

MEMORANDUM

**To:** Viterbi Faculty  
**From:** Yannis C. Yortsos, Dean *Yannis C. Yortsos*  
**Date:** August 22, 2022  
**Subject:** Civility and Climate in the Workplace

---

The University and the Viterbi School promote civil interactions and an inclusive climate among faculty and between faculty, staff, and students. I write to remind you of the appropriate policy, and to emphasize that behavior violating this policy will not be tolerated. A similar memo has been sent to Viterbi staff.

Chapter 6 of the [Faculty Handbook](#) describes University policy (<http://policy.usc.edu>) on providing a safe educational and work environment. In particular, Section 6-AA (2) states “...**no faculty member may take actions that are harassing, abusive, or intimidating against another member of the University community**” and Section 6-AA (3) states “...**When a University-authorized fact-finding process has concluded that a faculty member is not in compliance...a referral may be made to a Sanctioning Panel.**” The Faculty Handbook in Section 6-A (3) also states, “**The faculty member should carefully consider the class climate and ground rules around academic discourse, so that student learning is promoted but students are not unreasonably exposed to conditions in which harassment could easily arise.**” Thus, it is important that we promote and maintain an inclusive climate, welcoming and supportive, for all to thrive. The [USC Office of the Ombuds](#) is available for confidential, impartial, informal, independent consultation for anyone (faculty, staff, or student) with concerns about civility and climate.

The process below is to be followed in the School if any allegation of possible violation of this policy occurs:

- Once the School (either through the Department/Program unit or the Dean’s Office) learns of an incident in violation of this policy, the Department Chair or Program Director will contact and discuss the incident with the Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs, and the Vice Dean for Administration in case of staff involvement. The USC Office of Professionalism and Ethics ([OPE](#)) and/or the USC Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX ([EEO-TIX](#)) will be contacted as well, as applicable for the alleged incident.
- For non-EEO-TIX related matters, depending upon guidance that might be provided from the OPE, the Chair/Director (or designate) will contact directly the person(s) involved to hear their side and to emphasize that any behavior in violation of this policy must cease immediately.
- For repeated behavior in violation of university policy, appropriate follow-up action will be taken that may include discussion with the relevant Vice Dean and the Dean and/or investigation by the cognizant university office, including the Office of Conduct, Accountability and Professionalism (OCAP), as described in the Faculty Handbook, Section 6-A (7)(c), which may lead to disciplinary or other corrective action per University policy.
- Once all investigations have concluded, the relevant administrator or university office will notify the parties of the conclusions based on how best to communicate confidential, sensitive outcomes.

As part of the USC and the USC Viterbi communities, we share values that bind us together as University employees and as human beings. Let us uphold them.

