URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for Penn State Geosciences

This is what was found by the Penn State Geosciences Pod in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Some information was public; answers that were only found through follow up with contacts are noted.

Links to reporting policies at our organization:

- Penn State Reporting gateway (Ethics and Compliance):
  [https://universityethics.psu.edu/resources-reporting-wrongdoing](https://universityethics.psu.edu/resources-reporting-wrongdoing)
- Student Affairs: [https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/report](https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/report)
- Report Bias: [http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias](http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias)
- Other Policy Information:
  - [https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/welcome/access-disability/](https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/welcome/access-disability/)
  - [https://www.ems.psu.edu/diversity](https://www.ems.psu.edu/diversity)
  - [https://www.ems.psu.edu/graduate/graduate-student-resources/diversity-resources-graduate-students](https://www.ems.psu.edu/graduate/graduate-student-resources/diversity-resources-graduate-students)
  - [https://www.ems.psu.edu/undergraduate/diversity](https://www.ems.psu.edu/undergraduate/diversity)
  - [https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/support-safety-conduct/student-conduct/code-conduct](https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/support-safety-conduct/student-conduct/code-conduct)
- Reporting policies are reviewed occasionally by entities like the recent Student Code of Conduct Task Force:
  [https://news.psu.edu/story/644813/2021/01/20/administration/student-code-conduct-updated-task-force-recommendations](https://news.psu.edu/story/644813/2021/01/20/administration/student-code-conduct-updated-task-force-recommendations)
- Rates of reporting available:
  - Bias: [http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias](http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias)
  - At a University level reporting rates are publicly available: [http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/bias-report-archive](http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/bias-report-archive)

Mechanisms available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism:

- Vice Provost for Educational Equity Report Bias website: webform (accessed via PSU or Friends of Penn State login) or 24-Hr anonymous hotline: **1-800-560-1637**
- EMS Faculty Ombudsperson: [https://www.ems.psu.edu/faculty-ombudsperson](https://www.ems.psu.edu/faculty-ombudsperson)
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- EMS Staff Ombudspersons: https://www.ems.psu.edu/staff-ombudsperson
- Geosciences Ombudspersons for Graduate Students: Sridhar Anandakrishnan and Liz Hajek (needs to be updated re-added to the website after rebuild)
- Protocol for Bias Reporting: http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/reports/protocol-for-responding-to-bias-motivated-incidents
- University Police get involved when specific acts of harassment, etc. are reported/brought to their attention. They can then open an investigation as necessary.
  - Means for reporting include calling the University Police (814-863-111) or reporting online via https://www.police.psu.edu/report-crime
  - Reporting can be done by the person who has experienced the harassment or by a third-party witness.
  - University Park Police Department recently appointed a DEI director who may be a future resource: https://www.police.psu.edu/diversity-equity-and-inclusion
- It is not clear who in-person and online reports go to or who has access to them. This information will need to be evaluated.

**Resolution procedures and outcomes or consequences reported individuals:**
- University Discrimination and Harassment Resolution Procedures: https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/welcome/discrimination-complaints/discrimination-and-harassment-resolution-procedures/
- Procedures for resolutions of problems in the Graduate School: https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-800/gcac-802-procedures-for-resolution-of-problems/
- Grievance resolution in the Graduate School: https://gpsa.psu.edu/resources/grievance-resolution/

**Resources available for individuals reporting:**
- EMS: James Guyton (Coordinator of Multicultural Affairs)
- Penn State Gender Equity Center victim and survivor advocacy and support: https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health-wellness/victim-survivor-support-advocacy/reporting-options
- Penn State Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
  - https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling
  - https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/resources/resources-racially-minoritized-students
  - https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/resources/resources-sexually-diverse-and-gender-diverse-students
- Policies on protection against retaliation: https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ad67
Resources available to groups raising issues or proposing changes, and examples of organized feedback or intervention:

- It seems that working groups, ad hoc committees, and task forces are formed at the discretion of leadership and can be prompted by petitions or organized grass-roots activism. It is not clear whether there are formalized pathways for instigating a task force or similar investigation.

- Entities that can be contacted about changes or policy review include: Faculty Senate and administrative leadership (including Vice Provost and Deans for Educational Equity). Educational Equity active committees and commissions: Equal Opportunity Planning Committee; President’s Commissions for Equity; Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Equity; Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity; Commission for Women; all linked here: http://equity.psu.edu/

- College of EMS proactively hired an external consulting firm to conduct a culture and climate survey in 2019 (Assessment of Living, Learning, and Working Environment; ALLWE https://www.ems.psu.edu/allwe ) and an active ALLWE Implementation Committee continues to work on action items.


- Annual faculty activity summaries ask for feedback on unit leadership.

Gaps, needs, and recommendations

- Reporting resources link, prominent and clearly labeled, directly accessible from the Geosciences (and EMS) homepage.

- Almost overwhelming amount of links and resources; develop a simplified, annotated list for website and distribution during onboarding.

- Advocacy/peer-support network for students to provide support for navigating difficult situations and reporting.

- Clearer and transparent explanations of resolutions, outcomes, and general reporting statistics are needed.

- Regular reviews of internal climate and culture & transparency with how reporting is handled and who can view/access reports of issues. (Note the need for pathways for feedback that students, staff, and faculty feel comfortable using.)

- Assemble information about how policies can be challenged or changes requested across different levels (Department, College, Graduate School, University, etc.). Examples of responses and situations that prompted change would be helpful (examples to explore: response to recent PSU Black Student Caucus Zoom bombing incident, PSU Child Care situation, Graduate Student Unionization, and smaller departmental-level changes.)