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SECTION 6. Communication & Problem Solving

Saint Mary's College of California

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Section 6. Communication & Problem Solving

Authority

Director of Employee Relations & Compensation

Summary

This section reviews all phases of campus communication processes and the corresponding areas of responsibility. Below are the main headings:

- 6.1 Campus Communication
- 6.2 Saint Mary's College Events Posting Policy
- 6.3 Conflict Review and Problem Solving Process
- 6.4 Staff Appeals
- 6.5 Employee Assistance Services

6.1 Campus Communication

The College offers various means of communication with the campus community as a whole, about events taking place, changes in benefits and handbooks, required or voluntary training, new employees and employees leaving, and other College-related matters. While broadcast email has been used extensively, an unfortunate result is excessive emails in employees' in-boxes. The College encourages the community to use the weekly "Campus News" for announcing events and staff changes which can link to the appropriate College website for more information. Announcement information can be sent to the College Communications department by Thursday morning for inclusion in the following Monday's bulletin. For more information contact College Communications.

6.2 Saint Mary's College Events Posting Policy

In order to comply with established fire codes, to reduce visual clutter on campus, to reduce paper waste and to cut overall costs of event promotion for groups and organizations, a new events posting policy has been established by the Campus Deans and Directors Committee with the approval of the President's Cabinet. The College's posting policy applies to all printed materials posted or distributed on campus.

6.2.1 Designated Posting Areas and Methods

Special posting areas will be designated in 27 high-traffic areas located throughout central campus. These areas will be painted a uniform color and will be clearly marked as posting areas for approved materials. No materials may be posted outside of these areas. Posting will not be permitted on any painted building surfaces (other than the designated posting areas), glass doorways, windows, floor surfaces, or areas that might appropriately be used as escape routes in a fire or other emergency. Only special masking tape (“painter’s tape”) may be used to secure postings. All materials must be removed once the event is over and/or College approval expires; failure to remove expired postings might result in monetary fines or loss of posting privileges. Large banners, signs, or other specialized promotional materials may be posted only with advance approval from the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership.

6.2.2 Posting Approval

All posted materials must be approved by the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership, unless those materials are posted on one of five public posting areas (non-designated corkboards in building hallways of Dante Hall, Garaventa Hall, and Galileo Hall). The printed material must include the name and contact information of the sponsoring organization along with the event cost, date, time, and location. Material that is inconsistent or incompatible with the College’s mission and goals as determined by the Assistant Dean of Student Life for Involvement and Leadership, in consultation with the Vice Provost for Student Life, will not be posted or otherwise circulated. Any posting that does not display the stamp of the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership will be removed.

6.3 Conflict Review and Problem Solving Process

The Conflict Review and Problem Solving process provides a process whereby active staff employees of the College can request an independent, objective internal review of their work-related problems and concerns. This process is intended to address workplace conduct and circumstances that do not otherwise trigger the College’s obligation to conduct an internal administrative investigation (e.g. allegations of discrimination including sexual harassment or

retaliation) The goal of the Conflict Review and Problem Solving Process is to encourage open and constructive communication.

Employees may consult with Human Resources first, but are encouraged to try to resolve their problems or concerns with their immediate supervisor. If a resolution cannot be reached, the employee may ask for a meeting with a Human Resources representative or with the head of the department in which he/she works. If no resolution is reached, the employee may request further assistance from Human Resources as described below.

The Director of Employee Relations & Compensation is available to assist employees and supervisors at any time in addressing concerns, reviewing problems, and identifying possible solutions. The Director of Learning and Organizational Effectiveness is available to do coaching with individuals and supervisors to increase their effectiveness. The Human Resources department has additional resources available, both internal and external, in the event that some form of conflict resolution could be useful. Use of internal or external conflict resolution resources requires the approval of the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or designee, and in some situations, the Vice President of Finance and the Provost.

If potential solutions to address the conflict are proposed and are agreeable to the individuals involved, those potential solutions must be approved by the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or designee, in consultation with the appropriate Vice President or Provost. While conflict resolution services may be available, there is no guarantee that an appropriate solution will be reached that satisfies any or all of the participants in the process. The goal is to facilitate communication on concerns in an effort to resolve workplace conflict or dissatisfaction at local levels.

6.4 Staff Appeals

Subject to the qualifications below, the Employee Appeal process is the final stage of appeal for active staff employees regarding work-related matters. This process is not available for employees whose employment has been involuntarily terminated for any reason, or for employees who have voluntarily terminated employment at the College.

NOTE: This process is not available for appealing findings or sanctions resulting from investigations of complaints of violations of the College’s Non-Discrimination Policy, Including Sexual Harassment and Retaliation or for appealing findings or sanctions resulting from investigations under the College’s Whistleblower policy. The outcomes of these investigations are final and cannot be appealed.

Within 45 calendar days of the conclusion of the Conflict Review and Problem Solving described above, the active employee may submit a written appeal to the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or designee. The appeal should describe in detail the employee’s concerns and issues.

In considering the appeal, the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or her/his designee will discuss the appeal with the staff employee, meet separately with others who either are identified in the appeal and/or who may have knowledge of the facts around this issue, review applicable documents, involve others as appropriate including, but not limited to, the head of the department, the Vice President, President, Provost, Vice Provost. The decisions regarding whom to include in the appeal process rest solely with the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or designee. Human Resources will endeavor to keep matters confidential, recognizing, however, that in the course of looking into the matter, some dissemination of information to others is generally necessary.

Once the Human Resources review has concluded, the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or designee will communicate her/his decision in writing to the employee and, as appropriate, with others on a business “need to know” basis. The decision of the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or designee is final.

6.5 Employee Assistance Services

Employees with on or off the job issues resulting in unhappiness, distraction, anger or other emotions that may be affecting their work are strongly encouraged to contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This Saint Mary’s College benefit plan provides up to eight (8) confidential counseling sessions by a licensed professional near the eligible employee’s home or work. An employee not eligible for the Employee Assistance Program benefit can confidentially request EAP coverage on an exception basis by contacting the Director of Benefits, the Director

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of Employee Relations & Compensation, or the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources or designee. For more information on the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), see Benefits, Section IX of this Handbook, or check the HR website.