

## **STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICIES/PROCEDURES**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT OLD WESTBURY**

The procedures outlined here are in use by each major functional area of the College and are meant to guide students compelled to formally complain about such items as a campus policy, procedure, condition or staff member. The procedures here, however, do not replace or supersede any applicable law or legal process that might be required, depending on the complaint made.

#### **Academic Affairs**

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Office of Academic Affairs  
Campus Center, Room H-410  
Phone: 516-876-3135

A student may appeal specific grades, probation and dismissal, and degree requirements by following the Academic Grievance Procedures. Those procedures can be found at <https://www.oldwestbury.edu/academics/academic-affairs/academic-grievance-procedures>.

#### **Administration**

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Division of Administration  
Campus Center, Room I-211  
Phone: 516-876-3179

##### *Human Resources*

For those Students who are College employees, collective bargaining units may grieve through their respective unions (UUP, CSEA Administrative, CSEA Operational Unit, and Police). MC (at will) employees have access to the College's affirmative action policies.

##### *Facilities & Maintenance*

The Facilities & Maintenance Department is responsible for student transportation. Suggestions and complaints regarding the services can be directed to the Assistant Director for General Institutional Services who holds supervisory responsibility.

#### **Business & Finance**

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Business & Finance  
Division of Business & Finance  
Campus Center, Room H-310  
Phone: 516-876-3191

The following procedures are employed by the Division of Business & Finance regarding student complaints and grievances.

Business & Finance staff addresses each complaint on an individual basis; with satisfactory customer service and continuous communication forming the basis of our response. Complaints are received via email, handwritten, personal appearance (open-door policy) or via telephone. Most complaints are handled by the staff who received the complaint by following the steps enumerated below. In addition, in the Information Technology Services (ITS) area, a Service Request log is utilized to log in all complaints and requests for services. ITS provides First Level support to ITS, Financial Aid and Bursar. All complaints are logged as incidents or interruptions of service. Complaints are reviewed, assessed based on impact, urgency and priority, and timely resolved. Records and logs are provided to departments to resolve or review student complaints. The Service Request log is reviewed for similar issues and research and resolution is performed.

However, if a situation cannot be resolved at the staff level and student/parent/staff member wants to speak to someone above the staff level, the procedure would be as follows:

1. Complaint forwarded to the Supervisor/Director of the area. Complaints are timely addressed by the Director responsible for that area. The complainant is contacted, matters discussed and resolved. The Associate Vice is President notified of the resolution.
2. If the Supervisor/Director cannot resolve the situation, the complainant is referred to the appropriate Associate Vice President. The process in place to ensure complaints are reviewed and timely resolved includes direct feedback by the Director responsible. Once the complaint is elevated to the Associate Vice President, the complaint is recorded in a log for follow-up. Information recorded includes: semester, student OW ID#, student last name, student first name, issue(s) and resolution. The complaints are reviewed for similar issues and research and resolution is performed. In several cases policies and/or procedures are updated/changed. In some cases, follow-up is needed to address system issues.
3. If the Associate Vice President cannot resolve the situation, they would bring it to the Sr. Vice President for final resolution. The Sr. Vice President will contact the complainant seeking resolution or assist providing additional information of the situation and steps to be taken by complainant. Sr. Vice President will also provide reasons for actions taken by Business & Finance if resolution is not satisfactory to complainant. Sr. Vice President will then advise President's Office of outcome.

## **Enrollment Services**

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Office of Enrollment Services  
Campus Center, Room I-202  
Phone: 516-876-3073

1. Comments or complaints received via website  
Student should submit their comments or complaints to the Enrollment Services email address (enroll@oldwestbury.edu).

## 2. Complaints submitted by telephone

- The Caller is instructed to give contact information for supervisor follow-up the same day as the complaint is received. An Admission's Supervisor will contact the caller within three days.

## 3. Complaints issued in writing (letter)

Depending on the nature of the complaint, a written complaint is forwarded to the department's area Coordinator (ex: Campus Tour Coordinator, Graduate Admission Coordinator, Study Abroad Coordinator) or it is directed to the Director of Admissions or Vice President for Enrollment Services within **one day**. The Director or another supervisor will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint respond within one.

## 4. Resolution of complaints

### **Possible outcomes from complaints**

a. Students deserve an explanation regardless of ability to resolve complaint.

- When the person filing the complaint is not satisfied with the response, the person should be referred to the next highest immediate supervisor. The Admission's staff member should alert that supervisor about the situation the same day that the complaint was received.
- Most complaints will be resolved within one week unless there are further complications.

b. A corrective action may be taken or further clarification about an issue may be given within one week unless there are unforeseen circumstances.

- When a complaint highlights a lack of clarity in the Office's stated policies or procedures, the language related to the policy or procedures, the information should be updated and published as soon as possible (website, catalog, etc.).
- When a complaint is related to verbal information issued by an Admission's staff member, that staff member must be advised about the misunderstanding or error.
- If a complaint reveals that there was an error that can be easily corrected, corrective actions should be immediately taken and communicated to the student.

## **Institutional Advancement**

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Office of Institutional Advancement  
Campus Center, Room H-425  
Phone: 516-876-3207

The Division of Advancement operates under the belief that most complaints can be resolved on an informal basis and students who believe they have been aggrieved in some way are asked to discuss his or her problem with the staff member or function involved in the situation in an effort to reach a mutually agreeable solution. It is incumbent on each employee to report such instances to their immediate supervisor to ensure all student complaints are recorded in the Division's files of record.

Should informal discussion not yield a mutually agreeable result, the students can seek a formal review, which follow the process below:

1. Students are asked to provide in writing a description of the complaint, including the details of concern and the type of relief being sought. These descriptions are to be addressed to the Vice President for Institutional Advancement.
2. Upon notification of a complaint by the student, the Vice President for Institutional Advancement will make every effort to meet with the student to discuss the complaint within ten (10) days, excluding weekends, holidays, and break periods, in the event circumstances permit.
3. The Vice President for Institutional Advancement will investigate the complaint and may interview the student for clarification. After the investigation, he or she may either grant or deny the redress sought, or provide alternate remedies. The written decision of the Assistant to the President for Advancement should be issued no later than twenty (20) days following receipt of the formal letter of complaint, excluding weekends, holidays, and break periods, in the event circumstances permit.
4. Decisions of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement are final.

## **Public & Media Relations**

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Office of Public & Media Relations  
Campus Center, Room H-300  
Phone: 516-876-3162

The Office of Public & Media relations operates under the belief that most complaints can be resolved on an informal basis and students who believe they have been aggrieved in some way are asked to discuss his or her problem with the staff member or function involved in the situation in an effort to reach a mutually agreeable solution. It is incumbent on each employee to report such instances to their immediate supervisor to ensure all student complaints are recorded in the unit's files of record.

Should informal discussion not yield a mutually agreeable result, the students can seek a formal review, which follow the process below:

1. Students are asked to provide in writing a description of the complaint, including the details of concern and the type of relief being sought. These descriptions are to be addressed to the Vice President for Communications.
2. Upon notification of a complaint by the student, the Vice President will make every effort to meet with the student to discuss the complaint within ten (10) days, excluding weekends, holidays, and break periods, in the event circumstances permit.
3. The Vice President will investigate the complaint and may interview the student for clarification. After the investigation, he or she may either grant or deny the redress sought, or provide alternate remedies. The written decision of the Vice President should be issued no later than twenty (20) days following receipt of the formal letter of complaint, excluding weekends, holidays, and break periods, in the event circumstances permit.

4. Decisions of the Vice President for Communications are final.

## **Student Affairs**

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Division of Student Affairs  
Campus Center, Room H-418  
Phone: 516-876-3175

The Division of Student Affairs has adopted this grievance procedure to provide the prompt and equitable resolution of student complaints regarding service provided by SUNY Old Westbury offices within our division.

### Procedure for Submitting Complaints

1. A complaint should be filed in writing and must contain the name, address, student ID number, phone number(s) and email address of the person(s) filing the complaint and briefly describe the concern.
2. An investigation conducted by the Vice President for Student Affairs or her/his designee, as may be appropriate, will follow the filing of the complaint. The investigation will be thorough, and will afford all interested persons the opportunity to provide information relevant to the complaint.
3. Grievances related directly to the work of the Vice President for Student Affairs should be submitted to the Assistant to the President, Campus Center, H211.
4. A written determination will be provided to the complainant as to the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution, if any, shall be issued by the Vice President for Student Affairs (or investigating agent), within Ten (10) business days. Student will be notified if investigation into complaint requires additional time. The Vice President for Student Affairs will maintain the files and records relating to the complaint filed for a period of seven years.
5. To the extent practicable, all aspects of the investigation conducted in accordance with this procedure will be confidential. Involved parties may not retaliate against a student for filing a grievance.
6. Decisions of the Vice President for Student Affairs are final.

## **University Police**

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University Police Department Headquarters  
Phone: 516-876-3333

The University Police Department Manual of Rules includes the grievance process and related forms. Students seeking to initiate a complaint through this procedure should contact the Chief of University Police to do so.