



URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for Caltech GPS
February 19, 2021

This is what was found by the *GPS Pod* at *Caltech* on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**
 - Title IX reports can be filed here: <https://titleix.caltech.edu/reporting/reporting-options>
 - General safety reports can be filed with the Caltech Hotline here: <https://asic.caltech.edu/caltech-hotline>
 - Anonymous feedback to the GPS DEI committee can be filled here: <http://www.gps.caltech.edu/resources/dei-gps/dei-gps-comment>
 - Title IX reporting policies are developed by the Equity Office in accordance with federal guidelines. These are updated when federal guidelines are changed, though may be updated more regularly by the office in conjunction with student advisory groups (<https://titleix.caltech.edu/get-involved>).
 - Caltech security publishes an annual report (<https://security.caltech.edu/our-mission/annual-security-and-fire-safety-report>) that details all of the reporting policies for all types of crimes, violations, and misconduct.
 - Caltech maintains compliance with the Cleary Act and publishes a Daily Crime Log (including Title IX complaints) here: <https://security.caltech.edu/our-mission/caltech-daily-crime-log>.

- **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?**
 - Within the Caltech Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CCID), Equity Office, and Student Counseling there are a handful of “Confidential Resources” (people you can talk to and who are not required to file a report). Then most other employees at Caltech are “reporting resources” (people you can talk to, but who will be required to file a report). The CCID’s website describes some of these mechanisms: <https://diversity.caltech.edu/resources/report>
 - Reports can be made online and can be made anonymously (see links above).
 - Depending on which reporting method you use, the reports either go to the Equity Office, to Caltech Security, or to the GPS DEI committee (see links above). The members of those offices/groups can be found on the Caltech websites.
 - Non-Caltech people (including police) are not part of the reporting process, unless the individual filing the report requests them to become involved (or maybe in situations where the report cites imminent danger to hurt yourself or someone else). The Equity Office will help facilitate these interactions with police if you go that route.



- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**

- The general outcomes of reports/complaints are not known/tracked.
- The outcome of a complaint will depend on with whom the complaint is filed/reported. If it goes to the Title IX/Equity office, there is a defined procedure for deciding the consequences. If one files a complaint with their supervisor, the results will be very supervisor dependent. Some supervisors have been known to take action such as mandatory group implicit bias trainings. If a less formal complaint is reported to e.g. the GPS DEI committee, there are not yet standardized rules about how that would be handled. This is something we recommend the committee to consider and formalize in writing.
- In extreme cases complaints have resulted in a faculty member being placed on leave.

Racial profiling by campus security has been reported, but to our knowledge no steps were taken to prevent this from happening in the future.

- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**

- The CCID, Title IX/Equity Office, and Student Counseling staff are great resources for individuals reporting any incidents of bias, harassment, or assault. They are specially trained as advocates and counselors for individuals experiencing microaggressions, harassment, and other forms of racial discrimination. The staff in these offices represent diverse identities which is integral to ensuring comfort and safety in reporting incidences of racial discrimination. Caltech's policy prohibits retaliation or repercussions against individuals who submit a report in good faith. What this actually means in practice is unclear from the available online resources. We suggest that the relevant websites be updated accordingly to emphasize the concrete actions that are taken to prevent retaliation/repercussions.
- Furthermore, it is unclear what accommodations exist for reporters, or whether reporting will trigger an automatic assessment of potential impact of the incident on the individuals grades or evaluations. This information would be useful to include on the various websites describing reporting.

- **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**

- There are very few institutionalized structures or mechanisms at Caltech for formal action. One of the benefits of being a small institution is that change can happen more easily because there isn't much bureaucracy. However, a definitive shortcoming is that any collective action or student effort needs to forge its own path and cannot benefit from a formalized structure of petition, or committees, or town halls.
- The Graduate Student Council (GSC) runs an annual survey and reports their findings in negotiation with the administration on topics of student salaries, benefits, mental health resources, etc.



Within GPS the Local Student Committee (LSC), which is our branch of the GSC, organizes an annual survey and tries to communicate these findings with the division chair, though this effort has not been very successful in the past.

- **Recommendations for changes to improve the reporting systems with the Institution**

- Have links to reporting policies and forms, as well as detailed descriptions of the processes involved easily accessible on the institute website and within the department.
- Have the names and information of points of contact (reporting resources, departmental ombudspeople, etc.) displayed on websites and in the physical buildings for easy reference.
- Annually educate all students about the reporting process, including all steps involved and specific people they can contact for all types of issues that may arise. While it is important to have this information disseminated during orientation, it is best to have regular trainings to remind everyone in the community of the available resources.
- Have multiple levels within the reporting system, such as an ombudsperson within lab groups and representatives within each option, for people to talk to anonymously. Ensure these people are educated on the resources available to address various concerns and help students navigate the reporting process. This could build off of the already existing Title IX & Equity Advocates program.
- Departments should actively ask for feedback on current systems and review them frequently to address holes and problems as they arise. We recommend the creation of an annual survey and town hall run by the faculty to solicit student feedback and concerns.