Sonoma State University's Title IX responsibilities as a campus community

February 16, 2022

Dear campus community,

As we physically return to campus and fully resume educational and administrative activities, this is an excellent moment to reiterate our commitment to maintaining a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and sexual misconduct. All of us are responsible for creating an inclusive and equitable community that values diversity and fosters mutual respect. We welcome to our community, beginning on February 22, our new Title IX Officer and Senior Director of the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (OPHD), Ms. Julie Vivas, who will help us continue to foster a more inclusive, respectful environment in which students, faculty, and staff can succeed and feel supported.

Conduct that constitutes discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, and related retaliation, is outlined in CSU policy. The Interim CSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Exploitation, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking and Retaliation contains definitions of prohibited conduct, student and employee rights, complaint processes, and potential disciplinary action for violations.

As a reminder of our collective responsibilities:
- All employees (with few exceptions for those in designated, confidential roles) are deemed "Responsible Employees" who must promptly report all knowledge of incidents of potential discrimination, harassment, or violence that could violate CSU policies to the Title Coordinator/DHR Administrator. At Sonoma State University, this individual is the Senior Director of the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (OPHD). More information about OPHD, conduct prohibited by CSU policy, the Responsible Employee obligation, and how to fulfill it can be found on the OPHD website.
- All matters reported to OPHD are assessed by trained professionals to ensure appropriate steps are taken to address prohibited conduct and prevent its recurrence.
- The university prohibits retaliation against students or employees who have reported discrimination or sexual misconduct or participated in a complaint resolution process. Any acts of retaliation should also be reported to OPHD.
- In addition to CSU policy, federal and state laws require faculty and staff to complete annual online education on how to recognize discrimination and sexual misconduct, report incidents to campus authorities, and prevent misconduct from occurring in the first place. All CSU employees must complete the online Equity and Title IX training annually, and supervisors are required to complete the CSU Discrimination Harassment Prevention Program training every two years.
- All students must complete annual online training in sexual harassment and misconduct awareness and prevention education.

These shared responsibilities emanate from our community values– when we know about potential misconduct or harm, whether intended or not, we act. Remaining educated, understanding reporting obligations, and bringing information forward promptly so that all trained experts can respond appropriately are how we live those values on campus. If you have experienced, witnessed, or have questions about discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct, please reach out to OPHD or any Responsible Employee. Additional resources are listed on the OPHD website.

Creating and maintaining an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct involves the coordination of many programs and initiatives across the campus. It also takes commitment from all of us as individuals. I am grateful to everyone in the Seawolf community for joining me in the collective commitment to ensuring that our university is a safe, supportive, respectful, and collegial environment where we all can thrive and do our best work every day.

Very sincerely yours,

Judy K. Sakaki,
President