

Academia's Hidden Crisis: From Bullying to Institutional Flourishing

Academic institutions harbor bullying due to power imbalances and cultures normalizing suffering. Moving from 'spaces of survival' to 'intellectual flourishing' requires structural reforms for accountability and psychological safety.

THE REALITY OF THE CRISIS

28% to 50% of academic workers experience bullying.

Structural 'Shields' Enable Abuse.

Tenure Protections

Power Concentration

Prestige-Driven "Star" Cultures often protect perpetrators from accountability.

Exposure is highest among graduate students, international scholars, and marginalized groups.

High Organizational Costs.

Bullying triggers research quality degradation, talent attrition, and significant legal liability.

THE PATH TO INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Establish Independent Reporting.

Move reporting channels outside departmental control to protect targets from retaliation.

Hold Leadership Accountable.

Use 360-degree feedback and evaluate department chairs on cultural stewardship, not just productivity.

Restructure Mentorship Models.

Replace one-on-one advisor models with committee oversight and rotating mentorship to distribute power.

EXAMPLES OF REFORM SUCCESS

Institution	Reform Strategy Implemented
Univ. of British Columbia	Independent Ombudsperson Office
Univ. of Michigan	Multi-channel reporting and advisement reform
Stanford University	360-degree feedback for Department Chairs