

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, HARASSMENT, AND NONDISCRIMINATION  
FOR ALL FACULTY, STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES, AND THIRD-PARTIES**

**ONE POLICY, TWO PROCEDURES MODEL (1P2P)**

Neosho County Community College (NCCC) does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities. NCCC also prohibits retaliation against any person opposing discrimination or participating in any discrimination investigation or complaint process internally or externally. Reports of misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and concerns about noncompliance should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator.

Riann Mullis, Athletic Director  
Title IX Coordinator  
Neosho County Community College  
800 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chanute, KS 66720  
(620) 432-0321 – office  
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titleIX@neosho.edu  
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**POLICY: Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination**

**1. Glossary**

- *Advisor* means a person chosen by a party or appointed by the institution to accompany the party to meetings related to the resolution process, to advise the party on that process, and to conduct questioning for the party at the hearing, if any.
- *Complainant* means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute harassment or discrimination based on a protected class, or retaliation for engaging in a protected activity. A complainant who is not a student or employee at NCCC, who did not file a formal complaint, and did not substantially participate in the investigation shall, in the sole discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, be an “Unaffiliated Complainant”.
- *Complaint (formal)* means a document submitted or signed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging harassment or discrimination based on a protected class or retaliation for engaging in a protected activity against a Respondent and requesting that the NCCC investigate the allegation.
- *Confidential Resource* means an employee who is not a Mandated Reporter of notice of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation (irrespective of Clery Act Campus Security Authority status).
- *Day* means a business day when the Neosho County Community College is in normal operation.
- *Decision-maker* is the person, panel, and/or Chair who hears evidence, determines relevance, and makes the Final Determination of whether this Policy has been violated and/or assigns sanctions.

- *Directly Related Evidence* is evidence connected to the complaint, but which is neither inculpatory (tending to prove a violation) nor exculpatory (tending to disprove a violation) and cannot be relied upon by the investigation report or Decision-maker. Compare to Relevant Evidence, below.
- *Education program or activity* means locations, events, or circumstances where NCCC exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation occurs and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by the NCCC.
- *Final Determination*: A conclusion by preponderance of the evidence that the alleged conduct did or did not violate policy.
- *Finding*: A conclusion by preponderance of the evidence that the conduct did or did not occur as alleged (as in a “finding of fact”).
- *Formal Grievance Process* means “Process A,” a method of formal resolution designated by the NCCC to address conduct that falls within the policies included below, and which complies with the requirements of the Title IX regulations (34 CFR §106.45).
- *Grievance Process Pool* includes any investigators, hearing Decision-makers, appeal officers, and Advisors who may perform any or all of these roles (though not at the same time or with respect to the same case).
- *Investigator* means the person or persons charged by a NCCC with gathering facts about an alleged violation of this Policy, assessing relevance and credibility, synthesizing the evidence, and compiling this information into an investigation report of Relevant Evidence and a file of Directly Related evidence.
- *Mandated Reporter* means an employee of NCCC who is obligated by policy to share knowledge, notice, and/or reports of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation with the Title IX Coordinator.<sup>1</sup>
- *Notice* means that an employee, student, or third-party informs the Title IX Coordinator or other Official with Authority of the alleged occurrence of harassing, discriminatory, and/or retaliatory conduct.
- *Official with Authority (OWA)* means an employee of NCCC explicitly vested with the responsibility to implement corrective measures for harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation on behalf of NCCC.
- *Parties* include the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s), collectively.
- *Process A* means the Formal Grievance Process detailed below and defined above.
- *Process B* means the administrative resolution procedures detailed in [Appendix D](#) that apply only when Process A does not, as determined by the Title IX Coordinator
- *NCCC* means a postsecondary education program that is a NCCC of federal funding.
- *Relevant Evidence* is evidence that tends to prove (inculpatory) or disprove (exculpatory) an issue in the complaint.

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<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with those mandated by state law to report child abuse, elder abuse, and/or abuse of individuals with disabilities to appropriate officials, though these responsibilities may overlap with those who have mandated reporting responsibility in this Policy.

- *Remedies* are post-Finding actions directed to the Complainant and/or the community as mechanisms to address safety, prevent recurrence, and restore access to NCCC's educational program.
- *Respondent* means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute harassment or discrimination based on a protected class, or retaliation for engaging in a protected activity.
- *Resolution* means the result of an informal or Formal Grievance Process.
- *Sanction* means a consequence imposed by NCCC on a Respondent who is found to have violated this policy.
- *Sexual Harassment* is the umbrella category including the offenses of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and domestic violence. [See Section 17.b.](#) for greater detail.
- *Title IX Coordinator* is at least one official designated by NCCC to ensure compliance with Title IX and NCCC's Title IX program. References to the Coordinator throughout this policy may also encompass a designee of the Coordinator for specific tasks.
- *Title IX Team* refers to the Title IX Coordinator, any deputy coordinators, and any member of the Grievance Process Pool.

## **2. Rationale for Policy**

NCCC is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment, as well as other benefits, programs, and activities, that are free from discrimination and harassment based on a protected category, and retaliation for engaging in a protected activity.

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

NCCC values and upholds the equal dignity of all members of its community and strives to balance the rights of the parties in the grievance process during what is often a difficult time for all those involved.

## **3. Applicable Scope**

The core purpose of this policy is the prohibition of all forms of discrimination. Sometimes, discrimination involves exclusion from or different treatment in activities, such as admission, athletics, or employment. At other times, discrimination takes the form of harassment or, in the case of sex-based discrimination, it can encompass sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, dating violence, or domestic violence. When an alleged violation of this nondiscrimination policy is reported, the allegations are subject to resolution using NCCC's "Process A" or "Process B," as determined by the Title IX Coordinator, and as detailed below.

When the Respondent is a member of the NCCC community, a formal complaint may be filed and a grievance process may be available regardless of the status of the Complainant, who may or may not be a member of the

NCCC community. This community includes, but is not limited to, students,<sup>2</sup> student organizations, faculty, administrators, staff, and third parties such as guests, visitors, volunteers, vendors, and campers. The procedures below may be applied to incidents, to patterns, and/or to the campus climate, all of which may be addressed and investigated in accordance with this policy.

#### **4. Title IX Coordinator**

The Vice President for Student Learning serves as the Title IX Coordinator and oversees implementation of the NCCC's policy on equal opportunity, harassment, and nondiscrimination.

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

All parties will be provided with a comprehensive electronic document detailing options and resources, which the Title IX Coordinator may also go over in person with the parties, as appropriate (excluding an Unaffiliated Complainant in the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator).

#### **5. Independence and Conflict-of-Interest**

The Title IX Coordinator manages the Title IX Team and acts with independence and authority free from bias and conflicts of interest. The Title IX Coordinator oversees all resolutions under this policy and these procedures. The members of the Title IX Team are vetted and trained to ensure they are not biased for or against any party in a specific case, or for or against Complainants and/or Respondents, generally.

To raise any concern involving bias or conflict of interest by the Title IX Coordinator, contact the NCCC President (620-432-0346) or designee. Concerns of bias or a potential conflict of interest by any other Title IX Team member should be raised with the Title IX Coordinator.

Reports of misconduct or discrimination committed by the Title IX Coordinator should be reported to the NCCC President (620-432-0346) or designee. Reports of misconduct or discrimination committed by any other Title IX Team member should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator.

#### **6. Administrative Contact Information**

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

Riann Mullis, Athletic Director  
Title IX Coordinator  
Neosho County Community College  
800 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chanute, KS 66720  
(620) 432-0321 – office  
(913) 683-1075 - cell  
titleIX@neosho.edu  
NeoKan 217

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this policy, NCCC defines "student" as any individual who has accepted an offer of admission, or who is registered or enrolled for credit or non-credit bearing coursework, and who maintains an ongoing relationship with NCCC.

Sarah Robb, Vice President for Student Learning  
Deputy Title IX Coordinator  
Neosho County Community College  
800 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chanute, KS 66720  
(620) 432-0302 – office  
(620) 230-8062 - cell  
sarah\_rob主@neosho.edu  
Sanders Hall, Vice President's Office

Kerrie Coomes, Dean of Student Services  
Title IX Team Member  
Neosho County Community College  
800 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chanute, KS 66720  
(620) 432-0304 – office  
(620) 212-1153 - cell  
kcoomes@neosho.edu  
Sanders Hall Student Services office

Karin Jacobson, Director of Human Resources  
Title IX Team Member  
Neosho County Community College  
800 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chanute, KS 66720  
(620) 432-0333 – office  
(620) 212-5135 - cell  
kjacobson@neosho.edu  
Sanders Hall Human Resources office

Kerry Ranabargar, Vice President for Operations  
Title IX Team Member  
Neosho County Community College  
800 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chanute, KS 66720  
(620) 432-0301 – office  
(620) 212-3750 - cell  
kranabargar@neosho.edu  
Sanders Hall VPO office

Rekeshia Jones, Director of Residence & Student Life  
Title IX Team Member  
Neosho County Community College  
800 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chanute, KS 66720  
(620) 432-0381 – office  
(913) 220-0731 - cell  
rjones@neosho.edu  
Student Union, Residence Life office

Maggie Miller, Dean of the Online Campus  
Title IX Team Member  
Neosho County Community College  
900 East Logan Street  
Ottawa, KS 66067  
(785) 248-2810– office  
(785) 650-4859 – cell  
mmiller@neosho.edu  
Ottawa Campus – Dean of Online Office

Vacant - Director of Ottawa Campus  
Title IX Team Member  
Neosho County Community College  
900 East Logan Street  
Ottawa, KS 66067  
(785) 248-2798 – office  
cell  
email  
Ottawa Campus – Main Office

NCCC has also classified most employees as Mandated Reporters of any knowledge they have that a member of the community is experiencing harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation. The section below on Mandated Reporting details which employees have this responsibility and their duties, accordingly.

Inquiries may be made externally to:

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

For complaints involving employees, please contact the Director of Human Resources:

Karin Jacobson, Director of Human Resources  
Deputy Title IX Coordinator  
Neosho County Community College  
800 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chanute, KS 66720  
(620) 432-0333 – office  
(620) 212-5135 - cell  
kjacobson@neosho.edu  
Sanders Hall Human Resources office

## **7. Notice/Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Retaliation**

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

1) File a complaint with, or give verbal notice to, the Title IX Coordinator (or deputies/Officials with Authority) as listed above. Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail, to the office listed for the Title IX Coordinator or any other official listed.

[2] Report online, using the reporting form posted at neosho.edu (Share a Concern). Anonymous reports are accepted but can give rise to a need to investigate to determine if the parties can be identified. If not, no further formal action is taken, though measures intended to protect the community may be enacted. NCCC tries to provide supportive measures to all Complainants, which may be impossible with an anonymous report that does not identify the Complainant.

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

A Formal Complaint means a document submitted or signed by the Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging a policy violation by a Respondent and requesting that NCCC investigate the allegation(s). A complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail; by using the contact information in the section immediately above; or as described in this section. As used in this paragraph, the phrase "document filed by a Complainant" means a document or electronic submission (such as by electronic mail or through an online portal provided for this purpose by NCCC) that contains the Complainant's physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the complaint, and requests that NCCC investigate the allegations.

If notice is submitted in a form that does not meet this standard, the Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant to ensure that it is filed correctly.

## **8. Supportive Measures**

NCCC will offer and implement appropriate and reasonable supportive measures to the parties upon notice of alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation (excluding an Unaffiliated Complainant in the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator).

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

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

Neosho County Community College will maintain the confidentiality of the supportive measures, provided that confidentiality does not impair the NCCC's ability to provide those supportive measures. NCCC will act to ensure as minimal an academic/occupational impact on the parties as possible. The NCCC will implement measures in a way that does not unreasonably burden the other party.

These actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Referral to counseling, medical, and/or other healthcare services
- Referral to community-based service providers
- Visa and immigration assistance
- Student financial aid counseling
- Education to the institutional community or community subgroup(s)
- Altering campus housing assignment(s)
- Altering work arrangements for employees or student-employees
- Safety planning
- Providing campus safety escorts
- Providing transportation accommodations
- Implementing contact limitations (no contact orders) between the parties
- Academic support, extensions of deadlines, or other course/program-related adjustments
- Trespass or Be-On-the-Lookout (BOLO) orders
- [Timely warnings](#)
- Class schedule modifications, withdrawals, or leaves of absence
- Increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus
- Any other actions deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator

Violations of no contact orders or other restrictions will be referred to appropriate student or employee conduct processes for enforcement.

## **9. Emergency Removal**

Neosho County Community College can act to remove a student Respondent entirely or partially from its education program or activities on an emergency basis when an individualized safety and risk analysis has determined that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual justifies removal. This risk analysis is performed by the Title IX Coordinator in conjunction with the Mental Health Response Team.

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

This meeting is not a hearing on the merits of the allegation(s), but rather is an administrative process intended to determine solely whether the emergency removal is appropriate. When this meeting is not requested in a timely manner, objections to the emergency removal will be deemed waived. A Complainant and their Advisor may be permitted to participate in this meeting if the Title IX Coordinator determines it is equitable to do so. This section also applies to any restrictions that a coach or athletic administrator may place on a student-athlete arising from allegations related to Title IX. There is no appeal process for emergency removal decisions.

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

emergency removal prior to the meeting to allow for adequate preparation.

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

Neosho County Community College will implement the least restrictive emergency actions possible in light of the circumstances and safety concerns. As determined by the Title IX Coordinator, these actions could include, but are not limited to: removing a student from a residence hall, temporarily re-assigning an employee, restricting a student's or employee's access to or use of facilities or equipment, allowing a student to withdraw or take grades of incomplete without financial penalty, authorizing an administrative leave, and suspending a student's participation in extracurricular activities, student employment, student organizational leadership.

At the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, alternative coursework options may be pursued to ensure as minimal an academic impact as possible on the parties.

When the Respondent is an employee, existing provisions for interim action are applicable instead of the above emergency removal process.

## **10. Promptness**

All allegations are acted upon promptly by NCCC once it has received notice or a formal complaint. Complaints can take 60-90 business days to resolve, typically. There are always exceptions and extenuating circumstances that can cause a resolution to take longer, but NCCC will avoid all undue delays within its control.

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

## **11. Confidentiality/Privacy**

Every effort is made by NCCC to preserve the confidentiality of reports.<sup>3</sup> NCCC will not share the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; any Complainant; any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination; any Respondent, or any witness, except as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g; FERPA

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<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this policy, privacy and confidentiality have distinct meanings. **Privacy** means that information related to a complaint will be shared with a limited number of NCCC employees who "need to know" in order to assist in the assessment, investigation, and resolution of the report. All employees who are involved in NCCC's response to notice under this policy receive specific training and guidance about sharing and safeguarding private information in accordance with state and federal law. The privacy of student education records will be protected in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), as outlined in NCCC's Student Records Policy. The privacy of employee records will be protected in accordance with Human Resources policies. **Confidentiality** exists in the context of laws (including Title IX) that protect certain relationships, including those who provide services related to medical and clinical care, mental health providers, counselors, and ordained clergy. The law creates a privilege between certain health care providers, mental health care providers, attorneys, clergy, spouses, and others, with their patients, clients, parishioners, and spouses. NCCC has designated individuals who have the ability to have privileged communications as Confidential Resources. For more information about Confidential Resources, see page 22. When information is shared by a Complainant with a Confidential Resource, the Confidential Resource cannot reveal the information to any third party except when an applicable law or a court order requires or permits disclosure of such information. For example, information may be disclosed when: (i) the individual gives written consent for its disclosure; (ii) there is a concern that the individual will likely cause serious physical harm to self or others; or (iii) the information concerns conduct involving suspected abuse or neglect of a minor under the age of 18, elders, or individuals with disabilities. Non-identifiable information may be shared by Confidential Resources for statistical tracking purposes as required by the federal Clergy Act. Other information may be shared as required by law.

regulations, 34 CFR part 99; or as required by law; or to carry out the purposes of 34 CFR Part 106, including the conducting of any investigation, hearing, or grievance proceeding arising under these policies and procedures.

Neosho County Community College reserves the right to determine which NCCC officials have a legitimate educational interest in being informed about incidents that fall within this policy, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Only a small group of officials who need to know will typically be told about the complaint, including but not limited to: Title IX Team Members, members of the Mental Health Response Team, NCCC Safety & Security Team. Information will be shared as necessary with Investigators, Decision-makers, witnesses, and the parties. The circle of people with this knowledge will be kept as tight as possible to preserve the parties' rights and privacy.

Neosho County Community College may contact parents/guardians of students to inform them of situations in which there is a significant and articulable health and/or safety risk, but will usually consult with the student first before doing so.

Confidentiality and mandated reporting are addressed more specifically [below](#).

## **12. Jurisdiction of NCCC**

This Policy applies to the education program and activities of NCCC<sup>4</sup>, to conduct that takes place on the campus or on property owned or controlled by NCCC, at NCCC-sponsored events, and in buildings owned or controlled by NCCC's recognized student organizations. The Respondent must be a member of NCCC's community in order for this Policy to apply.

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

Regardless of where the conduct occurred, the NCCC will address notice/complaints to determine whether the conduct occurred in the context of its employment or educational program or activity and/or has continuing effects on campus or in an off-campus sponsored program or activity. A substantial NCCC interest includes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **13. Time Limits on Reporting**

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<sup>4</sup> Which includes the work environment of NCCC's employees.

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

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

#### **14. Online Harassment and Misconduct**

All NCCC policies, now existing or which may be adopted in the future, apply to conduct on the Internet, Social Media, websites or other venues, whether "on-campus" or "off-campus" especially (but not exclusively) those that deal with privacy, misuse of college resources, harassment, sexual harassment, stalking, bullying, discrimination, equal opportunity, grievance, disruption of college operations and confidentiality. (See NCCC Fair Use Policy).

In addition and not in any way limiting the foregoing, use of the NCCC network, internet access, technology, equipment assets or resources (on-campus use) which has a negative impact on the NCCC education program and activities, or which can be shown to cause a substantial in-program disruption, shall be subject to additional disciplinary and/or legal action as provided for in any NCCC Policy or appropriate state or federal statutes, rules and regulations, and may result in termination of use of the NCCC network and/or Internet access.

Nothing herein shall be interpreted to infringe upon First Amendment rights and protected speech.

#### **15. Policy on Nondiscrimination**

Please refer to the [NCCC Policy on Nondiscrimination](#).

#### **16. Policy on Disability Discrimination and Accommodation**

Please refer to the [NCCC Policy on Nondiscrimination](#).

#### **17. Policy on Discriminatory Harassment**

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

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

##### **a. Discriminatory Harassment**

Discriminatory harassment constitutes a form of discrimination that is prohibited by NCCC Policy. Discriminatory harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct by any member or group of the community on the basis of actual or perceived membership in a class protected by policy or law.

## **b. Sexual Harassment**

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

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

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

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

Conduct on the basis of sex<sup>5</sup> or that is sexual in nature that satisfies one or more of the following:

- 1) Quid Pro Quo:
  - a. an employee of the NCCC,
  - b. conditions<sup>6</sup> the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the NCCC,
  - c. on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.
  
- 2) Sexual Harassment:
  - a. unwelcome conduct,
  - b. determined by a reasonable person,
  - c. to be so severe, and
  - d. pervasive, and,
  - e. objectively offensive,
  - f. that it effectively denies a person equal access to NCCC's education program or activity.<sup>7</sup>
  
- 3) Sexual assault, defined as:

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<sup>5</sup> Including sexual orientation and sex stereotypes.

<sup>6</sup> Implicitly or explicitly.

<sup>7</sup> Unwelcomeness is subjective and determined by the Complainant (except when the Complainant is younger than the age of consent). Severity, pervasiveness, and objective offensiveness are evaluated based on the totality of the circumstances from the perspective of a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances ("in the shoes of the Complainant"), including the context in which the alleged incident occurred and any similar, previous patterns that may be evidenced. This definition is broad enough to potentially encompass forms of sex-based disparate treatment, even if not harassing in nature.

- Any sexual act<sup>8</sup> directed against another person<sup>9</sup>,
- without the consent of the Complainant,
  - including instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent.<sup>10</sup>
  - Incest:
    - 1) Non-forcible sexual intercourse,
    - 2) between persons who are related to each other,
    - 3) within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by Kansas law.
  - Statutory Rape:
    - 1) Non-forcible sexual intercourse,
    - 2) with a person who is under the statutory age of consent of 16.

- 4) Dating Violence, defined as:
- a. violence,
  - b. on the basis of sex,
  - c. committed by a person,
  - d. who is in or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the Complainant.

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<sup>8</sup> A ‘sexual act’ is specifically defined by federal regulations to include one or more of the following:

Forcible Rape:

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

Forcible Sodomy:

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

Sexual Assault with an Object:

- The use of an object or instrument to penetrate,
- however slightly,
- the genital or anal opening of the body of another person,
- forcibly,
- and/or against that person’s will (non-consensually),
- or not forcibly or against the person’s will in instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

Forcible Fondling:

- The touching of the private body parts of another person (buttocks, groin, breasts),
- for the purpose of sexual gratification,
- forcibly,
- and/or against that person’s will (non-consensually),
- or not forcibly or against the person’s will in instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

<sup>9</sup> This would include having another person touch you sexually, forcibly, and/or without their consent.

<sup>10</sup> This definition set is not taken from SRS/NIBRS verbatim. ATIXA has substituted Complainant for “victim,” has removed references to his/her throughout, has defined “private body parts,” has removed the confusing and unnecessary term “unlawfully,” and has inserted language clarifying that the NCCC interprets “against the person’s will” to mean “non-consensually.” These are liberties ATIXA thinks are important to take with respect to the federal definitions, but users should consult legal counsel before adopting them.

- i. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the Complainant's statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. For the purposes of this definition—
- ii. Dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse.
- iii. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

5) Domestic Violence\*, defined as:

- a. violence,
- b. on the basis of sex,
- c. committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the Complainant,
- d. by a person with whom the Complainant shares a child in common, or
- e. by a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the Complainant as a spouse or intimate partner, or
- f. by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the Complainant under the domestic or family violence laws of Kansas or
- g. by any other person against an adult or youth Complainant who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of Kansas.

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

6) Stalking, defined as:

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

For the purposes of this definition—

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

## **EXPECTATIONS WITH RESPECT TO CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS**

There are inherent risks in any romantic or sexual relationship between individuals in unequal positions (such as faculty and student, supervisor and employee). These relationships may be less consensual than perceived by the individual whose position confers power. The relationship also may be viewed in different ways by each of the parties, particularly in retrospect. Furthermore, circumstances may change, and conduct that was previously welcome may become unwelcome. Even when both parties have consented at the outset to a romantic or sexual involvement, this past consent may not remove grounds for a later charge of a violation of applicable sections of this policy. The College does not wish to interfere with private choices regarding personal relationships when these relationships do not interfere with the goals and policies of the College. For the personal protection of

members of this community, relationships in which power differentials are inherent (faculty-student, staff-student, administrator-student) are generally discouraged.

Consensual romantic or sexual relationships in which one party maintains a direct supervisory or evaluative role over the other party are unethical and may result in a sanction ranging from reprimand through expulsion (students) or termination of employment. This includes RAs and students over whom they have direct responsibility.

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

### c. Force, Coercion, Consent, and Incapacitation<sup>11</sup>

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

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

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

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

#### Consent is:

- knowing, and
- voluntary, and
- clear permission
- by word or action
- to engage in sexual activity.

Individuals may perceive and experience the same interaction in different ways. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each party to determine that the other has consented before engaging in the activity.

If consent is not clearly provided prior to engaging in the activity, consent may be ratified by word or action at some point during the interaction or thereafter, but clear communication from the outset is strongly encouraged.

For consent to be valid, there must be a clear expression in words or actions that the other individual consented to that specific sexual conduct. Reasonable reciprocation can be implied. For example, if someone kisses you, you can kiss them back (if you want to) without the need to explicitly obtain *their* consent to being kissed back.

Consent can also be withdrawn once given, as long as the withdrawal is reasonably and clearly communicated. If consent is withdrawn, that sexual activity should cease within a reasonable time.

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<sup>11</sup> The state definition of consent is 16, which is applicable to criminal prosecutions for sex offenses in Kansas but may differ from the definition used on campus to address policy violations. [Included for Clery/VAWA Sec. 304 compliance purposes]

Consent to some sexual contact (such as kissing or fondling) cannot be presumed to be consent for other sexual activity (such as intercourse). A current or previous intimate relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent.

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

Consent in relationships must also be considered in context. When parties consent to BDSM<sup>12</sup> or other forms of kink, non-consent may be shown by the use of a safe word. Resistance, force, violence, or even saying “no” may be part of the kink and thus consensual, so NCCC’s evaluation of communication in kink situations should be guided by reasonableness, rather than strict adherence to policy that assumes non-kink relationships as a default.

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

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

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

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

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

#### **d. Other Civil Rights Offenses**

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

- Sexual Exploitation, defined as: an individual taking non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for their own benefit or for the benefit of anyone other than the person being exploited, and that conduct does not otherwise constitute sexual harassment under this Policy. Examples of Sexual Exploitation include, but are not limited to:
  - Sexual voyeurism (such as observing or allowing others to observe a person undressing or using the bathroom or engaging in sexual acts, without the consent of the person being observed)
  - Invasion of sexual privacy
  - Taking pictures, video, or audio recording of another in a sexual act, or in any other sexually-related activity when there is a reasonable expectation of privacy during the activity, without the consent of all involved in the activity; or exceeding the boundaries of consent (such as allowing another person to hide in a closet and observe sexual activity; or disseminating sexual pictures

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<sup>12</sup> Bondage, discipline/dominance, submission/sadism, and masochism.

without the photographed person's consent), including the making or posting of revenge pornography

- Prostituting another person
  - Engaging in sexual activity with another person while knowingly infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or a sexually-transmitted disease (STD) or infection (STI), without informing the other person of the virus, disease, or infection
  - Causing or attempting to cause the incapacitation of another person (through alcohol, drugs, or any other means) for the purpose of compromising that person's ability to give consent to sexual activity, or for the purpose of making that person vulnerable to non-consensual sexual activity
  - Misappropriation of another person's identity on apps, websites, or other venues designed for dating or sexual connections
  - Forcing a person to take an action against that person's will by threatening to show, post, or share information, video, audio, or an image that depicts the person's nudity or sexual activity
  - Knowingly soliciting a minor for sexual activity
  - Engaging in sex trafficking
  - Knowing creation, possession, or dissemination of child pornography
- Threatening or causing physical harm; extreme verbal, emotional, or psychological abuse; or other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person;
  - Discrimination, defined as actions that deprive, limit, or deny other members of the community of educational or employment access, benefits, or opportunities, including disparate treatment;
  - Intimidation, defined as implied threats or acts that cause an unreasonable fear of harm in another;
  - Hazing, defined as acts likely to cause physical or psychological harm or social ostracism to any person within the NCCC community, when related to the admission, initiation, pledging, joining, or any other group-affiliation activity (as defined further in the Hazing Policy in the Student Handbook);
  - Bullying, defined as:
    - Repeated and/or severe
    - Aggressive behavior
    - Likely to intimidate or intentionally hurt, control, or diminish another person, physically and/or mentally
    - That is not speech or conduct otherwise protected by the First Amendment.

Violation of any other NCCC policies may constitute a Civil Rights Offense when a violation is motivated by actual or perceived membership in a protected class, and the result is a discriminatory limitation or denial of employment or educational access, benefits, or opportunities.

Sanctions for the above-listed Civil Rights Offenses range from reprimand through expulsion/termination.

## **18. Retaliation**<sup>13</sup>

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

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<sup>13</sup> Retaliation allegations can be routed exclusively through Process B if a NCCC so elects, but where retaliation and sexual harassment allegations are both alleged, it will likely make more sense to use Process A to resolve all together.

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

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

Filing a complaint within Process B could be considered retaliatory if those charges could be applicable under Process A, when the Process B charges are made for the purpose of interfering with or circumventing any right or privilege provided afforded within Process A that is not provided by Process B. Therefore, NCCC vets all complaints carefully to ensure this does not happen, and to ensure that complaints are routed to the appropriate process.

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

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

## **19. Mandated Reporting**

All NCCC employees (faculty, staff, administrators) are expected to report actual or suspected discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation to appropriate officials immediately, although there are some limited exceptions.

In order to make informed choices, it is important to be aware of confidentiality and mandatory reporting requirements when consulting campus resources. On campus, some resources may maintain confidentiality and are not required to report actual or suspected discrimination or harassment in a way that identifies the parties. They may offer options and resources without any obligation to inform an outside agency or campus official unless a Complainant has requested the information be shared.

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

The following sections describe the reporting options at NCCC for a Complainant or third-party (including parents/guardians when appropriate):

### **a. Confidential Resources**

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

- On-campus licensed professional counselor
- Off-campus (non-employees):
  - Licensed professional counselors and other medical providers
  - Local rape crisis counselors
  - Domestic violence resources
  - Local or state assistance agencies
  - Clergy/Chaplains
  - Attorneys

All of the above-listed individuals will maintain confidentiality when acting under the scope of their licensure, professional ethics, professional credentials, or official designation, except in extreme cases of immediacy of threat or danger or abuse of a minor or when required to disclose by law or court order.

Campus counselors are available to help students free of charge and may be consulted on an emergency basis during normal business hours.

Employees who have confidential privilege as described above, and who receive reports within the scope of their confidential roles will timely submit anonymous statistical information for Clery Act purposes unless they believe it would be harmful to their client, patient, or parishioner.

### **c. Mandated Reporters and Formal Notice/Complaints**

All employees of NCCC (including student employees), with the exception of those who are designated as Confidential Resources, are Mandated Reporters and must promptly share with the Title IX Coordinator all known details of a report made to them in the course of their employment.

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

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

Generally, disclosures in climate surveys, classroom writing assignments or discussions, human subjects research, or at events such as “Take Back the Night” marches or speak-outs do not provide notice that must be reported to the Coordinator by employees, unless the Complainant clearly indicates that they desire a report to be made or a seek a specific response from NCCC.

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

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

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

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

### **20. When a Complainant Does Not Wish to Proceed**

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

The Title IX Coordinator has ultimate discretion over whether NCCC proceeds when the Complainant does not wish to do so, and the Title IX Coordinator may sign a formal complaint to initiate a grievance process, usually upon completion of an appropriate violence risk assessment.

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

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

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

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

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

In cases in which the Complainant requests confidentiality/no formal action and the circumstances allow NCCC to honor that request, NCCC may offer informal resolution options (see below), supportive measures, and remedies to the Complainant and the community, but will not otherwise pursue formal action.

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

## **21. Federal Timely Warning Obligations**

Parties reporting sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking should be aware that under the Clery Act, NCCC must issue timely warnings for reported incidents that pose a serious or continuing threat of bodily harm or danger to members of the campus community.

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

## **22. False Allegations and Evidence**

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

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

### **23. Amnesty for Complainants and Witnesses**

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

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

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

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

**Students:** Sometimes, students are hesitant to assist others for fear that they may get in trouble themselves (for example, an underage student who has been drinking or using marijuana might hesitate to help take an individual who has experienced sexual assault to campus officials).

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

### **24. Federal Statistical Reporting Obligations**

All personally identifiable information is kept private, but statistical information must be shared regarding the type of incident and its general location (on or off-campus or in the surrounding area, but no addresses are given) for publication in the Annual Security Report and daily campus crime log.

### **25. Preservation of Evidence**

The preservation of evidence in incidents of sexual assault is critical to potential criminal prosecution and to obtaining restraining orders, and is particularly time-sensitive. NCCC will inform the Complainant of the importance of preserving evidence by taking the following actions:

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

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

## **INTERIM RESOLUTION PROCESS<sup>14</sup> FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE POLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, HARASSMENT, AND NONDISCRIMINATION (KNOWN AS PROCESS “A”)**

### **1. Overview**

NCCC will act on any formal notice/complaint of violation of the policy on Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination (“the Policy”) that is received by the Title IX Coordinator<sup>15</sup> or any other Official with Authority by applying these procedures, known as “Process A.”

The procedures below apply **only** to qualifying allegations of sexual harassment (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as defined above) involving students, staff, administrators, or faculty members either as a complainant or a respondent or both.

If other Policy definitions are invoked, such as protected class harassment or discrimination as defined above, please see [Appendix D](#) for a description of the procedures applicable to the resolution of such offenses, known as “Process B.”

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

Unionized/other categorized employees are subject to the terms of their agreements/employees’ rights to the extent those agreements do not conflict with federal or state compliance obligations.

The procedures below may be used to address collateral misconduct arising from the investigation of or occurring in conjunction with reported misconduct (e.g., vandalism, physical abuse of another), when alleged violations of the Policy are being addressed at the same time. All other allegations of misconduct unrelated to incidents covered by the Policy will be addressed through procedures described in various college publications including but not limited to the College Catalog, Student Handbook, Board Policies, and the Negotiated Agreement.

When an Unaffiliated Complainant is involved, procedures in either Process A or Process B which require contact with or involvement of the Unaffiliated Complainant, including but not limited to supportive measures, advisors, notices and resolution reports shall not apply to the Unaffiliated Complainant (but shall apply to respondent) if the Title IX Coordinator determines that is appropriate under the circumstances.

### **2. Notice/Complaint**

Upon receipt of a complaint or notice to the Title IX Coordinator of an alleged violation of the Policy, the Title IX Coordinator initiates a prompt initial assessment to determine the next steps NCCC needs to take.

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

- 1) Offering supportive measures because the Complainant does not want to file a formal complaint; and/or
- 2) An informal resolution (upon submission of a formal complaint); and/or
- 3) A Formal Grievance Process including an investigation and a hearing (upon submission of a formal complaint).

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<sup>14</sup> For institutions with grievance processes enabling students and/or employees to challenge NCCC action, it is recommended that discrimination allegations be exempted from that process and replaced with the resolution process outlined here. Most existing grievance proceedings are neither equitable (by definition), nor are they sufficiently prompt to satisfy Title IX. Such a change may require negotiation with any affected union.

<sup>15</sup> Anywhere this procedure indicates “Title IX Coordinator,” NCCC may substitute a trained designee.

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

### **3. Initial Assessment**

Following receipt of notice or a complaint of an alleged violation of this Policy, the Title IX Coordinator<sup>16</sup> engages in an initial assessment, typically within one to five business days. The steps in an initial assessment can include:

- The Title IX Coordinator seeks to determine if the person impacted wishes to make a formal complaint, and will assist them to do so, if desired.
  - If they do not wish to do so, or there is an Unaffiliated Complainant the Title IX Coordinator determines whether to initiate a complaint themselves.
- If a formal complaint is received, the Title IX Coordinator assesses its sufficiency and works with the Complainant to make sure it is correctly completed.
- The Title IX Coordinator reaches out to the Complainant to offer supportive measures.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure they are aware of the right to have an Advisor.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to determine whether the Complainant prefers a supportive and remedial response, an informal resolution option, or a formal investigation and grievance process.
  - If a supportive and remedial response is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to identify their wishes, assesses their request(s), and implements accordingly. No Formal Grievance Process is initiated, though the Complainant can elect to initiate one later, if desired.
  - If an informal resolution option is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator assesses whether the complaint is suitable for informal resolution and may seek to determine if the Respondent is also willing to engage in informal resolution.
  - If a Formal Grievance Process is preferred by the Complainant, the Title IX Coordinator determines if the misconduct alleged falls within the scope of the 2020 Title IX regulations:
    - If it does, the Title IX Coordinator will initiate the formal investigation and grievance process, directing the investigation to address:
      - an incident, and/or
      - a pattern of alleged misconduct, and/or
      - a culture/climate issue, based on the nature of the complaint.
    - If alleged misconduct does not fall within the scope of the 2020 Title IX regulations, the Title IX Coordinator determines that the regulations do not apply (and will “dismiss” that aspect of the complaint, if any), assesses which policies may apply, which resolution process is applicable, and will refer the matter accordingly, including referring the matter for resolution under Process B, if applicable. Please note that dismissing a complaint under the 2020 Title IX regulations is solely a procedural requirement under Title IX which does not limit NCCC’s authority to address a complaint with an appropriate process and remedies.

#### **a. Risk Assessment**

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<sup>16</sup> If circumstances require, NCCC President or Title IX Coordinator will designate another person to oversee the resolution process should an allegation be made about the Coordinator or the Coordinator be otherwise unavailable, unable to fulfill their duties, or have a conflict of interest.

In some cases, the Title IX Coordinator may determine that a risk assessment should be conducted by the Mental Health Response Team as part of the initial assessment. Risk assessment is the process of evaluating the potential for danger or violence.

**b. Dismissal (Mandatory and Discretionary)<sup>17</sup>**

NCCC must dismiss a formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation or hearing, it is determined that:

- 1) The conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment as defined above, even if proved; and/or
- 2) The conduct did not occur in or have an impact upon an educational program or activity controlled by NCCC (including buildings or property controlled by recognized student organizations), and/or NCCC does not have control of the Respondent; and/or
- 3) The conduct did not occur against a person in the United States; and/or
- 4) At the time of filing a formal complaint, a Complainant is not participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the NCCC<sup>18</sup>.

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

- 1) A Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein; or
- 2) The Respondent is no longer enrolled in or employed by the NCCC; or
- 3) Specific circumstances prevent the NCCC from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

A Complainant who decides to withdraw a complaint may later request to reinstate it or refile it.

Upon any dismissal, NCCC will promptly send written notice of the dismissal and the rationale for doing so simultaneously to the parties.

This dismissal decision is appealable by any party under the procedures for appeal below.

This section does not limit investigation after notice even if there is no formal complaint.

#### **4. Counterclaims**

Neosho County Community College is obligated to ensure that the grievance process is not abused for retaliatory purposes. NCCC permits the filing of counterclaims but uses an initial assessment, described above, to assess whether the allegations in the counterclaim are made in good faith. Counterclaims by a Respondent may be made in good faith, but are on occasion made for purposes of retaliation, instead. Counterclaims made with retaliatory intent will not be permitted.

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<sup>17</sup> These dismissal requirements are mandated by the 2020 Title IX Regulations, 34 CFR §106.45.

<sup>18</sup> Such a Complainant is still entitled to supportive measures, but the formal grievance process is not applicable unless the Title IX Coordinator signs the complaint in the event the Complainant cannot/will not do so.

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

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

## **5. Right to an Advisor**

The parties may each have an Advisor of their choice present with them for all meetings, interviews, and hearings within the resolution process, if they so choose. The parties may select whoever they wish to serve as their Advisor as long as the Advisor is eligible and available.<sup>19</sup>

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

### **a. Who Can Serve as an Advisor**

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

The Title IX Coordinator will also offer to assign a trained Advisor to any party if the party so chooses. If the parties choose an Advisor from the pool available from NCCC, the Advisor will have been trained by NCCC and be familiar with NCCC's resolution process.

If the parties choose an Advisor from outside the pool of those identified by NCCC, the Advisor may not have been trained by NCCC and may not be familiar with NCCC policies and procedures.

Parties also have the right to choose not to have an Advisor in the initial stages of the resolution process, prior to a hearing.

### **b. Advisor's Role in Meetings and Interviews**

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

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

### **c. Advisors in Hearings/NCCC-Appointed Advisor**

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

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<sup>19</sup> "Available" means the party cannot insist on an Advisor who simply doesn't have inclination, time, or availability. Also, the Advisor cannot have institutionally conflicting roles, such as being a Title IX administrator who has an active role in the matter, or a supervisor who must monitor and implement sanctions.

#### **d. Pre-Interview Meetings**

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

#### **e. Advisor Violations of NCCC Policy**

All Advisors are subject to the same NCCC policies and procedures, whether they are attorneys or not, and whether they are selected by a party or assigned by NCCC. Advisors are expected to advise their advisees without disrupting proceedings. Advisors should not address NCCC officials or investigators in a meeting or interview unless invited to do so (e.g., asking procedural questions). The Advisor may not make a presentation or represent their advisee<sup>20</sup> during any meeting or proceeding and may not speak on behalf of the advisee to the Investigator(s) or other Decision-maker(s) except during a hearing proceeding during questioning.

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

Any Advisor who oversteps their role as defined by this policy will be warned only once. If the Advisor continues to disrupt or otherwise fails to respect the limits of the Advisor role, the meeting/interview/hearing will be ended, or other appropriate measures implemented. Subsequently, the Title IX Coordinator will determine how to address the Advisor's non-compliance and future role.

#### **f. Sharing Information with the Advisor**

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

If a party requests that all communication be made through their attorney Advisor, NCCC will comply with that request at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator.

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

#### **g. Privacy of Records Shared with Advisor**

Advisors are expected to maintain the privacy of the records shared with them. These records may not be shared with third parties, disclosed publicly, or used for purposes not explicitly authorized by NCCC. Advisors will be asked to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs). NCCC may restrict the role of any Advisor who does not respect the sensitive nature of the process or who fails to abide by the NCCC's privacy expectations.

#### **h. Expectations of an Advisor**

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<sup>20</sup> Subject to the state law provisions or NCCC policy above.

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

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

#### **i. Expectations of the Parties with Respect to Advisors**

A party may elect to change Advisors during the process and is not obligated to use the same Advisor throughout. The parties are expected to inform the Investigator(s) of the identity of their Advisor at least two (2) business days before the date of their first meeting with Investigators (or as soon as possible if a more expeditious meeting is necessary or desired).

The parties are expected to provide timely notice to the Title IX Coordinator if they change Advisors at any time. It is assumed that if a party changes Advisors, consent to share information with the previous Advisor is terminated, and a release for the new Advisor should be secured. Parties are expected to inform the Title IX Coordinator of the identity of their hearing Advisor at least two (2) business days before the hearing.

As a public entity, NCCC fully respects and accords the Weingarten rights of employees. For parties who are entitled to union representation, the NCCC will allow the unionized employee to have their union representative (if requested by the party) as well as an Advisor of their choice present for all resolution-related meetings and interviews. To uphold the principles of equity, the other party (regardless of union membership) will also be permitted to have two Advisors. Witnesses are/are not permitted to have union representation or Advisors in grievance process interviews or meetings.

#### **j. Assistance in Securing an Advisor**

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

- FACE (<http://www.facecampusequality.org>)
- SAVE (<http://www.saveservices.org>).

Complainants may wish to contact organizations such as:

- The Victim Rights Law Center (<http://www.victimrights.org>),
- The National Center for Victims of Crime (<http://www.victimsofcrime.org>), which maintains the Crime Victim's Bar Association.]
- The Time's Up Legal Defense Fund: <https://nwlc.org/times-up-legal-defense-fund/> ]

### **6. Resolution Processes**

Resolution proceedings are private. All persons present at any time during the resolution process are expected to maintain the privacy of the proceedings in accordance with NCCC Policy.

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

The Formal Grievance Process is NCCC's primary resolution approach, unless Informal Resolution is elected by all parties and NCCC. Three options for Informal Resolution are detailed in this section, and the Formal Grievance Process is detailed starting in the next section.

#### **a. Informal Resolution**

- Supportive Resolution. When the Title IX Coordinator can resolve the matter informally by providing supportive measures (only) to remedy the situation. (This is in addition to and does not limit supportive measures pursuant to Section 8 or paragraph 2.1) of this Interim Resolution process).
- Alternative Resolution. When the parties agree to resolve the matter through an alternative resolution mechanism as described below, including mediation, restorative practices, facilitated dialogue, etc., usually before a formal investigation takes place; see discussion in b., below.
- Accepted Responsibility. When the Respondent accepts responsibility for violating policy, and desires to accept a sanction(s) and end the resolution process; see discussion in c., below.

To initiate Informal Resolution, a Complainant must submit a formal complaint, as defined above. A Respondent who wishes to initiate Informal Resolution should contact the Title IX Coordinator. The parties may agree as a condition of engaging in Informal Resolution that statements made or evidence shared during the Informal Resolution process will not be considered in the Formal Grievance Process unless all parties consent.

It is not necessary to pursue Informal Resolution first in order to pursue a Formal Grievance Process, and any party participating in Informal Resolution can stop the process at any time and begin or resume the Formal Grievance Process.

Prior to implementing Informal Resolution, NCCC will provide the parties with written notice of the reported misconduct and any sanctions or measures that may result from participating in such a process, including information regarding any records that will be maintained or shared by NCCC.

NCCC will obtain voluntary, written confirmation that all parties wish to resolve the matter through Informal Resolution before proceeding and will not pressure the parties to participate in Informal Resolution.

### **b. Alternative Resolution Approaches**

Alternative Resolution is an informal approach which the parties reach a mutually agreed upon resolution of an allegation. All parties must consent to the use of an Alternative Resolution approach.

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

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

The ultimate determination of whether Alternative Resolution is available or successful is to be made by the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is authorized to negotiate a resolution that is acceptable to all parties, and/or to accept a resolution that is proposed by the parties, usually through their Advisors.

The Title IX Coordinator maintains records of any resolution that is reached, and failure to abide by the resolution

agreement may result in appropriate responsive/disciplinary actions. Results of complaints resolved by Informal Resolution or Alternative Resolution are not appealable.

### **c. Respondent Accepts Responsibility for Alleged Violations**

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

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

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

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

## **7. Formal Grievance Process**

The Formal Grievance Process relies on a pool of administrators<sup>21</sup> (“the Pool”) to carry out the process. Members of the Pool are announced in an annual distribution of this policy to all students, employees, prospective students, and prospective employees. They are also listed in the Annual Title IX Report published by the Title IX Office.

### **a. Pool Member Roles**

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

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

### **b. Pool Member Appointment**

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<sup>21</sup> External, trained third-party neutral professionals may also be used to serve in pool roles.

The Title IX Coordinator, in consultation with the President, appoints the Pool<sup>22</sup>, which acts with independence and impartiality. Although members of the Pool are typically trained in a variety of skill sets and can rotate amongst the different roles listed above in different cases, NCCC can also designate permanent roles for individuals in the Pool, using others as substitutes or to provide greater depth of experience when necessary. This process of role assignment may be the result of particular skills, aptitudes, or talents identified in members of the Pool that make them best suited to particular roles.

### **c. Pool Member Training**

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

- The scope of NCCC's Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures
- How to conduct investigations and hearings that protect the safety of Complainants and Respondents, and promote accountability
- Implicit bias
- Disparate treatment
- Reporting, confidentiality, and privacy requirements
- Applicable laws, regulations, and federal regulatory guidance
- How to implement appropriate and situation-specific remedies
- How to investigate in a thorough, reliable, timely, and impartial manner by individuals who receive annual training in conducting investigations of sexual harassment, trauma-informed practices, and impartiality,
- How to uphold fairness, equity, and due process
- How to weigh evidence
- How to conduct questioning
- How to assess credibility
- Impartiality and objectivity
- How to render findings and generate clear, concise, evidence-based rationales
- The definitions of all offenses
- How to apply definitions used by the NCCC with respect to consent (or the absence or negation of consent) consistently, impartially, and in accordance with policy
- How to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes
- How to serve impartially by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias against Respondents and/or for Complainants, and on the basis of sex, race, religion, and other protected characteristics
- Any technology to be used at a live hearing
- Issues of relevance of questions and evidence
- Issues of relevance to create an investigation report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence
- How to determine appropriate sanctions in reference to all forms of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation allegations
- Recordkeeping

Specific training is also provided for all Pool members. All Pool members are required to attend these trainings annually. The materials used to train all members of the Pool are publicly posted on the NCCC website.

## **8. Formal Grievance Process: Notice of Investigation and Allegations**

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<sup>22</sup> This does not preclude NCCC from having all members of the Pool go through an application and/or interview/selection process.

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

The NOIA will include:

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

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

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

## **9. Resolution Timeline**

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

## **10. Appointment of Investigators**

Once the decision to commence a formal investigation is made, the Title IX Coordinator appoints Pool members to conduct the investigation (typically using a team of two Investigators), usually within two (2) business days of determining that an investigation should proceed.

## **11. Ensuring Impartiality**

Any individual materially involved in the administration of the resolution process including the Title IX Coordinator, Investigator(s), and Decision-maker(s) may neither have nor demonstrate a conflict of interest or bias for a party generally, or for a specific Complainant or Respondent.

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

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

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

## **12. Investigation Timeline**

Investigations are completed expeditiously, normally within thirty (30) business days, though some investigations may take weeks or even months, depending on the nature, extent, and complexity of the allegations, availability of witnesses, police involvement, etc.

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

## **13. Delays in the Investigation Process and Interactions with Law Enforcement**

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

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

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

## **14. Steps in the Investigation Process**

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

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

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

- Determine the identity and contact information of the Complainant
- Identify all policies implicated by the alleged misconduct and notify the Complainant and Respondent of all of the specific policies implicated
- Assist the Title IX Coordinator, if needed, with conducting a prompt initial assessment to determine if the allegations indicate a potential policy violation
- Commence a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation by identifying issues and developing a strategic investigation plan, including a witness list, evidence list, intended investigation timeframe, and order of interviews for all witnesses and the parties
- Meet with the Complainant to finalize their interview/statement, if necessary
- Work with the Title IX Coordinator, as necessary, to prepare the initial Notice of Investigation and Allegation (NOIA). The NOIA may be amended with any additional or dismissed allegations
  - Notice should inform the parties of their right to have the assistance of an Advisor, who could be a member of the Pool or an Advisor of their choosing present for all meetings attended by the party
- Provide each interviewed party and witness an opportunity to review and verify the Investigator's summary notes (or transcript) of the relevant evidence/testimony from their respective interviews and meetings
- Make good faith efforts to notify the parties of any meeting or interview involving the other party, in advance when possible
- When participation of a party is expected, provide that party with written notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting, as well as the expected participants and purpose
- Interview all available, relevant witnesses and conduct follow-up interviews as necessary
- Allow each party the opportunity to suggest witnesses and questions they wish the Investigator(s) to ask of the other party and witnesses, and document in the report which questions were asked, with a rationale for any changes or omissions
- Complete the investigation promptly and without unreasonable deviation from the intended timeline
- Provide regular status updates to the parties throughout the investigation
- Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, provide the parties and their respective Advisors (if so desired by the parties) with a list of witnesses whose information will be used to render a finding
- Write a comprehensive investigation report fully summarizing the investigation, all witness interviews, and addressing all relevant evidence. Appendices including relevant physical or documentary evidence will be included
- The Investigator(s) gather, assess, and synthesize evidence, but make no conclusions, engage in no policy analysis, and render no recommendations as part of their report
- Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, provide the parties and their respective Advisors (if so desired by the parties) a secured electronic or hard copy of the draft investigation report as well as an opportunity to inspect and review all of the evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the reported misconduct, including evidence upon which the NCCC does not intend to rely in reaching a determination, for a ten (10) business day review and comment period so that each party may meaningfully respond to the evidence. The parties may elect to waive the full ten days. Each copy of the materials shared will be watermarked on each page with the role of the person receiving it (e.g., Complainant, Respondent, Complainant's Advisor, Respondent's Advisor).
- The Investigator(s) may elect to respond in writing in the investigation report to the parties' submitted responses and/or to share the responses between the parties for additional responses
- The Investigator(s) will incorporate relevant elements of the parties' written responses into the final investigation report, include any additional relevant evidence, make any necessary revisions, and finalize the report. The Investigator(s) should document all rationales for any changes made after the review and comment period

- The Investigator(s) shares the report with the Title IX Coordinator and/or legal counsel for their review and feedback
- The Investigator will incorporate any relevant feedback, and the final report is then shared with all parties and their Advisors through secure electronic transmission or hard copy at least ten (10) business days prior to a hearing. The parties and advisors are also provided with a file of any directly related evidence that was not included in the report

### **15. Role and Participation of Witnesses in the Investigation**

Witnesses (as distinguished from the parties) who are employees of the NCCC are strongly encouraged to cooperate with and participate in the NCCC's investigation and resolution process. Student witnesses and witnesses from outside the NCCC community are encouraged to cooperate with NCCC investigations and to share what they know about a complaint.

Although in-person interviews for parties and all potential witnesses are ideal, circumstances (e.g., study abroad, summer break) may require individuals to be interviewed remotely. Skype, Zoom, FaceTime, WebEx, or similar technologies may be used for interviews if the Investigator(s) determine that timeliness, efficiency, or other reasons dictate a need for remote interviewing. The NCCC will take appropriate steps to reasonably ensure the security/privacy of remote interviews.

Witnesses may also provide written statements in lieu of interviews or choose to respond to written questions, if deemed appropriate by the Investigator(s), though not preferred. If a witness submits a written statement but does not intend to be and is not present for questioning at a hearing, their written statement may not be used as evidence.

### **16. Recording of Interviews**

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

### **17. Evidentiary Considerations in the Investigation**

The investigation does not consider: 1) incidents not directly related to the possible violation, unless they evidence a pattern; or 2) questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition; or 3) questions and evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior, unless such questions and evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the conduct alleged by the Complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the Respondent and are offered to prove consent.

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

### **18. Referral for Hearing**

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

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

The Title IX Coordinator will select an appropriate Decision-maker from the Pool depending on whether the

Respondent is an employee or a student, and provide a copy of the investigation report. Allegations involving student-employees in the context of their employment will be directed to the appropriate Decision-maker depending on the context and nature of the alleged misconduct.

### **19. Hearing Decision-maker Composition**

NCCC will designate a single Decision-maker or a three-member panel from the Pool, at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator. The single Decision-maker will also Chair the hearing. With a panel, one of the three members will be appointed as Chair by the Title IX Coordinator.

The Decision-maker(s) will not have had any previous involvement with the investigation. The Title IX Coordinator may elect to have an alternate from the Pool sit in throughout the hearing process in the event that a substitute is needed for any reason.

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

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

### **20. Evidentiary Considerations in the Hearing**

Any evidence that the Decision-maker(s) determine(s) is relevant may be considered. The hearing does not consider: 1) incidents not directly related to the possible violation, unless they evidence a pattern; 2) questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition; or 3) questions or evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior, unless such questions and evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the conduct alleged by the Complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the Respondent and are offered to prove consent.

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

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

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

After post-hearing deliberation, the Decision-maker(s) render(s) a determination based on the preponderance of the evidence; whether it is more likely than not that the Respondent violated the Policy as alleged.

### **21. Notice of Hearing**

No less than ten (10) business days prior to the hearing<sup>23</sup>, the Title IX Coordinator or the Chair will send notice of the hearing to the parties. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in-person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

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<sup>23</sup> Unless an expedited hearing is agreed to by all parties.

The notice will contain:

- A description of the alleged violation(s), a list of all policies allegedly violated, a description of the applicable hearing procedures, and a statement of the potential sanctions/responsive actions that could result.
- The time, date, and location of the hearing.
- Description of any technology that will be used to facilitate the hearing.
- Information about the option for the live hearing to occur with the parties located in separate rooms using technology that enables the Decision-maker(s) and parties to see and hear a party or witness answering questions. Such a request must be raised with the Title IX Coordinator at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing.
- A list of all those who will attend the hearing, along with an invitation to object to any Decision-maker(s) on the basis of demonstrated bias or conflict of interest. This must be raised with the Title IX Coordinator at least two (2) business days prior to the hearing.
- Information on how the hearing will be recorded and on access to the recording for the parties after the hearing.
- A statement that if any party or witness does not appear at the scheduled hearing, the hearing may be held in their absence, and the party's or witness's testimony and any statements given prior to the hearing will not be considered by the Decision-maker(s). For compelling reasons, the Chair may reschedule the hearing.
- Notification that the parties may have the assistance of an Advisor of their choosing at the hearing and will be required to have one present for any questions they may desire to ask. The party must notify the Title IX Coordinator if they do not have an Advisor, and the NCCC will appoint one. Each party must have an Advisor present. There are no exceptions.
- A copy of all the materials provided to the Decision-maker(s) about the matter, unless they have been provided already.<sup>24</sup>
- An invitation to each party to submit to the Chair an impact statement pre-hearing that the Decision-maker(s) will review during any sanction determination.
- An invitation to contact the Title IX Coordinator to arrange any disability accommodations, language assistance, and/or interpretation services that may be needed at the hearing, at least seven (7) business days prior to the hearing.
- Whether parties can/cannot bring mobile phones/devices into the hearing.

Hearings for possible violations that occur near or after the end of an academic term (assuming the Respondent is still subject to this Policy) and are unable to be resolved prior to the end of term will typically be held immediately after the end of the term or during the summer, as needed, to meet the resolution timeline followed by NCCC and remain within the 60-90 business day goal for resolution.

## **22. Alternative Hearing Participation Options**

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

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

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<sup>24</sup> The final investigation report may be shared using electronic means that preclude downloading, forwarding, or otherwise sharing.

### **23. Pre-Hearing Preparation**

After any necessary consultation with the parties, the Chair will provide the names of persons who will be participating in the hearing, all pertinent documentary evidence, and the final investigation report to the parties at least ten (10) business days prior to the hearing.

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

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

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

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

### **24. Pre-Hearing Meetings**

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

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

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

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

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

## **25. Hearing Procedures**

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

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

The Chair will answer all questions of procedure. Anyone appearing at the hearing to provide information will respond to questions on their own behalf.

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

## **26. Joint Hearings**

In hearings involving more than one Respondent or in which two (2) or more Complainants have accused the same individual of substantially similar conduct, the default procedure will be to hear the allegations jointly.

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

## **27. The Order of the Hearing – Introductions and Explanation of Procedure**

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

The Chair AND/OR hearing facilitator then conducts the hearing according to the hearing script. At the hearing, recording, witness logistics, party logistics, curation of documents, separation of the parties, and other administrative elements of the hearing process are managed by a non-voting hearing facilitator/case manager appointed by the Title IX Coordinator.<sup>25</sup> The hearing facilitator may attend to: logistics of rooms for various parties/witnesses as they wait; flow of parties/witnesses in and out of the hearing space; ensuring recording and/or virtual conferencing technology is working as intended; copying and distributing materials to participants, as appropriate, etc.

## **28. Investigator Presents the Final Investigation Report**

The Investigator(s) will then present a summary of the final investigation report, including items that are contested and those that are not, and will be subject to questioning by the Decision-maker(s) and the parties

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<sup>25</sup> If not conflicted out by previous involvement, the Title IX Coordinator may serve as the hearing facilitator/case manager.

(through their Advisors). The Investigator(s) will be present during the entire hearing process, but not during deliberations.

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

## **29. Testimony and Questioning**

Once the Investigator(s) present(s) the report and are questioned, the parties and witnesses may provide relevant information in turn, beginning with the Complainant, and then in the order determined by the Chair. The hearing will facilitate questioning of parties and witnesses by the Decision-maker(s) and then by the parties through their Advisors.

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

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

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

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

## **30. Refusal to Submit to Questioning; Inferences**

Cross-examination is an all or nothing proposition, meaning that if any relevant question is refused, no statements of that party or witness are admissible. Only if a party or witness is willing to submit to cross-examination, and answers all questions, will their statements prior to or at the hearing be fully admissible. If a party or witness chooses not to submit to cross-examination at the hearing, either because they do not attend the meeting, or they attend but refuse to participate in questioning, then the Decision-maker(s) may not rely on any prior statement made by that party or witness at the hearing (including those contained in the investigation report) in the ultimate determination of responsibility. The Decision-maker(s) must disregard all such statements. Evidence provided that is something other than a statement by the party or witness may be considered.

Whether a party or witness does or does not answer questions from the Decision-maker, their statements will be admissible as long as they are willing to submit to cross-examination questions, even if they are not asked such questions. The Decision-maker(s) may not draw any inference solely from a party's or witness's absence from the hearing or refusal to answer cross-examination or other questions.

If collateral charges of policy violations other than sexual harassment are considered at the same hearing, the Decision-maker(s) may consider all evidence it deems relevant, may rely on any relevant statement as long as the opportunity for questioning is afforded to all parties through their Advisors, and may draw reasonable inferences from any decision by any party or witness not to participate or respond to questions.

If a party's Advisor of choice refuses to comply with the NCCC's established rules of decorum for the hearing, the NCCC may require the party to use a different Advisor. If a NCCC-provided Advisor refuses to comply with the rules of decorum, the NCCC may provide that party with a different Advisor to conduct questioning on behalf of that party.

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

### **31. Recording Hearings**

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

The Decision-maker(s), the parties, their Advisors, and appropriate administrators of NCCC will be permitted to listen to the recording or review a transcript of the recording in a controlled environment determined by the Title IX Coordinator, upon request. No person will be given or be allowed to make a copy of the recording without permission of the Title IX Coordinator.

### **32. Deliberation, Decision-making, and Standard of Proof**

The Decision-maker(s) will deliberate in closed session to determine whether the Respondent is responsible or not responsible for the policy violation(s) in question. If a panel is used, a simple majority vote is required to determine the finding. The preponderance of the evidence standard of proof is used. The hearing facilitator may be invited to attend the deliberation by the Chair, but is there only to facilitate procedurally, not to address the substance of the allegations.

When there is a finding of responsibility on one or more of the allegations, the Decision-maker(s) may then consider the previously submitted party impact statements in determining appropriate sanction(s).

The Chair will ensure that each of the parties has an opportunity to review any impact statement submitted by the other party(ies). The Decision-maker(s) may – at their discretion – consider the statements, but they are not binding.

The Decision-maker(s) will review the statements and any pertinent conduct history provided by appropriate administrator and will recommend the appropriate sanction(s) in consultation with other appropriate administrators, as required.

The Chair will then prepare a written deliberation statement and deliver it to the Title IX Coordinator, detailing the determination, rationale, the evidence used in support of its determination, the evidence not relied upon in its determination, credibility assessments, and any sanctions or recommendations.

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

### **33. Notice of Outcome**

Using the deliberation statement, the Title IX Coordinator will work with the Chair to prepare a Notice of Outcome letter. The Notice of Outcome may then be reviewed by legal counsel. The Title IX Coordinator will then share the letter, including the final determination, rationale, and any applicable sanction(s) with the parties and their Advisors within 7 business days of receiving the Decision-maker(s)' deliberation statement.

The Notice of Outcome will be shared with the parties simultaneously. Notification will be made in writing and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person, mailed to the local or permanent address of the parties as indicated in official NCCC records<sup>26</sup>, or emailed to the parties' NCCC-issued email or otherwise approved account. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in-person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

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

The Notice of Outcome will specify the finding on each alleged policy violation; the findings of fact that support the determination; conclusions regarding the application of the relevant policy to the facts at issue; a statement of, and rationale for, the result of each allegation to the extent NCCC is permitted to share such information under state or federal law; any sanctions issued which NCCC is permitted to share according to state or federal law; and whether remedies will be provided to the Complainant to ensure access to NCCC's educational or employment program or activity.

The Notice of Outcome will also include information on when the results are considered by NCCC to be final, any changes that occur prior to finalization, and the relevant procedures and bases for any available appeal options.

### **34. Statement of the Rights of the Parties (see Appendix C)**

### **35. Sanctions**

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

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

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

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

#### **a. Student Sanctions**

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<sup>26</sup> Again, consider the confidentiality implications of sending mail to a home address.

The following are the usual sanctions<sup>27</sup> that may be imposed upon students or organizations singly or in combination<sup>28</sup>:

- *Warning*: A formal statement that the conduct was unacceptable and a warning that further violation of any NCCC policy, procedure, or directive will result in more severe sanctions/responsive actions.
- *Required Counseling*: A mandate to meet with and engage in either NCCC-sponsored or external counseling to better comprehend the misconduct and its effects.
- *Probation*: A written reprimand for violation of institutional policy, providing for more severe disciplinary sanctions in the event that the student or organization is found in violation of any institutional policy, procedure, or directive within a specified period of time. Terms of the probation will be articulated and may include denial of specified social privileges, exclusion from co-curricular activities, exclusion from designated areas of campus, no-contact orders, and/or other measures deemed appropriate.
- *Suspension*: Termination of student status for a definite period of time not to exceed two years and/or until specific criteria are met. Students who return from suspension are automatically placed on probation through the remainder of their tenure as a student at NCCC.
- *Expulsion*: Permanent termination of student status and revocation of rights to be on campus for any reason or to attend NCCC-sponsored events. This sanction will be noted permanently as a Conduct Expulsion on the student's official transcript, [subject to any applicable expungement policies.]
- *Withholding Diploma*: NCCC may withhold a student's diploma for a specified period of time and/or deny a student participation in commencement activities as a sanction if the student is found responsible for an alleged violation.
- *Revocation of Degree*: NCCC reserves the right to revoke a degree previously awarded from NCCC for fraud, misrepresentation, and/or other violation of NCCC policies, procedures, or directives in obtaining the degree, or for other serious violations committed by a student prior to graduation.
- *Organizational Sanctions*: Deactivation, loss of recognition, loss of some or all privileges (including NCCC registration) for a specified period of time.
- *Other Actions*: In addition to or in place of the above sanctions, the NCCC may assign any other sanctions as deemed appropriate.

1) *Warning*: A notice in writing to the student that the student is violating or has violated institutional regulations.

2) *Probation*: A written reprimand for violation of specified regulations. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if the student is found to be violating any institutional regulations during the probationary period. 3) *Loss of Privileges*: Denial of specified privileges for a designated period of time. 4) *Restitution*: Compensation for loss, damage or injury. This may take the form of appropriate service and/or monetary or material replacement. 5) *Discretionary Sanctions*: Work assignments, service to the College or other related discretionary assignments. 6) *Student Housing Suspension*: Separation of the student from Student Housing for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for readmission may be specified. 7) *Student Housing Expulsion*: Permanent separation of the student from Student Housing. 8) *College Suspension*: Separation of the student from the College for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions or readmission may be specified. 9) *Withdrawal*: Withdrawal is administrative removal of a student from a class or from the College and may be imposed in instances of unmet financial obligation; for reasons of health; pending the outcome of a competent medical evaluation. The withdrawn student may also be barred from re-enrollment until such time as specific conditions have been met. 10) *Expulsion*: Permanent severance from NCCC.

## **b. Employee Sanctions/Responsive/Corrective Actions**

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<sup>27</sup> NCCC policies on transcript notation will apply to these proceedings.

<sup>28</sup> Subject to NCCC's Organizational Code of Conduct.

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

- *Warning – Verbal or Written*
- *Performance Improvement Plan/Management Process*
- *Enhanced supervision, observation, or review*
- *Required Counseling*
- *Required Training or Education*
- *Probation*
- *Denial of Pay Increase/Pay Grade*
- *Loss of Oversight or Supervisory Responsibility*
- *Demotion*
- *Transfer*
- *Reassignment*
- *Delay of tenure track progress*
- *Assignment to new supervisor*
- *Restriction of stipends, research, and/or professional development resources*
- *Suspension with pay*
- *Suspension without pay*
- *Termination*
- *Other Actions:* In addition to or in place of the above sanctions/responsive actions, NCCC may assign any other responsive actions as deemed appropriate.

### **36. Withdrawal or Resignation While Charges Pending**

a. Students: Should a Respondent decide not to participate in the resolution process, the process proceeds absent their participation to a reasonable resolution. Should a student Respondent permanently withdraw from NCCC, the resolution process ends with a dismissal, as NCCC no longer has disciplinary jurisdiction over the withdrawn student.

However, NCCC will continue to address and remedy any systemic issues or concerns that may have contributed to the alleged violation(s), and any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation. The student who permanently withdraws from NCCC while the process is pending may not return to the NCCC in any capacity. Admissions and Human Resources will be notified, accordingly. Such exclusion applies to all campuses of NCCC].

If the student Respondent only withdraws or takes a leave for a specified period of time (e.g., one semester or term), the resolution process may continue remotely and that student is not permitted to return to NCCC unless and until all sanctions, if any, have been satisfied.

b. Employees: Should an employee Respondent resign with unresolved allegations pending, the resolution process ends with dismissal, as NCCC no longer has disciplinary jurisdiction over the resigned employee.

However, NCCC will continue to address and remedy any systemic issues or concerns that contributed to the alleged violation(s), and any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

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

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

### **37. Appeals**

Any party may file a request for appeal (“Request for Appeal”), but it must be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within 3 days of the delivery of the Notice of Outcome.

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

The Request for Appeal will be forwarded to the Appeal Chair or designee for consideration to determine if the request meets the grounds for appeal (a Review for Standing).

This review is not a review of the merits of the appeal, but solely a determination as to whether the request meets the grounds and is timely filed.

#### **a. Grounds for Appeal**

Appeals are limited to the following grounds:

- (A) Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- (B) New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
- (C) The Title IX Coordinator, Investigator(s), or Decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against Complainants or Respondents generally or the specific Complainant or Respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

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

If any of the grounds in the Request for Appeal meet the grounds in this Policy, then the Appeal Chair will notify the other party(ies) and their Advisors, the Title IX Coordinator, and, when appropriate, the Investigators and/or the original Decision-maker(s).

The other party(ies) and their Advisors, the Title IX Coordinator, and, when appropriate, the Investigators and/or the original Decision-maker(s) will be mailed, emailed, and/or provided a hard copy of the request for an appeal with the approved grounds and then be given 3 business days to submit a response to the portion of the appeal that was approved and involves them. All responses, if any, will be forwarded by the Chair to all parties for review and comment.

The non-appealing party (if any) may also choose to raise a new ground for appeal at this time. If so, that will be reviewed to determine if it meets the grounds in this Policy by the Appeal Chair and either denied or approved. If approved, it will be forwarded to the party who initially requested an appeal, the Investigator(s) and/or original Decision-maker(s), as necessary, who will submit their responses, if any, in 3 business days, which will be circulated for review and comment by all parties. If not approved, the parties will be notified accordingly, in writing.

Neither party may submit any new requests for appeal after this time period. The Appeal Chair will collect any additional information needed and all documentation regarding the approved grounds for appeal, and the subsequent responses will be shared with the Appeal Chair and the Chair will render a decision in no more than 7 business days, barring exigent circumstances. All decisions apply the preponderance of the evidence standard.

A Notice of Appeal Outcome will be sent to all parties simultaneously including the decision on each approved ground and rationale for each decision. The Notice of Appeal Outcome will specify the finding on each ground for appeal, any specific instructions for remand or reconsideration, any sanctions that may result which NCCC is

permitted to share according to state or federal law, and the rationale supporting the essential findings to the extent NCCC is permitted to share under state or federal law.

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

#### **b. Sanctions Status During the Appeal**

Any sanctions imposed as a result of the hearing are stayed during the appeal process. Supportive measures may be reinstated, subject to the same supportive measure procedures above.

If any of the sanctions are to be implemented immediately post-hearing, but pre-appeal, then emergency removal procedures (detailed above) for a show cause meeting on the justification for doing so must be permitted within 48 hours of implementation.

If the original sanctions include separation in any form, NCCC may place a hold on official transcripts, diplomas, graduations, and course registration pending the outcome of an appeal. The Respondent may request a stay of these holds from the Title IX Coordinator within two (2) business days of the notice of the sanctions. The request will be evaluated by the Title IX Coordinator or designee, whose determination is final.

#### **c. Appeal Considerations**

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

### **38. Long-Term Remedies/Other Actions**

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

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

- Referral to counseling and health services
- Education to the individual and/or the community
- Permanent alteration of housing assignments
- Permanent alteration of work arrangements for employees
- Provision of campus safety escorts
- Policy modification and/or training
- Provision of transportation accommodations
- Implementation of long-term contact limitations between the parties
- Implementation of adjustments to academic deadlines, course schedules, etc.

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

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

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

### **39. Failure to Comply with Sanctions and/or Responsive Actions**

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

Failure to abide by the sanction(s)/action(s) imposed by the date specified, whether by refusal, neglect, or any other reason, may result in additional sanction(s)/action(s), including suspension, expulsion, and/or termination from NCCC.

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

### **40. Recordkeeping**

NCCC will maintain for a period of at least seven years records of:

1. Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility and any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript required under federal regulation;
2. Any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the Respondent;
3. Any remedies provided to the Complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to NCCC's education program or activity;
4. Any appeal and the result therefrom;
5. Any Informal Resolution and the result therefrom;
6. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, Decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an Informal Resolution process. NCCC will make these training materials publicly available on NCCC's website. and
7. Any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, including:
  - a. The basis for all conclusions that the response was not deliberately indifferent;
  - b. Any measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to NCCC's education program or

- activity; and
- c. If no supportive measures were provided to the Complainant, document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

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

#### **41. Disabilities Accommodations in the Resolution Process**

NCCC is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and support to qualified students, employees, or others with disabilities to ensure equal access to NCCC's resolution process.

Anyone needing such accommodations or support should contact the Dean for Students Services on the Chanute campus and the Dean for the Ottawa and Online campuses on the Ottawa campus, or the Director of Human Resources if an employee, who will review the request and, in consultation with the person requesting the accommodation and the Title IX Coordinator, determine which accommodations are appropriate and necessary for full participation in the process.

#### **42. Revision of this Policy and Procedures**

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

During the resolution process, the Title IX Coordinator may make minor modifications to procedures that do not materially jeopardize the fairness owed to any party, such as to accommodate summer schedules. The Title IX Coordinator may also vary procedures materially with notice (on the institutional website, with the appropriate effective date identified) upon determining that changes to law or regulation require Policy or procedural alterations not reflected in this Policy and procedures.

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

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

## **APPENDIX A: POLICY EXAMPLES**

Some examples of possible sexual harassment include:<sup>29</sup>

- A professor offers for a student to have sex or go on a date with them in exchange for a good grade. This constitutes sexual harassment regardless of whether the student accedes to the request and irrespective of whether a good grade is promised or a bad grade is threatened.
- A student repeatedly sends graphic, sexually-oriented jokes and pictures around campus via social media to hundreds of other students. Many don't find it funny and ask them to stop, but they do not. Because of these jokes, one student avoids the sender on campus and in the residence hall in which they both live, eventually asking to move to a different building and dropping a class they had together.
- A professor engages students in class in discussions about the students' past sexual experiences, yet the conversations are not in any way germane to the subject matter of the class. The professor inquires about explicit details and demands that students answer them, though the students are clearly uncomfortable and hesitant.
- An ex-partner widely spreads false stories about their sex life with their former partner to the clear discomfort and frustration of the former partner, turning the former partner into a social pariah on campus.
- Chris has recently transitioned from male to non-binary, but primarily expresses as a female. Since their transition, Chris has noticed that their African Studies professor, Dr. Mukembo, pays them a lot more attention. Chris is sexually attracted to Professor Mukembo and believes the attraction is mutual. Chris decides to act on the attraction. One day, Chris visits Dr. Mukembo during office hours, and after a long conversation about being non-binary, Chris kisses Dr. Mukembo. Dr. Mukembo is taken aback, stops the kiss, and tells Chris not to do that. Dr. Mukembo explains to Chris that they are not interested in Chris sexually or romantically. Chris takes it hard, crying to Dr. Mukembo about how hard it is to find someone who is interested in them now based on their sexual identity. Dr. Mukembo feels sorry for Chris and softens the blow by telling them that no matter whether they like Chris or not, faculty-student relationships are prohibited by the university. Chris takes this as encouragement. One night, Chris goes to a gay bar some distance from campus and sees Dr. Mukembo there. Chris tries to buy Dr. Mukembo a drink and, again, tries to kiss Dr. Mukembo. Dr. Mukembo leaves the bar abruptly. The next day, Chris makes several online posts that out Dr. Mukembo as gay and raise questions about whether they are sexually involved with students. Dr. Mukembo contacts the Title IX Office and alleges that Chris is sexually harassing him.

### **Examples of Stalking**

- Students A and B were "friends with benefits." Student A wanted a more serious relationship, which caused student B to break it off. Student A could not let go and pursued student B relentlessly. Student B obtained a campus no-contact order. Subsequently, Student B discovered their social media accounts were being accessed, and things were being posted and messaged as if they were from them, but they were not. Whoever accessed their account posted a picture of a penis, making it look as if Student B had sent out a picture of themselves, though it was not their penis. This caused them considerable embarrassment and social anxiety. They changed their passwords, only to have it happen again. Seeking help from the Title IX Coordinator, Student B met with the IT department, which discovered an app on their phone and a keystroke recorder on their laptop, both of which were being used to transmit their data to a third party.

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<sup>29</sup> ATIXA recommends incorporation of examples into policy as an educational and preventive tool. Some campuses may prefer to break these out into separate documents or resources.

- A graduate student working as an on-campus tutor received flowers and gifts delivered to their office. After learning the gifts were from a student they recently tutored, the graduate student thanked the student and stated that it was not necessary and would appreciate it if the gift deliveries stopped. The student then started leaving notes of love and gratitude on the tutor's car, both on-campus and at home. Asked again to stop, the student stated by email, "You can ask me to stop, but I'm not giving up. We are meant to be together, and I'll do anything to make you have the feelings for me that I have for you." When the tutor did not respond, the student emailed again, "You cannot escape me. I will track you to the ends of the earth. If I can't have you, no one will."

#### Examples of Sexual Assault:

- Amanda and Bill meet at a party. They spend the evening dancing and getting to know each other. Bill convinces Amanda to come up to his room. From 11:00 p.m. until 3:00 a.m., Bill uses every line he can think of to convince Amanda to have sex with him, but she adamantly refuses. Despite her clear communications that she is not interested in doing anything sexual with him, Bill keeps at her, questions her religious convictions, and accuses her of being "a prude." He brings up several rumors that he has heard about how she performed oral sex on a number of other guys. Finally, it seems to Bill that her resolve is weakening, and he convinces her to "jerk him off" (hand to genital contact). Amanda would have never done it but for Bill's incessant coercion.
- Jiang is a junior. Beth is a sophomore. Jiang comes to Beth's residence hall room with some mutual friends to watch a movie. Jiang and Beth, who have never met before, are attracted to each other. After the movie, everyone leaves, and Jiang and Beth are alone. They hit it off, soon become more intimate, and start to make out. Jiang verbally expresses his desire to have sex with Beth. Beth, who was abused by a babysitter at the age of five and avoids sexual relations as a result, is shocked at how quickly things are progressing. As Jiang takes her by the wrist over to the bed, lays her down, undresses her, and begins to have intercourse with Beth, Beth has a severe flashback to her childhood trauma. She wants to tell Jiang to stop but cannot. Beth is stiff and unresponsive during the intercourse.
- Kevin and John are at a party. Kevin is not sure how much John has been drinking, but he is pretty sure it's a lot. After the party, he walks John to his apartment, and John comes on to Kevin, initiating sexual activity. Kevin asks John if he is really up to this, and John says yes. They remove each other's clothes, and they end up in John's bed. Suddenly, John runs for the bathroom. When he returns, his face is pale, and Kevin thinks he may have thrown up. John gets back into bed, and they begin to have sexual intercourse. Kevin is having a good time, though he can't help but notice that John seems pretty groggy and passive, and he thinks John may have even passed out briefly during the sex, but he came to again. When Kevin runs into John the next day, he thanks him for the great night. John remembers nothing and decides to make a report to the Dean.

#### Examples of Retaliation:

- Student-athlete A alleges sexual harassment by a coach; the coach subsequently cuts the student-athlete's playing time without a legitimate justification.
- A faculty member alleges gender inequity in pay within her department; the Department Chair then revokes approval for the faculty member to attend a national conference, citing the faculty member's tendency to "ruffle feathers."
- A student from Organization A participates in a sexual harassment investigation as a witness whose testimony is damaging to the Respondent, who is also a member of Organization A; the student is subsequently removed as a member of Organization A because of their participation in the investigation.



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

ATIXA has framed a process for IR that includes:

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

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

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

Here are the principles to be considered in supporting various approaches to informal resolution:

- IR can be applied in any sex/gender-based interpersonal conflict but may not be appropriate or advisable in cases involving violent incidents (sexual violence, stalking, domestic and dating violence, severe sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, etc.)
- Situations involving dangerous patterns or significant ongoing threat to the community should not be resolved by IR.
- The determination of whether to permit an IR-based resolution is entirely at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator (TIXC) and in line with the requirements for IR laid out in the Title IX regulations.
- Any party can end IR early-, mid-, or late-process for any reason or no reason.
- IR can be attempted before and in lieu of formal resolution as a diversionary resolution (although a formal complaint must be filed if you are within Section 106.30, per OCR).
- Alternative approaches can inform formal resolution, as in a formal resolution model infused with restorative practices.
- IR could be deployed after formal resolution, as an adjunct healing/catharsis opportunity (that could potentially mitigate sanctions or be a form of sanction).
- Alternative Resolution approaches to IR must be facilitated by NCCC or a third-party. There may be value in creating clearly agreed-upon ground rules, which the parties must sign in advance and agree to abide by, otherwise the informal resolution process may be deemed to have failed.
- Technology-facilitated IR can be made available, should the parties not be able or willing to meet in person.
- If IR fails, a formal resolution can take place thereafter. No evidence elicited within the “safe space” of the IR facilitation is later admissible in the formal resolution unless all parties consent.
- With cases involving violence, the preferred alternative approach typically involves a minimal number of essential parties and is not a restorative circle approach with many constituents, in order to ensure confidentiality.
- Some approaches require a reasonable gesture toward accountability (this could be more than an acknowledgement of harm) and some acceptance, or at least recognition, by the Respondent that catharsis is of value and likely the primary goal of the Complainant. A full admission by the Respondent is not a prerequisite. This willingness needs to be vetted carefully in advance by the TIXC before determining that an incident is amenable/appropriate for resolution by IR.
- IR can result in an accord or agreement between the parties (Complainant, Respondent, NCCC), which is summarized in writing by and enforced by NCCC. This can be a primary goal of the process.
- IR can result in the voluntary imposition of safety measures, remedies, and/or agreed-upon resolutions by the parties that are enforceable by NCCC. These can be part of the accord/agreement.
- As a secondary goal, IR can result in the voluntary acceptance of “sanctions,” meaning that a Respondent could agree to withdraw, self-suspend (by taking a leave of absence), or undertake other

restrictions/transfers/online course options that would help to ensure the safety/educational access of the Complainant, in lieu of formal sanctions that would create a formal record for the Respondent. These are enforceable by NCCC as part of the accord/agreement, as may be terms of mutual release, non-disparagement, and/or non-disclosure.

- Although a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) could result from IR, it would have to be mutually agreed-upon by the parties in an environment of non-coercion verified by the TIXC.
- Institutions must develop clear rules for managing/facilitating the conference/meeting/dialogue of alternative resolution approaches, to ensure they are civil, age-appropriate, culturally-competent, reflective of power imbalances, and maximize the potential for the resolution process to result in catharsis, restoration, remedy, etc., for the harmed party(ies).

### **APPENDIX C: STATEMENT OF RIGHTS OF THE PARTIES**

- The right to an equitable investigation and resolution of all credible allegations of prohibited harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation made in good faith to NCCC officials.
- The right to timely written notice of all alleged violations, including the identity of the parties involved (if known), the precise misconduct being alleged, the date and location of the alleged misconduct (if known), the implicated policies and procedures, and possible sanctions.
- The right to timely written notice of any material adjustments to the allegations (e.g., additional incidents or allegations, additional Complainants, unsubstantiated allegations) and any attendant adjustments needed to clarify potentially implicated policy violations.
- The right to be informed in advance of any public release of information by NCCC regarding the allegation(s) or underlying incident(s), whenever possible.
- The right not to have any personally identifiable information released by NCCC to the public without consent provided, except to the extent permitted by law.
- The right to be treated with respect by NCCC officials.
- The right to have NCCC Policy and these procedures followed without material deviation.
- The right not to be pressured to mediate or otherwise informally resolve any reported misconduct involving violence, including sexual violence.
- The right not to be discouraged by NCCC officials from reporting sexual harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation to both on-campus and off-campus authorities.
- The right to be informed by NCCC officials of options to notify proper law enforcement authorities, including on-campus and local police, and the option(s) to be assisted by NCCC in notifying such authorities, if the party so chooses. This also includes the right not to be pressured to report.
- The right to have allegations of violations of this Policy responded to promptly and with sensitivity by NCCC law enforcement and/or other NCCC officials.
- The right to be informed of available supportive measures, such as counseling; advocacy; health care; student financial aid, visa, and immigration assistance; and/or other services, both on campus and in the community.
- The right to a NCCC-implemented no-contact order (or a no-trespass order against a non-affiliated third party) when a person has engaged in or threatens to engage in stalking, threatening, harassing, or other improper conduct.

The right to be informed of available assistance in changing academic, living, and/or working situations after an alleged incident of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation, if such changes are reasonably available. No formal report, or investigation, either campus or criminal, needs to occur before this option is available. Such actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Relocating an on-campus student's housing to a different on-campus location
- Assistance from NCCC staff in completing the relocation
- Changing an employee's work environment (e.g., reporting structure, office/workspace relocation)
- Transportation accommodations

- Visa/immigration assistance
  - Arranging to dissolve a housing contract and provide a pro-rated refund
  - Exam, paper, and/or assignment rescheduling or adjustment
  - Receiving an incomplete in, or a withdrawal from, a class (may be retroactive)
  - Transferring class sections
  - Temporary withdrawal/leave of absence (may be retroactive)
  - Campus safety escorts
  - Alternative course completion options.
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- The right to have NCCC maintain such actions for as long as necessary and for supportive measures to remain confidential, provided confidentiality does not impair NCCC's ability to provide the supportive measures.
  - The right to receive sufficiently advanced, written notice of any meeting or interview involving the other party, when possible.
  - The right to have the Investigator(s), Advisors, and/or Decision-maker(s) identify and question relevant available witnesses, including expert witnesses.
  - The right to provide the Investigator(s)/Decision-maker(s) with a list of questions that, if deemed relevant by the Investigator(s)/Decision-maker(s), may be asked of any party or witness.
  - The right to have inadmissible prior sexual predisposition/history or irrelevant character evidence excluded by the decision-maker.
  - The right to know the relevant and directly related evidence obtained and to respond to that evidence.
  - The right to a fair opportunity to provide the Investigator(s) with their account of the alleged misconduct and have that account be on the record.
  - The right to receive a copy of all relevant and directly related evidence obtained by the investigation, subject to privacy limitations imposed by state and federal law, and a ten (10) business day period to review and comment on the evidence.
  - The right to receive a copy of the final investigation report, including all factual, policy, and/or credibility analyses performed, and to have at least ten (10) business days to review and comment on the report prior to the hearing.
  - The right to be informed of the names of all witnesses whose information will be used to make a finding, in advance of that finding, when relevant.
  - The right to regular updates on the status of the investigation and/or resolution.
  - The right to have reports of alleged Policy violations addressed by Investigators, Title IX Coordinators, and Decision-maker(s) who have received relevant annual training.
  - The right to a Hearing Panel that is not single-sex in its composition, if a panel is used.
  - The right to preservation of confidentiality/privacy, to the extent possible and permitted by law.
  - The right to meetings, interviews, and/or hearings that are closed to the public.

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

## **APPENDIX D: PROCESS B<sup>30</sup>**

- Process B is applicable when the Title IX Coordinator determines Process A is inapplicable, or offenses subject to Process A have been dismissed.
- If Process A is applicable, Process A must be applied in lieu of Process B<sup>31</sup>.

### **INTERIM RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE POLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, HARASSMENT, AND NONDISCRIMINATION**

NCCC will act on any formal or informal allegation or notice of violation of the policy on Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Nondiscrimination that is received by the Title IX Coordinator<sup>32</sup> or a member of the administration, faculty, or other employee, with the exception of confidential resources, as articulated in the Policy above.

The procedures described below apply to all allegations of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation on the basis of protected class status involving students, staff, faculty members, or third parties. Unionized or other categorized employees will be subject to the terms of their respective collective bargaining agreements/employees' rights.

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

#### **1. Initial Assessment**

Following intake, receipt of notice, or a complaint of an alleged violation of NCCC's nondiscrimination Policy, the Title IX Coordinator<sup>33</sup> engages in an initial assessment, which is typically one to five (1-5) business days in duration. The steps in an initial assessment can include:

- The Title IX Coordinator reaches out to the Complainant to offer supportive measures.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure they have an Advisor.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to determine which of three options to pursue: A Supportive Response, an Informal Resolution, or an Administrative Resolution.
  - If a Supportive Response is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to identify their wishes and then seeks to facilitate implementation. An Administrative Resolution process is not initiated, though the Complainant can elect to initiate it later, if desired.
  - If an Informal Resolution option is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator assesses whether the complaint is suitable for informal resolution, and may seek to determine if the Respondent is also willing to engage in Informal Resolution.
  - If Administrative Resolution is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator initiates the investigation process and determines whether the scope of the investigation will address:

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<sup>30</sup> This process may be legally insufficient for public institutions in states/jurisdictions that have adopted live hearing/cross-examination and/or formal due process requirements. It would also be insufficient for private institutions in California and the Third Circuit, which should use Process A or some variation thereof.

<sup>31</sup> NCCC can substitute any alternative process instead of Process B, if desired. VAWA Section 304 requirements apply to Process B or any alternative process for reports that fall under VAWA.

Title IX requirements outside of Section 106.30 (based on the original 1975 regulations, the 2001 Revised Guidance, etc.) may also be applicable to Process B.

<sup>32</sup> All references herein to a Title IX Coordinator also include a designee of the Title IX Coordinator.

<sup>33</sup> If circumstances require, the President or Title IX Coordinator will designate another person to oversee the process below should an allegation be made about the Coordinator or the Coordinator be otherwise unavailable or unable to fulfill their duties.

- Incident, and/or
- A potential pattern of misconduct, and/or
- A culture/climate issue.

In many cases, the Title IX Coordinator may determine that a Violence Risk Assessment (VRA) should be conducted by the Mental Health Assessment team as part of the initial assessment. A VRA can aid in ten critical and/or required determinations, including:

- Interim suspension of a Respondent who is a threat to health/safety;
- Whether the Title IX Coordinator should pursue Administrative Resolution absent a willing/able Complainant;
- Whether to put the investigation on the footing of incident and/or pattern and/or climate;
- To help identify potentially predatory conduct;
- To help assess/identify grooming behaviors;
- Whether a Complaint is amenable to Informal Resolution, and what modality may be most successful;
- Whether to permit a voluntary withdrawal by the Respondent;
- Whether to impose transcript notation or communicate with a transfer NCCC about a Respondent;
- Assessment of appropriate sanctions/remedies;
- Whether a Clery Act Timely Warning/Trespass order/Persona-non-grata is needed.

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

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

The investigation and the subsequent Administrative Resolution determine whether the nondiscrimination policy has been violated. If so, NCCC will promptly implement effective remedies designed to end the discrimination, prevent recurrence, and address the effects.

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

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

## **2. Resolution Process Pool**

The resolution process relies on a pool of officials ("Pool") for implementation.

The list of members and a description of the Pool can be found in this policy document within Process A. Members of the Pool are trained annually in all aspects of the resolution process and can serve in any of the following roles, at the direction of the Title IX Coordinator:

- To provide sensitive intake for and initial advice pertaining to the allegations
- To act as optional process Advisors to the parties
- To facilitate Informal Resolution
- To investigate allegations
- To serve as a Decision-maker
- To serve as an Appeal Decision-maker

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

Pool members receive annual training organized by the Title IX Coordinator, including a review of NCCC policies and procedures as well as applicable federal and state laws and regulations so that they are able to appropriately address allegations, provide accurate information to members of the community, protect safety, and promote accountability.

The Pool members receive annual training jointly. This training includes, but is not limited to:

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

### **3. Counterclaims**

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

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

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

#### **4. Advisors**

##### **a. Expectations of an Advisor**

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

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

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

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

##### **b. Expectations of the Parties with Respect to Advisors**

Each party may choose an Advisor<sup>34</sup> who is eligible and available<sup>35</sup> to accompany them throughout the process. The Advisor can be anyone, including an attorney, but should not be someone who is also a witness in the process. A party may elect to change Advisors during the process and is not obligated to use the same Advisor throughout.

The parties are expected to inform the Investigators of the identity of their Advisor at least two (2) business days before the date of their first meeting with the Investigator(s) (or as soon as possible if a more expeditious meeting is necessary or desired).

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

The Advisor may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) regarding private, sensitive records.

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<sup>34</sup> This could include an attorney, advocate, or support person. Witnesses are not entitled to Advisors within the process, though they can be advised externally. If the NCCC allows more than one Advisor for one party, they should do so for all parties.

<sup>35</sup> "Available" means the party cannot insist on an Advisor who simply doesn't have inclination, time, or availability. Also, the Advisor cannot have institutionally conflicting roles, such as being a Title IX administrator who has an active role in the matter, or a supervisor who must implement and monitor sanctions.

For parties who are entitled to union representation, the NCCC will allow the unionized employee to have their union representative (if requested by the party) as well as an Advisor of their choice present for all resolution-related meetings and interviews. To uphold the principles of equity, the other party (regardless of union membership) will also be permitted to have two Advisors. Witnesses are/are not permitted to have union representation or Advisors in grievance process interviews or meetings.

### **c. Assistance in Securing an Advisor**

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

- FACE (<http://www.facecampusequality.org>)
- SAVE (<http://www.saveservices.org>)

Complainants may wish to contact organizations such as:

- The Victim Rights Law Center (<http://www.victimrights.org>)
- The National Center for Victims of Crime (<http://www.victimsofcrime.org>), which maintains the Crime Victim's Bar Association
- The Time's Up Legal Defense Fund: <https://nwlc.org/times-up-legal-defense-fund/> ]

## **5. Resolution Options**

Proceedings are private. All persons present at any time during the resolution process are expected to maintain the privacy of the proceedings in accord with NCCC Policy.

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

### **a. Informal Resolution**

Informal Resolution is applicable when the parties voluntarily agree to resolve the matter through Alternative Resolution, or when the Respondent accepts responsibility for violating Policy, or when the Title IX Coordinator can resolve the matter informally by providing remedies to resolve the situation.

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

#### **i. Alternative Resolution**

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

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

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

The Title IX Coordinator maintains records of any resolution that is reached, and failure to abide by the resolution

can result in appropriate enforcement actions.

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

## **ii. Respondent Accepts Responsibility for Alleged Violations**

The Respondent may accept responsibility for all or part of the alleged policy violations at any point during the resolution process. If the Respondent accepts responsibility, the Title IX Coordinator makes a determination that the individual is in violation of NCCC Policy.

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

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

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

## **b. Administrative Resolution via an Investigation and Hearing**

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

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

Notification will include a meaningful summary of the allegations, will be made in writing, and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person, mailed to the local or permanent address of the parties as indicated in official NCCC records, or emailed to the parties' NCCC-issued or designated email account.

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

NCCC aims to complete all investigations within a sixty (60) business day time period, which can be extended as necessary for appropriate cause by the Title IX Coordinator, with notice to the parties as appropriate.

Once the decision is made to commence an investigation, the Title IX Coordinator appoints Pool members to conduct the investigation (typically using a team of two Investigators), usually within two (2) business days of determining that an investigation should proceed.

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

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

Investigations are completed expeditiously, normally within 10-20 business days, though some investigations take weeks or even months, depending on the nature, extent, and complexity of the allegations, availability of witnesses, police involvement, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

## **6. Investigation**

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

- Determine the identity and contact information of the Complainant
- In coordination with campus partners (e.g., the Title IX Coordinator), initiate or assist with any necessary supportive measures
- Identify all policies implicated by the alleged misconduct
- Assist the Title IX Coordinator with conducting an initial assessment to determine if there is reasonable cause to believe the Respondent has violated policy
- If there is insufficient evidence to support reasonable cause, the process is closed with no further action
- Commence a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation by developing a strategic investigation plan, including a witness list, evidence list, intended investigation timeframe, and order of interviews for all parties and witnesses
- Meet with the Complainant to finalize their statement, if necessary
- Prepare the initial Notice of Investigation and Allegation (NOIA) on the basis of the initial assessment. Notice may be one step or multiple steps, depending on how the investigation unfolds, and potential policy violations may be added or dropped as more is learned. Investigators will update the NOIA accordingly and provide it to the parties.
- Notice should inform the parties of their right to have the assistance of a Pool member as a process Advisor appointed by the NCCC or an Advisor of their choosing present for all meetings attended by the advisee

- When formal notice is being given, it should provide the parties with a written description of the alleged violation(s), a list of all policies allegedly violated, a description of the applicable procedures, and a statement of the potential sanctions/responsive actions that could result
- Give an instruction to the parties to preserve any evidence that is directly related to the allegations
- Provide the parties and witnesses with an opportunity to review and verify the Investigator's summary notes from interviews and meetings with that specific party or witness
- Make good faith efforts to notify the parties of any meeting or interview involving the other party, in advance when possible
- Interview all relevant individuals and conduct follow-up interviews as necessary
- Allow each party the opportunity to suggest questions they wish the Investigator(s) to ask of the other party and witnesses
- Complete the investigation promptly and without unreasonable deviation from the intended timeline
- Provide regular status updates to the parties throughout the investigation
- Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, summarize for the parties the list of witnesses whose information will be used to render a finding
- Write a comprehensive investigation report fully summarizing the investigation and all evidence
- Provide the parties with a copy of the draft investigation report when it is completed, including all relevant evidence, analysis, credibility assessments, and recommended finding(s)
- Provide each party with a full and fair opportunity to respond to the report in writing within 3 business days and incorporate that response, if any, into the report
- Investigators may choose to respond in writing in the report to the responses of the parties, and/or to share the responses between the parties for their responses, while also ensuring that they do not create a never-ending feedback loop
- Share the report with the Title IX Coordinator or legal counsel for review and feedback
- Provide the final report to the Title IX Coordinator with one of two options:
  - Include in the report a recommendation to the Title IX Coordinator/Decision-maker on a determination, based on a preponderance of the evidence, whether a policy violation is more likely than not to have occurred; OR
  - Gather, assess, and synthesize evidence without making a finding, conclusion, determination or recommendation.

## **7. Determination**

Within two to three (2-3) business days of receiving the Investigator's recommendation, the Title IX Coordinator or a trained, designated Decision-maker from the Pool<sup>36</sup> reviews the report and all responses, and then makes the final determination on the basis of the preponderance of the evidence.

If the record is incomplete, the Title IX Coordinator/Decision-maker may direct a re-opening of the investigation, or may direct or conduct any additional inquiry necessary, including informally meeting with the parties or any witnesses, if needed.

The recommendation of the investigation, if any, should be strongly considered but is not binding on the Title IX Coordinator/Decision-Maker. The Title IX Coordinator or Decision-maker may invite and consider impact statements from the parties if and when determining appropriate sanction(s), if any.

## **8. Additional Details of the Investigation Process**

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<sup>36</sup> When the Title IX Coordinator is the Investigator or has been heavily involved in the process prior to determination, a Decision-maker should be designated from the Pool to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

#### **a. Witness responsibilities**

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

#### **b. Remote processes**

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

#### **c. Recording**

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

#### **d. Evidence**

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

#### **e. Sexual history/patterns**

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

#### **f. Previous allegations/violations**

While previous conduct violations by the Respondent are not generally admissible as information supporting the current allegation, the Investigator(s) may supply the Title IX Coordinator/Decision-maker with information about previous good faith allegations and/or findings, when that information suggests potential pattern and/or predatory conduct.

Previous disciplinary action of any kind involving the Respondent may be considered in determining the appropriate sanction(s), if the NCCC uses a progressive discipline system.

Character witnesses or evidence may be offered. The investigation and hearing will determine if the character evidence is relevant. If so, it may be considered. If not, it will be excluded.

#### **g. Notification of outcome**

If the Respondent admits to the violation(s), or is found in violation, the Title IX Coordinator (in consultation with other administrators as appropriate) determines sanction(s) and/or responsive actions, which are promptly

implemented in order to effectively to stop the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation; prevent its recurrence; and remedy the effects of the discriminatory conduct, both on the Complainant and the community.

The Title IX Coordinator informs the parties of the determination within two to three business days of the resolution, ideally simultaneously, but without significant time delay between notifications. Notifications are made in writing and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person, mailed to the local or permanent address of the parties as indicated in official NCCC records, or emailed to the parties' NCCC-issued or designated email account. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in-person, notice is presumptively delivered.

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

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

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

## **9. Sanctions**

Factors considered when determining any sanction(s)/responsive action(s) may include, but are not limited to:

- The nature, severity of, and circumstances surrounding the violation
- An individual's disciplinary history
- Previous allegations or allegations involving similar conduct
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to bring an end to the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to prevent the future recurrence of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need to remedy the effects of the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation on the Complainant and the community
- The impact on the parties
- Any other information deemed relevant by the Title IX Coordinator/Decision-maker

The sanction(s) will be implemented as soon as is feasible. The sanctions described in this policy are not exclusive of, and may be in addition to, other actions taken, or sanctions imposed by outside authorities.

### **a. Student Sanctions**

The following are the sanctions that may be imposed upon students or student organizations singly or in combination:

- *Warning*: A formal statement that the behavior was unacceptable and a warning that further infractions of any NCCC policy, procedure, or directive will result in more severe sanctions/responsive actions.
- *Probation*: A written reprimand for violation of NCCC Policy, providing for more severe disciplinary sanctions in the event that the student or organization is found in violation of any NCCC policy, procedure or directive within a specified period of time. Terms of the probation will be articulated and may include denial of specified social privileges, exclusion from co-curricular activities, exclusion from designated areas of campus, no-contact orders, and/or other measures deemed appropriate.
- *Suspension*: Termination of student status for a definite period of time not to exceed two years,

and/or until specific criteria are met. Students who return from suspension are automatically placed on probation through the remainder of their tenure as a student at NCCC. At the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator/Decision-maker, this sanction may be noted as a Disciplinary Suspension on the student's official transcript.

- *Expulsion*: Permanent termination of student status, revocation of rights to be on campus for any reason or attend NCCC-sponsored events. This sanction will be noted as a Conduct Expulsion on the student's official transcript.
- *Withholding Diploma and/or Official Transcripts*: NCCC may withhold a student's diploma and/or official transcripts for a specified period of time, and/or deny a student participation in commencement activities as a sanction if the student is found responsible for an alleged violation.
- *Revocation of Degree*: NCCC reserves the right to revoke a degree previously awarded from NCCC for fraud, misrepresentation, or other violation of NCCC policies, procedures, or directives in obtaining the degree, or for other serious violations committed by a student prior to graduation.
- *Organizational Sanctions*: Deactivation, loss of recognition, loss of some or all privileges (including NCCC registration), for a specified period of time.
- *Other Actions*: In addition to or in place of the above sanctions, NCCC may assign any other sanctions as deemed appropriate.

#### **b. Employee Sanctions**

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

- *Warning – Verbal or Written*
- *Performance Improvement/Management Process*
- *Required Counseling*
- *Required Training or Education*
- *Probation*
- *Loss of Annual Pay Increase*
- *Loss of Oversight or Supervisory Responsibility*
- *Demotion*
- *Suspension with pay*
- *Suspension without pay*
- *Termination*
- *Other Actions*: In addition to or in place of the above sanctions, NCCC may assign any other sanctions as deemed appropriate.

#### **10. Withdrawal or Resignation While Charges are Pending**

Students: NCCC does not permit a student to withdraw if that student has an allegation pending for violation of the policy on Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination. The NCCC may place a hold, bar access to an official transcript, and/or prohibit graduation as necessary to permit the resolution process to be completed.

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

#### **11. Appeals**

All requests for appeal consideration must be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within 3 business days of the delivery of the written finding of the Title IX Coordinator or Decision-maker. Any party may appeal the findings only under the grounds described below.

An Appeal Decision-maker chosen from the Pool will be designated by the Title IX Coordinator from those who have not been involved in the process previously. Any party may appeal, but appeals are limited to the following grounds:

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

When any party requests an appeal, the Title IX Coordinator will share the appeal request with the other party(ies) or other appropriate persons such as the Investigator(s), who may file a response within three (3) business days. The other party may also bring their own appeal on separate grounds.

If new grounds are raised, the original appealing party will be permitted to submit a written response to these new grounds within 3 business days. These responses or appeal requests will be shared with each party. The Appeal Chair will review the appeal request(s) within 7 business days of completing the pre-appeal exchange of materials. If grounds are not sufficient for an appeal, or the appeal is not timely, the Appeal Chair dismisses the appeal.

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

- Decisions by the Appeal Chair are to be deferential to the original decision, making changes to the finding only when there is clear error and to the sanction(s)/responsive action(s) only if there is compelling justification to do so.
- Appeals are not intended to be full re-hearings (de novo) of the allegation(s). In most cases, appeals are confined to a review of the written documentation or record of the investigation and pertinent documentation regarding the grounds for appeal.
- An appeal is not an opportunity for the Appeal Chair to substitute their judgment for that of the original Investigator(s) or Title IX Coordinator/Decision-maker merely because they disagree with the finding and/or sanction(s).
- Appeals granted based on new evidence should normally be remanded to the Investigator(s) for reconsideration. Other appeals should be remanded at the discretion of the Appeal Chair.
- Sanctions imposed as the result of the Administrative Resolution are implemented immediately unless the Title IX Coordinator stays their implementation in extraordinary circumstances, pending the outcome of the appeal.
  - For students: Graduation, study abroad, internships/externships, etc., do NOT in and of themselves constitute exigent circumstances, and students may not be able to participate in those activities during their appeal.
- All parties will be informed in writing within 3 business days of the outcome of the appeal without significant time delay between notifications, and in accordance with the standards for Notice of Outcome as defined above.
- Once an appeal is decided, the outcome is final; further appeals are not permitted, even if a decision or sanction is changed on remand.
- In rare cases when a procedural or substantive error cannot be cured by the original Investigator(s) and/or Title IX Coordinator/Decision-maker (as in cases of bias), the Appeal Chair may recommend a new investigation and/or Administrative Resolution process, including a new resolution administrator.
- The results of a new Administrative Resolution process can be appealed once, on any of the three applicable grounds for appeals.
- In cases in which the appeal results in Respondent's reinstatement to NCCC or resumption of privileges, all reasonable attempts will be made to restore the Respondent to their prior status, recognizing that some opportunities lost may be irreparable.

## **12. Long-Term Remedies/Actions**

Following the conclusion of the resolution process, and in addition to any sanctions implemented, the Title IX Coordinator may implement long-term remedies or actions with respect to the parties and/or the campus community to stop the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation; remedy its effects; and prevent its reoccurrence.

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

- Referral to counseling and health services
- Referral to the Employee Assistance Program
- Education to the community
- Permanent alteration of housing assignments
- Permanent alteration of work arrangements for employees
- Provision of campus safety escorts
- Climate surveys
- Policy modification
- Provision of transportation accommodations
- Implementation of long-term contact limitations between the parties
- Implementation of adjustments to academic deadlines, course schedules, etc.

At the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, long-term remedies may also be provided to the Complainant even if no policy violation is found.

When no policy violation is found, the Title IX Coordinator will address any remedial requirements owed by NCCC to the Respondent.

## **13. Failure to Complete Sanctions/Comply with Interim and Long-term Remedies/Responsive Actions**

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

Failure to abide by the sanction(s)/action(s) imposed by the date specified, whether by refusal, neglect, or any other reason, may result in additional sanction(s) and responsive/corrective action(s), including suspension, expulsion, and/or termination from NCCC and may be noted on a student's official transcript.

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

## **14. Recordkeeping**

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

## **15. Statement of the Rights of the Parties [\(see Appendix C\)](#)**

## **16. Disabilities Accommodation in the Resolution Process**

NCCC is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and support to qualified students, employees, or

others with disabilities to ensure equal access to the resolution process at NCCC. Anyone needing such accommodations or support should contact the Dean of Student Services on the Chanute campus and the Dean for the Ottawa and Online Campuses on the Ottawa campus, who will review the request and, in consultation with the person requesting the accommodation and the Title IX Coordinator, determine which accommodations are appropriate and necessary for full participation in the process.

## **17. Revision**

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

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

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

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

Policy in effect at the time of the offense will apply even if the policy is changed subsequently but prior to resolution, unless the parties consent to be bound by the current Policy.

If government regulations change in a way that impacts this document, this document will be construed to comply with the most recent government regulations.

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

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

### Policy Scope

This policy covers records maintained in any medium that are created pursuant to the College's Title IX Policy and/or the regular business of the College's Title IX Office. All such records are considered private or confidential by the Title IX Office, in accordance with FERPA and the directive from the Department of Education to maintain the confidentiality of records related to Title IX. These records may be shared internally with those who have a legitimate educational interest, and will be shared with the parties to a complaint under applicable state and/or federal law, including the 2020 Title IX regulations, FERPA, and/or the Clery Act/VAWA §304. The Title IX Office controls the dissemination and sharing of any records under its control.

### Types of Records Covered Under this Policy

**Records Pertaining to the Grievance-Resolution Process.** These records include, but are not limited to:

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

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

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

with FERPA are also included in this category. All drafts of investigation reports shared with the parties are maintained.

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

### **Record Storage:**

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

The Title IX Office will store all records created pursuant to the Policy, regardless of the identities of the parties. Parallel records should not be maintained in the Office of Student Conduct and/or Human Resources, respectively. Any extra (non-essential) copies of the records (both digital and paper) must be destroyed.

A copy of records showing compliance with Clery Act requirements by Title IX personnel will be maintained along with the case file in the Title IX Office [and in a separate aggregate annual Clery Act composite file, as well].

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

### **Record Retention:**

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

### **Record Access:**

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

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

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

**Record Security:**

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