

Resolution 021
A Resolution to Clarify the Student Conduct Policy on Harassment at The
Catholic University of America
Sponsored by: Senator Ahearn
Co-Sponsored by: Senator Birth, Senator Bracey, Senator Holcomb, Senator
Marsden, Senator Sijgers

Whereas,

The Catholic University of America is a community “dedicated to the cultivation of knowledge, skills, wisdom, and virtue in accordance with the University's mission.”¹

Whereas,

The Catholic University of America publishes and regularly updates a Code of Student Conduct.²

Whereas,

The purpose of maintaining student conduct at Catholic University is to protect the character of the University community by discouraging conduct inconsistent with the mission and values of the institution.³

Whereas,

Harassment is defined in the Code of Conduct as “Any actions, threats, gestures, images, and/or words directed toward another person via any medium which have the purpose or which tend to incite a breach of the peace, create a hostile, offensive or demeaning environment, or cause emotional distress to that person because of the humiliating, degrading, intimidating, insulting, coercive, ridiculing, and/or alarming nature of the conduct.”⁴

Whereas,

Section B, Subsection 1 of the Code of Student Conduct defines discriminatory harassment as “offensive, unwelcome conduct or language that is based on an individual’s race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, personal appearance, family responsibilities, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, status as a veteran, or any other basis protected by applicable Federal and state or local laws.”⁵

Whereas,

The aforementioned subsection omits “sexual orientation” in its description of discriminatory harassment.

Whereas,

¹ “Code of Student Conduct,” Student Conduct Policies Directory (Catholic University), accessed March 16, 2021, <https://policies.catholic.edu/students/studentlife/studentconduct/conduct-full.html>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

American University,⁶ George Washington University,⁷ Georgetown University,⁸ Gallaudet University,⁹ Howard University,¹⁰ Trinity Washington University,¹¹ as well as Villanova University¹², all explicitly include “sexual orientation” in their harassment, discrimination and bias-related conduct policies contained within their respective student codes of conduct.

Whereas,

By not including “sexual orientation” as a category that needs explicit protection from harassment, the University is allowing a population of students to be defenselessly exposed to harassment.

Whereas,

Catholic University is the official university of the Church and consequently should uphold the Catholic Social Teaching of “Life and Dignity of the Human Person” which cannot be done to the fullest extent unless the student body is provided with necessary protections.

Be it enacted that,

The Student Government Association Senate, acting in its official capacity as the representative of the undergraduate student body of The Catholic University of America, hereby requests that the University Code of Student Conduct’s Section B, Subsection 1 be amended to include “sexual orientation” as one of the bases in defining “discriminatory harassment.”

Agreed to by a vote of _____ yeas to _____ nays on this date: _____ with _____ abstaining and _____ not present.

Gerald Sharpe
President of the Student Government Association

⁶ “University Policy: Discrimination and Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy,” Office of Campus Life (American University), accessed March 16, 2021, <https://www.american.edu/policies/au-community/upload/discrimination-and-non-title-ix-sexual-misconduct-policy-web.pdf>

⁷ “Student Code of Conduct,” Division of Student Affairs (George Washington University), accessed March 16, 2021, <https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs3451/f/downloads/Code%20of%20Student%20Conduct%2008172020.pdf>

⁸ “Conduct of Student Conduct 2020-2021,” Office of Student Conduct (Georgetown University), accessed March 16, 2021, <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/bibfmpo93061uxmwir29>

⁹ “2.28 Anti Discrimination Policy,” Administration and Finance (Gallaudet University), accessed March 16, 2021, <https://www.gallaudet.edu/administration-and-finance/administration-and-operations-manual/228-anti-discrimination-policy-and-complaint-procedure/#:~:text=Gallaudet%20prohibits%20discrimination%20or%20harassment,veteran%20status%2C%20or%20any%20other>

¹⁰ “Title IX (Student) Policy on Prohibited Sexual Harassment Harassment and Gender-Based Discrimination in Education Programs and Activities,” Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer (Howard University), accessed March 16, 2021, http://law.howard.edu/sites/default/files/related-downloads/400_005titleixpolicyonprohibitedsexualharassmentpolicy.pdf

¹¹ “Policy: Harassment,” Office of Student Affairs (Trinity Washington University), accessed March 16, 2021, <https://discover.trinitydc.edu/policies/harassment/>

¹² Discrimination. (2012). Retrieved March 17, 2021, from <https://studenthandbook.villanova.edu/discrimination>

Gemma del Carmen

Vice President of the Student Government Association

