

Office of the Faculty Civility Advocate

Faculty Civility Annual Report

January 2021

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 2020 through December 2020. During this past year, the global pandemic, COVID-19, has certainly impacted every aspect of our lives, including the professional lives of faculty; and I suspect this explains the relatively low number of inquiries during the time covered by this report (2020). In my time serving as the Faculty Civility Advocate, responsible for investigating faculty complaints about bullying and civility concerns in the workplace, I received ten inquiries as described below:

Total Inquiries (10)

Informal Discussions (Emails/Phone Calls): 5

Investigation requests (completed paperwork): 0

Civility/Bullying Training requests: 5

Despite numerous inquiries in the past year (January 2020 – December 2020), there were no formal investigations and no findings of workplace bullying. Five of the inquiries were from internal and external organizations/individuals who invited me to share our workplace bullying policy lessons and present on workplace bullying and incivility issues. In response to these requests, I presented to a group of individuals from Colorado State, presented to a college group on campus, and scheduled two trainings/presentations on civility/bullying, which will occur in 2021. One of the trainings is for a campus faculty-wide college effort and the other training is for a national conference on bullying. Two of the requests for training were not scheduled due to the COVID pandemic.



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The main reasons that faculty and university administrators have contacted me pertain to a wide array of concerns about bullying and incivility in the workplace. Specifically, faculty members have asserted that incidents of bullying and incivility have occurred in past faculty meetings, 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. Pursuant to one of these contacts, the request led to the establishment of a civility training session (online) for faculty across the college.

Many of the bullying and civility concerns arose because of disagreements about academic decisions, involving students, instructional assignments, and the application or interpretation of departmental policies and procedures. I have also been contacted for advice and guidance on dealing with conflict in the workplace involving 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 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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