



One Silber Way
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
T 617-353-2230 F 617-353-6580
www.bu.edu/provost

TO: Boston University Students, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Gloria Waters, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer *G.W.*

DATE: October 17, 2024

SUBJECT: Important Updates to BU's Nondiscrimination and Harassment Policies and Procedures

Boston University is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment free of discrimination and harassment through prevention efforts, vigorous enforcement of our nondiscrimination policies, and providing resources for our community members. I am writing to share an important update about our ongoing work in these areas.

As I shared in my [letter to the community](#) on August 20, BU has been updating our existing nondiscrimination policies and procedures to provide a more trauma-informed and responsive process. Effective October 15, 2024, the new [Interim Equal Opportunity and Title IX Policy](#) will apply to all forms of discriminatory and harassing behavior by BU community members that is prohibited by the University and applicable laws. The policy and its accompanying [procedures](#) consolidate the descriptions of behavior prohibited by the University and the processes for addressing reports and complaints of those behaviors. Formerly, this conduct was addressed in two separate policies – the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy – and their respective procedures.

The updated policy and procedures provide the following improvements for our community members. They:

1. Make it easier to understand what behavior is prohibited, how to report it, and how it will be addressed;
2. Improve and provide a uniform reporting, investigation, and response process, when permitted by federal or state law;
3. Eliminate duplicate efforts and ensure that all relevant information is consolidated in one place;
4. Enhance clarity and consistency in communication, making it easier for the community to stay informed;
5. Allow for more efficient use of resources because efforts can be focused on maintaining and enforcing one comprehensive policy rather than multiple ones.

The policy and procedures implement important changes arising from the Title IX harassment regulations released by the US Department of Education (DOE) in April 2024. Specifically,

under the new regulations, sex discrimination now includes discrimination based on sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity. However, because BU is one of many institutions in the United States enjoined by a recent federal court order from implementing all aspects of the 2024 regulations, the updated policy and procedures also incorporate certain procedural requirements set forth in the DOE's 2020 Title IX regulations. The policy and procedures are being issued on an interim basis in light of the injunction and to allow the Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) to solicit feedback from campus partners and a newly created student advisory council housed within EOO and comprised of undergraduate and graduate students.

We will launch updated training on the new policy and procedures for faculty and staff on October 29, 2024. More information about this training will be forthcoming. Student employees will also receive updated training in the coming weeks.

Conclusion

The updated policy and procedures reflect the University's steadfast commitment to promoting an environment in which our students, faculty, and staff may thrive in their academic, professional, and personal pursuits without experiencing discrimination and harassment. Each member of the BU community must share in this important commitment for us to succeed. More information about the University's nondiscrimination and harassment resources is available on the [EOO website](#).