Sexual Harassment:
What It Is ... What To Do About It...

IT IS ILLEGAL!

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination which is prohibited under federal and state laws:

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

IT COMES IN MANY FORMS...

Sexual harassment can be directed at a person of the same or opposite sex.

Behaviors that are considered as sexual harassment include:

- Unwelcome sexual advances.
- Requests for sexual favors.
- Language, graphic material, or physical conduct commonly understood to be of a sexual nature.
- Demeaning sexist remarks.
- Other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Such behaviors are especially offensive when:

- It is either implied or clearly stated that submission to or rejection of the behavior will affect or is a term or condition of, the individual's employment or educational status, or
- They create a coercive, hostile or intimidating atmosphere, or interfere with an individual's academic or work performance.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS NOT TOLERATED AT PVAMU!

University policy and System policy prohibits sexual harassment of employees or students, and visitors within the University and Texas A&M University System. (See PVAMU Policy Against Sexual Harassment). A copy of this policy may be obtained by calling the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and is also part of the Office web page.

Not only is sexual harassment illegal, but it is also unprofessional and seriously undermines the atmosphere of trust which is essential to a healthy academic environment.

Prairie View A&M University strives to maintain an environment in which the dignity and self-worth of all members of the institutional community are respected. Persons found to be in violation of the Texas A&M System and University's Policy Against Sexual Harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include oral or written warnings, suspension, transfer, demotion or dismissal.

WHO CAN BE A TARGET OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT? ….

Sexual harassment can occur between individuals of different sexes or of the same sex; employee/faculty to student; non-University employee to student; employee to employee; student to student; non-University personnel to employee.

Although sexual harassment most often exploits a relationship between individuals of unequal power (such *as between a faculty member and a student*; a supervisor and an employee, *or* tenured and untenured faculty members), it may also occur between individuals of equal power (such as between *fellow students or co-workers*) *or* in some cases even where it appears that the harasser has less power than the individual harassed (for example, *a student sexually harassing a faculty member*).

Sexual harassment is ***not** determined by* the ***intent*** of the harasser; but rather, it is determined by the ***impact*** that the behavior has on the person being harassed.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER SEXUAL HARASSMENT...

Employees, faculty or staff, who believe that they have been sexually harassed or need advice about what constitutes sexual harassment, should contact immediately one of the following persons:

- The Office of Equal Opportunity Programs, *or*
- The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources.

Mrs. Renee R. Williams, Equal Employment Opportunity Programs Officer, 936-261.2123

Mr. Albert Gee, Assistant Vice-President of Human Resources, 936-261-1730

Students who believe that they have been sexually harassed or need advice about what constitutes sexual harassment should contact:

- The Office of the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs *or*
- The Office of Equal Opportunity Programs.

Dr. Miron Billingsley, Office of the Associate Vice-President of Student Affairs, 936-261-3552

Mrs. Renee R. Williams, Equal Employment Opportunity Programs Officer, 936-261.2123

If you should encounter sexual harassment or are unsure whether what you are experiencing is sexual harassment, seek the advice of the appropriate *official listed above*. Do not assume that the offensive behavior will go away just by ignoring it. If you ignore the behavior, it may be viewed as approval. Show your disapproval by letting the individual know that the behavior is offensive to you and must be stopped by the offender. Keep records of each incident in as much detail as possible (e.g., dates, places, times, and witnesses, as well as the nature of the harassment).

A faculty or staff member who is told of an incident of sexual harassment by an individual, who seems unsure of how to deal with the situation, should immediately consult the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs.

Any unwelcome behavior that may be construed as sexual harassment should be reported; however, it is also the policy of the University that willful false accusations of sexual harassment will *not* be condoned.

UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING INQUIRIES OR COMPLAINTS:

Inquiries about sexual harassment need not begin with a formal complaint nor necessarily result in such a complaint. Inquiries can be made without disclosing specific details such as names and places.

There are administrative procedures that ensure uniform handling of sexual harassment complaints and the steps to resolve such matters. Initial emphasis is placed on resolving the situation through informal mediation; however, there is also a formal complaint procedure allowing for formal investigations, hearings, and appeals. These administrative procedures guide the conduct of fact finding and maintenance of records in such a way as to protect the privacy of the persons involved in such complaints.

For further information regarding the University's administrative procedures dealing with sexual harassment inquiries or complaints, please contact one of the above *designated* officials. Confidentiality will be respected for those making inquiry.

PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

Could I be penalized for filing a complaint?

Retaliation against anyone seeking information on sexual harassment, filing a sexual harassment complaint or serving as a witness is against University policy and forbidden. If you feel that you are being retaliated against, you may report the matter to the Office of Equal Opportunity. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against anyone found to be taking retaliatory action.

Prairie View A&M University is committed to providing an academic and working environment that is free from sexual harassment.

RENEE R. WILLIAMS, ***Equal Opportunity Officer***/Title IX Coordinator
Prairie View A&M University**,** Office of Student Affairs & Institutional Relations
P.O. Box 519: MS 1107, A.I. Thomas Building, St 013
Prairie View, Texas 77446; ***Tel: 936-261-2123***; Fax: 936-261-2138; Email: *rrwilliams@pvamu.edu*