

Office of the Faculty Civility Advocate

Faculty Civility Annual Report

June 2022

This annual report includes details about the nature and number of inquiries, requests, complaints, investigations, and presentations that were made pursuant to the University of South Carolina's workplace bullying policy [ACAF 1.80] from January 2021 through May 2022. During this time, we continued to rebound from the global pandemic, COVID-19, which may have impacted the number of inquiries and requests for workplace bullying investigations. This report also reveals a slight increase in the number of inquiries because the time covered by this report is longer. Specifically, the time covered in this report is spring 2021, summer 2021, fall 2021, and spring 2022. During this time, in my role as the Faculty Civility Advocate (FCA), responsible for investigating faculty complaints about bullying and civility concerns in the workplace, I received a total of 21 inquiries.

Total Inquiries (21)

Informal Discussions (Emails/Phone Calls/Meetings): 12

Investigation requests (submitted formal report): 3

Civility/Bullying Training requests: 3

International Conference & Interview Requests: 3

In addition to the numerous informal discussion and requests for training, presentations or interviews in the past year and a half (January 2021 – May 2022), there were three formal investigations which resulted in one finding of workplace bullying. As required by policy, at the conclusion of the workplace bullying investigations, I wrote three formal reports, which are on file in the Provost's Office, that include resolution findings and recommendations based on the formal investigations.

The training requests were from internal and external organizations/individuals who invited me to share our workplace bullying policy, offer advice and lessons based on our policy and my work as the FCA, and deliver a presentation/training on workplace



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bullying and incivility issues. In response to these requests, I presented twice for an Online Conference of STEM professionals, was interviewed by a prominent national science journal, presented to the Academic Leadership Development group on campus, and conducted a training session for the Committee on Professional Conduct.

Numerous faculty and university administrators have contacted me to file formal complaints and/or to discuss an array of concerns about bullying and incivility in the workplace over the past year. Specifically, the individual complainants and concerned parties have asserted that incidents of bullying, incivility, and retaliation were occurring in faculty meetings (face-to-face and online), informal interactions with colleagues, and email exchanges. Several administrators, including deans and department chairs, have similarly contacted me to request advice on dealing with faculty bullying/civility concerns in their respective colleges and departments.

Many of the bullying and civility concerns arose because of disagreements about academic decisions, student related issues, instructional and scheduling assignments, and the application or interpretation of departmental policies and procedures. I have also been contacted for advice and guidance on promoting civility in the workplace among faculty, administrators, and staff. Overall, the bullying and civility inquiries I have received this past year are not isolated or limited to one college or department. In other words, the perceived or alleged bullying and civility (and retaliation) concerns have been reported by faculty and administrators who serve in a wide array of positions, colleges, schools, and departments across the University of South Carolina.

Sincerely,



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