



Procedure 504-01 Institutional Records of Student Complaints

Sponsor: Student Affairs

Purpose

To maintain records of the formal, written and signed complaints filed by a student with the offices of the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Academic Officer, the Chief Business Officer, and/or the Chief Student Affairs Officer. Records will include information concerning the disposition of such complaints and referrals made to external agencies for final disposition of such complaints and referrals made to external agencies for final resolution.

Definitions

None

Procedure

Complaint Requirements

Only formal, written complaints, signed by a student, and addressed to one of the officers listed, will be accepted under the rules of these procedures. Complaints received via fax, e-mail and/or other electronic means will not be considered under these procedures.

Compliance to Institutional Procedures

If informal or formal procedures have not been followed, the complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate College official by the Officer. The Officer must notify the student complainant of this action, including the name and title of the College official receiving the written complaint. Complaints submitted in this manner will be subject to established College policy and procedures prior to action by the Officer. Complaints subject to institutional procedures and proceedings that are directed to College officials for action by an Officer will be reported to the Dean for Student Services and included in the annual report.

Complain Notification

A statement concerning the College's student complaints policy and procedures, including the names, titles and directory information of the primary Officers, as well as directory information for the Higher Learning Commission will be included in the College's official printed and web-based catalog.

Reporting Complaints

Written, formal complaints signed by a student to one of the Officers listed will be submitted by the Officer to the Dean of Student Affairs for tracking purposes. A written description of the actions taken by the Officer accompanying the complaint will include but is not limited to the following information:

1. The date the complaint was first formally submitted to the Officer.
2. The nature of the complaint.
3. The steps taken by the Officer and/or College to resolve the complaint.
4. The College's final decision regarding the complaint, including referrals made to outside agencies.
5. Any other external initiated by the student to resolve the complaint, if known by the College.

Complaints Received from The Higher Learning Commission

Complaints received by an Officer from the Commission will be subject to these procedures and will follow the same rules and steps outlined herein, including action and tracking.

1. The Dean of Student Affairs will, upon notice that a complaint has been received from the Commission, will notify the complainant, in writing, outlining the action the Officer and/or College will take in addressing the complaint.
2. Following action on any complaint received from the Commission, the Dean of Student Affairs will provide a written statement of resolution to the complainant and the College President. It will be the President's discretion whether to report the institutional action to the Commission.

Records Maintenance

Copies of the written student complaint and the written description of action submitted by the Officer, and complaints received by the Commission and status reports, will be maintained by the Dean of Student Affairs for a period of two years.

Individual student records of complaint and complaints received from the Commission will be destroyed at the end of the two-year period. The Dean of Student Affairs will be responsible for ensuring confidentiality of purged student complaint files.

Annual Institutional Records of Student Complaints will be maintained on record for a period of two years following the academic year in which the Record is published.

Complaint Tracking System

The annual Report will contain the following information:

1. The total number of complaints received by each officer.
2. The types of complaints received by generic category.
3. The total number of complaints referred to external agencies for final resolution.
4. A summary record of each complaint received, the action taken by the Officer and/or College, and information concerning a referral to an external agency for final resolution.

Confidentiality - The annual Institutional Record of Student Complaints will not include the name of the complainant or name(s) of any individuals involved in the facts of complaint. Requests by third parties to review confidential information will require written permission by the complainant and are subject to rules and regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Disclosure to the Higher Learning Commission - The Annual Institutional Record of Student Complaints will be available for review during the periodic accreditation visit/review. Evaluating teams may determine if information included in the Record is relevant to the affiliated status of the College and/or if evidence exists to require further investigation by the Commission. The Records will include at least the two years prior to the date of the evaluation visit.

Institutional Review

The annual Institutional Record of Student Complaints will be presented to the President's Advisory Council no later than August following the academic year of the Record. The President's Advisory Council will develop recommendations and/or additional action to ensure on-going quality service to students. The College President will provide a report on the Institutional Record of Student complaints and administrative recommendations for continuous improvement no later than the October District Governing Board meeting each year.

The review proceedings will be available to the Higher Learning Commission at the time of the comprehensive evaluation review or upon request.

References

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Procedure History

12/10/1998 New

Legal Review

None