



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Subject: **Workplace Violence**

Policy No. **5**

Pages: 9

Date: April 28, 2009

Approved by: Maria M. Houser, Associate Vice President for Human Resources

Signature: _____ and Labor Relations

POLICY

The State of Connecticut has adopted a statewide “**Zero Tolerance Policy**” for workplace violence under *Executive Order No. 16*. Southern Connecticut State University values the safety and security of its employees and students. Threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against employees, students, visitors, guests, or other individuals by anyone anywhere in the workplace will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy can lead to disciplinary action, which may include suspension, dismissal, expulsion, or criminal prosecution.

Any person who makes substantial threats, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts in the workplace shall be subject to removal from the premises as quickly as safety permits and shall remain off the campus pending the outcome of an investigation. SCSU will initiate an appropriate response. This response may include investigation, suspension or expulsion of students, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, and/or criminal prosecution of the person or persons involved.

All SCSU personnel are responsible for notifying the management representative(s) designated below of any threats which they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. Even without an actual threat, personnel should also report any behavior they have witnessed, which could be perceived as threatening or violent, when that behavior is job related or might be carried out at the University, or is connected to University employment or academic study. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person and persons who were threatened or were the focus of the threatening behavior. If the designated

management representatives are not available, personnel should report the threat to their supervisor or another member of the management team.

Compliance with this policy requires that all individuals at the workplace whether employees or non-employees, conduct themselves in a professional manner consistent with good business practices. Such individuals are expected therefore to conduct themselves in a non-violent and non-physically threatening or intimidating manner.

This policy wants to deal with workplace violence proactively through education, mediation and consultation before it escalates to the formal level of disciplinary action. Workplace violence incidents reaching the formal level will be dealt with in accordance with collective bargaining agreements, regulations, policies and law.

Crisis Management Representatives

In all situations, if violence appears to be imminent, **employees should take the precautions necessary to assure their own safety and the safety of others.**

The following are the critical telephone numbers which may be needed to carry out the procedures outlined in this section:

Emergency Services - Police, Fire, and Rescue dial **911** or **University Police** directly by dialing **(203) 392-5375**.

Designated management representatives are:

- Police Chief Joseph M. Dooley
Director of Public Safety
(203) 392-5375
Granoff Hall
10 Wintergreen Ave.
- Maria M. Houser
Associate Vice President of Human Resources and Labor Relations
(203) 392-8810
Wintergreen Building

Scope

SCSU is mandated to fully comply with the Governor's Executive Order. All faculty, staff, students, vendors, contractors, consultants, and others who do business with the University, whether in a University facility or off-campus location where University business is conducted, are covered by this policy. This policy applies to all SCSU full-time and part-time employees with permanent, probationary, trainee, or temporary appointments. This policy applies to the conduct of an employee while functioning in the course and scope of

employment as well as off-duty violent conduct that has a potential adverse impact on a University employee's ability to perform the assigned duties and responsibilities.

Examples of workplace violence

Workplace violence is any behavior that is violent, threatens violence, coerces, harasses or intimidates others, interferes with an individual's legal rights of movement or expression, or disrupts the workplace, the academic environment, or the University's ability to provide services to its employees, students and the public.

Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal or non-verbal threats of harm;
- Brandishing a weapon or an object which appears to be a weapon;
- Intimidating, threatening, or directing abusive language toward another person;
- Stalking a campus community member or visitor anywhere on the campus or off-site locations under SCSU auspices;
- Intentional physical contact for the purpose of causing harm such as slapping, stabbing, punching, striking, shoving, or other physical attack;
- Putting your closed fist close to another's face in an intimidating or threatening manner or telling another person you will "beat them up" to intimidate them;
- Using greater physical size/strength or greater institutional power to intimidate another;
- Disruptive behavior intended to disturb, interfere with or prevent normal work activities such as yelling, using profanity, verbally abusing others, or waving arms and fists.
- Menacing or threatening behavior such as throwing objects, pounding on a desk or door, damaging property, or otherwise acting aggressively;
- Making oral, written, e-mail or other electronically delivered statements specifically intended to frighten, coerce, or threaten where a reasonable person would interpret such behavior as constituting evidence of intent to cause harm to individuals or property, or
- Any other act which a reasonable person would consider as inappropriate and/or posing a danger or threat of danger/violence in the workplace.

Warning Signs, Symptoms and Risk Factors

The following are examples of warning signs, symptoms, and risk factors which may indicate an employee's potential for workplace violence:

- Dropping hints about a knowledge of firearms.
- Making intimidating statements like: "I'll meet you out in the parking lot after work," "I'll get even" or "You haven't heard the last from me."

- Possessing reading material with themes of violence, revenge and harassment.
- Keeping records of other employees the individual believes to have violated departmental policy.
- Physical signs of hard breathing, reddening of complexion, menacing stare, loudness, fast profane speech.
- Acting out either verbally or physically.
- Disgruntled employee or ex-employee who is excessively bitter.
- Being a loner.
- Having a romantic obsession with a co-worker who does not share that interest.
- History of interpersonal conflict.
- Intense anger, lack of empathy.
- Domestic problems, unstable/dysfunctional family.
- Brooding, depressed, strange behavior, "time bomb ready to go off."

Supervisors should be alerted to and aware of these indicators. If an employee exhibits such behavior the employee should be monitored and such behavior should be documented.

Reporting Procedure

Employees who feel subjected to any kind of inappropriate behaviors listed in the previous sections must immediately report the incident to their supervisor. Employees may also contact the HR Office directly. Supervisors and managers who receive such reports shall seek advice from the HR Office regarding investigating the incident and initiating appropriate action. Each member of the campus community is responsible within his/her area of jurisdiction for the implementation of this policy. Supervisors must report to the H R Office or University Police, as the case may be, any complaint of workplace violence made to him/her and any other incidents of workplace violence of which he/she becomes aware or reasonably believes to exist. Supervisors are expected to inform their immediate supervisor promptly about any complaints, acts, or threats of violence even if the situation has been addressed and resolved.

Supervisors are required to contact the University Police immediately in the event of imminent or actual violence involving weapons or potential physical injuries.

1. Imminent or Actual Violence

Any person experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or actual violence involving weapons or personal injury should call **University Police** immediately at **392-5375, or call 911.**

2. Criminal Complaints of Workplace Violence:

Any individual who experiences or witnesses violence, threats of violence or harassing behavior, or who has reason to suspect that these acts or behaviors

are occurring which be of a criminal nature, should immediately notify University Police. If these acts or behaviors occur off campus, the local law enforcement jurisdiction should be contacted.

University Police will investigate any criminal allegation or coordinate with the local law enforcement agency and provide a report of the results to Human Resources.

3. Non-Criminal Allegations of Workplace Violence:

Alleged behaviors that may not be criminal may still be subject to SCSU policy and subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination subject to applicable state statutes and contractual agreements. Employees should inform their direct supervisor or Human Resources immediately. It is not necessary to inform a direct supervisor first if an employee would prefer to discuss this matter directly with officials.

The supervisor or Human Resources staff will talk with the person reporting the workplace violence to get details about the events with the primary goal being to provide an opportunity to resolve the concerns through mediation, conflict resolution, and conciliation. Informal procedures at this time include, but are not limited to, separate meetings with the parties involved, joint meetings with the parties involved, and meetings of only the parties involved.

Employees may also be able to resolve alleged conflicts through the use of their collective bargaining agreement.

The Role of University Police

The primary role of University Police is to provide an immediate response to a crisis in progress. Not only by dispatching police officers but also by requesting and coordinating other emergency services, if needed. Prior to an actual occurrence, police involvement will include the following: Participation on the Threat Assessment Team, providing physical security for threatened or at-risk persons, confronting the potentially violent person (under certain circumstances); enforcing applicable laws; and thoroughly investigating and documenting all incidents and actions. In addition, University Police will serve as the repository for all personal protective orders.

The Role Of Human Resources

Human Resources is responsible for assisting in the prevention of violence in the workplace by providing advice and counsel to managers, supervisors and employees when faced with threats or other situations that have the potential for violence. Human Resources will assist campus departments in the implementation of appropriate personnel practices used in the hiring, supervision and retention of employees. They will also assist, as appropriate, in the investigation of threats of violence and address related issues that are of legitimate concern to employees.

Fitness-for-Duty Evaluation

At the discretion of the Associate VP of Human Resources, an employee exhibiting warning signs, symptoms and risk factors including, but not limited to those set forth above in this policy, may be ordered to submit to a psychological evaluation to determine the employee's fitness-for-duty. The Associate VP of Human Resources will consult with EAP and identify the nature of the concern. EAP should report the results of the evaluation to the Associate VP of Human Resources which shall then consult with the President to determine the employee's fitness-for-duty based on the evaluation. All evaluation records shall be maintained in a confidential manner.

Personal Protective or Restraining Orders

Faculty, staff or students who have been issued a personal protective order or restraining order which lists SCSU locations as being protected areas, shall provide University Police with a copy of the order.

Southern Connecticut State University understands the sensitivity of the information submitted and will respect the confidentiality of the reporting employee to the extent permitted by law. Depending upon the facts of a case it may be necessary for the University to take action, including consultation with others.

Victims of domestic violence who believe the violence may extend into the workplace, or employees who believe that domestic or other personal matters may result in their being subject to violence extending into the workplace, are encouraged to notify their supervisor, or the University Police. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

Retaliation

To better ensure a safe workplace and to encourage responsible reporting of violence in the workplace, no person making a report or files a complaint in good faith, or who testifies, assists, or participates in any manner in an investigation, proceeding or hearing shall be intimidated, threatened, coerced, or discriminated against by any other person within the University community and may subject the person engaging in alleged retaliation or harassment to discipline by this policy.

University Communications

All communications to the campus community and outside entities regarding incidents of workplace violence will be made through the Director of Public Affairs after consultation with the President or his/her designee.

Definitions

Bullying is defined as:

- Aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength and is sometimes meant to exclude someone;
- Unwanted offensive and malicious behavior which undermines an individual or group through persistently negative attacks;
- Intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behavior, such as name calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more persons against another;
- Aggressive or intimidating behavior that is not provoked by the target or targets; there is typically an element of vindictiveness and the behavior is calculated to undermine, patronize, humiliate, intimidate or demean the recipient.

Examples of Bullying can take many forms, including rumors, jokes, slurs, pranks, gestures, threats, attacks, demeaning or threatening text messages, instant messages, or e mails, or other written, oral, or physical actions.

Domestic Violence is the use of abusive or violent behavior, including threats and intimidation, between people who have an ongoing or prior intimate relationship. This could include people who are married, live together or date or who have been married, lived together or dated.

Intimidation includes but is not limited to stalking or engaging in actions intended to frighten, coerce or induce distress.

Physical Attack is unwanted or hostile physical contact such as hitting, pushing, kicking, shoving, throwing of objects or fighting.

Stalking is defined as repeatedly contacting another person when the contact is unwanted. It involves harassing or pestering an individual, in person, in writing, by telephone or electronic format. Stalking also involves following an individual or remaining in the physical presence of the other person, spying on them, alarming the recipient or causing them distress and may involve violence or the fear of violence.

Threat is the expression of intent to cause physical or mental harm. Such an expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry it out, and without regard to whether the threat is made on a present, conditional or future basis. In determining whether the conduct constitutes a threat, including whether the action was intended as a threat, the totality of the circumstances will be considered.

Property Damage is intentional damage to property owned by the State, the University, students, University employees, vendors or visitors to the University.

University facilities are any location, either permanent or temporary, owned or leased by SCSU or the State. This includes, but is not limited to, the buildings, grounds and the surrounding perimeters including the parking lots, field locations, classrooms, alternate work or class locations, and University owned or leased vehicles.

Weapon is any object used to attack or intimidate another person.

Workplace or worksite is any location, either permanent or temporary, where an employee performs any work-related duty. This includes but is not limited to the buildings and the surrounding perimeters, including the parking lots. It includes all state-owned and leased space, including vehicles, and any location where state business is conducted.

Workplace Violence is any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse occurring in the workplace by employees or third parties. It includes, but is not limited to, beating, stabbing, suicide, shooting, rape, attempted suicide, psychological trauma such as threats, obscene phone calls, an intimidating presence, and harassment of any nature such as stalking, shouting, swearing or any other behavior that gives a campus community member or visitor reasonable cause to believe that their health and safety is at risk. This definition expressly includes domestic violence which extends to the workplace, subject again to applicable laws.

Authority and Reference

- Connecticut Executive Order No. 16. The executive order:
<http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/olr/wpv/exc16.pdf>
- Office of Policy and Management, Office of Labor Relations, General Notice No. 99-05.
- State of Connecticut “Violence in the Workplace *Policy and Procedures Manual* for Human Resource Professionals” (June 2007).
<http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2992&q=383254>
- Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970
- Connecticut State University System Board of Trustees Policy Book 1.13 *Policy on Workplace Threats and Violence* (BR #98-48).
- SCSU Employee Handbook.
- Human Resources Policies for Management and Confidential Professional Personnel of the Connecticut State University System (Version 2.0)

Dissemination of the Policy

The workplace violence policy is disseminated to all University Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors and Department Heads. They will distribute it among their employees.

Exceptions

Any exception to the procedures in this Policy shall require prior written approval from the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and Labor Relations or designee.

**SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE
UNIVERSITY
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE**

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE REPORTING FORM

Name of Person Filing Report:
Telephone:

Date Completed:
Department:

Name of Supervisor Notified:

Date Notified:

Name of Person alleged to be acting violently or making threats:
Date on which this occurred:

Place at which this occurred;

Who or What was threatened?

What was said?

Did physical action accompany the threat?
If yes, describe.

Any weapon used?

Witness (es): Name(s):

Has this happened before?
When and where:

Any other relevant information:

Signature of Reporting Employee:

Date:

Signature of Supervisor Notified (if any):

Date:

FAX this Form to: HR Office at 392-8802
Deliver this Form to: HR Office in the Wintergreen Building.

