

Fort Valley State University

Sexual Harassment Policy

Policy

It is the policy of Fort Valley State University that all employees and students be able to work in an environment free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment refers to behavior, either direct or indirect, which is not welcome, which is personally offensive, which debilitates morale, and which therefore interferes with the University's mission and its effectiveness. Sexual harassment includes behavior that may not be considered overtly sexual. Federal law prohibits sexual harassment under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The existing Board of Regents' policy states "that it shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for any employer, because of the sex of any person, to discharge without cause, to refuse to hire, or otherwise discriminate against any person with respect to any matter directly or indirectly related to employment or academic standing. Sexual harassment, whether it be by peers, by persons in authority, or by students to faculty, violates federal law and Board policy. It is the intent of these policies to include sexual harassment by peers.

Some examples of relations to which harassment policies apply are as follows:

- a. faculty - faculty
- b. staff - staff
- c. student - student

Additional examples of relations to which harassment policies apply and that involve sexual harassment by persons in authority include:

- a. faculty - student
- b. faculty - staff
- c. graduate student - undergraduate student
- d. supervisor - subordinate

Sexual harassment of faculty by students is covered by these policies if it interferes with the faculty member's work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Consenting sexual relationships between faculty and students, or between supervisors and subordinates, are actively discouraged and may be deemed sexual harassment.

Definition

Sexual harassment of employees or students of Fort Valley State University is prohibited and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other sanctions after compliance with procedural due process requirements. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1984) guidelines, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing; or
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting an individual; or
- C. Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

Consensual Relationships

All employees and students of Fort Valley State University should realize that sexual harassment most frequently occurs when one person has some power or authority over another. The relationship between a faculty member and a student should be considered one of professional and client in which sexual liaisons, even consenting liaisons, are inappropriate because they threaten the intellectual dependence and trust that underscore the teacher/student bond. Likewise, the relationship between a supervisor and subordinate must be a professional one free from sexual involvement.

Although the policy of Fort Valley State University does not expressly forbid consenting sexual relationships, such relationships are strongly discouraged and all personnel are cautioned that persons entering into such relationships do place themselves in danger of subsequent charges of sexual harassment which would be most difficult to dispute.

In light of the above, Fort Valley State University strongly discourages consenting sexual relationships between faculty and students and supervisors or faculty who engage in such relationships must remove themselves from any decision-making activities regarding their consenting partner.

President's Statement on Sexual Harassment

The Fort Valley State University is committed to maintaining a working environment free of objectionable and disrespectful conduct and communication of a sexual nature, especially when such conduct is imposed by one on another and adversely affects a member of this institution's employment environment. Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and is viewed as a violation of Title VII and Title IX of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated by the University. Sexual Harassment in any context is reprehensible and is a matter of particular concern to the academic community in which students, faculty, and staff are related by strong bonds of intellectual dependence and trust.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the Sexual Harassment Policy and agree to abide by the standards referenced in this document.

Name _____

Date _____

Signature _____