# Paul Mitchell The School Birmingham

## PROTECTED CLASS NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Paul Mitchell The School Birmingham (“School”) is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment, as well as other benefits, programs, and activities, that are free from discrimination and harassment based on a protected characteristic and retaliation for engaging in a protected activity. The School values and upholds the equal dignity of all members of its community and strives to balance the rights of the parties in the Grievance Process during what can be a difficult time for all involved.

The School, in its admission, instruction, and graduation policies and practices, does not allow or tolerate harassment or discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, ethnic origin, national origin, ancestry, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), military or veteran status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, or any other basis protected by the federal, state, or local law.

To ensure compliance with federal, state, and local civil rights laws and regulations, and to affirm its commitment to promoting the goals of fairness and equity in all aspects of the education program or activity, the School has developed policies and procedures that are designed to provide a prompt, fair, and impartial process for those involved in an allegation of discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected characteristic and for allegations of retaliation.

In furtherance of this commitment, all students and employees are required to complete mandatory sexual harassment and prevention training when they first enroll or become employed with the School and annually, each January, thereafter. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the School prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, and promptly investigates when allegations of sex discrimination are made by a member of the School’s community.

### APPLICABLE SCOPE

The core purpose of this policy is the prohibition of all forms of discrimination. The School’s policy prohibits discrimination based on sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions), race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ethnic origin, ancestry, military or veteran status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. Sometimes, discrimination involves exclusion from or different treatment in activities, such as admission or employment. At other times, discrimination takes the form of harassment or, in the case of sex-based discrimination, it can encompass sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, dating violence, or domestic violence. When an alleged policy violation is reported, the allegations are subject to resolution using the School’s grievance procedures as determined by the Title IX Coordinator, and as detailed below.

When the Respondent is a member of the School community, a Formal Complaint may be filed and a Grievance Process may be available regardless of the status of the Complainant, who may or may not be a member of the School community. However, the School’s specific response may be limited by certain regulations. This community includes, but is not limited to, students, employees, customers or service guests, vendors, or anyone else who does business with the School. The procedures below may be applied to incidents, to patterns, and/or to the institutional culture/climate, all of which may be addressed and investigated in accordance with this Policy.

The School recognizes that reports and/or Formal Complaints under this Policy may include multiple forms of discrimination and harassment as well as violations of other School policies; may involve various combinations of students, employees, and other members of the School community; and may require the simultaneous attention of multiple School departments. Accordingly, School employees will share information, combine efforts, and otherwise collaborate, to the maximum extent permitted by law and consistent with other applicable School policies, to provide uniform, consistent, efficient, and effective responses to alleged discrimination and harassment or retaliation.

As part of the School's commitment to providing a working and learning environment free from discrimination, this Policy will be disseminated to the School community through publications such as the School's catalog, the School's website, new employee orientation, and other appropriate methods of communication.

**POLICY: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, HARASSMENT, AND NONDISCRIMINATION**

1. GLOSSARY

- ***Administrative Grievance Procedure*** means the Administrative Grievance Process set forth below in Appendix C that applies only when the Title IX Grievance Procedure does not, as determined by the Title IX Coordinator.
- ***Advisor*** means a person chosen by a party or appointed by the institution to accompany the party to meetings related to the Grievance Process to advise the party on that process and to conduct questioning for the party at the hearing, if any.
- ***Appeal Decision-Maker*** means the person who accepts or rejects a submitted appeal request determines whether an error occurred that substantially affected the investigation or original determination, and directs corrective action accordingly.
- ***Complainant*** means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute harassment or discrimination based on a protected characteristic or retaliation for engaging in a protected activity.
- ***Day*** means a business day, excluding Saturday and Sunday, when the School is in normal operation.
- ***Decision-Maker*** means the person or panel who hears evidence, determines relevance, and makes the Final Determination of whether this Policy has been violated and/or assigns sanctions.
- ***Directly Related Evidence*** is evidence connected to the complaint, but which is neither inculpatory (tending to prove a violation) nor exculpatory (tending to disprove a violation) and cannot be relied upon by the Decision-Maker. Compare to Relevant Evidence below.
- ***Education Program or Activity*** means locations, events, or circumstances where the School exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context in which the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation occurs.
- ***Final Determination*** is a conclusion by the standard of proof that the alleged conduct did or did not violate policy.
- ***Finding*** is a conclusion by the standard of proof that the conduct did or did not occur as alleged (as in a "finding of fact").
- ***Formal Complaint*** means a document submitted or signed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging a Respondent engaged in harassment or discrimination based on a protected characteristic or retaliation for engaging in a protected activity and requesting that the School investigate the allegation(s).
- ***Formal Grievance Process*** means the "Title IX Grievance Procedure," a method of formal resolution designated by the School to address conduct that falls within the policies included below, and which complies with the requirements of the Title IX regulations (34 CFR § 106.45) and the Violence Against Women Act § 304.
- ***Future Professional*** means any individual who has accepted an offer of admission, or who is registered or enrolled in coursework, and who maintains an ongoing educational relationship with the School.
- ***Grievance Process Pool*** includes any Investigators, Hearing Decision-Makers, Appeal Decision-Makers, and Advisors who may perform any or all of these roles (though not at the same time or with respect to the same complaint).
- ***Informal Resolution*** is a complaint resolution agreed to by the Parties and approved by the Title IX Coordinator that occurs prior to a formal Final Determination being reached.

- ***Investigator*** means the person authorized by the School to gather facts about an alleged violation of this Policy assesses relevance and credibility, synthesizes the evidence, and compiles this information into an investigation report of Relevant Evidence and a file of Directly Related Evidence.
- ***Mandated Reporter*** means a School employee who is obligated by policy to share knowledge, notice, and/or reports of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation with the Title IX Coordinator.
- ***Notice*** means that an employee, Future Professional, or third party informs the Title IX Coordinator or other Official with Authority of the alleged occurrence of harassing, discriminatory, and/or retaliatory conduct.
- ***Official with Authority (OWA)*** means a School employee (specifically the Owner or Director) who has responsibility to implement corrective measures for harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation on behalf of the School.
- ***Parties*** means the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s), collectively.
- ***Recipient*** means a postsecondary education program that receives federal funding.
- ***Relevant Evidence*** is evidence that tends to prove (inculpatory) or disprove (exculpatory) an issue in the complaint.
- ***Remedies*** are post-Final Determination actions directed to the Complainant and/or the community as mechanisms to address safety, prevent recurrence, and restore access to the School's education program.
- ***Respondent*** means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute harassment or discrimination based on a protected characteristic, or retaliation for engaging in a protected activity under this Policy.
- ***Resolution*** means the result of an Informal Resolution or Formal Grievance Process.
- ***Sanction*** means a consequence imposed on a Respondent who is found to have violated this Policy.
- ***Sexual Harassment*** is an umbrella category including the offenses of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and domestic violence. See Section 17.B. for greater detail.
- ***Title IX Coordinator*** is at least one official designated by the School to ensure compliance with Title IX and the School's Title IX program. References to the Coordinator throughout this policy may also encompass a designee of the Coordinator for specific tasks.
- ***Title IX Grievance Procedure*** means the Formal Grievance Process detailed below and defined above.

## 2. TITLE IX COORDINATOR

Holly Walker serves as the Title IX Coordinator and oversees implementation of the School's policy on equal opportunity, harassment, and nondiscrimination.

The Title IX Coordinator has the primary responsibility for coordinating the School's efforts related to the intake, investigation, resolution, and implementation of supportive measures to stop, remedy, and prevent discrimination, harassment, and retaliation prohibited under this Policy.

All parties will be provided with a comprehensive (electronic) brochure detailing options and resources, which the Title IX Coordinator may also review with the parties in person.

## 3. INDEPENDENCE AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Title IX Coordinator acts with independence and authority, free from bias and conflicts of interest. The Title IX Coordinator oversees all resolutions under this Policy and these procedures. Investigators, Decision-Makers (including Appeal Decision-Makers), and Advisors are vetted and trained to ensure they are not biased for or against any party in a specific complaint, or for or against Complainants and/or Respondents, generally.

To raise any concern involving bias, conflict of interest, misconduct, or discrimination by the Title IX Coordinator, contact the School's managing owner/Director Susanne Brown. Concerns of bias, misconduct, discrimination, or a potential conflict of interest by any other individual involved facilitating the Grievance Process should be raised with the Title IX Coordinator.

## 4. ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACT INFORMATION

Complaints or notice of alleged policy violations, or inquiries about or concerns regarding this Policy and procedures, may be made internally to:

Holly Walker
Title IX Coordinator
1694 Montgomery Highway, Suite 124, Hoover, AL 35216
(205) 824-4442 ext. 5841 hwalker@xcellacademy.com paulmitchell.edu/birmingham

The School has determined that the following administrators are Officials with Authority (OWAs) to address and correct harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation. In addition to the Title IX Coordinator, these OWAs may also accept notice or complaints on behalf of the School:

Director Susanne Brown

The School has also classified the Financial Services Leader, Admissions Leader, and Future Professional Advisor as Mandated Reporters of any knowledge they have that a member of the community is experiencing harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation. The section below on Mandated Reporting details their duties.

Inquiries may be made externally to:

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100
Customer Service Hotline #: (800) 421-3481
Facsimile: (202) 453-6012
TDD#: (877) 521-2172
Email: OCR@ed.gov
Web: http://www.ed.gov/ocr

For complaints involving employee-on-employee conduct: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

## 5. NOTICE/COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND/OR RETALIATION

Notice or complaints of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation may be made using any of the following options:

- File a report or Formal Complaint with, or give verbal notice to, the Title IX Coordinator or an Official with Authority. Such a report or Formal Complaint may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail, to the office listed for the Title IX Coordinator or any other official listed.
- Report online, using the reporting form posted at paulmitchell.edu/birmingham/title-ix/policy. Anonymous reports[1] are accepted but can give rise to a need to investigate to determine whether the parties can be identified. If not, no further formal action is taken, though measures intended to protect the community may be enacted. The School tries to provide supportive measures to all Complainants, which may be impossible with an anonymous report that does not identify the Complainant.

Because reporting carries no obligation to initiate a formal response, and because the School respects Complainant requests to dismiss complaints unless there is a compelling threat to health and/or safety, the Complainant is largely in control and should not fear a loss of confidentiality by making a report that allows the School to discuss and/or provide supportive measures.

As used in this Policy, the term “Formal Complaint” means a document or electronic submission (such as by electronic mail or through an online portal provided by the School for this purpose) that contains the Complainant’s physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the complaint, and requests that the School investigate the allegations. If notice is submitted in a form that does not meet this standard, the Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant to ensure that it is filed correctly.

## 6. SUPPORTIVE MEASURES

The School will offer and implement appropriate and reasonable supportive measures to the parties upon notice of alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation. Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate and reasonably available. They are offered, without fee or charge to the parties, to restore or preserve access to the School's education program or activity, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties and/or the School's educational environment and/or to deter harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

The Title IX Coordinator promptly makes supportive measures available to the parties upon receiving notice or a complaint. At the time that supportive measures are offered, the School will inform the Complainant, in writing, that they may file a Formal Complaint with the School either at that time or in the future, if they have not done so already. The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure that their wishes are considered with respect to any planned and implemented supportive measures. The School will maintain the confidentiality of the supportive measures, provided that confidentiality does not impair the School's ability to provide those supportive measures.

The School will act to ensure as minimal an occupational or academic impact on the parties as possible. The School will implement measures in a way that does not unreasonably burden the other party.

These actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Referral to the Employee Assistance Program
- Referral to the Student Wellness Program
- Referral to community-based service providers
- Visa and immigration assistance
- Future Professional financial aid counseling
- Education to the institutional community or community subgroup(s)
- Altering work arrangements for employees
- Safety planning
- Implementing contact limitations (no-contact orders) between the parties
- Academic support, extensions of deadlines, or other course/program-related adjustments
- Trespass orders
- Timely warnings
- Withdrawals or leaves of absence
- Increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus
- Any other actions deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator

Violations of no-contact orders or other restrictions may be referred to appropriate Future Professional or employee conduct processes for enforcement or added as collateral misconduct allegations to an ongoing complaint under this Policy.

## 7. EMERGENCY REMOVAL

The School can act to remove a Future Professional Respondent from its education program or activities—partially or entirely—on an emergency basis when an individualized safety and risk analysis has determined that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any Future Professional or other individual justifies removal. This risk analysis is performed by the Title IX Coordinator in conjunction with relevant School officials.

When an emergency removal is imposed, the Future Professional will be given notice of the action and the option to request to meet with the Title IX Coordinator prior to such action/removal being imposed, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter, to show cause why the action/removal should not be implemented or should be modified.

This meeting is not a hearing on the merits of the allegation(s), but rather it is an administrative process intended to determine solely whether the emergency removal is appropriate. When this meeting is not requested, objections to the emergency removal will be deemed waived. A Complainant and their Advisor may be permitted to participate in this meeting if the Title IX Coordinator determines it equitable to do so. There is no appeal process for emergency removal decisions.

A Respondent may be accompanied by an Advisor of their choice when meeting with the Title IX Coordinator for the show cause meeting. The Respondent will be given access to a written summary of the basis for the emergency removal prior to the meeting to allow for adequate preparation.

The Title IX Coordinator has sole discretion under this Policy to implement or modify an emergency removal and to determine the conditions and duration. Violation of an emergency removal under this policy will be grounds for discipline within the Future Professional or employee conduct processes, which may include expulsion or termination.

The School will implement the least restrictive emergency actions possible in light of the circumstances and safety concerns. As determined by the Title IX Coordinator, these actions could include, but are not limited to, temporarily reassigning an employee, restricting a Future Professional or employee's access to or use of facilities or equipment, allowing a Future Professional to withdraw without financial penalty, authorizing an employee administrative leave, and suspending a Future Professional's participation in extracurricular activities. At the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, alternative coursework options may be pursued to ensure as minimal an academic impact on the parties as possible.

When the Respondent is an employee accused of misconduct in the course of their employment, they may be removed from campus or placed on administrative leave based on the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator.

## 8. PROMPTNESS

Once the School has received notice or a Formal Complaint, all allegations are promptly acted upon. Complaints typically take 60–90 business days to resolve. There are always exceptions and extenuating circumstances that can cause a resolution to take longer, but the School will avoid all undue delays within its control.

Any time the general timeframes for resolution outlined in School procedures will be delayed, the School will provide written notice to the parties of the delay, the cause for the delay, and an estimate of the anticipated additional time that will be needed as a result of the delay.

## 9. PRIVACY

Every effort is made by the School to preserve the privacy of reports[2]. The School will not share the identity of any individual who has made a report or Formal Complaint of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; any Complainant; any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; any Respondent; or any witness, except as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)[3] or its implementing regulations[4], or as required by law; or to carry out the purposes of 34 CFR Part 106, including any investigation, hearing, or grievance proceeding arising under these policies and procedures.

The School reserves the right to determine which School officials have a legitimate educational interest in being informed about incidents that fall under this Policy, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Only a small group of School employees who need to know will typically be told about the complaint. Information will be shared as necessary with Investigators, Decision-Makers, witnesses, and the parties. The circle of people with this knowledge will be kept as tight as possible to preserve the parties' rights and privacy.

The School may contact parents/guardians of Future Professionals to inform them of situations in which there is a significant and articulable health and/or safety risk but will usually consult with the Future Professional first before doing so.

## 10. JURISDICTION

This Policy applies to the School's education program and activities[5] regarding conduct that takes place on property owned or controlled by the School and at School-sponsored events. The Respondent must be a member of the School's community in order for this Policy to apply.

This Policy can also be applicable to the effects of off-campus misconduct that effectively deprives a person of access to the School's education program or activities. The School may also extend jurisdiction to off-campus and/or to online conduct when the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct affects a substantial School interest.

Regardless of where the conduct occurred, the School will address notice/complaints to determine whether the conduct occurred in the context of its employment or education program or activity and/or has continuing effects on campus (including virtual learning and employment environments) or in an off-campus sponsored program or activity. A substantial School interest includes:

- Any action that constitutes a criminal offense as defined by law. This includes, but is not limited to, single or repeat violations of any local, state, or federal law.
- Any situation in which it is determined that the Respondent poses an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any Future Professional, employee, or other individual.
- Any situation that significantly impinges upon the rights, property, or achievements of others, significantly breaches the peace, and/or causes social disorder.
- Any situation that substantially interferes with the educational interests or mission of the School.

If the Respondent is unknown or is not a member of the School community, the Title IX Coordinator will assist the Complainant in identifying appropriate institutional and local resources and support options. If criminal conduct is alleged, the School can assist in contacting local or institutional law enforcement if the individual would like to file a police report.

Further, even when the Respondent is not a member of the School's community, supportive measures, remedies, and resources may be provided to the Complainant by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.

In addition, the School may take other actions as appropriate to protect the Complainant against third parties, such as barring individuals from School property and/or events.

All vendors serving the School through third-party contracts are subject to the policies and procedures of their employers.

When the Respondent is enrolled in or employed by another institution, the Title IX Coordinator can assist the Complainant in liaising with the appropriate individual at that institution, as it may be possible to pursue action under that institution's policies.

Similarly, the Title IX Coordinator may be able to assist and support a Future Professional or employee Complainant who experiences discrimination in an externship or other environment external to the School where sexual harassment or nondiscrimination policies and procedures of the facilitating or host organization may give the Complainant recourse.

## 11. TIME LIMITS ON REPORTING

There is no time limitation on providing notice/complaints to the Title IX Coordinator. However, if the Respondent is no longer subject to the School's jurisdiction and/or significant time has passed, the ability to investigate, respond, and/or provide remedies may be more limited or impossible.

Acting on notice/complaints significantly impacted by the passage of time (including, but not limited to, the rescission or revision of policy) is at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, who may document allegations for future reference, offer supportive measures and/or remedies, and/or engage in informal or formal action, as appropriate.

## 12. ONLINE HARASSMENT AND MISCONDUCT

The School's policies are written and interpreted broadly to include online manifestations of any of the behaviors prohibited below, when those behaviors occur in or have an effect on the School's education program and activities or when they involve the use of School networks, technology, or equipment.

Although the School may not control websites, social media, and other venues through which harassing communications are made, when such communications are reported to the School, it will engage in a variety of means to address and mitigate the effects.

Members of the community are encouraged to be good digital citizens and to refrain from online misconduct, such as feeding anonymous gossip sites; sharing inappropriate content via social media; participating in unwelcome sexual or sex-based messaging; distributing, or threatening to distribute, nude or semi-nude photos or recordings; performing breaches of privacy; or otherwise using the ease of transmission and/or anonymity of the Internet or other technology to harm another member of the School's community.

Off-campus harassing speech by employees, whether online or in person, may be regulated by the School only when such speech is made in an employee's official or work-related capacity.

## 13. POLICY ON NONDISCRIMINATION

The School adheres to all federal, state, and local civil rights laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination in private higher education institutions.

### 1. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The School does not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, Future Professional, or applicant for admission on the basis of:

- Sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions)
- Race
- Religion
- Creed
- Color
- National Origin
- Ancestry
- Military or Veteran Status
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Medical Condition
- Marital Status
- Age
- Genetic Information
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Gender Expression
- Any other protected characteristic under applicable local, state, or federal law, including protections for those opposing discrimination or participating in any Grievance Process within the institution, with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and/or other human/civil rights agencies
  This Policy covers nondiscrimination in both employment and access to educational opportunities. Therefore, any member of the School's community whose acts deny, deprive, or limit the educational or employment access, benefits, and/or opportunities of any member of the School's community, guest, or visitor on the basis of that person's actual or perceived protected characteristics listed above, is in violation of the School's Nondiscrimination Policy.
  When brought to the attention of the School, any such discrimination will be promptly and fairly addressed and remedied by the School according to the appropriate Grievance Process.

### 2. INCLUSION RELATED TO GENDER IDENTITY/EXPRESSION

The School strives to ensure that all individuals are safe, included, and respected in their working and learning environments, regardless of their gender identity or expression, including intersex, transgender, agender, and gender diverse Future Professionals and employees.

Discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression is not tolerated by the School. If a member of the School community feels they have been subjected to discrimination under this Policy, they should follow the appropriate reporting/Formal Complaint process described above.

In upholding the principles of equity and inclusion, the School supports the full integration and healthy development of those who are transgender, transitioning, or gender diverse, and seeks to eliminate any stigma related to gender identity and expression.

The School is committed to fostering a climate where all identities are valued and create a more vibrant and diverse community. The purpose of this Policy is to have the School administratively address issues some Future Professionals and employees, including those identifying as intersex, transgender, agender, and gender diverse, may confront as they navigate systems originally designed around the assumption that gender is binary. As our society's understanding of gender evolves, so do the School's processes and policies.

Concepts like misgendering and deadnaming may not be familiar to all, but understanding them is essential to the School's goal of being as welcoming and inclusive a community as possible.

Misgendering is the intentional or unintentional use of pronouns or identifiers that are different from those used by an individual. Unintentional misgendering is usually resolved with a simple apology if someone clarifies their pronouns for you. Intentional misgendering is inconsistent with the type of community we hold ourselves out to be. We all get to determine our own gender identity and expression, but we do not get to choose or negate someone else's.

Deadnaming, along with misgendering, can be very traumatic to a person who is transgender, transitioning, or gender diverse. Deadnaming means using someone's birth-assigned (cisgender) name, rather than the name they have chosen.

To a person who is transgender, transitioning, or gender diverse, their cisgender identity may be something that is in their past—dead, buried, and behind them. To then revive their deadname could trigger issues, traumas, and experiences of the past that the individual has moved past, or is moving past, and can interfere with their health and well-being.

Again, unintentional deadnaming can be addressed by a simple apology and an effort to use the person's chosen name. Intentional deadnaming could be a form of bullying, outing, or otherwise harassing an individual, and thus should be avoided.

This Policy should be interpreted consistent with the goals of maximizing the inclusion of intersex, transgender, transitioning, agender, and gender diverse Future Professionals and employees, including:

- Maintaining the privacy of all individuals consistent with law
- Ensuring all Future Professionals equal access to educational programming, activities, and facilities, including restrooms
- Ensuring all employees equal access to employment opportunities
- Providing professional development for employees and education for Future Professionals on topics related to gender inclusion
- Encouraging all future employees and current employees to respect the pronoun usage and identities of all members of the School's community
  The School has set forth its specific processes for implementing this Policy through the accompanying Title IX-related procedures.

## 14. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION AND ACCOMMODATION POLICY

The School is committed to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination against qualified persons with disabilities, as well as other federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to individuals with disabilities.

Under the ADA and its amendments, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

The ADA also protects individuals who have a record of a substantially limiting impairment or who are regarded as disabled by the School, regardless of whether they currently have a disability. A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, or caring for oneself.

Sara Mcfarland and Susanne Brown have been designated as School's ADA/504 Coordinators responsible for overseeing efforts to comply with these disability laws, including responding to grievances and conducting investigations of any allegation of noncompliance or discrimination based on disability.

Grievances related to disability status and/or accommodations will be addressed using the School's Policy and Procedures for Future Professionals with Disabilities. For details relating to disability accommodations in the School's Grievance Process.

### FUTURE PROFESSIONALS WITH DISABILITIES

The School is committed to providing qualified Future Professionals with disabilities with reasonable accommodations and support needed to ensure equal access to the School's academic programs, facilities, and activities. For more information refer to Policy and Procedures for Future Professionals with Disabilities.

## 15. DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT POLICY

Future Professionals and employees are entitled to an educational and employment environment that is free of discriminatory harassment. This Policy is not meant to inhibit or prohibit educational content or discussions inside or outside of the classroom that include germane, but controversial, or sensitive subject matters protected by academic freedom.

The sections below describe the specific forms of legally prohibited harassment that are also prohibited under the School's policy. When speech or conduct is protected by academic freedom, it will not be considered a violation of School policy, though supportive measures will be offered to those impacted. All offense definitions encompass actual and/or attempted offenses.

### 1. DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT

Discriminatory harassment—defined as unwelcome conduct by any member or group of the community on the basis of actual or perceived characteristic protected by policy or law—is a form of prohibited discrimination under School policy.

The School does not tolerate discriminatory harassment of any employee, Future Professional, customer or service guest, third party, vendor, or anyone else who does business with the School. The School will act to remedy all forms of harassment when reported, whether or not the harassment rises to the level of creating a "hostile environment." A hostile environment is one that unreasonably interferes with, limits, or effectively denies an individual's educational or employment access, benefits, or opportunities.[6] This discriminatory effect results from harassing verbal, written, graphic, and/or physical conduct that is severe or pervasive and objectively offensive.

When discriminatory harassment rises to the level of creating a hostile environment, the School may also impose sanctions on the Respondent through application of the appropriate Grievance Process.

The School reserves the right to address offensive conduct and/or harassment that (1) does not rise to the level of creating a hostile environment, or (2) that is of a generic nature and not based on a protected characteristic. Addressing such conduct will not result in the imposition of discipline under School policy, but may be addressed through respectful conversation, remedial actions, education, effective Alternative Resolution, and/or other Informal Resolution mechanisms.

For assistance with Alternative Resolution and other Informal Resolution techniques and approaches, employees and Future Professionals should contact the Director or Owner.

## 2. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the State/Commonwealth/District of Alabama regard sexual harassment, a specific form of discriminatory harassment, as an unlawful discriminatory practice.

The School has adopted the following definition of sexual harassment in order to address the unique environment of an academic community.

Acts of sexual harassment may be committed by any person upon any other person, regardless of the sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity of those involved.

Sexual Harassment, as an umbrella category, includes the offenses of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, and is defined as:

Conduct on the basis of sex,[7] or that is sexual in nature, that satisfies one or more of the following:

- **Quid Pro Quo:**
  - an employee of the School,
  - conditions[8] the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the School,
  - on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.
- **Sexual Harassment:**
  - unwelcome conduct,
  - determined by a reasonable person,
  - to be so severe, and
  - pervasive, and,
  - objectively offensive,
  - that it effectively denies a Complainant equal access to the School's education program or activity.[9]
- **Sexual Assault, defined as:**
  a. Any sexual act[10] directed against a Complainant,[11]
    - without their consent, or
    - instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent.

  b. **Incest:**
    - Non-forcible sexual intercourse,
    - between persons who are related to each other,
    - within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by Alabama law.

  c. **Statutory Rape:**
    - Non-forcible sexual intercourse,
    - with a person who is under the statutory age of consent of 16.
- **Dating Violence, defined as:**
  a. violence,
  b. on the basis of sex,
  c. committed by a person,
  d. who is in or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the Complainant.
    i. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the Complainant's statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. For the purposes of this definition—
      - Dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual abuse, physical abuse, or economic abuse[12] or the threat of such abuse.
      - Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.
- **Domestic Violence,[13] defined as:**
  a. felony or misdemeanor crimes,
  b. including the use or attempted use of physical or sexual abuse, or

c. a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a Complainant,
d. including verbal abuse, psychological abuse, economic abuse, or technological abuse that may or may not constitute criminal behavior,
e. on the basis of sex,
f. committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the Complainant,
g. by a person with whom the Complainant shares a child in common, or
h. by a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the Complainant as a spouse or intimate partner, or
i. by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the Complainant under the domestic or family violence laws of Alabama, or
j. by any other person against an adult or youth Complainant who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of Alabama.

- **Stalking,** defined as:
  a. engaging in a course of conduct,
  b. on the basis of sex,
  c. directed at the Complainant, that
     - would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety, or
     - the safety of others; or
     - suffer substantial emotional distress.
- **Technological Abuse**, defined as:
  a. an act or pattern of behavior that occurs within
  b. domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking,
  c. that is intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor,
  d. another person
  e. that occurs using any form of technology[14],
  f. except as otherwise permitted by law.

  For the purposes of this definition:
     - Course of conduct means two or more acts, including but not limited to, acts in which the Respondent directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.
     - Reasonable person means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the Complainant.
     - Substantial emotional distress means significant mental suffering or anguish that may but does not necessarily require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

       The School reserves the right to impose any level of sanction, ranging from a reprimand up to and including suspension or expulsion/termination, for any offense under this Policy. The most serious offenses are likely to result in suspension/expulsion/termination.

## 3. UNETHICAL RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

There are inherent risks in any romantic or sexual relationship between individuals in unequal positions (such as supervisor and employee). In reality, these relationships may be less consensual than perceived by the individual whose position confers power or authority. Similarly, the relationship also may be viewed in different ways by each of the parties, particularly in retrospect. Circumstances may change, and conduct that was once welcome may, at some point in the relationship, become unwelcome.

Even when both parties have initially consented to romantic or sexual involvement, the possibility of a later allegation of a relevant policy violation still exists. The School does not wish to interfere with private choices regarding personal relationships when these relationships do not interfere with the goals and policies of the School. However, for the

personal protection of members of this community, relationships in which power differentials are inherent (e.g., supervisor/employee) are generally discouraged. Employee relationships with Future Professionals are prohibited.

Consensual romantic or sexual relationships in which one party maintains a direct supervisory or otherwise evaluative role over the other party are inherently problematic. Therefore, persons with direct supervisory or otherwise evaluative responsibilities who are involved in such relationships must bring these relationships to the timely attention of the Title IX Coordinator. The existence of this type of relationship will likely result in removing the supervisory or evaluative responsibilities from the employee or shifting a party from being supervised or evaluated by someone with whom they have established a consensual relationship. When an affected relationship existed prior to adoption of this Policy, the duty to notify the appropriate supervisor still pertains.

Failure to timely self-report such relationships to the Title IX Coordinator as required can result in disciplinary action for an employee. Engaging in a consensual relationship with a Future Professional can result in disciplinary action for an employee. The Title IX Coordinator will determine whether to refer violations of this provision to human resources for resolution, or to pursue resolution under this Policy, based on the circumstances of the allegation.

## 4. FORCE, COERCION, CONSENT, AND INCAPACITATION[15]

As used in the offenses above, the following definitions and understandings apply:

**Force:** Force is the use of physical violence and/or physical imposition to gain sexual access. Force also includes threats, intimidation (implied threats), and coercion that is intended to overcome resistance or produce consent (e.g., "Have sex with me or I'll hit you," which elicits the response, "Okay, don't hit me. I'll do what you want.").

Sexual activity that is forced is, by definition, non-consensual, but non-consensual sexual activity is not necessarily forced. Silence or the absence of resistance alone is not consent. Consent is not demonstrated by the absence of resistance. While resistance is not required or necessary, it is a clear demonstration of non-consent.

**Coercion:** Coercion is unreasonable pressure for sexual activity. Coercive conduct differs from seductive conduct based on factors such as the type and/or extent of the pressure used to obtain consent. When someone makes clear that they do not want to engage in certain sexual activity, that they want to stop, or that they do not want to go past a certain point of sexual interaction, continued pressure beyond that point can be coercive.

**Consent is:**

- knowing, and
- voluntary, and
- clear permission
- by word or action
- to engage in sexual activity.
  Individuals may perceive and experience the same interaction in different ways. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each party to determine that the other has consented before engaging in the activity.
  If consent is not clearly provided prior to engaging in the activity, consent may be ratified by word or action at some point during the interaction or thereafter, but clear communication from the outset is strongly encouraged.
  For consent to be valid, there must be a clear expression in words or actions that the other individual consented to that specific sexual conduct. Reasonable reciprocation can be implied consent. For example, if someone kisses you, you can kiss them back (if you want to) without the need to explicitly obtain their consent to being kissed back.
  Consent can also be withdrawn once given, as long as the withdrawal is reasonably and clearly communicated. If consent is withdrawn, that sexual activity should cease within a reasonably immediate time.
  Consent to some sexual contact (such as kissing or fondling) cannot be presumed to be consent for other sexual activity (such as intercourse). A current or previous intimate relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent. If an individual expresses conditions on their willingness to consent (e.g., use of a condom) or limitations on the scope of their consent, those conditions and limitations must be respected.

Proof of consent or non-consent is not a burden placed on either party involved in a complaint. Instead, the burden remains on the School to determine whether its policy has been violated. The existence of consent is based on the totality of the circumstances evaluated from the perspective of a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances, including the context in which the alleged misconduct occurred and any similar and previous patterns that may be evidenced.

Consent in relationships must also be considered in context. When parties consent to BDSM16 or other forms of kink, non-consent may be shown by the use of a safe word. Resistance, force, violence, or even saying "no" may be part of the kink and thus consensual, thus the School's evaluation of communication in kink situations should be guided by reasonableness, rather than strict adherence to policy that assumes non-kink relationships as a default.

**Incapacitation:** A person cannot consent if they are unable to understand what is happening or are disoriented, helpless, asleep, or unconscious for any reason, including due to alcohol or other drug consumption. As stated above, a Respondent violates this Policy if they engage in sexual activity with someone who is incapable of giving consent.

It is a defense to a sexual assault policy violation that the Respondent neither knew nor should have known the Complainant to be physically or mentally incapacitated. "Should have known" is an objective, reasonable person standard that assumes that a reasonable person is both sober and exercising sound judgment.

Incapacitation occurs when someone cannot make rational, reasonable decisions because they lack the capacity to give knowing/informed consent (e.g., to understand the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" of their sexual interaction).

Incapacitation is determined through consideration of all relevant indicators of an individual's state and is not synonymous with intoxication, impairment, blackout, and/or being drunk.

This Policy also covers a person whose incapacity results from a temporary or permanent physical or mental health condition, involuntary physical restraint, and/or the consumption of incapacitating substances.

## 5. OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS OFFENSES

In addition to the forms of sexual harassment described above, which are covered by Title IX, the School additionally prohibits the following offenses as forms of discrimination that may be within or outside of Title IX when the act is based upon the Complainant's actual or perceived protected characteristic.

- **Sexual Exploitation**, defined as:
  a. an individual taking non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another
  b. for their own benefit or for the benefit of anyone other than the person being exploited, and
  c. that conduct does not otherwise constitute sexual harassment under this Policy.

  Examples of sexual exploitation include, but are not limited to:
  - Sexual voyeurism (such as observing or allowing others to observe a person undressing or using the bathroom or engaging in sexual acts, without the consent of the person being observed)
  - Invasion of sexual privacy (e.g., doxxing)
  - Knowingly making an unwelcome disclosure of (or threatening to disclose) an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression
  - Taking pictures, video, or audio recording of another in a sexual act, or in any other sexually related activity when there is a reasonable expectation of privacy during the activity, without the consent of all involved in the activity; or exceeding the boundaries of consent (such as allowing another person to hide in a closet and observe sexual activity; or disseminating sexual pictures without the photographed person's consent), including the making or posting of non-consensual pornography
  - Prostituting another person
  - Engaging in sexual activity with another person while knowingly infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or infection (STI), without informing the other person of the virus, disease, or infection

    - Causing or attempting to cause the incapacitation of another person (through alcohol, drugs, or any other means) for the purpose of compromising that person's ability to give consent to sexual activity, or for the purpose of making that person vulnerable to non-consensual sexual activity
    - Misappropriation of another person's identity on apps, websites, or other venues designed for dating or sexual connections (e.g., spoofing)
    - Forcing a person to take an action against that person's will by threatening to show, post, or share information, video, audio, or an image that depicts the person's nudity or sexual activity
    - Knowingly soliciting a minor for sexual activity
    - Engaging in sex trafficking
    - Knowingly creating, possessing, or disseminating child pornography
- **Harm/Endangerment**, defined as:
    a. threatening or causing physical harm;
    b. extreme verbal, emotional, or psychological abuse; or
    c. other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person or damages their property.
- **Discrimination,** defined as:
    a. actions that deprive, limit, or deny
    b. other members of the community
    c. of educational or employment access, benefits, or opportunities,
    d. including disparate treatment.
- **Intimidation**, defined as:
    a. implied threats or
    b. acts that cause the Complainant reasonable fear of harm.
- **Bullying**[17], defined as:
    a. repeated and/or severe aggressive behavior
    b. that is likely to intimidate or intentionally hurt, control, or physically or mentally diminish the Complainant.

Violation of any other School policies may constitute a Civil Rights Offense when a violation is motivated by actual or perceived protected characteristic(s), and the result is a discriminatory limitation or denial of employment or educational access, benefits, or opportunities.

Sanctions for the above-listed Civil Rights Offenses range from coaching through termination.

## 16. RETALIATION

Protected activity under this Policy includes reporting alleged misconduct that may implicate this Policy, participating in the Grievance Process, supporting a Complainant or Respondent, assisting in providing information relevant to an investigation, and/or acting in good faith to oppose conduct that constitutes a violation of this Policy.

Acts of alleged retaliation should be reported immediately to the Title IX Coordinator and will be promptly investigated. The School will take all appropriate and available steps to protect individuals who fear that they may be subjected to retaliation.

The School and any member of the School's community are prohibited from taking or attempting to take materially adverse action by intimidating, threatening, coercing, harassing, or discriminating against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by law or policy, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this Policy and procedures.

Filing a complaint under the Administrative Grievance Procedure could be considered retaliatory if those allegations could be subject to the Title IX Grievance Procedure, when the Administrative Grievance Procedure allegations are made for the purpose of interfering with or circumventing any right or privilege afforded within the Title IX Grievance Procedure that is not provided by the Administrative Grievance Procedure. Therefore, the School carefully vets all complaints to ensure this does not happen, and to ensure that complaints are routed to the appropriate process.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation.

Pursuing a code of conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a grievance proceeding under this Policy and procedures does not constitute retaliation, provided that the determination of responsibility, by itself, is not sufficient to conclude that any party has made a materially false statement in bad faith.

## 17. MANDATED REPORTING

Specific School employees have been designated as Mandated Reporters and are required to report actual or suspected discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation to appropriate officials immediately. This requirement applies to instances involving Future Professionals and colleagues.

If a Complainant expects formal action in response to their allegations, reporting to any Mandated Reporter can connect them with resources to report alleged crimes and/or policy violations, and these employees will immediately pass reports to the Title IX Coordinator (and/or police, if desired by the Complainant or required by law), who will act when an incident is reported to them.

The following sections describe the School's reporting options for a Complainant or third party (including parents/guardians when appropriate):

### 1. CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES

If a Complainant would like the details of an incident to be kept confidential, the Complainant may speak with:

- BPA Health Student Wellness Program (SWP)
- BPA Health Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Community-based resources (not affiliated with the School):

- Licensed professional counselors and other medical providers
- Local rape crisis counselors
- Domestic violence resources
- Local or state assistance agencies
- Clergy/Chaplains
- Attorneys
  The above-listed individuals will maintain confidentiality when acting under the scope of their licensure, professional ethics, professional credentials, or official designation, except in extreme cases of immediacy of threat or danger or abuse of a minor/elder/individual with a disability, or when required to disclose by law or court order.
  Both the SWP and EAP are available to help free of charge and may be consulted on an emergency basis 24 hours a day.

### 2. MANDATED REPORTERS AND FORMAL NOTICE/COMPLAINTS

Specific School employees are Mandated Reporters and must promptly share with the Title IX Coordinator all known details of a report made to them in the course of their employment. These employees include the Financial Aid Leader, the Admissions Leader, and the Future Professional Advisor.

Mandated Reporters must also promptly share all details of behaviors under this Policy that they observe or have knowledge of, even if not reported to them by a Complainant or third party.

Complainants may want to carefully consider whether they share personally identifiable details with non-confidential Mandated Reporters, as those details must be shared with the Title IX Coordinator.

Generally, disclosures in climate surveys, admissions essays, or at events such as "Take Back the Night" marches or speak-outs do not provide notice that must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator by employees, unless the Complainant clearly indicates that they desire a report to be made or to seek a specific response from the School.

Supportive measures may be offered as the result of such disclosures without formal School action.

Failure of a Mandated Reporter, as described above in this section, to report an incident of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation of which they become aware is a violation of School policy and can be subject to disciplinary action for failure to comply/failure to report.

Though this may seem obvious, when a Mandated Reporter is engaged in harassment or other violations of this Policy, they still have a duty to report their own misconduct, though the School is technically not on notice simply because a harasser is also a Mandated Reporter unless the harasser does in fact report themselves.

Finally, it is important to clarify that a Mandated Reporter who is a target themself of harassment or other misconduct under this Policy is not required to report their own experience, though they are, of course, encouraged to do so.

## 18. WHEN A COMPLAINANT DOES NOT WISH TO PROCEED

If a Complainant does not wish for their name to be shared, does not wish for an investigation to take place, and/or does not want a Formal Complaint to be pursued, they may make such a request to the Title IX Coordinator, who will evaluate that request in light of the duty to ensure the safety of the institution and to comply with state or federal law.

The Title IX Coordinator has ultimate discretion over whether the School proceeds when the Complainant does not wish to do so, and the Title IX Coordinator may sign a Formal Complaint to initiate a Grievance Process, usually upon completion of an appropriate violence risk assessment.

The Title IX Coordinator's decision should be based on results of the violence risk assessment that show a compelling risk to health and/or safety that requires the School to pursue formal action to protect the community.

A compelling risk to health and/or safety may result from evidence of patterns of misconduct, predatory conduct, threats, abuse of minors, use of weapons, and/or violence. The School may be compelled to act on alleged employee misconduct irrespective of a Complainant's wishes.

The Title IX Coordinator must also consider the effect that non-participation by the Complainant may have on the availability of evidence and the School's ability to pursue a Formal Grievance Process fairly and effectively.

When the Title IX Coordinator executes the written complaint, they do not become the Complainant. The Complainant is the individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute a violation of this Policy.

When the School proceeds, the Complainant (and/or their Advisor) may have as much or as little involvement in the process as they wish. The Complainant retains all rights of a Complainant under this Policy irrespective of their level of participation. Typically, when the Complainant chooses not to participate, the Advisor may be appointed as proxy for the Complainant throughout the process, acting to ensure and protect the rights of the Complainant, though this does not extend to the provision of evidence or testimony.

Note that the School's ability to remedy and respond to notice may be limited if the Complainant does not want the School to proceed with an investigation and/or Grievance Process. The goal is to provide the Complainant with as much control over the process as possible, while balancing the School's obligation to protect its community.

In cases in which the Complainant requests confidentiality/no formal action and the circumstances allow the School to honor that request, the School may offer Informal Resolution options, supportive measures, and remedies to the Complainant and the community, but will not otherwise pursue formal action.

If the Complainant elects to take no action, they can change that decision if they decide to pursue a Formal Complaint at a later date. Upon making a Formal Complaint, a Complainant has the right, and can expect, to have allegations taken seriously by the School and to have the incidents investigated and properly resolved through these procedures. Please consider that delays may cause limitations on access to evidence, or present issues with respect to the status of the parties.

## 19. FEDERAL TIMELY WARNING OBLIGATIONS

The School must issue timely warnings for reported incidents that pose a serious or continuing threat of bodily harm or danger to members of the School's community.

The School will ensure that a Complainant's name and other identifying information is not disclosed, while still providing enough information for community members to make safety decisions in light of the potential danger.

## 20. FEDERAL STATISTICAL REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Certain institutional officials—those deemed Campus Security Authorities—have a duty to report the following for federal statistical reporting purposes (Clery Act):

- All "primary crimes," which include criminal homicide, rape, fondling, incest, statutory rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson
- Hate crimes, which include any bias-motivated primary crime as well as any bias-motivated larceny or theft, simple assault, intimidation, or destruction/damage/vandalism of property
- VAWA-based crimes, which include sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking
- Arrests and referrals for disciplinary action for weapons-related law violations, liquor-related law violations, and drug law violations

All personally identifiable information is kept private, but statistical information must be shared with the Director regarding the type of incident and its general location (on or off campus or in the surrounding area, but no addresses are given) for publication in the Annual Security Report and daily campus crime log. Campus Security Authorities include the Financial Aid Leader, the Admissions Leader, the Future Professional Advisor, and the local police.

## 21. FALSE ALLEGATIONS AND EVIDENCE

Deliberately false and/or malicious accusations under this Policy are a serious offense and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. This does not include allegations that are made in good faith but are ultimately shown to be erroneous or do not result in a policy violation determination.

Additionally, witnesses and parties knowingly providing false evidence, tampering with or destroying evidence, or deliberately misleading an official conducting an investigation, hearing, or Informal Resolution can be subject to discipline under appropriate School policies.

## 22. AMNESTY

The School encourages the reporting of misconduct and crimes by Complainants and witnesses. Sometimes, Complainants or witnesses are hesitant to report to School officials or participate in grievance processes because they fear that they themselves may be in violation of certain policies, such as underage drinking or use of illicit drugs at the time of the incident. Respondents may hesitate to be forthcoming during the process for the same reasons.

It is in the best interests of the School community that Complainants choose to report misconduct to School officials, that witnesses come forward to share what they know, and that all parties be forthcoming during the process.

To encourage reporting and participation in the process, the School maintains a policy of offering parties and witnesses amnesty from minor policy violations—such as underage consumption of alcohol or the use of illicit drugs—related to the incident.

Amnesty does not apply to more serious allegations such as physical abuse of another or illicit drug distribution. The decision not to offer amnesty to a Respondent is based on neither sex nor gender, but on the fact that collateral misconduct is typically addressed for all Future Professionals within a progressive discipline system, and the rationale for amnesty—the incentive to report serious misconduct—is rarely applicable to Respondent with respect to a Complainant.

## 1. FUTURE PROFESSIONALS

Sometimes, Future Professionals are hesitant to assist others for fear that they may get in trouble themselves (for example, an underage Future Professional who has been drinking or using marijuana might hesitate to help take an individual who has experienced sexual assault to the School).

The School maintains a policy of amnesty for Future Professionals who offer help to others in need. Although policy violations cannot be overlooked, the School may provide purely educational options with no official disciplinary finding, rather than punitive sanctions, to those who offer their assistance to others in need.

### 2. EMPLOYEES

Sometimes, employees are hesitant to report harassment, discrimination, or retaliation they have experienced for fear that they may get in trouble themselves. For example, an employee who has violated the unethical relationship policy and is then assaulted in the course of that relationship might hesitate to report the incident to School officials.

The School may, at its discretion, offer employee Complainants amnesty from such policy violations (typically more minor policy violations) related to the incident. Amnesty may also be granted to Respondents and witnesses on a case-by-case basis.

### 23. PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

The preservation of evidence in incidents of sexual assault and stalking is critical to potential criminal prosecution and to obtaining restraining/protective orders and is particularly time sensitive. The School will inform the Complainant of the importance of preserving evidence by taking actions such as the following:

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT

- Seek forensic medical assistance at the Brookwood Medical Center hospital, ideally within 120 hours of the incident (sooner is better).
- Avoid urinating, showering, bathing, washing hands or face, or douching, if possible, but evidence may still be collected even if you do.
- If oral sexual contact took place, refrain from smoking, eating, drinking, or brushing teeth.
- If clothes are changed, place soiled clothes in a paper bag (plastic destroys evidence) or secure evidence container.
- Seeking medical treatment can be essential even if it is not for the purposes of collecting forensic evidence.

#### STALKING

- Evidence in the form of text and voice messages will be lost in most cases if the Complainant changes their phone number.
    - Make a secondary recording of any voice messages and/or save the audio files to a cloud server.
    - Take screenshots and/or a video recording of any text messages or other electronic messages (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook).
- Save copies of email and social media correspondence, including notifications related to account access alerts.
- Take timestamped photographs of any physical evidence including notes, gifts, etc., in place when possible.
- Save copies of any messages, to include those showing any request for no further contact.
- Obtain copies of call logs showing the specific phone number being used rather than a saved contact name if possible.

During the initial meeting between the Complainant and the Title IX Coordinator, the importance of taking these actions will be discussed, if timely.

## GRIEVANCE PROCESS FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, HARASSMENT, AND NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY (KNOWN AS THE TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE)

### 1. OVERVIEW

The School will act on any formal notice/complaint of violation of the Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy ("the Policy") that is received by the Title IX Coordinator[19] or any other Official with Authority by applying these procedures, known as "the Title IX Grievance Procedure."

The procedures below apply only to qualifying allegations of sexual harassment (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as defined in the Policy) involving Future Professionals and employees.

If other Policy definitions are invoked, such as protected characteristic harassment or discrimination as defined above, please see Appendix C for a description of the procedures applicable to the resolution of such offenses, known as the Administrative Grievance Procedure.[20]

The Administrative Grievance Procedure can also apply to sexual harassment (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as defined above) when jurisdiction does not fall within the Title IX Grievance Procedure, as determined by the Title IX Coordinator.

The procedures below may be used to address alleged collateral misconduct by the Respondent arising from the investigation of or occurring in conjunction with reported misconduct (e.g., vandalism, physical abuse of another), when alleged violations of the Policy are being addressed at the same time. In such cases, the Title IX Coordinator may consult with the institution officials who typically oversee such conduct (e.g., human resources, Future Professional Advisor, Education Leaders, etc.) to provide input as needed. All other allegations of misconduct unrelated to incidents covered by the Policy will be addressed through procedures described in the School catalog, and staff handbooks.

## 2. NOTICE/COMPLAINT

Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint or notice of an alleged policy violation by the Title IX Coordinator, the Title IX Coordinator initiates a prompt initial assessment to determine the next steps the School needs to take. The Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant to offer supportive measures and determine whether the Complainant wishes to file a Formal Complaint.

The Title IX Coordinator will then initiate at least one of three responses:

- Offering supportive measures because the Complainant does not want to file a Formal Complaint
- An Informal Resolution (upon submission of a Formal Complaint)
- A Formal Grievance Process including an investigation and a hearing (upon submission of a Formal Complaint)

The School uses a Formal Grievance Process as described below to determine whether the Policy has been violated. If so, the School will promptly implement effective remedies designed to ensure that it is not deliberately indifferent to harassment or discrimination, their potential recurrence, and/or their effects.

## 3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Following receipt of notice or a Formal Complaint of an alleged violation of this Policy, the Title IX Coordinator21 engages in an initial assessment, typically within five (5) business days. The steps in an initial assessment can include:

- The Title IX Coordinator seeks to determine whether the person impacted wishes to make a Formal Complaint, and will assist the person to do so, if desired.
    - If the person does not wish to do so, the Title IX Coordinator determines whether to initiate a complaint themself because a violence risk assessment indicates a compelling threat to health and/or safety.
- If a Formal Complaint is received, the Title IX Coordinator assesses its sufficiency and works with the Complainant to make sure it is correctly completed.
- The Title IX Coordinator reaches out to the Complainant to offer supportive measures.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure they are aware of the right to have an Advisor.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to determine whether the Complainant prefers a supportive and remedial response, an Informal Resolution option, or a formal investigation and Grievance Process.
    - If a supportive and remedial response is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to identify their needs and determine appropriate supports, and implements accordingly. No Formal Grievance Process is initiated, though the Complainant can elect to initiate one later, if desired.

- If an Informal Resolution option is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator assesses whether the complaint is suitable for Informal Resolution22, which informal mechanism may serve the situation best or is available, and may seek to determine whether the Respondent is also willing to engage in Informal Resolution.
- If a Formal Grievance Process is preferred by the Complainant, the Title IX Coordinator determines whether the alleged misconduct falls within the scope of the 2020 Title IX regulations:
  - If it does, the Title IX Coordinator will initiate the formal investigation and Grievance Process, directing the investigation to address, based on the nature of the complaint:
    - an incident, and/or
    - a pattern of alleged misconduct, and/or
    - a culture/climate issue
  - If alleged misconduct does not fall within the scope of the Title IX regulations, the Title IX Coordinator determines that the regulations do not apply (and will "dismiss" that aspect of the complaint, if any), assesses which policies may apply, determines which Grievance Process is applicable, and refers the matter accordingly, including referring the matter for resolution under the Administrative Grievance Procedure, if applicable. Please note that dismissing a complaint under the 2020 Title IX regulations is solely a procedural requirement under Title IX, which does not limit the School's authority to address a complaint with an appropriate process and remedies.

### 1. VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT

In some cases, the Title IX Coordinator may determine that a Violence Risk Assessment (VRA) should be conducted in conjunction with relevant School employees as part of the initial assessment. A VRA can aid in ten critical and/or required determinations, including:

- Emergency removal of a Respondent on the basis of immediate threat to an individual or the community's physical health/safety
- Whether the Title IX Coordinator should pursue/sign a Formal Complaint absent a willing/able Complainant
- Whether the scope of the investigation should include an incident, and/or pattern of misconduct, and/or climate of hostility/harassment
- To help identify potential predatory conduct
- To help assess/identify grooming behaviors
- Whether it is reasonable to try to resolve a complaint through Informal Resolution, and if so, what approach may be most successful
- Whether to permit a voluntary withdrawal by the Respondent
- Whether to communicate with a transfer school about a Respondent
- Assessment of appropriate sanctions/remedies (to be applied post-hearing)
- Whether a Clery Act Timely Warning/trespass order/persona non grata is needed
  Threat assessment is the process of evaluating the actionability of violence by an individual against another person or group following the issuance of a direct or conditional threat. A VRA is a broader term used to assess any potential violence or danger, regardless of the presence of a vague, conditional, or direct threat.
  A VRA is not an evaluation for an involuntary behavioral health hospitalization (e.g., Section XII in Massachusetts, Baker Act in Florida), nor is it a psychological or mental health assessment. A VRA assesses the risk of actionable violence, often with a focus on targeted/predatory escalations, and is supported by research from the fields of law enforcement, criminology, human resources, and psychology.

### 2. DISMISSAL (MANDATORY AND DISCRETIONARY)[23]

The School must dismiss a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein if at any time during the investigation or hearing it is determined that:

- The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint would not constitute sexual harassment as defined above, even if proved

- The conduct did not occur in an educational program or activity controlled by the School, and/or the School does not have control of the Respondent
- The conduct did not occur against a person in the United States
- At the time of filing a Formal Complaint, a Complainant is not participating in or attempting to participate in the School's education program or activity[24]
  The School may dismiss a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein if at any time during the investigation or hearing:
  - A Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant would like to withdraw the Formal Complaint or any allegations therein
  - The Respondent is no longer enrolled in or employed by the School
  - Specific circumstances prevent the School from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the Formal Complaint or allegations therein
    A Complainant who decides to withdraw a complaint may later request to reinstate it or refile it.
    Upon any dismissal, the School will promptly send written notice of the dismissal and the rationale for doing so simultaneously to the parties.
    This dismissal decision is appealable by any party under the procedures for appeal (See Section 37).

### 4. COUNTERCLAIMS

The School is obligated to ensure that the Grievance Process is not abused for retaliatory purposes, thus counterclaims made with retaliatory intent will not be permitted. The School permits the filing of counterclaims but uses an initial assessment, described above, to assess whether the allegations in the counterclaim are made in good faith.

Counterclaims determined to have been reported in good faith will be processed using the Grievance Process below. Investigation of such claims may take place after resolution of the underlying initial complaint, in which case a delay may occur.

Counterclaims may also be resolved through the same investigation as the underlying complaint at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator. When counterclaims are not made in good faith, they will be considered retaliatory and may constitute a violation of this Policy.

### 5. RIGHT TO AN ADVISOR

The parties may each have an Advisor of their choice present with them for all meetings, interviews, and hearings within the Grievance Process, if they so choose. The parties may select whoever they wish to serve as their Advisor as long as the Advisor is eligible and available.[25]

Choosing an Advisor who is also a witness in the process creates potential for bias and conflict of interest. A party who chooses an Advisor who is also a witness can anticipate that issues of potential bias will be explored by the hearing Decision-Maker.

### 1. WHO CAN SERVE AS AN ADVISOR

The Advisor may be a friend, mentor, family member, attorney, or any other individual a party chooses to advise, support, and/or consult with them throughout the Grievance Process. The parties may choose Advisors from inside or outside of the School community.

The Title IX Coordinator will also offer to assign a trained Advisor to any party if the party so chooses. If the parties choose a School-assigned Advisor, the Advisor will have been trained by the School and be familiar with the School's Grievance Procedure.

If the parties choose an Advisor not assigned by the School, the Advisor may not have been trained by the School and may not be familiar with School policies and procedures. Parties also have the right to choose not to have an Advisor in the initial stages of the Grievance Process, prior to a hearing.

## 2. ADVISOR'S ROLE IN MEETINGS AND INTERVIEWS

The parties may be accompanied by their Advisor in all meetings and interviews at which the party is entitled to be present, including intake and interviews. Advisors should help the parties prepare for each meeting and are expected to advise ethically, with integrity, and in good faith.

The School cannot guarantee equal Advisory rights, meaning that if one party selects an Advisor who is an attorney, but the other party does not or cannot afford an attorney, the School is not obligated to provide an attorney.

Where applicable under state law or School policy, Advisors or attorneys are permitted to fully represent their advisees or clients in resolution proceedings, including all meetings, interviews, and hearings. Although the School prefers to hear from parties directly, in these cases, parties are entitled to have evidence provided by their chosen representatives.

## 3. ADVISORS IN HEARINGS/SCHOOL-APPOINTED ADVISOR

Under the Title IX regulations, a form of indirect questioning is required during the hearing but must be conducted by the parties' Advisors. The parties are not permitted to directly question each other or any witnesses. If a party does not have an Advisor for a hearing, the School will appoint a trained Advisor for the limited purpose of conducting any questioning of the parties and witnesses.

## 4. PRE-INTERVIEW MEETINGS

Advisors and their advisees may request to meet with the Investigator conducting interviews/meetings in advance of these interviews or meetings. This pre-meeting allows Advisors to clarify and understand their role and the School's policies and procedures.

## 5. ADVISOR VIOLATIONS OF SCHOOL POLICY

All Advisors are subject to the same School policies and procedures, whether they are attorneys or not, and whether they are selected by a party or assigned by the School. Advisors are expected to advise their advisees[26] without disrupting proceedings. Advisors should not address School officials or Investigators in a meeting or interview unless invited to do so (e.g., asking procedural questions). The Advisor may not make a presentation or represent their advisee during any meeting or proceeding and may not speak on behalf of the advisee to the Investigator or other Decision-Maker except during a hearing proceeding during questioning.

The parties are expected to ask and respond to questions on their own behalf throughout the investigation phase of the Grievance Process. Although the Advisor generally may not speak on behalf of their advisee, the Advisor may consult with their advisee, either privately as needed, or by conferring or passing notes during any Grievance Process meeting or interview. For longer or more involved discussions, the parties and their Advisors should ask for breaks to allow for private consultation.

Any Advisor who oversteps their role as defined by this Policy, or who refuses to comply with the School's established rules of decorum for the hearing, will be warned. If the Advisor continues to disrupt or otherwise fails to respect the limits of the Advisor role, the meeting/interview/hearing may be ended, or other appropriate measures implemented, including the School requiring the party to use a different Advisor or providing a different School-appointed Advisor. Subsequently, the Title IX Coordinator will determine how to address the Advisor's noncompliance and future role.

## 6. SHARING INFORMATION WITH THE ADVISOR

The School expects that the parties may wish to have the School share documentation and evidence related to the allegations with their Advisors. The School provides a consent form that authorizes the School to share such information directly with a party's Advisor. The parties must either complete and submit this form to the Title IX Coordinator or provide similar documentation demonstrating consent to a release of information to the Advisor before the School is able to share records with an Advisor.

Advisors appointed by the institution will not be asked to disclose details of their interactions with their advisees to School officials or Decision-Makers.

### 7. PRIVACY OF RECORDS SHARED WITH ADVISOR

Advisors are expected to maintain the privacy of the records shared with them. These records may not be shared with third parties, disclosed publicly, or used for purposes not explicitly authorized by the School. The School may restrict the role of any Advisor who does not respect the sensitive nature of the process or who fails to abide by the School's privacy expectations

### 8. EXPECTATIONS OF AN ADVISOR

The School generally expects an Advisor to adjust their schedule to allow them to attend School meetings/ interviews/hearings when planned, but the School may change scheduled meetings/interviews/hearings to accommodate an Advisor's inability to attend, if doing so does not cause an unreasonable delay.

The School may also make reasonable provisions to allow an Advisor who cannot be present in person to attend a meeting/interview/hearing by telephone, video conferencing, or other similar technologies as may be convenient and available.

### 9. EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTIES WITH RESPECT TO ADVISORS

A party may elect to change Advisors during the process and is not obligated to use the same Advisor throughout. The parties are expected to inform the Investigator of the identity of their Advisor at least four (4) business days before the date of their first meeting with Investigators (or as soon as possible if a more expeditious meeting is necessary or desired).

The parties are expected to provide timely notice to the Title IX Coordinator if they change Advisors at any time. It is assumed that if a party changes Advisors, consent to share information with the previous Advisor is terminated, and a release for the new Advisor should be secured. Parties are expected to inform the Title IX Coordinator of the identity of their hearing Advisor at least four (4) business days before the hearing.

### 10. ASSISTANCE IN SECURING AN ADVISOR[27]

For representation, Respondents may wish to contact organizations such as:

- Families Advocating for Campus Equality (http://www.facecampusequality.org)
- Stop Abusive and Violent Environments (http://www.saveservices.org)
  Complainants may wish to contact organizations such as:
- The Victim Rights Law Center (http://www.victimrights.org)
- The National Center for Victims of Crime (http://www.victimsofcrime.org), which maintains the Crime Victim's Bar Association
- The Time's Up Legal Defense Fund (https://nwlc.org/times-up-legal-defense-fund/)

## 6. GRIEVANCE PROCESSES

Resolution proceedings are private. All persons present at any time during the Grievance Process are expected to maintain the privacy of the proceedings in accordance with School policy.

Although there is an expectation of privacy around what Investigators share with parties during interviews, the parties have discretion to share their own knowledge and evidence with others if they so choose, except for information the parties agree not to disclose as part of an Informal Resolution. The School encourages parties to discuss any sharing of information with their Advisors before doing so.

The Formal Grievance Process is the School's primary resolution approach unless Informal Resolution is elected by all parties and the School.

## INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Three options for Informal Resolution are detailed in this section.

- Supportive Resolution. When the Title IX Coordinator can resolve the matter informally by providing supportive measures (only) to remedy the situation
- Alternative Resolution. When the parties agree to resolve the matter through an Alternative Resolution mechanism, including mediation, restorative practices, facilitated dialogue, etc., as described below, often before a formal investigation takes place (See Section B)
- Accepted Responsibility. When the Respondent accepts responsibility for violating policy and desires to accept the recommended sanction(s) and end the Grievance Process (See Section C)
  To initiate Informal Resolution, a Complainant must submit a Formal Complaint, as defined above. A Respondent who wishes to initiate Informal Resolution should contact the Title IX Coordinator. The parties may agree, as a condition of engaging in Informal Resolution, that statements made, or evidence shared, during the Informal Resolution process will not be considered in the Formal Grievance Process unless all parties consent. It is not necessary to pursue Informal Resolution first in order to pursue a Formal Grievance Process, and any party participating in Informal Resolution can stop the process at any time and begin or resume the Formal Grievance Process. The parties may not enter into an agreement that requires the School to impose specific sanctions, though the parties can agree to certain restrictions or other courses of action. For example, the parties cannot require a Future Professional be terminated, but the parties can agree that the Respondent will temporarily or permanently withdraw. The only Informal Resolution process that can result in sanctions levied by the institution is “Accepted Responsibility.” The Title IX Coordinator has discretion to determine whether an investigation will be paused or limited during Informal Resolution, or if it will continue during the Informal Resolution process.
  Prior to implementing Informal Resolution, the School will provide the parties with written notice of the reported misconduct and any sanctions (only in the case of Accepted Responsibility) or measures that may result from participating in such a process, including information regarding any records that will be maintained or shared by the School.
  The School will obtain voluntary, written confirmation that all parties wish to resolve the matter through Informal Resolution before proceeding and will not pressure the parties to participate in Informal Resolution.

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## 2. ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTION APPROACHES

Alternative Resolution is an informal approach, including mediation, restorative practices, facilitated dialogue, etc., by which the parties reach a mutually agreed-upon resolution of a complaint. All parties must consent to the use of an Alternative Resolution approach.

The Title IX Coordinator may consider the following factors to assess whether Alternative Resolution is appropriate, or which form of Alternative Resolution may be most successful for the parties:

- The parties' amenability to Alternative Resolution
- Likelihood of potential resolution, considering any power dynamics between the parties
- The nature and severity of the alleged misconduct
- The parties' motivation to participate
- Civility of the parties
- Results of a violence risk assessment/ongoing risk analysis
- Disciplinary history of the Respondent
- Whether an emergency removal is needed
- Skill of the Alternative Resolution facilitator with this type of complaint
- Complaint complexity
- Emotional investment/capability of the parties
- Rationality of the parties
- Goals of the parties
- Adequate resources to invest in Alternative Resolution (time, staff, etc.)

  The ultimate determination of whether Alternative Resolution is available or successful is made by the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is authorized to facilitate a resolution that is acceptable to all parties, and/or to accept a resolution that is proposed by the parties, usually through their Advisors, including terms of confidentiality, release, and non-disparagement.

  The Title IX Coordinator maintains records of any resolution that is reached, and failure to abide by the resolution agreement may result in appropriate responsive/disciplinary actions (e.g., referral for formal resolution, referral to the conduct process for failure to comply). Results of complaints resolved by Alternative Resolution are not appealable.

### 3. RESPONDENT ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

The Respondent may accept responsibility for all or part of the alleged policy violations at any point during the Grievance Process. If the Respondent indicates an intent to accept responsibility for all of the alleged misconduct, the formal process will be paused, and the Title IX Coordinator will determine whether Informal Resolution can be used according to the criteria above.

If Informal Resolution is applicable, the Title IX Coordinator will determine whether all parties and the School are able to agree on responsibility, restrictions, and/or remedies. If so, the Title IX Coordinator implements the accepted finding that the Respondent is in violation of School policy and implements agreed-upon restrictions and remedies and determines the appropriate sanction(s) in coordination with other appropriate administrator(s), as necessary.

This result is not subject to appeal once all parties indicate their written assent to all agreed-upon resolution terms. When the parties cannot agree on all terms of resolution, the Formal Grievance Process will resume at the same point where it was paused[28].

When a resolution is accomplished, the appropriate sanction(s) or responsive actions are promptly implemented to effectively stop the harassment or discrimination, prevent its recurrence, and remedy the effects of the discriminatory conduct, both on the Complainant and the community.

## 7. FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS POOL

The Formal Grievance Process relies on a pool of individuals[29] ("the Pool") to carry out the process.

### 1. POOL MEMBER ROLES

Members of the Pool are trained annually and can serve in the following roles at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator:

- To provide appropriate intake of and initial guidance pertaining to complaints
- To act as an Advisor to the parties
- To serve in a facilitation role in Informal Resolution or Alternative Resolution if appropriately trained in appropriate resolution approaches (e.g., mediation, restorative practices, facilitated dialogue)
- To perform or assist with initial assessment
- To investigate complaints
- To serve as a hearing facilitator (process administrator, no decision-making role)
- To serve as a Decision-Maker regarding the complaint
- To serve as an Appeal Decision-Maker
  The Title IX Coordinator appoints the Pool, which acts with independence and impartiality.

### 2. POOL MEMBER TRAINING

Pool members receive annual training based on their respective roles. This training includes, but is not limited to:

- The scope of the School's Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedures
- How to conduct investigations and hearings that protect the safety of Complainants and Respondents, and promote accountability
- Implicit bias
- Disparate treatment
- Reporting, confidentiality, and privacy requirements
- Applicable laws, regulations, and federal regulatory guidance
- How to implement appropriate and situation-specific remedies
- How to investigate in a thorough, reliable, timely, and impartial manner
- How to conduct a sexual harassment investigation
- Trauma-informed practices pertaining to investigations and Grievance Processes
- How to uphold fairness, equity, and due process
- How to weigh evidence

- How to conduct questioning
- How to assess credibility
- Impartiality and objectivity
- How to render findings and generate clear, concise, evidence-based rationales
- The definitions of all offenses
- How to apply definitions used by the School with respect to consent (or the absence or negation of consent) consistently, impartially, and in accordance with policy
- How to conduct an investigation and Grievance Process including hearings, appeals, and Informal Resolution Processes
- How to serve impartially by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias against Respondents and/or for Complainants, and on the basis of sex, race, religion, and other protected characteristics
- Any technology to be used at a live hearing
- Issues of relevance of questions and evidence
- Issues of relevance to create an investigation report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence
- How to determine appropriate sanctions in reference to all forms of harassment, discrimination, and/ or retaliation allegations
- Recordkeeping

The materials used to train all members of the Pool are publicly posted.

## 8. FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS: NOTICE OF INVESTIGATION AND ALLEGATIONS

The Title IX Coordinator will provide written Notice of the Investigation and Allegations (the "NOIA") to the Respondent upon commencement of the Formal Grievance Process. This facilitates the Respondent's ability to prepare for the interview and to identify and choose an Advisor to accompany them. The NOIA is also copied to the Complainant, who will be given advance notice of when the NOIA will be delivered to the Respondent.

The NOIA will include:

- A meaningful summary of all allegations
- The identity of the involved parties (if known)
- The precise misconduct being alleged
- The date and location of the alleged incident(s) (if known)
- The specific policies implicated
- A description of the applicable procedures
- A statement of the potential sanctions/responsive actions that could result
- A statement that the School presumes the Respondent is not responsible for the reported misconduct unless and until the evidence supports a different determination
- A statement that determinations of responsibility are made at the conclusion of the process and that the parties will be given an opportunity during the review and comment period to inspect and review all directly related and/or relevant evidence obtained
- A statement about the School's policy on retaliation
- Information about the confidentiality of the process
- Information on the need for each party to have an Advisor of their choosing and suggestions for ways to identify an Advisor
- A statement informing the parties that the School's policy prohibits knowingly making false statements, including knowingly submitting false information during the Grievance Process
- Detail on how the party may request disability accommodations during the Grievance Process
- A link to the School's VAWA Brochure

- The name(s) of the Investigator, along with a process to identify to the Title IX Coordinator, in advance of the interview process, any conflict of interest that the Investigator may have
- An instruction to preserve any evidence that is directly related to the allegations

Amendments and updates to the NOIA may be made as the investigation progresses and more information becomes available regarding the addition or dismissal of various allegations.

Notice will be made in writing and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person or emailed to the parties' School-issued email or designated accounts. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

### 9. RESOLUTION TIMELINE

The School will make a good faith effort to complete the Grievance Process within a sixty to ninety (60–90) business-day time period, including appeal if any, which can be extended as necessary for appropriate cause by the Title IX Coordinator, who will provide notice and rationale for any extensions or delays to the parties as appropriate, as well as an estimate of how much additional time will be needed to complete the process.

### 10. APPOINTMENT OF INVESTIGATORS

Once the decision to commence a formal investigation is made, the Title IX Coordinator appoints individuals to conduct the investigation, usually within five (5) business days of determining that an investigation should proceed.

### 11. ENSURING IMPARTIALITY

Any individual materially involved in the administration of the Grievance Process including the Title IX Coordinator, Investigator, and Decision-Maker may neither have nor demonstrate a conflict of interest or bias for a party generally, or for a specific Complainant or Respondent.

The Title IX Coordinator will vet the assigned Investigator for impartiality by ensuring there are no actual or apparent conflicts of interest or disqualifying biases. At any time during the Grievance Process, the parties may raise a concern regarding bias or conflict of interest, and the Title IX Coordinator will determine whether the concern is reasonable and supportable. If so, another Pool member will be assigned and the impact of the bias or conflict, if any, will be remedied. If the source of the conflict of interest or bias is the Title IX Coordinator, concerns should be raised with the Director.

The Formal Grievance Process involves an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence obtained, including evidence that supports that the Respondent engaged in a policy violation and evidence that supports that the Respondent did not engage in a policy violation. Credibility determinations may not be based solely on an individual's status or participation as a Complainant, Respondent, or witness.

The School operates with the presumption that the Respondent is not responsible for the reported misconduct unless and until the Respondent is determined to be responsible for a policy violation by the applicable standard of proof.

### 12. INVESTIGATION TIMELINE

Investigations are completed expeditiously, normally within sixty (60) business days, though some investigations may take many weeks or even months, depending on the nature, extent, and complexity of the allegations, availability of witnesses, law enforcement involvement, etc.

The School will make a good faith effort to complete investigations as promptly as circumstances permit and will communicate regularly with the parties to update them on the progress and timing of the investigation.

### 13. INVESTIGATION PROCESS DELAYS AND INTERACTIONS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

The School may undertake a short delay in its investigation (several days to a few weeks) if circumstances require. Such circumstances include but are not limited to a request from law enforcement to temporarily delay the investigation, the need for language assistance, the absence of parties and/or witnesses, and/or health conditions.

The School will communicate the anticipated duration of the delay and reason to the parties in writing and provide the parties with status updates if necessary. The School will promptly resume its investigation and Grievance Process as soon as feasible. During such a delay, the School will implement supportive measures as deemed appropriate.

The School's action(s) or processes are not typically altered or precluded on the grounds that civil or criminal charges involving the underlying incident(s) have been filed or that criminal charges have been dismissed or reduced.

## 14. INVESTIGATION PROCESS STEPS

All investigations are thorough, reliable, impartial, prompt, and fair. Investigations involve interviews with all available relevant parties and witnesses; obtaining available, relevant evidence; and identifying sources of expert information, as necessary.

All parties have a full and fair opportunity, through the investigation process, to suggest witnesses and questions, to provide evidence and expert witnesses, and to fully review and respond to all evidence on the record. Recordings of interviews are not provided to the parties, but the parties will have the ability to review the transcript of the interview once the investigation report is compiled.

At the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, investigations can be combined when complaints implicate a pattern, collusion, and/or other shared or similar actions.

The Investigator typically takes the following steps, if not already completed (not necessarily in this order):

- Determine the identity and contact information of the Complainant
- Identify all policies implicated by the alleged misconduct and notify the Complainant and Respondent of all of the specific policies implicated
- Assist the Title IX Coordinator, if needed, with conducting a prompt initial assessment to determine whether the allegations indicate a potential policy violation
- Commence a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation by identifying issues and developing a strategic investigation plan, including a witness list, evidence list, intended investigation timeframe, and order of interviews for the parties and witnesses
- Meet with the Complainant to finalize their interview/statement, if necessary
- Work with the Title IX Coordinator, as necessary, to prepare the initial Notice of Investigation and Allegations (NOIA); the NOIA may be amended with any additional or dismissed allegations
- Provide each interviewed party and witness an opportunity to review and verify the Investigator's summary notes (or transcript) of the relevant evidence/testimony from their respective interviews and meetings
- Make good faith efforts to notify each party of any meeting or interview involving another party, in advance when possible
- When participation of a party is expected, provide that party with written notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting, as well as the expected participants and purpose
- Interview all available, relevant witnesses and conduct follow-up interviews as necessary
- Allow each party the opportunity to suggest witnesses and questions they wish the Investigator to ask of another party and/or witnesses, and document in the report which questions were asked, with a rationale for any changes or omissions
- Complete the investigation promptly and without unreasonable deviation from the intended timeline
- Provide regular status updates to the parties throughout the investigation
- Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, provide the parties and their respective Advisors (if so desired by the parties) with a list of witnesses whose information will be used to render a finding
- Write a comprehensive investigation report fully summarizing the investigation—all witness interviews—and addressing all relevant evidence; appendices including relevant physical or documentary evidence will be included
- Gather, assess, and synthesize evidence, but make no conclusions, engage in no policy analysis, and render no recommendations as part of their report

- Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, provide the parties and their respective Advisors (if so desired by the parties) a secured electronic or hard copy of the draft investigation report as well as an opportunity to inspect and review all of the evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related the reported misconduct, including evidence upon which the School does not intend to rely in reaching a determination, for a ten (10) business-day review and comment period so that each party may meaningfully respond to the evidence; the parties may elect to waive the full ten (10) days
- Elect to respond in writing in the investigation report to the parties' submitted responses and/or to share the responses between the parties for additional responses
- Incorporate relevant elements of the parties' written responses into the final investigation report, include any additional relevant evidence, make any necessary revisions, and finalize the report; the Investigator should document all rationales for any changes made after the review and comment period
- Share the report with the Title IX Coordinator and/or legal counsel for their review and feedback
- Incorporate any relevant feedback and share the final report with all parties and their Advisors through secure electronic transmission or hard copy at least ten (10) business days prior to a hearing; the parties and Advisors are also provided with a file of any directly related evidence that was not included in the report

## 15. WITNESS ROLE AND PARTICIPATION IN THE INVESTIGATION

Witnesses (as distinguished from the parties) who are employees of the School are strongly encouraged to cooperate with and participate in the School's investigation and Grievance Process. Future Professionals who are named as witnesses and witnesses from outside the School's community are encouraged to cooperate with School investigations and share what they know about a complaint.

Although in-person interviews for parties and all potential witnesses are ideal, circumstances may require individuals to be interviewed remotely. Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, Webex, or similar technologies may be used for interviews if the Investigator determine that timeliness, efficiency, or other reasons dictate a need for remote interviewing. The School will take appropriate steps to reasonably ensure the security/privacy of remote interviews.

Witnesses may also provide written statements in lieu of interviews or choose to respond to written questions, if deemed appropriate by the Investigator, though not preferred.

## 16. INTERVIEW RECORDING

No unauthorized audio or video recording of any kind is permitted during investigation meetings. If the Investigator elects to audio and/or video record interviews, all involved parties should be made aware of and consent to audio and/or video recording.

## 17. EVIDENTIARY CONSIDERATIONS

Neither the investigation nor the hearing will consider: (1) incidents not relevant or not directly related to the possible violation(s), unless they evidence a pattern; (2) questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition; or (3) questions and evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior, unless such questions and evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the conduct alleged by the Complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the Respondent and are offered to prove consent.

Within the boundaries stated above, the investigation and the hearing can consider character evidence generally, if offered, but that evidence is unlikely to be relevant unless it is fact evidence or relates to a pattern of conduct.

## 18. REFERRAL FOR HEARING

Provided that the complaint is not resolved through Informal Resolution, once the final investigation report is shared with the parties, the Title IX Coordinator will refer the matter for a hearing.

The hearing cannot be held less than ten (10) business days from the conclusion of the investigation—when the final investigation report is transmitted to the parties and the Decision-Maker—unless all parties and the Decision-Maker agree to an expedited timeline.

The Title IX Coordinator will select the Decision-Maker and provide a copy of the investigation report and the file of directly related evidence.

## 19. HEARING DECISION-MAKER COMPOSITION

The School will designate a single Decision-Maker, at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator. The single Decision-Maker will also Chair the hearing.

The Decision-Maker will not have had any previous involvement with the complaint. The Title IX Coordinator may elect to have an alternate sit in throughout the hearing process in the event that a substitute is needed for any reason.

Those who have served as Investigators will be witnesses in the hearing and therefore may not serve as a Decision-Maker. Those who are serving as Advisors for any party may not serve as a Decision-Maker in that matter.

The Title IX Coordinator may not serve as a Decision-Maker or Chair in the matter but may serve as an administrative facilitator of the hearing if their previous role(s) in the matter do not create a conflict of interest. Otherwise, a designee may fulfill the facilitator role. The hearing will convene at a time and venue determined by the Title IX Coordinator or designee.

## 20. ADDITIONAL EVIDENTIARY CONSIDERATIONS IN THE HEARING

Previous disciplinary action of any kind involving the Respondent may not be used unless there is an allegation of a pattern of misconduct. Such information may also be considered in determining an appropriate sanction upon a determination of responsibility, assuming the School uses a progressive discipline system. This information is only considered at the sanction stage of the process and is not shared until then.

The parties may each submit a written impact statement prior to the hearing for the consideration of the Decision-Maker at the sanction stage of the process when a determination of responsibility is reached.

After post-hearing deliberation, the Decision-Maker renders a determination based on the preponderance of the evidence, whether it is more likely than not that the Respondent violated the Policy as alleged.

## 21. HEARING NOTICE

No less than ten (10) business days prior to the hearing,30 the Title IX Coordinator or the Chair will send notice of the hearing to the parties. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

The notice will contain:

- A description of the alleged violation(s), a list of all policies allegedly violated, a description of the applicable hearing procedures, and a statement of the potential sanctions/responsive actions that could result.
- The time, date, and location of the hearing.
- Description of any technology that will be used to facilitate the hearing.
- Information about the option for the live hearing to occur with the parties located in separate rooms using technology that enables the Decision-Maker and parties to see and hear a party or witness answering questions. Such a request must be raised with the Title IX Coordinator as soon as possible, preferably at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing.
- A list of all those who will attend the hearing, along with an invitation to object to any Decision-Maker based on demonstrated bias or conflict of interest. This must be raised with the Title IX Coordinator at least two (2) business days prior to the hearing.
- Information on how the hearing will be recorded and how the parties can access the recording after the hearing.
- A statement that if any party or witness does not appear at the scheduled hearing, the hearing may be held in their absence. For compelling reasons, the Chair may reschedule the hearing.

- Notification that the parties may have the assistance of an Advisor of their choosing at the hearing and will be required to have one present for any questions they may desire to ask. The party must notify the Title IX Coordinator if they wish to conduct cross-examination and do not have an Advisor, and the School will appoint one. Each party must have an Advisor present if they intend to cross-examine others. There are no exceptions.
- A copy of all the materials provided to the Decision-Maker about the complaint unless they have already been provided.[31]
- An invitation to each party to submit to the Chair an impact statement pre-hearing that the Decision-Maker will review during any sanction determination.
- An invitation to contact the Title IX Coordinator to arrange any disability accommodations, language assistance, and/or interpretation services that may be needed at the hearing, at least seven (7) business days prior to the hearing.
- Whether parties can/cannot bring mobile phones/devices into the hearing.

## 22. ALTERNATIVE HEARING PARTICIPATION OPTIONS

If a party or parties prefer not to attend or cannot attend the hearing in person, the party should request alternative arrangements from the Title IX Coordinator or the Chair as soon as possible, preferably at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing.

The Title IX Coordinator or the Chair can arrange to use technology to allow remote testimony without compromising the fairness of the hearing. Remote options may also be needed for witnesses who cannot appear in person. Any witness who cannot attend in person should let the Title IX Coordinator or the Chair know as soon as possible, preferably at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

## 23. PRE-HEARING PREPARATION

After any necessary consultation with the parties, the Title IX Coordinator will provide the names of persons who have been asked to participate in the hearing, all pertinent documentary evidence, and the final investigation report to the parties at least ten (10) business days prior to the hearing.

Any witness scheduled to participate in the hearing must have been first interviewed by the Investigator, unless all parties and the Chair assent to the witness's participation in the hearing. The same holds for any relevant evidence that is first offered at the hearing. If the parties and Chair do not assent to the admission of evidence newly offered at the hearing, the Chair may delay the hearing and/or instruct that the investigation needs to be re-opened to consider that evidence.

The parties will be given the name of the Decision-Maker at least five (5) business days in advance of the hearing. All objections to the Decision-Maker must be raised in writing, detailing the rationale for the objection, and must be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator as soon as possible and no later than five (5) business days prior to the hearing. The Decision-Maker will only be removed if the Title IX Coordinator concludes that their actual or perceived bias or conflict of interest precludes an impartial hearing of the complaint.

The Title IX Coordinator will give the Decision-Maker a list of the names of all parties, witnesses, and Advisors at least five (5) business days in advance of the hearing. If the Decision-Maker cannot make an objective determination, they must recuse themselves from the proceedings when notified of the identity of the parties, witnesses, and Advisors in advance of the hearing. If a Decision-Maker is unsure of whether a bias or conflict of interest exists, they must raise the concern to the Title IX Coordinator as soon as possible.

During the ten (10) business-day period prior to the hearing, the parties have the opportunity for continued review and comment on the final investigation report and available evidence. That review and comment can be shared with the Chair at a pre-hearing meeting or at the hearing and will be exchanged between each party by the Chair.

## 24. PRE-HEARING MEETINGS

The Chair may convene a pre-hearing meeting, or meetings, with the parties and/or their Advisors and invite them to submit the questions or topics they (the parties and/or their Advisors) wish to ask or discuss at the hearing, so that the Chair can rule on their relevance ahead of time to avoid any improper evidentiary introduction in the hearing or to provide recommendations for more appropriate phrasing.

However, this advance review opportunity does not preclude the Advisors from asking a question for the first time at the hearing or from asking for a reconsideration on a pre-hearing ruling by the Chair based on any new information or testimony offered at the hearing. The Chair must document and share with each party their rationale for any exclusion or inclusion at a pre-hearing meeting.

The Chair, **only** with full agreement of the parties, may decide in advance of the hearing that certain witnesses do not need to be present if their testimony can be adequately summarized by the Investigator in the investigation report or during the hearing.

At each pre-hearing meeting with a party and/or their Advisor, the Chair will consider arguments that evidence identified in the final investigation report as relevant is, in fact, not relevant. Similarly, evidence identified as directly related but not relevant by the Investigator may be argued to be relevant. The Chair may rule on these arguments pre-hearing and will exchange those rulings between the parties prior to the hearing to assist in preparation for the hearing. The Chair may consult with legal counsel and/or the Title IX Coordinator or ask either or both to attend pre-hearing meetings.

The pre-hearing meeting(s) will not be recorded. The pre-hearing meetings may be conducted as separate meetings with each party/Advisor, with all parties/Advisors present at the same time, remotely, or as a written-only exchange. The Chair will work with the parties to establish the format.

## 25. HEARING PROCEDURES

At the hearing, the Decision-Maker has the authority to hear and make determinations on all allegations of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation and may also hear and make determinations on any additional alleged policy violations that occurred in concert with the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation, even though those collateral allegations may not specifically fall within the Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy.

Participants at the hearing include the Chair, the Investigator who conducted the investigation, the parties, Advisors to the parties, any called witnesses, the Title IX Coordinator, the hearing facilitator, and anyone providing authorized accommodations, interpretation, and/or assistive services.

The Chair will answer all questions of procedure.

Anyone appearing at the hearing to provide information will respond to questions on their own behalf.

The Chair will allow witnesses who have relevant information to appear at a portion of the hearing to respond to specific questions from the Decision-Maker and the parties, and the witnesses will then be excused.

## 26. JOINT HEARINGS

In hearings involving more than one Respondent and/or involving more than one Complainant who has accused the same individual of substantially similar conduct, the default procedure will be to hear the allegations jointly.

However, the Title IX Coordinator may permit the investigation and/or hearings pertinent to each Respondent or complaint to be conducted separately if there is a compelling reason to do so. In joint hearings, separate determinations of responsibility will be made for each Respondent and/or for each complaint with respect to each alleged policy violation.

## 27. THE ORDER OF THE HEARING—INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURE

The Chair explains the procedures and introduces the participants. This may include a final opportunity for challenge or recusal of the Decision-Maker based on bias or conflict of interest. The Chair will rule on any such challenge unless the Chair is the individual who is the subject of the challenge, in which case the Title IX Coordinator will review the challenge and decide.

The Chair then conducts the hearing according to the hearing script. At the hearing, recording, witness logistics, party logistics, curation of documents, separation of the parties, and other administrative elements of the hearing process are managed by a non-voting hearing facilitator/case manager appointed by the Title IX Coordinator.

The hearing facilitator may attend to logistics of rooms for various parties/witnesses as they wait; flow of parties/witnesses in and out of the hearing space; ensuring recording and/or virtual conferencing technology is working as intended; copying and distributing materials to participants, as appropriate, etc.

## 28. INVESTIGATOR PRESENTATION OF FINAL INVESTIGATION REPORT

The Investigator will present a summary of the final investigation report, including items that are contested and those that are not, and will be subject to questioning by the Decision-Maker and the parties (through their Advisors).

Neither the parties nor the Decision-Maker should ask the Investigator their opinions on credibility, recommended findings, or determinations, and Advisors and parties will refrain from discussion of or questions for Investigators about these assessments. If such information is introduced, the Chair will direct that it be disregarded.

## 29. TESTIMONY AND QUESTIONING

Once the Investigator presents the report and responds to questions, the parties and witnesses may provide relevant information in turn, beginning with the Complainant, and then in the order determined by the Chair. The hearing will facilitate questioning of parties and witnesses by the Decision-Maker and then by the parties through their Advisors.

All questions are subject to a relevance determination by the Chair. The Advisor, who will remain seated during questioning, will pose the proposed question orally, electronically, or in writing (orally is the default, but other means of submission may be permitted by the Chair upon request if agreed to by all parties and the Chair), the proceeding will pause to allow the Chair to consider the question (and state it if it has not already been stated aloud), and the Chair will determine whether the question will be permitted, disallowed, or rephrased.

The Chair may invite explanations or persuasive statements regarding relevance with the Advisors if the Chair so chooses. The Chair will then state their decision on the question for the record and advise the party/witness to whom the question was directed, accordingly. The Chair will explain any decision to exclude a question as not relevant, or to reframe it for relevance.

The Chair will limit or disallow questions on the basis that they are irrelevant, unduly repetitious (and thus irrelevant), or abusive. The Chair has final say on all questions and determinations of relevance. The Chair may consult with legal counsel on any questions of admissibility. The Chair may ask Advisors to frame why a question is or is not relevant from their perspective but will not entertain argument from the Advisors on relevance once the Chair has ruled on a question.

If the parties raise an issue of bias or conflict of interest of an Investigator or Decision-Maker at the hearing, the Chair may elect to address those issues, consult with legal counsel, refer them to the Title IX Coordinator, and/or preserve them for appeal. If bias is not an issue at the hearing, the Chair should not permit irrelevant questions that probe for bias.

## 30. REFUSAL TO SUBMIT TO QUESTIONING; INFERENCES

Any party or witness may choose not to offer evidence and/or answer questions at the hearing, either because they do not attend the hearing, or because they attend but refuse to participate in some or all questioning. The Decision-Maker can only rely on whatever relevant evidence is available through the investigation and hearing in making the ultimate determination of responsibility. The Decision-Maker may not draw any inference solely from a party's or witness's absence from the hearing or refusal to submit to cross-examination or answer other questions.

An Advisor may not be called as a witness at a hearing to testify to what their advisee has told them during their role as an Advisor unless the party being advised consents to that information being shared. It is otherwise considered off-limits, and an Advisor who is a School employee is temporarily alleviated from Mandated Reporter responsibilities related to their interaction with their advisee during the Grievance Process.

## 31. HEARING RECORDINGS

Hearings (but not deliberations) are recorded by the School for purposes of review in the event of an appeal. The parties may not record the proceedings and no other unauthorized recordings are permitted.

The Decision-Maker, the parties, their Advisors, and appropriate administrators of the School will be permitted to review the recording or review a transcript of the recording, upon request to the Title IX Coordinator. No person will be given or be allowed to make a copy of the recording without permission of the Title IX Coordinator.

## 32. DELIBERATION, DECISION-MAKING, AND STANDARD OF PROOF

The Decision-Maker will deliberate in closed session to determine whether the Respondent is responsible for the policy violation(s) in question. The preponderance of the evidence standard of proof is used. The hearing facilitator may be invited to attend the deliberation by the Chair, but is in attendance only to facilitate procedurally, not to address the substance of the allegations.

When there is a finding of responsibility on one or more of the allegations, the Decision-Maker may then consider the previously submitted party impact and/or mitigation statement(s) in determining appropriate sanction(s). The Chair will ensure that each of the parties has an opportunity to review any submitted impact and/or mitigation statement(s) once they are submitted.

The Decision-Maker will also review any pertinent conduct history provided by the appropriate School employee and will determine the appropriate sanction(s).

The Chair will then prepare a written statement detailing all findings and final determinations, the rationale(s) explaining the decision(s), the evidence used in support of the determination(s), the evidence not relied upon in the determination(s), any credibility assessments, and any sanction(s) and rationales explaining the sanction(s) and will deliver the statement to the Title IX Coordinator.

This statement is typically three to five (3–5) pages in length and must be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator within two (2) business days of the end of deliberations unless the Title IX Coordinator grants an extension. If an extension is granted, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the parties.

## 33. NOTICE OF OUTCOME

Using the deliberation statement, the Title IX Coordinator will work with the Chair to prepare a Notice of Outcome letter. The Title IX Coordinator will then share the letter, which includes the final determination, rationale, and any applicable sanction(s), with the parties and their Advisors within five (5) business days of receiving the deliberation statement.

The Notice of Outcome will be shared with the parties simultaneously. Notification will be made in writing and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person or emailed to the parties' School-issued email or otherwise approved account. Once emailed, and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

The Notice of Outcome will articulate the specific alleged policy violation(s), including the relevant policy section(s), and will contain a description of the procedural steps taken by the School from the receipt of the misconduct report to the determination, including any and all notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to obtain evidence, and hearings held.

The Notice of Outcome will specify the finding for each alleged policy violation; the findings of fact that support the determination; conclusions regarding the application of the relevant policy to the facts at issue; a statement of, and rationale for, the result of each allegation to the extent the School is permitted to share such information under state

or federal law; any sanction(s) issued which the School is permitted to share according to state or federal law; and whether remedies will be provided to the Complainant to ensure access to the School's educational or employment program or activity.

The Notice of Outcome will also include information on when the results are considered final by the School, will note any changes to the outcome and/or sanction(s) that occur prior to finalization, and the relevant procedures and bases for appeal.

## 34. RIGHTS OF THE PARTIES (SEE APPENDIX B)

## 35. SANCTIONS

Factors considered when determining a sanction/responsive action may include, but are not limited to:

- The nature, severity of, and circumstances surrounding the violation(s)
- The Respondent's disciplinary history
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to bring an end to the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to prevent the future recurrence of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need to remedy the effects of the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation on the Complainant and the community
- The impact on the parties
- Any other information deemed relevant by the Decision-Maker

The sanctions will be implemented as soon as is feasible, either upon the outcome of any appeal or the expiration of the window to appeal without an appeal being requested.

The sanctions described in this Policy are not exclusive of, and may be in addition to, other actions taken, or sanctions imposed, by external authorities.

If it is later determined that a party or witness intentionally provided false or misleading information, that action could be grounds for re-opening a Grievance Process at any time, and/or referring that information to another process for resolution.

### 1. FUTURE PROFESSIONAL SANCTIONS

The following are the common sanctions that may be imposed upon Future Professionals singly or in combination:

- *Coaching:* A formal statement that the conduct was unacceptable and a warning that further violation of any School policy, procedure, or directive will result in more severe sanctions/responsive actions.
- *Suspension:* Termination of Future Professional status for a definite period of time not to exceed two years and/or until specific criteria are met.
- *Termination:* Permanent termination of Future Professional status and revocation of rights to be on campus for any reason or to attend School-sponsored events.
- *Other Actions:* In addition to or in place of the above sanctions, the School may assign any other sanctions as deemed appropriate.

### 2. EMPLOYEE SANCTIONS/RESPONSIVE/CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Responsive actions for an employee who has engaged in harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation include:

- Verbal or Written Warning
- Performance Improvement Plan/Management Process
- Enhanced Supervision, Observation, or Review
- Required Counseling
- Required Training or Education
- Probation
- Denial of Pay Increase/Pay Grade

- Loss of Oversight or Supervisory Responsibility
- Demotion
- Transfer
- Reassignment
- Assignment to New Supervisor
- Restriction of Stipends and/or Professional Development Resources
- Suspension/Administrative Leave with Pay
- Suspension/Administrative Leave without Pay
- Termination
- Other Actions: In addition to or in place of the above sanctions/responsive actions, the School may assign any other responsive actions as deemed appropriate.

## 36. WITHDRAWAL OR RESIGNATION BEFORE COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

### 1. FUTURE PROFESSIONALS

Should a Respondent decide not to participate in the Grievance Process, the process proceeds absent their participation to a reasonable resolution. Should a Future Professional Respondent permanently withdraw from the School, the Grievance Process typically ends with a dismissal, as the School has lost primary disciplinary jurisdiction over the withdrawn Future Professional. However, the School may continue the Grievance Process when, at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, doing so may be necessary to address safety and/or remedy any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

Regardless of whether the complaint is dismissed or pursued to completion of the Grievance Process, the School will continue to address and remedy any systemic issues or concerns that may have contributed to the alleged violation(s), and any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation. The Future Professional who withdraws or leaves while the process is pending may not return to the School in any capacity. The appropriate School employees will be notified accordingly. Such exclusion applies to all School locations.

If the Future Professional Respondent only withdraws or takes a leave for a specified period of time (e.g., one semester or term), the Grievance Process may continue remotely and, if found in violation, that Future Professional is not permitted to return to the School unless and until all sanctions, if any, have been satisfied.

### 2. EMPLOYEES

Should an employee Respondent resign with unresolved allegations pending, the Grievance Process typically ends with dismissal, as the School has lost primary disciplinary jurisdiction over the resigned employee. However, the School may continue the Grievance Process when, at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, doing so may be necessary to address safety and/or remedy any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

Regardless of whether the matter is dismissed or pursued to completion of the Grievance Process, the School will continue to address and remedy any systemic issues or concerns that contributed to the alleged violation(s), and any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

The employee who resigns with unresolved allegations pending is not eligible for academic admission or rehire with the School or any School location, and the records retained by the Title IX Coordinator will reflect that status.

All School responses to future inquiries regarding employment references for that individual will include that the former employee resigned during a pending disciplinary matter.

## 37. APPEALS

Any party may submit a written request for appeal (“Request for Appeal”) to the Title IX Coordinator within five (5) business days of the delivery of the Notice of Outcome.

A single Appeal Decision-Maker will Chair the appeal. No Appeal Decision-Maker will have been previously involved in the Grievance Process for the complaint, including in any dismissal appeal that may have been heard earlier in the process.

The Request for Appeal will be forwarded to the Appeal Chair or designee for consideration to determine whether the request meets the grounds for appeal (a Review for Standing). This review is not a review of the merits of the appeal, but solely a determination as to whether the request meets the grounds and is timely filed.

### 1. GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

Appeals are limited to the following grounds:

- A procedural irregularity affected the outcome of the matter
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, which could affect the outcome of the matter
- The Title IX Coordinator, Investigator, or Decision-Maker had a conflict of interest or bias for or against Complainants or Respondents generally or the specific Complainant or Respondent that affected the outcome of the matter

  If any of the grounds in the Request for Appeal do not meet the grounds in this Policy, that request will be denied by the Appeal Chair, and the parties and their Advisors will be notified in writing of the denial and the rationale.

  If any of the grounds in the Request for Appeal meet the grounds in this Policy, then the Appeal Chair will notify all parties and their Advisors, the Title IX Coordinator, and, when appropriate, the Investigator, and/or the original Decision-Maker.

  All other parties and their Advisors, the Title IX Coordinator, and, when appropriate, the Investigator and/or the original Decision-Maker will be mailed, emailed, and/or provided a hard copy of the Request for Appeal with the approved grounds and then be given five (5) business days to submit a response to the portion of the appeal that was approved and involves them. All responses, if any, will be forwarded by the Appeal Chair to all parties for review and comment.

  The non-appealing party (if any) may also choose to appeal at this time. If so, that will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the grounds in this Policy by the Appeal Chair and either denied or approved. If approved, it will be forwarded to the party who initially requested an appeal, the Title IX Coordinator, and the Investigator and/or original Decision-Maker, as necessary, who will submit their responses, if any, within five (5) business days. Any such responses will be circulated for review and comment by all parties. If not approved, the parties will be notified accordingly, in writing.

  Neither party may submit any new requests for appeal after this time period. The Appeal Chair will collect any additional information needed and all documentation regarding the approved grounds for appeal, and the subsequent responses will be shared with the Appeal Chair and the Chair will render a decision within no more than five (5) business days, barring exigent circumstances. All decisions apply the preponderance of the evidence.

  A Notice of Appeal Outcome will be sent to all parties simultaneously. The Notice of Appeal Outcome will specify the finding on each ground for appeal, any specific instructions for remand or reconsideration, any sanction(s) that may result which the School is permitted to share according to state or federal law, and the rationale supporting the essential findings to the extent the School is permitted to share under state or federal law.

  Notification will be made in writing and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person, mailed to the local or permanent address of the parties as indicated in official institutional records, or emailed to the parties' School-issued email or otherwise approved account. Once mailed, emailed and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

### 2. SANCTIONS STATUS DURING THE APPEAL

Any sanctions imposed as a result of the hearing are stayed (i.e., not implemented) during the appeal process. Supportive measures may be reinstated, subject to the same supportive measure procedures above.

### 3. APPEAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Appeals are not intended to provide for a full re-hearing (de novo) of the allegation(s). In most cases, appeals are confined to a review of the written documentation or record of the original hearing and pertinent documentation regarding the specific grounds for appeal.
- Decisions on appeal are to be deferential to the original determination, making changes to the finding only when there is clear error and to the sanction(s)/responsive action(s) only if there is a compelling justification to do so.
- An appeal is not an opportunity for the Appeal Decision-Maker to substitute their judgment for that of the original Decision-Maker merely because they disagree with the finding and/or sanction(s).
- The Appeal Chair/Decision-Maker may consult with the Title IX Coordinator and/or legal counsel on questions of procedure or rationale, for clarification, if needed. Documentation of all such consultation will be maintained.
- Appeals granted should normally be remanded (or partially remanded) to the original Investigator and/or Decision-Maker for reconsideration.
- Once an appeal is decided, the outcome is final: further appeals are not permitted, even if a decision or sanction is changed on remand (except in the case of a new hearing).
- In rare cases where an error cannot be cured by the original Decision-Maker (as in cases of bias), the Appeal Chair/Decision-Maker may order a new investigation and/or a new hearing with new Pool members serving in the Investigator and Decision-Maker roles.
- The results of a remand to a Decision-Maker cannot be appealed. The results of a new hearing can be appealed (once) on any of the three available appeal grounds.
- In cases that result in reinstatement to the School or resumption of privileges, all reasonable attempts will be made to restore the Respondent to their prior status, recognizing that some opportunities lost may be irreparable in the short term.

## 38. LONG-TERM REMEDIES/OTHER ACTIONS

Following the conclusion of the Grievance Process, and in addition to any sanctions implemented, the Title IX Coordinator may implement additional long-term remedies or actions with respect to the parties and/or the institutional community that are intended to stop the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation, remedy the effects, and prevent reoccurrence.

These remedies/actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Referral to counseling and health services
- Referral to the Employee Assistance Program
- Referral to the Student Wellness Program
- Education to the individual and/or the community
- Permanent alteration of work arrangements for employees
- Climate surveys
- Policy modification and/or training
- Provision of transportation assistance
- Implementation of long-term contact limitations between the parties
- Implementation of adjustments to academic deadlines, course schedules, etc.

At the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, certain long-term support or measures may also be provided to the parties even if no policy violation is found.

When no policy violation is found, the Title IX Coordinator will address any remedies the School owes the Respondent to ensure no effective denial of educational access.

The School will maintain the confidentiality of any long-term remedies/actions/measures, provided confidentiality does not impair the School's ability to provide these services.

## 39. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH SANCTIONS AND/OR RESPONSIVE ACTIONS

All Respondents are expected to comply with the assigned sanctions, responsive actions, and/or corrective actions within the timeframe specified by the final Decision-Maker (including the Appeal Chair/Decision-Maker).

Failure to abide by the sanction(s)/action(s) imposed by the date specified, whether by refusal, neglect, or any other reason, may result in additional sanction(s)/action(s), including suspension and/or termination from the School. Supervisors are expected to enforce completion of sanctions/responsive actions for their employees.

A suspension will only be lifted when compliance is achieved to the satisfaction of the Title IX Coordinator.

## 40. RECORDKEEPING

The School will maintain for a period of at least seven years following the conclusion of the Grievance Process, records of:

1. Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility and any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript required under federal regulation
2. Any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the Respondent
3. Any remedies provided to the Complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the School's education program or activity
4. Any appeal and the result therefrom
5. Any Informal Resolution and the result therefrom
6. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, Decision-Makers, and any person who facilitates an Informal Grievance Process. The School will make these training materials publicly available on the School's website.
7. Any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or Formal Complaint of sexual harassment, including:
    - The basis for all conclusions that the response was not deliberately indifferent
    - Any measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the School's education program or activity
    - If no supportive measures were provided to the Complainant, document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances

The School will also maintain any and all records in accordance with state and federal laws.

## 41. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The School is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and support to qualified Future Professionals, employees, or others with disabilities to ensure equal access to the School's Grievance Process.

Anyone needing such accommodations or support should contact the ADA/504 Coordinator, who will review the request and, in consultation with the person requesting the accommodation and the Title IX Coordinator, determine which accommodations are appropriate and necessary for full participation in the process.

## 42. REVISION OF THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This Policy and procedures supersede any previous policies addressing harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, and/or retaliation for incidents occurring on or after August 14, 2020, under Title IX and will be reviewed and updated annually by the Title IX Coordinator. The School reserves the right to make changes to this document as necessary, and once those changes are posted online, they are in effect.

During the Grievance Process, the Title IX Coordinator may make minor modifications to procedures that do not materially jeopardize the fairness owed to any party, such as to accommodate summer schedules. The Title IX Coordinator may also vary procedures materially with notice (on the institutional website, with the appropriate

effective date identified) upon determining that changes to law or regulation require Policy or procedural alterations not reflected in this Policy and procedures.

If government laws or regulations change—or court decisions alter—the requirements in a way that impacts this document, this document will be construed to comply with the most recent government laws or regulations or court holdings.

This document does not create legally enforceable protections beyond the protections of the background state and federal laws which frame such policies and codes, generally.

This Policy and procedures are effective October 21, 2022.

**APPENDIX A: AN ATIXA FRAMEWORK FOR INFORMAL RESOLUTION (IR)**

ATIXA has framed a process for IR that includes three options:

1. A response based on supportive measures
2. A response based on a Respondent accepting responsibility
3. A response based on Alternative Resolution, which could include various approaches and/or facilitation of dialogue

Alternative Resolution approaches such as mediation, restorative practices, and transformative justice are likely to be used more and more often by postsecondary institutions. ATIXA does not endorse these approaches as better or worse than other formal or informal approaches.

ATIXA believes that if they are to be used in and are effective for sex offenses, they need to be carefully and thoughtfully designed and executed and be facilitated by well-trained personnel who take the necessary time to prepare and lay a foundation for success. Although no approach is a panacea, the framework below can help to lay that foundation, regardless of the approach(es) used.

Here are the principles to be considered in supporting various approaches to Informal Resolution:

- IR can be applied in any sex/gender-based interpersonal conflict but may not be appropriate or advisable in cases involving violent incidents (sexual violence, stalking, domestic and dating violence, severe sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, etc.).
- Situations involving dangerous patterns or significant ongoing threat to the community should not be resolved by IR.
- The determination of whether to permit an IR-based resolution is entirely at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator (TIXC) and in line with the requirements for IR laid out in the Title IX regulations.
- Any party can end IR early-, mid-, or late-process for any reason or no reason.
- IR can be attempted before and in lieu of formal resolution as a diversionary resolution (although a Formal Complaint must be filed if you are within 34 CFR § 106.30, per OCR).
- Alternative approaches can inform formal resolution, as in a formal resolution model infused with restorative practices.
- IR-based processes could be deployed after formal resolution, as an adjunct healing/catharsis opportunity (that could potentially mitigate sanctions or be a form of sanction).
- Alternative Resolution approaches to IR must be facilitated by the School or a third party. There may be value in creating clearly agreed-upon ground rules, which the parties must sign in advance and agree to abide by, otherwise the Informal Resolution process may be deemed to have failed.
- Technology-facilitated IR can be made available, should the parties not be able or willing to meet in person.
- If IR fails, a formal resolution can take place thereafter. Evidence elicited within the “safe space” of the IR facilitation could be later admissible in the formal resolution unless all parties determine it should not be. This will be clearly spelled out as a term of the decision to engage in the IR process.
- With cases involving violence, the preferred alternative approach typically involves a minimal number of essential parties and is not a restorative circle approach with many constituents, in order to ensure confidentiality.

- Some approaches require a reasonable gesture toward accountability (this could be more than an acknowledgment of harm) and some acceptance, or at least recognition, by the Respondent that catharsis is of value and likely the primary goal of the Complainant. A full admission by the Respondent is not a prerequisite. This willingness needs to be vetted carefully in advance by the TIXC before determining that an incident is amenable/appropriate for resolution by IR.
- IR can result in an accord or agreement between the parties (Complainant, Respondent, the School), which is summarized in writing by and enforced by the School. This can be a primary goal of the process.
- IR can result in the voluntary imposition of safety measures, remedies, and/or agreed-upon resolutions by the parties that are enforceable by the School. These can be part of the agreement.
- As a secondary goal, IR can result in the voluntary acceptance of "sanctions," meaning that a Respondent could agree to withdraw, self-suspend (by taking a leave of absence), or undertake other restrictions/transfers/online course options that would help to ensure the safety/educational access of the Complainant, in lieu of formal sanctions that would create a formal record for the Respondent. These are enforceable by the School as part of the agreement, as may be terms of mutual release, non-disparagement, and/or non-disclosure.
- Although a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) could result from IR, it would have to be mutually agreed-upon by the parties in an environment of non-coercion verified by the TIXC.
- Institutions must develop clear rules for managing/facilitating the conference/meeting/dialogue of Alternative Resolution approaches to ensure they are civil, age-appropriate, culturally competent, reflective of power imbalances, and maximize the potential for the Grievance Process to result in catharsis, restoration, remedy, etc., for the Complainant(s).

**APPENDIX B: STATEMENT OF RIGHTS OF THE PARTIES**

- The right to an equitable investigation and resolution of all credible allegations of prohibited harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation made in good faith to School officials.
- The right to timely written notice of all alleged violations, including the identity of the parties involved (if known), the precise misconduct being alleged, the date and location of the alleged misconduct (if known), the implicated policies and procedures, and possible sanctions.
- The right to timely written notice of any material adjustments to the allegations (e.g., additional incidents or allegations, additional Complainants, unsubstantiated allegations) and any attendant adjustments needed to clarify potentially implicated policy violations.
- The right to be informed in advance of any public release of information by the School regarding the allegation(s) or underlying incident(s), whenever possible.
- The right to not have any personally identifiable information released by the School to the public without consent provided, except to the extent permitted by law.
- The right to be treated with respect by School officials.
- The right to have School policy and these procedures followed without material deviation.
- The right to not be pressured to mediate or otherwise informally resolve any reported misconduct involving violence, including sexual violence.
- The right to not be discouraged by School officials from reporting sexual harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation to both on-campus and off-campus authorities.
- The right to be informed by School officials of options to notify proper law enforcement authorities, including on-campus and local police, and the option(s) to be assisted by the School in notifying such authorities, if the party so chooses. This also includes the right to not be pressured to report.
- The right to have allegations of violations of this Policy responded to promptly and with sensitivity by School officials.
- The right to be informed of available supportive measures, such as counseling; advocacy; health care; legal, Future Professional financial aid, visa, and immigration assistance; and/or other services, both on campus and in the community.

- The right to a School-implemented, no-contact order or a no-trespass order against a non-affiliated third party when a person has engaged in or threatens to engage in stalking, threatening, harassing, or other improper conduct.
- The right to be informed of available assistance in changing academic or working situations after an alleged incident of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation, if such changes are reasonably available. No formal report, or investigation, either institutional or criminal, needs to occur before this option is available. Such actions may include, but are not limited to:
    - Referral to the Employee Assistance Program
    - Referral to the Student Wellness Program
    - Referral to community-based service providers
    - Visa and immigration assistance
    - Future Professional financial aid counseling
    - Education to the institutional community or community subgroup(s)
    - Altering work arrangements for employees
    - Safety planning
    - Implementing contact limitations (no-contact orders) between the parties
    - Academic support, extensions of deadlines, or other course/program-related adjustments
    - Trespass orders
    - Timely warnings
    - Withdrawals or leaves of absence
    - Increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus
    - Any other actions deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator
- The right to have the School maintain such actions for as long as necessary and for supportive measures to remain confidential, provided confidentiality does not impair the School's ability to provide the supportive measures.
- The right to receive sufficiently advanced, written notice of any School meeting or interview involving another party, when possible.
- The right to identify and have the Investigator, Advisors, and/or Decision-Maker question relevant available witnesses, including expert witnesses.
- The right to provide the Investigator/Decision-Maker with a list of questions that, if deemed relevant by the Investigator/Decision-Maker, may be asked of any party or witness.
- The right to have inadmissible sexual predisposition/prior sexual history or irrelevant character evidence excluded by the Decision-Maker.
- The right to know the relevant and directly related evidence obtained and respond to that evidence.
- The right to a fair opportunity to provide the Investigator with their account of the alleged misconduct and have that account be on the record.
- The right to receive a copy of all relevant and directly related evidence obtained during the investigation, subject to privacy limitations imposed by state and federal law, and a ten (10) business-day period to review and comment on the evidence.
- The right to receive a copy of the final investigation report, including all factual, policy, and/or credibility analyses performed, and to have at least ten (10) business days to review and comment on the report prior to the hearing.
- The right to be informed of the names of all witnesses whose information will be used to make a finding, in advance of that finding, when relevant.
- The right to regular updates on the status of the investigation and/or resolution.
- The right to have reports of alleged Policy violations addressed by Investigators, Title IX Coordinators, and Decision-Maker who have received relevant annual training.
- The right to preservation of confidentiality/privacy to the extent possible and permitted by law.
- The right to meetings, interviews, and/or hearings that are closed to the public.

- The right to petition that any School representative in the process be recused on the basis of disqualifying bias and/or conflict of interest.
- The right to have an Advisor of their choice to accompany and assist the party in all meetings and or interviews associated with the Grievance Process.
- The right to the use of the appropriate standard of evidence, preponderance of the evidence to make a Finding and Final Determination after an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence.
- The right to be present, including presence via remote technology, during all testimony given and evidence presented during any hearing.
- The right to have an impact and/or mitigation statement considered by the Decision-Maker following a determination of responsibility for any allegation, but prior to sanctioning.
- The right to be promptly informed of the finding(s) and sanction(s) (if any) of the Grievance Process and a detailed rationale of the decision (including an explanation of how credibility was assessed) in a written Notice of Outcome letter delivered simultaneously (without undue delay) to the parties.
- The right to be informed in writing of when a decision by the School is considered final and any changes to the Final Determination or sanction(s) that occur post Notification of Outcome.
- The right to be informed of the opportunity to appeal the finding(s) and sanction(s) of the Grievance Process, and the procedures for doing so in accordance with the standards for appeal established by the School.
- The right to a fundamentally fair resolution as defined in these procedures.

**APPENDIX C: ADMINISTRATIVE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

- This process is applicable when the Title IX Coordinator determines the Title IX Grievance Procedure is inapplicable, or offenses subject to the Title IX Grievance Procedure have been dismissed.
- If the Title IX Grievance Procedure is applicable, the Title IX Grievance Procedure must be applied in lieu of the Administrative Grievance Procedure.

ADMINISTRATIVE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, HARASSMENT, AND NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The School will act on any formal or informal allegation or notice of violation of the Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Nondiscrimination Policy that is received by the Title IX Coordinator,[34] an Official with Authority, or a Mandated Reporter.

The procedures described below apply to allegations of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation on the basis of protected characteristic status involving Future Professionals, employees, customers or service guests, vendors, or anyone else who does business with the School.

These procedures may also be used to address collateral misconduct arising from the investigation of or occurring in conjunction with harassing, discriminatory, or retaliatory conduct (e.g., vandalism, physical abuse of another). All other allegations of misconduct unrelated to incidents covered by this Policy will be addressed through the procedures elaborated in the respective School catalog or staff handbook.

1. INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Following intake, receipt of notice, or a complaint of an alleged violation of the School's Nondiscrimination Policy, the Title IX Coordinator35 engages in an initial assessment, which is typically five (5) days in duration. The steps in an initial assessment can include:

- The Title IX Coordinator reaches out to the Complainant to offer supportive measures.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure they have an Advisor.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to determine which of three options to pursue: A Supportive Response, an Informal Resolution, or an Administrative Resolution.
    - If a Supportive Response is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to identify their wishes and then seeks to facilitate implementation. An Administrative Grievance Process is not initiated, though the Complainant can elect to initiate it later, if desired.

    - If an Informal Resolution option is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator assesses whether the complaint is suitable for Informal Resolution, which informal mechanism may serve the situation best or is available and may seek to determine whether the Respondent is also willing to engage in Informal Resolution.
    - If an Administrative Resolution is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator initiates the investigation process and determines whether the scope of the investigation will address:
        - Incident
        - A potential pattern of misconduct
        - A culture/climate issue
- In many cases, the Title IX Coordinator may determine that a Violence Risk Assessment (VRA) should be conducted by relevant School officials as part of the initial assessment. A VRA can aid in ten critical and/or required determinations, including:
    - Interim suspension of a Respondent who is a threat to health/safety
    - Whether the Title IX Coordinator should pursue the Administrative Grievance Process absent a willing/able Complainant
    - Whether to put the investigation on the footing of incident, pattern, and/or climate
    - To help identify potentially predatory conduct
    - To help assess/identify grooming behaviors
    - Whether a Complaint is amenable to Informal Resolution, and what modality may be most successful
    - Whether to permit a voluntary withdrawal by the Respondent
    - Whether to communicate with a transfer School about a Respondent
    - Assessment of appropriate sanctions/remedies
    - Whether a Clery Act Timely Warning/trespass order/persona non grata is needed.

Based on the initial assessment, the School will initiate one of these responses:

- **Supportive Response**—measures to help restore the Complainant's education access, as described in the Policy.
- **Informal Resolution**—typically used for less serious offenses and only when all parties agree to Informal Resolution, or when the Respondent is willing to accept responsibility for violating policy.
- **Administrative Resolution**—investigation of alleged policy violation(s) and recommended finding, subject to a determination by the Title IX Coordinator or Decision-Maker and the opportunity to appeal.

The investigation and the subsequent Administrative Resolution determine whether the Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy has been violated. If so, the School will promptly implement effective remedies designed to end the discrimination, prevent recurrence, and address the effects.

The process followed considers the preference of the parties but is ultimately determined at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator. If at any point during the initial assessment or formal investigation the Title IX Coordinator determines that reasonable cause does not support the conclusion that policy has been violated, the process will end and the parties will be notified.

The Complainant may request that the Title IX Coordinator review the reasonable cause determination and/or re-open the investigation. This decision lies in the sole discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, but the request is usually only granted in extraordinary circumstances.

### 2. GRIEVANCE PROCESS POOL

The Grievance Process relies on a pool of officials ("Pool") for implementation. Members of the Pool are trained annually in all aspects of the Grievance Process and can serve in any of the following roles, at the direction of the Title IX Coordinator:

- To provide sensitive intake for and initial advice pertaining to the allegations
- To act as optional process Advisors to the parties
- To facilitate Informal Resolution
- To investigate allegations

- To serve as a Decision-Maker
- To serve as an Appeal Decision-Maker

The Title IX Coordinator carefully vets Pool members for potential conflicts of interest or disqualifying biases and appoints the Pool, which acts with independence and impartiality.

Pool members receive annual training, including a review of School policies and procedures as well as applicable federal and state laws and regulations so that they are able to appropriately address allegations, provide accurate information to members of the community, protect safety, and promote accountability. This training includes, but is not limited to:

- The scope of the School's Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedures
- How to conduct investigations and hearings that protect the safety of Complainants and Respondents and promote accountability
- Implicit bias
- Disparate treatment
- Reporting, confidentiality, and privacy requirements
- Applicable laws, regulations, and federal regulatory guidance
- How to implement appropriate and situation-specific remedies
- How to investigate in a thorough, reliable, timely, and impartial manner
- How to conduct a sexual harassment investigation
- Trauma-informed practices pertaining to investigations and Grievance Processes
- How to uphold fairness, equity, and due process
- How to weigh evidence
- How to conduct questioning
- How to assess credibility
- Impartiality and objectivity
- Types of evidence
- Deliberation
- How to render findings and generate clear, concise, evidence-based rationales
- The definitions of all offenses
- How to apply definitions used by the institution with respect to consent (or the absence or negation of consent) consistently, impartially, and in accordance with Policy
- How to conduct an investigation and Grievance Process including hearings, appeals, and Informal Resolution Processes
- How to serve impartially by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias against Respondents and/or for Complainants, and on the basis of sex, race, religion, and other protected characteristics
- Any technology to be used
- Issues of relevance of questions and evidence
- Issues of relevance to create an investigation report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence
- How to determine appropriate sanctions in reference to all forms of harassment and discrimination allegations

### 3. COUNTERCLAIMS

Counterclaims by the Respondent may be made in good faith or may instead be motivated by a retaliatory intent. The School is obligated to ensure that any process is not abused for retaliatory purposes.

The School permits the filing of counterclaims, but uses the initial assessment, described above, to assess whether the allegations are made in good faith. If they are, the allegations will be processed using the resolution procedures below, typically after resolution of the underlying allegation. Counterclaims made with retaliatory intent will not be permitted.

A delay in the processing of counterclaims is permitted, accordingly. Occasionally, allegations and counterclaims can be resolved through the same investigation at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator. When counterclaims are not made in good faith, they will be considered retaliatory, and may constitute a violation of this Policy.

## 4. ADVISORS

### 1. ADVISOR EXPECTATIONS

The School generally expects an Advisor to adjust their schedule to allow them to attend School meetings when planned, but the School may change scheduled meetings to accommodate an Advisor's inability to attend, if doing so does not cause an unreasonable delay.

The School may also make reasonable provisions to allow an Advisor who cannot attend in person to attend a meeting by telephone, video conferencing, or other similar technologies as may be convenient and available.

Parties whose Advisors are disruptive or who do not abide by School policies and procedures may face the loss of that Advisor and/or possible Policy violations.

Advisors are expected to consult with their advisees without disrupting School meetings or interviews. Advisors do not represent parties in the process; their role is only to advise.

### 2. EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTIES WITH RESPECT TO ADVISORS

Each party may choose an Advisor[36] who is eligible and available[37] to accompany them throughout the process. The Advisor can be anyone, including an attorney, but should not be someone who is also a witness in the process. A party may elect to change Advisors during the process and is not obligated to use the same Advisor throughout.

The parties are expected to inform the Investigators of the identity of their Advisor at least four (4) business days before the date of their first meeting with the Investigator (or as soon as possible if a more expeditious meeting is necessary or desired).

The parties are expected to provide timely notice to the Investigator and/or the Title IX Coordinator if they change Advisors at any time.

Upon written request of a party, the School will copy the Advisor on all communications between the School and the party. The School provides a consent form that authorizes the School to share such information directly with a party's Advisor.

### 3. ASSISTANCE IN SECURING AN ADVISOR[38]

For representation, Respondents may wish to contact organizations such as:

- Families Advocating for Campus Equality (http://www.facecampusequality.org)
- Stop Abusive and Violent Environments (http://www.saveservices.org)
  Complainants may wish to contact organizations such as:
- The Victim Rights Law Center (http://www.victimrights.org)
- The National Center for Victims of Crime (http://www.victimsofcrime.org), which maintains the Crime Victim's Bar Association
- The Time's Up Legal Defense Fund (https://nwlc.org/times-up-legal-defense-fund/)

## 5. RESOLUTION OPTIONS

Proceedings are private. All persons present at any time during the Grievance Process are expected to maintain the privacy of the proceedings in accord with School policy.

While there is an expectation of privacy around what is discussed during interviews, the parties have discretion to share their own experiences with others if they so choose but are encouraged to discuss with their Advisors first before doing so.

### 1. INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Informal Resolution is applicable when the parties voluntarily agree to resolve the matter through Alternative Resolution mediation, restorative practices, facilitated dialogue, etc., when the Respondent accepts responsibility for violating Policy, or when the Title IX Coordinator can resolve the matter informally by providing remedies to resolve the situation. The Title IX Coordinator has discretion to determine whether an investigation will be paused or limited during Informal Resolution, or if it will continue during the Informal Resolution process.

It is not necessary to pursue Informal Resolution first in order to pursue Administrative Resolution, and any party participating in Informal Resolution can stop the process at any time and request the Administrative Grievance Process. Further, if an Informal Resolution fails after the resolution is finalized, Administrative Resolution may be pursued.

### 1. ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTION

Alternative Resolution is an informal process, such as mediation or restorative practices, by which the parties mutually agree to resolve an allegation. It may be used for less serious, yet inappropriate, behaviors and is encouraged as an alternative to the Administrative Grievance Process (described below) to resolve conflicts, as appropriate. The parties must consent to the use of Alternative Resolution.

The Title IX Coordinator determines whether Alternative Resolution is appropriate, based on the willingness of the parties, the nature of the conduct at issue, and the susceptibility of the conduct to Alternative Resolution.

In an Alternative Resolution, a trained administrator or third party facilitates communication among the parties to an effective resolution, if possible. Institutionally imposed sanctions are not possible as the result of an Alternative Resolution process, though the parties may agree to accept sanctions and/or appropriate remedies.

The Title IX Coordinator maintains records of any resolution that is reached, and failure to abide by the resolution can result in appropriate enforcement actions.

Alternative Resolution is not typically the primary resolution mechanism used to address reports of violent behavior of any kind or in other cases of serious violations of policy, though similarly structured conversations may be made available after the Administrative Grievance Process is completed should the parties and the Title IX Coordinator believe it could be beneficial. The results of Alternative Resolution are not appealable.

### 2. RESPONDENT ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

The Respondent may accept responsibility for all or part of the alleged policy violations at any point during the Grievance Process. If the Respondent accepts responsibility, the Title IX Coordinator determines that the individual is in violation of School policy.

The Title IX Coordinator then determines appropriate sanction(s) or responsive actions, which are promptly implemented in order to effectively stop the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation; prevent its recurrence; and remedy the effects of the conduct, both on the Complainant and the community.

If the Respondent accepts responsibility for all of the alleged policy violations and the Title IX Coordinator or designee has determined appropriate sanction(s) or responsive actions, to which the Respondent agrees, and which are promptly implemented, the process is over. The Complainant will be informed of this outcome.

If the Respondent accepts responsibility for some of the alleged policy violations and the Title IX Coordinator has determined appropriate sanction(s) or responsive actions, to which the Respondent agrees, and which are promptly implemented for those violations, then the remaining allegations will continue to be investigated and resolved through Administrative Resolution. The parties will be informed of this outcome. The parties are still able to seek Alternative Resolution on the remaining allegations, subject to the stipulations above.

## 2. ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTION VIA AN INVESTIGATION AND HEARING

Administrative Resolution can be pursued at any time during the process for any behavior for which the Respondent has not accepted responsibility that would constitute conduct covered by the Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy if proven. Administrative Resolution starts with a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation.

If Administrative Resolution is initiated, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notification of the investigation to the parties at an appropriate time during the investigation. Typically, notice is given at least 48 hours in advance of an interview. Advanced notice facilitates the parties' ability to identify and choose an Advisor, if any, to accompany them to the interview.

Notification will include a meaningful summary of the allegations, will be made in writing, and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person or emailed to the parties' School-issued or designated email account.

Once emailed and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered. The notification will include the policies allegedly violated, if known at the time. Alternatively, the policies allegedly violated can be provided at a later date, in writing, as the investigation progresses and details become clearer.

The School aims to complete all investigations within a sixty (60) business-day time period, which can be extended as necessary for appropriate cause by the Title IX Coordinator, with notice to the parties as appropriate. Investigations can take weeks or even months, depending on the nature, extent, and complexity of the allegations, availability of witnesses, police involvement, etc.

Once the decision is made to commence an investigation, the Title IX Coordinator appoints Pool members to conduct the investigation, usually within five (5) business days of determining that an investigation should proceed.

The Title IX Coordinator will vet the assigned Investigator to ensure impartiality by ensuring there are no conflicts of interest or disqualifying bias.

The parties may, at any time during the Grievance Process, raise a concern regarding bias or conflict of interest, and the Title IX Coordinator will determine whether the concern is reasonable and supportable. If so, another Investigator will be assigned and the impact of the bias or conflict, if any, will be remedied. If the bias or conflict relates to the Title IX Coordinator, concerns should be raised with Susanne Brown.

The School will make a good faith effort to complete the investigation as promptly as circumstances permit and will communicate regularly with the parties to update them on the progress and timing of the investigation.

The School may undertake a short delay in its investigation (several days to weeks, to allow evidence collection) when criminal charges based on the same behaviors that invoke the School's Grievance Process are being investigated by law enforcement. The School will promptly resume its investigation and Grievance Process once notified by law enforcement that the initial evidence collection process is complete.

School actions are not typically altered or precluded on the grounds that civil or criminal charges involving the underlying incident(s) have been filed or that criminal charges have been dismissed or reduced.

Investigations involve interviewing all relevant parties and witnesses; obtaining available, relevant evidence; and identifying sources of expert information, as necessary.

All parties have a full and fair opportunity, through the investigation process, to suggest witnesses and questions, to provide evidence, and to fully review and respond to all evidence on the record.

## 6. INVESTIGATION

The Investigators typically take the following steps, if not already completed (not necessarily in this order):

- Determine the identity and contact information of the Complainant.
- In coordination with School officials (e.g., the Title IX Coordinator), initiate or assist with any necessary supportive measures.
- Identify all policies implicated by the alleged misconduct.

- Assist the Title IX Coordinator with conducting an initial assessment to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe the Respondent has violated policy.
- If there is insufficient evidence to support reasonable cause, the process is closed with no further action.
- Commence a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation by developing a strategic investigation plan, including a witness list, evidence list, intended investigation timeframe, and order of interviews for all parties and witnesses.
- Meet with the Complainant to finalize their statement, if necessary.
- Prepare the initial Notice of Investigation and Allegations (NOIA) on the basis of the initial assessment. Notice may be one step or multiple steps, depending on how the investigation unfolds, and potential policy violations may be added or dropped as more is learned. Investigators will update the NOIA accordingly and provide it to the parties.
- Notice should inform the parties of their right to have the assistance of an Advisor of their choosing present for all meetings attended by the advisee.
- When formal notice is given, it should provide the parties with a written description of the alleged violation(s), a list of all policies allegedly violated, a description of the applicable procedures, and a statement of the potential sanctions/responsive actions that could result.
- Give an instruction to the parties to preserve any evidence that is directly related to the allegations.
- Provide the parties and witnesses with an opportunity to review and verify the Investigator's summary notes from interviews and meetings with that specific party or witness.
- Make good faith efforts to notify each party of any meeting or interview involving another party, in advance when possible.
- Interview all relevant individuals and conduct follow-up interviews as necessary.
- Allow each party the opportunity to suggest questions they wish for the Investigator to ask the other party and witnesses.
- Complete the investigation promptly and without unreasonable deviation from the intended timeline.
- Provide regular status updates to the parties throughout the investigation.
- Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, summarize for the parties the list of witnesses whose information will be used to render a finding.
- Write a comprehensive investigation report fully summarizing the investigation and all evidence.
- Provide the parties with a copy of the draft investigation report when it is completed, including all relevant evidence, analysis, credibility assessments, and recommended finding(s).
- Provide each party with a full and fair opportunity to respond to the report in writing within five (5) business days and incorporate that response, if any, into the report.
- Investigators may choose to respond in writing in the report to the responses of the parties, and/or to share the responses between the parties for their responses, while also ensuring that they do not create a never-ending feedback loop.
- Share the report with the Title IX Coordinator or legal counsel for review and feedback.
- Gather, assess, and synthesize evidence without making a finding, conclusion, determination, or recommendation.
- Provide the final report to the Title IX Coordinator.

### 7. DETERMINATION

Within four (4) business days of receiving the Investigator's recommendation, a trained Decision-Maker reviews the report and all responses, and then makes the final determination on the basis of the preponderance of the evidence. If the record is incomplete, the Decision-Maker may direct a re-opening of the investigation, or may direct or conduct any additional inquiry necessary, including informally meeting with the parties or any witnesses, if needed. The investigation recommendation, if any, should be strongly considered but is not binding on the Decision-Maker. The Decision-Maker may invite and consider impact and/or mitigation statements from the parties if and when determining appropriate sanction(s), if any.

## 8. ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS

### 1. WITNESS RESPONSIBILITIES

Witnesses (as distinguished from the parties) who are School faculty or staff are required to cooperate with and participate in the School's investigation and Grievance Process. Failure of a witness to cooperate with and/or participate in the investigation or Grievance Process constitutes a violation of Policy and may be subject to discipline.

### 2. REMOTE PROCESSES

Parties and witnesses may be interviewed remotely by phone, video conferencing, or similar technologies if the Investigator and/or Decision-Maker determine that timelines, efficiency, or other causes dictate a need for remote interviewing. Witnesses may also provide written statements in lieu of interviews, or respond to questions in writing, if deemed appropriate by the Investigator, though this approach is not ideal. When remote technologies are used, the School makes reasonable efforts to ensure privacy and ensures that any technology does not work to the detriment of any party or subject them to unfairness.

### 3. RECORDING

No unauthorized audio or video recording of any kind is permitted during the Grievance Process, including investigation interviews. If the Investigator elects to audio and/or video record interviews, all involved parties must be made aware of and consent to audio and/or video recording.

### 4. EVIDENCE

Any evidence that is relevant and credible may be considered, including an individual's prior misconduct history as well as evidence indicating a pattern of misconduct, subject to the limitation in (E) below. The process should exclude irrelevant or immaterial evidence and may disregard evidence lacking in credibility or that is improperly prejudicial.

### 5. PRIOR SEXUAL HISTORY/PATTERNS

Unless the Decision-Maker determines it is appropriate, the investigation and the finding do not consider: (1) incidents not directly related to the possible violation(s), unless they evidence a pattern; (2) the irrelevant sexual history of the parties (though there may be a limited exception made with regard to the sexual history between the parties); (3) irrelevant character evidence.

### 6. PREVIOUS ALLEGATIONS/VIOLATIONS

While previous conduct violations by the Respondent are not generally admissible as information supporting the current allegation, the Investigator may supply the Decision-Maker with information about previous good faith allegations and/or findings when that information suggests potential pattern and/or predatory conduct. If the School uses a progressive discipline system, previous disciplinary action of any kind involving the Respondent may be considered in determining the appropriate sanction(s). Character witnesses or evidence may be offered. The investigation and hearing will determine if the character evidence is relevant. If so, it may be considered. If not, it will be excluded.

### 7. NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME

If the Respondent admits to the violation(s), or is found in violation, the Title IX Coordinator, in consultation with relevant School officials, determines sanction(s) and/or responsive actions, which are promptly implemented in order to effectively stop the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation; prevent its recurrence; and remedy the effects of the discriminatory conduct, both on the Complainant and the community.

The Title IX Coordinator informs the parties of the determination within four (4) business days of the resolution, ideally simultaneously, but without significant time delay between notifications. Notifications are made in writing and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person or emailed to the parties' School-issued or designated email account. Once emailed and/or received in person, notice is presumptively delivered.

The Notification of Outcome specifies the finding for each alleged policy violation, any sanction(s) that may result which the School is permitted to share pursuant to state or federal law, and the rationale supporting the findings to the extent the School is permitted to share under state or federal law.

The notice will detail when the determination is considered final (See Section 11) and will detail any changes that are made prior to finalization.

Unless based on an acceptance of violation by the Respondent, the determination may be appealed by either party. The Notification of Outcome also includes the grounds on which the parties may appeal and the steps the parties may take to request an appeal of the findings. More information about the appeal procedures can be found in Section 11.

## 9. SANCTIONS

Factors considered when determining a sanction/responsive action may include, but are not limited to:

- The nature, severity of, and circumstances surrounding the violation(s)
- The Respondent's disciplinary history
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to bring an end to the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to prevent the future recurrence of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need to remedy the effects of the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation on the Complainant and the community
- The impact on the parties
- Any other information deemed relevant by the Decision-Maker

The sanctions will be implemented as soon as is feasible, either upon the outcome of any appeal or the expiration of the window to appeal without an appeal being requested.

The sanctions described in this Policy are not exclusive of, and may be in addition to, other actions taken, or sanctions imposed, by external authorities. If it is later determined that a party or witness intentionally provided false or misleading information, that action could be grounds for re-opening a Grievance Process at any time, and/or referring that information to another process for resolution.

## 1. FUTURE PROFESSIONAL SANCTIONS

The following are the common sanctions that may be imposed upon Future Professionals singly or in combination:

- *Coaching:* A formal statement that the conduct was unacceptable and a warning that further violation of any School policy, procedure, or directive will result in more severe sanctions/responsive actions.
- *Suspension:* Termination of Future Professional status for a definite period of time not to exceed two years and/or until specific criteria are met.
- *Termination:* Permanent termination of Future Professional status and revocation of rights to be on campus for any reason or to attend School-sponsored events.
- *Other Actions:* In addition to or in place of the above sanctions, the School may assign any other sanctions as deemed appropriate.

## 2. EMPLOYEE SANCTIONS/RESPONSIVE/CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Responsive actions for an employee who has engaged in harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation include:

- *Verbal or Written Warning*
- *Performance Improvement Plan/Management Process*
- *Enhanced Supervision, Observation, or Review*

- *Required Counseling*
- *Required Training or Education*
- *Probation*
- *Denial of Pay Increase/Pay Grade*
- *Loss of Oversight or Supervisory Responsibility*
- *Demotion*
- *Transfer*
- *Reassignment*
- *Assignment to New Supervisor*
- *Restriction of Stipends and/or Professional Development Resources*
- *Suspension/Administrative Leave with Pay*
- *Suspension/Administrative Leave without Pay*
- *Termination*
- *Other Actions: In addition to or in place of the above sanctions/responsive actions, the School may assign any other responsive actions as deemed appropriate.*

## 10. WITHDRAWAL OR RESIGNATION WHILE CHARGES ARE PENDING

### 1. FUTURE PROFESSIONALS

Should a Future Professional withdraw with unresolved allegations pending, the School may place a hold, bar access to an official School record, and/or prohibit graduation as necessary to permit the Grievance Process to be completed.

### 2. EMPLOYEES

Should an employee resign with unresolved allegations pending, the records of the Title IX Coordinator will reflect that status, and any School responses to future inquiries regarding employment references for that individual will include the former employee's unresolved status and whether the employee is eligible for rehire.

## 11. APPEALS

All requests for appeal consideration must be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within five (5) business days of the delivery of the written finding of the Decision-Maker.

An Appeal Decision-Maker will be designated by the Title IX Coordinator and they will not have previously been involved in the process. Any party may appeal, but appeals are limited to the following grounds:

- A procedural error or omission occurred that significantly impacted the outcome (e.g., substantiated bias, material deviation from established procedures, failure to correctly apply the evidentiary standard).
- To consider new evidence, unknown or unavailable during the investigation, that could substantially impact the original finding or sanction. A summary of this new evidence and its potential impact must be included in the appeal.

When any party requests an appeal, the Title IX Coordinator will share the appeal request with all other parties or other appropriate persons such as the Investigator, who may file a response within five (5) business days. Another party may also bring their own appeal on separate grounds.

If new grounds are raised, the original appealing party will be permitted to submit a written response to these new grounds within five (5) business days. These responses or appeal requests will be shared with each party. The Appeal Chair will review the appeal request(s) within seven (7) business days of completing the pre-appeal exchange of materials. If grounds are not sufficient for an appeal, or the appeal is not timely, the Appeal Chair dismisses the appeal.

When the Appeal Chair finds that at least one of the grounds is met by at least one party, additional principles governing the review of appeals include the following:

- Decisions by the Appeal Chair are to be deferential to the original decision, making changes to the finding only when there is clear error and to the sanction(s)/responsive action(s) only if there is compelling justification to do so.
- Appeals are not intended to be full re-hearings (de novo) of the allegation(s). In most cases, appeals are confined to a review of the written documentation or record of the investigation and pertinent documentation regarding the grounds for appeal.
- An appeal is not an opportunity for the Appeal Chair to substitute their judgment for that of the original Investigator or Decision-Maker merely because they disagree with the finding and/or sanction(s).
- Appeals granted based on new evidence should normally be remanded to the Investigator for reconsideration. Other appeals should be remanded at the discretion of the Appeal Chair.
- Sanctions imposed as the result of the Administrative Resolution are implemented immediately unless the Title IX Coordinator stays their implementation in extraordinary circumstances, pending the outcome of the appeal.
- All parties will be informed in writing within seven (7) business days of the outcome of the appeal without significant time delay between notifications, and in accordance with the standards for Notice of Outcome as defined above.
- Once an appeal is decided, the outcome is final; further appeals are not permitted, even if a decision or sanction is changed on remand.
- In rare cases when a procedural error cannot be cured by the original Investigator and/or Title IX Coordinator/Decision-Maker (as in cases of bias), the Appeal Chair may recommend a new investigation and/or Administrative Grievance Process, including a new Decision-Maker.
- The results of a new Administrative Grievance Process can be appealed once, on any of the three applicable grounds for appeals.
- In cases in which the appeal results in Respondent's reinstatement to the School or resumption of privileges, all reasonable attempts will be made to restore the Respondent to their prior status, recognizing that some opportunities lost may be irreparable.

## 12. LONG-TERM REMEDIES/ACTIONS

Following the conclusion of the Grievance Process, and in addition to any sanctions implemented, the Title IX Coordinator may implement additional long-term remedies or actions with respect to the parties and/or the institutional community that are intended to stop the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation; remedy the effects; and prevent reoccurrence.

These remedies/actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Referral to counseling and health services
- Referral to the Employee Assistance Program
- Referral to the Student Wellness Program
- Education to the individual and/or the community
- Permanent alteration of work arrangements for employees
- Climate surveys
- Policy modification and/or training
- Provision of transportation assistance
- Implementation of long-term contact limitations between the parties
- Implementation of adjustments to academic deadlines, course schedules, etc.

At the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, certain long-term support or measures may also be provided to the parties even if no policy violation is found.

When no policy violation is found, the Title IX Coordinator will address any remedies the School owes the Respondent to ensure no effective denial of educational access.

The School will maintain the confidentiality of any long-term remedies/actions/measures, provided confidentiality does not impair the School's ability to provide these services.

## 13. FAILURE TO COMPLETE SANCTIONS/COMPLY WITH INTERIM AND LONG-TERM REMEDIES/RESPONSIVE ACTIONS

All Respondents are expected to comply with conduct sanctions, responsive actions, and corrective actions within the timeframe specified by the Title IX Coordinator.

Failure to abide by the sanction(s)/action(s) imposed by the date specified, whether by refusal, neglect, or any other reason, may result in additional sanction(s) and responsive/corrective action(s), including suspension and/or termination from the School. Supervisors are expected to enforce completion of sanctions/responsive actions for their employees.

A suspension will only be lifted when compliance is achieved to the satisfaction of the Title IX Coordinator.

## 14. RECORDKEEPING

In implementing this Policy, records of all allegations, investigations, resolutions, and hearings will be kept by the Title IX Coordinator indefinitely, or as required by state or federal law or institutional policy.

## 15. STATEMENT OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PARTIES (SEE APPENDIX B)

## 16. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION IN THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The School is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and support to qualified Future Professionals, employees, or others with disabilities to ensure equal access to the School's Grievance Process. Anyone needing such accommodations or support should contact the ADA/504 Coordinator, who will review the request and, in consultation with the person requesting the accommodation and the Title IX Coordinator, determine which accommodations are appropriate and necessary for full participation in the process.

## 17. REVISION

These policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated annually by the Title IX Coordinator. The School reserves the right to make changes to this document as necessary and once those changes are posted online, they are in effect.

The Title IX Coordinator may make minor modifications to these procedures that do not materially jeopardize the fairness owed to any party, such as to accommodate summer schedules.

The Title IX Coordinator may also vary procedures materially with notice (on the School's website, with the appropriate effective date identified) upon determining that changes to law or regulation require policy or procedural alterations not reflected in this policy and procedure.

Procedures in effect at the time of the resolution will apply to resolution of incidents, regardless of when the incident occurred.

Policy in effect at the time of the offense will apply even if the policy is changed subsequently but prior to resolution unless the parties consent to be bound by the current policy. If government regulations change in a way that impacts this document, this document will be construed to comply with the most recent government regulations.

This document does not create legally enforceable protections beyond the protection of the background state and federal laws which frame such policies and codes, generally.

This Policy and procedure was implemented on October 21, 2022.

## APPENDIX D: ATIXA RECORD MAINTENANCE AND ACCESS MODEL POLICY

### POLICY SCOPE

This policy covers records maintained in any medium that are created pursuant to the School's Protected Class Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedures and/or the regular business of the School's Title IX Office. All such records are considered private or confidential by the Title IX Office, in accordance with FERPA and the directive from the Department of Education to maintain the confidentiality of records related to Title IX. These records may be shared internally with those who have a legitimate educational interest and will be shared with the parties to a complaint under applicable state and/or federal law, including the Title IX regulations, FERPA, and/or the Clery Act/VAWA § 304. The Title IX Coordinator controls the dissemination and sharing of any records under its control.

### TYPES OF RECORDS COVERED UNDER THIS POLICY

Records pertaining to the Grievance Process. These records include, but are not limited to:

- Documentation of notice to the institution including incident reports
- Anonymous reports later linked to a specific incident involving known parties
- Any documentation supporting the initial assessment
- Investigation-related evidence (e.g., physical and documentary evidence collected and interview transcripts)
- Dismissal-related documentation
- Documentation related to the Grievance Process
- The final investigation report
- Remedy-related documentation
- Supportive measures-related documentation
- Hearing recordings and records
- Appeal-related documentation
- Informal Resolution records
- Notices of Outcome
- Records documenting that the School's response was not deliberately indifferent
- Any other records typically maintained by the Recipient as part of the case file

Specific examples of records pertaining to the Grievance Process may include, but are not limited to anonymous reports later identified; intake documentation; incident reports; the written complaint; the names of the Complainant, the Respondent; any witnesses; any relevant statements or other evidence obtained; interview notes or transcripts; timelines, flowcharts and other forms used in the investigation process; witness lists, correspondence, telephone logs, evidence logs, and other documents related to the processing of an investigation; correspondence relating to the substance of the investigation; supportive measures implemented on behalf of the Complainant or Respondent; actions taken to restrict/remove the Respondent; correspondence with the parties; medical, mental health, medical, and forensic record evidence obtained with consent during the course of the investigation; police reports; expert sources used in consideration of the evidence; documentation of outcome and rationale; correspondence and documentation of the appeals process; documentation of any sanctions/discipline resulting from the Grievance Process; and documentation of reported retaliatory behavior as well as all actions taken to address these reports.

**Drafts and Working Files:** Preliminary drafts and "working files" are not considered records that must be maintained by the School, and these are typically destroyed during the course of an investigation or at the conclusion of the Grievance Process. They are preliminary versions of records and other documents that do not state a final position on the subject matter reviewed or are not considered to be in final form by their creator and/or the Title IX Coordinator. An example of a "working file" would be the Investigator notes made during one interview with topics the Investigator wants to revisit in subsequent interviews. Sole possession records maintained as such in accordance with FERPA are also included in this category. All drafts of investigation reports shared with the parties are maintained.

**Attorney Work-Product:** Communications from the Title IX Office or its designees with the School's legal counsel may be work-product protected by attorney-client privilege. These communications are not considered records to be maintained by the Title IX Office or accessible under this policy unless the Title IX Coordinator, in consultation with legal counsel as necessary, determines that these communications should be included as accessible records.

## RECORD STORAGE

Records may be created and maintained in different media formats; this policy applies to all records, irrespective of format. All records created pursuant to the Policy, as defined above, must be stored in digital and/or paper format. The complete file must be transferred to the Title IX Office within fourteen (14) business days of resolution of the complaint (including any appeal), if the file is not already maintained within the Title IX Office. Security protocols must be in place to preserve the integrity and privacy of any parts of any record that are maintained in the Title IX Office during the pendency of an investigation.

The Title IX Office will store all records created pursuant to the Policy, regardless of the identities of the parties. Parallel records should not be maintained by other School officials. Any extra (non-essential) copies of the records (both digital and paper) must be destroyed.

A copy of records showing compliance with Clery Act requirements by Title IX personnel will be maintained along with the case file in the Title IX Office.

The School will maintain an access log of each case file, showing when and by whom it was accessed, and for what purpose.

## RECORD RETENTION

All records created and maintained pursuant to the Policy must be retained indefinitely by the Title IX Office unless destruction or expungement is authorized by the Title IX Coordinator, who may act under their own discretion, or in accordance with a duly executed and binding settlement of claim, and/or by court or government order.

## RECORD ACCESS

Access to records created pursuant to the Policy or housed in the Title IX Office is strictly limited to the Title IX Coordinator and any individual the Coordinator authorizes in writing, at their discretion. Those who are granted broad access to the records of the Title IX Office are expected to only access records pertinent to their scope or work or specific assignment. Anyone who accesses such records without proper authorization may be subject to an investigation and possible discipline/sanction. The discipline/sanction for unauthorized access of records covered by this policy will be at the discretion of the appropriate disciplinary authority, consistent with other relevant School policies and procedures.

Future Professional parties may request access to their case file. The School will provide access or a copy within 45 days of the request. Appropriate redactions of personally identifiable information may be made before inspection or any copy is shared.

During the investigation, materials may be shared with the parties using secure file transmission software. Any such file will be watermarked by the Title IX Office before being shared, with the watermark identifying the role of the recipient in the process (Complainant, Respondent, Hearing Decision-Maker, Complainant's Advisor, etc.).

## RECORD SECURITY

The Title IX Coordinator is expected to maintain appropriate security practices for all records, including password protection; lock and key; and other barriers to access as appropriate. Record security should include protection from flood, fire, and other potential emergencies. Clothing, forensic, and other physical evidence should be securely stored. All physical evidence will be maintained in a facility that is reasonably protected from flood and fire. A catalog of all physical evidence will be retained with the case file.

*BASED ON THE ATIXA 2021 ONE POLICY, TWO PROCEDURES MODEL.*
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**FOOTNOTES**

[1] Some states have enacted requirements for providing the option to submit an anonymous report. Consult with legal counsel to determine if your state has such a requirement.

[2] For the purpose of this Policy, privacy means that information related to a complaint will be shared with a limited number of School employees who "need to know" in order to assist in the assessment, investigation, and resolution of the complaint. All employees who are involved in the School's response to notice under this Policy receive specific training and guidance about sharing and safeguarding private information in accordance with state and federal law. The privacy of Future Professional education records will be protected in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as outlined in the School's Student Right of Access/FERPA policy. The privacy of employee records will be protected in accordance with Human Resources policies.

[3] 20 U.S.C. 1232g

[4] 34 C.F.R. § 99

[5] This includes the School's employees' work environment.

[6] This definition of hostile environment is based on Federal Register / Vol. 59, No. 47 / Thursday, March 10, 1994: Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, Racial Inci- dents and Harassment Against Students at Educational Institutions Investigative Guidance.

[7] This includes gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and sex stereotypes.

[8] Implicitly or explicitly.

[9] Unwelcomeness is subjective and determined by the Complainant (except when the Complainant is younger than the age of consent). Severity, pervasiveness, and objective offensiveness are evaluated based on the totality of the circumstances from the perspective of a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances ("in the shoes of the Complainant"), including the context in which the alleged incident occurred and any similar, previous patterns that may be evidenced. This definition is broad enough to potentially encompass forms of sex-based disparate treatment, even if not harassing in nature.

[10] A "sexual act" is specifically defined by federal regulations to include one or more of the following:

Rape:

- Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person,
- without their consent,
- including instances where they are incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

Sodomy:

- Oral or anal sexual intercourse with a Complainant,
- forcibly, and/or
- against their will (non-consensually), or
- not forcibly or against their will in instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

Sexual Assault with an Object:

- The use of an object or instrument to penetrate,
- however slightly,
- the genital or anal opening of the body of the Complainant,
- forcibly, and/or

- against their will (non-consensually), or
- not forcibly or against their will in instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or

Fondling:

- The **intentional** touching of the **clothed or unclothed genitals, buttocks, groin, breasts, or other** body parts **of the Complainant by the Respondent**
    - without the consent **of the Complainant**
    - for the purpose of **sexual degradation**, sexual gratification, **or sexual humiliation**
- Or the Respondent caused or directed the Complainant's **intentiona**l touching **of the Respondent's clothed or unclothed genitals, buttocks, groin, breasts, or other** body parts
    - without consent of the Complainant
    - for the purpose of **sexual degradation**, sexual gratification, **or sexual humiliation**

[11] This would include having another person touch you sexually, forcibly, and/or without consent.

[12] 34 U.S.C. 12291 defines "economic abuse" in the context of dating violence and domestic violence, as,

- behavior that is coercive, deceptive, or unreasonably controls or restrains a person's ability,
- to acquire, use, or maintain economic resources to which they are entitled, including using coercion, fraud, or manipulation to:
    - restrict a person's access to money, assets, credit, or financial information;
    - unfairly use a person's personal economic resources, including money, assets, and credit, for one's own advantage; or
    - exert undue influence over a person's financial and economic behavior or decisions, including forcing default on joint or other financial obligations, exploiting powers of attorney, guardianship, or conservatorship, or failing or neglecting to act in the best interests of a person to whom one has a fiduciary duty.

[13] To categorize an incident as Domestic Violence under this Policy, the relationship between the Respondent and the Complainant must be more than just two people living together as roommates. The people cohabitating must be current or former spouses or have an intimate relationship.

[14] 34 U.S.C. 12291 provides that "any form of technology" includes but is not limited to: internet enabled devices, cameras and imaging programs, apps, location tracking devices, or communication technologies, or any other emerging technologies.

[15] The state definition of consent is [ ], which is applicable to criminal prosecutions for sex offenses in [State] but may differ from the definition used by the School to address policy violations.

[16] Bondage, discipline/dominance, submission/sadism, and masochism.

[17] The School's Anti-Bullying Policy prohibits bullying not covered by this policy.

[18] VAWA is the Violence Against Women Act, enacted in 1994 and codified in part at 42 U.S.C. sections 13701 through 14040.

[19] Anywhere this procedure indicates "Title IX Coordinator," the School may substitute a trained designee.

[20] Disability discrimination complaints involving Future Professionals will be processed using the School Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities.

[21] If circumstances require, the Director, Managing Owner, or Title IX Coordinator will designate another person to oversee the Grievance Process should an allegation be made about the Coordinator or the Coordinator be otherwise unavailable, unable to fulfill their duties, or have a conflict of interest.

[22] Per the 2020 Title IX regulations, recipients are prohibited from Informal Resolution of a complaint by a Future Professional against an employee.

[23] These dismissal requirements are mandated by the 2020 Title IX Regulations, 34 CFR §106.45.

[24] Such a Complainant is still entitled to supportive measures, but the Formal Grievance Process is not applicable unless the Title IX Coordinator signs the complaint in the event the Complainant cannot/will not do so.

[25] "Available" means the party cannot insist on an Advisor who simply does not have inclination, time, or availability. Also, the Advisor cannot have conflicting roles, such as being a Title IX Coordinator who has an active role in the matter, or a supervisor who must monitor and implement sanctions.

[26] Subject to the state law provisions or School policy above.

[27] This is being provided for informational purposes and does not constitute the School's endorsement of any of the external individuals/organizations listed.

[28] The parties may not want discussions that take place within Informal Resolution to be admissible in a later Formal Grievance Process, but essential facts must and do transfer from the informal process to the formal. Disclosing something in an informal setting to shield it from formal admissibility is a cynical strategy, so the School will take care in determining the terms of any assurances of the confidentiality of the Informal Resolution.

[29] External, trained, third-party, neutral professionals may also be used to serve in Pool roles.

[30] Unless an expedited hearing is agreed to by all parties.

[31] The final investigation report may be shared using electronic means that preclude downloading, forwarding, or otherwise sharing.

[32] 3234 C.F.R. § 668.46(k)(3)(B)(3) requires "timely and equal access to the accuser, the accused, and appropriate officials to any information that will be used during informal and formal disciplinary meetings and hearings."

[33] If not conflicted out by previous involvement, the Title IX Coordinator may serve as the hearing facilitator/case manager.

[34] All references herein to a Title IX Coordinator also include a designee of the Title IX Coordinator.

[35] If circumstances require, the Director, Managing Owner, or Title IX Coordinator will designate another person to oversee the process below should an allegation be made about the Coordinator or the Coordinator be otherwise unavailable or unable to fulfill their duties.

[36] This could include an attorney, advocate, or support person. Witnesses are not entitled to Advisors within the process, though they can be advised externally.

[37] "Available" means the party cannot insist on an Advisor who simply doesn't have inclination, time, or availability. Also, the Advisor cannot have institutionally conflicting roles, such as being a Title IX administrator who has an active role in the matter, or a supervisor who must implement and monitor sanctions.

[38] This is being provided for informational purposes and does not constitute the School's endorsement of any of the external individuals/organizations listed.