a graduate student.
- To another student: “Do you think I am a shady person because I let myself be emotionally involved with my student? I think I may actually be prone to this sort of thing.”
- “When I said I couldn’t work 80 hours a week, he said I would never make it in academia, I came to Caltech to do science. He slowly but surely made me feel worthless.”
- <http://www.buzzfeed.com/azeenghorayshi/ott-harassment-investigation>

'Fundamental flaw'

- Rep Jackie Speier (D-CA 14th - south of SF) mentioned the Slater case in a speech to the House of Representatives. She plans to introduce legislation to require schools to share information about disciplinary proceedings.
- U Wyoming claims not knowing about Slater proceedings
- There are reports that Geoff Marcy harassed students at his previous institution, SF State
- <http://www.buzzfeed.com/azeenghorayshi/geoff-marcy-at-sfsu>

Other stories/results

- Pamela L. Gay (@starstyder – 22.5 K followers) was given the report anonymously in the hopes she could bring it to light. She also attempted to bring a complaint against him in the IAU.
- Slater accused Gay of waging jealously-motivated “smear campaign”. “My wife, Stephanie, and I are admittedly very, very successful in our field, which causes more than a small amount of jealousy,” Slater wrote. “Dr. Gay and her comrades are our direct competitors, and have unfortunately engaged in this kind of gossip against us for years.”
- <http://mashable.com/2016/01/12/astronomy-professor-sexual-harassment-university-of-arizona/#6EWNUo8Dxiq7>
- For the record, Dr. Gay works in a different sub-field. Her university dropped the complaint the Slaters made against her.

Other stories/results

- A junior professor friend of mine was talking about this with a senior colleague and the colleague ended the conversation by saying how much they were looking forward to seeing her tenure dossier in a few years
- Does that mean: “wow, great conversation, I can’t wait to tenure you” or “Hey, remember you don’t have tenure, so we can fire you”

NASA Administrator Bolden

- Let me be perfectly clear: NASA does not tolerate sexual harassment, and nor should any organization seriously committed to workplace equality, diversity and inclusion. Science is for everyone and any behavior that demeans or discourages people from fully participating is unacceptable.
- I would direct your attention to NASA's MissionSTEM website, accessible at <http://missionstem.nasa.gov/index.html>. MissionSTEM is designed as a civil rights technical assistance tool for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs. It provides a wealth of written information and visual material on ***civil rights*** requirements as well as promising practices for achieving greater diversity and creating more inclusive STEM program environments.
- <http://www.nasa.gov/press-release/nasa-administrator-communicates-harassment-policies-to-grantees>

Doesn't happen in a vacuum

- Sexual harassment is the tip of the iceberg
- Harassment of all kinds is broadly acceptable in astronomy (and physics)
 - This includes racist, sexist, ableist, heteronormative, and more
 - No serious consequences
 - No consequences at all for “minor” offenses
 - No consequences for bullying, often encouraged
 - Ex: 80 hour work week expected; labor laws don't apply to students
 - “ was told at one point that because I was a pioneer, I would just have to expect it and get used to it. WHY SHOULD I? YOU CHANGE, NOT ME.”
- <https://twitter.com/IBJIYONGI/status/687336220523950080>

Academic Stardom

- Promotion/hiring based solely on publication rate (h-index)
- Or worse: based on impression of science
 - Ex: Ott tenured because he had a competing offer
 - Ex: Most scientists never getting job offer, others get many
- “I have bought into the ego-driven status game in academia. Hard. I find myself sometimes wondering more about opportunities to advance my reputation, status, name, and scholarship than about creating new knowledge and empowering disadvantaged communities.”
- <http://sasconfidential.com/2016/01/14/academic-stardom/>

My take

- Astronomy culture sucks. It's broken. So is the physics culture. The evidence? The lack of women and minorities in these fields. Something is making them leave. And, when you ask them, you get one answer: I couldn't take it anymore. Go on twitter and read the #astroSH tag. You'll hear from the women who were overtly harassed by advisors and colleagues. You'll also hear all the stories where women and people of color (and other minorities) did not feel welcome. And, when they complained to a person of authority or a mentor, were told "ignore it", "suck it up", "it wasn't that bad", etc.
- The people who train scientists are not chosen for their mentoring skills. They are chosen because of their "excellent science". What does that even mean? Our field tends to take a few people and make them "stars". They get multiple job offers, invitations to give multiple colloquia, invitations for invited talks at major conferences. Sometimes they win major awards or get on TV. This cult of personality is dangerous. We tell these "Stars" how great they are, how amazing they are, how wonderful they are. And they start to believe it. They start to believe that they are so awesome that they are better than everybody else. They start to believe that they are more important.
- So when these "Stars" start acting on every urge, start allowing their worst beliefs and behaviors out, they don't care. Because we have told them not to. This results in sexist, racist, ableist, etc. behaviors and words. It results in bullying. It must stop.