



## **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy**

Bluefield College is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, Bluefield College expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice, and harassment.

In compliance with federal law, including provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Bluefield College does not illegally discriminate against students, employees, or applicants on the basis of race, color, gender, creed, age, sexual orientation, marital status, national or ethnic origin, disability, veteran status, genetic information or military service in its administration of education policies, programs, or activities; admissions policies; or employment. Under federal law, the College may discriminate on the basis of religion in order to fulfill its purposes.

### **Definitions of Harassment**

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to: Unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, catcalls or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures (including through e-mail); and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature; Gender-based harassment, that is, harassment not involving sexual activity or language (e.g., male manager yells only at female employees and not males) and including unwelcome emphasizing of sexual identity may also constitute discrimination if it is severe or pervasive and directed at employees because of their gender.

Harassment on the basis of any other characteristic protected by local or federal law is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that belittles or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that:

- (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment;
- (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping;

threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; demeaning jokes and display or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that defames or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group (including through e-mail).

## **Individuals and Conduct Covered**

These policies apply to all applicants and employees, and prohibit harassment, discrimination and retaliation whether engaged in by fellow employees, by a supervisor or manager or by someone not directly connected to Bluefield College (e.g., an outside vendor, consultant or customer).

Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

## **Retaliation Is Prohibited**

Bluefield College prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Complaint Procedure: Reporting an Incident of Harassment, Discrimination or Retaliation**

Bluefield College strongly urges the reporting of all incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have experienced conduct that they believe is contrary to Bluefield College's policy or who have concerns about such matters should file their complaints with their immediate supervisor, the Director of Human Resources, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, the President, or any Officer of the College before the conduct becomes severe or pervasive. Individuals should not feel obligated to file their complaints with their immediate supervisor first before bringing the matter to the attention of one of the other Bluefield College designated representatives identified above.

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES:**

***Employees who have experienced conduct they believe is contrary to this policy have an obligation to take advantage of this complaint procedure. An employee's failure to fulfill this obligation could affect his or her rights in pursuing legal action. Also, please note, federal, state and local discrimination laws establish specific time frames for initiating a legal proceeding pursuant to those laws.***

Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or

perceived incidents of harassment. Therefore, while no fixed reporting period has been established, Bluefield College strongly urges the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken. Bluefield College will take prompt and adequate steps to stop alleged harassment before it becomes severe or pervasive, but can only do so with the cooperation of its employees.

The availability of this complaint procedure does not preclude individuals who believe they are being subjected to harassing conduct from promptly advising the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and requesting that it be discontinued.

## **The Investigation**

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

## **Responsive Action**

Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with promptly and appropriately. Responsive action may include, for example, training, referral to counseling, monitoring of the offender and/or disciplinary action such as warning, reprimand, withholding of a promotion or pay increase, reduction of wages, demotion, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay or termination of employment, as Bluefield College believes appropriate under the circumstances.

If an employee making a complaint does not agree with its resolution, the employee may appeal to Bluefield College's President.

Individuals who have questions or concerns about these policies should talk with the Director of Human Resources, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, or the President of the College.

Finally, these policies should not, and may not, be used as a basis for excluding or separating individuals of a particular gender, or any other protected characteristic, from participating in business or work-related social activities or discussions in order to avoid allegations of harassment. The law and the policies of Bluefield College prohibit unequal treatment on the basis of gender or any other protected characteristic, with regard to terms, conditions, privileges and prerequisites of employment. The prohibitions against harassment, discrimination and retaliation are intended to complement and further these policies, not to form the basis of an exception to them.