

# Understanding and Recognizing Discrimination

**Discrimination** is an intentional or unintentional act that adversely affects your educational opportunities and/or employment because of your **protected class**. **Discrimination** in employment and education is prohibited under MCLA's Equal Opportunity Policy as well as under state and federal law.

**Protected classes** are legally protected categories which are: race, color, national origin, religion, age (40+), disability, pregnancy, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, and active military or veteran status.

Discrimination is typically classified as either **disparate treatment** or **discriminatory harassment**.

**Disparate treatment** is when you are treated less favorably than other individuals outside of your protected class(es) because of your membership in a protected class(es). For instance, you are disciplined for conduct but notice that other individuals outside of your protected class(es) who engage in same or similar conduct are not disciplined.



**Discriminatory harassment** is characterized by speech or physical conduct made based on a protected class. For instance, use of a homophobic or racial slur, or an unwelcome sexual encounter (e.g. sexual harassment). To legally qualify, the speech or conduct must be severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it creates a hostile environment.



What qualifies as discriminatory harassment?

**Discriminatory Harassment** includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual harassment such as: Sexual gestures; Leering; Sending sexually explicit images or suggestive objects via text, email, and/or social media
- Racist, ableist, ageist, bigoted jokes, and derogatory comments; Slurs; Unwanted touching, rubbing, or hugging; Restriction of movement
- Use of power dynamics to create fear or to undermine, coerce, or intimidate



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

**Title IX and Equal Opportunity Office**  
Venable Hall 309  
375 Church Street  
North Adams, MA 01247  
413-662-5571  
TitleIX@mcla.edu

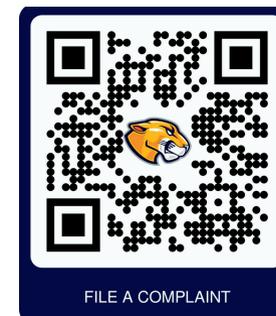


Title IX and EO Office

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

**PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION BASED ON**

**RACE • COLOR  
NATIONAL ORIGIN  
RELIGION • AGE (40+)  
DISABILITY  
PREGNANCY • SEX  
GENDER  
GENDER IDENTITY  
GENDER EXPRESSION  
SEXUAL ORIENTATION  
MARITAL STATUS  
PARENTAL STATUS  
VETERAN STATUS**



FILE A COMPLAINT



**Title IX and Equal Opportunity Office**

## What do you do if you witness or become aware of concerning behavior?

If you learn that a member of community has experienced behavior you believe is or might be discrimination, you are encouraged to contact either the **Dean for Title IX, Equal Opportunity, and Student Wellness** or the **Director of Title IX & Equal Opportunity**. They will assess for immediate safety concerns and provide consultation and support tailored to the situation.

Employees who are Mandated Reporters and Campus Security Authorities must report concerning behavior to the **Dean for Title IX, Equal Opportunity, and Student Wellness** or the **Director of Title IX & Equal Opportunity**.

## Resources and Support

If you have experienced any form of discrimination, confidential support resources are fully available to you whether or not you end up filing a formal complaint or requesting an official investigation.

### Confidential Resources

**MCLA Counseling Services:** 413-662-5331  
counselingservices@mcla.edu

**MCLA Health Services:** 413-662-5421  
healthservices@mcla.edu

**Elizabeth Freeman Center:** 866-401-4225

### File a Formal Complaint

At MCLA, you have the right to file a formal complaint with the Title IX and Equal Opportunity Office, a report to the police, both, or neither at all. The choice is yours. Scan the QR code to file an Equal Opportunity complaint.



## MCLA Policies

The Massachusetts State University System and MCLA have policies prohibiting discrimination, which includes discriminatory treatment and discriminatory harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, age if you're over 40, disability, pregnancy, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital and parental status, and active military and veteran status. For more info, see [www.website.com](http://www.website.com)

## Equal Opportunity Officers

**Patrick Connelly**  
Dean for Title IX, Equal Opportunity,  
and Student Wellness  
413-662-5127  
patrick.connelly@mcla.edu

**Justin MacDowell**  
Director of Title IX and Equal  
Opportunity  
413-662-5571  
justin.macdowell@mcla.edu  
Email: TitleIX@mcla.edu  
Online: [mcla.edu/titleix](http://mcla.edu/titleix)  
Location: Venable 309



If you are uncomfortable with behavior you have experienced or observed, or are unsure whether it qualifies as discrimination and/or harassment, consider contacting the Director of Title IX and Equal Opportunity to learn more about your rights and reporting options at 413-662-5571 or [justin.macdowell@mcla.edu](mailto:justin.macdowell@mcla.edu).

