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101

HELP DESK

# FACES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN UP DILIMAN AND THE OASH MANDATE

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## ABSTRACT

*As mandated, the Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment (OASH) of the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman adheres to and implements the Anti-Sexual Harassment (ASH) Code. This is to ensure that we in the UP Community are assured of a campus that is safe and free from sexual harassment (SH). This article presents the UP mandate on anti-sexual harassment and the UP Diliman experience in responding to, investigating, and resolving SH cases. Coverage and specific provisions in the ASH Code that directly relate to and persistently emerge in the filed SH cases are discussed. SH cases filed from 2003 to April 2019 are examined, specifically in the following areas and contexts: the number of filed cases, demographics of both complainants and respondents, types of relationships between complainants and respondents, forms of SH, places where SH cases are committed, and the types of resolutions for the said SH cases. Challenges on implementing the ASH Code are presented, specifically those that concern the following: information and awareness of SH and issues that entangle it; the insufficient number of personnel; the augmenting of OASH's support system in responding to SH cases reported, particularly in the areas of psycho-social and technological expertise; the strengthening of research and advocacy programs, especially in the student sector, which*

currently has the highest number of reported SH cases; and, finally, on developing a wellness program for OASH personnel and ASH Council members as frontliners who regularly handle complex, daunting, demanding, and emotionally-draining cases.

**Keywords:** Sexual harassment, Anti-Sexual Harassment Code, UP Diliman experience, jurisdiction, confidential

## ABSTRAK

Mandato ng Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment (OASH) sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas Diliman ang paninindigan at pagpapatupad ng Anti-Sexual Harassment (ASH) Code. Isinasagawa ito upang matiyak na ang Komunidad ng UP ay isang kampus na ligtas at malayo sa panganib ng sekswal na panggigipit o sexual harassment (SH). Ipinapakita ng artikulong ito ang mandato ng UP hinggil sa anti-sexual harassment at ang karanasan ng UP Diliman sa pagtugon, pag-imbestia, at paglutus sa mga kaso ng SH. Ang sakop at mga espesipikong probisyon sa ASH Code na tuwirang may kaugnayan at patuloy na lumilitaw sa mga kasong idinulog ay tinatalakay sa artikulo. Sinusuri ang mga kaso ng SH mula 2003 hanggang Abril 2019 batay sa sumusunod na mga saklaw (erya) at konteksto: bilang ng idinulog na mga kaso, demograpiya ng parehong nagrereklamo at inirereklamo, mga uri ng relasyon ng nagrereklamo at inirereklamo, mga anyo ng SH, mga lugar ng pinangyarihan ng SH, at mga uri ng resolusyon para sa nabanggit na mga kaso. Ipinakikita dito ang mga hámon sa pagpapatupad ng ASH Code, lalo na yaong may kinalaman sa impormasyon at pagmumulat hinggil sa ASH at ang mga isyung kaakibat nito; ang 'di-sapat na bilang ng kawani, sa paraan ng pagbibigay ng tulong ng OASH sa pagtugon sa mga kaso ng SH na idinudulog sa kanila lalo na yaong saklaw ng mga eksperto sa sikolohiyang panlipunan at teknolohiya; sa pagpapalakas ng programang pananaliksik at adbokasiya, lalo na sa sektor ng mga estudyante na sa kasalukuyan ay may pinakamataas na bilang ng mga kaso ng SH; at higit sa lahat, ang pagbuo ng programa para sa kagalingan (wellness) ng mga kawani ng OASH at ng mga miyembro ng ASH Council, na regular na tumutugon sa masasalimuot, maseselan, nakauubos-oras, at nakapapagod na mga kaso.

**Mga Susing salita:** *Sekswal na panliligalig, Anti-Sexual Harassment Code, karanasan ng UP Diliman, saklaw, kumpidensiyal*

Being part of the University of the Philippines Diliman Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment (OASH) for almost a decade has afforded us the many scenes where acts of sexual harassment (SH) occur. This article presents the number and nature of SH cases filed from the year the office was established in 2003 to April of this current year as well as our observations in our capacity as Coordinator for five years (T.P.D.L.) and University Research Associate (M.R.M.N.) for seven years at the OASH.

## I. The Mandate

**Section 1. Declaration of Policy.** - *The University values and upholds the dignity of every individual, and guarantees the full respect for human rights of all members of the UP community.*

*All forms of sexual harassment are unacceptable.*

*To this end, the University shall maintain an enabling, gender-fair, safe and healthy learning and working environment for the members of the UP community.*  
(UP Board of Regents 2017)

As mandated, the Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment (OASH) of the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman adheres to and implements the Anti-Sexual Harassment (ASH) Code. This is to ensure that we in the UP Community are assured of a safe and sexual harassment-free campus. Section one of the policy establishes and underscores that the University does not and will never tolerate SH. This has been the position of UP Diliman even before the formal institution of the OASH.

Even before Republic Act 7877 - otherwise known as the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law - was enacted into law in 1995, the University of the Philippines Diliman has already been active in the prevention of and response to sexual harassment cases. Before 1995, SH and other gender-related cases used to be forwarded to the Center for Women's Studies (now the Center for Women's and Gender Studies) for resolution. There had also been offices such as the Student Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT) - now the Student Disciplinary Council

(SDC) – and the Administrative Disciplinary Tribunal (ADT) tasked to resolve such cases. However, when RA 7877 was signed into law, UP immediately responded to its directive that government units craft their respective Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for the appropriate execution of the law.

Hence, in 1998, the UP *Anti-Sexual Harassment Implementing Rules and Regulations (Anti-SH IRR)* was crafted and consequently implemented in the whole UP System. The *UP Anti-SH IRR* is unique because it covers not only the educational institution but also both its teaching and non-teaching employees, not all of whom are under the Civil Service Commission's authority due to their contractual worker status. Thus, while employees who are Contractual or Non-UP Contractual are not under the Civil Service's power, the University has jurisdiction over them. UP Diliman is not just a school, it is also a workplace.

The UP IRR for Anti-SH was further strengthened when the OASH was established in 2003. This move was spearheaded by then UP Diliman Chancellor Emerlinda R. Roman. The OASH has two major functions: the (1) prevention and (2) resolution of SH in the campus. The office is tasked with promoting anti-sexual harassment campaigns, informing and educating the public on issues about SH, and conducting research and examining the state of SH in the campus. OASH's second role is to oversee the investigation and resolution of SH cases filed in the office.

The current ASH Code (2017) has several amendments, including the expansion of the "coverage" and "persons liable", such as "service contractors" and "UP organizations".

**Section 3. Coverage.** – *This Code applies to all members of the UP community.*

*The "UP community" refers to persons, natural or juridical, inclusive of teaching and non-teaching personnel, and students as defined herein.*

*(a) "Teaching personnel" – any member of the teaching staff of the University, regardless of academic rank or status of appointment, including any person with teaching responsibilities.*

(b) "Non-teaching personnel" - any person who works for the University, not included in the teaching staff regardless of status of appointment.

(c) "Student"- any individual admitted to and registered in any program of the University on a regular or part-time basis, including one who is officially on leave of absence; and who has not yet been separated from the University formally through either transfer, graduation, honorable or dishonorable dismissal, expulsion or expiration of the period allowed for maximum residence, at the time of the commission of the act of sexual harassment, regardless of whether or not he/she is enrolled in any unit of the University at the time of the filing of the charge or during the pendency of the disciplinary proceedings, including any person undertaking on-the-job training.

(d) "Service contractors" - any person under a service or consultancy contract, or job order, or under similar arrangements under, or as an employee of, a service provider entity.

(e) "UP organizations" - refers to organizations or groups registered or recognized by the University or any of its offices/units. (UP Board of Regents 2017)

The addition to coverage is the University's recognition, based on reported cases, that the UP community is not just composed of students and teaching and non-teaching personnel. UP organizations and service contractors are juridical entities that have, in the past, been involved and implicated in SH cases.

**Section 6. Persons Liable.** - Any member of the UP community is liable for sexual harassment when he/she:

(a) directly participates in the execution of any act of sexual harassment as defined by this Code;

(b) induces or directs another or others to commit sexual harassment as defined by this Code;

*(c) cooperates in the commission of sexual harassment by another through an act without which the sexual harassment would not have been accomplished;*

*(d) cooperates in the commission of sexual harassment by another through previous or simultaneous acts;*

*(e) benefits from the commission of any act of sexual harassment;*

*(f) conceals or hides the commission of any act of sexual harassment; and*

*(g) restrains, or coerces the victim from filing the appropriate complaint. (UP Board of Regents 2017)*

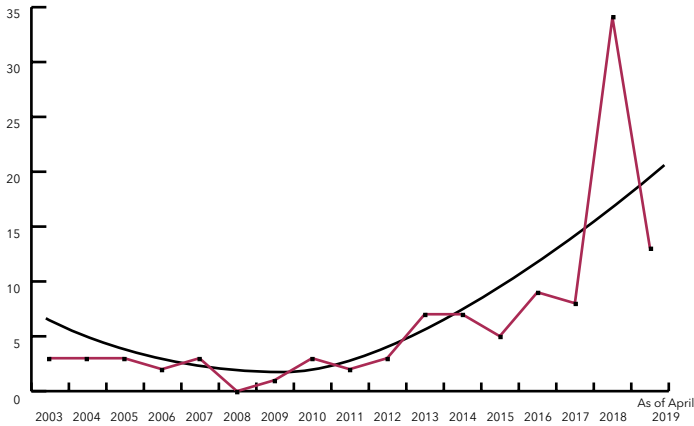
In the 1998 IRR, only the one who “*directly participates in the execution of any act of sexual harassment as defined by this Code*” was considered to be liable. However in the current code, the University acknowledges that other individuals may also be responsible for either carrying out a SH act or obstructing justice for the survivor of a SH act.

Through the years, the office has borne witness to the changing trends of how the UP community exists within this mandate. The curious question points to whether or not there has been a positive transformation from an assumed state of sexual harassment in the community.

## II. University of the Philippines Diliman Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment 2003-2019 Cases Filed Statistics - the UP Diliman Experience

**Figure 1. SH Cases Filed in OASH from 2003 to April 2019**

**Sexual Harassment Cases Filed in OASH from 2003 to April 2019**



Source: Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment (OASH) 2019

**Table No. 1. Sexual Harassment Cases Filed in OASH**

Year	Sexual Harassment Cases Filed in OASH
<b>2003</b>	3
<b>2004</b>	3
<b>2005</b>	3
<b>2006</b>	2
<b>2007</b>	3
<b>2008</b>	0



**Continuation of Table No. 1  
Sexual Harassment Cases Filed in OASH**

Year	Sexual Harassment Cases Filed in OASH
<b>2009</b>	1
<b>2010</b>	3
<b>2011</b>	2
<b>2012</b>	3
<b>2013</b>	7
<b>2014</b>	7
<b>2015</b>	5
<b>2016</b>	9
<b>2017</b>	8
<b>2018</b>	34
<b>As of April 2019</b>	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106</b>

*Source: OASH 2019*

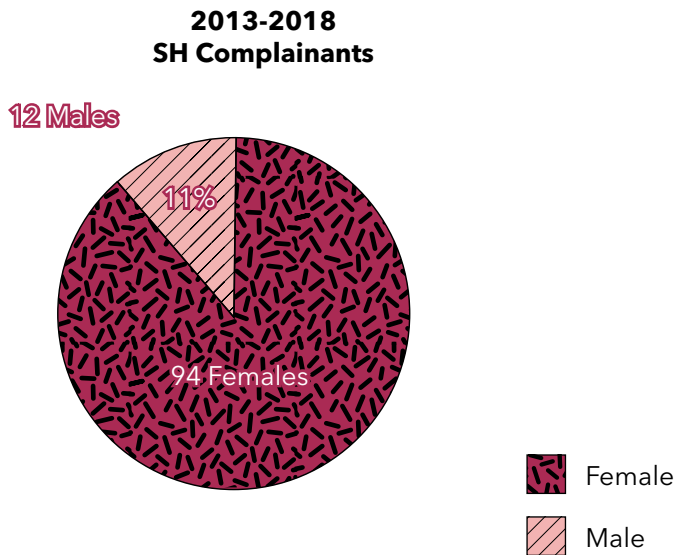
### **A. Number of SH Cases from 2003-April 2019**

Data shows a dramatic increase in the number of filed cases from 2003 to April 2019. There may be a variety of reasons for the rise in number. The community's increased awareness of SH due to the global trending of SH issues may have directly contributed to SH survivors' increased awareness and courage to report incidents of harassment, abuse, and violations to authorities. Another reason may also be how, initially, only a few members of the community had been aware that the OASH exists; but due to the incessant campaigns of both the OASH and the UP Diliman Gender Office (UPDGO), word of the existence of both offices eventually spread to more individuals. Thirdly, with the new code requiring Anti-SH orientations and clearance for employment and graduation, the UP

Diliman community has evidently become more knowledgeable on SH, especially on how to go about filing a SH case. Finally, the expansion of “coverage” and “persons liable” may have contributed to the escalation of cases filed.

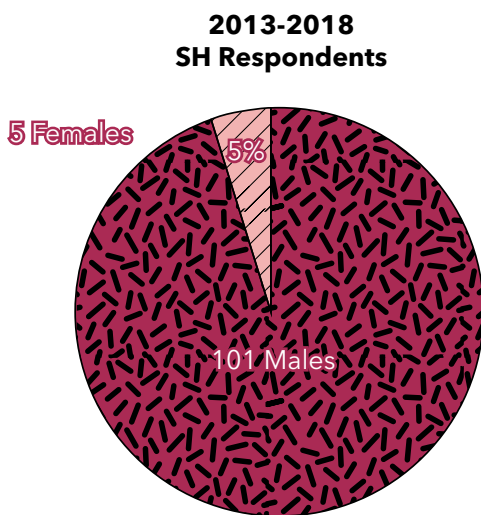
The dramatic difference in number of cases reported in 2018 (34) and in the first four months of 2019 (13) as compared to the yearly figures from 2003 to 2017 is a result of the increasing cases of gender-related violence such as sexually violent rhetoric and banter as well as SH committed during student organizations’ - including fraternities’ and sororities’ - initiations and other application processes. On the other hand, cases are more frequently reported today and could be due to the intensified and sustained campaigns against misogyny within the campus as well as the local and global media campaigns against SH and other types of gender-based violence.

**Figure 2. 2003-2018 SH Complainants**



Source: OASH 2019

**Figure 3. 2003-2018 SH Respondents**



Source: OASH 2019

**Table 2. 2003-2018 Complainants and Respondents**

Year	Sex of Complainant		Sex of Respondent		Total Cases
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
<b>2003</b>	3			3	3
<b>2004</b>	2	1	0	3	3
<b>2005</b>	3			3	3
<b>2006</b>	1	1		2	2
<b>2007</b>	2	1	1	2	3
<b>2008</b>					0
<b>2009</b>	1			1	1
<b>2010</b>	2	1		3	3

**Continuation of Table No. 2  
2003-2018 Complainants and Respondents**

Year	Sex of Complainant		Sex of Respondent		Total Cases
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
<b>2011</b>	2			2	2
<b>2012</b>	3			3	3
<b>2013</b>	5	2		7	7
<b>2014</b>	7			7	7
<b>2015</b>	5			5	5
<b>2016</b>	8	1		9	9
<b>2017</b>	8			8	8
<b>2018</b>	*30	4	0	**34	34
<b>As of April 2019</b>	12	1	3	9	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	94	12	6	101	106

\* Three (3) OASH cases with three (3) complainants and one (1) perpetrator

\*\* Ten (10) OASH cases with one (1) complainant and ten (10) different persons complained of

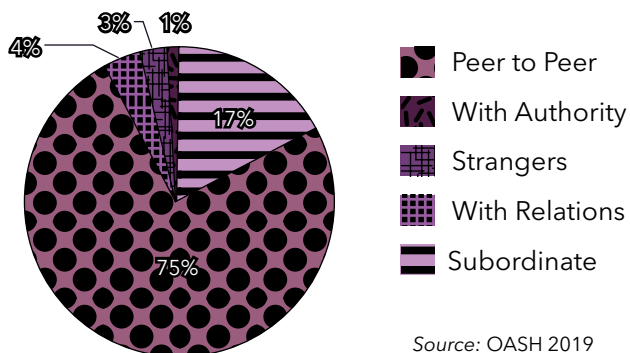
Source: OASH 2019

Data reveals that females remain to be the primary complainants of SH, with 89% females and 11% males filing complaints in the past seventeen (17) years. While women continue to be more prone to SH, the reality is that men are also subject to the same type of harassment but have the tendency not to report such experiences. It is argued that in a macho-patriarchal society, men are expected to be “strong” and, therefore, cannot become victims of SH. This viewpoint discourages men from filing SH cases.

On the other hand, with 5% females and 95% males as respondents in the past seventeen (17) years, data exposes that males are still the main perpetrators of SH. In a patriarchal society, there are unequal power relations between males and females, where females are relegated to a subordinate or inferior position. This circumstance makes females more susceptible to SH than men.

**Figure 4. 2003-2018 Relationship of Respondent to Complainant**

**2003-2018 Relationship of Respondent to Complainant**



**Table 3. Relationship of Respondent to Complainant**

Year	Relationship of Respondent to Complainant					TOTAL
	With Authority	Subordinate	Peer to Peer	Strangers	With Relations	
2003	1	0	2	0	0	3
2004	1	0	1	1	0	3
2005	1	0	2	0	0	3
2006	1	0	1	0	0	2
2007	1	0	2	0	0	3
2008	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	1	0	0	0	0	1
2010	0	0	1	1	1	3
2011	0	0	2	0	0	2
2012	1	0	2	0	0	3

**Continuation of Table No. 3  
Relationship of Respondent to Complainant**

Year	Relationship of Respondent to Complainant					TOTAL
	With Authority	Subordinate	Peer to Peer	Strangers	With Relations	
<b>2013</b>	3	0	4	0	1	<b>7</b>
<b>2014</b>	2	0	5	0	0	<b>7</b>
<b>2015</b>	1	0	4	0	0	<b>5</b>
<b>2016</b>	1	0	7	0	1	<b>9</b>
<b>2017</b>	2	0	4	2	0	<b>8</b>
<b>2018</b>	3	1	30	0	0	<b>34</b>
<b>As of April 2019</b>	0	0	13	0	0	<b>13</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	18	1	80	4	3	<b>106</b>

Source: OASH 2019

Data shows that the types of relationships between complainants and respondents in SH cases vary. The highest percentage is *peer-to-peer relations* (75%), followed by *person of authority to a subordinate* (17%), *strangers* (4%), *with relations* (3%), and *when a subordinate harasses a superior* (1%) in the last place. This information reveals that there is no single type of power relation that can exclusively trigger SH. Harassment can happen to anyone in any type of relationship because the source of power is not located in just one type of social position, such as in teacher-to-student relations. In this type of relationship, for example, the teacher has power over the student since the student aims to get a favorable grade from the teacher while the teacher has the power to give the student a favorable or unfavorable grade. However, data divulges that, in UP Diliman, most of the cases filed in OASH arise from peer-to-peer relationships within the context of academic activities outside of class hours and outside the University, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and organizational activities (with “organizations” defined as regular University-based and college-based associations that include fraternities, sororities, religious organizations, interest groups, and the like), and personal

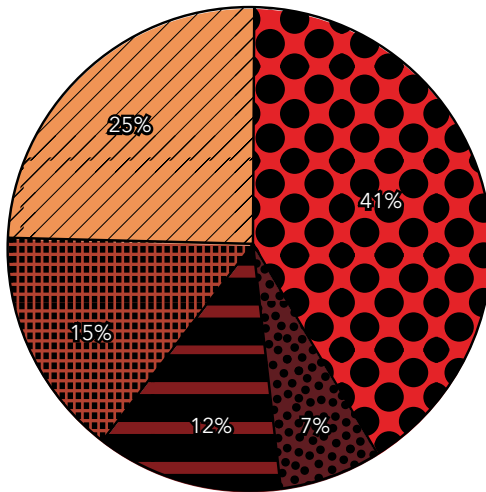
activities as affected by the changing landscape of romantic and pseudo-romantic relationships.






While this bears further probing, it remains important to identify the types of power relations within peer-to-peer relations that may lead to the commission of acts of SH.

**B. Forms of SH Filed**

**Figure 5. 2003-2018 Forms of SH Filed**

**2003-2018 Forms of SH Filed**



-  Physical SH
-  Online SH (or with use of technology)
-  Verbal SH
-  Visual SH
-  More than one form

Source: OASH 2019

**Table 4. Forms of SH Filed**

Year	Forms of SH Filed					TOTAL Cases
	Physical SH	Verbal SH	Visual SH	Online SH (or with use of technology)	More than one form	
<b>2003</b>	3					<b>3</b>
<b>2004</b>	1		2			<b>3</b>
<b>2005</b>			1		2	<b>3</b>
<b>2006</b>		1			1	<b>2</b>
<b>2007</b>	1		1		1	<b>3</b>
<b>2008</b>						<b>0</b>
<b>2009</b>					1	<b>1</b>
<b>2010</b>	2				1	<b>3</b>
<b>2011</b>	2					<b>2</b>
<b>2012</b>	2			1		<b>3</b>
<b>2013</b>	3	1			3	<b>7</b>
<b>2014</b>	2	1	1		3	<b>7</b>
<b>2015</b>	1	1			3	<b>5</b>
<b>2016</b>	3	1	5			<b>9</b>
<b>2017</b>	2	2	1	1	2	<b>8</b>
<b>2018</b>	14		2	12	6	<b>34</b>
<b>As of April 2019</b>	8			2	3	<b>13</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>106</b>

Source: OASH 2019



Data indicates that a variety of SH acts happen within the University. The *physical form of SH* (41%) is the most commonly committed type of SH on campus. *Online SH* and *SH with the use of internet-mediated technologies (IMT)* (25%) come in second, followed by *verbal* (15%), *visual* (12%), and *a combination of forms of SH* (7%). Lately, there has been an increase in cases filed involving IMTs, which includes new spaces and platforms where SH can be committed, such as email, chat groups, and Twitter. A challenge that surfaced when investigating and finding resolutions for such cases involves jurisdiction due to issues of the internet having no geographical boundaries as well as the “timelessness” of everything posted on it. An online form of SH may be viewed anywhere inside or outside the campus and can always be viewed over and over again.

### C. Where SH Happened

**Table 5. Where SH happened**

Year	Where SH Happened							
	Within Campus	Dormitory/ Boarding House/ Condo	Inside Vehicles	Bar/Hotel/ Restaurant/ Party Venue	Fieldwork	Other Places outside campus	Online	More than one venue
2003	2					1		
2004	1							2
2005								3
2006		1	1					
2007					1	2		
2008								
2009								1
2010		1			1			1
2011			2					
2012	1				1		1	
2013		2	1		1			3
2014	5				1	1		
2015	4			1				
2016	7				1	1		

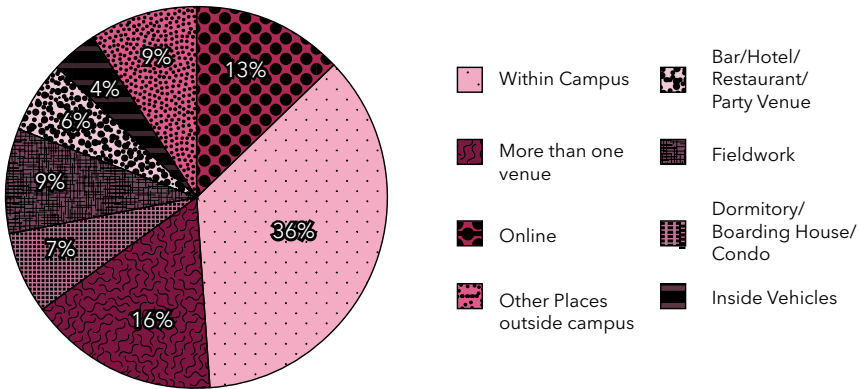
**Continuation of Table No. 5  
Where SH Happened**

Year	Where SH Happened							
	Within Campus	Dormitory/ Boarding House/ Condo	Inside Vehicles	Bar/Hotel/ Restaurant/ Party Venue	Fieldwork	Other Places outside campus	Online	More than one venue
<b>2017</b>	6			1				1
<b>2018</b>	10	1		2	1	5	12	3
<b>2019</b>	2	1		6			1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	38	6	4	10	7	10	14	17

Source: OASH 2019

**Figure 6. 2003-April 2019: Where SH happened**

**2003-2018 Forms of SH Filed**



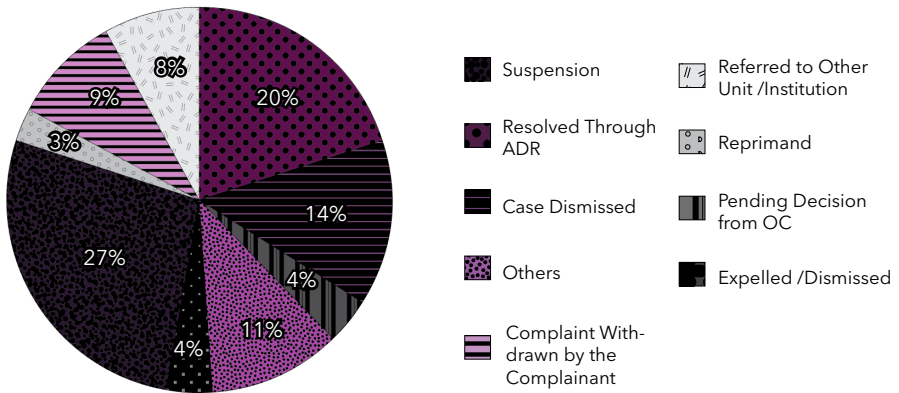
Source: OASH 2019

Data presents that SH can happen anywhere. However, the highest percentage of SH occurrence in UP Diliman is *on campus* (41%) followed by *online* (13%). *Bar/restaurant/party venues* and *other places outside the campus* are tied at 9%. SH also happens *during fieldwork* (7%), in *dormitories/boarding houses/condominium units* (6%), and *inside vehicles* (4%). There are cases

where SH happened in *multiple venues* (16%). It is evident though that there has been a dramatic increase of SH committed online in the past year. This may indicate that the increase of the number of SH cases filed may be due to an expansion and extension of places or locations where members of the UP community interact.

**Figure 7. Case Resolutions 2003 - 2018**

**2003-2018 Case Resolutions**



Source: OASH 2019

**Table 5. Where SH happened**

Year	Reprimand	Suspension	Expelled / Dismissed	Complaint Withdrawn by the Complainant	Referred to Other Unit / Institution	Resolved Through ADR	Case Dismissed	Case Dismiss Pending Decision from OC	Others
2003	1	1			1				
2004		1	1		1				
2005		3		1					
2006	1	1							
2007		1		1	1				
2008									
2009									1
2010				2	1				

**Continuation of Table No. 5  
Where SH Happened**

Year	Reprimand	Suspension	Expelled / Dismissed	Complaint Withdrawn by the Complainant	Referred to Other Unit / Institution	Resolved Through ADR	Case Dismissed	Case Dismissed Pending Decision from OC	Others
2003	1	1			1				
2004		1	1		1				
2005		3		1					
2006	1	1							
2007		1		1	1				
2008									
2009									1
2010				2	1				
<b>TOTAL</b>	3	19	2	6	6	14	10	3	8

Source: OASH 2019

Data reveals that SH cases are resolved in various ways. *Suspension of respondents* (27%) is the most common resolution of filed SH cases while *Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)* (20%) comes in second. This indicates that there are a number of parties involved in SH cases who opt and agree to resolve their disputes through settlement between parties (mediated and monitored by the ASH Council) to come to an agreement on conditions set by the complainants and concurred to by the respondents. Other forms of resolution include *dismissal of cases* (14%), *others* (11%) - which refers to archived cases (when either or both parties no longer show up at case hearings), *complaint withdrawn by the complainant* (9%), *case referred to other unit/institution* (8%), *pending* (4%) and *respondent expelled/dismissed* (3%). Dismissal of cases suggests that either these are outside the jurisdiction of the UP mandate or the council does not view these misdemeanors as SH. Instances where expulsion is carried out demonstrates how the University adheres to a transformative and reformative framework in dealing with SH. However, this data also shows that UP Diliman is serious in implementing such a penalty when deemed necessary.

### III. The Challenge

Examining the UP Diliman experience of SH in the past seventeen (17) years brings to the fore how the current ASH Code is employed in the appreciation and implementation of SH cases. Highlighted amendments from the 1998 IRR are: “Section 6 - Persons Liable”, “Section 5 - Sexual Harassment Defined (Jurisdiction)”, “Section 12 - Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)” and the implementation of Sections 29 and 30.

Implementation of “Section 6 - Persons Liable” widened the scope of persons who may be found liable for SH. Hence, there are now cases filed against those who did not necessarily directly participate in the SH act. Jurisdiction is also often argued.

Presently, the code states that SH “*may be committed inside UP premises; or outside UP premises in a work, education, research, extension, or related activity*”. Current cases and reports of SH include those committed outside the jurisdiction of the office, such as at a bar or in a condominium where non-UP related activities take place. SH committed online is also open to arguments about whether this is considered within the UP jurisdiction or not. Some argue that it is not, but others counter that there are no geographical boundaries in online communities and, as such, a sexually harassing message or post can be viewed anywhere including within the campus.

ADR, the second highest form of case resolution, is often employed when there is confusion on jurisdiction. Section 12 states:

*“As used in this Code, ADR is limited to conciliation and mediation. It may be resorted to only in one complaint of sexual harassment; Provided, that it is the first complaint against the person being complained of. Complaints settled through ADR shall at all times be with the assistance of the OASH.”* (UP Board of Regents 2017)

At the moment, it remains a challenge to fully implement Sections 29 and 30. These sections state:

**Section 29. Protocols for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment.** - *The ASH Council shall formulate, disseminate and publish protocols for the prevention of sexual harassment upon consultation with the*

*UP community. Academic units may formulate implementing guidelines applicable to their particular situation or context, subject to the review of the ASH Council.*

*An anti-sexual harassment protocol with contractors and concessionaires shall likewise be integrated in contracts entered with the University.*

**Section 30. Anti-Sexual Harassment Orientation and Clearance Requirement.** - *All members of the UP community shall undergo an orientation on anti-sexual harassment, once every three (3) years.*

*Anti-sexual harassment orientation and clearance shall henceforth be a component of student curriculum, personnel actions, such as hiring, tenure and promotion, and accreditation of service contractors, and partner entity engagements. (UP Board of Regents 2017)*

These sections aim to ensure that every member of the UP community is made aware of the Anti-SH Code and is held accountable if SH is committed.

With the dramatic increase of cases filed at the OASH, a number of other challenges have arisen, which necessitate that we implement more efficiently the ASH Code. We have observed that most of the current reported cases involve students who, most often than not, have psychological issues that may be related to perceived obligations and expectations regarding family, friendships, and academic as well as non-academic activities and pursuits.

To respond to this issue, the OASH needs further support from medical professionals in this field since the office does not have enough staffing. The office also needs mechanisms that will facilitate stronger support, collaboration, and coordination with Office of Student Activities (OSA), alumni, and organization advisers.

The emergence of IMTs and the internet as places where people extensively interact impacts OASH in the resolution of cases as well as in the protection of the confidentiality clause in the code. There is a need for more technological expertise in investigating online SH cases. On the other hand, parties involved

in cases typically have the propensity to post their “rants” online, undermining the confidentiality of cases.

**Section 27. Confidentiality Clause.** – *All proceedings and records related to the case are strictly confidential.*

*Parties to the case as well as University personnel and students entrusted with duties and functions in connection with the implementation or enforcement of this Code, are enjoined from disclosing any matters related thereto and to respect the individual privacy of all parties during the pendency of the case.*

*Any person who violates the confidential nature of such records shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.*

*The identity of the complainant in the final decision released by the University shall, upon request of the complainant, be under an assumed name; Provided, however, that where the respondent is found not liable for the offense charged, the name shall also be under an assumed name. (UP Board of Regents 2017)*

Advocacy and research need to be strengthened to be able to understand and make sense of the changing social relationships of UP community members, especially the student sector, where SH cases usually come from.

Finally, there should be a program that focuses on the care for the frontliners. Wellness for OASH personnel and members of the ASH Council should be given. We believe that OASH and ASH Council work is complex and daunting. It takes a toll on the well-being of individuals who regularly attend to such demanding and emotionally draining cases. It is our hope that, in the near future, this concern will be given proper attention and action.

## REFERENCES

- UP Board of Regents. 2017. *UP Anti-Sexual Harassment Code, 2017*. University of the Philippines.
- Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment (OASH). 2019. *2003-2019 Filed Cases Statistics*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines.