

What To Do If You Are a Target (Managing Faculty Targeted Harassment Incidents) College of Arts & Sciences at Mississippi State University¹

Ensure your Safety First:

- Contact the MSU Police (662.325.2121) if the incident involves an eminent threat.
- Contact your department head immediately. The department head will reach out to the A&S Dean's Office.
- Contact the Dean of Students Office (dos@msstate.edu|662.325.3611) if the incident involves a student.
- If you believe you are being targeted because you are a part of a protected group, contact the [MSU Office of Civil Rights Compliance](#).

Document the Incident(s):

- Work with your department head to report the incident. Should you be unable to reach your department head or believe that the response has not been fully examined, please reach out to Dean Travis at rtravis@deanas.msstate.edu.
- Create a log that documents the incident(s) timeframe and narrative.
- Save voicemail, email, or other forms of communication as evidence.
- Take screenshots of any social media posts or other forms of communication you receive from the threat.

Other Possible Action Items:

- Do not respond to emails or other communications regarding the incident(s) but seek guidance from others at the university to decide how to respond.
- Consider asking a friend to monitor your social media accounts, or other forms of external communication, and take screenshots of evidence of targeted harassment.
- Create a short-articulated position in your own words for you to distribute to colleagues and others. Consult your department head who may work with the communication team in Arts & Sciences if you need assistance with this task.
- Consult your department head if you believe this attack has impacted your progress towards tenure or promotion.
- Reach out to those in your support system.
- Contact the [Employee Action Program](#) (EAP) if you need assistance with mental health resources.

Additional Policies and Resources:

- MSU's policies concerning faculty can be found on the [Provost's website](#) and in the [Faculty Handbook](#).

¹ Portions of this document were informed by publicly available documents at the University of Iowa, University of Massachusetts Amhurst, the University of California Irvine, and the American Sociological Association.

- Further information about faculty rights and responsibilities can be found in AOP 13.03 [Faculty Responsibilities in Instruction and Curriculum, and Attendance at Classes](#),
- The Free Speech Policy can be found in OP 91.304 [Free Speech and Assembly](#) and the Academic Freedom Policy can be found in AOP 13.11 [Academic Freedom](#).
- The Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation policy can be found in OP 03.03 [Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#).
- Be aware that MSU email is part of the public record. See the [Mississippi Public Records Act](#) for details.

Additional Guidance for Department Heads:

Building on the information supplied to both faculty and department heads, there are several steps department heads should take once they are aware of a targeted harassment incident.

- Contact the faculty member immediately.
- Email Dean Travis, Thomas Bourgeois/Cat Walker to inform them of the situation and to coordinate efforts.
- The faculty member's safety is the number one priority. Assist the faculty member under threat to address their safety concerns.
- Inform staff in your department office that they may receive phone calls or email about the incident. Make sure they know to save all voicemail or email messages and to make you aware of any calls/emails. It may be helpful to create a written statement that they can read when they receive phone calls concerning harassment.
- Coordinate with the faculty member to temporarily remove their contact information from MSU webpages until the threat has passed.
- If the faculty member is experiencing harassment related to identity or gender, ask the faculty member if you can help facilitate a report with [Civil Rights Compliance](#).
- Make sure you include the Dean and Communication Team in your email and phone call correspondence as the event unfolds. Communication and coordinated efforts should be a top priority.
- Be mindful that MSU email is part of the public record.
- Remember that such events take a toll on a department, and it is important to consider the well-being of the entire department, including graduate students. In an email or a meeting, after determining what the targeted faculty member is comfortable sharing, provide information to the department. Further, reiterate the policy on and your support of academic freedom.
- Should long-term targeted harassment persist and impact the faculty member's promotion and tenure trajectory, work with them to consider all options, including extensions or other assistance.