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Best Practices for the Workplace Environment

In accord with the University of Arkansas, the College of Education and Health Professions (COEHP) is a community that aims to foster a supportive and collaborative environment that values and expects civility and professionalism for all community members. Toward that goal, the COEHP College Council has compiled definitions of key terms and resources for COEHP faculty regarding best practices for the workplace environment.

Collegiality

According to the AAUP (2016), collegiality in academia occurs through constructive cooperation and engagement in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Thus, it is not a distinct entity that can be directly measured. Collegiality does not refer to all parties being in agreement; moreover, collegiality often occurs when faculty engage in discussions coming from different points of view. Engaging as an active participant in the forward progression of one's program, department, college, university, and community is considered collegial; however, all communication is expected to be respectful and professional.

Civility

Distinct from collegiality, we believe all persons of our community should expect the highest level of civility, defined as politeness and courteous behavior. This is not to infringe on anyone's first amendment right to free speech, but to allow for different ideologies and schools of thought to be discussed with regard for everyone's individual point of view (Wajngurt, 2014).

Inclusion and Diversity

Inclusive practices are recognized and valued by COEHP faculty because they improve the quality of our workplace environment through the exchange of ideas. We also value and actively promote diversity in our administrators, faculty, students, and staff because diverse participation can serve as a catalyst for improved decision making, increased productivity, and a competitive advantage. Further, the COEHP works to foster an inclusive environment that recognizes the contributions and supports the advancement of all, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability because an inclusive environment can enhance the quality of education, improve school and community relations, and positively affect the educational level of society.

Within the COEHP, we promote diversity through:

- Diversity-specific accountability for all employees. Diversity-specific behaviors are outlined in the Standards of Excellence for staff and incorporated into employee evaluations.
- Recruitment and retention efforts focusing on a diverse and qualified workforce and student body.
- New employee orientation addressing diversity in the workplace, including recognizing and accepting differences.
- Biennial diversity training for all staff to help further awareness and understanding of cultural differences among staff.

Harassment / Bullying

Elizabeth Farrington defines campus bullying as behavior at colleges and universities that tends “to threaten, to intimidate, to humiliate or to isolate members of the working university environment [and] that undermines reputation or job performance” (Farrington, 1993). Bullying in the workplace is an act of aggression, and it is associated with high stress levels and lack of collegiality.

No faculty member should be in a position where they experience harassment or bullying in the workplace environment. [The APA Center for Organizational Excellence](#) maintains a wealth of resources for employers and employees who are dealing with bullying and harassment. At the University of Arkansas, and harassment or bullying incidents can be reported to your Program Coordinator, Department Head, or direct supervisor as outlined by your unit. If this chain of command is uncomfortable or not appropriate, you may also report an incident at report.uark.edu or the [Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs](#).

Best Practices for a Collegial and Inclusive Workplace Environment

There are many ways to facilitate positive interactions and engage with faculty in the workplace environment. Such practices could include aiming to keep your door open for a certain percentage of the time you are in your office, inviting faculty members to coffee, or going for a power walk with colleagues on campus. We also acknowledge that working within academia requires the ability to balance our time between many responsibilities. While we suggest that engagement with colleagues can lead to a more positive and inclusive work environment, we all realize that there are times throughout the semester where faculty may need to narrow their focus in order to catch up or get work completed in a timely manner. Shifts in engagement should not be considered negative, but is simply part of the balancing act.

References

American Association of University Professors (AAUP). (2016). On collegiality as a criterion for faculty evaluation. Retrieved from: <https://www.aaup.org/report/collegiality-criterion-faculty-evaluation>

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Wajngurt, C. (2014). Prevention of bullying on campus. *The American Association of University Professors*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aaup.org/comment/1346#.W5aNgOhKiUk>