

From: Committee on the Concerns of Women
Workplace Bullying and Sexual Harassment Subcommittee
Date: March 18, 2013

Proposed Policy Regarding Abusive Conduct in the Workplace

Central Connecticut State University is committed to having a positive working environment for its faculty, administrators and staff. All individuals have the right to enjoy an environment free from forms of conduct that can be considered abusive, such as bullying, mobbing or harassment.¹ In addition, academic freedom can exist only when every person is free to pursue ideas in a non-threatening atmosphere of mutual respect. CCSU is committed to protecting the academic freedom and freedom of expression of all members of the school community and this policy against abusive conduct will be applied in a manner that protects those freedoms.

Abusive conduct is intentional conduct by a state employee or employees in the workplace that is unrelated to the state's legitimate interest and that a reasonable person would find hostile or offensive considering the severity, nature and frequency of the conduct. Abusive conduct includes, but is not limited to, (A) repeated infliction of verbal abuse such as the use of derogatory remarks, insult and epithets; (B) verbal or physical conduct that is threatening, intimidating or humiliating; (C) the sabotaging or undermining of a person's work performance; or (D) behavior that exploits an employee's known psychological or physical vulnerability. For purposes of this policy, "state employee" means all state agency personnel, but does not include contractors, subcontractors, vendors of the state, or food service employees. Abusive conduct in the workplace is distinct from harassment or discrimination based on protected classes as defined by the Connecticut Human Rights and Opportunities Commission.

If an employee comes forward with a complaint, retaliatory actions against the employee are prohibited.

¹ Workplace bullying is defined as "repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators that takes one or more of the following forms: Verbal abuse; offensive conduct/behaviors (including nonverbal) which are threatening, humiliating, or intimidating; and/or work interference — sabotage — which prevents work from getting done." Drs. Gary and Ruth Namie, <http://www.workplacebullying.org/individuals/problem/definition>. Mobbing: "In the workplace, a mob consists of ordinary workers who, after deeming an individual worker a threat, collectively attack the perceived enemy...the individual workers harm the target by collective and relentless small jabs. The mob of workers can be understood as an entity in and of itself." Ken Westhues, <http://www.mobbingportal.com>.

Proposed reporting language [two options]:

1) If you think you have been the target of abusive conduct you may report it to Human Resources, the Office of Diversity, or the Ombudsperson, as well as to your union.

2) REPORTING OF ABUSIVE CONDUCT

Incident Reporting: Depending upon the outcome the employee desires, there are several possible reporting avenues that are available.

1) The incident involves students. The reporting should go through the Judicial Officer, Chris Dukes.

2) The incident involves an employee or student who falls under a protected class category, e.g. race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, familial status, disability status, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity). The reporting should go through the Office of Diversity and Equity.

3) The incident involves an employee and the employee hopes for a disciplinary outcome. The reporting should go through Human Resources. HR will conduct an investigation. Following the investigation, they will determine what possible disciplinary sanctions might be taken.

4) The incident involves an employee and you hope for a non-disciplinary outcome: Contact the Ombudsperson, the Women's Center, the Committee on the Concerns of Women, CCSU-AAUP, SUOAF-AFSCME, or the legal counsel at CCSU, or appropriate departments on campus.