

MEMORANDUM

**To:** Viterbi Faculty  
**From:** Yannis C. Yortsos, Dean  
**Date:** August 16, 2023  
**Subject:** Civility and Climate in the Workplace

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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 request your adherence in letter and in spirit to it. A similar memo has been sent to Viterbi staff.

Chapter 6 of the [Faculty Handbook 2022](#) 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)(b) 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.**” Also, the Faculty Handbook 2022, in Section 3-B(1)(a), states the following: “**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 potential harassment.**” Promoting and maintaining an inclusive climate, which is welcoming and supportive, is necessary 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.

In case of allegations of violation of this policy the following steps will be pursued:

- When an incident in violation of this policy is reported, the Department Chair, Director or designee of the Department or Program of the faculty member will report the event to the Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs, and the Vice Dean for Administration and Finance, in the case of staff involvement. If applicable, the USC Office of Professionalism and Ethics ([OPE](#)) and/or the USC Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX ([EEO-TIX](#)) will also be contacted.
- For non-EEO-TIX related matters, and depending upon guidance provided from OPE, the Chair will contact directly the person(s) involved to provide a fair hearing, to receive further understanding of the alleged violation, and to ensure that any continuing violation ceases immediately.
- For repeated violations of university policy, appropriate follow-up action will include conversation with relevant members of the dean’s office (Vice Dean as well as the Dean) and/or investigation or review by the cognizant university office or committee, as described in the Faculty Handbook 2022, Section 6-AA. According to University policy, this may lead to sanctions or other corrective action.
- Once all investigations have been concluded, the relevant administrator or university office will notify the parties of the conclusions reached, following appropriate communication guidelines if these conclusions include confidential and/or 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 continuously uphold them.

