

Policy

PROHIBITION AGAINST HARASSMENT

- I. Mercer County Community College [Mercer herein] is committed to an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work and learn in a collegial and professional atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, Mercer expects that all relationships among persons on campus will be mutually respectful, free of bias, prejudice and harassment.
- II. It is the policy of Mercer to encourage reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment and to investigate such reports. Mercer prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports.
- III. This Prohibition Against Harassment policy applies to all employees, students, vendors, contractors, visitors, guests and other individuals participating in any event at Mercer while they are on college property or are participating in a college-sponsored activity off-campus, such as but not limited to, business trips, business meetings, business-related social events, athletic events, student conferences, and any college-sponsored excursion.
- IV. Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state, and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example:
 - A. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
 - B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
 - C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.
- V. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to:
 - A. Unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies;

- B. Leering, whistling, or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures;
 - C. Display or transmission in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal, or visual conduct of a sexual nature.
- VI. Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States, nationality or disability or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that:
- A. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or academic environment;
 - B. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
 - C. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or educational opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls, or elsewhere on campus, circulated in the workplace or transmitted electronically.

Board of Trustees
October 16, 2003