

Sexual Harassment Policy

Policy Statement on Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of employees or students of Gordon State College is prohibited and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other sanctions after due process.

Sexual harassment most often occurs when a person with authority over another exploits that authority for sexual purposes. However, this policy also applies to sexual harassment directed against others of the same status in the College, i.e. student against student, faculty against faculty, staff against staff.

Consenting romantic or sexual relationships between faculty and students or between a supervisor and an employee may fall within this policy if a power differential exists in the relationship and a charge of sexual harassment is subsequently filed. Such romantic or sexual relationships are officially discouraged by Gordon State College. Faculty, staff, and students who engage in such relationships are hereby notified that they will not be able to have a charge of sexual harassment against them dismissed by pleading mutual consent.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual advancements, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing;
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting the individual; or
3. such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

Examples of Sexual Harassment

The following examples of sexual harassment are for illustrative purpose only. They are not intended to represent an exhaustive list.

1. Unwanted teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions of sexual nature.
2. Unwanted pressure for dates.
3. Unwanted letters or phone calls of a sexual nature.
4. Unwanted sexually suggestive looks or gestures.
5. Unwanted deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching.
6. Unwanted pressure for sexual favors.
7. Actual or attempted rape or sexual assault.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is essential if the College is to achieve its purpose. However, academic freedom is not a license for sexual harassment. Sexual harassment destroys academic freedom. No person has the right to intimidate, exploit, or coerce another under the guise of academic freedom. This statement of policy is designed to preserve academic freedom by protecting the College community against sexual harassment while preserving the rights of all members of that community.

Procedures for Handling Complaints of Sexual Harassment

Complaints Against Faculty

Complaints of sexual harassment against faculty shall be directed in writing to the Chair of the Division to which the faculty member is assigned. If the complaint is against the Chair, the complaint shall be directed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty. That person shall investigate to determine if the complaint is valid and shall consult with the Affirmative Action Officer as necessary in the investigation. The Division Chair or Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty may dismiss the complaint if it is unwarranted. The complainant may appeal this decision in writing within five (5) days of receiving the decision to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, or if the Dean has already heard the complaint, to the President.

The President may refer the complaint to the Grievance Committee of the College or another existing committee of the College or an ad hoc committee appointed to hear the complaint. The hearing committee shall follow the timetable and procedures published in the "Grievance Procedures."

Complaints Against Staff

Complaints of sexual harassment against staff shall be directed in writing to the supervisor to whom the staff member reports. If the complaint is directed against the supervisor, it shall be directed to the Vice President for Business Affairs. That person shall investigate to determine if the complaint is valid and shall consult with the Affirmative Action Officer as necessary in the investigation. The supervisor or the Vice President for Business Affairs may dismiss the complaint if it is unwarranted. The complainant may appeal this decision in writing within five (5) days of receiving the decision to the Vice President for Business Affairs, or if the Vice President for Business Affairs has already heard the complaint, to the President.

The President may refer the complaint to the Grievance Committee of the College or another existing committee or an ad hoc committee appointed to hear the complaint. The hearing committee shall follow the timetable and procedures published in the "Grievance Procedures."

Complaints Against Students

Complaints of sexual harassment against students shall be directed in writing to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs will dispose of the complaint according to the disciplinary procedures published in this catalog.

President's Statement on Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment, in any of its many guises, is a threat to the academic community. Everyone has the right to learn, teach, or work in an environment free from sexual behavior which is intimidating, hostile, or offensive. Such behavior cannot be tolerated because it imperils the purpose and spirit of Gordon State.