



Richard L. McCormick, President

To: Members of the University Community

From: Richard L. McCormick *Richard L. McCormick*

Date: February 12, 2008

Re: Discrimination and Harassment

Rutgers University prohibits its faculty, staff, and students from engaging in any form of prohibited discrimination or protected-status (including sexual) harassment. Over the years, the legal and social contexts of civil rights harassment have evolved and now include, in addition to sex-based conditions imposed on some aspect of work or study, the creation of a hostile, offensive, and intimidating environment for a member of a protected class. Congress and the New Jersey Legislature have expanded the list of protected classes, and the state and federal courts have defined and reaffirmed the responsibility of the university, as an employer and as an educational institution, to intervene in harassment within its halls.

While Rutgers has interpreted its own policy to include protection for transgender individuals since 1996, our policy has been updated to explicitly include "gender identity and expression" as a category of protection against discrimination and harassment. In order to more effectively respond to allegations of discrimination and harassment, the policy concerning harassment has been revised and is now the Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment. In order to ensure consistency of response across the university, all complaints of discrimination and harassment should be forwarded to the Office of Employment Equity.

It is particularly important in an institution with the diverse population of Rutgers that all faculty members and staff be aware of the breadth of the protections for students, faculty, and staff who are discriminated against or harassed, the resources available to them for resolution of any problems students or colleagues may bring to their attention, and the obligation imposed by law on supervisory employees and faculty members to refer complainants to the appropriate resources. If a faculty member or administrative employee is consulted by a student or colleague who believes that he or she is being subjected in the classroom or the workplace to prohibited discrimination or harassment, the Office of Employment Equity can assist in referring the complainant to appropriate services, or will deal directly with the problem.

The Office of Employment Equity is available to provide workshops to faculty, staff, or students concerning the new protected categories specifically as well as discrimination and harassment in general. The university discrimination and harassment policy is attached to this memorandum. Please note that formal complaints in which the individual named as a respondent is a student and not also an employee must be processed under the Code of Student Conduct. If you have any questions concerning the policy or complaint process, please contact the Office of Employment Equity at 732/932-3020 ext. 4030 or visit the web page at <http://uhr.rutgers.edu/equity>.

Rutgers plays an important role in shaping New Jersey's future by contributing exceptional leaders, research, and new ideas. To realize our vision for the future, we are committed to providing a supportive and collaborative social environment, and a community dedicated to respecting and valuing diversity. The elimination of discrimination and harassment is one necessary step toward a more hospitable environment in which the open exchange of ideas is encouraged and members of all groups are made to feel welcome.

Attachments