URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for Humboldt State University

This is what was found by Humboldt Geoscientists at Humboldt State University on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Most of the information was publicly available on the HSU website; we also spoke with the Associate Dean of Students.

- The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:
  - Students, Faculty or Faculty on behalf of students can make reports here. Reporting a student of concern or a complaint on behalf of a student (e.g. by a faculty or staff member) goes through the Dean of Students. Sexual misconduct/discrimination reports go to the Title IX office. Both forms are available at the webpage for “Student Rights and Responsibilities”.
  - HSU CARE form
  - Reporting Sexual Misconduct

Dean of Students team’s mission: “The Campus Assistance, Response, and Engagement (CARE) program’s primary mission is to support the wellbeing and success of Humboldt State University students by facilitating referrals, support, and advocacy through non-clinical interventions.”

- What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?
  - Reports can be made online (see links above). Anonymous reports are accepted.
  - Online reports are directed to the Dean of Students or to the Title IX office, and are checked daily.
  - Individuals can be accompanied by a Support Advisor of their choosing.
What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?
- The process is outlined in Executive Orders 1098 and 1097. Decisions about appropriate sanctions are made by the Student Conduct Administrator or Title IX Coordinator following investigation and discussion with the Parties. Within the CSU system there is an effort to have consistent sanctions in response to particular misconduct or behavior.
- Reports are tracked within each Office, and Annual Security Reports contain statistics of Clery Act crimes for HSU.
- Repeated complaints, any complainant who is not satisfied with a campus investigation outcome, or appeals go to the Office of the Chancellor.

What resources are available for individuals reporting?
- Students can bring a Support Advisor to hearings Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender.
- Students can bring a Support Advisor to hearings.
- Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations.
- There is protection against retaliation or repercussions. An interim remedy while investigation is pending can include a no contact order, and the Coordinator can work with the student to accommodate changing schedule or classes.

What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?
- The policies at HSU are California State University system-wide. The Student Code of Conduct (16) includes grounds upon which student discipline can be based on “Violation of any published University policy, rule, regulation or presidential order”.
- The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion can work on trainings and supporting culture-shifts in departments in response to complaints.

Examples:
- An example lab reporting policy: Basin Research Group 4 (under “Inclusivity and Diversity”)
- An example institution reporting policy: https://www.whoi.edu/HR/harassment

How do you make people feel comfortable coming to you?
- Checking in with students regularly to see how they are doing (in virtual teaching world I now use a google form to check in with them). A simple ‘How are you?’ goes a long way with building rapport and trust.
- Make a point of using inclusive language and making it clear that inclusivity is important to you (for instance, using preferred pronouns, providing clear guidelines to engage with others in class)
I attempt to get to know students on a personal level. My first appointment is an hour long. I generally start the interview with "Tell me a little about yourself". I let them speak and take notes, then ask probing questions. I let them know I do ask personal questions, but they never have to answer any they don’t want to, or tell me anything they don’t want to. If I take a student into the LSAMP program I tell them I will be “in their business -- academic, not personal, like the grandma or auntie you didn’t know you needed” and then ask if they would be ok with that. Most usually smile and say they probably need it. I have never had a student say no, that they didn’t want that kind of mentorship.

I check in with students regularly as well, especially those who are falling behind. In the online environment, if the class is small enough, I try to respond to students’ initial introduction post to let them know that I care about them as individuals. I hold a core belief that although I am more experienced in geology and pedagogy than my students, this does not mean that I am more experienced in all things in life, which I believe sets the tone of my interaction with students and makes me approachable.

I think that I would be uncomfortable going to someone (a professor/instructor/boss) with a question or to start a chat with them if I didn’t know a little bit about them. Therefore during the first class meeting, even though I go over the syllabus first-thing, my main goal is to introduce myself to the group. I make it a point to be honest about my journey through higher education. I admit that I didn't achieve a high GPA or standardized test scores. I describe some of my experiences of working off campus while pursuing an advanced education. My goal is to be relatable while emphasizing that we, as a group, will be going through this course together. I guess my thought process is, if one thinks that someone might understand a situation/hardship, they will probably be more likely to approach a discussion with them.