

This case study is an excerpt from Hamrick and Benjamin (Eds.) (in press) with permission from the authors, editors, and publisher. The case study, references and questions for discussion are offered here as an educational tool to foster discussions on issues of ethics in higher education. Following the case study is a list of relevant references and suggested questions that may help facilitators lead discussions on ethical issues specific to this case. Please see the entire Hamrick and Benjamin's book, *"Maybe I Should? . . ."* for a diverse array of ethical dilemmas applicable to graduate students, administrators, and faculty in higher education.

A Quick Wink: A Case Study about Sexual Harassment in Higher Education
Penny A. Pasque, University of Michigan
Dean Kennedy, North Carolina State University

The department of Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) at State University (SU), a land-grant institution, has a reputation for creating a cohesive, collaborative environment among faculty members and graduate students. The ten full-time faculty members admit approximately six Ph.D. and 15 M.A. students each fall. A number of well-respected leaders in the student affairs profession have graduated from HESA, including faculty members, senior student affairs administrators, and university presidents.

Every five years, HESA sponsors a "welcome home" reception for all current and past HESA faculty, staff, and students during SU's homecoming week. Prominent alumni often attend, turning the reception into a "who's who" event. HESA uses the reception as an opportunity to solicit donations, which have become critical in helping the department achieve its fundraising goals.

Myrna and Jodie are first year HESA doctoral students. Myrna is interested in studying student identity development as it relates to service learning and often utilizes her own identities as a working class, able-bodied, Latina as examples to explain her perspectives in class. Myrna's closest friend and classmate, Jodie, graduated at the top of her Master's cohort and her GRE scores were in the top 5th percentile in the country. She identifies as a White, middle class, now legally blind woman (due to a progressive and degenerative eye disease) who was enthusiastic about entering the HESA program because of its strong reputation for academic rigor. Jodie was appointed to work on a research project with Dr. Paige, a prominent faculty member in HESA who joined the faculty four

years ago as a new assistant professor and recently learned that he had been awarded a \$3.5 million federal research grant, the largest ever received by an individual HESA faculty member. The grant came at a crucial time as federal and state allocations to SU were in decline. Myrna and Jodie were both enrolled in Dr. Paige's introductory course this semester.

Myrna and Jodie were excited to attend the HESA "welcome home" reception that fall, and quickly realized that Dr. Paige's grant was the highlight of the evening. Faculty members and alumni were enthusiastically congratulating him. Myrna and Jodie noted how proud Dr. Paige seemed, and they went to offer their own congratulations. Myrna shook Dr. Paige's hand and congratulated him, and she noticed the pungent smell of liquor as he leaned over, smiled, and thanked her. Myrna asked if he had seen a recent article related to his area of research, and Myrna watched him slowly step in front of Jodie as she was speaking. After acknowledging that he had seen the article as well, Dr. Paige brought his face close to Myrna's and said, smiling, "I'm glad you're following this line of research, too. With this grant, I'm going to be collecting and analyzing all kinds of data, and there's no time like the present to get serious. Why don't you work with me on this grant? Since I have money, I can hire you, and my office at home has a great set up. It would be long hours, often at night. What do you say? If you need to think about it, you can let me know next Monday at class." He smiled again and quickly winked at Myrna before turning to greet an alumna who had tapped him on the shoulder. When Dr. Paige moved away, Myrna saw that Jodie was looking at her quizzically.

What should Myrna do, and why?

Citation for this Case Study

Pasque, P. A. & Kennedy, D. (in press). A quick wink: A case study about sexual harassment in higher education. In F. Hamrick & M. Benjamin (Eds.), *Maybe I should?...* Lanham, MD: The University Press of America.

Relevant References

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Discussion Questions

- What are the issues raised in this case study?
- What are your assumptions of the situation? Of the individuals involved?
- How would you proceed if you were Jodie or Myrna? Would there be a different reaction if you were Jodie? Myrna?)?
- How would you proceed if you were a faculty member/alumni observing the situation?
- Should Myrna be concerned about her grade in Dr. Paige's class and how might that dynamic influence this situation?
- How do your own ethical perspectives shape your perceptions of this situation? Are your perceptions different than other people you know? In what ways?
- How do different ethical perspectives (e.g. your perspectives, the perspectives of others) add to the complexities of this case study?
- If this situation is brought to the department chair, how should the issue be raised and by whom?
- What would you do as chair of the department?
- How does the grant awarded to Dr. Paige impact this situation?
- In what ways do the social identities (e.g. ability, age, class, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, race, religion, & sexual orientation) of Myrna, Jodie, and Dr. Paige play a role in your perceptions of this case study? What if each person had a different social identity – would your perceptions change?
- In what ways do the positions (e.g. tenured faculty, graduate students, employer of graduate students) of Myrna, Jodie and Dr. Paige play a role in your perceptions of this case study?
- What are the implications for each individual involved? For the people at the department level? School level? Institutional level?
- How does the field of higher education address these issues on a system-wide level? Within Student Affairs? Academic Affairs?
- What is the role of alcohol and the setting/environment in this situation?
- How do the policies, principles, and standards of ACPA relate to this situation?
- Do policies and procedures help this situation or not (at what level: department, institution, professional association, etc.)?