

## **Student Complaint Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

In accordance with VCCS Policy 6.5.0.1 Student Grievance and SACSCOC Standard 12.4 Student Complaints:

This Student Complaint policy provides students with a fair and equitable process to present an issue which they feel warrants action. The policy applies to all students in matters relating to other students, faculty, administrators, and staff at all College locations. A student concerned with a staff member or College department should try to resolve the complaint informally. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached informally, the student may appeal by submitting the [formal complaint form](#). Complaints not submitted using the formal complaint form will not be considered formal.

This policy **does not** apply to the following appeals or grievances. Policy and procedures for these are contained in other policy statements.

- Grade Appeals
- Any formal appeal or grievance covered by another College policy (e.g., code of conduct, admissions, financial aid, satisfactory academic progress, tuition appeal, etc.)
- All Human Resource policies
- Concerns regarding code of conduct, academic honesty, threats to campus safety, and/or sexual harassment should be reported via See Something Say Something

The student complaint procedure provides students a fair and equitable process to present an issue which they feel warrants action regarding their right to secure educational benefits and services without regard to non-merit factors including but not limited to such things as race, color, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions including lactation, age, status as a veteran, national origin, or other non-merit factors.

### **1. Definitions**

*Formal Complaint:* A complaint submitted by a student using the [formal complaint form](#) alleging improper, unfair, arbitrary, or discriminatory action by an employee or a student involving the application of a specific provision of a college rule or regulation or a board policy or procedure.

*Informal Complaint:* A verbal complaint, a written complaint sent via email or text, or a complaint posted on social media platforms.

### **2. Procedures**

1. After attempting to resolve the issue informally, if a satisfactory resolution is not reached the student may submit a formal complaint.
2. The student must complete and submit a [formal complaint form](#) within ten (10) business days following their attempt to resolve the matter informally. The College will not entertain complaints submitted anonymously, via email, or submitted on someone else's behalf. No other method, other than the formal complaint form, will be considered a formal complaint.
3. Formal complaints will be recorded and logged by the appropriate administrator.
4. If a complaint falls under another policy, it will be forwarded to the appropriate administrator and be processed under the appropriate policy procedures.
5. Upon receiving a formal complaint form, the appropriate administrator will arrange a conference with the student to discuss the issue within ten (10) business days. After the conference, the administrator will render his/her decision, in writing, to the student and the College employee involved.
6. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached as a result of the conference, the student may appeal within five (5) business days to the Provost or Vice President. The Provost or Vice President will review the complaint form and any supporting documentation and render a decision, in writing, within five (5) business days. The decision of the Provost or Vice President shall be final.
7. All formal complaint documentation is housed in the Office of the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

#### **1. Responsible Office:**

Authority for interpretation of this policy rests with the Associate Vice President of Student Services and Academic Support.

#### **2. Other Information:**

The Student Success Policy Committee developed the policy in accordance with VCCS Policy 6.5.0.1 and SACSCOC Standard 12.4.

VCCS Policy 6.5.0.1 Student Grievance: *Each VCCS college will develop and publish a student grievance procedure which will provide for equitable and orderly processes to resolve complaints made by students for improper treatment. A grievance is defined as a written claim raised by a student alleging improper, unfair, arbitrary, or discriminatory action by an employee or a student involving the application of a specific provision of a college or rule/regulation or a board policy or procedure.*

SACSCOC Standard 12.4 Student Complaints: *The institution (a) publishes appropriate and clear procedures for addressing written student complaints, (b) demonstrates that it follows the procedures when resolving them, and (c) maintains a record of student complaints that can be accessed upon request by SACSCOC.*

**Document History:**

*Approved: President J.J. Sygielski, Fall 2005*

*Revised: Interim President John Capps, 2009*

*Revised: President Kim Blosser, February 2023*