

POLICY NUMBER: II-7-12

DATE OF ADOPTION: September 7, 1998

REVISION DATE(S):

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

Seminole State College explicitly condemns sexual harassment of students, staff and faculty. The college is committed to maintaining a working and learning environment free of objectionable and disrespectful conduct and communication of a sexual nature and to ensuring the accessibility of appropriate grievance procedures for addressing all complaints regarding sexual harassment.

Since members of the college community hold positions of authority that may involve the legitimate exercise of power over others, it is their responsibility to be sensitive to that power. Faculty and supervisors in particular, in their relationships with students and those they supervise, need to be aware of potential conflicts of interest and the possible compromise of their evaluative capacity. Because there is an inherent power difference in these relationships, the potential exists for the less powerful person to perceive a coercive element in suggestions regarding activities outside those appropriate to the professional relationship. It is the responsibility of faculty and staff to behave in such a manner that their words or actions cannot reasonably be perceived as sexually coercive, abusive, or exploitive. Sexual harassment also can involve relationships among equals as when repeated advances, demeaning verbal behavior, or offensive physical contact interfere with an individual's ability to work and study productively.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment shall be defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature in the following context:

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

Examples of Prohibited Conduct

Conduct prohibited by this policy may include, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtation; advances or propositions for sexual activity
- Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature, such as suggestive comments and sexually explicit jokes
- Sexually degrading language to describe an individual
- Remarks of a sexual nature to describe a person's body or clothing

- Display of sexually demeaning objects and pictures
- Offensive physical contact, such as unwelcome touching
- Coerced sexual intercourse
- Sexual assault
- Actions indicating benefits will be gained/lost based on response to sexual advances.

Handling of Complaints

The college encourages all complaints of sexual harassment against employees be promptly reported to the immediate supervisor of the employee charging harassment, or the next level of supervision should the immediate supervisor be alleged to be the offending party. The report should occur within 90 days after the incident. Employees have a responsibility to the institution to report incidents of harassment. Students and employees who believe they have been sexually harassed, or employees who have received reports of sexual harassment, should contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) and provide complete details of the allegation. The VPSA will consult with the parties involved to see if a formal complaint needs to be filed. Incidents alleging sexual harassment by the VPSA should be filed with the Vice President for Academic Affairs who will follow the same procedures as outlined herein.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the VPSA will jointly conduct an investigation into the matter with the supervisors of the charged employee and at least one other College representative. The investigation will include one member from each gender. In cases of all formal sexual harassment complaints, a written report detailing the allegation, parties involved, method of investigation, conclusion and recommendation of the investigator(s) shall be prepared and submitted to the President. Appropriate disciplinary action may include a range of actions up to and including dismissal. Any disciplinary action may be appealed according to the due process procedure of the SSC Board Policy Manual.

Retaliation

Any attempt to penalize or retaliate against a person for filing a complaint or participating in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment will be treated as an equally serious form of harassment. Seminole State College is an Equal Opportunity Employer. SSC shall not allow gender to be a basis for exclusion from participation, denial of benefits, or discrimination in any education programs or activity.

Consensual Sexual Relationship Ethics Statement Policy Statement

Amorous relationships that might be appropriate in other circumstances are not appropriate when they occur between any teacher or officer of the institution and any student for whom that employee has a professional responsibility. Officers and other members of the teaching staff should be aware that any romantic involvement with their students makes them liable for formal action against them if a complaint is initiated by a student. The SSC administration will have the authority to take appropriate disciplinary actions and make workplace adjustments where amorous relationships result in a disruption of the academic or workplace environment.