WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment is defined as sexual contact which includes:

- Unwelcome sexual advances either verbal or physical.
- Requests for sexual favors.
- Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance, learning/educational experiences, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or learning environment.
- Implied (overtly or covertly) suggestion that sexual favors are a condition for employment, transfer, promotion, retention, salary increase, academic progress, or the awarding of any other job or student related action.

Sexual Harassment…

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, begins its definition by stating that (any) “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment.”

Students, employees, employment applicants, visitors, and contractors must be sensitive to the potential impact on others of all forms of action and expression. If the act is “of a sexual nature” and makes one uncomfortable, it might constitute sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment happens to both men and women. Often, in addition to complex feelings from the harassment situation itself, individuals may feel reluctant to try to change the situation for fear of more hurt or difficulty. They allow unethical and illegal behavior to continue without taking corrective action. Yet no one needs to allow sexual harassment to be part of his/her college experience as student, employee, visitor, or contractor.

The college has a responsibility to prevent harassment and if it occurs, to take appropriate action. If you feel harassed, enter a complaint in confidence. Most situations can be resolved through education, confrontation, or mediation by college authorities, without the use of formal discipline procedures.

If you are sexually harassed or simply want help with an uncomfortable situation, contact any college employee or human resources. Reports made to any college employee must be immediately forwarded to the director of human resources.

The college recognizes that the nature of allegations of sexual harassment require that confidentiality be preserved wherever possible. If an investigation is initiated, the human resources director (equity coordinator) or others authorized to conduct investigations may require the cooperation of students, employees of the college, or contractual employees working for the college or on college property. Refusal to cooperate with an investigation could result in disciplinary action.

The college outlines specific definitions, procedures and student/employee/visitor rights as they relate to harassment and sexual misconduct in the District Board of Trustees’ Manual of Policy 6.098. Specific questions concerning the application of this policy may be directed towards the college’s equity coordinator.

You may have further legal recourse through applicable Florida and federal statutes. In the case of rape, assault, battery, or other crime, immediately call local law enforcement.
**If you feel you have been sexually harassed…**

Students should report sexual harassment complaints to the instructor, division chair, the vice president of student development, or any college employee. Employees should report sexual harassment complaints to their immediate supervisor, department head, director, dean, or vice president. Employment applicants, visitors, and contractors may report complaints to any college employee. In all cases, the college official receiving the initial complaint will immediately notify the director of human resources.

- **PROCEDURE FOR FILING A COMPLAINT:** Any student, employee, or visitor having a complaint concerning sexual harassment may discuss it with one or more of the offices listed above. Such a discussion should include as much specific information as possible including names and positions of persons involved, identification of witnesses, if any, the time, place, and details of allegation. A written statement of the complaint may be necessary for any action to be taken.

- **ACTION:** An appropriate college official will immediately conduct an informal inquiry or investigation into the facts and circumstances of the incident, to whatever extent is necessary to resolve the issues on an informal basis. If that is impossible, then a formal investigation will be conducted. At the conclusion a written summary report, including appropriate recommendations, will be made to the president. When warranted and approved by the president or District Board of Trustees, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken against offending students, employees, visitors, or contractors.

- **RESULT:** Any student, employee, visitor, or contractor found guilty of sexual harassment or discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, termination, or removal from campus within the provisions of applicable current board rules and state/federal law.

Gulf Coast Community College will not tolerate harassment of its students, employees, and visitors. Harassment is any repeated or unwelcome verbal or physical abuse which causes the recipient discomfort or humiliation, or which interferes with the recipient’s educational or job performance. Any form of harassment related to an employee’s, student’s, visitor’s, or contractor’s race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, marital status, or physical or mental disability is a violation of college policy, as well as state and federal law.

The college policies concerning harassment shall cover all guests, temporary employees, and contract workers, as well as all students and regular full and part-time employees. These policies shall remain in force on all college property and at all college sponsored functions, activities, and programs, regardless of location.

It is the policy of Gulf Coast Community College and the District Board of Trustees that every employee, student, and visitor be allowed to work, visit, and attend GCCC in an environment free from any form of improper discrimination. Sexual harassment is considered a form of sex discrimination (and/or battery) and is conduct unbecoming a college employee or student.