

August 19, 2016

Division of Student Affairs

Addressing Student Complaints

Policy and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to ...

- present a Student Affairs' policy for addressing student complaints.
- explain our procedures for addressing how we review and resolve student complaints in a timely manner.
- explain how we summarize the number, type and resolution of complaints we have received in the three years prior to the HLC comprehensive visit.
- explain our mechanism for tracking and aggregating student complaint information.
- explain how we study the pattern of student complaints to determine whether improvements in our programs or processes might be appropriate.

Policy

The Division of Student Affairs will address and systematically process student complaints that it receives in a timely manner.

In addition, the Code of Student Community Standards (Student Handbook) states that each Ferris State University student has the right to initiate a complaint that may bring about an investigation and/or disciplinary action involving another member of the University academic community.

Procedures

If a student has a complaint, the recommended general strategy is for that student to first contact the specific department most directly connected with the issue at hand, unless there are good reasons for not doing so, such as a desire to maintain anonymity.

The on-line University directory provides contact information for all the divisions, departments, Deans' offices, etc. from which an individual can usually determine where to file a complaint. If students need to contact FSU regional locations they can do so by using telephone numbers listed at <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/statewide/contacts/index.htm>.

The departments/offices listed below report to the Deans in the Division of Student Affairs:

- Admissions and Records Office
- Birkam Health Center
- Career Services
- Center for Leadership, Activities & Career Services
- Commencement
- Dean of Student Life
- Enrollment Services
- Institutional Research and Testing
- Multicultural Student Services
- Orientation
- Personal Counseling Center
- Scholarships and Financial Aid
- Student Conduct
- Student Employment
- Title IX
- University Center
- University Recreation

Student Anonymity (Confidentiality)

If, for any reason, a student does not want to personally or directly contact a staff member to discuss a complaint, they may contact the person in the next highest level of authority, which would commonly be the supervisor (director, dean, associate vice president, or vice president). The student can request an appointment to meet with the director/dean/vice president and/or send a signed written description of the issue or problem and request that their identity be kept confidential.

That request will be honored unless there are over-riding reasons to do otherwise. For example, if a student alleges sexual harassment by a staff member to a director, the director *must* forward that information, to include the identity of the complainant, to the Department of Public Safety as a reporting agent.

Addressing Informal Student Complaints

All student concerns are taken seriously within the Division of Student Affairs. Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve complaints informally by visiting or calling the following areas to directly resolve their concern with the appropriate staff member.

Issues related to academic transcripts, transfer credits:

Contact Admissions and Records at (231)591-2100 located on the second floor of the Timme Center for Student Services.

Issues regarding University Center room reservations and event hosting:

Contact the University Center at (231)591-5916.

Issues related to University Recreation:

Contact the Student Recreation Center at (231)591-2679.

Issues related to school closures for severe weather or other emergencies: Contact the FSU Communications Center (ext. 2100), visit the Ferris homepage, or the MyFSU webpage.

Issues about on-campus housing (residence halls/apartments):

- Generally, if a student has a complaint they should bring it to the attention of their Residence Advisor (RA) in the Residence Halls, Hall Director if they live East Campus Suites, or the Apartment Manager if they live in one of the campus apartments.
- If there is a concern about the Hall Director or Apartment Manager, students can speak with the Assistant Director of Housing.
- Students may also speak with the Director of Housing and Residence Life.

The main Housing number is (231)591-3745.

Issues about policy violations in the Code of Student Community Standards and a student's disciplinary record:

Contact the Office of Student Conduct at (231)591-3619 or visit the Birkam Health Center Room 214.

Issues regarding discrimination:

Contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at (231) 591-3946, or Multicultural Student Services at (231)591-2617 and/or the Dean of Student Life at (231)591-2686.

Issues regarding disabilities:

Contact the Disabilities Services Office at (231)591-3057.

Issues regarding Fraternity and Sororities/General Registered Student Organizations (RSO):

Contact Center for Leadership, Activities and Career Services at (231)591-2606.

Issues related to general health, health fees, health insurance, or immunization records:

Contact the Birkam Health Center at (231)591-2614 for physical health issues.

Issues related to personal counseling:

Contact the Personal Counseling Center at (231)591-5968 for general counseling and other mental health concerns.

Issues about on-campus parking, parking tickets, metered parking, etc.:

Contact the Department of Public Safety at (231)591-5000.

Issues about scholarships, financial aid, tuition, and other charges:

Contact the Student Service Center in the Timme building which handles most of these issues. Student bills and financial aid information can also be accessed and viewed via a student's personal MyFSU page.

Issues regarding student employment:

Contact the Office of Student Employment at (231)591-3922.

Issues related to on-campus dining:

Contact Dining Services Administration and Staff at (231)591-2210.

Issues related to a student's computer:

Contact the Technology Assistance Center at (231) 591-4822.

Issues related to FSU campus events and programs:

Contact the relevant FSU office or group hosting the event.

Students also have the option of getting advice from key University officials who will suggest strategies and mechanisms for addressing student complaints:

- Vice President for Student Affairs, (231)591-3578, Timme CSS 313.
- Office of the Dean of Student Life, (231)591-2686, University Center 129
- Dean of Enrollment Services, (231)591-3963, Timme CSS 201.
- Any of the college Deans which are listed on the Ferris State University website.

Advice to Students - Steps to Submitting a Formal Written Signed Complaint:

- Step 1:** First try to resolve your complaint informally by talking with a staff member in the department most directly connected to your complaint. The staff member may request that you provide additional documentation if necessary, or schedule an appointment to address your concern.
- Step 2:** If you want to submit a formal written signed complaint please do so to the appropriate Student Affairs staff member. If you are not sure who the appropriate person is, simply ask any staff member for assistance. The written signed complaint must include the following information:
- the actual complaint (be as specific as possible), and
 - the specific outcome you are seeking.
- Step 3:** If the problem remains unresolved, the student and the staff member may refer the matter to the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee.

Process for Summarizing the Number, Type and Resolution of Student Complaints

- Each Director within the Division of Student Affairs uses an Excel spreadsheet to record the number, type and resolution of student complaints they receive. An example of this spreadsheet is provided below.
- Twice per year, all complaints are sent to the Executive Secretary to the Vice President of Student Affairs who aggregates the data into a master document.
- This data is then studied to see if patterns emerge which reveal a need for improvements in our programs, activities or services.

The Division of Student Affairs Student Complaint Report

[Department]
[Semester]

Complaint Date	Complaint Submitted To (Name of Person)	Title of Person	College or Office	Nature of the Complaint	Resolution Steps	Institution Final Decision Regarding the Complaint (Including Referral to Outside Agencies)	Any Other External Actions Initiated by the Student to Resolve the Complaint
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