

## STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY AND FORMS

07/09, 01/12, 07/15, 01/17, 06/21, 06/22, 04/23

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### **PURPOSE:**

A grievance is an individual student's claim of unfair and/or non-equitable treatment regarding established policies, procedures, and regulations of Bellin College. A student has a right to express a grievance without prejudice, penalty, or reprisal. The College believes in resolving issues at the lowest level possible. If there is more than one student involved, each student must file a separate grievance. A grievance submitted by a group of students will not be accepted.

### **POLICY:**

To provide students with a direction to voice their concerns, a four (4) step grievance procedure has been established for an individual student to express problems, concerns, or disagreements relative to their experiences at the College. If resolution is obtained in any given step, that resolution is considered final. The procedural steps outlined below need to be completed sequentially within the timeframes outlined in each step. Before filing an official grievance, the college community highly recommends first having a conversation with the Director of Student and Affairs and DEI or the designated Dean or Director to resolve the issue at hand.

**All aspects of the Student Grievance Procedure are confidential.** All parties, student and employees, are required to exercise confidentiality and privacy in relation to all verbal and written communications.

**Conflict of Interest:** In the event of any conflict of interest which will be identified through self-declaration by any of the members regarding a particular potential grievance, the individual will remove themselves from the Student Grievance Process. The Director of Student Affairs and DEI (or designee) will rule on any challenges regarding conflict of interest.

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **Step 1: Informal Grievance Process**

The student speaks to the College employee (faculty or staff member) to whom they have the concern with about the believed infringement of unfair and/or non-equitable treatment regarding established policies, procedures, and regulations of Bellin College. The concern must be articulated in a manner that is specific to the infringement and/or unaccepted treatment.

Possible following outcome:

- The issue is resolved.
- The issue is unresolved and proceeds to Step 2.

#### **Step 2: Informal Grievance Process**

The student meets with the Director of Student Affairs and DEI (or designee). This is to occur within 2 business days following Step 1.

The Director of Student Affairs and DEI (or designee) is to:

- Provide the student with the name of the employee's immediate supervisor.
- Notify the involved employee of the situation via a face-to-face meeting.
- Arrange and meet with the involved employee, their supervisor, and the student within 3 business days of the notification of the dispute to attempt to resolve the concern at the lowest level possible.

Possible following outcome:

- The issue is resolved.
- The issue is unresolved and proceeds to Step 3.

### **Step 3: Formal Grievance Process**

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal grievance process, the student may begin a formal grievance process by documenting their grievance and the steps that have been taken to resolve the situation. The student completes the Student Grievance Procedure Step 3 Form located in the Director of Student Affairs and DEI's office.

- Student name, address, phone number, and College email address
- Date of situation/incident
- Description the situation or incident to include the name of the College employee involved
- Steps that have been taken to resolve the situation
- Outcome of prior steps and communications with those involved
- Expectations for resolution
- Provision (attachment) of any supporting documentation related to the grievance
- Student signature and date to certify that the student has reviewed the Student Grievance Procedure, and understands their rights, obligations, and responsibility to the process

The documented Student Grievance Form is submitted to the Director of Student Affairs and DEI (or designee) who will supply copies to the employee and employee's immediate supervisor within three (3) business days of Step 2. The College employee has three (3) business days to respond in writing to the student. A copy of the response will be provided to:

- Employee's immediate supervisor.
- Director of Student Affairs and DEI
- Appropriate cabinet member

Possible following outcomes:

- The issue is resolved.
- The issue is unresolved and proceeds to Step 4.

### **Step 4: Formal Grievance Proceeds**

If the formal grievance proceeds to Step 4 the Director of Student Affairs and DEI (or designee) then meets with the College employee and student separately within three (3) business days to inform them that the grievance has progressed to the final step.

The Director of Student Affairs and DEI (or designee) convenes and meets with the Student Grievance Ad Hoc Committee within three (3) business days of meeting with the student. This Committee is chaired by the Director of Student Affairs and DEI (or designee) and members include: the appropriate Academic Dean, appropriate Program Director, a staff member, a student representative chosen from the Student Senate. If any member(s) of the Committee feels they are unable to be impartial they will be recused and replaced with another member.

The student and involved College employee will be given the opportunity to meet with the Committee to expound on their side of the grievance, as the committee may ask for further information or clarification from any or all involved during the meeting. The Student Grievance Ad Hoc Committee has 5 business days to make a decision on the Grievance based on the review of information provided and applicable College policies, procedures, and regulations. The committee shall base its decision upon the record of the meeting and shall not consider matters outside of the record.

The Student Grievance Ad Hoc Committee may determine:

- The Student Grievance is incomplete and request additional information. If additional information is required, the student or involved College employee has 3 business days to provide that information to the Ad Hoc Committee.
- The Student Grievance is in favor of the student.
- The Student Grievance is dismissed and provides a rationale for their decision.

The Director of Student Affairs and DEI (or designee) shall provide to the College employee and student involved the outcome of the committee's decision in writing via certified mail and College email. A copy of the letter will be provided to the President/CEO. The outcome shall include:

- Findings of fact in chronological order
- A statement of the individual student's claim of unfair and/or non-equitable treatment regarding established policies, procedures, and regulations of Bellin College that is alleged to have been violated
- An opinion on the validity of the grievance
- Remedial recommendations and the final outcome

An official record of the process and all steps taken to resolve the grievance will be documented and kept in a sealed file in a fireproof cabinet. Additionally, the grievance will be recorded on a separate document of all grievances in the Student Affairs Office for 5 years in accordance with the record retention policy.

### **Appeals Process:**

If the student or College employee believes that the process and procedures outlined in this Policy were not followed, within 10 business days of the date of the Student Grievance Ad Hoc Committee's decision an appeal may be submitted to the President/CEO in writing. The Appeals Form is located in the Student Affairs office.

Within 14 business days of receipt of the appeal, the President/CEO or designee(s) may review and communicate with the student, the College employee, the administrator and supervisor, or the members of the Ad Hoc Committee to determine whether the process and procedures were followed.

The President/CEO may render one of the following decisions:

- Finds evidence of violation of the process and procedures of this Policy, the President/CEO will direct the administrator to review the case anew.
- Finds no evidence of violation of the process and procedures of this Policy; the President/CEO will uphold the ruling of the Grievance Ad Hoc Committee

The President/CEO will respond, in writing, within 15 business days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the President/CEO is final and not appealable.