



# SAFE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

## WORKING GROUP DELIVERABLE

The **Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment Working Group** will focus on developing best practices to enhance safety and support services on campus, and giving students a voice in these important campus matters. In particular, the group will be charged with:

- ➔ Promoting the practice of data analysis through campus climate surveys.
- ➔ Establishing best practices for creating campus safety and inclusive environments.
- ➔ Drafting an implementation guide for colleges on the recommendations set forth by the 2017 Task Force on Campus Sexual Assault.

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# OVERVIEW

“**Where Opportunity Meets Vision: A Student-Centered Vision for New Jersey Higher Education**” is New Jersey’s commitment to transform higher education through a vision for a Student Bill of Rights. This includes making sure every student in New Jersey feels safe and supported in their learning environment and that students have a voice in decisions impacting their education. In order to ensure students are safe from physical harm and feel included and welcome on campus, will take the collective work of all stakeholders. In New Jersey, one of our strengths is our diversity, but we need to make sure that students from all backgrounds feel they belong at our institutions.

In recognition that all stakeholders provide a vital role, the **Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment (SILE)** workgroup was established to provide best practices to support the State’s plan to strengthen higher education in New Jersey. A variety of stakeholders, including students, practitioners, faculty, and organizational leaders, convened to discuss how the State, institutions, and students can move forward in with actionable steps to developing and sustaining safe and inclusive learning environments. We hope the work put forward from this group will serve as a useful resource for institutions to help students thrive at our New Jersey institutions so they can focus on successfully completing their degree program.

The group focused on three specific charges outlined in the State higher education plan:

1. Promote the practice of data analysis through campus climate surveys.
2. Establish best practices for creating campus safety and inclusive environments.
3. Draft an implementation guide for colleges on the recommendations set forth by the 2017 Task Force on Campus Sexual Assault.

Over the course of six months from May through October 2019, the group researched and vetted best practices within the state and nation. As an outcome of this work, three deliverables were created to help guide the work moving forward. These products include:

## **DELIVERABLE: INVENTORY OF CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEYS**

In response to the promotion of data analysis via campus climate surveys, a guidebook has been developed to assist institutions in finding appropriate instruments to administer to students, faculty and staff. In addition, a step-by-step implementation guide is provided to help institutions better understand what resources may be needed and what they should consider during key decision points in implementation.

## **DELIVERABLE: A RESOURCE GUIDEBOOK FOR PROMOTING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE CAMPUSES**

In response to establishing best practices for creating safe and inclusive environments, a resource guidebook has been developed to assist institutions in supporting diversity, inclusion, and safety initiatives on campuses. The goal of the resource guidebook is to provide best practices, sample policies and key elements to consider when designing policies.

## **DELIVERABLE: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

In accordance to the recommendations set forth by the 2017 Task Force on Campus Sexual Assault, an implementation guide was developed to assist New Jersey institutions in the areas of: prevention and education, college procedural processes, community collaboration, and evaluation and assessment. As an example, the implementation guide could equip students and campus leadership in creating an environment where students are knowledgeable of their rights, and can easily access the appropriate information and resources.

## **CONCLUSION**

By utilizing these three deliverables, New Jersey institutions of higher education will be able to proactively work towards fostering diverse, inclusive, and safe environments for student learning and engagement. The deliverables are “building blocks” – and provide a variety of action students that institutions can utilize both immediately and in their long-range planning to assess and improve in the campus culture. Through this collaboration and continued conversation, we can work to make safe and inclusive learning environments that will help students persist and complete. The engine for being an economic and innovation leader in the United States will be for New Jersey to commit to foster and nurture learning environments where all students – regardless of race, ethnic origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and other identities, as well as their intersection – have the ability to be successful in college, preparing them for future success in the workforce.

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**Disclaimer:**

The views expressed in this document belong to the Working Group and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the State of New Jersey. The content provided is intended to serve as a resource to help develop strategies to increase support for students at New Jersey's colleges and is provided in good faith. Due to time constraints, the Working Group notes the information may not be comprehensive and readers should take into account context for how the deliverable is used as well as further research that may be available after publication.

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## Overview

In [Where Opportunity Meets Innovation](#), New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education, the State introduces a bold vision for the New Jersey Student Bill of Rights. Part of that vision states that, "Every student in New Jersey should feel safe and supported in their learning environment. This means colleges must work to ensure students are not only safe from physical harm, but also included and welcome on campus." To help further this vision, the Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment Working Group has developed this Resource Guidebook. It is intended to be a useful resource that aids college administrators in establishing best practices for creating safe and inclusive environments for our students. This Resource Guidebook opens with definitions of key terms related to these efforts. It then enumerates general recommendations relevant to all campus stakeholders. The working group then offers a framework to initiate and organize efforts around diversity, safety, and inclusion. Finally, the document concludes with a list of suggested readings and resources organized by relevant topics to assist readers in developing their safe and inclusive campuses.

### Unpacking Diversity, Inclusion, and Safety

To guide our efforts, the working group offers working definitions for three key terms: diversity, inclusion, and safe campuses.

**Diversity** refers to the unique characteristics that distinguish individuals, visibly and invisibly, from one another, whose values are intrinsically representative of each person, and who come from a wide array of demographic and philosophical differences. The dimensions of diversity may include but are not limited to: age, socioeconomic background, educational attainment, gender expression and identity, citizenship status, linguistic proficiency, mental or physical able-bodiedness, national origin, political beliefs, race/ethnicity, religious or ethical beliefs, sexual orientation, social or family class/status, race, veteran status, and work experience (National Education Association, 2008).

**Inclusion** involves a welcoming environment in which individuals feel a strong sense of belonging in a place where they are safe from physical or verbal harm, contempt, or imminent danger in all spaces (in-person and virtual), treated fairly and respectfully, and are connected to others in positive interactions, which include debate and deliberation, wherein there can be mutual consent to agree to disagree, and where there is acceptance of the intersection between academic excellence and social justice. An inclusive campus is where all individuals are valued for their unique attributes that they possess which can contribute to being empowered in shaping and building a greater culturally-rich community in a myriad of ways, in which both the individuals and the institution achieve successful outcomes (Hussain, Jones, 2019; Pruitt, 2016).

**Safety** connotes a campus is that provides individuals the opportunity to teach, learn, and work in an environment free of discrimination, intimidation, or threat to physical and emotional well-being. It is a place in which students are able to pursue their academic potential and co-curricular engagement without being fearful of any of their surroundings, whether it be from others within or outside the campus, or from the actual infrastructure of the institution itself. A safe campus responds to such threats, and potential harmful situations, and takes decisive, corrective action to eliminate them. A safe campus is one

that is monitored for safety, one where the various dimensions of the environment are routinely evaluated, and adjustments are made as appropriate. Safety is an institutional responsibility and one that requires participation and commitment from multiple parties within the institution (Rund, 2002).

All three of these ideas are central for creating welcome and inclusive environments on our campuses.

### **General Recommendations**

As institutions across New Jersey move to create and/or maintain safe and inclusive environments, the working group shares the following general recommendations and encourages campuses to:

1. **Connect** your safety and inclusion efforts to your institution's mission, vision, and values, as well as build them into your strategic plan. This ensures that these efforts are central to your campus and hold all relevant stakeholders accountable.
2. **Consider** a broad understanding of diversity. Identities are complex and nuanced. It is critical to adopt a broad understanding of their associated socio-cultural factors and to consider their intersectionality.
3. **Engage** all relevant stakeholders. Efforts related to safety and inclusion should be everyone's responsibility. Resist the urge to silo these efforts in a particular office or relegate these duties to a select group's portfolio.
4. **Embrace** the dynamic nature of your safety and inclusion efforts. These efforts require ongoing attention as your campuses evolve.
5. **Provide** authority and access to the key personnel responsible for addressing inclusion, safety, and diversity (e.g., Chief Diversity Officer). Best practices indicate that relevant personnel should have the authority to engage in system-wide endeavors and the access to senior administration to collaborate with in fostering safety and inclusiveness.
6. **Promote** self-study efforts. Campuses are encouraged to evaluate their efforts around safety and inclusion regularly. Clear goals and objectives should be established and related mechanisms for evaluating efforts should be put in place. Additionally, campuses are encouraged to look at current data sets to identify and address any concerning trends.

### **Key Elements to Consider for Designing Safe and Inclusive Environments**

Based on the working group's collective wisdom from working in higher education in different areas across various campus, including academic affairs, administration, financial aid, student affairs, and other critical entities, this working group identified key elements for institutions of higher education to develop, implement, and foster initiatives related to diversity, inclusion, and safety. These elements are not necessarily sequential and are depicted in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. Key Elements to Consider for Designing Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments.*

### **Assessment**

To develop a plan for addressing inclusion and safety, it is important to conduct a scan of what currently exists on your campus to identify strengths and gaps. There are various tools to help assess your institution's endeavors. For example, environmental scans allow colleges and universities to engage in self-assessment, based on several key dimensions related to diversity. A sample tool is the Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education, developed by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE).<sup>1</sup>

Campus climate surveys are another way to assess current strengths and gaps related to safety, diversity and inclusion (see: "[Campus Climate Surveys: Implementation Guide and Survey Review](#)"). In addition to conducting environmental scans and campus climate surveys to determine your institution's next steps, assessment processes should be ongoing in order to identify the effectiveness of implemented initiatives and compare the experiences of students over time.

<sup>1</sup> [NERCHE Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education](#)

## Best Practices

The results of assessments conducted at your institution should be compared to existing best practices related to diversity, inclusion, and safety. From this comparison, recommendations should be generated with specific suggestions or proposals for addressing any gaps. A resource to help you in this process is the U.S. Department of Education's comprehensive report on promising practices that promote the advancement of diversity and inclusion in higher education (see: [Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education](#)).

*Examples of some best practices include the following:*

- **Offer mandatory and ongoing university-wide cultural competency training** for all levels of your campus community, including the board of trustees, the president's cabinet, faculty, staff, students, and alumni, so that everyone becomes aware of and understands what is necessary for an inclusive institution.
- **Ensure physical safety for all students.** This includes providing dormitories that are securely locked, with surveillance cameras in places where there is no need for privacy.
- **Provide safe and affirming spaces** for students, employees, and visitors, such as accessible gender neutral restrooms.
- **Organize tiered mentoring programs** for students, connecting them to their peers, faculty, staff, and/or alumni. This can promote a sense of community, connectivity, and personal growth, which furthers the sense of inclusion and diversity on campus.
- **Promote educational/professional development** opportunities for faculty and staff to learn strategies that help them establish safe and inclusive learning environments for all students. This will create and nurture a welcoming and inclusive culture on campus.
- **Provide mental health and disability services,** accommodations, and awareness training to meet all needs of any students requiring this assistance.
- **Provide easily-accessible mechanisms to report instances of bias.** Some institutions implemented online forms for students and staff to access remotely, for example, Montclair State University adopted "Simplicity," an online portal for reporting potential misconduct involving University employees, including harassment, discrimination, and other types of inappropriate behavior. Guidance for this resource can be found at: [Conduct Simplicity: How to Create a Public Incident Report](#)
- **Create effective programs to recruit and retain minority faculty and staff:** This must become a priority at New Jersey Higher Education Institutions, so our students see themselves reflected in their faculty and staff, thereby promoting diversity (see the guide on "Attracting and Supporting Diverse Faculty and Staff" produced by the Research, Innovation, and Talent Working group for more information).
- **Include work on diversity as criteria for tenure and promotion,** which may help faculty take these efforts seriously as they learn that the institution will consider this work formally in tenure and promotion decisions.
- **Providing departmental support** can be vital to tenure and promotion, but it is also crucial to avoid burnout from hurdling numerous barriers to deep and meaningful change. Are there other change agents among your colleagues? Are change agents

receiving tenure and being promoted? Are your departmental colleagues and the department chair talking seriously about diversity, equity, and inclusion?

- **Providing high level institutional support** through actions will speak louder than words. Look not only to what key administrators are saying regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. Who on campus is working on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and how much power do they have? Are they spoken about with respect? How many resources are being allocated? How do administrators treat others on your campus?

## Policies

A scan of institutional efforts to address diversity, safety, and inclusion should include a review of your institution's policies. Policies involve articulating the standards and rules of behavioral expectations and are critical for setting the tone on campus. There are various types of policies, including those that are legally required and those that are aspirational and can help build safe and inclusive policies. Below are some key policy areas in which your institution should be robust in order to create safe and inclusive learning environments, with links to further explanations in Appendix 1:

- [Anti-Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#)
- [Freedoms of Speech and Expression](#)
- [Bias-related & Hate Crimes](#)
- [Use of Technology & Social Media](#)
- [Student Code of Social Conduct](#)

### **Institutional policy statements on diversity and inclusion.**

In addition to having a range of policies related to these issues, your campus can demonstrate its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and safety by issuing institutional statements about its expectations for the campus community. This can be proactive, and not in response to any particular incident, to set the tone for the campus climate. For example, Montclair State University issued a statement to its community on campus climate for civility and human dignity. It was physically posted throughout campus and sent through email, explaining that the institution understands “its responsibility to foster an atmosphere of respect, understanding and good will among individuals and groups, with special sensitivity to those most likely to be subjected to disrespect, abuse and misunderstanding because of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation” (“Human Relations Statement on Campus Climate for Civility and Human Dignity,” n.d.).

Institutional statements may also be important to issue in reaction to a bias incident or a hate crime on campus to re-affirming the institution's values around diversity and inclusion. The President or a high-level university official should directly issue this statement denouncing the act. For example, San Jose's president, Dr. Mary Pappazain, sent out a university-wide communication to the community in response to hate incidents, asserting:

“Even as we engage in dialogue and review our relevant policies and practices, San Jose State University also will denounce the actions of white supremacist and white

nationalist hate groups. Our community will not tolerate bigotry, hatred, discrimination and other forms of social violence against individuals or groups based on their race, ethnicity, immigrant status, religion or other identities. We are committed to providing a campus community that is safe, equitable and responsive. Our inclusive educational environment will always challenge bigotry and ignorance” (Janes, 2019).

## **Procedures**

The spirit of the policy should be present in the procedures developed. These procedures should also be transparent. Procedures are the process by which recommendations and suggestions are implemented and carried out. In our collection of information, we have found some institutions of higher education who model that synergy. As an example, Princeton University’s procedures on addressing sexual misconduct as one of the many examples. Princeton University’s Title IX office created a specific website detailing their policies and the ways in which they implement these policies (see: [Policy on Discrimination and/or Harassment](#)).

## **Incentives**

There are significant incentives- or motivating factors- for fostering safety, diversity, and inclusion at institutions. According to the American Council on Education, “Diversity enriches the educational experience; it promotes personal growth and a healthy society; it strengthens communities and the workplace; and it enhances America’s economic competitiveness” (ACE Board of Directors, 2012). There are also existing federal and state funding opportunities that support enhancing diversity on campus. These programs can help improve students’ overall academic success, which lends to a more successful academic institution overall.

## **Accountability**

To create a safe, diverse, and inclusive environment, it is important to develop a system of accountability ensuring that colleges and universities (a) are responsive to the concerns of students, faculty, and staff, and (b) are prepared to take actionable steps to address problematic behaviors that may violate implemented policies. Such a system reinforces the importance of those policies in maintaining a learning environment, in which those with varying identities can thrive.

Alternatively, adopting restorative practices (such as peacemaking and/or healing circles) may also provide another opportunity to foster accountability. Trained staff can promote the use of indigenous practices to create a space and opportunity to address violations of the policies and repair the harm. Restorative practices strengthen relationships between individuals and foster a greater sense of safety and community accountability. These practices enhance communication and provide community members the opportunity to work through conflict and learn from each other. For more information on restorative justice options, see the [University of San Diego: Center for Restorative Justice](#) or the [International Institute: Defining Restorative](#).

Student-faculty coalition groups or town halls may offer another means of institutional accountability. Meetings or town halls can be used as forums for student and faculty representatives to engage with administrators regarding relevant issues regarding diversity, safety, and inclusion, such as systemic accountability. Administrators would have the opportunity to acknowledge the concerns of the group and collaborate with each other to develop concrete steps that address and repair the systemic shortcoming or “harm” that occurred. Whenever possible, institutions of higher education should share any data they collect on safety, diversity, and inclusion, as well as any kind of strategic plans to address gaps found. For more information on developing action plans related to campus safety and sexual violence, see:

[https://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/workinggroups/safe\\_and\\_inclusive\\_learning\\_environments/deliverable1](https://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/workinggroups/safe_and_inclusive_learning_environments/deliverable1).

Fostering a space for accountability that challenges and reimagines the distribution of power between students, faculty, and administrators may increase the institutional ability to maintain an environment that promotes safety, diversity, and inclusion. One way to do this is to draw upon transformative and feminist leadership styles, which can foster an environment in which students and faculty feel included in shaping the institution’s culture and environment. (see: [Transformative and Feminist Leadership for Women’s Rights](#)).

Lastly, it is also important to invite the greater campus community to participate in its safety, diversity, and inclusion efforts. By framing these issues as areas where everyone has an individual responsibility and a role to play in creating welcoming climates, community members can hold one another and the institution accountable to its commitment.

### **Closing Comments**

Our hope is that this guidebook serves as a helpful resource, which institutions can use to implement policies and practices that embrace diversity and promote safe and inclusive environments for all identities. The framework provided here illustrates several important factors to consider for implementation of these policies in procedures and practices that help cultivate and nurture safe and inclusive learning environments. We want to acknowledge that this guidebook is a living document. We are not endorsing any one example, instead providing a myriad of options for institutions to access. We recognize that the ways in which we understand student success will evolve, so we want this document to continue growing alongside them. It is not enough to recruit students with varying identities; it is essential that we create safe and inclusive spaces where students can learn, grow, and thrive.

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## Suggested Readings and Resources

### General

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## **Race/Ethnicity**

AAC& U - Equity Scorecard <https://www.aacu.org/node/12607>

“The Equity Scorecard™ is both a process and a data tool developed by researchers at the Center for Urban Education (CUE), which is housed at the University of Southern California’s Rossier School of Education. As a process, the Equity Scorecard™ combines a theoretical framework with practical strategies to initiate institutional change that will

improve outcomes for all students as well as close gaps experienced by students from underrepresented racial-ethnic groups.”

### **Sexual Orientation**

Campus Pride <https://www.campuspride.org/>

“Campus Pride represents the leading national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization for student leaders and campus groups working to create a safer college environment for LGBTQ students. The organization is a volunteer-driven network “for” and “by” student leaders. The primary objective of Campus Pride is to develop necessary resources, programs and services to support LGBTQ and ally students on college campuses across the United States.”

### **Disability**

Best Colleges - College Guide for Students with Physical Disabilities

<https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/college-planning-with-physical-disabilities/>

“For students with physical disabilities, finding a suitable postsecondary institution can be difficult. Thanks to legislative efforts over the last 50 years, institutions of higher learning have considerably expanded campus resources for those with special needs. This resource guide includes information on accommodating students with disabilities, transitioning from high school to college, assistive technology, and other resources.”

National Educational Association of Disabled Students -

[https://www.neads.ca/en/norc/campusnet/leadership\\_starting.php](https://www.neads.ca/en/norc/campusnet/leadership_starting.php)

“The National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS), supports full access to education and employment for post-secondary students and graduates with disabilities across Canada. This link is to a to a guidebook for students with disabilities to ‘Start an Organization of Students with Disabilities on your Campus’ and to organize at the grassroots level, using existing resource materials from the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS).”

### **Religion**

Interfaith Youth Core - <https://www.ifyc.org/>

“IFYC works in higher education, partnering with U.S. colleges and universities to make interfaith cooperation a vital part of the college experience, and ultimately a positive force in our society. Our various programs and initiatives equip campus leaders and help energize their efforts. IFYC offers free tools and other knowledge resources to students and educators, we offer grants and other funding, we organize spaces (real and virtual) to get training and share ideas, we advance research to help U.S. higher education find solutions and establish best practices, and we work directly with institutions who need a partner in engaging complex issues of religious and worldview diversity.”

AAC&U Leadership Practices for Interfaith Excellence in Higher Education - <https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2015/winter-spring/patel>

“This is an article about leadership practices that colleges and universities can embrace and apply, as part of a liberal education, that promote interfaith excellence. It describes what excellence looks like when it comes to the engagement of religious diversity on a college or university campus.”

### **National & Geographic Origin/International Students**

Diversity Abroad - <https://www.diversitynetwork.org/>

“Diversity Abroad’s mission is to create equitable access to the benefits of global education by empowering educators, engaging stakeholders, and connecting diverse students to resources and opportunity.”

Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Comprehensive Internationalization in Higher Education - [https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.diversitynetwork.org/resource/resmgr/Advancing\\_Diversity\\_Equity..pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.diversitynetwork.org/resource/resmgr/Advancing_Diversity_Equity..pdf)

“Diversity Abroad’s Strategic Leadership Forum convenes an intimate cohort of Chief Diversity Officers and Senior International Officers to examine best practices for strategic collaboration as higher education institutions tackle the challenges and opportunities of both campus internationalization and diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.”

### **First Generation**

Center for First-Generation Student Success - <https://firstgen.naspa.org/blog/beyond-barriers-best-practices-for-first-generation-students-provides-best-practices-for-working-with-first-generation-students-on-college-campuses>

“Advising, academic support, financial guidance, programs, initiatives, resources, tools, and support for first-generation students.”

### **Veteran/Military**

American Council on Education - Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions - <https://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Toolkit-for-Veteran-Friendly-Institutions.aspx>

“Online resource designed to help higher education institutions build effective programs for military-connected students, including a variety of best practices and models.”

## Other Possible Resources

### Assessments

- [Campus Pride Index](#)
- [National Inclusive Excellence Toolkit](#)

### Professional Development

- [National Conference on Race & Ethnicity \(NCORE\)](#)
- [NASPA Multicultural Institute](#)
- [Paperclip Communications](#)

### Associations

- [National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education \(NADOHE\)](#)

### Multicultural Centers

- [Association of Black Cultural Centers \(ABCC\)](#)
- [CAS Standards](#)

### Awards

- [INSIGHT into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award \(HEED\)](#)

### Trans-Affirming

- [Best Practices for Asking Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation on College Applications](#)
- [Best Practices for Supporting Trans Students in Higher Education](#)
- [Best Practices for Supporting Transgender and Queer Students of Color](#)
- [Colleges and Universities with Nondiscrimination Policies that Include Gender Identity/Expression](#)
- [Colleges and Universities that Cover Transition-Related Medical Expenses Under Student Health Insurance](#)
- [Colleges and Universities that Cover Transition-Related Medical Expenses Under Employee Health Insurance](#)
- [Colleges and Universities that Provide Gender-Inclusive Housing](#)
- [Colleges and Universities that Allow Students to Change the Name and Gender on Campus Records and to Have Their Pronouns on Course Rosters](#)
- [Colleges and Universities with a Trans-Inclusive Intramural Athletic Policy](#)
- [Colleges and Universities with LGBTQ Identity Questions as an Option on Admission Applications & Enrollment Forms](#)
- [Colleges and Universities with LGBTQ Identity Questions as an Option on Admission Applications & Enrollment Forms](#)
- [Women's Colleges with Trans-Inclusive Admissions Policies](#)

## Appendix A: Policies

This appendix provides a list of sample policies established by colleges across the country in the following areas: Anti-Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, Freedoms of Speech and Expression, Bias-related & Hate Crimes, Use of Technology and Social Media, and Student Code of Social Conduct.

To ensure variety of colleges were represented, we included a range from 4-year research universities to community colleges, including both public and private institutions. This is not a comprehensive listing of policies, nor is it an endorsement of the policies. Some of the policies were selected because they depicted verbiage that promoted safety and inclusion, which other institutions may want to consider when crafting their policies.

### Anti-Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

*Brief description:* These first two examples of university policies specifically address harassment and discrimination. They use specific language for visually identifying these issues to help individuals on campus recognize violations of this policy. They also delineate instructions and responsibilities for all parties likely to be involved and provide details on how to contact the campus offices and staff best equipped to address any reports of these incidents. The policies are also easy to locate and review because they have their own page on each respective website.

*Sample Policy Language from [Ramapo College of New Jersey: Policy Prohibiting Discrimination](#):*

- a comprehensive list of specific “protected categories,” such as race, religion, and gender identity, which can be the target of harassment and discrimination
- Title IX language delineating the protected members under federal law.
- Specifying the physical locations to which the policy applies: “conduct that occurs at the College” AND “conduct that occurs at any location which can be reasonably regarded as an extension of the College.”
- Separate processes for filing a discrimination complaint specific to reports by either student or by a faculty/staff/administrator/” applicants for employment”
- Direct hyperlinks to any relevant forms for easy access
- Names and contact info of various faculty/staff/administrators or offices responsible for intake of complaints or any other duties
- Guiding definitions and examples of “behaviors that may constitute a violation of this policy”
- Responsibilities of every party included (students, staff, the College) prior to and after the reporting of an incident
- Information specifically regarding the processes of confidentiality and training
- Explicit language discussing the expected disciplinary action for violation of this policy

*Sample Policy Language from [Union County College: Non-discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy](#):*

- A table of contents for easily glancing through the policy’s headings

- A few “safe options” for students who have been victims of sexual misconduct, including ways to obtain a restraining order or shelters for victims of domestic violence
- Guidelines on how to proceed as a student or employee when “sex or gender based violence was reported to you”
- A requirement for education and training for all employees and students, including specific areas that must be addressed, such as “discrimination awareness and prevention” and “equal employment opportunity issues for supervisors”

*Brief description:* This third example of a university policy specifically addresses sexual misconduct and sexual harassment, as well as other related prohibited behaviors (ex. stalking, retaliation, flashing, or public sex acts). The institution here placed all “University-wide Regulations” on one page with hyperlinks at the top for each policy on the page to make them easily accessible.

*Sample Policy Language from [Princeton University: Regulation 1.3 - Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct](#):*

- Language explaining the responsibility of the university to respond to any suggestive or observed sexual misconduct:
  - “Lack of a formal complaint does not diminish the University’s obligation to respond to information suggestive of sex discrimination or sexual misconduct.”
- Language regrading confidentiality and “interim measures” which the university will help the victim with, including “rescheduling of exams” or “change in work schedule or job assignment”
- Explicitly listing the people to which this policy applies:
  - “University students, regardless of enrollment status;”
  - “faculty; staff;”
  - “Third parties (i.e., non-members of the University community, such as vendors, alumni/ae, visitors, or local residents).”
- Definitions and explicit examples of sex discrimination/sexual misconduct (this kind of explicit language can be especially helpful to enforcers of this policy):
  - “Non-Consensual Sexual Penetration (commonly referred to as rape). Any act of vaginal or anal penetration by a person's penis, finger, other body part, or an object, or oral penetration by a penis, without consent.”
- Serious and specific range of disciplinary actions against proven acts of sexual misconduct, varying from a dean’s warning to expulsion
- Language to clarify common misunderstandings regarding actions committed to violate this policy:
  - Example: “The consumption of alcohol or the use of illegal substances does not constitute a mitigating circumstance when it contributes to a violation regarding sexual misconduct.”
  - Example: “Domestic Violence in the Context of Intimate Relationships.”
- A large section defining consent with specific examples including:
  - “Consent is not implicit in a person's manner of dress.”
  - “Accepting a meal, a gift, or an invitation for a date does not imply or constitute consent”

- A comprehensive list of specific with University resources for students, such as “the University’s Sexual Harassment/Assault Advising, Resources, and Education (SHARE) office” and their contact info
- A list of available resources in the community not affiliated with the University, such as “Mercer County Sexual Assault Response Team” or “Womanspace, Inc.”
- Sections detailing penalty and appeal procedures for different groups of respondents: students, faculty/staff, third-parties

## Freedom of Speech and Expression

*Brief description:* These two policies aim to provide guidance on the Freedoms of Speech and Expression, which follow tenets of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. They explain the protections guaranteed to dissenters and to each organization, staff, and student on campus, as well as the responsibilities they have when bringing in these guest speakers. The policies also explain the restrictions each institution has placed on these freedoms.

*Sample Policy Language from [Kean University: Free Speech an Dissent Policy](#):*

- An explicit guarantee from the University to give its members “free speech and dissent”
- Highlighting “the obligation” for those dissenting “not to interfere with any member’s freedom to hear and to study unpopular and controversial views on intellectual and public issues”
- Explicitly stating the University’s commitment of “supporting the right of a group or individual to sponsor speakers or events with unpopular or controversial points of view while enabling those who oppose these points of view the opportunity to express disagreement or dissent in ways that do not restrict the ability of individuals to hear the ideas being presented”
- Language addressing restrictions on open meetings/events (where attendance is voluntary), as well as the classroom and academic freedom, in reference to the invitation of external speakers
- A list of examples “meant to suggest the limits of acceptable dissent” but not “comprehensive”
- Hyperlinks to guidelines and a form to request an area for demonstration and distribution of accompanying literature on campus

*Sample Policy Language from [Bergen Community College Board of Trustees: Student Guest speaker Policy](#)*

- Referencing guest speakers invited by organizations on campus: “No attempt is made to regulate the selection of speakers.”
- The requirement that any organizations sponsoring events with outside speakers include the College’s pre-written statement (written in this policy) in any advertising as a disclaimer that the College did not necessarily provide “approval or endorsement of the views expressed by the guest speaker, or by anyone else present at the event”

Sample Policy Language from [St. Louis University: Policy on Speech, Expression and Civil Discourse](#)

- The responsibilities of “a member of the University community or organization” when they present “a speech or performance outside the classroom or not as a part of the curriculum for an academic course”

*Brief description:* This policy mainly focuses on academic freedom as it relates to freedom of speech and expression. It discusses the institution’s boundaries, as well as the general responsibilities of its members.

Sample Policy Language from [University of Wisconsin: Commitment to Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression](#)

- Explicit definitions of academic freedom and freedom of expression, giving students and faculty “the right to speak and write as a member of the university community or as a private citizen without institutional discipline or restraint, on scholarly matters, or on matters of public concern.”
- Detailed language on where the university is not to interfere with these freedoms, keeping the university from any “attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they, or others, find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive”
- Clearly stating that the institution must and will restrict these freedoms if someone’s actions violate state/federal law or other university policies

## **Bias-Related & Hate Crimes**

*Brief description:* These two policies address Hate and Bias-related Crimes. They discuss the definition of these terms according to the institutions and the law. They also include specific details on recognizing and reporting any incidents in order to resolve the matter as efficiently and peacefully and possible.

Sample Policy Language from [Stevens Institute of Technology: Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Bias Incidents](#)

- Under Prohibited Content, the university defines bias incidents or hate crimes, stating that the latter are prohibited under federal and state law
- A procedure is delineated from reporting an incident, to the investigation, any interim measures, findings/recommendations, and an appeal process
- A section on retaliation is included, specifying that if it occurs “any time during or after the investigation,” disciplinary actions will be taken

Sample Policy Language from [Pace University: Hate/Bias-Related Crime Policy:](#)

- The University quotes its Guiding Principles of Conduct to explain the responsibility of each member of Pace’s community to maintain an environment that fosters free speech
- There is a strict and very detailed definition of the term “hate crime”
- The title IX coordinator and Affirmative Action Officer’s contact information is available for reporting, as well as a list of other officials and offices

- For anyone unsure of whether a hate-crime has been committed, the contact number for Counseling Centers in New York is included
- There are hyperlinks to policies regarding harassment, sex-based misconduct, and university disciplinary procedures

## Use of Technology & Social Media

*Brief description:* These two policies address the responsibilities of the members of each respective institution when using technology on campus. The second one specifically addresses social media platforms and their use in affiliation with the University.

*Sample Policy Language from [College of Saint Elizabeth: Acceptable Use Policy](#):*

- Language addressing privacy when using “the College’s computing, communication and information resources” as well as “the [College’s] right to access communications and other data using College hardware, software, and information systems for its legitimate business or academic purposes”
- A list of responsibilities for any “users” of the College’s technology, including “refrain[ing] from conduct that can be characterized as harassing, obscene, or a nuisance”

*Sample Policy Language from [Rowan University: Social Media Policy](#)*

- Dates for most recent revision to the policy are placed at the top for the viewer
- The parameters for the policy’s applicability are specifically stated: “all members of the University community who use social media for University-affiliated communication and those who use the University name in association with social media accounts”
- A disclaimer that the policy is not comprehensive accounting for the rapid growth of technology, “as the evolution of technology precludes the University from anticipating all potential means of storing, capturing and transmitting information”
- Outlined expectation of the University’s members on their use of any social media platforms in connection with the institution “in an official capacity for their unit”
- Language prohibiting any “personal use of social media” with the University, adding the following:
  - “All accounts and posts in which a user identifies him/herself as a member of the University community should clearly communicate: ‘The views and opinions expressed are strictly those of the author. The contents have not been reviewed or approved by Rowan University’ or ‘Views/opinions are my own.’”
- A specific and simple procedure on how to report harassment done through social media
- A list of all the University’s official social media accounts necessary in the event of crisis management

## Student Code of Social Conduct

*Brief description:* This policy details the institution's expectation of its students, as well as the disciplinary measures that will be taken if students violate any part of the policy.

*Sample Policy Language from [Rutgers University: University Code of Student Conduct](#)*

- A section explaining parties responsible for the policy, their contact information, the parts they recently revised within the policy
- Language establishing this policy's jurisdiction on "University premises; at University sponsored activities; at functions, activities, or events hosted by recognized students or student organizations, on or off campus; and other off-campus conduct that affects a University interest."
- Hyperlinks to other policies regarding the expectation for student behavior, such as academic integrity and sexual harassment
- Specificity on the kinds of violations a students can commit under different subtitles, such as "invasion of privacy" and "Hazing"
- Details on the criteria upon which disciplinary sanctions are determined and acted upon, ranging from fines to loss of university housing or expulsion
- A through outline of the disciplinary and appeals process for violations of this policy

