



Policy Name:	Student Non-Academic Grievance Policy	
Effective Date:	2/27/04	
Review Date:	Reviewed: 8-12-15	Approved: 8-12-15
Responsible Office or Committee:	Faculty Administrative Council	
Applies to:	All Students	
Where Policy Resides:	SSW Policy Manual; Student Handbook	
Review Cycle:	Three Year Cycle - 2018	

Policy

The seminary wishes to respond to student complaints and grievances in a timely, thoughtful, and responsive manner. Several administrative and faculty committees exercise advisory and/or administrative responsibility over many aspects of seminary life. The student handbook lists these committees and they are referred to in this policy because they often represent the most expedient way to hear and resolve a complaint. A student who has a complaint is encouraged to examine this avenue. The procedure outlined below is designed to address those problems not resolved or able to be resolved by this means.

The following procedure is to be followed by a student with a complaint against another student or member of the faculty, or staff, or administration regarding matters that adversely affect the student or the broader community life at the seminary. Included within the scope of this procedure are complaints of improper conduct; serious or persistent problems; complaints concerning discrimination of any kind, including discriminatory application of seminary rules and procedures. This policy specifically excludes complaints or grievances that involve academic matters or matters of sexual harassment – other applicable seminary policies and procedures should be followed in those cases.

It is the intention of the seminary to resolve such grievances informally by consultation as much as possible. Therefore, the aggrieved student shall first approach the involved student or member of the faculty, staff, or administration directly, explain the disagreement, and try to resolve it in a mutually satisfactory way. If the student wishes, he or she may ask another member of the community for assistance in arranging such a meeting and facilitating discussion. This third person may be the student’s advisor, a class representative, a seminary vice president, a department head or primary administrative officer, or someone else, and care should be taken in the choice of this third person so that (1) he or she would be as neutral as possible with respect to the grievance and its possible resolution and that (2) he or she would not likely be involved in any related formal complaint or appeal.

If the dispute cannot be resolved by such informal consultation, the aggrieved student may take the second step of filing a formal written complaint within the office of the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance. The complaint shall describe both the incident that precipitated the grievance and the unsuccessful attempt to resolve it informally, and shall be filed within thirty calendar days after the incident that precipitated the grievance.

If the person who is the subject of the complaint is the Dean and President, the complaint shall be filed with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the Board shall determine the procedure by which it will respond. If the person in question is the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance, the complaint shall be filed with the Dean and President.

The office of the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance (or other party receiving the complaint, as above; all henceforth “Arbitrator”), shall within three business days send written notification to the aggrieved student that

the complaint has been received and to the person involved that a complaint has been made against him or her. In this notice, the Arbitrator shall inform both parties that they will meet with him or her within five business days, at which time they will have an opportunity to present information relevant to the complaint. Within ten business days after this first meeting, the Arbitrator shall attempt to reconcile the dispute in a mutually satisfactory way, or may decide the case in accordance with seminary policies or other practices customary in educational institutions or in the Episcopal Church. The Arbitrator shall notify the parties concerned in writing of the details of the decision. During this process, the Arbitrator may solicit the assistance of advisors, professional counselors, or mediators.

If no mutually satisfactory resolution is reached, or if the Arbitrator has made a decision to which either party objects, the matter may be appealed to the Dean and President. This appeal shall be in writing and shall be made within five business days of the written notification of the decision to the complainant by the Arbitrator.

Upon receipt of this appeal, the Dean and President shall convene an ad hoc committee of three to review the matter, conduct appropriate inquiries, and make a recommendation for resolution to the Dean and President. The committee shall be named within seven days. Membership of the committee shall be drawn from the constituencies involved in the dispute and from the community at large, i.e., one student member, a second member representing the constituency of the person involved in the complaint, a third member representing a constituency not involved in the complaint. The work of the committee shall involve at least one hearing at which both parties to the dispute are present, and all parties involved in the case and in the failed attempts to resolve it shall have ample opportunity to present information relevant to the case. Within fourteen days of its appointment, the committee shall communicate its findings and recommendations for resolution in writing to the Dean and President.

The Dean and President shall review the communication of the ad hoc committee, consider its findings and recommendations for resolution, and make his or her decision, either upholding the findings and recommendations or revising them. That decision shall be communicated in writing to the parties involved within seven business days. The dean's decision is final.

Copies of all documents and correspondence connected with a formal complaint and resolution shall be maintained in an appropriate file in the office of the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Contact information for filing student complaints with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board can be accessed here: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=C9BD55D4-C5A3-4BC6-9A0DF17F467F4AE9>

How to submit a student complaint: After exhausting the institution's grievance/complaint process, current, former, and prospective students may initiate a complaint with THECB by sending the required forms either by electronic mail to StudentComplaints@thecb.state.tx.us or by mail to:

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
College Readiness and Success Division
P.O. Box 12788
Austin, Texas 78711-2788

Facsimile transmissions of the forms are not accepted.

All submitted complaints must include a student complaint form, a signed Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Consent and Release form, and a THECB Consent and Agreement Form. Submitted complaints regarding students with disabilities shall also include a signed Authorization to Disclose Medical Record Information form. Links to the forms are set forth below:

The following forms are **required** to start the complaint process:

- [Student Complaint and Release Forms](#)
- [Authorization to Disclose Medical Record Information](#) (Required if a disability is alleged)