Bemidji State University Policies

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<th>Policy Name:</th>
<th>Effective Date:</th>
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<td>Student Complaints and Grievances Policy</td>
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<tr>
<th>Policy Owner:</th>
<th>Last Review:</th>
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<tr>
<td>VP for Academic Affairs/Registrar/ VP for SDE</td>
<td>6/1/2015</td>
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<th>Next Review:</th>
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<td>9/1/2017</td>
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**Policy Statement**
Bemidji State University policy states that students have the right to seek a remedy for issues of institutional or program quality such as Bemidji State University’s compliance with the standards of our accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), or a claim of consumer fraud or deceptive trade practices. No retaliation of any kind shall be taken against a student for participation in a complaint or grievance.

**Scope and Purpose of Policy**
The scope of this policy applies to all university students, faculty and staff. Bemidji State University is committed to a respectful learning environment for all members of the campus community.

**Definitions**
Grievance - A written claim raised by a student alleging improper, unfair, arbitrary, or discriminatory action by an employee involving the application of a specific provision of a university rule/regulation or a Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Board policy or procedure. A grievance may also be about issues of institutional or program quality such as Bemidji State University’s compliance with HLC standards, or a claim of consumer fraud or deceptive trade practices.

Complaint – A claim by a student alleging improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment. A complaint may also be about issues of institutional or program quality such as Bemidji State University’s compliance with HLC standards, or a claim of consumer fraud or deceptive trade practices.

Appeal – A request for reconsideration of a grievance application of a policy or procedure.

Retaliation – Retribution of any kind taken against a student for participating in a complaint or grievance.

Student – An individual student, a group of students, or the student government.

**Procedures**
For certain types of policies such as discrimination/harassment, student conduct, grade challenges, and parking specific procedures are in place and must be followed. These procedures are found in the Bemidji State University Student Handbook.
The procedures for all other types of complaints or grievances follow.

1. When a student has a complaint or grievance, she or he shall first meet on an informal basis with the faculty member, staff member, or university administrator directly involved in the dispute in an attempt to resolve the complaint or grievance. For full consideration, the complaint or grievance should be filed in the semester in which the concern arises, or within the first two weeks of the subsequent term.

2. When a student has a complaint or grievance which remains unresolved after consultation with the faculty member, staff member, or university administrator directly involved in the dispute, she or he may file a written account of his or her grievance with the appropriate academic dean in cases where the dispute involves teaching faculty, or the appropriate supervisor in cases where the dispute involves other university employees. A Student Complaints and Grievance Form is available for this purpose.

3. This notification shall contain a statement indicating the intention of the student(s) to proceed with the grievance, and the relief requested. The academic dean, appropriate supervisor, or designee, shall respond in writing to the student(s) within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the written, signed notice of grievance.

4. If the grievance is not resolved at the meeting with the supervisor, the student(s) may appeal to the vice president for the area. The vice president shall consider the appeal and make a decision. The vice president shall respond in writing to the student within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the written, signed notice of appeal. If the supervisor consulted in #2 above is also a vice president, the student may appeal to the president of the University as described below.

5. If the grievance is not resolved at the meeting with the area vice president, the student(s) may appeal to the University president, who will consider the appeal and make a decision. The University president shall respond in writing to the student within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the written, signed notice of appeal. The decision of the president is final and binding.

6. If the grievance involves a Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy, the actions of the Bemidji State University president, an issue of institutional or program quality such as BSU’s compliance with the standards of HLC or other licensing agency standards, or a claim of consumer fraud or deceptive trade practice, a student may further appeal the university decision to the MnSCU chancellor. The decision of the chancellor is final and binding.

**Record Keeping**

The Administrative Assistant for the VP for Student Development and Enrollment will maintain a complaint file. On a yearly basis, a summary of the complaints will be reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team and cabinet for possible actions. Summary information regarding student complaints to these administrative offices is provided to the Higher Learning Commission, upon their request, and in compliance with data privacy policy, as a part of the university’s periodic accreditation review. Questions regarding student complaint/grievance procedures should be directed to the Office of the Vice President for Student Development & Enrollment.
Rationale
Bemidji State University is committed to a respectful learning environment for all members of the campus community. Students have the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement when they believe they have been treated in an improper, unfair or arbitrary manner.

Supporting References
MnSCU Board Policy Procedure 3.8.1
http://www.bemidjistate.edu/students/handbook/policies/campus/harassment.cfm


Bemidji State University Student Handbook
http://www.bemidjistate.edu/students/handbook/policies/