

CCS Administrative Procedure

3.40.01-D Student Concerns

Implementing Board Policy [3.40.01](#)

Contact: Provost, 434-5060

1.0 Purpose

Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS) has established procedures to assist students who feel they have a complaint or concern relating to an action by a member of the CCS community. It is the belief and practice at CCS that the best way for students to address concerns is to first meet with the employee involved and attempt to resolve the concern. The process outlined for informal and formal student concerns complies with state and federal regulations and collective bargaining agreements (Master Contract, Article 3, Section 24).

- 1.1 It is the philosophy of CCS to resolve concerns between the parties that are closest to the issues. Students engage in this form of problem solving every day with a great deal of success.
- 1.2 In some instances, resolution is not possible at this level. In these cases, after all steps of the informal process outlined in either section 4.0 or 5.0 below, have been followed, students may choose to initiate a more formal process of review.
- 1.3 **Special Circumstances:** If at any point during the concern process it is determined the concern may involve violation of federal/state law or Board policy, it will be forwarded to the appropriate district/college officer for consideration outside of the student concerns process. This includes situations where students believe they have been harassed or discriminated against.

2.0 Limitations & Requirements

- 2.1 Students who are seeking a grade change should follow the process outlined in Administrative [Procedure 4.40.01-A Grades](#).

3.0 Definitions and Process

- 3.1 Processes below are outlined below for both informal and formal student concerns with faculty and non-faculty colleagues.
- 3.2 **Supporter:** a non-employee who provides support to the student complainant, but otherwise does not speak or provide legal counsel on the student's behalf. Students shall give advance notice to the other party when bringing a supporter with them to meetings. The student and supporter will sign a [Student Supporter Acknowledgment Agreement](#) that explain the supporter's role and gives the other participant permission to discuss student information in front of the supporter.

4.0 Informal Process for Addressing Student Concerns with Faculty

- 4.1 The following steps are to be used in resolving student concerns with a faculty member at CCS. The student is asked to remember:
 - 4.1.1 Concerns must be initiated within ten (10) instructional days of the start of quarter following the quarter during which the alleged action(s) occurred. An informal concern may be initiated in summer quarter if the faculty member and student mutually agree.

- 4.1.2 Informal concerns should proceed to the next step only if not resolved at prior steps.
- 4.1.3 The student will make reasonable effort to complete the informal concern process described below within twenty (20) instructional days. The student has a right to a supporter during any meeting, provided advance notice is given to the other participant. The Student Supporter Acknowledgement Agreement must be signed by the student and supporter at the beginning of the meeting.
- 4.1.4 To ensure confidentiality and compliance with privacy statutes, this is an individual process. Group concerns will not be considered.
- 4.1.5 The faculty member has the right to union representation at any meeting regarding the concern.

4.2 Step 1: The student communicates with the faculty member and describes the concern. The faculty member will respond to the student within five (5) instructional days after hearing the informal concern from the student. If the student has used at least two methods to attempt to contact the faculty member on instructional days and received no response within a reasonable time, the student will contact the department chair for assistance. Before proceeding to Step 2, the department chair will first ascertain that the student has made valid attempts to contact the faculty member during the faculty member's instructional days. If not, the chair will facilitate communication with the faculty member.

4.3 Step 2: If the concern is not resolved at Step 1, the student next speaks with the faculty member's department chair. The chair will attempt to facilitate a mutually acceptable resolution of the concern between the faculty member and the student. The department chair will respond to the student within five (5) instructional days of hearing the informal concern from the student. A student may initiate the informal concern directly at Step 3, provided the cause for the student not proceeding through Steps 1 and 2 is ascertained and found credible by the faculty member's dean. The faculty member's dean will first ascertain that the student has made valid attempts to contact the faculty member during the faculty member's instructional days (Step 1), and not having received a response, has contacted the department chair for assistance (Step 2).

4.4 Step 3: If the concern is not resolved at Step 2, or it is determined by the faculty member's dean to be advanced to this step, the student next speaks with the dean. At any point during the informal process, the dean may call an informal meeting between the student, faculty, chair and the dean to attempt to reach a resolution. The dean will respond to the student within ten (10) instructional days of receiving the concern. The dean will inform the employee and department chair of the response. If the dean is not reasonably available, the student may instead contact the appropriate vice president for assistance or assignment of a designee.

4.5 If the concern has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction, they may file a formal complaint utilizing the Formal Student Complaint Process Form (found in Appendix N-1 of the Faculty Master Contract). This form must be submitted to the dean's office within ten (10) instructional days of the dean's Step 3 response. Failure to do so causes the complaint to be denied as untimely. Please see Section 5.0 below for the instructions for filing a formal complaint.

5.0 Formal Process for Addressing Student Concerns with Faculty

The formal process for addressing student concerns is initiated only after a student has been unsuccessful in resolving the issue of concern at the informal level as outlined in section 4.0

above. **Note: Issues involving alleged harassment or discrimination do not follow this process, but must follow [CCS Administrative Procedure 2.30.01-A Non-discrimination/Anti-harassment](#) or [CCS Administrative Procedure 2.30.01-D Title IX Procedures for Employees](#).**

- 5.1 The intent of the Formal Process for Addressing Student Concerns is to provide a clear outline of steps to be followed that will provide due process for all parties. The following guidelines are in place to further facilitate this process.
 - 5.2 If the concern has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction, they may file a formal complaint utilizing the Formal Student Complaint Process form (found in Appendix N-1 of the Master Contract). The form must be submitted to the dean's office within ten (10) instructional days of the dean's Step 3 response. Failure to do so causes the complaint to be denied as untimely.
 - 5.3 The Formal Student Complaint Process Form and related material are considered an education record of the student subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
 - 5.4 The dean will assess the formal complaint and make a determination of whether the complaint is appropriate for further consideration. If the dean determines that it is not appropriate, they will notify the student in writing not later than ten (10) instructional days after receipt of the formal complaint. The student may appeal to the appropriate Vice President within ten (10) instructional days after the dean's response. The Vice President's response will be the college's final official response.
 - 5.5 If the dean determines further consideration is appropriate, they will, within ten (10) instructional days of receiving the signed written complaint, send the signed written complaint to the faculty member and to the AHE.
 - 5.6 The faculty member will submit a written response to the formal complaint to the dean within ten (10) instructional days of being notified. The faculty member can either 1) assert the informal process was not followed, or 2) provide a written response to the dean.
 - 5.7 The dean will provide the division formal response to the student within five (5) instructional days after the above meeting. This serves as the official division response to the complaint. The student may appeal to the appropriate Vice President within ten (10) instructional days after the dean's response. The Vice President's response will be the college's final official response.
 - 5.8 The faculty member has the right to AHE representation at any step in the process.
 - 5.9 Formal complaints shall be retained for two academic years beyond the year in which it was filed and shall thereafter be purged. Material relating to formal complaints that were determined appropriate for further consideration are placed in the employee's division file (Master Contract Article 3, Section 4, Paragraph B, 3, e). A formal complaint that is not determined appropriate will not be retained in the division file, but will be retained in a Vice President of Student Services record retention file for risk management purposes. Complaints not moved into formal remediation shall be purged from any and all records after four (4) full academic quarters, excluding summer (Master Contract Article 3, Section 4, Paragraph B, 3, iv).
- 6.0 Informal Process for Addressing Student Concerns with Non-Faculty Employees**

- 6.1** The following steps are to be followed by students when seeking review of a concern involving a non-faculty employee of CCS. The student is asked to remember:
- 6.1.1 Concerns must be initiated within ten (10) instructional days of the start of quarter following the quarter during which the alleged action(s) occurred. Students are encouraged to make their concerns known as quickly as possible so that something can be done to resolve the situation during the current quarter in which the concern originates.
 - 6.1.2 The review of concerns must proceed from the lowest level of review to higher level of review.
 - 6.1.3 The student has a right to a supporter during any meeting, provided advance notice is given to the other participant. The Student Supporter Acknowledgement Agreement must be signed by the student and supporter at the beginning of the meeting.

In order to ensure confidentiality and compliance with privacy statutes, this is an individual process and group concerns will not be considered

- 6.2 Step 1:** The student speaks with the supervisor of the employee with whom they have the informal concern and seeks to resolve the matter at this level. The supervisor will attempt to facilitate an acceptable resolution between the employee and student. The supervisor has five (5) instructional days to respond after hearing the student's informal concern. There is no need for further action if the concern is resolved at Step 1.
- 6.3 Step 2:** If the informal concern is not resolved at Step 1, or it is determined by the employee's dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor to be advanced to this step, the student next speaks with the dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor. The dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor will attempt to informally resolve the concern. At any point during the informal process, the dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor may call an informal meeting with the student, employee and supervisor to attempt to reach a resolution. The dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor will respond to the student within 10 (ten) instructional days of receiving the concern. The dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor will inform the employee and supervisor of the response. If the concern cannot be resolved at this informal level and the issue warrants formal action, the student may proceed to the Formal Process for Addressing Student Concerns for Non-Faculty Employees in section 7.0 below.
- 6.4** Students may initiate the informal concern directly at Step 2 provided the cause for the student not proceeding through Step 1 is ascertained and found credible by the dean or administrator/supervisor.
- 6.5** The student will make reasonable effort to complete the informal concern process within 20 instructional days.
- 6.6** The student has a right, with advance notice, to a supporter during any meeting. At the beginning of any meeting where a supporter is present, both the student and the supporter will sign the Student Supporter Acknowledgement Agreement, which outlines the supporter's role and waives the student's confidentiality rights.

7.0 Formal Process for Addressing Student Concerns with Non-Faculty Employees

The formal process for addressing student concerns with non-faculty employees is initiated only after a student has been unsuccessful in resolving the issue of concern at the informal level as outlined in section 6.0 above. **Note: Issues involving alleged harassment or discrimination**

do not follow this process, but must follow [CCS Administrative Procedure 2.30.01-A Non-discrimination/ Anti-harassment](#) or [CCS Administrative Procedure 2.30.01-D Title IX Procedures for Employees](#).

- 7.1 If the concern warrants formal action, the student will be asked to submit the concern in writing to the appropriate administrator/supervisor. The Formal Student Complaint Form and related material are considered an education record of the student subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- 7.2 The employee involved will be notified in writing within ten (10) instructional days that a complaint has been received, will receive a copy of the written student complaint, and the appropriate bargaining unit procedures for addressing such matters will be followed. The bargaining unit will be notified by the dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor.
- 7.3 The intent of the Formal Process for Addressing Student Concerns is to provide a clear outline of steps to be followed that will provide due process for all parties. The following guidelines are in place to further facilitate this process.
 - 7.3.1 The Vice President of Instruction/Learning of the College is the administrator overseeing all issues relating to instruction and those occurring within their instructional divisions with other staff. The Vice President of Student Services is the administrator overseeing all issues related to student services and those occurring within their divisions. The Chief Officer of the district unit is the administrator responsible for overseeing all issues related to employees who work for that district office or division.
 - 7.3.2 The student has a right to a supporter during any meeting, provided advance notice is given to the other participant. The Student Supporter Acknowledgement Agreement must be signed by the student and supporter at the beginning of the meeting.
 - 7.3.3 A student may terminate the process at any level.
 - 7.3.4 When the issue involves a represented employee, the employee may choose to notify the bargaining unit at any step in the process.
- 7.4 **Step 1:** The student submits a completed Formal Student Complaint Process form to the appropriate dean or administrator/supervisor.
- 7.5 **Step 2:** The dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor will assess the formal complaint and make a determination of whether it is appropriate for further consideration. If it is determined that it is not appropriate, they will notify the student in writing within ten (10) instructional days. If the complaint is determined to be appropriate for further consideration, the dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor must notify the employee and appropriate bargaining unit within ten (10) instructional days of the complaint that a written complaint has been received. The employee will be given the submitted student complaint form and is asked to provide a written response to the complaint and return it within ten (10) instructional days to the dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor.
- 7.6 **Step 3:** A meeting to discuss the complaint and draft the division's official response is scheduled by the dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor within ten (10) instructional days of receiving the employee's written response. The meeting will include the employee, the appropriate administrator/supervisor and bargaining unit representative. Others may participate in the meeting at the mutual agreement of the dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor and the employee. The dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor will provide the division's formal response to the student within five (5) instructional days after the meeting.

- 7.7 Step 4:** If the complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, they may appeal to the appropriate Vice President or District Officer within ten (10) instructional days after the division's response. The Vice President/District Officer's response will serve as the college's final official response to the complaint.

8.0 Campus Contacts

- 8.1** Spokane Community College – 1810 N. Greene St. Spokane, WA 99217
Vice President of Instruction – Building 1, Suite 268A – (509) 533-7075
Vice President of Student Services – Building 1, Suite 270A – (509) 533-7015
- 8.2** Spokane Falls Community College- 3410 W. Whistalks Way, Spokane, WA 99224
Vice President of Learning – Building 30, Suite 224 – (509) 533-3538
Vice President of Student Services – Building 30, Suite 225 – (509) 533-3514
- 8.3** CCS District Office– 501 N. Riverpoint Blvd. Spokane, WA99202
Chief Administration Officer – Suite 125F – (509) 434-5037
Chief Financial Officer – Suite 204 – (509) 434-5275
Public Information Officer – Suite 139 – (509) 434-5107
Chief Information Officer – Suite 126B – (509) 434-5427
Provost – Suite 110 – (509) 434-5060
Chancellor – Suite 110 – (509) 434 -5006

9.0 Related Information

- 9.1** CCS Board Policy [3.30.01 Non-discrimination/Anti-harassment](#)
- 9.2** CCS Administrative Procedure [2.30.01-A Complaints of Discrimination, Sexual Harassment or Misconduct, Domestic or Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation](#)
- 9.3** Informal Guidelines for Addressing Student Concerns for Non-Faculty Employees, [CCS 30-06-C](#), CCS Administrative Procedure 2.30.01-D Title IX Procedures for Employees
- 9.4** Informal Guidelines for Addressing Student Concerns for Faculty, [CCS 30-06-A](#)
- 9.5** Student Concerns Complaint Form for Faculty, [CCS 30-06-B](#), (also found in Appendix N-1 of Master Contract)
- 9.6** Student Concerns Complaint Form for Non-Faculty Employees, [CCS 30-06-D](#)
- 9.7** [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#) Standards 2.A.15; 2.A.22
- 9.8** [Master Contract](#), Article 3, Section 24; Article 14, Section 2, Paragraph A, 8; Article 3, Section 4, Paragraph B, 3, e
- 9.9** [Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 40, Section 40.1](#)
- 9.10** [Student Supporter Acknowledgment Agreement](#)