

There's a professor here who's been doing unprofessional things that make me uncomfortable. It's never anything huge, but it's built up over the years I've been here and I don't feel safe around him. Although I'm generally really happy at Rochester, these situations have made me miserable at times. It's Florian.

I don't specifically remember a lot of the things he's done because they were little and made me really uncomfortable, but weren't ridiculously unacceptable, just unprofessional. Stuff didn't stick out too much; I just got really uncomfortable. Also, sometimes it takes me a while to get what happened in a social interaction and understand how I felt about it and why. Early on I got the sense that he likes to push people's boundaries and that's a huge red flag to me. I've done a pretty good job of completely avoiding him since he started making me feel uneasy, except when that's impossible (department events). Two examples that do stick out are:

1. My office is 414, and his is 418 (two doors away). A couple years ago (I think early in my second year), he walked into my office without asking, picked up some post-its and a pen off someone's desk, then stood directly behind my chair at my desk (in a very large, empty office) without saying anything, for what felt like a few minutes (may have just been a minute). I turned my screen off and angled it so I could see him behind me and worked on something else. I assumed he was writing a note for his door as he had done before with our office supplies but it was creepy and unprofessional. Fortunately when Redacted moved into the office he quit poking his head in all the time randomly, which is what he'd been doing before then.

2. At the end of the final recruiting party at Jessica and Brad's this year, I was on the couch hugging one of Redacted stuffed animals. There were several other graduate students hanging out there, and Florian walked in and asked if he could take a picture of me. I said no, and he walked out. I was waiting to walk home with my neighbor and everyone had left the room when he walked by again and just took a picture of me with his phone. I was pretty angry, and the picture (if it still exists anywhere) is of me flipping him off. It makes me feel angry, sick, and my skin crawl to think of him having a picture of me anywhere.

I just told Dick about him making me uncomfortable this spring. I realize it's not ideal that this has gone on so long. This shit's been happening for years but it took me a long time to realize how uncomfortable it makes me, that it usually happens when other people aren't there to see (so they didn't know about it), and most importantly: that it's been happening to other graduate student women and it's not just me and I'm not overreacting by thinking he's creepy. I had not-great experiences with some of his students in my first semester (who have now graduated), and learned enough about him to predict that he would not let things go, so I figured if I said something about it, I would probably end up way more unhappy from social exclusion and him escalating. I had given up on anything being done about it and only told Dick because after the recruiting incident I had to interact with Florian after my short lunch talk and I realized then that I'm really upset about everything he's been doing and I want someone to know why I don't ever want to be around him.

I didn't realize how I was responding until recently, but I've dealt with this by removing myself from department activities he would be at. I feel cut out of some graduate student social events because he comes to them. There are people I don't hang out with because he'll be there, or it's hosted at his house. I have avoided going to professional learning opportunities because he would be there (or it involved his lab). I've avoided collaborating with people who work with him because I was worried I'd have to be around him, or even meet with him. This situation has



influenced me wanting to go into industry rather than academia because in industry when you get harassed it's easier to change jobs, and I'm not sure I could live with knowing another professor was harassing students somewhere I worked.

Things were fine this summer and fall, after I told Dick, because I haven't seen him and he's been on sabbatical. Florian was in town recently and the whole situation has been bothering me. He showed up to a postdoc/grad student potluck two weeks ago and I left. It's been upsetting seeing him around, especially at grad student social events. I talked to Steve about it after he noticed I wasn't doing so well and he said that you don't know about this but could do more than has been done previously (having ~~Redacted~~ babysit him maybe hasn't been the most effective way to address the issues). I wouldn't have said something if Steve hadn't spent some time convincing me it would be both safe to say something and worth it. I also talked to a potential CLS postdoc last weekend at a conference and she said she didn't want to apply because she was afraid if she got it she would have to work with Florian. I told her she wouldn't have to, but I don't know whether she'll apply.

Here are some actions I think would help.

1. Try to hear from other women in the department about what Florian has done to them, specifically. I can tell you what happened to me, but it's not that bad compared to some really inappropriate things that happened to others. There's a pattern, and it's recent and ongoing, and some of it is really unacceptable. I could ask some of them if they'd be ok with you contacting them? What I know about includes past and present postdocs and grad students, and one (probably many more) past undergrad. At least nine other women, some of whom don't want to say anything (unless asked directly?) because they want to stay in academia and are worried he'll retaliate by badmouthing them when they try to get jobs.
2. Can he get some training on boundaries and respecting them? Personally I doubt how effective that would be because I honestly think he's trying to make people uncomfortable, but at least letting him know that's not acceptable in this department would help.
3. It took me less than two months of being at Rochester to feel creeped out, and then two and a half years to say something to my advisor, over which time Florian's behavior continued to the point that I got so angry I could finally tell someone who wasn't a peer. It's really not easy, but it could potentially be made slightly easier for people to speak up if it were clearer in the department who to say something to and that it will be taken seriously and things will change. If there's any way to do that, it would be great. I feel bad that I haven't checked in with younger grad students because they might be going through what I went through without knowing they're not the problem, and that is shitty.
4. No graduate student should ever live with him again. He's still, as recently as this summer, getting students to rent from him and from what I've heard that is a terrible idea.

Here's what I need advice on.

1. I never want to have to interact with him again. I never want him at a talk I give. Is that possible? If he ever tries to push for interaction, is it ok to tell him I prefer not to because of how uncomfortable his unprofessional behavior has made me?
2. What do I tell prospective students? It's incredibly awkward. Nobody's ended up coming to work with him, but people ask and I feel like a terrible person for not warning them. This is an awkward thing for more than just me, and for more than just the women he's harassed.