



**HARFORD**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
**SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND  
DISCRIMINATION POLICY  
AND PROCEDURES**

**Effective Date: August 14, 2020**

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# Introduction

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Harford Community College (HCC) is an academic community committed to providing a safe, welcoming learning and working environment for everyone. Our College policies prohibit sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. This Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedure document outlines HCC's commitment to address this prohibited conduct, the procedures for investigating and resolving complaints, and the resources that are available for both a complainant and a respondent.

HCC has implemented specific measures to strongly encourage and support the reporting of harassment, discrimination and violence and to ensure that all allegations are investigated and resolved in a timely, discreet, fair, and impartial manner in accordance with Title IX and Clery Act federal regulations and Maryland Education Article §11-601. HCC also utilizes educational prevention programming and makes training opportunities available to all employees and students.

HCC is here to help any students or employees who have experienced or are currently experiencing sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. **If you are in immediate danger, please call 911.** You may also call the 24 hour confidential help line at 410.836.8430 to speak to someone from the Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center, Inc. (SARC).

To ensure the safety of our campus community, Harford Community College has formalized agreements with the Harford County Sheriff's Office and SARC.

# Sexual Harassment & Discrimination Policy

Harford Community College adheres to all federal, state, and local civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in employment and education. Harford Community College does not discriminate in its admissions practices, in its employment practices, or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of sex/gender. As a recipient of federal financial assistance for education activities, Harford Community College adheres to the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to ensure that all of its education programs and activities do not discriminate on the basis of sex/gender. Sex includes sex, sex stereotypes, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and pregnancy or parenting status.

Harford Community College also prohibits retaliation against any person opposing discrimination or participating in any discrimination investigation or complaint process internal or external to the institution. Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking are forms of sex discrimination, which are prohibited under Title IX and by Harford Community College policy.

Any member of the campus community, guest, or visitor who acts to deny, deprive, or limit the educational, employment, or social access, opportunities and/or benefits of any member of the College community on the basis of sex is in violation of the Sexual Harassment and Discrimination policy. A violation of this policy will be handled as provided in the comprehensive Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Procedure document, with employees subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.

Any person may report sex discrimination at any time (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to have experienced the conduct), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator:

## **Dr. Jacqueline Jackson, Vice President for Student Success**

### **Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Executive Suite, 3rd Floor of the Library  
401 Thomas Run Road, Bel Air, MD 21015  
443.412.2233 | [jajackson@harford.edu](mailto:jajackson@harford.edu)

# Applicable Scope

The core purpose of this policy is the prohibition of all forms of sex discrimination. Sometimes, sex discrimination involves exclusion from activities, such as admission, athletics, or employment. Sex 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 the appropriate protocol as determined by the Title IX Coordinator.

## Title IX Team

A complainant may make a report directly to the Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator:

### **Dr. Jacqueline Jackson, Vice President for Student Success** **Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Executive Suite, 3rd Floor of the Library  
443.412.2233 | [jajackson@harford.edu](mailto:jajackson@harford.edu)

### **Donna Shopulski, Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Employee Development** **Deputy Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Chesapeake Center  
443.412.2103 | [dshopulski@harford.edu](mailto:dshopulski@harford.edu)

### **Edward Liesch, Associate Athletic Director** **Deputy Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Susquehanna Center  
443.412.2571 | [eliesch@harford.edu](mailto:eliesch@harford.edu)

### **Elizabeth Mosser, Associate Dean for Academic Operations & Assistant Women's Tennis Coach** **Deputy Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Executive Suite, 3rd Floor of the Library  
443.412.2319 | [emosser@harford.edu](mailto:emosser@harford.edu)

### **Sean Wright, Fitness Center Manager** **Deputy Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Susquehanna Center  
443.412.2542 | [swright@harford.edu](mailto:swright@harford.edu)

### **Dr. Griselda Flores, Director for Student Life** **Deputy Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Student Center  
443.412.2372 | [grflores@harford.edu](mailto:grflores@harford.edu)

### **Jennie Towner, Associate Vice President for Student Development** **Deputy Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Student Center  
443.412.2142 | [jtowner@harford.edu](mailto:jtowner@harford.edu)

### **Ruschel Harris, Athletics Associate** **Deputy Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Susquehanna Center  
443.412.2226 | [ruharris@harford.edu](mailto:ruharris@harford.edu)



## Officials with Authority

Harford Community College has determined that the following administrators are Officials with Authority to address and correct harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation. In addition to the Title IX Team members listed on page 2, Officials with Authority include Deans, Directors, and Supervisors of Harford Community College employees.

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.

To raise any concern involving bias, conflict of interest, misconduct or discrimination committed by the Title IX Coordinator, contact the Harford Community College President, Dr. Felder. Concerns of bias or a potential conflict of interest by any other Title IX Team member should be raised with the Title IX Coordinator.

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

**Dr. Jacqueline Jackson, Vice President for Student Success**

**Title IX Coordinator**

HCC – Executive Suite, 3rd Floor of the Library  
401 Thomas Run Road, Bel Air, MD 21015  
443.412.2233 | [jajackson@harford.edu](mailto:jajackson@harford.edu)

**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](mailto:OCR@ed.gov)

**Web:** [www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr)

**For complaints involving employees:**

[Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](http://www.eeoc.gov)

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

Initial notice or complaints of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation may be made using any of the following options:

- File a complaint with, or give verbal notice to, the Title IX Coordinator, Deputy Title IX Coordinator, or Officials with Authority. Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator or any other official listed.
- Students may report online, by completing a Report Form for Code of Conduct Violation located in the My Academic Life tab in OwlNet. Anonymous reports are accepted but can give rise to a need to investigate. Harford Community College tries to provide supportive measures to all Complainants, which is impossible with an anonymous report. Because reporting carries no obligation to initiate a formal response, and as HCC respects Complainant requests to dismiss complaints unless there is a compelling threat to health and/or safety, the Complainant is largely in control and should not fear a loss of privacy by making a report that allows HCC to discuss and/or provide supportive measures.
- Report to a campus supervisor via a verbal or written report.

Once an initial complaint has been submitted and reviewed by the Title IX Coordinator, the complainant will be given the option to submit a Formal Complaint. 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 Harford Community College investigate the allegation(s). As used in this paragraph, the phrase "document filed by a Complainant" means a document or electronic submission (such as by electronic mail or through an online portal) provided for this purpose by Harford Community College that contains the Complainant's physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the complaint. 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.

At the time of filing a formal complaint, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of Harford.

## Supportive Measures

Harford Community College will offer and implement appropriate and reasonable supportive measures to the parties upon notice of alleged sexual harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

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.

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 Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator will inform the Complainant, in writing, that they may file a formal complaint 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. The Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator will document, in writing, the supportive measures offered to a student or employee.

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. Harford Community College will act to ensure as minimal an academic impact on the parties as possible. HCC will implement measures in a way that does not unreasonably burden the other party. These actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Referral to counseling, medical, and/or other healthcare services
- Public Safety assistance with transport to the nearest hospital

- Referral to the Employee Assistance Program
- Referral to the Student Assistance Program
- Referral to community-based service providers
- Visa and immigration assistance
- Student financial aid counseling
- Education to the community or community subgroup(s)
- Altering work arrangements for employees or student-employees
- Safety planning
- Providing campus safety escorts
- Implementing contact limitations (no-contact orders) between the parties
- Academic support, extensions of deadlines, or other course/program-related adjustments
- Be-on-the-Lookout (BOLO) orders
- Timely warnings
- Class schedule modifications, withdrawals, or leaves of absence
- Increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus
- Public Safety assistance with filing a protective order with the nearest police jurisdiction
- Any other actions deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator

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

### A. ACCOMMODATING PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS

Under the Department of Education's (DOE) Title IX regulations, an institution that receives federal funding "shall not discriminate against any student, or exclude any student from its education program or activity, including any class or extracurricular activity, on the basis of such student's pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom." According to the DOE, appropriate treatment of a pregnant student includes granting the student leave "for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's



physician,” and then effectively reinstating the student to the same status as was held when the leave began.

This generally means that pregnant students will be treated by Harford Community College the same way as someone who has a temporary disability and will be given an opportunity to make up missed work wherever possible. Extended deadlines, make-up assignments (e.g. papers, quizzes, tests, and presentations), tutoring, independent study, online course completion options, and incomplete grades that can be completed at a later date, should all be employed, in addition to any other ergonomic and assistive support typically provided by Disability Services. To the extent possible, Harford Community College will take reasonable steps to ensure that pregnant students who take a leave of absence or medical leave return to the same position of academic progress that they were in when they took leave, including access to the same course catalog that was in place when the leave began. The Title IX Coordinator has the authority to determine that such accommodations are necessary and appropriate and to inform faculty members of the need to adjust academic parameters accordingly.

As with disability accommodations, information about pregnant students’ requests for accommodations will be shared with faculty and staff only to the extent necessary to provide the reasonable accommodation. Faculty and staff will regard all information associated with such requests as private and will not disclose this information unless necessary. The Title IX Coordinator will coordinate with Disability and Student Intervention Services (DSIS) for the provision of accommodations based on a temporary disability.

In situations such as clinical rotations, performances, labs, and group work, the institution will work with the student to devise an alternative path to completion, if possible. In progressive curricular and/or cohort-model programs, medically necessary leaves are sufficient cause to permit the student to shift course order, substitute similar course, or join a subsequent cohort when returning from leave.

Students are encouraged to work with their faculty members and Harford Community College’s support systems to devise a plan for how best to address the conditions as pregnancy progresses, anticipate the need for leaves, minimize the academic

impact of their absence, and get back on track as efficiently and comfortably as possible. The Title IX Coordinator will assist with plan development and implementation as needed.

**Scope of Policy** - This policy applies to all aspects of Harford Community College’s programs, including, but not limited to, admissions, educational programs, and activities, extracurricular activities, hiring, leave policies, employment policies, and health insurance coverage.

## **B. How to Get Help for Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and/or Stalking**

Being the victim of a crime is a traumatic experience that may have physical and psychological effects. HCC encourages anyone who has been the victim of a sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking to go to a safe place and seek assistance as soon as possible.

HCC urges any person who believes he or she has been a victim of a sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking occurring at HCC or during the course of HCC-sponsored activities to call HCC’s Department of Public Safety (443.412.2272) as soon as possible. The Department of Public Safety Office is open 24 hours a day.

HCC’s Department of Public Safety will inform a victim of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking of the right to notify the appropriate law enforcement agency to file criminal charges and the importance of preserving evidence associated with the sexual assault. With the victim’s consent, the HCC Department of Public Safety will notify the Harford County Sheriff’s Office to conduct an official criminal investigation of any allegation and, where appropriate, will arrange for the victim to be transported to either University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health Center or University of Maryland Harford Memorial Hospital for medical evaluation and treatment.

Only those HCC employees with a legitimate need to know will be informed of the incident. Normally that will include the Title IX Coordinator, the Vice President for Student Success, and the Associate Vice President of Student Development.

## C. Preservation of Evidence

Preserving physical evidence is critically important to the legal process. The collection of evidence from a crime is based upon a scientific principle that states that whenever two surfaces come in contact there will be an exchange of material. Physical evidence, such as DNA from semen, saliva and skin cells, and fingerprints, hair, and fibers are all types of evidence that can be transferred from the suspect to the victim and from the victim to the suspect. It is important that evidence be collected in a timely manner, free from contamination, and stored properly in order for that evidence to be used in criminal proceedings. The victim of a sexual assault should not change clothes, smoke, bathe/shower, urinate, douche, wash hands, brush teeth, eat or drink before the evidence can be collected.

## D. Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Kits

If a victim of sexual assault elects to go to the hospital, an advocate or designated hospital staff member will provide the following options:

- Report to police and receive a forensic exam;
- Receive a forensic exam as an anonymous report; or
- Receive medical treatment only.

Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence (SAFE) kits are collected by a trained Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE). FNEs are nurses, not law enforcement personnel, who have been specially trained in the collection of sexual assault evidence.

A victim may decline to have a SAFE kit collected or may elect to have a kit collected as an anonymous reporting (i.e., "Jane Doe" kit). Anonymous reporting/Jane Doe kits allow the victim of a sexual assault to have a SAFE kit collected without having to report the crime to law enforcement. The evidence will be collected, given a tracking number, and stored for future use. It is important to note that Jane Doe kits are merely stored for potential use if the victim decides in the future to make a report. The evidence is not examined at the time it is collected; therefore, investigative leads, such as identifying a suspect, are not developed.

If the anonymous report option is selected, it is the expectation of HCC that the victim will be told:

- The benefits of anonymous reporting (e.g., time to weigh options before participating in the criminal justice system);
- The drawbacks of anonymous reporting (e.g., challenges for the investigation and prosecution);
- The length of time for which evidence will be stored; and
- Who to contact, and how, if the victim decides to report.

For more information on anonymous reporting, visit the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention's website: [goccp.maryland.gov/victims/](http://goccp.maryland.gov/victims/).

## Emergency Removal

HCC can act to remove a Respondent entirely or partially from our 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 CARE Team using its standard objective violence risk assessment procedures.

In all cases in which an emergency removal is imposed, the student or employee 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.

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 within two work days, 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. This section also applies to any restrictions that a coach or athletic administrator may place on a student-athlete arising from allegations related to Title IX.

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. The Title IX Coordinator has sole discretion under this policy to implement or stay an emergency removal and to determine the conditions and duration. An emergency removal will remain in effect until 1) a final decision has been made concerning the alleged policy violation and/or 2) the Title IX Coordinator determines that the reasons for imposing the emergency removal no longer exists. Violation of an emergency removal under this policy will be grounds for discipline, which may include expulsion or termination.

## Promptness

All allegations are acted upon promptly by Harford Community College 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; however, Harford Community College will avoid all undue delays within its control.

Any time the general timeframes for resolution outlined in these procedures will be delayed, Harford Community 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.

## Privacy

Every effort is made by Harford Community College to preserve the privacy of reports. The College 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.

Harford Community College reserves the right to designate which College 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). Only a small group of officials who need to know will typically be told about the complaint, including but not limited to: Title IX and Deputy Title IX Coordinators, Harford Community College Public Safety, and the CARE Team. 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. Harford Community 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.

## Jurisdiction of Harford Community College

This policy applies to the educational program and activities of the Harford Community College to conduct that takes place on the campus or on property owned or controlled by Harford Community College and at Harford Community College-sponsored events. The Respondent must be a member of Harford Community College's community in order for its policies to apply. For the purpose of this policy, member of Harford Community College's community applies to students and employees participating in an educational program or activity.

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

Regardless of where the conduct occurred, HCC 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 Harford Community College interest includes:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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
- Any situation that is detrimental to the educational interests or mission of Harford Community College.

If the Respondent is unknown or is not a member of the Harford Community 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. Further, even when the Respondent is not a member of the HCC community, supportive measures, remedies, and resources may be accessible to the Complainant by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.

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

All vendors serving Harford Community 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.

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.

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 Harford Community College where sexual harassment or sexual discrimination procedures of

the facilitating or host organization may give recourse to the Complainant.

## Time Limits on Reporting

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

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.

When notice/complaint is affected by significant time delay, HCC 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.

## Online Harassment and Misconduct

The policies of Harford Community College 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 Harford Community College networks, technology, or equipment.

While Harford Community College may not control websites, social media, and other venues in which harassing communications are made, when such communications are reported to Harford Community College, it will engage in a variety of means to address and mitigate the effects.

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.

Any online postings or other electronic communication by students, including cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, cyber-harassment, etc., occurring completely outside of HCC's control (e.g., not on HCC's networks, websites, or between HCC email accounts) will only be subject to this policy when such online conduct can be shown to cause a substantial in-program disruption.

## Discriminatory Harassment on the Basis of Sex

Students, staff, administrators, and faculty are entitled to an employment and educational environment that is free of discriminatory harassment on the basis of sex. Harford Community College'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.

The sections below describe the specific forms of legally prohibited harassment that are also prohibited under Harford Community College policy.

### A. Sexual Harassment

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

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.

Harford Community College 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.

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:

1. Quid Pro Quo:
  - a. an employee of Harford Community College,
  - b. conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the College,
  - c. on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; and/or
2. Sexual Harassment:
  - a. unwelcome conduct,
  - b. determined by a reasonable person,
  - c. to be so severe, and
  - d. pervasive, and,
  - e. objectively offensive,
  - f. that it effectively denies a person equal access to the Harford Community College's education program or activity.

### B. Sexual Assault, Defined as:

1. Sex Offenses, Forcible:
  - a. Any sexual act directed against another person,
  - b. without the consent of the Complainant,
  - c. including instances in which the Complainant is incapable of giving consent.
2. Forcible Rape:
  - a. Penetration,
  - b. no matter how slight,
  - c. of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or
  - d. oral penetration by a sex organ of another person,
  - e. without the consent of the Complainant.
3. Forcible Sodomy:
  - a. Oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person,
  - b. forcibly,
  - c. and/or against that person's will (non-consensually), or



- d. 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. Sexual Assault with an Object:

- a. The use of an object or instrument to penetrate,
- b. however slightly,
- c. the genital or anal opening of the body of another person,
- d. forcibly,
- e. and/or against that person's will (non-consensually),
- f. 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.

5. Forcible Fondling:

- a. The touching of the private body parts of another person (buttocks, groin, breasts),
- b. for the purpose of sexual gratification,
- c. forcibly,
- d. and/or against that person's will (non-consensually),
- e. 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.

6. Sex Offenses, Non-forcible:

- a. Incest:
  - Non-forcible sexual intercourse,
  - between persons who are related to each other,
  - within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by MD law.
- b. Statutory Rape:
  - Non-forcible sexual intercourse,
  - with a person who is under the statutory age of consent of MD

## C. Dating Violence, Defined as:

- 1. violence,
- 2. on the basis of sex,
- 3. committed by a person,
- 4. who is in or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the Complainant.
  - a. 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—
  - b. Dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse.
  - c. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

## D. Domestic Violence, Defined as:

- 1. violence,
  - 2. on the basis of sex,
  - 3. committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the Complainant,
  - 4. by a person with whom the Complainant shares a child in common, or
  - 5. by a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the Complainant as a spouse or intimate partner, or
  - 6. by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the Complainant under the domestic or family violence laws of Maryland or
  - 7. 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 Maryland.
- \* 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.



## E. Stalking, Defined as:

1. engaging in a course of conduct,
2. on the basis of sex,
3. directed at a specific person, that
  - a. would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety, or
  - b. the safety of others; or
  - c. suffer substantial emotional distress.

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.
- Reasonable person means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the Complainant.
- Substantial emotional distress means significant mental suffering or anguish that may but does not necessarily require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

## FORCE, COERCION, CONSENT, AND INCAPACITATION

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

**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.").

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.

**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.

## F. Consent is:

- Consent is a positive, unambiguous, and voluntary agreement to engage in specific sexual activity throughout a sexual encounter.
- Consent cannot be inferred from the absence of the person saying "no." A clear "yes," verbal or otherwise, is necessary.
- Consent to some sexual acts does not imply consent to others, nor does past consent to a given act imply present or future consent.
- Consent must be ongoing throughout a sexual encounter and can be revoked at any time.
- Consent cannot be obtained by threat, coercion, or force.
- Consent cannot be obtained from a person who is incapacitated. Incapacitated refers to those persons who have mental or physical disabilities that temporarily or permanently render the person incapable of appraising the nature of the sexual activity, resisting the sexual activity, or unable to communicate an unwillingness to engage in the sexual activity. **Consent cannot be obtained from someone who is asleep or otherwise mentally or physically incapacitated due to alcohol, drugs, medication, or some other condition.**

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Proof of consent or non-consent is not a burden placed on either party involved in an incident. Instead, the burden remains on the Harford Community 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.

## Retaliation

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.

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

It is prohibited for Harford Community College or any member of Harford Community College'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.

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.

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.

## Mandated Reporting

All Harford Community College employees (faculty, staff, administrators) are expected to report actual or suspected discrimination or harassment to appropriate officials immediately, though there are some limited exceptions.

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.

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

### A. Confidential Resources

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

- On-campus licensed professional counselor
- SARC employee
- Counselors available through the 24/7 online and web-based Student and Employee Assistance Programs

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.

Harford Community College employees who are confidential will timely submit anonymous statistical information for Clery Act purposes unless they believe it would be harmful to their client or patient.

## B. Mandated Reporters and Formal Notice/Complaints

All employees of Harford Community College (including student employees), with the exception of those who are designated as Confidential Resources, 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.

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.

Complainants may want to carefully consider whether they share personally identifiable details with non-confidential Mandated Reporters, as those details must be shared with the Title IX Coordinator.

Supportive measures may be offered as the result of such disclosures without formal Harford Community College action.

Failure of a Mandated Reporter, as described above in this section, to report an incident of harassment or discrimination of which they become aware can be subject to disciplinary action for failure to comply.

## When a Complainant Does Not Wish to Proceed

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.

The Title IX Coordinator has ultimate discretion over whether Harford Community 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.

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 Harford Community College to pursue formal action to protect the community.

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. Harford Community College may be compelled to act on alleged employee misconduct irrespective of a Complainant's wishes.

The Title IX Coordinator must also consider the effect that non-participation by the Complainant may have on the availability of evidence and Harford Community College's ability to pursue a Formal Grievance Process fairly and effectively.

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.

When Harford Community 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.

Note that Harford Community College's ability to remedy and respond to notice may be limited if the Complainant does not want Harford Community 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 Harford Community College's obligation to protect its community.

In cases in which the Complainant requests confidentiality/no formal action and the circumstances allow the College to honor that request, Harford Community College will offer informal resolution options (see below), supportive measures, and remedies to the Complainant and the community, but will not otherwise pursue formal action.

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 Harford Community College and to have the incidents investigated and properly resolved through these procedures.

## Federal Timely Warning Obligations

Parties reporting sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking should be aware that under the Clery Act, Harford Community College 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.

Harford Community 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.

## False Allegations and Evidence

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.

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 Harford Community College policy.

## Amnesty for Complainants and Witnesses

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

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

To encourage reporting and participation in the process, Harford Community College maintains a policy of offering Complainants and witnesses amnesty from minor policy violations—such as underage consumption of alcohol or the use of illicit drugs—related to the incident.

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. Harford Community College maintains a policy of amnesty for students who offer help to others in need.

## Federal Statistical Reporting Obligations

Certain campus officials—those deemed Campus Security Authorities—have a duty to report the following for federal statistical reporting purposes (Clery Act):

- All “primary crimes,” which include homicide, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson;
- 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;
- VAWA-based crimes, which include sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking; and
- Arrests and referrals for disciplinary action for weapons-related law violations, liquor-related law violations, and drug abuse-related law violations.

All personally identifiable information is kept private, but statistical information must be passed along to HCC Public Safety 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.

Campus Security Authorities include: student affairs/student conduct staff, (Public Safety), local police, coaches, athletic directors, residence life staff, student activities staff, human resources staff, advisors to student organizations, and any other official with significant responsibility for student and campus activities.

## Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure

The procedures below apply only to qualifying allegations of sexual harassment (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as defined above) involving students, staff, administrator, or faculty members. All other allegations of misconduct unrelated to incidents covered by the Policy will be addressed through procedures elaborated in the student and employee handbooks.

### 1. Notice/Complaint

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

Harford Community College will initiate at least one of three responses:

- Offering supportive measures because the Complainant does not want to proceed formally; and/or
- An informal resolution; and/or
- A Formal Grievance Process including an investigation and a hearing.

The investigation and grievance process will determine whether or not the Sexual Harassment Policy has been violated. If so, Harford Community 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.

### 2. Initial Assessment

Following receipt of notice or a complaint of an alleged violation of this Policy, 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:

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.
  - a. 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.
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.
3. The Title IX Coordinator reaches out to the Complainant to offer supportive measures.
4. The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure they are aware of the right to have an Advisor.
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.



- a. 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.
  - b. 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.
  - c. If a Formal Grievance Process is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator determines if the misconduct alleged falls within the scope of Title IX:
    - If it does, the Title IX Coordinator will initiate the formal investigation and grievance process, directing the investigation to address:
      - an incident, and/or
      - a pattern of alleged misconduct, and/or
      - a culture/climate issue, based on the nature of the complaint.
    - 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.
- Whether to put the investigation on the footing of incident and/or pattern and/or climate;
  - To help identify potential predatory conduct;
  - To help assess/identify grooming behaviors;
  - Whether it is reasonable to try to resolve a complaint through informal resolution, and what modality may be most successful;
  - Whether to permit a voluntary withdrawal by the Respondent;
  - Whether to impose transcript notation or communicate with a transfer institution about a Respondent;
  - Assessment of appropriate sanctions/ remedies (to be applied post-hearing); and/or
  - Whether a Timely Warning should be issued to the Campus Community consistent with the Clery Act
  - Whether a banning letter should be issued to the respondent making their presence on campus a criminal offense.

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.

VRAs require specific training and are typically conducted by psychologists, clinical counselors, social workers, case managers, law enforcement officers, student conduct officers, or other CARE TEAM members. A VRA authorized by the Title IX Coordinator should occur in collaboration with the CARE TEAM. 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.

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

## **VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT**

In many cases, the Title IX Coordinator may determine that a Violence Risk Assessment (VRA) should be conducted by the CARE TEAM as part of the initial assessment. A VRA can aid in ten critical and/or required determinations, including:

- Emergency removal of a Respondent on the basis of immediate threat to physical health/safety;
- Whether the Title IX Coordinator should pursue/sign a formal complaint absent a willing/able Complainant;



escalations, and is supported by research from the fields of law enforcement, criminology, human resources, and psychology.

More about Harford Community College's process for VRA can be found in ["Appendix D: Violence Risk Assessment \(VRA\)"](#).

### **DISMISSAL (MANDATORY AND DISCRETIONARY)**

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

- The conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment as defined in the Policy hereinabove, even if proved; and/or
- The conduct did not occur in an educational program or activity controlled by Harford Community College (including buildings or property controlled by recognized student organizations), and/or Harford Community College does not have control of the Respondent; and/or
- The conduct did not occur against a person in the United States; and/or
- At the time of filing a formal complaint, a Complainant is not participating in or attempting to participate in an education program or activity of HCC

Harford Community College **may** dismiss a formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation or hearing:

- A Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein; or
- The Respondent is no longer enrolled in or employed by the College; or
- Specific circumstances prevent the College from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon any dismissal, Harford Community College will promptly send written notice of the dismissal and the rationale for doing so simultaneously to the parties.

This dismissal decision is appealable by any party under the procedures for appeal below. The decision not to dismiss is also appealable by any party claiming that a dismissal is required or appropriate. A Complainant who decides to withdraw a complaint may later request to reinstate it or refile it.

## **3. Counterclaims**

Harford Community College is obligated to ensure that the sexual harassment grievance process is not abused for retaliatory purposes. Harford Community 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.

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.

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 this policy.

## **4. Right to an Advisor**

The parties may each have no more than two Advisors of their choice present with them for all meetings and interviews within the resolution process, if they so choose. Advisors could include an attorney, advocate, or support person. The parties may select whoever they wish to serve as their Advisor as long as the Advisor is eligible and available. The Advisor cannot have institutionally conflicting roles, such as being a Title IX administrator who has an active role in the matter, or a supervisor who must monitor and implement sanctions.

Both the Complainant and the Respondent may access counsel to serve as an Advisor, whose fees may be reimbursed up to a certain amount by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (the "Commission"), if they meet the following criteria:

- The Complainant is a current or former student who makes a complaint on which a formal Title IX investigation is initiated and who was enrolled as a student at the institution at the time of the incident that is the basis of the complaint, unless the student knowingly and voluntarily chooses not to have counsel; and
- The Respondent is a current or former student who responds to a complaint on which a formal Title IX investigation is initiated and who was enrolled as a student at the institution at the time of the incident that is the basis of the complaint, unless the student knowingly and voluntarily chooses not to have counsel.

The Commission maintains a list of attorneys and legal services programs who have indicated they are willing to represent students in Title IX proceedings on a pro bono basis or for reduced legal fees. This list will be developed in consultation with state and local bar associations and legal services providers with expertise about sexual misconduct. More information can be found at [Maryland Higher Education Commission Website](#).

Students may select and retain an attorney from the Commission's list prior to the conclusion of the formal Title IX proceedings. If the student selects and retains an attorney that is not on the Commission's list, the attorney may seek fee reimbursement up to a certain amount from the Commission.

The Commission is not required to pay a student's attorney's fees for representation in a criminal or civil matter.

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.

### **WHO CAN SERVE AS AN ADVISOR**

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 Harford Community College community.

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 Harford Community College, the Advisor will be trained by Harford Community College and be familiar with Harford's resolution process.

If the parties choose an Advisor from outside the pool of those identified by Harford Community College, the Advisor may not have been trained by Harford Community College and may not be familiar with the College's policies and procedures. Parties also have the right to choose not to have an Advisor in the initial stages of the resolution process, prior to a hearing.

### **ADVISORS IN HEARINGS/HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE-APPOINTED ADVISOR**

Under U.S. Department of Education regulations applicable to Title IX, cross-examination is required during the hearing and 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, Harford Community College will appoint a trained Advisor for the limited purpose of conducting any cross-examination.

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, Harford Community 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 during the hearing.

### **ADVISOR'S ROLE**

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.

Harford Community 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, Harford Community College is not obligated to provide an attorney.

### **PRE-INTERVIEW MEETINGS**

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 Harford Community College's policies and procedures.

### **ADVISOR VIOLATIONS OF HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE POLICY**

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

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.

### **SHARING INFORMATION WITH THE ADVISOR**

Harford Community 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.

Harford Community College also provides a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 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 Harford Community College is able to share records with an Advisor. If a party requests that all communication be made through their attorney Advisor, Harford Community College will not comply with that request.

### **PRIVACY OF RECORDS SHARED WITH ADVISOR**

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 Harford Community College. HCC 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 Harford Community College's privacy expectations.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF AN ADVISOR**

Harford Community 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. Harford Community 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.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTIES WITH RESPECT TO ADVISORS**

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).

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 FERPA 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.

## 5. Resolution Processes

Resolution proceedings are private. All persons present at any time during the resolution process are expected to maintain the privacy of the proceedings in accordance with Harford Community College policy. 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. Harford Community College encourages parties to discuss this with their Advisors before doing so.

### INFORMAL RESOLUTION

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

It is not necessary to pursue Informal Resolution first in order to pursue a Formal Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, and any party participating in Informal Resolution can stop the process at any time and begin or resume the Formal Sexual Harassment Grievance Process.

Prior to implementing Informal Resolution, Harford Community 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 Harford Community College.

Harford Community 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.

The Title IX Coordinator may look to the following factors to assess whether Informal Resolution is appropriate:

- The parties' amenability to Alternate Resolution;
- Likelihood of potential resolution, taking into account any power dynamics between the parties;
- The parties' motivation to participate;
- Civility of the parties;
- Cleared violence risk assessment/ ongoing risk analysis;
- Disciplinary history;
- Whether an emergency removal is needed;
- Skill of the Informal Resolution facilitator with this type of complaint;
- Complaint complexity;
- Emotional investment/ intelligence of the parties;
- Rationality of the parties;
- Goals of the parties;
- Adequate resources to invest in Alternate Resolution (time, staff, etc.)

The ultimate determination of whether Informal 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.

## 6. Sexual Harassment Grievance Process Pool

The Formal Sexual Harassment Grievance Process relies on a pool of employees ("the Pool") to carry out the process. Members of the Pool are announced in an annual distribution of this policy to all students, parents/guardians of students, employees, prospective

students, and prospective employees. They are also listed in the Annual Title IX Report published by the Title IX Office. The list of Pool members and a description of the Pool can be found at [www.harford.edu/about-harford/get-to-know-harford/student-consumer-information/contacts-and-resources.php](http://www.harford.edu/about-harford/get-to-know-harford/student-consumer-information/contacts-and-resources.php).

### **POOL MEMBER ROLES**

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

- To provide appropriate intake of and initial guidance pertaining to complaints
- To act as an Advisor to the parties
- To perform or assist with initial assessment
- To investigate complaints
- To serve as a hearing facilitator
- To serve as a Decision-maker regarding the complaint
- To serve as an Appeal Decision-maker

### **POOL MEMBER TRAINING**

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

- The scope of Harford Community College's Sexual Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures
- How to conduct investigations and hearings that protect the safety of Complainants and Respondents, and promote accountability
- Implicit bias
- Disparate treatment and impact
- Reporting, confidentiality, and privacy requirements
- Applicable laws, regulations, and federal regulatory guidance
- How to implement appropriate and situation-specific remedies
- How to investigate in a thorough, reliable, and impartial manner
- How to uphold fairness, equity, and due process

- How to weigh evidence
- How to conduct questioning
- How to assess credibility
- Impartiality and objectivity
- How to render findings and generate clear, concise, evidence-based rationales
- The definitions of all offenses
- How to apply definitions used by Harford Community College with respect to consent (or the absence or negation of consent) consistently, impartially, and in accordance with policy
- How to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes
- How to serve impartially by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias
- Any technology to be used at a live hearing
- Issues of relevance of questions and evidence
- Issues of relevance to create an investigation report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence
- How to determine appropriate sanctions in reference to all forms of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation allegations

Specific training is also provided for Appeal Decision-makers, intake personnel, Advisors (who are Harford Community College employees). All Pool members are required to attend these trainings annually. The materials used to train all members of the Pool are publicly posted here: [www.harford.edu/about-harford/get-to-know-harford/student-consumer-information/contacts-and-resources.php](http://www.harford.edu/about-harford/get-to-know-harford/student-consumer-information/contacts-and-resources.php).

### **POOL MEMBERSHIP**

The Pool includes Deputy Title IX Coordinators, Student Conduct Officials, and other representatives from Human Resources, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs.



## 7. Formal Grievance Process: Notice of Investigation and Allegations (NOIA)

The Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of the investigation and allegations (the "NOIA") to the Respondent upon commencement of the Formal Sexual Harassment 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.

The NOIA will include:

- A meaningful summary of all of allegations,
- The identity of the involved parties (if known),
- The precise misconduct being alleged,
- The date and location of the alleged incident(s) (if known),
- The specific policies implicated,
- A description of the applicable procedures,
- A statement of the potential sanctions/responsive actions that could result,
- A statement that Harford Community College presumes the Respondent is not responsible for the reported misconduct unless and until the evidence supports a different determination,
- 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,
- A statement about Harford Community College's policy on retaliation,
- Information about the privacy of the process,
- Information on the need for each party to have an Advisor of their choosing and suggestions for ways to identify an Advisor,
- A statement informing the parties that Harford Community College Policy prohibits knowingly making false statements, including knowingly submitting false information during the resolution process,

- Detail on how the party may request disability accommodations during the interview process,
- A link to Harford Community College's VAWA Brochure,
- 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
- An instruction to preserve any evidence that is directly related to the allegations.

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.

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 Harford Community College records, or emailed to the parties' College-issued email or designated accounts. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in-person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

## 8. Resolution Timeline

Harford Community College will make a good faith effort to complete the resolution process within a sixty-to-ninety (60-90) work 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 an estimate of how much additional time will be needed to complete the process.

## 9. Appointment of Investigators

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

## 10. Ensuring Impartiality

Any individual materially involved in the administration of the resolution process, including the Title IX Coordinator, Investigator(s), and Decision-maker,



may neither have nor demonstrate a conflict of interest or bias for a party generally, or for a specific Complainant or Respondent.

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.

The Formal Sexual Harassment 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.

Harford Community 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 preponderance of evidence standard.

## 11. Investigation Timeline

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.

Harford Community 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.

## 12. Delays in the Investigation Process and Interactions with Law Enforcement

Harford Community 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.

Harford Community 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. Harford Community College will promptly resume its investigation and resolution process as soon as feasible. During such a delay, Harford Community College will implement supportive measures as deemed appropriate.

Harford Community College 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.

## 13. Steps in the Investigation Process

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.

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.

The Investigator(s) typically take(s) the following steps:

- Determine the identity and contact information of the Complainant.
- In coordination with campus partners (e.g., the Title IX Coordinator), initiate or assist with any necessary supportive measures.
- Identify all policies implicated by the alleged misconduct and notify the Complainant and Respondent of all of the specific policies implicated.
- Assist the Title IX Coordinator with conducting a prompt initial assessment to determine if the allegations indicate a potential policy violation.

- 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.
- Meet with the Complainant to finalize their interview/statement, if necessary.
- Prepare the initial Notice of Investigation and Allegation (NOIA). The NOIA may be amended with any additional or dismissed allegations.
  - 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.
- 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.
- Make good faith efforts to notify the parties of any meeting or interview involving the other party, in advance when possible.
- 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.
- Interview all available, relevant witnesses and conduct follow-up interviews as necessary.
- 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.
- Complete the investigation promptly and without unreasonable deviation from the intended timeline.
- Provide regular status updates to the parties throughout the investigation.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## 14. Role and Participation of Witnesses in the Investigation

Witnesses (as distinguished from the parties) who are employees of Harford Community 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.

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.

## 15. Recording of Interviews

No unauthorized audio or video recording of any kind is permitted during investigation meetings.

## 16. Evidentiary Considerations in the Investigation

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.

## 17. Referral for Hearing

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.

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.

The Title IX Coordinator will select an appropriate Decision-maker. Decision-makers 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.

## 18. Decision-maker Selection

Harford Community College will designate a hearing Decision-maker, at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator. The Decision-maker 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.

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.

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 Decision-maker.

## 19. Evidentiary Considerations in the Hearing

Any evidence that the Decision-maker determines 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.

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.

The parties may each submit a written impact statement prior to the hearing for the consideration of the Decision-maker at the sanction stage of the process when a determination of responsibility is reached.

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.

## 20. Notice of Hearing

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:

- 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.
- The time, date, and location of the hearing and a reminder that attendance is mandatory, superseding all other campus activities.
- Any technology that will be used to facilitate the hearing.
- Information about the option for the live hearing to occur with the parties located in separate rooms using technology that enables the Decision-maker 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.
- 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.
- Information on how the hearing will be recorded and on access to the recording for the parties after the hearing.
- 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. For compelling reasons, the Decision-maker may reschedule the hearing.

- 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 HCC will appoint one. Each party must have an Advisor present. There are no exceptions.
- A copy of all the materials provided to the Decision-maker about the matter, unless they have been provided already.
- 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.
- 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.
- Whether parties are permitted to bring mobile phones/devices into the hearing.

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 Harford Community College and remain within the 60-90 business day goal for resolution.

## 21. Alternative Hearing Participation Options

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 Decision-maker at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing.

The Title IX Coordinator or the Decision-maker 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 Decision-maker know at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

## 22. Pre-Hearing Preparation

The 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.

Any witness scheduled to participate in the hearing must have been first interviewed by the Investigator(s), unless all parties and the Title IX Coordinator 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 Title IX Coordinator do not agree to the admission of evidence newly offered at the hearing, the Title IX Coordinator will delay the hearing and instruct that the investigation needs to be reopened to consider that evidence.

The parties will be given a list of the names of the Decision-maker 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. A Decision-maker 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).

The Title IX Coordinator will give the Decision-maker 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.

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.

## 23. Pre-Hearing Meetings

The Title IX Coordinator may convene a pre-hearing meeting(s) with the parties and their Advisors to invite them to submit the questions or topics they wish to

ask or discuss at the hearing, so that the Decision-maker 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 Decision-maker must document and share their rationale for any exclusion or inclusion at this pre-hearing meeting.

The Decision-maker, 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.

At each pre-hearing meeting with a party and their Advisor, the Decision-maker 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 Decision-maker 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 Decision-maker may consult with legal counsel and/or the Title IX Coordinator, or ask either or both to attend pre-hearing meetings.

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

## 24. Hearing Procedures

Participants at the hearing will include the Decision Maker(s), the hearing facilitator, the Investigator(s) who conducted the investigation, the parties (respondent and complainant), Advisors to the parties, any called witnesses, the Title IX Coordinator, and anyone providing authorized accommodations or assistive services.

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

The Decision-maker 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 and the parties and will then be excused.



## 25. Joint Hearings

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.

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.

## 26. The Order of the Hearing - Introductions and Explanation of Procedure

The Title IX Coordinator explains the procedures and introduces the participants. This may include a final opportunity for challenge or recusal of the Decision-maker on the basis of bias or conflict of interest.

At the hearing, recording, witness logistics, party logistics, curation of documents, separation of the parties, and other administrative elements of the hearing process are managed by a non-voting hearing facilitator appointed by the Title IX Coordinator. The hearing 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.

## 27. Investigator Presents the Final Investigation Report

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

Neither the parties nor the Decision-maker 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 Decision-maker will direct that it be disregarded.

## 28. Testimony and Questioning

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 and then by the parties through their Advisors ("cross-examination").

All questions are subject to a relevance determination by the Decision-maker. 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 Decision-maker upon request or agreed to by the parties and the Decision-maker), the proceeding will pause to allow the Decision-maker to consider it, and the Decision-maker will determine whether the question will be permitted, disallowed, or rephrased.

The Decision-maker may explore arguments regarding relevance with the Advisors, if the Decision-maker so chooses. The Decision-maker will then state their decision on the question for the record and advise the party/witness to whom the question was directed, accordingly. The Decision-maker will explain any decision to exclude a question as not relevant, or to reframe it for relevance.

The Decision-maker will limit or disallow questions on the basis that they are irrelevant, unduly repetitious (and thus irrelevant), or abusive. The Decision-maker has final say on all questions and determinations of relevance, subject to any appeal. The Decision-maker may consult with legal counsel on any questions of admissibility. The Decision-maker 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 Decision-maker has ruled on a question.

If the parties raise an issue of bias or conflict of interest of an Investigator or Decision-maker at the hearing, the Decision-maker 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.

## 29. Refusal to Submit to Cross-Examination and Inferences

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 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 must disregard that statement. Evidence provided that is something other than a statement by the party or witness may be considered.

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. Statements can be relied upon when questions are posed by the Decision-maker, as distinguished from questions posed by Advisors through cross-examination.

The Decision-maker 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.

If a party's Advisor of choice refuses to comply with Harford Community College's established rules of decorum for the hearing, the Title IX Coordinator may require the party to use a different Advisor. If a Harford Community College-provided Advisor refuses to comply with the rules of decorum, the Title IX Coordinator may provide that party with a different Advisor to conduct cross-examination on behalf of that party.

## 30. Recording Hearings

Hearings (but not deliberations) are recorded by Harford Community 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.

The Decision-maker, the parties, their Advisors, and appropriate administrators of Harford Community 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.

## 31. Deliberation, Decision-making, and Standard of Proof

The Decision-maker 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.

When there is a finding of responsibility on one or more of the allegations, the Decision-maker may then consider the previously submitted party impact statements in determining appropriate sanctions.

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 may—at their discretion—consider the statements, but they are not binding.

The Decision-maker will review the statements and any pertinent conduct history and will determine the appropriate sanction(s) in consultation with other appropriate administrators, as required.

The Decision-maker 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.

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.

## 32. Notice of Outcome

Using the deliberation statement, the Title IX Coordinator will work with the Decision-maker to prepare a Notice of Outcome. The Notice of Outcome will then be reviewed by legal counsel. 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 seven business days of receiving the Decision-maker's deliberation statement.

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 Harford Community College records, or emailed to the parties' Harford Community College-issued email or otherwise approved account. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

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 Harford Community 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.

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 that Harford Community College is permitted to share such information under state or federal law; any sanctions issued which Harford Community College is permitted to share according to state or federal law; and any remedies provided to the Complainant designed to ensure access to the Harford Community College's educational or employment program or activity, to the extent that Harford Community College is permitted to share such information under state or federal law.

The Notice of Outcome will also include information on when the results are considered by the Harford

Community College to be final, any changes that occur prior to finalization, and the relevant procedures and bases for any available appeal options.

## 33. Statement of the Rights of the Parties

(See ["Appendix C: Statement of Rights of the Parties"](#))

## 34. Sanctions

Factors considered when determining a sanction/responsive action may include, but are not limited to:

- The nature, severity of, and circumstances surrounding the violation(s)
- The Respondent's disciplinary history
- Previous allegations or allegations involving similar conduct
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to bring an end to the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to prevent the future recurrence of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need to remedy the effects of the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation on the Complainant and the community
- The impact on the parties
- Any other information deemed relevant by the Decision-maker

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.

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.

### STUDENT SANCTIONS

The following are the usual sanctions that may be imposed upon students or organizations singly or in combination:

1. **Warning:** Notice, orally or in writing that a Student is violating or has violated any College policy, rule, or regulation.

2. **Educational Project:** This sanction requires a Student to complete a specific educational assignment as determined by the Student Conduct Official or his/her designee.
3. **Campus and/or Community Service:** This sanction requires a Student to perform a specified number of service hours. The Student Conduct Official or his/her designee shall determine the specific assignment.
4. **Restitution:** Reimbursement for loss, damage or injury. This may take the form of appropriate service and/or monetary material replacement.
5. **Fines:** Previously established and published fines may be imposed.
6. **Disciplinary Probation:** Written notice that continuation or repetition of conduct found wrongful, during a designated period of time not exceeding one year, will be cause for more severe disciplinary action such as suspension or expulsion.
7. **Loss of Privileges:** The Student is excluded from participation in privileged or extracurricular institutional activities, including intercollegiate athletics, registered student organizations, access to campus facilities, and loss of campus employment opportunities for a specified period of time.
8. **Suspension from Course(s):** Separation of the Student from participation in particular course(s) for a period of time not to exceed one semester.
9. **Suspension from the College:** Separation of the Student from the College for a specified period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for readmission may be specified.
10. **Expulsion from the College:** Permanent separation of the Student from the College.
11. **Revocation of Admission, Credit, and/or Degree:** Admission to, credit earned, or a degree awarded from the College may be revoked for fraud, misrepresentation, or other violation of College standards in obtaining the degree, or for other serious violations committed by a student prior to graduation.

12. **Withholding Degree:** The College may withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until the completion of the process set forth in this Student Code, including the completion of all sanctions imposed, if any.

## EMPLOYEE SANCTIONS

Responsive actions for an employee who has engaged in harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation include:

- *Warning – Verbal or Written*
- *Performance Improvement/Management Process*
- *Required Counseling*
- *Required Training or Education*
- *Probation*
- *Loss of Annual Pay Increase*
- *Loss of Oversight or Supervisory Responsibility*
- *Demotion*
- *Suspension with pay*
- *Suspension without pay*
- *Termination*
- *Other Actions: In addition to or in place of the above sanctions, Harford Community College may assign any other sanctions as deemed appropriate.*

## 35. Withdrawal or Resignation While Charges Pending

Should a student decide to not participate in the resolution process, the process proceeds absent their participation to a reasonable resolution.

If a decision is made by Harford Community College to end the resolution process as a result of a student Respondent permanently withdrawing from Harford Community College, or an employee Respondent resigning from Harford Community College, Harford Community 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 sexual harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

## 36. Appeals

Any party may file a request for appeal ("Request for Appeal"), but it must be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within seven days of the delivery of the Notice of Outcome.

An appeal Decision-maker will be designated by the Title IX Coordinator. This person will not have been involved in the process previously, including any dismissal appeal that may have been heard earlier in the process.

The Request for Appeal will be forwarded to the Appeal Decision-maker for consideration to determine if the request meets the grounds for appeal (a Review for Standing).

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.

### GROUNDINGS FOR APPEAL

Appeals are limited to the following grounds:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- 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
- The Title IX Coordinator, Investigator(s), or Decision-maker 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.
- Other additional bases as long as applied to the parties, equitably.
- Parties must be able to appeal a determination or a sanction.

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 Appeal Decision-maker and the parties and their Advisors will be notified in writing of the denial and the rationale.

If any of the grounds in the Request for Appeal meet the grounds in this Policy, then the Appeal Decision-maker will notify the other party(ies) and their Advisors, and, when appropriate, the Investigators and/or the original Decision-maker.

The other party(ies) and their Advisors, the Title IX Coordinator, and, when appropriate, the Investigators and/or the original Decision-maker will be mailed, emailed, and/or provided a hard copy of the request with the approved grounds and then be given seven 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 Appeal Decision-maker to all parties for review and comment.

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 Decision-maker 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, as necessary, who will submit their responses in seven business days, which will be circulated for review and comment by all parties.

Neither party may submit any new requests for appeal after this time period. The Appeal Decision-maker will collect any additional information needed and all documentation regarding the approved grounds and the subsequent responses to render a decision in no more than seven business days, barring exigent circumstances. All decisions made by the Appeal Decision-maker are based on the preponderance of the evidence standard.

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 Harford Community College is permitted to share according to state or federal law, and the rationale supporting the essential findings to the extent Harford Community College is permitted to share under state or federal law.

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' Harford Community College-issued email or otherwise approved account. Once mailed, emailed and/or received in person, notice will be presumptively delivered.

### **SANCTIONS STATUS DURING THE APPEAL**

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.

If any of the sanctions are to be implemented immediately post-hearing, then emergency removal procedures for a hearing on the justification for doing so must be permitted within 48 hours of implementation.

Harford Community College may still place holds on official transcripts, diplomas, graduations, and course registration pending the outcome of an appeal when the original sanctions included separation.

### **APPEAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 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.
- 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.
- An appeal is not an opportunity for Appeal Decision-makers to substitute their judgment for that of the original Decision-maker merely because they disagree with the finding and/or sanction(s).
- The Appeal Decision-maker 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.

- Appeals granted based on new evidence should normally be remanded to the original Investigator(s) and/or Decision-maker for reconsideration. Other appeals may be remanded at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator or, in limited circumstances, decided on appeal.
- Once an appeal is decided, the outcome is final: further appeals are not permitted, even if a decision or sanction is changed on remand.
- In rare cases where a procedural error cannot be cured by the original Decision-maker (as in cases of bias), the appeal may order a new hearing with a new Decision-maker.
- The results of a new hearing can be appealed, once, on any of the three available appeal grounds.
- In cases in which the appeal results in reinstatement to Harford Community 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.

## **37. Long-Term Remedies/Other Actions**

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.

These remedies/actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Referral to counseling and health services
- Referral to the Employee Assistance Program
- Education to the individual and/or the community
- Permanent alteration of work arrangements for employees
- Provision of campus safety escorts
- Climate surveys



- Policy modification and/or training
- Implementation of long-term contact limitations between the parties
- Implementation of adjustments to academic deadlines, course schedules, etc.

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.

When no policy violation is found, the Title IX Coordinator will address any remedies owed by Harford Community College to the Respondent to ensure no effective denial of educational access.

Harford Community College will maintain the privacy of any long-term remedies/actions/measures, provided privacy does not impair Harford Community College's ability to provide these services.

### 38. Failure to Comply with Sanctions and/or Interim and Long-term Remedies and/or Responsive Actions

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.

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 Harford Community College and may be noted on a student's official transcript.

A suspension will only be lifted when compliance is achieved to the satisfaction of the Title IX Coordinator.

### 39. Recordkeeping

Harford Community College will maintain for a period of seven years records of:

1. Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility and any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript required under federal regulation;
2. Any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the Respondent;

3. Any remedies provided to the Complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the College's education program or activity;
4. Any appeal and the result therefrom;
5. Any Informal Resolution and the result therefrom;
6. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, Decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an Informal Resolution process. HCC will make these training materials publicly available on Harford Community College's website; and
7. Any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, including:
  - a. The basis for all conclusions that the response was not deliberately indifferent;
  - b. Any measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to Harford Community College's education program or activity; and
  - c. 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.

Harford Community College will also maintain any and all records in accordance with state and federal laws.

### 40. Disabilities Accommodations in the Resolution Process

Harford Community College 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.

Anyone needing such accommodations or support should contact the Director for Disability and Student Intervention Services 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.

### 41. Revision of this Policy and Procedures

This Policy and procedures supersede any previous policy(ies) addressing harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, and/or retaliation and will be reviewed

and updated annually by the Title IX Coordinator. Harford Community College reserves the right to make changes to this document as necessary, and once those changes are posted online, they are in effect.

During the resolution process, the Title IX Coordinator may make minor modifications to procedures that do not materially jeopardize the fairness owed to any party, such as to accommodate summer schedules. The Title IX Coordinator may also vary procedures materially with notice (on the institutional website, with the appropriate effective date identified) upon determining that changes to law or regulation require policy or procedural alterations not reflected in this Policy and procedures.

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.

This Policy and procedures are effective August 14, 2020.

## Education and Training

Harford Community College prohibits dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Departments within Student Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness (SAIE) and Administration Divisions collaborate to provide comprehensive and intentional violence prevention and educational programs for students and employees in order to reduce and prevent these crimes in our campus community. These offices include but not limited to Admissions, Student Life, Disability Support and Student Intervention Services, Human Resources, Public Safety, and Title IX.

For prevention purposes, the following definitions apply according to the State of Maryland:

**Dating Violence:** While there is no Maryland law definition of dating violence, HCC uses the following definition: 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. 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.

**Domestic Violence:** The occurrence of one or more of the following acts between "family or household members": assault, an act that places a person in fear of imminent serious bodily harm, an act that causes serious bodily harm, rape or sexual offense, attempted rape or sexual offense, stalking, false imprisonment, such as interference with freedom, physically keeping you from leaving your home or kidnapping you.

**Sexual Assault:** Any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent. The actions constituting sexual assault are set forth in Title 3, Subtitle 3 of the Criminal Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and include, but are not limited to the following acts committed by an acquaintance or stranger ("Actor"): Forcible rape sodomy, or forcible sexual penetration, however slight, of another person's anal or genital opening; touching of an unwilling person's intimate parts (defined as genitalia, groin, breast, or buttocks, or clothing covering them); or, forcing an unwilling person to touch another's intimate parts. To constitute sexual assault these acts must be committed either by force, threat, intimidation or through the use of the victim's mental or physical helplessness of which the Actor was aware or should have been aware.

**Stalking:** Malicious course of conduct that includes approaching or pursuing another where the person intends to place or knows or reasonably should have known the conduct would place another in reasonable fear of serious bodily injury of an assault in any degree; of rape or sexual offense or attempted rape or sexual offense in any degree; of false imprisonment, or of death; or that a third person likely will suffer any of the acts; or the person intends to cause or knows or reasonably should have known that the conduct would cause serious emotional distress to another.

## Primary Prevention Programs

Every semester the College provides comprehensive violence prevention programs for students and employees. Educational content is regularly updated to reflect the most relevant circumstances, environmental risk and protective factors, and realistic strategies

students and employees can take, based on feedback collected by the campus community. These programs are intentionally designed to be interactive and utilize best practices, such as

- encouraging safe bystander intervention by educating the campus community about situations of potential harm and warning signs of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking;
- reviewing potential ways to take action to help that are culturally relevant, inclusive of diverse communities and identities, and taking into account the barriers that may make it difficult to intervene; and
- promoting social norms that encourage helping behavior and mutually respectful relationships and sexuality.

## Programs for Incoming Students and Employees

Students enrolled in their first semester of degree programs and new employees in their first days of employment are expected to complete online training about sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence and stalking. Completion of these programs requires that students and employees read and acknowledge our College's policy that prohibits the crimes of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; review definitions of dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, and consent in our local jurisdiction; learn about safe and positive options for bystander intervention and risk reduction; and access information on the procedures our College follows when one of these crimes is reported and rights within disciplinary proceedings.

On a yearly basis, the College sponsors several college-wide and student-specific awareness and prevention programs. These time-limited events and initiatives are aimed at increasing audience knowledge and sharing information and resources to prevent violence, promote safety, increase empowerment for victims and bystanders, and reduce perpetration. They also incorporate the key elements of the primary prevention programs and programs for incoming students and employees listed above.

Furthermore, the HCC Department of Public Safety works with Student Services to provide a variety of

resources and educational opportunities, including crime prevention programs and services:

- Trained faculty and staff conduct facilitated film screenings with Escalation and host other "One Love" special events in remembrance of Yeardley Love, to raise awareness about dating and domestic violence.
- HCC Continuing Education and Training (CET) offers a Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) course to females each semester. Refer to the CET schedule for specific course offerings.
- "What Students Should Know About Sexual Harassment on Campus" brochure
- "A Student Guide for Responding to Sexual Assault" brochure
- Department of Public Safety's "Stalking: Know it. Name it. Stop it." brochure
- The Student Activities Office sponsors an annual program on healthy relationships.
- Sexual Harassment training is provided to all students who attend New Student Orientation.
- Incident Response to Violence training is offered to all new employees.
- All HCC employees must complete annual online training about harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence and stalking, including a section pertaining to Title IX.
- Information regarding Title IX updates are provided at Quarterly Supervisor's Meetings.

The following additional efforts to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination are in place in the Athletics Department:

- All coaches and other staff members receive a copy of the *HCC Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedures* and review it once a year at an annual staff meeting;
- The Coaches Handbook references the *HCC Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedures*;
- Head coaches review the *HCC Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedures* with student-athletes on their respective teams during the team's preseason meeting; and

- The *HCC Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedures* are referenced in the Student-Athlete Handbook.

## Training for Disciplinary Personnel

Title IX Coordinator and deputies, investigators, members of the Student Conduct Review Board (SCRB), and [other personnel] receive annual training on

- issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking;
- how to conduct an investigation and hearing process that protects the safety of victims and promotes accountability;
- the definition of sexual harassment and the scope of our College's education program or activity under Title IX;
- how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes; and
- how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.

In addition, all investigators receive training on creating an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, and employees who participate in adjudication proceedings (and other personnel) receive training on the technology used at a live hearings and on issues of relevance of questions and evidence.

All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, and Decision-makers promote impartial investigations and adjudications and are free from sex stereotypes. They are publicly available on the HCC website at [www.harford.edu/about-harford/get-to-know-harford/student-consumer-information/contacts-and-resources.php](http://www.harford.edu/about-harford/get-to-know-harford/student-consumer-information/contacts-and-resources.php).

## Appendix A: Policy Examples

**Examples of possible sexual harassment include:**

- A professor offers for a student to have sex or go on a date with them in exchange for a good grade. This constitutes sexual harassment regardless of whether the student accedes to the request and irrespective of whether a good grade is promised or a bad grade is threatened.

- A student repeatedly sends graphic, sexually-oriented jokes and pictures around campus via social media to hundreds of other students. Many don't find it funny and ask them to stop, but they do not. Because of these jokes, one student avoids the sender on campus and in the residence hall in which they both live, eventually asking to move to a different building and dropping a class they had together.
- A professor engages students in class in discussions about the students' past sexual experiences, yet the conversations are not in any way germane to the subject matter of the class. The professor asks about explicit details and demands that students answer them, though the students are clearly uncomfortable and hesitant.
- An ex-partner widely spreads false stories about their sex life with their former partner to the clear discomfort and frustration of the former partner, turning the former partner into a social pariah on campus.
- Chris has recently transitioned from male to non-binary, but primarily expresses as a female. Since their transition, Chris has noticed that their African Studies professor, Dr. Mukembo, pays them a lot more attention. Chris is sexually attracted to Professor Mukembo and believes the attraction is mutual. Chris decides to act on the attraction. One day, Chris visits Dr. Mukembo during office hours, and after a long conversation about being non-binary, Chris kisses Dr. Mukembo. Dr. Mukembo is taken aback, stops the kiss, and tells Chris not to do that. Dr. Mukembo explains to Chris that they are not interested in Chris sexually or romantically. Chris takes it hard, crying to Dr. Mukembo about how hard it is to find someone who is interested in them now based on their identity. Dr. Mukembo feels sorry for Chris and softens the blow by telling them that no matter whether they like Chris or not, faculty-student relationships are prohibited by the university. Chris takes this as encouragement. One night, Chris goes to a gay bar some distance from campus and sees Dr. Mukembo at the bar. Chris tries to buy Dr. Mukembo a drink and, again, tries to kiss Dr. Mukembo. Dr. Mukembo leaves the bar abruptly. The next day, Chris makes several online posts that out Dr. Mukembo as

gay and raise questions about whether they are sexually involved with students. Dr. Mukembo contacts the Title IX Office and alleges that Chris is sexually harassing him.

#### **Examples of Stalking:**

- Students A and B were friends with benefits. Student A wanted a more serious relationship, which caused student B to break it off. Student A could not let go, and pursued student B relentlessly. Student B obtained a campus no-contact order. Subsequently, Student B discovered their social media accounts were being accessed, and things were being posted and messaged as if they were from them, but they were not. Whoever accessed their account posted a picture of a penis, making it look as if they had sent out a picture of themselves, though it was not their penis. This caused them considerable embarrassment and social anxiety. They changed their passwords, only to have it happen again. Seeking help from the Title IX Coordinator, Student B met with the IT department, which discovered an app on their phone and a keystroke recorder on their laptop, both of which were being used to transmit their data to a third party.
- A graduate student working as an on-campus tutor received flowers and gifts delivered to their office. After learning the gifts were from a student they recently tutored, the graduate student thanked the student and stated that it was not necessary and would appreciate it if the gift deliveries stopped. The student then started leaving notes of love and gratitude on the tutor's car, both on-campus and at home. Asked again to stop, the student stated by email, "You can ask me to stop, but I'm not giving up. We are meant to be together, and I'll do anything to make you have the feelings for me that I have for you." When the tutor did not respond, the student emailed again, "You cannot escape me. I will track you to the ends of the earth. If I can't have you, no one will."

#### **Examples of Sexual Assault:**

- Amanda and Bill meet at a party. They spend the evening dancing and getting to know each other. Bill convinces Amanda to come up to his room. From 11 PM until 3 AM, Bill uses every line he can think of to convince Amanda to have sex with

him, but she adamantly refuses. Despite her clear communications that she is not interested in doing anything sexual with him, Bill keeps at her, questions her religious convictions, and accuses her of being "a prude." He brings up several rumors that he has heard about how she performed oral sex on a number of other guys. Finally, it seems to Bill that her resolve is weakening, and he convinces her to "jerk him off" (hand to genital contact). Amanda would have never done it but for Bill's incessant advances. He feels that he successfully seduced her and that she wanted to do it all along but was playing shy and hard to get. Why else would she have come up to his room alone after the party? If she really didn't want it, she could have left.

- Jiang is a junior. Beth is a sophomore. Jiang comes to Beth's residence hall room with some mutual friends to watch a movie. Jiang and Beth, who have never met before, are attracted to each other. After the movie, everyone leaves, and Jiang and Beth are alone. They hit it off, soon become more intimate, and start to make out. Jiang verbally expresses his desire to have sex with Beth. Beth, who was abused by a babysitter at the age of five and avoids sexual relations as a result, is shocked at how quickly things are progressing. As Jiang takes her by the wrist over to the bed, lays her down, undresses, and begins to have intercourse with Beth, Beth has a severe flashback to her childhood trauma. She wants to tell Jiang to stop but cannot. Beth is stiff and unresponsive during the intercourse.
- Kevin and John are at a party. Kevin is not sure how much John has been drinking, but he is pretty sure it's a lot. After the party, he walks John to his apartment, and John comes on to Kevin, initiating sexual activity. Kevin asks John if he is really up to this, and John says yes. They remove each other's clothes, and they end up in John's bed. Suddenly, John runs for the bathroom. When he returns, his face is pale, and Kevin thinks he may have thrown up. John gets back into bed, and they begin to have sexual intercourse. Kevin is having a good time, though he can't help but notice that John seems pretty groggy and passive, and he thinks John may have even passed out briefly during the sex, but he came to again. When Kevin runs into John the next day, he thanks him for the great night. John remembers nothing and decides to make a report to the Dean.



### Examples of Retaliation:

- Student-athlete A alleges sexual harassment by a coach; the coach subsequently cuts the student-athlete's playing time without a legitimate justification.
- A faculty member alleges gender inequity in pay within her department; the Department Chair then revokes his approval for her to attend a national conference, citing the faculty member's tendency to "ruffle feathers."
- Student from Organization A participates in a sexual misconduct investigation as a witness whose testimony is damaging to the Respondent, who is also a member of Organization A; the student is subsequently removed as a member of Organization A because of their participation in the investigation.

## Appendix B: Framework for Informal Resolution (IR)

Alternative resolution approaches like mediation, restorative practices, transformative justice, etc., are likely to be used more and more often by colleges and universities.

Here are the principles to be considered for supporting various approaches to informal resolution:

- IR can be applied in any sex/gender-based interpersonal conflict but should be only be cautiously considered for violent incidents (sexual violence, stalking, domestic and dating violence, severe sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, etc.)
- Situations involving dangerous patterns or significant ongoing threat to the community should not be resolved by IR.
- The determination of whether to permit an IR-based resolution is entirely at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator (TIXC) and in line with the requirements for IR laid out in the Title IX regulations.
- Any party can end IR early-, mid-, or late-process for any reason or no reason.
- IR can be attempted before and in lieu of formal resolution as a diversion-based resolution

(although a formal complaint must be filed if you are within Section 106.30, per OCR).

- Alternative approaches can inform formal resolution, as in a formal resolution model infused with restorative practices.
- IR could be deployed after formal resolution, as an adjunct healing/catharsis opportunity (that could potentially mitigate sanctions or be a form of sanction).
- Alternate Resolution approaches to IR must be facilitated by Harford Community College. There may be value in creating clearly agreed-upon ground rules, which the parties must sign in advance and agree to abide by, otherwise the informal resolution process will be deemed to have failed.
- Technology-facilitated IR can be made available, should the parties not be able or willing to meet in person.
- If IR fails, a formal resolution can take place thereafter. No evidence elicited within the "safe space" of the IR facilitation is later admissible in the formal resolution unless all parties consent.
- With cases involving violence, the preferred alternative approach typically involves a minimal number of essential parties and is not a wide restorative circle approach in order to ensure confidentiality.
- Some approaches require a reasonable gesture toward accountability (this could be more than an acknowledgment of harm) and some acceptance, or at least recognition, by the Respondent that catharsis is of value and likely the primary goal of the Complainant. A full admission by the Respondent is not a prerequisite. This willingness needs to be vetted carefully in advance by the TIXC before determining that an incident is amenable/appropriate for resolution by IR.
- IR can result in an accord or agreement between the parties (Complainant, Respondent, Harford Community College) which is summarized in writing by and enforced by Harford Community College. This can be a primary goal of the process.
- IR can result in the voluntary imposition of safety measures, remedies, and/or agreed-upon resolutions by the parties, that are enforceable by

Harford Community College. These can be part of the accord/agreement.

- As a secondary goal, IR can result in the voluntary acceptance of "sanctions," meaning that a Respondent could agree to withdraw, self suspend (by taking a leave of absence), or undertake other restrictions/transfers/online course options that would help to ensure the safety/educational access of the Complainant, in lieu of formal sanctions that would create a formal record for the Respondent. These are enforceable by Harford Community College as part of the accord/agreement, as may be terms of mutual release, non-disparagement, and/or non-disclosure.
- While a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) could result from IR, it would have to be mutually agreed-upon by the parties in an environment of non-coercion verified by the TIXC.
- Institutions must develop clear rules for managing/facilitating the conference/meeting/dialogue of alternative resolution approaches, to ensure they are civil, age-appropriate, culturally-competent, reflective of power imbalances, and maximize the potential for the resolution process to result in catharsis, restoration, remedy, etc., for the harmed party(ies).

## Appendix C: 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 Harford Community College 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 Harford Community 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 Harford Community College officials from reporting sexual misconduct or discrimination to both on-campus and off-campus authorities.
- The right to be informed by Harford Community College officials of options to notify proper law enforcement authorities, including on-campus and local police, and the option(s) to be assisted by Harford Community College 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 Harford Community College 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 Harford Community 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)
  - Visa/immigration assistance
  - 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)
  - Public safety escorts
  - Alternative course completion options.
- The right to have Harford Community 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 to identify and question relevant witnesses, including expert witnesses.
  - The right to provide the Investigator(s)/Decision-maker 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 who have received at least eight hours of relevant annual training.
  - 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 Harford Community 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 preponderance of the evidence standard 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 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 therefore (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 Harford Community 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 Harford Community College.
  - The right to a fundamentally fair resolution as defined in these procedures.
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 CARE Team. The CARE Team 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 CARE Team manual and will rely on a consistent, research-based, reliable system that allows 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 CARE Team members conduct 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.

## Appendix D: 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 CARE team members.

A VRA occurs in collaboration with the CARE team 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, 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;

# Glossary

- *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.
- *CARE Team*: The Care Team engages in proactive and collaborative approaches to identify, assess, and mitigate risks associated with students exhibiting concerning behaviors or expressing concerning thoughts that may pose a threat to the campus community. By partnering with members of the community, the Care Team strives to promote individual student well-being and success while prioritizing community safety.
- *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.
- *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 College investigate the allegation.
- *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).
- *Day* means a work day when Harford Community College is in normal operation.
- *Education program or activity* means locations, events, or circumstances where Harford Community College 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 the Harford Community College
- *Final Determination*: A conclusion by preponderance of evidence about whether conduct, that is found to have occurred by preponderance of evidence, did or did not violate policy.
- *Finding*: A conclusion by preponderance of evidence that the conduct did or did not occur as alleged.
- *Formal Grievance Process* a method of formal resolution designated by the College to address conduct that falls within the policies included below, and which complies with the requirements of 34 CFR Part 106.45.
- *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).
- *Hearing Decision-maker or Panel* refers to those who have decision-making and sanctioning authority within the Harford Community College's Formal Grievance process.
- *Investigator* means the person or persons charged by Harford Community College 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.
- *Mandated Reporter* means an employee of Harford Community College who is obligated by policy to share knowledge, notice, and/or reports of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation with the Title IX Coordinator.
- *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.
- *Official with Authority (OWA)* means an employee of the College explicitly vested with the responsibility to implement corrective measures for harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation on behalf of the Recipient.
- *Parties* include the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s), collectively.
- *Process A* means the Formal Grievance Process detailed below and defined above.
- *Recipient* means Harford Community College which is also referred to as HCC or the College in this document.



- *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 educational programs at Harford Community College.
- *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.
- *Resolution* means the result of an informal or Formal Grievance Process.
- *Sanction* means a consequence imposed by the College on a Respondent who is found to have violated this policy.
- *Sexual Harassment* is the umbrella category including the offenses of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence and domestic violence.
- *Student*: For the purpose of this policy, Harford Community College defines "student" as any individual who is registered for credit or non-credit bearing coursework.
- *Title IX Coordinator* is at least one official designated by Harford Community College to ensure compliance with Title IX and the College's Title IX program. References to the Coordinator throughout this policy may also encompass a designee of the Coordinator for specific tasks.
- *Title IX Team* refers to the Title IX Coordinator, any deputy coordinators, and any member of the Grievance Process Pool.
- *VAWA* is the Violence Against Women Act, enacted in 1994 codified in part at 42 U.S.C. sections 13701 through 14040.



