

Student Concerns, Complaints, and Grievances

Concerns, complaints, and grievances, other than those addressed in the policies on sexual harassment, discrimination, and racism as set out in the [Student Handbook](#), are received in several ways: informally through the Student Council and President's Listening Hours, and formally through direct consultation with the appropriate supervisor, office, or officer.

Students are encouraged to consult directly with the appropriate office/officer about any situation they feel may:

- a) affect negatively their study, work, residential or social environment in the school;
- b) pose a threat to the safety of people and property; or
- c) violate any school policies and procedures; accrediting agencies' regulations; state or federal laws.

Student workers are encouraged to speak directly to their supervisors or to the Director of Human Resources. *Teaching Assistants* should speak directly to their supervising faculty or to the director of the PhD program.

In addition to direct consultation, all concerns, complaints, and grievances also may be submitted through a secure online form (available [here](#)), initiated either by the student or by the office/officer receiving the concern and distributed to the appropriate offices for response. The online form allows us to track and timestamp the entire process of complaint, response, and resolution. These offices will annually review concerns and responses and present a report to the President and leadership team.

All concerns will be handled as promptly and discreetly as possible, with facts made available only to those who need to know to investigate and resolve the matter. We are committed to safeguarding the confidentiality of individuals who submit reports. Due to the nature of certain claims, Garrett-Evangelical may be limited with respect to the action(s) it may be able to take in response to a report if the individual submitting the report does not wish to make his or her identity known.

Seminary policy prohibits the taking of any retaliatory action against anyone for reporting or inquiring about potential breaches of seminary policies or for seeking guidance on how to handle suspected breaches. However, any individual who deliberately or maliciously provides false or frivolous information may be subject to disciplinary action, as the circumstances warrant, up to and including termination of relationship to the Seminary, as the case may be.

The processes concerning violations of state or federal law are addressed under the Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Whistleblower policy, as set out in the [Student Handbook](#), pp. 60-61. Substantive concerns related to accreditation regulations are addressed under the guidelines of the [Higher Learning Commission](#) and at the [Illinois Board of Higher Education](#).

In all cases our goal is to ensure that we:

- a) secure a safe environment where the integrity, dignity, rights, and safety of all people are protected;
- b) promote a culture of accountability among all members in the community;
- c) sustain a culture and practice of mediation in which reconciliation and reparation may be explored in cases of conflict; and
- d. provide response, resolution, and appeal systems that are clear, effective, fair/just, and assessed.

Appeals for review or reconsideration of any decision may be made to the appropriate Vice-President. Decisions may be further reviewed by the President and/or the Board of Trustees when appropriate.

Review

At least annually, the President, the Leadership Team, and the Title IX coordinator will review reports from the various offices regarding grievances and their adjudication a) to ensure that grievances and complaints have been addressed in a timely manner, b) to determine that responses are appropriate to and consistent with other institutional policies and procedures, and c) to determine when policies and procedures need to be revised. For this review, the appropriate vice-presidents and director of Human Resources will provide a summary report—issues raised, number of cases, character of responses, what has been discovered and any changes implemented as a result of the complaint. The purpose of this review is not to rehearse all details or to reconsider specific cases. A summary of complaints and how they have been addressed will be reported to the appropriate committees of the Board of Trustees and made available to the Institutional Assessment committee as needed for required reporting.