

# MLML Code of Conduct

*Last approved 10/10/2025*

At Moss Landing Marine Labs we are a community of students, faculty, researchers, and staff working together to *empower a diverse community of marine science leaders by providing unparalleled and equitable access to the education, environment, and tools necessary to understand marine and coastal processes—creating new understanding and solutions in a changing world.* ([MLML Inclusive Mission Statement](#)). This Code of Conduct has been developed to foster inclusive and safe learning and research environments. Labs, research groups, and specific activities such as boating, diving, chemical safety, and others may have additional guidelines. MLML adheres to SJSU and CSU policies and state and federal laws regarding discrimination and harassment.

Conduct Expectations .....	2
Welcoming and Inclusive Environment.....	2
Harassment and Discrimination .....	3
Reporting & Resources .....	4
What do you do if you observe or experience unacceptable or concerning behavior? .....	4
Informal Reporting Options.....	5
Formal Reporting Options.....	5
Student Reporting.....	5
SJSU (these resources are available to students regardless of home campus): ..	5
CSUMB:.....	6
Student Reporting Summary Table:.....	6
Other Home Campuses .....	7
SJSU Research Foundation Staff Reporting.....	7
SJSU Faculty and Staff Reporting.....	7
What are some possible consequences for inappropriate conduct .....	7
Possible corrective actions for faculty, staff, and research scientists include: .....	7
Possible corrective actions of students include: .....	7
Revisions and Feedback .....	8
Resources .....	8

## Conduct Expectations

Everyone at MLML has the right to learn and work in an inclusive and respectful environment free from discrimination and harassment. These expectations apply to all MLML affiliates, including faculty, researchers, staff, and students, as well as private entities that work on MLML premises or employ MLML students, in both physical spaces (on campus and in the field) and virtual spaces.

**We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment,** bullying, microaggressions, ethical misconduct, or other harmful behavior.

**We value diversity** in our science and education and **actively strive to increase diversity, and promote equity and inclusion.**

**We will be kind, tolerant, and respectful** of fellow students, researchers, lab mates, and collaborators.

**We will communicate respectfully and professionally:** All communication, whether in person, virtual, or written (e.g., email), should be appropriate for a professional audience and be considerate of people from different cultural backgrounds. Sexual language and imagery are not appropriate at any time.

**We will challenge ideas, not individuals:** In our search for knowledge and application of the scientific method, we will challenge ideas and assertions while showing respect for those with whom we engage.

**We will ethically conduct research, teaching, and community engagement.** We will uphold integrity, transparency, and fairness, respecting people, communities, and the environment in all our activities.

**We will adhere to laws and policies:** We will be aware of and comply with laws, university policies, and this Code of Conduct in our professional behavior.

## Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Remember that all MLML community members are people before we are researchers, students, and employees. Always strive to be empathetic and supportive, and be respectful of:

- Privacy if someone chooses not to disclose things about their personal life
- Confidentiality if someone shares something personal
  - NOTE:
    - All members of the MLML community who are also SJSU or SJSU Research Foundation employees, including student employees, are “[mandatory reporters](#)” for incidents of discrimination and sexual harassment.

- These must be reported to either the [Title IX and Equal Opportunity Office \(SJSU\)](#) or [Title IX and Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation \(CSUMB\)](#).
- Boundaries with respect to physical and mental health, family obligations, religious practice, etc.
- The ways that people may be personally affected by global events and politics

At MLML, we strive to treat everyone with equal respect regardless of their gender, age, race, sexual orientation, religion, culture, (dis)ability, academic record, or personal background.

MLML affiliates should:

- Actively include and engage all lab members in discussions (e.g., lab meetings, social events).
- Be mindful of how much each person is participating and being heard
- Welcome and support people of all backgrounds and identities into groups
- Refer to each other with the individual's self-identified pronouns
- Foster a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment
- Avoid homophobic, racist, transphobic, ageist, sexist, or otherwise exclusionary language or behavior
- Show kindness, patience, and treat everyone in a dignified manner

## Harassment and Discrimination

Discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated at MLML.

Harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct or comments, whether directed at an individual or expressed more generally, that create an environment hostile to that individual or that undermines their dignity or respect. Behavior may constitute harassment, regardless of intent, if a reasonable person in the target's position would view it as such, and if the target experiences it as limiting their ability to participate in or benefit from University services, activities, or opportunities.

Harassment can often take the form of "microaggressions." Microaggressions are everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to individuals based on their marginalized group membership. For example, commenting on a woman's appearance rather than her work is a microaggression. These remarks are often framed as "compliments" (e.g. "you're too attractive to be a scientist"), which adds stress to the target, who must then decide how to respond. Over time, microaggressions can take a great toll on mental and emotional health and undermine the target's sense of belonging in science and academia.

Furthermore, it is illegal to discriminate against anyone based on their sex, gender, or gender identity. Likewise, unwanted sexual advances or conditioning employment benefits on the exchange of sexual favors are also illegal.

Our MLML community is protected from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation on the basis of:

- Age
- Disability-Medical Condition (including pregnancy)
- Genetic Information
- Marital status
- Race, color, citizenship, ancestry, or national origin
- Religion
- Sex, gender, gender expression, and/or gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Veteran status
- Engaging in protected activities such as reporting harassment or refusing to comply with discriminatory practices.

Examples of Unacceptable Behavior include:

- Physical or verbal abuse, harassment, or assault
- Intimidation or bullying
- Coercion/Manipulation
- Threats (including but not limited to threats of violence, professional discreditation, unwarranted decreases in responsibilities, and public embarrassment)
- Gender, race-based, age-based, ability-based, or sexual harassment
- Unwanted sexual advances
- Conditioning employment benefits on the exchange or refusal of sexual favors.
- The use of hate speech directed at a minority group, including comments about a person's gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, or national origin
- Behavior that endangers the mental or physical health and safety of lab members
- Stalking
- Retaliation against a person or group reporting code of conduct violations

## **Reporting & Resources**

### **What do you do if you observe or experience unacceptable or concerning behavior?**

- Call 911 if you or someone else is in immediate danger.
- You can report an incident in an informal or formal way, see below.
- As our MLML values emphasize, we strive to address violations of our code of conduct with early intervention and dialogue focused on the needs of the person experiencing the discrimination or harassment.
- Retaliation against anyone who reports a violation is not tolerated
- MLML will respond promptly to reports, usually within 3 business days. The response will, in part, depend on the mode of reporting (see below).

## Informal Reporting Options

- Who To Talk To:
  - If you feel comfortable, you can speak directly to the person and remind them of the code of conduct and the related educational resources available.
  - You can talk with one of several MLML contacts:
    - your lab advisor or supervisor,
    - any [faculty member](#), [PI](#), or [staff member](#) at MLML
    - [Graduate Program Coordinator, Terra Eggink](#), terra.eggink@sjsu.edu
    - [Health & Safety Officer, Brian Gallagher](#), brian.gallagher@sjsu.edu
    - [MLML Department Chair, Ivano Aiello](#), ivano.aiello@sjsu.edu,
    - or the [MLML Director, Petra Dekens](#), petra.dekens@sjsu.edu.
- NOTE: Some complaints (discrimination and sexual harassment) **cannot** be kept informal or anonymous.
  - All members of the MLML community who are also SJSU or SJSU Research Foundation employees, including student employees, are “[mandatory reporters](#)” for incidents of discrimination and sexual harassment.
  - These incidents must be reported to the [Title IX and Gender Equity Office](#); however, reporting does not necessarily lead to an investigation and can instead provide an opportunity to receive support and information.
- [Student anonymous report form](#):
  - If you choose to report in confidence and remain anonymous, this may limit the scope of the investigation and the ability to ensure due process.
  - This form goes to the MLML Graduate Program Coordinator, who will forward it to the appropriate MLML administrator.

## Formal Reporting Options

### Student Reporting

In addition to the informal options above, you can report formally through SJSU or your home campus resources. Students who are also employed at MLML should also see the Staff section below.

*SJSU (these resources are available to **all** students regardless of home campus):*

- [Bias/Discrimination Incident Reporting Form](#)
  - By reporting discrimination incidents, you are helping to maintain SJSU as an inclusive and safe campus environment. Once received, staff from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and other offices will review the information and may contact you for additional information.
- Discrimination & Harassment Complaints for Students
  - From the [Office for Title IX and Equal Opportunity webpage](#), there is a link to make a report.
  - When you click the link, it takes you to a [form with instructions](#) and further information about making a complaint (Including a link to the official CSU nondiscrimination policy).

- General Misconduct for Policy Violations
  - For student-related misconduct such as violations of the student code (academic integrity, etc) report to the [Student Conduct and Ethical Development Office](#)
  - For other misconduct, report to the [University Personnel Office](#) using this [form](#).
- [Student Ombuds](#)
  - A designated administrator who offers students impartial, informal, and confidential support to assist them with a variety of issues and concerns.

*CSUMB:*

- Discrimination & Harassment Complaints for Students (and other incident types)
  - Go to the [Title IX and Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#) webpage.
  - Click the link to submit a report.
  - You will be taken to a [page with descriptions](#) of several types of incidents and misconduct.
  - At the bottom of the page, select the type of incident/misconduct you want to report and you will then be directed to the appropriate form.
- [Ombuds](#)
  - The Ombuds Office serves as a no-barrier, first-stop resource for students, faculty, and staff seeking guidance, information, and insight from a trusted advisor.

*Student Reporting Summary Table:*

What the report is about	Where to submit
Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on a protected status (including age, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital status, medical condition, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran or military status). This also includes experiences related to sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual exploitation, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and associated retaliation.	SJSU: <a href="#">Office for Title IX and Equal Opportunity</a>  CSUMB: <a href="#">Title IX and Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation</a>
Student-related misconduct (i.e. academic integrity)	SJSU: <a href="#">Student Conduct and Ethical Development Office</a>  CSUMB: <a href="#">Office of Student Conduct</a>
All other types of misconduct	SJSU: <a href="#">University Personnel Office</a>

#### *Other Home Campuses:*

- Look for the Title IX or discrimination and harassment reporting process on your home campus website, but all students are welcome to report to the SJSU resources listed above.

#### **Staff and Faculty Reporting**

In addition to the informal options above, you can report (via email, in writing, or verbally) to your supervisor, MLML director, or SJSU resources.

#### *SJSU Research Foundation Staff*

- [Complaint Procedure and Form | Research Foundation](#)

#### *SJSU State Staff and Faculty*

- Discrimination and Harassment Complaints are made through the [Office for Title IX and Equal Opportunity](#), following the same protocol as described for students.
- All other misconduct is reported to [University Personnel](#).

#### **What are some possible consequences for inappropriate conduct?**

In accordance with SJSU and CSU policies, MLML will address violations of our code of conduct in support of the inclusive and supportive environment we intend to foster. Inappropriate conduct will be addressed with coaching, corrective action, and disciplinary measures up to and including termination of the violator's appointment.

#### **Possible corrective actions for faculty, staff, and research scientists include:**

- Meetings to address concerns: Issues and/or patterns of behavior will be discussed in meetings with written and signed documentation of outcomes. These meetings provide faculty and research scientists with an opportunity to present their perspectives and identify ways to mitigate recurring issues. Subsequent complaints will lead to further action.
- Restrictions on mentoring: Loss of ability to recruit new graduate students or supervise undergraduate students;
- Impact on evaluations and funding: Depending on the infraction, negative performance evaluations may occur, which can lead to loss of merit raises and/or loss of access to endowments or discretionary funds (if applicable);
- Severe consequences: In severe cases, termination.

#### **Possible corrective actions for students include:**

- Referral for policy violations: Violations of [SJSU's Student Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity policy](#) will be referred to the appropriate SJSU personnel. Violations of [CSUMB's student conduct codes](#) will be referred to the appropriate CSUMB personnel.
- Restricted access: Loss or limitation of access to certain facilities
- Disciplinary sanctions: Suspension or expulsion in serious cases

## **Revisions and Feedback**

This code of conduct will be revised annually by the MLML Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The committee welcomes feedback. [Contact the committee](#) by email.

## **Resources**

Resources, links to trainings, and readings are available on the [Code of Conduct webpage](#).