



## Title IX

### Purpose

As further defined below, this policy addresses Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking regardless of where it occurs, including both on and off university property, if it potentially affects the alleged complainant's educational program, activities, or employment. This policy complies with governing laws, regulations, and guidance.

### Persons Affected

This Policy applies to Sexual Harassment, as defined below, that occurs within the University's Education Programs and Activities and that is committed by an administrator, faculty member, staff, student, contractor, guest, or other member of the University Community within the United States.

### Definitions

**Sexual Harassment:** for purposes of this Policy is conduct on the basis of sex that constitutes Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment, Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking.

**Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment:** occurs when an employee of the University conditions the provision of aid, benefit, or service of the University on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.

**Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment:** is unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person access to the University's education programs and activities.

**Sexual Assault:** includes the sex offenses of Rape, Sodomy, Sexual Assault with an Object, Fondling, Incest, and Statutory Rape.<sup>1</sup>

- (a) Rape: the carnal knowledge of a person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- (b) Sodomy: oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- (c) Sexual Assault with an Object: using an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent

---

<sup>1</sup> The University's definition of "Sexual Assault" is mandated by federal regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Those regulations require the University to adopt a definition of "Sexual Assault" that incorporates various forcible and non-forcible sex crimes as defined by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting System. See 34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a)(3). When applicable, we have included the state law definition. In any criminal action brought by law enforcement, the state law definition will apply.



because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

- (d) Fondling: the touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- (e) Incest: sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by Texas law.
- (f) Statutory Rape: sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent as defined by Texas law.

**Domestic (Family) Violence:** felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or who has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of Texas<sup>2</sup>, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of Texas. This includes the use or attempted use of physical abuse or sexual abuse, or a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim, including verbal, psychological, economic, or technological abuse that may or may not constitute criminal behavior, by a person who is:

- (a) A current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, or person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim;
- (b) Is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
- (c) With whom the victim shares a child in common; or
- (d) commits acts against youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the family and domestic violence laws of Texas.

It should be understood that domestic violence/dating violence applies to any pattern of coercive behavior that is used by one person to gain power and control over a current or former intimate partner or dating partner. This pattern of behavior may include physical or sexual violence, emotional and psychological intimidation, threats, verbal abuse, stalking, isolation, and economic control.

**Dating Violence<sup>3</sup>:** violence committed by a person:

---

<sup>2</sup> Family Violence is defined by the Texas Family Code Section 71.004 as:

- (1) an act by a member of a family or household against another member of the family or household that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault or that is a threat that reasonably places the member in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault, but does not include defensive measures to protect oneself;
- (2) abuse, as that term is defined by Sections 261.001(1)(C), (E), and (G), by a member of a family or household toward a child of the family or household; or
- (3) Dating violence, as that term is defined by Section 71.0021.

<sup>3</sup> Dating violence is defined by the Family Code, Section 71.0021 as:



- (a) Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
- (b) Where the existence of such a relationship will be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
  - a. The length of the relationship;
  - b. The type of relationship; and
  - c. The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

**Stalking:** engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

- (a) Fear for their safety or the safety of others; or
- (b) Suffer substantial emotional distress.

For the purposes of this definition:

- (a) *Course of Conduct* means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, or communicates to or about a person, threatens that a reasonable person would regard as threatening bodily injury or death of that person, their family members including someone with whom the person is dating or interferes with that person's property.
- (b) *Reasonable Person* means a person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the person subjected to the stalking behavior would fear for their safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.
- (c) *Substantial Emotional Distress:* Significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

**Economic Abuse:** in the context of domestic violence and dating violence means 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

- 
- (a) an act, other than a defensive measure to protect oneself, by an actor that:
    - (1) is committed against a victim:
      - (A) with whom the actor has or has had a dating relationship; or
      - (B) because of the victim's marriage to or dating relationship with an individual with whom the actor is or has been in a dating relationship or marriage; and
    - (2) is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or Sexual Assault or that is a threat that reasonably places the victim in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or Sexual Assault.
  - (b) For purposes of this title, "dating relationship" means a relationship between individuals who have or have had a continuing relationship of a romantic or intimate nature. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on consideration of:
    - (1) the length of the relationship;
    - (2) the nature of the relationship; and
    - (3) the frequency and type of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
  - (c) A casual acquaintanceship or ordinary fraternization in a business or social context does not constitute a "dating relationship" under Subsection (b).



manipulation to:

- (a) Restrict a person's access to money, assets, credit, or financial information;
- (b) Unfairly use a person's personal economic resources, including money, assets, and credit, for one's own advantage; or
- (c) 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.

**Technological Abuse:** an act or pattern of behavior that occurs within domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking and is intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor, except as otherwise permitted by law, another person, that occurs using any form of technology, including but not limited to internet enabled devices, online spaces and platforms, computers, mobile devices, cameras and imaging programs, apps, location tracking devices, or communication technologies, or any other emerging technologies.

**Reasonable Person:** a hypothetical person that is used as a comparative standard regarding the action(s) or situation of another individual and whether or not the approach taken or not taken was appropriate given the circumstances. This comparative standard is used in addition to the definition of "stalking".

**Relevant:** evidence pertinent to proving whether facts material to the allegations under investigation are more or less likely to be true. "Relevant" evidence and questions refer to any questions and evidence that tends to make an allegation of sexual harassment more or less likely to be true. "Relevant" evidence and questions do not include the following types of evidence and questions, which are deemed "irrelevant" at all stages of the Title IX Process:

- (a) Evidence and questions about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior unless:
  - a. They are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or
  - b. They concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(6)(i).
- (b) Evidence and questions that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally-recognized privilege.
- (c) Any party's medical, psychological, and similar records unless the party has given voluntary, written consent. 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30294 (May 19, 2020).

**Mandatory Reporter:** All University Employees, with the exception of Confidential Employees, operating in the scope of their employment who witness or receive information regarding an incident that the employee reasonably believes constitutes Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, and/or Stalking and has been alleged to have been committed by or against a person who was a student enrolled at or an employee of the University at the time of the incident.



**Consent:** a clear voluntary, ongoing, mutual understanding among all participants that clearly indicates a willingness, through words or physical actions, and demonstrates a knowing, intentional agreement to engage in each specific instance and stage of sexual contact or activity. Knowledge of consent is the responsibility of each person involved in every instance of sexual contact and/ or activity and consent can be withdrawn at any time. A person who is Coerced and/or Incapacitated is not capable of giving Consent. Consent cannot be inferred from silence, absence of resistance, or lack of protest.

The following list provides examples of when Consent has not been obtained or is not effective:

- (a) Consent is not effective when any participant in the sexual activity is unsure if a knowing, intentional, voluntary agreement to engage in each act of sexual activity has been demonstrated.
- (b) Consent is not effective if one person knew or reasonably should have known that another person involved was incapacitated.
- (c) Consent to one act does not imply consent to another; past consent does not imply future consent.
- (d) Consent to engage in sexual activity with one person does not imply consent to engage in sexual activity with another.
- (e) Any expression of an unwillingness to engage in any instance of sexual activity establishes a presumptive lack of consent.
- (f) Consent is not effective if it results from: (a) the use of physical force, (b) a threat of physical force, (c) Intimidation,<sup>4</sup> (d) Coercion, (e) Incapacitation or (f) any other factor that would eliminate an individual's ability to exercise their own free will to choose whether or not to have sexual activity.
- (g) A current or previous dating or sexual relationship does not, by itself, constitute consent. Even in the context of a relationship, there must be a voluntary, mutually understandable agreement that clearly demonstrates a willingness to engage in each instance of sexual activity.
- (h) An individual's manner of dress does not, by itself, constitute Consent to engage in sexual conduct and/or activity.

**Incapacitated:** a state of being that prevents an individual from having the mental ability, emotional stability, or maturity to provide consent at the time the alleged behavior occurs. Incapacitation could result from the use of drugs or alcohol, a person being asleep or unconscious, or because of an intellectual or other disability or medical condition.

Alcohol and drugs can impair judgment and decision-making capacity, including the ability to rationally consider the consequences of one's actions. The effects of alcohol and drug consumption often occur along a continuum. For example, inhibition to euphoria

---

<sup>4</sup> *Intimidation* means intentional behavior that would cause a reasonable person to fear injury or harm.



and memory impairment, and to disorientation and incapacitation. Incapacitation due to alcohol or drug use is a state beyond “mere” intoxication or even being drunk. Indicators of incapacitation may include inability to communicate, lack of control over physical movements, and/or lack of awareness of circumstances. An incapacitated person can also experience a blackout state during which they appear to give consent but do not have conscious awareness or the capacity to consent.

**Coercion:** the use of pressure and/or other oppressive behavior, including expressed or implied threats of physical harm, or severe and/or pervasive emotional intimidation which places an individual in fear of immediate or future harm or physical injury or causes a person to engage in unwelcome sexual activity. A person’s words or conduct amounts to coercion if they wrongfully limit the other’s ability to freely choose whether or not to engage in sexual activity. Coercion also includes administering a drug, intoxicant, or other substance that impairs the person’s ability to give consent.

**Retaliation:** intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX and its implementing regulations or because an 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. Retaliation is prohibited and is considered a stand-alone policy violation without regard to any finding of responsibility for violation of this policy.

**Complainant:** the individual(s) who is alleged to have been impacted by a violation of this Policy.<sup>5</sup>

**Respondent:** the individual(s) who is alleged to have violated this Policy.

**Formal Complaint:** a document filed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging Sexual Harassment against a Respondent and requesting that the University investigate the allegation of Sexual Harassment in accordance with this Policy. At the time of filing a Formal Complaint, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the University’s education programs and activities. A “document filed by a Complainant” means a document or electronic submission (such as the reporting form) that contains the Complainant’s physical or electronic signature or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the Complaint.

**Supportive Measures:** non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered, as appropriate, and reasonably available, and without fee or charge, that are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the University’s Education Programs and Activities without unreasonably burdening another Party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties implicated by a report or the University’s education environment, or to deter Sexual Harassment. Supportive measures may include: counseling, extensions of academic or other

---

<sup>5</sup> A Complainant and Respondent are each individually a “Party” and collectively the “Parties” with respect to a Formal Complaint filed under this Policy.



deadlines, course-related adjustments, modifications to work or class schedules, campus escort services, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of campus, and other similar measures. Supportive Measures may also include mutual restrictions on contact between the parties implicated by a report.

**Education Programs and Activities:** all the operations of the University, including, but not limited to, in-person and online educational instruction, employment, research activities, extracurricular activities, athletics, residence life, dining services, performances, and community engagement and outreach programs. Additionally, the term applies to all activity that occurs on campus or on other property owned or occupied by the University. It also includes off-campus locations, events, or circumstances over which the University exercises substantial control over the Respondent and the context in which the Sexual Harassment occurs, including Sexual Harassment occurring in any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by the University. It also includes off-campus conduct when the conduct could deny or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the University's programs and activities or when the University, in its sole discretion, has an identifiable interest in the off-campus conduct.

## **Policy**

Stephen F. Austin State University (the "university") is committed to providing an educational and employment environment free of unlawful sex discrimination. Consistent with the university's Non-Discrimination Notice and the U.S. Department of Education's implementing regulations for Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act ("SaVE Act"), Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA"), and Clery Act, the university prohibits Sexual Harassment that occurs within its Education Programs and Activities.

As further defined below, this policy addresses Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking regardless of where it occurs, including both on and off university property, if it potentially affects the alleged complainant's educational program, activities, or employment. This policy complies with governing laws, regulations, and guidance.

**Non-Discrimination in Application:** The requirements and protections of this policy apply equally regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or other protected classes covered by federal or state law. All requirements and protections are equitably provided to individuals regardless of such status or status as a Complainant, Respondent, or Witness. Individuals who wish to file a complaint about the institution's policy or process may contact the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights using contact information available at <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/contact-ocr>. Pg. 1.

**Disability Accommodations:** This Policy does not alter any institutional obligations under federal disability laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Parties may request reasonable accommodations for disclosed disabilities to the Title IX Coordinator at any point before or during the Title IX process that do not fundamentally alter the process. The Title IX Coordinator will not affirmatively provide disability accommodations that have not been specifically requested by the Parties, even where the Parties may be receiving accommodations in other institutional programs and activities.



## **Procedures**

### **A. Understanding Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment**

In determining whether a Hostile Environment exists, the University will consider the totality of circumstances, including factors such as the actual impact the conduct has had on the Complainant; the nature and severity of the conduct at issue; the frequency and duration of the conduct; the relationship between the parties (including accounting for whether one individual has power or authority over the other); the respective ages of the parties; the context in which the conduct occurred; and the number of persons affected. The University will evaluate the totality of circumstances from the perspective of a reasonable person in the Complainant's position. A person's adverse subjective reaction to conduct is not sufficient, in and of itself, to establish the existence of a hostile environment.

The University encourages members of the University Community to report any and all instances of Sexual Harassment, even if they are unsure whether the conduct rises to the level of a policy violation.

Sexual Harassment also includes gender-based harassment, which may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on gender or gender stereotyping, sexual orientation, and gender identity even if those acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

Some specific examples of conduct that may constitute Sexual Harassment if unwelcome include, but are not limited to:

1. Unreasonable pressure for a dating, romantic, or intimate relationship or sexual contact;
2. Unwelcome kissing, hugging, or massaging;
3. Sexual innuendos, jokes, or humor;
4. Displaying sexual graffiti, pictures, videos, or posters;
5. Using sexually explicit profanity;
6. Asking about, or telling about, sexual fantasies, sexual preferences, or sexual activities;
7. E-mail and Internet use that violates this policy;
8. Leering or staring at someone in a sexual way, such as staring at a person's breasts or groin;
9. Sending sexually explicit emails, text messages, or social media posts;
10. Commenting on a person's dress in a sexual manner;
11. Giving unwelcome personal gifts such as lingerie that suggest the desire for a romantic relationship; or
12. Insulting, demeaning, or degrading another person based on gender or gender stereotypes.

### **B. Reporting Sexual Harassment**

#### *1. Title IX Coordinator*

Any person may report Sexual Harassment to the Title IX Coordinator. Reports may be made in person, by regular mail, telephone, electronic mail, or by any other means





that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person’s verbal or written report. In-person reports must be made during normal business hours, but reports can be made by regular mail, telephone, or electronic mail at any time, including outside normal business hours.

Reporting options and online reporting forms can be found at the following website: [www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care](http://www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care). In addition, a link to reporting information will be maintained on the university home page.

Contact information for the Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Title IX coordinators is outlined below. This information is subject to change and the most updated contact information for the Title IX coordinator and deputy coordinators can be found at [www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care](http://www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care).

Title IX Coordinator	McKibben Education Building, Suite 304 titleix@sfasu.edu   (936) 468-8292
Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Faculty, Staff, and Third Parties: Director of Human Resources	Austin Building, Suite 201 titleixemployees@sfasu.edu   (936) 468-2304
Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Athletics: Senior Woman Administrator, SFA Intercollegiate Athletics	SFA Athletic Fieldhouse titleixathletics@sfasu.edu   (936) 468-3751
Deputy Title IX Coordinator for the SFA Charter School: CEO/Principal SFA Charter School	2428 Raguet Street titleixcharter@sfasu.edu   (936) 468-5899

**2. Mandatory Reporting Requirement for University Employees**

Under Texas law, all University employees, with the exception of Confidential Employees, who:

- a. in the course and scope of their employment<sup>6</sup>
- b. witnesses or receives information regarding an incident that the employee reasonably believes constitutes Sexual Harassment<sup>7</sup>, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, or Stalking, which
- c. is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who was a student enrolled at or an employee of the University at the time of the incident

must promptly report within 48 hours the incident to the University’s Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator.

<sup>6</sup> “Course and Scope of Employment” means an employee performing duties in the furtherance of the institution’s interests.

<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of Texas’ mandatory reporting requirement only, “Sexual Harassment” means: unwelcome, sex-based verbal or physical conduct that (a) in the employment context, unreasonably interferes with a person’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or (b) in the education context, is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct interferes with a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the University’s educational programs or activities.



**Writing required.** The University's online reporting form is the preferred method of communicating incidents promptly, so that a record is made of the time and all factual details disclosed in the initial report. A written memo is also acceptable if it can be delivered to a Coordinator promptly after the employee's duty to report arises.

**Report Contents.** The employee's report must include all information concerning the incident known to the employee which is relevant to an investigation under this Policy, including whether the subject of the report has expressed a desire for an institutional response to the incident or made a request for confidentiality in reporting the incident.

**Privacy vs. Confidentiality.** References made to confidentiality refer to the ability of identified confidential resources to not report full details of crimes and violations, in accordance with mandatory reporting laws, to law enforcement or university officials without permission, unless waived in writing by the affected individual, or for extreme circumstances, such as a health and/or safety emergency or child abuse. References made to privacy mean University officials and employees who cannot guarantee confidentiality but will maintain privacy to the greatest extent possible, and information disclosed will be relayed only as necessary to investigate and/or seek a resolution and to notify the Title IX Coordinator or designee. The University will limit the disclosure as much as practicable even if the Title IX Coordinator or designee determines that the request for confidentiality cannot be honored.

**Exceptions.** The mandatory reporting requirement does not apply to:

- a. Individuals who are themselves the victims of the Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, or Stalking incident that is being reported;
- b. Instances when an employee receives information about Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, or Stalking at a public awareness event sponsored by the University; or
- c. Employees designated as Confidential Employees.
- d. A campus peace officer employed by the university who receives information regarding an incident involving sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking from an alleged victim who chooses to complete a pseudonym form described in Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. University Police Officers must report limited information to the Title IX Coordinator, including the type of incident, general location and date of alleged incident. The report may not include the victim's name, phone number, address, or other information that may directly or indirectly reveal the victim's identity.

**Consequences of Non-Compliance.** An employee who fails to make a required report will be terminated following an investigation and any required process under the applicable personnel policy.<sup>8</sup>

**Immunity.** An employee who, in good faith reports or assists in the investigation of a report under this Policy, or who testifies or otherwise participates in a disciplinary process or judicial proceeding arising from a report of such an incident, will not be subject to disciplinary action for violations of the administrative policies of Stephen F.

---

<sup>8</sup> Employees who fail to make a mandatory report under this provision may also be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to Texas Education Code section 51.255(a).



Austin State University that are reasonably related to the incident. This immunity does not apply to a person who perpetrates or assists in the perpetration of the incident reported under this policy or who commits a criminal offense pursuant to Texas Education Code § 51.255(a).

### 3. *Confidential Employees*

The University believes it is critical to provide community members who may be experiencing Sexual Harassment information about available institutional resources to empower those individuals to make informed decisions about their rights and options. Members of the University community may speak to officially designated Confidential Employees<sup>9</sup> about Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, or Stalking without the conversation triggering a mandatory report of incident details.

The University has designated the following Confidential Resources:

SFA Counseling Services  
(936) 468-2401 | [counseling@sfasu.edu](mailto:counseling@sfasu.edu)

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic  
(936) 468-1041 | [SFAcounselingClinic@sfasu.edu](mailto:SFAcounselingClinic@sfasu.edu)

SFA Student Health Clinic  
(936) 468-4008 | [healthservices@sfasu.edu](mailto:healthservices@sfasu.edu)

Family Crisis Center of East Texas  
(936) 468-7233 Campus Office  
(800) 828-7233 (24-hour crisis line)

**A Confidential Employee is not required to report any information that would violate an individual's expectation of privacy, such as the name or other identifying information of an individual who has experienced or allegedly engaged in Sexual Harassment.**

This provision does not affect any employee's duty to report incidents of sexual misconduct as required by other law.

### 4. *Reports to Law Enforcement*

Victims of a crime have the right to choose whether to report the crime to law enforcement, to be assisted by the University in reporting the crime to law enforcement, or to decline to report the crime to law enforcement. The University encourages anyone who believes they experienced or witnessed a crime to make a report to the Stephen F. Austin State University Police Department ("UPD"), if the assault occurred on campus, or to local law enforcement, for crimes occurring off campus.

Reports of criminal offenses occurring on campus, including but not limited to sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking may also be made to UPD at

---

<sup>9</sup> Under Texas law, a "Confidential Employee" is an employee (1) designated by the University as a person with whom students may speak confidentially concerning Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, or Stalking or (2) receives information regarding such an incident under circumstances that render the employee's communications confidential or privileged under other law.



936-468-2608 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency) or to the City of Nacogdoches Police Department 936-559-2607 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency) or to other local law enforcement authorities. Regardless of where the incident occurred, UPD can assist in making a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Individuals are not required to report all criminal violations to law enforcement, but the University strongly encourages reporting criminal violations to the police. The Title IX Coordinator and deputy Title IX coordinators can assist individuals in contacting these law enforcement agencies as well as the confidential resources outlined in Section 6.1 C of this policy. Employees and students with protective or restraining orders relevant to a report are encouraged to provide a copy to the University Police Department.

If a report of a policy violation is made to UPD, officers will advise the complainant or reporting party of their right to file a report under this policy. To the extent allowed by law and university policy, UPD shall also notify the Title IX Coordinator of the report, and provide the Title IX Coordinator, or the individual investigating the reported policy violation, access to any related university law enforcement records, so long as doing so does not compromise any criminal investigation.

#### **5. *Medical Treatment and Preservation of Evidence***

In cases of sexual assault, and for one's safety and well-being, immediate medical attention is encouraged to evaluate for physical injury, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. Being examined as soon as possible, ideally within 120 hours, is important for evidence collection, which may be used to support prosecution should the Complainant decide to pursue criminal charges.

#### **6. *Anonymous Reports***

Anyone, not designated as a Mandatory Reporter, can make an anonymous report by submitting information through the Online Reporting Form found at <http://www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care>.

### **C. Preliminary Assessment**

Upon receipt of a report, the Title IX Coordinator will conduct a preliminary assessment to determine whether the conduct, as reported, constitutes or could constitute Sexual Harassment.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct reported could not fall within the scope of this Policy, and/or could not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if investigated, the Title IX Coordinator will close the matter and may notify the reporting party if doing so is consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"). The Title IX Coordinator may refer the report to other University offices, as appropriate.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct reported could fall within the scope of this Policy, and/or could constitute Sexual Harassment, if investigated, the Title IX Coordinator will proceed to contact the Complainant.

As part of the preliminary assessment, the Title IX Coordinator may take investigative steps to determine the identity of the Complainant, if such identity is not apparent from the report.



#### **D. Contacting the Complainant**

If a report is not closed as a result of the preliminary assessment and the Complainant's identity is known, the Title IX Coordinator or their designee will promptly contact the Complainant to discuss the following:

1. The availability of Supportive Measures with or without filing a Formal Complaint;
2. The Complainant's wishes with respect to such Supportive Measures;
3. The process for filing and pursuing a Formal Complaint;
4. The importance of going to a hospital for treatment and preservation of evidence as soon as practicable after the incident, if applicable;
5. The right to report the incident to the institution and to receive a prompt and equitable resolution of the report;
6. The right of a victim of a crime to choose whether to report the crime to law enforcement, to be assisted by the institution in reporting the crime to law enforcement, or to decline to report the crime to law enforcement; and
7. Information about resources that are available on campus and in the community.

#### **E. Supportive Measures**

**Generally.** Any individual affected by or accused of Sexual Harassment will have equal access to support and counseling services offered through the University. The University encourages any individual who has questions or concerns to seek support of University-identified resources. The Title IX Coordinator or their designee is available to provide information about the University's policy and procedure and to provide assistance. A list of University identified resources is located at the following link: <http://www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care>.

With regard to an allegation of sexual harassment of an employee, the university and the supervisor of the respondent-employee will take immediate and appropriate corrective action appropriate to the circumstances of the allegation, while affording the necessary due process rights to the respondent-employee.

**Complainant.** The Title IX Coordinator or their designee will offer and make available Supportive Measures to the Complainant upon receipt of a report of Sexual Harassment regardless of whether the Complainant elects to file a Formal Complaint.

**Respondent.** The Title IX Coordinator or their designee will notify the Respondent of the availability of Supportive Measures contemporaneously with the Respondent being notified of a Formal Complaint. Once a Formal Complaint has been initiated, the University will offer and make available Supportive Measures to the Respondent in the same manner in which it offers and makes them available to the Complainant. The University will also



offer and make available Supportive Measures to the Respondent prior to the Respondent being notified of a Formal Complaint, if the Respondent requests such measures.

**All Parties.** The University will, to the greatest extent practicable, ensure that each Party or other person who reports an incident of Sexual Harassment is offered counseling provided by a counselor who does not provide counseling to any other person involved in the incident. In addition, all Parties are allowed to drop a course in which both Parties are enrolled without any academic penalty.

**Confidentiality.** The University will maintain the confidentiality of Supportive Measures provided to either a Complainant or Respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality does not impair the University's ability to provide the Supportive Measures in question.

## **F. Emergency Removal**

At any time after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator may remove a student Respondent from the University's education programs and activities on a temporary basis if an individualized safety and risk analysis determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of Sexual Harassment justifies removal. In the event the Title IX Coordinator imposes an emergency removal, the Title IX Coordinator must offer to meet with the Respondent within 24 hours and provide the Respondent an opportunity to challenge the interim removal.

In the case of a Respondent who is a non-student employee (administrator, faculty, or staff), and in its discretion, the University may place the Respondent on administrative leave at any time after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment, including during the pendency of the investigation and adjudication process.

For all other Respondents, including independent contractors and guests, the University retains broad discretion to prohibit such persons from entering onto its campus and other properties at any time, and for any reason, whether after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment or otherwise.

## **G. Formal Complaint**

### *1. Filing a Formal Complaint*

A Complainant may file a Formal Complaint with the Title IX Coordinator requesting that the University investigate and adjudicate a report of Sexual Harassment in accordance with this Policy. Provided, however, that at the time the Complainant submits a Formal Complaint, the Complainant must be participating in, or attempting to participate in, one or more of the University's Education Programs or Activities.

A Complainant may file a Formal Complaint with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by regular mail, or by email using the contact information specified above. No person may submit a Formal Complaint on the Complainant's behalf.

In any case, including a case where a Complainant elects not to file a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator may file a Formal Complaint on behalf of the University if doing



so is not clearly unreasonable. Such action will normally be taken in limited circumstances involving serious or repeated conduct or where the alleged perpetrator may pose a continuing threat to the University Community. Factors the Title IX Coordinator may consider include (but are not limited to):

- a. the seriousness of the alleged incident, including (a) whether a weapon was involved in the incident, (b) whether multiple assailants were involved in the incident, and (c) whether the incident is poses a risk of recurrence;
- b. whether the institution has received other reports of Sexual Harassment committed by the Respondent;
- c. whether the alleged incident poses a risk of harm to others; and
- d. any other factors the University determines relevant.

If the Complainant or the Title IX Coordinator files a Formal Complaint, then the University will commence an investigation and proceed to adjudicate the matter. If the University elects to proceed as a Complainant, the University will inform the alleged victim of the incident of that decision. In all cases where a Formal Complaint is filed, the Complainant will be treated as a Party, irrespective of the Party's level of participation.

## 2. *Consolidation of Formal Complaints*

The University may consolidate Formal Complaints as to allegations of Sexual Harassment against more than one Respondent, or by more than one Complainant against one or more Respondents, or by one Party against the other Party, where the allegations of Sexual Harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances. Where the investigation and adjudication process involve more than one Complainant or more than one Respondent, references in this policy to the singular "Party," "Complainant," or "Respondent" include the plural, as applicable.

## 3. *Dismissal Prior to Commencement of Investigation*

In a case where the Complainant files a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will evaluate the Formal Complaint and must dismiss it if the Title IX Coordinator determines:

- a. The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint would not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if proved; or
- b. the conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint falls outside the scope of this Policy (*i.e.*, because the alleged conduct did not occur in the University's Education Programs and Activities).
- c. The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint took place outside the United States.

In the event the Title IX Coordinator determines the Formal Complaint should be dismissed pursuant to this Section, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of dismissal to the parties and advise them of their right to appeal. The Title IX Coordinator may refer the subject matter of the Formal Complaint to other University offices, as appropriate. A dismissal pursuant to this Section is presumptively a final



determination for purposes of this policy, unless otherwise specified in writing by the Title IX Coordinator in the written notice of dismissal.

#### 4. *Notice of Formal Complaint*

Upon receiving a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator or designee will promptly transmit a written notice to the Complainant and Respondent that includes:

- a. A physical copy of or hyperlink to this Policy;
- b. Sufficient details known at the time so that the Parties may prepare for an initial interview with the investigator, to include the identities of the parties involved in the incident (if known), the conduct allegedly constituting Sexual Harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident (if known);
- c. A statement that the Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged Sexual Harassment and that a determination of responsibility will not be made until the conclusion of the adjudication and any appeal;
- d. Notifying the Complainant and Respondent of their right to be accompanied by an advisor of their choice;
- e. Notifying the Complainant and Respondent of their right to inspect and review evidence;
- f. Notifying the Complainant and Respondent of the University's prohibitions on retaliation and false statements; and
- g. Information about resources that are available on campus and in the community.

Should the University elect, at any point, to investigate allegations that are materially beyond the scope of the initial written notice, the University will provide a supplemental written notice describing the additional allegations to be investigated.

#### 5. *Presumption of Non-Responsibility*

From the time a report or Formal Complaint is made, a Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged misconduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made final.

### **H. Investigation**

#### 1. *Commencement and Timing*

After the written notice of Formal Complaint is transmitted to the Parties, an investigator selected by the Title IX Coordinator will undertake an investigation to gather evidence relevant to the alleged misconduct, including inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. The burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination in the adjudication lies with the University and not with the Parties. The investigation will culminate in a written investigation report that will be submitted to the adjudicator during the selected adjudication process. Although the length of each investigation may vary depending on the totality of the circumstances, the University strives to complete each investigation within 100 university business days of the transmittal of the written notice of Formal Complaint.

#### 2. *Equal Opportunity*





During the investigation, the investigator will provide an equal opportunity for the Parties to be interviewed, to present witnesses (including fact and expert witnesses), and to present other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the investigator retains discretion to limit the number of witness interviews the investigator conducts if the investigator finds that testimony would be unreasonably cumulative, if the witnesses are offered solely as character references and do not have information relevant to the allegations at issue, or if the witnesses are offered to render testimony that is not Relevant. The investigator will not restrict the ability of the parties to gather and present relevant evidence on their own.

The investigation is a Party's opportunity to present testimonial and other evidence that the Party believes is relevant to resolution of the allegations in the Formal Complaint. A Party that is aware of and has a reasonable opportunity to present particular evidence and/or identify particular witnesses during the investigation, and elects not to, will be prohibited from introducing any such evidence during the adjudication absent a showing of mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect.

### 3. *Documentation of Investigation*

The investigator will take reasonable steps to ensure the investigation is documented. Interviews of the parties and witnesses may be documented by the investigator's notes, audio recorded, video recorded, or transcribed. The particular method utilized to record the interviews of parties and witnesses will be determined by the investigator in the investigator's sole discretion, although whatever method is chosen shall be used consistently throughout a particular investigation.

### 4. *Access to the Evidence*

At the conclusion of the evidence-gathering phase of the investigation, but prior to the completion of the investigation report, the investigator will transmit to each Party and their advisor, in either electronic or hard copy form, all evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint, including evidence the University may choose not to rely on at any hearing and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a Party or some other source. The parties will have ten calendar days in which to submit to the investigator a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completing the investigation report.

The parties and their advisors are permitted to review the evidence solely for the purposes of this grievance process and may not duplicate or disseminate the evidence to the public.

### 5. *Investigation Report*

After the period for the parties to provide any written response has expired, the investigator will complete a written investigation report that fairly summarizes the various steps taken during the investigation, summarizes the relevant evidence collected, lists material facts on which the parties agree, and lists material facts on which the parties do not agree. When the investigation report is complete, the investigator will transmit a copy to the Title IX Coordinator. The investigator will also transmit the investigation report to each Party and their advisor, in either electronic or hard copy form.



## **I. Adjudication Process Selection**

After the investigator has sent the investigation report to the parties, the Title IX Coordinator will transmit to each Party a notice advising the Party of the two different adjudication processes specified below. The notice will explain that the hearing process is the default process for adjudicating all Formal Complaints and will be utilized unless both parties voluntarily consent to administrative adjudication as a form of informal resolution. The notice will be accompanied by a written consent to administrative adjudication and will advise each Party that, if both parties execute the written consent to administrative adjudication, then the administrative adjudication process will be used in lieu of the hearing process. Parties are urged to carefully review this Policy, consult with their advisor, and consult with other persons as they deem appropriate (including an attorney) prior to consenting to administrative adjudication.

Each Party will have three calendar days from transmittal of the notice specified below to return the signed written consent form to the Title IX Coordinator. If either Party does not timely return the signed written consent, that Party will be deemed not to have consented to administrative adjudication and the Formal Complaint will be adjudicated pursuant to the hearing process.

## **J. Adjudication**

### **1. *Hearing Process***

The process for adjudicating Formal Complaints is the hearing process specified in this Section. The hearing process will be used to adjudicate all Formal Complaints unless both parties' timely consent to Informal Resolution.

Non-participation by any party or their advisor at any point in the hearing process shall not delay the adjudication.

#### **a. Hearing Panel**

After selection of the hearing process as the form of adjudication, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly appoint a hearing panel which will oversee the hearing process and render a determination of responsibility for the allegations in the Formal Complaint, at the conclusion of the hearing process. The Title IX Coordinator will see that the hearing panel is provided a copy of the investigation report and a copy of all evidence transmitted to the parties by the investigator. The hearing panel is composed of three people selected from a pool of trained panelists, one of whom will serve as the hearing panel chair. Neither the investigator nor the Title IX Coordinator may serve on the hearing panel. Panelists whose relationship with a party in an investigation causes a conflict of interest shall be excluded from the panel. The hearing panel is responsible for conducting a live hearing for alleged violations of this policy and for making a determination of responsibility and, when appropriate, apply sanctions. Hearing panelists shall complete ongoing training regarding the issues contained in this policy.

#### **b. Hearing Notice and Response to the Investigation Report**

After the hearing panel is appointed by the Title IX Coordinator, the hearing panel chair will promptly transmit written notice to the parties notifying the parties of the



hearing panel's appointment; setting a deadline for the parties to submit any written response to the investigation report; setting a date for the pre-hearing conference; and setting a date and time for the hearing. The hearing may not be held any earlier than ten calendar days from the date of transmittal of the written notice.

A Party's written response to the investigation report must include:

- i. To the extent the Party disagrees with the investigation report, any argument or commentary regarding such disagreement;
- ii. Any argument that evidence should be excluded from consideration at the hearing based on relevancy;
- iii. A list of any witnesses that the Party contends should be requested to attend the hearing pursuant to an attendance notice issued by the hearing panel chair;
- iv. A list of any witnesses that the Party intends to bring to the hearing without an attendance notice issued by the hearing officer;
- v. Any request that the parties be separated physically during the pre-hearing conference and/or hearing;
- vi. Any other accommodations that the Party seeks with respect to the pre-hearing conference and/or hearing;
- vii. The name and contact information of the advisor who will accompany the Party at the pre-hearing conference and hearing; and
- viii. If the Party does not have an advisor who will accompany the Party at the hearing, a request that the University provide an advisor for purposes of conducting questioning.

A Party's written response to the investigation report may also include:

- i. Argument regarding whether any of the allegations in the Formal Complaint are supported by a preponderance of the evidence;
- ii. Argument regarding whether any of the allegations in the Formal Complaint constitute Sexual Harassment;
- iii. Relevant evidence which was not included in the investigation report due to mistake, inadvertence, surprise or excusable neglect;
- iv. Questions which the parties' advisors intend to ask during cross-examination at the hearing to be ruled on for relevancy by the hearing chair prior to the hearing; and
- v. Concerns of bias or conflict of interest which may exist between a party and a member or members of the hearing panel.

c. Pre-Hearing Conference

Prior to the hearing, the hearing chair will conduct a pre-hearing conference with the parties and their advisors. The pre-hearing conference will be conducted live, with participation by the parties and their advisors. By default, the pre-hearing conference will be conducted with the hearing officer, the parties, the advisors, and other necessary University personnel, if any, together in the same physical



location. However, upon request of either Party, the parties will be separated into different rooms with technology enabling the parties to participate by video and audio.

In the hearing chair's discretion, the pre-hearing conference may be conducted virtually, by use of video and audio technology, where all participants participate by use of such technology.

During the pre-hearing conference, the hearing chair will discuss the hearing procedures with the parties; address matters raised in the parties' written responses to the investigation report, as the hearing officer deems appropriate; discuss whether any stipulations may be made to expedite the hearing; discuss the witnesses the parties have requested be served with notices of attendance and/or witnesses the parties plan to bring to the hearing without a notice of attendance; and resolve any other matters that the hearing officer determines, in the hearing chair's discretion, should be resolved before the hearing. Effort shall be made by the hearing chair to conduct pre-hearing conferences that are equitable and present information that is materially the same to all parties and advisors.

d. Issuance of Notices of Attendance

After the pre-hearing conference, the hearing chair will transmit notices of attendance to any University employee (including administrator, faculty, or staff) or student whose attendance is requested at the hearing as a witness, including those requested by the hearing panel. The notice will advise the subject of the specified date and time of the hearing and advise the subject to contact the hearing chair immediately if there is a material and unavoidable conflict.

The subject of an attendance notice should notify any manager, faculty member, coach, or other supervisor, as necessary, if attendance at the hearing will conflict with job duties, classes, or other obligations. All such managers, faculty members, coaches, and other supervisors are required to excuse the subject of the obligation, or provide some other accommodation, so that the subject may attend the hearing as specified in the notice.

The University is not obligated to issue a notice of attendance to any witness who is not an employee or a student.

e. Hearing

After the pre-hearing conference, the hearing panel will convene and conduct a hearing. The hearing will be audio recorded. The audio recording will be made available to the parties for inspection and review on reasonable notice, including for use in preparing any subsequent appeal.

The hearing will be conducted live, with simultaneous and contemporaneous participation by the parties and their advisors. By default, the hearing will be conducted with the hearing panel, the parties, the advisors, witnesses, and other necessary University personnel together in the same physical location. However, upon request of either Party, the parties will be separated into different rooms with technology enabling the parties to participate simultaneously and contemporaneously by video and audio. The hearing may, in the hearing chair's discretion, be conducted virtually, by use of video and audio technology, where all



participants participate simultaneously and contemporaneously by use of such technology.

While the rulings from the hearing chair will govern the particulars of the hearing, each hearing will include, at a minimum:

- i. Opportunity for each Party to address the hearing panel directly and to respond to questions posed by the hearing chair;
- ii. Opportunity for each Party's advisor to ask directly, orally, and in real time, relevant questions, and follow up questions, of the other Party and any witnesses, including questions that support or challenge credibility;
- iii. Opportunity for each Party to raise contemporaneous objections to testimonial or non- testimonial evidence and to have such objections ruled on by the hearing chair and a reason for the ruling provided;
- iv. Opportunity for each Party to submit evidence that the Party did not present during the investigation or pre-hearing conference due to mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect;
- v. Opportunity for each Party to make a brief closing argument.

Except as otherwise permitted by the hearing chair, the hearing will be closed to all persons except the parties, their advisors, the investigator, the hearing panel, the Title IX Coordinator, and other necessary University personnel. With the exception of the investigator and the parties, witnesses will be sequestered until such time as their testimony is complete. During the hearing, the parties and their advisors will have access to the investigation report and evidence that was transmitted to them.

While a Party has the right to attend and participate in the hearing with an advisor, a Party and/or advisor who materially and repeatedly violates the rules of the hearing in such a way as to be materially disruptive, may be barred from further participation and/or have their participation limited at the discretion of the hearing officer.

Subject to the minimum requirements specified in this Section, the hearing chair will have sole discretion to determine the manner and particulars of any given hearing, including with respect to the length of the hearing, the order of the hearing, and questions of admissibility. The hearing chair will independently and contemporaneously screen questions for relevance in addition to resolving any contemporaneous objections raised by the parties and will explain the rationale for any evidentiary rulings.

The hearing is not a formal judicial proceeding and strict rules of evidence do not apply.

All participants shall be subject to the university's rules of decorum during hearing processes.

f. Subjection to Questioning

In the event that any Party or witness refuses to attend the hearing, or attends but refuses to submit to questioning by the Parties' advisors, the statements of that



Party or witness whether given during the investigation or during the hearing, may be considered by the hearing panel in reaching a determination of responsibility. The hearing panel will rely on appropriate training to judge the credibility and weight given to any statement or evidence presented in the hearing or the investigative report in making a determination of responsibility.

In applying this Section, the hearing panel will not draw an inference about the determination of responsibility based solely on a Party or a witness's absence from the live hearing and/or refusal to submit to questioning by the parties' advisors.

g. Deliberation and Determination

After the hearing is complete, the hearing panel will objectively evaluate all relevant evidence collected during the investigation, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, together with testimony and non-testimony evidence received at the hearing, and ensure that any credibility determinations made are not based on a person's status as a Complainant, Respondent, or witness. The hearing panel will take care to exclude from consideration any evidence that was ruled not Relevant at the pre-hearing conference, during the hearing, or otherwise. The hearing panel will resolve disputed facts using a preponderance of the evidence (i.e., "more likely than not") standard and reach a determination regarding whether the facts that are supported by a preponderance of the evidence constitute one or more violations of the policy as alleged in the Formal Complaint.

h. Discipline and Remedies

In the event the hearing panel determines that the Respondent is responsible for violating this policy, the hearing chair will, prior to issuing a written decision, consult with an appropriate University official with disciplinary authority over the Respondent and such official will determine any discipline to be imposed and the process to follow through with such discipline in coordination with other University departments as necessary. The hearing chair will also, prior to issuing a written decision, consult with the Title IX Coordinator who will determine whether and to what extent ongoing support measures or other remedies will be provided to the Complainant.

If a student is found responsible for Sexual Harassment and the sanction imposed makes the student ineligible to reenroll in the University (i.e., suspension or expulsion), the University will include a notation on the student's transcript. The student may request the removal of a transcript notation imposed under this Policy if:

- i. the student becomes eligible to reenroll at the University; or
- ii. the University determines that good cause exists to remove the notation.

If the University receives an appropriate request by another postsecondary educational institution, the University will provide to the requesting institution information relating to the University's determination that the student violated this Policy.

i. Written Decision



After reaching a determination and consulting with the appropriate University official and Title IX Coordinator as required above, the hearing chair will prepare a written decision that will include:

- i. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting covered Sexual Harassment made in the Formal Complaint;
- ii. A description of the procedural steps taken by the University upon receipt of the Formal Complaint, through issuance of the written determination, including notification to the parties, interviews with the parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather non-testimonial evidence, and the date, location, and people who were present at or presented testimony at the hearing;
- iii. Findings of fact, made under a preponderance of the evidence standard, that support the determination;
- iv. A statement of, and rationale for, each allegation that constitutes a separate potential incident of Sexual Harassment, including a determination regarding responsibility for each separate potential incident;
- v. The discipline determined by the appropriate University official;
- vi. Whether the Complainant will receive any ongoing support measures or other remedies as determined by the Title IX Coordinator; and
- vii. A description of the University's process and grounds for appeal.

The hearing chair's written determination will be transmitted to the parties. Transmittal of the written determination to the parties concludes the hearing process, subject to any right of appeal.

Although the length of each adjudication by hearing will vary depending on the totality of the circumstances, the University strives to issue the hearing chair's written determination within 15 business days of the conclusion of the hearing.

## **2. *Administrative Adjudication***

In lieu of the hearing process and to the extent not prohibited by federal law, the Parties may consent to have a Formal Complaint resolved by administrative adjudication as a form of informal resolution. Administrative adjudication is voluntary and must be consented to in writing by both parties and approved by the Title IX Coordinator. At any time prior to the issuance of the administrative officer's determination, a Party has the right to withdraw from administrative adjudication and request a live hearing.

If administrative adjudication is selected, the Title IX Coordinator will appoint an administrative officer who does not need to be an employee of the University. The Title IX Coordinator will see that the administrative adjudicator is provided a copy of the investigation report and a copy of all the evidence transmitted to the parties by the investigator.

The administrative officer will promptly send written notice to the Parties notifying the parties of the administrative officer's appointment; setting a deadline for the parties to submit any written response to the investigation report; and setting a date and time for each party to meet with the administrative officer separately. The administrative



officer's meetings with the parties will not be held any earlier than ten calendar days from the date of transmittal of the written notice specified in this paragraph.

A Party's written response to the investigation report must include:

- i. To the extent the party disagrees with the investigation report, any argument or commentary regarding such disagreement;
- ii. Any argument that a particular piece or class of evidence should be categorically excluded from consideration at the hearing based on privilege, relevancy, the prohibition on the use of sexual history, or for any other reason;
- iii. Argument regarding whether any of the allegations in the Formal Complaint are supported by a preponderance of the evidence;
- iv. Argument regarding whether any of the allegations in the Formal Complaint constitute Sexual Harassment.

After reviewing the Parties' written responses, the administrative officer will meet separately with each party to provide the Party with an opportunity make any oral argument or commentary the Party wishes to make and for the administrative officer to ask questions concerning the Party's written response, the investigative report, and/or the evidence collected during the investigation.

After meeting with each Party, the administrative officer will objectively re-evaluate all relevant evidence, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence and ensure that any credibility determinations made are not based on a person's status as a Complainant, Respondent, or witness. The administrative officer will take care to exclude from consideration any evidence that the administrative officer determines should be ruled inadmissible based on the objections and arguments raised by the Parties in their respective written responses to the investigation report. The administrative officer will resolve disputed facts using a preponderance of the evidence (*i.e.*, "more likely than not") standard and reach a determination regarding whether the facts that are supported by a preponderance of the evidence constitute one or more violations of the policy as alleged in the Formal Complaint.

Thereafter, the administrative officer will consult with any University official and the Title IX Coordinator and will prepare and transmit a written decision which shall serve as a resolution for purposes of informal resolution.

Transmittal of the administrative officer's written determination concludes the administrative adjudication, subject to any right of appeal.

Although the length of each administrative adjudication will vary depending on the totality of the circumstances, the University strives to issue the administrative officer's written determination within twenty-one calendar days of the transmittal of the initiating written notice.

## **K. Dismissal During Investigation or Adjudication**

The University may dismiss a Formal Complaint at any point during the investigation or adjudication process if the Title IX Coordinator determines that any one or more of the following is true:





1. The Complainant provides the Title IX Coordinator written notice that the Complainant wishes to withdraw the Formal Complaint or any discrete allegations therein (in which case those discrete allegations may be dismissed);
2. The Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the University; or
3. Specific circumstances prevent the University from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the Formal Complaint, or any discrete allegations therein (in which case those discrete allegations may be dismissed).

In the event the Title IX Coordinator determines that a Formal Complaint should be dismissed pursuant to this Section, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of dismissal to the parties and advise them of their right to appeal. The Title IX Coordinator may refer the subject matter of the Formal Complaint to other University offices, as appropriate. A dismissal pursuant to this Section is presumptively a final determination as it pertains to this policy, unless otherwise specified in writing by the Title IX Coordinator in the written notice of dismissal.

## **L. Appeal**

### *1. Grounds for Appeal*

Either Party may appeal the determination of an adjudication, or a dismissal of a Formal Complaint, on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. A procedural irregularity affected the outcome;
- b. There is new evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination or dismissal was made, that could have affected the outcome;
- c. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, hearing panel, or administrative officer had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally, or against the individual Complainant or Respondent, that affected the outcome.

No other grounds for appeal are permitted.

### *2. Deadline to File Appeal*

A Party must file an appeal within seven calendar days of the date they receive notice of dismissal or determination appealed from or, if the other Party appeals, within three calendar days of the other Party appealing, whichever is later. All parties will be provided a link to the appeal form upon notification of the findings in their case. The appeal must be submitted in writing and must specifically identify the determination and/or dismissal appealed from, articulate which one or more of the three grounds for appeal are being asserted, explain in detail why the appealing Party believes the appeal should be granted, and articulate what specific relief the appealing Party seeks. Appeals should be submitted using the online appeal form which can be found on the Lumberjacks Care webpage at <http://www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care>.



### **3. Resolution of Appeal**

Promptly upon receipt of an appeal, the Title IX Coordinator or designee will appoint an appeal officer who will conduct an initial evaluation to confirm that the appeal is timely filed and that it invokes at least one of the permitted grounds for appeal. If the appeal officer determines that the appeal is not timely, or that it fails to invoke a permitted ground for appeal, the appeal officer will dismiss the appeal and provide written notice of the same to the parties.

If the appeal officer confirms that the appeal is timely and invokes at least one permitted ground for appeal, the appeal officer will provide written notice to the other Party that an appeal has been filed and that the other Party may submit a written opposition to the appeal within seven calendar days. The appeal officer shall also promptly obtain from the Title IX Coordinator or designee any records from the investigation and adjudication necessary to resolve the grounds raised in the appeal.

Upon receipt of any opposition, or after the time period for submission of an opposition has passed without one being filed, the appeal officer will promptly decide the appeal and transmit a written decision to the parties that explains the outcome of the appeal and the rationale. The determination of a Formal Complaint, including any discipline, becomes final when the time for appeal has passed with no Party filing an appeal or, if any appeal is filed, at the point when the appeal officer has resolved all appeals, either by dismissal or by transmittal of a written decision. No further review beyond the appeal is permitted.

Although the length of each appeal will vary depending on the totality of the circumstances, the University strives to issue the appeal officer's written decision within 21 calendar days of an appeal being filed.

## **M. Informal Resolution**

The University may, in the Title IX Coordinator's discretion, facilitate an Informal Resolution in accordance with the protocol outlined below.

### **1. Guiding Principles**

Generally, informal resolution involves a structured, supervised interaction between the Parties and/or other affected community members that seeks to identify and meet the needs of the Complainant while providing an opportunity for the Respondent and/or other affected community members to repair harm (to the extent possible). Informal resolution may not include an investigation, hearing, or disciplinary action against a Respondent (including transcript notations), but may include imposing appropriate and reasonable remedies as agreed to by the Parties. All informal resolutions are facilitated by a trained administrator or outside expert.

### **2. Availability of Information Resolution**

Informal resolution is available in matters in which the Title IX Coordinator, in the Title IX Coordinator's discretion, determines it is appropriate. Factors the University will consider when determining whether a report of Prohibited Conduct is suitable for Informal Resolution include, but are not limited to:



- a. The nature and severity of the conduct, including whether the use of force or a weapon was involved;
- b. the Respondent's prior known disciplinary or criminal conduct, including whether the University has received other reports of Prohibited Conduct committed by the Respondent;
- c. whether the alleged incident poses a risk of harm to other individuals or the community;
- d. the dynamics of power or control commonly associated with the alleged conduct or the nature of the parties' relationship;
- e. whether multiple parties are affected or involved;
- f. any admissions of responsibility by the Respondent; and
- g. any other factor deemed relevant by the Title IX Coordinator or their designee in the interest of overall campus safety or safety of the parties involved.

Informal Resolution will not be permitted if:

- a. The Respondent is a non-student employee accused of committing Sexual Harassment against a student;
- b. The allegations include Sexual Assault;
- c. The allegations include ongoing Dating and/or Domestic Violence, or
- d. An imminent threat of harm exists.

The Title IX Coordinator's determination on whether the allegations may be resolved with an Informal Resolution is not subject to appeal.

### **3. *Informal Resolution Process***

At any time after the parties are provided written notice of the Formal Complaint, and before the completion of any appeal, the parties may voluntarily consent, with the Title IX Coordinator's approval, to engage in mediation, facilitated resolution, or other form of dispute resolution the goal of which is to enter into a final resolution resolving the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint by agreement of the parties. Administrative Adjudication is a form of informal resolution.

The specific manner of any informal resolution process will be determined by the Parties and the Title IX Coordinator, in consultation together. Prior to commencing the informal resolution process agreed upon, the Title IX Coordinator will transmit a written notice to the Parties that:

- a. Describes the parameters and requirements of the informal resolution process to be utilized;
- b. Identifies the individual responsible for facilitating the informal resolution (who may be the Title IX Coordinator, another University official, or a suitable third-Party);
- c. Explains the effect of participating in informal resolution and/or reaching a final resolution will have on a Party's ability to resume the investigation and adjudication of the allegations at issue in the Formal Complaint; and



- d. Explains any other consequence resulting from participation in the informal resolution process, including a description of records that will be generated, maintained, and/or shared.

After receiving the written notice specified in this paragraph, each Party must voluntarily provide written consent to the Title IX Coordinator, before the informal resolution may commence. The University will not pressure or compel any individual to engage in mediation, to directly confront the other, or to participate in any particular form of informal resolution. Individuals may be accompanied by an adviser or support person at any meetings related to the informal resolution process.

If the Parties reach a resolution through the informal resolution process, and the Title IX Coordinator agrees that the resolution is not clearly unreasonable, the Title IX Coordinator will reduce the terms of the agreed resolution to writing and present the resolution to the parties for their written signature. Once both parties and the Title IX Coordinator sign the resolution, the resolution is final, and the allegations addressed by the resolution are considered resolved and will not be subject to further investigation, adjudication, remediation, or discipline by the University, except as otherwise provided in the resolution itself, absent a showing that a Party induced the resolution by fraud, misrepresentation, or other misconduct or where required to avoid a manifest injustice to either Party or to the University. Notwithstanding the foregoing if the form of informal resolution is Administrative Adjudication, there shall not be an agreed resolution requiring the parties' signatures; instead, the determination issued by the administrative officer shall serve as the resolution and conclude the informal resolution process, subject only to any right of appeal. With the exception of a resolution resulting from the Administrative Adjudication process, all other forms of informal resolution pursuant to this Section are not subject to appeal.

#### 4. *Informal Resolution Options*

The office of Title IX at Stephen F. Austin State University offers the following informal resolution procedures for addressing Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment covered in this policy:

*Mutual No-Contact Directive:* A mutual no-contact directive is a contract provided by the Office of Title IX, the terms of which are that the parties will not initiate contact with each other in person, over text or social media, or through third parties.

*Mediation:* The purpose of mediation is for the involved parties to identify appropriate remedies to resolve the allegations and maintain equitable access to educational activities. During mediation, a facilitator will guide a conversation between parties in separate meetings; the parties will be asked not to contact each other directly during the process. Mediation may not result in disciplinary action against a Respondent but may include imposing appropriate and reasonable remedies as agreed to by the parties.

*Administrative Adjudication:* Administrative Adjudication is a form of informal resolution. Notwithstanding the foregoing if the form of informal resolution is administrative adjudication, there shall not be an agreed resolution requiring the parties' signatures; instead, the determination issued by the administrative officer shall serve as the resolution and conclude the informal resolution process, subject only to any right of appeal.



With the exception of a resolution resulting from the Administrative Adjudication process, all other forms of informal resolution are not subject to appeal.

**5. *Termination of Informal Resolution***

A Party may withdraw their consent to participate in informal resolution at any time before a resolution has been finalized. If the parties withdraw from the informal resolution process, information disclosed or obtained during the informal resolution may be included as evidence during the formal investigation and live hearing.

**6. *Deadlines for Informal Resolution***

Absent extension by the Title IX Coordinator, any informal resolution process must be completed within 15 university business days, unless otherwise deemed by the Title IX Coordinator. If an informal resolution process does not result in a resolution within 21 calendar days, and absent an extension, abeyance, or other contrary ruling by the Title IX Coordinator, the informal resolution process will be deemed terminated, and the Formal Complaint will be resolved pursuant to the investigation and adjudication procedures. The Title IX Coordinator may adjust any time periods or deadlines in the investigation and/or adjudication process that were suspended due to the informal resolution.

During the pendency of the informal resolution process, the investigation and adjudication processes that would otherwise occur are stayed and all related deadlines are suspended.

**N. Other Investigation and Adjudication Considerations**

**1. *Advisor of Choice***

From the point a Formal Complaint is made, and until an investigation, adjudication, and appeal are complete, the Complainant and Respondent will have the right to be accompanied by an advisor of their choice to all meetings, interviews, and hearings that are part of the investigation, adjudication, and appeal process. The advisor may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.

Except for the questioning of witnesses during the hearing, the advisor will play a passive role and is not permitted to communicate on behalf of a Party, insist that communication flow through the advisor, or communicate with the University about the matter without the Party being included in the communication. In the event a Party's advisor of choice engages in material violation of the parameters specified in this policy, the University may preclude the advisor from further participation, in which case the Party may select a new advisor of their choice.

In the event a Party is not able to secure an advisor to attend the and requests the University to provide an advisor, the University will provide the Party an advisor, without fee or charge, who will conduct questioning on behalf of the Party at the hearing. The University will have sole discretion to select the advisor it provides. The advisor the University provides may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.

The University will provide an advisor to any Party upon receipt of a request to the Title IX Coordinator or their designee. The University will provide an advisor for any Party at a hearing for the purpose of cross-examining a Party or witness.



The role of advisors in cross-examination in Title IX hearings shall not constitute the practice of law as reserved for a licensed attorney. Licensed attorneys retained as advisors for Title IX proceedings shall fill the role of an advisor, not the role of an attorney.

**2. *Conflict of Interest, Bias, and Procedural Complaints***

The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, hearing officer, administrative officer, appeals officer, and informal resolution facilitator will be free of any material conflicts of interest or material bias. Any Party who believes one or more of these University officials has a material conflict of interest or material bias must raise the concern promptly so that the University may evaluate the concern and find a substitute, if appropriate. The failure of a Party to timely raise a concern of a conflict of interest or bias may result in a waiver of the issue for purposes of any appeal.

**3. *Objections Generally***

Parties are expected to raise any objections, concerns, or complaints about the investigation, adjudication, and appeals process in a prompt and timely manner so that the University may evaluate the matter and address it, if appropriate.

**4. *Treatment Records and Other Privileged Information***

During the investigation and adjudication processes, the investigator and adjudicator are not permitted to access, consider, disclose, permit questioning concerning, or otherwise use:

- a. a Party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the Party; or
- b. information or records protected from disclosure by any other legally-recognized privilege, such as the attorney-client privilege

unless the University has obtained the Party's voluntary, written consent to do so for the purposes of the investigation and adjudication process.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the investigator and/or adjudicator, may consider any such records or information otherwise covered by this Policy if the Party holding the privilege affirmatively discloses the records or information to support their allegation or defense.

**5. *Sexual History***

During the investigation and adjudication processes, questioning regarding a Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, 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, 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. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a Complainant who affirmatively uses information otherwise considered irrelevant by this Section for the purpose of supporting the



Complainant's allegations, may be deemed to have waived the protections of this Section.

**6. *Student Withdrawal or Graduation Pending Disciplinary Charges***

If a student withdraws or graduates from the University pending an investigation of a complaint of Sexual Misconduct under this Policy, the University will expedite the disciplinary process as necessary to accommodate both the Complainant and the Respondent's interest in a speedy resolution and continue the investigation with or without the participation of the Respondent.

**7. *Academic Freedom***

The University will construe and apply this Policy consistent with the principles of academic freedom specified SFA HOP 02-303 Academic Freedom and Responsibility. In no case will a Respondent be found to have committed Sexual Harassment based on expressive conduct that is protected by the principles of academic freedom specified in university policy.

**O. Sanctions**

1. Disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures shall not be imposed on Respondents prior to a determination of responsibility except in cases meeting the requirements for emergency removals.
2. The designated administrator may decide sanctions, if any, or may delegate the sanctioning decision to another authority. Sanctioning decisions involving employees must be determined in consultation with Human Resources.
3. Sanctions may have rehabilitative, educational, and restorative elements for students. In addition, sanctions may have punitive components. Examples of sanctions may include, but are not limited to, written reprimand or warning, required training, no-contact directives, probation, suspension, and employment dismissal and/or expulsion.
4. Students found responsible for committing Dating or Domestic Violence and/or Sexual Assault will be subject to permanent expulsion with a minimum sanction of a one-year suspension, in the absence of significant mitigating factors.
5. Students found responsible for committing acts of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and/or any other sex-based misconduct who are allowed to return after a suspension of one year or more will be ineligible to represent the university in any way or to hold an office in any recognized student organization. This includes intercollegiate athletics or other competitions, both on and off campus, and ineligible to receive an institutional scholarship, in the absence of significant mitigating factors.
6. When an employee is found to have sexually harassed or engaged in sex-based misconduct as defined in this policy, the sanction will be termination of employment.
7. For sex discrimination complaints, both the Complainant(s) and the Respondent(s) will be informed in writing of any and all sanctions, except when to do so would violate state or federal law (e.g., Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).



## **P. Additional Policy Violations**

### **1. Retaliation**

Any person who retaliates against (a) anyone filing a report of Sexual Misconduct or Formal Complaint, (b) the parties or any other participants (including any witnesses or any University employee) in a Grievance Process relating to a Formal Complaint, (c) any person who refuses to participate in a Grievance Process, or (d) any person who under this Policy opposed any unlawful practice, is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or separation from the University. If any participant in a Grievance Process believes they have been subject to Retaliation (as defined in this Policy), they should immediately report the alleged retaliatory conduct to the Title IX Coordinator.

### **2. Bad Faith Complaints and False Information**

Any person, who in bad faith, knowingly files a false complaint under this Policy or provides materially false or frivolous information is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or separation from the University. A determination that a Respondent is not responsible for allegations of Sexual Misconduct does not imply a report, Formal Complaint, or information provided was false. Similarly, a determination that a Respondent is responsible for a policy violation does not imply that a Respondent's statements disclaiming responsibility were false.

### **3. Interference with the Grievance Process**

Any person who interferes with the Grievance Process (outlined in Section 6 of this Policy) is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or separation from the University. Interference with a Grievance Process may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Attempting to coerce, compel, or prevent an individual from providing testimony or relevant information;
- b. Removing, destroying, or altering documentation relevant to the Grievance Process; or
- c. Knowingly providing false or misleading information to the Title IX Coordinator, investigator or hearing officer, or encouraging others to do so.

### **4. Failure to Report for Responsible Employees**

If a Responsible Employee knowingly fails to report within the aforementioned guidelines to the Title IX Coordinator all information concerning an incident the employee reasonably believes constitutes Sexual Misconduct (including stalking, dating violence, sexual assault, or sexual harassment) committed by or against a student or employee at the time of the incident, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

The duty to report acts reasonably believed to be stalking, dating violence, sexual assault, and sexual harassment arises from state law. The University goes further and requires Responsible Employees to report all acts reasonably believed to be any type of Sexual Misconduct, as defined in this Policy. It is important to note that for purposes of Failure to Report, the definition of sexual harassment, as defined under state law,





is broader than the definition of sexual harassment under this Policy and is defined as: Unwelcome, sex-based verbal or physical conduct that:

- a. In the employment context, unreasonably interferes with a person's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or
- b. In the education context, is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct interferes with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from educational programs or activities at a postsecondary institution.

#### *5. Investigative Process for Allegations under Additional Policy Violations*

When a complaint is received under this section and the alleged conduct, if true, rises to a potential violation of this policy, an investigator will be assigned by the Title IX Coordinator. The university reserves the right to appoint an external investigator or investigator from a different division in its sole discretion. The investigation shall normally be conducted within 30 business days from when the investigator is appointed. Case complexity will vary and the resolution of the Complaint will depend on case circumstances; however, the investigation will conclude under normal circumstances within 30 business days. It is incumbent upon the investigator to document a reasonable justification for extending an investigation beyond 30 business days.

The investigator will interview Complainant and persons who are considered to have pertinent factual information related to the complaint. The investigator will also gather and examine documents relevant to the complaint. Facts will be considered through the Reasonable Person standard. Findings will be based on the totality of circumstances surrounding the conduct complained of. The investigator conducting the investigation may also consult with appropriate management personnel, including the director of human resources, the Title IX Coordinator, and/or legal counsel for advice and guidance as applicable.

The University reserves the right to take such action as may be reasonably appropriate upon receipt of a Complaint to protect Complainant or the university community pending outcome of the investigation, including interim suspension with pay of an employee, or interim suspension of a student.

- a. Notification of the Respondent(s): After investigating the allegations, the investigator will meet with Respondent(s), provide them with information regarding the complaint, and give them an opportunity to respond. Respondent(s) may, but is not required to, submit a written response to the allegations in the time prescribed by the investigator.
- b. Report of Findings and Recommendations: The investigator is responsible for preparing a report responding to each allegation subject to this Policy. This report should describe the investigator's findings and conclusions to each allegation.

There are two possible findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard: (1) Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence that it is more likely than not that the Policy has been violated, based on the evidence reviewed; or (2) Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove that the Policy has been violated,



based on the evidence reviewed. The report should also include a brief overview of the investigative process including the category and number of individuals interviewed, timelines, and a summary of each allegation. Finally, the report should contain the investigator's recommendations, if any, for resolution of the matter. This report should be addressed to the appropriate university administrator with the authority to impose sanctions if warranted.

The appropriate university administrator shall review the findings and recommendations of the investigator and take such action deemed appropriate. Such action shall be communicated in a letter to Complainant and Respondent(s) with copies to the general counsel, director of human resources, and the Title IX Coordinator, as applicable, within ten (10) business days of receipt from the investigator.

#### **6. *Appeal Process***

A Complainant or Respondent may request a review of the findings and conclusions by the appropriate vice president (or President if the recipient of the investigative report was a vice president). A request for review must be submitted to the reviewing official within five (5) business days from the date of the prior university administrator's notification. The appeal process is not a re-investigation of the original complaint, but is an opportunity for the appealing party to request a review based on one or more of the following grounds for appeal: (1) a procedural error on the part of the investigator that unfairly and materially affected the outcome of the case; or (2) material evidence has been discovered that was not reasonably available at the time of the investigation. A complete request for review will include the basis for the request and how this affected the investigator's determination in the case. Incomplete requests will not be considered. The decision of the reviewing official regarding the finding and determination is final.

#### **7. *Sanctions for Additional Policy Violations***

##### **a. University employees**

- i. University sanctions for violations of this section may include any disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment for faculty or staff. Such activities may be viewed as constituting a violation of SFA HOP 02-308 Faculty Code of Conduct, grounds for termination under SFA HOP 02-321 Tenure and Continued Employment, and a major work rule violation under SFA HOP 03-304 Discipline and Discharge.
- ii. The employment of individuals found responsible for a failure to report under this Policy will be terminated as required by law.

##### **b. Students**

- i. Students are subject to the spectrum of sanctions as defined in this Policy.

#### **8. *Other Sex-Based Misconduct***

This policy applies only to Sexual Harassment as defined in this Policy. Complaints of other forms of sex discrimination are governed by SFA HOP 01-305 Nondiscrimination.



## **Q. Records Retention**

The University shall meet minimum requirements for Title IX processes records retention (whether digital or analog) set forth by federal regulation, state law, and university policy.

## **R. Discretion in Application**

### *1. Interpretation*

The University retains discretion to interpret and apply this Policy in a manner that is not clearly unreasonable, even if the University's interpretation or application differs from the interpretation of the Parties.

The provisions of this Policy and the Hearing Procedures are not contractual in nature, whether in their own right, or as part of any other express or implied contract. Accordingly, the University retains discretion to revise this Policy and the Hearing Procedures at any time, and for any reason. The University may apply Policy revisions to an active case provided that doing so is not clearly unreasonable.

### *2. Outside Appointments, Dual Appointments, and Delegations*

The University retains discretion to retain and appoint suitably qualified persons who are not University employees to fulfill any function of the University under this policy, including, but not limited to, the investigator, hearing officer, administrative officer, informal resolution officer, and/or appeals officer. The University also retains discretion to appoint two or more persons to jointly fulfill the role of investigator, hearing officer, administrative officer, informal resolution officer, and/or appeals officer.

The functions assigned to a given University official under this policy, including but not limited to the functions assigned to the Title IX Coordinator, investigator, hearing officer, administrative officer, informal resolution officer, and appeals officer, may, in the University's discretion, be delegated by such University official to any suitably qualified individual and such delegation may be recalled by the University at any time.

### *3. Vendors, Contractors and Third Parties*

The University does business with various vendors, contractors, and other third-parties who are not students or employees of the University. Notwithstanding any rights that a given vendor, contractor, or third-party Respondent may have under this policy, the University retains its right to limit any vendor, contractor, or third-party's access to campus for any reason. And the University retains all rights it enjoys by contract or law to terminate its relationship with any vendor, contractor, or third-party irrespective of any process or outcome under this policy.

### *4. Recordings*

Wherever this policy specifies that an audio or video recording will be made, the recording will be made only by the University and is considered property of the University, subject to any right of access that a Party may have under this policy, FERPA, and other applicable federal, state, or local laws. Only the University is permitted to make audio or video recordings under this policy. The surreptitious recording of any meeting, interview, hearing, or other interaction contemplated under this policy is strictly prohibited. Should any Party desire a transcription of the recording,



a request should be made to the Title IX Office and the requesting Party is responsible for all associated costs.

**5. Relationship with Criminal Process**

This policy sets forth the University's processes for responding to reports and Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment. The University's processes are separate, distinct, and independent of any criminal processes. While the University may temporarily delay its processes under this policy to avoid interfering with law enforcement efforts if requested by law enforcement, the University will otherwise apply this policy and its processes without regard to the status or outcome of any criminal process.

**S. Revocation by Operation of Law**

Should any portion of the Title IX Final Rule, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026 (May 19, 2020), be stayed or held invalid by a court of law, or should the Title IX Final Rule be withdrawn or modified to not require the elements of this policy, this policy, or the invalidated elements of this policy, will be deemed revoked as of the publication date of the opinion or order and for all reports after that date, as well as any elements of the process that occur after that date if a case is not complete by that date of opinion or order publication. Should this HOP be revoked in this manner, any conduct covered under this HOP shall be investigated and adjudicated under the existing SFA HOP 01-305 Nondiscrimination.

**Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards**

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681  
42 U.S.C. § 1981  
34 C.F.R. Part 106

Tex. Educ. Code §§ 51.251-.260, .281-.293  
Tex. Fam. Code §§ 71.0021, 004

SFA HOP 01-305 Nondiscrimination  
SFA HOP 02-303 Academic Freedom and Responsibility  
SFA HOP 02-308 Faculty Code of Conduct  
SFA HOP 02-321 Tenure and Continued Employment  
SFA HOP 04-106 Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity  
SFA HOP 03-305 Discipline and Discharge

**Responsible Executive**

Title IX Coordinator

**Forms**

Sexual Misconduct Reporting Form, Sexual Misconduct Appeal of Investigation Findings Form,  
Mandatory Reporter- Title IX Reporting Form



**Revision History**

September 1, 2023 (original)