



Item FR - 4.5

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Student Complaints

The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. **(Federal Requirement 4.5)**

Judgment

Compliant Non-Compliant Not Applicable

Narrative

The Columbia Campus has three policies pertaining to student complaints that are widely distributed to students. The procedures outlined in the policies are followed to resolve student complaints. In addition, the Student Ombudsman takes an active role in reviewing and revising student policies, and is available to student to resolve complaints. Student Ombudsmen are also available to help student resolve grievances and maintain policy compliance:

- Ombudsperson for graduate students
- Ombudsperson for undergraduate student

Annual Ombuds Reports (Graduate)

2015-16

2014-15

2013-14

Annual Ombuds Reports (Undergraduate)

2015-16

2014-15

2013-14

Academic Student Complaints

Student Affairs Policy STAF 6.30 outlines the steps to be taken to resolve complaints about a final grade in a course.

Undergraduate Academic Example

Situation: A student completed 8-week course but did not receive a passing grade in the course. There is a difference in opinion over her final paper and last log being submitted on Blackboard. Photos of the submission show the two assignments being submitted minutes before the deadline; however, the professor didn't receive them. Professor told student "Please refrain from sending anything" and student took it to mean no more communication.

Outcome: Student provided copies of email correspondence and Blackboard photos. Interim-dean was asked to look into situation. Professor inadvertently left out final exam grade. Student's grade was recalculated to B+. Outcome communicated to the student.

Graduate Academic Examples

Situation: Grade Dispute

Outcome: Typically, students have very few options if they wish to challenge or dispute a grade. However, the Graduate Ombudsmen discuss those (informal and formal) options with students who bring to him complaints about a grade. One such student claimed his grade was unfair because the instructor in the course failed to follow the syllabus. With the student's written permission, the Ombudsmen reached out to the professor for clarification. The professor provided feedback that included documents that revealed the student had filed a formal petition to have the grade changed. That petition was denied. I explained to the student that once a formal process for resolution was attempted, there was very little I could do beyond guiding them through various appeal processed (beyond the department). In this case, he could file a similar petition with the college. If that petition was denied, he could file yet another similar petition with the Graduate Council. We discussed other options external to the University depending upon the nature of the complaint. Since there was no claim of discrimination, there were few options to discuss. The initial appeal's audit trail suggested the student simply misunderstood the syllabus or miscalculated the numerical grade. After several discussions about the limited options through which a student could successfully challenge a grade, there was no further appeal.

Situation: GPA below 3.0 minimum required for graduation

Outcome: An international student went to the Ombudsmen for assistance in challenging the 3.0 minimum GPA required for graduation. The student got off to a shaky start and never fully recovered. After completing 60 hours in a 30-hour program, his GPA was still just below 3.0. In the transition from Graduate School to departmental responsibility for monitoring and enforcing academic probation and suspension, he slipped through the cracks and was allowed to continue to enroll. His department expressed a willingness to support a formal petition to allow him to graduate with a GPA just below the 3.0 minimum. The Ombudsmen suggested that such an exception was unprecedented, but agreed that filing such a petition was an option. The department filed the petition which was denied. The Ombudsmen was involved in the discussion about the wisdom of establishing such a precedent. The Ombudsmen suggested an alternative to encourage the department to file a similar petition requesting academic forgiveness for the student's first term of enrollment (the primary source of the sub-par GPA) with an exception to the rule requiring two years of non-enrollment. This rule had an established precedent for exception and seemed a more viable option. The department agreed and filed a petition which was approved by the Graduate School allowing the student to graduate with a GPA just above 3.0. While a formal petition was required for both actions, the solution to the student's problem was the result of an informal process and suggestion.

Non-Academic Student Complaints

Student Affairs Policy STAF 6.27 describes the steps to be taken to resolve student complaints other than grading issues.

Undergraduate Non-Academic Examples

Situation: Student is disputing final grade. The student received 0/75 participation points. Points are calculated on attendance, group project, completing class survey, and participation in class. The Professor clearly explained that student's group gave her 0 points for participation and student missed 4 classes, which according to syllabus will lower her grade.

Outcome: Professor's rationale was relayed to student. She still feels like she deserves a B- in the course and will pursue complaint with EOP for discrimination.

Situation: Professor gave test April 22, 2016 in violation of faculty manual on examinations prior to exam week.

Outcome: The test on the last day was a teacher assisted test in order to help students learn and improve their grades. Professor's syllabus states he will use best 6 out of 7 test grades but in light of student's complaint has agreed to use best 5 out of 7 for final grade. Professor will follow the policy strictly in the future.

Graduate Non-Academic Examples

Situation: Racial Discrimination Complaint

Outcome: An African-American student's name was inadvertently left out of the Doctoral Commencement Program. The omission was perceived as a malicious attempt to embarrass and humiliate him based on his race. The allegation was portrayed as a part of a pattern of unfair scrutiny and discriminatory behavior triggered by an earlier grievance. He further claimed the discrimination was covered up by a widespread conspiracy involving high level administrators. His allegations came to me in an attempt to resolve the issue and reconcile differences informally. The Ombudsmen found no evidence of discrimination, conspiracy, or malicious intent. Everything seemed to suggest the omission, however unfortunate, was the result of an honest mistake—nothing more. The student was unhappy with the outcome of this finding and filed formal complaints with EOP and the DOE's OCR division. After thorough investigations at both levels, no evidence of discrimination was discovered and the case was dropped. In addition to formal options of filing complaints with EOP and OCR, the student also was informed he had the option of pursuing legal remedy through civil action against the University and/or those responsible for his alleged mistreatment. To date, we have received no notice of further legal action on this matter.

Situation: Financial crisis

Outcome: An international student reached out to the Ombudsmen for help in addressing a financial crisis that threatened to force her to leave her master's program only one term shy of graduation. She came to the US as a political refugee with permission to work and study. However, her work permit was limited and subject to external forces controlling renewal options. She had a GA that provided enough financial support to allow her to complete three of the four terms required for her master's degree. However, during the third term of enrollment, her work permit expired forcing her to forfeit her GA, and more importantly, the tuition reduction valued at about \$6000. She came to the Ombudsmen when this outstanding balance blocked her spring registration preventing her from completing her degree. The work permit was renewed, but too late to provide an opportunity to pick up a GA with a tuition benefit. The Ombudsmen reached out to her department and asked if they would consider awarding a modest fellowship for the fall term remove the non-resident differential and make it possible for her to establish a payment plan and complete her degree during the spring term. Through the department's generosity (they provided a \$250 fellowship eligible for the tuition benefit), the University was able to reduce the student's tuition balance and enable her to complete her degree.

Students with Disabilities Policy

Student Affairs Policy STAF 6.27 specifically addresses complaints by students with disabilities. Also policies and procedures are listed on the Student Disability Services website, which includes a general complaints and appeals policy (OSDS 10.00 Complaints and Appeals). This policy states that the Director of Student Disability Services will assist disabled students with the University grievance procedures.

All student complaint policies are available online at the Policies and Procedures website. The Complaints and Appeals policy for students with disabilities is available from a link on the Students with Disabilities homepage. The Graduate Student Ombudsman website provides information about the office, the ombudsman, annual reports, the IOA Standards of Practice and the IOA Code of Ethics as well as links to other ombuds-related resources. Finally, contact information for the Student Ombudsman is available on the Student Affairs and Academic support website.

Regional Palmetto College Campuses

The four regional campuses of USC (USC Lancaster, USC Union, USC Sumter, and USC Salkehatchie) fall under the authority of the Columbia campus and reside in a central administrative unit known as Palmetto College, headed by a Chancellor and Associate Provost/Dean. Resultantly, these campuses are referred to as regional Palmetto College campuses. The administrative unit also houses USC's Extended University, which offers undergraduate credit programs and courses at Ft. Jackson and provides guidance and support for the delivery of the University's undergraduate online degree completion programs.

Students at all regional Palmetto College campuses are provided equal opportunity protections via University policy. See the following Equal Opportunity Programs policies: Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action; Equal Opportunity Compliant Processing Procedures; Sexual Harassment; Discriminatory Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy. Local campus policies as stated below for each campus reinforce these policies as well as campus academic and student life issues. Local campus policies are subject to guidelines of the University-wide Policy on Policies.

All regional Palmetto College campuses have adopted the USC Columbia initiated Carolinian Creed as a foundation guiding personal and academic behavior as a student. Further, USC Columbia staff serve, when requested, as subject matter experts to regional Palmetto College campuses on student complaint matters.

Finally, the campuses adhere to University policy regarding course evaluations.

Lancaster

Student grievances against faculty and staff are addressed initially by the department chair, office supervisor, or the Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs according to the policies established in the Code of Student/Faculty Academic Integrity and Responsibility (p. 43-50) and the USCL Code of Student Conduct (pp. 19-26, both of which are contained in the USC Lancaster 2016-2017 Student Handbook. The USCL Student Handbook may be found online via the Student Life Web Site. To assure further circulation, USC Lancaster publishes a Student Information website, which allows students adequate access to information related to Academic Complaints, Non-Academic Complaints, and Student Rights and Freedoms.

For minor, informal student complaints, the institution has is in the process of establishing a "Suggestions" link which will be available at all times for students. These suggestions will be fielded by the Director of Student Engagement and Success, who will then forward them to the appropriate department for response. Further, suggestions and comments will be discussed with appropriate campus officials and/or administrative council to ensure that they are addressed and resolved.

The *Handbook* describes the procedures for filing grievances, including (but not limited to) mistreatment by a University employee, wrongful assessment and processing of fees, records and registration errors, and discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status. It is available online and is distributed in electronic format to all incoming freshmen during orientation. Actions relevant to all levels of appeals are detailed in the *Handbook*.

Non-Academic Student Complaint

In early September 2016, a student was charged under the USCL Code of Student Conduct. Because of the nature of the incident, after meeting with Campus Security officials and the Associate Dean, the Dean's Office sent the student a Letter of Warning (dated 27 September) and imposed sanctions on the student (letter is attached).

The student notified the Associate Dean within the specified time that he wished to appeal the sanctions. The Student Disciplinary Committee convened on October 12 and heard the student's appeal. The following day, it submitted its findings unanimous recommendation to the Dean that the sanctions be lifted (letter dated 13 October).

Academic Student Complaint

The Academic Honor Code Council has not, recently, received a formal student complaint. The paragraph below outlines a recent informal grievance.

In the Fall semester 2016, a student was accused of violating the USC Lancaster Academic Honor Code. As outlined in the student grievance policy, the professor made the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs aware. The Associate Dean met with the student and presented the evidence. After seeing the evidence, the student decided not to file a formal complaint with the Academic Honor Code Council.

Disability Services Complaint

The Office of Disability Services at the University of South Carolina Lancaster has not received a recent student complaint.

Salkehatchie

Salkehatchie has established official policies concerning student rights that are published in the University of South Carolina Salkehatchie 2016-2017 Student Handbook (see section V, pp. 38-63). Students are introduced to the information in the Handbook during freshman orientation and in University 101 classes. To assure further dissemination, USC Salkehatchie has links to a statement of Student Rights and Freedoms and the Student Grievance Policy on its website. Further, the campus provides, on its web page (see Quick Links), ready access to student feedback tools, several of which are referenced below.

Student complaints that are academic in nature are handled by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Academic Dean) at USC Salkehatchie. The procedure is for the Academic Dean to interview the student/s lodging the complaint and to follow-up by interviewing the instructor of the course where the complaint originated. Once the interviews are concluded the Academic Dean reports his/her findings to the Dean of the campus. After consultation with the Dean, the Academic Dean may seek guidance from the legal/student services experts on the USC Columbia campus on how best to proceed to resolve the complaint.

For minor, informal complaints, the institution has a web site Suggestion or Comments link which is available at all times for students, faculty and staff. All of these go directly to the Dean. The Dean then forwards the suggestion or complaint to the appropriate member of the executive council over the area in concern and the executive council member reports back to the Dean on a resolution. If it is a campus-wide issue, the suggestion is added to the Executive Council agenda.

Also for minor, informal complaints, the administration meets with the student government association yearly to hear students concerns from their representatives. All suggestions are addressed and resolved by executive council.

As one more avenue for communication, a Student Satisfaction Survey is online at all times, and students can respond to questions about specific offices and services at any time. These results are compiled and sent to executive council twice a year, so that they can be addressed.

Academic Student Complaint

The attached Student Academic Complaint Document provides an example via documentation.

Non-Academic Student Complaint

In April 2016, at first three students and, after further investigation, four students were found to have attacked a fifth student and assaulted her. After reports from the City of Allendale police department as well as video evidence of the attack were viewed by Jane Brewer, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and interviews were conducted by Ms. Brewer with the victim and the four students in question. After consultation with the Office of Student Discipline on the USC Columbia campus, the four students were banned from the campus for the remainder of the spring 2016 semester with stipulations of completing anger management classes and meeting with their disciplinary officer before attempting to return to school for any subsequent semester.

The students requested a hearing before the Student Discipline Committee to express a grievance opposing their punishment. The hearing was scheduled with the members of the committee (the director of Student Activities, the director of the Opportunity Scholars Program, two faculty members, two students, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Director of Campus Security. After hearing the students' story and Ms. Brewer's, the committee voted to uphold the ban from campus for the remainder of the spring semester.

One of the students did complete an anger management class over the summer and re-appeared before the Student Discipline Committee in early August where she expressed her regret and her commitment to better behavior if allowed to return. The committee did approve her returning to campus for fall 2016.

The attached Student Non-Academic Complaint Documents provide further information.

Disability Services Complaint

A student registered with the USC Salkehatchie Student Disability Office as having severe Type 1 Diabetes which sometimes prevented her being able to attend class/exams. Approval of accommodations for the student were sent to all or her professors. Late in the semester, the student missed an exam because of being delayed by traffic after having been to an eye doctor's appointment earlier in the day. She emailed the professor relaying the traffic issue had caused her to miss the exam. The professor did not approve her being excused from the exam since the doctor's appointment was not an emergency but had been long scheduled, was not directly related to her disability, and the issue relayed by the student to the professor was traffic.

The student filed a grievance with the Student Disability Office claiming that her eye doctor's appointment was related to her disability. The Director of Student Disability met with the student and after extensive conversation with the student determined that the eye doctor's appointment was indeed related to the student's disability. The professor then allowed the student to take the missed exam.

The attached Student Disability Complaint Documents provide further information.

Sumter

At USC Sumter, student complaints are channeled to the Office of Student Life for the entire campus. The Director of Student Life gathers as much information as possible by interviewing the complainant. The Director of Student Life will notify the Office of Academic and Student Affairs and other offices (if necessary and relevant to the situation or to sustaining the integrity of the institution). The Director of Student Life will then address the situation with the individual, supervisor or department chair. Recommendations are made, implemented, and consequences communicated in order to resolve the matter and safeguards are put in place to prevent a recurrence. Full policy information may be found in the 2016-2017 USC Sumter Student Handbook (specifically, Student Rights and Freedoms, pp. 12-13, Code of Student Conduct, pp. 32-40 and Grievances, pp. 41-43)

Academic Student Complaint

A student was suspended for failing to meet satisfactory academic progress. The student's attempt to petition the suspension with the Admissions Committee resulted in expulsion from the University for "falsification of documents." The Admissions Committee recognized a discrepancy in the documentation provided by the student in their appeal and found that the student has submitted a forged medical document as evidence of why the Committee should review the suspension. The Admissions Committee turned over the evidence to the Director of Student Life, who confirmed the forgery with the physician whose signature and letterhead had been forged, and then called in

the student to discuss the issue. The student confirmed that it was a forgery, but claimed not to have known it was a forgery at the time of submission, claiming that because of time constraints a relative had procured the documentation and therefor unwittingly to the student the forgery was submitted to the Admissions Committee. Upon consultation with the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, the Director of Student Life handed over the case to the Faculty Organization Discipline and Grievance Committee, who has the authority under the Faculty Organization By-Laws to make a recommendation to the Campus Dean of expulsion. The student and the student's advisor of record, along with the Director of Student Life, met with the Discipline and the Grievance Committee and held a hearing where the student was allowed to make their case and call any witnesses on their behalf. The student made their case and the Committee, not finding the student's presentation of the facts at hand as credible, made their recommendation of expulsion to the Campus Dean who followed through with the process of expulsion. After the Dean made the decision the student was given a 10-day period to file an appeal, which had it been filed would have been heard by the Chancellor of the College. The student did not choose to exercise that option.

The attached Student Academic Complaint Documents provide further information.

Non-Academic Student Complaint

A student was accused by an instructor of making a bodily threat toward another student, as defined under the Student Discipline Code for "Hazing and Threats." The alleged threat was one that involved shooting the student under threat. The accused student had a previous situation, about two months earlier where they had also been accused of threatening bodily harm against another student. The student did not deny the first incident and had been counseled by the Director of Student Life (who again at the time also held the internal title Associate Dean of Student Affairs) that a second violation would not be tolerated. After the second incident a disciplinary hearing was held with the Faculty Organization Discipline and Grievance Committee, who has the authority under the Faculty Organization By-Laws to make a recommendation to the Campus Dean of expulsion. The hearing was held with the Committee, the Director of Student Life, the accused and the accused advisor of record. The committee recommended suspension. The campus Dean considered the Committee's recommendation and followed through with the suspension after giving the student an opportunity to provide his Office with a formal psychological "assessment of risk" which the student failed to follow through on in an appropriate manner.

The attached Student Non-Academic Complaint Documents provide further information.

Disability Services Complaint

The USC Sumter Office of Student Life has not received a recent disability complaint.

Union

Information and policy concerning USC Union student Right and Freedoms, Code of Student Conduct, and Grievance procedures are outlined in the USC Union Bulletin (Student Life section). The Grievance procedures are extracted below followed by examples:

Preface

The University of South Carolina Union is committed to a policy of treating all members of the University community fairly in regard to their personal and professional concerns. In order to ensure that students know what to do when they need to resolve a problem, this procedure is provided.

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Purpose

The primary objective of the grievance procedure is to ensure that concerns are promptly dealt with and resolutions reached in a fair and just manner. It is essential that each student be given an adequate opportunity to bring complaints and problems to the University administration with assurance that each will be given fair treatment.

Definition

A grievance is defined as dissatisfaction occurring when a student thinks that any condition affecting him or her is unjust, inequitable, or creates unnecessary hardship. Such grievances include, but are not limited to, the following problems: mistreatment by any USCU employee, wrongful assessment and processing of fees, records and registration errors, racial discrimination, sex discrimination, and handicapped discrimination, as they relate to nonacademic areas in the University.

One exception to this definition of grievance is that the procedures herein shall not extend to matters of grading student work where the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the mark or grade placed on the work. Such matters shall be discussed by the student and the teacher; final authority shall remain with the teacher.

Procedure

Initiating a grievance: The initial phase of the student grievance procedure requires an oral discussion between the student and the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. This discussion must take place within 10 working days of the incident which constituted the grievance.

First appeal

If the student wishes to file a formal grievance, a written appeal must be prepared that includes the name, address, and phone number of the grievant; the name of the person against whom the grievance is being filed; the nature of the grievance; a description of the desired solution; a description of the actions taken by the grievant to date; and all pertinent written documentation. This file must be completed and presented to the immediate supervisor of the person alleged to have caused the grievance within five working days of the initial discussion referred to in the above paragraph.

The supervisor shall immediately acknowledge receipt of the grievance and shall begin an investigation of the incident at once. The supervisor shall respond in writing of the decision to the student (with a copy to the dean) within three working days of the conclusion of the investigation. If the student feels the grievance has been resolved, the process is complete. If not, an appeal may be brought before the Student Affairs Committee.

Appeal to the Student Affairs Committee

If the grievance is unresolved, the student may bring the grievance before the Student Affairs Committee by presenting a written statement within five working days of the date of the supervisor's decision. This statement shall be forwarded to the dean in a sealed envelope and shall a) state the grievance, b) state why the response is unacceptable, and c) request a hearing before a grievance panel.

Any related materials (including a copy of the grievance file and the written response from the supervisor) must accompany the letter. The dean shall immediately notify the chair of the Student Affairs Committee of the appeal.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the chair shall send a copy of the appeal to the members of the committee and the major parties involved. The major parties include the person(s) against whom the grievance was initiated, the supervisor of that individual(s), and the appropriate administrator. The chair of the committee shall ask the major parties to respond in writing to the appeal within five working days.

At the end of the five working day period, the chair shall meet with the Student Affairs Committee to examine the request for an appellate hearing and the replies. A hearing shall be granted if a majority of the quorum finds that grounds for the appeal have been substantiated. A tie vote shall result in a hearing being granted. The chair shall notify all involved parties of the decision of the committee to either hear or not hear the grievance.

The hearing shall be conducted no sooner than five working days after the decision to grant the request for the hearing and no later than 15 working days after the decision to grant the request for the hearing.

A postponement may be granted by the chair upon written request of either party. The request shall state why the postponement should be granted.

Conduct of the Hearing

The chair of the Student Affairs Committee shall open the hearing by reading the request for an appeal and informing the parties involved of the jurisdiction of the committee and its procedures. The chair shall ascertain that all the parties involved are aware of their rights, answer any questions they have in regard to these matters, and conduct the meeting.

All hearings shall be closed to the public, unless all parties agree that the hearing be opened to members of the USCU community.

A tape recording shall be made of the proceedings.

All parties involved in a hearing shall maintain in the strictest confidence the identity of the individuals appearing before the committee, as well as the information presented to the committee. Hearings shall be conducted in an informal manner. The taking of statements from the parties to the grievance (and from witnesses, if any) may be done by discussion format, though each individual appearing before the committee may be subject to cross-examination. Witnesses shall be present only during the time they are testifying. The major parties involved in the grievance shall be required to attend all hearings of the committee.

At the conclusion of the hearing, each party shall submit a proposed solution of the grievance to the committee.

After receiving the proposed solutions to the grievance, the chair shall dismiss all individuals who are not members of the Student Affairs Committee. The committee shall reach its decision based on the information presented during the hearing and according to the statement of student rights and responsibilities.

The committee shall decide by a majority vote the solution of the grievance. In the case of a tie, the chair shall vote and thus break the tie. The chair (or designee) shall forward a copy of the committee's decision to the major parties involved and to the dean within five working days of the conclusion of the hearing.

Decisions of the committee shall be final, subject to the student's right to appeal directly to the dean and to the vice provost for regional campuses.

The decision of the committee shall be kept on file in the dean's office.

The Grievance Committee

At USC Union, the Student Affairs Committee acts as the Grievance Committee and shall be composed of seven members as appointed by the faculty organization.

a) Composition:

- 1) Two students
- 2) SGA president and vice president
- 3) Two administrators
- 4) Three faculty members.

b) Terms of office:

- 1) All members shall serve for one calendar year.
- 2) If vacancies occur, individuals appointed to fill the vacancies shall serve for the unexpired portions of the original appointees' terms.
- 3) If a member of the committee is involved in the grievance, the committee will elect a replacement for that particular grievance.
- 4) All individuals may be appointed to additional terms. Appointments shall become effective on the first day of the fall semester.

Students with Disabilities Policy

In the 2015-16 Academic Bulletin for USC Union under Academic Regulations the following policy is presented relative to disabilities:

Learning-disabled students who wish to take advantage of University-approved program accommodations must have an academic advisory plan on file with the Office of Student Disability Services and the dean of the college. This plan will be formulated by the student's academic advisor with the assistance of the Office of Student Disability Services and will contain recommended accommodations which specifically relate to and are consistent with the student's diagnosed disability. A copy of the student's academic advisory plan must be provided to the course instructor for the student to be eligible for a particular accommodation. Any substitutions for degree requirements recommended in the student's academic advisory plan must be referred to the Scholastic Standards and Petitions Committee of the student's college for action.

Non-Academic Student Complaint

There have not been any recent non-academic formal student complaints received at USC Union. Informally however, there was a student on campus recently who expressed frustration with another student for personal reasons during the Fall 2016 semester. After separate discussions with those students about the situation, they agreed that the matter could be best resolved through minimizing contact with each other on campus. To that end, we helped them achieve this by switching one of them out of the one class that they were in together at the time. No further issues have been reported since that resolution was reached.

Academic Student Complaint

The only formal complaint received from a student in recent years was a grade dispute. While it involved a BLS student, the class was a local class, so the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs attempted to moderate the dispute—even though our policy specifically says that grade disputes do not fall under the grievance procedure. The student and the teacher discussed the dispute at least once before the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs got involved, reading over the statement of the student and discussing the matter with both of them. The teacher did not change the student's grade.

In the Fall 2016 semester, there were also two students at the USC Union Laurens site accused of violating the university's Honor Code for plagiarism. The instructor filed a formal complaint for this with the Office of Academic Integrity in Columbia. A response from that office was received on December 12, 2016. Due to the timing of the complaint at the end of the Fall semester, further action involving consultation between that office, the student, and the Associate Dean will take place during the Spring 2017 semester.

Disability Services Complaint

A USC-Union student pre-ordered materials for a class through the campus' bookstore. The student visited the bookstore to obtain his purchase and learned that the class materials consisted of a disc with an access code to the course software and an electronic version of the textbook (e-book). A staff member assisted the student with activating his software, using the access code he purchased. After the student left the bookstore he placed a phone call to his mother and expressed some concern over not receiving a physical copy of the text book. The mother then arrived at the bookstore, also concerned over the lack of a physical copy of the textbook. The interaction between the bookstore employee and the student's mother escalated to the point that the campus security officer became involved.












Later that day, the student's mother contacted the Office of EOP (in Columbia) to file a formal complaint regarding the incident. In the complaint, the mother explained that she had mentioned to the bookstore employee that her son was autistic and the bookstore employee allegedly used the work "issues" in reference to his disability. The complaint also indicated that the student's mother was more concerned over the inappropriate response of the employee than by the textbook itself, and expressed that she would like to see USC-Union provide sensitivity training to its employees.





















After reviewing the complaint and interviewing the bookstore employee, USC-Union's Disability Services Director arranged a meeting between all parties. At the meeting, the mother reiterated her account of the incident and was informed that a sensitivity training for the entire faculty/staff body would be arranged to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future. Because the student was not currently registered with Disability Services (either at USC-Union or with the Columbia campus), the mother was offered assistance with the registration process and was informed of the types of accommodations provided by registration but the assistance was not accepted.

Brandon Simpson is in the process of planning that sensitivity training for faculty and staff, to be scheduled at a time that will allow all to attend. Brandon had also reached out to the mother again to arrange a follow-up meeting with the Campus Dean, John Catalano, but she has not responded to that as of yet.

The attached Student Disability Services Complaint Documents provide further information.

Sources

-  2013-2014EighthAnnualReportUniversityOmbudsUSC
-  2014-2015NinthAnnualReportUniversityOmbudsUSC
-  2015-2016TenthAnnualReportUniversityOmbudsUSC
-  ACAF 1.04
-  EOP 1.00
-  EOP 1.01
-  EOP 1.02
-  EOP 1.03
-  EOP 1.04
-  Graduate ombudsreport1314
-  Graduate ombudsreport1415

-  Graduate ombudsreport1516
-  Lancaster 2016-2017 Student Handbook
-  Lancaster Non-Academic Document
-  OSDS 10.00 Complaints and Appeals Policy
-  STAF 1.02
-  STAF_6.27 Student Grievance Policy Non Academic
-  STAF_6.30 Academic Grievance Policy
-  Salk Academic Complaint Document
-  Salk Disability Complaint Document
-  Salk Non-Academic Complaint Document
-  Salkehatchie 2016-2017 Student Handbook
-  Student Grievance Policy « USC Salkehatchie
-  Student Life - Union Campus - Acalog ACMS™
-  Student Rights and Freedoms « USC Salkehatchie
-  Sumter Academic Complaint Document
-  Sumter Non-Academic Complaint Document
-  UNIV 1.00
-  USC SUMTER STUDENT HANDBOOK 2016-17
-  Union Academic Complaint Document
-  Union Disability Complaint