MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

March 14, 2020

Dear Sociology Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students—and Student, Temp, and On-Call Employees,

Now that we have endured one of the more hectic weeks at MSU in recent years, I would like to share with us all some important workplace behavioral expectations and key university policies. This announcement is both timely and prudent.

It is *timely* because we have a newly codified set of behavioral expectations in the College and a recently revised University protocol for how key units/leadership coordinate when there is a reported violation of our Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct or our Anti-Discrimination Policy.

It is *prudent* not only because it may deter us from problematic behavior—which may be even more harmful to others during such times of heightened confusion, uncertainty, and stress—but also because it may help us better understand our rights as MSU employees and/or students and our options for reporting such behavior when it directly or indirectly affects us.

First, I draw your attention to the Community Code of Conduct, which we recently adopted in the College. I have included this immediately after my letter. This is an aspirational code guided by the six values in the College's strategic plan. As such, it describes behaviors to which we aspire and standards to which we hold ourselves and others.

Second, below are links to several important university policies on website of the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE).

MSU's Notice of Nondiscrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Non-Retaliation
<https://oie.msu.edu/nondiscrimination-anti-harassment-non-retaliation/index.html>

MSU's Anti-Discrimination Policy
<https://oie.msu.edu/policies/adp.html>

MSU's Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct
<https://oie.msu.edu/policies/rvsm.html>

MSU's Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Policy
<https://oie.msu.edu/policies/disability-and-reasonable-accommodation-policy.html>

**College of
Social Science**

Department of
Sociology

509 E. Circle Drive
316 Berkey Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824

Phone: 517-355-6640
sociology.msu.edu

Third, the link below takes you to page informing you how to file a report about behavior that may violate MSU's Anti-Discrimination Policy or Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct.

    <https://oie.msu.edu/file-a-report/index.html>

Fourth, if you click on "Protocols (PDF)" or "A protocol for coordination" on the page below, you will access the "Protocol for the Coordination of Reported Violations of the RVSM and ADP between OIE, AHR, OER, OCR, and Unit Leadership" which was revised on January 3, 2020. This protocol describes how relevant University, College, and Departmental leaders work together once a Claimant has filed an OIE report about a Respondent.

    <https://oie.msu.edu/policies/index.html>

Briefly, this protocol addresses the following (among other matters):

- who notifies whom when and about what information regarding the reported incident;
- who determines which, if any, interim employment actions (for either the Respondent or the Claimant) and/or protective measures (typically for the Claimant) are warranted and when they will occur;
- who shares information with whom and who receives updates about the status of OIE's pre-investigatory phase (and subsequent formal investigation, if necessary); and
- what happens at the conclusion of an OIE formal investigation which finds that an employee violated MSU's Anti-Discrimination Policy or Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct; and
- what information about such a formal investigation (and corresponding finding, if applicable) is included in an employee's official personnel file in Human Resources.

Thank you for your attention to these important workplace behavioral expectations and key university policies.

Sincerely,

Aaron M. McCright, Ph.D.

Professor and Chairperson
Department of Sociology
Michigan State University
mccright@msu.edu

College of Social Science Community Code of Conduct

The mission of the College of Social Science is to become a global leader in top-tier research while advancing engaged learning and societal well-being. A positive climate that prioritizes mutual respect is essential to advancing this mission. We resolve to achieve our mission by embodying the values of the College and celebrating those who advance our collective integrity. Consistent with the Faculty Handbook statement on Tolerance and Civility (https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/university-wide/tolerance_civility.html), our intent is that this code enables civil conversation and especially protects vulnerable individuals when they express diverse opinions.

We all have a responsibility to foster and maintain respectful relationships with others and to promote an equitable and supportive workplace environment. Civility does not imply homogeneity or the absence of conflict; intellectual exchange (even heated intellectual exchange) is pivotal to our academic mission. That said, we need to engage in reasoned exchanges that are professional, respectful, and considerate of individuals and their differences. Civility is a hallmark of a healthy intellectual community; bullying has no place in one.

The College's strategic plan identifies six values which guide both how we carry out our day-to-day activities and our interactions with each other, within and outside the College. These values are below, with some examples of the types of behaviors to which we aspire. Note that these examples are not intended to be comprehensive, but simply some examples of the standards to which we hold ourselves.

Quality
- We value multiple perspectives and solicit diverse viewpoints because a healthy exchange of ideas is a pivotal part of the academic enterprise and increases the quality of our work. We are free to disagree with one another and engage in honest debate, but we do so in a manner that embodies comity.
- We lead and interact with positivity and sensitivity to power differentials; we use authority responsibly.

Inclusiveness
- We acknowledge power imbalances and take special care to ensure that the viewpoints of all stakeholders are considered.
- We treat each other with respect.
- We solicit and are receptive to diverse feedback from each other.

Connectivity
- We recognize that our words and actions have consequences for others. We act to advance, not degrade, each others' productivity and dignity.
- We cultivate honesty, transparency, and open lines of communication.
- We work to constructively resolve conflict whenever possible, avoiding personal attacks.
- We extend civility through all forms of communication, including email and social media.

Integrity
- We do not spread untruths or engage in ad hominem attacks.
- We give credit to those who deserve it.

Creativity
- We ask creative and sometimes difficult questions to ensure we promote and defend academic freedom.
- We innovate to address challenges and overcome barriers.

Empowerment
- We trust each other to lead and complete tasks.
- We are accountable to ourselves and to each other to maintain the values of the College.

This code will be in place for five years, then be re-evaluated by the College Faculty Advisory Council and the Dean's Office. For these standards to be effective, we all need to provide voice. If you experience or observe behavior you believe to be inconsistent with these values, we encourage you to discuss it with the individual involved if appropriate, or bring it to any of the following individuals:
- For faculty and academic staff (including specialists), the head of your academic unit, the Faculty Excellence Advocate of the College, the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, the University's Faculty Grievance Office, Academic Human Resources.

- For graduate students, the Director of Graduate Studies or head of your academic unit, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, the Dean of the Graduate School, the University Ombudsperson, your union representative if appropriate.
- For staff, the business manager or head of your academic unit, the Dean's Chief of Staff, Human Resources, your union representative if appropriate.
- For undergraduate students, the head of your academic unit, or the unit in which the individual is affiliated, the University Ombudsperson, the office of the Dean of Students, the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs.

Complaints involving violations of RVSM or ADP policies should be communicated directly to the Office of Institutional Equity. Retaliation for reporting violations of any policy or participating in any investigation is never acceptable at MSU. When possible, reported violations should be addressed via restorative justice and alternative-dispute resolution methods. Repeated, persistent, and/or especially severe behaviors inconsistent with these values on the part of administrators, faculty, staff, or students could lead to disciplinary action. Links to the appropriate policies are below.

https://www.hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/tenure_discipline_dismissal.html
https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=112#s514
https://hr.msu.edu/ua/discipline/support-staff.html
https://www.deanofstudents.msu.edu/student-conduct-0

College of Social Science Community Code of Conduct Process

We began our process in Fall, 2018 with a discussion in our Chairs/Directors meeting about the importance of collegiality, the levels of collegiality that various units are facing (both high and low) and how centralized/decentralized they felt the process should be. The consensus of the group is that they would like to have a College-wide document that they could bring to the faculty/staff in their units for discussion. We then began the process of creating that document by identifying a subset of Chairs/Directors to form a writing group.

That group collected professionalism statements from a variety of professional associations represented in the College. We read them, and identified elements we felt should be included in a College statement. We also discussed extensively how to frame the document (linked to our values in the College's new strategic plan), the document's orientation (aspirational rather than prescriptive), how to ensure that the code of conduct would not be used to attack vulnerable individuals who happen to disagree with powerful ones (an explicit statement in the introduction and reference to power differentials throughout), and the consequences for behavior that violations of this code would entail (as a precursor for discipline).

We then circulated the document and received feedback from a variety of groups, revising the document in response to these comments periodically:
- College Chairs/Directors 9/26/2018
- College Faculty Advisory Committee 9/28/2018
- Dean's Group on Community Values 10/9/2018
- College Research Committee 10/19/2018
- Graduate Dean's Student Advisory Council 10/25/2018 (graduate students)
- HRLR Board members (who have expertise in these types of policies) 10/29/2018
- College Associate Chairs 10/30/2018
- Staff Advisory Committee 10/30/2018 (precursor to Dean's Advisory Committee for Support Staff)
- Dean's Advisory Board for Diversity and Inclusion 11/1/2018
- Graduate Program Directors 11/5/2018
- College Chairs/Directors 1/23/2019
- Dean Croson visits individual Departments/Schools 1/2019-4/2019 (many included departmental staff)
- College Chairs/Directors 8/21/2019
- College Faculty Advisory Committee 10/11/2019
- College Chairs/Directors 10/16/2019
- College Faculty Advisory Committee 11/18/2019 (vote 11 to 0, 1 abstention)
- College Faculty and Staff for "notice and comment" 1/6/2020-1/22/2020
- Chairs/Directors 2/19/2020 (unanimous)