PRESIDENT: June 27, 2014

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
4. Personnel Matters

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) Once an individual (complainant) has lodged a complaint to a TCL employee, it is up to that employee to do his or her best to address the problem at that level. The resolution could including discussing the problem with his or her immediate supervisor(s), or higher, but it always includes a discussion with the individual (complainant) The complainant then has the option to accept the resolution or if he or she believes the resolution is insufficient or unacceptable, he or she must register a written complaint on TCL’s official Institutional Complaint Form (See Attachment
A) within three (3) instructional days after discussing the complaint with the employee.

2) After the complainant has lodged a formal written complaint, the form is forwarded to the Vice President for Student Affairs for disposition and tracking. The Vice President for Student Affairs, or designee, will determine if the written complaint should be classified as one of the three areas noted above and route the issue accordingly. Once the formal written complaint is submitted, the College will acknowledge it, in writing, in two (2) instructional days after acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the appropriate College personnel will review the complaint and its documentation and determine:

   a. If the complainant falls within the scope of College policies;
   b. If the complainant has provided adequate documentation;
   c. If the complaint identifies issues that may jeopardize the quality of educational programs or the general welfare and integrity of the College;
   d. If the complaint raises significant questions about the College’s compliance with College standards.

3) Institutional Complaint. If the issue is classified as an Institutional Complaint against a specific department, the Vice President for Student Services or designee, will forward the Institutional Complaint Form to the appropriate department head. Within seven (7) working days, the department head will review the form, determine if any additional action is required and respond in writing to the Vice President for Student Affairs. If additional time is need, a request may be made for a reasonable extension as determined by the Vice President of Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs, or designee, will review the written response for the department head, confer with the Vice President for
Academic Affairs if the issue is related to faculty members or academic staff members and make a decision.

The Vice President for Student Affairs will communicate the decision to the complainant in writing, within seven (7) working days after the decision. Once an Institutional Complaint has been reviewed by the Vice President for Student Affairs and a decision has been made, that decision is final and the issue may not be appealed.

4) Student Grievance. If the issue is classified as a Student Grievance, the due process procedures listed in the TCL Student Handbook, Student Grievance Procedure, Sections I-IV will be followed. These procedures provide specific direction for student grievances and the appeal process used if desired. The student grievance appeal process may escalate to the President, whose decision is final.

5) Student Misconduct. If the Dean of Students determines that a complaint should be classified as Student Misconduct, the due process procedures listed in the Student Handbook, Student Misconduct will be followed. These procedures provide specific direction addressing student misconduct issues and the appeal process if desired. A student misconduct appeal process may escalate to the President whose decision is final.

6) Academic Misconduct. If the issue is determined to be an Academic Misconduct issue, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or designee, will resolve the issue using the due process procedures outlined in the Academic Affairs policy and procedure for Academic Misconduct.

7) Tracking and Notification. For all written complaints, the office of the Vice President for Student Services tracks, maintains a log of complaints, and manages the process, including notification to the complainant.

The College will maintain a log of complaints and periodically review the types of complaints filed. Steps will be taken to address any patterns(s) that may be observed in the review.
These procedures will be published in the Consumer Information section of the college web site, the Student Handbook. The form for an institutional complaint will be available in each vice president’s office. Once completed and signed by the complainant, the form must be forwarded to the Vice President for Student Services to be processed within three (3) working days.
TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE NUMBER: 2-1-234.1

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TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLAINT FORM

Name: ___________________________ Student I.D. #: ___________________________

Phone number: ___________________ Are you currently enrolled? ______ yes ______ no

E-mail Address: ___________________ If no, indicate last date of attendance if applicable.

Nature of the complaint: include dates, personnel/departments contacted and other specific information. Use space below or provide a typed statement.

________________________________________________________________________

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This complaint cannot be Processed unless all lines below are checked and you have signed the Complaint Form and have attached pertinent documentation.

Please acknowledge awareness that:

I have read the TCL complaints policy and agree that this form constitutes my formal complaint.

I authorized the vice president of student affairs or his/her designee to forward my complete and/or any documents concerning my complaint to the appropriate department.

I hereby certify that the information I have given above is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Student signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Check one or more of the areas for which this complaint is being filed:

____ ADA Office ________ Career Services ________ Retention

____ Admissions ________ Counseling ________ Student Activities

____ Academic Advising ________ Dean of Students ________ Student Support Services

____ Bookstore ________ Enrollment Services ________ Student Records

____ Business Office ________ Financial Aid ________ Testing

Location: ________ New River ________ Mungin Center ________ Hampton ________ Beaufort ________ Whale Branch

Painters Island ________ Air Station ________ Online

Complaint forwarded to: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Follow up communication with student (to be completed by the employee)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Date issue resolved: ___________________________ Resolved by: ___________________________