

MANUAL OF NOTRE DAME COLLEGE POLICIES  
PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Title/Subject: Student Concerns and Complains

Applies to: faculty  staff  students  student employees  visitors  contractors

Effective Date of This Policy: May 1, 2017

Contact for More Information: Student Affairs

Board Policy  Administrative Policy  Procedure  Guideline

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**INTRODUCTION (RATIONALE and PURPOSE):**

The College encourages the resolution of questions, concerns, and complaints in a fair manner. This document establishes a policy and procedure for students to request assistance and/or resolution of questions, concerns, and complaints. Concerns and complaints may be resolved through normal college channels or with the assistance of the Student Ombuds or Designee.

What is a **concern** for the purpose of this policy?

A “concern” is a worry or expression of dissatisfaction regarding a department, service, process, student, College employee, or a College administrative action, that does not require clarification, follow-up, or resolution.

What is a **complaint** for the purpose of this policy?

A “complaint” is an expression of dissatisfaction regarding a department, service, process, student, College employee, or a College administrative action, that requires clarification, follow-up, investigation, and/or resolution.

**POLICY/PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES:**

Concern Policy and Procedure

Step 1 – Share with the student the name of the supervisor who oversees the area in which their concern exists; affording the student an opportunity to address the concern through normal college channels.

Step 2 – Document and share the documentation with the supervisor who oversees the area in which the concern exists.

## Complaint Policy and Procedure

Step 1 – Informal resolution within the college: Students should attempt to resolve their complaint through the normal channels by contacting the person responsible for the specific area where the complaint exists.

Step 2 – If no resolution is reached in Step 1, the student may request assistance in the form of informal mediation from the Student Ombuds or may request to move into formal resolution (Step 3).

Step 3 – Formal resolution: Formal documentation of the complaint and steps taken to date is presented to the senior staff member responsible for supervision of the area where the complaint exists. Decisions made by senior staff members are documented and returned to the Student Ombuds to be shared with the student. If the senior staff member has had significant involvement already, or has been named in the complaint, a group of three staff members will be assembled to respond to the complaint. This group will be selected by the President, will have limited previous involvement in the complaint, and will not report to anyone named in the complaint. Decisions made at the end of Step 3 are final.

### **REGULATIONS (SCOPE,PROVISIONS and GUIDELINES)**

#### Concerns

The student Ombuds will document and share, in writing, the concern with the supervisor in the area where the concern exists. If the concern is about an employee, it will be sent to the employee's supervisor and human resources. The supervisor will be made aware that the student is not seeking resolution and that no follow-up to the student Ombuds is required. The student has the right to provide their name or remain anonymous.

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#### Complaints

Steps 1 and 2 - Information will be documented by the Student Ombuds, but will not be shared with the supervisor by the Student Ombuds. It is the student's decision and responsibility to proceed through the steps of resolution. This information will be used to track trends and aid in decision making. In the tracking report, the overview will not contain information that would identify the student. Reasonable measures will be taken to provide confidentiality in the documentation.

Step 3 - A written record containing the complaint and the resolution will be kept on file in the Office of the Student Ombuds. This information will be used to track trends and aid in decision making. In the tracking report, the overview will not contain information that would identify the student. Reasonable measures will be taken to provide confidentiality in the documentation.

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#### Additional Notes:

Supervisors will receive concern information within 72 hours of the Student Ombuds having completed the documentation gathering.

All reasonable measures should be made to complete requests for formal resolution (Step 3, Complaint Policy) within 28 days.

All highlights, concerns, or complaints made to the Ombuds, about an employee, will be shared with Human Resources when it is shared with the supervisor or senior staff member.

All student related information will be considered confidential and protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, (FERPA). Records relating to employees and other records that do not include student information are not confidential.