§4  INCLUSION OF BULLYING AS A VIOLATION OF THE STATEMENT

Principle: To include the harassment or bullying of a student, by any means, including technological, as a violation of the Statement

Proposed by: Central Student Government

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Community Support: College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government (LSA SG), Information Technology Services (ITS), Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC)

Definition:

Bullying is a behavior that is not confined to high school, and it can still occur on college campuses. Bullying is defined as “unwanted, aggressive behavior...that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time”. Even though the behavior of bullying does not change between high school and college, the ultimate goals do shift slightly. “The goal in college changes from being top dog, to fitting in. It is impossible to be liked (and in many cases even known) by everyone, so we focus our attention on being a part of a group that makes us happy. Bullying occurs less on an individual basis, from one person to another, and more between groups.” Bullying continues to be a major issue on college campuses and it is possible for it to lead to suicide of the victims, and can include student-to-student bullying, as well as teacher-to-student bullying.

Cyberbullying, cyberharrassment, and cyberstalking are fairly new behaviors that are categorized under “bullying,” and they are quickly spreading throughout the country. Although these three behaviors having a commonality of all being performed on forms of technology, they differ in their exact definitions. Cyberbullying can be defined as “the use of modern communication technologies (cell phones, computers, chat rooms, e-mails, and messages) to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them”. The National Conference of State Legislatures has defined Cyberharassment as “threatening or harassing email messages, instant

3 Stutzky, Glenn M.S.W. “Cyberbullying Information.” School of Social Work, Michigan State University.
messages, or to blog entries or websites dedicated solely to tormenting an individual." The difference between cyberbullying and cyberharassment is that in a case of cyberbullying the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) are both under the age of 18, while in a case of cyberharassment at least one of the victim(s) or perpetrator(s) is above the age of 18. Cyberstalking is defined as “the use of the Internet, email or other electronic communications to stalk, and generally refers to a pattern of threatening or malicious behaviors." In this proposal all three behaviors will be categorized under the title of “cyberbullying.”

Rationale:

Bullying does not end when students enter college. A study done by Christine MacDonald, a Professor of educational and school psychology at Indian State University, found that 15% of college students reported being bullied during their college career. In another study done on college-age students reports found that of a sample of 1,025 undergraduates indicated that 24.7% had seen students bully other students occasionally and 2.8% very frequently, 5% had been bullied by students occasionally and 1.1% very frequently, 12.8% had seen teachers bully students occasionally and 1.9% very frequently, 4.2% had been bullied by teachers occasionally and .5% very frequently, while 3.2% had bullied other students occasionally and 1.9% very frequently. “Bullying victims have been found to suffer many negative consequences as a result of the bullying including school avoidance, low self-esteem, and higher levels of anxiety, and suicidality." Bullying is a behavior that still occurs in colleges and needs to be stopped.

With the increasingly accessibility of forms of technology, bullying is on the rise throughout the United States. According to the National Crime Prevention Center, over 40% of all teenagers with access to the Internet have reported being bullied online during the past year ("Cyber Bullying

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...”). In a recent study of about 5,500 teens, it was found that close to 80% of the sample had come into contact with some sort of cyberbullying (Stutzky 2). In the study done by Christine MacDonald, she found that nearly 22% of college students reported being cyberbullied.

Currently, bullying is not specified in the Statement of Student Rights & Responsibilities as one of the behaviors that “contradict the values of the University community and are subject to action under the Statement.” Instead bullying may or may not fall under the current violation of: “C. Sexually harassing another person as defined by the University’s Standard Practice Guide”; “E. Stalking or harassing another person.” However, this language is not enough to encompass the behavior or bullying.

Unfortunately, the current violations specified in the Statement as of now only occur between two people verbally and physically and only under the title of “harassment.” The Statement does not include bullying as a behavior, and does not include any language about emotional and psychological occurring via cell phone, text message, computer, or email. Verbal or emotional abuse is defined as a pattern of behavior “undermining an individual’s sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem...[such as] constant criticism, diminishing one’s abilities, [or] name-calling. This harassment can be racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, or socio-economic in nature.

**Justification:**

1.) Bullying, in all of its forms, goes against the values specified in the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities, specifically the values of “civility, dignity, equality, freedom, honesty, and safety.”

2.) This amendment falls in line with the campus community perspectives on harassment, which include “unwanted negative attention perceived as intimidating, demeaning or bothersome to an individual.”

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10 Stutzky, Glenn M.S.W. “Cyberbullying Information.” School of Social Work, Michigan State University.


13 Ibid.


3.) This amendment falls in line with the Expect Respect Campaign created by the University of Michigan to promote “a respectful and inclusive environment that provides the support and opportunity necessary for each member of our community to prosper and achieve.”

4.) Bullying causes extensive emotional and psychological to the victim. “Bullying victims have been found to suffer many negative consequences as a result of the bullying including school avoidance, low self-esteem, and higher levels of anxiety, and suicidality.” It often makes the victim feel isolated, angry, or depressed. Cyberbullying has more negative consequences than traditional forms of bullying. A recent study by the US National Institutes of Health found that victims of cyberbullying were at a higher risk of depression than other types of bullying victims. “Unlike traditional bullying which usually involves a face-to-face confrontation, cyber victims may not see or identify their harasser; as such, cyber victims may be more likely to feel isolated, dehumanized or helpless at the time of the attack.”

5.) OSCR reported that the number of cyberbullying incidents is increasing each semester, and there are likely many more instances occurring each semester that go unreported.

6.) While many states have passed some sort of bullying law, including the state of Michigan, there is currently no state law concerning cyberbullying or cyberharrassment. Based on data collected in 2011, over 92% of states have some sort of traditional bullying law, but of the states with traditional bullying laws, only 16% have cyberbullying included under their bullying law.

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the University itself may have difficulty handling cases of bullying. In order to protect the community it is necessary to include language in the Statement concerning cyberbullying.

**Proposed Amendment**

*IV. Violations, p. 6 [proposal to add language]*

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<tr>
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<td>E. Stalking or harassing another person</td>
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<td>E. Stalking, harassing, or bullying – physically, verbally, or through the use of digital media</td>
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