



Institutional Support For Maintaining Safety of Faculty Toolkit

Equity, Diversity, Action Committee

Why this toolkit?

[Resolution 13.02 F22](#) directed ASCCC to:

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges develop resources beginning in spring of 2023, such as a toolkit or a position paper in order to support the efforts of local academic senates to maintain safe, welcoming classroom environments and learning spaces to promote up-to-date and well-publicized codes of conduct and procedures for dealing with discriminatory disruptions and racelighting.

Background

- Effective for graduates in 2024-25, the California State University system, the University of California system and the California Community Colleges have all implemented an Ethnic Studies requirement for transfer and/or graduation and community college Associate degrees.
- Prior to the implementation of these requirements, students took Ethnic Studies courses because they were interested in the classes, as an elective for another graduation requirement, or because they were majors in Ethnic Studies.
- With the new Ethnic Studies requirements for degrees, transfer, and/or graduation, there are more students enrolled in Ethnic Studies who may be skeptical about or even openly hostile towards learning Ethnic Studies, which can and has caused major classroom disruptions, making it unsafe for faculty and students to engage in the free intellectual exchange of ideas and perspectives that are necessary to true learning.
- In this environment, California community colleges should review and update their institutional policies and procedures, including Codes of Conduct, and ensure that they have procedures in place to maintain safe, welcoming classroom environments and learning spaces for all students and faculty, not just in Ethnic Studies, but in all courses offered by the colleges.

We Do the Work. You Check the Box: Unearthing the Impact of Racialized Stress and Trauma on Black Women
CommunityCollege Educators Leading DEI Work Brandi Renee Avila Loyola Marymount University,

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<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2261&context=etd>

“Since the summer of 2020, following the execution of Mr. George Floyd, many institutions of higher education established or strengthened their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In attempting to create more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and antiracist campuses to foster student success and belonging on campus, another inequity is born. Higher education institutions have failed to center the wellbeing of educators tasked with leading these efforts. This qualitative study used semi structured interviews with 10 Black women leading DEI efforts throughout the California Community College system to explore the impact of racialized stress and trauma on holistic wellbeing.”

Results of AAUP (American Association of University Professors) 2017 Survey

cited in webinar “Envisioning Institutional Responses To Supporting Scholar Safety” (link: <https://lsa.umich.edu/ncid/news-events/all-events/scholar-safety.html>)

Out of 50 respondents to AAUP Survey on Threats to Faculty:

48% had experienced threats of violence

79% had experienced harassment on social media, including threats of violence

62% of targeted harassed faculty identified as women

48% were harassed about work centering on race issues

14% were harassed about work centering on gender issues

Disproportionate number of diversity scholars experienced threats of harassment, and in November 2023 at the time of the webinar, climate change scholars and scholars who work on topics like reproductive health are also experiencing harassment too

What's evolved since the 2017 AAUP survey?

- Rise of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement after George Floyd's death in 2019
- Increased backlash against BLM
- Increased numbers of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation passed in states
- Increased book bans and attacks on DEI (Diversity Equity Inclusion) work/initiatives in education
- Increased hateful speech on social media
- U of Michigan Fall 2023 survey: more respondents experienced harassment based on scholarship and advocacy about Palestine
- More reluctance from faculty to report attacks because people fear being further attacked for their identity
- Increased harassment has a "chilling effect" on dialogue and academic freedom
- Politicization and vilification of Critical Race Theory (CRM)

Resources on Effects of Politically Charged Atmosphere

- Articles for guidance:
 - Politicization of CRT - [Getting To The Truth of It All: The Role And Impact of Critical Race Theory on California Community Colleges](#)-- Rostrum Article (Michelle Bean, Hermelinda Rocha, and Manuel Velez)
 - [Academic Freedom and Equity](#) -- Rostrum article (Manuel Velez and Stephanie Curry)
 - [My Students Aren't Debating Genocide; they're looking for the freedom to learn](#)

How are current institutional policies and processes failing to maintain safety of faculty/teachers of controversial topics?

- Institutions fail to recognize/acknowledge that some harassed people have greater social capital than others (e.g. a gay white cisgender male faculty might get stronger institutional response and resources than an LGBTQ+ identified woman of color or transgender person)
- Institutional policies that try to protect campus members from harassment focus on harassment from other campus members, &/or only focus on harassment taking place at campus places/events. Few institutions have policies addressing threats/harassment from outside the campus/institution, or that target faculty/members' cars or homes, or email and social media.
- If the harassment comes from one person from a minoritized population directed towards a person from another or similar minoritized population, the institution may hesitate to respond or dismiss the seriousness of the threat/harassment; this especially applies to anti-indigeneity and anti-Blackness

How are current institutional policies and processes failing to maintain safety of scholars/teachers of controversial topics?

- Institutional reporting policies are cumbersome and lag behind in speed of frequency of harassment, especially online harassment and is often playing “catch up” to harassing events
- Faculty members’ research, teaching, and well-being are all impacted by threats and harassment and often feel little support from the institution
- Members of the institution often lack depth of understanding of racelighting and gender-based harassment
- Lack of demonstration of care from institution when a faculty member reports a harassment/threat (e.g. no response); faculty are expected to carry on and do their work as if nothing happened, especially faculty who have less social capital (ie. nonwhite faculty, female faculty, nonbinary faculty, and part time/adjunct faculty)

Fallout from threats/harassment against faculty who teach controversial topics

- Faculty who are targeted “second guess” their work and approach to teaching and research and often self-censor themselves (curtail their own academic freedom)
- Targetted faculty may leave the institution for safety reasons
- Targetted faculty may experience paranoia about any kind of attention (even something such as a lingering glance)
- Targetted faculty can feel debilitating isolation and depression, or may be told “you brought this on yourself” by teaching controversial topics they were hired to teach
- Especially for part-time/contingent faculty: they may be reluctant to report threats/harassment for fear of being seen as “the one who complains”
- Targetted faculty may be the target of “cancel culture” and have their academic reputation and livelihood greatly harmed or even lose the ability to work

What Do Faculty Who Are Harassed/Threatened Need From The Institution?

There are multiple needs all at once. Think of a trauma-informed response of support looking like an octopus where the faculty/targetted individual is at the center, and all around them are the “tentacles/arms” of needs that could include but is not limited to:

- police/security protection needs
- trauma support/psychological services
- IT/support for monitoring emails and social media
- threat assessment
- Student Life office support
- Human Resources support
- Department/division administrative support
- Peer support (especially from others who have also experienced threats/harassment)
- Immediate support when needed
- Advocacy support (such as having someone who can help tell the harassment story without the targetted person having to retell and re-traumatize themselves with each retelling)

Institutional Obstacles to Dealing with Threats/Harassment

- Institutional inertia
- Having to navigate lots of complexities of issues
- Lack of top-down support from leadership who are willing to invest resources into developing a strong institutional response team
- Lack of awareness how serious these threats/harassment are to the campus and how traumatizing they are to the harassed individuals and areas
- Lack of institutional cultural competence and cultural humility to recognize the seriousness of racelighting and gender-based harassment/threats
- Lack of preemptive ways to keep harassment/threat incidents from becoming salacious “trauma porn”
- Potential fear of offending institutional donors and/or local community members by institutionally defending individuals who are harassed/threatened because of teaching controversial topic areas

What can Institutions do to better maintain safe learning spaces for faculty?

- Recognize that targeted faculty need teams of support at the department level as well as at the institutional level to deal with harassments/threats
- Center on understanding the needs of harassed faculty and also understand that traumatized people may not behave as “professionally” as they would if not experiencing trauma
- Recognize that the needs of harassed people require support from a community of care; it can't just be put on one person
- **Develop a Threat/Harassment Assessment and Response Team** whose task is to come up with preemptive policy and processes to be ready to support faculty who are threatened and harassed

Threat/Harassment Assessment and Response Team

Should be a cross-functional team with representation from:

- Human Resources
- Police Department
- Counseling (social work and mental health)
- Academic Senate
- Student Senate
- Senior administrative leadership
- Facilities
- Depending on campus community, may include representation from other groups/areas such as affinity group(s), Equity office, etc.

There's no "one size fits all" that meets the need of every institution

- Could be a good idea to have a separate Advisory group for the Response Team

Threat/Harassment Assessment and Response Team

Purpose:

- To develop multi-pronged approach to identifying/assessing and dealing with harassments and threats
- Should develop preemptive communications language and policies and processes to respond to threats/harassment in a timely manner and immediately support the harassed/threatened individuals
- Develop tools and processes to de-escalate tense situations with compassion (ie do not force faculty to have to engage with hostile harassers)
- “If we can’t respond to these threats/harassment, we’re not just failing the people being targeted, we’re failing our entire institution and our mission and the heart of what we do”

John Lofy, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts at the University of Michigan; and Co-chair of U-M Work Group on Responding to Threats and Harassment of Faculty

Threat/Harassment Assessment and Response Team

Must have buy-in and support from highest level of institutional leadership--such a team would need a team of resources, not just one person

Should NOT be located primarily in or led/chaired by Human Resources or Police Department, as these are often punitive spaces

Should address hierarchy of needs in these areas:

- Communications
- Facilities
- Security
- IT (email, websites, social media)
- Legal
- Trauma support/Psych services
- Department/division administrative and peer support

Threat Harassment Assessment and Response Team

Must be prepared to support people hired to teach in controversial subject areas such as Ethnic Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Climate Change, and Reproductive Health

Can help President/CEO develop preemptive communications to go to the entire institution to condemn any attacks/threats to faculty teaching controversial subject areas. This can greatly create a sense of safety for the entire campus.

Can help develop institutional routine “check-ins” with faculty teaching controversial subject areas, especially those where threats/harassment have occurred previously

Can help the institution recognize and understand that faculty with less social capital may experience different responses from students than faculty with more social capital (e.g. the teaching experiences of faculty who identify/present as non-white &/or as non-binary versus faculty who identify as white &/or as cisgender), even when teaching similar “controversial” topics.

Policies and Code of Conduct Recommendations

How can an Institution review their Code of Conduct to help establish a clear transparent statement of what is and is not tolerated for safe learning environments?

1. Understand what Codes of Conduct are, and how they can be a foundation for establishing procedures to stop harassment carrying a threat of violence, in order to maintain safe and welcoming classrooms and learning spaces for students and faculty.
2. Define racelighting, gender-based harassment, and laws against hate crimes committed on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability which are prosecuted by the U.S. Department of Justice.
3. Find examples of Codes of Conduct with clear descriptions of violations and procedures to address violations of codes of conduct, and where Codes of Conduct are posted/discussed so that campus community is aware of them
4. Provide resources to help colleges update Codes of Conduct to address racelighting, and other forms of hate-based harassment, as well as resources to help create Community Agreements for classes/meetings that reference Code of Conduct.
5. Provide resources on procedures for campus responses to violations of Codes of Conduct

Academic Senate Action Item

- As Codes of Conduct are a **Title 5** 10+1 issue (#5 Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success), Academic Senates should feel empowered to work actively with Student Senates and other campus entities which oversee student conduct, campus equity, psychological/mental health services, and campus security to review and update Codes of Conduct and procedures to maintain safe, welcoming, learning spaces on the entire campus.

Title 5 & Ed Code Definitions of Code of Conduct

General definition of Code of Conduct

Code of Academic Conduct means the set of rules, responsibilities, restrictions, procedures, and practices outlining the College's expectations regarding academic integrity, published and disseminated via the College's website and the College Catalog, among other means, with the objective of sustaining an environment in which Students recognize and demonstrate the importance of being accountable for their academic behavior.

Code of Conduct in Education Code

Education code 66300: The Regents of the University of California, the Trustees of the California State University, and the governing board of every community college district, shall adopt or provide for the adoption of specific rules and regulations governing student behavior along with applicable penalties for violation of the rules and regulations. The institutions shall adopt procedures by which all students are informed of such rules and regulations, with applicable penalties, and any revisions thereof.

Education code 66301(e) (Speech promoting hate violence): This section does not prohibit an institution from adopting rules and regulations that are designed to prevent hate violence, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 4 of Chapter 1363 of the Statutes of 1992, from being directed at students in a manner that denies them their full participation in the educational process, if the rules and regulations conform to standards established by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and Section 2 of Article I of the California Constitution for citizens generally.

When is a Code of Conduct not a violation of free speech?

The concept of freedom of speech can be complex and varies across different legal, cultural, and social contexts. Generally, freedom of speech refers to the right to express one's opinions without censorship or restraint. However, this right is not absolute, and there are limitations and exceptions. A Code of Conduct, especially in specific environments such as workplaces, online platforms, or community spaces, may establish rules and guidelines to maintain a respectful and inclusive atmosphere.

A Code of Conduct is not considered a violation of freedom of speech when it:

Protects Against Harm: Codes of Conduct often exist to prevent harm, harassment, discrimination, or the incitement of violence. Limiting speech that causes harm or infringes on the rights of others is generally seen as a reasonable restriction.

Maintains Order: In certain contexts, like workplaces or educational institutions, a Code of Conduct may be necessary to maintain order and ensure a productive and respectful environment.

Promotes Inclusivity: Codes of Conduct may be designed to foster inclusivity and prevent speech that is discriminatory or offensive towards certain groups based on characteristics like race, gender, religion, or other protected categories.

Preserves the Purpose of the Environment: In specific environments, such as professional settings or educational institutions, maintaining a focused and productive atmosphere may be a legitimate reason for limiting certain types of speech.

It's important to note that the interpretation of freedom of speech can vary, and legal considerations can differ depending on the jurisdiction. Additionally, private entities, like companies or online platforms, have the right to establish their own rules and guidelines as long as they don't violate applicable laws.

In summary, a Code of Conduct is not a violation of freedom of speech when it aims to prevent harm, maintain order, promote inclusivity, or preserve the purpose of the environment within the legal and ethical boundaries of the jurisdiction in question.

Resources Addressing Racelighting and Politically Charged Hate Speech and Gender-Based Harassment in the Classroom

Links and articles for review

- [Addressing Racelighting on Community College Campuses](#)

Racelighting is a form of psychological manipulation whereby Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) second-guess their experiences, perceptions, and realities due to racism. In this article, the authors provide recommendations for how community colleges can foster environments that counter the harmful effects of racelighting.

- <https://www.diverseeducation.com/opinion/article/15108651/racelighting-a-prevalent-version-of-gaslighting-facing-people-of-color>
- Federal Hate Crime Laws and Policies:
<https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/laws-and-policies>
- Gender-Based Harassment (Title IX policies and procedures for violation of Title IX) [De Anza Policy](#)
- 5 part course series that addresses how schools, colleges, and universities can address racelighting. <https://coralearning.org/product/racelighting/>

Code of Conduct Procedures should be jointly established with Academic Senate, Student Senate, Student Conduct Office, Equity Office, Psychological Services, and Campus Security

- Ensure that student input is part of policy decisions - [Academic Senates and Student Governments: A Critical Partnership](#)
- Student Senate of CA Community Colleges (SSCCC) - [Anti-Racism: A Student Plan of Action”](#) and [“Anti-Racism: A Student Plan of Action, Part 2: Anti-Asian Hate](#)
- [San Mateo College Professional Code of Ethics](#)
- [City College of San Francisco Community Agreements](#)

Procedures for Upholding Threat/Harassment Policies and Dealing with Violations

- Establish Behavioral Intervention Teams with specific processes to support faculty affected by abusive, sexist and racist behavior
1. Los Angeles Harbor College - <https://www.lahc.edu/campus-life/bit#:~:text=The%20Behavioral%20Intervention%20Team%20was,of%20the%20students%20or%20others.>
 2. De Anza Board Policy on [Procedures To Resolve Complaints Regarding Harassment And Discrimination](#)
 3. De Anza Board Policy on [Student Due Process and Discipline](#) & [Students Rights & Responsibilities](#)
 4. Recommending that a hostile racelighter/harasser meet with the harassed target causes further harm.

Colleges that have addressed Racelighting

Grossmont College -

https://www.grossmont.edu/faculty-staff/academic-senate/_resources/assets/pdf/meetings/2023/handouts/2023-03-20-equityminded-communication-resolution.pdf

Umpqua Community College -

<https://umpqua.edu/student-life/student-resources/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-resources/>

Increasing Awareness of Institutional Policies and Procedures For Responding to Harassment/Threats

Make the Codes of Conduct easy to find on campus or on the website

Most campuses seem to have the student codes of conduct or standards of conduct in the catalog on the website, but they are not easily located or visible

Some campuses have a list of actions that could result in disciplinary actions, usually found in “Student’s Rights and Responsibilities.”

Incentivize students to read the Students’ Rights and Responsibilities

Increasing Awareness of Institutional Policies and Procedures For Responding to Threats/Harassment

Train faculty, especially adjunct faculty, to include institutional Standards or Codes of Conduct in their syllabi and/or course materials, similar to how many faculty have “netiquette” guidelines for their online classes.

Once an institution establishes a Threats/Harassment Assessment and Response Team, make sure that faculty and others are aware of this team through means such as faculty professional development and in required trainings (such as harassment training)

Methods of Publicizing Institutional Policies and Procedures For Responding to Threats/Harassment

Websites with direct links from the homepage

Dynamic Posters/Print Materials for classrooms

Social Media Posts - collaborating with Campus Life and other campus entities

Local Academic Senates - Communications, emails, orientations, professional development workshops.

- Ensure that Board policies are updated and include a focus on anti-racism.

Suggestions for Academic Senates

Work with senior leadership and other campus constituents to develop a campus Harassment/Threat Assessment and Response Team

Encourage Faculty to include statements about Institutional Policies and Procedures For Responding to Harassment/Threats in syllabi.

Review Board policies and recommend addressing “hate speech” and discriminatory behaviors.

Appoint a Liaison to work with Student Affairs Office to share and educate on Threat/Harassment Policies and Procedures and Assessment and Response Team

Resources

de Becker, Gavin. The Gift of Fear: Survival Signals That Protect Us From Violence. January 19, 2010.

“Envisioning Institutional Responses to Supporting Scholar Safety” University of Michigan National Center for Institutional Diversity Webinar, November 2, 2023:

<https://lsa.umich.edu/ncid/news-events/all-events/scholar-safety.html>

Sayre, Kelly. Sharp Women: Embrace Your Intuition, Build Your Situational Awareness, and Live Life Unafraid. February 16, 2022