

# Policy Statement on Discrimination, General Harassment and Abuse

## *Overview*

Harassment and discrimination are contrary to the College's mission. The College is committed to responding to all reports of harassment, abuse, or discrimination and will use all reasonable means to prevent, confront, and eliminate such behavior. Harassment and discriminatory acts infringe upon a victim's dignity and integrity, often denying or limiting a victim's access to academic life. Harassment and discriminatory acts are among the most egregious in our community and warrant the most serious penalties. Any student who is found to have violated the College's Harassment Policies through intentional and targeted behavior directed at any individual(s), on or off-campus, should expect that the College will impose sanctions, up to and including expulsion from the College. With the consent of the victim(s), the College will report the incident to the police when the alleged action constitutes a hate crime. Further, the College reserves the right to restrict any student who is accused of violating the College's Harassment Policies from all college property and/or events pending the resolution of the complaint.

Maintaining our commitment to a campus climate where harassment and discrimination are not tolerated must be a shared goal. By joining the Trinity College community, students accept that they too have an individual responsibility to help create an environment free of harassment. We encourage students to report promptly any behavior that falls short of our communal values and we expect students to cooperate fully in any college investigation or judicial process regarding harassment allegations.

Students should note that the College does not consider ignorance to be a reasonable defense in complaints of harassment and discrimination. As such, all students should familiarize themselves with the particulars of this policy as outlined below.

Additionally, while some actions, speech, and forms of expression run contrary to individual beliefs and even our community values, we recognize that many of them are protected by law and are permissible under the principles of academic freedom. We fully expect that those who introduce protected but controversial, provocative, or divisive elements, and those who disagree with them, will make themselves available to civil debate and discussion. The College provides space for provocative and unpopular speech and expression so long as those actions do not violate the law and/or are found to be targeted and intentional actions that violate our harassment policy.

## *Discrimination*

Members of the College community are prohibited from engaging in physical or verbal acts that have the purpose or effect of denying the right to equal access to education or employment on the basis of race, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, color, gender expression, or gender

identity. Discrimination may be found to have occurred when there is evidence of differential treatment, i.e., when an agent or employee of the College, acting in his or her official capacity, treats a student or employee differently based on membership in the aforementioned protected classes without a non-discriminatory reason to do so, with the result that the person is prevented from participating in or gaining the privileges of programs and services of the College. Discrimination may also occur between parties of equal authority, or between students, based on the protected classes.

### *Discriminatory Harassment*

Discriminatory harassment is harassment based on race, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, color, gender expression, or gender identity. Discriminatory harassment includes conduct specifically directed at an individual or a small group of individuals and expresses hatred or contempt on the basis of stereotyped group characteristics or because of a person's identification with a particular group. Discriminatory harassment also includes any action or speech directed toward members of the aforementioned groups that reasonably can be determined to be threatening in content or is spoken in a manner that suggests violence toward such persons is imminent.

Discriminatory harassment may be found to have occurred when harassing conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent that it interferes with or limits a student's or employee's ability to participate in or gain the privileges of programs and services of the College.

### *General Harassment/Abuse*

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, physical or non-physical behavior, such as assault, abuse, stalking, hazing, invasion of privacy, and intimidation. The following definitions provide examples of behavior that will not be tolerated:

- *Assault* is nonconsensual physical contact that places someone in fear or apprehension of immediate harm. Relationship violence may also be categorized as assault.
- *Stalking* refers to a pattern of behavior in which an individual willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows another in his/her course of daily activities in such a way that the stalker's actions can reasonably be found to interfere with another person's ability to perform his or her regular duties or cause that person to feel frightened, intimidated, harassed, threatened, or molested.
- *Invasion of privacy* is unauthorized taking and use of facts, information, and/or property not in the public domain that a reasonable person would desire to keep from the public eye.
- *Intimidation* is spoken, written, or physical conduct directed toward an individual or individuals that unreasonably interferes with their full participation in the Trinity College community or that is intended to create or may be

reasonably determined to have created a threatening or hostile environment.

### *Sexual Harassment*

(see [Policy on Sexual Misconduct](#))