

ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE REPORTING SYSTEM (HOTLINE) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

In the spring of 2007, the Board of Regents system office issued an RFP for an ethics and compliance reporting system for the 35 system institutions. The selected vendor, The Network, will be working directly with the University of Georgia to assist with the development of an implementation plan and timetable.

While the University currently has in place a system whereby individuals can report concerns about research misconduct, fraud or misappropriation, etc., implementation of the system from The Network will be a more holistic and coordinated approach and will provide executive reports to management as well as to the Board of Regents. This initiative is described by the Chancellor as a tool for institutional awareness of complaints and their resolution. The system office will monitor the results of the hotline use on an annual basis, but does not intend to oversee individual events at the institutional level. According to the system office, the hotline will not accept sexual harassment claims or complaints related to performance appraisals or employee salary increase issues. In addition, UGA has determined that grade appeals and strictly academic matters will not be accepted by the hotline.

The University will be implementing this reporting system in early 2008. Once operational, the reporting system will provide a mechanism for anonymous submission of concerns and/or reports of suspected wrongdoing. It has been proposed that a central office be designated with the responsibility to manage and oversee the operation of the ethics and compliance reporting system and coordinate investigation and response efforts with appropriate investigative units and the campus unit(s) to which the reported item relates. The success of the ethics and compliance reporting system requires the earnest involvement of various University departments that operate within areas of higher education risk categories. These risk categories include:

- Financial – accounting irregularities, fraud, theft:
- Research Misconduct – concerns regarding animal testing, infringements on intellectual property, scientific misconduct, research grant violations:
- Human Resources Complaints – substance abuse, workplace violence, unfair treatment:
- Athletics Compliance – athletic eligibility violations:
- Human Health and Safety – environmental complaints, complaints related to workplace conditions:
- Medical Issues – patient care/confidentiality:
- Information Technology – data privacy violations, release of proprietary information.

The designation of a centralized office for the purpose of maintaining the ethics and compliance reporting system will not remove or replace any of the compliance

responsibilities or policy/decision making authority vested at the major unit/school/college level, but will create a unified, University-wide approach to reporting and resolution of complaints made through the hotline. That office will provide senior leadership with information about potential areas of risk which with early detection could be corrected and/or self-reported, thereby protecting the University against penalties, fines, legal action or situations leading to the loss of public trust.

The Network is a leading hotline provider to large employers, including some of the nation's leading colleges and universities. The system used by The Network allows investigators and case managers, both at the Network offices and on campus, to document their activities in a single system, to generate reports and track trends. The hotline provides multilingual access 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. It also allows a person to make an anonymous report.

In early November, representatives from the Senior Vice Presidents, as well as, from the Board of Regents, Dale Wetzberger, the University's Director of Internal Auditing, and representatives from the Office of Legal Affairs will meet with The Network to discuss how the University's hotline will be customized to meet the University's specific needs, and to develop a timetable for implementation of the hotline. Please be prepared to assist in this important initiative by posting promotional materials as they are developed and distributed, and by responding to requests for information as we move forward. Anyone who has questions or concerns about the hotline, or who has specific input related to his/her area should contact Beth Bailey, Associate Director for Legal Affairs, at (706) 542-0006.