



## STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### PURPOSE

The University's mission is to provide a mutually respectful environment conducive to student learning and development. In doing so, the University acknowledges that students can offer valuable information about the performance of the university in meeting goals and providing services as part of our mission. Consistent with this aim, the University invites feedback and is committed to addressing student dissatisfaction. When a problem or issue arises, students are advised to seek information and assistance through the various processes and procedures, including student governance organizations, instituted to receive and respond to student complaints regarding faculty/staff, another student, programs, or services. When registering concerns or complaints, students must follow the appropriate procedures. If a student has any question about the applicable procedure to follow for a particular complaint, the student should contact the Office of Student Services, Associate Vice President, and Senior Conduct Officer at (504) 520-7359 or [studentservices@xula.edu](mailto:studentservices@xula.edu). Discussions may remain confidential until a student decides to take more formal action.

### APPLICATION

The policy provisions outlined apply to all students currently enrolled at Xavier University of Louisiana who choose to make a formal written complaint.

### EXEMPTIONS

If a student has a complaint concerning any of the following matters, the student should refer to the proper resource:

A. Academic Integrity Policy (College of Arts and Sciences / College of Pharmacy). Any student who wants to dispute a decision made regarding academic misconduct or academic dishonesty

B. Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic). Any student misconduct that violates University Policy, Procedures or Standards

C. Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment. Any student who has experienced treatment or consideration based upon ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability, or any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and sexual assault. (contact Title IX Coordinator, Human Resources or Senior Conduct Officer)

D. Scope and Authority Complaints regarding individuals who are not full or part-time members of faculty/staff or enrolled at the University or that are outside the scope of University operations do not fall within this policy.

### POLICY PROVISIONS

## **Procedures for Filing a Written Complaint**

A student who has a complaint that a policy or procedure has been incorrectly or unfairly applied in his/her particular case, or a complaint about the behavior of a University faculty/staff member that does not fall within any of the categories listed above, or dissatisfaction with specific college experience, the complaint will be handled as follows:

1) Informal Resolution – Student Concern or Dissatisfaction Communicated Students are encouraged to speak directly with the individual (faculty/staff member) or office (financial aid, housing, etc.) involved with or responsible for the situation that is the cause of the complaint.

Appropriate University staff will review the matter presented by the student and determine whether any action is required. The Senior Conduct Officer, or designee, may serve as an advocate and/or third-party mediator if agreed by all parties, and the situation warrants.

Options for Informal Resolution:

- a. Take no further action
- b. Make comments or suggestions regarding the issue, or
- c. If this communication does not lead to a satisfactory resolution or such a discussion is not deemed appropriate, the student may file a formal written complaint.

2) Formal Resolution - Filing a Formal Written Complaint/Grievance

a. After an attempt for informal resolution of the matter is unresolved and there are irreconcilable differences, or informal resolution was deemed not appropriate, a formal complaint may be filed

b. Complete the Student Complaint Form and mail or campus delivery to:

Vice President of Student Services  
Attn: Senior Conduct Officer  
4801 Dixon Street  
305 University Center (campus delivery)  
New Orleans, LA 70125

Email: [studentservices@xula.edu](mailto:studentservices@xula.edu)

Phone: 504.520.7359

You will need the following information:

- Name and contact information
- A clear description of the concern or complaint
- Appropriate supporting documentation that is directly related to the complaint
- A description of any subsequent action taken by the student or the university
- A description of the desired outcome

The form will be forwarded to the dean of the relevant College or the head of the appropriate office from which the complaint arises. Formal complaints must be filed within sixty (60) days of the event that triggered the complaint, and state the nature of the grievance and the remedy being sought. Any previous attempts to resolve the issue should also be described.

NOTE: All formal Student Complaints must be submitted in writing on the Student Complaint Form. A complaint reported by telephone will not be considered as submitted for review.

### **Complaint Review and Resolution Process**

Records of the final outcome of all formal complaints will also be stored in a centralized database in the student's electronic file (effective spring 2017). Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within fourteen (14) days. The appropriate University administrator will then review the matter. A final written determination, including any proposed resolution, will be sent to the student within sixty (60) days of the receipt of the complaint or other reasonable period depending on the complexity of the complaint and those involved.

If there is new evidence/statements that could have impacted the original decision, the complainant may appeal the decision to the next highest administrative level within seven (7) days. If that officer does not find a substantial basis for an appeal, the case is closed. If the appeal is granted, the Administrative officer or College Dean will provide a final resolution to uphold or overturn the decision. The office of the appropriate Vice President is the highest level to which appeals may be made. If a complaint is against a Vice President, the Director of Human Resources will have oversight.

### **Complaint Tracking**

Record Retention: A complete record (paper copy) of formal complaints will be retained by the relevant University office up to five (5) years after final disposition:

- Date of complaint
- Student identified with the complaint
- Nature of the complaint
- University official who addressed the complaint and steps taken to resolve
- Final resolution or disposition
- Any external actions were taken by the complainant

Records of the final outcome of all formal complaints will also be stored in a centralized database in the student's electronic file (effective spring 2017). The database logs and tracks each complaint.

Each Office of the College Dean and the Senior Conduct Officer (Associate Vice President for Student Services) will meet in order to conduct an annual review of complaints to identify any persistent patterns and, if such emerge, establish a process to address them.

### **Withdrawing a Complaint**

Students have the right to withdraw a complaint at any time during the process, in which case the complaint shall be registered as concluded and noted as withdrawn. If the complaint was made in writing, the withdrawal should also be in writing to the person handling the complaint. The staff member who receives the notification will advise all parties to the complaint in writing of the withdrawal. Staff may still decide to initiate appropriate corrective action as a result of the complaint.

If the complaint was against another person or group of people, they have the right to make a written statement following the withdrawal. This should be addressed to the member of staff handling the complaint, who will then circulate the response to all those involved in handling the complaint to date. The complaint will then be concluded and no further correspondence will be required.

Students who choose to withdraw complaints must include their reasons for withdrawal.

### **Complaints to External Entities**

If there is evidence that appears to support significant non-compliance with a university requirement or standard, the student may file a complaint with the appropriate accrediting or compliance agency:

For unresolved complaints concerning university compliance with accrediting standards or against the Commission

The Southern Association of College and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

The Accreditation Councils for unresolved complaints regarding program requirements or standards

Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)

National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct Complaints

The Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education for complaints concerning federal laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment

### **Definitions**

**Student:** A currently enrolled individual, or enrolled within the two previous semesters (one academic year) when the circumstances of the complaint first occurred, and who has not been suspended or dismissed, or otherwise separated from the university.

**Informal Complaint:** An expression of a problem, concern, or dissatisfaction by a student to any staff, office, or department. Complaints may be expressed and discussed with the most immediately before any grievance is filed. If the complaint cannot be resolved, a formal complaint may be filed.

**Formal Complaint/Grievance:** A formal statement of complaint that specifies a misinterpretation, misapplication, or unreasonable application of an official University policy, procedure, rule, or regulation or behavior regarding the student. Student Complaints can be made in four areas: Academic, Non-Academic (Student Conduct), Discrimination/Harassment, or Appeal of any of the previously stated areas.

**Complainant:** The person expressing the concern or complaint

**Respondent:** The individual responding to, or involved in addressing the concern or complaint

### **Amendments or Termination of Policy**

The University reserves the right to modify, amend, or terminate this policy at any time.