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## VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY STATEMENT

UNCG HRS

*Effective:* September, 2003

*Revised:* January 30, 2009

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### Statement of Policy

Violence of any sort is contrary to The University of North Carolina At Greensboro's purpose of providing quality education. This statement is established as an anti-violence and violence prevention policy. Violence threatens the safety of personnel (and often the general public) and affects employee morale and productivity. This policy shall apply to all EHRA, SHRA full-time and part-time employees with either a permanent, probationary, trainee, time-limited permanent or temporary appointment. All visitors will be expected to maintain behavior that is pleasant and conducive to productivity. Any SHRA employee who engages in workplace violence as hereinafter defined is subject to the State of North Carolina Disciplinary Action, Suspension, and Dismissal Policy. EHRA employees are considered "at will" and as such may be terminated for participating in any acts of workplace violence as hereinafter defined.

The policy includes actions related to or situations arising out of actions which are part of the performance of ones job. Employees acting with an appropriate use of force in the line of duty (sworn police personnel) are exempt from this policy. Incidents of the use of excessive force are covered under Public Safety Departmental policy.

Ignoring threats and/or violence can result in serious injury or death of staff, faculty, students and/or the general public. Violence also negatively affects morale, productivity, absenteeism, turnover, litigation costs, worker's compensation costs, employment and training costs. Violence often follows established threat patterns and behavioral changes that are observable and, with appropriate training, can be recognized as early warning signs. Violence may be prevented or reduced by responding to threats with effective preemptive action.

### Definitions

In order to understand exactly what constitutes workplace violence the following is to be used as your reference:

- **Workplace Violence** includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, threats, physical attack or property damage.
- **Bullying** is unwanted offensive and malicious behavior which undermines an individual or group through persistently negative attacks. There is typically an element of vindictiveness and the behavior is calculated to undermine, patronize, humiliate, intimidate or demean the recipient.
- **Stalking** involves harassing or pestering an individual, in person, in writing, by telephone or electronic format. Stalking also involves following an individual, spying on them, alarming the recipient or causing them distress and may involve violence or the fear of violence.
- **Threat** is the expression of an intent to cause physical or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the present ability to carry it out without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional or future.
- **Property Damage** is intentional damage to property which includes property owned by the State, employees, visitors, or vendors.
- **Intimidation** includes, but is not limited to, stalking or engaging in actions intended to frighten, coerce, or induce duress.
- **Physical Attack** is unwanted or hostile physical contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing, shoving, or throwing objects.

- **Domestic Violence** is the use of abusive or violent behavior, including threats and intimidation, between people who have an ongoing or prior intimate relationship. This could include people who are married, live together or date or who have been married, lived together or dated.
- **Prohibited Weapons** include, but are not limited to, firearms, dirk, dagger, sling shot, loaded cane, metallic knuckles, razor, shurikin, stun gun, knives if other than a pocket knife. Pocket knife is defined for the purposes of this policy as a small knife, designed for carrying in a pocket or purse, that has its cutting edge and point entirely enclosed by its handle, and that may not be opened by a throwing, explosive, or spring action.  
Use of other items as weapons (such as tools or furniture) is also prohibited. Tools used in the course of duty, such as axes, hammers, and similar instruments, are considered weapons when used as a weapon of aggression.

## Early Warning Signs of Workplace Violence

Workplace violence is often difficult to predict. Psychologists differ on what profile may indicate which individuals will commit aggressive acts. However, early warning signs can be identified that may indicate a tendency to workplace violence. These signs may include, but are not limited to:

- Sudden personality changes.
- Job performance suddenly becomes more erratic.
- Employee makes open comments about being treated badly, wanting to strike back.
- Behavior that suddenly becomes more aggressive, such as bullying and/or intimidating behavior toward supervisors or fellow workers.
- Showing off, commenting about use of, or actually brandishing a weapon
- Aggressive words spoken aloud that indicate physical retaliation for not having been promoted, transferred, etc.
- Obsessions, such as nursing a grudge against a co-worker or supervisor, or from frustrated romantic interests.
- Employee is involved in frequent verbal/physical disputes with co-workers or supervisor.  
Employee routinely violates University policy.

## Threats of Violent Activities

The following activities although not inclusive, are illustrative of unacceptable behavior that is considered violent in nature. Employees exhibiting these activities are in violation of this anti-violence policy which may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination:

- physical harm or beatings resulting in injury or death,
- psychological trauma due to verbalized threats, stalking, etc.,
- property damage due to violence
- property theft due to employer-directed violence (employer in this sense could mean any agent, officer, or administrator of UNCG),
- homicide, rape, sexual assault, gun shot wounds, stabbing, etc.,

## Responsibility

**Agency Responsibility:** All managers, supervisors, and employees shall receive training in the Violence in the Workplace Policies at UNCG. All staff employed by the University are expected to perform their duties professionally, including taking responsibility for decisions related to their individual physical safety. All staff are required to report any incidents in which safety is jeopardized or threatened. Employees are also encouraged to seek help for problems which may lead to an act of violence or aggression. The Employee Assistance Program provides counseling and referral service for all University employees.

**Employee Responsibility:** Each UNCG employee has the personal responsibility to abide by the Violence in the Workplace policy every time he or she comes to work. In addition, every employee has the responsibility to report any suspicion or knowledge of a current or potential incident of workplace violence to a supervisor as instructed by the reporting procedures. Incidents involving non-employees (i.e.

involving a family member or member of the public) should be noted just as incidents with State employees.

**Supervisor Responsibilities:** Each supervisor has the personal and professional responsibility to abide by the Violence in the Workplace policy every time he or she comes to work. In addition, every supervisor has the responsibility to report any suspicion or knowledge of a current or potential incident of workplace violence to the Workplace Violence Response Team as instructed by the reporting procedures. Following the prescribed training program established by the UNCG Workplace Violence Management Team, each supervisor is expected to learn the steps to prevent incidents of workplace violence and the measures to be taken if such an incident occurs. Supervisors should respond to incidents involving non-employees as well.

**Workplace Violence Response Team:** A Workplace Violence Response Team shall be established and shall consist of the Chairperson, Director of Public Safety and Police; Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources; University Counsel; and the Director of Counseling and Testing Center. The role of the Workplace Violence Response Team will be to: respond to acts or threats of violence in the workplace, investigate reports of a threat or a threatening situation, investigate and follow-up on acts or threats of violence, report to the Workplace Violence Management Team semi-annually and more frequently if deemed necessary by the Chairperson. The team may also become involved in other workplace situations as necessary to prevent and/or respond to violence. The Chairperson shall report all issues and findings to the Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs and the Chancellor.

**Workplace Violence Management Team:** A Workplace Violence Management Team shall be established and shall consist of employees and managers as defined in this policy statement. The role of the Workplace Violence Management Team will be to: establish a training program for all managers, supervisors, and employees; review statistics brought forward by the Workplace Violence Response Team and make recommendations for future action and/or determination of ways to prevent similar situations in the future; and assist the Workplace Violence Response Team as requested by the Chairperson. For example, when a student has been involved in an act or threat of violence the Chairperson may request that the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs attend a meeting of the Workplace Violence Response Team. The Workplace Violence Management Team will meet at least semi-annually and more frequently if deemed necessary by the Chairperson.

UNCG shall maintain records and periodically report to the Chancellor and Office of State Personnel regarding the operation of this policy and provide data on incidents which shall consist of location, time of incident, extent of damage or violence, etc.

## **Workplace Violence Management Team**

The Workplace Violence Management Team shall consist of the following:

- CHAIRPERSON - Director of Public Safety and Police
- One representative from Police Management appointed by the Chair
- Professional Development Coordinator/ Human Resources
- Director of Facilities
- Director of Medical Services
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources
- Sr. Associate Provost for Academic Administration
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (Student Discipline)
- Director of Environmental Health and Safety
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Financial Services
- Two Faculty representatives appointed by the Provost
- University Counsel
- Director of Information Services

## **Reporting Threats or Acts of Violence**

Employees and others can report threats or acts of violence directly to their Supervisor, Department Head, Human Resources Management, Vice-Chancellor/Provost, University Counsel, Campus Police or any member of the University Workplace Violence Management Team. Anyone who receives notice of a threat or a threatening situation is to report this information immediately to the Chairperson (Director of Public Safety and Police) of the Workplace Violence Management Team. The Chairperson may convene the Workplace Violence Response Team and/or the Workplace Violence Management Team to determine if investigation is necessary and assign members of the Workplace Violence Response Team accordingly to investigate the report. The Chairperson reports all issues and findings to the Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs and/or the Chancellor.