

# **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY**

## **Approved by University Council October 14, 1999**

Reviewed and approved by University Council on December 10, 2009

### **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The University of Houston-Clear Lake seeks to provide a safe environment for learning and work for all employees, students, and visitors, by eliminating or reducing threats of workplace violence.

### **2. DEFINITIONS**

2.1 Violence - physical activity which is intended to injure, abuse, or damage a person or property.

2.2 Threat - Words or actions that create a reasonable perception that there is intent to physically harm persons or property.

2.3 Workplace - the UHCL campus or the off-campus site of any UHCL-sponsored activity.

2.4 Witness - one who has firsthand knowledge of an act, including a threat or act of violence.

2.5 Dangerous weapons - for purposes of this policy, "dangerous weapons" means:

any item commonly used as, or primarily intended for use as, a weapon; including but not limited to a firearm, knife, club, or other prohibited weapon as defined by V.T.C.A., Penal Code Section 46.05; or any object that has been modified to endanger or has been employed to endanger a person or property.

2.6 Firearm - any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use (V.T.C.A., Penal Code, Section 46.01(3)).

2.7 UHCL Police Department - a full service police department staffed by peace officers licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) and commissioned as police officers by the University of Houston System Board of Regents consistent with authorization granted by Article 51.203 of the Texas Education Code and Article 2.12 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. The Texas Education Code defines the department's primary jurisdiction as all counties in which property is owned, leased, rented, or otherwise under the control of the University of Houston System Board of Regents and also includes streets contiguous to and running through the campus. The UHCL Police Department is located in the Bayou Building Suite B1636, and can be reached at telephone number 281-283-2222.

### 3. POLICY

3.1 UHCL will not tolerate workplace violence of any type, from any source. This includes, but is not limited to, threatening, destructive or violent actions directed against employees, students, visitors, or university buildings, equipment, or property.

Possession of firearms or other dangerous weapons on the physical premises of the University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL) is prohibited (Texas Penal Code, Section 46.03). Further, although Texas Penal Code, Section 46.15 allows for peace officers to carry weapons throughout the state including areas where others are prohibited from doing so, peace officers are encouraged not to possess weapons while attending classes at UHCL as long as this would not violate rules and regulations of their respective police departments.

3.2 UHCL executives, administrators, managers, supervisors, and employees are responsible for observing and promoting measures to establish and maintain a non-violent workplace. Additional responsibility is vested in students and visitors to the university to observe university regulations designed to establish and maintain a non-violent workplace.

3.3 Incidents of workplace threats or acts of violence will be treated seriously by university personnel. Witnesses should report such acts or threats promptly to the UHCL Police Department. Reported threats or acts of violence will be investigated promptly, and appropriate action will be taken to address each incident that is reported.

3.4 The university will respond promptly, positively, and firmly to deal with threats or acts of violence. This response will include timely involvement of the UHCL Police Department. Violations of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the policies and procedures, which govern the behavior of UHCL employees and students. In addition, violations of this policy by any person, including non-UHCL affiliated persons, may lead to action by the criminal justice system.

3.5 Responses to threats or acts of violence may include dismissal from employment or from enrollment, arrest, prosecution, removal from campus property, suspension, reassignment of duties or other sanctions as authorized by specific disciplinary policies.

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Every witness to a threat of violence or a violent action is responsible for reporting the incident to the UHCL Police Department.

4.2 The Chief of Police is responsible for coordinating the university response to workplace-related threats and acts of violence. Department heads, managers and supervisors will continue to have primary responsibility for ensuring a safe workplace, for monitoring and resolution of employee conflicts or disputes, for taking appropriate corrective action when potentially violent situations develop and for working with the UHCL Police Department when threats or acts of violence occur. The Office of Human Resources will be responsible for informing employees of this policy.

4.3 Managers and supervisors will be provided with training in how to deal with workplace-related threats and acts of violence. This training will focus on prevention, recognition and de-escalation of violence, will include suggestions for appropriate responses to threats and acts of violence, and will

identify those resources which are available for use once a potential problem has been identified, or an incident has occurred. The UHCL Police Department and the Office of Human Resources will coordinate such training.

4.4 Workshops will be offered for training in threat awareness and appropriate responses to aggressive, threatening and violent behaviors. Assessment of additional training needs for employees will be made upon request to the unit supervisor, and appropriate training programs will be developed and presented. UHCL Police and the Office of Human Resources will coordinate this training.

4.5 Department heads, managers, and supervisors are specifically empowered to take immediate appropriate action to resolve or stabilize violent situations in the workplace, and to protect people from harm. Supervisors will ensure that, when a threat is made or a violent incident occurs, the UHCL Police Department will be notified immediately. Supervisors and managers will also ensure that appropriate disciplinary responses to internal workplace violence and aggression are made, and coordinate these efforts with the executive director of human resources, the dean of students or their designee.

William A. Staples

Title: President  
University of Houston-Clear Lake

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