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## Teaching Online and Cyberbullying: Examining Higher Education Cyberbullying Policies In The Florida State University System

Joseph Raditch  
*University of Central Florida*

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TEACHING ONLINE AND CYBERBULLYING:  
EXPLORING HIGHER EDUCATION CYBERBULLYING POLICIES IN THE  
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education  
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education  
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at the University of Central Florida  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The cyberbullying phenomena has been recorded as affecting students and faculty alike in the K-12 and higher education systems. Cyberbullying in higher education has negative effects to the institution and its stakeholders, including faculty turn over and student suicide. While these responses are highly publicized, the effects of cyberbullying on the online classroom remain relatively untouched by researchers. There are very few resources available to faculty who teach online courses for creating strategies to combat cyberbullying in that context. Furthermore, many states, including Florida, defer conduct policies and their enforcement to the individual institution. While there are many aspects of cyberbullying within the online course in higher education that remain unexplored by research, this study seeks to breach the subject by analyzing the policies at Florida public universities. Using document analysis, this study analyzed policies from the 12 state universities capturing the definition of cyberbullying and recommended reporting practices for faculty on cyberbullying from each institution. By framing the results of the analysis through the community of inquiry, this study provides value to faculty seeking to strengthen their online teaching presence through providing clear guidelines established by each Florida institution. It will also provide value to administrators at institutions within the United States who are reviewing their policies addressing online abuse and cyberbullying by identifying to common definitions currently used within public institutions.

For dad, Jonathan, Jessica and Lily.

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Thanks also go to my mother, brother, and in-laws. Thank you for providing the space I needed to excel. Thank you for also enduring my long periods of brooding and silence.

To my dad, Robert, and best friend, Jonathan, who both expired too soon, I want to thank you for showing me how to look at the world in different ways. You both taught me how to approach problem solving through finesse, ingenuity, and, at times, brute force.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### General Background

The repercussions of cyberbullying in higher education shocked the U.S. population in 2010 when Tyler Clementi committed suicide after being secretly filmed by a roommate during a sexual encounter with another man at Rutgers (Parker, 2012; Pilkington, 2010). Dharun Ravi, Clementi's roommate, had not only filmed Clementi's encounters, but also streamed the live video feed to other students at Rutgers University. After Clementi's death, Ravi was charged with and pled guilty to 15 counts of invasion of privacy (Cherelus, 2016). However, the convictions were overturned in 2016 by an appeals court (McGeehan, 2016).

Clementi's suicide began a public discussion about both cyberbullying and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues in higher education, specifically questioning the university's support for cyberbullied and LGBT students (Cherelus, 2016; Hubbard, 2013). After the incident, then-Rutgers' President Richard McCormick (2010) released a public statement to reaffirm the university's commitment to diversity and supporting the privacy of all students. While the statement focused on the greater need for additional LGBT support within the university's community, McCormick (2010) encouraged the student body to participate in Project Civility, a 2-year program designed to explore the meaning of respect at Rutgers. While the project would cover aspects of civility, the "critically important issues of personal privacy and the responsible uses of technology" were highlighted as discussion topics (McCormick, 2010, para. 2). The web archive of Project Civility exhibited an October 29, 2010 "fireside chat" event titled

*Technology and the Generation Gap: Multi-tasking, Misbehavior, and Misunderstanding*, described as a discussion about the uses and misuses of technology in college life (Rutgers University, 2010).

In the spring of 2017, Nick Lutz, a student at the University of Central Florida, was suspended after grading and subsequently tweeting his ex-girlfriend's apology letter following the dissolution of the relationship (Langly, 2017; Roll, 2017). The tweet of the graded message reportedly received over 121,000 re-tweets (Coleman, 2017; Roll, 2017). In March 2017, Lutz was informed that he might have violated the law, and university leaders called him to a Code of Conduct hearing (Coleman, 2017).

On July 6, Lutz was informed of his suspension for the summer 2017 term for being in violation of the school's Code of Conduct policy on disruption and bullying. The student's attorney, Jacob Stuart, fought the suspension citing the First Amendment, arguing that the institution leaders could not restrict speech that did not originate from campus or use campus resources for its dissemination (Langly, 2017). Stuart argued further that the decision would set precedence for the university leaders to sift through all student social media posts for content found objectionable (Roll, 2017). The university leaders reversed the decision to suspend Lutz in the summer of 2017 but retained the right to take additional corrective action if “appropriate charges are identified” (University of Central Florida, as cited in Roll, 2017, para. 2).

Cyberbullying also impacts the classroom. In another 2017 cyberbullying incident, Marshall Polston, a student at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, was accused of sending threatening emails to an adjunct world religion professor after



receiving a failing grade on an essay (Russon, 2017a). Polston and his world religion professor, Areej Zufari, both attended face-to-face class meetings since the beginning of the semester. According to Zufari, Polston would disrupt class sessions, make contradictions, and monopolize time (Russon, 2017a). Outside of class, Polston reportedly sent emails to the professor accusing Zufari of being "anti-Christian" and threatening to expose her bias to the student's "friends in the national media" (Russon, 2017a, para. 2). Zufari submitted a report of the harassment incident to school administrators, as well as filed for a protection against stalking with Orange County.

Another allegedly threatening email was sent to Zufari after she assigned Polston a 52 on an essay, which prompted the professor to cancel class out of fear and concern. An associate dean was dispatched to place a notice of cancellation for the class and took notice of Polston waiting. After starting a conversation, the dean reported that he was uncomfortable with Polston's behavior and continued generic references to guns (Russon, 2017a). However, Polston was not disciplined for his emails to Zufari.

Rollins College president Grant Cornwell stated that the college leaders would not suspend a student for disagreeing with a professor (Russon, 2017a). Meanwhile, Zufari resigned from the institution after journalists from conservative news outlets reported the story, and she began to receive harassing and hate messages through social media from individuals beyond the Rollins College community (Quintana, 2017a; Russon, 2017a, 2017b). Though initial reports speculated otherwise, Polston was not suspended for his threats toward Zufari or religious disagreements (Quintana, 2017; Russon, 2017b). Instead, Polston was suspended on unrelated cyberbullying activities on Facebook toward

another student (Quintana, 2017; Russon, 2017b). According to Cornwell, Polston was reinstated at the college after Rollins College had determined the Facebook comments written by Polston were not specific threats (Quintana, 2017).

### Research on Cyberbullying

The three cases above represented reports that both researchers and media have examined regarding cyberbullying within higher education (Coleman, 2017; McCormick, 2010; Quintana, 2017; Roll, 2017; Russon, 2017b). However, the continuation of cyberbullying related articles and news reports have motivated scholars to question the over identification of the phenomenon (Olweus, 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2015; Sabella, Patchin, & Hinduja, 2013). Olweus (2012), whom researchers have credited as a significant contributor to the cyberbullying research field (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012), labelled the phenomenon as "overrated," citing low incident rates (4.5%, p. 526) in a 5-year meta-analysis of his studies. However, Hinduja and Patchin (2012) argued the topic remained relevant, as their 10 years of research on adolescents and K-12 students demonstrated that 1 in 4 youth experienced cyberbullying.

While Olweus (1995, 2012), and Hinduja and Patchin (2015) focused the cyberbullying studies on the adolescent and K-12 groups, other authors examining cyberbullying have revealed that the phenomena also influences adult learners and faculty within higher education (Baldasare, Bauman, Goldman, & Robie, 2012; Vance, 2010; Walker, Sockman, & Koehn, 2011). For example, according to Vance (2010), students (12%) and faculty (35%) have reported being bullied within an online course.

Berne et al. (2013) reported that 11% of students at a large university indicated they personally experienced cyberbullying. These data demonstrate that cyberbullying impacts learners and instructors within higher education.

Though increasing evidence has indicated cyberbullying has influenced students and faculty from within higher education, evidence has also shown administrators do not perceive it an issue in *their* institution (Luker, 2015). Luker (2015) reported 44.5% of administrators surveyed believed that cyberbullying was a rare occurrence at their home institution compared to their peer institutions. In the same study, Luker reported that only 13% of the institutions sampled reported not having a cyberbullying incident in the past 12 months (see Chapter 2 for additional details about Luker's [2015] study). Luker's (2015) research revealed a disconnect between administrative perceptions about cyberbullying and the reality of cyberbully occurrences within the institutions.

In addition to this perceptual disconnect about the occurrence of cyberbullying, faculty and administrators are unprepared to manage cyberbullying incidents that may arise from coursework. This point was exemplified by the 2017 Rollins College incident described above (Russon, 2017a, 2017b). Vance (2010) provided evidence that cyberbullying did happen *within* online courses—a subset of distance education. Researchers have defined distance education as the process of providing education to students who are separated by distance from their instructor through using technology (Seaman, Allen, & Seaman, 2018). Online courses are a form of distance education, which utilize the Internet to support or wholly distribute instruction (Hiltz & Turoff, 2005). While much information regarding best practices are available to faculty teaching

in the online environment, ranging from academic papers to books, to online workshops, this study is based on a gap in the literature regarding preparing faculty teaching postsecondary online courses in the United States to address instances of cyberbullying within online courses.

Researchers have often studied managing misconduct online (Palloff & Pratt, 2003, 2011). Palloff and Pratt (2011) proposed focusing on maintaining authority through the syllabus by indicating specific expectations for classroom conduct and referring the student to any existing online harassment policies maintained by the institution. Researchers have studied community building within online courses and proposed discussion management techniques to keep students on task, rather than managing harassment (Palloff & Pratt, 2003, 2011). However, these discussion management techniques do not address cyberbullying occurrences in students' online courses.

### Issues Defining Cyberbullying

Adding to the difficulty of identifying and managing cyberbullying in online courses, researchers have not standardized the definition of cyberbullying. Many researchers have defined cyberbullying as an individual using information and communications technology to promote deliberate and hurtful behavior with the intent to harm (Berne et al., 2013; Haber & Haber, 2007; Walker et al., 2011). The legislature in Florida defined cyberbullying as the following:

“Cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system,

or photooptical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. (Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act, 2008, para. 2)

The literature indicates that there are inconsistencies in how cyberbullying is defined. In 2010, Vance proposed that age influenced the definition of cyberbullying. He argued that adults who experienced aggressive behavior online were cyber-harassed, rather than cyberbullied. In addition to age, some researchers have included nuisances, such as spam email and broad cyber-attacks (e.g., scamming or phishing), within their definitions of cyberbullying (Zorkadis, Karras, & Panayotou, 2005). Spam email refers to unwanted online content, such as advertisements delivered to a person's email inbox (Zorkadis et al., 2005). Most spam is untargeted and sent to a large number of people from purchased or stolen mailing lists. Phishing scams refer to emails or other electronic messages sent to many people using malicious hyperlinks. These hyperlinks are usually masked to resemble harmless hyperlinks and to steal information from a person who clicks the link (Zorkadis et al., 2005). Both spam and phishing scams are not necessarily targeted at a single individual; the methods are most effective when sent to many potential victims. However, other researchers consider phishing and spam as separate types of cyber-attacks from cyberbullying (Hamby, Blount, Smith, Jones, Mitchell, & Taylor, 2018; Wright, 2018). Because of these inconsistencies and the fact that the study

is situated in Florida, this study will use the state of Florida's legal definition of cyberbullying.

### Legal Issues

Like the definition of cyberbullying, legislation and policies on cyberbullying and cyber-harassment vary across the United States. Each state maintains its laws about bullying and online bullying behavior for individuals under the age of 18 (Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014). However, many states do not regulate the harassment of adults, including college-age students. The majority of students entering university within the United States are equal to or near the age of 18. Public institutions are not legally bound to protect adult aged students from certain types of online harassment from individuals not associated with the school. However, some state legislatures have delegated the responsibility of regulating student misconduct to the state college and state university systems (Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014).

Florida regulates cyberbullying in the K-12 system, but not in the state college or state university system (Fla. Stat. § 1006.147, 2018). Instead, Florida's legislature delegated the creation of policy to regulate student conduct to the state colleges and state universities (Fla. Stat. § 1006.50, 2018; Fla. Stat. § 1006.62, 2018). While this delegation of power allows each state institution to address conduct as necessary, it does provide opportunity for policy inconsistency across Florida. To date, there has not been a comprehensive review of cyberbullying policies within the United States, including the state of Florida.

Additionally, federal requirements for Title VII and Title IX discrimination and harassment against students and staff have mandated that institutions of higher learning regulate certain types of student behavior by threatening the institutions' access to federal funding. As such, school leaders have adopted technology-use policies, which restrict offensive, annoying, or harassing communications originating from campus-based resources, such as local area or wireless networks or university managed computers (Barr & Lugas, 2011).

In Florida, students agree to any policy published by the university upon accepting admission. Bar and Lugas (2011) asserted that many of the regulations created by institutions of higher learning on cyberbullying have been housed within information technology or campus technology resource policies, rather than student conduct policies. As such, faculty and students seeking out definitive answers about cyberbullying may not know where to look.

### Statement of the Problem

Cyberbullying impacts students and faculty participating within online courses (Vance, 2010). In online courses, cyberbullying includes harassment and bullying through online discussions that may obstruct participation within an online classroom (Clark, Werth, & Ahten, 2012; Stover, 2006). Additionally, disruptive dialogues among the students affect their ability to interact with course content and other students effectively within an online learning community. According to Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (1999), disruptions within online courses may interrupt students during the

higher-order thinking processes to address aggressive behavior. Garrison et al. (1999) asserted instructors of online courses should facilitate and guide any dialogue within an online course to promote higher-order thinking, partially by using the tools made available to them by their institution. These tools would include the policies that governed student behavior.

However, there are few state, federal, or institutional policies that address cyberbullying in higher education (Washington, 2015). In place of state or federal laws, Washington (2015) recommended that institutions of higher learning “develop training, policies and procedures to address cyberbullying that occurs on campus” (p. 25). When policies addressing cyberbullying were identified, Barr and Lugas (2011) concluded that many were improperly housed within campus technology-oriented policies. The confusion surrounding the existence of an institution’s policies and procedures regarding cyberbullying has been identified as a barrier for part-time faculty in reporting and addressing the phenomenon (Minor, Smith, & Brashen, 2013). In Florida, leaders of each public university have maintained independent policies to regulate student behavior. There has been no comprehensive study reviewing or cataloging these policies in regards to cyberbullying across institutions within the state of Florida. Researchers have expressed the need for future studies to examine if institutions of higher education have crafted policies addressing cyberbullying (Washington, 2015; Watts, Wagner, Velasquez & Behrens, 2017). This qualitative study will examine how leaders of public institutions of higher education in the state of Florida define cyberbullying and encourage reporting of cyberbullying incidents.



### Significance of the Study

As discussed earlier, while there is a wealth of cross-discipline research on cyberbullying explicitly about the K-12 education system, the studies related to higher education are few. Furthermore, as of 2018, comparisons of policies regarding cyberbullying in online courses at public institutions of higher learning in the state of Florida are do not exist. Regarding public universities in the state of Florida, this study will catalog and analyze the policies that pertain to cyberbullying, harassments, and disruptions within an online course. As a result of this research, this study will provide instructors with an accurate cyberbullying policy resource that spans all public institutions of higher learning in Florida.

Identifying common definitions and student conduct reporting strategies among public Florida universities on the topic of cyberbullying can provide instructors, administrators, and instructional designers with cohesive resources to mitigate aggressive behavior in an online course. This resource may improve faculty development in online teaching, the quality of online courses, and the learning experiences for students consistently in public institutions of higher learning in Florida.

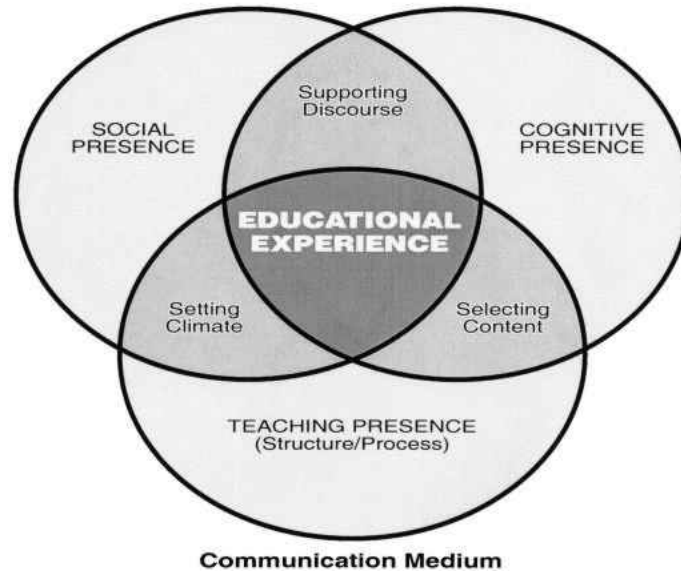
### Conceptual Framework

#### Community of Inquiry Overview

The community of inquiry (COI) theoretical framework has been selected as a conceptual framework for this study. According to Garrison et al. (1999), the community of inquiry refers to the educational experience within an online course as the culmination

of the interaction between the social, cognitive, and teaching presences. Garrison et al. (1999) developed the COI framework to address the lack of evidence that “text-based communications used in computer conferencing can ... support and encourage the development and practice of higher-order skills” (p. 91). Garrison et al. (1999) attributed the foundation of the framework to the “acceptance of social context as affecting learning activities and outcomes” (p. 91). The authors cited Lipmann’s (as cited in Garrison et al., 1999) assertion that a COI was integral to a learning process that encouraged critical thinking and the development of the education experience. As such, Garrison et al. (1999) concluded the social and cognitive aspects of the learning process could not be separated from one another, and the researchers established the social and cognitive presences. The authors proposed a third element called the teaching presence, in which an instructor engaged in the purposeful curation of the social and cognitive elements in a course setting. Figure 1 illustrates the interaction between the three interdependent presences.

## Community of Inquiry



*Figure 1. Community of Inquiry Model. From “Critical Inquiry in a Text-Based Environment: Computer Conferencing in Higher Education,” by D. R. Garrison, T. Anderson, and W. Archer, 1999, *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2, p. 287. Copyright 1999 by Elsevier. Reprinted with permission.*

Researchers have used the social presence to describe the student's ability to interact within the course with the other students and teachers (Garrison et al., 1999). As the participants converse and interact with one-another within the course, they project their full personalities to the other participants within the online course. This projection of identity is known as the social presence (Garrison, 2011; Garrison et al., 1999).

Through the relationships and conversations within the course, the participants express opinions, seek information, and explore alternative hypotheses with one-another.

Researchers have used the cognitive presence to illustrate the student's ability to critically think and actively learn by applying concepts created through the social-educational interactions within the online course's educational activities and examined through discussions (Garrison et al., 1999). This process of learning and interacting socially

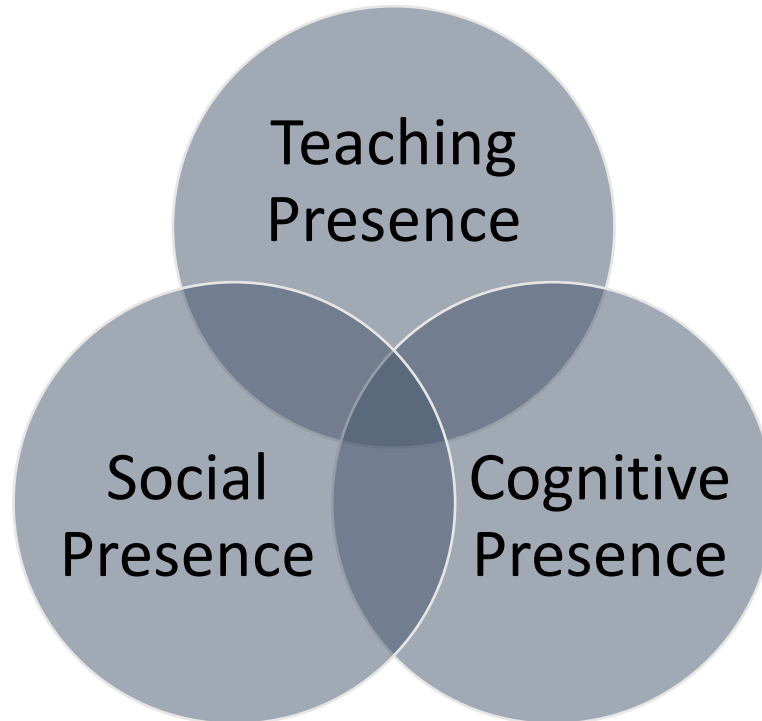
within an online class is possible through the design of the course, as applied by the instructor. As such, researchers have used the teaching presence to describe the instructor's ability to moderate the classroom; provide feedback on coursework and discussions; develop the course structure, flow, and syllabus; and control coursework (Garrison et al., 1999).

The primary mode of inquiry for this investigation shall be framed through the teaching presence. As described through the framework, the instructor builds the course, creates guidelines for the course using all tools available (including the institutional, state, and federal policies), and facilitates interactions between participants. Researchers created the COI with the assumption that participants within the online course interacted through active dialogue to achieve a higher level of understanding of the coursework and concepts being examined (Garrison et al., 1999).

The instructor facilitates the social process using the design of the course and the guidelines established to keep information and ideas positive. Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer (2001) explained that part of this process involved one addressing and repairing communications resulting from “inappropriate postings” through the “modeling of appropriate etiquette and effective use of the medium” (p. 6). Garrison (2011) stated that authority was often downplayed by instructors or ignored by students in online courses, which risked the deterioration of the educational environment.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the interdependent social, teaching, and cognitive presences are connected to generate the educational experience through the COI. Cyberbullying acts as a disruptor, deriving from the social presence and working to

separate each element simultaneously, and creates chaos within the learning environment. Anderson et al. (2001) suggested that the teaching presence would act as a deterrent against these attacks by exemplifying proper etiquette and providing stable expectations for the class. Garrison (2011) later expanded this idea, stating that “disciplinary expertise” was an “essential aspect to the educational experience” (p. 59).



*Figure 2.* Cyberbullying affecting the educational experience. Developed by this author.

#### Teaching Presence

Researchers have defined the teaching presence as course design and organization, facilitation of discourse, and direct instruction, all of which the instructor has used to provide direction for the cognitive and social presences (Anderson et al.,

2001; Garrison et al., 1999). The teaching presence places the instructor as the intellectual and social authority within an online class through designing course progression and assignments, as well as providing and enforcing rules for the class (Anderson et al., 2001; Garrison et al., 1999; deNoyelles, Zydney, & Chen, 2014; Zydney, deNoyelles, & Seo, 2012). The inclusion of institutional policy within a course's design and organization falls within the purview of the teaching presence. However, Garrison (2011) explained that teaching within the COI is not solely the instructor's responsibility. Because the outcomes depend on the online community's discourse, all participants play some role within the teaching presence. In some cases, instructors may elect to include elevated student roles, such as discussion moderators (Anderson et al., 2001; Garrison, 2011). That being said, the instructor is responsible for the design, oversight, organization, and direction of the course.

Garrison (2011) described the design and organization of an online course as the act of one crafting the course's structure to promote learning by leveraging the social and cognitive presences. The instructor, acting as an instructional designer, has actively planned the paths the students will take to experience the online course (Anderson et al., 2001; Pawan, Paulus, Yalcin, & Chang, 2003; Peters & Hewitt, 2010). In addition to planning the course's path, the instructor has also established guidelines to keep the course on the correct path (Anderson et al., 2001).

Instructors design and organize their courses, a time-consuming activity for many, especially through transitioning their course from a face-to-face to fully online format (Garrison, 2011). Teachers face time issues partly due to having to learn new

technologies for creating and publishing online course content, redesigning old content to fit the new online format, and anticipating the needs of first-time online learners (Garrison, 2011). Garrison (2011) proposed that online instructors should expect that some students had not experienced an online modality, and “new expectations and behaviors will require understanding and patience” on behalf of the instructor (p. 56).

When discussing the design and organization of an online course, Anderson et al. (2001) described five significant online teaching indicators critical to the teaching presence. The first indicator includes the instructor setting the curriculum, which ranges from syllabus design to designing a single assignment, to provide explicit instructions on the subject matter. Teachers can use the second indicator, designing methods, to describe how they plan to obtain and measure specific learning outcomes. For example, teachers can create a series of discussion-based activities to explain the topic of discussion, and then provide the students with a rubric to explain how their discussion will be graded. The third indicator involves the instructor establishing a strict boundary of time in which the students may participate in the assignment. The fourth indicator, utilizing the online medium effectively, refers to the instructor modeling the best practices for using the technology available to the online course, such as “reply” features, hyperlinking, or document uploads. Finally, “establishing netiquette” refers to the guidelines for social and cognitive interactions (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 6).

Anderson et al. (2001) defined netiquette as the expected discussion standards set and modeled by the instructor that online course participants should use for discussions. For example, an instructor can set specific guidelines on the types of interactions that are

both appropriate and inappropriate within the course using the institution's established policies. The instructor should then produce an example of a proper discussion posting and appropriate dialog.

As the course launches, the teaching presence moves from design and organization to the facilitation of discourse. The faculty's teaching presence plays an important role in facilitating discourse by them not only managing and monitoring the discussions, but also allowing discussions to evolve and self-correct naturally (Garrison, 2011). In the facilitation of discourse, the instructor acts as a moderator by rectifying misconceptions about course materials or procedures held by the students, encouraging student contributions, building consensus, gathering additional participants, setting the tone, and redirecting the discussion (Anderson et al., 2001; Garrison, 2001). Garrison (2011) stated that during the facilitation of discourse, teaching presence should balance cognitive development with maintaining a positive learning environment for the participants. This balance requires instructors to have an understanding of the context in which the messages are sent, allowing them to discern social discussion from academic.

Direct instruction is a less subtle aspect of the teaching presence, in which the instructor plays an active role in managing expectations and dialogue (Garrison, 2011). In this role, the instructor is established as the authoritative figure within the course, acting as a subject matter and technical expert. As the expert, the instructor identifies and pursues positive discussion routes that are aligned with the learning outcomes, as well as troubleshoots both learning and technical issues. The instructor actively models and enforces the guidelines created in the design role. This facilitation role can range from



injecting additional information into the discussion in the form of articles or personal experience to disciplining bad behavior (Garrison, 2011).

Pawan et al. (2003) assessed the influence of the teaching presence by studying graduate student interactions in collaborative activities in online courses. Pawan et al. examined the online dialogs within three graduate-level courses for language teacher education. Two of the courses used asynchronous threaded discussion postings. The third course used a suite of online communications tools, including internal email, synchronous chat, and asynchronous discussion posts made available through a learning management system (LMS).

One threaded discussion condition and the LMS tool condition allowed for the students to have free-form discussions without instructor influence beyond the chosen topic of discussion. The second threaded discussion condition established a netiquette within the design by asking students to use a "starter/wrapper" technique. With the starter/wrapper technique, the instructor asked students first to initiate a discussion based on their readings, and then synthesize the corresponding discussions at the end of the week (Pawan et al., 2003).

Pawan et al. (2003) found the free-form discussion conditions produced monologue-like and off-topic responses from students. The starter/wrapper condition yielded the greatest number of on-topic and structured responses from students. Pawan et al. posited the structure of the assignment using anchoring starter questions was the source of the focus and deliberate discussions, thereby encouraging the learner-centered learning experience. Pawan et al. argued free-form discussions diminished the authority

of the instructor, placing more emphasis on learner-led initiatives. However, the evidence indicated the starter/wrapper design of the activity was more successful in promoting in-depth dialogues between students.

Another study regarding teaching presence in online courses indicated that instructors should balance their instructional methods and time parameters. Using a questionnaire, Peters and Hewitt (2010) revealed that graduate-level students began to feel overloaded and discouraged by the number of discussion postings required within an online course. The asynchronous nature of the classes left some students feeling intimidated by the number of replies or messages they needed to read and reply to between login sessions.

After submitting a discussion post for an assignment, the student would exit the course for a period. During that time, while a student might be away from the course, other students might reply to the discussion and post their own separate discussion threads. When the original student would return to the course, he or she would find a large number of messages and new discussions from other students. Peters and Hewitt (2010) found that time parameters influenced the cognitive output of students within the discussion. The authors noted that providing too much time allowed students to become verbose, creating walls of texts that other students would not want or have time to read. Conversely, too little time prompted students to perform the bare minimum to receive required points, and did not allow time and space for significant engagement (Peters & Hewitt, 2010). Peters and Hewitt (2010) concluded instructors should redesign their

online courses in ways that focus on improving learning outcomes rather than having rigid participatory requirements.

Researchers have identified manipulating group size as a variable for improving learning outcomes in online classrooms. The size of the discussion group has been identified as having an impact on the quality of student postings and deeper learning. In a 2007 qualitative study, Dooley and Wickersham investigated message quality originating from larger discussion group sizes in online. The researchers analyzed the discussion threads from an online course consisting of 28 graduate students. Through their analysis, Dooley and Wickersham (2007) revealed critical connections between student posts and responses were weak and frequently off topic. In the event of a student submitting a thoughtful or insightful post, other students would reply with shallow appreciations of the post rather than extending the original post. The researchers also identified a tendency for an “alpha student” to overtake the discussion and drive the discourse without making the critical connections between posts. Finally, Dooley and Wickersham (2007) illuminated the volume of posts posed an issue for the instructor and students trying to follow the various discussions. As such, instructors can limit the size of the group in online discussions in attempts to improve student discourse.

Through a quantitative study, Akcaoglu and Lee (2016) demonstrated group size impacted the student perception of group cohesion. The researchers provided questionnaires to 33 graduate students who were enrolled in a fully online course. The students were exposed equally to both a small group discussion and a whole class discussion for the first four week of class. In the second four weeks, the students were

assigned randomly to a small group of four to five members. Akcaoglu and Lee (2016) discovered students perceived a significant number of benefits to being in a small discussion group as opposed to whole class discussion. These perceived benefits included improved personability between students, deeper conversations, and rich critical thinking. The researchers concluded that the larger online discussion group sizes produced conditions for low social interdependence, critical thinking, and laziness due to the volume of posts that students have to read through. Akcaoglu and Lee (2016) suggested students would perceive greater group cohesion and deeper learning in online discussions when placed in smaller group sizes by the instructor.

In addition to group size, instructor-set guidelines and roles have also been identified as having an impact within online class discussion. In a mixed method study, Schellens, Van Keer, and De Wever (2007) demonstrated providing students with well-defined guidelines and placing them in specific roles in online discussion groups led to a significantly higher level of learning than those without roles. The researcher compared student performance within online courses between two undergraduate cohorts (N=223 and N=286) through content analysis of online discussion posts and comparison of final exam scores. Students in each cohort were divided into groups of 10. The students within the first cohort were not provided a defined set of roles. The students in the second cohort were given the following roles per group: moderator, theoretician, summarizer, and source searcher. The moderator's role was to monitor the discussion closely, provide motivation and on task. The theoretician would ensure that the appropriate theories were applied to the discussion post. The source searcher identified additional sources of

information which were not included by the instructor. The summarizer condensed the initial information provided by the group. Schellens, Van Keer, and De Wever (2007) discovered cohort two performed significantly better than cohort one in the construction of knowledge. In fact, the researcher noted that the inclusion of roles and well-defined guidelines in cohort two's online group discussions significantly improved the knowledge construction for students within the group who were not assigned a role. Schellens, Van Keer, and De Wever (2007) concluded that well-defined guidelines within online group discussions created the potential for improving knowledge construction.

### Cognitive Presence

Cognitive presence refers to the state in which a student stays engaged in critical thought and works to understand an issue during the learning process (Garrison et al., 1999). Garrison et al. (1999) modeled the cognitive presence on Dewey's (2007) constructivist approach to education and theory of critical thinking. Garrison et al. (1999) integrated the practical inquiry model within the cognitive presence to describe the four phases that a participant within an online course would move through. Figure 3 illustrates the practical inquiry model.



*Figure 3. Practical Inquiry Model. From “Critical Inquiry in a Text-Based Environment: Computer Conferencing in Higher Education,” by D. R. Garrison, T. Anderson, and W. Archer, 1999, *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2, p. 287. Copyright 1999 by Elsevier. Reprinted with permission.*

The phases start with a triggering event, such as discussion assignment, in which the instructor poses a question or problem to the online class. The students will then enter an exploration phase where they actively seek out information about the problem. Within this phase, the students will privately explore resources, such as articles, and publicly begin discourse to understand the problem. According to Garrison et al. (1999), students use this phase to sort information and question their own understanding of the problem. In the integration phase, students begin to connect issues and create meaning from the information processed. During this phase, the facilitation and direct instruction roles of the teaching presence involve nurturing the student’s understanding of the problem by one asking probing questions and dismissing misconceptions. Finally, the students resolve the problem by directly or indirectly applying the information gained from the integration phase to the problem. Garrison et al. (1999) suggested that this phase was the

hardest to detect in an education setting, as students rarely had an opportunity for practical application.

Garrison et al. (1999) asserted that participants within an online course became actively engaged with the subject matter through discourse, specifically discussion postings. These postings formed the basis of the cognitive presence, in which the student became an active participant as an information seeker, and source of experiential and philosophical knowledge (Garrison, 2009). Garrison (2009) posited that the asynchronous communication, such as discussion postings found within online education, was essential in "supporting effective, higher-order learning" (p. 47). Garrison (2009) argued that using the COI framework provided a greater degree of student engagement that moved beyond "infotainment" (p. 47). Namely, coursework using asynchronous communications was less objective-based or passive gamification, relying on the student-participant to invest time into the assignment through investigating information sources, and discussing observations and hypotheses with others. The advantage of asynchronous communications within online courses is that discussion posts provided time for the participants to investigate, reflect on, and reconsider a position. The experience of the interactive dialogue also allowed the participant to experiment with their ideas before committing to an argument.

The effectiveness of online learning has become a metric by which cognitive presence is evaluated. Dewey (2007) questioned the educational merit of prepackaged content designed for consumption and regurgitation. As such, Garrison (2009) argued, "Learning for educational purposes is more than simply accessing information and

participating in chat rooms" (p. 48). Garrison (2009) defined effective learning as *active* participation, guided by higher-order thought, in which the student or participant sought out knowledge and shared understanding. As stated above, Dewey's (2007) practical inquiry model is a part of the cognitive presence, as described by Garrison (2009). The concept of reflective inquiry, self-direction, and metacognition must be discussed to enhance and reflect effectiveness as a metric.

Reflective inquiry is a concept that represents the student's movement from the exploration to integration phases of the cognitive presence (Garrison, 2009). Students begin with an internal perspective, in which they question and commit the issue to their understanding. In the next step, students begin to discuss and share their knowledge with the community. Garrison (2009) described this as an inside-out experience, emphasizing the direction of the generation of knowledge from internal thought to external exposition and discussion.

Reflective inquiry infers a variable of time. Garrison (2009) alluded to time being a contributing and necessary element to online learning; participants could use time in an online course to digest information appropriately. However, time would appear to have both benefits and detriments to a student's engagement within the reflective inquiry process (Meyer, 2003). In a study of 22 graduate students engaged in both online and face-to-face courses, Meyer (2003) found four significant time-centric themes when comparing the discussion preferences between the two modalities. Meyer asked the student participants to provide feedback on both modalities after the conclusion of each



course. Meyer hoped participants would then have time to experience and reflect on their preferred course-type.

In the first theme, Meyer (2003) suggested that *time expanded* due to the number of discussion postings students would have to read and digest. Each post could contribute additional time to the overall time required to be invested in the course. The responders also noted the increase in time provided them with additional opportunities to refine their discussions through research and reflection.

In the second theme, Meyer (2003) suggested that the *quality of discussions* was influenced by time. In the face-to-face course, students commented that the limited amount of time required quick, spontaneous comments and competition to have their voices heard. As such, the limited amount of time left no room for purposeful conversation on topics. Conversely, students felt that online discussions provided more time to participate and dig deeper into a subject. The online discussions were perceived as being developed, well-reasoned, and evidence-based.

In the third theme, *need of the student*, students commented that the loss of interpersonal communication cues, such as smiling or hand gestures, required additional time to redevelop writing styles to prevent misunderstandings (Meyer, 2003). Finally, *faculty expertise* was found to differ between online and face-to-face classes. In an online setting, the instructor can address a question as needed (e.g., through private message, through open discussion, or broad systems-based announcements; Meyer, 2003). Additionally, faculty could use asynchronous discussions to have time to understand and respond to a question carefully, rather than “off-the-cuff” answers required in a face-to-

face setting. As such, the instructor could use the additional time available for careful consideration and evaluation of the issue, presenting an opportunity to gather all available resources to address the issue completely and with authority.

Meyer (2003) also illustrated the important role that both the social and teaching presences played in the reflective inquiry process. The emerging theme about student needs indicated a need to realign the way in which students communicated to mitigate possible misunderstandings. This theme indicated the social presence influenced the reflective inquiry process so that participants would think about not only the content of their response, but also the way they composed the response. Likewise, the evidence from the faculty expertise theme substantiate interactions between the teaching and cognitive presences.

Wang and Woo (2007) examined the differences between face-to-face and asynchronous computer-mediated discussions. Wang and Woo included 24 students pursuing a post-graduate degree in education at the National Institute of Education in Singapore. The 24 student-participants included 18 females and six males. The course included three online sessions and nine face-to-face sessions. The students received many structured activities with defined time limits within the face-to-face meetings, including a tutor presentation (30 minutes), group discussion (40 minutes), and hands-on activities (30 minutes; Wang & Woo, 2007).

The asynchronous events occurred within Blackboard, a learning management system, and through Weblog, an open-source blogging software. Wang and Woo (2007) noted limitations on the Blackboard LMS would not allow students to initiate discussion

prompts; instead, the students required help from a tutor. The instruments for data collection consisted of observation notes of classroom behaviors and student reflection exercises. Through the student reflections, participants made notes of perceived differences of asynchronous and face-to-face assignments.

Wang and Woo (2007) affirmed reports that time was a significant difference between online and face-to-face sessions and is influential in asynchronous course sessions. The authors found that face-to-face discussions were more prompt, more efficient, more interactive, and allowed for better communication compared to the asynchronous discussions (Wang & Woo, 2007, pp. 280-283). Wang and Woo (2007) attributed efficiency and slower response time in the asynchronous format to the additional time needed for articulating ideas and writing. The observation of the need for additional time in asynchronous online courses was consistent with the findings of Garrison (2009) and Meyer (2003), who did not consider the slower pace of discussion a negative. The pace exemplifies the necessity of time in ensuring effective learning through resource gathering and careful deliberation of thought in asynchronous courses. Based on their research, Wang and Woo (2007) determined that participants spent too much time in arguments without a leader or tutor led mediation during asynchronous discussions (Wang & Woo, 2007).

This final observation indicated the ease in which arguments could destabilize higher-order learning and the critical role the teaching presence played in maintaining order (Wang & Woo, 2007). Without clear guidance and an authoritative figure, the asynchronous course fell into disarray. Furthermore, this observation indicated the

integral part the teaching presence played in maintaining the cognitive presence and promoting investment in understanding the core concepts within the online course. Finally, the observation demonstrated the delicate relationship between the cognitive and social presence; meaning, the social experience might overpower the cognitive aspect through user disagreements or off-topic conversations (Wang & Woo, 2007).

### Social Presence

Garrison et al. (1999) originally defined social presence as the “ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as ‘real’ people (i.e., their full personality), through the medium of communication being used” (p. 94). Biocca, Harms, and Burgoon (2003) described social presence as the feeling of connectedness between two or more individuals through computer-mediated communications. Biocca et al. continued to describe social presence as two individuals feeling connected through a shared experience, although they were not physically in the same space or time without regarding the medium used to communicate. Students should have the ability to relate to another student and the instructor of record as another critical component in the COI; this ability to connect provides psychological, social, and cognitive support to a student in the class (Garrison et al., 1999). Moreover, Palloff, Pratt, and Stockley (2001) warned that students who could not engage socially within an online course were at risk for apathy, failure, and isolation. Students with social presence in a virtual classroom can provide other students with social cues that would otherwise be obscured by the physical distance between students (Garrison et al., 1999; Rogers & Lea,

2005). However, social presence is not limited to simple connections between course participants and their ability to appear real. Rogers and Lea (2005) interjected that the shared social identity within the community of inquiry resulted in stronger collaboration and more efficient productivity. In other words, the social presence is enhanced by the group sharing common goals and values, rather than relying on each individual's identity.

A shared social identity is not a new concept to group dynamics in online communications. Worchel, Rothgerber, Day, Hart, and Butemeyer (1998) noted that a shared identity between group members in an online environment resulted in a positive increase in group productivity. Garrison (2011) proposed that the idea of a shared social identity had reconceptualized the social identity element within the COI. Garrison (2011) revised the definition for the social identity element to refer to a participant projecting his or her individual personalities into an online course to identify with the class, develop personal and working relationships, and communicate purposely and openly in a safe space. As such, the concept of the social identity has become less about an individual trying to portray themselves as real. Instead, the participants invest their own personalities and values into the group to create more purposeful discussions about the subject matter. Through this interaction, Garrison (2011) suggested that the cognitive presence was enhanced as academic discussions within online courses were improved by the social relationships and the shared values of the group. He suggested that through the course of open discussions, participants would be less likely to be sensitive to criticisms or differing opinions over time.

However, research on group identity outside the community of inquiry framework has shown that group members who share values are less likely to be open to outsider opinions or information sources (Hubbell & Hubbell, 2010; Wojcieszak, 2011). Applying these findings to the COI framework would support Garrison et al.'s (1999) proposal that the teaching presence should be involved in the development of the social presence. An instructor excluding themselves from the social “teambuilding” element of the community could find themselves at a disadvantage when trying to maintain a position of academic authority.

Shared values are not the only factors that influence the effectiveness of the social presence. Jahng, Nielsen, and Chan (2010) suggested that too much social messaging within a group might influence the cognitive presence. In a study about student communications between whole-group discussions and small-group, Jahng et al. used a content analysis and social network analysis to analyze messages sent within a 13-week course. The course consisted of 12 graduate students: five males and seven females. The course was structured to have five whole-group discussions, which were designed for students to post opinions that other students could answer online.

Jahng et al. (2010) included two discussions in the study. The first discussion analyzed was an introductory post in which students described themselves to the class. The second discussion was based on a topic of the instructor's choosing. Following the whole-group discussion analysis, Jahng et al. analyzed small-group discussions, which were used for two group papers. Within the small group condition, three student groups were analyzed. Jahng et al. decided on three thematic codes for both of the analyses:

cognitive, social, and managerial. They defined cognitive as communications made about the task at hand. Social was defined as communications to build group membership.

Managerial was defined as communications to manage collaboration.

In the results, Jahng et al. (2010) noted that 99% of the self-introduction whole-group discussion fell into the social category, and 89% of the topical whole-group discussion fell into the cognitive category. The results and themes aligned with the type of assignment being reviewed. An assignment requiring students to introduce themselves to the class comprised the social identity type of messaging. The 89% result from the cognitive assignment indicated that social discussions were occurring during the assignment. In practice, this social activity may be associated with cultivating additional time needed to build a more cohesive group. Jahng et al. reported that the small group assignments were more varied in the conversational content between students, containing 43% cognitive, 23% social, and 34% managerial. This finding would account for the need to discuss the assignment, build group relationships, and distribute the workload.

Additionally, Jahng et al. (2010) compared the relationships between the type of messages sent and received within the discussion. The researchers found a positive significant relationship between the number of out-bound social messages and in-bound cognitive messages ( $r = 0.74$ ) in the whole-group discussions. According to Jahng et al., this finding indicated that students who were socially active within the discussions also provided more input to the cognitive discussion. This finding indicated the same relationship between the social and cognitive presences, as described by Garrison et al.

(1999). Additionally, the finding reinforced the importance of maintaining positive social relationships between students within an online course.

However, Jahng et al. (2010) found the inverse relationship in the small group's communications. In the second group of students reviewed, the authors found an increase in social messaging and a significant decrease in cognitive messaging. This finding led Jahng et al. to conclude that for instructors to best promote a productive learning environment in the online classroom, they should find a balance between social and cognitive messaging. This conclusion connected the social presence back to the teaching presence by acknowledging the need for a moderator to help refocus and manage discussions within a small group. In fact, Jahng et al. included a managerial messaging theme within the discussions in which the participants would redirect social conversations towards becoming more productive. Jahng et al. suggested a future study could investigate the effects of applying additional managerial style messaging to an overly social group to improve cognitive output.

#### COI Debate and Limitations

Researchers have debated the merits of COI and presented limitations (Jézégou, 2010; Xin, 2012). Researchers have acknowledged the COI as a popular framework used to analyze the productivity of asynchronous online courses (Akyol et al., 2009; Xin, 2012). As such, some researchers have reviewed the framework for its usefulness.



Jézégou (2010) described the framework as being “a poorly detailed model with regard to its theoretical foundation” (p. 2). Jézégou (2010) cited Garrison and Anderson’s assertion that a COI existed simply because certain social interactions were overtly apparent within online discussion forum. Jézégou argued that this was insufficient evidence of a COI. More specifically, the characteristics of the “community” within the COI were not fully defined. This point was echoed in other criticisms, such as by Xin (2012). Xin argued that asynchronous discussions within online courses were inherently social by nature, and the language used within was the same used in face-to-face settings. As such, both Xin (2012) and Jézégou (2010) asserted that the COI did not accurately reflect the communications used by participants.

Xin (2012) questioned using the term *presence* in an online modality. According to Xin (2012), “Every online communication is a manifestation of presence, regardless of what is said” (p. 4). In this context, Xin (2012) argued a participant posting discussions was not enough to establish a presence within the course. A person could post a discussion as part of an assignment and receive no reply, thus allowing the discussion to stall and become ineffective. Instead, the individual would have to participate within a conversation to be present. Xin stated that this example represented the difference between a student having the ability to project his or her real self and a student actively presenting his or her self as real. In this instance, a student who works at presenting himself or herself to the class would interact with other participants by pursuing a conversation. As such, Xin argued the COI framework highlighted what one should think when measuring online course engagement, rather than providing practitioners best

practices in online instruction which promote the social, cognitive, and teaching presences. In critiquing the social presence, Xin (2012) presented the argument that while group cohesion and open communication were important to the group dynamic, purposeful and trusting communication was less clear. Xin believed that purposeful and trusting communication was altruistic with one assuming the communications between students were entirely “risk-free.”

Meyer’s (2003) research revealed that within online courses, students noticed a need to choose their words carefully to avoid conflict. This observation might indicate that students did not believe that the environment was risk-free, finding the pursuit of knowledge worth navigating any issues. Meyer posited purposeful and trusting communication was a means to positive outcome within the course. With this alternative assumption, Xin (2012) argued that group cohesion and open communications were outcomes of affective communication, rather than actions of the social presence. Akyol et al. (2009) conceded this point by stating there was no disagreement that the process could refer to outcome. In fact, Akyol et al. encouraged further study to link both practices and outcomes to the COI.

Annand (2011) argued that related research on social presence did not produce a significant influence on cognitive presence. This conclusion, much like the arguments from Xin (2012) and Jézégou (2010), derived from researchers expressing that all three presences and the COI represented ill-defined terms. Furthermore, Annand (2011) posited the effects of the social presence were overstated and adversely magnified the importance of the social presence on the cognitive presence. As such, Annand

requested additional studies to identify and isolate different factors that might influence learning outcomes within the COI and social presence.

In summary, the COI may be limited by how researchers have defined the related terms. Annand (2011), Jézégou (2010), and Xin (2012) agreed the one could use the COI framework to detect the presence of a community, rather than provide distinct instruction in building a community. As such, the researchers requested additional research on individual effects on learning outcomes through the COI.

### Summary

The COI framework has been chosen to guide this research study. As defined by Garrison et al. (1999), the COI refers to the educational experience of all online course participants through the culmination of the teaching, social, and cognitive presences. The teaching presence is the direction of course outcomes through the design and organization of course content, direction of discussions, and expert and authoritative input from the instructor. The social presence is the participants' ability to connect with other participants within the course and engage in purposeful dialogue. The cognitive presence is the course participants' ability to reflect on information presented in the course to synthesize meaning.

This researcher acknowledges the criticisms (e.g., Jézégou, 2010; Xin, 2012) that the COI is limited by the definitions used to describe each presence. As such, the researcher proposes to use the COI as a framework to understand the influence of institutional policy on the learning community. More specifically, this researcher will use

the COI framework to identify attributes of cyberbullying policies that align with the teaching presence.

### Research Questions

This study will use the following research questions to offer direction:

RQ1. Do different Florida state public universities address cyberbullying in policies and codes of conduct? In addressing cyberbullying, do they define it? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ1a. If policies or codes of conduct that directly or indirectly govern cyberbullying exist at different Florida state public universities, do the policies provide support to the Community of Inquiry's concept of teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ2. Do policies or codes of conduct at Florida state public universities provide guidelines for instructor response to or methods of reporting cyberbullying? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ2b. If guidelines for instructor response or methods of reporting harassment or bullying exist within policies at Florida state public universities, do the guidelines support to the Community of Inquiry's concept of teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not?

## Definitions of Terms

***Cognitive presence*** - Within the COI model, *cognitive presence* is the state in which a student is engaged in critical thought to construct meaning (Garrison et al., 1999).

***Community of Inquiry*** - The *Community of Inquiry (COI)* is a model in which educational experiences are comprised of the cognitive, social, and teaching presence in which the community seeks knowledge together (Garrison et al., 1999).

***Cyberbullying*** - The term *cyberbullying* is defined as one using information and communications technology to promote deliberate and hurtful behavior with the intent to harm (Berne et al., 2013; Haber & Haber, 2007; Walker et al., 2011). The Florida legislature defined cyberbullying as the following:

“Cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photooptical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. (Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act, 2008, para. 2)

***Cyber-harassment*** - In comparison to cyberbullying, the term *cyber-harassment* is defined as one using information and communications technologies to promote deliberate and hurtful behavior with the intent to harm *between adults* (Vance, 2010).

***Distance education*** - Researchers have defined *distance education* as the process of providing education to students who are separated by distance from their instructor through using technology (Seaman et al., 2018).

***Online courses*** - *Online courses* refer to forms of distance education, where educators use the Internet to support or wholly distribute instruction (Hiltz & Turoff, 2005). Leaders in Florida have defined online courses as courses in which the educator performed 80% or more of the instruction entirely over the Internet (Florida Board of Governors [FLBOG], 2017h).

***Social presence*** - Within the COI model, *social presence* is the student's ability to relate and identify with others within a class. One can use social presence to support the cognitive presence by providing context and social support (Garrison et al., 1999).

***Teaching presence*** - Within the COI model, *teaching presence* refers to the instructor's ability to guide a class, set the tone, and select course content through instructional design, discourse facilitation, and direct instruction. One can use the teaching presence to support the cognitive presence by fulfilling these functions (Garrison et al., 1999).

### Summary

Both students and faculty have faced cyberbullying and cyber-harassment issues in the higher education system. The results of cyberbullying in higher education have been extreme, showing the loss of talented teaching professionals, or even the loss of student life (Parker, 2012; Pilkington, 2010). Cyberbullying may also influence the

learning potential of students within an online course, as the instructor must address disruption to order, rather than focus on the subject matter (Coleman, 2017; McCormick, 2010; Quintana, 2017; Roll, 2017; Russon, 2017b). To maintain authority and promote the vital teaching presence within the online classroom, instructors should have an understanding of the policies that influence conduct in online learning. There is no single resource or policy within the state of Florida for public institutions of higher education that covers cyberbullying specifically. Instead, the regulation of student conduct is delegated to the individual public institutions in the state college and state university systems. As a result, faculty must adapt to incidents involving cyber-harassment in the online classroom to provide a complete educational experience without disruption to the educational experience. Based on the research, one must have a clear understanding of how institution leaders have defined cyberbullying and cyber-harassment, when one should report misconduct, and what professional development opportunities are made available to online teaching faculty.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

Chapter 1 provided a general background of the issue of cyberbullying and cyber-harassment within online learning at institutions of higher learning. Chapter 1 also introduced the COI framework that will be for the evaluation of this study. The following research questions and background issues related were presented:

RQ1. Do different Florida state public universities address cyberbullying in policies and codes of conduct? In addressing cyberbullying, do they define it? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ1a. If policies or codes of conduct that directly or indirectly govern cyberbullying exist at different Florida state public universities, do the policies provide support to the Community of Inquiry's concept of teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ2. Do policies or codes of conduct at Florida state public universities provide guidelines for instructor response to or methods of reporting cyberbullying? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ2b. If guidelines for instructor response or methods of reporting harassment or bullying exist within policies at Florida state public universities, do the guidelines support the Community of Inquiry's concept of teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not?

The review of literature in Chapter 2 is structured to address many factors key to examining cyberbullying within an online course and how that conflict is resolved. The



researcher first presents a discussion about online distance education. The discussion about online distance education will be followed by discussing the research on computer-mediated communications, online communities, and social identities within computer-mediated communications. Within this section, research from the field of mass communications is reviewed to understand social interactions within online discussions. This section will be followed by a discussion of bullying and cyberbullying. This discussion includes demographic information, behavioral characteristics, profiles of victims and perpetrators, institutional and faculty perception of cyberbullying, and instructor preparation for cyber-conflict. This discussion adds context to the complexity of cyberbullying as an experience one can confront within the educational system. The final section presents a review of literature related to conflict resolution from both the fields of higher education and interpersonal communications.

### Online Distance Education

#### Definition and Description of Distance and Online Distance Education

In the United States, the delivery of distance education has evolved from letter correspondence through the postal service to using a multitude of different electronic and physical mediums (Keegan, 2013; Moore, Dickson-Deane, & Galyen, 2011).

Traditionally, researchers have defined distance education as instruction delivered to students who are separated by distance from their instructor (Allen & Seaman, 2018; Moore et al., 2011). As such, the instructor can be located in a separate space from the student. Depending on the medium used to deliver the instruction, a student may

experience class at the time of instruction (synchronous) or at a different time (asynchronous).

Beginning in 1858, educators orchestrated distanced education through correspondence courses, in which students would interact with their class or instructor through postal services (Keegan, 2013). As recent as the 1980s, electronic technologies provided the mechanism in which distance learning was conducted through offline mediums such as audio- or videotape (Moore et al., 2011). Moore et al (2011) suggested scholars began to use the term e-learning within scholarly research during the 1980s to describe distance learning through electronic devices. E-learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge and distribution of content through digital mediums, including offline mediums (e.g., CD-ROM, film, or television), or online mediums housed within the Internet (Allen & Seaman, 2018; Clark, 2002; Moore et al., 2011; Tavangarian, Leypold, Nölting, Röser, & Voigt, 2004). The online mediums formed what is now known as online distance education. Online distance education is important to this study because it represents the method of curriculum delivery in which cyberbullying may occur (Vance, 2010).

The literature has indicated that scholars and lawmakers have used the terms to describe the process of learning at a distance, especially online, inconsistently (Moore et al., 2011). Because of the variable nature of online learning, researchers have defined different classifications to describe the classroom setting better based on the amount of time spent providing online instruction (Allen & Seaman, 2018; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Moore et al., 2011). The first classification is web facilitated or enhanced, in which

educators use the online modality for a small portion of the class, but they deliver the majority of the course through a face-to-face format (Allen & Seaman, 2011; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Allen and Seaman (2011) defined *web facilitated* as a course in which online instruction consisted between 1% and 29% of the total class time. This classification may be as simple as one using email or posting the course syllabus on a website for students to download (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

The second classification is known as a *blended* or *hybrid* modality, in which the course is designed to include both face-to-face and online course time. Allen and Seaman (2011) defined the *blended* or *hybrid* category consisting of online instruction between 30% and 79% of the total class time. In blended courses, students both meet in a face-to-face setting and engage with each other and course materials through online formats which may include discussion posts and other forms of engagement. Differences exist between the academic definition and the legal definition of a hybrid course. For example, leaders in Florida have defined hybrid and blended courses as educators conducting between 50% and 79% of direct instruction through a technology in a class that is not traditional face-to-face instruction (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

Allen and Seaman (2011) benchmarked the final classification as fully online in which online instruction was between 80% and 100% of total class time. In this *fully online* format, students may never meet in a face-to-face setting at all. As such, all of the course content and instruction is delivered and completed entirely online. Likewise, the state of Florida defines distance learning as any course in which 80% or more of the

direct instruction is conducted through the use of technology and the student and faculty are separated by space, time, or both (1009.24 [18] F.S.).

For the purposes of this study, online distance learning will be defined as any course that uses Internet technology to enhance or deliver instruction (Allen & Seaman, 2011). This definition encompasses all three classifications of online distance learning purposefully to account for cyberbullying instances that may occur in web enhanced, blended, or fully online courses. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) stated the community of inquiry could be found face-to-face, fully online, or in the areas in-between, justifying using the three classifications for the definition.

#### Online Distance Education Growth

Online courses and programs have heightened public university growth in the United States during a time of declining enrollments in higher education. Allen and Seaman (2018) observed an 8.0% growth in enrollment public institutions between 2012 and 2016, while private for-profit institution enrollment declined by 32%. Between 2012 and 2016, the percentage of students enrolling in online courses rose from 25.9% to 31.6% of total enrollments in the United States (Seaman et al., 2018). In Florida, students enrolling in distance courses rose from 35.3% in 2012 to 40.5% in 2015 (Seaman & Seaman, 2018).

Some of the factors contributing to the growth of online distance learning in higher education include expanding access, changing technologies, new emerging market segments, and overcoming capacity limitations (Layne, Boston, & Ice, 2013; Volery &

Lord, 2000). For chief academic officers at institutions that offer distance classes, distance learning is a critical long-term strategy (Allen & Seaman, 2018). However, the cost of implementing online distance courses is prohibitive to smaller institutions. Because of the prohibitive costs, as of 2018, Allen and Seaman (2018) saw evidence of smaller institutions excluding distance learning as a critical component within their long-term strategy if they had previously not invested.

### Summary

Online distance education is a core component of this study. This study defines online distance education as any course that uses Internet connected technology to enhance or deliver some or all instruction. Online distance education had steady enrollment increases over the past five years. Based on 2016 data, it is estimated that one in three students will enroll in a distance education course in the 2018 academic year (Allen & Seaman, 2018).

### Computer-Mediated Communications and Online Communities

#### Computer-Mediated Communications

The term and study of computer-mediated communications (CMC) originated from the mass and interpersonal communications discipline. Researchers have described CMC as using computer technology to disseminate communications between users who are separated by space (Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, & Haag, 1995; McQuail, 2010; Walther, 1996). Identity, time, space, and message intent are variables that

researchers have identified as having influenced computer-mediated communications (Jonassen et al., 1995; McQuail, 2010; Ramirez & Zhang, 2007; Walther, 1996).

Early CMC researchers have explored the influence of identity and group dynamics on the workspace. Researchers have identified a phenomenon of impersonal messaging between coworkers that advanced the progress of a project but lacked personal details (Rapaport, 1991; Rheingold, 1993; Walther, 1996). As a result, the productivity of the workers increased by filtering out the noise of social conventions (Dubrovsky, 1985). Through this filtering of social conventions, Walther (1996) proposed that that CMC "democratizes" the workspace by equalizing the voice of each worker. The asynchronous nature of CMC provides an employee the same amount of time as a manager to vocalize ideas by removing social identity as a restraint. Researchers have echoed this idea of equity through anonymity in more contemporary CMC research, such as social identity deindividuation and group affinity (Herring, Job-Sluder, Scheckler, & Barab, 2002; Kling, Lee, Teich, & Frankel, 1999; Scott & Bonito, 2010; Spears, Corneliussen, Postmes, & TerHaar, 2002).

Conversely, researchers have found the lack of social context as the cause of issues between communicators. Researchers have found the depersonalization of workspace increases hostility between communicators within CMC (Garton & Wellman, 1995; Walther, 1996). Some researchers have examined the issue through social presence theory to conclude that the reduction of face-to-face interactions and social contextual cues lead to more impersonal messaging and aggression (Hiltz, Johnson, & Turoff, 1986; Steinfield, 1986). Moreover, these early investigators have tested time-limited

associations between group members, which provided less of a reason for individuals to act cordially to one-another. The group members anticipated short interactions with each other and would disseminate brisk, task related messaging without including small-talk or salutations (Hiltz et al., 1986; Steinfield, 1986).

As the investigation of computer-mediated communication continued, including additional longitudinal studies, researchers have discovered that users gravitated toward communities and adapted their behaviors over time to compensate for the lack of social cues (Rice & Love, 1987; Walther, 1996; Walther, Slovacek, & Tidwell, 2001). Walther et al. (2001) identified a progression of communicator activity within computer-mediated communications. First, the communicator sought out a relationship or community with others, despite limitations of the digital medium. Next, users adapted to the standard language or accepted social protocols established within the medium by other communicators within the community. Finally, the users purposely developed relationships within that community (Rice & Love, 1987; Walther, 1996; Walther et al., 2001). Walther et al. noted that computer-mediated relationships were relatively slower to build compared to those which were entirely face-to-face.

Not only did users of computer-mediated communications seek out relationships with other users, but they also assigned positive or negative impressions to the messages received and of the communicating partner (Walther, 1996). The individual's investment in a discussion affected the impression that the individual assigned to the message (Ramirez, Zhang, McGrew, & Lin, 2007). Individuals who participated in an online community's discussions were more likely to understand the nuances of the community's

social protocol and assigned positive impressions to messages compared to those who were observers. These impressions then affected the user's anticipation of future interaction (Walther, 1996). For example, the user would decide if he or she was optimistic or apprehensive about future interactions with their online communication partner.

Ramirez et al. (2007) examined the anticipation of future communications and the intensity of the impression assigned to a message based on the communicator's level of involvement in the conversation. Because communicators assigned impressions to messages they received from other communicators, Ramirez et al. hypothesized that users who actively participated in computer-mediated messaging would assign meaning with greater intensity than lurkers. Ramirez et al. explained that lurking (observing) within online communities was a common practice, in which the lurker would only watch the conversation, rather than provide input.

Ramirez et al. (2007) conducted three studies to measure participant-observer effects within CMC. Ramirez et al. used the first study to examine the effects of web chat synchronous communications. They studied 72 participants and 72 observers. In the second study, Ramirez et al. examined the effects of web-based conferencing systems and asynchronous communications. The second study consisted of 131 participants and 131 observers. In the third, and final study, Ramirez et al. researched the effects on both synchronous and asynchronous communications across two time periods. The third study included 142 participants and 142 observers.



In each study, Ramirez et al. (2007) asked the participants to rate communications for intimacy, social orientation, dominance, informality, and composure. Over the three studies, the researchers consistently found that participants perceived communications more favorably compared to observers. This finding indicated that communicators had an increased affinity to messages when they were actively involved within the conversation. Another finding of importance was that formality within communication was rated lower within the synchronous conditions. Ramirez et al. (2007) attributed this finding to the rapid pace of the messages sent while using the web chat form of synchronous communications (chatting). The researchers proposed that users communicating in this modality were less concerned with editing their typographical errors in order to stay engaged with the conversation.

#### Summary of CMC

Throughout the literature on computer-mediated communications, researchers have described the interactions between individuals communicating while separated by time and space (Ramirez et al., 2007; Rice & Love, 1987; Walther, 1996; Walther et al., 2001). Over the years, CMC has evolved from being a tool to send quick work-centric messages into a medium in which individuals can connect with each other through common interests. Due to the previous limitations of CMC, individuals would interact with each other without typical social cues customarily found in face-to-face interpersonal communications (Rice & Love, 1987; Walther, 1996; Walther et al., 2001). The lack of social cues left communicators to assign meaning to communications by

other users. Further research demonstrated that individuals invested in a conversation through CMC are more likely to assign meaning with greater intensity compared to individuals who lurk (Ramirez et al., 2007).

### Identity in CMC

Researchers have revealed that identity is a significant factor within computer-mediated communications (Kling et al., 1999). Individuals using CMC may elect to provide other communicators with their real identity or hide behind a pseudonym or total anonymity (Kling et al., 1999). In discussing future research on identity and CMC, Marx (1999) defined anonymity as being the state in which an individual could not be identified by the seven elements of identification. Marx described seven elements of identification: (a) legal name, (b) locatability, (c) traceable pseudonymity or pseudo-anonymity, (d) untraceable pseudonymity, (e) pattern knowledge, (f) social categorization, and (g) symbol of eligibility or noneligibility. Marx determined this list through his years of research on the undercover police and surveillance technology.

The legal name, as described by Marx (1999), is a person's birth given identity, as related to biological, social, and other recorded information. While there may be many similar individuals with the same given name, each individual may be unique based on other characteristics, such as birth place and time (Marx, 1999). Within higher education, this information is typically kept within official records that one can use to identify students and faculty within the institution's classroom management system. The Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), passed in 1974, in many

circumstances protects these records from being disclosed to requestors by institutions of higher education without prior permission by the student or students of the records requested (Daggett, 2008).

The term locatability refers to the physical location of an individual (Marx, 1999). Data relating to locatability include physical addresses, GPS coordinates, and suite or room numbers (Nissenbaum, 1999). Between 2010 and 2015, locatability has increasingly become an issue within cyber-abuse, as malicious individuals doxx others by releasing physical addresses or phone numbers of others without prior permission (Leong & Morando, 2015; Wachhaus, 2018). More recently, people have used an individual's locatability in swatting, in which another individual submits a false police report against a victim for a violent crime-in-progress that results in a S.W.A.T. team breaching the victim's home (Wachhaus, 2018). As of 2018, in the U.S. one individual in the United States had been killed because of swatting (McLaughlin, 2018).

Traceable pseudonymity refers to a user disguising his or her identity online though he or she may still be identified or tracked via digital signatures or pseudonyms (Marx, 1999). Much like a mailbox, computer devices that connect to the internet have unique addresses (IP Addresses) to identify the general location of the computer (Postel, 1980). For instance, Internet service providers maintain records of users by Internet Protocol (IP) address per service contract. As such, users who only mask their names may still be identified by their device's address (Elkin-Koren, 2005). While this information may not be visibly apparent to the general user, website or application administrators may access logs from user posts or other browsing activities to build digital profiles of their

visitors. Individuals seeking additional privacy can use private browsing, which isolates browser cookies into a single session and does not store the browsing session's history (Google, 2018). While this process can disrupt a website using basic analytics tools from gathering details, these individuals using private browsing can still be identified by their IP address or system configurations (Google, 2018). In 2018, due to consumer concerns and data abuse companies, such as Apple, implemented tools that empower users to limit access to the information that companies collect on the user's browsing habits (Brandom, 2018).

Untraceable anonymity is available to individuals who do not leave digital traces of their identity or location by masking their tracks or communicating through proxies (Marx, 1999). Some users have enabled proxy services, connected to virtual private networks, or connected through alternative networks such as The Onion Router (TOR) which allow them to route their internet traffic through someone else's computer address in attempt to disguise their online activity (Goldschlag, Reed, & Syverson, 1999; Reed, Syverson, & Goldschlag, 1998). These digital services work in much of the same way as a post office box in the physical world. The Internet traffic is re-routed through a central address location to which many others may subscribe, allowing the originator to remain anonymous (Reed et al., 1998). These practices are different from private browsing sessions,

However, regardless of these privacy efforts, Kling et al. (1999) warned that users could be identified through pattern knowledge, such as posting consistent content, at a consistent time, or on a consistent forum. The social categorization in which users place

themselves is also an identifying feature. An example of this categorization would include using a specific pronoun or discussing their age, class, socioeconomic status, or religion. Finally, symbols of eligibility or ineligibility, such as exclusive passwords, pseudonyms, or distributed access to web space or networks, are identifiable features.

When speaking about anonymity, Kling et al. (1999) identified both the benefits and harms of online users masking their identities. Users may employ anonymity or pseudo-anonymity on the Internet for self-help, whistleblowing, law enforcement, journalism, personal privacy protection, and to avoid persecution. Conversely, Kling et al. warned that anonymity in CMC provides the opportunity for nefarious users to spam, deceive, send hate mail, impersonate others, commit financial fraud, or become involved in many other illegal activities.

Within higher education in the United States, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 indicated a student over the age of 18 must give their institution prior consent to release identifying information. This act ensures personal privacy protection online and offline. While one may argue CMC and anonymity can encourage individuals to speak more freely and connect with others (de Vries & Valadez, 2008), the lack of social and contextual communication cues can lead to misinterpretations of the individual's intent (Lee, 2008). Angouri and Tesla (2010), as well as Denny (2000), argued that individuals participating in CMC were more prone to infer direct hostility and aggression from other online users, as opposed to face-to-face communication. Therefore, one may describe the effects of online anonymity as paradoxical.

Groups embrace anonymity because it removes barriers by lowering inhibitions, promoting participation, and freeing ideas within communities (Scott & Bonito, 2006). Anonymous individuals can work toward the group's goals, uninhibited by conformance pressures or embarrassment. In the context of anonymity, there is no risk of harm or defamation of character because there is no character to defame (Connolly, Jessup, & Valacich, 1990). However, Scott (2004) attributed unwanted or disruptive behaviors within online communities to this reduction of inhibition. Anonymous online individuals may believe they are neither at risk of being identified, nor of being held responsible for their actions; therefore, they become more likely to say or do things they otherwise would not do in an interpersonal setting (Kling et al., 1999). This anonymity, combined with physical separation, provides users with the opportunity to be disruptive, critical, or rude without fear of physical or immediate repercussions.

Researchers have related the loss of context in communications to CMC and anonymity (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Denny, 2000). Studies have shown that individuals are prone to infer direct personalization and persecution from computer-mediated communications (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Denny, 2000). These same studies have demonstrated a relationship between users inferring personal attacks from communications and aggressive behavior.

In 2010, Angouri and Tseliga conducted a study on aggression and disagreement within online discussion fora. The researchers identified two discussion forums, one student, and one professional academic, and they analyzed 200 posts using lexical markers, such as spelling and punctuation. Angouri and Tseliga (2010) concluded that

disagreements between individuals within a web forum could escalate due to lack of context or even a user's inhibition to use discretion or follow the community's standards. These effects might be amplified as groups accept harsh or vulgar language and abusive behavior into group colloquialisms (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010).

### Consensus

Another effect researchers have paired with CMC is false consensus (Wojcieszak, 2008). False consensus is manifested when users participate in online communities and have a skewed estimation of support for their viewpoint. In a 2008 study, Wojcieszak found that a user's participation in online forums concerning similar ideologies misinterpreted the forum's consensus as general public support for their extreme viewpoints. The discussions within the group create an echo chamber amplifying the user's perception of support due the deep interactions and connections within the social network of users.

Wojcieszak (2008) explored the differences between radical neo-Nazis and environmental groups in their respective online discussion boards and their perceptions of public support for their world views. The researcher sent a survey through 512 emails and private messages. One-hundred-twelve neo-Nazis and 90 environmentalists returned fully completed responses. Using questions from the Pew Research Center on globalization and social justice, Wojcieszak (2008) asked participants to estimate the portion of the general population that agreed with their respective world view. The researcher compared the results of the participants to Pew's results. Wojcieszak (2008) found that the neo-Nazi

participants who invested and participated in online forums overestimated the public's annoyance with civil rights to be greater compared to those who did not participate. This finding indicated that active participation with online communities reinforced previously held views and projected those views upon the larger community. Wojcieszak (2008) also found that estimates of public support by the environmentalist extremists decreased as the participants became more radical in their beliefs to a point in which they underestimated public support.

In a follow-up study, Wojcieszak (2011) asked if offline mediums of conflicting political views would provide users participating within ideologically homogenous online communities with a more accurate perception of public support. In 2005, Wojcieszak (2011) provided a questionnaire to 300 active participants within neo-Nazi online discussions. Of the 300 distributed questionnaires, 112 were returned entirely completed; the partial or noncompleted responses were not used in the analysis. Wojcieszak (2011) found that offline relationships with politically different interests exhibited no significant impact on the views of active participants within an online community. The author noted that the finding was contrary to the expected results and hypothesized the particular sample could not count on offline mediums, such as newspapers or traditional television news, to reflect an accurate portrayal of public perception. Additionally, Wojcieszak (2011) found that as participation within the online community increased, so did the effect of false consensus as the users sought news sources that reflected their views. While Wojcieszak (2011) focused on online extremism, a false consensus was applicable



to discussion postings within an online class, and one might expect similar dynamics of seeking support for one's views to occur.

### Summary

Computer-mediated communications are digital synchronous or asynchronous communications that are transferred between users who may be separated by space (Jonassen et al., 1995; McQuail, 2010; Ramirez & Zhang, 2007; Walther, 1996). Communicators using the medium are likely to seek out relationships and form communities online. Online communicators may display different levels of identity within their communities. While identities may be traceable online, users are provided some level of anonymity (Wachhaus, 2018). This anonymity provides users with the opportunity to shed vulnerability and connect with the group of their choice. As such, the users begin to identify with the group. The group identity influences their view of information received from outside sources. One may use the social identity deindividuation model to understand this issue further.

### Social Identity Deindividuation Model

#### Deindividuation

Deindividuation studies dated back to 1895; for example, Le Bon (1895) discussed the psychology of the crowd. Le Bon published during a time of turmoil for the French government in which the crowd represented a threat to the established social order, specifically as an uprising of syndicalists and socialists from the lower social

classes. The disdain for the crowd was apparent in Le Bon's work. In his writings, crowds were only a destructive force, and the individual lost part of their humanity after joining the crowd. Le Bon described this loss of humanity as a decrease in intellect, reduction of personal restraint, and the loss of a sense of individualism. Regardless, Le Bon drafted a two-point model to map out the mental processes that occur after individuals have attained group membership and acted on behalf of that group—(a) the group acts as a whole (group membership), and (b) the group acts on primitive impulses making them subject to suggestions (messaging). He also attributed a decrease in intellect, increase in emotion, and an increase in stubbornness among individual members when acting within the group (Le Bon, 1895).

In 1995, Reicher, Spears, and Postmes adopted the ideas of deindividuation within their model to address computer-mediated communication. Under Reicher et al.'s interpretation of deindividuation, the individual's identity is not lost, but has shifted from a personal to a social level of identity. In this shift, the individual *shared* an individual identity and group identity but allowed the group identity to become salient. Unlike Le Bon's (1895) initial model, individuals did not lose control over their behaviors. Instead, individuals aligned their motives with those of the group. Furthermore, Reicher et al. (1995) described three assumptions of social identity and deindividuation: (a) group membership, (b) levels of anonymity (access to identity), and (c) lack of personalizing cues.

## Assumptions of Social Identity/Deindividuation

### Group Membership

Group membership is a vital aspect of social presence within an online environment (Spears et al., 2002). In discussing group membership, one must also explore the underlying assumption of deindividuation or a group-centric identity. Within online environments, reducing identity and distance between individuals provides the opportunity for individuals to assume the identity of the online group, rather than maintain the totality of their own (Spears et al., 2002). Researchers have demonstrated that group identity is correlated with increased productivity (Worchel et al., 1998), as well as a correlation with group consensus (Wojcieszak, 2011).

Researchers have tested this assumption within classrooms to explore the in-group/out-group relationships between students and teachers. Student cohorts can enhance the relationship between the in-group students (Hubbell & Hubbell, 2010). Those who identify within a group may marginalize the power or authority of the out-group individuals. For example, in the classroom, if the grading structure does not conform to the expectations of the in-group students, cohorts may act or attempt to diminish the authority of faculty members (Hubbell & Hubbell, 2010).

Though researchers have tended to explore the in-group effects of deindividuation and insinuate the necessity of a message leader (Hubbell & Hubbell, 2010), individual users may be prone to deindividuating effects without the prompt of a group leader. Instead, lone individuals may perceive an “us against them” scene, in which they feel an overwhelming urge to degrade an opposing group (Lindahl & Unger, 2010). In doing

this, the individual applies the group's philosophies to most other interactions encountered on the Internet, without the support of additional group members. For instance, a user who identifies strongly with the alt-right movement may labeling other users "snowflakes" on a news site, though no other alt-righters have made themselves known. In such cases, one can rationalize the definition of group membership within overarching group settings, such as students, teachers, or administrators. The relationship among group members may not truly exist outside of the common denominator of group label (Lindahl & Unger, 2010).

Lindahl and Unger (2010) revealed this effect in their study of student responses on faculty evaluation. Assuming that students privately responded to evaluations, many of the comments made in the qualitative reviews were rude and demoralizing toward faculty members (Lindahl & Unger, 2010). Furthermore, sexually charged comments from students demeaned the process and indicated a lack of seriousness with which the students approached the evaluations. Lindahl and Unger noted a decrease in rude comments from students who signed their names to written evaluations. Though the students privately responded to the evaluations, the researchers noted that many of the students conferred together before they responded (Lindahl & Unger, 2010).

Lindahl and Unger (2010) also began to demonstrate a new dimension in the group membership dynamic, in which the group value could be divided into two levels: high order or low order. The rationale behind these two orders was as follows: High-order membership is the cognitive effort placed by an individual to belong to a particular group (Lindahl & Unger, 2010). For example, a student must make the decision to be part

of a Greek organization or be involved in student leadership. Low-order membership is obtaining group membership by merely being associated with a particular demographic, such as being a student or faculty member. There are no ties to the group beyond these simplistic similarities. Lindahl and Unger's (2010) research revealed actions associated with low-order group membership, where students united and comprised a similar message because of their identities as students. Future research should explore the same dynamic but separate students by group identification and evaluate the difference in scores (Lindahl & Unger, 2010).

The group assumption includes attributes, such as group polarization, in which individuals accept or profess a more extreme position compared to the group (Lee, 2007). Lee (2007) associated the rationale behind group polarization with individuals' conscious desires to differentiate themselves and excel beyond others within the group. This desire conflicts with the core elements of deindividuation as individuals, established within the group, who now seek to individualize themselves within the group by expressing a more radical viewpoint.

Lee (2007) hypothesized a positive relationship between group identification and group polarization, in which individuals would identify strongly with a message within a group resulting in a polarized viewpoint. To test this hypothesis, Lee (2007) divided 104 undergraduates into deindividuated and individuated groups, and then encouraged them to interact via the Internet. Lee (2007) instructed the individuals within the individuation group to introduce themselves without disclosing identifying information. Information shared included some biographical information, interests, and major. The deindividuation

group skipped this exercise. Lee (2007) then provided each group with a series of discussion scenarios; they were instructed to select a pre-constructed decision, and then type a short argument defending their decision. After the decision was constructed, the participant and their partner's arguments compared their arguments for personal agreement or disagreement.

Lee's (2007) research revealed that the deindividuated student participants exhibited a stronger group identification compared to their individuated counterparts. Furthermore, the deindividuated participants were also more likely to display polarizing opinions. Lee (2007) demonstrated that reducing the individual's identity resulted in a stronger group cohesion. Because of this strong group cohesion, the deindividuated students reinforced their opinions with that of the group's opinions.

### Anonymity

Chiou (2006) conducted a Taiwanese study about the interactions between anonymity and a teen's willingness to disclose sexual desires and actions to other online users. Chiou examined 1,347 males and females between the age of 16 and 23 and participants to rate and disclose their familiarity with a varying degree of intimate subjects. Chiou tested their willingness to disclose under three conditions of anonymity: webcam (low), profile image (medium), and online moniker (high). Chiou found that gender played a significant role in the reported results. Male respondents were found to be more likely to report and disclose sexual familiarity under the condition of anonymity. However, females were subject to greater deindividuation effects than males. Chiou

proposed that female adolescents remained more sensitive about disclosing sexual subjects. Moreover, the respondents' customs and ethics of origin regarded adolescent sexuality, mainly female sexuality, as taboo (Chiou, 2006).

One cannot entirely attribute student disinhibition online directly to deindividuation effects. In 2008, Hinduja expanded the research of online misbehavior and deindividuation beyond CMC into digital piracy. When testing deindividuation effects against student illegally download copyrighted materials, Hinduja (2008) found lack of evidence to link the two variables. Instead, she attributed some online deviancy to untested variables, such as a decreased perception of the likelihood and severity of punishment. Additionally, Hinduja attributed another possible explanation to deviancy and piracy: personality differences.

Hinduja (2008) relied on the anonymous responses of students within a university. These respondents were expected to self-disclose their value of anonymity and habits of online piracy. Hinduja posited researchers have criticized self-disclosure for its inconsistency and lack of reliability. Hinduja never truly tested an anonymous condition in this study, but asked the students to indicate their value of anonymity. Asking students to assign value to anonymity assumes that the student understands the nuances of identity on the Internet. In fact, many users may believe they are anonymous due to their lack of understanding of computer forensics, network addresses, and pseudonym. The results of Hinduja's (2008) study and subsequent criticism are significant to the current study as they illuminate that online misbehavior is complex and not isolated to the effects of deindividuation.

### Conformity and Argument Processing

While previous researchers have focused on the relational similarities between the individual and the group (Chiou, 2006; Lindahl & Unger, 2010), Lee (2008) explored the differences between the in-group and outsiders, and the perceived strength of their arguments. Lee (2008) examined users' abilities to (a) make an argument, (b) distinguish the impact of the arguments made by themselves and other users, and (c) remember the arguments made by others under the condition of anonymity. Lee (2008) posited that users who exchanged profile information would be more likely to remember the point of an argument made by another user due to their abilities to connect on a more personal level. Those who could not exchange profile information would be less likely to remember an argument and would fall back on arguments made by the virtual group.

After conducting his experiment, Lee (2008) found that removing identity cues obscured the user's ability to systematically process an argument. The users would also show reliance on how strongly they identified with their partner, rather than the strength of the argument presented to them when deciding conformity. Lee (2008) noted that adding a brief biography between users primed the users for more intensive message processing, as well as increased the strength of an argument that would otherwise lead to conformity behavior.

Lee (2008) stated implications to suggest a shared consensus of ideas between in-group users, in which these users scrutinized arguments from out-group sources. Interestingly, Lee (2008) stated that the lack of individuating cues might lower the user's motivation to scrutinize arguments made within the group. More so, the users who



maintained individualized identities were more likely to follow group norms when presented with a quality argument.

### Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effect Limitations

Social identity model of deindividuation effects (SIDE) studies have been limited by the ability to operationalize the deindividuation and its effects. Researchers have previously manipulated these effects by using isolation (Spears, Lea, & Lee, 1990), visual anonymity (Sassenberg & Postmes, 2002), or lack of biographical information (Postmes & Spears, 2002). These researchers have conceptualized the deindividuation effects, such as the inability to individualize the environment in which the individual interacted with others, thus increasing the need to fit the mold of the group (Sassenberg & Postmes, 2002; Spears et al., 1990). In many ways, this view of deindividuation is similar to the typical experience of the new student in class: The individual senses they are different and frantically attempts to fit in by identifying with the salient ideal of the group.

### Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Cyber-Harassment

#### Bullying

Researchers have commonly defined bullying as repeated aggressive behavior with the intent to harm another due to the disparity in power between the aggressor and victim (Olweus, 1995). Smith and Sharp (1994) argued that bullying involved a “systemic abuse of power” (p. 2). Bosworth, Espelage, and Simon (1999) qualified intent to harm as having the “potential to cause physical or psychological harm to the recipient”

(pp. 342-343). This act might include physical or verbal abuse, “such as name-calling, social exclusion, and having money or belongings damaged, as well as more obvious forms of hitting and kicking” (Bosworth et al., 1999, pp. 342-343). As such, the bullying might not always be physically visible or instantly apparent to outsiders.

### Bullies, Victims, and Bully-Victims

Olweus (1995) described bullies as impulsive, less respectful to children and adults alike, and lacking empathy for their victims. While some have perceived this impulsive and reckless behavior as proof that these are the actions of an incompetent mind (Crick & Dodge, 1999), others have believed bullying behavior can be found in many lifestyles and levels of intelligence (Sutton & Smith, 1999). In fact, Sutton and Smith (1999) revealed that bullies had the social and mental capabilities to manipulate victims and remain undetected.

Most bullies intend to provoke a response, such as fear, from their victims; in many situations, they are rewarded with prestige by their peers (Olweus, 1995). Other motivating factors include team performance and individual ranking (Salin, 2001). In higher education, bullying can be tied to more tangible outcomes, such as a letter grade. Researchers have found that a student verbally abused online classmates to coerce them into working harder to obtain a favorable grade (Jones & Scott, 2012). In such situations, learning outcomes become subjacent to one attaining a pristine grade. Researchers have previously assumed that bullies were insecure under their tough exterior, but Olweus (1995) disagreed with the conclusion. Crick and Dodge (1996) found that because peers

were likely to submit to aggression, proactive-aggressive personalities might become stronger over time. According to Ragatz, Anderson, Fremouw, and Schwartz (2011), bullies are individuals who were never victims. They are individuals always in a seat of power who use that power to terrorize their victims.

Olweus (1995) defined a victim as an individual who was repeatedly verbally or physically abused on by one or more individuals. Slee (1994) posited victims suffer from low self-esteem and social anxiety. Slee noted that victims feared being ostracized by their peers or seen in a negative light. Slee suggested that victims endured bullying behavior to reduce further ridicule by their peers. Hodges, Malone, and Perry (1997) argued social anxiety displayed by victims only reinforced bullying behavior. Both authors indicated a victim blaming mentality (Hodges et al., 1997; Slee, 1994). However, in understanding the description of a bully, one can argue that bullies can identify vulnerabilities of potential victims.

Some individuals may be both a bully and a victim. These individuals are victimized by more powerful figures, and also victimize those they see as having less power (Ragatz et al., 2011). Sutton and Smith (1999) observed that bully-victims exhibited more impairment in social skills and empathy compared to bullies and were also more reactively aggressive, with known deficits in their problem-solving capabilities. During a conflict, bully-victims resorted to aggressive means to attain their goals, such as gaining respect and acceptance from peers (Ragatz et al., 2011). With their increased reactive aggression, bully-victims were more anxious, which could have led them to interpret the acts of others as hostile. In turn, it created a cycle where the

reactive-aggressive bully-victim perceived a communication as hostile and the individual retaliated aggressively. The peers then responded more aggressively that, in the mind of the bully-victim, confirmed the initial suspicion. Eventually, the peers may become hostile toward such reactive-aggressive personalities (Crick & Dodge, 1996).

#### Witnesses

O'Connell, Pepler, and Craig (1999) estimated that bystanders witnessed 85% of bullying incidents. A witness has the opportunity to join the bully, defend the victim, or continue to observe the incident passively (Kowalski, 2011). In a study of K to 12 students, O'Connell et al. (1999) observed bullying in children between the ages of five and 12 at two elementary schools. These students were provided a questionnaire asking about the school climate, bullying, and victimization. O'Connell et al. selected a subsample of 120 students for observation via videotape. O'Connell et al. (1999) observed that during each bullying episode, bystanders actively supported the bully by engaging in bullying behavior such as name calling or physical violence 20.7% of the time (p. 446). Similarly, during these incidents bystanders refrained from any action 53.9% of the time (p. 446). O'Connell et al. (1999) classified this action as a passive reinforcement of the bullying behavior since the aggression was not dissuaded. Bystanders intervened in bullying episodes on behalf of the victim by protecting the victim from bullying behavior 25.4% of the time (O'Connell et al., 1999, p. 446).

While O'Connell et al. (1999) focused on K-12 students, studies examining schoolyard bullying and workplace bullying have indicated significant correlations

between the two (Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003). Smith et al. (2003) provided evidence that individuals who experienced bullying in school were more likely to be bullied in the workplace. Furthermore, Smith et al. posited bully-victims as being at the greatest risk for bullying behavior in the workplace, as attributed to poor socialization and poor childhood home lives. This evidence indicated that bullying behaviors, including victimization and witnessing, were not attributes that diminished over time.

### Cyberbullying

Cyber-harassment and cyberbullying are not new phenomena; however, these are new to research studies about higher education. Since 1995, researchers have explored fields beyond education regarding online aggression (Jonassen et al., 1995). From within education, researchers have described cyber-harassment and online misconduct through non-peer reviewed sources during the infancy of online education (Palloff et al., 2001). After a series of suicides between 2000 and 2011, said to be the result of cyberbullying, educators and leaders began to consider the effects of cyberbullying (Washington, 2015). Journalists have outlined the effects of bullying on student and teachers alike (Washington, 2015). However, only recently have researchers of journals of higher education policy begun to examine the policies surrounding cyberbullying (e.g., Hinduja & Patchin, 2015; Washington, 2015). Interestingly, there is very little research published about the influence of cyberbullying on a student's academic or cognitive success.

According to Poore (2015), cyberbullying shares the fundamental imbalance of power that is associated with bullying. Like many other authors, Poore (2015) defined

cyberbullying as “a hostile act directed towards another person that occurs using digital technology” (p. 82). Additionally, Poore (2015) outlined seven key attributes to describe cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is transcendent of space and time, in which the abuse perpetually exists in cyberspace. In fact, malicious messaging may be exponentially replicated by many different users by copying and retransmitting the original message. Additionally, removal of the malicious content may not be permanent. Messages and digital assets can be saved and redistributed at a later date. Because of the possibility of replication, Poore noted that the “repeated” variable in the traditional bullying definition was removed from cyberbullying’s definition. Actions, such as liking, retweeting, or reblogging, provided greater reach for incidents and exposed additional individuals to the communication. Retweeting or reblogging allowed users to replicate a post within their timelines or blog instantly. Concurring with bullying research, cyberbullying provided the opportunity for onlookers or passive participants; however, in cyberbullying these were in greater numbers (Poore, 2015).

#### Occurrences in Higher Education

Zalaquett and Chatters (2014) studied the prevalence of cyberbullying among college students at a large southeastern university. In the study, 604 students responded to a survey distributed among six undergraduate classes. Of the 604 respondents, 459 were female; 149 were male; and five remained undefined. Zalaquett and Chatters developed the instrument with 23 questions. The results of the study illustrated that 19% of students had experienced cyberbullying while in college. Fourteen percent of students surveyed

reported being cyberbullied 1 to 3 times; 4% reported 4 to 6 times; and only 2% reported 7 to 10 times, indicating the majority of harassment incidents are isolated (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2014).

Of the students who were cyberbullied in college, the majority experienced harassment through text message (46.1%) and email (43.5%). Additionally, 44% reported the cyberbullying was perpetrated by a fellow student (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2014). Finally, Zalaquett and Chatters (2014) found that 77% of the total sample was in favor of additional education about cyberbullying. Zalaquett and Chatters confirmed cyberbullying continued beyond the K-12 schoolyard and into higher education. Additionally, Zalaquett and Chatters highlighted the need for cyberbullying education in postsecondary institutions.

Shariff (2008) reported that school ethos and the instructors' attitudes toward bullying had a significant influence on the incident rate, as well as the effects of bullying in the classroom. When bullying was treated as harmless or teasing, the problem could lead to enabling the abuse (Shariff, 2008). Providing additional education about cyberbullying may help students and faculty identify and stop incidents before the abuse becomes a larger problem.

Luker (2015) found the faculty and administration perception of the prevalence of cyberbullying in higher education was either misunderstood or reluctantly accepted as happening. Using descriptive statistics, Luker found that over 44.53% of institutions perceived cyberbullying to be a rare occurrence. In the same study, she reported that more than half of the faculty surveyed perceived that cyberbullying occurred in higher

education monthly or more frequently. Luker also stated that only 13% of institutions reported not having a cyberbullying incident in the past 12 months. Additionally, while institutional leaders seemed to admit that cyberbullying was an issue in higher education, Luker reported that they perceived their issues as minor compared to peer institutions. Evidence from Vance's (2010) dissertation indicated that reporting of these occurrences remained low, in which the faculty had a first and possibly final view of the harassment, thereby skewing the institutional perception of the issue. Luker (2015) suggested that a group-serving bias might have influenced the institutional perceptions, in which administrators and faculty were reluctant to admit that cyberbullying was a problem at their respective institutions.

#### Occurrences in the Higher Education Online Classroom

It is clear that cyberbullying impacts postsecondary education. While the prevalence of cyberbullying in the online classroom across the United States is still unclear, there is evidence that the phenomenon does occur (Vance, 2010; Minor, Smith, & Brashen, 2013; Smith, Minor, and Brashen, 2014). Moreover, the evidence indicates that cyberbullying impacts both students and faculty in the online classroom.

Vance (2010) explored the prevalence of cyberbullying within online courses. Vance found both students (12%) and faculty (35%) experienced online harassment within their courses. Additionally, Vance (2010) noted that 25% of individuals over the age of 35 experienced harassments compared to 14% under 23 and 11% between the ages of 23 and 35 (p. 47). Vance (2010) discovered that 43% of those who did not report an



instance of cyberbullying to the administration admitted to being reluctant due to a perceived inability for an authority figure to act. Thirty-eight percent of those experiencing cyberbullying did not report because they did not know it was a reportable offense. These findings significantly illustrated an issue of unclear or under-communicated policies (Vance, 2010). Again, education on policies may help to reduce cyberbullying. Furthermore, knowledge of the policies may lead to a better reporting rate, as victims may feel encouraged that administration may take action.

While the subject remains under-researched, previous studies on student-to-faculty cyberbullying within the online classroom have reported high rates of occurrence for the phenomenon, ranging from 12% to 45% (Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson, 2014; Clark, Faan, & Werth, 2012; Eskey, Taylor, & Eskey, 2014; Minor, Smith, and Brashen, 2013; Vance, 2010).

In one study, Minor et al. (2013) measured the prevalence of cyberbullying against faculty within higher education. While Minor et al. expressed severe limitations of the study due to generalizability and questionable interpretation of quantitative data, their qualitative discussion was evaluated as excellent by other authors (e.g., Barr & Lugas, 2011; Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014; Jones & Scott, 2012). In a mixed-method study, Minor et al. (2013) researched (a) the experiences of faculty with cyberbullying, (b) how the situation was handled, (c) why a faculty member would not address the issue, and (d) how cyberbullying should be addressed within online education. Minor et al. provided a qualitative survey to 346 faculty members who taught in the College of Management and Technology at a sizeable fully-online institution. The use of online

faculty members in this study was significant because the faculty participants would only have interacted with their students through an online medium, increasing the perceived distance between student and faculty. However, only 68 faculty members completed the survey. The authors did not explain the low response rate (20%) of their faculty members beyond using a sample of convenience. The survey was comprised of 19 multiple-choice questions—each followed by the opportunity for the respondent to provide their experience with a short response. The first five questions were demographics, while the final 12 captured the respondent's experience with cyberbullying.

The findings of Minor et al.'s (2013) study reflected those of Vance (2010). Minor et al. (2013) stated 33.8% (p. 19) of faculty reported having been cyberbullied within a course. Minor et al. (2013) stated 61.8% (p. 19) reported having not been cyberbullied; however, the authors indicated that many respondents reported having dealt with aggressive behavior associated with cyberbullying. Minor et al. (2013) noted these respondents might have been unfamiliar with or unaware of the definition of cyberbullying.

Those faculty participants who did report having been cyberbullied noted distinct instances of being threatened, treated to obscene language, cyberstalked, publicly defamed, or impersonated on obscene websites (Minor et al., 2013). The respondents further noted the episodes extended from grade disputes or the number of assignments within a course (Minor et al., 2013, p. 22). The respondents also indicated that the episodes were experienced through private mediums (private messages or email), course contained mediums (course public discussion boards), or public mediums (external sites).

Interestingly, many threats involved the instructor being “reported” or the student dropping out of the institution (Minor et al., 2013, p. 22). This evidence indicated that students believed their power was monetary, and their unhappiness would be echoed by the administration by the potential loss of a customer.

When Minor et al. (2013) asked about who handled the situation, 22.1% (p. 21) of faculty reported handling it themselves; 11.8% (p. 21) reported that a program director handled it; and 1.5% (p. 21) reported someone else handling the issue. The 64.6% remaining respondents did not acknowledge student cyberbullying within the online classroom. The authors hypothesized that a number of faculty who did not acknowledge cyberbullying within the classroom were either unable to identify cyberbullying or too embarrassed to admit that it occurred. However, Minor et al. were unable to capture data to confirm this hypothesis. Their hypothesis would imply that an unknown number of incidents were unreported and not acted upon.

Of the responses that acknowledged cyberbullying, 26.5% felt the issue was effectively handled (Minor et al., 2013, p. 22). The authors addressed the low perceived effectiveness as an issue of adequate preparation and knowledge of who, how, and when to report an issue. Furthermore, Minor et al. (2013) reported five themes which emerged from faculty describing the barriers to report:

- Not knowing to whom or what to report
- Perceived non-support from administration
- Embarrassment by lack of control over students in the online classroom
- Fear of job loss due to negative student evaluations

- Lack of time to address conduct issues

Minor et al. (2013) concluded that mechanisms should be established to support faculty in handling incidents, including (a) developing institution-wide policy against cyberbullying, (b) developing and communicating to faculty procedures for handling cyberbullying, (c) providing cyberbullying training for faculty and students, and (d) handling legitimate student complaints appropriately.

In addition to reported incident rates of student-to-faculty cyberbullying, some researchers have examined the faculty experiences and impact of the phenomenon (Blizard, 2016; Cassidy et al., 2014; Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson, 2017). For example, Cassidy et al. (2014) reported that 12% of the 121 faculty surveyed self-disclosed having been cyberbullied by students. Those faculty which disclosed having been cyberbullied indicated that the phenomenon impacted their ability to do their work, their relationship with students, mental health, and induced thoughts of quitting. Blizard (2016) and Cassidy et al. (2017) suggested that concrete knowledge of cyberbullying, additional support from administration, as well as a clearly defined policies and procedure targeting cyberbullying would help to mitigate the negative impact of cyberbullying on faculty.

### Cyberbullying Laws and Policies in K-12

All 50 states within the United States maintain legislation that pertains to bullying, as does the District of Columbia (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015; Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014). Of the 50 states, 49 define and include cyberbullying within bullying legislation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). According to Horowitz and Bollinger (2014), the

states that do not define cyberbullying in legislation delegate the task to other responsible agencies, such as the local school board or the state's Department of Education. Forty-four of the 51 jurisdictions include criminal sanctions against cyberbullying offenders (Cyberbullying Research Center, n.d.). Many of these anti-bullying measures are only included in statutes related to the K-12 public education systems (Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014).

In the 50 jurisdictions that define cyberbullying, most refer to the transmission of an electronic message using an electronic medium (Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014). As cyberbullying becomes a larger issue in the K-12 systems and often occurs off-campus, new court rulings have expanded the scope of jurisdiction to discipline malicious users. Florida, Illinois, California, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Kansas included the creation of websites or other electronic mediums, such as social media, within the definitions of electronic medium (Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014). In such cases, the state legislation has seemed to expand the school's jurisdiction on cyberbullying beyond the school's physical property. In fact, 16 states have adopted this strategy (Cyberbullying Research Center, n.d.). However, many state legislatures have been slow to adopt jurisdictional expansions.

Jurisdiction was not the only term defined by state legislatures to have changed. In many cases, the legislation provided to school systems to discipline cyberbullying incidents have included language that requires the incident to have substantially interrupted school discipline or the rights of others (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015; Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014). This language dates back to the Supreme Court ruling on *Tinker v.*

Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969), in which the court ruled that the suspension of three students for wearing black armbands as protest to the Vietnam War violated the students' first amendment rights (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). The court ruled in the student's favor because the black armbands were passive and not disruptive to the school's function, nor impeded the rights of others (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). As such, Hinduja and Patching (2015) explained the court required the school personnel to demonstrate that any speech was disruptive to school activities or infringe the rights of others.

In 2000, the Court of Pennsylvania upheld disciplinary expulsion in *J.S. v. Bethlehem Area School District* (2000). In this case, J.S. had created a website that included threats and slander against school staff. The court ruled in favor of the school, stating that schools do have the authority to discipline students for off-campus offences when the speech in question clearly disrupts the school environment.

In 2011, both the lower court and the Fourth U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the suspension of Kara Kowalski (*Kowalski v. Berkeley County Schools*, 2011). Kowalski created a social media profile called "S.A.S.H" on Myspace™. Kowalski sued the school, citing free speech violations, claiming the page was for a group called "Students Against Slut Herpes." However, other students came forward and admitted that the acronym actually stood for "Students Against Shay's Herpes." The courts ruled in favor of the school, stating that Kowalski's actions were an attack on a classmate, and using "students" in the acronym was sufficient evidence to connect the school environment and implicate the school board's jurisdiction (*Kowalski v. Berkeley County Schools*, 2011).

Overall, the legislation and courts have been generous when addressing cyberbullying in the K-12 systems (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). As cyberbullying becomes a larger issue in these school systems, legislation has been applied to provide schools with the tools necessary to discipline online behavior that impact the school environment (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). The courts have also been supportive of disciplinary action and/or legal judgements when the school leaders have demonstrated that the student's speech has influenced the school environment or the rights of others.

### Cyberbullying Laws and Policies in Higher Education

Legislations regarding disruptive behavior and student conduct within higher education vary from state to state. In the state of Florida, policies are written broadly, thereby allowing the institutions' leaders to define disruptive behaviors and adopt a code of conduct to which students must abide. Florida leaders have delegated to each Florida College System institution and state university the authority to adopt a code of conduct and apply penalties for violations of rules and regulations by the students (Fla Stat. § 1006.6 [5]). Additionally, *Florida Statutes* section 1006.6 (5) mandates that leaders of Florida College System institutions and state universities should adopt rules and regulations for lawfully disciplining students who *intentionally* disrupt or impair "orderly conduct, processes, and functions of the institution" (para. 2). The autonomy provided to institutions of higher learning exemplified by the state of Florida illustrates the potential for inconsistencies in policies, rules, and procedures governing cyberbullying between institutions. While such policies exist, faculty and administration may have difficulty

interpreting the policies. Researchers have found that unclear student conduct policies negatively influence resolutions available to instructors and administrators seeking a resolution to cyberbullying in their classrooms (Jones & Scott, 2012).

Beyond the United States, as of 2012, Jones and Scott found that most Canadian university student conduct policies did not include a direct reference of cyberbullying. The authors mentioned that when references to cyberbullying were identified, they primarily appeared in information technology resource policies. Jones and Scott noted the references to cyberbullying within the information technology policies, while encouraging, were inherently limited to apply in student conduct cases. Specifically, the jurisdiction of the institution is a question as these types of policies are typically written to control employee, rather than student abuse. Illustrated above in the K-12 section, much of the cyberbullying can occur outside of the physical network maintained by the educational institution. Jones and Scott specifically questioned the university's ability to use information technology policies to control student behavior on cloud-based learning management systems, such as Blackboard™ or Canvas™, which might not be maintained, licensed, or owned by the institution. With 31.6% of total enrollments in the United States interacting with institutions through a learning management system, information technology policies may no longer be adequate for addressing cyberbullying. Furthermore, information technology departments may not be the appropriate entity to manage discipline for students that occur within an online classroom.

While there were discrepancies between institution leaders in how they interpreted disruptive behaviors, the federal government established policies to help



govern issues regarding racial and sexual harassments and violence. Title VII (Civil Rights Act of 1964) provided institution employees and faculties with protection against racial discrimination and harassment. Title IX (Patsy Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act of 2002) prohibited the systematic discrimination of individuals based on their sexual identity, as well as set guidelines for addressing sexual violence, harassment, and reporting. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) provided guidance for institutions to interpret these policies to include face-to-face and electronic interactions. This Guidance document also encouraged educational institutions to establish training on identifying and addressing discrimination (Ali, 2010).

### Summary

Much like the K-12 system, cyberbullying is a detriment to the goals of higher education (Poore, 2015; Washington, 2015). Students and faculty have experienced cyberbullying as they have interacted online. However, the policies available to resolve cyberbullying conflicts within the classroom may be unclear or appear in unrelated policies which may be overlooked by faculty and students (Minor et al., 2013; Jones & Scott, 2012). Additionally, many states have delegated the creation and enforcement of behavioral policies to each public institution of higher learning. Faculty, especially adjuncts, traveling between multiple institutions may find it increasingly more difficult to manage cyberbullying issues if they are not aware of the differences between institutional policies.

## Conflict and Conflict Resolution

### Conflict

This section will discuss the definitions of conflict and discuss the operationalization of the online component of cyberbullying. The literature established a baseline on how the subject has been studied previously. As this study is exploring the conflict between individuals within an online classroom, this review will include potential parallels between workplace and online communities.

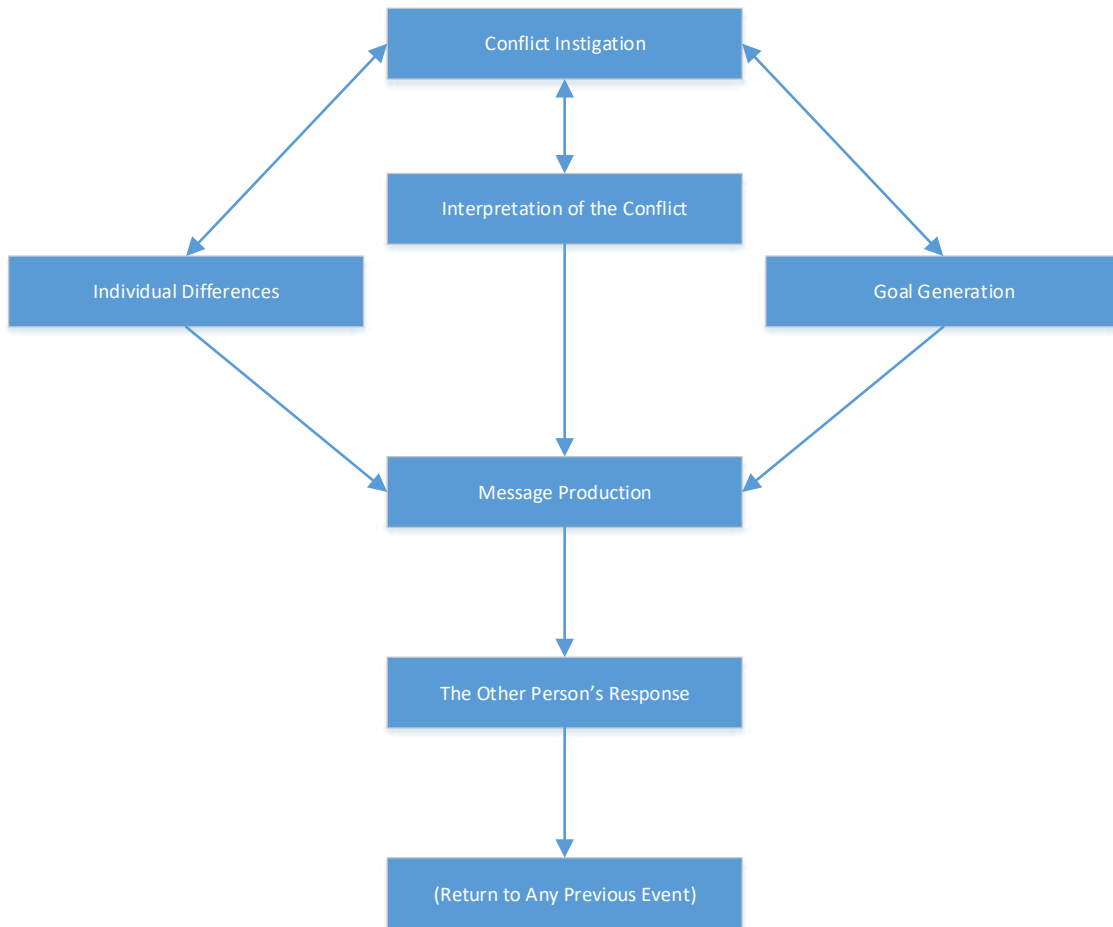
Scholars defining conflict have agreed on its definition (Putnam, 2006). Researchers have historically defined conflict as an expressed struggle between two or more parties due to their incompatibilities in achieving a goal or resources (Putnam, 2006). The issue with the common definition of conflict is that it indicates a cordial acknowledgment of the issues and both parties formally lay out their complaint for governing bodies to see.

For this study, the definition and operationalization of conflict needs to be flexible to account for the volatility of human personality. Because students and faculty are physically separated by time and space which obscures interpersonal cues that are present in face-to-face interactions, one must examine conflict, especially online conflict, with individual differences in mind. The model of strategic conflict provides one such lens.

### Model of Strategic Conflict

Canary (2003) applied the modified strategic choice model, the model of strategic conflict, to conflict resolution because of its ability to account for an

individual's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral response to a perceived aggression or oppression from another person. Canary (2003) used the model to assume that individuals in conflict were not cognitively impaired beyond their emotional distress. Canary (2003) posited one could apply the model to everyday conflict situations, such as one's relationships, workplace, or education. Additionally, Canary (2003) suggested the model illustrated conflict was episodic, which varied based on the numerous social interactions encountered throughout a day. These interactions between individuals and the environment in which they socialize are part of the conflict potential that may induce or reduce interpersonal conflict. The model is depicted in Figure 4.



*Figure 4.* Model of Strategic Conflict. From “Managing interpersonal conflict: A model of events related to strategic choices,” by D. J. Canary, in *Handbook of communication and social interaction skills* (p. 515), edited by J. O. Greene, and B. R. Burleson, 2003, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Copyright 2003 by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Reprinted with permission.

In this model, conflict begins at instigation. Three factors affect instigations, including (a) individual differences, (b) goal generation, and (c) interpretation of the conflict. According to Canary (2003), conflict instigation has two parts. Anger provocation is the factor related to anger-inducing behavior such as blameworthiness or undesirable actions. For instance, a student may become frustrated by the lack of work being done by partners on a group project—as the lack of action is undesirable to the

situation. Of course, there are different degrees of anger that may be experienced by individuals such as *pure anger*, *reproach*, *frustration*, and *resentment*. An individual's external aversions, such as sadness, stress, and pain, also add to one instigating anger-like reactions (Berkowitz, 1993).

Conflict potential and anger provocation insinuate that *individual differences* influence conflict instigation. For some people, the tiniest slight against their identity is enough to provoke anger. Conversely, other individuals have a higher tolerance for annoyances and provocation. Neurotic people—individuals who meet the world with negativity, anger, and depression (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975)—reported higher instances of conflicts and addressed the issues with either angry confrontation or withdrawal (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995). Gilbert (1991) described the confrontational approach of neurotic individuals as *avoid-approach-avoid*, in which the individual passively addresses the issue until it can no longer be ignored. The individual will actively engage the conflict until emotionally drained, prompting retreat.

An individual's locus of control and conflict locus of control also influence how conflict is perceived and considered for resolution. The locus of control refers to an individual's perception of how he or she has influenced success or failure. Conflict locus of control refers to the individual's perception of his or her influence on success or failure to interpersonal conflict. Individuals who rely on an internal locus of control are likely to accept that they may influence the outcome of conflict (Canary, Cunningham, & Cody, 1988) and may approach the issue positively to begin resolution (Caughlin & Vangelisti, 2000). Conversely, individuals who use an external locus of control may assign blame

and either approach conflict using negative or avoidance tactics (Canary et al., 1988; Caughlin & Vangelisti, 2000).

Conflict locus of control also implies that attribution plays an essential role in the personal interpretation of conflict. In attempts to comprehend the conflict issues, individuals create a narrative for the interpersonal problems (Canary, 2003). As such, they assign responsibility, create or pursue information about the conflict partner's motivation, and react both emotionally and behaviorally to the conflict (Canary, 2003; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987).

Goal generation is a common thread across conflict research. Research demonstrates that everyone wants to achieve something and tie those goals to his or her identity (Canary, 2003). When another individual or group of individuals thwart that achievement, conflict may arise. Moreover, goals do not exist in a vacuum and are regularly competing against each other. For example, a student may want to achieve a high grade in a course, while an instructor may need to assess a student's mastery of the subject. Established goals provide a frame of reference in which an individual evaluates the threat posed by conflicting goals and how to reconcile the differences (Fincham, 1999). Depending on the temperament of the student, he or she may employ specific tactics to achieve a high grade. As discussed regarding individual differences, students with an internal locus of control may explore positive options, such as improved study habits. Whereas, students with an external locus of control may blame the instructor for too harsh a grade; in some instances, they may even accuse or attack the instructor (Russon, 2017a).

Following the events of instigation, reactions, and assessment of goals in the face of conflict, people begin to engage conflict management strategies. Conflict strategies refer to the different methods by which people attempt to control the interpersonal issues (Canary, 2003). Conflict tactics are the actions people use to enact the strategies in real time (Newton & Burgoon, 1990). The verbal (or non-verbal) messages between the conflicting parties are produced from these strategies. Canary (2003) examined conflict management through two dimensions: engagement (direct-indirect) and cooperation (cooperative-competitive). *Direct-indirect* refers to how overtly individuals engage their conflict partner. Cooperative-competitive refers to the extent to which conflicting parties will pool resources to create a beneficial outcome. For example, in an article appearing in the *Orlando Sentinel*, Russon (2017a) described a conflict event in which after receiving a low grade on an essay a student produced profane and threatening emails to his world religion professor. The professor responded by filing a restraining order against the student. The actors in this scenario acted against each other (competitive). The student engaged the instructor, while the instructor actively avoided the conflict actor.

The example also highlights the next tier of Canary's (2003) model: the other person's response. As with any communication, there is always a response to the message—even if the response is silence. In the case of conflict, the response may either support or exasperate the conflict. Canary stated that the response might be reciprocal or compensative to the original message. Reciprocation refers to communications that are evenly distributed between conflict actors. Compensation refers to actions or communications that conflict with the original message. Consider a situation when two

children are playing together. Perhaps, they both have a favorite toy. The first child breaks the second child's favorite toy. In a reciprocation, the second child, after crying, breaks the first child's toy. However, in a compensation scenario Child B may find a new "favorite" toy from the toy box (Canary, 2003). The messages sent by the conflicted party may return the conflict to a previous state, thus placing the conflict in a state of self-perpetuation (Canary, 2003). The escalation of events through either reciprocation or compensation may result in more conflict. Therefore, learning to manage conflict positively becomes critical in order to avoid conflict escalation between the conflicted parties (Canary, 2003).

### Conflict Resolution

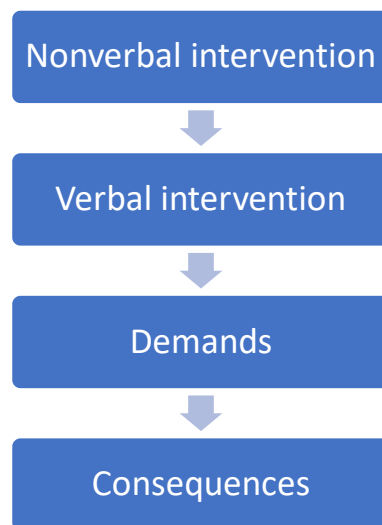
This section includes a discussion of conflict resolution research from interpersonal communications. As established in the computer-mediated communications section, CMC can exist as interpersonal messaging (Jonassen et al., 1995; McQuail, 2010; Ramirez & Zhang, 2007; Walther, 1996). Based on the literature, research presented, cyberbullying is a type of interpersonal conflict (Poore, 2015). This study examines conflict resolution techniques as applied to the online and offline classroom.

#### Conflict and Disruption Resolution in the Higher Education Classroom

The resources available to higher education instructors for resolving discipline issues in the classroom are numerous. One such method for conflict resolution in the classroom is the *response hierarchy* (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). The response hierarchy provides the instructor with a 4-tier structure to intervening with disruptions. The top tier,



nonverbal intervention is the intentional ignoring and monitoring of the disruptive student, which may also include a reprimanding visual response. As such, an instructor using the nonverbal method would not interact with the disruptive student beyond a disapproving stare. While this intervention method is designed for a face-to-face course, it could be adopted into the online classroom by an instructor hiding disruptive comments within an online discussion. Hiding a comment in a discussion thread removes the comment from public view as if the comment was not posted. According to Shrigley (1985), 40% of all disruptions may be handled with nonverbal intervention. Nonverbal is followed by a verbal intervention, in which the instructor attempts to acknowledge the issue and uses the student's name to establish authority. Next, the instructor makes demands of the student. Finally, if the conflict is not resolved, consequences are enacted on the student (e.g., removal from the classroom).



*Figure 5.* Response hierarchy. Developed by this author.

Palloff and Pratt (2013) provided general guidelines for conflict resolution within the online classroom. They suggested that instructors should set rigid guidelines and

expectations at the beginning of the course. An adequate explanation of these guidelines and expectations would provide students with the understanding of expected course interactions, as well as provide possible consequences for actions outside of the norm.

According to Palloff and Pratt (2013), *flaming*—an expression of emotions by a verbal attack in online communications—may occur in an online course when students have encountered issues with the course. For example, instead of asking questions in a private message with the instructor, a frustrated student may attack other students or the instructor publicly. Palloff and Pratt suggested responding quickly to the attack, as the instructor would in a face-to-face setting. Poore (2015) advised that the perpetrators of abusive comments should be identified and blocked. Blocking is efficiently silencing or removing an individual from being able to post and, in some cases, view discussions. Blocking a student is the digital equivalent to both nonverbal and consequence stages of the response hierarchy.

### Summary

This chapter reviewed research surrounding computer-mediated communications, bullying and cyberbullying, and conflict. Computer-mediated communications provide an understanding of community, identity, and messaging through online mediums (Jonassen et al., 1995; McQuail, 2010; Ramirez & Zhang, 2007; Walther, 1996). Examining bullying and cyberbullying provides this study with an understanding of the people involved in bullying behavior, including bullies, victims, and witnesses as well as their personality types. Additionally, it applies these concepts to cyber-harassment and

cyberbullying and discusses abuse through online courses. Finally, Chapter 2 included studies about conflict through the lens of the strategic conflict model, which indicated the conflict resolution technique for classrooms.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### Introduction

By 2015, the reality of online communication was that cyberbullying was a common occurrence (Poore, 2015). As demonstrated in Chapter 2, researchers have demonstrated that cyberbullying affects students and faculty in the U.S. within K-12 and higher education (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2014). While most states take steps to regulate cyberbullying at the elementary and secondary education level, researchers have indicated that policies regulating cyberbullying within postsecondary institutions may be inconsistent between each state and their respective public institutions, as well as between each institution within the state (Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014). Furthermore, a gap within the literature has been identified that documents the differences between policies regarding cyberbullying at public institutions within the United States.

This qualitative research study analyzed and compared policies and codes of conduct from Florida state public universities regarding cyberbullying. The research study accessed policies and codes of conduct that have been made available online from each of the 12 public universities in the state of Florida. Each policy was analyzed through document analysis. As such, Chapter 3 provides the details of the methodological protocols to be used within this research study.

### Research Questions

This study will use the following research questions to offer direction:

RQ1. Do different Florida state public universities address cyberbullying in policies and codes of conduct? In addressing cyberbullying, do they define it? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ1a. If policies or codes of conduct that directly or indirectly govern cyberbullying exist at different Florida state public universities, do the policies provide support to the Community of Inquiry's concept of teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ2. Do policies or codes of conduct at Florida state public universities provide guidelines for instructor response to or methods of reporting cyberbullying? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ2a. If guidelines for instructor response or methods of reporting harassment or bullying exist within policies at Florida state public universities, do the guidelines support the Community of Inquiry's concept of teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not?

#### Rationale for Qualitative Method

Qualitative researchers express interest in how people apply meaning or interpret experiences (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Researchers can use qualitative methodology as a toolset for gathering a detailed and rich examination of how people interpret experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). According to St. John, Duan-Barnett, and Moronski-Chapman (2013), many policies derive from policymakers accepting their own beliefs about a subject as truth. The current study used qualitative research methods

to identify the differences in how public institutions of higher education in the state of Florida interpret cyberbullying and enact policy based on the interpretation of the issue.

Through qualitative inquiry, the details of these interpretations are best extrapolated through different means, such as personal interviews, group discussions, or documents (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). According to Bowen (2009), documents as a data source represent text and images that have been produced without intervention of the researcher. Documents are typically produced and exist as ‘social facts’ in that they are created and shared for social consumption (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011). These text artifacts may include public record, personal documents, or other types of physical evidence (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011; Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The data gathered and subsequently analyzed through policy documents in the current research study are bound by time, allowing for a historical approach to help provide context to the content analyzed (Patton, 2002; O’Leary, 2014). Tuchman (1994) outlined a number of steps in conducting historical research:

1. Gather all relevant information and data.
2. Establish a point of view with a relevant framework.
3. Determine the authenticity of the data gathered.
4. Consider any possible biases that may exist within the data.
5. Determine the cultural history of the data
6. Begin analysis.

Tuchman (1994) argued that there are multiple ways to interpret cultural history. The current study interprets cultural history as “an exploration of the meanings of cultural

practices” (Tuchman, 1995, p.315). In adopting this interpretation of cultural history, the current study explored the definitions of cyberbullying by public universities within the state of Florida and how those definitions were used to govern aggressive online behavior in online courses.

The historical approach provides the methodology for identification of primary source material from which the data was collected (Tuchman, 1994). Primary sources are documents in which the author has first-hand experience with the phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 2009). The current research study will examine the definition of cyberbullying as published by public state universities in Florida. As such, each published policy examined qualified as a primary source. Furthermore, Danto (2008) noted government documents as being invaluable primary source material within the historical research approach. Examining the content of these artifacts in historical research allowed the researcher to examine facts as presented by the authors of the documents (Prior, 2012).

Merriam (2009) noted three major limitations of historical data. First, the documents being analyzed were not created for the purposes of research which may leave gaps in the data collected (Merriam, 2009). Second, the content within the documents may not be in a format that is usable or understandable to the researcher (Merriam, 2009). Third, historical artifacts may have issues with accuracy and authenticity. Merriam (2009) explained that public records may carry biases unknown to the researcher.

The current study used document analysis to examine policy documents published on public colleges and universities in the state of Florida websites. Document analysis is

a specific style of content analysis in which the researcher examines text artifacts for patterns, extracts data, and describes that data through systematically developed themes (Bowen, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; O’Leary, 2014; Patton, 2002). Through such analysis, emergent themes are documented and systematically assigned to significant selections within the text (Bowen, 2009). The policies examined for this study exist as public record and are readily accessible, thereby providing the current study with an accurate profile of the cyberbullying policies of each Florida public institution of higher learning.

#### Validity and Trustworthiness

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated that the integrity of qualitative research must be upheld to strike true “with readers, practitioners, and other researchers” (p. 201). The way in which qualitative social science research is applied makes it necessary that those who read and apply the content have full confidence in the method and results of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As such, the researcher made every effort to record and follow the method used to collect and analyze data rigorously, as well as to ensure the conclusions remain sound and logical (Firestone, 1987). In doing so, qualitative research is evaluated on the validity and trustworthiness of the research performed.

Creswell (2014) defined qualitative validity as the accuracy check of the researcher’s findings through consistent methods. Validity is concerned with the truth of the answers obtained by the researcher and includes the correctness of the manner in which the researcher obtained those answers (O’Leary, 2014). Maxwell (2016)



contended, “Objective truth is not essential to a theory of validity,” nor was an “ultimate truth required for research to be useful or believable” (p. 114). As such, the finding of the qualitative study should be “accurate from the standpoint research, the participant, or the readers of an account” (Creswell, 2014 p. 251). Guba and Lincoln (1981) preferred the term trustworthiness over validity. The researchers outlined four criteria for qualitative research to achieve trustworthiness: credibility (confidence in the research’s internal validity); transferability (ability to exist outside the context of the original research); dependability (replicability of the research performed), and confirmability (objectivity or neutrality of the research). The application of these four criteria supported the researcher in maintaining the integrity of the research study.

From a procedural perspective, Creswell (2014) recommended that researchers identify one or more validity strategies to check the accuracy of their findings. A validity strategy is an approach that supported the researcher’s goal in affirming accuracy. The following validity strategies was employed to ensure trustworthiness throughout the analysis of this research study:

- Audit trail
- Triangulation
- Inter-code reliability
- Rich, thick description
- Clarifying biases and reflexivity

### Audit Trail

The researcher maintained a research journal to detail the processes thereby creating an audit trail. An audit trail is detailed description of the data collection, categories creation, and decision-making processes (Merriam, 2009). The research journal will provide clear documentation on all research activity by recording the chronological account of data collection and data analysis procedures (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

### Triangulation

Creswell (2014), Maxwell (2016), and Merriam and Tisdell (2015) all pointed to triangulation as a strategy for addressing questions of credibility and dependability. Triangulation refers to a research study using multiple data collection methods, multiple data sources, or independent researchers reviewing data to verify the findings (Maxwell, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The current research study used multiple data sources to ensure trustworthiness. Triangulation through multiple data sources includes comparing the same type of data source from different perspectives and world views (Patton, 2002). Specifically, the researcher obtained multiple policy documents, including student codes of conduct, faculty handbooks, and university policies, from each public institution of higher learning in the state of Florida. The researcher will use these policies from each university to form a holistic understanding of how each institution has defined cyberbullying and what its policies are.

## Inter-coder Reliability

In addition to using multiple data sources, the researcher employed a second coder to check the reliability of the analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Testing for inter-coder agreement allows the researcher to confirm that evidence of theme exists and is not influenced by the researcher's bias (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). The researcher observed the following steps as described by Creswell (2016): 1) Identify a research colleague who is willing and able to follow directions; 2) Create a codebook of codes which provides details on the set of codes and their definitions; 3) Provide training and instruction to the colleague on the method of conducting the coding exercise; 4) Independently conduct analysis of the policies; and 5) Review both sets of analyses for inter-coder agreement.

The current research study used Cohen's (1960) kappa coefficient to measure inter-coder agreement. Cohen's kappa coefficient is a statistic used to measure the consistency of agreement between assigned category items from two coders. Cohen's kappa rates inter-coder agreement on a scale of 0 to 1. The coefficient will equal to 1 when raters are in full agreement. When raters are in total disagreement beyond that of chance, the coefficient will equal 0. Krippendorff (1980) recommended agreement of at least .70 to be considered significant. The current research used .70 as the statistical marker of agreement.

The research colleague employed to be the second coder is a quality assurance chemist at a public utility laboratory operated by the county government of a large southeastern metropolitan area. She was chosen to perform the independent analysis because of her background in quality assurance. Her position requires her review and

audit over 50 different water analysis methods, ensuring that analysts follow protocols set by accrediting and government bodies. Additionally, she is required to read and interpret state and federal regulations, ensuring that the laboratory is in compliance. She is also responsible for reviewing the accuracy of quantitative and qualitative analyses performed by the laboratory staff. The research colleague was also chosen because of her background in the biological sciences rather than higher education. This measure was taken as an attempt to exclude pre-existing biases or knowledge of the higher education policy creation process. In other words, this individual was chosen because of her ability to meticulously follow and audit research protocols, as well as having fresh, unbiased motive.

#### Rich, Thick Description

Merriam (2009) indicated “rich, thick description” as a strategy to address questions of transferability. Through the gathering of data which includes rich, thick description the researcher provides highly descriptive details about the setting and participants of the study, as well as detailed descriptions of the findings along with evidence presented from field notes and the documents gathered. The information documented through rich, thick description increase the readers ability to infer the study’s transferability – the study’s applicability to a different setting, context, or time - and determine if the finding can be transferred due to shared characteristics (Creswell, 2014; Merriam 2009).

## Clarifying Biases and Reflexivity

Qualitative research has been defined as interpretive research which relies on the researcher defining and redefining his observations (Stake, 2010). The definitions created by the researcher draw heavily from the researcher's lived experiences and beliefs. Maxwell (2016) explained one could not "eliminate the existing theories, beliefs, and perpetual lens" (p. 115). These theories and beliefs held by the researcher may potentially influence the interpretation of data. Therefore, to uphold the integrity of the work, the researcher should contemplate his interconnection with the phenomenon, explore the impact of past experiences on the proposed research, and disclose his point of reference (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). As such, the researcher explicitly stated his position.

In addition to stating his position, the researcher maintained a reflective journal throughout analysis as to be actively aware of himself, thoughts, and any preconceived ideas or prejudices. A reflective journal is a tool which provides the opportunity for the researcher to continue to be conscious of his own perspective while observing and analyzing the perspective presented in the artifacts (Annink, 2017; Patton, 2002). Through the reflective journal, the researcher is able to express emotions, ask questions, and even disclose doubt about the research study (Janesick, 2016). A researcher may use the journal for critical analysis of the context in which the data has been presented (Annink, 2017). As such, details provided in the reflective journal can illuminate affirmations or expose contrary data (Janesick, 2016). Additionally, the details extracted from the journal enhanced the credibility of the research study by adding depth to the analysis and discussion of the results (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher used a bracketing technique within the journal to acknowledge and set aside his preconceptions during the analysis of the data. Bracketing is a technique in which the internal suppositions of the researcher are suspended as to not interfere with analysis during a specified period within the research study (Gearing, 2004). Tufford and Newman (2010) argued that using bracketing within a reflective journal supports the researcher in examining and clarifying existing biases, conflicts, prior assumptions, and emotions. Though the researcher's personal beliefs, assumptions and biases are suspended for a period of time, those presuppositions are not ignored nor excluded from the study by the researcher (Gearing, 2004; Tufford & Newman, 2010). The researcher records the bracketed presuppositions within the journal so they may be reintegrated into the discussion after the methodological analysis (Gearing, 2004). Within the current study, the researcher used bracketing during the data gathering and analysis processes. After the data has been processed, the researcher reintegrated the bracketed thoughts into his discussion of the results where appropriate.

#### Role of the Researcher

The researcher of the current study is a White male who works for a large metropolitan university in the southeastern United States. His responsibilities within the university have included maintaining the social media presence of the digital learning division, crafting communications in regard to online learning, devising the digital and web strategies for recruiting prospective online students, and instructing students within undergraduate hybrid courses. These responsibilities also include providing coaching for

campus entities who may encounter cyberbullying, trolling, or other types of online incivilities. Additionally, the researcher has been involved in creating an institution-wide social media policy.

The researcher is certified by the institution where he is employed to teach online courses. The certification process included a 40-hour online course that provided instructors with pedagogical guidelines to successfully teach an online course that has been designed by another instructor. This course does not provide training in identifying cyberbullying or correcting misbehavior. The researcher has taught two different undergraduate hybrid courses over several semesters at the institution where he is employed. These courses include page design and writing for electronic media. Page design is a digital and print layout design course restricted to journalism majors. Writing for electronic media is a course in the radio/television major that surveys writing formats in radio, television, and web and is open to all majors. As an instructor, the researcher has never encountered cyberbullying within his course sections.

The researcher became interested in cyberbullying and online incivility in non-higher education contexts after participating in discussion boards, social media, instant messaging platforms, and massively multiplayer online video games. Through these mediums, he witnessed, experienced, and participated in aggressive online behavior.

As his responsibilities grew within the institution, the researcher became interested in examining the cyberbullying phenomenon to enhance reputation and expectation management. After engaging in conversations with current and potential students in online message boards, the researcher began to see parallels in user behavior

between education related communities and non-education related communities on multiple social media platforms such as Twitter <sup>TM</sup>, Facebook <sup>TM</sup>, and Reddit <sup>TM</sup>.

The researcher has previously held the belief that much of the aggressive behavior and language displayed in online communities was part of the experience of being online and an evolution of communication. In essence, users were expressing shocking behavior for no other reason than to be as shocking as possible. However, in recent years, this belief has eroded. It is now the researcher's belief that much of the aggressive behavior and language used online is rooted in hate rather than shock. The researcher arrived at this belief after witnessing what he perceived to be a change in tone and focus in the interactions between online commenters on sites like Facebook <sup>TM</sup> and Reddit <sup>TM</sup>. The remarks made by the aggressive party were seemingly more focused on oppressing groups and their beliefs, rather than being blatantly shocking. For instance, on a discussion board dedicated to the institution where the researcher is employed, the researcher witnessed multiple posts and comments blaming the institution's issues on minority groups. Reviewing the users' comment and posting histories, which are made available through the discussion board, it became evident to the researcher that the offending users participated and supported the white supremacy movement.

In the current study, the researcher approached the gathering of data as if he were a new instructor at each institution. Through this approach, he accessed each institution's policies through expected methods of information gathering – by directly accessing each institution's website and navigating to the policy pages and through Google <sup>TM</sup> search. The researcher believed this would help to provide an instructor's perspective when



searching for an institution's published policies that may provide guidance on cyberbullying. Additionally, the researcher excluded speaking with individuals from each institution who may offer guidance in identifying university policies, as they may offer unofficial or non-enforceable resources. As such, the researcher has determined to review documents that have been adopted and published as official resources.

### Setting

This study was conducted in the context of Florida's public state university system. The State University System of Florida is under the jurisdiction of the Florida Board of Governors (2016a, 2016b), with each university governed by a local Board of Trustees. There are 12 public universities in the State University System. In 2016, 352,116 students enrolled in state universities. In the 2015-2016 academic year, the state counted 248,823 full-time students and 103,293 part-time students (FLBOG, 2017h). During the same time period, the state reported 158,014 unique students participating in a distance learning course (FLBOG, 2017h). Eleven percent of students enrolled in the state university system took courses in exclusively distance courses. The *2015-16 System Accountability Report* (FLBOG, 2017h) reported 13,634 full-time and 3,185 part-time faculty employed in the state university system. Furthermore, FLBOG (2017h) reported that 14% of all course sections were offered through distance learning.

### Population

This study used the population of the public institutions participating in the Florida state university system. A population is defined as the entirety of a well-defined

group (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012). The Florida State University System maintains 12 public universities. The data evaluated from each institution are available publicly from each institution through individually maintained policy websites.

## 12 Public Universities in the State of Florida: Overview

### Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University

The Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University (FAMU) is a medium-sized 4-year, primarily residential, historically Black college and university (HBCU) located in Tallahassee, Florida. FAMU is an 1890 land-grant institution founded on October 3, 1887 (FLBOG, 2018b; FLBOG, n.d.). For the 2017-2018 academic year, FAMU's annual operating budget was \$319,588,307 (FLBOG, 2018a). In the fall of 2017, 9,909 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018b). As of 2011-2012 academic year, FAMU offers distance and hybrid education (FLBOG, 2014). According to the FLBOG's (2018b) *2018 Accountability Plan Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 8,903 students enrolled in traditional courses, 123 enrolled in hybrid courses, and 353 students enrolled in distance courses. The university leaders employed 547 full-time faculty and one part-time faculty. As of Fall 2017, 4.5% of FAMU's course selection were offered through distance and blended learning (FLBOG, 2018b). Eighty-five percent of students are Black; 8% are White; 3% are Hispanic; and 4% are another ethnicity (FLBOG, 2017a). FAMU is designated by the Carnegie Classification as an R2 institution (FLBOG, 2018b). The R2 Carnegie classification is awarded to institutions that confer 20 or more research

doctorates and have a “higher” research activity based on their research and development expenditures (Carnegie Classifications, n.d.).

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs FAMU. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. These appointments serve staggered terms of five years. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association, each serving a 1-year term (FAMU, n.d.). A faculty senate is also maintained by the university. According to the Faculty Senate page of the FAMU website, the senate is the “highest legislative body within the university and advises the President on academic matters” (FAMU, n.d., para. 1). Finally, FAMU maintains a student government which provided the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university

#### Florida Atlantic University

The Florida Atlantic University (FAU) is a large, 4-year nonresidential institution located in Boca Raton, Florida. The university was established in 1961 (FLBOG, n.d.). In the fall of 2017, 30,281 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018c). For the 2017-2018 academic year, FAU’s annual budget was \$780,162,967 (FLBOG, 2018a). As of the 2008-2009 academic year, FUA has offered both distance and hybrid courses (FLBOG, 2013). According to the FLBOG’s (2018c) *2018 Accountability Plan Florida Atlantic University*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 18,109 students enrolled in traditional courses; 1,215 students enrolled in hybrid courses; and

5,508 students enrolled in distance courses. The university leaders employed 849 full-time faculty and 433 part-time faculty (FLBOG, 2017b). In the 2016-17 academic year, FAU leadership reported 27% of the institution's course selection as being offered as distance and blended learning (FLBOG, 2018c). As of the 2015-2016 academic year, the university is an emerging Hispanic serving institution (FLBOG, 2017b). The students are comprised of 45% White, 24% Hispanic, 19% Black, and 12% other ethnicities.

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs FAU. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. These appointments serve staggered terms of five years. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association (FAU, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution's mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. A faculty senate is also maintained by the university's faculty leadership. According to the Faculty Senate page of the FAU website, the senate is the governance body "concerned with matters of general university educational policy" (FAU, n.d., para. 1). Finally, FAU maintains a student government which provides the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university.

#### Florida Gulf Coast University

Florida Gulf Coast University is a four-year, large, primarily residential university located in Fort Myers, Florida (FLBOG, 2018bd). The institution was founded in 1991 (FLBOG, n.d.). For the 2017-2018 academic year, FGCU's annual budget was

\$215,091,927 (FLBOG, 2018a). In the fall of 2017, 14,824 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018d). Florida Gulf Coast University began offering distance and hybrid education in 1997 (Chait & Trower, 1998). According to the FLBOG's (2018d) *2018 Accountability Plan the Florida Gulf Coast University*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 10,0076 students enrolled in traditional courses; 66 students enrolled in hybrid courses; and 2,554 students enrolled in distance courses (FLBOG, 2018d). While Florida Gulf Coast University did not report the number of courses offered online, 19% of undergraduate students attending the institution participated in online courses in the 2016-2017 academic year (FLBOG, 2018d). As of the 2015-2016 academic year, the university leaders employ 456 full-time faculty and 429 part-time faculty. The students are comprised of 67% White, 18% Hispanic, 7% Black, and 8% of other ethnicities. The instructional programs include professional, arts, sciences, and some graduate. Florida Gulf Coast University maintains a single doctoral program in education (FLBOG, 2017c).

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs FGCU. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association (FGCU, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution's mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. A faculty senate is also maintained by the university's faculty leadership. According to the Faculty Senate page of the FGCU website, the senate is the governance body which governs the rights and

responsibilities of faculty (FGCU, n.d.). Finally, FGCU maintains a student government which provides the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university.

### Florida International University

Florida International University (FIU) is a “four-year, large, primarily nonresidential” (FLBOG, 2017d, p. 2) university located in Miami, Florida. The institution was established in 1969 (FLBOG, n.d.). For the 2017-2018 academic year, FIU’s annual budget was \$1,106,874,324 (FLBOG, 2018a). In the fall of 2017, 45,666 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018e). As of 1998, FIU offers traditional, hybrid, and distance education courses (FLVC, n.d.). According to the FLBOG’s (2018e) *2018 Accountability Plan Florida International University*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 29,400 students enrolled in traditional courses; 3,432 students enrolled in hybrid courses; and 12,835 students enrolled in distance courses. The institution reported 30% of student credit hours being enrolled in online education and another 8% enrolled in hybrid education (FLBOG, 2018e). According to the FLBOG’s (2017d) *2015-2016 Accountability Report for the Florida International University*, the university leaders employed 1,232 full-time faculty and 30 part-time faculty. The university is a Hispanic serving institution. The student ethnicities are comprised of 11% White, 64% Hispanic, 12% Black, and 13% other ethnicities. The undergraduate programs are balanced between arts, science, and the professions. The

graduate instruction is research focused, receiving a “highest research activity” in its 2015 Carnegie Classification (FLBOG, 2017d).

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs FIU. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association (FIU, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution’s mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement and reporting. A faculty senate is also maintained by the university’s faculty leadership. According to the Faculty Senate page of the FIU website, the senate is the self-governing body which serves “as the source of academic authority and as the guardian of policies that govern the academic community” (FIU, n.d., para. 1). Finally, FIU maintains a student government which provides the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university.

#### Florida State University

Florida State University (FSU) is located in Tallahassee, Florida. FSU was founded in 1851 (FSU, n.d.). In the fall of 2017, 41,800 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018f). For the 2017-2018 academic year, FSU’s annual budget was \$1,373,022,942 (FLBOG, 2018a). As of 1999, FSU offers traditional, hybrid, and distance courses (Easton, 2000). According to the FLBOG’s (2018f) *2018 Accountability Plan Florida State University*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 33,091 students enrolled in traditional (face-to-face) courses; 3 students enrolled in

hybrid courses; and 6,497 students enrolled in distance courses. While the institution did not report the number of distance and hybrid courses available, 16% of undergraduates were enrolled in online courses in the 2017-2018 academic year. As of 2013, FSU is designated as a preeminent university in Florida by the state legislature (Kumar, 2013). The university employed 1,806 full-time faculty and 491 part-time faculty. The student ethnicity make-up includes 62% White, 17% Hispanic, 8% Black, and 13% other (FLBOG, 2017e). The institution leaders balance its undergraduate instruction between art, sciences, and the professions. The graduate instruction is research focused, receiving a “highest research activity” in its 2015 Carnegie Classification. The institution also maintains medical and veterinary doctoral programs (FLBOG, 2017e).

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs FSU. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association (FSU, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution’s mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. A faculty senate is also maintained by the university. According to the Faculty Senate page of the FSU website, the senate serves as the “basic legislative body of the University” and determines University-wide academic policies (FSU, n.d., para. 1). Finally, FSU’s administration maintains a student government which provides the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university.



### Florida Polytechnic University

Florida Polytechnic University, established in 2013, is located in Lakeland, Florida. In the fall of 2017, 1,458 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018h). For the 2017-2018 academic year, FPU's annual budget was \$ 54,952,708 (FLBOG, 2018a). As of the 2016-2017 academic year, Florida Polytechnic University did not offer distance education or hybrid courses. According to the FLBOG's (2018h) *Accountability Plan Florida Polytechnic University*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 1,458 students enrolled in traditional courses; zero students enrolled in hybrid courses; and zero students enrolled in distance courses. The institution's leadership proposed that 1% of the undergraduate FTE would be enrolled in online courses by the 2019-2020 academic year. The university leaders employ 171 full-time faculty and 41 part-time faculty (FLBOG, 2017f). Being a new institution, the university leaders did not report demographic or Carnegie Classification information in the *2015-26 Annual Accountability Report* (FLBOG, 2017h).

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs FPU. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Assembly and the Student Government Association (FPU, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution's mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. A faculty assembly is also maintained by the university. According to the Faculty Assembly page of the FPU website, the assembly's purpose is to ensure shared governance between the faculty and

the university's administration with oversight on the academic standards, curriculum, faculty hiring, research, and the university's academic mission (FPU, n.d.). Finally, FPU's administration maintains a student government which provided the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university.

#### New College of Florida

New College of Florida is a “four-year, very small, highly residential” (FLBOG, 2017g, p. 2) university located in Sarasota, Florida. The institution was founded as a private college in 1960 (New College, nd). In 2001, New College entered into the Florida State University System. In the fall of 2017, New College counted 952 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018h). For the 2017-2018 academic year, New College's annual budget was \$ 50,719,262 (FLBOG, 2018a). As of the 2016-2017, New College of Florida does not offer distance education or hybrid courses. According to the FLBOG's (2018h) *Accountability Plan New College of Florida*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 963 students enrolled in traditional courses; zero students enrolled in hybrid courses; and zero students enrolled in distance courses (FLBOG, 2017g). However, the university plans to begin offering distance education courses. The institution's leadership projected 54 students to be enrolled in a distanced education course in 2020-2021 academic year (FLBOG, 2018h).

The university leaders employ 79 full-time faculty and 20 part-time faculty. The student ethnicities are comprised of 69% White, 16% Hispanic, 3% Black, and 11%

other. New College of Florida is entirely arts and science focused and offer no graduate level instruction (FLBOG, 2017g).

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs NCF. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the chair of the faculty and the Student Government Association President (NCF, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution's mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. Multiple faculty and administration lead committees are also maintained within the institution. According to the faculty handbook for New College of Florida, the Educational Policy Committee is the governance body which is responsible for the consideration and recommendation of academic policy and programs to the faculty (NCF, n.d.). The Educational Policy Committee also serves as forum for students and faculty to discuss curriculum, policy, and personnel within an academic program. Finally, NCF's administration maintains a student government which provides the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university.

### University of Florida

The University of Florida (UF), founded in 1853, is located in Gainesville, Florida (FLBOG, n.d.). In the fall of 2017, 55,862 students enrolled in the university (FLBOG, 2018k). For the 2017-2018 academic year, UF's annual budget was \$3,220,372,862 (FLBOG, 2018a). The University of Florida launched its first online

course in 1998 (UF, n.d.). According to the FLBOG's (2018k) *Accountability Plan University of Florida*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 33,502 students enrolled in traditional courses; 727 students enrolled in hybrid courses; and 15,583 students enrolled in distance courses. Thirty-two percent of undergraduate FTE were reported to be enrolled in online courses (FLBOG, 2018k). As of 2013, UF is designated as a preeminent university in Florida by the state legislature (Kumar, 2013). The students are comprised of 54% White, 17% Hispanic, 6% Black, and 22% other. The undergraduate instruction is balanced with art, sciences, and professions. The graduate instruction is research focused, receiving a "highest research activity" in its 2015 Carnegie Classification. The University of Florida offers both a medical and veterinary program (FLBOG, 2017j).

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs UF. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association (UF, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution's mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. A faculty senate is also maintained within the university. According to the Faculty Senate bylaws, the senate is the governance body which provides oversight on all academic policies which concern more than one college or the general interest of the institution (UF, n.d.). Finally, UF's administration maintains a student government which provides the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university.

## University of Central Florida

The University of Central Florida, established in 1963, is located in Orlando, Florida. In the fall of 2017, 66,180 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018j). For the 2017-2018 academic year, UCF's annual budget was \$1,723,375,048 (FLBOG, 2018a). Since 1996, the University of Central Florida has offered online distance and hybrid education (Lowe & Calandrino, 2017). According to the FLBOG's (2018j) *Accountability Plan University of Central Florida*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 31,396 students enrolled in traditional courses; 5,267 students enrolled in hybrid courses; and 17,629 students enrolled in distance courses. In the 2017-2018 academic year, 33% undergraduate FTE were enrolled in online courses. The university leaders employ 1,626 full-time faculty and 46 part-time faculty (FLBOG, 2017i). The University of Central Florida is an emerging Hispanic serving institution. The students are comprised of 53% White, 23% Hispanic, 11% Black, and 14% other. The undergraduate instruction is focused on profession and included arts and sciences. The graduate instruction is research focused, receiving a "highest research activity" in its 2015 Carnegie Classification. The institution also offered a medical doctoral program (FLBOG, 2017i).

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs UCF. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association (UCF, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution's mission, establishment of

education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. A faculty senate is also maintained by the university. According to the Faculty Senate page of the UCF website, the senate is the legislative body of the institution (UCF, n.d.). UCF's faculty senate functions include reviewing and approving policies, new courses, course changes, new programs and program changes. Additionally, UCF's administration maintains a student government which provides the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university. The student handbook, *The Golden Rule*, is governed by the *Golden Rule Review Committee* which is charged with making recommendation for the book's updates (UCF, n.d.). This committee is comprised of seven student members. There is an application process for students interested in serving on the committee. Approved applicants are appointed to the position by the Student Body President and the Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Services. All current students, faculty, staff, and administration may submit a proposal change that the committee must review.

#### University of North Florida

The University of North Florida is a "four-year, large, primarily nonresidential" (FLBOG, 2017k, p. 2) university located in Jacksonville, Florida. UNF was founded in 1969 (FLBOG, n.d.). In the fall of 2017, 16,525 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018l). For the 2017-2018 academic year, UNF's annual budget was \$283,851,287 (FLBOG, 2018a). As of the 2005-2006 academic year, UNF offers distanced and hybrid education courses (FBLOG, 2013b). According to the FLBOG's

(2018) *Accountability Plan University of North Florida*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 10,706 students enrolled in traditional courses; 400 students enrolled in hybrid courses; and 2,665 students enrolled in distance courses. In the 2017-2018 academic year, 19% of the undergraduate FTE were enrolled in online courses. The university leaders employ 490 full-time faculty and 20 part-time faculty. The University of North Florida's students are comprised of 68% White, 10% Hispanic, 10% Black, and 13% other ethnicities. The undergraduate programs are balanced between arts, sciences, and professions. The university currently has a single doctoral program: education (FLBOG, 2017k).

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs UNF. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Association and the Student Government Association (UNF, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution's mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. A Faculty Association is also maintained by the university's faculty. According to the Faculty Association, the association is a "collegial governance which provides faculty with mechanism and procedures... for the development and implementation of recommendation in areas of traditional faculty concern" (UNF, 2014, Article III Section 4, para. 1). Finally, UNF's administration maintains a student government which provides the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university.

## University of South Florida

As of 2019, the University of South Florida is a system of three separately accredited institutions located in Tampa, Sarasota, and St. Petersburg, Florida. USF was established in 1956 (FLBOG, n.d.). In the fall of 2017, 50,784 students enrolled within the USF system (FLBOG, 2018m). For the 2017-2018 academic year, USF's annual budget was \$ 1,793,556,540 (FLBOG, 2018a). USF began offering distanced and hybrid education courses in 1996 (Levy, 2011). According to the FLBOG's (2018m) *Accountability Plan University of South Florida*, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 30,209 students enrolled in traditional courses; 306 students enrolled in hybrid courses; and 12,416 students enrolled in distance courses. In the 2017-2018 academic year, 29% of the undergraduate FTE were enrolled in online courses. The university leaders employ 1,626 full-time faculty and 46 part-time faculty (FLBOG, 2017l). The student body is comprised of 53% White, 18% Hispanic, 10% Black, and 20% other ethnicities.

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs USF. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the President of the USF System Faculty Council and the USF System Student Advisory Council (USF, n.d.). The Board of Trustees were responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution's mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. In addition to the Board of Trustees, the 2002 Florida legislature required the institution to implement a Campus Board to oversee both USF St. Petersburg and USF Sarasota-



Manatee (Fla. Stat. § 1004.33, 2002). Each member of the Campus Boards is appointed by the Board of Trustees.

A faculty senate is established at each campus within the University of South Florida system. The Faculty Senates' responsibilities include reviewing and recommending decisions that pertain to the mission of the university with specific focus on issues pertaining to the academic mission. The three faculty senates are united through the system's singular Faculty Council. Council members are faculty representatives from each of the system's campuses whom are elected to sit on the faculty council. According to the Faculty Council page of the USF website, the Council:

“serves as a mechanism to discuss issues of importance to faculty across the three USF System institutions and to provide specific recommendations to the administration proposals for new System-wide policies and procedures or changes to existing ones” (USF, n.d., para.1).

Finally, USF's administration maintains a student government at each of the system's campuses which provides the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university (USF, n.d.; USFSP, n.d.; Orgsync, n.d.).

#### University of West Florida

The University of West Florida, established in 1967, is a “four-year, medium, primarily nonresidential” (FLBOG, 2017m, p. 2) university located in Pensacola, Florida. In the fall of 2017, 13,033 students enrolled at the institution (FLBOG, 2018n). For the 2017-2018 academic year, UWF's annual budget was \$ 314,696,366 (FLBOG, 2018a). As of 2002, UWF offers distanced and hybrid education courses (Shaer, Khabou, &

Fuchs, 2009). According to the FLBOG's (2018n) Accountability Plan University of West Florida, full-time equivalent enrollment for the university included 5,794 students enrolled in traditional courses; 267 students enrolled in hybrid courses; and 4,304 students enrolled in distance courses. In the 2017-2018 academic year, 33% of the undergraduate FTE were enrolled in online courses. The university leaders employed 351 full-time faculty and zero part-time faculty. The ethnicities within the student body included 65% White, 9% Hispanic, 12% Black, and 14% other. The undergraduate programs balance arts and sciences. The University of West Florida had a single doctoral program: education.

A board of trustees, which consists of 13 members, governs UWF. The governor of Florida appoints six of the trustees. Five trustees are designated by the Board of Governors. The final two seats belong to the President of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association (UWF, n.d.). The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing policy decisions that affect the institution's mission, establishment of education programs, performance measurement, and reporting. Both Faculty and Staff Senates were established by university personnel. Both senates are recognized equally by university leadership to review policies and rules (UWF, n.d.). Additionally, the Faculty Senate participates in new program approval at the institution (UWF, 2016). Finally, UWF maintains a student government which provided the student body with representation in policy decisions enacted by the university.

### Data Collection

The researcher gathered policy documents from each of the Florida public universities, which may reference cyberbullying. These documents gathered specifically included, but were not limited to, student codes of conduct, faculty handbooks, and university policy and regulation documents. These documents provided the researcher with the official language and stance that each public university in the state of Florida uses when providing guidance on understanding, recognizing, and handling cyberbullying. Table 1 provided a sample of the data collected to organize and track each policy.

Table 1.  
*Sample of Data Collection Matrix*

University	Name of Document	Stakeholder	Type of Policy	URL
University of Central Florida	4-002.2 Use of Information Technologies and Resources	Students, Faculty	Technology	<a href="http://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-002.2UseOfInformationTechnologiesAndResources.pdf">http://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-002.2UseOfInformationTechnologiesAndResources.pdf</a>
University of Central Florida	2-004.1 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence	Students, Faculty	Academic	<a href="http://policies.ucf.edu/documents/2-004.1ProhibitionOfDiscriminationHarassmentAndRelatedInterpersonalViolence.pdf">http://policies.ucf.edu/documents/2-004.1ProhibitionOfDiscriminationHarassmentAndRelatedInterpersonalViolence.pdf</a>
University of Central Florida	The Golden Rule - UCF-5.008 Rules of Conduct	Students	Code of Conduct	<a href="http://policies.ucf.edu/documents/2-004.1ProhibitionOfDiscriminationHarassmentAndRelatedInterpersonalViolence.pdf">http://policies.ucf.edu/documents/2-004.1ProhibitionOfDiscriminationHarassmentAndRelatedInterpersonalViolence.pdf</a>

### Data Analysis

This section discusses the procedure the researcher used to analyze the data set. The procedure followed the document analysis steps outlined by Bowen (2009): (1) document gathering, (2) superficial review of data, (3) thorough review of data, and (4) interpretation. Bowen (2009) explained that the superficial review of data entails the researcher identifying meaningful and relevant passages within the texts. The passages

retrieved from the text by the researcher are then separated from the non-relevant information (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). During this phase, the researcher should determine if the documents are relevant to the research being conducted. Bowen (2009) suggested that the researcher also determine if the documents fit the conceptual framework. After the superficial review of data, the researcher is to carefully re-examine the data and begin sorting the data by applying codes “based on the data’s characteristics” (Bowen, 2009, p.32). Using the codes as a guide, the researcher evaluates and interprets the data.

After downloading and catalog the policies, regulations, and codes of conduct to be analyzed, each document was thoroughly read. Using the state of Florida’s definition of cyberbullying as a guide, the researcher identified significant passage that met the criteria of cyberbullying. To do this, the current study used a coding instrument adapted from Smith, Smith, Osborn, and Samara’s (2008) analysis of anti-bullying policies which identified bullying behavior by keywords (i.e. harassment, bullying, sexual harassment). The researcher modified Smith et al.’s coding scheme for use with electronic bullying behavior, including, but not limited to, keywords such as “electronic”, “email”, “online”, and “network”. Appendix A exhibits the coding instrument used in this research study. Table 2 and Table 3 illustrates the alignment of each research question with the questions within the coding instrument.

Table 2.  
*Aligning Target Data with Code Data*

Number	Code Question	Research Question
A	Policies	
1	Institution	RQ 1, RQ 1a, RQ2, RQ 2a
2	Policy Name	RQ 1, RQ 1a, RQ2, RQ 2a
3	Policy Location	
4	Policy Stakeholder/ Type	
5	Have a definition of cyberbullying?	RQ 1, RQ2
6	What is the definition of cyberbullying?	RQ 1, RQ 2
7	Does the definition make it clear that cyberbullying is different from other kinds of aggressive behavior?	RQ 1, RQ 2
8	Explicit: Does the definition use the term cyberbullying or cyber-harassment? If so, which term is used?	RQ 1, RQ2
9	Implicit: Does the definition exclude the term cyberbullying or cyber-harassment, but include terms such as harassment, computer, network, technology, online, or internet?	RQ 1, RQ 2
10	What terms are used?	RQ 1, RQ2
11	Does the policy provide a reporting structure? If so, how?	RQ2
12	Does the policy provide a response guideline? If so, how?	RQ2
B	Teaching Presence Elements	
13	Does the policy recommend placement within a course syllabus? If so, where?	RQ 1a, RQ 2a
14	Is there a proposed time or numerical interaction limit on harassment? I.e., first offense is a warning. If so, what?	RQ 1a, RQ 2a
15	Does the policy provide guidelines on how institutional technology should be used? If so, how?	RQ 1a, RQ 2a
16	Does the policy provide guidelines on how a student should act in class? If so, what is described?	RQ 1a, RQ 2a

Table 3.  
*Research and Coding Question Matrix*

Research Questions	Coding Question
RQ1	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
RQ1a	13, 14, 15, 16
RQ2	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
RQ2a	13, 14, 15, 16

After each reference to cyberbullying within the document has been identified, the documents were re-analyzed and coded. The advantage of using a content or document analysis when reviewing documents is the ability to capture quasi-quantitative data along with the qualitative data (Thomas, 2003). Quasi-quantitative data provided descriptive statistics to describe the data being analyzed, such as illustrating the number of times a term or theme has occurred.

Research Question 1 asked: Do different Florida state public universities address cyberbullying in their policies and codes of conduct? If so, how? In not, why not? To answer this question, the researcher recorded the different definitions of bullying or cyberbullying from each public university in the state of Florida. In instances that bullying or cyberbullying is not mentioned by name, the researcher recorded the approximate definition based on the qualities of cyberbullying defined in the literature review. These qualities include the transmission of a communication with the intent to harm through an electronic medium or technology. This process provided the researcher with a yes or no answer.

The definition recorded also provided the answer to the second part of Research Question 1, which asked how the universities being investigated address cyberbullying in

policies and codes of conduct. The researcher recorded if the definition has clearly delineated cyberbullying from other types of aggressive behavior. The researcher captured keywords and key-phrases used in the definitions. The expected keywords and key-phrases included technology, transmission of communication, harmful intent, disruption of instruction, and disruption of school activities. The expected themes for this question included an explicit cyberbullying definition, a bullying definition and implicitly mentions using technology, or does not address cyberbullying at all. To answer why not, the researcher reviewed all definitions of bullying within each of the respective institutions policies and codes of conduct for cyberbullying qualities. An expected theme included cyberbullying inferred within a broader bullying category (Horowitz & Bollinger, 2014).

Research Question 1a asked: If policies or codes of conduct that directly or indirectly govern cyberbullying exist at different Florida state public universities, do the policies provide support to the teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not? To answer this question, the researcher identified attributes within the policies that align with four dimensions from the teaching presence that correspond with supporting the design and organization of an online course. Table 4 shows these dimensions and their alignment with the proposed coding questions. Where the policies did not contain data that meet the teaching presence criteria outlined in table 4, the researcher documented the missing criteria to support the “why not” answer.



Table 4.  
*Teaching Presence and Coding Questions*

Teaching Presence Element	Coding Question
Set Curriculum	Does the policy recommend placement within a course syllabus?
Time-proposal	Is there a proposed time or numerical interaction limit on harassment (i.e., first offense is a warning)?
Using medium effectively	Does the policy provide guidelines on how institutional technology should be used?
Establish Netiquette	Does the policy provide guidelines on how a student should act in class?

Research Question 2 asked: Do policies or codes of conduct at Florida state public universities provide guidelines for instructor response to or methods of reporting cyberbullying? If so, how? If not, why not? First, the researcher identified policies or codes of conduct that provide either a response mechanism or reporting method for harassment or bullying. Where a policy provided a specific response to harassment or bullying from faculty or students, the researcher identified suggested responses with the code “instructor response” or “student response” and record the response method. Where the policy provided guidelines for reporting harassment or bullying behavior, the researcher coded “instructor reporting” or “student reporting” and record the reporting method. Using Research Question 1 as a guide, the researcher identified where the guidelines included cyberbullying within their definition.

Research question 2a asked: If guidelines for instructor response or methods of reporting harassment or bullying exist within policies at Florida state public universities, do the guidelines support the teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not? To answer this question, the researcher identified attributes within the policies that align with four

dimensions from the teaching presence that correspond with supporting the design and organization of an online course. If the policies do not contain data that meet the teaching presence criteria outlined in table 4, the researcher documented the missing criteria to support the “why not” answer.

#### Inter-coder Process

At the end of the Spring 2019 semester, the researcher identified an additional researcher who agreed to conduct the inter-coder reliability analysis. The additional researcher was identified through her role as an experienced auditor employed by a public utilities laboratory which is operated by the county government located in a large southeastern metropolitan area. As a quality assurance chemist, the additional researcher’s responsibilities include reviewing the accuracy of qualitative and quantitative analyses performed by the laboratory staff, as well as auditing over 50 methods to ensure laboratory scientist complied with state and federal regulation. In addition to the methodology auditing experience, the research associate offered an unbiased perspective to the analysis. Bowen (2009) noted that the biased selection and interpretation of documents is a potential flaw of document analysis. As such, engaging a researcher from another discipline helped to limit bias.

The additional researcher was provided with copies of policies from each institution and an excel workbook for each institution. The excel workbooks contained the coding instrument (Appendix A) pre-set for each policy. Additionally, the additional researcher was provided the state of Florida definition of cyberbullying. The researcher

then gave step-by-step instructions to the research colleague on the coding process and using the coding instrument using three policies as examples: one with an explicit definition of cyberbullying, one with an implicit definition, and one with no definition.

Prior to conducting the research, the researcher identified an assumption that policies and regulation were equal and easily recognizable to an individual knowledgeable about higher education. The researcher mitigated this assumption by downloading all policies and regulation that may influence the academic process. The researcher also requested that his research associate to audit each institution site against the downloaded policies in an attempt to identify policies related to the study that the researcher may have missed.

After reconciliation with his researcher associate, the researcher identified a number of documents which made no reference to cyberbullying nor impacted interpersonal conduct. Those included: (1) academic misconduct policies, which were associated with honesty and cheating; (2) disruptive behavior/employee codes of conduct, which were associated with non-faculty employee behavior; and (3) some student grievance policies, which outlined conflict resolution between the student and university departments.

Each researcher spent approximately three weeks independently reviewing and coding the documents. At about the week and a half point, the researcher contacted the colleague to answer any questions. The researcher and his colleague came together at the beginning of the summer semester to reconcile their codes.

When analyzing for cyberbullying definitions, eight codes were identified between the coders. Those eight codes were then reconciled into four themes. Table 5 shows the identified codes and their thematic categories.

Table 5.  
*Codes and Themes of Cyberbullying Definitions*

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Broad - Defines Guidelines	Broad Strokes - No Definition
Broad	
Lofty	
Broad Blanket Terms	
Implicit	Implied
Implied	
Explicit	Explicit
Redirection	Redirection
None	
Not Available	

Cohen's Kappa was run to determine inter-coder reliability between the four themes. There was excellent agreement between the coders,  $\kappa=.878$  ( $p < .005$ ).

In measuring faculty reporting, four codes were identified and then re-coded into binary answers. The decision to recode to binary answers was made because Research Question 2 asked if faculty reporting appeared in the documents. Table 6 displays the identified codes and related binary answers.

Table 6.  
*Reporting Codes*

<b>Reporting Code</b>	<b>Binary Answer</b>
Formal Complaint	Yes
Student and Faculty Reporting	
Student Reporting	No
No Reporting	
Not Applicable	

Cohen’s Kappa was run to determine inter-coder reliability between the binary answers. There was excellent agreement between the coders,  $\kappa=.86$  ( $p < .005$ ).

In measuring faculty response, four codes were identified and then re-coded into binary answers. The decision to recode to binary answers was made because Research Question 2 asked if faculty responses appeared in the documents. Table 7 displays the identified codes and related binary answers.

Table 7.  
*Response Codes*

<b>Response Code</b>	<b>Binary Answer</b>
Faculty Response	Yes
Student Response	No
IT Response	
University Response	

Cohen’s Kappa was run to determine inter-coder reliability between the binary answers. There was excellent agreement between the coders,  $\kappa=.905$  ( $p < .005$ ).

Finally, the coders identified four themes when analyzing the documents for teaching presence. Those themes were matched to appropriate teaching presence elements. Table 8 illustrates teaching presence elements matched to the identified themes.

Table 8.  
*Teaching Presence Elements and Matching Themes*

<b>Teaching Presence Element</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Setting Curriculum	Inclusion in Syllabus
Effective Use of Medium	Technology Responsibility
Netiquette	Conduct Expectations
Time-proposal	Numerical Limit

Cohen's Kappa was run to determine inter-coder reliability on the identified themes within the analyzed documents. There was moderate agreement between the coders,  $\kappa=.786$  ( $p < .005$ ).

Both researchers had a question about the implicit nature of teaching presence within the sexual harassment and non-discrimination policies. Both researchers questioned if these policies inherently described acceptable conduct within an online classroom. Initially, the researcher and his colleague had indicated that teaching presence was not found in either policies at any institution. However, after discussing the jurisdiction and language within the policies, both researchers agreed that the policies described acceptable behavior in all academic setting. As such, the results include sexual harassment and anti-discrimination policies as having at least one element of teaching presence. The elements and the corresponding themes will be discussed in Chapter Four.

### Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

All research studies suffer from some limitations. Maxwell (2016) explained that researcher bias is a risk in qualitative research. The researcher may not acknowledge the prejudice and experiential knowledge that he incorporates into the study. Without specifically recalling possible biases and knowledge, the researcher risks impacting the trustworthiness of the study. Previously in this chapter, the researcher discussed how his experience impacts the phenomenon under investigation. Additionally, he kept both reflective and research journals to document reflection and process.

Patton (2002) acknowledged lack of training on behalf of the researcher or coders as a limitation of qualitative research. Researchers and evaluators without proper training or preparation may exhibit anxiety that may influence the outcome of the research. The current study used a coder that is unfamiliar with the research subject or the coding guidelines outlined. The researcher provided the coder with instruction and practice before undertaking the analysis to help mitigate this limitation.

Document analysis is limited by the data that may be obtained from the artifacts (Merriam, 2009). The documents gathered to be analyzed may not have been created for the purposes of research and may be incomplete (Merriam, 2009). The researcher relied on the data present within the documents analyzed to complete this study.

Delimitations of a study are limitations that arise in defining the scope of the study or have been purposefully excluded (Simon, 2011). A delimitation of the design of this study is that the policies and procedures implemented by instructors of online courses are not investigated. The goal of this study is to examine policies and codes of conduct by

addressing cyberbullying, as these are presented within the state of Florida. However, the instructors that teach online or mix-mode courses at these institutions may also have individual policies and practices to address abusive behavior. This study cannot capture that information.

### Summary

This chapter included the research method for this study. A historical research study employing document analysis of policies and codes of conduct was performed. The researcher examined policies and codes of conduct from the 12 public universities in the Florida state college and state university systems. These policies and codes of conduct were analyzed using a content analysis. Frequencies for the definition of cyberbullying or cyber-harassment, the inclusion of a reporting clause, and the recommendations for addressing cyberbullying incidents were collected. Additionally, the researcher and a second, independent coder collected each definition of cyberbullying or cyber-harassment used within the policies or codes of conduct, as well as a description of the recommendation for addressing cyberbullying incidents in online courses. The definitions of cyberbullying from each institution in the study were then divided into themes, as were each of the recommendations.



## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter four discusses the findings and analysis of the current research study. The chapter is organized by discussing the themes identified, the results for Research Question 1, the results for Research Question 2, and the results for Research Questions 1a and 2a. Research questions 1a and 2a were discussed together to reduce the redundancy of their findings.

### Themes

Before discussing the findings, this section describes the major themes that emerged from this study. The discussion of themes is divided into three sections: definitions, reporting, and teaching presence.

#### Definition Themes

**Explicit Definition.** Explicit Definition was a theme found in the Faculty Handbook and Sexual Harassment Policy from the University of North Florida. Though the theme only appears in two documents, it represents cyberbullying as a term that can be included within policies. In these documents, the precise definition included the term cyberbullying as part of the definition of harassment. As such, cyberbullying is not viewed as being different from other types of harassing or aggressive behavior. Instead, it is a child or subdimension of the harassment category.

**Implied Definition.** The Implied Definition was the most prominent theme. Instead of explicitly using the term cyberbullying, the authors of the policies relied on

contextual modifiers such as, “email” or “electronic communication” to add a digital scope to the definition of harassment. Included within the implied definition are references to cyberstalking, which many of the institutions defined as the repeated harassment of an individual through a digital medium (e.g., social media or email).

**Redirection.** Redirection is the second most prominent theme. The theme describes policies that rely on other policies to define the scope and merit or harassing behavior. In these policies, rather than redefining the terms, the authors refer to existing policies that have behaviors defined. As such, the redirected policy acts as a modifier to the original behavioral definition. For example, the Acceptable Use of Technology Resources policy from Florida Atlantic University states:

Laws and regulations: All users are responsible for adhering to all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations and all University regulations and policies, specifically including without limitation the University’s sexual harassment regulations and policies, those pertaining to the privacy of student records (FERPA), and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA).

In this case, the Acceptable Use of Technology Resources policy is expected to augment all FAU regulations and policies by adding technology resources to their existing definitions.

Redirection also supported the concept of teaching presence by connecting seemingly unrelated policies. Where policies may have been weak on their own, the connection forged between each policy by redirection has the opportunity to strengthen the instructor's use of these resources in setting expectations for behavior in their online course.

**Broad Harassment – No Definition.** Broad Harassment – No Definition describes policies that define harassment and aggressive behaviors, but make no reference to an electronic medium, use no contextual modifiers, nor implement redirections to other policies. In using Broad Harassment – No Definition, the policy makers use encompassing phrases such as, "of any kind." While policies that do fall into this category do not redirect, other policies may redirect to the Broad Harassment policy. Through this process, the Broad Harassment policy's applicability is augmented to include the redirected policy's scope. This concept is illustrated in figure 6.

#### Reporting Themes

**Comprehensive reporting details.** Comprehensive reporting details describes reporting protocols found within policies, regulations, or codes of conduct that contained complete details on the conduct reporting process. Documents that were found to have complete reporting details typically included: the report intake process, details required on the report, report intake medium (e.g., written, online, verbal), who could report, and time limit for reporting.

**Limited reporting details.** Limited reporting details describes reporting protocols found within policies, regulations, or codes of conduct that contained partial details on the conduct reporting process. Documents that were found to have limited reporting details did not entirely describe the reporting process and required detail or redirected readers to other policies or regulations.

## Teaching Presence Themes

**Inclusion in syllabus.** Inclusion in syllabus describes the university's encouragement to include references to harassment and conduct policies within a course's syllabus. Including references to these policies are rarely required by the institutions.

**Numerical limit.** The numerical limit theme refers to the number of occurrences a behavior can occur before action can be taken. The numerical limit ranges between zero tolerance to a structured course of action for each behavioral incident.

**Technology responsibility.** The technology responsibility theme describes the institution's expectation of all users to ethical, legal, and civil use of institutional technology resources. These technologies include institutionally owned or managed systems, software, and networks. In many instances, the institutions provide examples on how not to use their technology resources and offer guidance as to which university, state, and/or federal policies users should adhere.

**Conduct Expectations.** Conduct Expectations describes the philosophical and operational behavioral expectation for university stakeholders. Policies with conduct expectations typically describe acceptable and unacceptable behavioral patterns as well. Conduct Expectations may also include essential processes and outcomes for unacceptable behavior.

Table 5 illustrates the alignment of teaching presence themes to the conceptual framework elements.

Table 9.  
*Teaching Presence Themes Aligned to Conceptual Framework*

Teaching Presence Element	Teaching Presence Theme
Set Curriculum	Inclusion in syllabus
Time-proposal	Numerical Limit
Using medium effectively	Technology Responsibility
Establish Netiquette	Conduct Expectations

### Research Question 1 – Defining Cyberbullying

Table 10 illustrates the frequency each definition theme appeared at each of the universities in the state of Florida. Research question 1 focused on establishing if each public university in the state of Florida defined cyberbullying in their existing policies, regulations, faculty handbooks, and codes of conduct. Only one institution, University of North Florida, explicitly used the term cyberbullying within the documents. While each university may not have used the term "cyberbullying" explicitly, all have made reference to types of harassing conduct expressed across different digital mediums to varying degrees. In keeping with rich, thick descriptions, this section pulls direct quotes in their entirety from their sources as to provide the full impact and nuances of each definition.

Table 10.  
*Frequency of Themes at Each Florida Public University*

<b>University</b>	<b>Explicit</b>	<b>Implied</b>	<b>Redirection</b>	<b>Broad Harassment - No Definition</b>
FAU		1	3	1
FGCU		5		1
FIU		1	1	4
Florida A&M		3	1	
FPU		2	3	4
FSU		5	1	
New College		2	2	1
UCF		4	1	2
UF		2	7	3
UNF	2	2		2
USF		2	2	3
UWF		2	3	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>

#### Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University

Twelve documents from Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, four contained references to bullying behaviors. FAMU policymakers produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in three of the four documents. Those documents include 5.003 Electronic Connectivity, 10.103 Non-Discrimination Policy, and Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedures, and 2.012 Student Code of Conduct.

The 5.003 Electronic Connectivity policy states that electronic connectivity users may not:

Defame, abuse, harass, stalk, threaten, discriminate, or otherwise violate federal or state laws, or Board of Governors and University regulations, policies, and procedures;

Additionally, electronic connectivity is defined in 5.003 Electronic Connectivity as being:

Any connection to a Florida A&M University (“University”) computer, network, e-mail system, data management system, or similar.

The Student Code of Conduct provides detailed definitions and examples of unacceptable behavior. Behavior identified as matching cyberbullying includes the term electronic communication within its definition of harassment.

Harassment: Verbal or written abuse (including electronic communications or internet activity), threats, intimidation, coercion and/or other conduct that endangers the health, safety, or welfare of others, or places another individual in reasonable fear of physical harm or creates a hostile environment in which others are unable to reasonably conduct or participate in work, education, research, living or other activities. Harassment also includes actions defined in Regulation 10.103.

Additionally, the Student Code of Conduct augments the definition of harassment by including examples of "misuse of computer facilities, wireless system, network, data, and resources":

5. Use of a computer or computer system in the commission of a crime to violate or facilitate the violation of laws, Board of Governors or University rules, regulations or policies;
8. Use of computing facilities and resources to send obscene or defamatory messages or material;

Finally, the definition of stalking within the Student Code of Conduct also references electronic communication:

Stalking:

1. Repeated following, contacting, harassing, threatening, or intimidating another by telephone, mail, electronic communication, social media, or any other action, device, or method that places a person in reasonable fear for his/her physical or emotional welfare; or

2. Behavior that is intentional and repeated, or meant to be done in humor or in jest, that results in the intimidation, injury or distress of another individual physically, mentally, or socially. The behavior may be physical, written, visual, electronic, or verbal.

The Faculty Handbook did not include any definition of cyberbullying behavior.

Instead, the authors chose to redirect the reader to the existing policies on discrimination and harassment:

The University protects and safeguards the rights and opportunities of faculty members to work in an environment free from any form of discrimination or harassment and recognizes its obligations under federal and State laws, rules, and regulations prohibiting discrimination/ or harassment.

#### Florida Atlantic University

Ten documents from Florida Atlantic University were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, four contained references to bullying behaviors. FAU produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in one of the four documents. FAU's student code of conduct included the following statement as a violation of the Code of Conduct:

Acts of verbal, written (including electronic communications or internet activity) or physical abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion, or other conduct, the foregoing of which threaten the health, safety or welfare of any person.

The Code of Conduct separately included the definition of bullying as a violation, as stated:



Bullying: means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve: teasing; social exclusion; threat; intimidation; stalking; physical violence; theft; sexual, religious or racial harassment; public humiliation or destruction of property.

Both passages describe the act of harassment as being a violation of the Code of Conduct, with 'Bullying' including the modifiers 'systematically' and 'chronically.' As such, it is implied that cyberbullying – the systematic harassment of an individual or individuals through electronic communications – is a violation of the Code of Conduct.

The Acceptable Use of Technology Resources, the Faculty Handbook, and Privacy of Electronic Communication redirected to other policies, laws, and regulations. The Acceptable Use of Technology Resources policy was immediately connected to all university policies and regulations, as well as federal, state, and local laws. This redirection provides the authors of the policies the opportunity to augment the authority of previously defined and published regulations, policies, and laws by defining the technology component:

Laws and regulations: All users are responsible for adhering to all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations and all University regulations and policies, specifically including without limitation the University's sexual harassment regulations and policies, those pertaining to the privacy of student records (FERPA), and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA).

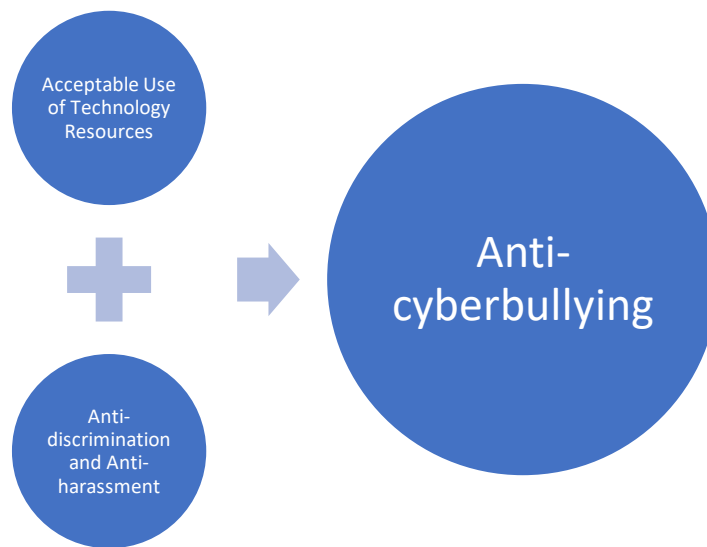
Additionally, the authors of the Acceptable Use of Technology Resources policy linked the document to employee and student conduct through:

Additional guidance concerning general employee and student conduct can be found in Regulation 4.007 (Student Code of Conduct), the Employee Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, and University Policy 1.9 (Fraud).

The Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment policy used broad harassment definition as if the authors hoped to capture all harassing activities by using blanketing terms:

Verbal and/or physical conduct based on a protected characteristic that: (A) has the purpose or effect of creating an objectively intimidating, hostile or offensive work or educational environment; (B) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or learning performance; or (C) otherwise unreasonably adversely affects an individual's employment or educational opportunities.

The Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment policy, however, works in conjunction with Acceptable Use of Technology Resources through the aforementioned policy's redirection. Figure 6 shows this interaction.



*Figure 6.* Interaction of a Redirected policy with a Broad Harassment policy to form anti-cyberbullying language. Developed by this author.

Florida Gulf Coast University

Ten documents from Florida Gulf Coast University were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, five contained

references to bullying behaviors. FGCU policymakers produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in five of the five documents. Those documents include the Faculty Handbook, Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure, Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct policy, Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct regulation, Sexual Misconduct policy, and the Student Code of Conduct. Each document used the term ‘electronic communication’ as a modifier for harassing conduct:

Harassment: Unwelcome conduct, including electronic and written communication, that is based upon race, color, religion, age, disability, sex, national origin, marital status, genetic predisposition, sexual orientation, gender identity/gender expression, and/or veteran status. Harassment is further defined as behavior so severe, pervasive, or persistent that it limits a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program, undermines the responsibilities of the employee, and/or creates a hostile working or learning environment.

The Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct policy separately defined stalking, but included electronic harassing behavior:

Stalking: The repeated following, harassing, threatening, or intimidating of another by any action, including but not limited to use of telephone, mail, electronic communication, social media, or any other device or method that purposely or knowingly causes substantial emotional distress or reasonable fear of bodily injury or death.

In addition to implicitly defining cyberbullying, the Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure forged a connection to Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct policy through redirection.

## Florida International University

Ten documents from Florida International University were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, seven contained references to bullying behaviors. Those seven documents were: Student Code of Conduct, Faculty Handbook, Nondiscrimination, Harassment and Retaliation, Graduate Student Academic Grievance Guidelines and Procedure, Undergraduate Student Academic Grievance Guidelines and Procedure, and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX).

FIU policymakers produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in one of the six documents, the Sexual Misconduct regulation, which states:

***Harassment*** - is a type of conduct that occurs when verbal, physical, electronic, or other conduct based on an individual's protected status interferes with that individual's (a) educational environment (e.g., admission, academic standing, grades, assignment); (b) work environment (e.g., hiring, advancement, assignment); (c) participation in a University program or activity (e.g., campus housing); and/or (d) receipt of legitimately requested services (e.g., disability or religious accommodations), thereby creating hostile environment harassment or quid pro quo harassment.

The undergraduate and graduate student grievances policies provided broad harassment definitions when providing students guidance on submitting formal complaints against professors who display unprofessional conduct:

The definitions and procedures address grievances by undergraduate students in which the complaint or controversy alleges: (a) arbitrary and capricious awarding of grades; (b) unprofessional conduct by a professor that affects adversely either the student's ability to satisfy academic expectations, whether in the classroom

As such, the grievance policies provided a broad definition of unacceptable actions performed by faculty giving students experiencing cyberbullying within their

online class recourse against the professor. Additionally, the policy differentiated unprofessional conduct from sexual harassment and discrimination.

The Student Code of Conduct also used broad-stroke language, which may have included cyberbullying in interpretation of prohibited behavior. For example, when discussing disruptive conduct, the following is prohibited:

Behavior that substantially and materially disrupts, disturbs, impairs, interferes with or obstructs the orderly conduct, processes, and functions of the classroom or laboratory and/or immediate surrounding areas. This includes interfering with the academic mission of the University or individual classroom or interfering with a faculty member or instructor's role to carry out the normal academic or educational functions of their classroom, laboratory and/or immediate surrounding areas

In addition to disruptive conduct, the Student Code of Conduct contained broad language without any electronic or digital modifiers on personal abuse that pertains to cyberbullying:

Verbal or written abuse, threats, intimidation, and/or Coercion that objectively endangers the health, safety, or well-being of others. Using fighting words or statements which reasonably endanger the health and safety of any person that are not protected speech may result in University action. This definition shall not be interpreted to abridge the right of any member of the University community to freedom of expression protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and/or any other applicable law.

Unlike the many of other public universities in Florida, FIU's Code of Computer Practice did not include any reference or redirection to harassing behavior. Instead, the page's content addressed using the institution's information technology resources to perform other electronic-based deviancies such as purposeful service disruption and unauthorized commercial activity (e.g., running an e-commerce website from FIU's servers).

The Faculty Handbook from Florida International University did not define cyberbullying within the text. Instead, the document contained hyperlinks to the Student Code of Conduct as well as the sexual harassment policy. As such, the Faculty Handbook relied the aforementioned policies to define and classify cyberbullying behavior.

#### Florida State University

Eight documents from Florida State University were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, five contained references to bullying behaviors. FSU administrators produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in four of the five documents. Those documents include Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy, Regulations Chapter 3 – Student Life, the Faculty Handbook, Information Security Policy, and Student Conduct Codes.

The Student Conduct Codes uses the term cyberstalking to describe the same behavior as cyberbullying:

“Cyberstalking” means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic email and electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

Interestingly, bullying is later defined as a subcategory of harassment without the use of a digital modifier. Harassment is defined as:

Bullying behavior, not of a sexual nature, defined as the systematic and chronic infliction of physical hurt or psychological distress by teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, physical violence, theft, harassment, or destruction of property.

The Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct regulation established by university officials redirects to FSU Policy 2-2 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy. The Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct regulation establishes the institution's commitment against sexual misconduct and relies on the language within FSU 2-2 to define misconduct.

#### Florida Polytechnic University

Sixteen documents from Florida Polytechnic University were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, nine contained references to bullying behaviors. Those documents were FPU 1.004 Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity, FPU 1.005P Sexual Harassment, FPU-11.0018P Appropriate Use of IT Resources, FPU-11.0017P Electronic Communications and Data Transmission, FPU-3.0011P Email as Official Form of University's Communication with Students, FPU-3.0031P-Student Grievance Process, FPU-3.006 Student Code of Conduct, FPU-5.001 Academic Freedom and Responsibility, FPU-6.002 Personnel Code of Conduct and Ethics, and the Faculty Handbook.

FPU leaders produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in two of the four documents. Those documents include FPU 1.004 Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity and FPU 1.005P Sexual Harassment. Harassment described within the text of Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity pertains to protected classes and may impact others that may not be the intended victim:

Harassment, under this regulation, is an unlawful form of discrimination and is defined as unwelcome or offensive conduct that is based on a protected class when such conduct:

- i. is so frequent or so severe that it creates an intimidating, hostile, offensive, or abusive educational or work environment; or
- ii. results in an adverse education or employment decision

A victim of unlawful harassment does not have to be the individual that is the target of such harassing conduct when the conduct effectually results in creating a hostile environment.

An example was provided within the text which describes the use of digital or electronic mediums to perpetrate harassment against an individual:

Displaying, transmitting, or sending offensive or inappropriate objects, pictures, or communications, by any medium.

The combination of the example of harassment and harassment definition could be used to produce a definition of cyberbully – one which identifies a very specific set of features for a victim. In this case, a victim of cyberbullying would have to be a member of a protected class, such as race, marital status, or age. However, the authors of the document later included all members of the university:

The University does not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, directed towards any individual within the University Community

As a separate type of harassment, sexual harassment is defined within FPU

1.005P Sexual Harassment as being:

Sexual harassment, a form of sex discrimination, includes, but is not limited to, sexual violence, gender-based discrimination, and conduct in the form of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal (including written and electronic communications) or physical conduct of a sexual nature from any person when such behavior



In this definition, the authors included electronic communications as a modifier for verbal conduct. Within the document, the authors provide a list of examples of sexual harassment, three of which meet the criteria for cyberbullying:

Suggestive or inappropriate communications, notes, letters, e-mail, text messages, contact through social media, or other written materials.

Displaying, transmitting, or sending suggestive or inappropriate photographs, videos, computer images, slides, calendars, cartoons, or drawings through any medium.

Bullying, when of a sexual nature meaning repeated and/or severe aggressive behavior likely to intimidate or intentionally hurt, control, or diminish another person, physically or mentally (excluding speech or other conduct protected by the First Amendment).

The Appropriate Use of IT Resources redirects readers to the Non-Discrimination/Harassment and Sexual Harassment policies, as well as the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, the authors offer guidance on the type of behavior that violates the policy:

Transmitting threatening or abusive messages in violation of University rules, regulations or policies, or the Student Code of Conduct;

The inclusion of this language in the Appropriate Use of IT Resources acts as a modifier to university rules, regulations, policies, and Student Code of Conduct, extending the jurisdiction to include university IT Resources. This modifier support documents like the Student Code of Conduct, which used broad strokes to define harassment or misconduct:

Physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, stalking, coercion, and/or other conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person, group, or animal that is not of a sexual nature.

## New College of Florida

Five documents from New College of Florida were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, five contained references to bullying behaviors. New College of Florida policymakers produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in two of the five documents. Those documents included 6-3005 New College of Florida Student Code of Conduct and 3-4018 Sexual Discrimination/Harassment.

Bullying and harassment as defined in the Student Code of Conduct included students shaming or bullying others through online forums or social media:

Bullying, Harassment or Retaliation – Conduct which creates an intimidating, hostile, offensive working or educational environment, or harassment of a Complainant or other person alleging misconduct, including, but not limited to intimidation and threats, as well as shaming and bullying on electronic forums and social media.

In Sexual Discrimination/Harassment, the authors note that not all behavior constitutes as sexual harassment and require the examination of "facts and circumstances," including frequency, degree the victims work or education environment is impacted, and duration of misconduct. The authors provide the following example in addition to the criteria previously listed, clearly identifying a digital component to sexual harassment:

Displaying or telling of sexually oriented or discriminatory jokes, statements, photographs, drawings, computer images, web sites, videos, slides, graphics, calendars, cartoons, e-mails or other communications;

The document 4-5002 Information Technology Acceptable Use redirected readers to the Student Code of Conduct, as well as Florida Statutes. In doing this, the authors of

the document relied on the authority of each document to define behaviors. As such, 4-5002 Information Technology Acceptable Use acts as a modifier to the Student Code of Conduct and Florida statutes, identifying the institution's IT resources as the jurisdiction for these policies.

### University of Florida

Thirteen documents from the University of Florida were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, twelve contained references to harassing behaviors. Those documents were Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Penalties, Policies on Information Technology and Security, Complaints Against Faculty, Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, the Faculty Handbook, Student Honor Code and Code of Conduct, Sexual Harassment Policy, Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy, Disruptive Behavior, and Grievance Procedure.

The Disruptive Behavior policy used broad strokes and had no definition of cyberbullying. Additionally, the policy was written with regards to staff conduct. This policy described behavior that was severe in nature to disrupt daily business and the mission of the university.

The Grievance Procedure alludes to faculty misconduct against a student. Within the document, a grievance is concerned with academic issues that are not grade disputes or "mistreatment by any University employee." This is an extremely broad classification that could include many types of misconduct against a student.

UF policymakers produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in two of the twelve documents. Those documents included the Student Honor Code/Student Code of Conduct and Sexual Harassment policy. The Student Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct describes harassment as:

Harassment. Threats, intimidation, Coercion, or any other conduct that places a Reasonable person in fear of physical harm, through words or actions, or objectively disrupts a person's daily activities, including education and employment. Harassment does not include conduct protected by the First Amendment.

Through this definition, cyberbullying could be inferred through the language inclusion of disrupting a person's education. If the course is online, this could be applied. However, the code does not include a clear definition of online student.

Cyberstalking is also defined within the Student Code of Conduct. It is defined separately from harassment and includes the following statement:

Stalking/cyberstalking, which is a course of conduct committed with the intent to kill, injure, harass or intimidate another person that either places the person in Reasonable fear of the death of, or serious bodily injury to, that person, an immediate family member, a spouse or an intimate partner of that person; or causes, attempts to cause, or would be reasonably expected to cause substantial emotional distress to a person listed above.

The Acceptable Use Policy redirects readers to the Student Code of Conduct and the university's Sexual Harassment Policy. This redirection allows the policy to focus on the technology aspect of acceptable use and relies on the aforementioned policies to define types of harassment. This creates an interaction between the policies which formulates into a definition of cyberbullying.

The Code of Penalties redirects readers to the Student Code of Conduct, harassment and sexual harassment policies. The content within the code of penalties

describes the punishments that the university may impose on students, staff, and faculty. Combining the policies produce a description of cause and effects. For example, the Code of Penalties describes the possible consequences available to students violating the Code of Conduct. As such, this policy relies on the Code of Conduct to define harassing behavior.

#### University of Central Florida

Fourteen documents from the University of Central Florida were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, seven contained references to harassing behaviors. UCF policymakers produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in four of the seven documents. Those documents include Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence, Use of Information Technologies and Resources, the Student Code of Conduct, and Rules of Conduct.

In the Use of Information Technologies and Resources, the authors included user responsibilities and redirect authority to "all applicable conduct codes and rules." Additionally, the authors provide explicit details about the misuse of Computing and Telecommunication Resources, including email and other electronic messaging systems. The language is written broad enough to include a Learning Management System with messaging capacities. As such, the following types of messages are prohibited:

- b. harassing or hate messages
- c. threatening or abusive messages sent to individuals or organizations

## Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence

covers harassing misconduct within the university. When defining discriminatory harassment, the authors stated:

Discriminatory harassment may take many forms, including verbal acts, name-calling, graphic or written statements (including the use of cell phones or the Internet), or other conduct that may be humiliating or physically threatening.

Cyberstalking was also defined as a different category of harassment within the Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence. The authors stated:

Stalking includes “cyber-stalking,” a particular form of stalking in which a person uses electronic media, such as the internet, social networks, blogs, phones, texts, or other similar devices or forms of contact.

Bullying behavior is defined within the Student Code of Conduct. The authors of the document state:

Bullying: Defined as behavior of any sort (including communicative behavior) directed at another, that is severe, pervasive, or persistent, and is of a nature that would cause a reasonable person or group in the target’s position substantial emotional distress and undermine his or her ability to work, study, or participate in University life or regular activities, or which would place a reasonable person in fear of injury or death.

Student Rights and Responsibilities redirected readers to the institution's harassment policies and student code of conduct. When defining the scope of the document and the term "student," the authors chose to include "online student" as a modifier. This is important because the author have explicitly established that online education is within the scope of student rights, responsibilities, and potential punishments. The authors are allowing the definition of bullying defined within the Student Code of Conduct to apply to students engaging within an online modality.

## University of South Florida

Eleven documents from the University of South Florida were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, six contained references to harassing behaviors. USF policymakers produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in two of the four documents. Those documents include the Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy. For instance, within the Student Code of Conduct, a definition of bullying was identified as a subcategory of harassment:

Bullying is included in this violation and refers to repeated and/or severe aggressive behaviors that intimidate or intentionally harm or control another person physically or emotionally, and are not protected by freedom of expression.

Additionally, stalking and cyberstalking were defined separately from harassment.

The description of cyberstalking included repeated harassment through several digital mediums:

Stalking - To follow another person and/or repeatedly interact with a person so as to harass that person, or a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for one's or others' safety or to suffer substantial emotional stress. This includes "cyber-stalking" a particular form of stalking with a person who uses electronic media, such as the internet, social media networks, blogs, cell phones, text messages, or other similar devices or forms of contact.

Academic Disruption, Title XI and Sexual Misconduct, and Discrimination and Harassment policies all contained broad stroke definitions that did not mention the use of digital or electronic mediums. Instead, these policies contain broad definitions of misconduct that could be later modified by other policies.

The Appropriate Use of Technology and the Grievance Policy both used redirected the authority of defining harassment to other USF policies, including Title XI

and Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination and Harassment policies. The redirection from the Appropriate Use of Technology creates a modification to the scope of the sexual harassment and discrimination and harassment policies to include digital and electronic mediums, effectively creating a definition of cyberbullying.

#### University of North Florida

Eleven documents from the University of North Florida were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. Of those, six contained references to harassing behaviors. Two explicitly defined cyberbullying as a type of harassment. Those two policies were 1.0050R Sexual Misconduct Regulation and Faculty Handbook.

The authors include bullying and cyberbullying as examples of criminal acts that, when based on sex, may be interpreted as sexual harassment. This description does make it apparent that cyberbullying is different from other harassing behaviors.

“Bullying/Cyberbullying” means repeated and/or severe aggressive behaviors with the intent to intimidate or harm another person, physically or emotionally, when such behaviors are not protected as freedom of speech. Examples of such conduct include stalking, harassment, and invasion of privacy.

In addition to the sexual harassment policy, the faculty handbook also contained a definition of cyberbullying within the descriptions of faculty misconduct and bullying.

With cyberbullying being list as one form, bullying is described as:

repeated, unwelcome severe and pervasive behavior that intentionally threatens, intimidates, humiliates or isolates the targeted individual(s), or undermines their reputation or job performance.



UNF produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in one of the six documents. Those documents include 5.0010R Student Conduct Code. The Student Code of Conduct described harassment and included cyberstalking within the definition:

Verbal, physical, electronic or other conduct, action(s) or statements that are severe, persistent or pervasive that threaten harm or reasonably intimidate another person causing them to fear for their safety, under both an objective (a reasonable person's) and subjective (the alleged victim's or reporting person's) view...

... includes the concept of cyber-stalking, a particular form of stalking which electronic media such as the internet, social networks, blogs, cell phones, texts, or other similar devices or forms of contact are used to pursue, harass, or to make unwelcome contact with another person in an unsolicited fashion.

1.0050P Network Acceptable Use redirected readers to "existing university policies applicable to standards of behavior." As such, this policy may be used in collaboration with any policy, such as 1.0040R Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Diversity Regulation, to define and enforce cyberbullying behavior.

1.0030R Disruptive Behavior and 1.0040R Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Regulation both use broad strokes to describe harassing behavior. For instance, harassment defined within 1.0040R does not include electronic or digital modifiers. Instead, the language hinges upon broad phrases such as:

...deny or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the University's educational programs...

Combining this language with the language found within 1.0050P Network Acceptable Use could produce an actionable definition of cyberbullying in that 1.0050P modifies the Non-Discrimination policy to include the scope of IT and network resources.

## University West Florida

Eighteen documents from the University of West Florida were identified by the researcher as possible sources for cyberbullying definitions. While a site and a Google™ listing were available, the Faculty Handbook was unavailable to retrieval at the time of research. Of the seventeen documents identified and available for retrieval, seven contained references to harassing behaviors. UWF policymakers produced implied definitions of cyberbullying in three of the four documents. Those documents included Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Violence, Gender-Based Discrimination, and Retaliation and Student Code of Conduct.

The language used within the Student Code of Conduct describes two separate misconduct activities: disruptive conduct and harassment. Disruptive conduct is broad and could encompass many different actions, including but not limited to cyberbullying. The focus on f the language with disruptive conduct is not the repeated or pervasive attributes of the misconduct, but rather on the impact it has on the functions of the institution. Stated within the policy:

Conduct which is disorderly and/or disruptive or in any way interferes with or obstructs the orderly conduct, processes, administration or functions of the University, interferes with the freedom of movement of members or guests of the University community, or interferes with the rights of others to carry out their activities or duties. This includes acts that occur both inside and outside the classroom setting and may involve the use of electronic or cellular equipment. This also includes behavior off campus during a University sanctioned event or activity or an event where the student serves as a representative of the University.

In this case, if an instance of cyberbullying were to impact the online classroom, it would be included within disruptive conduct. Alternatively, harassment is described within the Code of Conduct as:

Harassment is defined as conduct that is sufficiently severe or pervasive so that it unreasonably interferes with an individual's academic or employment status or performance (Harassment on the basis of these protected classes may include threatened or actual physical harm or abuse, stalking, or other intimidating conduct directed against the individual based on his or her protected class.).

The Student Communication Policy, Student Rights and Responsibilities, and UWF Information Security and Privacy policies all redirected to conduct policies. As such, these policies acted modifiers to the original conduct policies. For example, the UWF Information Security and Privacy added UWF's technologies and networks to the scope of the Student Code of Conduct.

The language in Standards of Conduct and Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation used broad strokes to describe harassment in each of the documents. This language used to describe harassment within both policies did not include references to technology or digital or electronic communications.

### Summary

All twelve public universities in the state of Florida maintained policies that contained a definition of harassment that encompassed cyberbullying behavior. Only one institution, University of North Florida, explicitly named cyberbullying as harassing behavior. The other eleven institutions used a combination of implicit, redirection, or broad harassment language to capture cyberbullying as prohibited behavior. This section also discussed redirection as a tool to link policies to create a definition of cyberbullying.

## Research Question 2 – Reporting and Responding

Research Question 2 asked: Do policies or codes of conduct at Florida state public universities provide guidelines for instructor response to or methods of reporting cyberbullying? If so, how? If not, why not? This question was focused on identifying university approved actions that faculty can implement when encountering cyberbullying in the classroom. This research question was dependent upon cyberbullying definitions being identified through Research Question 1. This section discussed results from each institution.

### Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University

#### 10.103 Non-Discrimination Policy and Discrimination and Harassment Complaint

Procedures discussed the procedures from submitting a discrimination or harassment complaint. According to the regulation, the victim could submit a formal or informal complaint to the Equal Opportunity Programs Officer. Formal complaints are required to be written and signed by the complainant/victim within 60 days of the alleged incident. The regulation does not provide details to submit a complaint on behalf of a victim in the event that the violation occurred in a classroom or online course.

The Student Code of Conduct discussed the reporting guidelines for Gender-based Misconduct offenses and student conduct violation. The document contains a short statement on reporting conduct violations:

Accordingly, all purported violations of the Code shall be referred to the University Conduct Officer (Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution). Students, faculty, staff, stakeholders, or other individuals with

knowledge, may report violations of the Code, in writing, to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

The Student Code of Conduct offers more details and guidance on submitting Gender-Based Misconduct violation. Much like the Non-Discrimination regulation, the victim, known as the complainant, is the designated reporter. According to the Student Code of Conduct, the complainant is:

An individual who reportedly experienced gender-based misconduct regardless of whether the individual participates in the disclosure or review of that report by the University at any point.

This is significant as the university did not designate responsible employees for reporting Title XI offenses. This suggests that sexually orientated harassment and cyberbullying behavior can go unreported though it may be detrimental to the classroom. Additionally, while the complainant was encouraged to report, he or she was not required.

#### Florida Atlantic University

Regulation 5.010 Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment discussed the guidance on reporting discrimination and harassment conduct violations. Procedures for self-reporting misconduct directed at the reporter were outlined within the document. Complainants, including faculty, were asked to submit formal and informal complaints directly to the Equity, Inclusion and Compliance office within 180 calendar days. Provided within the document were alternative reporting designees such as the Dean of Students, appropriate Vice President, or college dean, or department chair.

The anti-discrimination regulation did not include a procedure for reporting witnessed violations. Alternatively, the anti-discrimination regulation directed readers to the Student Code of Conduct in regard to submitting a conduct violation complaint against a student.

The Student Code of Conduct from Florida Atlantic University outlined the procedure for reporting a conduct complaint against a student. Stated within the Code of Conduct:

Any person or entity may request that charges be filed against a student for alleged violation of law or University regulations or policies. An investigation may take the place of the circumstances of the complaint.

As for reporting violations, the complainant was asked to submit a report to police, forward a complaint from another law enforcement agency, or provide a written or oral statement to the Dean of Student within 6 months of the incident or gaining knowledge of the incident. In addition, the complainant may submit a Title XI claim with the Title XI Coordinator.

#### Florida International University

The Student Code of Conduct from Florida International University provided instructions on file a report of conduct violation to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (SCCR). The intake method for violations presented within the Student Code of Conduct allowed reporting from “any person or entity.” A person or entity would either submit a police report, submit an incident report to SCCR, or make an oral report to SCCR. FIU limited the reporting period to 90 days from the incident or obtaining

knowledge of the incident, except for domestic violence, sexual misconduct, and stalking which have no time limit for reporting. Separate reporting guidelines for sexual misconduct and harassment appeared in regulation FIU-105 Sexual Misconduct (Title IX).

FIU-105 Sexual Misconduct (Title IX) discussed the reporting procedures and requirements for sexual harassment, sexual violence, and sexual discrimination. Faculty members, as responsible employees, are required to share details about prohibited conduct with the Title XI Coordinator. Additionally, the reporting party is encouraged to report conduct that is believed to be prohibited regardless of their certainty of the conduct's prohibition. Faculty were directed to submit reports directly to the Title XI Coordinator, or her designees, through email, phone, online, or in person. The reporting party should provide details of the incident, names of the parties involved, description of the incident, and information regarding previous reporting attempts.

Faculty were encouraged to report probable acts of discrimination or harassments as described in FIU-106 Nondiscrimination, Harassment and Retaliation (Title VII) to the Office of Equal Opportunity Program. Faculty submitting a complaint were asked to submit the complaint in writing within 300 days of the alleged acts. The complaint submitted by faculty should contain the name of the complainant, nature of the act, details about the alleged offender, the date the offenses occurred, names of witnesses, and desired outcome.

The Faculty Handbook at Florida International University established the appropriate response to misconduct and provided instructions on reporting misconduct.

According to the document, instructors may provide an oral reprimand and/or remove a student from the classroom. If the instructor sought to remove the student permanently, he or she would be required to report the disruptive behavior to the Office of Student Conduct. The authors of the handbook cautioned that the individual reporting misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct would be required to participate in the disciplinary procedures. Additionally, if a student confides an allegation of sexual misconduct to the instructor, the instructor was encouraged to provide a copy of the institution's sexual harassment policy.

#### Florida Gulf Coast University

The Faculty Handbook from Florida Gulf Coast University devoted a section to student/classroom issues. However, this section only discusses student record privacy, absence from class due to a professional obligation, student absences, and medical emergencies. There was no discussion on bullying, misbehavior, or misconduct within the section. Additionally, the faculty handbook provided a brief statement on sexual harassment but redirected the reader to the sexual harassment policy.

Policy number 1.006 Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct included a discussion on the procedure for reporting discriminatory or harassing behaviors, including Title IX violations. As discussed in the document, a complainant may submit a formal or informal report of an alleged violation within 90 days of the violation occurring through a form made available by the EIOC. An instructor, as a responsible employee, may report a violation through the Florida Gulf



Coast University EthicsPoint hotline. As such, this policy provided two reporting options to faculty – one as the complainant which is submitted directly EIOC and one as a witness submitted through an ethics hotline.

The regulation on Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct provided additional guidance on the responsibility to report conduct violations, including Title IX violations. The regulation stated:

Whenever an employee, student, or non-employee makes allegations of Discrimination, Harassment, or Sexual Misconduct which may violate this Regulation, supervisors and managers are required to take prompt and appropriate action to report the alleged violations.

Additionally, the regulation stated that all employees of the university must report all information they may possess about sexual misconduct to the Director of Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance and Title IX Coordinator. Both statements are significant because of the requirement to report misconduct. While it is unclear if instructors qualify as supervisors, under this regulation, any allegation of harassment an instructor makes to an immediate supervisor must be reported immediately. The regulation established disciplinary measures against individuals in supervisory or managerial roles who did not report any alleged discriminatory, harassment, or sexual misconduct.

The Student Code of Conduct and Conduct Review Process did not specify a method of reporting conduct violation. The document did specify that non-Title IX reports were to be reported within 6 months of the alleged infringement. It could be assumed that reporting guidelines were meant to be reviewed in their respective conduct policies.

As such, this study finds that Florida Gulf Coast University did provide faculty with reporting guidelines for conduct violations, which loosely included cyberbullying. Conduct policies outlined the responsibility of faculty for reporting certain types of conduct violation, as well as the conduct authority to whom the faculty should report. This study did not find policies that described faculty response to misconduct within the classroom.

#### Florida Polytechnic University

Through FPU-1.004 Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity, it was established that all faculty had a responsibility to report any allegation or instances of discrimination to their immediate supervisor, the President, Human Resources, Director of Student Affairs, or the Provost. The purpose of the responsibility to report was to maintain an environment free from discrimination. While the regulation established the requirement to report and to whom report should be submitted, there was no guidance on the method of reporting.

Likewise, FPU-1.005P Sexual Harassment established that faculty were to report sexual misconduct immediately. In fact, the opening paragraph of the policy established that FPU-1.005P was created to offer guidance on reporting. As to the requirement of reporting, the language within FPU-1.005P stated:

All faculty members are required to report to the Title IX Coordinator promptly or, alternatively, to their department chair, dean, or applicable academic administrator any and all allegations, reports, or instances of alleged sexual harassment by or against a student in violation of this policy. Persons to whom alleged acts of sexual harassment are reported by faculty must promptly report the

matter to the Title IX Coordinator (either verbally or through written communications).

Unlike FPU-1.004 Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity, Sexual Harassment provided guidance not only to whom report should be submitted, but also how. The statement specifies that reports should be made verbally or through written communication, leaving the options for reporting open to modalities such as email or telephone calls.

As such, the policies and regulations found at Florida Polytechnic University provided faculty with a description of the reporting process and to whom the report should be made. The description of the reporting process, however, was found to be lacking within the Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity regulation as it did not specify how the report should be made. This study did not find any description of responding to student conduct in the classroom.

#### Florida State University

The Faculty Handbook from Florida State University discussed the reporting requirements for sexual misconduct briefly. Within the document, faculty were discussed as responsible employees and redirected the reader to FSU Policy 2-2, Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Reporting mechanism and guidelines were discussed within FSU Policy 2-2, Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy. Additionally, faculty were defined as responsible employees. As a responsible employee, faculty were required to all incidents involving students. Faculty who initially received sexual misconduct reports from

students were required to take the reports at face value and make no further inquiries beyond the original statement. All relevant details were required to be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator within two days of becoming aware of the incident. The report could be made orally or in writing. Additionally, an EthicPoint hotline and an online reporting tool had been made available to submit alleged conduct violations.

The Student Code of conduct outlined the intake method for student conduct violations. Within the code, student conduct action would be initiated through one of the following:

- report submitted through a secure University reporting function
- receipt of a police report
- sign statement provided to a student conduct authority
- in the case of Title IX violations, reports to the Title IX Coordinator

The current study classified the reporting details provided to faculty as comprehensive. The policies and regulations found at Florida State University provided faculty with an accurate description of the reporting process and to whom report should be made. However, this study did not find any description of responding to student conduct in the classroom.

#### New College of Florida

Reporting procedures for sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination were found within 3-4018 Sexual Discrimination/Harassment. The reporting method for sexual discrimination/harassment was described as a voluntary report, directing the complainant

to a supervisor, Director of Human Resources (faculty/staff) or Dean of Students (student) or management that the complainant feels comfortable speaking about the matter, contact the Title IX Coordinator, or report using an online form. Faculty were permitted to submit a report of sexual harassment on behalf of a student when they become aware of the act. Faculty were required to immediately report allegations of sexual assault to the Title IX Coordinator.

3-4018 Sexual Discrimination/Harassment also contained an outline of documentation accompanying the complaint. The document stated that complaints should contain detail descriptions of the alleged conduct including dates and times; names of any witnesses; and any documentation that support allegations.

The Student Code of Conduct contained guidance on submitting a student conduct violation. The language within the Student Code of Conduct stated that any individual within the college community could submit a formal charge against a student who may have violated the Code of Conduct. The complainant who filed the charge would be burdened with providing proof that the accused student was responsible for the conduct violation.

According to the Student Code of Conduct, complaints of student conduct violation were required to be submitted in writing – any verbal complaints would be accepted but handled informally. Complaints would be addressed to the Office of Student Affairs within six months of, or discovery of, the alleged violation. The complaint was required to include: name, address and phone number of complainant; the name(s) of the student alleged to have violated the Code of Conduct; a statement on which provisions

within the Code of Conduct have been violated; date of the violation; essential facts or summary of the alleged violation; and the signature of the complainant.

The current study did not find protocol describing a process for faculty response to in-class instances of cyberbullying or harassment. This study classified the document analyzed from New College as comprehensive reporting.

#### University of Central Florida

The Golden Rule, University of Central Florida's Student Code of Conduct, contained an outline for reporting sexual harassment and misconduct to the university. The institution provided an online reporting tool for sexual misconduct through <http://letsbeclear.ucf.edu>. Additionally, the Golden Rule established that individual reporting would be made to the Office of Institutional Equity. Faculty, as responsible employees, were required to immediately report all details about sexual misconduct to the Office of Institutional Equity. Online submissions of the alleged conduct could be made through a form available on <http://letsbeclear.ucf.edu>.

The process to report conduct violations was described in the Golden Rule. The submission of alleged violations was described as being required in writing to the Director of the Office of Student Conduct or designee. There was no description of a time requirement for the submission of a violation.

Reporting and reporting obligation for faculty were described in 2-004.1 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence. Faculty, both full-time and part-time, and graduate students with classroom responsibilities were

classified as responsible employees. As a responsible employee, an individual was required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator.

Two channels of reporting were described in 2-004.1 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence. The complainant may report prohibited conduct to the university and/or to law enforcement. As stated through the document, complainants may use both channels to report conduct violation as the channels are not mutually exclusive. This means that a complaint may be passed through the university conduct process as well as a criminal process.

2-004.1 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence provided details on submitting a conduct violation to a law enforcement agency. Local and state law enforcement agency contact information was provided within the document. Additionally, the university encouraged complainants to submit a police report for alleged conduct violations. The university stated it would assist the complainant in submitting a police report if requested.

In addition to filing a police report, 2-004.1 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence described the process to report a conduct violation to the university. Complainants were encouraged to report conduct violations to the Office of Institutional Equity. Complaints could be submitted through telephone, email, or in person. The document stated that there was no time limit for complaints.

2-700 Reporting Misconduct and Protection from Retaliation described the reporting process for "any violation of law, regulation, statute, UCF regulation, policy, procedure, guideline, and/or standard of conduct, whether intentional or inadvertent." As

described in 2-700, any suspected misconduct at the university is “expected and encouraged” to be submitted by an individual acting in good faith. The policy set the expectation that faculty could submit suspected misconduct to their supervisors, central administration offices (including the Title IX Coordinator), the University Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office, UCF Integrity Line, and/or the Ombuds Office. Submissions to the Ombuds Office were only viewed as informal reporting and would offer advice on proper reporting protocol.

The current study classified the resources reviewed as comprehensive reporting. The resources found within the policies reviewed at the University of Central Florida provided the reader with clear expectations of reporting conduct violations. The individual faculty’s responsibility to report different types of misconduct and which office was responsible for receiving the report was concrete. The current study did not identify protocols regarding faculty responding to in-class misconduct.

#### University of Florida

Student Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct contained the description on reporting conduct violations. As outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, any individual may submit a conduct violation through filing a police report with the University of Florida Police Department or another law enforcement agency, provide a written report to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, or submitting a report directly to the Office of Title IX Compliance and requesting the report be forwarded to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. While there was no time limit for submitting a report of alleged



conduct violation, students could not be charged one year after the alleged violation occurred, except in certain circumstances. In extenuating circumstances, the Dean of Students or designee would have sole discretion in extending the period to charge a student.

Sexual Harassment Policy contained a description of submitting sexual misconduct violations. According to the policy's webpage, it was the responsibility of all university community members to report sexual misconduct. The webpage stated that reporting sexual misconduct to the Title IX coordinator was strongly encouraged for all students, staff, and faculty. Additionally, the policy webpage provided a link to the Title IX Coordinator's website, as well as a broken link to the reporting form. While the direct link to the form was broken from the policy's webpage, users could still access the form the Title IX Coordinator's website.

Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policies contained a description of submitting discrimination and harassment complaints. According to the policies, an individual may submit an informal or written formal complaint. The document redirected the reader to University of Florida regulations 1.0063, which discussed employee relations, and 4.012, which discussed the student grievance process. This policy did not provide a timeline for submitting complaints to the university.

The current study identified reporting processed within the Student Code of Conduct and the Sexual Harassment policies. The Non-Discrimination/ Harassment/ Invasion of Privacy Policies briefly described a portion of the process to submit discrimination and harassment complaints. The Non-Discrimination/ Harassment/

Invasion of Privacy Policies redirected readers to employee relations and student grievance regulations for further details. As such, the current study determined that policies and regulations at the University provided limited reporting details.

#### University of North Florida

1.0050R Sexual Misconduct Regulation contained a description of submitting reports of sexual misconduct to the university. The process described in the regulation suggested that any individual that has been subjected to what they believe to be sexual misconduct on campus should move to a safe space and report the conduct to a responsible employee, Title IX Administrator, or Title IX Coordinator designee. Title IX complaints would be filed with the Title IX administrator within 60 calendar days of the alleged conduct violation. It was explained within the policy that criminal complaints of Title IX offenses would be addressed by law enforcement as well as the institution. At the time of analysis, it was not clear if the complainant would have to submit a separate criminal complaint with law enforcement.

The Faculty Handbook contained a description of submitting conduct violations on workplace bullying to the university. As described within the handbook, faculty with reason to believe another faculty member had engaged in bullying should submit a report to the Chairperson of the Faculty Affairs Committee. The policy required all allegations to be submitted in writing along with evidence of wrongdoing. Non-faculty with reasons to believe faculty had engaged in bullying were asked to submit a complaint to human resources.

5.0010R Student Conduct Code contained instructions on submitting student conduct violations to the university. According to the Student Conduct Code, the conduct process could be initiated by any university community member, visitor or guest through submitting a report of the violation to the Student Conduct Office or University Police. It was stated in the conduct code that allegations should be submitted in a reasonable timeframe. The term 'reasonable' was not defined. The medium in which the complaint should be submitted was not clarified within the conduct code.

1.0040R Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Regulation contained instructions on submitting discrimination complaints to the university. According to Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Regulation, faculty were required:

to promptly report to the EOD [Equal Opportunity and Diversity Office] or their department chair, dean or applicable administrator any allegations, reports or instances of alleged discrimination, retaliation and/or harassment by or against a student in violation of this Regulation.

The current study did not find processes or procedures for faculty responding to harassment or bullying in the classroom within the documents reviewed. The current study identified reporting processed within the Student Conduct Code, Sexual Misconduct Regulation, and Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Regulation. Additionally, the Faculty Handbook briefly described a portion of the process to submit bullying/cyberbullying complaints. As such, the current study determined that policies and regulations at the University provided comprehensive reporting details.

## University of South Florida

Only one institution provided an independent step-by-step policy for responding to disruptive misconduct in the classroom - University of South Florida. The authors of the Student Code of Conduct referred the reader to the Disruption of Academic Process policy and described the process a faculty member may take during a disruption:

Faculty members may remove a Student from the classroom environment for disruption on the day that it occurs or faculty members may remove a Student permanently from the class. If the Student disrupts the classroom environment, the faculty member should make a referral to Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Additionally, the Student Code of Conduct stated that the faculty should make a referral to the Student Rights and Responsibilities. Referrals were required to be made no later than 6 months from the discovery. While there is no stated requirement for medium or information accompanying the referral, the Code of Conduct alluded to a minimum requirement of information for Student Rights and Responsibilities to accept the referral.

The Disruption of Academic Process policy contains outlines the option available to faculty when confronting disruptive behavior. First, the faculty member may ask the student to stop misbehaving. Next, the instructor may remove the student from the class setting. If the instructor pursues this course of action, an Academic Disruption Incident Report must be submitted within 48 hours. Finally, the instructor may choose to exclude the student from the academic setting until the conflict has been resolved. While the Disruption of Academic Process policy explicitly stated that the policy applied to online class settings, it does not provide instruction on how to exclude a student from an online course.

Title IX and Sexual Misconduct contained an outline on submitted sexual misconduct violations to the university and was applicable to the university system. According to the policy, faculty were classified as responsible employees and required to report allegation or instances of sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct under the requirements described within the policy was expected to be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Senior Deputy Coordinator. Instances of sexual harassment were expected to be submitted within 120 days of the incident. In the event a crime may have been committed, complaints may be pursued with both law enforcement and the university simultaneously.

Discrimination and Harassment policy contained details about submitting discrimination and harassment complaints to the university system. According to the policy, faculty were encouraged, but not required to submit a report of discrimination or non-sexual harassment. As such, referrals against the student would be made to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibility or the "appropriate student affairs office." The policy redirected readers to the Student Code of Conduct for the description of the referral process.

The current study identified reporting processed within the Student Code of Conduct, Title IX and Sexual Misconduct policy, and the Discrimination and Harassment policy. Additionally, the Student Code of Conduct and the Disruption of Academic Process policy described the response process faculty might follow for in-class misconduct. As such, the current study determined that policies and regulations at the University of South Florida provided comprehensive reporting details.

## University of West Florida

The Student Code of Conduct contained the protocol for submitting student conduct violations to the university. According to the Student Code of Conduct:

Alleged violations of the Student Code of Conduct may be reported to the Dean of Students Office by anyone, including but not limited to: (a) University Police or other University departments, (b) faculty, staff, or students or (c) third parties.

While a time limit on reporting was not discussed within the Student Code of Conduct, the Dean of Student Office could not charge a student with a violation a year after the date the conduct occurred or was discovered. The medium expected to be used for reporting was not discussed.

Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Violence, Gender-Based Discrimination and Retaliation contained a description of the process for submitting a report of sexual misconduct. According to this policy, faculty as responsible employees were required to report all allegations of sexual misconduct. As such, faculty were required to report the allegations to the Title IX Coordinator. It was established within the policy that there was no time limit on reporting sexual misconduct. The policy did not describe a medium in which the complaints were required to be submitted.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation contained a description of the protocol for submitting a discrimination, harassment or retaliation complaint to the institution. According to the policy, reports of discrimination, harassment or retaliation were limited to 180 days from the alleged event. The policy explained that written report, submitted to the Equal Opportunity Programs office could be filed in person or online.

The current study identified reporting procedures within the Student Code of Conduct, Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Violence, Gender-Based Discrimination and Retaliation, and Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation. Each policy described in detail the responsibility to report, how to file a report, and to whom reports should be filed. The current study did not identify descriptions of immediate faculty response protocol to in-class misconduct. As such, the current study determined that policies and regulations at the University of West Florida provided comprehensive reporting details.

### Summary

Thirty-three documents from all twelve public universities in the state of Florida described the reporting process for harassing behavior. As discussed in the results for Research Question 1, the definition of harassing behavior included cyberbullying in varying degrees. Only one institution, the University of South Florida, provided a detailed policy on the steps available to faculty for responding to harassing behavior in-class. While not a policy, the Faculty Handbook at Florida International University did specify appropriate responses to student misconduct.

### Research Questions 1A and 2A – Teaching Presence

Research Questions 1A and 2A focused on establishing if teaching presence was present within the documents that contained anti-cyberbullying definitions and methods of responding or reporting incidents. This section discusses Research Question 1A and 2A together limiting the redundancy of findings.

## Inclusion in syllabus

Thematically, inclusion in the syllabus describes the suggestion for instructors to include a policy or policies within their course syllabus as to provide students with resources and to set expectations on classroom behavior. This theme is connected to the teaching presence element of setting curriculum. No policies that contained any references to cyberbullying or reporting included a suggestion to include the policy within the course syllabi. However, some universities did maintain policies on the syllabi that referenced conduct policies. Additionally, the Faculty Handbook at Florida International University linked the course syllabi to the conduct policies.

The University of Florida, Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, Florida Polytechnic University, University of Central Florida, University of North Florida, and the University of South Florida had standing policies regarding the syllabi. However, only Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, and Florida Polytechnic provided suggestions to faculty on placing language about or directing attention towards anti-harassment policies. Each institution addressed the inclusion of such policies differently. For instance, Florida Polytechnic University's administration required that university policies be placed within the syllabus.

Within the Florida Atlantic University's Guidelines for Course Syllabi, the authors suggested instructors include a statement on classroom etiquette policy, supplemented by the phrase 'if applicable'. 'If applicable' suggests that the inclusion of etiquette policy is entirely optional by the instructor. Furthermore, the language found



within the Guidelines for Course Syllabi suggested that the inclusion of classroom etiquette policies should be owned by the instructor, stating:

If you have a particular policy relating to student behavior in the class, such as relating to tardiness or on the use of electronic devices in the classroom state so here. Recognizing that the unique relationship between faculty and student and adhering to the principles of academic responsibility, any such policy must be reasonable, non-discriminatory, and not impede the educational mission.

Support for the inclusion of behavioral guidelines or policies in the syllabus was also found in the Faculty Handbook at Florida Atlantic University. The authors of the handbook advised the inclusion of behavioral policies in cases where the instructors were inclined to include them. Once again indicating that the inclusion of behavioral policies was not mandatory.

Florida International University, on the other hand, explicitly stated which policy is recommended for inclusion within the syllabi. The language within the document illuminated that the university's administration recommended, but did not require instructors to include a "reference to University policies on sexual harassment".

These findings suggest that cyberbullying/harassment reporting mechanisms are only required at two institutions in the state of Florida – Florida Polytechnic and Florida International. However, the sexual harassment reporting mechanisms at Florida International were only recommended and not required. As such, those reporting mechanisms may not be consistently salient in every online classroom.

## Numerical Limit

All public universities within the state of Florida established a numerical limit on harassing behavior. The numerical limit describes the number of times an individual may display harassing or disruptive behavior before incurring penalties. These penalties may range from being removed from the classroom to being expelled or fired from the university. The numerical limit ranges from zero tolerance (e.g. the first instance) to documented multiple offenses.

Anti-sexual harassment and violence policies at each institution required ‘responsible employees’ to immediately report instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or stalking to the institution’s Title IX office or officer, thus offering a zero tolerance limit on sexually harassing behavior. The University of Florida’s Sexual Harassment policy illustrates this point:

To achieve this goal, no behavior of this nature will be tolerated and, if discovered, the procedure for investigation and potential adjudication, as outlined in this policy, will be followed.

Alternatively, the University of Central Florida’s Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence policy stated:

Responsible employees are required to immediately report to the University’s Office of Institutional Equity all relevant details (obtained directly or indirectly) about an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination or harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, relationship violence, and/or stalking (as defined herein) that involves any student as a complainant, respondent, and/or witness, including dates, times, locations, and names of parties and witnesses.

This finding is significant as this study found cyberstalking to be inclusive of the cyberbullying definition. As such, cyberbullying behavior exemplified by stalking

through many of the investigated institutions' policies would require immediate reporting. While these policies required responsible employees to immediately report the violating conduct, there were no instructions for faculty on how to resolve the issue in the classroom at the time of an incident.

As discussed in the results of Research Question 2, University of South Florida was the only institution to provide a step-by-step protocol for disruptive conduct. The Student Code of Conduct at the University of South Florida alludes to a numerical limit on disruptive behavior within the classroom. The Disruption of Academic Process policy contains a written description of the steps faculty should take when disruption occurs. The policy, which is included within the undergraduate catalog, outlined the following disciplinary process and was applicable to all academic setting, including online:

1. The instructor may ask the student to stop behavior.
2. The instructor may ask the student to leave the class. The instructor must submit an Academic Disruption Incident Report within 48 hours.
3. The instructor may choose to further exclude the student from the academic setting until resolution.

### Technology Responsibility

Fourteen policies regarding the use of technology with a relationship to a definition of cyberbullying were found to include statements about using the medium efficiently. Additionally, these fourteen policies were identified as having an IT response to misconduct. Table 11 displays each institution and the corresponding information

technology policy. The language used within each policy established two parameters for the use of technology resources: (1) using the medium effectively and (2) improper use. For example, Florida A&M University's Electronic Connectivity policy contained the following statement on effective use:

In order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of business and academic processes, it is the responsibility of FAMMail users to timely read notifications sent to them through FAMMail.

Through these fourteen information technology documents, the language within provided examples on improper use of the technology, such as using the network to break the law, harassing others through email and electronic messaging, and impairing others ability to effective use the resources. Florida A&M University illustrated this point:

FAMU electronic connectivity users may not, including, but not limited to:

(a) Access, send, or view e-mails that contain obscene or pornographic materials not necessary for University academic instruction or research or legal matters;

The combination of effective use of the medium and examples of improper user behavior builds the construct of technology responsibility. Through this construct, the university administration sets the example for its users on the expected use of its information technology resources. This is significant to this study because online courses require information technology resources to function and communicate. As such, the institution setting this example helps to establish efficient use of the medium.

Table 11.  
*Florida Public Universities' Information Technology Use policies*

<b>University</b>	<b>Policy Name</b>
<b>FAU</b>	Acceptable Use of Technology
<b>FAU</b>	Privacy of Electronic Communications
<b>FGCU</b>	Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure
<b>FAMU</b>	Electronic Connectivity
<b>FPU</b>	FPU-11.0018P Appropriate Use of IT Resources 4.21.15
<b>FPU</b>	FPU-11.0017P Electronic Communications and Data Transmission 8.29.15
<b>FSU</b>	Information Security Policy
<b>New College</b>	4-5002 Information Technology Acceptable Use
<b>New College</b>	4-5015 Email Accounts
<b>UCF</b>	4-002.2 Use of Information Technologies and Resources
<b>UF</b>	Acceptable Use Policy
<b>UNF</b>	6.0050P Network Acceptable Use
<b>USF</b>	0-502: Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources
<b>USF</b>	Acceptable use policy
<b>UWF</b>	Student Communications Policy
<b>UWF</b>	UWF Information Security and Privacy Policy

### Conduct Expectations

Expectations of student and faculty conduct were found within policies and documents from all universities. In total, forty-seven documents with definitions of cyberbullying included the expectation of conduct. Table 12 illustrates the documents with conduct expectations from each university. The documents ranged from student codes of conduct to faculty handbooks to anti-harassment policies. Conduct expectations align with the setting netiquette element of this study's theoretical framework. As such,

policies and documents that exhibit conduct expectations commonly presented language with guidance on proper interpersonal etiquette.

Table 12.  
*University documents with conduct expectations.*

<b>University</b>	<b>Name of Document</b>
<b>FAU</b>	Student Code of Conduct
<b>FAU</b>	Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment
<b>FGCU</b>	Faculty handbook
<b>FGCU</b>	Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct
<b>FGCU</b>	Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct
<b>FGCU</b>	Student Code of Conduct and Student Conduct Review Process
<b>FGCU</b>	Disciplinary Actions
<b>FIU</b>	Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)
<b>FIU</b>	340.340 Undergraduate Student Academic Grievance Definitions and Procedures
<b>FIU</b>	380.047 Graduate Student Academic Grievance Guidelines and Procedure
<b>FIU</b>	Nondiscrimination, Harassment and Retaliation
<b>FIU</b>	Student Code of Conduct
<b>FAMU</b>	Student Code of Conduct
<b>FAMU</b>	Non-Discrimination Policy and Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedures
<b>FPU</b>	FPU 1.004 Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity 1.14.14
<b>FPU</b>	FPU 1.005P Sexual Harassment 2.20.15
<b>FPU</b>	FPU-3.0031P-Student Grievance Process 1.17.17
<b>FPU</b>	FPU-3.006 Student Code of Conduct 12.6.17
<b>FSU</b>	Chapter 3 - Student Life
<b>FSU</b>	2-2 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy (continued)
<b>FSU</b>	Faculty Handbook

<b>FSU</b>	Student Conduct Codes
<b>New College</b>	3-4018 Sexual Discrimination/Harassment
<b>New College</b>	6-3005 New College of Florida Student Code of Conduct
<b>UCF</b>	Student Code of Conduct
<b>UCF</b>	2-004.1 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence
<b>UCF</b>	UCF-5.008 Rules of Conduct
<b>UCF</b>	Faculty handbook
<b>UCF</b>	2-700 Reporting Misconduct and Protection from Retaliation
<b>UF</b>	Student Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct
<b>UF</b>	Sexual Harassment Policy
<b>UF</b>	Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policies
<b>UF</b>	Disruptive Behavior
<b>UF</b>	Grievance Procedure
<b>UNF</b>	1.0050R Sexual Misconduct Regulation
<b>UNF</b>	Faculty handbook
<b>UNF</b>	5.0010R Student Conduct Code
<b>UNF</b>	1.0030R Disruptive Behavior
<b>UNF</b>	1.0040R Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Regulation
<b>USF</b>	Code of conduct
<b>USF</b>	Academic Disruption
<b>USF</b>	Title Xi and sexual misconduct
<b>USF</b>	Discrimination and harassment
<b>UWF</b>	Student Code of Conduct
<b>UWF</b>	Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Violence, Gender-Based Discrimination and Retaliation
<b>UWF</b>	Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation
<b>UWF</b>	Standards of Conduct

The student codes of conduct contained language that expressed conduct expected of students. The language described not only conduct violations, but also positive

characteristics expected from all students, such as having integrity and thinking critically.

For example, the Student Code of Conduct from the University of North Florida states:

We value: the pursuit of truth and knowledge carried out in the spirit of intellectual and artistic freedom; ethical conduct; community engagement; diversity; responsibility to the natural environment; and mutual respect and civility.

Through this language, the student code of conduct set netiquette by describing the values to which the university community adhere. Setting conduct expectation in this context is not simply stating the rules but explaining the philosophy behind the rules that drive the intellectual community.

Anti-sexual harassment and violence policies, as well as anti-discrimination policies, exhibited language that provided guidance on conduct expectations when interacting with students and faculty of protected classes. In fact, these types of policies implicitly set expectations of conduct for the classroom as part of the university. They use broad language to describe the jurisdiction of the university for violation of these policies, which include all university activities. However, most commonly, these policies describe an on-campus setting, rather than fully online.

In addition to documents that defined cyberbullying, a number of policies that supported evidence of the methods of reporting and responding to bullying behaviors contained some references to conduct expectations. The student grievance policies from most institutions identify unprofessional behavior from faculty and staff resulting in official complaints from students. However, the description of unprofessional behavior varies from institution to institution. For instance, the University of West Florida's language was broad:



A grievance is defined as a complaint or dissatisfaction occurring when a student thinks that an action or decision by the University affecting him/her is unjust, inequitable or creates unnecessary hardship.

Alternatively, the Undergraduate Student Grievance Policy from Florida

International University provided the following guidance:

The definitions and procedures address grievances by undergraduate students in which the complaint or controversy alleges: (a) arbitrary and capricious awarding of grades; (b) unprofessional conduct by a professor that affects adversely either the student's ability to satisfy academic expectations, whether in the classroom, a field setting, a laboratory or other setting, or the student's actual performance;

Both statements offer insight into how each respective institution expects its faculty and staff to act towards students. The policy from the University of West Florida depersonalized a perceived hardship by the student. In doing so, it is as if the authors of the policy intended the university to assume blame or responsibility for the hardship, thereby setting an expectation of the university processes and procedures, rather than human expectations. Conversely, the language in Undergraduate Student Grievance Policy from Florida International University loosely identifies expectation for professors to be professional in conduct.

### Summary

Chapter Four discussed the finding of the current study. The study found in regard to research question 1 that each institution did define cyberbullying within its policies. Four themes were identified in describing these definitions – (1) Explicit, (2) Implied, (3) Redirection, and (4) Broad Harassment – No Definition. In answering research question 2, the study found that the documents reviewed from each institution contained misconduct reporting guidelines. Additionally, only the University of South Florida

maintained policies that explicitly empowered faculty in class responses to misconduct. Finally, the study identified and discussed four themes connecting teaching presence with the catalog of policies at each institution. Those themes were (1) inclusion in syllabus, (2) numerical limit, (3) technology responsibility, and (4) conduct expectations.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Summary

The purpose of this dissertation was to identify how the public universities in the state of Florida defined cyberbullying within their official policies, codes of conduct, and faculty handbooks, identify how each institution described the process for faculty response to and reporting of cyberbullying in those policies, and identify elements of teaching presence within the same documents. This qualitative study reviewed policies and regulations, codes of conduct, and faculty handbooks from each public university in the state of Florida. Data gathering procedures included navigating to each institution's website, identifying, and downloading the appropriate documents. Document analyses of 121 documents were conducted. Bowen (2009) stated that document analysis allows for the systematic evaluation of print and electronic text-media. This study accomplished research trustworthiness and validity through multiple methods, such as rich, thick description, triangulation, and inter-coder reliability.

There were two motivations for this study: 1) understanding how public institutions define cyberbullying within their official policies and 2) discovering elements within those policies that may support the instructor's curation of the online learning environment. While formulating the research questions, the researcher investigated the Community of Inquiry to gain a better understanding of the authoritative resource's impact on the educational experience. Garrison et al (1999) detailed how instructor molded the educational experience for students within the online classroom through the

inclusion of guidelines and discussed elements of teaching presence. Examples of four elements of teaching presence included inclusion in syllabus, numerical limit, technology responsibility, and conduct expectations which were discussed in Chapter 4. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. Do different Florida state public universities address cyberbullying in policies and codes of conduct? In addressing cyberbullying, do they define it? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ1a. If policies or codes of conduct that directly or indirectly govern cyberbullying exist at different Florida state public universities, do the policies provide support to the Community of Inquiry's concept of teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ2. Do policies or codes of conduct at Florida state public universities provide guidelines for instructor response to or methods of reporting cyberbullying? If so, how? If not, why not?

RQ2a. If guidelines for instructor response or methods of reporting harassment or bullying exist within policies at Florida state public universities, do the guidelines support the Community of Inquiry's concept of teaching presence? If so, how? If not, why not?

## Discussion of Research Questions

### Research Question 1: Defining Cyberbullying

All twelve public universities in the state of Florida maintained policies which made references to cyberbullying behavior. This study identified three themes in how the policy authors defined cyberbullying behavior – explicit, implied, and redirection. A fourth theme, broad harassment – no definition, described harassing behaviors but did not include a digital component. However, when combining broad harassment with redirecting policies, a cyberbullying definition could be created. This process will be discussed later in the chapter.

Only one institution, the University of North Florida, contained policies that explicitly used the term cyberbullying. In those policies at North Florida, cyberbullying was included as a sub-category or example of harassing behavior and never defined as different or specific type of behavior. In fact, the majority of policies that defined larger scope terms, such as harassment, stalking, and bullying, and included modifying terms like ‘electronic communication’. This suggests there is hierarchal definition which places emphasis on harassment as the parent and bullying, cyberbullying, and stalking as child definitions in which context is a key dimension.

The definitions provided within these documents were contextual. The category of policy or code of conduct dictated the context in which the behavior was discussed. For instance, sexual misconduct documents discussed harassment in the context of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and sexual discrimination and pertained to the university community and its visitors. In these policies and regulations, the discussion focused on

defining prohibited behavior, expectations of campus safety, and Title IX reporting requirements. Alternatively, codes of conduct discussed harassing behaviors in the contexts of creating an environment of collegial integrity. Prohibited behaviors, including harassment and bullying, were discussed within codes of conduct in terms of obstructing the educational mission of the institution and its stakeholders.

This spectrum of contextual definitions for harassing behaviors, and subsequently cyberbullying behaviors, offers insight into how far reaching electronic misbehavior can extend and the complexity in defining cyberbullying. Figure 7 illustrates the contextual differences in the definition of harassment.

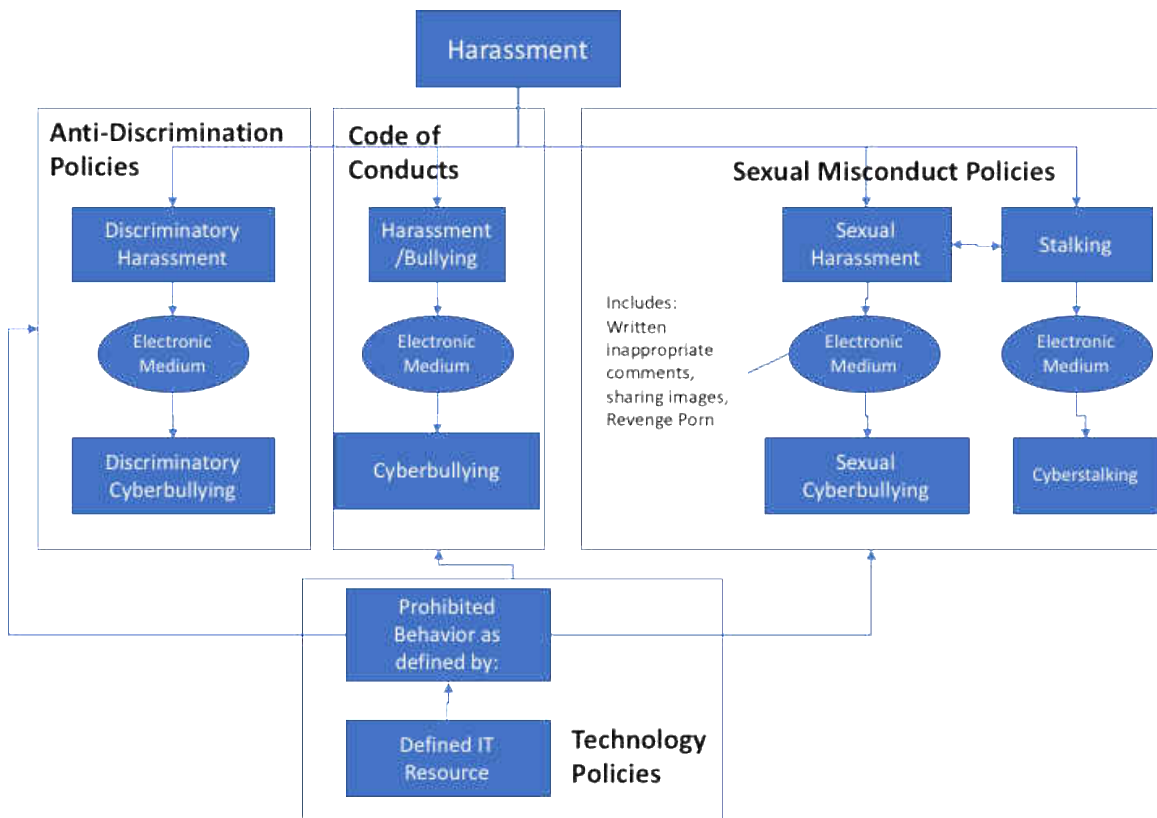


Figure 7. Contextual differences in defining harassment.

### On Cyberbullying and Cyber-harassment

As previously discussed, most public institutions in the state of Florida discussed harassing behaviors as having an electronic or digital scope, rather than defining or using the term cyberbullying. Vance (2010) argued cyber-harassment to be a more appropriate term when discussing cyberbullying within the context of higher education. He explained that the term “bullying” applied to behavior exhibited by children. Instead, Vance continued, harassment should be treated as the adult equivalent. While this study does not provide evidence to the argument that age is a factor, it does provide evidence that harassment is a commonly identified term within policies in public institutions in the state of Florida. Moreover, the definitions used for harassment commonly contained terms that identified different electronic mediums and communications. Perhaps, then, cyber-harassment is the more appropriate term.

### On Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking

Stalking and cyberstalking also contained inferences to cyberbullying. In many cases, cyberstalking was explicitly defined as continued interactions with an individual with the intent to harass through an electronic or digital medium. In some instances, the definition of cyberstalking was enhanced with fear-centric qualifiers. For instance, the University of North Florida, University of South Florida, University of Central Florida, and University of Florida all included references to the victim assuming a state of fear or distress that would impact the victim’s ability to engage in the educational process. Interestingly, the same concept of pervasive fear or distress is also used in the definition

of bullying found in University of Central Florida's and University of South Florida's student codes of conduct.

One explanation of the diverging of these terms and definitions can be identified through federal sexual misconduct reporting requirements. Instructions are required through the Clery Act to report and disclose certain crime statistics (Federal Register, 2014). As such, instances of stalking, dating violence, and domestic violence are all required to be disclosed by institutions. This distinction of stalking as a type of relationship violence then separates the term from general harassment or bullying.

However, this leads one to question how sexual interest or relational interested is determined when examining and determining to report these types of harassing behaviors to federal authorities. A future study should examine the contents of cyber-harassment and cyberstalking reports at institutions for the consistency of categorization between the two terms. This also illuminates two potential issues regarding the online classroom that could stem these very similar definitions. The difference in the interpretation between the two similar definitions impacts the requirement of the instructor to report the misconduct and the consequential outcome for the alleged perpetrator. Discussion on the reporting requirements for faculty will be discussed in the discussion of Research Question 2.

#### On Cyberbullying and Technology Policies

While references to cyberbullying behavior were made within technology policies, this study determined that technology policies relied on conduct policies such as the codes of conduct to define harassing behaviors. This is contradictory to the



suppositions of Lugas and Barr (2011) who claimed most cyberbullying definitions would be found in technology-focused policies. Instead, these technology policies set guidelines on using the institution's technology resources, referencing conduct policies when discussing prohibited behaviors through those resources.

This strategy allows the custodians of the IT resources to manage the use of these resources without having to police misconduct. Though this redirection to conduct policies, IT resources are added as a modifier to the existing conduct policies. Where conduct policies broadly defined harassing behaviors, the added effects from the technology policies enhanced the harassment definition to include university-maintained IT resources – thus building a definition of cyberbullying. This concept is much like enchantment cards in Magic the Gathering™, in which enchantments, such as flying, are added to base monster cards in order to expand the rules of how the base card plays.

## Research Question 2: Faculty Response and Reporting

Establishing the rules of engagement and discussion is part of developing teaching presence through setting the climate for the online classroom (Garrison, 2011). This process of climate setting in the online environment includes designing the structure of the course and providing feedback to social behaviors of the students (Hambacher, Ginn, & Slater, 2018; Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, & Fung, 2010; Robinson, Kilgore, & Warren, 2017; Shae, Pickett, & William, 2003). As such, establishing the response and reporting guidelines that the instructor will follow is an important process of the building

the online classroom. Through these established guidelines, instructors can set the expectations for student on the measures the instructor will take to correct misbehavior.

### In-class Response

Only two institutions in the state of Florida established an official policy or faculty handbook which guided faculty in responding to classroom misbehavior. The Faculty Handbook at Florida International University acknowledged the instructor's authority within the classroom. Informally, the authors of the document set an order of operations in which the instructor may first provide an oral reprimand to the student and then may remove the student from the class. The phrase 'oral reprimand' was non-inclusive of the online modality, unless the instructor elected to hold a synchronous video class meeting at which time the instructor may orally reprimand a disruptive student. Alternative word choices to consider when writing guides for online teaching include 'verbal reprimand', 'text reprimand', or 'visual warning'.

The University of South Florida outlined the authoritative actions faculty could take against disruptive behavior within their classroom, regardless of modality. Within the Academic Disruption policy, the university administration delegated the authority to instructors to intervene during disruptive behavior, including actions such as asking the student to stop and removing the student from the class environment. These actions reflect the conflict response model discussed in Chapter 2. The measures outlined within the policy are appropriate responses to increasingly uncivil conduct. First the instructor ask the student to stop. If the conduct continues, the faculty is authorized to remove the

student from the classroom environment. During this phase, the instructor is required to submit a conduct report to the department. If the instructor has reason to believe the conduct would the conduct may continue, he or she is authorized to extend the length of time the student spends away from the classroom.

While the online modality was explicitly included within the policy, there was no description of the process to exclude a student from a course. Of course, this description would be dependent upon the capabilities of the chosen learning management systems. Exclusion from an online course can be fundamentally different than that of a face-to-face setting, as well. Theoretically, through the use of web moderation tools, a student could be systematically inhibited from misconduct, while still being able to engage with other types of course content (Poore, 2015). If the solution is to limit the student's interaction with others while still enabling the student to progress within the course, discussion moderation tools may be more appropriate than removing the student entirely from the course. The University of South Florida currently uses the Canvas LMS™ (USF, nd). According to CanvasLMS user community, this style of moderation is not yet available (CanvasLMS, 2017). Interestingly, as one user pointed out, there have been a number of requests for to implement a feature allowing for the moderation of inappropriate discussions from repeat offenders, yet the platform has yet to create or adopt a tool (CanvasLMS, 2017).

## Reporting Misconduct

The reporting procedures for harassing misconduct was outlined in policies at each of the twelve universities. Much like the definition of harassment and subsequently cyberbullying, the reporting structure was dictated by the context in which the misconduct was presented. Sexual misconduct and Title IX reporting at most institutions required faculty members to immediately report known instances of sexual misconduct to the campus' Title IX coordinator. Harassment, as described in the codes of conduct, of non-sexual nature were to be reported to a university's respective student conduct office. Discriminatory harassment was encouraged to be reported to the university's respective equal opportunity or institutional equity office. Additionally, some policies described an option for victims to pursue criminal charges simultaneously with conduct charges in the event of criminal misconduct. Figure 8 illustrates the common reporting model for harassment.

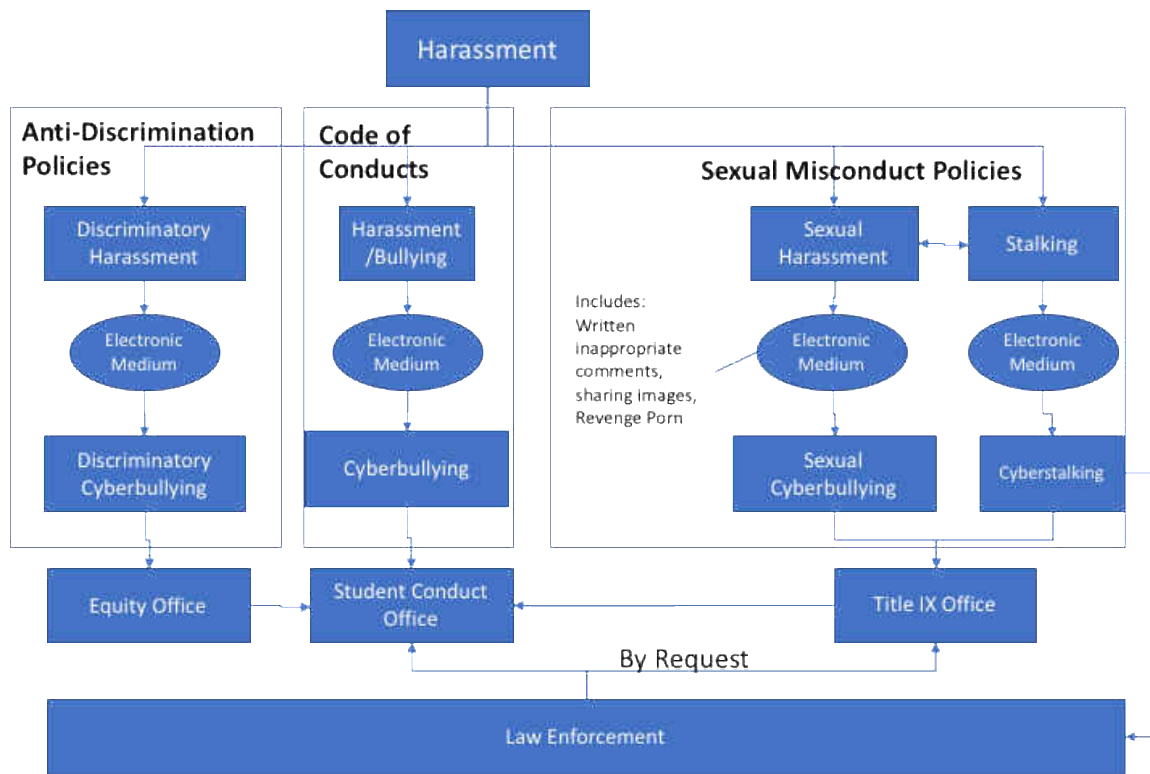


Figure 8. Harassment reporting flow.

### Research Question 1a and 2a: Teaching Presence

Research Questions 1a and 2a were focused on identifying teaching presence elements within the policies that either defined cyberbullying or discussed the instructor response to or reporting of cyberbullying. As discussed for Research Question 1, cyberbullying was not explicitly defined in all but two analyzed policies. Instead, harassment was the parent term which was augmented by either the use of digital or electronic centric terms or the redirection from information technology policies. Additionally, the same policies that contained harassment definitions also described the process for reporting misconduct. Because of this, Research Questions 1a and 2a will be discussed together.

### Elements of Teaching Presence

Elements of teaching presence were identified in most misconduct and technology policies. The technology policies were coded with the theme technology responsibility. These policies described the expected and efficient use of the campus technologies in order to effectively achieve the educational mission of the university. Anderson et al (2001) described modeling the efficient use of the medium as a critical condition for online course design. As such, the technology policies identified not only how communications were to be conducted through the institution's technology resources, but also examples of prohibited behavior, such as using the technology to violate the institution's student code of conduct.

Likewise, the conduct policies (codes of conduct, sexual misconduct, and anti-discrimination) set conduct expectation for students and faculty for campus and the classroom. In doing so, these policies set netiquette and the standard for behavior and discussion within the online classroom. As mentioned within Chapter 1, Garrison (2011) explained that an instructor's expertise and authority for discipline was critical in building teaching presence and the educational experience. Policies enforced by the university help to enhance the instructor's expertise on discipline by providing a description of misconduct and the procedure to intervene. Furthermore, grievance policies, like the document found at Florida International University, set expectations of the instructor's conduct and provided students with a route to mediation.

Additionally, the conduct policies also established numerical limits on behavioral issues. Most prominently were the sexual harassment and violence policies, which set

zero tolerance limits on sexual misconduct. Within these policies, instructors at most universities defined as ‘responsible employees’ and required known or suspected sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. However, it may be hard for instructor to reconcile some types of harassing behaviors with sexual harassment and violence due to the incongruities between the definition of harassment and stalking. The obfuscation of categorical classification for different types of harassment may explain why many of the analyzed policies included statements on the zero tolerance of any kind of harassment directed at any individual. Through this line of line of reasoning, the obfuscation is removed because all misconduct is reported, leaving the determination to conduct professionals.

However, in the context of teaching presence, the “report everything” attitude may be counterproductive. In enacting zero-tolerance policies, the instructor may inadvertently set the wrong social climate in which students are discouraged to discuss sensitive topics out of fear of punishment. It would appear that a number of administrators considered this hinderance. Provisions were written in some policies which made exceptions for the First Amendment and academic freedom. For example, the following language was found in the Student Code of Conduct from the University of Central Florida:

This definition, however, shall not be interpreted to abridge the rights of the University community to freedom of expression protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and any other applicable law.

Similarly, the University of North Florida provided an example of types of speech exempt from sexual harassment. As explained in 1.005R Sexual Harassment, discourse

within post-secondary education may delve into uncomfortable topics of discussion. If an uncomfortable topic is broached within the context of the subject matter, it may be protected by academic freedom. However, the authors of the policy warned that courts within the United States have placed limits on academic freedom in ways that may limit or deny a student the ability to engage in the educational process.

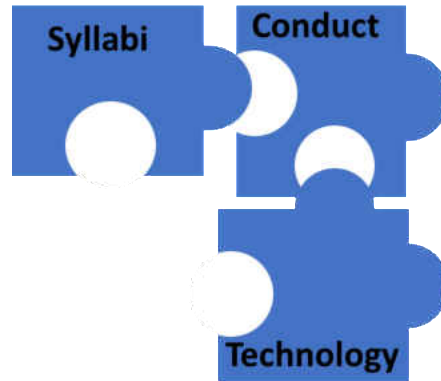
### Linking Policies to Help in the Construction of Teaching Presence

Another issue with the themes identified in the current study and policies reviewed is that they are weak in teaching presence on their own. This is exemplified by technology policies relying on conduct policies to establish netiquette. Additionally, this study identified no conduct or information technology policy containing a reference to including policy within the syllabus. Instead, the connection between conduct expectations and curriculum was established in syllabi policies. However, only three universities-maintained syllabi policies which mentioned the inclusion of either conduct expectations or hyperlinks to the university conduct policies. Anderson et al (2001) suggested that stable expectations would act as a deterrent to classroom misconduct. Establishing the conduct expectations for a course could be achieved by including those expectations within the syllabus, along with hyperlink to the authoritative source.

Linking, or redirecting, served as a strength and weakness of policies. As mentioned previously, three policies on syllabi encouraged the inclusion of conduct policies and expectations within course syllabi. This served as a binding agent, connecting conduct with course expectations. Likewise, the effective use of the medium



exemplified within information technology resources policies were linked to conduct expectations set within conduct policies. However, these connections are one way and, while not mutually exclusive, may not clearly establish the connection between all three policies for use within the classroom. This concept is like working on a jigsaw puzzle. Three pieces have been identified that roughly fit the area very near to the edge. However, one of the pieces is adjacent to the other two and does not complete the image. Figure 9 illustrates this analogy. As such, it may difficult for faculty to establish teaching presence without creating some media that connects the three policies for students.



*Figure 9.* Missing puzzle piece concept.

### Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

#### Limitations

There were two major limitations to the study which were out of the control of the researcher. One limitation was the availability of documentations from some institutions' websites. The one link to the sexual harassment policy at found within the student code of conduct from the University of Florida was no longer active and returned a 'page not

found' at the time of analysis. This required the researcher to identify an alternative source for the institution's sexual harassment policy. The research was able to identify a series of webpages on the University of Florida Human Resources website that served as the basis for analysis. Additionally, all links which referenced a faculty handbook at the University of West Florida were not active or broken. It would appear that the webmasters at the University of West Florida placed many of the institutional manuals, such as faculty handbooks, behind a login. As such, the faculty handbook from UWF was not analyzed.

Another limitation was the content within the documents analyzed. Bowen (2010) stated a common limitation of document analysis was that documents were comprised only of the content held within and may lack contextual information that may be found in other forms of qualitative research. The researcher made efforts to close the contextual gaps by finding supporting details about the phenomenon within and across the documents analyzed.

### Delimitations

Beyond the limitations, there were a number of delimitations within the control of the researcher. One delimitation was the type of documents analyzed. The researcher made the decision to analyze only official policies, regulations, codes of conduct, and faculty handbooks. This decision was made based on the literature which questioned the availability of cyberbullying definition within policies at universities in the United States. Another delimitation is related to the first, in which the researcher excluded human

knowledge of policies. This decision allowed the researcher to analyze only official policies, rather than unofficial departmental policies or published best practices. Another delimitation was the researcher's determination to focus the research study through the framework of the Community of Inquiry. By intersecting the research questions with the Community of Inquiry framework, researcher was able to gain a greater understanding of the policies available to instructors to set the climate within their online classroom.

### Researcher Reflection

The researcher began this research study with the desire to gain an understanding of certain types of cyberbullying in higher education. In fact, the first concepts of this study were specific to revenge porn and its educational impact on the victims. However, as research into the topic was gathered, it was apparent that the parent category of cyberbullying was not well researched in higher education. The studies that have been conducted on the phenomenon were very similar in discussing the perceived prevalence of cyberbullying in the general lives of students or faculty. In fact, there were very few studies on the prevalence of cyberbullying through the duration of a course. As such, the researcher resolved to examine cyberbullying in the context of online education.

That said, the researcher did not want to repeat studies of the perceived prevalence of cyberbullying or self-reporting of in-class instances. Because of the inequity of the cyberbullying definition across literature and other researchers alluding to individuals being ignorant to the phenomenon, the researcher was determined to find a new way explore the topic. However, much of the literature on the topic requested a

review of cyberbullying policies in higher education. After discussing his topic with several instructional designers at his institution, he identified the Community of Inquiry as a good framework within to work. The Community of Inquiry was used to describe the living knowledge communities within online courses. This was perfect, as the researcher's previous research experience and interests had been on cyberbullying in broader online communities, such as Reddit <sup>TM</sup>. Furthermore, many of the key concepts of the Community of Inquiry fit with another model the researcher was interested in, the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects.

The researcher started the current study with two objectives in mind, identifying how institutions define cyberbullying and connecting those definitions to the Community of Inquiry. Through the review of literature, the researcher noticed that research on the Community of Inquiry rarely reached beyond the immediacy of the online classroom. Honestly, this was discouraging to the researcher. How could he connect the two objectives? After careful consideration, the researcher concluded that elements of the Community of Inquiry would possibly be present in policies, as they were created to guide a university's community in its educational mission.

The results of the study confirmed that researcher chose the correct path of study. While the researcher was not surprised by the use of harassment over cyberbullying, he was surprised by the way in which harassment was defined. It was almost as if the authors of the policies had the word on the tip of their tongue but couldn't quite find it. Additionally, the researcher was relieved by identifying elements of teaching presence

within the policies. As noted previously, the researcher suspected that the elements existed.

For the researcher, this study not only shed light on how institutions defined cyberbullying, but also how we as academics and practitioners talk about online education. When online education is discussed, it has previously either described the macro or micro attributes. At the macro level, the modality was described through the growth of online programs, adoption of learning management systems, and increasing enrollment within the United States. On the micro level, the modality was discussed as course creation and curation. If we discuss the merits of student affairs and other operations at the university which impact student success, shouldn't we have the same discussion about the online modality? It is of the opinion of this researcher, that as more institutions adopt the fully online modality in which student never step foot on a physical campus, the conversation of online education should shift to being similar of the traditional student experience.

### Recommendations

The researcher has determined the following recommendation based upon the data gathered and analyzed:

1. Define or include examples cyber-harassment or cyberbullying within conduct policies.
2. Establish additional policies on classroom management.
3. Interlink policies and regulations to reinforce teaching presence.

#### 4. Expand the Community of Inquiry.

##### Define or Include Examples Cyber-harassment or Cyberbullying

As mentioned within this chapter, cyberbullying behavior was identified in conduct policies at all twelve institutions. However, the behavior was included in the parent category of harassment. It is the recommendation of this researcher to include the terms cyber-harassment or cyberbullying as examples of harassment. In implementing the use of either term, this researcher recommends that the authors of conduct policies clearly delineates the differences between cyber-harassment/cyberbullying and cyberstalking. Through the course of analysis, the author of the current study identified similarities between the definition of harassment and cyberstalking. These similarities may cause confusion for instructors and students when it comes to reporting the behavior.

On the determination to include a definition for or examples of cyber-harassment or cyberbullying within policies, the researcher recommends using the term cyber-harassment. This recommendation echo's Vance (2010) call to use the term cyber-harassment. Unlike Vance, however, the determination to use cyber-harassment over cyberbullying is not based on the age group to which the term describes. Instead, this recommendation is based on the established parent category of harassment that is prevalent within the policies reviewed.

##### Establish Additional Policies on Classroom Management

The current study identified a single institution, the University of South Florida, which contained a policy on the management of disruptive conduct. Minor et al. (2013)

reported that barriers to reporting cyberbullying behavior by faculty were lack of known authoritative resources and perceived lack of administration support. The perceived lack of administration support is best exemplified by the Rollins College case discussed in the Chapter 1. As such, the researcher of the current study recommends that institutions adopt official policies that provide faculty with the recommended course of action for disruptive conduct. These policies will provide faculty with the authority to discipline misbehavior and affirm support from the administration.

#### Interlink Policies to Reinforce Teaching Presence

The current study identified that the policies and document analyzed were weak in the support of teaching presence. This weakness was because the policies were written to address a specific issue. As such, these policies touched one or two elements of teaching presence in the process of addressing their respective subject. The current research study also recognized a strength in linking policies together. As exemplified previously in the chapter, technology resource policies established the use of technology medium and linked to conduct policies which established the expected conduct. Through the linking of policies, the institutions effectively created a definition of cyberbullying and reinforced teaching presence.

It is the recommendation of the researcher for institutions to create a reference map of related degrees. There are many different ways accomplish this goal. Depending on the content management system that publishes an institution's website, this could be done simply through creating a tagging system of related terms and policies. An example

of using tags to relate policies can be found on Florida International University's website (<https://policies.fiu.edu/>). To support instructors and teaching presence, tagging these policies as 'classroom management', 'online classroom management', and 'classroom conduct' is recommended.

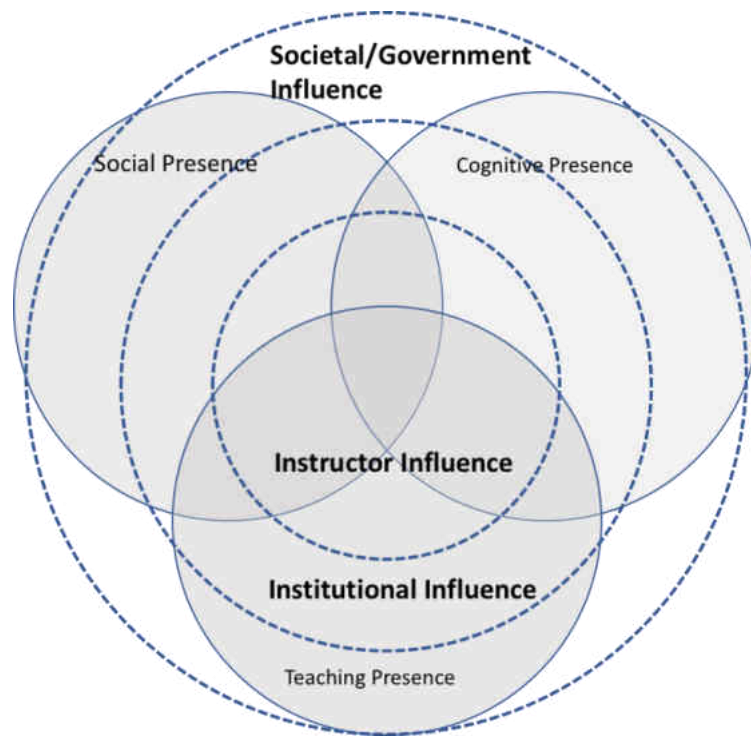
Additionally, instructors can influence teaching presence by including conduct and technology policies within their syllabi. It is the recommendation of the researcher that institutions that have not adopted syllabi policies, do so. Institutions that have adopted policies should require instructors to include a statement on classroom conduct expectations which includes links to technology and conduct policies.

#### Expand the Community of Inquiry

Much of the research on the Community of Inquiry has been on the design of an online course. This is the first study to the knowledge of the researcher that examines institutional policies for elements of teaching presence. The researcher chose to examine policies under the framework of the Community of Inquiry because there are additional factors that influence the success of a student within a course beyond those immediately implemented by the instructor (Van den Berg & Hoffman, 2005). The researcher recommends an expansion to the Community of Inquiry which offers additional layers to the framework. In this expansion, the Community of Inquiry is viewed as a layered onion. The outer layer represents state, federal, and societal influences through policy, funding, and discourse. The second layer represents the university's influences through



policies, regulations, programs and offerings. The interior layer represents the online classroom. Figure 10 illustrates this proposed model.



*Figure 10.* Proposed Community of Inquiry Onion Model

#### Future Research

Additional research is recommended on the prevalence of cyberbullying in the online classroom. The finding of this study identified that reporting of cyberbullying and cyber-harassment may go unreported due to similarities in their definitions. As higher education continues its growth in digital areas, it will become important to understand policy changes required to maintain safety and structure within the online classroom. This area of inquiry should also be investigated through a longitudinal study. The changes prevalence cyberbullying behaviors should be documented.

Several questions that arose during the investigation centered around jurisdiction. Does jurisdiction need to be defined in how institutions identify cyberbullying? How does jurisdiction affect online courses that are either entirely or partially conducted through non-traditional online mediums, such as social media or massively multiplayer online (MMO) games? For instance, before the mass adoption of learning management systems, many instructors chose to conduct synchronous course meetings through the MMO known as Second Life™ (Warburton, 2009). Second Life's™ service, which persists today, is not managed by a university, and is accessible to subscribers regardless of university affiliation (Second Life, nd). Though the synchronous condition of the course would be conducted through the Second Life medium, would instructors be able to act against misconduct without moderation tools such as removing a student from the class environment or report the misconduct?

There have also been instances of instructors partially conducting courses through Twitter™. For instance, in the Summer 2019 semester, Josie Ahlquist from the Florida State University used Twitter™ to conduct a portion of her EDH 5309 course (Ahlquist, 2019). Students within the course interacted with a specific hashtag, #EDH5309, answering questions posed by Ahlquist. Do institutional rules on harassment apply to the platform? Some, but not all, Florida institutions included electronic communication within their jurisdiction. For example, Florida Gulf Coast University stated:

This may include violations which are alleged to have occurred partly or entirely through electronic means.

Is there a standard that public universities should follow regarding the jurisdiction of cyberbullying in higher education? A follow up study on the jurisdiction of cyberbullying in higher education would help to answer these questions.

### Conclusion

The researcher conducted this study because of the lack of literature around policies on cyberbullying in higher education. Through document analysis of policies, regulations, codes of conduct, and faculty handbooks, this study expands the body of literature about the cyberbullying policies in higher education and their uses within online classrooms. As universities across the United States expand their access mission to include the online modality, it becomes increasingly important to understand the policies that guide student interaction. Furthermore, it is equally as important for instructors of online modalities to know the content of these policies, so they are able to build better experiences within their online classrooms.

**APPENDIX A:  
CODING INSTRUMENT**

Number	Code Question	Code	Notes:
A	Policies		
1	Institution	University Name	
2	Policy Name	Insert Name	
3	Policy Location	Insert URL	
4	Policy Stakeholder/ Type	Student, Faculty	
5	Have a definition of cyberbullying?	Yes/No	
6	What is the definition of cyberbullying?	Insert Definition	
7	Does the definition make it clear that cyberbullying is different from other kinds of aggressive behavior?	Yes/No	
8	Explicit: Does the definition use the term cyberbullying or cyber-harassment? If so, which term is used?	Yes/No	
9	Implicit: Does the definition exclude the term cyberbullying or cyber-harassment, but include terms such as computer, network, technology, online, or internet?	Yes/No	
10	What terms are used?	Keywords and Key-phrases	
11	Does the policy provide a reporting structure? If so, how?	Instructor Reporting, Student Reporting	
12	Does the policy provide a response guideline? If so, how?	Instructor response, Student Response	
B	Teaching Presence Elements		
13	Does the policy recommend placement within a course syllabus? If so, where?		
14	Is there a proposed time or numerical interaction limit		(continued)

Number	Code	Question	Code	Notes:
		on harassment? I.e., first offense is a warning. If so, what?		
15		Does the policy provide guidelines on how institutional technology should be used? If so, how?		
16		Does the policy provide guidelines on how a student should act in class? If so, what is described?		

**APPENDIX B:  
IRB NON-HUMAN DETERMINATION LETTER**



**Institutional Review Board**  
 FWA00000351  
 IRB00001138  
 Office of Research  
 12201 Research Parkway  
 Orlando, FL 32826-3246

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

NOT HUMAN RESEARCH DETERMINATION

April 22, 2019

Dear [Joseph Raditch](#):

On 4/22/2019, the IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	TEACHING ONLINE AND CYBERBULLYING: EVALUATING HIGHER EDUCATION BULLYING POLICIES IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA
Investigator:	<a href="#">Joseph Raditch</a>
IRB ID:	STUDY00000364
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-Human Research Form, Category: IRB Protocol;</li> <li>• Faculty Advisor Review of Student Research, Category: Faculty Research Approval;</li> <li>• Coding Instrument.docx, Category: Test Instruments;</li> <li>• Data Collection instrument.docx, Category: Test Instruments;</li> </ul>

The IRB determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations.

IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human in which the organization is engaged, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination. You can create a modification by clicking **Create Modification / CR** within the study.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or [irb@ucf.edu](mailto:irb@ucf.edu). Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Showman  
 Designated Reviewer



**APPENDIX C:  
TABLE OF DOCUMENTS WITH REPORTING**

<b>University</b>	<b>Name of Document</b>
FAU	Student Code of Conduct
FAU	Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment
FGCU	Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct
FGCU	Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct
FIU	Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)
FIU	Nondiscrimination, Harassment and Retaliation
FIU	Student Code of Conduct
FAMU	Student Code of Conduct
FAMU	Non-Discrimination Policy and Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedures
FPU	FPU 1.004 Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity 1.14.14
FPU	FPU 1.005P Sexual Harassment 2.20.15
FSU	Chapter 3 - Student Life
FSU	2-2 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy
FSU	Faculty Handbook
New College	3-4018 Sexual Discrimination/Harassment
New College	6-3005 New College of Florida Student Code of Conduct
UCF	Student Code of Conduct
UCF	2-004.1 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence
UCF	2-700 Reporting Misconduct and Protection from Retaliation
UF	Student Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct

UF	Sexual Harassment Policy
UF	Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policies
UNF	1.0050R Sexual Misconduct Regulation
UNF	Faculty handbook
UNF	5.0010R Student Conduct Code
UNF	1.0040R Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Regulation
USF	Code of conduct
USF	Academic Disruption
USF	Title Xi and sexual misconduct
USF	Discrimination and harassment
UWF	Student Code of Conduct
UWF	Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Violence, Gender-Based Discrimination and Retaliation
UWF	Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation

**APPENDIX D:  
ALL REVIEWED POLICIES AND THEIR LOCATION**

University	Name of Document	URL
FAU	Acceptable Use of Technology	<a href="https://www.fau.edu/policies/files/12.2%20Acceptable%20Use%20of%20Technology%20Resources.pdf">https://www.fau.edu/policies/files/12.2%20Acceptable%20Use%20of%20Technology%20Resources.pdf</a>
FAU	Privacy of Electronic Communications	<a href="https://www.fau.edu/policies/files/12.5%20Privacy%20of%20Electronic%20Communications.pdf">https://www.fau.edu/policies/files/12.5%20Privacy%20of%20Electronic%20Communications.pdf</a>
FAU	Faculty handbook	<a href="http://www.fau.edu/provost/faculty/files/facultyhandbook_2018.pdf">http://www.fau.edu/provost/faculty/files/facultyhandbook_2018.pdf</a>
FAU	Student Code of Conduct	<a href="http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/REGULATION%204%20007_6%202023%2015%20Clean%20Copy%20rev%2012.16.pdf">http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/REGULATION%204%20007_6%202023%2015%20Clean%20Copy%20rev%2012.16.pdf</a>
FAU	Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment	<a href="http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter5/Reg%205.010%206-2015.pdf">http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter5/Reg%205.010%206-2015.pdf</a>
FAU	Workplace Threat Assessment	<a href="https://www.fau.edu/policies/files/1.12%20Workplace%20Threat%20Assessment%20Team.pdf">https://www.fau.edu/policies/files/1.12%20Workplace%20Threat%20Assessment%20Team.pdf</a>
FAU	Code of Academic Integrity	<a href="http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf">http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf</a>
FAU	Misc. Student Rules	<a href="http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg%204.004%20Reg%20Amend%2051518.pdf">http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg%204.004%20Reg%20Amend%2051518.pdf</a>
FAU	Grievance Procedure	<a href="http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter5/Reg%205.009%205-22-15.pdf">http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter5/Reg%205.009%205-22-15.pdf</a>
FAU	Syllabi Guidelines	<a href="http://www.fau.edu/provost/files/Guidelines-for-course-Syllabi-7-29-15.pdf">http://www.fau.edu/provost/files/Guidelines-for-course-Syllabi-7-29-15.pdf</a>
FGCU	Faculty handbook	<a href="https://www2.fgcu.edu/FacultySenate/files/FacultyHandbook-approved08-04-04.pdf">https://www2.fgcu.edu/FacultySenate/files/FacultyHandbook-approved08-04-04.pdf</a>

FGCU	Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure	<a href="https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/policies/Policy3_022_Technology_Use_09_03_09_ada.pdf">https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/policies/Policy3_022_Technology_Use_09_03_09_ada.pdf</a>
FGCU	Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct	<a href="https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/policies/Policy1_006_NonDiscAntiHaraSexualMisc_12192016_ada.pdf">https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/policies/Policy1_006_NonDiscAntiHaraSexualMisc_12192016_ada.pdf</a>
FGCU	Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct	<a href="https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_PR_1_003_Non-DiscAntiHarr_Sexual_060716_ada.pdf">https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_PR_1_003_Non-DiscAntiHarr_Sexual_060716_ada.pdf</a>
FGCU	Student Code of Conduct and Student Conduct Review Process	<a href="https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_4002_StudentCode_04112017.pdf">https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_4002_StudentCode_04112017.pdf</a>
FGCU	Disciplinary Actions	<a href="https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_PR_5_016_Disc_Actions_091118.pdf">https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_PR_5_016_Disc_Actions_091118.pdf</a>
FGCU	Student Disputes Resolution	<a href="https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/policies/Policy_1_010_Student_Disputes_Resolution_09272016_ada.pdf">https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/policies/Policy_1_010_Student_Disputes_Resolution_09272016_ada.pdf</a>
FGCU	Student Disputes Resolution	<a href="https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_PR_4_004_StudDispRes_04192016_ada.pdf">https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_PR_4_004_StudDispRes_04192016_ada.pdf</a>
FGCU	Student Rights and Responsibilities	<a href="https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_PR_4_001_StudRights_092011_ada.pdf">https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/regulations/FGCU_PR_4_001_StudRights_092011_ada.pdf</a>
FIU	Faculty handbook	
FIU	Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)	<a href="https://regulations.fiu.edu/docs=202">https://regulations.fiu.edu/docs=202</a>

FIU	340.340 Undergraduate Student Academic Grievance Definitions and Procedures	<a href="https://policies.fiu.edu/policy/737">https://policies.fiu.edu/policy/737</a>
FIU	380.047 Graduate Student Academic Grievance Guidelines and Procedure	<a href="https://policies.fiu.edu/files/739.pdf">https://policies.fiu.edu/files/739.pdf</a>
FIU	Nondiscriminati on, Harassment and Retaliation	<a href="https://regulations.fiu.edu/docs=203">https://regulations.fiu.edu/docs=203</a>
FIU	Student Code of Conduct	<a href="https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-conflict-resolution/student-code-of-conduct%20/_assets/code_of_conduct_booklet-web.pdf">https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-conflict-resolution/student-code-of-conduct%20/_assets/code_of_conduct_booklet-web.pdf</a>
FIU	Course syllabi requirement	<a href="https://policies.fiu.edu/files/736.pdf">https://policies.fiu.edu/files/736.pdf</a>
FIU	380.043 Graduate Academic Misconduct Definitions and Procedures	<a href="https://policies.fiu.edu/files/740.pdf">https://policies.fiu.edu/files/740.pdf</a>
FIU	340.303 Undergraduate Academic Misconduct Definitions and Procedures	<a href="https://policies.fiu.edu/files/738.pdf">https://policies.fiu.edu/files/738.pdf</a>
FIU	Preventing and Responding to Sex Offenses	<a href="https://policies.fiu.edu/files/821.pdf">https://policies.fiu.edu/files/821.pdf</a>
FIU	Code of Computing Practice	<a href="https://it.fiu.edu/policy/">https://it.fiu.edu/policy/</a>

FAMU	Faculty handbook	<a href="http://www.famu.edu/facultysenate/Faculty%20Handbook%20-%20-%20Spring%202008.pdf">http://www.famu.edu/facultysenate/Faculty%20Handbook%20-%20-%20Spring%202008.pdf</a>
FAMU	Student Code of Conduct	<a href="http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Final%202_012%20Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf">http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Final%202_012%20Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf</a>
FAMU	Electronic Connectivity	<a href="http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Regulation%205.003%20Electronic%20Connectivity%20Regulation%20Final%207-15.pdf">http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Regulation%205.003%20Electronic%20Connectivity%20Regulation%20Final%207-15.pdf</a>
FAMU	Non-Discrimination Policy and Discriminatioin and Harassment Complaint Procedures	<a href="http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Amended%20Regulation%20%2010%20103%20FINAL%207%201%2014.pdf">http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Amended%20Regulation%20%2010%20103%20FINAL%207%201%2014.pdf</a>
FAMU	Due Process, Other Rights and Responsibilities	<a href="http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Final%202_013%20Due%20Process%207.14.16.pdf">http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Final%202_013%20Due%20Process%207.14.16.pdf</a>
FAMU	Disruptive Conduct	<a href="http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Regulation10.111DisruptiveConduct.pdf">http://www.famu.edu/regulations/Regulation10.111DisruptiveConduct.pdf</a>
FPU	Faculty handbook	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/Faculty-Handbook-2018-19-Ed.-FINAL-06.25.18-for-posting.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/Faculty-Handbook-2018-19-Ed.-FINAL-06.25.18-for-posting.pdf</a>
FPU	FPU-3.0011P Email as Official Form of University's Communication with Students 11.19.14	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-3.0011P-Email-as-Official-Form-of-Universitys-Communication-with-Students-11.19.14-FINAL.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-3.0011P-Email-as-Official-Form-of-Universitys-Communication-with-Students-11.19.14-FINAL.pdf</a>



FPU	FPU-5.005 Academic Integrity 7.29.14	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FPU-5.005-Academic-Integrity-7.29.14.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FPU-5.005-Academic-Integrity-7.29.14.pdf</a>
FPU	Course Syllabus	<a href="https://floridapolytechnic.org/wp-content/uploads/FPU-5.0065AP-Course-Syllabi-10.29.14.pdf">https://floridapolytechnic.org/wp-content/uploads/FPU-5.0065AP-Course-Syllabi-10.29.14.pdf</a>
FPU	FPU-6.002 Personnel Code of Conduct and Ethics 2.28.18	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-6-002-Personnel-Code-of-Conduct-and-Ethics-approved-by-BOT-2.28.18.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-6-002-Personnel-Code-of-Conduct-and-Ethics-approved-by-BOT-2.28.18.pdf</a>
FPU	FPU-11.0018P Appropriate Use of IT Resources 4.21.15	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-11.0018P-Appropriate-Use-of-IT-Resources-04.21.15-FINAL.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-11.0018P-Appropriate-Use-of-IT-Resources-04.21.15-FINAL.pdf</a>
FPU	FPU 1.004 Non- Discrimination/E qual Opportunity 1.14.14	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FPU-1.004-Non-Discrimination-and-Equal-Opportunity-Regulation-1.14.20141.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FPU-1.004-Non-Discrimination-and-Equal-Opportunity-Regulation-1.14.20141.pdf</a>
FPU	FPU 1.005P Sexual Harassment 2.20.15	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-1.005P-Sexual-Harassment-02.20.15-FINAL-REVISED.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-1.005P-Sexual-Harassment-02.20.15-FINAL-REVISED.pdf</a>
FPU	FPU-3.0031P- Student Grievance Process 1.17.17	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-3.0031P-Student-Grievance-Process-01.17.17-FINAL-REVISED.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-3.0031P-Student-Grievance-Process-01.17.17-FINAL-REVISED.pdf</a>
FPU	FPU-3.006 Student Code of Conduct 12.6.17	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-3.006-Student-Code-of-Conduct-Approved-12.6.2017.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-3.006-Student-Code-of-Conduct-Approved-12.6.2017.pdf</a>

FPU	FPU-5.001 Academic Freedom and Responsibility 1.14.14	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FPU.5.001-Academic-Freedom-Academic-Freedom-and-Responsibility-1.14.141.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FPU.5.001-Academic-Freedom-Academic-Freedom-and-Responsibility-1.14.141.pdf</a>
FPU	FPU-11.0017P Electronic Communications and Data Transmission 8.29.15	<a href="https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-11.0017P-Electronic-Communciations-and-Data-Transmission-08.29.15-FINAL.pdf">https://mk0floridapolyrvphbf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/FPU-11.0017P-Electronic-Communciations-and-Data-Transmission-08.29.15-FINAL.pdf</a>
FSU	Academic Honor Policy - Website	<a href="http://fda.fsu.edu/content/download/21140/136629/file/AHPFinal2014.pdf">http://fda.fsu.edu/content/download/21140/136629/file/AHPFinal2014.pdf</a>
FSU	Distance Learning Policy and Process	<a href="https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/policies/provost/DLPolicy.pdf">https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/policies/provost/DLPolicy.pdf</a>
FSU	Chapter 6 - Miscellaneous	<a href="https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/regulations/adopted/FSU-Chapter-6-20180717.pdf">https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/regulations/adopted/FSU-Chapter-6-20180717.pdf</a>
FSU	Chapter 3 - Student Life	<a href="https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/regulations/adopted/FSU-Chapter-3%20Revised%2020190114.pdf">https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/regulations/adopted/FSU-Chapter-3%20Revised%2020190114.pdf</a>
FSU	2-2 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy	<a href="https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/policies/president/FSU%20Policy%202-2.pdf">https://regulations.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu486/files/policies/president/FSU%20Policy%202-2.pdf</a>
FSU	Faculty Handbook	<a href="https://facultyhandbook.fsu.edu/handbook-sections/section-6-policies-and-procedures">https://facultyhandbook.fsu.edu/handbook-sections/section-6-policies-and-procedures</a>

FSU	Information Security Policy	<a href="http://policies.vpfa.fsu.edu/policies-and-procedures/technology/information-security-policy">http://policies.vpfa.fsu.edu/policies-and-procedures/technology/information-security-policy</a>
FSU	Student Conduct Codes	<a href="https://dos.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1476/files/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20June%202018-c.pdf">https://dos.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1476/files/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20June%202018-c.pdf</a>
New College	3-4027 Discrimination/ Harassment	<a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zMWtyQ3cxMzRBRDA">https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zMWtyQ3cxMzRBRDA</a>
New College	3-4007 Misconduct	<a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zMWtyQ3cxMzRBRDA">https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zMWtyQ3cxMzRBRDA</a>
New College	4-5002 Information Technology Acceptable Use	<a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zeTZQYy1PTHI0aTA">https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zeTZQYy1PTHI0aTA</a>
New College	4-5015 Email Accounts	<a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zeTZQYy1PTHI0aTA">https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zeTZQYy1PTHI0aTA</a>
New College	3-4018 Sexual Discrimination/ Harassment	<a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zMWtyQ3cxMzRBRDA">https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zMWtyQ3cxMzRBRDA</a>
New College	6-3005 New College of Florida Student Code of Conduct	<a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zUmVEYUNTQnAzbm9">https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3FQtTgKui8zUmVEYUNTQnAzbm9</a>
New College	Faculty Handbook	<a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=1u2H3ssATZhup0noV2Q6bCgqPy06DIIBHtyDKxKA4dHk">https://drive.google.com/open?id=1u2H3ssATZhup0noV2Q6bCgqPy06DIIBHtyDKxKA4dHk</a>
UCF	4-403.1 Required Elements of the Course Syllabus	<a href="https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-403.1RequiredElementsoftheCourseSyllabus.pdf">https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-403.1RequiredElementsoftheCourseSyllabus.pdf</a>

UCF	UCF-3.0134 Complaints and Grievances Alleging Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment or Retaliation	<a href="https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter3/documents/3.0134GrievancesAllegingDiscriminationFINAL_July17.pdf">https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter3/documents/3.0134GrievancesAllegingDiscriminationFINAL_July17.pdf</a>
UCF	UCF-3.019 Disruptive Conduct	<a href="https://regulations.ucf.edu/docs/notices/3.019DisruptiveConduct_finalJun09_000.pdf">https://regulations.ucf.edu/docs/notices/3.019DisruptiveConduct_finalJun09_000.pdf</a>
UCF	UCF-5.009 Student Conduct Review Process; Sanctions	<a href="https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.009StudentConductRevProcFINALJuly18.pdf">https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.009StudentConductRevProcFINALJuly18.pdf</a>
UCF	UCF-5.015 Student Academic Behavior Standards	<a href="https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.015StudentAcademicBehaviorStandardsFINALJuly18.pdf">https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.015StudentAcademicBehaviorStandardsFINALJuly18.pdf</a>
UCF	UCF-5.006 Student Rights and Responsibilities	<a href="https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.006StudentsRightsResponsibilitiesFINALJune18.pdf">https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.006StudentsRightsResponsibilitiesFINALJune18.pdf</a>
UCF	4-002.2 Use of Information Technologies and Resources	<a href="https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-002.2UseOfInformationTechnologiesAndResources.pdf">https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-002.2UseOfInformationTechnologiesAndResources.pdf</a>
UCF	Student Code of Conduct	<a href="http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/docs/goldenrule.pdf">http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/docs/goldenrule.pdf</a>
UCF	2-004.1 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence	<a href="https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/2-004.1ProhibitionOfDiscriminationHarassmentAndRelatedInterpersonalViolence.pdf">https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/2-004.1ProhibitionOfDiscriminationHarassmentAndRelatedInterpersonalViolence.pdf</a>
UCF	UCF-5.008 Rules of Conduct	<a href="https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.008RulesofConductFINALJuly18.pdf">https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.008RulesofConductFINALJuly18.pdf</a>

UCF	Faculty handbook	<a href="https://facultyexcellence.ucf.edu/files/2016/10/Faculty-Handbook_9-111.pdf">https://facultyexcellence.ucf.edu/files/2016/10/Faculty-Handbook_9-111.pdf</a>
UCF	2-700 Reporting Misconduct and Protection from Retaliation	<a href="https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/2-700ReportingMisconductAndProtectionFromRetaliation.pdf">https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/2-700ReportingMisconductAndProtectionFromRetaliation.pdf</a>
UF	UF Policy on Course Syllabi	<a href="http://www.syllabus.ufl.edu/media/syllabusufledu/syllabi_policy_20180911.pdf">http://www.syllabus.ufl.edu/media/syllabusufledu/syllabi_policy_20180911.pdf</a>
UF	Acceptable Use Policy	<a href="http://www.it.ufl.edu/policies/aupolicy.html">http://www.it.ufl.edu/policies/aupolicy.html</a>
UF	Code of Penalties	<a href="http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1.007.pdf">http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1.007.pdf</a>
UF	Policies on Information Technology and Security	<a href="http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/10102.pdf">http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/10102.pdf</a>
UF	Complaints Against Faculty Members	<a href="http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/7036.pdf">http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/7036.pdf</a>
UF	Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution	<a href="https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/">https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/</a>
UF	Faculty handbook	<a href="http://handbook.aa.ufl.edu/">http://handbook.aa.ufl.edu/</a>
UF	Student Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct	<a href="http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf">http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf</a>
UF	Sexual Harassment Policy	<a href="http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm">http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm</a> - 404s
UF	Non-Discrimination/ Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policies	<a href="http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1.006.pdf">http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1.006.pdf</a>
UF	Disruptive Behavior	<a href="http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1008.pdf">http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1008.pdf</a>

UF	Grievance Procedure	<a href="http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/4012.pdf">http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/4012.pdf</a>
UNF	4.0200P Academic Freedom	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/04-HumanResources/4_0200P.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/04-HumanResources/4_0200P.aspx</a>
UNF	2.0640P Academic Misconduct Policy	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/02-AcademicAffairs/EnrollmentServices/2_0640P.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/02-AcademicAffairs/EnrollmentServices/2_0640P.aspx</a>
UNF	1.0150P Email Policy	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/01-General/1_0150P.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/01-General/1_0150P.aspx</a>
UNF	2.0800P Faculty Syllabus	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/02-AcademicAffairs/Faculty/2_0800P.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/02-AcademicAffairs/Faculty/2_0800P.aspx</a>
UNF	2.0990P Student Complaints & Appeals	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/02-AcademicAffairs/General/2_0990P.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/02-AcademicAffairs/General/2_0990P.aspx</a>
UNF	1.0050R Sexual Misconduct Regulation	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/01-General/1_0050R.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/01-General/1_0050R.aspx</a>
UNF	Faculty handbook	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/acadaffairs/faculty_handbook/Chapter10.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/acadaffairs/faculty_handbook/Chapter10.aspx</a>
UNF	6.0050P Network Acceptable Use	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/06-AdminFinance/6_0050P.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/06-AdminFinance/6_0050P.aspx</a>
UNF	5.0010R Student Conduct Code	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/05-StudentAffairs/5_0010R.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/05-StudentAffairs/5_0010R.aspx</a>
UNF	1.0030R Disruptive Behavior	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/01-General/1_0030R.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/01-General/1_0030R.aspx</a>

UNF	1.0040R Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Regulation	<a href="https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/01-General/1_0040R.aspx">https://www.unf.edu/president/policies_regulations/01-General/1_0040R.aspx</a>
USF	Syllabi Policy	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-11-008.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-11-008.pdf</a>
USF	Academic integrity	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf3.027.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf3.027.pdf</a>
USF	General Grievance policy 0-502: Appropriate Use of Information	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-30-054.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-30-054.pdf</a>
USF	Technology Resources	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-502.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-502.pdf</a>
USF	Grievance policy	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-30-053.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-30-053.pdf</a>
USF	Code of conduct	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf6.0021.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf6.0021.pdf</a>
USF	Acceptable use policy	<a href="https://www.usf.edu/it/about-us/policies-standards/acceptable-use.aspx">https://www.usf.edu/it/about-us/policies-standards/acceptable-use.aspx</a>
USF	Academic Disruption	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf3.025.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf3.025.pdf</a>

USF	Title Xi and sexual misconduct	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-004.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-004.pdf</a>
USF	Discrimination and harassment	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-007.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-007.pdf</a>
UWF	Faculty handbook	<a href="https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/division-of-academic-affairs/resources/Faculty_Handbook_Updated_Links_07_03_14.doc">https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/division-of-academic-affairs/resources/Faculty_Handbook_Updated_Links_07_03_14.doc</a>
UWF	Student Code of Academic Conduct	<a href="https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/trustees/regulations/2017/UWF-REG-3.030-3.23.17.pdf">https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/trustees/regulations/2017/UWF-REG-3.030-3.23.17.pdf</a>
UWF	Student Grievance Process	<a href="https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/63014507/SA-27.02-02.17%20Student%20Grievance%20Process%2010.2.2017.pdf?api=v2">https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/63014507/SA-27.02-02.17%20Student%20Grievance%20Process%2010.2.2017.pdf?api=v2</a>
UWF	UWF Electronic Communications Policy	<a href="https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598041/IT-01.02-08.15%20UWF%20Electronic%20Communications%20Policy.pdf?api=v2">https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598041/IT-01.02-08.15%20UWF%20Electronic%20Communications%20Policy.pdf?api=v2</a>
UWF	Disruptive Conduct	<a href="https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/trustees/regulations/UWFRREG2.016DisruptiveConduct_000.pdf">https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/trustees/regulations/UWFRREG2.016DisruptiveConduct_000.pdf</a>
UWF	Faculty Syllabus	



UWF	Student Rights and Responsibilities   University of West Florida	<a href="https://uwf.edu/go/student-handbook/student-rights-and-responsibilities/">https://uwf.edu/go/student-handbook/student-rights-and-responsibilities/</a>
UWF	Student Communications Policy	<a href="https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598274/SA-19.03-05-18%20Student%20Communications%20Policy.pdf?api=v2">https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598274/SA-19.03-05-18%20Student%20Communications%20Policy.pdf?api=v2</a>
UWF	UWF Information Security and Privacy Policy	<a href="https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598073/IT-04.02-11.18%20UWF%20Info%20Security%20and%20Privacy%20Policy.pdf?api=v2">https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598073/IT-04.02-11.18%20UWF%20Info%20Security%20and%20Privacy%20Policy.pdf?api=v2</a>
UWF	Student Code of Conduct	<a href="https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/trustees/regulations/2018/UWF-REG-3.010-Student-Code-of-Conduct-2018-10-12.pdf">https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/trustees/regulations/2018/UWF-REG-3.010-Student-Code-of-Conduct-2018-10-12.pdf</a>
UWF	Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Violence, Gender-Based Discrimination and Retaliation	<a href="https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598169/P-14.02-02.15%20Sexual%20Misconduct,%20Sexual%20Violence,%20Gender-Based%20Discrimination%20and%20Retaliation.pdf?api=v2">https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598169/P-14.02-02.15%20Sexual%20Misconduct,%20Sexual%20Violence,%20Gender-Based%20Discrimination%20and%20Retaliation.pdf?api=v2</a>
UWF	Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation	<a href="https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/64815260/P-13.08-03.16%20Prohibition%20of%20Discrimination.pdf?api=v2">https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/64815260/P-13.08-03.16%20Prohibition%20of%20Discrimination.pdf?api=v2</a>
UWF	Standards of Conduct	<a href="https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598032/HR-22.00-2004.07%20Standards%20of%20Conduct.pdf?api=v2">https://confluence.uwf.edu/download/attachments/44598032/HR-22.00-2004.07%20Standards%20of%20Conduct.pdf?api=v2</a>

**APPENDIX E:  
SAMPLE OF RESEARCH JOURNAL**

Entry "USF Download" from 4/18/2019

To begin my policy search, I searched "USF Policies" through Google. Google replied with over one million results. The first page of results contained the following sites:

<http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations-and-policies/regulations-policies-procedures.asp>

<http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/>

Discrimination and harassment	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-007.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-007.pdf</a>
<a href="#">Syllabi Policy</a>	<a href="http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-11-008.pdf">http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-11-008.pdf</a>

<http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/>

<http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/>

<http://generalcounsel.usf.edu/> - Directs to the regulations site

<https://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/policies.aspx> -unrelated

<https://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-rights-responsibilities/policies/index.aspx> - redirects to policies & Regulation pdf residing on policies and regulation - Researcher download files related to:

Student reporting form: [https://usf-](https://usf-advocate.symplicity.com/public_report/index.php/pid105359?)

[advocate.symplicity.com/public\\_report/index.php/pid105359?](https://usf-advocate.symplicity.com/public_report/index.php/pid105359?) Found through USFm site

**APPENDIX F:  
SAMPLE OF REFLECTIVE JOURNAL**

From Entry “Trends” filed on 4/23/2019:

Initial downloads and data scouring is signaling some trends:

- Policies and regulations are not uniform across institutions
- Some institutions link policies together - requiring additional mapping for realization
- Publication of policies may live as pdf or webpage - webpage could indicate stealth updates

From Entry “5/7/2019”, filed on 5/7/2019:

So far, only 1 university defines cyberbullying in its policies - UNF. It also happens to be in the sexual misconduct policies.

The rest of the policies seem to rely on broad spectrum harassment definitions. Could this be unclear for faculty?

So far, technology policies have been redirecting conduct to codes of conduct and other conduct policies. Redirection is an on going theme. There is a need to string policies together to understand not only what is acceptable behavior but also how to report or discipline unacceptable behavior.

Questions of jurisdiction are arising. There is mention of conduct happening on campus and limited off-campus or during university related activities - but how does that impact online learning?



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