

## **Student Grievance Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a process for students to express and resolve misunderstandings, concerns, or grievances that they have with any College employee in a prompt, fair, and equitable manner. This procedure emphasizes informal resolution.

### **GRIEVABLE MATTERS**

A student may use this procedure if the student believes that a College employee (faculty or staff) has violated a college policy or has otherwise acted in a manner resulting in unfair treatment of the student.

### **NONGRIEVABLE MATTERS**

A student may not use this procedure for grievances related to the following matters:

- Actions of other students, because there is a separate procedure administered by the Dean of Students;
- Exceptions to academic policies and procedures, because there is a separate procedure administered by the Academic Standing Committee and/or Curriculum Committee;
- Grade appeals, because there is a separate procedure administered by the Dean of the College;
- Matters covered under other college policies that contain grievance, hearing and/or appeal procedures, including but not limited to the Title IX Policy, Bias Incident Response Protocol, financial aid appeal procedures, and the Academic Honor Code.

**CAMPUS SOURCES OF SUPPORT** Prior to initiating an informal or formal grievance under this policy, a student may choose to contact one of the following individuals to assist them in making decisions about how to address the situation of concern and whether to pursue an informal or formal grievance under this policy. These individuals will maintain confidentiality to the extent reasonably possible.

- Associate Dean of the College (Tim Foster, Old Main 101, tfoster@knox.edu)
- Dean of Students (Deb Southern, Old Main 101, dsouther@knox.edu)

*Please note that the above individuals may serve as a resource/source of support for students seeking to resolve any type of concern, whether or not it is covered under this procedure.*

### **INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

The College believes that most grievances can be resolved informally. With that in mind, the student is encouraged to discuss the matter with the person against whom they have the grievance and seek a mutual resolution.

If the grievance is unable to be resolved at this level, or if the student does not feel that they can discuss the matter directly with the employee, the student may pursue the matter with the department chair (for grievances involving faculty) or the individual's supervisor (for grievances

against staff). The sources of support listed in Section III can assist the student in identifying who the department chair or supervisor is and how to contact them.

## FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the informal resolution process is not able to remediate the situation, a student has the right to file a formal grievance.

### *Procedure:*

1. The student must submit the complaint in writing (hard copy or email) to the Dean of the College for grievances against faculty or to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources for grievances against staff. The statement should include:
  - a complete narrative of the circumstances giving rise to the grievance;
  - identification of the parties involved, including names, addresses, and contact information;
  - a statement of the remedy requested.Students are invited to consult with the Associate Dean of the College or the Dean of Students in preparing their written statements.
2. The Dean of the College/Associate Vice President of Human Resources will determine whether the complaint has sufficient substance to be deemed a grievance.
3. If the complaint is determined to be sufficiently substantive, the Dean of the College/Associate Vice President of Human Resources will notify the employee that a grievance has been filed.
4. The Dean of the College/Associate Vice President of Human Resources will gather any material deemed necessary for review and will meet with all parties directly related to the grievance, in order to gather facts and information needed to make a fair and equitable decision. The student and the individual against whom a grievance is filed may be advised or accompanied by another person at any stage of the grievance procedure, though the adviser may not participate directly in the meeting. If a student or employee with a disability would benefit from a reasonable accommodation at any point during the process, they are encouraged to request an accommodation by contacting the Office of Disability Support Services (students) or Human Resources (employees). This investigative stage of the grievance procedure shall be completed within twenty-one (21) working days after receipt of the grievance, or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible.
5. Within seven (7) calendar days after completion of the investigation, the Dean of the College/Associate Vice President of Human Resources shall issue a finding as to whether the employee has violated a college policy or has otherwise acted in a discriminatory or arbitrary manner, resulting in unfair treatment of the student, and, if so, what remedies should be made available to the student. The decision will be sent via

email to the vice president in the appropriate administrative area and the employee's direct supervisor, as well as via email to the student and the employee.

#### APPEAL

Appeals of formal grievances may be made by either the student or employee if one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- New evidence is available that was not available prior to the submission of the original grievance.
- The process outlined in this procedure was not followed, and the break in process was substantial enough to have potentially affected the outcome..

Appeals must be submitted in writing (hard copy or email) to the President of the College within seven (7) calendar days of email receipt of the outcome.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

All parties to the proceedings held or actions taken under this policy shall maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and all written reports to the extent reasonably possible. Original records, documents, and reports shall be maintained in the office of the Dean of the College or Associate Vice President of Human Resources, as appropriate.

#### NON-RETALIATION

No person against whom a grievance is filed or any other person shall intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for filing a grievance or otherwise participating in this process. Complaints of such retaliation or interference may be filed and processed under this procedure.