



Office for Equal Opportunity  
and Civil Rights

BIENNIAL REPORT

**2022-2024**

# The Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights (EOCR)

is responsible for ensuring a living, learning, and working environment free from discrimination and harassment in accordance with the University of Virginia's Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Statement.

To carry out this mission, we inform and educate our community about individual rights and responsibilities in relation to UVA's non-discrimination and equal opportunity policies; we respond to reports and complaints of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and sexual misconduct; and we coordinate with and advise our partners throughout UVA with regard to accessibility, and equal opportunity throughout all aspects of the University.

Within our office, we have teams dedicated to particular aspects of this work, including our ADA Team; our Employment Equity Team; our Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (DHR) Team; and our Title IX Team.

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# Opening Letter

On behalf of our entire team in the **Office of Equal Opportunity & Civil Rights**, I invite you to explore this Biennial Report to learn about our office's role in guiding, educating and realizing the University of Virginia community's adherence to its principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunity. Our team of dedicated professionals has almost two centuries of collective experience in civil rights and works intentionally to engage locally and nationally to learn and adapt our approaches to meet the evolving needs of our community. This report shares how we do this work, as well as what we've accomplished and addressed over the past two academic years in alignment with our mission.

The work of our office is broad reaching and varied. We work with many others throughout the University in a myriad of ways.

## **A few examples include:**

- Delivering training to IT and web design personnel to broaden their understanding of digital accessibility and teach them skills to make digital information accessible
- Reaching out to and meeting with individuals impacted by sexual misconduct to offer supportive measures and help them understand formal and informal options to address harms
- Creating and overseeing the delivery of online training modules for employees and students, as well as delivering in-person training sessions throughout the University

- Advising hiring managers and search committees on recruiting diverse applicant pools and ensuring their searches are conducted consistently and free from bias or discrimination
- Conducting comprehensive investigations to determine whether our nondiscrimination and harassment policies have been violated and working to address and remedy harms
- Working with partners across Grounds to address real-time barriers to accessibility

Our work is both *proactive* — aimed at building our collective skill set to prevent and address potential barriers to access and equal access, and *responsive* — aimed at promptly looking into reported harms to determine whether our policies have been violated and working to address harms in appropriate and meaningful ways.



Sincerely,

**Emily Springston**

Associate Vice President

Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights

SECTION I

# ADA/Accessibility

**The ADA Team**, led by the University's ADA Coordinator, Melvin Mallory, serves as a primary resource for disability and accessibility related issues, questions, and concerns. We work to ensure that programs, services and activities are accessible for all individuals with disabilities, whether students, faculty, staff, or third parties engaging with UVA.

Accessibility work spans UVA's academic and work environments, the physical and built environments, and the digital and online environments throughout all University programs and activities.

Our team coordinates the University's efforts to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other related laws. We take measures to address barriers to access. We respond to and resolve disability-related access issues, and we offer training and educational resources to the community.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- In the 2022-2023 academic year, we created and filled the new Digital Accessibility Coordinator position (see page 27 for an introduction)
- In the 2022-2023 academic year, we created and launched our new Digital Accessibility Website
- In the 2023-2024, we onboarded our new Deputy ADA Coordinator (see page 26 for an introduction)

# ADA Coordinator Team Contacts

We monitor the scope and volume of our efforts by tracking “contacts” each year – these include contacts from students, faculty, staff, and visitors seeking assistance, information, consultation, and guidance related to the ADA and accessibility.

Contacts include individuals with accessibility needs who contact our office for information, as well as others such as supervisors, event planners, and instructors seeking information to help individuals with accessibility needs and challenges. Our “contacts” data also include all matters that our team works on throughout the year to address accessibility needs and requirements.

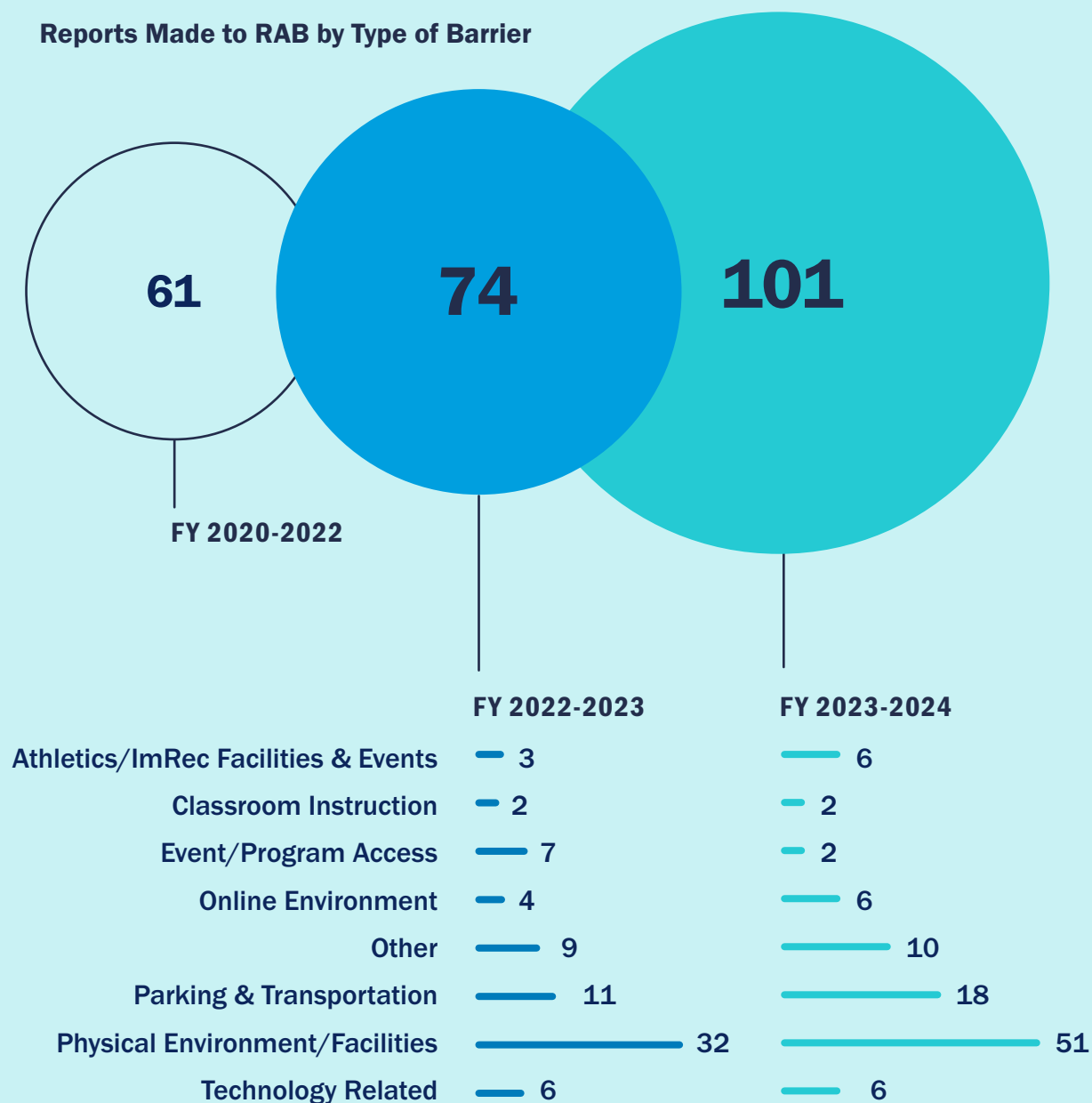
During the 2022-2023 & 2023-2024 academic years, the ADA team responded to more than 1,000 contacts. These connections provide our team an opportunity to identify ways in which we can improve accessibility at the University of Virginia while promoting an environment that is inclusive of all community members.

AREA	2022-2023	2023-2024
Academic	1	2
Accommodation Procedures	9	16
ADA Training	9	12
Assessment	2	1
Communication	2	2
DART/DART Registration	207	191
Digital Accessibility	44	54
Disability Accommodation	76	66
Disability Accommodation Fund	4	1
Service/Emotional Support Animal	11	12
Event/Program/Major Event	115	36
Information Session/Role of ADA Coordinator	4	1
Other	48	23
Parking/Transportation	13	14
Patient Care Services	4	1
Physical/Facilities/Site Visits	56	20
Service	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>452</b>

# Addressing Barriers to Accessibility

Report A Barrier (RAB) is an online tool designed to provide members of our community a way to report real-time barriers to access. Through the use of the RAB online reporting tool and in conjunction with the University's incident management system, SafeGrounds, the ADA Team is able to work in partnership with units across Grounds to alert them to accessibility concerns and take prompt action to remedy barriers.

Reports Made to RAB by Type of Barrier



SECTION II

# Employment Equity

Employment Equity



**The Employment Equity team** is committed to ensuring that hiring officials, managers, and other relevant stakeholders are well prepared to engage in the selection and advancement of faculty and staff at the University of Virginia in an objective, consistent, and nondiscriminatory way.

We do this by providing training, guidance on promising workplace practices, and engaging in comprehensive analysis of the total employment program and employee life cycle to share with University leaders, and make informed decisions about policies and procedures.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Partnered with University Human Resources to improve the system for evaluating requests for exceptions to the standard staff recruitment processes, resulting in enhanced efficiency and accountability
- Prepared custom workplace trend analyses of specific units within the university to support their efforts and to aid in evaluation of institutional recruitment activities for faculty and staff
- Provided ongoing workplace related data and analysis for federal and state reporting requirements and for internal purposes such as personnel matters and workplace reorganization

SECTION III

# Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Discrimination/Harassment/Retaliation

**The Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation (“DHR”) Team** is responsible for educating and training members of the UVA community on our Preventing and Addressing Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (“PADHR”) policies. In addition to education and training, we respond to and address reports and formal complaints of potential discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

We do this through a variety of tools and approaches that include consulting and advising; providing informal educational coaching to students, faculty and staff; gathering additional information and working with others in the university to address concerns; investigating formal complaints of discrimination, harassment and retaliation; and providing training. To carry out this work, our team regularly partners with University Human Resources, the Division of Student Affairs, University leadership and the academic leadership within each School, and Medical Center leadership.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Published pregnancy/parenting related resources online for students and faculty/staff in the 2022-23 academic year. These dedicated pages on EOCR’s website include information about pregnancy accommodations, planning information, important contacts at the University, lactation rooms/break times, childcare, and policies
- Developed new guidelines and FAQs for religious accommodations aimed to help students and instructors understand how to request and how to respond to requests for religious-based accommodations
- Finalized the workplace accommodation procedures for pregnancy and religion, which provides clarity regarding the process for making and approving a request
- Welcomed a new Civil Rights Investigator to our team in the spring of 2023 (see page 26 for an introduction)

## Responding to Reports and Formal Complaints

We receive reports of potential Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation in a variety of ways – through the Just Report It online reporting form; from Responsible Employees who are aware of a potential incident; and from individuals reaching our office directly to report a concern. For all reports of potential Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation, our team promptly reviews the report and related information; gathers additional information if needed; outreaches to provide information on rights, resources, and options; and makes an initial determination whether the reported conduct, if true, could be a violation of PADHR policy. We often work with other offices, including Human Resources and Student Affairs, to gather additional information and in outreach and support. If our policy is implicated, we offer to meet with the individual impacted to explain the options for formal and informal resolution, which can be initiated by filing a formal complaint.

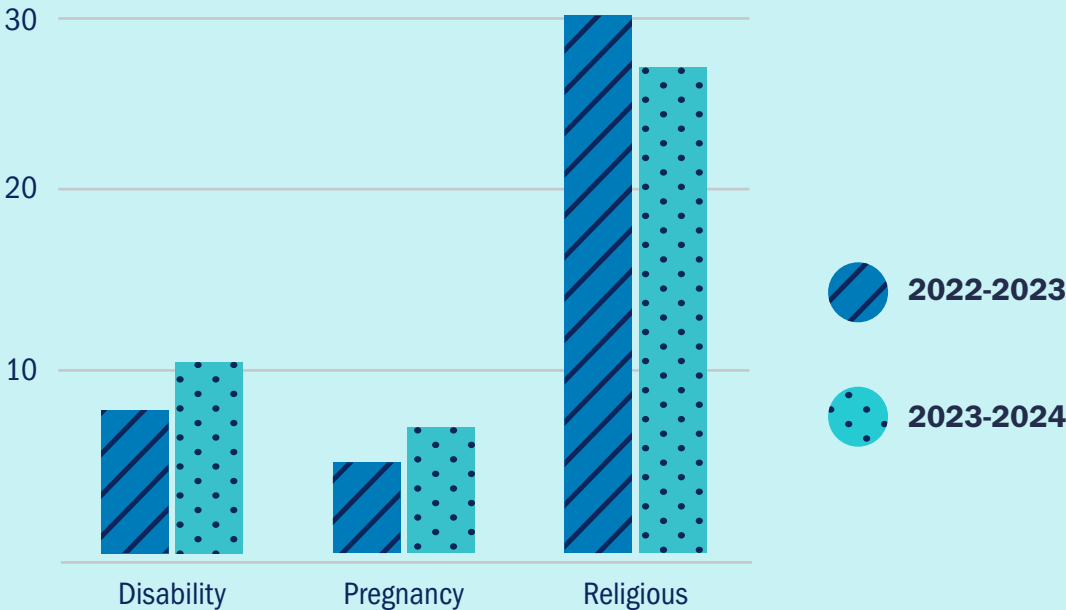
In addition to reports, we are also often contacted by UVA community members seeking advice and guidance on the application of PADHR policies to UVA's educational programs, activities, and employment, and about ensuring equal opportunity and providing accommodations for disability, pregnancy, and religion.



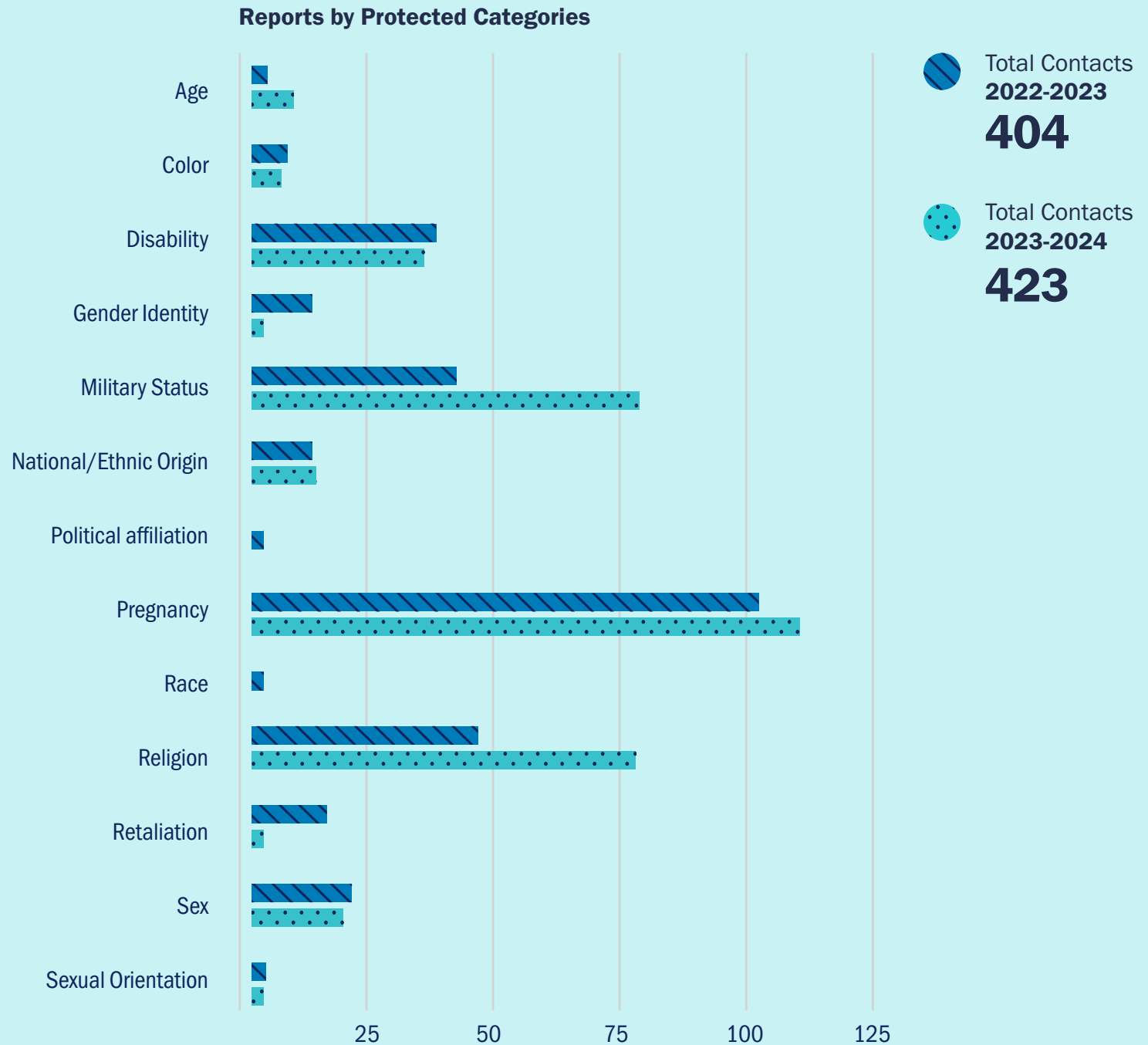
# Responding to Reports and Formal Complaints (Cont.)

**Note:** PADHR Contacts include both contacts seeking advice and consultation, as well as reports of potential Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation. If following our initial assessment of a report, the reported conduct does not fit within or implicate PADHR policy, we refer individuals to more appropriate offices including TIX, Human Resources, and Student Affairs, who may be able to respond.

Advising on Accommodation Matters



# Responding to Reports and Formal Complaints (Cont.)



## Formal Resolution

We also conduct investigations and oversee formal resolutions in response to Formal Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation. Complaints can be resolved through a formal investigative process or through informal resolution processes. We also conduct administrative reviews, a helpful investigative tool in the absence of a formal complaint.

### Formal Resolutions and Administrative Reviews

2022-2023

7

2023-2024

5

## PADHR Training Module

Our team designs and manages the online PADHR Training module. We created this module to address topics and concerns specific to UVA and to help faculty and staff understand their rights and responsibilities to ensure non-discrimination and equal access. Employees are required to complete the online training module when they start at UVA and every two years thereafter.

We reviewed thousands of feedback forms from faculty and staff who completed the training over the last few years and set about to revise our online module incorporating that feedback, including by adding more information about resources and more scenarios throughout the course.

### Number of New and Current Employees Completing the Online Training Module

2022-2023

21,000

2023-2024

12,508

SECTION IV

# TIX/Sexual Misconduct

TIX/Sexual Misconduct



# Title IX Team

The Title IX Team is committed to fostering an environment free from sexual or gender-based harassment or misconduct. We respond to those who may have been impacted by sex and gender-based harassment or misconduct by providing them access to supportive measures and other resources and offering and facilitating resolutions. We also work to educate and train our community about sex and gender-based harassment to increase our community's skills in preventing and addressing concerning conduct and support those impacted.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2022, based on internal needs and community input we created a role within Title IX to work directly with individuals seeking assistance with resources and support. This new role meets with individuals to provide information about our policies and processes, helps them understand their rights and options, and implements supportive measures where needed. That Spring, we filled the new Case Manager position (see page 27 for an introduction)
- With the support of President Ryan, co-chairs Molly Zlock, Assistant Vice President and University TIX Coordinator, and Emily Springston,

launched a newly formed Coalition to End Sexual Misconduct (CESM) in the 2023-24 academic year. CESM is a pan-university group that enhances the University's awareness, support, and coordination of its sexual violence and harassment prevention and response efforts. Serving in an advisory capacity to leadership, CESM's goal is to create a meaningful cultural transformation within our community that aligns with our office's efforts

- UVA is an active member of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Math (NASEM) Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education.

The Action Collaborative “brings together leaders from academic and research institutions and key stakeholders to collaboratively work toward and share targeted action on addressing and preventing sexual harassment across all disciplines and among all people in higher education.” Emily Springston and Maite Brandt-Pierce, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, serve as UVAs Member Representatives. In the 2023-2024 academic year, Jennie Knight, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Development represented UVA as a member of the Prevention Infrastructure Working Group, with Molly Zlock serving in the current year

# Reporting and Response Efforts

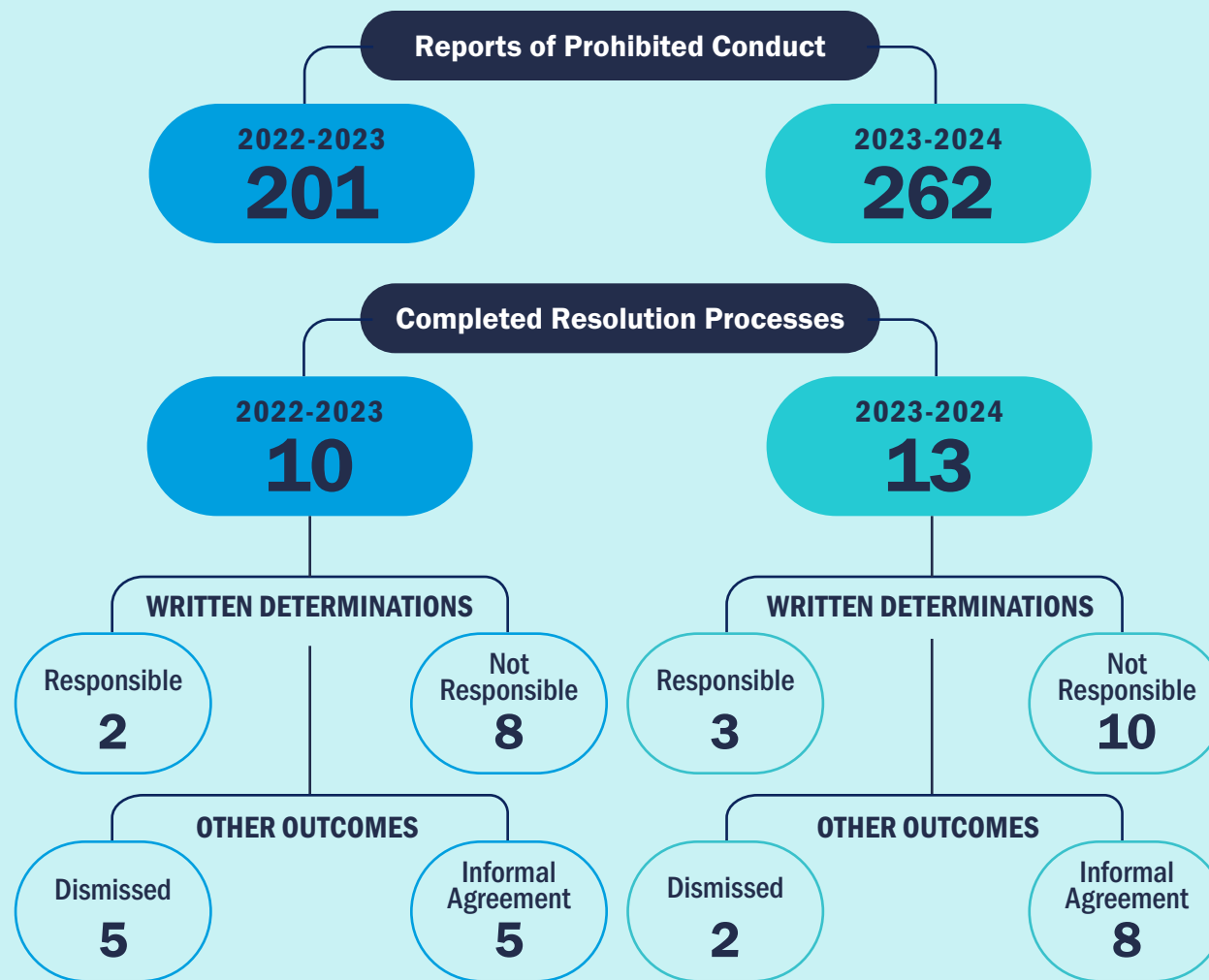
As the Title IX Team responds to each report of potential sexual misconduct, the work also has the potential to address the impacts of sexual misconduct on the University community as a whole.

During the 2022-23 academic year, we received and responded to 201 reports of Prohibited Conduct, and initiated 14 formal resolutions and 7 alternative resolutions. During the 2023-2024 academic year, we received and responded to 262 reports of Prohibited Conduct, and initiated 9 formal resolutions and 3 alternative resolutions.

Our Case Manager played an instrumental role in the expansion of our Alternative Resolution Process, serving as the facilitator, helping parties explore alternative resolution approaches. During this time, the Case Manager also works to ensure that all participants in the process are able to access essential resources and support. We began to track these efforts more intentionally in 2023-2024. In that academic year, our Case Manager held 197 meetings with individuals in the University community and facilitated 98 supportive measures.

## Reporting and Response Efforts (Cont.)

**Note:** At the time of this report, several matters are still pending and not reflected in this data. It is important to note that matters can overlap academic years, because of this, the number of cases that are opened may not align with the data associated with the outcomes that are reported.



SECTION V

# Outreach, Education, & Training

Outreach, Education, & Training



## Strengthening Skills for Engaging with our Community

Each dedicated team within EOCR works to ensure that all individuals who may interact with an impacted party do so with care and compassion, and that we apply our policies and processes in a fair and unbiased manner. We've done this in two ways; first by ensuring that our entire team receives ongoing training and professional development to help hone the skills that are relevant to the work and to ensure we stay current with applicable laws and regulations and any changes in their application; and secondly by bringing our community colleagues, both internal and external to UVA, together to engage in meaningful ways to develop knowledge and skills when engaging with any individual who may have experienced discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence.

For example, during the 2023-2024 academic year, in collaboration with our partners in Student Affairs Care and Support Services Office (CASS), we invited FEAP counselors to spend time with our two offices to learn about vicarious trauma that can arise from working with individuals directly impacted by trauma and the self-care techniques that are effective in reducing the effects of secondary trauma such as stress, fatigue, and burnout.

Our office demonstrated this commitment further by partnering with experts from Virginia's Office of the Attorney General to host their "Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations" training. More than 85 internal and external community stakeholders came together to receive information that is vital to the mission of this office.



# Outreach, Education, & Training

Recognizing the need for more robust efforts around outreach, education, and training for the entire University community, we created a new position within the office to help us develop more intentional and strategic efforts to keep our community informed and engaged in our prevention efforts. Given her deep knowledge of both EOCR's work and mission, as well as the institution, Jenna Kidd stepped into this role in summer 2024. We look forward to sharing more information about the impact of this work in the future.

## ADA/Accessibility

- Launched a new training curriculum in the 2023-24 academic year devoted to training our community on digital accessibility. This training allows web content managers, communication specialists, and web developers to receive training to ensure their digital content is accessible.
- Conducted more than 60 presentations, trainings, and courses between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

## Employment Equity

- Launched an updated Employment Equity training module in the 2023-24 academic year to include scenarios relevant to faculty and staff hiring processes and improved integration with University workplace learning management systems.

## Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

- Presented to numerous groups of students, faculty, and staff to further educate them on our policies, processes, and related information. These ongoing training sessions, often in partnership with the Title IX/Sexual Misconduct teams, inform our audiences on the scope of our policies, what to do if they experience or witness harassment, discrimination, or other prohibited conduct; the role of Responsible Employees; and options and avenues for response to reports and complaints, and resources available to them.

# Outreach, Education, & Training (Cont.)

## Title IX

- During the 2022-23 academic year, we harnessed the ingenuity of our students to help bring a new perspective to the Title IX Office and our larger office. UVA students have proven to be consistently successful in roles related to public service and these efforts were demonstrated through their work on our websites as well as our resource and training materials. Working closely with our Title IX Coordinator in the 2023-24 academic year, our interns developed a training that is designed to be peer-led and aimed to demystify the process and promote reporting so students are empowered and more comfortable engaging with the TIX Office to access resources and support.
- In addition to the Not On Our Grounds online training module that is provided to students, faculty, and staff every two years, the Title IX Office also facilitated 27 in person training sessions during the 2022-2023 academic year and 30 in person training sessions during the 2023-2024 academic year, highlighting our commitment to working towards improving the culture on Grounds.

# Outreach, Education, & Training (Cont.)

## Combining Efforts

- Interoffice collaboration is key to ensuring that University students, faculty, and staff members receive customized training sessions that meet their individual needs. These sessions allow individuals an opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions that include scenarios to increase one's ability to identify prohibited conduct when it occurs; how to respond when a disclosure is made; and what resources are available to those who have been impacted by misconduct on Grounds. This knowledge allows them to leave the training session prepared to address any concerns that may arise. In addition to their respective trainings that are offered annually, the Title IX and DHR Team frequently collaborate to offer joint training sessions that provide information on both sets of policies and procedures. During the 2022-2023 academic year, 15 joint trainings were conducted and during the 2023-2024 academic year, 13 joint trainings were conducted.



SECTION VI

# Hoo's New

Hoo's New

## Hoo's New

Combining over 212 collective years of service to the University community, the EOCR team works tirelessly to protect the rights of our community members. In recent years, our office has experienced many transitions and over the past two academic years we've recruited new members to our team whose expertise, experiences, and passions align with the mission of our office. As of the date of this report, we are happy to announce that our transitional period is stabilizing with the addition of eight new team members.

### Jennifer Bennett

**Civil Rights Investigator – Joined 2023**

Jennifer joined the office from the Lynchburg Commonwealth Attorney's office bringing twenty years of investigative experience to the role. Outside of work, Jennifer enjoys spending time with her family, tending to her veritable zoo of pets, and indulging in reading across all genres.

### Victoria Hinton

**Civil Rights Investigator – Joined 2023**

Victoria joined the office from the Department of Health Professions where she served as an Adjudications Specialist. Outside of work, Victoria enjoys spending time with her goldendoodle, Finn, visiting independently owned local bookstores, and reading.

### Austin McCullough

**Civil Rights Investigator – Joined 2022**

Austin joined the office from private practice in Hawaii bringing fifteen years of investigative experience to the role. Outside of work, Austin has been enjoying being back home and on his days off, can often be found traversing the mountains of Virginia.

### Cory Paradis

**Deputy ADA Coordinator – Joined 2023**

Cory joined the office from the private sector, doing accessibility and inclusion consulting and training. Outside of work, Cory is an avid sports fan - especially supporting the local teams and motorsports of any kind – and loves to travel, experiencing new places, cultures, and traditions.

# Hoo's New (Cont.)

## Hayley Racine

**Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Case Manager – Joined 2022**

Hayley joined the office from Dartmouth University. Outside of work, Hayley is completing her Ed.D. in Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership from the College of William & Mary. When she is taking a break from her coursework, Hayley makes time to cheer on the Hoos, play pickleball, and spend time with her corgi.

## Brooke Thompson

**Digital Accessibility Coordinator – Joined 2023**

Brooke joined the office from UVA Communications with nearly a decade of experience as a front-end web developer and IT specialist. Outside of work, Brooke is deeply involved in her church's food pantry and leads mission trips to Peru and Belize, carrying out her commitment to service and global outreach.

## Jessica Vormwald

**Civil Rights Investigator – Joined 2022**

Jessica joined the office from the Lynchburg Commonwealth Attorney's Office bringing nearly a decade's worth of investigative experience to the role. Outside of work, Jessica enjoys reading as well as fostering shelter animals until they find their forever home.

## Molly Zlock

**Assistant Vice President & Title IX Coordinator – Joined 2023**

Molly joined the office from Elon University, bringing an extensive background in Title IX and Equal Opportunity. Outside of her work in the office, Molly enjoys spending time with her husband, Jon, and her twins, Deacon and Harper.



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