

UNIVERSITY ANTI-BULLYING, MOBBING, AND HARASSMENT

PURPOSE

To educate the university community about bullying, to promote civility, and to take immediate corrective action when appropriate.

DEFINITION

Bullying consists of abusive conduct relative to acts, omissions, or both, that a reasonable person would find hostile, based on the severity, nature, and frequency of the conduct and without regard to the method of delivery, such as verbal, written or electronic. Abusive conduct may include, but is not limited to: repeated infliction of verbal abuse, such as the use of derogatory remarks, insults, and epithets; verbal or physical conduct of a threatening, intimidating, or humiliating nature; the sabotage or undermining of an individual's work performance; or attempts to exploit an individual's known psychological or physical vulnerability. A single act normally will not constitute abusive conduct, but an especially severe and egregious act may meet the standard.

POLICY

Westfield State University accepts and endorses state Senate bill #699 "An Act Addressing Workplace Bullying, Mobbing, and Harassment, Without Regard to Protected Class Status" as proposed, and, further, accepts and endorses any and all amendments made to this bill, as well as the bill in its final form that is signed into law by the governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In keeping with the Senate bill #699, Westfield State University prohibits conduct which may be interpreted as bullying or harassment as described in this policy. The university wishes to promote a friendly, welcoming, and healthy environment in conjunction with the university's Mission Statement. Every individual is entitled to be treated with respect and to be free from bullying and harassment. All members of the university community are expected to behave in a manner which demonstrates proper regard for the rights and welfare of others.

Staff are required and students are strongly encouraged to provide support to individuals who are bullied or harassed and to report incidents to the appropriate university official.

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APPROVED: December 2010

REVIEWED: December 2014

This anti-bullying policy applies to the entire university community, including full time and part time administration, faculty, staff, students, contractors, consultants, and vendors. It includes conduct in the workplace and conduct in connection with work-related travel and/or at university-sponsored events. It also expands harassment beyond the protected classes to include the entire university community.

Education/Prevention

This policy will be circulated each fall to all employees and students through the Diversity/Affirmative Action Office along with the annual distribution of the following: Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity/Diversity Plan, Drug Free Schools and Communities Information Policy, Rape/Sexual Assault Policy. Additionally, the Anti-Bullying Policy will be included in all electronic and paper versions of the university's Policy Manual. Staff will facilitate workshops during the academic year for students and employees to educate around the topic of bullying.

Disciplinary Action

Violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with university policy, collective bargaining, and the Student Handbook.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING

Normal channels of reporting alleged bullying will be used in accordance with the Student Handbook, collective bargaining agreements, and university procedures. Investigations of complaints of bullying will be done expeditiously and with the highest level of confidentiality.

Reporting Violations by Students

Complaints of bullying should be reported immediately to the Public Safety or Residential Life staff (24 hour operations). Complaints may also be reported to the Dean of Students or Student Conduct Office.

Complaints will be investigated and forwarded to the Student Conduct Office for review in a timely manner. Alleged student conduct violations stemming from complaints will be processed in accordance with the student conduct procedures outlines in the Student Handbook.

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Reporting Violations by Employees, Contractors, Vendors

- Complaints of bullying should be reported to the Director, Human Resources.
- The Director of Human Resources will determine at what level the complaint will be investigated and what/if any corrective action should be administered. For example, an instance where an employee accuses a supervisor of bullying, the complaint may be referred to the area vice president.

Questions regarding reporting alleged violations of this policy may be directed to the Director of Human Resources.

REVIEW

This document will be reviewed annually by the Dean, Affirmative Action/Diversity and the Director of Human Resources. Should related legislation become law, this policy will be reviewed immediately and revised in accordance with federal and state laws.