

HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Title IX Sexual Harassment Guidelines & Grievance Process

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QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Title IX Sexual Harassment Guidelines & Grievance Process

I. Introduction

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient who receives federal financial assistance. Sexual Harassment Process and Guidelines (hereafter “Guidelines”) are developed to ensure compliance with the law and that individual rights are honored. As outlined in detail herein, HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE: (hereafter “the College”)

- Does not discriminate on the basis of sex, including in admissions and employment, and is committed to providing an educational and workplace environment that is free from sex-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.
- Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in its educational programs and activities, as required by law.
- Is committed to promoting fairness and equity in all aspects of its operations.
- Has a responsibility to establish and maintain a learning and working environment, that is free from sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment.
- Values and promotes the equal dignity of all community members and is committed to the pursuit of just resolutions concerning the rights of all parties involved.

These guidelines are adopted to communicate the position that discrimination is prohibited under Title IX and to outline a prompt, fair, and impartial process to address complaints of alleged discrimination based on sex.

Inquiries about these guidelines or the application of Title IX may be referred to the College’s Title IX Coordinators, the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, or both.

Reference: Board Policy 8071 Sexual Misconduct.

II. Overview of Title IX Sexual Harassment Process and Guidelines

Responsibilities of the Title IX Coordinator

The Title IX Coordinators oversee the implementation and enforcement of these Guidelines, which include: primary responsibility for coordinating the College’s efforts related to the intake, investigation, resolution, and implementation of supportive measures to stop, remediate, and prevent discrimination, harassment, and retaliation prohibited under this process.

The College’s Title IX Coordinators are identified below and may be contacted with questions to file a report or formal complaint or to otherwise assist individuals in ensuring equal access to the College’s educational programs or activities in compliance with Title IX. Reports may be filed using online forms located on Hagerstown Community College’s Title IX webpage <https://www.hagerstowncc.edu/student-affairs/sexual-misconduct-procedures> , in person, or via email.

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Note: A designee who is appropriately trained may be appointed to serve as investigator or decision maker to ensure a thorough and expedited response to a complaint.

Individuals may also contact the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights with Title IX questions. (Please note that inquiries to OCR alone are not sufficient to allow appropriate responsive action by the College. To ensure your concern is appropriately addressed under this Process, please file a report with the College's Title IX Coordinator).

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
U.S. 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>

Definitions

Actual Notice - Notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to the College's Title IX Coordinator or any official of the College who has the authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the College. The College receives notice when an employee, student, or third-party informs the Title IX Coordinator or other Official with Authority of the alleged occurrence of harassing, discriminatory, and/or retaliatory conduct. Imputation of knowledge based solely on vicarious liability or constructive notice is insufficient to constitute actual knowledge.

Complainant - A student, employee, or third party who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute harassment, discrimination, or retaliation under Title IX, who is participating or attempting to participate in the College's programs or activities at the time of filing.

Consent - refers to a knowing, voluntary, and affirmatively communicated willingness to participate in a particular sexual activity or behavior. Only a person who has the ability and capacity to exercise free will and make a rational, reasonable judgment can give consent. Consent may be expressed either by words and/or actions, as long as those words and/or actions create a mutually understandable agreement to engage in specific sexual activity. It is the responsibility of each party to ensure that they have consent from the other party and that the other party is capable of providing consent.

- Lack of protest or resistance is not consent. Silence, in and of itself, cannot be interpreted as consent. For that reason, relying solely on non-verbal communication can lead to misunderstanding.
- Previous relationships, including past sexual relationships, do not imply consent to future sexual acts.
- Consent to one form of sexual activity does not automatically imply consent to other forms of sexual activity.
- Consent must be present throughout sexual activity and may be withdrawn at any time. If there is confusion as to whether there is consent or whether prior consent has been withdrawn, it is essential that the participants stop the activity until the confusion is resolved.
- Consent cannot be obtained by use of physical force, threats, intimidating behavior, or coercion.

Consolidated Complaint - A formal complaint with more than one Complainant or Respondent arising when multiple parties submit formal complaints arising out of the same facts and circumstances and as deemed appropriate for consolidation by the Title IX Coordinator.

Education Program or Activity - Locations, events, or circumstances where the College exercises substantial control over both the Respondent, and the context in which the alleged sexual harassment or discrimination occurs and also includes any building owned or controlled by the College or by a student organization that is officially recognized by the College, and locations including outside of the U.S. or outside of the College's activities.

Final Determination - A decision rendered and provided in writing to the parties of a Formal Complaint after application of the College's Title IX Grievance Process concluding whether or not the Respondent is responsible for conduct alleged within a Formal Complaint in violation of this Policy.

Finding - A conclusion within the Final Determination as evaluated under the burden of proof that a specific allegation within a Formal Complaint did or did not occur.

Formal Complaint - A document filed and signed by the Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging a Policy violation by a Respondent and requesting that the College investigate the allegation(s).

Formal Grievance Process - The method of formal resolution designated by the College to address conduct that falls within the scope of this Process, and which complies with the requirements of 34 CFR Part 106.45.

Decision-maker(s) - A trained individual with responsibility for making a Final Determination as outlined in the College's Title IX Grievance Process. A Decision-maker must maintain neutrality and cannot perform the function of either the Title IX Coordinator or Investigator.

Informal Resolution Process - An alternative resolution process that may be available to the parties to seek Resolution of a Formal Complaint in lieu of the Title IX Grievance Process. Informal resolution is facilitated by appropriately trained individuals, is made available at the discretion of the College and as deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator, and is offered only if informed, voluntary, and written consent is made by all parties to a complaint. Any party may opt out of the informal process at any time, and the matter will proceed through the Formal Title IX Grievance Process. Examples of informal resolution include but are not limited to, mediation and restorative justice. The results of Complaints resolved by Informal Resolution are not appealable. This option is not available if an allegation is made against an employee.

Investigator - A trained individual responsible for fulfilling the College burden of gathering and evaluating all evidence related to allegations within a Formal Complaint as required under the College Title IX Grievance Process. This may be the designated Title IX Coordinator or a designee who has training and expertise.

Mandated Reporter - An employee of the College who is obligated by Policy to share knowledge, notice, and/or reports of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation with the Title IX Coordinator.

Official with Authority (OWA) - An employee explicitly vested with the responsibility to implement corrective measures for Title IX harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation on behalf of the College.

Parties - The Complainant(s) and Respondent(s), collectively.

Preponderance of Evidence Standard – The evidence must show that the allegations are more likely to be true than not; over 50%

Remedies - Post-finding actions directed to the Complainant and/or the community implemented to address safety, prevent the recurrence of harassment, and ensure continued access to the College's educational program.

Respondent - An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute harassment, discrimination, or retaliation under Title IX.

Sanction - A disciplinary consequence imposed by the College on a Respondent who is found to have violated these Guidelines.

Sexual Harassment / Sexual Misconduct - Behavior or conduct as defined under Title IX and its implementing regulations and as more fully articulated in these Guidelines and Grievance Processes. At HCC, Sexual Misconduct is used as an umbrella term that includes sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

Title IX Coordinator - The College's employee who is responsible for ensuring compliance with Title IX,

inclusive of monitoring any barriers to reporting information about conduct that may reasonably constitute sex discrimination and taking steps to address such barriers.

Title IX Personnel - Those individuals collectively tasked with the implementation of this Policy and Title IX Grievance Process including specifically, the Title IX Coordinator (including any designees as applicable), any Investigator, or any Decision-maker.

How to Make a Report or Formal Complaint of an Alleged Title IX Violation

Any person may report alleged sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or retaliation to the Title IX Coordinator, irrespective of whether the reporting person is the alleged victim of such conduct. A report is differentiated from a Formal Complaint (“Complaint”), which is a document filed/signed requesting that the College investigate the allegation(s) and implement the College’s Grievance Process. A report or complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, verbally, or through the online form located on the College’s website at any time (including during non-business hours), using the contact information in the section immediately above or as described below:

1. Student complaints - to Dr. Christine Ohl-Gigliotti, Title IX Coordinator for Students, Dean of Students Office, Student Center Room 142, 11400 Robinwood Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740, 240-500-2526, caohl-gigliotti@hagerstowncc.edu
2. Employee complaints – to Ms. Jennifer Childs, Title IX Coordinator for Employees Human Resources Office, ASA Building, Room 700, 11400 Robinwood Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740, 240-500-2259, jachilds@hagerstowncc.edu
3. By telephone - for student reports 240-500-2526 or for employee reports via 240-500- 2259
4. Title IX complaints for Athletics see page iv.

After Making a Report or Formal Complaint

Upon receipt of a report or Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator shall undertake an initial assessment to determine appropriate next steps as required, including making an initial threat assessment to ensure there is no immediate danger to Complainant or the campus community and, if there is, to take appropriate action, which may include emergency removal of Respondent as described below.

The Coordinator shall contact Complainant to discuss the availability of appropriate supportive measures that may be implemented with input from the Complainant irrespective of, and in addition to, any resolution process including the formal Title IX Grievance Process, and will notify the Complainant about the right to have an advisor.

If the report has been made without filing a Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will review the allegations and discuss options with the Complainant, including the option of proceeding with a Complaint. If the Complainant does not want to proceed with a Complaint, the Coordinator may initiate a Complaint if the Coordinator determines that a Complaint is warranted.

If the Complainant files a Complaint, or the Title IX Coordinator initiates a Complaint, the matter will proceed as described under the Title IX Grievance Process.

After submission of a Complaint and after notifying the Respondent of the Complaint’s allegations, the parties will be notified of the availability of informal resolution, as applicable.

Note: This option is not available if an employee is the named respondent. The parties may withdraw such consent at any time and resume the formal Title IX Grievance Process. At all stages of the process, irrespective of any resolution or grievance process that may be offered, responsive and reasonable supportive measures will be implemented to ensure continued access to the College's educational program or activities.

Emergency Removal of Respondent

The College reserves the right to remove a Respondent from its education program or activities on an emergency basis when the Respondent poses an immediate threat to the health or safety of any student or campus community member. The College will implement the least restrictive emergency actions possible in light of the circumstances and safety concerns. If an emergency removal is imposed, the Respondent will be given notice of the removal and the option to meet with the Title IX Coordinator prior to such action/removal being imposed, or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible, to show cause why the removal should not be implemented. Emergency removal decisions are not subject to Appeal. Removals cannot be based on hypothetical or speculative concerns.

Administrative Leave of Employee Respondent

Respondents who are College employees may be placed on administrative leave during the pendency of a grievance process as determined by the Title IX Coordinator for Employees.

Complainant's Decision to Pursue a Complaint

If a Complainant does not wish to be identified, does not wish for an investigation to take place, or does not want a Complaint to be pursued, the Complainant may make such a request to the Title IX Coordinator, who will evaluate the request in light of the duty to ensure campus safety and compliance with state and federal law. The College will comply with the Complainant's wishes unless the Coordinator determines that initiating a Complaint is warranted under the circumstances.

If the Coordinator independently initiates a Complaint, the Complainant may have as much or as little involvement in the process as the Complainant desires. The Complainant retains all rights of a Complainant under this Policy irrespective of participation level. Irrespective of whether a Complaint is filed, the College shall offer supportive measures to ensure the Complainant's continued access to the College's educational program and activities. If the Complainant elects not to file a Complaint, the Complaint shall retain the right to file a Complaint later. Respondents will also be offered supportive measures during the process.

Complaint Dismissal

Mandatory Dismissal

The College must dismiss a Complaint if, at any time during the investigation or hearing, it is determined that:

1. The conduct alleged in the Complaint does not constitute sexual harassment as defined under Title IX; and/or
2. The conduct did not occur in an educational program or activity controlled by the College (including buildings or property controlled by recognized student organizations); and/or
3. The College does not have jurisdiction over the Respondent; and/or
4. At the time of filing a Complaint, the Complainant is not participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the College.
5. The conduct did not occur against a person in the United States.

Discretionary Dismissal

The College may dismiss a formal complaint or any allegations therein if at any time during the investigation or hearing:

1. A Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant would like to withdraw the Complaint or any allegation therein; or
2. The Respondent is no longer enrolled in or employed by the College; or
3. Circumstances prevent the College from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the Complaint or allegations therein.

Upon any dismissal, the College shall promptly send written notice of the dismissal and its rationale simultaneously to the parties. This dismissal decision is appealable by any party under the procedures for appeal below.

Dismissed Complaints may include conduct that could be considered a potential violation of the College's Code of Student Conduct or Employee Handbook and may be addressed through other applicable, non-Title IX conduct policies and procedures accordingly.

Consolidated Complaints

If a Complaint involves one or more Complaint, Complainant, and/or Respondent and allegations arising out of the same set of circumstances, the College may elect to consolidate complaints.

Time Limits on Reporting

There is no time limitation on making a report or Complaint. However, acting on reports or Complaints is significantly impacted by the passage of time and the occurrence of other events (including, but not limited to, the rescission or any revision of these guidelines and grievance process), and is at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, who may, among other things, document allegations for future reference, offer supportive measures and/or Remedies, and/or engage in informal or formal action, as appropriate. Additionally, if the Respondent is no longer subject to the College's jurisdiction and/or significant time has passed, the ability to investigate, respond, and provide Remedies may be more limited or impossible.

Anonymous Report or Complaint

If a Complainant makes a report anonymously, it will be investigated by the College to the extent possible, both to assess the underlying allegation(s) and to determine if supportive measures or remedies can be provided.

Anonymous reports typically limit the College's ability to investigate and respond, depending on what information is shared. In some situations, the Title IX Coordinator may proceed with the issuance of a Formal Complaint even when the Complainant's report has been made anonymously but will ensure due process is provided to the named respondent.

Confidentiality

The College shall undertake reasonable efforts to preserve the confidentiality of reports and complaints and respect the privacy of the parties but such measures cannot restrict the parties right to obtain and present evidence regarding the allegations. The College shall not disclose any report or complaint except as provided herein and as necessary to effectuate this Process, or as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g; FERPA regulations, 34 CFR part 99, or as required under applicable law.

Certain professionals have a legal and/or ethical responsibility to maintain communications made in the scope of their professional roles in strict confidence. Some of these roles include licensed professional counselors/mental health providers, licensed medical and health care providers, victim advocates, ordained/licensed clergy, licensed attorneys, and rape crisis or domestic violence resources.

Complainants or Respondents wishing to speak to someone confidentially are encouraged to seek out such resources. Communications with such professionals are considered legally privileged and cannot be revealed without a party's express written consent.

In highly limited circumstances, such as when presenting an immediate threat or danger to another, or when subject to a court order, confidential communications may be revealed without the consent of a party.

Supportive Measures

Promptly after receipt of a report, the coordinator will contact the parties to discuss the availability of supportive measures.

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the parties to restore or preserve access to the College's education program or activity, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the College's educational environment, and/or deter harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

The Title IX Coordinator promptly makes supportive measures available upon receipt of a report or a complaint alleging possible sexual harassment. At the time that supportive measures are offered, the College will inform the Complainant, in writing, that they may file a formal complaint with the College either at that time or in the future if they have not done so already. The Title IX Coordinator works with the parties to ensure that their wishes are taken into account with respect to the supportive measures that are planned and implemented.

The College shall maintain the confidentiality of the supportive measures to the greatest extent reasonably practicable, provided that confidentiality does not impair the College's ability to provide supportive measures or otherwise fulfill its obligations under this Process. The College will implement measures in a way that does not unreasonably burden the other party.

Supportive measures may include but are not limited to, counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, referral to medical or healthcare services, referral to community-based services, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures.

Amnesty for Complainants and Witnesses

The College encourages the reporting of misconduct and crimes by Complainants and witnesses. Sometimes, Complainants or witnesses are hesitant to report or participate in grievance processes because they fear that they may violate 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 College community that Complainants choose to report misconduct to College 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 College may offer parties and witnesses amnesty from minor violations of other College policies – such as underage alcohol consumption or personal use of illicit drugs – that may be associated with the incident.

Amnesty does not apply to more serious allegations, such as physical abuse of another or illicit drug distribution.

Presence of an Advisor

The parties have the right to select an advisor of their choice to accompany them to any or all meetings and interviews during the resolution process. There are no limits on who can serve as an advisor; it 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 resolution process. Under Title IX, cross-examination is required during the hearing, and must be conducted by the parties' advisors. If a party selects an advisor of their choice, this advisor must perform cross-examination on their behalf during the hearing, as the parties are not permitted to directly cross-examine each other or any witnesses. If a party does not have an advisor, or the advisor does not appear for a hearing, the College will provide one for the limited purpose of conducting cross-examination on behalf of the party.

An advisor who is also a witness to the allegations in the complaint 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(s) and may, but will not necessarily, impact the Final Determination.

The College cannot guarantee equal advisory rights, meaning that if one party selects an advisor who is an attorney, but the other party does not select or retain an attorney or cannot afford an attorney, the College is not obligated to provide the other party with an attorney. The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) maintains a list of attorneys and legal service programs who are willing to represent current or prior student Complainants and Respondents in Title IX campus proceedings on a pro bono basis or for reduced legal fees; information is available on the MHEC website, <https://mhec.maryland.gov/Pages/Title-IX-Campus-Sexual-Assault-Proceedings---Attorney-List.aspx>. Students using MHEC approved attorneys may be reimbursed attorney fees.

Conflict-of-Interest & Bias

Title IX Personnel are trained to ensure they have no conflict of interest and are not biased for or against any party in a specific case, or for or against Complainants and/or Respondents, generally. To raise any concern involving bias, conflict of interest or other misconduct by any Title IX Personnel contact the College's President to report the concern.

Resolution Timeline

The College will make a good-faith effort to complete the resolution process fairly and promptly. Duration of a matter that proceeds through the Title IX Formal Grievance Process is determined by many factors including, but not limited to, the cooperation and availability of the parties and witnesses, potential concurrent criminal investigations, and the College closures, among others. The College will avoid all undue delays within its control and will grant reasonable extensions of time, upon written request and showing of good cause, by a party. The College shall provide the parties written notice of delays and/or extensions, including appeal, 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.

Notifications to Parties

All notifications to the parties noted herein will be made by one or more of the following methods: in person, mailed to the local or permanent address of the parties as indicated in official College records, or emailed to the parties' College-issued email or otherwise approved account. Once mailed, e-mailed, and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

Equitable Treatment

The College will treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures and adhering to the grievance process before imposing any disciplinary sanctions.

Clery Act Reporting

Reports or complaints of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking that pose a serious or continuing threat of bodily harm or danger to members of the campus community may trigger a timely warning obligation by the College under the Clery Act. If a warning is deemed necessary, the College 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.

In addition, the College is obligated to report and disclose crimes under the Clery Act, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking as defined in this Policy, for statistical reporting purposes only. Reports of these crimes do not include personally identifiable information and therefore preserve the confidentiality of any involved parties.

Retaliation

The College prohibits retaliation. Retaliation may include 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 procedure. Alleged retaliation should be reported immediately to the Title IX Coordinator and will be promptly investigated. The College will take appropriate action to protect individuals who fear that they may be subjected to retaliation.

Charging an individual with a code of conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a grievance proceeding under this procedure does not constitute retaliation. Relatedly, a determination of responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party has made a materially false statement in bad faith.

The College's Mandatory Response Obligations

The College's mandatory response obligations arise when the College has Actual Knowledge of conduct that may constitute sexual discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, as defined herein. Actual Knowledge occurs when the Title IX Coordinator or a College official with authority to implement corrective measures ("OWA")¹ or persons who have responsibility for administrative leadership, teaching, or advising students become aware of the potential occurrence of such conduct. Actual notice received by any of these OWAs constitutes Actual Knowledge upon which the College's mandatory response obligations arise. All other employees of the College serve as Mandated Reporters² who are required under the College's process to report known or suspected discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. In these cases, the College must act to stop, remedy, and prevent the future recurrence of prohibited conduct through the application of this process.

Notice, Dissemination, and Publication of Policy

Title IX requires the College to notify applicants for admission or employment as well as students, employees, and, if applicable, unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining of collective agreements with the College of this process the College complies with Title IX's notice requirements, including prominently publishing its Non-Discrimination & Grievance Process and contact information for the Title IX Coordinator on its website and in other publications.

III. Sexual Harassment Defined, Jurisdiction & Scope of Policy

Sexual Harassment Defined

For purposes of this Title IX grievance process and Maryland Anti-Discrimination Laws, Sexual Harassment has the meaning set forth below. Sexual Harassment may be committed by any person upon any other person, regardless of the sex, sexual orientation, gender, and/or gender identity of those involved.

Sexual Harassment means:

1. Quid Pro Quo:

- a. a College employee, agents, or other persons authorized by the College to provide aid, benefit, or service in its program,
- b. conditions the provision of aid, benefit, or service of the College,
- c. on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; and/or

-or-

2. Sexual Harassment:

- a. Unwelcomed conduct,
- b. determined by a reasonable person
- c. to be so severe, and
- d. pervasive, and,
- e. objectively offensive,
- f. that it effectively denies a person equal access to the College's education program or activity

-or-

3. Sexual Assault, defined as:

- a. Sex Offenses, Forcible or Non-forcible:
 - i. Any sexual act directed against another person,
 - ii. without the consent of the Complainant,
 - iii. including instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent.

-or-

4. Quid Pro Quo:

- a. a College employee, agents, or other persons authorized by the College to provide aid, benefit, or service in its program,
- b. conditions the provision of aid, benefit, or service of the College,
- c. on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; and/or

¹ The following have been identified and designated as OWAs: HCC Police or Security Officers, Executive Director of Human Resources, Dean of Students, Director of Athletics and ARCC, Student Activities Staff, and Student Organization/Club Advisors. ² The College has identified the following as Mandated Reporters: All faculty, staff, and administration employees

5. Sexual Harassment:

- a. Unwelcomed conduct,
- b. determined by a reasonable person
- c. to be so severe, and
- d. pervasive, and,
- e. objectively offensive,
- f. that it effectively denies a person equal access to the College's education program or activity

-or-

6. Sexual Assault, defined as:

- a. Sex Offenses, Forcible or Non-forcible:
 - i. Any sexual act directed against another person,
 - ii. without the consent of the Complainant,
 - iii. including instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent.

-or-

b. Forcible Rape:

- i. Penetration,
- ii. no matter how slight,
- iii. of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or
- iv. oral penetration by a sex organ of another person,
- v. without the consent of the Complainant.

-or-

c. Forcible Sodomy:

- i. Oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person,
- ii. forcibly,
- iii. and/or against that person's will (non-consensually), or
- iv. not forcibly or against the person's 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.

-or-

d. Sexual Assault with an Object:

- i. The use of an object or instrument to penetrate,
- ii. however slightly,
- iii. the genital or anal opening of the body of another person,
- iv. forcibly,
- v. and/or against that person's will (non-consensually),
- vi. or not forcibly or against the person's 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.

-or-

e. Forcible Fondling:

- i. The touching of the private body parts of another person (buttocks, groin, breasts),
- ii. for the purpose of sexual gratification,
- iii. forcibly,
- iv. and/or against that person's will (non-consensually),
- v. or not forcibly or against the person's 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.

-or-

f. Sex Offenses, Non-forcible:

i. Incest:

- i. Non-forcible sexual intercourse,
- ii. between persons who are related to each other,
- iii. within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by Maryland state law.

-or-

ii. Statutory Rape:

- i. Non-forcible sexual intercourse,
- ii. with a person who is under the statutory age of consent of Maryland state law.

-or-

7. 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—
 - ii. Dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse.
 - iii. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

-or-

8. Domestic Violence, defined as:

- a. violence,
- b. on the basis of sex,
- c. committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the Complainant,
- d. by a person with whom the Complainant shares a child in common, or
- e. by a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the Complainant as a spouse or intimate partner, or
- f. by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the Complainant under the domestic or family violence laws of the state of Maryland.
- g. 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 the state of Maryland.

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

-or-

9. Stalking, defined as:

- a. engaging in a course of conduct,
- b. on the basis of sex,
- c. directed at a specific person, that
 - i. would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety, or
 - ii. the safety of others; or
 - iii. Suffer substantial emotional distress.

For the purposes of this definition—

- i. 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.
- ii. A reasonable person means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the Complainant.
- iii. Substantial emotional distress means significant mental suffering or anguish that may but does not necessarily require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

Force, Coercion, Consent, and Incapacitation

As used in the offenses above, the following definitions and meanings 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.

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: See definitions section

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 by alcohol or other drugs. A Respondent violates these guidelines if they engage in sexual activity with someone incapable of giving consent.

It is a defense to an alleged sexual assault 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 cannot give knowing/informed consent (e.g., to understand the “who, what, when, where, why, or 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 process 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 drugs.

Jurisdiction of the College

If the Respondent is unknown or is not a member of the College community, the Title IX Coordinator will assist the Complainant as requested in identifying appropriate campus and local resources and support options and/or, when criminal conduct is alleged, in contacting local or campus law enforcement to file a police report upon request.

Further, even when the Respondent is not a member of the College community, supportive measures, remedies, and resources may be accessible to the Complainant by contacting the Title IX Coordinator. In addition, the College may take other actions as appropriate to protect the Complainant against third parties, such as barring individuals from College property and/or events. All vendors serving the College through third-party contracts are subject to the policies and procedures of their employers, or if applicable, to these policies and procedures to which their employer has agreed to be bound by their contracts.

Scope of the College’s Educational Program and Activities

For purposes of this process, the College’s educational program or activities includes locations, events, or circumstances, within the U.S., where the College exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context in which the alleged sexual harassment or discrimination occurs and also includes any building owned or controlled by the College or by a student organization that is officially recognized by the College. It also includes online, and cyber manifestations of conduct prohibited by these guidelines, when those behaviors occur in or have an effect on the College’s education program and activities or use the College networks, technology, or equipment.

Expectations for Employees – Relationships with Students

The College is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination, sexual harassment, and conflicts of interest. A dating or sexual relationship between an employee and a student is prohibited when

the employee has any current or foreseeable professional responsibility for the student. Voluntary consent by the student in such a relationship is suspect, given the fundamental nature of such a relationship. In addition to the inherent power imbalance of such relationships, there is the potential for conflicts between all students and the reputation and mission of the College.

Should a student involved in an existing relationship with an employee enroll in the College, the employee must report the relationship to the Executive Director of Human Resources to ensure the employee is not in a supervisory or academic situation with the student.

Students Under the Age of 18

An employee engaged in sexual behavior with a student under 18 may be deemed a form of child sexual abuse as defined as “an act by an adult involving a minor or a student that constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the state, or any sexual contact between an adult and a minor” as stipulated in Family Law Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, §5-701. Employees who engage in such behavior may be disciplined up to and including dismissal and may be subject to child abuse charges. Any employee who has reason to suspect an employee is engaged in any form of child or sexual abuse with a minor is compelled to report such concern to the Department of Social Services.

IV. Formal Grievance Process

If a Formal Complaint is filed, the matter will proceed through the Title IX Grievance Process as outlined below and will include an objective investigation with a live hearing being optional. This process will treat complainants and Respondents equitably. Any provisions, rules, or practices adopted by the College as part of the grievance process, other than those required under Title IX and its implementing regulations will apply equally to both parties. The process will include an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence (inculpatory and exculpatory), will be conducted by trained Title IX Personnel, free from any known conflict of interest or bias, and presumes Respondent’s non-responsibility until and unless demonstrated otherwise by the evidence and after a Final Determination has been rendered. Disciplinary sanctions or punitive measures will not be imposed against a Respondent unless and until there has been a finding of responsibility after the application of the process. If at any stage of the investigation, it is determined that conditions exist warranting dismissal, the complaint will be dismissed. Complainant will continue to be entitled to appropriate supportive measures in such cases.

The College requires impartiality in the process by ensuring there are no actual or apparent conflicts of interest or disqualifying biases of any Title IX Personnel. The parties may, at any time during the resolution process, raise a concern regarding bias, conflict of interest, or any irregularity that may blemish the impartiality of the process. Such concerns should be reported in writing to the Title IX Coordinator, or President, who will evaluate the concern and take appropriate corrective action to ensure the integrity of the process.

Notice of Allegations

The Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of the allegations to the Respondent and Complainant upon receipt of a Formal Complaint. The notice will be provided before any initial meeting or interview with the Respondent and their advisor, if applicable, allowing sufficient advanced notice to prepare.

The notice will include:

- A meaningful summary of all allegations,
- The identity of the parties (if known),

- The precise misconduct being alleged,
- The date and location of the alleged incident(s) (if known),
- The specific policies alleged to have been violated,
- A description of the applicable procedures, including grievance procedures and informal resolution
- A statement of the potential sanctions/responsive actions that could result,
- A statement that Respondent is presumed not responsible for the reported misconduct unless and until a Final Determination has been rendered after the process,
- Notice that the parties will be allowed to inspect and review all directly related and relevant evidence obtained during the investigation,
- Retaliation is prohibited
- Information about the privacy of the process,
- The right to have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney,
- A statement informing the parties that the College's policy prohibits knowingly making false statements, including knowingly submitting false information during the resolution process,
- Detail on how the party may request disability accommodations during the interview process,
- An instruction to preserve any evidence that is directly related to the allegations.

Investigation

Trained Investigators will be assigned to investigate allegations contained in a Formal Complaint and will do so objectively with the goal of seeking the truth. The burden to collect all evidence related to the allegations, including both inculpatory and exculpatory, rests on the College, and not on the parties. Investigators must be free from bias and conflicts of interest. Depending on the complexity of the case, more than one Investigator may be assigned.

Investigation Timeline

The College 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. The College may undertake a reasonable delay in its investigation under appropriate circumstances. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, a concurrent law enforcement investigation, the need for language assistance, the absence of parties and/or witnesses, and/or accommodations for disabilities or health conditions. The College will communicate in writing the anticipated duration of the delay and the reason to the parties and provide the parties with status updates as warranted. The College will promptly resume its investigation and resolution process as soon as feasible. During such a delay, the College will implement supportive measures as deemed appropriate.

Concurrent Law Enforcement Investigation or Criminal Proceedings

The College's Title IX grievance process is an administrative procedure required under Title IX to address sexual discrimination and therefore is separate and independent of any law enforcement investigation or criminal proceedings. While a law enforcement investigation may necessitate a temporary delay in the College's grievance process, such a law enforcement investigation does not replace the College's grievance process, as the College is legally obligated to address and remedy potential sexual harassment in its educational programs and activities as outlined in this Policy. The College will collaborate with law enforcement seeking not to compromise its investigation while also ensuring compliance under Title IX.

The Investigation Process

Investigators serve free from conflict of interest, objectively and without bias. All investigations are thorough, reliable, impartial, prompt, and fair. Investigations involve interviews with all relevant parties and witnesses and obtaining available, relevant evidence. The College, not the parties, bears the burden of gathering evidence and burden of proof. Parties have equal 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.

The investigation will be conducted within a reasonably prompt timeframe, allowing for thorough collection and evaluation of all evidence related to the allegations. The investigator will keep the parties informed as to estimated timelines, and any delays.

Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, the parties will be provided with an 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 to the allegations in the Formal Complaint, (whether or not it will be used in reaching a determination). The parties will have a ten (10) business day review and comment period so that each party may meaningfully respond to the evidence.

The Investigator will incorporate any relevant feedback provided by the parties during the review process, and the final report is then shared with all parties and their advisors through electronic transmission or hard copy at least ten (10) business days before a hearing.

Role and Participation of Witnesses in the Investigation

Witnesses who are College employees are expected to cooperate with and participate in the College's investigation and resolution process. Failure of such witnesses to cooperate with and/or participate in the investigation or resolution process constitutes a Policy violation and may warrant discipline.

Interviews may occur in person or remotely. Skype, Zoom, FaceTime, WebEx, or similar technologies may be used. The College will take appropriate steps to reasonably ensure the security/privacy of remote interviews.

Recording of Interviews

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

Evidentiary Considerations in the Investigation

The investigation includes a collection of all evidence directly related to the allegations, which is not otherwise privileged. Only evidence which is also deemed relevant is summarized in the investigative report which is considered by the Decision-Maker(s), in rendering a determination of responsibility. All parties are provided the opportunity to review all non-privileged evidence gathered during the investigation which is directly related to the allegations in the complaint, whether or not it is also included in the investigative report. All parties are also provided with a copy of the investigative report summarizing relevant evidence only.

Relevant evidence does not include evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior unless such evidence is offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the conduct alleged by the Complainant, or if the evidence concerns specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the Respondent, and is offered to prove consent. Privileged evidence is likewise excluded from both the investigation, investigative report, and hearing unless a party expressly waives this privilege in writing and consents to the release of this information during the grievance process.

Investigative Report

Upon conclusion of the investigation, the Investigator will create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, and, at least ten (10) days prior to a hearing, the report will be sent to each party and the party's advisor, if any. The investigative report will be sent in an electronic format or hard copy, for each party's review and written response.

The Hearing

Upon conclusion of the investigation and distribution of the investigative report to the parties, the matter will proceed to the hearing stage of the Title IX grievance process. The hearing may be offered live, in real-time, and will include cross-examination. A Decision-maker(s) will be appointed to preside over the hearing, evaluate the evidence, and decide as to each allegation in the complaint. The Decision-maker will be independent and neutral, and will not have had any previous involvement with the investigation. Investigators, Title IX Coordinator (or designee) or advisors are prohibited from serving as Decision-makers.

The College reserves the right to adopt any hearing protocols, which will be applied and be made available equally to both parties, to ensure the efficiency, order, and decorum of the hearing process. Any such protocols will be provided in writing to the parties, witnesses, and participating individuals at least ten (10) days before the scheduled hearing dates.

The College may designate an administrative facilitator of the hearing, which may include the Title IX Coordinator and /or an attorney as long as they do not have a conflict of interest.

The College may conduct the hearing virtually at their discretion or upon request of a party. Request for remote participation by any party or witness should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator and made at least five (5) business days before the hearing. Such hearings may not be audio-only.

The Decision-maker may question the parties and any witness at the hearing.

Only relevant questions, testimony, and evidence may be proffered at the hearing, and the Decision-maker will make determinations as to the relevancy of every question posed by an advisor during cross-examination before it is answered and of any evidence offered.

Privileged evidence or testimony, likewise, may not be proffered during the hearing, without a party's waiver and written consent allowing its consideration at the hearing.

Parties may not conduct cross-examination. Advisors only will conduct a cross-exam on a party's behalf. Only relevant questions will be allowed.

Parties, advisors, witnesses, and all participating individuals are expected to behave respectfully during the

hearing. Harassing, intimidating, or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated, and the College reserves the right to exclude anyone from participation in the process who fails to comport themselves accordingly.

An audio or audiovisual recording, or transcript may be made of the hearing and will be made available to the parties for inspection and review. No other recording of the hearing will be allowed.

Evidentiary Considerations in the Hearing

Only Relevant Evidence Allowed

Any evidence that the Decision-maker(s) determine(s) is relevant and credible may be considered. Only evidence, which is directly related to the allegations, not subject to an enforceable legal privilege, and not otherwise excludable as described here is considered relevant.

The hearing does not consider the following which are deemed not relevant: 1) incidents not directly related to the possible violation unless they evidence a pattern; or 2) questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or 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 concerning the Respondent and are offered to prove consent.

Privileged Evidence Must be Excluded

Evidence subject to any recognized legal or medical privilege will not be allowed in the hearing without the prior written waiver of the privilege and consent for its consideration during the grievance process.

When a Party/Witness Refuses to Submit to Cross-Examination

If a party or witness does not attend or chooses not to submit to cross-examination at the hearing, the Decision-maker may not rely on any prior statement made by that party or witness in the ultimate determination of responsibility. The Decision-maker(s) may not draw any inference solely from a party's or witness's absence.

Final Determination as to Responsibility and Standard of Proof

Upon completion of the hearing, the Decision-maker will deliberate privately and will render a finding as to each allegation in the complaint by applying the preponderance of evidence standard; whether it is more likely to be true than not that the Respondent violated the Policy as alleged. The decision will be provided simultaneously to the parties through the issuance of a written determination letter, delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person, mailed to the local or permanent address of the parties as indicated in the official College records, or emailed to the parties using the College issued email or otherwise approved account. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

The determination letter will include:

1. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment as defined under the Policy;
2. A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits methods used to gather evidence, and hearing held;
3. Findings of fact supporting the determination;
4. Conclusions regarding the application of the College's code of conduct to the facts;
5. A statement, and rationale for, the results as of each allegation, including a determination regarding

responsibility, and disciplinary sanctions the College imposes on the Respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the College's education program or activity will be provided by the College to the Complainant; and

6. The College's permissible bases for the Complainant and Respondent to appeal.

The determination regarding responsibility becomes final after the expiration or exhaustion of any appeal rights.

Sanctions, Disciplinary Action & Remedies

The College may consider several factors when determining a sanction and/or remedy and will focus primarily on actions aimed at ending and preventing the recurrence of, discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation and the need to remedy the effects its effects on the Complainant and campus community. Sanctions will be imposed upon either the expiration of the appeal window or after the Final Determination on any appeal filed.

Sanctions or actions may include but are not limited to, those listed below. These may be applied individually or in combination and the College may assign sanctions not listed, as deemed appropriate.

Warning: A formal statement that the conduct was unacceptable and a warning that further violation of any College policy, procedure, or directive will result in more severe sanctions/responsive actions.

Required Counseling: A mandate to meet with and engage in either College-sponsored or external counseling to better comprehend the misconduct and its effects.

Probation: A written reprimand for violation of College policy, providing for more severe disciplinary sanctions in the event that the student or employee is found in violation of any College policy, procedure, or directive within a specified period. Terms of the probation will be articulated and may include denial of specified social privileges, exclusion from exclusion from designated areas of campus, no-contact orders, and/or other measures deemed appropriate.

Suspension: Termination of student status for a definite period not to exceed two years and/or until specific criteria are met. Students who return from suspension are automatically placed on probation through the remainder of their tenure as a student at the College. Employees may be suspended without pay.

Expulsion/Termination: Permanent termination of student status and revocation of rights to be on campus for any reason or to attend College-sponsored events. Employees may be terminated.

Withholding Diploma: The College may withhold a student's diploma for a specified period and/or deny a student participation in commencement activities if the student has an allegation pending or as a sanction if the student is found responsible for an alleged violation.

Other Actions:

1. *Performance Improvement/Management Process*
2. *Required Training or Education*
3. *Loss of Annual Pay Increase*
4. *Loss of Oversight or Supervisory Responsibility Demotion*
5. *Other Actions: In addition to or in place of the above sanctions, the College may impose any other sanction as deemed appropriate.*

False Allegations and Evidence

Making deliberately false and/or malicious accusations, knowingly providing false evidence, tampering with or destroying evidence, or deliberately misleading an official conducting an investigation are policy violations subject to discipline.

Long-Term Remedies/Other Actions

Following the conclusion of the resolution process, and in addition to any sanctions imposed, the Title IX Coordinator may implement additional long-term remedies or actions concerning the parties and/or the campus community that are intended to stop the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation, remedy the effects, and prevent reoccurrence.

These Remedies/Other Actions may include, but are not limited to:

1. *Referral to counseling and health services*
2. *Referral to the Employee Assistance Program*
3. *Education to the individual and/or the community*
4. *Alteration of work arrangements for employees*
5. *Provision of campus safety escorts*
6. *Climate surveys*
7. *Policy modification*
8. *Training or awareness campaigns*
9. *Provision of transportation accommodations*
10. *Implementation of long-term contact limitations between the parties*
11. *Adjustments to academic deadlines, course schedules, etc.*
12. *Modified campus security measures*

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.

The College will maintain the privacy of any long-term Remedies, provided privacy does not impair the College's ability to provide these services.

Failure to Comply with Disciplinary Sanctions or other Remedies

Respondents are expected to comply with any disciplinary sanction or remedy as set forth in the Final Determination or in response to a final outcome. Failure to abide by the sanction(s)/action(s) whether by refusal, neglect, or any other reason, may result in additional disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion, and/or probation, demotion, or termination.

Appeals

Any party may file an Appeal on the following grounds. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within seven (7) calendar days of the delivery of the Notice of Outcome. After the expiration of the appeal window, the determination will be considered final, and any applicable sanctions will be imposed.

Grounds for Appeal

Appeals may be made on one or more of the following bases:

1. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
2. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and

3. The Title IX Coordinator, Investigator(s), or Decision-maker(s) 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

Any sanctions imposed as a result of the Final Determination are stayed during the appeal process.

Title IX personnel with prior involvement in the matter will not be permitted to serve as a Decision-maker in the appeal. Appeals will not include a hearing. A decision on the merits will be based on information provided in the appeal document. If an appeal is based on the availability of new evidence, this evidence must be described with specificity and must be available for review within a reasonably prompt timeframe for consideration.

The appeal outcome will specify the finding on each ground for appeal, any specific instructions for remand or reconsideration, and the rationale supporting the findings. Appeal decisions will be made within seven (7) business days, barring exigent circumstances, including the review of new evidence not immediately available for submission with the appeal request. Decisions on appeal will be made by applying the preponderance of evidence standard.

Notification of the appeal outcome will be made in writing and will be delivered simultaneously to the parties by one or more of the following methods: in person, mailed to the local or permanent address of the parties as indicated in official College records, or emailed to the parties' College issued email or otherwise approved account. Once mailed, e-mailed, and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered. Appeal decisions are considered final.

Record Retention

The College shall maintain the following records related to the implementation of this Policy for at least seven years:

1. Reports or Formal Complaints alleging sexual discrimination, including harassment.
2. Records of any dismissal of a Formal Complaint.
3. Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility and any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript required under federal regulation;
4. Any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the Respondent;
5. Any Remedies implemented by the College designed to restore or preserve equal access to the College's education program or activity;
6. Any appeal and the result therefrom;
7. Any Informal Resolution and the result therefrom;
8. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, Decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an Informal Resolution process. The College will make these training materials publicly available on the College's website. (Note: If the College does not maintain a website, the College must make these materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.); and
9. Any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, including:
 - a. The basis for all conclusions that the response was not deliberately indifferent;
 - b. Any measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the College's education program or activity; and
 - c. If no supportive measures were provided, document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

Revision of this Process

The Sexual Misconduct Policy 8071 and this Title IX Sexual Harassment Guidelines and Grievance Process supersede any previous policy(ies) addressing harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, and/or retaliation under Title IX and will be reviewed and updated subject to any relevant change in law or College policy, and on a recurring periodic basis, by the Title IX Coordinator. The College reserves the right to make changes to this Process as necessary, which become effective when published.

This process will not restrict any rights guaranteed against government action by the U.S. Constitution and should be interpreted accordingly and should also be construed to comply with the most recent government regulations or applicable judicial decisions.

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

This process and procedures are effective August 30, 2021, and with each date of revision.

- Revised February 2024
- Revised December 2024
- Revised March 2025

Training Required for All Employees

Employee training will include the College's policy for handling complaints, the resolution process, and how they can support students, including:

- The scope of conduct that constitutes Title IX sex discrimination, sex-based harassment, and sexual/interpersonal violence. This includes the college's obligation to address these issues in all its educational programs and activities;
- Information on connecting persons who experience misconduct to confidential resources, including the Title IX Coordinator's contact and general information;
- Employee's responsibility to report sex discrimination, sex-based harassment, and sexual and interpersonal violence to the Title IX Coordinator;
- The responsibility of all employees to provide students with the Title IX Coordinator's contact and other information upon notice of a student's pregnancy or related condition and explain how the Title IX Coordinator can coordinate specific actions to prevent sex discrimination and ensure their equal access to the education program or activity; and
- Understand victim protections, maintain victim privacy to the extent possible, and uphold the presumption of innocence for the accused until the resolution process concludes.