

POLICY #11.4

SUBJECT: Student Complaints

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish policy on receiving and responding to student complaints; however, this Policy does not supersede University [Policy 6.19](#).

II. REFERENCES

- A. Southern Utah University [Policy 5.27 Non-Discrimination / Anti-Harassment](#)
- B. Southern Utah University [Policy 6.19 Grade Appeal](#)

III. DEFINITIONS

N/A

IV. POLICY

- A. Process for Student Complaints
 - 1. Students who have a concern about a faculty (to include adjunct) or staff member should first try to discuss the concern with the individual. This can be the most appropriate and expedient way to resolve such matters; however, if this approach does not lead to resolution of the matter or, if for some reason, the student cannot take the matter directly to the employee, the student should discuss their concern with the employee's immediate supervisor. In the case of a faculty member, this would be the department chair. In the case of a staff member, this would be the director, or manager to whom the employee reports.
 - 2. If the concern involves a supervisor, as defined above, and if the student and the supervisor cannot reach resolution, the concern should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Academic Dean or Vice President.

3. If the complaint is still not resolved, the department chair will ask the student to draft a formal letter of complaint and submit it to them within 30 calendar days. The supervisor hearing the initial concern can, in consultation with the student, take one of several formal courses of action.
 - a. Meet with the faculty or staff member to discuss the concerns while protecting the student's identity.
 - b. Meet with the faculty or staff member to discuss the concerns to include sharing the source of the complaint.
 - c. Meet with the faculty or staff member and the student to address the complaint and determine a course of action (as appropriate) to reach resolution.
 - d. For any of the actions outlined above to occur, the concern must be formalized into a written complaint signed by the student and submitted to the supervisor. No formal action will be taken without written documentation.
 4. If resolution is reached, a letter from the supervisor to the student and the faculty or staff member will be provided. The letter will outline the resolution that was reached and a copy, signed by both parties, will be retained by the supervisor and copied to the appropriate Dean or Vice President.
 5. If the complaint remains unresolved, the written complaint, along with a narrative of the actions taken, will be forwarded to the appropriate next level of supervision for investigation. This investigation may include informal conversations with individuals who may have knowledge that supports or refutes the allegations. If resolved, a letter of resolution will be provided to the faculty or staff member, the student and the appropriate department chair or director. A copy signed by all parties involved will be retained by the Dean or Vice President.
 6. If it is determined that a complaint against a faculty member warrants a formal hearing, the matter will be referred to the Provost who will follow appropriate University policy to resolve the matter. If, in the case of a staff member, a more formal process is warranted, the supervisor will consult with the Director of Human Resources who will assure the appropriate University policies are followed to resolve the matter.
- B. Students in need of guidance during this process can find assistance in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

- C. Public denigration of faculty members through media such as newspapers and petitions is not an acceptable substitute for the steps outlined above. In fact, such actions will dilute the effectiveness of the procedures outlined in representing the best interest of all involved.
- D. If the allegations articulated by the student complainant suggest harassment or discrimination on the part of the faculty member, [Policy 5.27](#) will be followed.

V. RELEVANT FORMS/LINKS

N/A

VI. QUESTIONS/RESPONSIBLE OFFICE

The responsible office for this Policy is the [Vice President for Student Affairs](#). For questions about this Policy, contact the [Dean of Students](#).

VII. POLICY ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT DATES

Date Approved: March 25, 1991

Amended: [December 11, 1998](#); May 1, 2009