



# PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

Regarding Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

As President of the University of Central Florida, I wish to affirm my support for the goals of equal opportunity and affirmative action as identified in state and federal law, as well as the prohibition of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

## **Prohibition of Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

UCF is an equal opportunity employer and educational provider. As set forth in the [Nondiscrimination Policy \(No. 2-004\)](#) and [Title IX Grievance Policy \(No. 2-012\)](#), the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, non-religion, age, genetic information, sex (including pregnancy, parental status, gender identity or expression, and sexual orientation), marital status, physical or mental disability (including learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and past or present history of mental illness), veteran's status (as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistant Act), or membership in any other protected classes as set forth in state or federal law in all its programs and activities. This includes the prohibition of unlawful discrimination or harassment based on an individual's actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, or citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity (for example, individuals that identify as Hindu, Jewish, Muslim or Sikh). The University prohibits discrimination with respect to all terms and conditions of employment and in all its educational programs, activities, services, and related opportunities.

The University also prohibits unlawful harassment, a form of discrimination. Unlawful harassment is based upon an individual's protected class (as set forth above) and meets the description of either *Hostile Environment Harassment* or *Quid Pro Quo Harassment*. *Hostile Environment Harassment* consists of unwelcome behavior based on a protected class, where the frequency and severity of the alleged harassing conduct effectively denies the individual's ability to participate in or benefit from the education, employment, or university program or activity, when viewed from both a subjective and an objective perspective. *Quid Pro Quo Harassment* consists of behavior where submission to or rejection of unwelcome conduct is used, explicitly or implicitly, as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's education, employment, or participation in a university program or activity.

The University further prohibits sexual harassment, which is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other unwanted verbal, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when the conditions for *Hostile Environment Harassment* or *Quid Pro Quo Harassment* are present.

## **Inappropriate Amorous Relationships**

In furtherance of our commitment to a learning and working environment free of sexual harassment, all faculty and staff must be aware that certain [amorous relationships](#) are prohibited. Amorous relationships with students are likely to lead to difficulties and have the potential to place faculty and staff members at great personal and professional risk. The power difference inherent in the faculty-student or staff-student relationship means that any amorous relationship between a faculty or staff member and a student is potentially exploitative or could at any time be perceived as exploitative. Accordingly, all employees are prohibited from pursuing or engaging in any amorous relationship with any undergraduate student.

Also, employees are prohibited from pursuing or engaging in any amorous relationship with a graduate student under that employee's authority (including formal mentoring or advising, supervision of research, employment as a teaching assistant, and responsibility for student's grades). In the event of a charge of sexual harassment arising from such circumstances, the University will in general be unsympathetic to a defense based upon consent when the facts establish that a faculty-student or staff-student power differential existed within the relationship.

Similarly, amorous relationships between supervisors and their subordinate employees often adversely affect decisions, distort judgment, and undermine workplace morale for all employees, including those not directly engaged in the relationship. Accordingly, the University prohibits all employees from pursuing or engaging in amorous relationships with employees whom they supervise. No supervisor shall initiate or participate in institutional decisions involving a direct benefit or penalty (employment, retention, promotion, tenure, salary, leave of absence, etc.) to a person with whom that individual has or has had an amorous relationship.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity & Maintaining an Inclusive Community**

The University will actively seek to ensure that our employees and student body represent broad backgrounds by making outreach efforts that encourage all qualified individuals to apply for employment and enrollment. The University is an equal employment opportunity/affirmative action employer and maintains an Affirmative Action Plan aimed at developing and maintaining a broadly-representative workforce. Equal employment opportunity is the purpose and goal of affirmative action. The University's commitment to affirmative action requires that we make the good faith efforts that may be necessary in all aspects of personnel administration to ensure that the recruitment and hire of individuals reflect their availability in the job market; that the causes of underutilization are identified and eliminated; that alternative approaches are explored when personnel practices have a negative impact on protected classes; and that the terms, conditions, and privileges of employment, including upward and lateral mobility, are equitably administered. In other words, the University remains committed to seeking the best-qualified person to fill each available position, and that all candidates for employment will be assured careful and fair consideration.

The administrative leadership will be kept informed of my commitment to equal opportunity, equal access, and affirmative action at UCF, as required by state and federal law. Regular reporting of each administrative unit to me will ensure that goals are being met. I am convinced that our commitment to these goals will measurably strengthen the University and its relationship to the Central Florida community we serve.

The University remains committed to achieving equal educational and employment opportunity and full participation for persons with disabilities. A person with a disability must be ensured the same access to programs, opportunities, and activities at the University as all others. Existing barriers, whether physical or programmatic, must be removed and there must be ongoing vigilance to ensure that new barriers are not erected. As part of the University's commitment to maintaining an inclusive community and ensuring equitable access for individuals with disabilities, UCF's [Digital Accessibility Policy](#) requires individuals responsible for the development, maintenance, or purchase of information and communication technology to strive to comply with the accessibility standard adopted by the university (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0 AA).

## Prohibition of Retaliation

It is the responsibility of all departments and personnel to ensure the University's compliance with state and federal law, as well as University policies and regulations. Employees, students, and third parties must be free from fear of reprisal in exercising their civil rights. Accordingly, the University strictly prohibits retaliation against any person for making a good faith report of unlawful discrimination or harassment, or participating in or being a party to any proceeding under the *Nondiscrimination Policy* or *Title IX Grievance Policy*. Retaliation shall be regarded as seriously as unlawful discrimination or harassment itself. Both will warrant discipline when substantiated.

## Responsible Person & Supervisor Reporting Obligations & Where to Report

If you are a **Responsible Person**, you are required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, Title IX sexual harassment, and/or sexual violence (including sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking) involving a student to the Office of Institutional Equity. Please visit the University's **Let's Be Clear website** to file a report by clicking on the "File A Report" tab, as well as to review additional information regarding resources and reporting options for incidents of this nature.

If you are a supervisor and aware (either directly or indirectly) of any incident of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation where the individual who has been accused of the misconduct is a university or DSO employee or volunteer, you are required to report the incident to the Office of Institutional Equity.

Persons who believe that they are being subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation are encouraged to consult with the Office of Institutional Equity.

**Office of Institutional Equity**  
112701 Scholarship Drive, Suite 101  
Barbara Ying CMMS Building 81  
Orlando, FL 32816-0030  
(407) 823-1336  
[oie@ucf.edu](mailto:oie@ucf.edu)  
[oie.ucf.edu](http://oie.ucf.edu)

This office is assigned primary responsibility for addressing all matters related to discrimination. Complaints pertaining to Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, the Florida Educational Equity Act, the Florida Civil Rights Act, Executive order 11246 and other civil rights statutes should be brought to the attention of the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). The University's Title IX Coordinator (Amber Abud; Phone: (407) 823-1336; Email: [oie@ucf.edu](mailto:oie@ucf.edu)) serves as the Assistant Director of OIE. OIE's Director (Nancy Myers; Phone: (407) 823-1336; Email: [oie@ucf.edu](mailto:oie@ucf.edu)) also serves as the University's ADA Coordinator, Title VI Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator and Affirmative Action Officer.



**Alexander N. Cartwright, Ph.D.**  
President and Professor of Electrical  
and Computer Engineering

*April 5, 2024*

**Date**