

# WHO ARE YOU

## WHISTLING

### AT?

#### Feminist Club leaders launch anti-harrassment campaign

SOPHIE YOUNG  
Staff Writer

You walk down the hallway and suddenly feel the sting. It's like a slap across the face, a shove from behind, a yank of your hair. You're trying to get to class, so you keep walking. But then you feel it again. Words that cling and claw at your back. You try to ignore it, ignore them. You turn the corner into an empty hallway and they follow behind you. It's just the two of you alone. Do you turn to say something or walk quickly to class?

Sexual harassment, or unwanted sexual advances or remarks, plagues high schools like ours, but the issue is often not faced. Founders of the Feminist Club, Seniors Rachael Veldman, Allison Daniel, and Amanda Garcia, have gained the confidence and courage to acknowledge and educate the high school campus.

The problematic environment of the halls is faced every morning and afternoon, during and between all seven classes. American

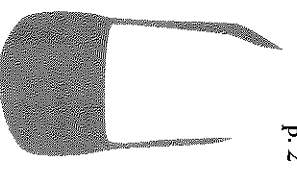
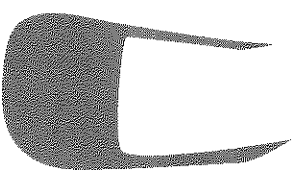
History, Government, Economics, and Psychology teacher and Feminist Club sponsor Mark Chapman sees the problems students face in terms of sexual harassment at the school.

"The situation in the hallways is at best problematic. Sometimes it's downright hostile," Chapman said. "Constantly you see boys inappropriately touching girls. I know that a lot of those girls don't want that to be happening. They don't feel comfortable saying leave me alone or they don't feel like the boy is going to listen."

This situation is what inspired the club's founders to start a campaign for awareness of the issue. Their goal is to inform the public that the current state of the halls is not okay and acknowledge that the problem is only the first step. Garcia was introduced to the problem by another teacher.

"We spoke to Ms. Segal, the yearbook teacher," Garcia said.

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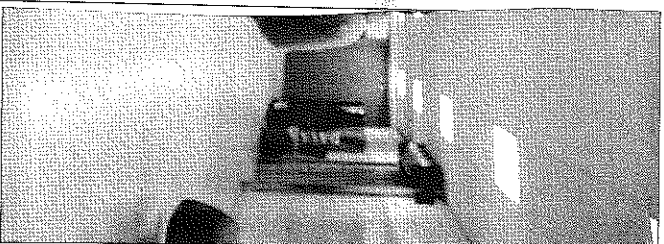


Annie Tao

## ice sexual harrassment on campus

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Dinna Pineda

girls on high school

I think we want to do something that defines exactly what sexual harassment is because a lot of people don't really know," Veldman said. "We're just trying to let people know and spread awareness that this isn't right and if you see something, stop it."

The club was prepared for a whole variety of responses from the school. Daniel expected both support from her fellow club members but also great opposition from much of the student body.

"I think we'll have a lot of support from other feminists and other people with similar views," Daniel said. "But I think there's going to be a whole other side where some people are going to be very strongly against it and very strongly against us because there's already a group that is. I'm prepared though. That's just what you have to do."

But even through the differing views of the campaign, teachers like Chapman saw how beneficial it was for the school.

"I absolutely think it's important for the school," Chapman said. "It's a situation that we have done too little to address. So a comprehensive plan to try and deal with this would be helpful."

Along with this plan was the goal to define what sexual harassment actually was. Veldman saw how not acknowledging even minor forms of sexual harassment only strengthens the issue and that some people need to learn what defines sexual harassment before they can end the problem.

"I think there are a lot of different definitions

isn't even a valid thing," Veldman said. "They think that if you weren't say raped, then it's nothing. It's not a big deal. Some of it could be people not wanting to acknowledge it, but some of it is just genuinely not knowing. It's the way people are brought up without having any attention put towards it. When you think sexual harassment, you think something horrible, but it comes in even minor forms that are still not okay."

Defining minor forms was essential in creating more awareness in the ways that people can be sexually harassed. Veldman saw that minor harassment like this was still violating a person.

"Minor forms would be like cat calling, following, things that don't really last a long time," Veldman said. "Things that aren't quite yet to the point of being dangerous, but they still are not okay. They still make someone uncomfortable. They are still not complimenting that person."

Garcia also added on to the definition of sexual harassment. "It's just something that makes you uncomfortable," Garcia said. "Any type of harassment should be reported, like bullying, anything like that."

Harassment in the school created a negative environment in a place that was created as a place for learning. This included sexual harassment among any other type of bullying. The Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign will hopefully destroy the negative

## Feminist Club attempts to reduce sexual harrassment on campus

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"She had been getting complaints from her students about the athletic teams catcalling the girls in yearbook whenever they would leave and walk to their cars," Garcia said. "She thought it would be a good idea to bring it up to us and then we spoke to our club about it. We found that it was a really big issue that everyone has to deal with all the time."

The idea of the campaign was to not only to educate the public, but also dealt with how to address sexual harassment. Daniel dealt with sexual harassment herself and felt like addressing the harassment when it occurred is just as important

as campaigning against it.

"If I walk past a bus stop or past Chick-fil-a or just walking on the way to that intersection, there's always a ton of people and I've been yelled at quite a few times by students in that area," Daniel said. "I think I got called 'white trash' once walking home. It's not a lot of fun. So, I don't want people feeling that way. I know I can handle it pretty well, but some people are really fragile and very insecure."

Daniel saw how knowing how to respond in the correct manner to sexual harassment was just as important as identifying it.

"Responding in any way, probably a non-aggressive way would be best, but showing any

kind of response at all would be recommended," Daniel said.

"Victims of sexual harassment keep going on their way and pretend it didn't happen, but I think the thing you should do is confront people who harass you. However if you feel like the situation could put you in danger, you should not confront your harasser. Safety is what we always must think about first."

The Feminist Club's next step to fight sexual harassment was campaigning for the issue to be recognized around the school. Veldman was prepared to announce the campaign and further spread awareness.

"We know for a fact that we are able to have one banner, and

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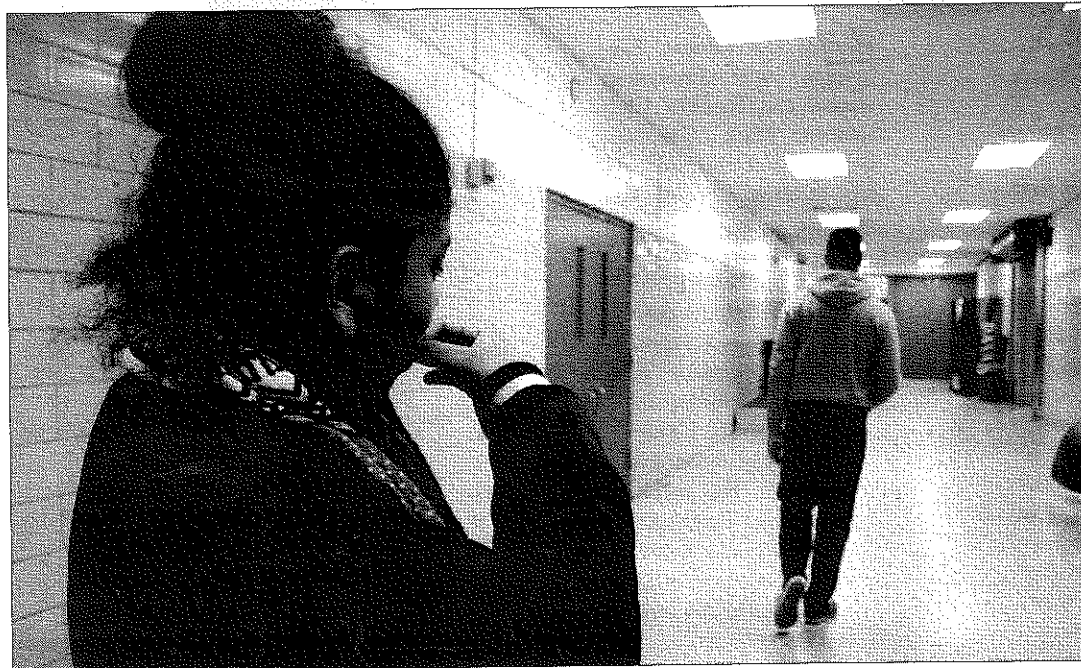
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Dina Pineda

**Whistling at boys:** Sexual harassment remains a problem for boys as well as girls on high school campuses.