

## URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for Northwestern University

This is what was found by GeoEquity at Northwestern 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.

*This is a working draft. Items to be followed up on or addressed in the future are listed in italics.*

The links for the reporting policy and reporting at Northwestern:

- Office of Equity (great resource to help guide where to report):  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/>
  - For reporting cases of sexual misconduct or discrimination/harassment:  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/resources/report-an-incident/index.html>
- Northwestern Community Standards:  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/communitystandards/>
  - Contains the student handbook, report a general concern about a student or student's conduct. In addition, a concern related to hate or bias.
- Graduate School specific resources:  
<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/academic-student-services/>
  - Inquiries concerning The Graduate School's academic policies and procedures.
- Graduate student handbooks for the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences: <https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/graduate/graduate-program/graduate-student-guidebooks.html> and Northwestern University: <https://www.northwestern.edu/student-conduct/about-us/student-handbook/assets/student-handbook.pdf>
  - The Northwestern University graduate student handbook outlines policies and procedures for reporting incidents in higher detail.
- The Office of Equity released their data for the 2018-2019 in a public report: <https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/documents/office-of-equity-annual-report-18-19.pdf>, and have surveyed campus climate in 2015 and 2019: <https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/about/statements-initiatives/campus-climate-survey.html>
- General policies at the University level can be found here:  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/policies-procedures/policies/index.html>
- *Determining the level of anonymity still needs to be determined.*
- *Ultimately, we would like to create a simple flow chart outlining how individuals can/should report.*

## **Additional Information Associated with Reporting Policies**

- The Office of Equity encourages reporters of sexual misconduct to file a police report, but this decision is entirely up to the reporter.
- Who has access to reports is not publicly listed, but likely includes staff in the line of decision making listed above.

## **Department personnel involved with reporting:**

- Department Chair: Matthew Hurtgen (Currently holding position 2021-2022)  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/hurtgen-matthew.html>
- Assistant Department Chair: Patricia Beddows (Currently holding position 2021-2022)  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/beddows-patricia.html>
- Director of Graduate Studies: Suzan van der Lee (Currently holding position as of 2021-2022)  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/van-der-lee-suzan.html>
- Director of Undergraduate Studies: Daniel Horton (Currently holding position as of 2021-2022)
- Ombudspeople: Yarrow Axford: <https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/axford-yarrow.html>, Steve Jacobsen: <https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/jacobsen-steven.html> (Currently holding position 2021-2022)
- *Considering laboratory-specific ombudsperson*

## **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**

- To the best of our knowledge, these statistics are tracked in aggregate by the Office of Equity: <https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/> with reports listed at <https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/documents/office-of-equity-annual-report-18-19.pdf>
- More specific details of individual cases, particularly those at the department, level are opaque.
- Possible outcomes for responsible faculty and staff found responsible for discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct include: a written warning, pay reduction, termination. Other potential outcomes include mandated additional training or being found not responsible. See above Office of Equity document pages 12-14.
- Some possible outcomes for students found responsible for sexual misconduct include suspension and expulsion. It is also possible for students to be found not responsible. See above Office of Equity document page 8.
- For staff, the Office of Human Resources and the respondent's supervisor decide on the outcomes after the Office of Equity investigation. For faculty, the Office of Equity makes recommendations to the department chair, dean, and provost who decide the outcome. See above Office of Equity document page 13. For students, outcomes are determined by the Office of Equity and the Office of Student Conduct. See above Office of Equity document page 8.

### **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**

- Dean of Student Office provides general support for students:  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/studentaffairs/dos/> such as NUhelp:  
[northwestern.edu/nuhelp/](https://www.northwestern.edu/nuhelp/)
- Reporters are protected by university policy:  
<https://policies.northwestern.edu/docs/non-retaliation-policy-FINAL.pdf>
- For individuals' mental health, Counselors and Psychological Services (CAPS):  
provides counselors available to all students and a filter-able list of referrals for  
local mental health resources [https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/  
index.html](https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/index.html)

### **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**

- Petitions may bring about broader attention to the issue, leading the University to make a policy change.
- Working closely with departmental leadership, such as the Chair, can lead to policy changes being brought to the faculty for a vote.
- Campus climate surveys have occurred roughly every 5 years for the past 5 years:  
[https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/about/statements-  
initiatives/campus-climate-survey.html](https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/about/statements-initiatives/campus-climate-survey.html)
- The Department does not currently have a climate survey. *We will consider instituting an annual climate survey at the department level.*