

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENT ON AND PLAN TO PREVENT WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

INTRODUCTION

In 1992, the Minnesota Legislature adopted the following act: Freedom from Violence

The State of Minnesota hereby adopts a policy of zero tolerance of violence. It is state policy that every person in the state has a right to live free from violence.

In furtherance of this policy, Minn. Stat. 15.86 mandates that each agency of the state government adopt a goal of zero tolerance of violence in, and around, the workplace.

DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE

"Violence is the abusive or unjust exercise of power, intimidation, harassment and/or the threatened or actual use of force which results in or has a high likelihood of causing hurt, fear, injury, suffering or death."

Violence Prevention Advisory Task Force, 1994.

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY GOAL

It is the goal of Winona State University to achieve a work and educational environment which is free from threats and acts of violence. Winona State University is committed to seeking to eliminate potential for violence on the campus. The University will not tolerate workplace violence of any type, from any source. This includes threatening or violent actions by employees directed against other employees, by employees directed against students or other workplace visitors, and by students or visitors directed against university employees or each other.

POLICY

It is the policy of Winona State University and the responsibility of its administration, faculty, staff, and students to maintain a workplace and educational environment free from threats and acts of violence. The university will work to provide a safe workplace for employees and visitors to the campus. Each employee and everyone with whom we come into contact in our work, will be treated with respect and dignity. Winona State University will foster an environment where students, visitors, faculty and staff are at low risk of involvement in workplace violence.

This plan outlines guidelines for Winona State University employees, students, and guests toward prevention of workplace violence. In instances where prevention is ineffective, this plan provides a means of responding to workplace violence and recovery support. Through informed training, the university will work to foster a work environment and culture that is devoid of violence for its students, employees and visitors.

The university's policy on work-related violence includes:

- The university will actively work to prevent and eliminate acts of work-related violence.
- The university will clarify and enforce expectations regarding behaviors of employees, students and visitors.

- The university will respond promptly, positively, and aggressively to deal with threats or acts of violence. This response may include timely involvement of law enforcement agencies, as appropriate.
- Incidents of work-related threats or acts of violence will be treated seriously by the university. Reports of all such acts will be promptly investigated. Supervisors and/or administration will take action, as necessary, to appropriately address each incident.
- Retaliation against any individual acting in good faith who reports threats of real or perceived violent behavior will not be tolerated and may be the basis for appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The university will support criminal prosecution of those who threaten or commit work-related violence against its employees, students or visitors to its campus.
- Individuals who intentionally falsify reports of violence will be subject to university disciplinary action.
- Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 15.86, this policy does not create any civil liability on the part of the State of Minnesota.
- The university will provide information and training for its employees in an effort to foster 1) a safe work environment, 2) a respectful work environment, and 3) environment that is proactive and able to be responsive to threats (perceived or real) in the workplace.
- Possession, use or threat of use of a dangerous weapon (Appendix A), is not permitted at work or in any University building or grounds, unless such weapon is a necessary and approved requirement of the person's position. This section includes weapons kept in automobiles while on university property.

PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING ZERO TOLERANCE OF VIOLENCE IN, AND AROUND, THE WORKPLACE

1. The University Will Provide a Safe Workplace at both Winona and Rochester Campuses.

Winona State University is committed to ensuring that the workplace provides for the safety of employees, students and visitors, and for reasonable protection from workplace violence.

- A "Campus Protection Plan" will be prepared for both Rochester and Winona campuses. The Plan will address physical security requirements of each campus, and will include procedures for appropriate response to threats and acts of violence.

2. The University Will Attempt to Limit Violence From External Sources by Positively Affecting the Attitudes and Behavior of its Visitors.

- The university will continue to place emphasis on providing services in a manner that is fair, efficient, reliable and understandable. In doing so, and by treating visitors with respect and dignity, the potential for workplace violence from external sources will be greatly reduced.

3. Prevention: The University Will Attempt to Reduce the Potential for Internal Workplace Violence by Positively Affecting the Attitudes and Behavior of its Employees and Students.

- **Behaviors and Interactions:** Clear expectations of behaviors and interactions for employees, students and visitors in the workplace are established by virtue of this policy. This will include a zero tolerance for behaviors that have the effect or intent of threatening, intimidating or harassing others. Examples of such behaviors may include: name calling; obscene language or gestures; stalking; bullying; hazing; negative racial or sexual comments; interpersonal

aggression such as throwing things, pushing, or striking others; inappropriate touching; carrying weapons; or power used as intimidation or control. Members of the WSU community are expected to show respect for colleagues, co-workers, students and visitors within the office, classroom and campus."

- Creating a Low-Risk Work Environment: University administration, faculty, and staff, are expected to lead by example, by treating each other, students, and visitors with respect and dignity. Supervisors will emphasize creating a workplace where the established standards of conduct are clear, communicated, and consistently enforced, and where discipline is used fairly and appropriately to deal with instances of unacceptable behavior.
- Employee Training: Appropriate to their position, all university employees will be provided with training on managing conflict. Supervisor training will focus on prevention and de-escalation of violence, and will include suggestions for appropriate responses to threats and acts of violence, and will identify resources which are available for use once a potential problem has been identified or an incident has occurred. (Human Resource Office will schedule and arrange the training.)

Other training and/or information that foster a positive workplace environment, such as enhanced communication or stress management, etc. will be made available.

- Employee Counseling and Assistance: The university will encourage use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is primarily an assessment, short-term counseling and referral agency. While supervisors, colleagues, union representatives, or family members may encourage employees to seek help from the EAP, the decision to use its services must be a voluntary one. Employees may also choose to seek assistance from private health services to deal with pressures, stress, emotional problems, or other personal issues which could, if ignored, lead to threats or acts of violence.
- Safety Promotion: Information and instruction will be provided or posted for university employees, students and visitors regarding appropriate responses to potential safety threats. For example, evacuation routes will be posted for all workplace areas to ensure the safe evacuation of all employees, students and visitors. A reception area policy will be strictly enforced to enhance security generally.
- Self-help: Informational brochures and other methods will be used to make employees familiar with the services offered by the EAP, and will provide information on how to take advantage of those services. Information will also be provided about other options for the resolution of personal and work-related problems that may have a potential for escalating to a violent incident. Employees will be encouraged to utilize available resources.
- Valuing and Respecting Diversity: It is the university's policy and practice to value and respect individual differences among people. Harassment of any person in the workplace is strictly prohibited. Harassment can be any behavior which is unwelcome, personally offensive, insulting, or demeaning, when:
 - submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of an individual's employment;
 - submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual; or
 - such conduct has the primary purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Harassment and discrimination are serious concerns. Incidents of this nature, if not corrected, may result in workplace violence. Management will continue to treat reports of harassment and

discrimination seriously. Complaints of alleged harassment or discrimination will be investigated and, as necessary, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

- The University Will Effectively Address Threats of Violence, and Actual Incidents of Violence.
- Supervisory Responsibilities: University supervisors have primary responsibility for ensuring a safe work environment. Supervisors are specifically empowered to take immediate action to resolve or stabilize violent situations in the workplace, and to protect people from harm. (Supervisors are defined as secretaries supervising students; chairpersons supervising secretaries; deans/vice presidents supervising faculty and/or staff; department/program directors supervising staff and/or students; and unit supervisors supervising staff and/or students.) They will ensure that, when a threat is made or a violent incident occurs, an appropriate and timely response is taken. Supervisors will also ensure that appropriate disciplinary responses to internal workplace violence and aggression are made. Supervisors will carry out these responsibilities with the assistance of the Human Resource Office, and as appropriate the Campus Security Office (5555), and other state and local agents as is necessary for the circumstances.
- Incident Reports of Threats or Acts of Violence: All incidents should be reported to the department or unit supervisor and the Human Resource Office. Reports should fully detail the specific incident and the names of all persons involved, including witnesses. All incidents will be fully investigated by the department/unit supervisor and Human Resource personnel with assistance from other agents as necessary.
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing: Critical incidents are defined as: (1) any incident involving an employee which results in death, great bodily harm, or substantial bodily harm to an employee or a member of the public; (2) any incident in which deadly force, as defined in M.S. 609.0661 Subd. 1, is used by an employee or against an employee; (3) any incident deemed serious enough by the circumstances to warrant investigation and review. All critical incidents are to be reported immediately to the supervisor. The supervisor or designee shall prepare a complete written report of the incident and submit it to the Director of Human Resources. Responses to a critical incident can include the following as appropriate: (1) provide paid administrative leave time, if deemed appropriate; (2) encourage professional counseling; (3) referral to the Employee Assistance Program; (4) relocating employees on a temporary basis, if a facility is inhabitable; (5) reassigning employees to different work sites.
- Media Inquiries regarding incidents of workplace violence will be handled by authorized administrative personnel.

5. The University Will Work to Eliminate Dangerous Weapons from the Workplace.

Dangerous Weapon Prohibition: The possession of any dangerous weapon, including firearms, on university property is, by any person other than a law enforcement officer, strictly prohibited. University personnel are prohibited from possessing any dangerous weapon while in work status. (See Appendix A for a list of dangerous weapons and exceptions.)

AS WARRANTED, LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES OR EMERGENCY MEDICAL PERSONNEL SHOULD BE CONTACTED IMMEDIATELY BY DIALING 911.

AUTHENTICATED BY:

Darrell W. Krueger
President

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APPENDIX A

Dangerous Weapons

For the purpose of this Policy/Plan, the following items are considered to be "dangerous weapons":

- any weapon which, per applicable law, is illegal to possess;
- any firearms, loaded or unloaded, assembled or disassembled, including pellet, "BB", and stun guns (electronic incapacitation devices);
- replica firearms, as defined in Minn. Stat. 609.713;
- knives (and other similar instruments) with a blade length of more than three inches, other than those present in the workplace for the specific purpose of food preparation and service; any "switchblade" knife;
- "brass knuckles", "metal knuckles", and similar weapons;
- bows, cross-bows and arrows;
- explosives and explosive devices, including fireworks and incendiary devices;
- "throwing stars", "numchucks", clubs, saps, and any other item commonly used as, or primarily intended for use as, a weapon;
- any object that has been modified to serve as, or has been employed as, a dangerous weapon;

Exceptions

- Archery and fencing equipment may be possessed on campus by students or employees while enrolled in a University archery or fencing course. When not in class the arrows must be kept in the weapons storage area or a locked vehicle.
- Knives with blades exceeding three inches may be possessed on campus when required to perform coursework. When not being used in class, the knives must be kept in a locked storage area.
- Employees and organizations contracting with the University required to use knives with blades greater than three inches in length to perform their job duties may do so. Those knives must be kept in a limited access area when not in use.
- Martial arts weapons may be possessed on campus when required to perform coursework. When not being used in class, the martial arts weapons must be kept in a locked storage area.
- Firearms used for theatrical purposes must be disabled and stored with the faculty advisor/director when not being used in practice or during a production.

- Swords, daggers and other knifelike theatrical props may be used for theatrical presentations. Any props with cutting surfaces must have all those surfaces dulled and be stored with the faculty advisor/director when not being used in practice or during a production.
 - On the infrequent occasions where a presentation involves dangerous weapons, as defined in Appendix A, the prior approval of the Director of Security must be obtained.
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APPENDIX B

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE RECEIVED AND READ A COPY OF THE WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY ZERO TOLERANCE OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND THE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY AND PLAN.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Please sign and return this form to the WSU Human Resource Office
