

Student Complaints against the School

Background

IUPUI has developed guidelines and procedures to address situations when a student believes that his or her rights as defined in the *IUPUI Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct (Student Code)* have been violated by a member of the university faculty, staff, or administration. The rights addressed in the *Student Code* include individual rights (for citizenship, discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment based on sexual orientation, and racial harassment) and academic rights. Part 1 of the *Student Code* explains these rights, which can be accessed at <http://www.iupui.edu/~sldweb/dos/> (select Student Rights link, left side)

SPEA supports the student rights enumerated in the *Student Code*. SPEA's policy on student complaints against faculty, staff, or administration applies to complaints that a student may have in the pursuit of his or her education. This policy does not apply to complaints about discrimination or harassment (that is sexual, based on sexual orientation or race) complaints. These complaints are handled under the Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

The resolution of such cases of grievances against the faculty, staff, or administration may also involve the IUPUI Dean of Faculties or IUPUI Human Resources Administration.

This policy applies to graduate and undergraduate students.

Policy (Orig. 9/03, Rev. 4/10/06, 5/12/06)

A student who believes that his or her rights in pursuit of their education as specified in the *IUPUI Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct*, Part 1. A. (Student Rights in the Pursuit of Education) have been violated by SPEA faculty, staff, or administration have the right to file a grievance against the person who they believe has violated these rights with the Associate Dean or Director of Academic Affairs.

Responsibilities

- ✓ The faculty, staff, and administration are responsible for treating students fairly and impartially in the academic setting if the student has filed or is in the process of filing a complaint against them.
- ✓ The student is responsible for understanding and following the procedure for filing complaints against the faculty, staff, or administration.
- ✓ The faculty, staff, or administration is responsible for considering and attempting to resolve the student's informal complaint at the student's initiation.
- ✓ The Associate Dean and Director of Academic Affairs are responsible for receiving, investigating, and resolving informal and formal complaints as required by this policy.
- ✓ The Associate Dean and Director of Academic Affairs are responsible for notifying all parties to the complaint about the outcome of the investigation and resolution within SPEA.
- ✓ The Associate Dean or Director of Academic Affairs is responsible for submitting a letter regarding the outcome of a formal complaint to the Director of Student Services for placement in the student's file.
- ✓ The Associate Dean is responsible for maintaining a file of formal student complaints.
- ✓ When complaints cannot be resolved within the School, the Associate Dean and Director of Academic Affairs are responsible for referring the complaint to the appropriate campus office, which may include the Dean of Faculties, Human Resources Administration, and/or IUPUI Dean of Students

Procedure

1. Definitions
 - a. Faculty or faculty member includes all full-time, part-time, and associate faculty and those graduate students who have teaching responsibilities in SPEA.
 - b. Staff includes advisors and all other employees of SPEA, except the administration.

- c. The IUPUI Dean of students includes the IUPUI Dean of the Graduate School (for graduate students) and the Director, Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct, IUPUI Office of the Dean of Students (for undergraduate students)
2. IUPUI e-mail may be used for official communications in the process of resolving a student's grievance.
3. When a student has a pending academic misconduct case and a grievance against the instructor in the same class, the grievance will be resolved after the case of academic misconduct is resolved.
4. The complaint process involves two steps: 1) Informal Complaint and 2) Formal Complaint.
5. Informal Complaint
 - a. The student should ordinarily attempt to resolve the complaint informally with the person involved.
 - b. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally or if the student has a justifiable reason for not going directly to the person involved, the student may make an informal complaint to the Director of Academic Affairs or to the Associate Dean as follows:
 - A complaint against a faculty member or the Associate Dean should be directed to the Director of Academic Affairs.
 - A complaint against a staff member or the Director of Academic Affairs should be directed to the Associate Dean.
 - The Director of Academic Affairs and Associate Dean work together to resolve complaints made against the faculty.
6. Formal Complaint.
 - a. When a student makes an informal complaint and perceives the response to be unsatisfactory, he or she should file a formal complaint to the Director of Academic Affairs or Associate Dean as noted in item 1 above within 30 days after the end of the semester during which the issue occurred.
 - b. If the student does not make an informal complaint, he or she should file the formal complaint to the Director of Academic Affairs or Associate Dean as noted in item 1 above within 30 days after the end of the semester during which the student should reasonably have learned about the event which is the basis of the complaint. The Director of Academic Affairs or Associate Dean may extend the thirty day period when he or she deems it appropriate.
 - c. The student must make a formal complaint using his or her official IUPUI email address or via a signed written complaint. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.
 - d. The Director of Academic Affairs or Associate Dean will provide a copy of the complaint to the individual who is the subject of the complaint and provide him or her with an opportunity to respond to the complaint in writing.
 - e. The Director of Academic Affairs or Associate Dean must consider a formal complaint within twenty-one calendar days after it has been received.
 - f. The Director of Academic Affairs or Associate Dean gather facts and discuss the matter individually with the students and the person involved in the complaint.
 - g. The Director of Academic Affairs or Associate Dean may ask the student and person involved in the complaint to meet together with the person who is the subject of the complaint in an effort to resolve the complaint.
 - h. If the complaint is not resolved within twenty-one calendar days from the day it was filed, the Director of Academic Affairs or Associate Dean must refer the complaint along with a written response concerning the incident to the IUPUI Dean of Faculties, IUPUI Director of Human Resources, or IUPUI Dean of Students, as appropriate.
 - i. The referral must include all documents pertaining to the complaint.
 - j. The Director of Academic Affairs or Associate Dean should remove himself or herself from considering a complaint for reasons of bias or personal involvement.
7. If the complaint is upheld, the faculty or staff member may be sanctioned.
8. The Associate Dean or Director of Academic Affairs is responsible for submitting a letter regarding the outcome of a formal complaint to the Director of Student Services for placement in the student's file.

9. The Director of Academic Affairs and Associate Dean are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of complaints and documentation related to complaints. Documentation of complaints is maintained by the Associate Dean in a secure file in the Associate Dean's office.

Documentation

- ✓ IUPUI Student Rights in the Pursuit of their Education (Attachment 1)
- ✓ Student's formal complaint
- ✓ Reponse to the formal complaint by the faculty, staff or administration
- ✓ Associate Dean's letter to the student file

IUPUI Student Rights in the Pursuit of Education

Source: IUPUI Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct, accessed 7/12/07, available at <http://www.iupui.edu/~sldweb/rights/docs/CodeofConduct.pdf>.

Part 1. Student Rights

A. Rights in the Pursuit of Education

The classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and studios are the essential learning environments of the university, and the freedom to learn in these environments should be promoted and encouraged by instructors. The following statements have been developed in support of a student's right in the classroom or other learning environment.

Students shall have the right to:

- Have access to faculty, academic technology, classrooms, libraries, presentations, and other resources necessary for the learning process.
- Have access to academic advising and clear expectations for degree and graduation requirements.
- Have decisions related to the pursuit of their education made in a clear manner.
- Learn in an environment that supports the freedom of self-expression and association.
- Participate in an exchange of ideas, pursuant with his or her constitutional rights and the Preamble of this Code, free of conduct that impedes either an instructor's ability to teach or the student's ability to learn. (See Guidelines for Dealing with Disruptive Students in Academic Settings, University Faculty Council, April 12, 2005)
- Receive either a paper or an electronic class syllabus in a timely manner.
- Expect to interact with faculty who act professionally; provide clearly stated class goals; provide clear expectations for class performance and evaluation; meet classes as scheduled; are accessible for office hours, appointments or consultation; and maintain a clear connection between course content and the most recently approved course description.
- Expect a faculty member will be sensitive to the student's religious beliefs and observances, including an expectation that instructors will make reasonable arrangements upon notice that the student must miss an exam or other academic exercise resulting from the observance of a religious holiday. (See Policy on Accommodations for Religious Observances, University Faculty Council, March 28, 2000)
- Have the freedom to raise relevant issues pertaining to classroom discussion (including personal and political beliefs), offer reasonable doubts about data presented, and express alternative opinions without concern for any academic penalty.
- Students have the right to expect that their work will be evaluated by academic standards alone.
- Study, work, and interact in an environment of professionalism and of mutual trust and respect that is free of amorous or sexual advances by a faculty member. All amorous or sexual relationships between faculty members and students are unacceptable when the faculty member has any professional responsibility for the student, even when both parties have consented or appear to have consented to the relationship. Such professional responsibility encompasses both instructional and noninstructional contexts. A faculty member shall not have an amorous or sexual relationship, consensual or otherwise, with a student who is enrolled in a course being taught by the faculty member or whose performance is being supervised or evaluated by the faculty member. A faculty member should be careful to distance himself or herself from any decisions that may reward or penalize a student with whom he or she has or has had an amorous or sexual relationship, even outside the instructional context, especially when the faculty member and student are in the same academic unit or in units that are allied academically. (From the University Code of Academic Ethics, Part A.1, Relations with students). See definition of "faculty member" in Part IV of the Code.