SON OP 60.020 - Complaint or Grievance Resolution (Non-Grade Related)

PURPOSE
Students have the opportunity to register complaints about non-grade related issues through a formal procedure. The policy allows for student input and tracking of complaints to ensure continuous quality improvement.

REVIEW
The OP shall be reviewed by the Associate Academic Dean of Education Support Services and Student Affairs by October 1st of each even numbered year (ENY), with recommendation for revision forwarded to the Dean of the School of Nursing. Final approval of the OP is provided by the Dean.

1.0 Definition
Formal Complaint is defined as a written and submitted student complaint regarding misunderstandings, concerns, behaviors, or non-grade grievances concerning a university employee or fellow student.

2.0 Policy Statement
It is the policy of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing to affirm the right of its students to a prompt and fair resolution of a complaint or grievance. The purpose of the Grievance Procedure for Non-grade Complaints is to establish a process for students to express and resolve misunderstandings, concerns or grievances that they have with any university employee or fellow student in a prompt, fair and equitable manner. Actions that may be grieved under this procedure include (but are not limited to unless otherwise excluded as defined below) unfair, inequitable or unprofessional treatment, improper application of school policy or procedure or improper disclosure of grades (i.e. FERPA violation). Although the procedure encourages the resolution of the concern informally, a formal grievance is available should the concern not be resolved informally. The formal grievance process constitutes a formal complaint being filed.

Actions that may not be grieved under this procedure include: 1) misconduct actions by another student in accordance with the TTUHSC Code of Conduct; 2) sexual harassment by an employee or student; 3) discrimination; and 4) American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance complaints. The above actions can be grieved through the TTUHSC Office of Student Services. Grade Disputes shall be grieved through the TTUHSC School of Nursing. Please reference the TTUHSC SON Handbook for these procedures.

3.0 Policy/Procedure
Complaint resolution procedures include both informal and formal processes. Students should use the formal complaint procedure only as a last resort. Prior to the informal process it may be helpful for the student to consult with the Associate Academic Dean for Student Affairs to clarify the issues involved.

INFORMAL PROCESS
The goal of the informal process is to establish communication between the student and the appropriate faculty/staff member or student for the purpose of providing a forum where the student's questions or concerns can be addressed and a satisfactory resolution developed. If a student choses they may have a representative present (faculty, staff, or student) in the informal process for guidance and/or support.

Prior to filing a formal written grievance, students are encouraged to first address their complaint informally with the faculty, staff, or student involved. The parties involved in the non-grade grievance are encouraged to resolve the misunderstanding, concern, or grievance through discussion. If, after meeting with the
faculty/staff or student involved in the grievance, the student remains unsatisfied, the next step in the informal process is for the student to discuss the issue with their department chair, regional dean, or the Associate Academic Dean for Student Affairs (AADSA) as appropriate. If the issue is not resolved informally, the student has the right to meet with the AADSA regarding the process for filing a formal grievance.

FORMAL PROCESS – Non-Grade Complaint Against a Faculty Member, Staff Member or Student

A. To file a non-grade grievance, the student shall:

1. Students are to file a non-grade complaint utilizing the on-line process found at https://www.ttuhsc.edu/student-services/grievances.aspx. This is to be filed within ten (10) business days from the date of the last meeting with the appropriate faculty, staff or fellow student with the AADSA. The student must include in the complaint form a written statement including any information regarding attempts at resolution, and basis for the allegation that was unfair and the expected remedy or outcome by filing the grievance.

2. The AADSA will submit the complaint form and any accompanying evidence to either the Department Chair (DC) responsible for the faculty member(s) or fellow student involved or the Associate Dean for Business and Finance (ADBF) for the staff member involved. The DC/ADBF shall notify all parties to the complaint and convene an informal meeting with the faculty/staff or fellow student and student filing the complaint separately and review all materials pertinent to the complaint. If two or more students are involved, the DC/ADBF may elect to meet with the students either separately or jointly. The role of the DC/ADBF is to mediate the dispute. If the DC/ADBF is the faculty/staff member cited in the grievance, he/she should recuse himself/herself and the AADSA shall mediate the facilitated discussions on the grievance.

3. All parties to the complaint will be allowed to submit documentation to the appropriate supervisor. The DC/ADBF will conduct an investigation of the dispute and interview each of the parties to the dispute individually or may at his/her discretion conduct a joint meeting of the parties to mediate and resolve the dispute. No parties other than those involved in the complaint may participate or attend.

The role of the DC/ADBF is to take evidence as described above, to listen to all parties, and make a final decision regarding the complaint. The DC/ADBF will have ten (10) business days to render a decision from the date of receipt of the complaint form. Notification will be sent to the student filing the complaint as well as the faculty/staff member or fellow student via certified mail and/or via email. All substantive decisions of the DC/ADBF are final.

B. Appeal to the Dean

The student filing the complaint may only appeal issues of procedural due process to the Dean of the School of Nursing. Within five (5) business days of the date of the decision of the DC/ADBF, the student filing the complaint must submit to the Associate Academic Dean for Student Affairs the form for procedural appeal (Attachment A). This form is located at http://nursing.ttuhsc.edu/forms/general/grievance_b.pdf. The decision of the Dean will be sent to the student and faculty/staff or fellow student via certified mail and/or via email within five (5) business days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Dean is final.

All records will be retained in the Office of the Associate Academic Dean for Student Affairs for three (3) years.

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