Investigations
GET COMFORTABLE AND CENTERED

What do you need to be fully present here this afternoon?
What is one thing you can commit to do to keep yourself in this conversation today?
What Guides Your Work?

Through the implementation of an ethic of care and concern that promotes the fair, transparent, and compassionate application of published institutional standards and expectations, OCS aims to thoroughly investigate and resolve allegations of student behavioral harm to the UConn community in an educational and restorative manner.

How do you demonstrate an ethic of care and concern?

How do you demonstrate fairness and transparency?

How do you demonstrate compassion?
TODAY'S DISCUSSION

What Makes a Great Investigator
Practice Investigation Planning (and re-planning)
The Interview In Depth
Writing the Investigative Report
Great Investigators

**Personal Characteristics**
- Planning & project management
- Ability to establish rapport
- Professionalism/respect
- Objectivity
- Analytical problem solving
- Courage
- Excellent listening, speaking & writing skills
- Can discuss difficult topics without awkwardness and with compassion.

**Institutional Characteristics**
- Buy-in from leadership
- Clear policies and processes
- A community well trained on behavioral expectations
- Professional development
Developing a Plan

- Define the investigation’s scope
- Identify preliminary timeline of events according to the original complaint or allegation
- Identify testimony and other evidence that may confirm or rebut the complaint
- Initial witness list
- Order in which to interview
What "items" can you gather?

- Applicable written policies and procedures
- Security videotapes
- Photos or videos from other sources, such as cellphones
- Voice mail messages, text messages, or recordings of calls to campus police or the security office
- Entry/exit logs for the residence hall, social spaces, or other campus buildings involved
PLANNING STAGES

INITIAL PLAN
Formal Complaint Signed

REVISE AND REPEAT
Add witnesses and associated questions to the plan as you learn from interviews

SHARE AND REVISE AGAIN
As witnesses and parties review their statements they inspire more witnesses (and questions)
THE INTERVIEW
SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

Make the Time

Review the Plan and Materials

Personal Check In
CREATING THE CLIMATE
Setting Interviewee Up for Success

Recognizing and Attending to Needs

- Bathroom & Breaks
- Tissues & Water
- Advisor & Support Person
- Supportive resources
- Rights (non-retaliation, privacy not confidentiality, information they provide will be shared w/others)
Setting Interviewee Up for Success
Orienting to process

- How long will they be there w/you?
- What is your role?
- Why are they there?
- What else may they be asked to do?
  - review their statement
  - attend hearing
  - provide evidence referenced in interview
Throughout The Conversation

Be Intentional about Your Non-Verbals
Posture can communicate your engagement or disengagement
Gestures can be interpreted differently by people of different cultural backgrounds
Para-language (speed, pitch, intonation, volume) communicates much more than the words said.

Actively Listen
(paraphrase, ask open ended questions, short verbal affirmations display empathy-recognize their emotions and feelings)
Starting The Conversation

Witnesses

Tell me why you think you are here?
Tell me how you are connected to this issue?
Do you recall an encounter on this date and time?

Parties

Complainant: I have read your Formal Complaint and I have some questions...
Respondent: As you know I received a Formal Complaint and I have some questions...
Practicing cultural humility requires us to put aside our own beliefs, generalizations, and assumptions about other people and cultures and instead focus on learning how individuals identify themselves.

It requires us to step back and critically assess our own assumptions and values, then acknowledge how these factors affect our interactions with people of other cultures.
The practice of cultural humility requires humbleness along with high levels of self-reflection and critique.

Due to the dynamic nature of culture, cultural humility is a life-long process, not a goal to be accomplished. Instead, it is a practice that must be continued throughout life.
Concluding The Conversation

- Request documentation (notes, calendars, social media posts, emails, phone messages, texts, etc.)
- Ask “What else should I have asked, but didn't?”
- Thank the individual.
- Invite the person to return to the investigator with any additional information they remember.
- Remind about their need to review the interview summary.
PRACTICE
SUMMARY STATEMENTS

NARRATIVE NOT DECLARATIVE

MAKE IT CLEAR WHAT QUESTIONS WERE ASKED

INCORPORATE INCONSISTENCY
Revise The Plan
Writing the Report
CREATE HEADERS
Identifying the important time segments.

TELL THE STORY
Introductory paragraph/facts in agreement and not in agreement. From each parties' and witnesses perspective on what happened in each section.

INCAPACITATION, CREDIBILITY, OTHER RELEVANT SECTIONS
Writing Rules

- Omit needless words
- Keep average sentence length to about 20 words
- Keep subject, verb and object together (towards beginning of the sentence)
- Parallel phrasing for parallel ideas
- Active over Passive
- Avoid multiple negatives
- Avoid legalisms
- Minimize "is, are, was, and were" (use strong verbs instead)
- Turn "ion" words into verbs when you can

Struck, Jr., W., *The Elements of Style*, updated 1st Ed., 2021
Practice