

## **Student Complaint Policy**

*(Approved by Executive Council, 3/2/05)*

The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) is committed to fostering a learning environment that promotes academic excellence and personal development. Students are encouraged to voice their complaints and concerns in a manner that is respectful of the dignity of the individual, if any, who is the subject of the complaint. It is the policy of UIW that students with complaints be treated honestly and fairly, and that their complaints be handled in a timely manner with regard to resolution of the issue(s) presented. Any UIW student may express a concern or complaint by following these procedures. Please note that UIW explicitly prohibits any member of the UIW community from harassing or retaliating against students who file complaints.

### **General Guidelines**

Complaints are most effectively and efficiently managed by first expressing them to the individual, if any, who is the subject of the complaint. Students are strongly encouraged to first discuss their complaint directly with any such individual involved.

If the complaint involves a policy, procedure, or area of responsibility of a specific administrative department, it should be directed to the supervisor/manager of that department. In each instance of a departmental complaint, the appropriate individual will investigate the complaint, seek a solution, and report back to the student in writing within 10 school days. The department supervisor/manager will keep a record of the decision.

For more information about how to process a complaint or to appeal a decision, the student should contact the appropriate office below.

### **Offices to Contact for Different Kinds of Complaints**

#### ***Course Work Complaints***

Students who have complaints about what they believe to be unfair treatment involving their academic work should contact the appropriate College/School Dean.

College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Administration Building 163, CPO 144, (210) 829-6022

Division of Extended Academic Programs, 3200 McCullough (adjacent to St. Anthony's Catholic High School; ADCaP, CPO 294, (210) 805-5800

Dreeben School of Education, Gorman Building, 124, CPO 16, (210) 829-2761

Feik School of Pharmacy, 703 E. Hildebrand, CPO 99, (210) 883-1000

HEB School of Business and Administration, Gorman Business and Education Center 137, CPO 123, (210) 805-5884

Ila Faye Miller School of Nursing and Health Professions, Nursing Building Foyer, CPO 300, (210) 283-5093

Rosenberg School of Optometry, 9725 Datapoint, CPO 373, (210) 883-1194

School of Mathematics, Science, and Engineering, Science Hall, 112, CPO 68, (210) 829-2718

School of Media and Design, Administration Building 112, CPO 107, (210) 829-6091

School of Physical Therapy, 9160 Guilbeau, CPO 412, (210) 283-6472

#### ***Other Academic Complaints***

Students who have complaints about academic advisement or other issues related to academic policies, procedures, or deadlines should contact the Dean of Student Success, Student Support Center, CPO 96, (210) 805-3005.

### ***Administrative Department Complaints***

Students who have complaints about the policies, procedures, or deadlines of an administrative area of UIW, or the personal treatment they have received from an administrative area of UIW, should contact the appropriate major office of UIW.

Admissions, Southwest Texas Building 112, CPO 285, (210) 805-3550

Business Office, Administration Building 190, CPO 291, (210) 829-6088

Disability Services, Administration Building 105, CPO 286, (210) 829-3928

Financial Aid, Chapel Building, CPO 308, (210) 829-3912

Graduate Studies and Research, Administration Building 180, CPO 23, (210) 829-2759

Library 215, CPO 297, (210) 829-3837

Registrar, Administration Building 129, CPO 304, (210) 829-3919

Technology Services, Administration Building 3, CPO 103, (210) 829-3866

Center for Veterans Affairs, 3200 McCullough, CPO 324, (210) 829-2705

### ***Violations of the Student Code of Conduct***

Any member of the UIW community, including faculty and students, may file a complaint against any student for alleged violations of the UIW Student Code of Conduct by contacting the Dean of Campus Life, Marian Hall Student Center, CPO 306, (210) 829-6034.

### ***General Concerns or Complaints***

Students who have a general complaint regarding UIW policies, procedures, or personnel should contact the Dean of Campus Life, Marian Hall Student Center, CPO 306, (210) 829-6034.

### ***Harassment Complaints***

Students who believe that they have been subjected to harassment or treated in a way that violates UIW's anti-harassment policy (i.e., harassment related to an individual's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, citizenship status, or disability) by another student, a UIW employee, a contractor, or a visitor to the campus, should immediately report the alleged harassment to the Director of Human Resources, Southwest Texas Building 220-A, (210) 283-5091, or to the Dean of Campus Life, Student Center, CPO 306, (210) 829-6034.

### **Additional Resources**

#### Mediation Services

Mediation is a process that attempts to establish communication between people having disputes and assists them in finding a mutually acceptable solution. The end result of a successful mediation is that there are neither winners nor losers, but rather, generally satisfied individuals who have arrived at an agreement, which resolves their dispute as they define it. Mediation is a confidential process. The agreements made by the parties involved are non-binding. UIW offers a mediation program designed to assist all members of the UIW community to resolve problems and disputes. Anyone may initiate mediation. To initiate mediation, contact the Counseling Center, Southwest Texas Building 216, CPO 35, (210) 829-3129.

#### The Student Government Association

Students may address various concerns and comments to the Executive Officers of the UIW Student Government Association (SGA). Concerns regarding specific matters related to clubs and organizations, University policies and practices, or ideas and suggestions for UIW administrative offices may be directed to SGA. Concerns are accepted verbally at their twice-monthly general assembly meetings, at SGA-sponsored student forums, or by addressing an SGA officer. Students may also share their concerns in writing by using the forms provided at SGA suggestion boxes that are located in each building on

campus. Concerns directed to the SGA may be submitted anonymously. Concerns are subject to publication in the *Logos*, the UIW student newspaper. Students' concerns are addressed by officers at their regular meetings with UIW administrators or in public forums. The concerns received are also compiled each semester by the SGA and priority issues are presented to the University Planning Commission for discussion and action, as needed. Student Government Officers may be reached in the Student Government Office, Marian Hall Student Center, CPO 1210, (210) 829-3833.

## **Student Complaints Related To Faculty Decisions About Student Course Work Procedure Guidelines**

*(Approved by VPASA, 10/27/05, and Faculty Senate, 10/26/05)*

The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) is committed to maintaining a learning environment which promotes academic excellence and personal development. The following procedure guidelines assure students the opportunity to register their complaints about what they believe to be unfair treatment involving their academic work and to receive prompt resolution of matters related to the complaint.

“Unfair treatment” applies to any act which may be perceived as either prejudiced or arbitrary in the evaluation of a student’s performance, or in the imposition of sanctions without regard for due process.

Students are to complete the following steps:

### **1. Informal Meeting with the Instructor to Resolve a Complaint**

The student should seek resolution of a complaint by talking to the instructor as soon as an incident of perceived unfair treatment occurs. After this step, the student may decide to initiate a Formal Conference for the record.

### **2. Formal Conference with the Instructor to Resolve a Complaint**

The student is responsible for initiating a Formal Conference by completing Part I of the Conference Documentation Form obtained from the office of the Dean in whose college/school the instructor resides.

- a. The student completes Part 1 of the Documentation Form (attached, page 3) and then meets with the instructor within 10 school days of the alleged unfair treatment, or in the case of a final grade, before the beginning of the semester following the alleged unfair treatment. The student explains the complaint and attempts to resolve the matter with the instructor.
- b. The instructor will sign the form acknowledging that there was discussion with the student about the complaint and indicate whether she/he is providing comments.
- c. The instructor may provide written comments as an attachment to the complaint form. The comments must be provided to the student within three days of meeting with the student.
- d. After the conference, the student completes Part 2 of the Documentation Form and signs the document.
- e. The student delivers this form, and any written comments provided by the instructor, in a sealed envelope to the Dean of the college/school in which the instructor resides.

### **3. Appeal to the Dean**

If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student shall have the right to appeal a decision in writing to the Dean or a person designated by the Dean. The student completes the form called the Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions (attached, page 4), and delivers it in a sealed envelope to the appropriate Dean’s office within three school days of meeting with the instructor.

1. To begin the appeal process, the student completes the Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions and attaches to the form a written statement a) of the complaint, b) the student’s

- perception of the results of the conference with the instructor, and c) reasons why the meeting did not resolve the matter of the alleged unfair treatment.
2. The Dean shall meet with the instructor, and others as appropriate, to clarify the relevant facts and perceptions in the matter.
  3. The Dean shall meet with the student\* to clarify the relevant facts and perceptions in the matter as described in the student's written statement.
  4. The Dean then makes a decision on the matter.

As an alternative, the Dean has the option of deciding to convene a review committee.

2. a. The Dean creates a committee consisting of at least two faculty, and one of these, if possible, from the same department as the faculty being complained about, and a student (the SGA School Senator is one possibility), who is not in the same course as the complainant. The Dean shall appoint one of the faculty to chair the meeting.
  3. a. The committee will meet with the student\*\* and the instructor.
  4. a. The committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Dean who makes a decision on the matter.
5. The Dean's decision shall be communicated in writing to the student and the instructor within 10 school days of receipt of the student's completed Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions.
  6. The Dean's decision is final and there is no further appeal to another administrator or office.

**If the complaint involves an individual assignment grade or a final grade, the Dean may ask the instructor to change the grade only in cases involving a procedural error in the conduct of the course or due to evidence of unfair treatment.**

7. Records of the Dean's decision shall be kept in a file separate from the faculty permanent file in the Dean's Office.

\*The student may choose to bring an observer to the meeting. The role of observers is to provide support but they may not actively participate in the conversation. If an observer is present, the Dean may also choose an observer to be present. If the student's observer is also a lawyer, the Dean shall postpone the meeting until university counsel can be present.

\*\* The student may choose to bring an observer to the meeting. The role of observers is to provide support but they may not actively participate in the conversation. If the student's observer is also a lawyer, the faculty chair shall notify the Dean and postpone the meeting until university counsel can be present and the Dean will then chair the meeting.

**Formal Conference Documentation Form**  
**(For a Student Complaint about an Instructor's Decision)**

**Part I**

The student completes this part **prior to the meeting** with the instructor.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

UIW email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/cell: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ UIW extension #: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue (completed by the student prior to the conference):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

.....  
By signature I acknowledge that I have met with the above named student to discuss this issue. I am/am not (circle one) providing written comments. (Comments must be submitted to your dean within three days of this meeting.)

Signature of Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 2**

The student, **after the meeting**, describes whether resolution of the complaint was reached or not:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Whether there is resolution or not, the student delivers this form in a sealed envelope to the Dean of the college/school in which the instructor resides.

If resolution was not reached and the student wishes to appeal the instructor's decision, then the student requests from the Dean's Office the Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions, completes it and returns to the Dean's Office within three days.

cc: Student

Instructor

**Appeal Form For Student Complaints About Faculty Decisions**

**Student Contact Information\***

Student's (Complainant's) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ UIW Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complaint Information**

Date of the incident/complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of the incident (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Place the incident occurred (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of the instructor who made a decision that directly affected you and is the subject of your complaint:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of last conversation with such person(s) when you tried to resolve your complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Please **attach a letter** explaining your complaint and the reasons why a decision or action that affected you should be changed.

**What happens next?**

- 1) Your complaint will be investigated by the appropriate college/school dean who will seek a fair solution, and report back to you in writing within 10 school days.
- 2) The final decision may not be appealed to a higher level.
- 3) Your file will be kept in the office where the final decision was made.

**\*PLEASE NOTE: UIW explicitly prohibits any member of the University community from harassing or retaliating against students who file complaints and appeal decisions.**

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date Appeal Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Response Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Dean's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Response Sent to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:



## **Student Receipt of Complaint Procedure Guidelines and Forms**

*(Approved by VPASA, 11/4/05)*

The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) is committed to maintaining a learning environment which promotes academic excellence and personal development. Procedure guidelines assure students the opportunity to register their complaints about what they believe to be unfair treatment involving their academic work and to receive prompt resolution of matters related to the complaint.

Here is a summary of the Procedure Guidelines that explain the process a student must follow in registering a complaint:

### **1. Hold an Informal Meeting with the Instructor to Resolve the Complaint.**

If the complaint is not resolved, the student may decide to initiate a Formal Conference for the record.

### **2. Hold a Formal Conference with the Instructor after filling out Part I of the Conference Documentation Form.**

If the complaint is still not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student shall have the right to appeal a decision in writing to the Dean of the College/School in which the instructor resides.

### **3. Initiate the process of appealing to the Dean by completing the form called the Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions.**

I understand the basic 3-step process for resolving a complaint related to faculty decisions about student course work and realize that for further details I must read the Procedure Guidelines and Forms I have received. I also understand that the Dean is the appropriate administrator for making a final decision on the appeal and that I am not entitled to appeal to another administrator or office.

Print Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_