



***POLICY TITLE***  
**Academic Complaint and Grievance**

**POLICY NUMBER**  
**1-002**

<b>Responsible Unit:</b> <i>Office of Academic Affairs and Workforce Development</i>	<b>Effective Date:</b> <i>02/21/2020</i>
<b>Responsible Official:</b> <i>Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs</i>	<b>Last Reviewed Date:</b>
<b>Policy Classification:</b> <i>Academic Affairs</i>	<b>Origination Date:</b> <i>01/30/2020</i>

**I. POLICY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE**

Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA) promotes the open exchange of ideas among all members of the University community – students, faculty, staff, and administration. An environment conducive to the open exchange of ideas is essential for an institution of higher learning. However, the University recognizes that a student may occasionally have concerns related to University practices, or that a student may have a concern related to a certain action or inaction by an employee of the University. This policy defines the process by which a student who has a valid complaint or grievance may pursue resolution of the matter of concern.

**II. POLICY SCOPE AND AUDIENCE**

This policy applies to an individual who is currently enrolled (credit or non-credit), or was enrolled (credit or non-credit) at the college, within the previous semester, when the underlying facts and circumstances of the complaint first occurred, and who has not been suspended or dismissed, or otherwise is required to reapply for admission. The audience also includes online, off campus sites, and dual enrollment students. Parents, relatives, employers, agents and other persons acting for, or on behalf of, a student is not able to file a complaint in a student's name.

### **III. POLICY COMPLIANCE**

Failure to comply with this policy may result either in no action being taken with respect to a complaint or other disposition. Where such failure also causes a violation of rules and policies regarding student or employee conduct, disciplinary action may result in accordance with the applicable rules and policies.

### **IV. POLICY DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this policy, a “complaint” is defined as a valid statement of dissatisfaction of any official activity of or sponsored by the University, or any other matter which is within the scope of the authority of the University’s administration, faculty, or staff.

A “grievance” is defined as a valid complaint which, after reasonable attempts at an informal resolution, has not been satisfactorily resolved and continues through a formal process.

Not all complaints can be considered as grievances. In general, complaints which may be considered as grievances must concern:

- actions which allegedly involve a misapplication or violation of University policies or procedures; or
- violations of state or federal laws not covered by other University policies.

For complaints/grievances related to instances of discrimination or harassment (of a non-sexual nature), students should refer to the University’s Harassment and Discrimination Policy. For complaints related to sexual misconduct, students should refer to the University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures. For disputes concerning final course grades, students should refer to the University’s Grade Appeal Policy. Concerns related to academic issues such as academic misconduct or financial aid appeals also fall under separate policies and may generally not be considered as grievances under this policy, except in cases where there are alleged misapplications or violations of University policies or procedures.

For the purposes of this policy, “business day” is defined as any day the University is officially open, regardless of whether classes are in session.

Retaliation is a very serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately. Any attempt to penalize or retaliate in any way against a person bringing, investigating, or cooperating with an investigation of a complaint or grievance is prohibited and will be treated as a separate incident to be reviewed on its own merit.

These procedures do not replace the right of a student to pursue other options or remedies available under state, civil, or criminal statutes and/or federal law.

## V. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

Southern University at Shreveport faculty and staff serve as a resource for individuals seeking assistance in resolving matters within the campus community. Individuals should reference SUSLA Student Complaint resolution chart to determine the initial area for assistance referral and subsequent contact areas as the individual progresses toward complaint resolution.

1. The student must first discuss the issue with the faculty member involved and explain the basis for his/her grievance within six weeks after the grade is awarded. After six weeks, a student forfeits the right to appeal. Note: this policy does not apply to students disputing grades received on exams, assignments, research papers, clinical rotations, etc. Those kinds of grade disputes must be resolved between the faculty member and the student within the same semester. This policy does not apply to grades students received due to non- attendance.
2. If the matter is not resolved with the faculty member, the student may appeal to the division dean, program coordinator/director within three (3) working days. This appeal must be in writing and should describe the basis for the student's complaint as well as the outcome of the discussion with the faculty member. Within three (3) working days following the receipt of the grievance, the division dean program coordinator/director will decide regarding the student complaint and will provide a written response to the student.
3. If the matter is not resolved with the division dean program coordinator/director, the student may appeal in writing to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs within five (5) working days. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will render a decision or call a meeting of the Instructional Grievance Committee. If an Instructional Grievance Committee meeting is called, the following will apply:
  - A. The Instructional Grievance Committee is composed of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs or designee, who serves as the chair, faculty members, staff members, and/or administrators.
  - B. The student must be present when the grievance is heard. The student may have an *advisor* present during the hearing. If an advisor will be present, the student must inform the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in writing at least two (2) working days prior to the hearing.
  - C. The responsibility of the committee shall be limited to a review of the case to determine if established policies, procedures, or practices were followed and interpreted correctly.
  - D. The Instructional Grievance Committee will render its decision in writing to the student within (5) working days.
4. No grade will be changed after twelve (12) months following the completion of the course in question. This provides ample time to have a grade formally and successfully appealed.
5. Complaint Tracking: The Office of Academic Affairs and Workforce Development, will track each Academic Student Complaint and maintain within that system a record of the following for not less than two (3) years after final disposition of the complaint:
  - Date complaint was received.
  - Students identified with the complaint.
  - Copy of the complaint.

- College officials who addressed the complaint.
- Steps taken to resolve the complaint.
- Final resolution or disposition of the complaint.
- Any external actions taken by the complainant of which the Office of Academic Affairs and Workforce Development becomes aware. The data tracked will be assessed and made available to regulatory agencies and accrediting bodies, as required in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and policies.

## VI. POLICY RELATED INFORMATION

This policy is aligned with the Louisiana Board of Regents Student Complaint Process [Filing a Student Complaint Against a Louisiana Institution](#)

### 1. Process for students enrolled at a Louisiana public post-secondary academic degree-granting institution:

The first step for students who wish to file a complaint against a Louisiana institution is to exhaust all of the institution's student complaint or grievance procedures. An institution's student complaint or grievance procedures are typically available in the academic catalog or student handbook on the institution's website.

<https://regents.la.gov/students-parents/student-complaint-process/>

This policy is aligned with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Section 12: Academic and Student Support Services, Standard 12.4 The institution (a) publishes appropriate and clear procedures for addressing written student complaints, (b) demonstrates that it follows the procedures when resolving them, and (c) maintains a record of student complaints that can be accessed upon request by SACSCOC. (Student complaints).

<http://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

SUSLA Complaint Process flow chart accompanies this policy to provide a visual to the process and tracking for a complaint.

## VII. POLICY HISTORY AND REVIEW CYCLE

This is a newly created policy and is subject to a five-year policy review cycle.

## VIII. POLICY URL

[www.susla.edu](http://www.susla.edu)

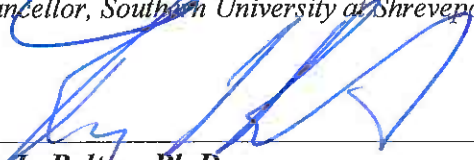
**IX. POLICY APPROVAL**



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**Rodney A. Ellis, Ed.D.**  
*Chancellor, Southern University at Shreveport*

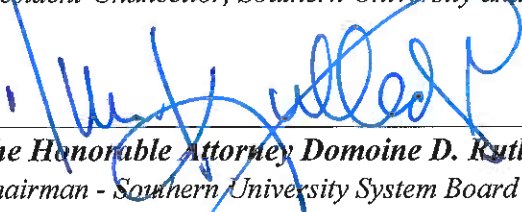
2-21-20  
*Effective Date of Policy*



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**Ray L. Belton, Ph.D.**  
*President-Chancellor, Southern University and A&M College System*

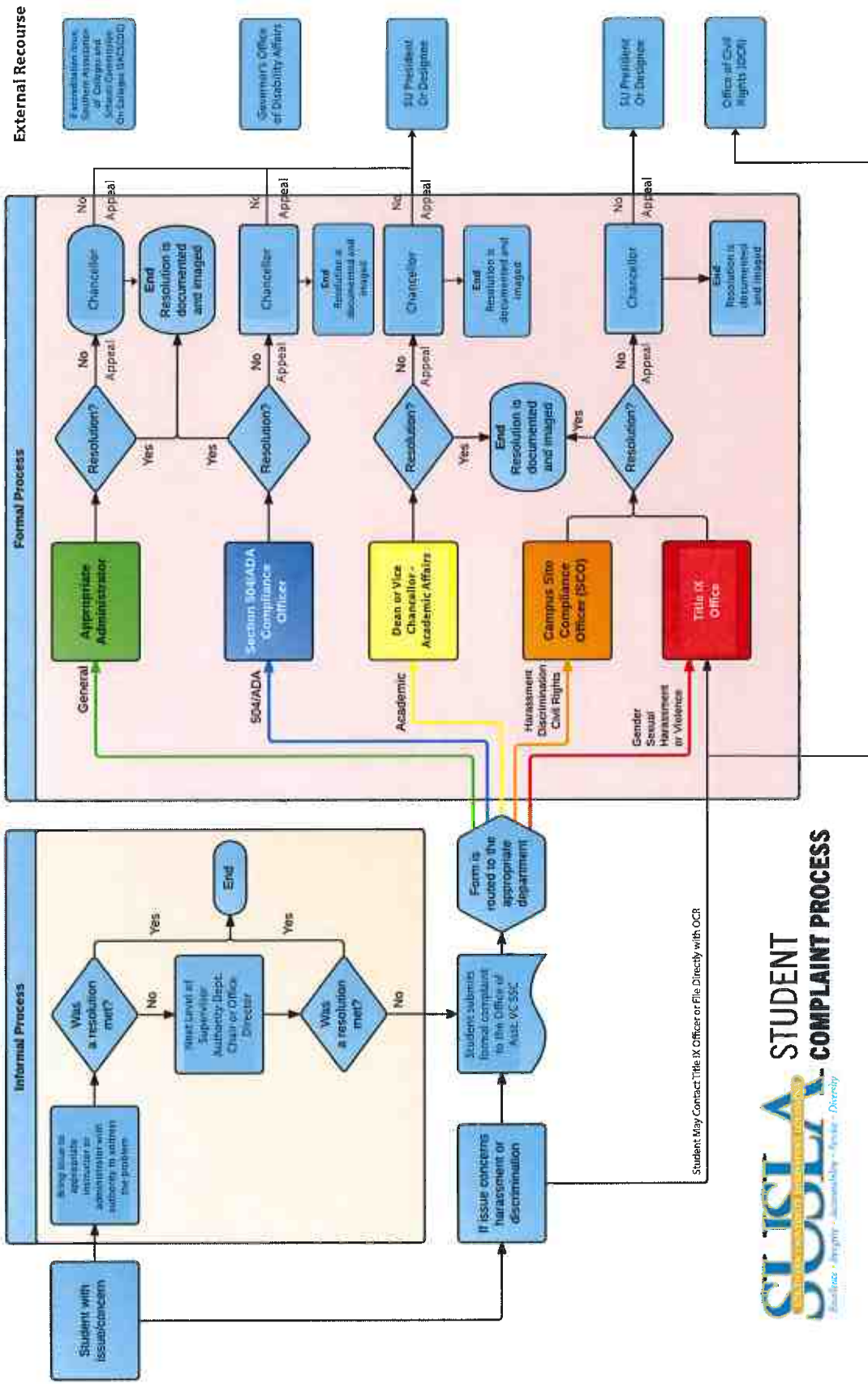
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**The Honorable Attorney Domoine D. Rutledge**  
*Chairman - Southern University System Board of Supervisors*

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**SUNY STUNYLA** STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCESS

*Respect • Integrity • Accountability • Access • Diversity*

Student May Contact Title IX Officer or File Directly with OCR