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Navigating Your Role as a TA & Mentor

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Navigating Your Role as a TA/Mentor

1. Understand UH policies and procedures
2. Review appropriate professional responses
3. Equip you with resources

CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Equal Opportunity Services

- Anti-Discrimination Reporting
- Affirmative Action Plan
- Electronic Information Resource Accessibility
- Employee Accommodation Requests
- Sexual Misconduct/ Title IX Reporting

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Discrimination

- Treating an individual or members of a **Protected Class less favorably** because of their membership in that class or having a policy or practice that has disproportionally adverse impact on Protected Class members.

Harassment

- Subjecting an individual on the basis of membership in a protected class to unlawful severe or pervasive treatment that constitutes:
  - Humiliating, abusive, or threatening conduct or behavior that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group;
  - An intimidating, hostile, or abusive living or working environment that alters the conditions of learning, living, or working; or
  - An unreasonable interference with an individual's academic or work performance

Anti-Discrimination Policy

System Administrative Memorandum (SAM) 01.D.07

**Addresses Discrimination & Harassment on the basis of a protected class:**

- Veteran Status
- Genetic Information
- Sex (including Pregnancy)
- Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression
- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Age
- National Origin
- Disability

UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy

SAM 01.D.08

Referred to at times as **Title IX** recently updated in August of 2020 by the Dept. of Ed.

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, **be denied the benefits of,** or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

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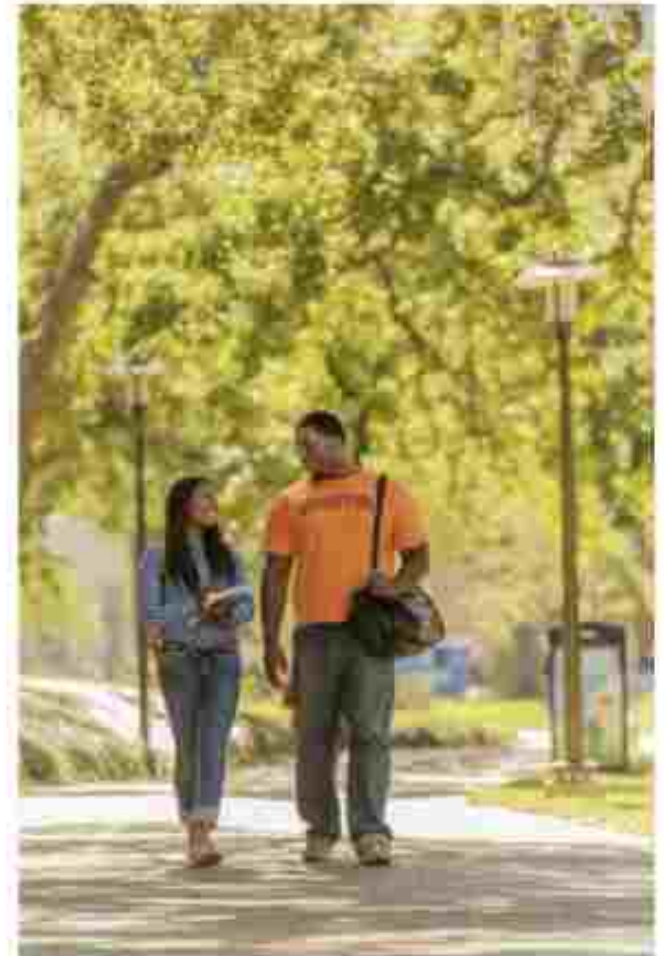
Sexual Misconduct Policy/Title IX

- UH addresses all sexual misconduct under the Sexual Misconduct Policy regardless of whether the incident falls under the new federal laws.

- We prioritize safety and are committed to taking all reports of sexual misconduct seriously.

Sexual Misconduct Policy

- Covers faculty, staff, students, and visitors
- No time limit to report or file a formal complaint
- Provides equal rights to people involved
- Making a report does not automatically start the formal process
- UH employees—including Graduate and Teaching Assistants—are required to report allegations of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator.

What does the SMP cover?

- Sexual Assault
- Non-consensual Sexual Touching
- Stalking
- Sexual Intimidation
- Sexual Exploitation
- Dating and Domestic Violence
- Sexual Harassment

Do I report?

Yes...Even if:

They heard it second-hand.

They don't know everyone involved.

They were asked to keep it a secret.

They're not *sure* if it's an EOS issue.

It might be a rumor.

They heard it from a third party.

Stalking

- College students are <u>more likely</u> to experience stalking

- **Be aware of the information you share online**

- Safety in online dating
  - You don't really know who's on the other side of a profile. Don't immediately connect with someone on social media
  - Let a friend know where you are going
  - Majority of our stalking cases are social media related.
- **Observe boundaries!**

Netflix series, You

Professionalism on Social Media

Remember the rules regarding TA and student conduct are the same for online and in-person interactions

- **Discrimination** based on race, color, religion, sex, etc. (lack of respect for women)
- **Harassment such as** "Sexual" harassment including unwelcome conduct such as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or dates, remarks about appearance, discussions, remarks or jokes of a sexual nature, and/or other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.
- **Harassing Conduct such as** intimidation, ridicule, insult, comments
- **Retaliation** action that might deter a reasonable person from participating in activity
- **Avoid** inappropriate language (such as profane words)
- *Social media can connect classmates for group projects, support, community, and networking*
- *Warn students that quiz, test, homework, lab, etc. information shared on social media will be a violation of university policy*

Reporting

Equal Opportunity Services

- File a University Complaint
- Online reporting link at the bottom of every UH webpage

University of Houston Police Department

- Criminal Complaint

Fraud & Non-Compliance Hotline

- Option to report anonymously to the University
- By phone or online report

Responding

- **Let them know you are not a confidential resource. Meaning that you'll need to make a report to EOS**
  - Offer confidential resources
- **Listen.**
  - You don't need to fill silence.
- **Ask:**
  - Are you **physically hurting**?
  - Do you feel **safe**?
  - **What can I do for you**?
- **Let them know that they are not alone.**
  - Be prepared to offer information about resources.
- **You are not expected to be an expert, counselor, or investigator.**

- Be **professional**.
- Be consistent in your treatment of other students and your fellow staff.
- **Do not discuss incidents later with friends**.
- If you have concerns about ongoing issues, seek help from EOS or your supervisor.
- Remember, when people see you, they see your position.

Signs of Distress

As Teaching Assistants and Mentors, you may or may not know this information. However, if you become aware of signs of distress it's important that you take action!

Examples:
- Changes in academic performance
- Excessive absences or tardiness
- Avoiding participation
- Dominating discussion
- Disruptive behavior
- Observable signs of injury
- References to suicide or death

What I Should NOT Do?

- Ignore concerning behavior
- Keep suicidal ideation to yourself
- Try to "fix" the situation
- Adopt an overprotective or over involved attitude
- Treat someone's behavior as gossip

What Can I Do?

- Be patient with yourself and your students
- Reset reasonable expectations when necessary
- Offer resources (e.g. Center for Students with Disabilities, LAUNCH)
- Practice empathy

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How to Respond and Refer

"I hear you are running into some barriers this semester. Do you know about the offices that offer support to students?"

"I believe that you are really struggling, and I want to make sure you get the help you need to be successful."

Disruptive students

- Try to de-escalate the situation

- Ask questions to understand

- Avoid become defensive

- Terminate the meeting/discussion if needed

- Alert UHPD, CART, CAPS

- Establish a code word for emergencies; ask a colleague to be on standby for support

On-Campus Resources

- **Confidential**
  - CAPS
  - Sexual Misconduct Support Services (Devon Fan)
  - Health Center
  - A.D. Bruce Religion Center
- **Reporting**
  - EOS (University Policy)
  - UHPD (Legal)
  - Online
- **Other Resources**
  - UH Wellness (Prevention)
  - Women and Gender Resource Center

Consensual Relationship Policy

- Defined as: "Any consensual dating, intimate, romantic, and/or sexual relationship between:
  - An **employee** (including staff, faculty or student employees) and
  - An **individual that the employee has responsibility as part of their job duties** to teach, instruct, manage, supervise, advise, counsel, oversee, grade, coach, train, treat, or evaluate in any way."
- The University prohibits consensual dating, intimate, romantic, and/or sexual relationships **between faculty and undergraduate students**.
- The University prohibits consensual dating, intimate, romantic, and/or sexual relationships **between coaches and undergraduate students**.

Creating a Good Environment

Everyone MUST take reports of sexual harassment seriously

- Encourage reporting
- **Never assume behavior is accepted**
  - Just because people are laughing doesn't mean the comment or joke is appropriate
  - Don't assume everyone appreciates your sense of humor
- **Be a good bystander-bystander intervention**
  - Directly address; delegate or diffuse
- Do not retaliate!

Set Expectations for Acceptable Conduct

Protect and promote the pursuit of the following goals :

- The opportunity for other students to attain their educational objectives,

- The creation and maintenance of an intellectual and educational atmosphere throughout the University platforms, and

- The protection of the health, safety, welfare, property, and human rights of all members of the University.

Refer to Student Conduct and Community Standards for processes
https://uh.edu/dos/_files/student-code-of-conduct-2019-2020.pdf

Avoid...

- Making the class harder than it should be, even if you have the power to do so.
- Ignoring preferred pronouns if you are aware of the existence of such. (she, they, or he may be displayed behind a students name to indicate preferred pronoun)
- Treating individuals less favorably because of their membership in a protected class (i.e. gender or psychological/physical disability).
- An outward impression that coding or tech is a "nerd industry" where only certain people can be successful.
- Giving off the impression that only certain classes of individuals can be successful in the technological industry.

What NOT to do

- Do not speak with arrogance to students especially to students who are struggling.

- Do not discourage students by saying things like "this is easy, yeah you should be done with this by now"

- Do not show surprise if the student does not know an essential skill (it is easy for students to pick up on condescendence and feel badly)

What to do

- Express empathy, say that subject matter can be difficult at times

- Encourage students to do their best and to study the information they find difficult

- Express to students the importance of learning essential skills, offer support, and suggest repetition

What NOT to do

- Do not follow a teaching method that promotes only getting the right answers

- Do not offer help when you are truly busy, thus unable to provide a student with undivided attention.

What to do

- Teach in a way that fosters understanding concepts, testing (not teaching) is used to check knowledge

- Stick with the office hours you set and update students if office hours need to change. If a student reaches out for help inform them that you will assist them when you finish your current task

CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Just an FYI we aren't going to be answering any more questions about Lab quiz, so don't text us on Teams

I'm getting a lot of questions that I cannot answer at the moment. Continue to submit your questions and I will address them at my earliest convenience.

- don't test me on the disorganization bs guys we have been giving u guys extensions, if u want a fully structured course we can stop extending things and keep it as is

Thanks for the feedback. I'll ask everyone for patience and flexibility in order to promote learning of the material for everyone

- ~~Id be okay giving 1 or 2 grades but only here cause i actually enjoy watching u guys suffer~~

CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- lmao honestly I dont get it when people say they're gonna drop a CS class. Like. Are you not a CS major or do you plan to be a semester behind for like ever? not to be rude or anything but

I'm sorry to hear that people are considering dropping the class, be sure to ask questions and make sure you have the time needed to understanding the material. Meet with your academic adviser before dropping any courses to discuss your options.

- plz don't txt him guys I'm working with him rn
- wait until after the meeting when I have all the info I swear some of u succ I'm trying my hardest

We're currently working and will respond when finished with the current task. Thanks for your patience.

- ~~ur on thin ice~~

CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- the hardest questions r probs gonna be the lab questions I am creating, cause these are testing if u actually understand the labs or if ur just winging them

Be sure to study the labs we've completed there will be questions to check understanding of how the concepts are applied

- I just wanted to reach out to u guys directly cause u r the ones that r gonna fail it anyways

I'm reaching out directly because I'm concern about your progress up to this point in the class. I want to encourage you to devote more time to studying and ask questions if things are unclear

- ~~so if ur okay with a public humiliation lmk~~
- ~~the problem took me 20 minutes to code with no problems, but for u guys I expect it to be 2 hours of questioning why u choose~~ a major in CS

What support services does EOS offer?

- Academic accommodations
- Safety Planning
- Changing parking locations
- Changing residence halls
- No Contact Orders

...and more!

Contact EOS

- Interim Title IX Coordinator: Toni Benoit
- Email: eos@uh.edu
- Phone: 713-743-8835
- In-person:
  - Student Service Center 2
  - Next to CSD
- **Make a report by clicking "Sexual Misconduct Reporting & Awareness" at the bottom of any UH webpage**

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CAPS & Other Referral Resources

CAPS:

- Remote services via telehealth
  - Let's Talk Consultation
  - Triage (M-F; 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.)
  - Workshops
  - Single Session
  - Individual Counseling
  - Couples Counseling
  - After-hours crisis support
- QPR Virtual Training
- COVID-19 web resources

Additional Resources:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- CART
- UHPD (713-743-3333)
- Center for Students with Disabilities
- LAUNCH- tutoring services, academic counseling, ADHD workshops

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Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Phone number:

(713) 743 – 5454

Health 2 Building 2nd Floor

Location:

Main Campus: Student Service Center 1, Suite 226

UH at Sugar Land: George Building, Suite 119 *limited hours

Website:

www.uh.edu/caps

Social media:

Facebook @UHCAPS

Twitter @UH_caps

Instagram @uhcaps

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uh.edu/caps/calendar