PURPOSE

Directives from the United States Department of Education and accreditation principles require institutions of higher education to establish procedures for resolving institutional complaints. Compliance requires the maintenance of a record of complaints received by the institution, related to all written complaints, a log recording a summary of the complaint, the person or office charged to resolve the complaint, and the resolution or actions taken in response to the complaint.

This procedure specifically addresses any miscellaneous complaints against the institution that do not fall into the categories covered by the Student Code and Grievance process. The institutional catalog provides for the Student Code and Grievance complaint process for the following specified situations which are not covered by this procedure:
1. Complaints regarding discrimination
2. Complaints regarding sexual harassment
3. Complaints regarding academic matters, excluding individual grades

PROCEDURE

A formal institutional complaint is one that is submitted in writing, signed and sent to the attention of a TCL executive officer (President or Vice President). The College will neither entertain complaints that are not in writing or which are anonymous; nor will it consider complaints that are sent electronically or through facsimile transmission.

Once the formal written complaint is submitted, the College will acknowledge it within 15 instructional weekdays of its receipt. Within 30 instructional weekdays after acknowledging receipt of the complaint, College staff will review the complaint and its documentation and determine if it falls within the scope of College policies, if there is adequate documentation, whether the complaint identifies issues that may jeopardize the quality of educational programs or the general welfare and integrity of the College, or whether the complaint raises significant questions about the College’s compliance with College standards. The College will inform the complainant, in writing, regarding the disposition of the complaint to include one of the following:

1. The complaint will not be processed further because it does not fall within the scope of College policies or there is inadequate documentation to raise questions concerning the institution’s compliance with College standards.

2. Where appropriate, a resolution is suggested to the complainant.
3. The complaint has sufficient substance to warrant further review. In this case, the College will make every effort to expedite the investigation; however, the time required to conduct the investigation may vary considerably depending on the circumstances and nature of the complaint. Following the review, the complainant will be notified, by the Vice President for Administrative Services, or designee, regarding one of the following:

   a. The complaint will not be processed further because there is insufficient evidence of significant non-compliance.

   b. If there appears to be sufficient evidence of significant non-compliance or if the College staff are unable to document compliance, then the Vice President for Administrative Services (or designee) and an ad-hoc committee will determine the action to ensure compliance. Written follow-up correspondence will be provided to the complainants.

   c. If the complainant is not satisfied, a complaint may be submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

4. Individual complaints will be retained in the office of the Vice President for Administrative Services.

5. The College will maintain a log of complaints and periodically review the types of complaints filed. Steps will be taken to address any pattern(s) that may be observed in the review.