

# **SUNY Cobleskill**

## **Campus and Workplace Violence Prevention**

### **Policy and Program**

#### **Section I - Policy**

##### **Policy Statement**

**SUNY Cobleskill is committed to providing a safe work environment for all employees. The College will respond promptly to threats, acts of violence, and acts of aggression by employees or against employees by coworkers, students, members of the public or others.**

##### **Prohibited Conduct**

- The College will not tolerate any act or threat of violence made in the workplace, on College property, or while in work status.
- No person may engage in violent conduct or make threats of violence, implied or direct, on College property or in connection with College business. This includes but is not limited to:
  - The use of force with intent to cause harm, e.g. physical attacks, any unwanted contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing, or throwing objects;
  - Behavior that diminishes the dignity of others through sexual, racial, religious or ethnic harassment;
  - Acts or threats which are intended to intimidate, harass, threaten, bully, coerce, or cause fear of harm whether directly or indirectly;
  - Acts or threats made directly or indirectly by oral or written words, gestures or symbols that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical or mental harm.
- No person, without legal authority, may carry, possess or use any dangerous weapon on College property or in College buildings or facilities.

## **Section II: Workplace Violence Prevention Program**

Pursuant to the College's commitment to zero tolerance of workplace violence, the College adopts the following as its Workplace Violence Prevention Program:

### **Workplace Violence Prevention Advisory Committee**

- A. The College has established the Workplace Violence Prevention Advisory Committee. The Committee will be co-chaired by representatives from Human Resources and University Police, and will report to the President. The Committee, as part of its charge, will participate in conducting a physical risk assessment evaluation of the Campus. On or about July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, the Committee will also review the annual summary of incidents of workplace violence for the previous year, and make recommendations as appropriate. The Committee will also annually review the Workplace Violence Prevention training module and make recommendations as appropriate. The campus will be evaluating the roles of this Committee, prescribed in this policy, with those of the existing Personal Safety Advisory Committee, whose role was previously established by the SUNY Board of Trustees.
- B. The Committee includes representatives from University Police, Human Resources, Environmental Health and Safety, all bargaining units (UUP, CSEA & PBA), and others as deemed appropriate by the President to sit on the Committee.

### **Risk Assessment Evaluation Process**

- 1. On an annual basis the College will distribute a survey to all faculty and staff inquiring about potential risk factors in the workplace and soliciting their involvement in the annual process.
- 2. Prior to the actual physical work site risk assessment process beginning, a second survey is distributed to all deans, directors, and department heads in preparation for the team visit to the actual worksite.
- 3. Site visits are then conducted with every department on campus. Team members meet with the dean, director, department head, or designee, and encourage them to have interested employees participate in the site visit. During the site visit, teams review the survey results, walk the actual worksite with the department designee and solicit information on additional concerns related to workplace safety.
- 4. A small committee, comprised of representatives from Human Resources, Environmental Health & Safety and University Police, reviews all the workplace site assessments to determine high risk occupations / risk factors on the campus.
- 5. The Workplace Violence Advisory Committee will then review a spreadsheet which contains information on every department, high risk factors in those departments, and additional information which should be considered. The Committee will then draft a report with recommendations on appropriate work practice control measures. Secondary

site visits by an experienced safety team will also be conducted for high risk areas as appropriate.

6. The Workplace Violence Advisory Committee report will be submitted to Senior Staff for review, approval, and further action.

### **High Risk Occupations / Risk Factors on the Campus**

The College, through the Workplace Violence Prevention Advisory Committee, has identified the following occupations on the Campus as potentially high risk for workplace violence:

1. Offices handling the exchange of money, including cash, checks and credit card receipts;
2. Offices which handle issues which are stressful to students, such as the Wellness Center, Registrar, Student Accounts, Office of Residential Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, and Dean's Offices;
3. Offices which handle issues which are stressful to faculty and staff, such as the Office of Human Resources and the Office of the Provost
4. Working alone or in small groups; and
5. Working late at night or early in the morning.

### **Reporting Process / Procedures**

Incidents of violence, threats of violence, or observations of violence in the College community are not to be ignored by any member of the College community. Workplace violence should promptly be reported to the appropriate the College official (see below). Additionally, all members of the College community are encouraged to report behavior they reasonably believe poses a potential for workplace violence in order to maintain a safe working and learning environment.

- A. The Director of Employee Relations and Affirmative Action, Lynn Berger, is the designated contact person: (518) 255-5465 and is located in Knapp Hall, Room 123.
- B. Any person experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or personal injury or violence involving weapons or actual violence should call the University Police immediately:
  - ❖ Campus telephone: 911 or 5555
  - ❖ Cell phone or off campus telephone: (518) 255-5555
  - ❖ Blue light telephones located on campus: Dialed automatically/pick up receiver
- C. Employees should then notify his/her supervisor as well.
- D. This policy and program applies to Cobleskill College Foundation and Research Foundation employees as well. In instances involving these groups of employees, please substitute the

Research Foundation Human Resources office rather than the SUNY Cobleskill Human Resources office.

- E. Employees should report any threat or act of violence that they have witnessed, received, or have been informed of, to University Police and his or her supervisor.
- E. Every threat should be reported to best maintain safety for the entire campus community.
- F. Any individual who makes a threat, exhibits threatening behavior or engages in violent acts on College property may be subject to removal from the premises as quickly as safety permits.

**Other Contacts:**

- Wellness Center 518-255-5225
- Provost's Office 518-255-5523
- Employee Assistance Program 518-255-5327
- Human Resources 518-255-5423
- University Police (non-emergency) 518-255-5317

**Employees**

- A. All employees are responsible for helping to maintain a safe work and educational environment and are urged to take reasonable precautions to prevent violence and other unsafe conditions in the workplace. Employees should report **indicators of increased risk** of violence in the workplace including, but not limited to, the following:
  - a. Direct or veiled threats of harm;
  - b. Intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying, stalking or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior;
  - c. Numerous conflicts with supervisors and other employees;
  - d. Bringing a weapon to the workplace, brandishing a weapon in the workplace, making inappropriate references to guns, or fascination with weapons;
  - e. Statements showing fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides;
  - f. Statements indicating desperation (over family, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide or intimating a possibility of pending violence;
  - g. Drug/alcohol abuse; and
  - h. Extreme changes in behavior

Below are some precautions which should be taken:

- a. In response to telephone inquiries, do not release information about coworkers' schedules, home telephone numbers, or other personal information.
  - b. In the event of suspicious conduct, request the credentials of any stranger who enters your office to do repairs or other service work. If necessary, verify the work request with the building administrator.
  - c. Never leave money, credit card, travel documents or anything else of value in an unlocked desk or cabinet.
  - d. If something is stolen, report it immediately to University Police.
- B. Employees are expected to notify University Police whenever an order of protection is granted which mentions the College property, or involves a College employee, or a person working at or attending the College, and provide a copy of the order. Appropriate efforts will be made to protect the privacy and sensitivity of the information provided. Employees should also notify their supervisor.
- C. Victims of domestic violence who believe the violence may extend into the College community, students or employees who believe that domestic or other personal matters may result in their being subject to violence extending into the workplace, are encouraged to notify their supervisor, or University Police. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.
- D. All employees should report any incidents of violence and/or inappropriate conduct or behavior to University Police and their supervisor immediately.
- E. Any employee or representative of employees who believes that a serious violation of a workplace violence protection program exists or that an imminent danger exists shall bring such matter to the attention of University Police, Human Resources and/or the Vice President for Student Affairs (if applicable).

## **Students**

- A. All students are responsible for helping to maintain a safe work and educational environment and are urged to take reasonable precautions to prevent violence and other unsafe conditions on campus.
- B. Students are expected to notify University Police whenever an order of protection is granted which mentions College property, or involves a College employee, or a person working at or attending the College, and provide a copy of the order. Appropriate efforts will be made to protect the privacy and sensitivity of the information provided.

- C. Victims of domestic violence who believe the violence may extend into the College community, students or employees who believe that domestic or other personal matters may result in their being subject to violence extending into the campus community are encouraged to notify the University Police. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.
- D. All students should report any incidents of violence and/or inappropriate conduct or behavior to University Police.
- E. Any student who believes that a serious violation of this Policy and Program exists or that an imminent danger exists shall bring such matter to the attention of University Police, or the Office of Student Affairs. Following a written notice, the offices shall coordinate an investigation, and resolution
- F. Students shall adhere to this Policy and Program, and the rules set forth in the Code of Student Conduct.

### **Supervisors**

- A. Each dean, director, department chairperson, executive officer, administrator, or other person with supervisory responsibility (hereinafter “supervisor”) is responsible within his/her area of jurisdiction for the implementation of this policy.
- B. Supervisors are required to ask employees to familiarize themselves with this policy and are expected to model and establish boundaries of acceptable behavior. They should consult with Human Resources (518-255-5423), the Employee Assistance Program (518-255-5327) or other appropriate departments for guidance regarding any problematic employee behavior. In an emergency, they should contact University Police (518-255-5555).
- C. Supervisors are required to contact University Police immediately in the event of imminent or actual violence involving weapons or potential physical injuries.
- D. Supervisors must report to University Police any complaint of workplace violence made to him/her and any other incidents of workplace violence of which he/she becomes aware or reasonably believes to exist. Supervisors are expected to inform their immediate supervisor promptly about any complaints, acts, or threats of violence even if the situation has been addressed and resolved. After having reported such complaint or incident to University Police and immediate supervisor, the supervisor should keep it confidential and disclose it only as necessary during the investigation process and/or subsequent proceedings.
- E. Every supervisor is obligated to report any knowledge of such conduct to the Office of Human Resources immediately. Failure of a supervisor to investigate and initiate appropriate action may result in administrative action up to and including discipline.

## **University Police**

- A. University Police is responsible for:
  - 1. Responding to;
  - 2. Intervening; and
  - 3. Documenting all incidents of violence in the workplace.
- B. University Police will copy Human Resources on all incidents involving workplace violence. Human Resources will maintain an internal tracking system of all threats and incidents of violence. On an annual basis, this spreadsheet of incidents will be reviewed with the Workplace Violence Prevention Advisory Committee.
- C. When informed, University Police will maintain a record of any Orders of Protection.
- D. University Police will provide escort service to members of the College community within its geographical confines, when sufficient personnel are available. Such services are to be extended at the discretion of the Chief of Police or designee.

## **Office of Human Resources**

- A. The Office of Human Resources (HR) is responsible for:
  - 1. Assisting University Police and supervisors in responding to workplace violence;
  - 2. Facilitating appropriate responses to reported incidents of workplace violence;
  - 3. Notifying University Police of workplace violence incidents reported to HR; and
  - 4. Consulting with, as necessary, counseling services to secure professional intervention.
- B. The Office of Human Resources is responsible for providing new employees or employees transferred to the College with a copy of the Workplace Violence Policy and Program and ensuring that employees receive appropriate training pursuant to NYS Labor Law §27b.
- C. The Office of Human Resources will also be responsible for annually disseminating information on how to access this policy and program to all employees, as well as posting the policy throughout the campus and on the College's website, as appropriate.

## **Information and Training for Employees**

- A. The College shall make this Workplace Violence Prevention Policy and Program available, upon request, to its employees and their designated representatives.
- B. At the time of employees' initial assignment and annually thereafter, the College shall provide its employees with the following information and training on the risks of violence in their workplace(s):
  - 1. Be informed of the requirements of NYS Labor Law § 27-b;
  - 2. The risk factors in their workplace(s);
  - 3. The location and availability of the written workplace violence prevention program; and
  - 4. Training sessions that outline:
    - a. The measures employees can take to protect themselves from such risks, including specific procedures the College has implemented to protect employees and
    - b. Details of the written workplace violence prevention program developed by the College.
- C. Completion of annual training is required via an on-line training component. Accommodations and/or additional training will be made upon request.

## **Record Keeping and Reporting to the NYS Labor Department**

All record keeping and reporting shall be made in compliance with the then applicable law and regulation (currently New York State Labor Law Sections 27-a and 27-b and 12 NYCRR Part 801) and SUNY policy.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliatory action against anyone acting in good faith who has made a complaint of workplace violence, who has reported witnessing workplace violence, or who has been involved in reporting, investigating, or responding to workplace violence is a violation of this policy. Those found responsible for retaliatory action will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

## **Counseling Assistance**

If an employee has been the victim of workplace violence, or an employee has witnessed workplace violence, he or she may seek counseling from the College's Employee Assistance Program by contacting the EAP Office at (518)255-5327. Consultations with, and assessments and referrals by, the EAP coordinator are in confidence.

Students may seek assistance from the College Wellness Center (518) 255-5225.