
Columbia University
School of International and Public Affairs
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Columbia University is an academic community committed to fostering intellectual inquiry in a climate of academic freedom and integrity. Its members - students and faculty alike - are expected to uphold these principles and exhibit tolerance and respect for others.

The following procedures are part of a process to ensure that student concerns about experiences in the classroom or with faculty are addressed in an informed and appropriate manner.

Due to the size and diverse nature of the University's scholarly community, each school maintains its own processes for addressing a variety of student life issues, including students' concerns about experiences in the classroom or with faculty at their school. Experience has shown that most student concerns are best resolved in a collaborative way at the school level, starting with the staff of the Student Affairs Office, as explained below.

If a student's concerns are not satisfied through this process, or if the student believes that a direct complaint to the Vice President for Arts & Sciences is more appropriate, formal grievance procedures are available to students through the Office of the Vice President for Arts & Sciences.

For all complaints, there is a provision for a final appeal to the University Provost.

Student Grievance Procedures

The University Statutes and the general policies of the University describe the roles and responsibilities of faculty in their teaching and research. The rights, duties and obligations of the faculty can be found in the Faculty Handbook at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/fhb/main.html> Faculty have a right to expect freedom in the classroom to discuss their subjects and not to be penalized for their private opinions. Faculty do, however, have special obligations arising from their position in the academic community. Chapter 7 of the Faculty Handbook reads in pertinent parts:

The University's commitment to the principle of academic freedom is defined in Section 70a of the University Statutes. That commitment assures officers of the freedom to determine the content of what they teach and the manner in which it is taught and the freedom to choose the subjects of their research and publish their results. It also guarantees that they will not be penalized for expressions of opinion or association in their private or civic capacity.

In conducting their classes, faculty should make every effort to be accurate and should show respect for the rights of others to hold opinions differing from their own. They should confine their classes to the subject matter covered by the courses and not use them to advocate any cause.

The Ombuds Office is an additional and alternative source available to students to advise on various areas of redress and can mediate a dispute, if both parties agree. Ombuds Officers do not have authority to adjudicate any complaint.

When a student believes that a faculty member has failed to meet these standards in one of their classes, the student should first raise the issue with the faculty member and use any mediation and other

procedures described below. If a student is uncertain which procedure to follow, they should consult with a staff member in the Student Affairs Office their home school.

Types of Grievances

The University and SIPA have established policies and procedures for the various types of misconduct. A student's first step is to determine which office to approach for consultation. In all cases any Assistant Dean in the SIPA Student Affairs Office can provide guidance in that determination

1. *Discrimination and sexual harassment* may be dealt with through the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, the Ombuds Office, the SIPA Student Affairs Office if the accused is a SIPA student, or the Department of Security if the situation may involve criminal activity. See below for an excerpt from the University's policy statement on discrimination and harassment.

2. *Sexual misconduct* by a student may be dealt with through the Office on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Education. See below for an excerpt from the University's policy statement on sexual misconduct.

3. *Professional misconduct or fraud in research* on the part of a faculty member should be brought to the attention of the dean of the school according to the procedure outlined in Appendix E of The Faculty Handbook.

4. *Grade Disputes*: Academic assessment of students resides with the faculty. Grievances relating to academic evaluation involving accusations of discrimination or sexual harassment should be referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (see above). In other cases, SIPA will only act to ensure that the assessment was made impartially and according to procedures applicable to all students as published in the course syllabus.

5. *Questions about the conduct of faculty or students from other schools*: If a grievance involving a member of the faculty appointed in a division of the university outside SIPA cannot be resolved informally, and if the grievant wishes to file a formal written grievance, it must be addressed to the appropriate dean, department chair, or vice president. The SIPA Dean of Faculty and Curriculum Affairs will advise the student with whom the grievance should be filed.

Formal grievances filed against administrators and/or students of Schools or administrative units other than SIPA must be filed with the dean of that School, or the Vice President to whom the administrator in question ultimately reports. Grievances against faculty members should be addressed to the Chair of the Department in which the faculty member is appointed, with a copy to the Dean of the Faculty to which the faculty member is appointed.

6. *Conduct on the part of SIPA faculty or SIPA students not covered above*: Students are encouraged to discuss problems, questions, and grievances with any Assistant Dean in the Student Affairs office. They may also discuss them with the University Ombuds officer, a neutral complaint-handler who seeks fair and equitable solutions to problems. Grievances may be brought against individuals subject to the authority of the Dean including administrators, faculty members, or fellow graduate students. If the grievance in question does not fall into the areas of responsibility of another university office, an Assistant Dean may advise the student on SIPA's grievance procedures. If resolution is not reached through informal procedures, a written grievance may be submitted. Both the informal and written grievance procedures are outlined below.

Procedures for SIPA Grievances

Informal Resolution

If possible, the student should discuss the matter with the responsible individual. If no resolution results, students should consult with staff in the Student Affairs office of their home school, who will then confer with the SIPA Associate Dean for Faculty and Curriculum Affairs. Every effort should be made to resolve the matter at an informal level without escalating the complaint to the status of a formal grievance. Discussions aimed at informal resolution remain confidential and generally should last for no more than 30 working days.

Filing a Written Grievance

If no informal resolution occurs, the student should compose a written statement documenting the misconduct causing the complaint, its adverse consequences, and the informal efforts at resolution made to date. This statement should also include a description of the remedy sought. The written grievance should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Faculty and Curriculum Affairs in a timely fashion, that is, usually within 30 working days of the end of the semester in which the misconduct occurred.

Initial Review of the Grievance

Depending on the nature of the grievance, the Associate Dean of Faculty will convene a committee including the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, the directors of the relevant degree or curricular programs, and, in all cases, the elected student representatives of the SIPA Committee on Instruction. If one of these people is named in the grievance or has a conflict of interest, as determined by the Associate Dean for Faculty and Curriculum Affairs, the other members of the committee will appoint a replacement. Faculty will be replaced with faculty, students with students, and the Associate Deans with administrators of the Dean's choosing.

The Associate Dean of Faculty and Curriculum chairs the meeting. The committee will independently interview the grievant and the faculty member in question. Each of them may select a faculty member, graduate student or SIPA administrator to attend the meeting and serve as his or her advocate. The advocate may not pose questions or intervene in the proceedings, but may consult with the grievant. If the grievant or faculty member chooses not to attend, he or she will be informed that the committee will proceed to a decision. The merits of the grievance are evaluated within the context of University and SIPA policy, a resolution is reached by a majority vote and, when appropriate, a remedy is recommended.

The Committee responds with a written decision in a timely fashion, that is, no later than the end of the semester following that in which the grievance was filed. If the grievant or the faculty member is not satisfied with the committee decision, he or she may appeal in writing to the Dean. This appeal must be submitted within thirty working days of the decision. The Vice President for Arts & Sciences will be informed of the dispute and of the resolution determined by the Dean.

If either of the parties involved in the grievance is not satisfied with the Dean's determination, or he or she believes that a direct complaint to the Office of the Vice President for Arts & Sciences is more appropriate, he or she may appeal to the Vice President, following the procedures outlined on the webpage of the Arts & Sciences (insert URL).

Appendices
Related University-wide Procedures, Policies & Resources

**A. Policy Statement on Discrimination and Harassment, Statement of Nondiscriminatory Policies,
Discrimination Grievance Procedure, Policy on Sexual Harassment, and Romantic Relationship
Advisory Statement (Excerpt from Appendix E of FACETS)**

Columbia University is committed to providing a working and learning environment free from discrimination and sexual harassment and to fostering a nurturing and vibrant community founded upon the fundamental dignity and worth of all of its members. Consistent with this commitment and with applicable federal, state, and local laws, it is the policy of the University not to tolerate discrimination or sexual harassment in any form and to provide faculty, students, administrators, and staff who feel that they are victims of either with mechanisms for seeking redress.

The University offers several options for those seeking the intervention of the offices and individuals who are authorized to respond to their complaints. These include informal counseling, mediation, and a formal process for having their complaint reviewed.

All members of the University community are expected to adhere to the policy in this statement and to cooperate with the procedure it describes for responding to complaints of discrimination and sexual harassment. They are also encouraged to report any conduct they believe to be in violation of this policy. Management and supervisory personnel in particular are responsible for taking reasonable and necessary action to prevent discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace and for responding promptly to any such claims.

After a formal investigation conducted according the appropriate University procedure, individuals found to have engaged in discrimination or sexual harassment will be subject to discipline. The sanctions imposed can range up to and include termination of employment in the case of officers and staff or dismissal from the programs in which they are enrolled for students. Retaliation against anyone who files a complaint or participates in an investigation is prohibited may be addressed in an independent claim.

Consensual, romantic relationships between faculty and other employees and students and between individuals who work together are generally not considered sexual harassment and are not prohibited by University policy. However, individuals should be aware that these relationships are susceptible to being characterized as non-consensual, and even coercive, if there is an inherent power differential between the parties, and can lead to complaints of sexual harassment. Individuals should refer to the University's Romantic Relationship Advisory on the World Wide Web at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/eoaa/docs/romance.html>.

Nothing in this policy shall abridge academic freedom or the University's educational mission. Prohibitions against discrimination and sexual harassment do not extend to statements or written materials that are relevant and appropriately related to the subject matter of courses.

What to do if you feel you are the victim of discrimination or harassment:

Students who feel they may have been harassed or discriminated against based on race, color, age, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, and related issues may consult or file a complaint with:

- the EO/AA Office if the accused is a University employee (faculty or staff) or student;
- the Ombuds Office;

- their own dean;
- the dean of the school of the accused if the accused is a student;
- the Department of Security if the situation may involve criminal activity.

For the disciplinary procedure applicable to discrimination and sexual harassment, please see the entire text of Appendix E in FACETS which is available on the web at www.columbia.edu/cu/facets. For information and a more comprehensive explanation of the University's policies and procedures, or regarding discrimination or sexual harassment, contact:

Susan Rieger, Associate Provost
Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
402 Low Memorial Library, Mail Code 4333
(212) 854-5511
sr534@columbia.edu

B. Sexual Misconduct Policy and Disciplinary Procedure (Excerpt from Appendix F of FACETS)

On February 25, 2000, the University Senate adopted a Sexual Misconduct Policy and Disciplinary Procedure that can be used as an alternative to Dean's Discipline. The Sexual Misconduct Policy applies to all students in all schools of the University.

The Disciplinary Procedure for Sexual Misconduct applies to these same students, with the exception of the Law School, but including the students of Teachers College and Barnard College. The policy prohibits sexual misconduct by any student. A comprehensive program to educate students, faculty, and administrators about the issue of sexual misconduct has also been developed. Copies of the policy and procedure are available from the Office of the Dean of Students of every school.

Policy on Sexual Misconduct

The University's Policy on Sexual Misconduct requires that standards of sexual conduct be observed on campus, that violations of these standards be subject to discipline, and that resources and structures be sufficient to meet the physical and emotional needs of individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct. Columbia University's policy defines sexual misconduct as non-consensual, intentional physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as unwelcome physical contact with a person's genitals, buttocks or breasts. Lack of consent may be inferred from the use of force, threat, physical intimidation, or advantage gained by the victim's mental or physical incapacity or impairment of which the perpetrator was aware or should have been aware.

What to do if you are the victim/survivor of sexual misconduct or assault:

- Please consider getting medical attention and contacting the NYPD;
- contact the Rape Crisis/Anti-Violence Support Center
- consult or file a complaint with the Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Education if the accused is another student;
- consult or file a complaint with the dean of the accused if the accused is another student;
- file a complaint with the Department of Security;
- consult with the Ombuds Office

For the disciplinary procedure applicable to cases of sexual misconduct, please see the entire text of Appendix F of FACETS or contact:

Misumbo Byrd, Program Director
Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Education
703 Lerner Hall, Mail Code 2617
(212) 854-1717
mb2068@columbia.edu

**C. Statement on Professional Ethics and
Faculty Obligations and Guidelines for Review of Professional Misconduct
(Excerpt from Appendix E of the Faculty Handbook)**

The Statement on Professional Ethics and Faculty Obligations and Guidelines for Review of Professional Misconduct was adopted by the University Senate on September 29, 1972, and revised by that body on April 18, 1986.

I. Teaching

The freedom traditionally accorded to members of the faculty to decide for themselves in large measure what they teach and how imposes a correlative obligation of responsible self-discipline. Every effort must therefore be made to be accurate, to be objective, to demonstrate appropriate restraint, and to show respect for the opinions of others. Faculty members may not enroll or refuse to enroll students on the basis of those students' beliefs, or otherwise discriminate arbitrarily or capriciously among them. Evaluation of students and awards of grade and credit must be based on academic performance professionally judged, not on matters extraneous to that performance; grades and other evaluations shall be provided to the University promptly as required for each student, for each class. Faculty members shall meet their classes as announced and shall also make themselves regularly available to their students outside the classroom. When it is impossible to meet a class, alternative instruction shall be offered, and adequate notice given, such as to satisfy the students' expectations and the faculty member's contract with the University; this obligation can be met in various ways, and the method adopted should be endorsed by the department chairman or the dean. Exploitation of students or of junior colleagues for private advantage is to be avoided, and all significant assistance must be publicly acknowledged. Faculty members must respond conscientiously to requests from students or former students for references; the confidential nature of teacher-student relationships is to be respected.

II. Faculty Relationship

All members of the faculty share responsibility for the governance of the University and for the preservation of an atmosphere of scholarship and rational discourse. Faculty members may not use their positions to cause interference with personal security, property, or freedom of movement, expression, or assembly on campus. Faculty members should join in the broadest possible search for academic talent, and in the appointment or promotion of the best qualified candidate, making every effort to be objective in their professional judgments of colleagues and potential colleagues. Faculty members must acknowledge indebtedness to other scholars. Senior faculty members should stand ready to counsel their junior colleagues and to give them due credit for any assistance given. When faculty members assume obligations outside the University, they should assess the amount and character of these obligations with due regard to their paramount responsibilities within the University. When a faculty member speaks or acts as a private person outside the University, a special effort must be made to avoid giving the impression that he or she speaks or acts on behalf of the University.

III. Research

A climate must be maintained at the University where creativity and productivity in research are promoted in an atmosphere of high ethical standards. It is essential that the integrity of research be maintained at all times, since long-standing, often irreversible damage can result from breach of academic commitment to truth in investigative activities. Misconduct in research is herein defined as gross lack of integrity in conducting basic or clinical investigations involving dishonesty, knowing misrepresentation of data, and/or violation of accepted standards. Academic misconduct or fraud can destroy public trust in the academic community as a whole and in our own institution in particular; it can shatter individual careers; it can undermine sensitive relationships between investigators, students, and the public.

In modern collaborative research, the implications of academic misconduct or fraud go far beyond the individual; they also affect collaborators whose own work has been committed to objective search for truth. The specter of guilt by association may lurk in the background for many years to come. Therefore, joint authorship requires joint responsibility; each author claiming credit for the entire work must also be aware of joint discredit. Investigators in collaborative research projects each must make reasonable and periodic inquiry as to the integrity of and processes involved in gathering and evaluating data. It should be understood that overall responsibility for the integrity of collaborative research rests with the principal investigator. Senior investigators cannot be allowed to escape the consequences of the discovery of misconduct or fraud committed under their supervision.

Every member of the faculty has a duty to respond promptly to any well-founded suspicion of academic misconduct or fraud. Allegations must be made with caution; nevertheless, the results of long-standing misconduct or fraud are so devastating that potential irregularities must be brought promptly to the attention of the proper authorities. At the same time, the rights of those whose research procedures or results are in question from the standpoint of possible falsification or adulteration must be carefully protected while a careful and fair investigation is being carried out.

For the guidelines for the review of professional misconduct or fraud in research, please see the complete text of Appendix E of The Faculty Handbook which is available on the web at www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/fhb.

Note: These and other passages from the Faculty Handbook also inform policy regarding graduate students. Graduate students engaged in teaching and research are at all times expected to uphold the ethical standards that are here applied to the faculty.

D. The Ombuds Office

The Ombuds Officer is a neutral complaint-handler who seeks fair and equitable solutions to problems. The Ombuds Office serves the entire Columbia University community. In considering any given instance or concern, the rights of all parties that may be involved, along with the welfare of the University, are taken into account.

The Ombuds Office is a safe and confidential place to voice concerns. No formal permanent records of individual cases are kept, except anonymous aggregate statistical data on the categories of complaints or inquiries. The Ombuds Officer will not report the names of callers or visitors or the specific content of problems reported unless permission is granted, or in the very rare instance in which there is reasonable cause to believe that the safety of the caller or others may be endangered.

Except in emergencies, the Ombuds Officer does not take action or investigate an issue without the permission of the person who introduced the information to the Ombuds Office. The Ombuds Officer will listen, offer information about Columbia University policies and procedures, present a range of options for resolving a problem or help find ways to convey information while maintaining the confidentiality of the source.

The Ombuds Officer may conduct an informal, impartial investigation or facilitate a resolution upon request. However, the Ombuds Officer does not arbitrate or adjudicate. The Ombuds Officer has no power to establish, change, or set aside any University rules or policies. However, the Ombuds Officer is a resource for administrators and, when appropriate, may make recommendations or propose general changes in existing practices to correct problem areas or stimulate discussion of issues affecting the University community.

The Ombuds Office supplements, but does not replace, the existing resources for conflict resolution and fair practice available at Columbia University. The Ombuds Office is independent of existing administrative structures and reports directly to the President of the University. Discussions with the Ombuds Officer are off-the-record and do not constitute formal notice to the University.

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101 Bard Hall
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wagner@columbia.edu