

CCS Administrative Procedure

3.40.01-D Student Concerns

Implementing Board Policy [3.40.01](#)

Contact: District Academic Services Officer, 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.

- 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 three steps of the informal process outlined in section 2.0, below, have been followed, students may choose to initiate a more formal process of review.
- 1.3 Special Circumstances: There are some instances when students believe they have been the victims of harassment or discrimination. In these cases students should follow CCS Administrative Procedure 3.30.01-A Non-discrimination/Anti-harassment.

2.0 Informal Process for Addressing Student Concerns

- 2.1 The following steps are to be followed by students when seeking review of a concern involving an employee of CCS. The student is asked to remember:
 - 2.1.1 This is an **informal** process, requiring no paperwork or forms. The intent is to establish a dialogue between the student and the college that results in resolution of the concern.
 - 2.1.2 Concerns must be initiated within fifteen (15) 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.
 - 2.1.3 The review of concerns must proceed from the lowest level of review to higher level of review.
- 2.2 **Step 1:** The student speaks with the person with whom they have the concern and seeks to resolve the matter at this level. There is no need for further action if the concern is resolved at Step 1.
- 2.3 **Step 2:** If the concern is not resolved at Step 1, the student may request a meeting with the faculty member's department chair or the staff member's immediate supervisor. There is no need for further action if the concern is resolved at Step 2 (Master Contract Article 11, Section 3.6.a.2).
- 2.4 **Step 3:** If the concern is not resolved at Step 2, the student may request a meeting with the employee's division dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor (Master Contract Article 11, Section 3.6.a.3).
- 2.5 Cause for the student not proceeding through Steps 1 and 2 must be ascertained and found credible by the dean/administrator/supervisor before he/she will consider hearing the student's concern. The dean/administrator/supervisor upon determining that the appropriate steps were followed will attempt to informally resolve the complaint.

- 2.6 If the concern cannot be resolved at this informal level and the complaint warrants formal action the student may proceed to the Formal Process for Addressing Student Concerns, section 3.0, below.

3.0 Formal Process for Addressing Student Concerns

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 2.0, above. **Note: Issues involving alleged harassment or discrimination do not follow this process, but must follow CCS Administrative Procedure 3.30.01-A Non-discrimination/Anti-harassment.**

- 3.1 If the concern warrants formal action, the student will be asked to submit the concern in writing to the appropriate administrator/supervisor. The Student Concerns form and related material are considered an education record of the student subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- 3.2 The employee involved will be notified in writing within ten (10) working days that a complaint has been received, will receive a copy of the written student complaint, and the appropriate AHE/bargaining unit procedures for addressing such matters will be followed. The AHE/bargaining unit will be notified by the dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor.
- 3.3 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:
- 3.3.1 The Chief Academic Officer of the College or the IEL is the administrator overseeing all issues relating to instruction. All other concerns are directed to the Chief Student Services Officer.
 - 3.3.2 A student may bring an advocate (e.g. counselor, instructor, staff member, student, friend, or student government representative) to assist with any of the steps outlined in this process.
 - 3.3.3 A student may terminate the process at any level.
 - 3.3.4 When the issue involves a represented employee the employee may choose to notify the AHE/ bargaining unit at any step in the process.
- 3.4 **Step 1:** The student submits a completed Student Concerns form to the appropriate dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor (Master Contract Article 11, Section 3.a.6.c). The student will be notified of the receipt of the written concern within five (5) working days.
- 3.5 **Step 2:** The dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor must notify the employee within ten (10) working days of the complaint that a written complaint has been received. The employee will be given the submitted student concern form and is asked to write and sign a response regarding the complaint and return it within ten (10) working days to the dean or appropriate administrator/supervisor. A copy of the employee response will be provided to the student.
- 3.6 **Step 3:** The student schedules an appointment with the department chair or supervisor to discuss the concern(s). The department chair or supervisor must provide a written response on the Student Concerns form and he/she and the student sign the form.
- 3.6.1 If the concern(s) is addressed to the student's satisfaction the completed page is sent Chief Academic Officer or Chief Student Services Officer.
 - 3.6.2 If the concern(s) is not addressed to the student's satisfaction the student may proceed to Step 4.

- 3.6.3 It is the responsibility of the department chair or supervisor to notify the faculty/staff member regarding the outcome of the concern. If the student decides to proceed to Step 4 the department chair or supervisor is asked to notify the employee and, if possible, obtain their signature on the form indicating they have been notified. This ensures that the employee is aware that the student is proceeding with the process.
- 3.7 **Step 4:** The dean or appropriate administrator will determine if additional meetings between the student and employee and possibly department chair/supervisor are appropriate (Master Contract Article 14, Section 2.a.8).
- 3.7.1 If the concern(s) is addressed to the student's satisfaction the student indicates that in writing on the original complaint. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to notify the employee regarding the outcome of the concern.
- 3.7.2 If the concern(s) is not addressed to the student's satisfaction the student may proceed to Step 5.
- 3.7.3 If the student decides to proceed to Step 5, the supervisor is asked to notify the employee and, if possible, obtain their signature on the form indicating they have been notified. This ensures that the employee is aware that the student is proceeding with the process.
- 3.8 **Step 5:** The student submits the written concern to the Chief Academic Officer or the Chief Student Services Officer. The file is reviewed, a decision made and notification is given to the student, employee, department chair, dean, or division administrator and AHE/bargaining unit within ten (10) calendar days of the action or decision.
- 4.0 Material relating to such complaints may be placed in the employee's division file. Complaints not moved into formal remediation shall be purged from any and all records after four (4) full academic quarters, excluding summer.
- 5.0 **Campus Contacts**
- 5.1 Spokane Community College
- Administration, Bldg. 50, Rm 100B
 - Counseling Center, Bldg. 15
- 5.2 Spokane Falls Community College
- Office of the Associate Dean for Student Life, Bldg. 17, Rm 126
 - Office of the Chief Academic Officer, Bldg. 1, Rm 105E
 - Office of the Chief Student Services Officer, Bldg. 17, Rm 150
- 5.3 Institute for Extended Learning
- Office of the Vice President of Learning, Bldg. 27, Rm 247
 - Office of the Vice President of Student Services, Bldg. 27, Rm 247
- 6.0 **Related Information**
- 6.1 CCS Board Policy [3.30.01 Non-discrimination/Anti-harassment](#)
- 6.2 CCS Administrative Procedure [3.30.01-A Non-discrimination/Anti-harassment](#)
- 6.3 Student Concerns form, [CCS 30-06](#)
- 6.4 [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#) Standard 2.A.15; 2.A.22
- 6.5 [Master Contract](#), Article 11, Section 3.6; Article 14, Section 2.a.8