



<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>Student Academic Grievance Policy</b>	
<b>Original Effective Date:</b>	<b>10/3/01</b>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>Reviewed: 1-20-16</b>	<b>Approved: 2-10-16</b>
<b>Responsible Office or Committee:</b>	<b>Academic Affairs Committee</b>	
<b>Applies to:</b>	<b>All Students</b>	
<b>Where Policy Resides:</b>	<b>SSW Policy Manual; Academic Code; Student Handbook</b>	
<b>Review Cycle</b>	<b>Three Year Cycle – 2019</b>	

## **Policy**

The seminary aims to provide students with a fair and equitable learning environment, following the Conversation Covenant. In order to achieve this aim, the following policy and procedure is in place for students who have a grievance against a faculty member regarding any matter that adversely affects academic course work or conditions conducive to learning, unless the complaint is one of sexual harassment, in which case the procedure described in the seminary's Policy on Sexual Harassment shall be followed.

## **Procedure:**

It is the intention of the seminary community to resolve grievances informally by consultation, if possible.

- Therefore the aggrieved student shall first approach the faculty member directly, explain the disagreement, and try to resolve it in a timely and mutually satisfactory way. If the student wishes, he/she may ask another faculty member for assistance in arranging such a meeting and facilitating discussion with the faculty member with whom he/she has a complaint. It would be appropriate for the student to request such assistance from or otherwise consult with, his/her faculty advisor, unless the faculty advisor is implicated in the grievance. However, the student may resort to any faculty member whom he/she deems helpful.
- If the dispute cannot be resolved by such informal consultation, the aggrieved student may take the second step of filing a formal written complaint with the office of the Academic Dean. The complaint shall describe both the incident that precipitated the grievance and the unsuccessful attempt to resolve it informally no later than fifteen days of regular fall or spring term time after the unsuccessful attempt to resolve the matter informally.
- If the faculty member in question is the Dean, the complaint shall be filed with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the Board shall determine the procedure by which they will respond. If the faculty member in question is the Academic Dean, the complaint shall be filed with the Dean, and the Dean shall designate another member of the faculty to fulfill the function of the Academic Dean described in the following procedure.
- The Academic Dean will promptly notify the student that the complaint has been received and will notify the faculty member that a complaint has been made against him/her. In this notice the Academic Dean shall also inform both parties that they are to arrange to meet with him/her within ten days of regular Fall or Spring term time, at which meeting they will have an opportunity to present information deemed relevant to the complaint. After hearing from all parties involved, within ten days of regular Fall or Spring term time the Academic Dean

shall attempt to reconcile the dispute in a mutually satisfactory way, or may decide the case. At this stage of the process, the Academic Dean may solicit the assistance of professional counselors or mediators.

- If no mutually satisfactory resolution is reached, or if the Academic Dean has made a decision to which either party objects, the student or the faculty member may take the third step of requesting a hearing from the Faculty. The request shall be made in writing and addressed to the Dean and President.
- The Dean and President, the Academic Dean, and the faculty member against whom the complaint is being made will not be eligible to participate in the hearing.
- The hearing shall be held within ten days of regular Fall or Spring term time after the Dean and President receives the request. The Faculty shall give the aggrieved student and the accused faculty member at least five days' notice of the date and time of the hearing. All parties involved in the complaint and in the failed attempts to resolve it shall have opportunity to present information relevant to the case. The faculty shall then decide the matter.
- Within ten days of the faculty's decision either party may appeal to the Dean and President by sending him/her a written request to this effect. If the Dean and President decides to review the case, he/she may solicit statements from any of the parties involved regarding information that he/she wishes to reconsider.
- The decision of the Dean and President, which shall be rendered within ten days of the request for an appeal, is final.

### **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](mailto: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)