

Student Concerns and Complaints Policy

Bethel's desire is to provide the best experience possible for students as they pursue their education here. Acknowledging that students may on occasion have concerns or complaints about their experience, this policy is established to guide the quick and efficient resolution of concerns or complaints presented to staff members in the Office of Student Life.

The student life division will resolve student complaints for all issues relevant to the Office of Student Life at the lowest staffing level possible. When receiving a complaint from a student, the student life staff person receiving the complaint should make every effort to determine what office is best able to resolve the student's concern and connect him or her directly to an individual in that office who is able to assist. Examples of student complaints may include but are not limited to:

- Academic concerns— Office of Academic Affairs*
- Concerns about finances or a student's bill—Business Office
- Concerns about financial aid— Office of Financial Aid
- Residence life, roommate concerns, housing issues—Office of Student Life
- Parking or security and safety— Offices of Security and Safety or Campus Services
- Meal plans or food service—Sodexo or Office of Residence Life
- Racial or sexual harassment—Offices of Student Life or Human Resources

When a student presents a concern or complaint to the Office of Student Life that is relevant to the work of student life, the following procedure will be followed: Office personnel (or the staff member receiving the complaint) will determine who in the office (or division) is best able to respond to the student's concern. When possible, the student's concern should be addressed and resolved by that individual. As a matter of practice, this should be considered the "normal" resolution process. When concerns can be resolved quickly, no formal record needs to be made.

On occasions when a student's concern or complaint cannot be resolved through this procedure, or when the student is not satisfied with the resolution offered, students may make a formal complaint. Formal complaints should be presented in writing to the Office of Student Life. When a complaint is received, the student life personnel receiving the written complaint will forward it to the dean of student programs. The dean of student programs will review the complaint and assign the case to the student life staff member most able to resolve the situation (deans, directors, resident directors, etc.). The student will be notified by letter or email within two business days that his or her complaint has been received and to whom it has been assigned. Student life staff members will make every effort to respond to and resolve the student's complaint within 10 business days (more quickly when possible). The final resolution will be provided to the student in writing and in person when appropriate. If a student is dissatisfied with the resolution offered, he or she may appeal to the vice president for student life. If a student continues to be dissatisfied, a final appeal can be made to the university provost.

Note: When concerns or complaints are first presented by a student's parent(s), parents will be asked to encourage their daughter or son to present the concern or complaint or write the appeal. As a general rule, written correspondence concerning the complaint will always be directed to the student and meetings concerning the complaint should always happen in the presence of the student. Records of student complaints and resolutions will be kept by the associate vice president for student life.

Policy Contact:

- Office of Student Life
 - studentlife@bethel.edu
 - 651-638-6300