



TO: Bruce Benson, University of Colorado President

CC: Patrick O'Rourke, Vice President, University Counsel, and Secretary to the Board of Regents

FROM: CU Faculty Council

DATE: April 30, 2018

RE: Workplace Environments and Relations at CU

This complicated matter relating to workplace environments involves issues about policies, awareness, support system, mediation, oversight, and monitoring.

Based on recommendations from Faculty Senate at the November 30, 2017 meeting, Faculty Council collected concerns to identify key issues that have negative impact on workplace relations across the university. Several discussions identified workplace environment issues, which include instances of academic bullying, non-sexual harassment, intimidation and retaliation.

Workplace culture impacts the overall health and well-being of faculty and staff, and thus their productivity can translate ultimately in loss of work days and financial capital. It can affect the reputation of CU and the loyalty of faculty and staff towards CU as well recruitment and retention efforts for high-caliber faculty. These issues have the capacity to tarnish the CU brand within our local community and across Colorado as we compete for patient and student populations. Therefore, specific attention to workplace relations may mitigate these concerns.

There are often no effective mechanisms for constructive conflict resolution, which results in issues left unresolved and persisting. Existing campus-based mechanisms to deal with disputes and lapses in professionalism do not consistently provide adequate pathways to address academic bullying, non-sexual harassment, intimidation and retaliation. Therefore, it is important to provide a clear and strong system-wide policy on bullying, harassment and retaliation that can guide faculty and staff facing such issues.

Faculty and staff at all levels of employment are affected by hostility in the workplace. Examples of these issues frequently involve senior faculty members who are in positions of power, and vulnerable groups such as junior tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. Senior faculty and individuals in leadership positions may also be targets. Contributing factors include deficits in leadership style and practice, lack of knowledge of behavioral impact, lack of knowledge of university policies and procedures, and lack of adequate resources to promote a positive leadership culture.

While it is apparent that each campus has to define its own policies and procedures on the maintenance of healthy workplace environment, Faculty Council can take actions that positively address workplace relations with the support of CU administration. A message from senior leadership that bullying, harassment, and retaliation are not consistent with University of Colorado values is imperative.

To facilitate this conversation and address the issues that impact our workplace environments at CU, Faculty Council will engage with the administration on the following actions:

1. Conduct a survey to determine how widespread or systemic the problem of workplace bullying, intimidation, and retaliation is at CU, beyond what we heard during our recent discussions. Faculty Council shall be involved in survey development and in subsequent analysis and interpretation.
2. After collecting and analyzing the data, determine the context in which bullying, intimidation and retaliation are most likely to occur, and determine what interventions are most likely to result in a positive outcome.
3. Enhance reporting procedures and improve access and availability of campus resources that can effectively mediate conflicts related to workplace bullying, harassment and retaliation.
4. Ensure there are clear written and explicit policies that address this problem. Procedures should be clear and unambiguous with directives that outline the steps someone should take if they are bullied.
5. Affirm that faculty are entitled to the protection of "rights and duties" documents, which can be used in all circumstances of intimidation.
6. Create meaningful reward systems that will promote advocacy and mentoring.
7. Provide education on leadership skills in managing employees and teams.
8. Provide education about the generation and maintenance of healthy and effective work environments.
9. Raise awareness on campuses and at all levels for ideal models of workplace behaviors and how unhealthy workplace behaviors detract from CU's mission.