

STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES – AP 5530

A quick reference guide for students who may have experienced a problem.

It is our ambition at College of the Siskiyous that you have a pleasant, successful experience with us. However, if you do encounter a difficulty, this is a quick reference guide to help you contact the right people who can assist you.

There are generally two types of issues: 1) Academic and 2) Non-Academic

1. ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES & CHALLENGES

Informal Resolution

Each student who has a grievance shall make a reasonable effort to resolve the matter on an informal basis prior to requesting a grievance hearing, and shall attempt to solve the problem with the person with whom the student has the grievance, that person's immediate supervisor, or the local college administration. Academic Grievances & Challenges include:

Area	Informal Resolution	
	First Step for Assistance - Informal	If resolution cannot be reached, next contact
Classroom: Grades, Testing, Class Content, Assignments	Instructor	Instructional Dean/Director
Academic Probation or Dismissal	Counseling	Director of Admissions and Records
Counseling/Advising	Counseling	Associate Dean of Student Success
Course or Requirement Challenge	Counseling	Instructional Dean
Challenge: Prerequisite	Counseling	Faculty, Instructional Dean
Waivers: AA Degree or Certificate Requirement	Counseling	Faculty, Instructional Dean, Director of Admissions and Records

2. NON-ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES & CHALLENGES

Informal Resolution

Each student who has a grievance shall make a reasonable effort to resolve the matter on an informal basis prior to requesting a grievance hearing, and shall attempt to solve the problem with the person with whom the student has the grievance, that person's immediate supervisor, or the local college administration as indicated in the table below. The student may also seek the assistance of a college friend in attempting to resolve a grievance informally.

Area	Informal Resolution	
	First Step for Assistance - Informal	If resolution cannot be reached, next contact
Campus Bookstore	Bookstore Supervisor	Vice President of Administrative Services
Classroom Facilities	Maintenance Staff	Director of Maintenance
Computer Labs	Computer Lab Staff	Dean of Liberal Arts & Science
Disabled Students	DSPS	Director of DSPS, then Associate Dean of Student Success
Fee payments and refunds	Cashier	Director of Fiscal Services
Financial Aid	Financial Aid Specialist	Director of Financial Aid
Health Services	Health Clinic Staff	Vice President of Student Services
Grounds	Director of Maintenance	Vice President of Administrative Services
Library	Library Director	Assistant Dean of Learning Resources
Advising, Assessment, Orientation	Associate Dean of Student Success	Vice President of Student Services
Parking & Traffic	Director of Maintenance	Vice President of Administrative Services
Registration Procedures & Residency	Director of Admissions and Records/Registrar	Vice President of Student Services
Lodges	Lodge Staff	Director of Residence Life
Safety (non-emergency)	Campus Safety	Vice President of Administrative Services
Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Title IX violations	Director of Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator	Superintendent/President

Student Dining Services	Dining Services Manager	Vice President of Administrative Services
Student Govt. & Clubs	ASB Advisor	Director of Residence Life
Student Records	Director of Admissions and Records	Vice President of Student Services

FORMAL PROCESS FOR ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES & CHALLENGES

Step 1. Filing a Grievance

Any student who believes that after the informal process, he/she continues to have a grievance may file a Statement of Grievance with the Designated Administrator within one year of the incident on which the grievance is based.

If the student wishes the grievance to become official, the Statement of Grievance must be filed whether or not the student has already initiated efforts at an informal resolution. The Statement of Grievance document can be obtained from the Vice President of Student Services office.

Step 2. Review of Grievance

The Designated Administrator shall advise the student of his/her rights and responsibilities under these procedures, and assist the student in the preparation of the Statement of Grievance within two days upon receiving the Statement of Grievance Form.

The Designated Administrator will also work with the student to determine if a formal grievance committee is necessary or if they can work with an appointed mediator.

Sufficient grounds for a Grievance hearing shall be based on the following:

The statement contains facts which, if true, would constitute a grievance under these procedures;

- The grievant is a student of College of the Siskiyous, which include applicants and former students;
- The grievant is personally and directly affected by the alleged grievance;
- The grievance was filed in a timely manner;
- The grievance is not clearly frivolous, clearly without foundation, or clearly filed for purposes of harassment.

No more than 10 days following the student's first formal meeting with the Designated Administrator, the student has the right to request a Grievance Hearing if there is no informal resolution which is satisfactory to the student,

The hearing will begin within 10 days following the decision to grant a Grievance Hearing. All parties to the grievance shall not be given less than 1 days' notice of the date, time and place of the hearing.

Step 3. Grievance Hearing Committee Members

Membership: There are three types of Grievance Hearing Committees used to respond to the formal grievances. These include:

- Academic Grievance Committee - Three Faculty members
- Financial Aid Appeals Committee - Three Faculty members or Administrators
- General Grievance Committee - One student, one faculty member and one staff member

Please see Administrative Procedure 5530 for additional committee appointment information.

No person shall serve as a member of a Grievance Hearing Committee if that person has been personally involved in any matter giving rise to the grievance, has made any statement on the matters at issue, or could otherwise not act in a neutral manner. Any party to the grievance may challenge for cause any member of the hearing committee prior to the beginning of the hearing by addressing a challenge to the Designated Administrator. The Designated Administrator may remove the challenged member or members and substitute a member or members from the panel described above.

The Designated Administrator shall appoint an individual to serve as the Grievance Officer for the Grievance Hearing Committee. This individual will not vote. The Grievance Officer shall coordinate all scheduling of hearings, assist all parties and the Hearing Committee to facilitate a full, fair and efficient resolution of the grievance, and shall avoid an adversary role

Step 4. Grievance Committee Hearing Process

Prior to the scheduled Grievance Hearing, the Grievance Hearing Committee shall meet in private and without the parties present to select a chair and review the grounds for a hearing.

- The members of the Grievance Hearing Committee shall be provided with a copy of the grievance and any written response provided by the respondent.
- Each party to the grievance may call witnesses and introduce oral and written testimony relevant to the issues of the matter.
- Formal rules of evidence shall not apply. Any relevant information shall be admitted.
- The decision of the Grievance Hearing Committee shall be final on all matters relating to the conduct of the hearing.

The following is the procedure for the hearing:

Presentations

Each party to the grievance shall be permitted to make an opening statement with the grievant(s) giving the first presentation, followed by the respondent or respondents. The burden shall be on the grievant(s) to prove by substantial information that the facts alleged are true and that a grievance has been established as specified above.

Participants

Each party to the grievance represents him/herself, and may be accompanied by a college friend (active employee or student of the college) of his/her choice; except that he/she shall not be represented by an attorney. Hearings shall be closed and confidential.

Witnesses

The grievant(s) and respondent(s) may present witness(es) at the hearing. Witnesses shall not be present at the hearing when not testifying, unless all parties and the committee agree to the contrary.

Recording

The hearing may be recorded either by tape recording or detailed notes, and shall be the only recording made. No witness who refuses to be recorded may be permitted to give testimony.

Attendance

If the individual filing the grievance fails to appear at the hearing, only the written information will be used.

Committee Decision

The Grievance Hearing Committee shall prepare and send to the Designated Administrator a written decision within 5 working days following the close of the hearing. The decision shall include findings of fact regarding the grievance, and conclusions regarding whether a grievance has been established as defined above. The decision shall also include recommendation(s) regarding the relief to be afforded the grievant, if any. The decision shall be based only on the record of the hearing which includes the original grievance, any written response, and the oral and written evidence produced at the hearing.

Following receipt of the Grievance Hearing Committee's decision and recommendation(s), the Designated Administrator shall send to all parties his/her written decision, together with the Hearing Committee's decision and recommendations, within 5 working days. The student may choose to appeal if he/she meets the criteria listed below.

Appeal

Any appeal relating to a Grievance Hearing Committee decision shall be made in writing to the Vice President of Student Services within 2 working days of the receipt of the decision. Such appeals shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the College President or his/her designee.

The appeal shall be limited to a review of the verbatim record of the Grievance Hearing Committee and supporting documents for one or more of the following purposes:

- a) Due Process: The grievant can demonstrate that the Grievance Hearing Committee was not conducted fairly in light of the charges and information presented, and was not in conformity with prescribed procedures. The student must have had a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present information and that all parties were given a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present a response to those allegations. Deviations from designated procedures will not be a basis for sustaining an appeal unless significant prejudice results.
- b) New Information: The grievant has new information, sufficient to alter a decision or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information and/or facts

were not known to the person appealing at the time of the original Grievance Hearing Committee.

If the appeal is upheld by the Vice President of Student Services, the matter shall be reviewed to allow reconsideration of the original determination and/or sanction.

The Vice President of Student Services may also decide to sustain, reverse or modify the decision. The VP Student Services decision shall be in writing and shall include a statement of reasons for the decision and shall be final.

The decision on appeal shall be reached within 5 working days after receipt of the appeal documents. Copies of the VP Student Services appeal decision shall be sent to all parties.

For more information and forms please see Administrative Procedure 5530, web site: <http://www.siskiyous.edu/procedures/services/AP5530.pdf>, the Student Handbook or contact the Student Services office.

Incident Report forms may be obtained from <http://www.siskiyous.edu/safety/incidentreport.pdf>

Complaint Process Notice (per Section 600.9 State Authorization (a)(1), Section 668.43(b))

Most complaints, grievances or disciplinary matters should be resolved at the campus level. This is the quickest and most successful way of resolving issues involving a California Community College (CCC). Students are obligated to work through the campus complaint process first before escalating issues to any of the following resources. Issues that are not resolved at the campus level may be presented:

- **To the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)** at <http://www.accjc.org/complaint-process> if your complaint is associated with the institution's compliance with academic program quality and accrediting standards. ACCJC is the agency that accredits the academic programs of the California Community Colleges.
- **To the CCC Chancellor's Office** by completing the Web form at <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/ComplaintsForm.aspx> if your complaint does not concern CCC's compliance with academic program quality and accrediting standards.
- **If your complaint involves unlawful discrimination**, to the Chancellor's Office Web site at <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/complaintsForm.aspx>. Nothing in this disclosure should be construed to limit any right that you may have to take civil or criminal legal action to resolve your complaints.

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