



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
SOUTHERN

**SEXUAL
MISCONDUCT,
RELATIONSHIP
VIOLENCE,
STALKING, AND
RETALIATION**
2023 ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY 1, 2023 - DECEMBER 31, 2023

OFFICE OF TITLE IX

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SOUTHERN
433 WEST MADISON STREET
PULASKI, TENNESSEE 38478

utsouthern.edu/about/title-ix



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SOUTHERN

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April 1, 2024

Dear UT Southern community and colleagues,

In anticipation of Sexual Assault Awareness Month next month, this is the perfect time to reflect on the past year's prevention, education, and training efforts around sexual misconduct, relationship violence and stalking. In 2023, our efforts focused on two priorities: student education around the meaning of consent, and employee education around best practices in prevention and reporting. In a community of our size, we can have the most impact when every member of our community is familiar with Title IX and its protections.

As of today, we had no Formal Complaints of misconduct in relation to sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, and retaliation in 2023. However, the Office of Title IX regularly fielded questions and concerns regarding related behaviors that did not rise to the level of a Title IX Formal Complaint. In these situations, we offer advice, refer resources, and help walk our Firehawks through their options both on and off campus. We also offer interventions where appropriate, and it is our hope that these efforts are contributing to the low number of Formal Complaints at UT Southern. We continue to work to increase campus awareness and education efforts, with the understanding that when students understand the process, they may be more likely to make a report to the University. In addition, when faculty and staff are aware of reporting obligations and resources, students' reports can be properly addressed.

As we move forward, we will continue to evaluate our Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation ("Policy"), procedures, and service to the campus. Our policies and procedures are reflective of the ever-changing Title IX regulations.

In the following pages, please find UT Southern's Annual Report on Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence and Stalking. This report is intended to provide information about UT Southern's overall Title IX compliance and prevention efforts and the number and type of reported incidents. Please contact me with any questions or concerns about UT Southern's Title IX compliance or about Title IX in general. Thank you for your commitment to making our campus a safe and discrimination-free environment.

Sincerely,

Sarah Catherine Richardson

Title IX Coordinator for Complaints of Sexual Discrimination & Harassment

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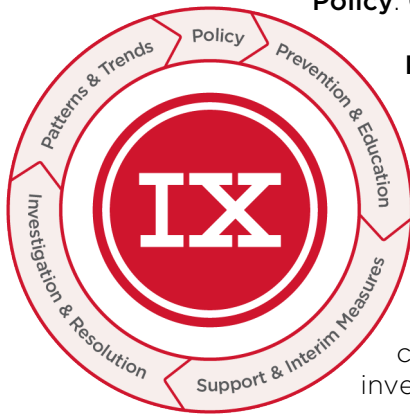
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MISSION & MODEL

The Office of Title IX at the University of Tennessee Southern seeks to provide a working, learning, and living environment free of sexual harassment.

Grounded in the social ecological model, our Title IX commitment emphasizes five key areas:



Policy. Our foundation is in the policy and procedures we follow.

Prevention. Our goal is to prevent sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, and retaliation before they happen.

Supportive measures. Our promise is to provide appropriate supportive measures to individuals involved in the Title IX process.

Investigation and resolution. Our commitments to due process, campus safety, and encouraging reporting guide how we investigate and resolve reports.

Patterns and trends. Our responsibility is to utilize the best available research, evidence-based practice, and our own campus trends in our prevention and response efforts.

POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL ASSAULT, DATING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND STALKING

The primary purposes of the Policy are to:

- Define, eliminate, prevent, and remedy the effects of Prohibited Conduct
- Identify care, support, and reporting options for students and employees
- Explain the obligations of employees to report Prohibited Conduct to the University
- Identify the grievance procedures the University will follow to thoroughly, equitably, and promptly investigate and resolve reports of Prohibited Conduct

The updated policy is accessible at utsouthern.edu/about/title-ix along with additional information about campus procedures, training, and prevention programs related to prohibited conduct. The University will continue to review and update the policy annually to best serve our students, faculty, and staff.

TITLE IX COORDINATOR

Sarah Catherine Richardson is the University's Title IX Coordinator and oversees the University's response to reports of Prohibited Conduct, including investigations, supportive measures, and hearing procedures. The Title IX Coordinator also leads the University's educational and prevention efforts regarding Prohibited Conduct. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached at scrich@utsouthern.edu or via 931-424-4073.



PREVENTION, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

Mandatory Reporter Training

Mandatory reporters are employees who are required to report information about known or suspected Prohibited Conduct to the Office of Title IX. At UT Southern, that includes both faculty and staff personnel from every department on campus. Each fall, UT Southern provides new and updated training for our campus, both for Mandatory Reporters and for our wider UT Southern community. In addition to all regulatory requirements for this training, the 2023 training also included information about boundary setting and unique risks for athletes, as well as a module from our partners at [Center of Hope](#) on why survivors do not always come forward.

Faculty & Staff

Faculty and staff members are part of the frontline of making sure UT Southern is a safe and respectful place to work and learn. Mandatory reporters were trained via online platforms in addition to a live presentation for faculty members as part of faculty mandatory training on August 17, 2023.

100% **FACULTY & STAFF TRAINED**

Students

Student leaders on campus were trained to be resources for their peers regarding Prohibited Conduct and were educated on their own roles as Mandatory Reporters where applicable. UT Southern continued to focus on prevention and education for **first-year students** in particular through providing students with information regarding consent, reporting, and active bystander interventions. Working closely with the University's First-Year Experience (FYE) program, the Title IX Coordinator was able to present an introductory presentation to new students before their first day of classes during Welcome Week in August 2023. FYE also hosted Isabella Romero (a prevention specialist from the Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence) during class sessions in November 2023 for Bystander Intervention.

383 **STUDENTS TRAINED**



Events





Hike the Hill – Inspired by a tradition from our friends in Knoxville, UT Southern hosted its second annual Hike the Hill event, a walk “up the hill” from our campus green to the gym. Around 60 students and many more faculty, staff, and community members joined.

Activity Fair - Representatives from Center of Hope, Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, and Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services all graciously visited campus for our annual Activity Fair in late August to provide education, resources, and support.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month Event – Center of Hope partnered with the Office of Title IX to mark Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. In a tabling event on October 18, 42 students, plus a variety of faculty and staff members, learned about healthy relationships, red flags, and how to support survivors.

DEFINITIONS + REPORTS OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

- **Sexual Harassment** - conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following: (1) An employee of the University conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the University on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; (2) Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the University's education program or activity; or (3) Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and/or Stalking. 
- **Sexual Assault** - an umbrella term for any sexual act directed against another person, without consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Sexual Assault includes Rape, Fondling, Incest, and Statutory Rape.
 - **Rape** - the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus, with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.
 - **Fondling** - the touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity.
 - **Incest** - sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.
 - **Statutory Rape** - sexual intercourse with a person under the statutory age of consent.
- **Dating Violence** - violence committed by a person (A) who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and (B) where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: (i) The length of the relationship, (ii) The type of relationship, (iii) The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. 
- **Domestic Violence** - felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime occurs, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime occurs.
- **Stalking** - engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to— (A) fear for his or her safety or the safety of others; or (B) suffer substantial emotional distress.
- **Retaliation** - to intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by this Policy, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing.

To protect anonymity, we do not publish the actual number of reports when there are less than 5 unique reports.