



# OEO News

*"Committed to promoting a working and learning environment free of discrimination..."  
Kim D. Kirkland, Ed.D., Director, Office of Equal Opportunity*

## In a Civil Workplace: Civility

*In this first of three-parts, OEO will provide definition and context for IUPUI's Civility Statement. Future issues will provide examples helpful in understanding workplace civility.*

**Civility.** noun *ci-vil-i-ty*  
\sə- 'vi-lə-tē\; *polite, reasonable, and respectful behavior.* ~

*Merriam-Webster dictionary*

IUPUI's civility statement is not a new concept; and after hard-won lessons, several years' hiatus, and a two-year conversation among campus constituents, the redrafted statement provides a blueprint of expected behavior for the campus community without impeding First Amendment rights.

*(cont. on next page)*



Office of Equal Opportunity  
980 Indiana Avenue, 1164  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
Phone: 317-274-2306  
Hotline: 1-866-245-1310  
[www.iupui.edu/~oio](http://www.iupui.edu/~oio)  
[affaindy@iupui.edu](mailto:affaindy@iupui.edu)

### A Day in the Uncivilized Life

"Go around me \*^\$@#\*" you snarl as an SUV grill fills your rear-view mirror.



Juggling backpack, lunch bag and umbrella, you're first in line for the bus. A crowd gathers, the shuttle arrives, doors open, and the throng pushes forward. The vehicle pulls away leaving you standing...and grumbling.

Email scream in all caps and voicemail unjustly derides performance. You respond in kind or with sickeningly-sweet sarcasm. Staff meetings include crimson-faced colleagues blasting the team for dissenting opinions and objection is met with raised voice or a reminder of your easy replacement.

After work, a store clerk barely acknowledges you exist while tallying a \$240 grocery bill. "You're welcome," you respond to nothing. Evening news delivers political insult, violence, and corruption. "Reality TV" thrives on the outrageously offensive, even social media accounts – those considered "friendly" – are full of rude jokes, insults and crass videos.

We give and receive uncivilized behavior. What happened to civility? IUPUI's Civility Statement helps guide the campus community back to civil and respectful behavior on campus.

### IUPUI Civility Statement

The IUPUI community has dedicated itself to creating an environment where each individual is valued and can succeed. Our institutional ethic compels us to foster the best possible environment for doing our work as educators, learners, and supporters of the educational process. When our members are prevented from doing their best, the entire community is diminished.

Our commitment to be a diverse and inclusive campus relies on all community members to do their part. While no set of rules or policies can wholly govern human conduct, civility requires respect and a thoughtful and careful balancing of differing points of view.

As members of an institution of higher learning, we must periodically reaffirm the fundamental ethics and values that form the framework for our university. This means fostering a climate of acceptance, mutual respect, academic freedom, and civil discourse. Civil discourse is a form of dialogue that acknowledges and gives voice to one another's ideas, experiences, and beliefs.

Civility and respect should be extended to all persons regardless of their role, status, or social identity. We encourage everyone to speak and act thoughtfully and judiciously and with respect for one another. We may not always agree with one another, but when we disagree, we are called to respond with civility.

Civility. (cont.)

According to OEO Director **Kim D. Kirkland**, the Civility Statement is “an aspirational statement on how we engage one another in word and deed.” She said it is broadly worded and designed to encourage mindful behavior, not to impose disciplinary actions.

### Not A New Revelation

IUPUI’s Civility Statement is not new but we don’t have to go all the way back to Robert Burns’ 1785 poem to inquire about “man’s inhumanity to man”. Recent history is rife with examples of “uncivilized” behavior leading to claims of harassment and this has led universities, schools, private industry and even the U.S. government to develop and issue their own civility statement.

**Gerald L. Bepko**, IUPUI Chancellor Emeritus, first endorsed a civility statement in 1997 and his successor, former Acting Chancellor **William Plater** followed suit. But even something as seemingly benign as a civility statement, carrying no direct threat of disciplinary action, is not so simple where inquiry is the life-blood of an organization. Concerns here and on college campuses across the nation challenged the statements as a violation of First Amendment rights. In some cases the challenges led to litigation. Those concerns and other factors led former Chancellor **Charles R. Bantz** to withdraw the statement which has officially been on hiatus since 2008.

From 2008 to 2014 campus complaints increased from approximately 60 to nearly 260 annually inspiring “an outpouring of campus constituents to reinstate a civility statement that speaks to how we engage one another as a campus community,” said Dr. Kirkland.

Led by the Equal Opportunity Council and endorsed by IUPUI’s Common Theme Committee,

Faculty Council, Staff Council and Women’s Advisory Council, the revised Civility Statement was reinstated and endorsed by Dr. Bantz.

### What It Is, And Is Not

“First, the Civility Statement is not a policy,” said **Daniel B. Griffith**, Director of the Office for Intergroup Dialogue and Civil Community. “It is a broad,

*“...the Civility Statement will help all of us recognize that we are responsible for building an inclusive and diverse academic community where we value, respect, and gain immeasurably from different points of view.” ~ Chancellor Nasser Paydar*

aspirational statement to be used as a vehicle to help develop positive civil culture across campus.”

Mr. Griffith said the Civility Statement respects free expression and ideas and raises questions: What does it mean to have civil discourse? Why do we need to foster a civil culture? How can the statement be used? Answers to these and other questions, although perhaps unique in their own right, define the Civility Statement’s purpose.

Perhaps one of the most concise definitions of civil behavior is found in [Principles of civility and community](#). “Civility is an act of showing regard and respect for others including: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Ultimately, civility is treating others as we would like to be treated.”

### A Word From Our Chancellor

Chancellor **Nasser Paydar** endorses the Civility Statement citing that it builds upon the IUPUI strategic plan foundation.

“A campus that engages respectfully and civilly, even as we rigorously explore and debate ideas, will help us promote an environment where all community members feel welcome and valued,” he said. “I hope that the Civility Statement will help all of us recognize that we are responsible for building an inclusive and diverse academic community where we value, respect, and gain immeasurably from different points of view.”

Read *OEONews* on-line at: <http://www.iupui.edu/~o eo/>

### Save The Date

The Office for Intergroup Dialogue and Civil Community will sponsor a civility symposium on April 4, 2016. Mark this date on your calendar and check the November 1 *OEONews* for details.

### Questions?

Please submit questions to:

Emily Kempfski, Administrative Assistant and Editor, *OEONews*, [ekempfski@iupui.edu](mailto:ekempfski@iupui.edu)

### Civility Statement

For a .pdf copy of IUPUI’s Civility Statement, visit the OEO web page: <http://www.iupui.edu/~o eo/>.

### Future *OEONews* topics:

November 1: In a Civil Workplace: Professional Conduct

December 1: In a Civil Workplace: Navigating Social Media