



# Faculty Support & Safety Guidance

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**OXY** Occidental College

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# Occidental College Faculty Safety Guidelines

This guide is designed to assist Occidental College faculty, staff, and administrators in developing strategies to protect academic freedom that may come under threat from individuals or groups outside the College. Faculty whose work addresses divisive issues, or whose scholarly viewpoints may be considered controversial may find themselves targets of unwelcome attacks, in virtual (or actual) space. We recognize that such targeting may be disproportionately experienced by faculty of color and those that are underrepresented in their fields of study.

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This guide includes a set of practices and strategies that the institution can take to assist faculty that are faced with such situations, and also provides practical advice that faculty themselves can take to respond in the event that they are targeted by individuals or groups outside of the College based on the content of their scholarship and teaching. It addresses potential concerns arising in such situations and lists resources available to assist individual faculty members, department chairs, and other administrators. This guide is “content neutral,” in that it is designed to offer support for faculty members across a wide spectrum of views and areas of research.

The foundation for this guide is Occidental's unwavering support for academic freedom and freedom of expression. As stated in the Faculty Handbook, “Occidental resolutely reaffirms its commitment to academic freedom ... colleges and universities serve the common good through learning, teaching, research, and scholarship; and the fulfillment of this function necessarily rests upon the preservation of the intellectual freedoms of teaching, expression, research, and debate. All components of the academic community have a responsibility to exemplify and support these freedoms in the interests of reasoned inquiry.” The faculty's right to academic freedom includes controversial issues or ideas that may provoke public disagreement. Through this guide, and other means, the College seeks to protect faculty against the intimidation or violence that the expression of unpopular ideas and controversial research sometimes generates.

This guide focuses on threats to or harassment of faculty members from outside the College. For information about policies and procedures governing discrimination, harassment and retaliation committed by Oxy employees or students, please see Oxy's [anti-harassment policy](#), and other Oxy [policies](#) governing workplace behavior. In addition, community members should be familiar with the College's [Threat Assessment Policy](#), to understand how to respond in situations in which a member of the Oxy community may pose a threat to the safety of others.

In matters of safety and security, individual faculty members are encouraged to make use of campus resources to assist them in responding to an immediate situation, as well as to address any concerns that arise in the longer term.

## **THE FOLLOWING SECTION OFFERS SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN VARIOUS ROLES, INCLUDING:**

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- » **College Leadership**
- » **Individual Faculty Member**
- » **Department Chair**
- » **Academic Administration**
- » **Marketing and Communications**

# Guidelines for College Leadership

As the public face of the institution, the President's stance on matters of academic freedom is important as both a guiding principle of the College's core values, and should form the basis of a full-throated defense of academic freedom whenever a faculty member is targeted.

ROLE	ACTIONS
President and / or Board Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• College Leadership proactively develop a leadership message that defends academic freedom, the importance of faculty safety, and the development of learning environments, to which all students have access, in which difficult issues are discussed and dissected. In addition to proactive messaging, work with Marketing and Communications to reaffirm these principles for use as a template to ensure a strong and swift public response should a crisis arise.</li></ul>

# Guidelines for the Individual Faculty Member

Identify your primary concerns and seek out assistance to help ensure your safety.

ROLE	ACTIONS
Individual Faculty Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult directly or work with your department chair and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs to ensure the appropriate institutional response to any targeting or threats that you experience, which may include engaging the College's <a href="#">Threat Assessment Team</a>, or working directly with Campus Safety on appropriate responses.</li> <li>• Campus Safety is a resource for all members of the Oxy community that can provide assistance to faculty experiencing targeting or threats. Assistance may include safety escorts, patrols, or other measures as appropriate. Reach out to Rick Tanksley, Director of campus safety, (<a href="mailto:rtanksley@oxy.edu">rtanksley@oxy.edu</a>, 323-341-4685) to discuss your safety concerns.</li> <li>• Download the <a href="#">LiveSafe app</a>, which is designed to provide students, faculty and staff with an easy way to directly connect with Campus Safety for your safety and security needs.</li> <li>• If you believe those who are targeting you know where you live and you are concerned about safety in your home, Campus Safety can assist you in assessing risk and planning accordingly, and can help connect you to law enforcement resources in your local community.</li> <li>• Notify your chair and other colleagues as necessary to protect the safety of all members of the department and community.</li> <li>• If you are experiencing gender-based harassment and/or harassment that is sexual in nature, contact the Human Resources Department, the Title IX Coordinator, or the staff member designated to handle complaints about harassment, discrimination or retaliation, to ensure that you are fully aware of your rights and resources. HR can be reached at 323-259-2613 or <a href="mailto:hr@oxy.edu">hr@oxy.edu</a>. Title IX Department can be reached at 323-259-1338 or email the Title IX Coordinator, Alexandra Fulcher, at <a href="mailto:afulcher@oxy.edu">afulcher@oxy.edu</a>.</li> <li>• If you are experiencing electronic harassment of any kind, please contact the VP for ITS/CIO at 323-259-2506 or <a href="mailto:cio@oxy.edu">cio@oxy.edu</a> for assistance. Do not delete any messages, but you may want to disengage from reading all emails in your inbox, listening to all voice messages, etc. Preserved messages may be of use in identifying the harassers and pressing any relevant charges. Seek out assistance to review and sort your incoming messages (e.g., find someone to read your messages and forward harassing ones to the Threat Assessment Team and work-related ones to you). Also, see <a href="#">Protecting Your Oxy Information</a> for guidance.</li> <li>• Create a log to document and archive all threatening emails, tweets, Facebook posts, and phone messages. Consider asking a friend to monitor social and other media apart from your personal accounts to keep you apprised of any developments or threats. ITS can work with you to manage your Oxy email account and other systems to properly document the threatening/harassing behavior.</li> <li>• If you are concerned about your cyber-identity (e.g., cell phone, network access, social media), contact ITS for assistance. See <a href="#">Oxy ITS Online Safety and Security</a>.</li> <li>• If you are concerned about the potential for harassment, you can have your directory information and affiliation removed from the College's website. Please contact the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs at 323-341-4023 or <a href="mailto:boyde@oxy.edu">boyde@oxy.edu</a> for assistance.</li> </ul>

# Guidelines for the Department Chair

The Chair of the targeted faculty member's department should view their role as one of support, guidance, and assisting the faculty member identify and utilize appropriate resources. If the targeted faculty member is untenured, they will also need guidance for whether and how to address the issue in future reappointment, tenure, and promotion reviews.

ROLE	ACTIONS
Department Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should a department chair become aware of a threat against a member of the faculty, they should contact the faculty member, the Dean's Office, and Campus Safety as soon as possible. Meet with the faculty member to offer support in the initial days of the incident, and review the items in the above section to ensure the faculty member is aware of campus resources.</li> <li>• Before all else, work with the faculty member to ensure that their on-campus and off-campus safety and security concerns are addressed. Be aware that the identity of the faculty member may influence their individualized needs (e.g., parental status, faculty rank, minoritized identity). With the faculty member's consent, reach out to additional campus resources to address whatever issues the faculty member identifies.</li> <li>• It is possible that social media and phone harassment will be received by multiple offices. Inform the department administrative staff on a need-to-know basis. Ensure your department coordinator is supported and informed about strategies for being on the front line (e.g., a script or template response, instructions for preserving phone messages to aid future investigations).</li> <li>• Stay in communication with the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs to ensure a coordinated response. Share details of the situation on a need-to-know basis to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the Oxy community. Consider the well-being of the rest of the departmental faculty, staff, and students when determining what to share. Consult with the threatened faculty member about what, when and how to share information with the department. If possible, bring people together to discuss the situation, the department's actions, and available support resources.</li> <li>• Work with the registrar and Dean's Office to facilitate changes in assigned classrooms and/or work space if feasible, and if the affected faculty member requests it.</li> <li>• Advise the faculty member that they can contact the Dean's office to request the removal of their direct contact information from department and college webpages and the Oxy directory, in collaboration with Human Resources (which maintains the directory database).</li> <li>• If the attacks are identity-based (e.g., harassment based on gender, race, sexual identity), consult with the Title IX Coordinator, or the staff member designated to handle complaints about harassment, discrimination or retaliation, to counsel the faculty member about their rights and with the Chief Diversity Officer to explore additional support options for the faculty member and others in the department who share their identity (e.g., students, colleagues, staff).</li> <li>• If the faculty member is experiencing gender-based harassment and/or harassment that is sexual in nature, consult the Title IX Office and Human Resources Office to ensure that the faculty member is fully aware of their rights and resources.</li> </ul>

ROLE	ACTIONS
Department Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="386 163 1487 426">• After addressing the faculty member’s safety and security concerns, keep in mind the potential effect of this event on their academic career. For example, if their scholarship and/or professional expertise was attacked, discuss how/whether it will affect their future research trajectory or the students’ experience working with that faculty member, or taking their classes. Advise the faculty member to consult with the Dean’s Office for guidance regarding the timing of future reviews. Connecting the faculty member with other scholars who have experienced similar attacks may be useful to contextualize the events within their broader career goals and experiences.</li> <li data-bbox="386 468 1487 562">• Discuss issues of academic freedom in department meetings, including attention to the ways in which external forces may attempt to silence scholars through social media attacks and the resources available to respond when/if attacks occur.</li> <li data-bbox="386 604 1487 667">• If you become the target of the harassment, consult with the Dean’s Office and refer to the strategies recommended for faculty members (above) to ensure your own safety.</li> </ul>

# Guidelines for the Academic Administration

The primary role of the Dean's Office is to support the faculty in all aspects of their work. The Dean should be mindful of the impact on the well-being of the faculty member and those members of the campus community that might be most impacted by the faculty member's experience with external threats, and act accordingly.

ROLE	ACTIONS
Academic Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out to the targeted faculty member, reiterating the College's commitment to academic freedom as appropriate.</li> <li>• Consult with the targeted faculty member to discuss whether a public response is desirable or advisable, and the manner in which to do so. Involve the faculty member's department chair in crisis management conversations to ensure that efforts are coordinated.</li> <li>• Support the department chair in working with the targeted faculty member by offering assistance and resources.</li> <li>• Inform all members of the Dean's Office staff on a need-to-know basis. It is likely that social media and phone harassment will be directed at multiple offices. Informing all relevant individuals in the Dean's Office will strengthen the College's ability to engage in a coordinated response. Ensure that Dean's Office staff members whose responsibilities may include answering harassing phone calls are supported and informed about strategies for being on the front line (e.g., a script or template response, instructions for preserving phone messages to aid future investigations).</li> <li>• Alert the Human Resources Department of the concerns. HR can inform the targeted faculty member of resources available to them under the Employee Assistance Program.</li> <li>• Engage the HR Department in the coordination of the college-wide response, including support for staff who may be experiencing stress due to being on the front line of answering harassing phone calls and/or may be concerned about their own safety.</li> <li>• Consider inviting the Threat Assessment Team to a faculty meeting to present about their role and resources before or during a crisis.</li> <li>• In consultation with the Office of the President and the Office of Marketing and Communication, issue a statement (as appropriate) asserting the importance of academic freedom and committing to the safety of the faculty. The statement should emphasize the institution's mission and values rather than comment on the faculty member's scholarship.</li> </ul>



# Guidelines for the Office of Marketing and Communications

The Office of Marketing and Communications (OMC) is well positioned to help faculty members protect themselves from external threats, respond to threats when they do occur, and can assist College leadership and other members of the community with crafting and disseminating messages that assert the rights of faculty to conduct their work free from threats and harassment.

ROLE	ACTIONS
Marketing and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the dean if you become aware that a faculty member's name has shown up in a harassing social media post or in other on-line forums (e.g., via a Google alert notification). Keep the dean informed of ongoing mentions throughout the crisis management process.</li> <li>• Provide support for the faculty member being targeted, including tips on working with the media, managing one's professional and personal reputation, and <a href="#">Facing Harassment on Social Media: Know Your Options</a>.</li> <li>• Work with the Dean's Office and other campus spokespeople to coordinate information sharing on a need-to-know basis and to coordinate a consistent message (e.g., phone scripts for front-line staff answering aggressive callers).</li> <li>• Consult with faculty, staff, and administrators about the potential impact of speaking with the media about faculty harassment, and offer media training and guidance if appropriate.</li> <li>• Provide assistance to senior leadership in crafting a leadership message that defends academic freedom, emphasizes institutional values, and addresses potential concerns of multiple constituents (e.g., faculty, alumni, trustees, donors, students).</li> </ul>