

SAA-2000

C#1-2021

Exp: Pending Policy Approval

SOUTHERN ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENT (SAA)

TO: All College Employees
Institutional Board of Governors

FROM: 
Pamela L. Alderman
President

DATE: August 14, 2020

SUBJECT: Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy

REFERENCE: West Virginia Code §18B-1-6; West Virginia Human Rights Act; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e to 2000e-17; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681; the West Virginia Human Rights Act, W. Va. Code §§ 5-11-1 to -20; the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, 20 U.S.C. §1092; the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. § 13925; Series 27, Academic Freedom, Professional Responsibility, Promotion and Tenure; SCP-1400, Guest Speakers, Lecturers, Performers, and Organized Groups; SCP-4770, Students Rights and Responsibilities, SAM - 2000.1, Employee Handbook

As permitted by Southern College Policy (SCP) 1000, Section 5.1.1 and in compliance with West Virginia Code §18B-1-6, the following administrative announcement regarding “*Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination*” is effective immediately and shall serve as interim institutional policy until such time that a college policy regarding this subject shall be developed, sent out for a 30-day comment period, and formally adopted by the institution’s Board of Governors. It is anticipated that such formal policy will be developed and adopted no later than December 31, 2020.

This Administrative Announcement is being distributed with the policy and procedure proposals, SCP-XXXX, *Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy*; Attachment A, *Statement of Rights of the Parties*; Attachment B, *Violence Risk Assessment*; and SIP-XXX, *Interim Resolution Process for Alleged Violations of the Policy on Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination*.

Background on the Title IX Rule

This past spring, the United States Department of Education provided historic regulation on Title IX. The Rule, announced on May 6, 2020, following years of stakeholder input, public comment and careful deliberation, extends many new protections against sexual harassment, and strongly safeguards the rights of all students, including the right to due process. The Department also launched a new website that

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provides a one-stop resource for this key information, including how to file a complaint, an overview of the Rule's protections for survivors, and a detailed webinar on how schools can fully implement and uphold the new provisions in the law.

The new website will serve as an online hub for information and resources students can use to understand their rights under Title IX and what the new Rule means for them. It also provides a robust fact sheet for students that dispels myths and falsehoods about the Rule. For instance, the Rule expressly prohibits students from directly cross-examining one another, and it requires schools to provide support services to students, even if a student chooses not to move forward with a formal complaint process. The website is also home to information on how courts have opined on the new Rule and the importance of due process and includes statements from lawmakers, respected attorneys, and other major thought leaders on the importance of due process for all students.

The regulation carries the full force of law, unlike the much-criticized "Dear Colleague" letter on the topic that denied students basic due process protections and led to courts frequently overturning school decisions, subjecting survivors to further trauma. With the benefit of robust public participation in the rulemaking process, the Title IX regulation reflects Secretary DeVos' commitment to ensuring that every person's claim of sexual misconduct is taken seriously while ensuring the fair treatment of every person accused of such misconduct.

Key provisions of the Department of Education's new Title IX regulation:

- C Defines sexual harassment to include sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex.
- C Provides a consistent, legally sound framework on which survivors, the accused, and schools can rely.
- C Requires schools to offer clear, accessible options for any person to report sexual harassment.
- C Empowers survivors to make decisions about how a school responds to incidents of sexual harassment.
- C Requires schools to offer survivors supportive measures, such as class reassignments or no-contact orders.
- C Holds colleges responsible for off-campus sexual harassment at houses owned or under the control of school-sanctioned fraternities and sororities.
- C Restores fairness on college and university campuses by upholding a student's right to written notice of allegations, the right to an advisor, and the right to submit, cross-examine, and challenge evidence at a live hearing.
- C Shields survivors from having to come face-to-face with the accused during a hearing and from answering questions posed personally by the accused.
- C Requires schools to select one of two standards of evidence, the preponderance of the evidence standard or the clear and convincing evidence standard, and to apply the selected standard evenly to proceedings for all students and employees, including faculty.
- C Provides "rape shield" protections and ensures survivors are not required to divulge any medical,

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psychological, or similar privileged records.

- C Requires schools to offer an equal right of appeal for both parties to a Title IX proceeding.
- C Gives schools flexibility to use technology to conduct Title IX investigations and hearings remotely.
- C Protects students and faculty by prohibiting schools from using Title IX in a manner that deprives students and faculty of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Southern has worked diligently to bring processes into compliance with Title IX, some of the more vexing challenges include:

1. Cross-constituency complaints (student-on-faculty, faculty-on-staff, etc.);
2. Varied processes for resolving allegations involving students, faculty, staff, etc.;
3. Different processes for discrimination allegations (race, disability, age, etc.) than those used to address Title IX-related allegations;
4. Balancing Title VII and Title IX by incorporating equity standards into employee-on-employee allegations;
5. Reconciling allegations that include both Title IX-covered behaviors and those standing outside Title IX.
6. Getting up to speed on ALL OF THE CHANGES OCR now requires with the 2020 Regulations!

Given the complexity of addressing these challenges separately – and many others inherent in good policy – many schools and campuses are realizing that patched policies and procedures just aren't going to cut it going forward. New regulations require a clean-sheet approach. This policy and procedure covers everyone equitably with the same kind and degree of protection of their rights.

The attached policy and procedure creates a unified process to addressing issues of Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination. A unified process can be centrally administered and overseen, often by expanding the Title IX Coordinator role in the form of an institutional equity officer. Unification simplifies the investigation function and avoids duplicative training when there are multiple bodies all resolving the discrimination allegations across the campus.

Unification allows consistent sanctions and responsive actions for the same types of misconduct, whether the misconduct involves a student, faculty, or staff member. Unification fosters collaboration across the departments that are stakeholders, including Human Resources, Student Services, and Academic Affairs while retaining their needed voice in the resolution process. Critically, a unified process can also be essential to the detection and tracking of patterns of misconduct, to limit the frequency of repeat offenses.

Unified models are becoming the industry standard approach. For those who fear that campus cultures or politics will not accept a unified approach, we suggest that the momentum created by the new regulations will make this the right window of opportunity to champion such sweeping change. It will also be easier in the long run to fix it now, rather than to Band-Aid existing processes not designed for 2020 compliance in the hopes they will suffice.

**SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
SCP-XXXX**

- SUBJECT:** Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy.
- REFERENCE:** West Virginia Code §18B-1-6; West Virginia Human Rights Act; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e to 2000e-17; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681; the West Virginia Human Rights Act, W. Va. Code §§ 5-11-1 to -20; the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, 20 U.S.C. §1092; the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. § 13925; Series 27, Academic Freedom, Professional Responsibility, Promotion and Tenure; SCP-1400, Guest Speakers, Lecturers, Performers, and Organized Groups; SCP-4770, Students Rights and Responsibilities, SAM - 2000.1, Employee Handbook.
- ORIGINATION:** August 14, 2020
- EFFECTIVE:** August 14, 2020
- REVIEWED:** N/A

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College (“Southern” or “the College”) is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment, as well as other benefits, programs, and activities, that are free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. To ensure compliance with federal and state 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, Southern 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. Southern 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.

SECTION 2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 The core purpose of this policy is the prohibition of all forms of discrimination. Sometimes, discrimination involves exclusion from activities, such as admission, athletics, or employment. Other times, discrimination takes the form of harassment or, in the case of sex-based discrimination, can encompass sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, dating violence or domestic violence. When an alleged violation of this anti-discrimination policy is reported, the allegations are subject to resolution using Southern's procedure SIP-xxxx.
- 2.2 When the Respondent is a member of the Southern community, a grievance process may be available regardless of the status of the Complainant, who may or may not be a member of the Southern community. This community includes, but is not limited to, students, student organizations, faculty, administrators, staff, and third parties such as guests, visitors, volunteers, vendors, invitees, 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.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 *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 cross-examination for the party at the hearing, if any.
- 3.2 *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.
- 3.3 *Complaint (formal)* means a document filed/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 recipient investigate the allegation.
- 3.4 *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).
- 3.5 *Day* means a business day when Southern is in normal operation, Monday through Thursday.
- 3.6 *Education program or activity* means locations, events, or circumstances where Southern exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment or discrimination occurs and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by Southern.
- 3.7 *Final Determination*: A conclusion by the preponderance of evidence standard of proof that the alleged conduct occurred and whether it did or did not violate policy.
- 3.8 *Finding*: A conclusion by the preponderance of evidence standard of proof that the conduct did or did not occur as alleged.
- 3.9 *Formal Grievance Process* means "Process A," a method of formal resolution designated by the recipient to address conduct that falls within the policies included below, and which complies with the requirements of 34 CFR Part 106.45.
- 3.10 *Grievance Process Pool* includes any investigators, hearing officers, 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).
- 3.11 *Hearing Decision-maker or Panel* refers to those who have decision-making and sanctioning authority within the Southern's Formal Grievance process.
- 3.12 *Investigator* means the person or persons charged by Southern 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 and file of directly related evidence.
- 3.13 *Mandated Reporter* means an employee of Southern who is obligated by policy to share knowledge, notice, and/or reports of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation with the Title IX Coordinator.

- 3.14 *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.
- 3.15 *Official with Authority (OWA)* means an employee of Southern explicitly vested with the responsibility to implement corrective measures for harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation on behalf of Southern.
- 3.16 *Parties* include the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s), collectively.
- 3.17 *Process A* means the Formal Grievance Process detailed in SIP-xxxx.
- 3.19 *Recipient* means a postsecondary education program that is a recipient of federal funding.
- 3.20 *Remedies* are post-finding actions directed to the Complainant and/or the community as mechanisms to address safety, prevent recurrence, and restore access to the College's educational program.
- 3.21 *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.
- 3.22 *Resolution* means the result of an informal or Formal Grievance Process.
- 3.23 *Sanction* means a consequence imposed by the College on a Respondent who is found to have violated this policy.
- 3.24 *Sexual Harassment* is the umbrella category including the offenses of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence and domestic violence. See Section 17.b for greater detail.
- 3.25 *Student* means an individual subject to SCP-4470, *Student Rights and Responsibilities*.
- 3.26 *Title IX Coordinator* is at least one official designated by Southern to ensure compliance with Title IX and Southern's Title IX program. References to the Coordinator throughout this policy may also encompass a designee of the Coordinator for specific tasks.
- 3.27 *Title IX Team* refers to the Title IX Coordinator, any deputy coordinators, and any member of the Grievance Process Pool.

SECTION 4. POLICY

- 4.1 Policy on Nondiscrimination
- 4.1.1 Southern adheres to all federal and state civil rights laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination in public institutions of higher education.
- 4.1.2 Southern does not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission on the basis of :

- 4.1.2.1 race,
 - 4.1.2.2 color,
 - 4.1.2.3 national origin,
 - 4.1.2.4 ancestry,
 - 4.1.2.5 age,
 - 4.1.2.6 physical or mental disability,
 - 4.1.2.7 marital or family status,
 - 4.1.2.8 pregnancy,
 - 4.1.2.9 veteran status,
 - 4.1.2.10 service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law),
 - 4.1.2.11 religion,
 - 4.1.2.12 creed,
 - 4.1.2.13 sex,
 - 4.1.2.14 sexual orientation,
 - 4.1.2.15 genetic information,
 - 4.1.2.16 gender identity or gender expression
 - 4.1.2.17 or any other protected category under applicable local, state, or federal law, including protections for those opposing discrimination or participating in any grievance process on campus, with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or other human rights agencies.
- 4.1.3 This policy covers nondiscrimination in both employment and access to educational opportunities. Therefore, any member of the Southern community whose acts deny, deprive, or limit the educational or employment access, benefits, and/or opportunities of any member of the Southern community, guest, or visitor on the basis of that person's actual or perceived membership in the protected classes listed above is in violation of the Southern policy on nondiscrimination.
- 4.1.4 When brought to the attention of Southern, any such discrimination will be promptly and fairly addressed and remedied by Southern according to the appropriate grievance process described below.

4.2 Policy on Disability Discrimination and Accommodation

- 4.2.1 Southern is committed to full compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination against qualified persons with disabilities, as well as other federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to individuals with disabilities.
- 4.2.2 Under the ADA and its amendments, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.
- 4.2.3 The ADA also protects individuals who have a record of a substantially limiting impairment or who are regarded as disabled by the Recipient, regardless of whether they currently have a disability. A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, or caring for oneself.
- 4.2.4 The Director of Disability and Adult Services has been designated as Southern's ADA/504 Coordinator responsible for overseeing efforts to comply with these disability laws, including responding to grievances and conducting investigations of any allegation of noncompliance or discrimination based on disability.
- 4.2.5 Grievances related to disability status and/or accommodations will be addressed using the procedures below. For details relating to disability accommodations in the College's resolution process, see page ##.

4.2.5.1 Students with Disabilities

- 4.2.5.1.1 Southern is committed to providing qualified students with disabilities with reasonable accommodations and support needed to ensure equal access to the academic programs, facilities, and activities of the College.
- 4.2.5.1.2 All accommodations are made on an individualized basis. A student requesting any accommodation should first contact the Director of Disability and Adult Services, who coordinates services for students with disabilities.
- 4.2.5.1.3 The Director of Disability and Adult Services reviews documentation provided by the student and, in consultation with the student, determines which accommodations are appropriate for the student's particular needs and academic program(s).

4.2.5.2 Employees with Disabilities

- 4.2.5.2.1 Pursuant to the ADA, Southern will provide reasonable accommodation(s) to all qualified employees with known disabilities when their disability affects the performance of their essential job

functions, except when doing so would be unduly disruptive or would result in undue hardship to the College.

- 4.2.5.2.2 An employee with a disability is responsible for submitting a request for an accommodation to the Director of Human Resources and providing necessary documentation. The Director of Human Resources will work with the employee's supervisor to identify which essential functions of the position are affected by the employee's disability and what reasonable accommodations could enable the employee to perform those duties.

4.3 Policy on Discriminatory Harassment

4.3.1 Students, staff, administrators, and faculty are entitled to an employment and educational environment that is free of discriminatory harassment. Southern's harassment 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.

4.3.2 The sections below describe the specific forms of legally prohibited harassment that are also prohibited. When speech or conduct is protected by academic freedom and/or the First Amendment, it will not be considered a violation of Southern's policy, though supportive measures will be offered to those impacted.

4.3.2.1 Discriminatory Harassment

4.3.2.1.1 Discriminatory harassment constitutes a form of discrimination that is prohibited by College 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.

4.3.2.1.2 Southern does not tolerate discriminatory harassment of any employee, student, visitor, or guest. Southern will act to remedy all forms of harassment when reported, whether or not the harassment rises to the level of creating a "hostile environment."

4.3.2.1.3 A hostile environment is one that unreasonably interferes with, limits, or effectively denies an individual's educational or employment access, benefits, or opportunities. This discriminatory effect results from harassing verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct that is severe or pervasive **and** objectively offensive.

4.3.2.1.4 When discriminatory harassment rises to the level of creating a hostile environment, Southern may also impose sanctions on the Respondent through application of the appropriate grievance process.

4.3.2.5 The College reserves the right to address offensive conduct and/or harassment that 1) does not rise to the level of creating a hostile

environment, or 2) that is of a generic nature and not based on a protected status. Addressing such conduct will not result in the imposition of discipline under Recipient policy, but may be addressed through respectful conversation, remedial actions, education, effective Alternate Resolution, and/or other informal resolution mechanisms.

4.3.2.6 For assistance with Alternate Resolution and other informal resolution techniques and approaches, employees should contact the Director of Human Resources, and students should contact the Title IX Coordinator.

4.3.2.2 Sexual Harassment

4.3.2.2.1 The Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the State of West Virginia regard Sexual Harassment, a specific form of discriminatory harassment, as an unlawful discriminatory practice.

4.3.2.2.2 Southern has adopted the following definition of Sexual Harassment in order to address the unique environment of an academic community, which consists not only of employer and employees, but of students as well.

4.3.2.2.3 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.

4.3.2.2.4 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 that satisfies one or more of the following:

4.3.2.2.4.1 Quid Pro Quo

4.3.2.2.4.1.1 an employee of the College conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the College, on an individual’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; and/or

4.3.2.2.4.2 Sexual Harassment

4.3.2.2.4.2.1 unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe and pervasive, and objectively offensive, that it effectively denies a person equal access to the College’s education program or activity.

4.3.2.2.4.3

Sexual assault, defined as:

- 4.3.2.2.4.3.1 Sex Offense, Forcible: Any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the Complainant, including instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent.
- 4.3.2.2.4.3.2 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 or another person, without the consent of the Complainant.
- 4.3.2.2.4.3.3 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.
- 4.3.2.2.4.3.4 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 the 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.
- 4.3.2.2.4.3.5 Forcibly Fondling: The touching of the private body parts of another person (buttocks, groin, breasts), for the purpose of sexual gratification, forcibly, and/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.

4.3.2.2.4.3.6 Sex Offenses, Non-forcible: 4.3.2.2.4.3.6.1

Incest: Non-forcible sexual intercourse, between persons who are related to each other, within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by West Virginia law.

4.3.2.2.3.3.6.2 Statutory Rape: Non-forcible sexual intercourse, with a person who is under the statutory age of consent of 16.

4.3.2.2.4.4 Dating Violence, defined as:

4.3.2.2.4.4.1 violence, on the basis of sex, committed by a person, who is in or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the Complainant.

4.3.2.2.4.4.2 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, dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

4.3.2.2.4.5 Domestic Violence, defined as:

4.3.2.2.4.5.1 violence, on the basis of sex, committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the Complainant, by a person with whom the Complainant shares a child in common, or by a person who is

cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the Complainant as a spouse or intimate partner, or by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the Complainant under the domestic or family violence laws of West Virginia, or 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 West Virginia.

4.3.2.2.4.5.2 To categorize an incident as Domestic Violence, 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.

4.3.2.2.4.6 Stalking, defined as:

4.3.2.2.4.6.1 engaging in a course of conduct, on the basis of sex, directed at a specific person, would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety, or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.

4.3.2.2.4.6.2 For the purposes of this definition: 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.

4.3.2.2.4.6.3 For the purposes of this definition: Reasonable person means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the Complainant.

4.3.2.2.4.6.4 For the purposes of this definition: Substantial emotional distress means

significant mental suffering or anguish that may but does not necessarily require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

- 4.3.2.2.5 Although consensual relationships are within the purview of individual privacy, those engaging in such relationships that occur between persons in inherently unequal and closely related positions at Southern, or between employees within the same reporting line, including those between supervisors and supervisees, must remain aware that such relationships could lead to circumstances that result in harassment or sexual or domestic misconduct.
 - 4.3.2.2.5.1 In these specific cases of consensual relationships, the individuals shall notify their immediate supervisor or other appropriate administrator. The supervisor or administrator shall be responsible for arranging to eliminate or mitigate any conflict of interest or other legitimate occupational interest related to employment, the consequences of which might prove detrimental to Southern or to either party in the relationship. In some instances, if no suitable way to eliminate or mitigate the conflict is reasonably feasible, one or both individuals may be separated from Southern.
 - 4.3.2.2.5.2 It is important to note that these types of consensual relationships also may result in a hostile or offensive environment affecting other employees or students. For example, others may perceive a person involved in the consensual relationship as receiving favorable treatment in employment or educational decisions and actions.
- 4.3.2.2.6 A faculty member or instructor is prohibited from engaging in a consensual relationship with a student whom the faculty member or instructor evaluates, supervises, instructs or advises.
 - 4.3.2.2.6.1 Where there is pre-existing consensual relationship, the faculty member or instructor shall notify his or her immediate supervisor or other appropriate administrator. The supervisor or other appropriate administrator shall be responsible for arranging to eliminate or to mitigate any conflict, the consequences of which might prove detrimental to Southern or to either party in the relationship.
- 4.3.2.2.7 Southern 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.

4.3.2.3 Force, Coercion, Consent, and Incapacitation

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

4.3.2.3.1.1 **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,” “Okay, don’t hit me, I’ll do what you want.”).

4.3.2.3.1.2 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.

4.3.2.3.1.3 **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.

4.3.2.3.1.4 **Consent:** Consent is knowing, and voluntary, and clear permission by word or action to engage in sexual activity.

4.3.2.3.1.4.1 Since individuals may experience the same interaction in different ways, it is the responsibility of each party to determine that the other has consented before engaging in the activity.

4.3.2.3.1.4.2 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.

4.3.2.3.1.4.3 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.

4.3.2.3.1.4.4 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.

4.3.2.3.1.4.5 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.

4.3.2.3.1.4.6 Proof of consent or non-consent is not a burden placed on either party involved in an incident. Instead, the burden remains on the College 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, previous patterns that may be evidenced.

4.3.2.3.1.4.7 Consent in relationships must also be considered in context. When parties consent to BDSM 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 Southern'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.

4.3.2.3.1.5 **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.

4.3.2.3.1.5.1 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 which assumes that a reasonable person is both sober and exercising sound judgment.

4.3.2.3.1.5.2 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, or how” of their sexual interaction).

4.3.2.3.1.5.3 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.

4.3.2.3.1.5.4 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.

4.3.2.4 Other Civil Rights Offenses

4.3.2.4.1 In addition to the forms of sexual harassment described above, which fall within the coverage of Title IX, the College additionally prohibits the following offenses as forms of discrimination outside of Title IX when the act is based upon

the Complainant's actual or perceived membership in a protected class.

4.3.2.4.1.1 Sexual Exploitation, defined as: 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:

4.3.2.4.1.1.1 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).

4.3.2.4.1.1.2 Invasion of sexual privacy.

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

4.3.2.4.1.1.4 Prostituting another person

4.3.2.4.1.1.5 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 infection

- 4.3.2.4.1.1.6 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
- 4.3.2.4.1.1.7 Misappropriation of another person's identity on apps, websites, or other venues designed for dating or sexual connections
- 4.3.2.4.1.1.8 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
- 4.3.2.4.1.1.9 Knowingly soliciting a minor for sexual activity
- 4.3.2.4.1.1.10 Engaging in sex trafficking
- 4.3.2.4.1.1.11 Creation, possession, or dissemination or child pornography
- 4.3.2.4.2 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;
- 4.3.2.4.3 Discrimination, defined as actions that deprive, limit, or deny other members of the community of educational or employment access, benefits, or opportunities;
- 4.3.2.4.4 Intimidation, defined as implied threats or acts that cause an unreasonable fear of harm in another;

4.3.2.4.4 Hazing, defined as acts likely to cause physical or psychological harm or social ostracism to any person within the College community, when related to the admission, initiation, pledging, joining, or any other group-affiliation activity;

4.3.2.4.5 Bullying, defined as:

4.3.2.4.5.1 Repeated and/or severe

4.3.2.4.5.2 Aggressive behavior

4.3.2.4.5.3 Likely to intimidate or intentionally hurt, control, or diminish another person, physically and/or mentally

4.3.2.4.5.4 That is not speech or conduct otherwise protected by the First Amendment.

4.3.2.4.2 Violation of any other College 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.

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

4.4 Retaliation

4.4.1 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.

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

4.4.3 It is prohibited for Southern or any member of Southern's community 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.

4.4.4 Charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a

report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, constitutes retaliation.

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

4.4.6 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 a determination regarding responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party has made a materially false statement in bad faith.

4.5 Mandated Reporting

4.5.1 All Southern employees (faculty, staff, administrators) are expected to report actual or suspected discrimination or harassment to the Title IX Coordinator immediately, though there are some limited exceptions.

4.5.2 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. 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.

4.5.3 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.

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

4.5.4.1 Confidential Resources

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

4.5.4.1.1.1

Off-campus (non-employees):

4.5.4.1.1.1.1 Licensed professional counselors and other medical providers

4.5.4.1.1.1.2 Local rape crisis counselors

4.5.4.1.1.1.3 Domestic violence resources

4.5.4.1.1.1.4 Local or state assistance agencies

4.5.4.1.1.1.5 Clergy/Chaplains

4.5.4.1.1.1.6 Attorneys

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

4.5.4.2 Anonymous Notice to Mandated Reporters

4.5.4.2.1 At the request of a Complainant, notice may be given by a Mandated Reporter to the Title IX Coordinator anonymously, without identification of the Complainant. The Mandated Reporter cannot remain anonymous themselves.

4.5.4.2.2 If a Complainant has requested that a Mandated Reporter maintain the Complainant's anonymity, the Mandated Reporter may do so unless it is reasonable to believe that a compelling threat to health or safety could exist. The Mandated Reporter can consult with the Title IX Coordinator on that assessment without revealing personally identifiable information.

4.5.4.2.3 Anonymous notice will be investigated by the Recipient to the extent possible, both to assess the underlying allegation(s) and to determine if supportive measures or remedies can be provided.

4.5.4.2.4 However, anonymous notice typically limits the Recipient's ability to investigate, respond, and provide remedies, depending on what information is shared.

4.5.4.2.5 When a Complainant has made a request for anonymity, the Complainant's personally identifiable information may be withheld by a Mandated Reporter, but all other details must be shared with the Title IX Coordinator. Mandated reporters may not be able to maintain requests for anonymity for Complainants who are minors, elderly, and/or disabled, depending on state reporting of abuse requirements.

4.5.4.3 Mandated Reporters and Formal Notice/Complaints

4.5.4.3.1 All employees of the College (including student employees) 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.

- 4.5.4.3.2 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.
- 4.5.4.3.3 Complainants may want to carefully consider whether they share personally identifiable details with Mandated Reporters, as those details must be shared with the Title IX Coordinator.
- 4.5.4.3.4 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 the College.
- 4.5.4.3.5 Supportive measures may be offered as the result of such disclosures without formal College action.
- 4.5.4.3.6 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 College policy and can be subject to disciplinary action for failure to comply.
- 4.5.4.3.7 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 the College is technically not on notice when a harasser is also a Mandated Reporter unless the harasser does in fact report themselves.
- 4.5.4.3.8 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.

4.6 When a Complainant Does Not Wish to Proceed

- 4.6.1 If a Complainant does not wish for their name to be shared, does not wish for an investigation to take place, 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.
- 4.6.2 The Title IX Coordinator has ultimate discretion over whether the College 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 upon completion of an appropriate violence risk assessment.
- 4.6.3 The Title IX Coordinator’s decision should be based on results of the violence risk assessment that show a compelling risk to health and/or safety that requires the College to pursue formal action to protect the community.

- 4.6.4 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. Southern may be compelled to act on alleged employee misconduct irrespective of a Complainant's wishes.
- 4.6.5 The Title IX Coordinator must also consider the effect that non-participation by the Complainant may have on the availability of evidence and the College's ability to pursue a Formal Grievance Process fairly and effectively.
- 4.6.6 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.
- 4.6.7 When the College proceeds, the Complainant (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.
- 4.6.8 Note that the College's ability to remedy and respond to notice may be limited if the Complainant does not want the College 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 the College's obligation to protect its community.
- 4.6.9 In cases in which the Complainant requests confidentiality/no formal action and the circumstances allow the College to honor that request, the College will offer informal resolution options, supportive measures, and remedies to the Complainant and the community, but will not otherwise pursue formal action.
- 4.6.10 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 Southern, and to have the incidents investigated and properly resolved through these procedures.

4.7 Federal Timely Warning Obligations

- 4.7.1 Parties reporting sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking should be aware that under the Clery Act, Southern must issue timely warnings for incidents reported to them that pose a serious or continuing threat of bodily harm or danger to members of the campus community and post those incidents in the College's daily crime log.
- 4.7.2 The 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.

4.8 False Allegations and Evidence

- 4.8.1 Deliberately false and/or malicious accusations under this policy, as opposed to allegations which, even if erroneous, are made in good faith, are a serious offense and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

4.8.2 Additionally, witnesses and parties knowingly providing false evidence, tampering with or destroying evidence after being directed to preserve such evidence, or deliberately misleading an official conducting an investigation can be subject to discipline under College policy.

4.9 Amnesty for Complainants and Witnesses

4.9.1 The Southern community encourages the reporting of misconduct and crimes by Complainants and witnesses. Sometimes, Complainants or witnesses are hesitant to report to Southern 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.

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

4.9.3 To encourage reporting and participation in the process, Southern 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.

4.9.4 Amnesty does not apply to more serious allegations such as physical abuse of another or illicit drug distribution. The decision not to offer amnesty to a Respondent 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.

4.9.5 **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 misconduct to the Executive Director of Student Services or designee).

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

4.9.7 **Employees:** Sometimes, employees are hesitant to report harassment or discrimination they have experienced for fear that they may get in trouble themselves. For example, an employee who has violated the consensual relationship policy and is then assaulted in the course of that relationship might hesitate to report the incident to College officials.

4.9.8 The College may, at its discretion, offer employee Complainants amnesty from such policy violations (typically more minor policy violations) related to the incident. Amnesty may also be granted to Respondents and witnesses on a case-by-case basis.

4.10 Federal Statistical Reporting Obligations

4.10.1 All College employees have a duty to report the following for federal statistical reporting

purposes (Clery Act) to :

- 4.10.1.1 All “primary crimes,” which include homicide, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson;
 - 4.10.1.2 Hate crimes, which include any bias motivated primary crime as well as any bias motivated larceny or theft, simple assault, intimidation, or destruction/damage/vandalism of property;
 - 4.10.1.3 VAWA-based crimes, which include sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking; and
 - 4.10.1.4 Arrests and referrals for disciplinary action for weapons-related law violations, liquor-related law violations, and drug abuse-related law violations.
- 4.10.2 All personally identifiable information is kept private, but statistical information must be passed along to Directors of Campus Operations 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.

SECTION 5. BACKGROUND OR EXCLUSIONS

1. If needed for understanding.

SECTION 6. GENERAL PROVISIONS

6.1 Independence and Conflict-of-Interest

- 6.1.1 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.
- 6.1.2 To raise any concern involving bias or conflict of interest by the Title IX Coordinator , contact the College President. Concerns of bias or a potential conflict of interest by any other Title IX Team member should be raised with the Title IX Coordinator.
- 6.1.3 Reports of misconduct or discrimination committed by the Title IX Coordinator should be reported to the College President or designee. Reports of misconduct or discrimination committed by any other Title IX Team member should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator .

6.2 Administrative Contact Information

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

Title IX Coordinator

P.O. Box 2900
Mount Gay, WV 25637
Office Number: A-205
Email: TitleIX@southernwv.edu
Office Phone: (304) 896-7432

6.2.2 Recipient has also classified all 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.

6.2.3 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
Web: <http://www.ed.gov/ocr>

For complaints involving employees:
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
Web: <https://eeoc.gov/>

6.3 Notice/Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Retaliation

6.3.1 File a complaint with, or give verbal notice to, the Title IX Coordinator. Such a report may be made at any time (including non-business hours) by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

6.3.2 A Formal Complaint means a document filed/signed by the Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging a policy violation by a Respondent and requesting that the Southern 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) that contains the Complainant’s physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the complaint. College employees and students may use their College email address as a form of digital signature.

6.3.3 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.

6.4 Supportive Measures

- 6.4.1 Southern will offer and implement appropriate and reasonable supportive measures to the parties upon notice of alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.
- 6.4.2 Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the parties to restore or preserve access to the College's education program or activity, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the College's educational environment, and/or deter harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.
- 6.4.3 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, the College will inform the Complainant, in writing, that they may file a formal complaint with the College 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.
- 6.4.4 The College will maintain the privacy of the supportive measures, provided that privacy does not impair the College's ability to provide the supportive measures. Southern will act to ensure as minimal an academic impact on the parties as possible. The Recipient will implement measures in a way that does not unreasonably burden the other party.
- 6.4.5 These actions may include, but are not limited to:
 - 6.4.5.1 Referral to counseling, medical, and/or healthcare services
 - 6.4.5.2 Referral to community-based service providers
 - 6.4.5.3 Student financial aid counseling
 - 6.4.5.4 Education to the community or community subgroup(s)
 - 6.4.5.5 Altering work arrangements for employees or student-employees
 - 6.4.5.6 Safety planning
 - 6.4.5.7 Providing campus safety escorts
 - 6.4.5.8 Implementing contact limitations (no contact orders) between parties
 - 6.4.5.9 Academic support, extension of deadlines, or other course/program-related adjustments
 - 6.4.5.10 Timely warnings
 - 6.4.5.11 Class schedule modifications, withdrawals, or leaves of absence
 - 6.4.5.12 Increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus
 - 6.4.5.13 Any other actions deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator

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

6.5 Emergency Removal

6.5.1 The College can act to remove a 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 Behavioral Intervention Team using its standard objective violence risk assessment procedures.

6.5.2 In all cases in which an emergency removal is imposed, the student, employee, or two (2) representatives from a student organization 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.

6.5.3 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. There is no appeal process for emergency removal decisions.

6.5.4 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.

6.5.5 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, which may include expulsion or termination.

6.5.6 The 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: 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, or intercollegiate/intramural athletics.

6.5.7 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.

6.6 Promptness

6.6.1 All allegations are acted upon promptly by Southern 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 the College will avoid all undue delays within its control.

- 6.6.2 Any time the general timeframes for resolution outlined in Southern's procedures will be delayed, the College 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.

6.7 Privacy

- 6.7.1 Every effort is made by the College to preserve the privacy of reports. Southern 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 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.

- 6.7.2 The College reserves the right to designate which Southern 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).

- 6.7.3 Only a small group of officials who need to know will typically be told about the complaint. 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.

- 6.7.4 The College may contact parents/guardians 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.

- 6.7.5 Confidentiality and mandated reporting are addressed more specifically later in this policy.

6.8 Jurisdiction of the College

- 6.8.1 This policy applies to the education program and activities of the College, to conduct that takes place on the campus or on property owned or controlled by the College, at College-sponsored events, or in buildings owned or controlled by Southern's recognized student organizations. The Respondent must be a member of Southern's community in order for its policies to apply.

- 6.8.2 This policy can also be applicable to the effects of off-campus misconduct that effectively deprive someone of access to Southern's educational program. The recipient may also extend jurisdiction to off-campus and/or to online conduct when the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct affects a substantial College interest.

- 6.8.3 Regardless of where the conduct occurred, the Recipient 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 College interest includes:

6.8.3.1 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;

6.8.3.2 Any situation in which it is determined that the Respondent poses an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual;

6.8.3.3 Any situation that significantly impinges upon the rights, property, or achievements of oneself or others or significantly breaches the peace and/or causes social disorder; and/or

6.8.3.4 Any situation that is detrimental to the educational interests or mission of the College.

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

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

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

6.8.7 All vendors serving the College through third-party contracts are subject to the policies and procedures of their employers, or to these policies and procedures to which their employer has agreed to be bound by their contracts.

6.8.8 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.

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

6.9 Time Limits on Reporting

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

6.9.2 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.

- 6.9.3 When notice/complaint is affected by significant time delay, the College will typically apply the policy in place at the time of the alleged misconduct and the procedures in place at the time of notice/complaint.

6.10 Online Harassment and Misconduct

- 6.10.1 The policies of Southern are written and interpreted broadly to include online and cyber manifestations of any of the behaviors prohibited below, when those behaviors occur in or have an effect on the College's education program and activities or use College networks, technology, or equipment.
- 6.10.2 While Southern may not control websites, social media, and other venues in which harassing communications are made, when such communications are reported to Southern, it will engage in a variety of means to address and mitigate the effects.
- 6.10.3 Members of the community are encouraged to be good digital citizens and to refrain from online misconduct, such as feeding anonymous gossip sites, sharing inappropriate content via Snaps or other social media, unwelcome sexting, revenge porn, breaches of privacy, or otherwise using the ease of transmission and/or anonymity of the Internet or other technology to harm another member of the College community.
- 6.10.4 Any online postings or other electronic communication by students, including cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, cyber-harassment, etc., occurring completely outside of the College's control (e.g., not on Southern networks, websites, or between College email accounts) will only be subject to this policy when such online conduct can be shown to cause a substantial in-program disruption.
- 6.10.5 Otherwise, such communications are considered speech protected by the First Amendment. Supportive measures for Complainants will be provided, but protected speech cannot legally be subjected to discipline.
- 6.10.6 Off-campus harassing speech by employees, whether online or in person, may be regulated by the Southern only when such speech is made in an employee's official or work-related capacity.

SECTION 7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The Title IX Coordinator has the primary responsibility for coordinating Southern's efforts related to the intake, investigation, resolution, and implementation of supportive measures to stop, remediate, and prevent discrimination, harassment, and retaliation prohibited under this policy.
- 7.2 The ADA/504 Coordinator oversees implementation of disability compliance and serves as Deputy Title IX Coordinator for complaints involving students.
- 7.3 The Director of Human Resources oversees implementation of Southern's Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity plan, and serves as Deputy Title IX Coordinator for complaints involving employees.

SECTION 8. CANCELLATION

8.1 Any previous policy being superseded.

SECTION 9. REVIEW STATEMENT

9.1 This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis with a time frame for review to be determined by the President or the President’s designee. Upon such review, the President or President’s designee may recommend to the Board that the policy be amended or repealed.

SECTION 10. SIGNATURES

Board of Governors Chair **Date**

President **Date**

Attachments: Official Summary Sheet, Form(s), and “/or example” attachments, etc., when necessary, two lines below last signature line.

Distribution: Board of Governors (12 members)
www.southernwv.edu

Revision Notes: N/A

ATTACHMENT A: STATEMENT OF RIGHTS OF THE PARTIES

- The right to an equitable investigation and resolution of all credible allegations of prohibited harassment or discrimination made in good faith to Southern 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 regarding the allegation(s) or underlying incident(s), whenever possible.
- The right not to have any personally identifiable information released to the public without consent provided, except to the extent permitted by law.
- The right to be treated with respect by College officials.
- The right to have College policies and 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 College officials from reporting sexual misconduct or discrimination to both on-campus and off-campus authorities.
- The right to be informed by Southern officials of options to notify proper law enforcement authorities, including on-campus and local police, and the option(s) to be assisted by Southern authorities in notifying such authorities, if the party so chooses. This also includes the right not to be pressured to report, as well.
- The right to have allegations of violations of this Policy responded to promptly and with sensitivity by Southern officials.
- The right to be informed of available interim actions and supportive measures, such as counseling; advocacy; health care; legal, student financial aid, visa, and immigration assistance; or other services, both on campus and in the community.
- The right to a College-implemented no-contact order when a person has engaged in or threatens to engage in stalking, threatening, harassing, or other improper conduct that presents a danger to the welfare of the party or others.
- 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:

- Changing an employee's work environment (e.g., reporting structure, office/workspace relocation)
 - Transportation accommodations
 - Arranging to dissolve a housing contract and 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.
 - The right to have the College maintain such actions for as long as necessary and for supportive measures to remain private, provided privacy does not impair the College'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 ask the Investigator(s) and Decision-maker(s) to identify and question relevant 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)/Chair, may be asked of any party or witness.
 - The right not to have irrelevant prior sexual history or character admitted as evidence.
 - The right to know the relevant and directly related evidence obtained and to respond to that evidence.
 - The right to 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 the investigation report, including all factual, policy, and/or credibility analyses performed, and all relevant and directly related evidence available and used to produce the investigation report, subject to the privacy limitations imposed by state and federal law, prior to the hearing, and the right to have at least ten (10) business days to review the report prior to the hearing.
 - The right to respond to the investigation report, including comments providing any additional relevant evidence after the opportunity to review the investigation report, and to have that response on the record.
 - 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 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 College 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 and a detailed rationale therefor (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 the College is considered final and any changes to the sanction(s) that occur before the decision is finalized.
- 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 the College.
- The right to a fundamentally fair resolution as defined in these procedures.

ATTACHMENT B: VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT (VRA)

Threat assessment is the process of assessing the actionability of violence by an individual against another person or group following the issuance of a direct or conditional threat. A **Violence Risk Assessment (VRA)** is a broader term used to assess any potential violence or danger, regardless of the presence of a vague, conditional, or direct threat.

The implementation of VRAs require specific training and are typically conducted by psychologists, clinical counselors, social workers, case managers, law enforcement officers, student conduct officers, and/or other Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) (sometimes also known as CARE teams) members.

A VRA occurs in collaboration with BIT and must be understood as an on-going process, rather than a singular evaluation or meeting. A VRA is not an evaluation for an involuntary behavioral health hospitalization (e.g., 5150 in California, Section XII in Massachusetts, Baker Act in Florida), nor is it a psychological or mental health assessment.

A VRA assesses the risk of actionable violence, often with a focus on targeted/predatory escalations, and is supported by research from the fields of law enforcement, criminology, human resources, and psychology.

When conducting a VRA, the assessor(s) use an evidence-based process consisting of:

1. an appraisal of **risk factors** that escalate the potential for violence;
2. a determination of **stabilizing influences** that reduce the risk of violence;
3. a contextual **analysis of violence risk** by considering environmental circumstances, hopelessness, and suicidality; catalyst events; nature and actionability of threat; fixation and focus on target; grievance collection; and action and time imperative for violence; and
4. the application of **intervention and management** approaches to reduce the risk of violence.

To assess an individual's level of violence risk, the Title IX Coordinator will initiate the violence risk assessment process through the BIT. The BIT will assign a trained individual(s) to perform the assessment, according to the specific nature of the Title IX case.

The assessor will follow the process for conducting a violence risk assessment as outlined in the BIT manual and will rely on a consistent, research-based, reliable system that allows the for the operationalization of the risk levels.

Some examples of formalized approaches to the VRA process include: The NaBITA Risk Rubric, The Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment (SIVRA-35), The Extremist Risk Intervention Scale (ERIS), Looking Glass, Workplace Assessment of Violence Risk (WAVR-21), Historical Clinical Risk Management (HCR-20), and MOSAIC.

The VRA is conducted independently from the Title IX process, free from outcome pressure, but is informed by it. The individual(s) conducting the assessment will be trained to mitigate any bias and provide the analysis and findings in a fair and equitable manner.

The BIT members conducts a VRA process and makes a recommendation to the Title IX Coordinator as to whether the VRA indicates there is a substantial, compelling, and/or immediate risk to health and/or safety of an individual or the community.

**SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE
STUDENT SERVICES
PROCEDURE
SIP-xxxx**

SUBJECT: Interim Resolution Process for Alleged Violations of the Policy on Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination (Known as Process “A”).

REFERENCE: SCP-xxxx, Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy.

ORIGINATION: August 14, 2020.

EFFECTIVE: August 14, 2020.

REVIEWED: August 14, 2020.

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Southern will act on any formal or informal notice/complaint of violation of the policy on Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination (“the Policy”) that is received by the Title IX Coordinator or any other Official with Authority by applying these procedures, known as “Process A.”
- 1.2 The procedures below apply to all allegations of harassment or discrimination on the basis of protected class status involving students, staff, administrators, faculty members, or guests. A set of technical dismissal requirements within the Title IX regulations may apply as described in this procedure, but when a technical dismissal under the Title IX allegations is required, any remaining allegations will proceed using these same grievance procedures, clarifying which policies are applicable. While the effect of the Title IX regulations can be confusing, these grievance procedures apply to policies on Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination.
- 1.3 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). All other allegations of misconduct unrelated to incidents covered by the Policy will be addressed through procedures elaborated in the student and employee handbooks.

SECTION 2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This procedure is applicable to all Southern employees and students.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Used to give meaning to a word, term, or phrase as used in the procedure.

SECTION 4. PROCEDURE

- 4.1 Notice/Complaint

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

4.1.2 The College will initiate at least one of three responses:

4.1.2.1 Offering supportive measures because the Complainant does not want to proceed formally; and/or

4.1.2.2 An informal resolution; and/or

4.1.2.3 A Formal Grievance Process including an investigation and a hearing.

4.1.3 The investigation and grievance process will determine whether or not the Policy has been violated. If so, the College will promptly implement effective remedies designed to ensure that it is not deliberately indifferent to harassment or discrimination, their potential recurrence, or their effects.

4.2 Initial Assessment

4.2.1 Following receipt of notice or a complaint of an alleged violation of the Policy (SCP-xxxx), the Title IX Coordinator engages in an initial assessment, which is typically one to five business days in duration. The steps in an initial assessment can include:

4.2.1.1 If notice is given, 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.

4.2.1.1.1 If they do not wish to do so, the Title IX Coordinator determines whether to initiate a complaint because a violence risk assessment indicates a compelling threat to health and/or safety.

4.2.1.2 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.

4.2.1.3 The Title IX Coordinator reaches out to the Complainant to offer supportive measures.

4.2.1.4 The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure they are aware of the right to have an Advisor.

4.2.1.5 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.

4.2.1.5.1 If a supportive and remedial response is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to identify their wishes and then seeks to facilitate implementation. No Formal Grievance Process is initiated, though the Complainant can elect to initiate one later, if desired.

- 4.2.1.5.2 If an informal resolution option is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator assesses whether the complaint is suitable for informal resolution, which informal mechanism may serve the situation best or is available, and may seek to determine if the Respondent is also willing to engage in informal resolution.
- 4.2.1.5.3 If a Formal Grievance Process is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator determines if the misconduct alleged falls within the scope of Title IX:
 - 4.2.1.5.3.1 If it does, the Title IX Coordinator will initiate the formal investigation and grievance process, directing the investigation to address:
 - 4.2.1.5.3.1.1 an incident, and/or
 - 4.2.1.5.3.1.2 a pattern of alleged misconduct, and/or
 - 4.2.1.5.3.1.3 a culture/climate issue, based on the nature of the complaint.
 - 4.2.1.5.3.2 If it does not, the Title IX Coordinator determines that Title IX does 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. Please note that dismissing a complaint under Title IX is just procedural, and does not limit the College's authority to address a complaint with an appropriate process and remedies.
- 4.2.1.5.4 Violence Risk Assessment
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1 In many cases, the Title IX Coordinator may determine that a Violence Risk Assessment (VRA) should be conducted by the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) as part of the initial assessment. A VRA can aid in ten critical and/or required determinations, including:
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1.1 Emergency removal of a Respondent on the basis of immediate threat to physical health/safety;
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1.2 Whether the Title IX Coordinator should pursue/sign a formal complaint absent a willing/able Complainant;
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1.3 Whether to put the investigation on the footing of incident and/or pattern and/or climate;

- 4.2.1.5.4.1.4 To help identify potential predatory conduct;
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1.5 To help assess/identify grooming behaviors;
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1.6 Whether it is reasonable to try to resolve a complaint through informal resolution, and what modality may be most successful;
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1.7 Whether to permit a voluntary withdrawal by the Respondent;
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1.8 Whether to impose transcript notation or communicate with a transfer Recipient about a Respondent;
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1.9 Assessment of appropriate sanctions/remedies (to be applied post-hearing); and/or
 - 4.2.1.5.4.1.10 Whether a Clery Act Timely Warning is needed.
- 4.2.1.5.4.2 Threat assessment is the process of evaluating the actionability of violence by an individual against another person or group following the issuance of a direct or conditional threat. A VRA is a broader term used to assess any potential violence or danger, regardless of the presence of a vague, conditional, or direct threat.
- 4.2.1.5.4.3 VRAs require specific training and are typically conducted by BIT members. A VRA authorized by the Title IX Coordinator should occur in collaboration with the BIT. Where a VRA is required by the Title IX Coordinator, a Respondent refusing to cooperate may result in a charge of failure to comply within the appropriate student or employee conduct process.
- 4.2.1.5.4.4 A VRA is not an evaluation for an involuntary behavioral health hospitalization, nor is it a psychological or mental health assessment. A VRA assesses the risk of actionable violence, often with a focus on targeted/predatory escalations, and is supported by research from the fields of law enforcement, criminology, human resources, and psychology.

4.2.1.5.4.5 More about the College’s process for VRA can be found in Appendix B.

4.2.1.5.5 Dismissal (Mandatory and Discretionary)

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

4.2.1.5.5.1.1 The conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment as defined in SCP-xxxx even if proved; and/or

4.2.1.5.5.1.2 The conduct did not occur in an educational program or activity controlled by the College (including buildings or property controlled by recognized student organizations), and/or the College does not have control of the Respondent; and/or

4.2.1.5.5.1.3 The conduct did not occur against a person in the United States; and/or

4.2.1.5.5.1.4 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 recipient.

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

4.2.1.5.5.2.1 A Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein; or

4.2.1.5.5.2.2 The Respondent is no longer enrolled in or employed by the recipient; or

4.2.1.5.5.2.3 Specific circumstances prevent the recipient from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

4.2.1.5.5.3 Upon any dismissal, the College will promptly send

written notice of the dismissal and the rationale for doing so simultaneously to the parties.

4.2.1.5.5.4 This dismissal decision is appealable by any party under the procedures for appeal in Section 4.36.

4.3 Counterclaims

- 4.3.1 The College is obligated to ensure that the grievance process is not abused for retaliatory purposes. The College 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 the Respondent may be made in good faith, but are, on occasion, also made for purposes of retaliation. Counterclaims made with retaliatory intent will not be permitted.
- 4.3.2 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.
- 4.3.3 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 SCP-xxxx, Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy.

4.4 Right to an Advisor

- 4.4.1 The parties may each have an Advisor of their choice present with them for all meetings and interviews 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.
- 4.4.2 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).
- 4.4.3 Who Can Serve as an Advisor
 - 4.4.3.1 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 College community.
 - 4.4.3.2 The Title IX Coordinator will also offer to assign a trained Advisor for any party if the party so chooses. If the parties choose an Advisor from the pool available from the College, the Advisor will be trained by the College and be familiar with the College's resolution process.
 - 4.4.3.3 If the parties choose an Advisor from outside the pool of those identified by the College, the Advisor may not have been trained by the College and may not be familiar with Southern policies and procedures.

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

4.4.4 Advisors in Hearings/College-Appointed Advisor

4.4.4.1 Under U.S. Department of Education regulations applicable to Title IX, cross-examination is required during the hearing, but must be conducted by the parties' Advisors. The parties are not permitted to directly cross-examine each other or any witnesses. If a party does not have an Advisor for a hearing, the College will appoint a trained Advisor for the limited purpose of conducting any cross-examination.

4.4.4.2 A party may reject this appointment and choose their own Advisor, but they may not proceed without an Advisor. If the party's Advisor will not conduct cross-examination, the College will appoint an Advisor who will do so thoroughly, regardless of the participation or non-participation of the advised party in the hearing itself. Extensive questioning of the parties and witnesses will also be conducted by the Decision-maker(s) during the hearing.

4.4.5 Advisor's Role

4.4.5.1 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.

4.4.5.2 The College 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, the College is not obligated to provide an attorney.

4.4.6 Pre-Interview Meetings

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

4.4.7 Advisor Violations of College Policy

4.4.7.1 All Advisors are subject to the same Southern policies and procedures, whether they are attorneys or not. Advisors are expected to advise their advisees without disrupting proceedings.

4.4.7.2 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.

- 4.4.7.3 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 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.

4.4.8 Sharing Information with the Advisor

- 4.4.8.1 The College expects that the parties may wish to have the College share documentation and evidence related to the allegations with their Advisors. Parties may share this information directly with their Advisor or other individuals if they wish. Doing so may help the parties participate more meaningfully in the resolution process.
- 4.4.8.2 The College also provides a consent form that authorizes the College to share such information directly with their 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 Southern is able to share records with an Advisor.
- 4.4.8.3 If a party requests that all communication be made through their attorney Advisor, the College will not comply with that request.

4.4.9 Privacy of Records Shared with Advisor

- 4.4.9.1 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 Southern. The College may seek to restrict the role of any Advisor who does not respect the sensitive nature of the process or who fails to abide by the College's privacy expectations.

4.4.10 Expectations of an Advisor

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

4.4.11 Expectations of the Parties with Respect to Advisors

- 4.4.11.1 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).
- 4.4.11.2 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 must 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.

4.5 Resolution Processes

4.5.1 Resolution proceedings are private. All persons present at any time during the resolution process are expected to maintain the privacy of the proceedings. While 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. Southern encourages parties to discuss this with their Advisors before doing so.

4.5.1.1 Informal Resolution can include three different approaches:

4.5.1.1.1 When the parties agree to resolve the matter through an alternate resolution mechanism including mediation, restorative practices, etc.;

4.5.1.1.2 When the Respondent accepts responsibility for violating policy, and desires to accept a sanction and end the resolution process;
or

4.5.1.1.3 When the Title IX Coordinator can resolve the matter informally by providing supportive measures to remedy the situation.

4.5.1.2 To initiate Informal Resolution, a Complainant needs to submit a formal complaint, as defined above. If a Respondent wishes to initiate Informal Resolution, they should contact the Title IX Coordinator to so indicate.

4.5.1.3 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.

4.5.1.4 Prior to implementing Informal Resolution, the College 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 the College.

4.5.1.5 The College 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.

4.5.2 Alternate Resolutions

4.5.2.1 Alternate Resolution is an informal process, including mediation or restorative practices, etc. by which a mutually agreed upon resolution of an allegation is reached. All parties must consent to the use of Alternate Resolution.

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

4.5.2.2.1 The parties' amenability to Alternate Resolution;

4.5.2.2.2 Likelihood of potential resolution, taking into account any power dynamics between the parties;

4.5.2.2.3 The parties' motivation to participate;

4.5.2.2.4 Civility of the parties;

4.5.2.2.5 Cleared violence risk assessment/ongoing risk analysis;

4.5.2.2.6 Disciplinary history;

4.5.2.2.7 Whether an emergency removal is needed;

4.5.2.2.8 Skill of the Alternate Resolution facilitator with this type of complaint;

4.5.2.2.9 Complaint complexity;

4.5.2.2.10 Emotional investment/intelligence of the parties;

4.5.2.2.11 Rationality of the parties;

4.5.2.2.12 Goals of the parties;

4.5.2.2.13 Adequate resources to invest in Alternate Resolution (time, staff, etc.)

4.5.2.3 The ultimate determination of whether Alternate Resolution is available or successful is to be made by the Title IX Coordinator. 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 Alternate Resolution are not appealable.

4.5.3 Respondent Accepts Responsibility for Alleged Violations

- 4.5.3.1 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 in that section above.
- 4.5.3.2 If Informal Resolution is applicable, the Title IX Coordinator will determine whether all parties and the College 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 College policy and implements agreed-upon sanctions and/or remedies, in coordination with other appropriate administrator(s), as necessary.
- 4.5.3.3 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.
- 4.5.3.4 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.

4.5.4 Negotiated Resolution

- 4.5.4.1 The Title IX Coordinator, with the consent of the parties, may negotiate and implement an agreement to resolve the allegations that satisfies all parties and the College. Negotiated Resolutions are not appealable.

4.6 Grievance Process Pool

- 4.6.1 The Formal Grievance Process relies on a pool of Title IX administrators (“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.

4.6.2 Pool Member Roles

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

- 4.6.2.1.1 To investigate complaints
- 4.6.2.1.2 To serve as a hearing facilitator (process administrator, no decision-making role)
- 4.6.2.1.3 To serve as a Decision-maker regarding the complaint
- 4.6.2.1.4 To serve as an Appeal Decision-maker

4.6.3 Pool Member Appointment

4.6.3.1 The Title IX Coordinator, appoints the Pool, which acts with independence and impartiality. While 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, the College 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.

4.6.4 Pool Member Training

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

- 4.6.4.1.1 The scope of the College's Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures
- 4.6.4.1.2 How to conduct investigations and hearings that protect the safety of Complainants and Respondents, and promote accountability
- 4.6.4.1.3 Implicit bias
- 4.6.4.1.4 Disparate treatment and impact
- 4.6.4.1.5 Reporting, confidentiality, and privacy requirements
- 4.6.4.1.6 Applicable laws, regulations, and federal regulatory guidance
- 4.6.4.1.7 How to implement appropriate and situation-specific remedies
- 4.6.4.1.8 How to investigate in a thorough, reliable, and impartial manner
- 4.6.4.1.9 How to uphold fairness, equity, and due process
- 4.6.4.1.10 How to weigh evidence
- 4.6.4.1.11 How to conduct questioning
- 4.6.4.1.12 How to assess credibility
- 4.6.4.1.13 Impartiality and objectivity
- 4.6.4.1.14 How to render findings and generate clear, concise, evidence-based rationales
- 4.6.4.1.15 The definitions of all offenses
- 4.6.4.1.16 How to apply definitions used by the recipient with respect to consent (or the absence or negation of consent) consistently, impartially, and in

accordance with policy

4.6.4.1.17 How to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes

4.6.4.1.18 How to serve impartially by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias

4.6.4.1.19 Any technology to be used at a live hearing

4.6.4.1.20 Issues of relevance of questions and evidence

4.6.4.1.21 Issues of relevance to create an investigation report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence

4.6.4.1.22 How to determine appropriate sanctions in reference to all forms of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation allegations

4.6.4.2 Specific training is also provided for Appeal Decision-makers, intake personnel, Advisors (who are College employees), and Chairs. 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 College's website.

4.6.5 Pool Membership

4.6.5.1 The Pool includes:

4.6.5.1.1 Three Chairs: one representative from Human Resources and two from Student Services, who are members and who respectively Chair hearings for allegations involving student and employee Respondents

4.6.5.1.2 Three members of the Academic Affairs administration and/or faculty

4.6.5.1.3 Three members of the administration and/or staff

4.6.5.1.4 Two members who are Directors of Campus Operations

4.6.5.2 Pool members are appointed to three-year terms.

4.7 Formal Grievance Process: Notice of Investigation and Allegations

4.7.1 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 is to be given advance notice of when the NOIA will be delivered to the Respondent.

4.7.2 The NOIA will include:

4.7.2.1 A meaningful summary of all of allegations,

- 4.7.2.2 The identity of the involved parties (if known),
 - 4.7.2.3 The precise misconduct being alleged,
 - 4.7.2.4 The date and location of the alleged incident(s) (if known),
 - 4.7.2.5 The specific policies implicated,
 - 4.7.2.6 A description of the applicable procedures,
 - 4.7.2.7 A statement of the potential sanctions/responsive actions that could result,
 - 4.7.2.8 A statement that the College presumes the Respondent is not responsible for the reported misconduct unless and until the evidence supports a different determination,
 - 4.7.2.9 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,
 - 4.7.2.10 A statement about the College's policy on retaliation,
 - 4.7.2.11 Information about the privacy of the process,
 - 4.7.2.12 Information on the need for each party to have an Advisor of their choosing and suggestions for ways to identify an Advisor,
 - 4.7.2.13 A statement informing the parties that the College's Policy prohibits knowingly making false statements, including knowingly submitting false information during the resolution process,
 - 4.7.2.14 Detail on how the party may request disability accommodations during the interview process,
 - 4.7.2.15 A link to the College's Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Brochure,
 - 4.7.2.16 The name(s) of the Investigator(s), along with a process to identify, in advance of the interview process, to the Title IX Coordinator any conflict of interest that the Investigator(s) may have, and
 - 4.7.2.17 An instruction to preserve any evidence that is directly related to the allegations.
- 4.7.3 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 charges.
 - 4.7.4 Notice 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(es) of the parties as indicated in official College records, or emailed to the parties' College-issued email accounts. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in-person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

4.8 Resolution Timeline

4.8.1 The 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, 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 a estimate of how much additional time will be needed to complete the process.

4.9 Appointment of Investigators

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

4.10 Ensuring Impartiality

4.10.1 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.

4.10.2 The Title IX Coordinator will vet the assigned Investigator(s) to ensure impartiality by ensuring there are no actual or apparent conflicts of interest or disqualifying biases. 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 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 College President.

4.10.3 The Formal Grievance Process involves an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence obtained, including evidence which supports that the Respondent engaged in a policy violation and evidence which 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.

4.10.4 The College 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.

4.11 Investigation Timeline

4.11.1 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.

4.11.2 The College 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.

4.12 Delays in the Investigation Process and Interactions with Law Enforcement

4.12.1 The College 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.

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

4.13 Steps in the Investigation Process

- 4.13.1 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.
- 4.13.2 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.
- 4.13.3 The Investigator(s) typically take(s) the following steps, if not already completed (not necessarily in this order):
 - 4.13.3.1 Determine the identity and contact information of the Complainant.
 - 4.13.3.2 In coordination with campus partners (e.g., the Title IX Coordinator), initiate or assist with any necessary supportive measures.
 - 4.13.3.3 Identify all policies implicated by the alleged misconduct and notify the Complainant and Respondent of all of the specific policies implicated.
 - 4.13.3.4 Assist the Title IX Coordinator with conducting a prompt initial assessment to determine if the allegations indicate a potential policy violation.
 - 4.13.3.5 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.
 - 4.13.3.6 Meet with the Complainant to finalize their interview/statement, if necessary.
 - 4.13.3.7 Prepare the initial Notice of Investigation and Allegation (NOIA). The NOIA may be amended with any additional or dismissed allegations.
 - 4.13.3.7.1 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.

- 4.13.3.8 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
- 4.13.3.9 Make good faith efforts to notify the parties of any meeting or interview involving the other party, in advance when possible.
- 4.13.3.10 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.
- 4.13.3.11 Interview all available, relevant witnesses and conduct follow-up interviews as necessary
- 4.13.3.12 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.
- 4.13.3.13 Complete the investigation promptly and without unreasonable deviation from the intended timeline.
- 4.13.3.14 Provide regular status updates to the parties throughout the investigation.
- 4.13.3.15 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.
- 4.13.3.16 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.
- 4.13.3.17 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.
- 4.13.3.18 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 College 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).

- 4.13.3.19 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.
- 4.13.3.20 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.
- 4.13.3.21 The Investigator(s) shares the report with the Title IX Coordinator for review and feedback.
- 4.13.3.22 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 are also provided with a file of any directly related evidence that was not included in the report.

4.14 Role and Participation in the Investigation

- 4.14.1 Witnesses (as distinguished from the parties) who are employees of the College are expected to cooperate with and participate in the College's investigation and resolution process. Failure of such witnesses to cooperate with and/or participate in the investigation or resolution process constitutes a violation of policy and may warrant discipline.
- 4.14.2 While 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 or efficiency dictate a need for remote interviewing. The Recipient will take appropriate steps to reasonably ensure the security/privacy of remote interviews.

4.15 Recording of Interviews

- 4.15.1 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 must be made aware of audio and/or video recording.

4.16 Evidentiary Considerations in the Investigation

- 4.16.1 The investigation does not consider: 1) incidents not directly related to the possible violation, unless they evidence a pattern; 2) the character of the parties; or 3) questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or 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.

4.17 Referral for Hearing

- 4.17.1 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.
- 4.17.2 The hearing cannot be 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.
- 4.17.3 The Title IX Coordinator will select an appropriate Decision-maker from the Pool depending on whether the Respondent is an employee or a student. Allegations involving student-employees will be directed to the appropriate Decision-maker depending on the context of the alleged misconduct.

4.18 Hearing Decision-maker Composition

- 4.18.1 The College 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.
- 4.18.2 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 resolution process in the event that a substitute is needed for any reason.
- 4.18.3 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.
- 4.18.4 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 role. The hearing will convene at a time determined by the Chair or designee.

4.19 Evidentiary Considerations in the Hearing

- 4.19.1 Any evidence that the Decision-maker(s) determine(s) is relevant and credible may be considered. The hearing does not consider: 1) incidents not directly related to the possible violation, unless they evidence a pattern; 2) the character of the parties; or 3) questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or 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.
- 4.19.2 Previous disciplinary action of any kind involving the Respondent may be considered in determining an appropriate sanction upon a determination of responsibility. This information is only considered at the sanction stage of the process.
- 4.19.3 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.

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

4.20 Notice of Hearing

4.20.1 No less than ten (10) business days prior to the hearing, 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. The notice will contain:

- 4.20.1.1 A 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.
- 4.20.1.2 The time, date, and location of the hearing and a reminder that attendance is mandatory, superseding all other campus activities.
- 4.20.1.3 Any technology that will be used to facilitate the hearing.
- 4.20.1.4 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.
- 4.20.1.5 A list of all those who will attend the hearing, along with an invitation to object to any Decision-maker on the basis of demonstrated bias. This must be raised with the Title IX Coordinator at least two (2) business days prior to the hearing.
- 4.20.1.6 Information on how the hearing will be recorded and on access to the recording for the parties after the hearing.
- 4.20.1.7 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.
- 4.20.1.8 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 Recipient will appoint one. Each party must have an Advisor present. There are no exceptions.
- 4.20.1.9 A copy of all the materials provided to the Decision-maker(s) about the matter, unless they have been provided already.
- 4.20.1.10 An invitation to each party to submit to the Chair an impact statement pre-hearing that the Decision-maker will review during any sanction determination.

- 4.20.1.11 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.
 - 4.20.1 .12 Whether parties can/cannot bring mobile phones/devices into the hearing.
 - 4.20.2 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 the College and remain within the 60-90 business day goal for resolution.
 - 4.20.3 In these cases, if the Respondent is a graduating student, a hold may be placed on graduation and/or official transcripts until the matter is fully resolved (including any appeal). A student facing charges under this Policy is not in good standing to graduate.
- 4.21 Alternative Hearing Participation Options
- 4.21.1 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.
 - 4.21.2 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.
- 4.22 Pre-Hearing Preparation
- 4.22.1 The Chair, after any necessary consultation with the parties, Investigator(s) and/or Title IX Coordinator, 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.
 - 4.22.2 Any witness scheduled to participate in the hearing must have been first interviewed by the Investigator(s) 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 will delay the hearing and instruct that the investigation needs to be re-opened to consider that evidence.
 - 4.22.3 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 one day 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).
 - 4.22.4 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.

4.22.5 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 the pre-hearing meeting or at the hearing and will be exchanged between each party by the Chair.

4.23 Pre-Hearing Meetings

4.23.1 The Chair may convene a pre-hearing meeting(s) with the parties and their Advisors to invite them to submit the questions or topics they (the parties and 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 provide recommendations for more appropriate phrasing. However, this advance review opportunity does not preclude the Advisors from asking at the hearing for a reconsideration based on any new information or testimony offered at the hearing. The Chair must document and share their rationale for any exclusion or inclusion at this pre-hearing meeting.

4.23.2 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.

4.23.3 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 the Title IX Coordinator, or ask Title IX Coordinator to attend pre-hearing meetings.

4.23.4 The pre-hearing meeting(s) will not be recorded.

4.24 Hearing Procedures

4.24.1 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 have 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.

4.24.2 Participants at the hearing will include the Chair, any additional panelists, the hearing facilitator, the Investigator(s) who conducted the investigation, the parties (or three (3) organizational representatives when an organization is the Respondent), Advisors to the parties, any called witnesses, the Title IX Coordinator and anyone providing authorized accommodations or assistive services.

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

4.24.4 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 will then be excused.

4.25 Joint Hearings

4.25.1 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.

4.25.2 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.

4.26 The Order of the Hearing—Introductions and Explanation of Procedure

4.26.1 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.

4.26.2 The 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.

4.27 Investigator Presents the Final Investigation Report

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

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

4.28 Testimony and Questioning

4.28.1 Once the Investigator(s) present their 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 parties/witnesses will submit to questioning by the Decision-maker(s) and then by the parties through their Advisors (“cross-examination”).

4.28.2 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 or agreed to by the parties and the Chair), the proceeding will pause to allow the Chair to consider it, and the Chair will determine whether the question will be permitted, disallowed, or rephrased.

- 4.28.3 The Chair may explore arguments 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.
- 4.28.4 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, subject to any appeal. 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.
- 4.28.5 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.

4.29 Refusal to Submit to Cross-Examination and Inferences

- 4.29.1 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 that statement. Evidence provided that is something other than a statement by the party or witness may be considered.
- 4.29.2 If the party or witness attends the hearing and answers some cross-examination questions, only statements related to the cross-examination questions they refuse to answer cannot be relied upon. However, if the statements of the party who is refusing to submit to cross-examination or refuses to attend the hearing are the subject of the allegation itself (e.g., the case is about verbal harassment or a quid pro quo offer), then those statements are not precluded from admission. Similarly, statements can be relied upon when questions are posed by the Decision-maker(s), as distinguished from questions posed by Advisors through cross-examination.
- 4.29.3 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.
- 4.29.4 If 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 cross-examination 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.
- 4.29.5 If a party's Advisor of choice refuses to comply with the Recipient's established rules of decorum

for the hearing, the Recipient may require the party to use a different Advisor. If a recipient-provided A refuses to comply with the rules of decorum, the Recipient may provide that party with a different Advisor to conduct cross-examination on behalf of that party.

4.30 Recording Hearings

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

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

4.31 Deliberation, Decision-making, and Standard of Proof

4.31.1 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.

4.31.2 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).

4.31.3 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.

4.31.3 The Decision-maker(s) will review the statements and any pertinent conduct history provided by the Executive Director of Student Services or designee and will recommend the appropriate sanction(s) in consultation with other appropriate administrators, as required.

4.31.4 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 disregarded, credibility assessments, and any sanctions or recommendations.

4.31.5 This report typically should not exceed 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.

4.32 Notice of Outcome

4.32.1 Using the deliberation statement, the Title IX Coordinator will work with the Chair to prepare a Notice of Outcome. The Notice of Outcome may then be reviewed by legal counsel, at the

discretion of the Title IX Coordinator. 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 five (5) business days of receiving the Decision-maker(s)' deliberation statement.

- 4.32.2 The Notice of Outcome will then 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 College records, or emailed to the parties' College-issued email or otherwise approved account. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in-person, notice will be presumptively delivered.
- 4.32.3 The Notice of Outcome will identify 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 the College 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.
- 4.32.4 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 the College is permitted to share such information under state or federal law; any sanctions issued which the College is permitted to share according to state or federal law; and any remedies provided to the Complainant designed to ensure access to the College's educational or employment program or activity, to the extent the College is permitted to share such information under state or federal law (this detail is not typically shared with the Respondent unless the remedy directly relates to the Respondent).
- 4.32.5 The Notice of Outcome will also include information on when the results are considered by the College to be final, any changes that occur prior to finalization, and the relevant procedures and bases for any available appeal options.

4.33 Statement of the Rights of the Parties (See Attachment A)

4.34 Sanctions

- 4.34.1 Factors considered when determining a sanction/responsive action may include, but are not limited to:
 - 4.34.1.1 The nature, severity of, and circumstances surrounding the violation(s)
 - 4.34.1.2 The Respondent's disciplinary history
 - 4.34.1.3 Previous allegations or allegations involving similar conduct
 - 4.34.1.4 The need for sanctions/responsive actions to bring an end to the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
 - 4.34.1.5 The need for sanctions/responsive actions to prevent the future recurrence of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation

- 4.34.1.6 The need to remedy the effects of the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation on the Complainant and the community
- 4.34.1.7 The impact on the parties
- 4.34.1.8 Any other information deemed relevant by the Decision-maker(s)
- 4.34.2 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.
- 4.34.3 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.
- 4.34.4 Student Sanctions
 - 4.34.4.1 The following are the usual sanctions that may be imposed upon students or organizations singly or in combination:
 - 4.34.4.1.1 *Warning:* A formal statement that the conduct was unacceptable and a warning that further violation of any Southern policy, procedure, or directive will result in more severe sanctions/responsive actions.
 - 4.34.4.1.2 *Required Counseling:* A mandate to meet with and engage in either College-sponsored or external counseling to better comprehend the misconduct and its effects.
 - 4.34.4.1.3 *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.
 - 4.34.4.1.4 *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 Southern.
 - 4.34.4.1.5 *Expulsion:* Permanent termination of student status and revocation of rights to be on campus for any reason or to attend College-sponsored events. This sanction will be noted permanently as a Conduct Expulsion on the student's official transcript.

- 4.34.4.1.6 *Withholding Diploma:* The College may withhold a student’s diploma for a specified period of time and/or deny a student participation in commencement activities if the student has an allegation pending or as a sanction if the student is found responsible for an alleged violation.
- 4.34.4.1.7 *Revocation of Degree:* The College reserves the right to revoke a degree previously awarded from the College for fraud, misrepresentation, and/or other violation of College policies, procedures, or directives in obtaining the degree, or for other serious violations committed by a student prior to graduation.
- 4.34.4.1.8 *Organizational Sanctions:* Deactivation, loss of recognition, loss of some or all privileges (including College registration) for a specified period of time.
- 4.34.4.1.9 *Other Actions:* In addition to or in place of the above sanctions, the College may assign any other sanctions as deemed appropriate.

4.34.5 Employee Sanctions

- 4.34.5.1 Responsive actions for an employee who has engaged in harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation include:
- 4.34.5.2 *Warning – Verbal or Written*
- 4.34.5.3 *Performance Improvement/Management Process*
- 4.34.5.4 *Required Counseling*
- 4.34.5.5 *Required Training or Education*
- 4.34.5.6 *Probation*
- 4.34.5.7 *Loss of Annual Pay Increase*
- 4.34.5.8 *Loss of Oversight or Supervisory Responsibility*
- 4.34.5.9 *Demotion*
- 4.34.5.10 *Suspension with pay*
- 4.34.5.11 *Suspension without pay*
- 4.34.5.12 *Termination*
- 4.34.5.13 *Other Actions:* In addition to or in place of the above sanctions, the College may assign any other sanction as deemed appropriate.

4.35 Withdrawal or Resignation While Charges Pending

- 4.35.1 Students: If a student has an allegation pending for violation of the Policy on Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination, the College may place a hold on a student's ability to graduate and/or to receive an official transcript/diploma.
- 4.35.2 Should a student decide to not participate in the resolution process, the process proceeds absent their participation to a reasonable resolution. Should a student Respondent permanently withdraw from the College, the resolution process ends, as the College no longer has disciplinary jurisdiction over the withdrawn student.
- 4.35.3 However, the College will continue to address and remedy any systemic issues, variables that may have contributed to the alleged violation(s), and any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation. The student who withdraws or leaves while the process is pending may not return to the College. Such exclusion applies to all campuses of Southern. A hold will be placed on their ability to be readmitted. They may also be barred from College property and/or events.
- 4.35.4 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 College unless and until all sanctions have been satisfied.
- 4.35.5 During the resolution process, the College may put a hold on a responding student's transcript or place a notation on a responding student's transcript that a disciplinary matter is pending.
- 4.35.6 Employees: Should an employee Respondent resign with unresolved allegations pending, the resolution process ends, as the College no longer has disciplinary jurisdiction over the resigned employee.
- 4.35.7 However, the College will continue to address and remedy any systemic issues, variables that contributed to the alleged violation(s), and any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment or discrimination.
- 4.35.8 The employee who resigns with unresolved allegations pending is not eligible for rehire with the College, and the records retained by the Title IX Coordinator and the Director of Human Resources will reflect that status.
- 4.35.9 All Southern responses to future inquiries regarding employment references for that individual will include that the former employee resigned during a pending disciplinary matter.

4.36 Appeals

- 4.36.1 Any party may file a request for appeal ("Request for Appeal"), but it must be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within three (3) days of the delivery of the Notice of Outcome.
- 4.36.2 An Appeal Decision-maker will Chair the appeal designated by the Title IX Coordinator. The Appeal Decision-maker will not have been involved in the process previously, including any dismissal appeal that may have been heard earlier in the process.

- 4.36.3 The Request for Appeal will be forwarded to the Appeal Chair for consideration to determine if the request meets the grounds for appeal (a Review for Standing).
- 4.36.4 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.
- 4.36.5 Grounds for Appeal
- 4.36.5.1 Appeals are limited to the following grounds:
- 4.36.5.1.1 Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- 4.36.5.1.2 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
- 4.36.5.1.3 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.
- 4.36.5.2 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 Chair and the parties and their Advisors will be notified in writing of the denial and the rationale.
- 4.36.5.3 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).
- 4.36.5.4 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 with the approved grounds and then be given three (3) business days to submit a response to the portion of the appeal that was approved and involves them. All responses will be forwarded by the Chair to all parties for review and comment.
- 4.36.5.5 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 for standing 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 in three (3) business days, which will be circulated for review and comment by all parties.
- 4.36.5.6 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 and the subsequent

responses and the Chair will render a decision in no more than five (5) business days, barring exigent circumstances. All decisions and apply the preponderance of the evidence.

- 4.36.5.7 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 the College is permitted to share according to state or federal law, and the rationale supporting the essential findings to the extent the College is permitted to share under state or federal law.
 - 4.36.5.8 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' College-issued email or otherwise approved account. Once mailed, emailed and/or received in-person, notice will be presumptively delivered.
- 4.36.6 Sanctions Status During the Appeal
- 4.36.6.1 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.
 - 4.36.6.2 If any of the sanctions are to be implemented immediately post-hearing, then emergency removal procedures (detailed above) for a hearing on the justification for doing so must be permitted within 48 hours of implementation.
 - 4.36.6.3 Southern may still place holds on official transcripts, diplomas, graduations, and course registration pending the outcome of an appeal when the original sanctions included separation.
- 4.36.7 Appeal Considerations
- 4.36.7.1 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.
 - 4.36.7.2 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.
 - 4.36.7.3 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).

- 4.36.7.4 The Appeal Chair may consult with the Title IX Coordinator on questions of procedure or rationale, for clarification, if needed. Documentation of all such consultation will be maintained.
- 4.36.7.5 Appeals granted based on new evidence should normally be remanded to the original Investigator(s) and/or Decision-maker(s) for reconsideration. Other appeals may be remanded at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator or, in limited circumstances, decided on appeal.
- 4.36.7.6 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). When appeals result in no change to the finding or sanction, that decision is final. When an appeal results in a new finding or sanction, that finding or sanction can be appealed one final time on the grounds listed above and in accordance with these procedures.
- 4.36.7.7 In rare cases where a procedural or substantive error cannot be cured by the original Decision-maker(s) (as in cases of bias), the appeal may order a new hearing with a new Decision-maker(s).
- 4.36.7.8 The results of a new hearing can be appealed, once, on any of the three available appeal grounds.
- 4.36.7.9 In cases in which the appeal results in reinstatement to the College 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.

4.37 Long-Term Remedies/Other Actions

- 4.37.1 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.
- 4.37.2 These remedies/actions may include, but are not limited to:
 - 4.37.2.1 Referral to counseling and health services
 - 4.37.2.2 Education to the individual and/or the community
 - 4.37.2.3 Permanent alteration of housing assignments
 - 4.37.2.4 Permanent alteration of work arrangements for employees
 - 4.37.2.5 Provision of campus safety escorts
 - 4.37.2.6 Climate surveys

- 4.37.2.7 Policy modification and/or training
- 4.37.2.8 Provision of transportation accommodations
- 4.37.2 .9 Implementation of long-term contact limitations between the parties
- 4.37.2.10 Implementation of adjustments to academic deadlines, course schedules, etc.
- 4.37.3 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.
- 4.37.4 When no policy violation is found, the Title IX Coordinator will address any remedies owed by the College to the Respondent to ensure no effective denial of educational access.
- 4.37.5 The College will maintain the privacy of any long-term remedies/actions/measures, provided privacy does not impair the College's ability to provide these services.
- 4.38 Failure to Comply with Sanctions and/or Interim and Long-term Remedies and/or Responsive Actions
 - 4.38.1 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).
 - 4.38.2 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 the College and may be noted on a student's official transcript.
 - 4.38.3 A suspension will only be lifted when compliance is achieved to the satisfaction of the Title IX Coordinator.
- 4.39 Recordkeeping
 - 4.39.1 Southern will maintain for a period of seven years records of:
 - 4.39.1.2 Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility and any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript required under federal regulation;
 - 4.39.1.2 Any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the Respondent;
 - 4.39.1.3 Any remedies provided to the Complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the College's education program or activity;
 - 4.39.1.4 Any appeal and the result therefrom;
 - 4.39.1.5 Any Informal Resolution and the result therefrom;
 - 4.39.1.6 All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, Decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an Informal Resolution process. Southern will make these training materials publicly available on Southern's website;and

4.39.1.7 Any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, including:

4.39.1.7.1 The basis for all conclusions that the response was not deliberately indifferent;

4.39.1.7.2 Any measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the College's education program or activity; and

4.39.1.7.3 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.

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

4.40 Disabilities Accommodations in the Resolution Process

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

4.40.2 Anyone needing such accommodations or support should contact the Director of Disability Services or the Director of Human Resources, 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.

5. BACKGROUND OR EXCLUSIONS

5.1 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 regulations or holdings.

5.2 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.

6. GENERAL PROVISIONS

6.1 N/A

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 N/A

8. CANCELLATION

- 8.1 This procedure supersede any previous procedures addressing harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, and/or retaliation and will be reviewed and updated annually by the Title IX Coordinator. The College reserves the right to make changes to this document as necessary, and once those changes are posted online, they are in effect.

9. REVIEW STATEMENT

- 9.1 This procedure shall be reviewed on a regular basis with a time frame for review to be determined by the President or the President's designee. Upon such review, the Cabinet-level Administrator may recommend to the President's Cabinet that the procedure be amended or repealed.

10. SIGNATURES

President

Date

Cabinet-level Administrator

Date

Attachments: Official Summary Sheet
Statement of Rights of the Parties

Distribution: All Southern Employees
All Southern Students

Revision Notes: New Procedure

Addendum

Notice of Time Limits for Filing a Charge of Discrimination

The anti-discrimination laws give a complainant a limited amount of time to file a charge of discrimination. Pursuant to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a Complainant has 180 calendar days from the date the discrimination took place to file a complaint.

Updated 12/13/2023

Dr. Pamela L. Alderman

12/13/2023

Pamela L. Alderman, Ed.D., MSN, RN, President