

September 14, 2009

## Division of Student Affairs

### Guide to Helping Students Resolve their Complaints

#### Overview and Introduction

The purpose of this document is to (1.) outline the Division of Student Affairs' Student Complaint Policy and (2.) explain ways students may communicate complaints within the Division of Student Affairs at Ferris State University's main campus and Regional Centers. This introductory section provides general information. The remainder of the document is broken into several sections which address the most common categories of student issues and specific contact strategies.

The Code of Student Community Standards states that each Ferris State University student has a right to initiate a complaint that may bring about an investigation and/or disciplinary action involving another member of the University academic community.

**The recommended general strategy is to first contact the specific department most directly connected with the issue at hand**, unless there are good reasons for not doing so, such as a desire to maintain anonymity. The University Directory, online and in paper form, generally provides contact information for all the divisions, departments, Deans' offices, etc. from which an individual can usually determine where to go to file a complaint. Please contact the regional locations via the telephone numbers listed below or visit the Ferris homepage and/or University Directory.

#### **The departments listed below report to the Vice President for Student Affairs:**

- Admissions and Records Office
- Birkam Health Center
- Career Services
- Commencement
- Dean of Student Life
- Enrollment Services
- Institutional Research and Testing
- Multicultural Student Services
- Orientation
- Personal Counseling Center
- Rankin Student Center
- Scholarships and Financial Aid
- Student Conduct

- Student Employment
- Student Leadership and Activities
- University Recreation

**Additional FSU campus locations that assist students:** The following locations are connected to the College of Professional & Technological Studies.

College of Professional and Technological Studies Big Rapids/On-line	(800)562-9130 or (231)591-2340
FSU Alpena	(989)358-7219
FSU Dowagiac	(800)456-8675 or (269)782-1214
FSU Flint	(866)387-9430 or (810)762-0461
FSU Grand Rapids	(800)998-3425 or (616)643-5737
FSU Lansing	(517)483-9723
FSU Midland	(989)686-9256
FSU Muskegon	(231)777-0510
FSU Petoskey	(231)348-6207
FSU Traverse City	(866)857-1954 or (231)995-1734
Kendall College of Art and Design	(800)676-2787 or (616)451-2787

### **Student Anonymity (Confidentiality)**

If, for any reason, a student does not want to personally or directly contact a staff member to discuss a complaint, the student should begin with the next highest level of responsibility, which would commonly be the supervisor (director, dean, associate vice president, or vice president). The student can request an appointment to meet with the director/dean/associate vice president/vice president and/or send a signed written description of the issue or problem and request that their identity be kept confidential.

That request will be honored unless there are over-riding reasons to do otherwise. For example, if a student alleges sexual harassment by a staff member to a director, the director *must* forward that information, to include the identity of the complainant, to the Department of Public Safety as a reporting agent.

### **Addressing Informal Student Complaints**

All student concerns are taken seriously within the Division of Student Affairs. Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve complaints informally by visiting or calling the following areas to directly resolve their concern with the appropriate staff member.

**Issues related to academic transcripts, transfer credits:**

Contact Admissions and Records at (231)591-2100 located on the second floor of the Timme Center for Student Services.

**Issues regarding Rankin Student Center room reservations and event hosting:**

Contact the Rankin Student Center at (231)591-5916.

**Issues related to University Recreation:**

Contact the Student Recreation Center at (231)591-2679.

**Issues related to school closures for severe weather or other emergencies:**

Contact the FSU Communications Center (ext. 2100), visit the Ferris homepage, or the MyFSU webpage.

**Issues about on-campus housing (residence halls/apartments):**

- Generally, if a student has a complaint they should bring it to the attention of their Residence Advisor (RA) in the Residence Halls or Community Advisor (CA) if they live in one of the campus apartments.
- If there is a concern about the Hall Director, students can speak with the Assistant Director of Housing.
- Students may also speak with the Director of Housing.

The main Housing number is (231)591-3745 and specific numbers for each Residence Hall (to contact the appropriate Hall Director) are listed under “Residence Halls” in the University Directory. Contact the Housing Office for campus apartment concerns.

**Issues about policy violations in the Code of Student Community Standards and a student’s disciplinary record:**

Contact the Office of Student Conduct at (231)591-3619 or visit Rankin Student Center Rm. 104.

**Issues regarding discrimination:**

Contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 231/591-3946, or Multicultural Student Services at (231)591-2617 and/or the Dean of Student Life at (231)591-2088.

**Issues regarding disabilities:**

Contact the Disabilities Services Office at (231)591-3057.

**Issues regarding Fraternity and Sororities/General Registered Student Organizations (RSO):**

Contact Student Leadership and Activities at (231)591-2606.

**Issues related to general health, health fees, insurance, or immunization records:**

Contact the Birkam Health Center at (231)591-2614 for physical health issues.

**Issues related to personal counseling:**

Contact the Personal Counseling Center at (231)591-5968 for general counseling and other mental health concerns.

**Issues about on-campus parking, parking tickets, metered parking, etc.:**

Contact the Department of Public Safety at (231)591-5000.

**Issues about scholarships, financial aid, tuition, and other charges:**

Contact the Student Service Center in the Timme building which handles most of these issues. Student bills and financial aid information can also be accessed and viewed via a student's personal MyFSU page.

**Issues regarding student employment:**

Contact the Office of Student Employment at (231)591-3922.

**Issues related to on-campus dining:**

Contact Dining Services Administration and Staff at (231)591-2210.

**Issues related to a student's computer:**

Contact the Technology Assistance Center at (231) 591-4822.

**Issues related to FSU campus events and programs:**

Contact the relevant FSU office or group hosting the event.

Students also have the option of getting advice from key University Officials who will suggest strategies and mechanisms for addressing student complaints:

- Vice President for Student Affairs, (231)591-3578, Timme CSS 313.
- Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, (231)591-2088, Rankin Student Center Rm. 255.
- Office of the Dean of Student Life, (231)591-2088, Rankin Student Center Rm. 255.
- Dean of Enrollment Services, (231)591-3963, Timme CSS 201.
- Vice Chancellor/Academic Dean, (616)643-5737 – College of Professional and Technological Studies.
- Any of the college Deans which are listed in the University Directory.

## **Advice to Students - Steps to Submitting a Formal Written Signed Complaint:**

- Step 1:** First try to resolve your complaint informally by talking with a staff member in the department most directly connected to your complaint. The staff member may request that you provide additional documentation if necessary, or schedule an appointment to address your concern.
- Step 2:** If you want to submit a formal written signed complaint please do so to the appropriate Student Affairs staff member. If you are not sure who the appropriate person is, simply ask any staff member for assistance. The written signed complaint must include the following information:
- the actual complaint (be as specific as possible), and
  - the specific outcome you are seeking.
- Step 3:** If the problem remains unresolved, the student and the staff member may refer the matter to the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee.

*The Division of Student Affairs is committed to providing a positive learning environment for our students.*