

TUSCULUM COLLEGE

Formal Student Complaint Policy

Policy Intent

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and procedures for Tusculum College students, faculty and staff members with regard to the handling of informal and formal student complaints. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) requires that there be a policy specific to handling and logging written student complaints.

Embracing the core values of integrity, education, and civic responsibility, the Tusculum College community seeks to promote civil discourse among all of our constituencies (students, parents, alumni, members of the Board of Trustees, guests, faculty members, staff members, and other employees of the College). In support of this discourse, the College seeks to address concerns and complaints with integrity, respect and virtue in communications, relationships and actions. For many student concerns or complaints that do not involve harassment, the College seeks to support informal communication channels involving the student and those most directly involved. The purpose of this document is to outline the formal student complaint policy and procedures.

Formal Student Complaint

To be considered a formal student complaint, the complaint must meet the following criteria:

1. Be written; (this includes complaints received by emails)
2. Be received by a Dean, Vice President or President, and
3. Include a complainant's name and signature.

Routing of Student Complaints

When a student approaches a faculty member, staff member, or administrator with a verbal concern or complaint or proceeds with a formal complaint as defined above, the nature of the complaint/concern determines the direction of the process:

- a) Any complaints of harassment or sexual assault/rape should move directly to the sexual harassment policy and reporting procedures in the Tusculum College Student Handbook.
- b) Any grade issue should move directly to the grade appeal process found in the Tusculum College Catalog.
- c) Any complaint involving other students or student related issues should move directly to the Dean of Students as described in the Tusculum College Student Handbook.
- d) Any other complaint/concern other than complaints of harassment or sexual assault/rape should move forward to the appropriate Vice President or Dean responsible for the applicable area with the procedures below.

General Procedures

Students are encouraged to discuss with the appropriate faculty or staff member as soon as possible particular concerns or complaints. For concerns that are not resolved through the informal process, the student should be directed to the appropriate Dean or Vice President. The Dean or Vice President may meet with the complainant first, but a formal complaint will require the student to put the complaint into writing. The Dean or Vice President will then proceed to

investigate the complaint thoroughly. The Dean or Vice President will begin by requesting written documentation from the faculty or staff member involved. The Dean or Vice President will gather and document all relevant information before making a determination. The Dean or Vice President will inform the complainant and the relevant faculty or staff member of the determination in writing. In the case of academic complaints, if the issue is still not resolved, they may take their concern to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In all cases, the final appeal is to the President of the College.

A log of written student complaints and their resolution will be maintained by each of the Vice Presidents and Deans of the College. The Office of the VPAA will collect logs from the Deans on an annual basis.

Off Campus Authorities

Before pursuing complaints through an off-campus authority, it is expected that the complainant will follow the procedures as described above, except in cases of harassment or sexual assault/rape. If after following those procedures, the issue is still not resolved, they can direct complaints to the following agencies.

- Complaints relating to quality of education or noncompliance with accreditation standards, policies, and procedures may be made to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097. (The Commission's complaint policy, procedure and the Complaint form may be found on their website, <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/complaintpolicy.pdf>);
- Complaints related to the application of state laws or rules related to approval to operate or licensure of a particular professional program within a postsecondary institution shall be referred to the appropriate State Board (i.e., State Boards of Health, State Board of Education, and so on) within the Tennessee State Government and shall be reviewed and handled by that licensing board (<http://www.tn.gov>, and then search for the appropriate division);
- Complaints related to state consumer protection laws (e.g., laws related to fraud or false advertising) shall be referred to the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs and shall be reviewed and handled by that Unit (<http://www.tn.gov/consumer/>).
- Complaints about the college can also be directed to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) (<http://www.state.tn.us/thec/>). THEC will direct any complaints to the President of the College, 60 Shiloh Road, P.O. Box 5048, Greeneville TN 37743.
- Complaints that originate with SACSCOC or other accrediting bodies are to be forwarded to the appropriate liaison who will follow the general procedures addressed in the Formal Student Complaint Policy.