URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for Montana State University

This is what was found by Department of Earth Sciences at Montana State University 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.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**
  - Organization, Company, University Policies
    - The university reporting policy is largely focused on those related to legal or policy violations. However, one must wade through an intimidating document put together by the MSU Legal Counsel or office of Research Compliance in order to understand pathways and ‘violations’ included and where to direct your concerns. The first statement about reporting suggests concerns first be directed to the individual’s supervisor. Furthermore, the table for reporting procedures is a table that solely links offices to contact, not specific contacts, emails, or links to these offices (see table 1 at bottom of this document).
    - The umbrella Montana University System (that covers all MSU campuses) also has an anonymous and non-retaliation compliance hotline, but language includes confusing statement of relevant concerns. For example, Discrimination and Harassment and Human Resources are considered appropriate areas of concern for this hotline, though “Non-academic student conduct matters” are not. This leaves a large grey area for Graduate Students and Undergraduate Students workers or assistants. Research misconduct concerns are also reported here. Notably, though many professional organizations have recently included harassment, bullying, coercion, and discrimination into their policies of professional ethics and conduct (following several high profile cases), MSU does not explicitly state that these forms of misconduct are research misconduct.
    - MSU has also a Bias Incident Reporting System developed by the Office of Institutional Equity, Dean of Students Office, and Diversity Awareness office. This reporting system is
The Dean of Students maintains a separate reporting pathway for conduct violations. How these reports are used is unclear, though one may make an anonymous report. Insight rom the xxxx indicates that there are two committees involved: one focused on student safety, but also an umbrella team that meets regularly.

- Department, Lab, Division, Advisor or Supervisor Policies
  - Lab Policies are defined and managed by individual PIs and advisors. Some are developed as part of student-advisor contracts – however these do not typically include reporting pathways.
  - The department has not developed a formal reporting pathway, though directions via the Dean of Students direct students to the Head of Department. The Graduate Coordinator has acted as an informal ombudsperson, however the pathway is unclear, and there is no policy on non-retaliation, anonymity, or how concerns and conflicts will be resolved.
  - Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? What is the process for changing policy?
    - Unsure at the University level, though reporting pathways associated with the Dean of Students office are reviewed and discussed regularly at meetings that include multiple offices.
    - The department is reviewing and developing policies now.
  - Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)?
    - The Dean of Students releases a campus safety report every year that include the number of harassment, bias, and assault reports to the university.

- What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?
  - Who are the designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents?
    - Please see the text in section 1 regarding Bias reporting.
  - Can reports be made online? Where?
    - Yes, please see above
  - Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
    - In many cases this is unclear, however for each form (pathway) the organizing office is listed. The Diversity and Inclusion office
  - Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?
    - Students appear to be able to select specific pathways that involve police. Nearly all offices have mandatory reporting that applies to harassment/assault of protected classes. Because several forms are
anonymous, students that wish for police to not be involved can select this. It is uncertain when advocates are involved or encouraged.

- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**
  - This information was largely unclear in most reporting mechanisms.
    - Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?
      - Each reporting mechanism has associated offices, and many appear to also have ways for these offices to elevate concerns across offices.
    - Are reports tracked?
      - The Dean of Students office tracks reports across all pathways (it seems) that involve students (aside from those within departments or to direct supervisors). Tracking of faculty reports is unclear.
    - Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
      - Unclear, though the Title IX office has a defined mechanism.

- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**
  - Insight from the Diversity of Awareness and Inclusion office indicates that students can choose to elevate concerns to multiple levels, and even ‘small’ accommodations can be made for students that report bias including switching class sections without elevating concerns to formal levels or including an instructor. The Dean of Students office is involved when academic performance is impacted, and they work with students (in collaboration with instructor if the instructor is not involved in the discrimination or bias incident) to find appropriate accommodations. What accommodations are available is not clear.

- **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**
  - This has been an issue at the University recently, as highlighted by a BIPOC group encouraging the university to develop statements and goals regarding equity and diversity. This was an intimidating process for the students, and involved high-level administrators discouraging organization activities. This incident uncovered many barriers to university change, and has also helped to push forward recent efforts related to diversity, inclusion, and equity.
  - Time and advocacy has improved the situation, and committees have been developed at the college level and university level to facilitate the process.
  - University Climate surveys were developed in the past decade as part of an NSF grant focusing on gender equality, however there has been little effort over that same time towards understanding racial and ethnic components of campus climate. It is our understanding that the College of Letters and Sciences at MSU is currently developing a climate surveys.
Table 1: MSU 300.10 Reporting Legal, Regulatory and Policy Violations.

Individuals should share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with a university administrator who can address them properly. In many cases the individual’s supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. If an individual is not comfortable speaking with the supervisor, or is not satisfied with the supervisor’s response, individuals should take their concerns to the offices listed below that will review and/or address the concern as appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violation</th>
<th>MSU at Bozeman*</th>
<th>MSU-Billings</th>
<th>MSU-Northern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic matters</td>
<td>Office of the Provost</td>
<td>Office of the Provost</td>
<td>Office of the Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic student conduct matters</td>
<td>Office of the Dean of Students</td>
<td>Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs</td>
<td>Office of the Dean of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting and financial</td>
<td>Office of Audit Services</td>
<td>Office of Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services</td>
<td>Office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>Senior Associate AD for Compliance</td>
<td>Office of the Athletic Director or Office of the Chancellor</td>
<td>Office of the Athletic Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination or harassment</td>
<td>Office of Institutional Equity</td>
<td>Office of Human Resources</td>
<td>Office of Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and safety</td>
<td>Safety and Risk Management</td>
<td>Risk Manager and Safety Coordinator</td>
<td>Office of Human Resources</td>
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<td>Human resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information security and technology</td>
<td>Information Security Group</td>
<td>Chief Information Officer</td>
<td>Information Technology Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Office of Research Compliance</td>
<td>Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs</td>
<td>Office of the Provost</td>
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</tbody>
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*Including MSU Extension, Montana Agricultural Experiment Station and Fire Services Training School.