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**A. POLICY STATEMENT**

Stephens College is committed to creating a safe and respectful learning, living, and working environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, abuse, intimidation and/or violence. No enrolled student or employee shall be discriminated against or harassed on the basis of age, color, disability, gender expression and identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status and all other classifications protected by law in the administration of educational and employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, and all other programs administered by the College; or in its employment practices. Consistent with college policy, and as allowed by law, the same principles apply to admissions policies and practices concerning women applicants to the residential undergraduate program.

Furthermore, the College prohibits retaliation against anyone because that person makes a good faith complaint under this Policy, assists in an investigation of such complaint, or otherwise exercises any rights protected by law or under this Policy.

**B. PURPOSE**

To establish and maintain a safe and nondiscriminatory learning, living and working environment in which all individuals are treated with dignity and respect and to prevent the occurrence of any form of discrimination or harassment by expressing the College's strong disapproval of such action.

**C. SCOPE**

This Policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, vendors, contractors, guests, and others in the College environment.

By contractual agreement, all on-campus vendors will follow this policy.

**D. DEFINITIONS**

Harassment is defined as unreasonable, unwelcome conduct that is based on an individual's race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, age, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, veteran or military status, or any other classifications protected by law or College policy. Harassment can occur in any form and can be directed at individuals or groups. When harassment objectively and subjectively harms the person by severely, persistently, or pervasively interfering with the person's educational opportunities, peaceful enjoyment of residence and community, or terms of employment, it is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion/termination.

Harassment denies an individual dignity and respect and may take on different forms. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of that individual's race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, age, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, veteran or military status (or that of an individual's relatives, friends, or associates);

- Threats, derogatory comments, jokes, innuendoes, insults, slurs, epithets, negative stereotyping, and other similar conduct that relate to race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, age, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, veteran or military status; or
- The placement, dissemination or circulation in the workplace or on campus of any written or graphic material (in hard copy or electronic form) that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, age, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, veteran or military status. In all cases, the College encourages individuals to seek support and assistance as soon as harassing conduct occurs.

Although illustrative, the above summary of prohibited behavior is not meant to be all-inclusive. Rather, any form of inappropriate discriminatory, intimidating, or harassing behavior by students, employees, or other individuals associated with Stephens College may subject an individual to corrective, disciplinary, and/or other appropriate action, up to and including expulsion/termination, as applicable.

Discrimination is defined as any action that specifically deprives other members of the community of educational or employment access, benefits or opportunities on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, age, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, veteran or military status, or any other classifications protected by law or College policy. Discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfavorably on inequitably because of that person's status as part of a protected class.

Retaliation is defined as any act or attempt to retaliate against or seek retribution from any individual or group of individuals involved in the investigation and/or resolution of a complaint. Retaliation can take many forms, including continued abuse or violence, bullying, threats, intimidation or any action that significantly disadvantages or restricts an individual as to their status as students or employees, or their ability to gain the benefits or opportunities of a program. Any individual or group of individuals, not just a claimant or respondent, can engage in retaliation.

## **E. PROCEDURES**

Stephens College takes every report of discrimination and harassment seriously and will promptly and equitably respond to all reports in order to eliminate the discrimination or harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects on any individual or the community.

Any member of the College community may make a formal complaint. Complaints can be made orally or in writing to the Title IX Coordinator, the 504/ADA Coordinator, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Student Development or the Director of Human Resources (contact information is listed in Section F of this Policy).

For matters related to gender-based discrimination or sexual harassment, the procedures in the Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy will govern the investigation. For all other matters involving employees, Human Resources will conduct the investigation. For all other matters involving students, Student Development will conduct the investigation. If the subject of a complaint is a faculty member, the relevant provisions of the Stephens College Faculty Personnel Policies shall apply. If the subject of a complaint is a student, the relevant provisions of the Stephens College Student Conduct Code shall apply.

Should it be determined from the investigation by a preponderance of the evidence that a violation of the College's policy on discrimination and harassment has occurred, appropriate action will be taken and will reflect the severity of the incident and any past discrimination or harassment offenses. If the investigation finds no violation of this policy, the complaint shall be dismissed.

When appropriate, minor infractions can oftentimes be resolved informally and with remedial steps, including training, counseling, restorative justice or mediation.

The resolution of all complaints of violations of this policy must fulfill the College's responsibilities to prevent future discrimination and harassment and the creation of a hostile environment, and to remedy any negative effects of the discrimination or harassment in question. Claims of gender-based discrimination or sexual harassment will also be handled in accordance with Title VII and Title IX, and claims of discrimination or harassment regarding physical ability will be handled in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the American with Disabilities Acts.

Retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, makes a complaint or participates or assists in an investigation under this policy is expressly prohibited. Retaliation is itself a separate, serious violation of this policy and should be reported in the same manner as a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

#### *False Information and Malicious Accusations*

Any individual who knowingly files false and malicious accusations of discrimination, harassment, retaliation or intimidation, who knowingly provides false information to College officials, or who intentionally misleads College officials who are involved in the investigation or resolution of a report of discrimination, harassment, retaliation or intimidation may be subject to disciplinary action or other sanctions up to and including expulsion or termination. Erroneous reports or complaints of discrimination, harassment, retaliation or intimidation made in good faith are exempted from this provision.

## **F. CONTACT**

- Inquiries or complaints concerning the application of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, including the institutional response to sex- and gender-based discrimination and harassment, may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator Shannon Walls – (573) 876-7250, [sbwalls@stephens.edu](mailto:sbwalls@stephens.edu), LRW 342, Campus Box 2001.

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- Inquiries or complaints concerning the application of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 may be referred to the ADA/504 Coordinator: Sady Mayer Strand – (573) 876-7240, [smayer@stephens.edu](mailto:smayer@stephens.edu), Student Success Center, Hugh Stephens Library, Campus Box 2111.
  - Inquiries or complaints concerning other forms of discrimination in the educational context may be referred to the Vice President for Academic Affairs: Dr. Leslie Willey – (573) 876-7213, [lwilley@stephens.edu](mailto:lwilley@stephens.edu), LRW 339, Campus Box 2022.
  - Inquiries or complaints concerning other forms of discrimination in the residential or extracurricular context may be referred to the Vice President for Student Development: Dr. Vicky Owles – (573) 876-7212, [vowles@stephens.edu](mailto:vowles@stephens.edu), Stamper Commons, Campus Box 2033.
  - Inquiries or complaints concerning other forms of discrimination in the employment context may be referred to the Director of Human Resources: Kim Schellenberger – (573) 876-7172, [kschellenberger@stephens.edu](mailto:kschellenberger@stephens.edu), Visitors Center, Campus Box 2036.
  - Although the College encourages the use of its procedures to address complaints under this Policy, students and employees may also file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-421-3481 or [ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov).