

Office of the Faculty Civility Advocate

Faculty Civility Annual Report

August 15, 2023

This annual report includes details about the nature and number of inquiries, requests, complaints, investigations, and reports that were made pursuant to the University of South Carolina's policy [ACAF 1.80, rev'd 6/24/2022] from June 1, 2022 through August 15, 2023. The ACAF 1.80 policy was revised following an in-depth review by a Task Force Committee that I served on with the Faculty Senate Chair, Associate Provost Cheryl Addy, and several faculty and staff members from across campus. The new title, Faculty Workplace Incivility, replaces the previous title, Workplace Bullying Policy, and clarifies the new focus and definition of incivility. The revised ACAF 1.80 also permits faculty and/or staff to file workplace incivility complaints against faculty.

Over the past year, I have served as the Faculty Civility Advocate and have been responsible for investigating complaints about incivility in the workplace. In this role, I received twenty-eight inquiries as described below:

Total Inquiries (28)

Informal Discussions [In-person Meeting/Emails/Phone Calls]: 10

Formal Investigation requests: 11

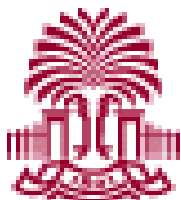
Formal Investigation Reports (Finding of incivility): 1

Civility/ACAF Policy Training requests: 4

External Interview and Related Requests: 2

Out of the twenty-eight inquiries, eleven individuals filed six workplace incivility complaints and submitted the formal documents required per ACAF 1.80. Two of the six formal complaints are ongoing, three of the six complaints failed to meet the ACAF policy guidelines and were not investigated, and one of the six workplace incivility complaints resulted in a finding of faculty incivility.

In addition to formal complaints and investigations, ten individuals made general inquiries about the ACAF 1.80 policy or requested meetings to discuss issues and seek



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guidance. Other inquiries resulted in four trainings and presentations on incivility and the revised ACAF 1.80 policy. Two of the requests for information were from external organizations or individuals, specifically, a non-profit organization sought feedback on proposed legislation and invited my testimony at an upcoming public hearing on recently introduced legislation in Massachusetts, the Workplace Psychological Safety Act.

The main reasons that faculty, staff, and administrators have contacted me pertain to a wide array of concerns about incivility in the workplace and specific allegations that incivility has led to an absence of trust, caused substantial emotional distress and/or interfered with their ability to work. The complainants alleged that incivility occurred in department or committee meetings, face-to-face interactions, and email exchanges. Other individuals, including faculty from USC system campuses, department chairs, and college deans, have similarly contacted me to request information about ACAF 1.80 and schedule civility trainings and presentations. Many informal discussions are requested by faculty and staff who seek advice on general matters of conflict in the workplace involving faculty and staff members, as well as administrators.

Overall, the incivility inquiries I have received between June 1, 2022 and August 15, 2023, are not isolated or limited to one college. In other words, the perceived or alleged incivility concerns have been reported by faculty and administrators who serve in a wide array of positions, colleges, schools, and departments.

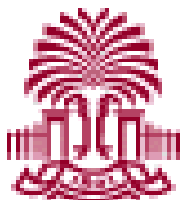
Sincerely,

Susan C. Bon, J.D., Ph.D.

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