

Policy Title: Grievance Policy, Pertaining to Students and all College Employees	Policy Number: 025
Approved By: Leadership Team	Date Implemented: January 17, 2013
BPPE Laws & Regs as of 9-9-13: 71810(b)(14)	Date Revised: December 31, 2014

Purpose: To ensure that all grievances are taken seriously and are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner according to clear, established procedures that are in compliance with State and federal regulations and with the moral ideals of the College.

Scope: (Persons involved)

- College President
- Any or all members of the Leadership Team
- Grievance Committee Co-conveners/Chairs as appointed by the Leadership Team. The co-conveners represent different constituencies of the College.
 - This group is often comprised of:
 - Dean of Students
 - Associate Academic Dean
 - Ombuds as appointed by the President, with recommendation by Leadership Team
- Grievance Committee members as selected, by the Grievance Committee Co-chairs, to serve in any unique situation. Committee members represent all constituencies of the College, including students. All members of the Grievance Committee should possess the qualities necessary in resolving grievances: fairness, empathy, the ability to hold confidentiality, and discernment regarding the particular ramifications of each grievance.

Policy:

If any member of the College community--student, faculty, or staff member--files with the proper College authority a grievance report implicating a member or members of the College community, the College promptly investigate the complaint.

Open Door Policy

We believe in communicating openly and honestly with students and employees about issues affecting our working environment. We also believe that successful communication is a two-way dialogue. So, if you have a question, problem, complaint, or suggestion, tell us. You will always find us willing to listen and respond.

The College is committed to working with all students and employees to resolve problems and conflicts in as fair a manner as possible. We firmly believe the best interests of our students, staff and faculty can be served without third party intervention. Therefore, all students and employees have the opportunity to resolve problems with representatives of management. Although we cannot guarantee that you will always be satisfied with the solution reached by the College, you will have the opportunity to express your ideas, concerns, and questions knowing that the College will listen.

The College prohibits retaliation against any student or employee for exercising his/her right to bring issues to the attention of management.

Grievance Policy

Rudolf Steiner College recognizes that in the normal course of human interactions, conflicts and disputes may arise. Though most conflicts and problems that arise in the College environment can be

resolved informally through the Open Door Policy described above, when such attempts do not result in a resolution, a formal grievance process may be initiated. The College believes that all students and employees have the right and the obligation to seek resolution through a grievance process.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy we use the following definitions:

- **CONFLICT** – Intense interpersonal or intrapersonal dissonance between two or more parties (individual or groups) based on incompatible goals, needs, desires, values, beliefs, attitudes or perceptions of entitlement.
- **DISPUTE** – Conflicts that have become particularized around a specific issue or issues.
- **GRIEVANCE** – Grievance is defined as any real or perceived injustice, unfair treatment or wrong that is personal or professional in nature. A grievance takes the form of a formal expression of a dispute in the form of a complaint by one or more of the parties.

Levels of Grievance

- **LEVEL ONE:** There is a perceived injustice or unfair treatment occasioned by another person or persons, process or aspect of College life.
- **LEVEL TWO:** There is concern that voicing the complaint to a person or persons responsible for the situation could possibly result in a threat to one's own security or well being or that of another person, then assistance is sought.
- **LEVEL THREE:** The conditions of Level Two may exist and/or the enforcement of a College Policy or Procedure is possibly needed. The matter may also have legal ramifications and/or involve discrimination or harassment.

Procedure:

CONFLICTS AND DISPUTES

Level One Grievances:

When student or employee has a difficulty with a person, persons or aspect of College life and that individual feels that an effort to resolve this face-to-face is the best place to begin. The College supports this action and encourages all members of the College Community to begin at this step if at all possible. A good source for guidance can be found in the book *Crucial Conversations* (2006), authored by Patterson, Grenny, McMillian, and Switzler.

LEVEL ONE: At this level the individual meets with the student or employee directly involved, in an attempt to resolve the matter. If necessary, after consultation with the Dean of Students, Academic Dean or Human Resources Coordinator, a third party or mediator may be used. The purpose of mediation is to build consensus toward a resolution of the dispute between the parties in an informal setting. Mediation is based on the principles of neutrality and confidentiality and the mediator acts as a disinterested third party, not as an advocate for the College or any other party. All parties will be asked to consent to confidentiality as well. Grievance forms and a report on the resolution of the situation are filed: for employees in the employee's personnel file; for students in the office of Dean of Students; and all are sent to the Leadership Team.

Level Two and Three Grievances:

LEVEL TWO: An individual may feel a need for a third party, mediator or other intervention because of extreme discomfort or a possible threat to his/her well-being. In this circumstance, a grievance form must be filed as a first step. The form may be obtained from the Reception office, the Dean of Students or from RSC's website at www.rudolfsteinercollege.edu/policies. The

completed Grievance Form should be sent to the President or a member of the Leadership Team. The Grievance Committee and the Leadership Team inform each other of the situation. In the case of employees, the grievance form is forwarded to their supervisors (only if appropriate).

LEVEL THREE: Grievances at this level should be submitted through a Grievance Form (see above) to the President or other member of the Leadership Team. This level of Grievance usually warrants formal intervention and definitive actions on the part of leadership in the College.

Additional Procedures for Level Two and Three Grievances:

1. Records of forms, process and resolution for Level Two and Three grievances are stored electronically in a grievance log located in the President's area of the intranet drive.
2. Leadership Team members may involve themselves in the process if there is a concern for potential liability to the College.
3. If the President or Leadership Team does not join the process at this juncture, grievance committee co-chairs will be appointed by the Leadership Team and the co-chairs will select the additional committee member(s) most appropriate for the situation (for a total of at least three members).
4. The student or employee who has filed the Grievance Form is given the names of those who have been selected from the grievance committee pool. If no concern of bias is raised the procedure continues; if a concern arises other members may be selected from the pool.
5. The Grievance Committee may at their discretion:
 - a. Interview all persons involved.
 - b. Bring the parties together to facilitate a resolution.
 - c. Recommend a resolution.
6. The Grievance Committee produces a written document of the grievance disposition and sends it along with the grievance form to the President and other Leadership Team members.
7. All documents involving students are kept for the duration of the student's matriculation. These documents are kept in the secure file of the Dean of Students. Upon graduation or leaving the College, a decision will be made as to the handling of these documents (see Guidelines for Access to and Disclosure of Educational Records).
8. All grievances involving College personnel are kept for a period of at least six years. Level One grievances by employees are kept in their personnel files. Level Two and Three grievances are stored electronically in the President's Grievance Log.
9. In a case where a resolution has not been found, notes of the process and a description of attempts to resolve the situation are sent to the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team may, or may not, repeat previous steps in determining the final and non-negotiable solution to the grievance.

Student Grievance Form is available on the website (www.rudolfsteinercollege.edu/policies).

Academic Grievance Policy—Not Involving Questions Regarding Grades

Persons seeking to resolve problems or complaints regarding curriculum, instruction, or other academic matters are advised to follow this procedure:

1. First contact the instructor in charge.
2. If the matter is not resolved, document the problem and notify the Modality Director or Program Chair.
3. If this is still unsatisfactory, forward the documented problem to the Dean of Students and the Academic Dean (listed in Catalog under Faculty).
4. The Academic Dean will respond to the appeal informing the student about the appropriate

action to be taken and/or the status of the request. This is done in writing and is to be received by the student within 15 days of the student's written request.

Possible other actions include but are not limited to:

- A facilitated conversation between the student making the concern known and others involved in the written document of concern;
- An immediate action to remedy the situation;
- Relegate the issue to the Campus Life Committee for comment, solution, and/or proposal for action;
- Refer issue to Leadership Team, begin procedure in Grievance Policy.