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Weinstein sparks national “me too” movement

Allegations of sexual assault against Harvey Weinstein prompt backlash

by Claudia Levens

Since the New York Times published reports accusing prominent movie producer Harvey Weinstein of sexual harassment and coercive bargaining on Oct 5, dozens of other women have come forward with similar claims against him and other well-known public figures.

Weinstein was a well-respected American film producer and studio executive who has been recognized with numerous accolades, including multiple Oscar, Tony, and Emmy awards, an appointment as an honorary Commander of the Order of the British Empire, and as a knight of the French Legion of Honor.

Until the fallout of the accusations led him to be fired from his own company and expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

In addition, steps are being taken to revoke many of his accolades and remove his name from projects he's been involved in, including

“Shakespeare in Love,” “Reservoir Dogs,” “Pulp Fiction,” “Good Will Hunting,” “Air Bud,” “The Hateful Eight,” “Carol,” “Silver Lining’s Playbook,” “Spy Kids,” “Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King,” and last year’s film about sexual assault against a Native American girl called “Wind River.”

The full list of 82-women who have come forward with claims of having been sexually assaulted or harassed by the movie mogul includes actresses Lupita Nyong’o, Cara Delevigne, Heather Graham, Eva Green, Angelina Jolie, Ashley Judd, Mika Kelly, Gwyneth Paltrow, Natalie Mendoza, Rose McGowan, and Lena Heady.

Weinstein’s responses have ranged from denial, to acceptance, to threats of lawsuits, and to apology.

Following in the wake of the events, a social media campaign highlighting and empowering victims of sexual assault and abuse under the hash tag #metoo has taken over Twitter and other social media platforms.

Though much of this behavior has reportedly been going on for years, the reaction in its wake has been swift and decisive.

“It shined a spotlight on the fact that, for so long, so much bad stuff



Actress Rose McGowan, alleged victim, supports #MeToo campaign | AP

has been allowed to live under the surface,” said junior Sophie Beitel. “The accusations have only just come out now, but it’s always been a reality and will continue to be unless we change it.”

Weinstein’s fall initiated a domino effect: numerous other men have lost prominent positions in the industry due to allegations of sexual misconduct or a history of behavior that demeaned women.

This list includes Roy Price, Mark Halprin, Chris Savino, James Toback, Ben Affleck, Lockhart Steele, John Besh, and Kevin Spacey.

The fall of Weinstein himself could also be part of an even larger domino effect.

“We can’t forget the litany that led up to Harvey Weinstein and could very well have played a significant role in causing it,” said Elizabeth Blair in an NPR article.

“Bill Cosby. Bill O’Reilly. Roger Ailes. And now, Harvey Weinstein. They’re like sequoias falling in the forest. They’re epochal moments.”

Tiffany Meyers, New Trier’s Social Work Department Chair, stressed the critical role of a

bystander. While the general public seems to be coming more aware, she said, “[My colleagues and I] have been very aware for a long time, since we provide support and help to students who are victims of these circumstances- especially after big events like homecoming and prom.”

In an article published in the May 22, 2017 issue of the New Trier News about the screening of “Hunting Ground,” a documentary about sexual assault on campuses, a now-graduated senior Ben McCormick said, “Instead of sex being a consequential thing and relationships being healthy, it’s about conquest and dominance which only contributes to the culture that enables people to get away with sexual assault.”

Junior girls advisor Kim Hafron acknowledged the cultural predisposition to silence. She commented on a striking statistic from the documentary: 1 in 4 women will be victims of sexual assault in college.

Hafron said, “Looking around at my advisees that’s 6 out of 24 of them. And they aren’t the ones who should be responsible for fixing it; it should be the perpetrators, yet it so often ends up being that way. All I can do is my best to ensure they have access to and are aware of resources and support.”

West wing strives for eco-friendly design

Innovative green architecture and design benefits environment

by Stephanie Kim

Not only has the addition to New Trier’s Winnetka campus brought a host of modern features, such as a new library and a revamped cafeteria, but it also facilitates an initiative to make the building more energy-efficient and environmentally aware.

One of the newest additions was two green roofs on the fourth floor -- complete with their own gardens -- that are inspired by the desire to feel connected to nature. Coupled with the skylights spanning the ceiling, the countless glass windows on the walls, and the open, free atmosphere, the entire West Wing building radiates an environmentally conscious vibe.

“There are a lot of windows and a lot of natural light,” said senior Jack Mersino, who is an architecture student and learned about green construction in his previous classes.

Senior Tara O’Connor, also an architecture student, also agreed with the choice of ample natural light, adding that the new building provides far more insulation as well.

Another principle of green design is making sure the building is not harmful to the people inside. This can be ensured by using fewer toxic chemicals during construction, especially in paint. The new addition utilizes water-based paints and materials that are as sustainable and long-lasting as the building itself, according to architecture teacher



Green roof provides new eco-friendly student leisure space | Guthrie

Jason Boumstein.

A significant part of eco-friendly architecture also involves the idea of accessibility, specifically ADA-compliant features like wider doorways and bathrooms. Features like these are present in various places in the building, including two new elevators and more ramps on the lower floors of the building, according to the New Trier website.

Not only does the new addition have environmentally friendly features, but part of it includes making the building more “clean” and efficient with energy consumption.

The New Trier Anew event page explains that the district is seeking a LEED Silver Certification or higher. LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a global green building rating system based on several criteria, such as air quality and energy use.

“LEED certification has two main purposes: to create a better world and reduce the carbon footprint,” said Boumstein. “LEED is the number

one used award to communicate that a building effectively reduces energy, water usage, implements a process for recycling, and so on. Points are given for different criteria matched.”

The number of points earned correlates with a specific kind of certification. The options include LEED Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum, of which Platinum is the highest ranking. New Trier is aiming for a Gold rating, according to Boumstein.

The new addition’s environmental awareness is not only aimed at helping the earth, but the students as well. Research has shown that being outside can drastically improve mood and academic performance levels, according to junior Leah Ulrich, who wrote an extensive essay concerning the topic for her AP Language & Composition class.

“Spending more time outside - for example, eating outside or even just taking one walk a day - can

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District pays \$50,000 for students to take ACT, SAT

Juniors will be taking both tests through the school in April

by Danielle Kurensky

Despite the state’s transition to the SAT, juniors at New Trier will take both the SAT and ACT free of cost this April though the district has paid \$50,000 for the ACT, which remains popular among both students and educators.

Every state is required to provide one of the two college entrance exams to all public school students their junior year free of cost. States do this to make the college admissions process more fair for all students.

For the second year since Illinois’ change to the SAT, the district will pay for juniors to take both tests.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Peter Tragos said, “[The ACT] is an important test for students, since most of our students use the ACT for their college entrance exam. So we thought it was important to continue to offer that. It’s a service to our students.”

Furthermore, the district feels it is necessary to provide both exams to compare data of student growth. The school has over a decade’s worth of data about the ACT.

“We think that is important data for us to know about our students and how their growing between Sophomore and Junior year,” said Tragos.

For over a decade, students have

taken the ACT’s PLAN test their sophomore year and then take the ACT their junior year. This system allowed administrators to compare students’ scores and track growth throughout high school.

Due to these changes, New Trier does not have enough data to compare these results.

Although colleges accept both tests, the ACT has always been popular in Illinois and few students have taken the SAT. According to Testing Coordinator Peg Stevens, “Typically, less than 200 students take the SAT for college purposes.”

The majority of New Trier students don’t even consider taking the SAT.

“Some people assume they will be better at one or the other and never find out,” said Post High School Counseling Department Chair James Conroy II.

Many question whether standardized testing is the best way to demonstrate students’ knowledge. English teacher Lissa Raguseo said, “It ultimately doesn’t become a day off. I see how it can add stress and I’m thinking about what our goal is here.”

In the 2016-2017 school year, 90 districts in Illinois paid for the ACT to be given in addition to the SAT.

The change of tests came after Illinois’ 15-year contract with ACT came to an end and was replaced by a \$14.3 million, three-year bid from the SAT.

Although the ACT remains the preferred test by students, many agree with junior Sylvia Rybia who said, “I’ll submit whichever one I do better on.”