



## Questions and Answers for Employees

### **Q. What is EthicsPoint?**

EthicsPoint is a comprehensive and anonymous Internet- and telephone-based reporting tool that allows University management and employees to work together to address activities which may involve fraud, abuse, misconduct, and other violations of University policy in the workplace, while helping to cultivate a positive work environment.

### **Q. May I report using either the Internet or the telephone?**

Yes, you may. By giving you choices, EthicsPoint helps ensure that employees can file a report anonymously and in the manner most comfortable or convenient to them.

### **Q. Can I still file a report if I don't have access to the Internet?**

You can file an EthicsPoint report from any computer that can access the Internet. You can file from home. Many public locations, including the public library, have Internet computers. If you don't have access or are uncomfortable using a computer, you can call your EthicsPoint toll-free hotline at **866-974-8411** which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

### **Q. Why do we need a system like EthicsPoint?**

There are several reasons why we need a reporting tool:

1. We believe that employees are our University's most important asset. Through open channels of communication, you can participate in improving the University and helping to create a safe and ethical environment.
2. Publicly traded companies are required by law (Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002; SOX) to have an anonymous reporting system to address accounting and auditing misconduct. Most colleges and universities in the U.S. have adopted components of SOX as "best practice." The Finance and Audit Workgroup of the University Board of Trustees has requested that this resource be made available to our employees. The University chose EthicsPoint because of its specialized expertise in managing anonymous reporting hotlines for higher education.
3. The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners noted in their "2010 Report to the Nation on Occupational Fraud and Abuse" that the number one way that fraud is typically detected is through tips. This finding has been consistent since 2002 when they began tracking data on fraud detection methods.

### **Q. Does management really want me to report?**

We certainly do. In fact, we need you to report. You know what is going on in your workplace—both good and bad. You may have initial knowledge of an activity that may be cause for concern. Your reporting can minimize the potential negative impact on the University and its people. Also, offering positive input may help identify issues that can improve both our culture and performance.

### **Q. Why should I report what I know? What's in it for me?**

We all have the right to work in a positive environment. With that right, comes the responsibility to act in an ethical manner and to report unethical conduct to the appropriate people. By working together, we can maintain a healthy and productive environment. As shown by companies like Enron and WorldCom, corporate misconduct can threaten the livelihood of an entire company.

### **Q. It is my understanding that any report I send from a University computer generates a server log that shows every website that my computer connects with. Won't this log identify me as a report originator?**

EthicsPoint does not generate or maintain any internal connection logs with IP addresses, so no information linking your computer to EthicsPoint is available. With fewer than 12% of reports generated during business hours, most people prefer to report from the comfort of their home after hours and on the weekend.

**Q. Can I file a report from home and still remain anonymous?**

A report from home, a neighbor's computer, or any Internet portal will remain secure and anonymous. An Internet portal never identifies a visitor by screen name, and the EthicsPoint system strips away Internet addresses so that anonymity is totally maintained. Plus, EthicsPoint is contractually committed not to pursue a reporter's identity.

**Q. I am aware of some individuals involved with unethical conduct, but it doesn't affect me. Why should I bother reporting it?**

Ethics violations hurt the University and all employees, at any level, including you. You only have to consider what happened in recent corporate scandals to see disastrous effects that a seemingly harmless lapse in ethics can have on an otherwise healthy company. So, if you know of any incidents of misconduct or ethical violations, consider it your duty to yourself and your coworkers to report it.

**Q. I am not sure what I have observed or heard is a violation of company policy or involves unethical conduct, but it just does not look right to me. What should I do?**

File a report. EthicsPoint can help you prepare and file your report so it can be properly understood. We'd rather you report a situation that turned out to be harmless, than let possible unethical behavior go unchecked because you weren't sure.

**Q. Where do these reports go? Who can access them?**

Reports are entered directly on the EthicsPoint secure server to prevent any possible breach in security. EthicsPoint makes these reports available only to specific individuals within the University who are charged with evaluating the type of violation and location of the incident. Each of these report recipients has had training in keeping these reports in the utmost confidence. The EthicsPoint system and staff are trained and committed to ensure that no report is ever shared with implicated parties, their peers, or subordinates. USF's Office of University Audit and Compliance has the responsibility for administering this system and will monitor the reporting activity and follow-up.

**Q. What if I remember something important about the incident after I filed the report? Or what if the company has further questions for me concerning my report?**

When you file a report at the EthicsPoint website or via telephone, you receive a unique user name and are asked to choose a password. You can return to the EthicsPoint system again either by Internet or telephone and access the original report to answer questions posed by a University representative and add further information that will help resolve open issues. We strongly suggest that you return to the site in the time specified to answer questions. You and the University now have entered into an "anonymous dialogue" where situations are not only identified but can be resolved, no matter how complex.

**Q. Are these follow-up reports as secure as the first one?**

All EthicsPoint correspondence is held in the same strict confidence as the initial report, continuing under the umbrella of anonymity.

**Q. What if I want to be identified with my report?**

There is a section in the report for identifying yourself, if you wish. Also, some situations, such as allegations of sexual harassment, may require you to identify yourself in order to properly investigate the claim.

**Q. Is the telephone toll-free hot line anonymous, too?**

Yes. You will be asked to provide the same information that you would provide in an Internet-based report, and an interviewer will type your responses into the EthicsPoint website. These reports have the same security measures applied to them during delivery.