

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS**AP No.
3435**

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I. Complaints

The law prohibits coworkers, supervisors, managers, and third parties with whom an employee comes into contact from engaging in harassment, discrimination, or retaliation. Any person who has suffered harassment, discrimination, or retaliation may file a formal or informal complaint of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.

A formal complaint is a written and signed statement filed with the District or the State Chancellor's Office that alleges harassment, discrimination, or retaliation in violation of the District's Board Policies, Administrative Procedures or in violation of state or federal law. An informal complaint is any of the following: 1) An unwritten allegation of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; 2) a written allegation of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation that falls outside the timeline for a formal complaint; or 3) a written complaint alleging harassment, discrimination, or retaliation filed by an individual who expressly indicates that he or she does not want to file a formal complaint.

A. Informal Complaints

Any person may submit an informal complaint to the District Compliance Officer (Executive Director of Human Resources), or any other District or college administrator. Administrators receiving an informal complaint shall immediately notify the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer in writing of all pertinent information and facts alleged in the informal complaint.

Upon receipt of an informal complaint, the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer will notify the person bringing the informal complaint of his/her right to file a formal complaint, if the incident falls within the timeline for a formal complaint, and explain the procedure for doing so. The complainant may later decide to file a formal complaint, if within the timelines to do so. If the individual chooses not to file a formal complaint, or if the alleged conduct falls outside the timeline to file a formal complaint, the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer shall consider the allegations contained in the informal complaint and determine the appropriate course of action. This may include efforts to informally resolve the matter, or a fact-finding investigation.

Investigation of an informal complaint will be appropriate if the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer determines that the allegation(s), if proven true, would constitute a violation of the District policy prohibiting harassment, discrimination, or retaliation. The Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer will explain to any individual bringing an informal complaint that the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer may decide to initiate an investigation, even if the individual does not wish the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer to do so. The Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer shall not disregard any

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allegations of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation solely on the basis that the alleged conduct falls outside the deadline to file a formal complaint.

B. Formal Complaints

Formal Complaints must be filed with the State Chancellor or the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer unless the party submitting the Formal Complaint alleges discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against the responsible district officer, in which case it should be submitted directly to the Superintendent/President or the State Chancellor.

Formal Complaints should be submitted on the form prescribed by the State Chancellor. A copy of the form will be available at the offices of the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer, and online.

If any party submits a written allegation of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation not on the form described above, the District will seek to have the individual complete and submit the form. However, if the individual chooses not to do so, the District will attach the written allegation(s) to the form and treat it as a Formal Complaint. In no instance will the District reject a written allegation of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation on the basis that it was not submitted on the proper form.

A Formal Complaint must meet each of the following criteria:

- It must allege facts with enough specificity to show that the allegations, if true, would constitute a violation of District policies or procedures prohibiting discrimination, harassment, or retaliation;
- The complainant must sign and date the Formal Complaint;
- The complainant must file any Formal Complaint not involving employment within one year of the date of the alleged discriminatory, harassing, or retaliatory conduct or within one year of the date on which the complainant knew or should have known of the facts underlying the allegation(s) of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
- The complainant must file any Formal Complaint alleging discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in employment within 180 days of the date of the alleged discriminatory, harassing, or retaliatory conduct, except that this period shall be extended by no more than 90 days following the expiration of the 180 days if the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged violation after the expiration of the 180 days.

If the Formal Complaint does not meet the requirements set forth above, the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer will promptly return it to the complainant and specify the defect. If the sole defect is that the Formal Complaint was filed outside the applicable

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proscribed timeline, the Executive Director of Human Resources/District Compliance Officer will handle the matter as an informal complaint.

II. Oversight of Complaint Procedure

The Executive Director of Human Resources is the “responsible District officer” charged with receiving complaints of discrimination or harassment, and coordinating their investigation.

The actual investigation of complaints may be assigned by the Executive Director of Human Resources to other staff or to outside persons or organizations under contract with the District. This shall occur whenever the Executive Director of Human Resources is named in the complaint or implicated by the allegations in the complaint. All designated investigators will have appropriate training in civil harassment investigation procedures.

III. Who May File a Complaint

A complaint may be filed by any student, employee, or third party who believes he/she has been discriminated against or harassed by a student, employee, or third party in violation of this procedure and the related policy.

IV. Where to File a Complaint

Any student, employee, or third party who believes he/she has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this procedure may make a complaint orally or in writing. The District Compliance Officer is located in the Office of Human Resources, Room A113 or at (562) 908-3405.

Student complainants shall be notified that they may file a discrimination complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), 50 United Nations Plaza, Room 1490, Mail Box 1200 San Francisco, CA 94102 (415) 486-5555.

Employee complainants shall be notified that they may file employment discrimination complaints with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Royal Federal Building, 255 East Temple Street, 4th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90012 or the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH)-, 2218 Kausen Drive, Suite 100 Elk Grove, CA 95758.

Complaints filed with the EEOC and/or the DFEH should be forwarded to the California Community College Chancellor's Office by the District.

Any District employee who receives a harassment or discrimination complaint, regardless of whether it is brought by a student or an employee, shall notify the District's Executive Director of Human Resources immediately.

Immediately upon receiving a Formal Complaint, as described above, regardless of whether the complaint is brought by a student or by an employee, the District shall forward a copy of the Formal Complaint to the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

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V. Informal/Formal Complaint Procedure

When a person brings a charge(s) of unlawful discrimination or harassment to the attention of the District's Compliance Officer, that officer will:

- (1) Upon approval by the parties involved, and when appropriate, undertake efforts to informally resolve the charges;
- (2) Advise the complainant that he/she need not participate in informal resolution;
- (3) Notify the person of his or her right to file a formal complaint and explain the procedure for doing so;
- (4) Assure the complainant that he/she will not be required to confront, or work out problems with the person accused of unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- (5) Advise the complainant that he/she may file a non-employment based complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education (OCR) where such a complaint is within that agency's jurisdiction.
- (6) If the complaint is employment-related, the complainant should also be advised that he or she may file a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and/or the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) where such a complaint is within that agency's jurisdiction.
- (7) Take interim steps to protect a complainant from coming into contact with a respondent, especially if the complainant is a victim of sexual violence. The District Compliance Officer, or designee, should notify the complainant of his or her options to avoid contact with the accused individual and allow students to change academic situations as appropriate. For instance, the District may prohibit the parties from having any contact with one another pending the results of the investigation.

Selecting an informal resolution does not extend the time limitations for filing a formal complaint. Efforts at informal resolution may continue after the filing of a formal written complaint, but after a complaint is filed an investigation is required to be conducted pursuant to Title 5, section 59334, and will be completed unless the matter is informally resolved and the complainant dismisses the complaint in writing. Even if the complainant does dismiss the complaint, the District Compliance Officer may require the investigation to continue if he/she determines that the allegations are serious enough to warrant an investigation. Any efforts at informal resolution after the filing of a written complaint will not exceed the 90-day period for rendering the administrative determination pursuant to Title 5, section 59336.

In employment-related cases, if the complainant also files with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing or with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a copy of that filing will be sent to the State Chancellor's Office requesting a determination of whether further investigation under Title 5 is required. Unless the State Chancellor's Office determines that a separate investigation is required, the District will discontinue its investigation under Title 5 and the matter will be resolved through the Department of Fair Employment and Housing or the U.S.

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Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The District will allow for representation where required by law or collective bargaining agreement and may allow for representation in other circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

VI. Filing a Formal Written Complaint

If a complainant decides to file a formal written unlawful discrimination or harassment complaint against the District, he or she should be advised, but not required, to file the complaint on a form prescribed by the Chancellor's Office. The approved form is available from the District Compliance Officer, at the Rio Hondo College Website, and also at the State Chancellor's Office website.

The completed form must be filed with the District Compliance Officer or mailed directly to the State Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges.

If a complaint of unlawful discrimination or harassment is presented in another written format, such as a letter, the District may request that the complainant complete the form. Every effort should be made to have the complaint filed on this form and to obtain the complainant's signature. However, where a complainant has indicated that he or she wishes to pursue the formal complaint process, a complaint should not be rejected solely based on the failure to file the complaint on this form. If there is a delay in obtaining a completed form, or the complainant refuses to transfer the information or otherwise complete the form but wishes to pursue the formal complaint process, the District will attach the letter to the form and open a formal investigation. While a complaint filed in an improper form is still procedurally defective under Title 5 standards, the merits of the complaint itself may still be valid and must be addressed.

Once a complaint is filed, the individual(s) accused of engaging in unlawful discriminatory or harassing conduct should be advised of that filing and the general nature of the complaint. The District will take appropriate and reasonable action to ensure that the alleged behavior does not continue while the investigation is being conducted. This should occur as soon as possible and in a manner that is appropriate under the circumstances. The District will also advise the responding party that an assessment of the accuracy of the allegations has not yet been made, that the complaint will be investigated, that the responding party will be provided an opportunity to present his/her side of the matter, and that any conduct that could be viewed as retaliatory against the complainant or any witnesses must be avoided.

VII. Advisors

Each party is allowed an advisor or support person of their choice present with them for all investigative and disciplinary meetings, from intake through final determination. The parties may select whomever they wish to serve as their advisor as long as the advisor is eligible and available, and usually otherwise not involved in the resolution process, such as serving as a witness. The advisor may be a friend, mentor, family member, attorney or any other supporter a party chooses to advise them who is

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available and eligible. Witnesses cannot also serve as advisors. The parties may choose advisors from inside or outside the campus community. In cases of sexual and domestic violence or harassment the District Compliance Officer will offer a confidential survivor advocate.

Advisors should help their advisees prepare for each meeting, and are expected to advise ethically, with integrity and in good faith. The District 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 District is not obligated to provide one. All advisors are subject to the same campus rules, whether they are attorneys or not. Advisors may not address campus officials in a meeting or interview unless invited to. The advisor may not make a presentation or represent the reporting party or the responding party during any meeting or proceeding and may not speak on behalf of the advisee to the investigators or adjudicators.

Advisors are expected to refrain from interference with the investigation and resolution. Any advisor who steps out of their role will be warned once and only once. If the advisor continues to disrupt or otherwise fails to respect the limits of the advisor role, the advisor will be asked to leave the meeting. When an advisor is removed from a meeting, that meeting will typically continue without the advisor present. Subsequently, the District Compliance Officer will determine whether the advisor may be reinstated, may be replaced by a different advisor, or whether the party will forfeit the right to an advisor for the remainder of the process.

The District expects that the parties will wish to share documentation related to the allegations with their advisors. The District provides a consent form that authorizes such sharing. The parties must complete this form before the District is able to share records with an advisor, though parties may share the information directly with their advisor if they wish. Advisors are expected to maintain the privacy of the records shared with them. These records may not be shared with 3rd parties, disclosed publicly, or used for purposes not explicitly authorized by the District. The District 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 District's privacy expectations.

VIII. Investigation Process

- i. Authorization of an Investigation: The District Compliance Officer, or designee, shall:
 - Authorize the investigation of the complaint, and supervise and/or conduct a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation of the complaint, as set forth below. Where complainants opt for informal resolution, the designated officer will determine whether further investigation is necessary to ensure resolution of the matter and utilize the investigation process outlined below as appropriate. In the case of a formal complaint, the investigation will include interviews with the complainant, the responding party, and any other persons who may have relevant knowledge concerning the complaint. This may include victims of similar conduct.

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- Review the factual information gathered through the investigation to determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes harassment, or other unlawful discriminatory conduct, giving consideration to all factual information and the totality of the circumstances, including the nature of the verbal, physical, visual or sexual conduct, and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred.
- ii. Investigation of the Complaint: The District shall promptly investigate every complaint of harassment or discrimination. No claim of employee or student harassment or discrimination shall remain unexamined. This includes complaints involving activities that occur off campus and in connection with any academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, or other programs of the District, whether those programs take place at a District facility, in a District vehicle, or at a class, training program or similar event sponsored by the District at another location.

As set forth above, where the complainant opts for an informal resolution, the District Compliance Officer may limit the scope of the investigation, as appropriate. The District will keep the investigation confidential to the extent possible, but cannot guarantee confidentiality because release of some information on a "need-to-know-basis" is essential to a thorough investigation. When determining whether to maintain confidentiality, the District may weigh the request for confidentiality against the following factors: the seriousness of the alleged harassment; the complainant's age; whether there have been other harassment complaints about the same individual; and the reporting party's individual rights to receive information about the allegations if the information is maintained by the District as an "education record" under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S. Code Section 1232g; 34 Code Federal Regulations Part 99.15. The District will inform the complainant if it cannot maintain confidentiality.

- iii. Investigation Steps: The District will fairly and objectively investigate harassment and discrimination complaints. Employees designated to serve, as investigators under this policy shall have adequate training on what constitutes discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, racial discrimination, disability discrimination and age discrimination and understand how the District's grievance procedures operate. The investigator may not have any real or perceived conflicts of interest and must be able to investigate the allegations impartially.

Investigators will use the following steps: interviewing the complainant(s); interviewing the responding individual(s); identifying and interviewing witnesses and evidence identified by each party; identifying and interviewing any other witnesses, if needed; reminding all individuals interviewed of the District's no-retaliation policy; considering whether any involved person should be removed from the campus pending completion of the investigation; reviewing personnel/academic files of all involved parties; reaching a conclusion as to the allegations and any appropriate disciplinary and remedial action; and seeing that all recommended action is carried out in a timely fashion. When the District evaluates the complaint, it shall do so using a preponderance of the evidence standard. Thus, after considering all the evidence it has gathered, the District will

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decide whether it is more likely than not that discrimination or harassment has occurred.

- iv. **Timeline for Completion:** The District will undertake its investigation as promptly and as swiftly as possible. To that end, the investigator shall complete the above steps, and prepare a written report within 90 days of the District receiving the complaint, unless an extension has been granted. The Executive Director of Human Resources will notify all the parties involved of the District's determination, in writing, within 10 working days of the determination being made.

Cooperation Encouraged: All students and employees are expected to cooperate with a District investigation into allegations of harassment or discrimination. Lack of cooperation impedes the ability of the District to investigate thoroughly and respond effectively. However, lack of cooperation by a complainant or witnesses does not relieve the District of its obligation to investigate. The District will conduct an investigation if it is discovered that harassment is, or may be occurring, with or without the cooperation of the alleged victim(s) and regardless of whether a complaint is filed. If the complainant refuses to participate in the investigation, the District should continue to pursue appropriate steps to limit the effects of the alleged harassment and prevent its recurrence.

- v. **Written Report:**

The results of the investigation of a complaint shall be set forth in a written report that will include at least all of the following information:

- A description of the circumstances giving rise to the Formal Complaint;
- A summary of the testimony provided by each witness interviewed by the investigator;
- An analysis of relevant evidence collected during the course of the investigation;
- A specific finding as to whether there is probable cause to believe that discrimination, harassment, or retaliation occurred with respect to each allegation in the complaint; and
- Any other information deemed appropriate by the District.

IX. Defective Complaint

If a complaint is found to be defective, it will be immediately returned to the complainant with a complete explanation of why an investigation will not be initiated under California Code of Regulations, Title 5, section 59300, et seq. The notice will inform the complainant that the complaint does not meet the requirements of section 59328 of Title 5, and shall specify in what requirement the complaint is defective. A copy of the notice to the complainant will also be sent to the State Chancellor's Office.

X. Notice to State Chancellor or District

A copy of all formal complaints filed in accordance with the Title 5 regulations will be forwarded to the State Chancellor's Office immediately upon receipt, regardless of

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whether the complaint is brought by a student or by an employee. Similarly, when the State Chancellor's Office receives a complaint, a copy will be forwarded to the District immediately.

XI. Oversight of Complaint Procedure

The Executive Director of Human Resources is the "responsible District officer" charged with receiving complaints of discrimination or harassment, and coordinating their investigation. The actual investigation of complaints may be delegated by the Executive Director of Human Resources to other trained, qualified staff, outside persons or organizations under contract with the District. This must occur whenever the Executive Director of Human Resources is named in the complaint or implicated by the allegations in the complaint.

XII. Administrative Determination

When the District evaluates the complaint, it shall do so using a preponderance of the evidence standard, meaning more likely than not. Thus, after considering all the evidence it has gathered, the District will decide whether it is more likely than not that discrimination or harassment has occurred.

In any case not involving employment discrimination or harassment, within 90 days of receiving an unlawful discrimination or harassment complaint filed under Title 5, sections 59300, et seq., the District Compliance Officer (or third party investigator) will complete the investigation and forward a copy of the investigative report to the State Chancellor, a copy of the summary of the report to the complainant, and written notice setting forth all the following to both the complainant and the State Chancellor¹:

- (a) the determination of the District Compliance Officer (or third party investigator) as to whether there is probable cause to believe unlawful discrimination or harassment occurred with respect to each allegation in the complaint;
- (b) a description of actions taken, if any, to prevent similar problems from occurring in the future;
- (c) the proposed resolution of the complaint; and
- (d) the complainant's right to appeal to the District's Board of Trustees and, for Title 5 complaints, to the State Chancellor.

In any case involving employment discrimination, within 90 days of receiving an unlawful discrimination or harassment complaint filed under Title 5, sections 59300, et seq., the District Compliance Officer (or third party investigator) will complete the investigation and forward a copy of the summary of the report to the complainant, and written notice setting forth all the following to the complainant:

¹ For non-employment complaints filed under the federal civil rights statutes referenced in Section I, a copy of the summary report and written notice shall be forwarded only to the complainant.

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- (a) the determination of the District Compliance Officer (or third party investigator) as to whether there is probable cause to believe discrimination or harassment occurred with respect to each allegation in the complaint;
- (b) a description of actions taken, if any, to prevent similar problems from occurring in the future;
- (c) the proposed resolution of the complaint; and
- (d) the complainant's right to appeal to the District's Board of Trustees and to file a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing or the U.S. Equal Employment Commission.

The District will keep these documents on file for a period of at least three (3) years after closing the case, and make them available to the State Chancellor upon request.

XIII. Discipline and Corrective Action

If harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation occurred in violation of Board Policy 3410, Board Policy 3430, or this procedure, the District shall take disciplinary action against the respondent and any other remedial action it determines to be appropriate. The action will be prompt, effective, and commensurate with the severity of the offense. Remedies for the complainant might include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring that the complainant and alleged perpetrator do not attend the same classes or work in the same work area;
- providing an escort to ensure that the complainant can move safely between classes and activities;
- providing counseling services;
- providing academic support services, such as tutoring;
- arranging for a student-complainant to re-take a course or withdraw from a class without penalty, including ensuring that any changes do not adversely affect the complainant's academic record;
- reviewing any disciplinary actions taken against the complainant to see if there is a causal connection between the discrimination or harassment and the misconduct that may have resulted in the complainant being disciplined; and
- preventing offending third parties from entering campus.
- circulating memoranda to students and staff about pertinent District policy; and
- other remedies deemed necessary by the District.

If discipline is imposed, the nature of the discipline will generally not be communicated to the complainant. However, the District may disclose information about the sanction imposed on an individual who was found to have engaged in discrimination or harassment when the sanction directly relates to the complainant; for example, the District may inform the complainant that the harasser must stay away from the complainant. A victim of discrimination or harassment who is informed of disciplinary action must keep that information confidential.

Employees, students, or other persons acting on behalf of the District who engage

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in unlawful discrimination or harassment as defined in this policy or by state or federal law may be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge, expulsion, or termination of contract.

Disciplinary actions against faculty, staff, and students will conform to all relevant statutes, regulations, and personnel policies and procedures, including the provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

The District shall also take reasonable steps to protect the complainant from further unlawful harassment, and/or discrimination, and to protect the complainant and witnesses from retaliation as a result of communicating the complaint and/or assisting in the investigation. The District will ensure that complainants and witnesses know how to report any subsequent problems, or any retaliation, or new incidents of discrimination or harassment. The District shall take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the investigation and to protect the privacy of all parties to the extent possible without impeding the District's ability to investigate and respond effectively to the complaint.

XIV. Appeal Rights

If the District imposes discipline against a student or employee as a result of the findings in its investigation, the student or employee may appeal the decision using the procedure for appealing a disciplinary decision. Similarly, if the complainant is not satisfied with the process or the results of an administrative decision, he or she may also appeal using the following procedure:

- First level of appeal: The complainant has the right to file an appeal to the District's Board of Trustees within 15 days from the date of the administrative determination. The Board will review the original complaint, the investigative report, the administrative determination, and the appeal.
- The Board will issue a final District decision in the matter within 45 days after receiving the appeal. Alternatively, the Board may elect to take no action within 45 days, in which case the original decision in the administrative determination will be deemed to be affirmed and shall become the final District decision in the matter. A copy of the final decision rendered by the Board will be forwarded to the complainant and for Title 5 complaints, to the State Chancellor's Office.
- Second level of appeal: The complainant has the right to file an appeal with the California Community College Chancellor's Office in any Title 5 case not involving employment-related unlawful discrimination or harassment within 30 days from the date that the Board issues the final District decision or permits the administrative determination to become final by taking no action within 45 days. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the decision by the Board or evidence showing the date on which the

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complainant filed an appeal with the Board, and a statement under penalty of perjury that no response was received from the Board within 45 days from that date. In any case involving employment discrimination or harassment, the complainant has the right to file a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) where the case is within the jurisdiction of that agency.

XV. Extensions

If, for reasons beyond its control, the District is unable to comply with the 90-day or 150-day deadlines specified above for submission of materials to the complainant and the State Chancellor's Office, the District Compliance Officer will file a written request that the State Chancellor grant an extension of the deadline. Where an extension is deemed necessary by the District, it must be requested from the State Chancellor regardless of whether or not the case involves employment discrimination. The request will be submitted no later than 10 days prior to the expiration of the deadlines established by Title 5 in sections 59336 and/or 59340 and will set forth the reasons for the request and the date by which the District expects to be able to submit the required materials.

A copy of the request for an extension will be sent to the complainant, who will be advised that he or she may file written objections with the State Chancellor within five (5) days of receipt.

The State Chancellor may grant the request unless delay would be prejudicial to the investigation. If an extension of the 90-day deadline is granted by the State Chancellor, the 150-day deadline is automatically extended by an equal amount.

XVI. Confidentiality of the Process

The District will keep the investigation confidential to the extent possible, but cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality because release of some information on a "need-to-know-basis" is essential to a thorough investigation. When determining whether to maintain confidentiality, the District may weigh the request for confidentiality against the following factors: the seriousness of the alleged discrimination or harassment; the complainant's age; whether there have been other discrimination or harassment complaints about the same individual; and the responding individual's rights to receive information about the allegations if the information is maintained by the District as an "education record" under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S. Code Section 1232g; 34 Code Federal Regulations Part 99.15. The District will inform the complainant if it cannot maintain confidentiality.

If a complainant insists that his or her name not be revealed, the District Compliance Officer (or third party investigator) should take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the complainant's request, as long as doing so does not jeopardize the rights of other students or employees.

Complainants, witnesses, and those accused of discrimination or harassment shall be

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informed of the possibility that they may be charged with allegations of defamation if they circulate the charges outside of the District's process. Persons who discuss their claims with persons outside of the process may expose themselves to tort charges. Complainants, witnesses, and those accused of discrimination or harassment will be asked to sign a confidentiality acknowledgement statement.

XVII. Retaliation

It is unlawful for anyone to retaliate against someone who files an unlawful discrimination or harassment complaint, who refers a matter for investigation or complaint, who participates in an investigation of a complaint, who represents or serves as an advocate for an alleged victim or alleged offender, or who otherwise furthers the principles of the District's unlawful discrimination and harassment policy.

If an individual believes she/he has been subject to retaliation, the individual may file an additional or amended complaint with the District Compliance Officer. The District Compliance Officer (or third party investigator) shall investigate the claim of retaliation in accordance with these procedures.

If the District Compliance Officer (or third party investigator) determines that the complaint of retaliation is valid, in addition to any other remedies which may be appropriate (such as disciplinary action), the appropriate District administrator/manager shall take all necessary steps to end the retaliatory behavior as quickly as possible and shall provide counseling to the person performing the retaliation in regard to the rights of complainants to be free from retaliation.

XVIII. Academic Freedom

Rio Hondo Community College District Board of Trustees reaffirms its commitment to academic freedom, as defined in BP 4030, but recognizes that academic freedom does not allow any form of unlawful discrimination. Nothing in these policies and procedures shall be interpreted to prohibit bona fide academic requirements for any specific community college program, course, or activity, including participatory/shared governance and representation of constituents.

When investigating unlawful discrimination or harassment complaints containing issues of academic freedom, the District will consult with a faculty member appointed by the Academic Senate with respect to contemporary practices and standards for course content and delivery.

Reference: Cohen v. San Bernardino Valley College (1995) 883 F.Supp. 1407, 1412-1414, *affd.* in part and *revd.* in part on other grounds, (1996) 92 F.3d 968; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 59302

XIX. Dissemination of Policy and Procedures

All College employees will be provided with a copy of the District's written policy on unlawful discrimination and harassment at the beginning of the fall semester of each new academic year.

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District policy and procedures related to harassment will include information that specifically addresses sexual violence. District Policy and Procedures related to harassment will be made available in the college catalog, emailed to all students and College employees, and will be posted on the District's Website.

When hired, employees are required to sign that they have received the policy and procedures, and the signed acknowledgment of receipt is placed in each employee's personnel file.

XX. Notice, Training, and Education for Students and Employees

Rio Hondo Community College District's Compliance Officer, or designee, shall make arrangements for, or provide training to, employees and students on the District's unlawful discrimination and harassment policy and procedures.

A workshop or informational session will be made available to all District employees at least once annually. Because of their special responsibilities under the law, supervisors will undergo mandatory training within six (6) months of assuming a supervisory position and every two (2) years thereafter. In years in which a substantive policy or procedural change has occurred, all District employees will attend a training update and/or receive a copy of the revised policies and procedures.

A workshop or informational session will be made available to all students at least once annually. The student workshop or informational session will include an explanation of the policy, how it works, and how to file a complaint. The session will also include information aimed at encouraging students to report incidents of sexual violence to the appropriate District and law enforcement authorities. In addition, a copy of the District's written policy on unlawful discrimination and harassment, as it pertains to students, will be distributed to all students through the student portal at the beginning of each fall semester.

The training and education required by this procedure shall include information and practical guidance regarding the federal and state statutory provisions concerning the prohibition against and the prevention and correction of discrimination and harassment on all bases covered by this procedure, and the remedies available to victims of discrimination and harassment.

XXI. Definitions

Definitions applicable to nondiscrimination policies are as follows:

- "Accused" means the individual who allegedly unlawfully discriminated against or harassed the complainant
- "Appeal" means a request by a complainant made in writing to the Rio Hondo Community College District Board of Trustees pursuant to Title 5, section 59338, and/or to the State Chancellor's Office pursuant to Title 5, section 59339, to

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- review the administrative determination of the District regarding a complaint of discrimination.
- "Association with a person or group with these actual or perceived characteristics" includes advocacy for or identification with people who have one or more characteristics of a protected category listed under "Unlawful Discrimination Policy" and Title 5, section 59300, participation in a group associated with persons having such characteristics, or use of a facility associated with use by such persons.
 - "Complaint" means a written and signed statement meeting the requirements of Title 5, section 59328² that alleges unlawful discrimination in violation of the nondiscrimination regulations adopted by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, as set forth at Title 5, sections 59300, et seq.
 - "Complainant" means anyone who alleges that he or she has personally suffered unlawful discrimination in violation of these policies and procedures, or a person who has learned of such unlawful discrimination, including a faculty member, administrator, student, family member, or other third party who files on behalf of an individual or group alleged to have suffered discrimination or harassment.
 - "Days" means calendar days.
 - "Gender" means sex, and includes a person's gender identity and gender-related appearance and behavior whether or not stereotypically associated with the person's assigned sex at birth.
 - "Mental disability" includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - (1) Having any mental or psychological disorder or condition, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, or specific learning disability, that limits a major life activity. For purposes of this section:
 - (A) "Limits" shall be determined without regard to mitigating measures, such as medications, assistive devices, or reasonable accommodations, unless the mitigating measure itself limits a major life activity.
 - (B) A mental or psychological disorder or condition limits a major life activity if it makes the achievement of the major life activity difficult.
 - (C) "Major life activities" shall be broadly construed and shall include physical, mental, and social activities, as well as working.
 - (2) Any other mental or psychological disorder or condition not described in paragraph (1) that requires specialized supportive services.
 - (3) Having a record or history of a mental or psychological disorder or condition described in paragraph (1) or (2), which is known to the District.
 - (4) Being regarded or treated by the District as having, or having had, any mental condition that makes achievement of a major life activity

² See section VIII., Filing a Formal Written Complaint.

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- difficult.
- (5) Being regarded or treated by the District as having, or having had, a mental or psychological disorder or condition that has no present disabling effect, but that may become a mental disability as described in paragraph (1) or (2). "Mental disability" does not include sexual behavior disorders, compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania, or psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from the current unlawful use of controlled substances or other drugs.
- "Physical disability" includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - (1) Having any physiological disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss that does both of the following:
 - (A) Affects one or more of the following body systems: neurological, immunological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory, including speech organs, cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.
 - (B) Limits a major life activity. For purposes of this section:
 - (i) "Limits" shall be determined without regard to mitigating measures such as medications, assistive devices, prosthetics, or reasonable accommodations, unless the mitigating measure itself limits a major life activity.
 - (ii) A physiological disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss limits a major life activity if it makes the achievement of the major life activity difficult.
 - (iii) "Major life activities" shall be broadly construed and include physical, mental, and social activities and working.
 - (2) Any other health impairment not described in paragraph (1) that requires specialized supportive services.
 - (3) Having a record or history of a disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, anatomical loss, or health impairment described in paragraph (1) or (2), which is known to the District.
 - (4) Being regarded or treated by the District as having, or having had, any physical condition that makes achievement of a major life activity difficult.
 - (5) Being regarded or treated by the District as having, or having had, a disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, anatomical loss, or health impairment that has no present disabling effect but may become a physical disability as described in paragraph (1) or (2).
 - (6) "Physical disability" does not include sexual behavior disorders, compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania, or psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from the current unlawful use of controlled substances or other drugs.
 - "District" means Rio Hondo Community College District or any District program or activity that is funded directly by the state or receives financial assistance from the state. This includes the District Personnel Commission and any other organization associated with the District or its College that receives state funding or financial assistance through the District.

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- “Respondent” or “Responding Party” means the individual who allegedly unlawfully discriminated or sexually harassed the complainant.
- “Responsible District Officer” means the officer identified by the District to the State Chancellor’s Office as the person responsible for receiving complaints filed pursuant to Title 5, section 59328, and coordinating their investigation.
- “Sex” includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy, childbirth, or medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth. “Sex” also includes, but is not limited to, a person’s gender, as defined in section 422.56 of the Penal Code. Discrimination on the basis of sex or gender also includes sexual harassment.
- “Sexual harassment” is unlawful discrimination in the form of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from or in the workplace or in the educational setting, and includes but is not limited to:
 - (1) Making unsolicited written, verbal, physical, and/or visual contacts with sexual overtones. (Examples of possible sexual harassment that appear in a written form include, but are not limited to: suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations. Examples of possible visual sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: leering, gestures, display of sexually aggressive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters.)
 - (2) Continuing to express sexual interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcomed.
 - (3) Making reprisals, threats of reprisal, or implied threats of reprisal following a rebuff of harassing behavior. The following are examples of conduct in an academic environment that might be found to be sexual harassment: threatening to withhold, or actually withholding, grades earned or deserved; suggesting a poor performance evaluation will be prepared; or suggesting a scholarship recommendation or college application will be denied.
 - (4) Engaging in explicit or implicit coercive sexual behavior within the work environment which is used to control, influence, or affect the employee’s career, salary, and/or work environment.
 - (5) Engaging in explicit or implicit coercive sexual behavior within the educational environment that is used to control, influence, or affect the educational opportunities, grades, and/or learning environment of a student.
 - (6) Offering favors or educational or employment benefits, such as grades or promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assignments, favorable duties or shifts, recommendations, reclassifications, etc., in exchange for sexual favors.
 - (7) Awarding educational or employment benefits, such as grades or duties or shifts, recommendations, reclassifications, etc., to any student or employee with whom the decision maker has a sexual relationship and denying such benefits to other students or employees.
- “Sexual orientation” means heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality.
- “Unlawful discrimination” means discrimination based on a category protected under Title 5, section 59300, including retaliation and sexual harassment.

XXII. Record Retention

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The District will retain on file for a period of no less than three years after closing the case copies of:

- The original complaint;
- The investigatory report;
- The summary of the report if one is prepared;
- The notice provided to the complainant, of the District's administrative determination and his/her right to appeal;
- Any appeal;
- The District's final decision; and
- Documentation of any corrective actions taken.

Unlawful discrimination and harassment records that are part of an employee's employment records may be classified as permanent records and retained indefinitely in accordance with Title 5, California Code of Regulations, section 59022.

XXIII. Sources /References:

In so providing, Rio Hondo Community College District hereby implements the provisions of California Government Code sections 11135 through 11139.5, the Sex Equity in Education Act (Ed. Code, § 66250 et seq.), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794), section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794d), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §§ 12100, et seq.), and the Age Discrimination Act (42 U.S.C. § 6101).

Education Code Section 66281.5; Government Code 12950.1; Title 5, Sections 59320, 59324, 59326, 59328, and 59300 et seq.; 34 C.F.R. Section 106.8(b).