Student Complaint Procedures

ROWAN UNIVERSITY POLICY

Title: *Student Complaint Policy*
Subject: *Academic Affairs*
Policy No: *AA: 2015:14*
Applies: *University-Wide*
Issuing Authority: *Sr. Vice President and Provost*
Responsible Officer: *Deans*
Adopted:
Last Revision: 03*/13/2017*
Last Reviewed:

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures that will ensure prompt resolution of student complaints.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

Under direction of the Provost, all Deans and Department Chairs shall implement this policy and all faculty shall ensure compliance with the policy.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all students of Rowan University.

IV. POLICY

1. If a letter of complaint is received by a department chair/supervisor, dean/department head, the provost, or the president from a student, parent, legislator, or any other individual in which a faculty, staff member, or administrator is named, the individual receiving the complaint will determine whether it has come as the result of the official complaint process, or directly to that office. If it has come directly to that office, the individual receiving the complaint will notify the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the complaint and provide a copy of the complaint procedure.

2. If a department chair/supervisor, dean/department head, the Provost, or the President of the University receives a letter of complaint about a faculty or professional staff member from a student, he/she will forward the letter to the individual being complained about and inform the student that the complaint process must begin with an attempt to resolve the problem with the faculty/professional staff member, and that the above complaint procedure must be followed.

3. To insure the protection of the parties' privacy, the process and all documentation will be completely confidential.

4. This policy and procedure does not apply to allegations of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct. For such allegations, there is a separate, distinct policy and process. The appropriate policy and procedures for sexual harassment and sexual misconduct can be found in the University Policy: *Student Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy*.

5. This process does not apply to the students' personal preferences regarding the faculty/professional staff members' physical appearance, personal values, sexual orientation, or the right to academic

freedom or the freedom of expression.

6. In all grievance matters, to the extent possible, the student will be responsible for documentation of his /her allegations.

7. The faculty/professional staff member being complained about is expected to attend all 8 meetings set up to resolve the complaint.

8. Student complaint procedures must begin with an attempt to resolve the problem with the faculty /professional staff member, and that the below complaint procedure must be followed:
    a. Department Level
        i. The student and faculty/professional staff member will meet to attempt resolution of the complaint.
        ii. If the matter is not resolved, the student and the instructor will then meet with the department chairperson/supervisor, who will act as a facilitator, to determine if resolution is possible.
        iii. If the faculty/professional staff member is not accessible for any reason (e.g., prolonged illness, on leave, refuses to meet with student), or if the student fears reprisal, the student may initiate the process by first meeting with the department chairperson/supervisor.
        iv. In any case, if the matter is not resolved, the student must notify (in writing) the faculty /professional staff member or department chairperson/supervisor within twenty (20) calendar days from the date the student knew or should reasonably have known about the matter.
        v. If the above named people are not available or cannot be contacted, the student must submit in writing his/her intention to pursue the process at the department level. The written statement must be sent to the department chairperson/supervisor within the same twenty (20) days noted above.
        vi. If the student wishes to pursue the matter immediately, the department chairperson /supervisor must schedule a meeting between the faculty/professional staff member and the aggrieved student within ten (10) working days after being contacted by the student and it must be held within fifteen (15) days of such contract. The student and faculty /professional staff member will be informed in writing by the department chairperson /supervisor of the outcome of the meeting.
        vii. If the student wishes to delay pursuing the matter until the semester is over, the department chairperson/supervisor must schedule a meeting between the faculty /professional staff member and the aggrieved student within twenty (20) working days of the next semester. The student and faculty/professional staff member will be informed in writing by the department chairperson/supervisor of the outcome of the meeting.
        viii. If the grievance is against the department chairperson/supervisor, the student may begin the complaint process at the college/unit level.
        ix. If the department chairperson/supervisor is unable to facilitate the meeting between faculty and student for any reason, the student may begin the complaint process at the college /unit level.
        x. In such instances, the student must submit in writing his/her intentions to pursue the process at the college/unit level.
    b. College/Unit Level
        i. If the issue is not resolved at the departmental level, within fifteen (15) working days of the departmental level meeting, the student shall schedule a meeting with the appropriate dean /director and will provide, in writing, the rationale for the complaint.
        ii. The dean/director will convene a meeting to attempt to effect reconciliation between the two parties within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving the student's written rationale for the grievance. Pertinent documentation provided by the faculty/professional staff member and/or the student shall form the basis of discussion at this stage. The faculty/professional staff member and the student may be assisted in the meeting by advisors. The advisors must be from within the university community and cannot speak for the faculty/professional staff member or the student. The advisors can only advise the parties they represent.

iii. The dean/director will render a written decision within fifteen (15) working days of the college level meeting. If the complaint cites a violation of the Ethics Code and the student is not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting, he/she may file a grievance with the Rowan University Senate Ethics Committee.