NIU URGE Deliverable: Complaints and Reporting

This is what was found by Geology URGE Pod at Northern Illinois 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 Northern Illinois can be found here:
  - Ethics and Compliance Office definitions policies and procedure can be found [here](#).
  - Unclear how often the university reviews reporting policies. Policies were last updated in October of 2019.
  - Ethics and Compliance Office publishes overview of complaints. 2020’s overview can be found [here](#).
  - Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences uses the NIU policies and has no policies related to the department alone.

- What Mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, macroaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?
  - University level:
    - Complaints may be submitted online to either the Office of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion or the Ethics and Compliance Office
    - Ethics and Compliance Office Incident reporting portal can be found [here](#).
    - Office of Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Reporting portal and policy can be found [here](#).
    - Complaints are received by:
      - Ethics and Compliance Office Investigators. A list of staff for this Office with titles can be found [here](#).
      - It is unclear who receives complaints filed for the Office of Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
      - It is unclear if or when police are included in the process for either office.
  - Department Level: There is a student advisory board that meets monthly with the Department chair but there is no formal process for reporting complains within the department.

- What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals:
  - University level:
    - Ethics and Compliance Office statement on consequences: “Corrective action may include, but is not limited to, a counseling statement, a letter of warning, oral reprimand, written reprimand, referral to a required counseling program, suspension from employment with or without pay or termination from employment in accordance with prevailing university personnel due process procedures or applicable collective bargaining agreements.”
    - Outcomes are determined by the investigator from the Ethics and Compliance Office.
    - Reports are tracked and 2020’s reports can be found [here](#).
    - It unclear how repeated complaints are handled.
  - Department level: There is no known policy for consequences for reported individuals within the department.
• What resources are available to individuals reporting?
  o University resources include:
    ▪ **Office of the Ombudsperson**
    ▪ **Counseling and Consultation Services**
    ▪ **Employee Assistance Program**
  o External Resources:
    ▪ **Illinois Department of Human Rights**
    ▪ **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**
    ▪ **Office of Civil Rights**
    ▪ **Office of Executive inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor**
    ▪ Illinois Sexual harassment and Discrimination Helpline: (877) 236-7703
• Suggestions that URGE Pod has for department level policies and procedures.
  o Department should create policies that address:
    ▪ Trainings: (i.e., sexual harassment, bystander, NIU CODE training, ect.)
    ▪ Student complaints about faculty
    ▪ Peer to peer complaints
    ▪ Creating non-punitive and meaning full feedback, while having clear record keeping and guidelines for handling repeat offenders.
    ▪ Guidelines for TAs on what their responsibility is in reporting incidents and at what level the department will take over handling
    ▪ Handling retaliatory responses or complaints based on DEI training or discussions
  o Actionable items for the department related to policies and procedures for complaints.
    ▪ Provide a place where all policies and resources (universal and departmental) can be accessed by all members of the department (faculty, staff, and students).
    ▪ Provide trainings for Teaching assistants and faculty to learn how to address bias and macroaggressions as they occur in courses.
    ▪ Create yearly reviews of faculty to elucidate student interactions related to bias with the instructor.
    ▪ Have at least 1 faculty member and 1 graduate student that can stand as the point person to help others find resources and/or support them through a complaint