

## **University Notice of Petitioners Rights Under Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”) protects people from discrimination based on sexual orientation in education programs or activities which receive Federal financial assistance. Title IX states:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Everglades University not only complies with the letter of Title IX’s requirements but also endorses the law’s intent and spirit. The University is committed to compliance in all areas addressed by Title IX including access to higher education, career education, math and science, standardized testing, athletics, education for pregnant and parenting students, learning environment, and technology, as well as sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence are types of sex discrimination. Other acts can also be forms of sex-based discrimination and include dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. As such should you report a form of sex-based discrimination, The University wants to inform you of our policy and procedures that address sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, whether the incident occurs on or off campus as well as your rights, and The University’s responsibilities.

As a petitioner of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, you will receive a full copy of our institution’s Title IX Policy. This policy has procedures in place that serve to be sensitive to those who report sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. These procedures include our right to inform you of your rights to file criminal charges as well as the availability of medical, counseling, and support services. We also offer additional remedies to prevent contact between a complainant and an accused party. The policy also addresses possible sanctions and interim and/or long-term protective measures that the University may impose.

### **Definitions**

**Consent** is defined in Florida as “intelligent, knowing, and voluntary consent and does not include coerced submission. Consent shall not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the alleged victim to offer physical resistance to the offender.” (Florida Statute Chapter 794.011)

**Sexual Assault** is defined as an offense classified as a forcible or non-forcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Sexual violence includes any one incident of:

1. Sexual battery, as defined in Florida Statute Chapter 794.
2. A lewd or lascivious act, as defined in Florida Statute Chapter 800, committed upon in the presence of a person younger than 16 years of age.
3. Luring or enticing a child, as described in Florida Statute Chapter 784.
4. Sexual performance by a child, as described in Florida Statute Chapter 827.

5. Any other forcible felony wherein a sexual act is committed or attempted regardless of whether criminal charges based on the incident were filed, reduced, or dismissed by the state attorney. (Florida Statute Chapter 794.011)

**Domestic Violence** includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.

Domestic violence means any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member of another family or household member. A family or household member means spouses, former spouses, persons related by blood or marriage, persons who are presently residing together as if a family or who have resided together in the past as if a family, and persons who are parents of a child in common regardless of whether they have been married. With the exception of persons who have a child in common, the family or household members must be currently residing or have in the past resided together in the same single dwelling unit. (Florida Statute Chapter 741.28)

**Dating Violence:** Means violence committed by a person—

- (a) Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
- (b) where the existence of such a relationship will be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- (i) The length of the relationship
- (ii) The type of relationship
- (iii) The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

Dating violence means violence between individuals who have or have had a continuing and significant relationship of a romantic or intimate nature. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the consideration of the following factors:

1. A dating relationship must have existed within the past 6 months.
2. The nature of the relationship must have been characterized by the expectation of affection or sexual involvement between the parties.
3. The frequency and type of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship must have included that the persons have been involved over time, and on a continuous basis during the course of the relationship.

The term does not include violence in a casual acquaintanceship or violence between individuals who have engaged in ordinary fraternization in a business or social context.

**Stalking:** Means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others; or suffer substantial emotional distress.

“Credible threat” means a verbal or nonverbal threat, or a combination of the two, including threats delivered by electronic communication or implied by a pattern of conduct, which places the person who is the target of the threat in reasonable fear for his or her safety, or the safety of his or her family members or individuals closely associated with the person, and which is made with the apparent ability to carry out the threat to cause such harm. It is not necessary to prove that the person making the threat had the intent to actually carry out the threat. The present incarceration of the person making the threat is not a bar to prosecution under this section “Cyber stalk” means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images,

or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose. A person who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows, harasses, or cyber stalks another person commits the offense of stalking, a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in Florida Statutes 775.082 or 775.083. A person who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows, harasses, or cyber stalks another person and makes a credible threat to that person commits the offense of aggravated stalking, a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in Florida Statutes 775.082, 775.083, or 775.084.

**Bystander Intervention:** A bystander is someone other than the victim who is present when an act of dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault is occurring or when a situation is occurring in which a reasonable person feels as though some protective action is required to prevent sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking. Bystanders, if active, can prevent harm or intervene before a situation gets worse.

### **Reporting sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking**

After an incident of sexual assault or domestic violence, the victim should consider seeking medical attention as soon as possible at a local hospital that will supply a physical evidence recovery collection kit. In Florida evidence may be collected even if you chose not to make a report to law enforcement. A victim's name and identifying information will be withheld from the public and press in accordance with the Florida Public Records Law. It is important that a victim of sexual assault not bathe, douche, smoke, change clothing or clean the bed/linen/area where they were assaulted if the offense occurred within the past 96 hours so that evidence as may be necessary to the proof of criminal activity may be preserved. In circumstances of sexual assault, if victims do not opt for forensic evidence collection, health care providers can still treat injuries and take steps to address concerns of pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted disease.

Victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence are encouraged to also preserve evidence by saving text messages, instant messages, social networking pages, other communications, and keeping pictures, logs or other copies of documents, if they have any, that would be useful to the University hearing boards/investigators or police. Although the university strongly encourages all members of its community to report violations to law enforcement, it is the victim's choice whether or not to make such a report, and victims have the right to decline involvement with the police. To report an incident involving a sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking or dating violence, contact the Vice President of Academic Affairs at 561-912-1211 or toll free at 888-772-6077.

In Florida, a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking has the following rights:

- (1) A law enforcement officer who investigates an alleged sexual battery shall:
  - (a) Assist the victim in obtaining medical treatment, if medical treatment is necessary as a result of the alleged incident, a forensic examination, and advocacy and crisis-intervention services from a certified rape crisis center and provide or arrange for transportation to the appropriate facility.
  - (b) Advise the victim that he or she may contact a certified rape crisis center from which the victim may receive services.
  - (c) Prior to submitting a final report, permit the victim to review the final report and provide a statement as to the accuracy of the final report.
- (2) The law enforcement officer shall give the victim immediate notice of the legal rights and remedies available to a victim on a standard form developed and distributed by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence in conjunction with the Department of Law Enforcement. The notice will include the resource listing,

including telephone number, for the area certified rape crisis center as designated by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence.

A person who is the victim of sexual violence or the parent or legal guardian of a minor child who is living at home who is the victim of sexual violence has standing in the circuit court to file a sworn petition for an injunction for protection against sexual violence on his or her own behalf, or on behalf of the minor child if:

1. The person has reported the sexual violence to a law enforcement agency and is cooperating in any criminal proceeding against the respondent, regardless of whether criminal charges based on the sexual violence have been filed, reduced, or dismissed by the state attorney; or
2. The respondent who committed the sexual violence against the victim or minor child was sentenced to a term of imprisonment in state prison for the sexual violence and the respondent's term of imprisonment has expired or is due to expire within 90 days following the date the petition is filed.

Further, the University complies with Florida law in recognizing orders of protection for dating violence, domestic violence, repeat violence, and sexual violence. Any person who obtains an order of protection from Florida or any reciprocal state should provide a copy to their Campus President. A petitioner should then meet with Campus President to develop a Safety Action Plan, which is a plan to reduce risk of harm while on campus, or coming and going from campus. This plan may include, but is not limited to: escorts, special parking arrangements, or other measures to assist the petitioner.

Below are details on how to file a restraining order:

1. Prepare a petition and file the petition with Circuit Court.
  - a. Petition includes information on the petitioner and respondent, such as, address, employment, children, and description of the respondent.
  - b. Allegation
    1. Must be described in detail
    2. Relationship to the respondent
    3. Dates of incidents
  - c. Reviewed by Judge immediately
    1. If requirements are met
    2. Judge will grant a temporary restraining order
    3. Restraining order will be valid for 15 days
    4. Once order is served to the respondent it will be valid and enforceable
2. Court Hearing
  - a. Scheduled 15 days after filing.
  - b. Hearing will be extended 15 days if respondent cannot be found. (Temporary restraining order will not be valid or enforceable until respondent is served.)
  - c. Gather witnesses, and any other evidence to present to the Judge.
  - d. All documents must be certified under Florida Rules of Evidence, or a live witness must testify at the hearing to document authenticity of the documents.
  - e. Evidence must relate to the allegation on the petition.
3. Hearing
  - a. Respondent does not appear at hearing.
    1. Petitioner allowed to present evidence.
    2. Ruling will be based on evidence presented.
  - b. Respondent appears at hearing.

1. Respondent can object to evidence which is based on Florida Rules of Evidence.
2. Respondent can cross-examine witnesses and the petitioner.
- c. Petitioner will rest their case.
- d. Respondent can introduce evidence.
- e. Judge Rules on:
  1. Custody (if required)
  2. Visitation (if required)
  3. Restraining Order can be for a certain time period or indefinitely.
  4. Judge can also deny petition.
  5. At any time either the petitioner or respondent can file to remove the Restraining Order.

The Hearing is considered a trial and is applicable to Florida Rules of Evidence. Non-authenticated and hearsay are not allowable at the hearing.

To the extent of the victim's cooperation and consent, all University offices will work cooperatively to ensure that the petitioner's health, physical safety, work and academic status are protected, pending the outcome of a formal University investigation of the complaint. Additionally, personal identifiable information about the victim will be treated as confidential and only shared with persons with a specific need to know who are investigating/adjudicating the complaint or delivering resources or support services to the complainant. The University does not publish the name of crime victims nor publish any identifiable information regarding victims in the crime logs. Victims may request that their directory information be withheld by making a request in writing to the campus Registrar.

### **Disciplinary Procedures Following a Complaint**

The investigatory process involves interviewing the parties involved and any witnesses while gathering documentary or other evidence. In cases involving alleged criminal conduct, the complainant may file a criminal complaint with the local police department. A complainant need not pursue a criminal complaint in order to seek, or to hold the accused responsible through the University's Student Code of Conduct. As soon as possible, the complainant will be offered appropriate assistance.

Based on the outcome of the investigation, the assigned Title IX Officer or their designee will determine if there is sufficient cause to proceed with the complaint. If so, the Title IX Officer or the designee will arrange for an informal resolution conference with the accused. Complainants do not attend informal resolution meetings but are apprised of the meeting's outcome. If the accused does not accept responsibility for the allegations and/or the proposed sanction, the Title IX Officer or their designee will determine if the evidence warrants a formal hearing before the Grievance Committee. The exact nature of the responsive action depends on the circumstances, but may include discipline up to and including suspension or dismissal from the University for a student, staff or faculty who is found to have violated University policies.

The University will take appropriate action i.e., an investigation, adjudication and disciplinary and remedial/corrective steps in response to a complaint made pursuant to the complaint policies/procedures listed above. The University will make every effort to handle complaints and investigations with sensitivity to both the rights of the person who complains, and the rights of the accused.

The University handles complaints discreetly and attempts to maintain privacy throughout the investigatory process, to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances. However, in order to conduct an investigation, it is generally necessary to discuss the allegations with the accused and other potential witnesses.

Additionally, the University may have legal obligations to disclose information to law enforcement or in the context of legal proceedings.

Complaints may be made anonymously. While the University endeavors to investigate all complaints, including anonymous complaints, the nature of anonymous complaints makes investigation, determination, and remediation more difficult and, at times, impossible. Further, while the University attempts to protect the identity of complainants who do not wish to be identified, this may not always be possible.

In appropriate cases as determined by the University, conflict resolution may be possible. This is permitted only where both the complainant and accused voluntarily agree to participate, and either party may terminate informal resolution attempts and commence formal Grievance procedures at any time prior to reaching a mutually acceptable resolution. Depending on the circumstances, a mediated resolution may not necessarily involve face-to-face discussions between the complainant and the accused. Certain cases are not appropriate for conflict resolution, such as complaints of particularly egregious sexual harassment or cases involving sexual assault or violence.

Occasionally, an individual makes a complaint and later wishes to revoke or discontinue the investigation or adjudication process. Similarly, it may occur that someone other than the victim reports an incident, and the victim declines to participate in the investigation or adjudication process. In other instances, complaints may be received anonymously and/or the victim may not wish to be personally identified. The University endeavors to respect the wishes of a victim to either not be identified and/or not participate in the process. In these situations, the University attempts to investigate and address complaints in accordance with the victim's wishes.

If a victim wishes to talk about an incident with the assurance that the discussion will be confidential and will not result in an investigation or follow up action, the University will also proceed in this regard.

In determining whether sex discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual misconduct occurred, the University does not apply the criminal standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt," nor do formal court rules of evidence apply. Instead, the University uses a "preponderance of the evidence" standard, and the University may consider any evidence it deems relevant. A "preponderance of the evidence" means the evidence which is of greater weight, or is more convincing than opposing evidence such that it is "more likely than not" that an act occurred.

If the applicable investigatory or adjudicatory process allows for parties to offer witnesses and evidence, the complainant and the accused will have an equal opportunity to do so. The complainant and the accused will be informed in writing of the outcome of the complaint, to the extent permitted by law. An accused who is a student may appeal the outcome to an impartial decision maker. An employee who is deemed guilty shall have whatever rights are granted by law. The particular method and grounds for appeal are explained in the student policies listed above.

The University endeavors to resolve complaints promptly. Ordinarily, the investigative stage will take no longer than 60 calendar days from the time the complaint is received. In exceptional circumstances (including but not limited to especially complex cases, or when the University is not in session), it may be necessary to extend these timelines. If that occurs, the parties will be informed of the expected timeline for completion.

The University prohibits retaliation against any individual who in good faith makes a complaint of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct or participates as a witness in a proceeding under this or any other University policy. Retaliation is also unlawful pursuant to Title IX and other laws.

The University engages in educational programming to prevent domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Educational programming consists of primary prevention and awareness programs for all incoming students and new employees and ongoing awareness and prevention campaigns for students and faculty that:

- a. Identifies domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking as prohibited conduct;
- b. Defines what behavior constitutes domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking;
- c. Defines what behavior and actions constitute consent to sexual activity in the State of Florida;
- d. Provides safe and positive options for bystander intervention that may be carried out by an individual to prevent harm or intervene when there is a risk of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against a person other than the bystander;
- e. Provides information on risk reduction so that students and employees may recognize warning signs of abusive behavior and how to avoid potential attacks.
- f. Provides an overview of information contained in the Annual Security Report in compliance with the Clery Act.

This educational campaign will consist of but not be limited to the distribution of educational materials to new students, participating in and presenting information and materials during employee orientation and through newsletters among other means of distribution through the year. The Office of Student Services also has a directory of services that are available to victims within the community to assist those who have suffered from a criminal act.

### **Risk Reduction/Warning Signs of Abusive Behavior**

No victim is ever to blame for being assaulted or abused. Unfortunately, a person who is the victim of sexual or dating violence is more likely to be re-victimized. Below are some tips to help reduce your risk, to recognize warnings signs of abusive behavior and how to avoid potential attacks.

### **Warning Signs of Abusive Behavior**

Domestic and dating abuse often escalates from threats and verbal abuse to violence. And, while physical injury may be the most obvious danger, the emotional and psychological consequences of domestic and dating violence are also severe. Warning signs of dating and domestic violence include:

- 1) Being afraid of your partner.
- 2) Constantly watching what you say to avoid a “blow up.”
- 3) Feelings of low self-worth and helplessness about your relationship.
- 4) Feeling isolated from family or friends because of your relationship.
- 5) Hiding bruises or other injuries from family or friends.
- 6) Being prevented from working, studying, going home, and/or using technology (including your cell phone.)
- 7) Being monitored by your partner at home, work, or school.
- 8) Being forced to do things you don’t want to do.

### **Help Reduce Your Risk and Avoid Potential Attacks**

If you are being abused or suspect that someone you know is being abused, speak up or intervene.

1. Learn how to look for “red flags” in relationships so you can learn to avoid some of those characteristics in future partners.
2. Consider making a report with the Campus President and ask for a “no contact” directive from the University to prevent future contact.
3. Consider getting a protective order or stay away order.
4. Learn more about what behaviors constitute dating and domestic violence, understand it is not your fault, and talk with friends and family members about ways you can be supported.
5. Trust your instincts—if something doesn’t feel right in a relationship, speak up or end it.

### **Sexual Assault Prevention (From Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network - RAINN)**

- Try not to leave your drink unattended.
- Only drink from un-opened containers, or from drinks you have watched being made and poured.
- Cover your drink. It is easy to slip in a small pill even while you are holding your drink. Hold a cup with your hand over the top, or choose drinks that are contained in a bottle and keep your thumb over the nozzle.
- If you feel extremely tired or drunk for no apparent reason, you may have been drugged. Find your friends and ask them to leave with you as soon as possible.
- If you suspect you have been drugged, go to a hospital and ask to be tested.
- Keep track of how many drinks you have had.
- Try to come and leave with a group of people you trust.
- Avoid giving out your personal information (phone number, where you live, etc.). If someone asks for your number, take his/her number instead of giving out yours.

### **Traveling around campus**

- Make sure your cell phone is easily accessible and fully charged.
- Take major, public paths rather than less populated shortcuts.
- Avoid dimly lit places and talk to campus services if lights need to be installed in an area.
- Avoid putting music headphones in both ears so that you can be more aware of your surroundings, especially if you are walking alone.
- Carry a noisemaker on your keychain.
- Carry a small flashlight on your keychain.