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TITLE:	Discrimination and Harassment
NUMBER:	615
APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:	6/14/88
AMENDED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:	3/17/21; 11/8/17; 11/21/13; 7/11/07

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## A. Introduction

Whatcom Community College recognizes its responsibility for investigation, resolution, implementation of corrective measures, and monitoring the educational environment and workplace to stop, remediate, and prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, perceived or actual physical or mental disability, pregnancy, genetic information, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, creed, religion, or honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the use of trained guide dog or service animal, as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act and ADA Amendment Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act and Washington State’s Law Against Discrimination, Chapter 49.60 RCW and their implementing regulations. Employees are also protected from discrimination for filing a whistleblower complaint with the Washington State Auditor.

Note: Complaints involving sexual misconduct and sex-based discrimination the Title IX Coordinator or designee will evaluate the complaint according to Policy 616, WAC132U-305. Complaints that fit the jurisdictional requirements of Policy 616 will follow the investigative and discipline procedures outlined in that policy, which follows the requirements spelled out in the 2020 federal regulations under Title IX, which went into effect August 14, 2020. All complaints that do not fit the jurisdictional requirements of Policy 616 will use the procedures outlined in this policy.

## B. Definitions

**Complainant:** employee(s), applicant(s), student(s), or visitors(s) of Whatcom Community College who alleges that she or he has been subjected to discrimination or harassment due to his or her membership in a protected class.

**Complaint:** a description of facts that allege violation of the College’s policy against discrimination or harassment.

**Consent:** knowing, voluntary and clear permission by word or action, to engage in mutually agreed upon sexual activity. Each party has the responsibility to make certain that the other has consented before engaging in the activity. For consent to be valid, there must be at the time of the act of sexual intercourse or sexual contact actual words or conduct indicating freely given agreement to have sexual intercourse or sexual contact. A person cannot consent if he or she is unable to understand what is happening or is disoriented, helpless, asleep, or unconscious for any reason, including due to alcohol or other drugs. An individual who engages in sexual activity when the individual knows, or should know, that the other person is physically or mentally incapacitated has engaged in

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nonconsensual conduct. Intoxication is not a defense against allegations that an individual has engaged in nonconsensual sexual conduct.

**Discrimination:** unfavorable treatment of a person based on that person's membership or perceived membership in a protected class. Harassment is a form of discrimination.

**Harassment:** a form of discrimination consisting of physical or verbal conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward individuals because of their membership in a protected class or their perceived membership in a protected class. Harassment occurs when the conduct is sufficiently severe and/or pervasive and so objectively offensive that it has the effect of altering the terms or conditions of employment or substantially limiting the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the College's educational and/or social programs and/or student housing. Petty slights, annoyances, offensive utterances, and isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) typically do not qualify as harassment. Examples of conduct that could rise to the level of discriminatory harassment include but are not limited to the following:

- Epithets, "jokes," ridicule, mockery or other offensive or derogatory conduct focused upon an individual's membership in a protected class.
- Verbal or physical threats of violence or physical contact directed towards an individual based upon their membership in a protected class.
- Making, posting, emailing, texting, or otherwise circulating demeaning or offensive pictures, cartoons, graffiti, notes or other materials that relate to race, ethnic origin, gender or any other protected class.

**Protected Class:** persons who are protected under state or federal civil rights laws, including laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, perceived or actual physical or mental disability, pregnancy, genetic information, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, creed, religion, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal.

**Resolution:** the means by which the complaint is finally addressed. This may be accomplished through informal or formal processes, including counseling, mediation, or the formal imposition of discipline.

**Respondent:** person or persons who are members of the campus community who allegedly discriminated against or harassed another person or persons.

**Retaliation:** Harming, threatening, intimidating, coercing, or taking adverse action of any kind against a person because person reported an alleged violation of this policy or other college policy, provided information about an alleged violation, or participated as a witness or in any other capacity in an investigation or disciplinary proceeding.

**Sexual Harassment:** a form of discrimination consisting of unwelcome, gender-based verbal, written, electronic, and/or physical conduct. Sexual harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's gender. There are two types of sexual harassment:

**Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment** occurs when the conduct is sufficiently severe and/or pervasive and so objectively offensive that it has the effect of altering the terms or conditions of

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employment or substantially limiting the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the College's educational and/or social programs and/or student housing.

**Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment** occurs when an individual in a position of real or perceived authority, conditions the receipt of a benefit upon granting of sexual favors.

Examples of conduct that may qualify as sexual harassment include:

- Persistent comments or questions of a sexual nature.
- A supervisor who gives an employee a raise in exchange for submitting to sexual advances.
- An instructor who promises a student a better grade in exchange for sexual favors.
- Sexually explicit statements, questions, jokes, or anecdotes.
- Unwelcome touching, patting, hugging, kissing, or brushing against an individual's body.
- Remarks of a sexual nature about an individual's clothing, body, or speculations about previous sexual experiences.
- Persistent, unwanted attempts to change a professional relationship to an amorous relationship.
- Direct or indirect propositions for sexual activity.
- Unwelcome letters, emails, texts, telephone calls, or other communications referring to or depicting sexual activities.

**Sexual Violence:** "Sexual Violence" is a type of sexual discrimination and harassment. Nonconsensual sexual intercourse, nonconsensual sexual contact, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking are all types of sexual violence.

**Nonconsensual sexual intercourse** is any sexual intercourse (anal, oral, or vaginal), however slight, with any object, by a person upon another person, that is without consent and/or by force. Sexual intercourse includes anal or vaginal penetration by a penis, tongue, finger, or object, or oral copulation by mouth to genital contact or genital to mouth contact.

**Nonconsensual sexual contact** is any intentional sexual touching, however slight, with any object, by a person upon another person that is without consent and/or by force. Sexual touching includes any bodily contact with the breasts, groin, mouth, or other bodily orifice of another individual, or any other bodily contact in a sexual manner.

**Domestic violence** includes asserted violent misdemeanor and felony offenses committed by the victim's current or former spouse, current or former cohabitant, person similarly situated under domestic or family violence law, or anyone else protected under domestic or family violence law.

**Dating violence** means violence by a person who has been in a romantic or intimate relationship with the victim. Whether there was such relationship will be gauged by its length, type, and frequency of interaction.

**Stalking** means intentional and repeated harassment or following of another person, which places that person in reasonable fear that the perpetrator intends to injure, intimidate, or harass that person. Stalking also includes instances where the perpetrator knows or reasonably should know that the person is frightened, intimidated, or harassed, even if the perpetrator lacks such intent.

## Complaint Procedure

Whatcom Community College has enacted policies prohibiting discrimination against, and harassment of members of protected classes. Any individual found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the College or from employment.

Any employee, student, applicant, or visitor who believes that he or she has been the subject of discrimination or harassment should report the incident or incidents to the College's Title IX / EEO Coordinator identified below. If the complaint is against that Coordinator, the complainant should report the matter to the president's office for referral to an alternate designee.

The College encourages the timely reporting of any incidents of discrimination or harassment. Complaints may be submitted in writing or verbally. For complainants who wish to submit a written complaint, a formal complaint

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form is available online at <http://www.whatcom.edu/home/showdocument?id=360>. Hardcopies of the complaint form are available in the Human Resource Office, Laidlaw Center (LDC) 235.

The following College officials are designated to handle inquiries regarding this policy:

**Name:** Benjamin Reed  
**Title:** Title IX & ADA Coordinator  
**Office:** Laidlaw Center (LDC) 208  
**Contact:** [breed@whatcom.edu](mailto:breed@whatcom.edu)  
**Address:** 237 W. Kellogg Rd., Bellingham, WA 98226

**Name:** Becky Rawlings  
**Title:** Executive Director for Human Resources, Deputy Title IX Coordinator, EEO Coordinator  
**Office:** Laidlaw Center (LDC) 235  
**Contact:** [brawlings@whatcom.edu](mailto:brawlings@whatcom.edu)  
**Address:** 237 W. Kellogg Rd., Bellingham, WA 98226

### **The Title IX / EEO Coordinator(s) or designee:**

- will accept all complaints and referrals from College employees, applicants, students, and visitors;
- will make determinations regarding how to handle requests by complainants for confidentiality;
- will keep accurate records of all complaints and referrals for the required time period;
- may conduct investigations or delegate and oversee investigations conducted by a designee;
- may impose interim remedial measures to protect parties during investigations of discrimination or harassment;
- will issue written findings and recommendations upon completion of an investigation; and
- may recommend specific corrective measures to stop, remediate, and prevent the recurrence of inappropriate conduct.

### **C. Who May File a Complaint**

Any employee, applicant, student, or visitor of Whatcom Community College may file a complaint. Complaints may be submitted in writing or verbally. The College encourages the timely reporting of any incidents of discrimination or harassment. For complainants who wish to submit a written complaint, a formal complaint form is available online at <http://www.whatcom.edu/home/showdocument?id=360>. Hardcopies of the complaint form are available at the Human Resource Office, Laidlaw Center (LDC) 235. Any person submitting a discrimination complaint shall be provided with a written copy of the College's anti-discrimination policies and procedures.

## D. Confidentiality and Right to Privacy

Whatcom Community College will seek to protect the privacy of the complainant to the full extent possible, consistent with the legal obligation to investigate, take appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action, and comply with the federal and state law, as well as Whatcom Community College policies and procedures. Although Whatcom Community College will attempt to honor complainants' requests for confidentiality, it cannot guarantee complete confidentiality. Determinations regarding how to handle requests for confidentiality will be made by the Title IX / EEO Coordinator/designee.

1. **Confidentiality Requests and Sexual Violence Complaints:** The Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee will inform and obtain consent from the complainant before commencing an investigation into a sexual violence complaint. If a sexual violence complainant asks that his or her name not be revealed to the respondent or that the College not investigate the allegation, the Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee will inform the complainant that maintaining confidentiality may limit the College's ability to respond fully to the allegations and that retaliation by the respondent and/or others is prohibited. If the complainant still insists that his or her name not be disclosed or that the College not investigate, the Title IX /EEO Coordinator/designee will determine whether the College can honor the request and at the same time maintain a safe and non-discriminatory environment for all members of the College community, including the complainant. Factors to be weighed during this determination may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. the seriousness of the alleged sexual violence;
  - b. the age of the complainant;
  - c. whether the sexual violence was perpetrated with a weapon;
  - d. whether the respondent has a history of committing acts of sexual violence or violence or has been the subject of other sexual violence complaints;
  - e. whether the respondent threatened to commit additional acts of sexual violence against the complainant or others; and
  - f. whether relevant evidence can be obtained through other means (e.g., security cameras, other witnesses, physical evidence).

If the College is unable to honor a complainant's request for confidentiality, the Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee will notify the complainant of the decision and ensure that complainant's identity is disclosed only to the extent reasonably necessary to effectively conduct and complete the investigation.

If the College decides not to conduct an investigation or take disciplinary action because of a request for confidentiality, the Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee will evaluate whether other measures are available to limit the effects of the harassment and prevent its recurrence and implement such measures if reasonably feasible.

## E. Investigation Procedure

Upon receiving a discrimination complaint, the College shall commence an impartial investigation. The Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee shall be responsible for overseeing all investigations. Investigations may be conducted by the Title IX / EEO Coordinator or his or her designee. If the investigation is assigned to someone other than the Title IX /EEO Coordinator, the Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee shall inform the complainant and respondent(s) of the appointment of an investigator.



1. **Interim Measures:** The Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee may impose interim measures to protect the complainant and/or respondent pending the conclusion of the investigation. Interim measures may include, but are not limited to, imposition of no contact orders, rescheduling classes, temporary work reassignments, referrals for counseling or medical assistance, and imposition of summary discipline on the respondent consistent with the College's student conduct code or the College's employment policies and collective bargaining agreements.
2. **Investigation:** Complaints shall be thoroughly and impartially investigated. The investigation shall include, but is not limited to, interviewing the complainant and the respondent, relevant witnesses, and reviewing relevant documents. The investigation shall be concluded within a reasonable time, normally sixty days barring exigent circumstances. At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator shall set forth his or her findings and recommendations in writing. If the investigator is a designee, the investigator shall send a copy of the findings and recommendations to the Title IX / EEO Coordinator/designee. The Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee shall consider the findings and recommendations and determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence, whether a violation of the discrimination and harassment policy occurred, and if so, what steps will be taken to resolve the complaint, remedy the effects on any victim(s), and prevent its recurrence. Possible remedial steps may include, but are not limited to, referral for voluntary training/counseling, development of a remediation plan, limited contact orders, and referral and recommendation for formal disciplinary action. Referrals for disciplinary action will be consistent with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (WAC 132U-125) or college employment policies and collective bargaining agreements.
3. **Written Notice of Decision:** The Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee will provide each party and the appropriate student services administrator or appointing authority with written notice of the investigative findings and of actions taken or recommended to resolve the complaint, subject to the following limitations. The complainant shall be informed in writing of the findings and of actions taken or recommended to resolve the complaint, if any, only to the extent that such findings, actions, or recommendations directly relate to the complainant, such as a finding that the complaint is or is not meritorious or a recommendation that the respondent not contact the complainant. The complainant may be notified generally that the matter has been referred for disciplinary action. The respondent shall be informed in writing of the findings and of actions taken or recommended to resolve the complaint and shall be notified of referrals for disciplinary action. Both the complainant and the respondent are entitled to review any final findings, conclusions, and recommendations, subject to confidentiality requirements.
4. **Informal Dispute Resolution:** Informal dispute resolution processes, like mediation, may be used to resolve complaints, when appropriate. Informal dispute resolution shall not be used to resolve sexual discrimination complaints without written permission from both the complainant and the respondent. If the parties elect to mediate a dispute, either party shall be free to discontinue mediation at any time. In no event shall mediation be used to resolve complaints involving allegations of sexual violence.
5. **Final Decision and/or Reconsideration:** Either the complainant or the respondent may seek reconsideration of the decision by the Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee. Requests for reconsideration shall be submitted in writing to the Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee within seven business days of receiving the decision. Requests must specify which portion of the decision should be reconsidered and the basis for reconsideration. If no request for reconsideration is received within seven business days, the

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decision becomes final. If a request for reconsideration is received, the College President or designee shall respond within fourteen business days. The President or designee shall either deny the request or, if the President or designee determines that the request for reconsideration has merit, issue an amended decision. Any amended decision is final and no further reconsideration is available.

## **F. Publication of Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures**

The policies and procedures regarding complaints of discrimination and harassment shall be published and distributed as determined by the president or president's designee. Any person who believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination in violation of College policy will be provided a copy of these policies and procedures.

## **G. Limits to Authority**

Nothing in this procedure shall prevent the College President or designee from taking immediate disciplinary action in accordance with Whatcom Community College policies and procedures, and federal, state, and municipal rules and regulations.

## **H. Non-Retaliation, Intimidation, and Coercion**

Retaliation by, for, or against any participant (including complainant, respondent, witness, Title IX / EEO Coordinator/designee, or investigator) is expressly prohibited. Retaliatory action of any kind taken against individual(s) as a result of seeking redress under the applicable procedures or serving as a witness in a subsequent investigation or any resulting disciplinary proceedings is prohibited and is conduct subject to discipline. Any person who thinks he/she has been the victim of retaliation should contact the Title IX / EEO Coordinator/Designee immediately.

## **I. Criminal Complaints**

Discriminatory or harassing conduct may also be, or occur in conjunction with, criminal conduct. Criminal complaints may be filed with the following law enforcement authorities:

### **Bellingham Police Department**

505 Grand Ave, Bellingham, WA 98225

(360) 778-8800 <https://www.cob.org/gov/dept/police>

### **Blaine Public Safety Department**

322 H St, Blaine, WA 98230

(360) 332-6769 <http://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/171/Public-Safety>

### **Everson Police Department**

111 W Main St, Everson, WA 98247

(360) 966 4212 <http://www.ci.everson.wa.us/police-department.html>



**Ferndale Police Department**

2220 Main St, Ferndale, WA 98248

(360) 384 3390 <http://www.ferndalepd.org/>

**Lummi Nation Police Department**

2665 Kwina Road, Bellingham, WA 98226

(360) 312 2000 <https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/Website.php?PageID=397>

**Lynden Police Department**

203 19th St, Lynden, WA 98264

(360) 354 2828 <http://www.lyndenwa.org/departments/police/>

**Nooksack Tribal Police Department**

5061 Deming Road, Deming, WA

(360) 592 5176 <https://nooksacktribe.org/departments/law-enforcement/>

**Sumas Police Department**

433 Cherry St, Sumas, WA 98295

(360) 988 5711 <http://www.sumaspolice.com/>

**Western Washington University**

Department of Public Safety

516 High Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

(360) 650 3911 <http://www.wvu.edu/ps/police/index.shtml>

**Whatcom County Sheriff's Office**

Public Safety Building

311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225

(360) 676 6650 <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/200/Sheriff>

The College will proceed with an investigation of harassment and discrimination complaints regardless of whether the underlying conduct is subject to civil criminal prosecution.

**J. Other Discrimination Complaint Options**

Discrimination complaints may also be filed with the following federal and state agencies:

**Washington State Human Rights Commission** at <http://www.hum.wa.gov/>

**U.S. Dept. of Education Office for Civil Rights** at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

**Equal Employment Opportunity Commission** at <http://www.eeoc.gov/>

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## Discrimination/Harassment Complaint Form

This form is designed to assist you with filing a discrimination and/or harassment complaint. Please write clearly and focus on the alleged discriminatory and/or harassing conduct. The complaint should include as much information regarding the incident giving rise to the complaint as possible, including the location, date and time of the alleged incident(s); the name of the individual or group whom the complaint is against, if known; a description of the incident(s); and the remedy sought.

Name of filing the complaint: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You may use the base side of this sheet if needed. Please return this form to the Title IX/EEO Coordinator, LDC 235.