

## Mid-Atlantic Christian University Student Life Policy #16

SUBJECT: STUDENT GRIEVANCES

DATE: February 27, 2013

REVISED:

REVIEWED: 2/12/18, 2/19, 4/20

NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW: This policy will be reviewed in February of odd numbered years.

APPROVED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES: October 18, 2013

Policy for: Mid-Atlantic Christian University  
Procedure for: Staff, Faculty, and Students  
Authorized by: Vice President for Student Life  
Issued by: Board of Trustees

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### I. Purpose:

The purpose of the student grievance policy is to provide due process for resolving student complaints against university employees or university policies.

This policy partially meets the requirements for accreditation with SACSCOC, Principles of Accreditation, Standard 12.4.

### II. Policy and Procedure:

MACU has established three grievance procedures depending on the nature of the grievance. The procedures follow:

1. Standard Grievance Procedure – discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, or other conditions or preferences; unfair treatment that is in violation of students' basic rights, as set forth in the university's Student Handbook.
2. Academic Grievance – academic matters where students have a grievance. Areas for appeal include, but are not limited to, classroom procedures, charges of unfair treatment by an instructor, charges of unfair grades given by an instructor, absence and tardiness practices, course requirements that differ substantially from those set forth in the syllabus, the right to participate in University sponsored activities, and policies and procedures outlined in the University catalog under "Academic Information" and "Programs of Study."
3. Sexual Harassment Grievance – student allegation of sexual harassment.

**Notes:** *If any of the above are committed against a student by another student instead of a university employee, the offended student should report the matter immediately to a university official, who will report it to the vice president for student services. The incident will be investigated and action taken if a violation of the Student Code of Conduct occurred. The offending student will then be dealt with according to the Student Code of Conduct. Under no circumstances will a student requesting due process be harassed, intimidated, discouraged, or denied access to the Grievance Procedures (Due Process).*

#### **A. Standard Grievance Procedure**

The following procedure is to be used to resolve a grievance. Once this procedure of due process has begun, students who want to continue to pursue due process must follow the procedure and may not circumvent steps in the procedure and go prematurely to a higher authority.

**1. The Offending Person**—The student must first make contact with the offending person to resolve their differences within five school days. The exception to this requirement is sexual harassment complaints, which may be taken directly to the vice president for student services, as described below. If a student desires they may ask the Vice President for Student Life to designate a mediator.

**2. The Vice President for Student Life**—If the complaint is not resolved in the conference with the offending person, the student may then appeal in writing to the Vice President for Student Life, who will schedule a conference with the student and the other involved parties. If the grievance is academic in nature the student will be directed to follow the Procedure for Resolving an Academic Grievance as listed below.

**3. The Appeals Committee**—If the grievance is not resolved by the appropriate vice president, the student may request a hearing in writing before the Appeals Committee.

- a. The student must present his/her case in writing to the Vice President for Student Life who will appoint a chair of the Appeals Committee within five days after the meeting with the appropriate vice president.
- b. The Appeals Committee is comprised of one faculty member, a student services staff member, the vice president for finance or his/her designee, an academic department chair, and any additional members appointed by the president of the university.
- c. After receiving the student's letter of grievance, the Appeals Committee must grant a hearing at the earliest convenient opportunity, but no later than five working days after receiving the request.
- d. The Appeals Committee will send to the student the procedures to be followed in the hearing. These may include, but are not limited to, who may attend the hearing, who may speak before the committee, and any documentation that is requested.
- e. The Appeals Committee must render a decision and respond to the student in writing within five working days following the hearing.

**4. The President**—If the grievance is not resolved to the student’s satisfaction by the Appeals Committee, the student may request a hearing in writing before the president of the university. The student must present his/her grievance in a signed and dated document to the office of the President within five working days of receiving the decision of the Appeals Committee. The President will outline for the student any guidelines to be followed in the hearing and will then grant a hearing at the earliest convenient time, but no later than five working days after receiving the request unless prevented by official travel of the President of the University.

## **B. Academic Grievance Procedure**

An Academic Grievance must be initiated within **one semester** of the completion of the course in question. If the grievance is regarding an academic matter, the following steps must be followed:

**1. The Instructor**—The student must go first to the instructor with whom he/she has the grievance. A conference with the instructor will be held to resolve the grievance informally.

**2. The Department Chair**—If the informal conference with the instructor does not resolve the grievance, the student may appeal in writing within five working days of the informal conference to the department chair/director/coordinator.

**3. Vice President for Academic Affairs**—If the grievance is not resolved in the meeting with the department chair, the student may appeal in writing within five working days to the vice president for academic affairs. If the grievance is not resolved by the vice president for academic affairs, the student has access to the Standard Grievance Procedure beginning with the Appeals Committee, which must be initiated in writing within five working days.

**4. Interim Decision Concerning Student Status**—Before the student goes before the Appeals Committee, the vice president for academic affairs, with the assistance of the department chair of that student’s educational program, will determine the feasibility of keeping the student in class while the appeals process continues. Should the circumstances warrant, the vice president for academic affairs may decide that the student should be removed from class and/or the campus until the appeals process has ended.

## **C. Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure**

If the student grievance pertains to an allegation of sexual harassment by either another student or an employee, the student may go directly to the vice president for student services rather than to the offending person. Any person who receives knowledge of a student allegedly being sexually harassed must report it to the vice president for student services. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the student has access to the Standard Grievance Procedure, beginning with the Appeals Committee. (The employee sexual harassment grievance procedures are in Employment Matters, Harassment and Discrimination.)

Note: *“In writing” – the preposition phrase is defined as follows: a separate document (e.g., letter) either mailed to the university, delivered in person to the addressee, or attached to an email (attached either as a .doc, .docx, or .pdf). Letters must have a date on them and they must be*

*signed. In the letter there must be the specific grievance, process used to date to attempt to resolve the grievance, and any evidence if appropriate.*

#### **D. State Level Review**

If a complaint cannot be resolved through the institution's complaint process, students may file a complaint with the North Carolina Post-Secondary Education Complaints unit.

The Licensure Division of the University of North Carolina Systems Office serves as the official state entity to receive complaints concerning post-secondary institutions that are authorized to operate in North Carolina. If students are unable to resolve a complaint through the institution's grievance procedures, they can review the [Student Complaint Policy \(PDF\)](#) and complete the online [Student Complaint Form](#). For more information contact:

North Carolina Post-Secondary Education Complaints  
c/o Student Complaints  
University of North Carolina Systems Office  
223 S. West Street, Suite 1800; Raleigh NC 27603  
Website: [North Carolina Post-Secondary Education Complaints \(https://www.northcarolina.edu/post-secondary-education-complaints/\)](#)

For more information, call (919) 962-4550.

To file a complaint with the Consumer Protection Division of the North Carolina Department of Justice, please visit the State Attorney General's web page at: <http://www.ncdoj.gov/complaint>. North Carolina residents may call (877) 566-7226. Outside of North Carolina, please call (919) 716-6000. En Espanol (919) 716-0058.

If you choose to mail a complaint, please use the following address:

Consumer Protection Division  
Attorney General's Office  
Mail Service Center 9001  
Raleigh, NC 27699-9001

IV. Published:

*MACU Academic Catalog; MACU Student Handbook; MACU Faculty Handbook*

V. Reason for Revision:

VI. Appendices: None