

MEMORANDUM

To: Viterbi Staff
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 staff and between faculty, staff, and students. I write to remind you of University and School policy, and to emphasize that behavior violating this policy will not be tolerated. A similar memo has been sent to Viterbi faculty.

In the Staff Hiring and Employment Policies, the section on Causes for Discipline addresses inappropriate behavior, discrimination and harassment as behaviors and actions that may result in discipline, stating the following: “[USC] is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment; the university expects that all members of the university community—faculty, staff, and students—should be able to pursue their work and education in such an environment” and “[those] who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including termination or dismissal for cause in accordance with university policies.” In all cases, 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 (Department/Program unit or Dean’s Office) learns of an incident in which a staff member is involved, the Department Chair or Program Director should contact and discuss it with the VSoE Director of Human Resources. University Human Resources, 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.
- The VSoE Director of Human Resources (or designate) will work with the Chair/Director, University Human Resources, and the cognizant university office to investigate the allegations, determine if disciplinary action toward the staff member is warranted and the level of discipline. Academic units may not conduct investigations nor impose a disciplinary action, verbal or written, on a staff member without the prior approval and guidance of the VSoE Director of Human Resources.
- If the behavior continues, the VSoE Director of Human Resources will consult with the Vice Dean for Administration, University Human Resources, and cognizant university office, as needed. After investigation as deemed appropriate, further discipline may be taken, up to and including termination.
- After investigations are concluded, the VSoE Director of Human Resources or cognizant university office will notify the parties of the conclusions based on how best to communicate confidential, sensitive outcomes.

It is important that we promote and maintain an inclusive climate, welcoming and supportive, for all to thrive. As part of the USC Viterbi and USC communities, we share values that bind us together as University employees and as human beings. Let us uphold them.

