Student Complaint Procedure

A. Purpose

To outline the appropriate steps to resolve a complaint.

B. Background and Responsibility

1. Occasionally a student may have a complaint involving another person, disability, or condition, which he or she believes to be unfair, inequitable, or a hindrance to his or her participation in the college learning experience.

2. Complaints are often due to misunderstandings about college practices and expected standards. Communications between the individuals involved usually clears misunderstandings.

3. Students are required to follow these guidelines to resolve problems. It is the responsibility of the faculty member, staff member, and administrator to fulfill his or her role in accordance with these procedures.

C. Procedures

1. Complaint Regarding a Condition or Another Person

   a. If the complaint is regarding a condition, the student should make an appointment with the appropriate person. If the complaint is regarding another person, the student should make an appointment to discuss the situation with that person. The simplest, quickest, and most satisfactory solution may be accomplished at this level.

   b. If the situation is not resolved at this level, the student should make an appointment to discuss the situation with the first level supervisor, if applicable.

   c. Students seeking further recourse should make an appointment with the next level supervisor. If the student has difficulty in determining the sequence of supervisors, the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management should be contacted for assistance.

   d. If all the preceding contacts have been made and the complaint is still not resolved, and the student chooses to appeal, the process is as follows:
(1) A written appeal is made to the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management stating the sequence of events leading to the appeal and any personal interpretations related to the complaint. This written appeal must be made no later than one month after the alleged complaint occurred.

(2) If the complaint is about a person, the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management notifies the person against whom the complaint has been made. If the complaint is regarding a condition, the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management notifies the appropriate person in the organization. The Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management activates a committee to hear the student's appeal. Membership of the committee is as follows:

(a) The Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management who serves as the Chair of the Appeals Committee.

(b) If a complaint involves a Gaston College employee, the Director of Human Resources.

(c) If the complaint involves a Gaston College faculty member, the appropriate divisional vice president.

(d) A faculty or staff member selected by the student making the appeal. If the complaint is against a faculty member, a faculty member will be selected. If the complaint is against a staff member or administrator, a staff member or administrator will be selected.

(e) If the complaint involves a faculty member, that faculty member will select another faculty member. If the complaint involves a staff member or administrator, the staff member or administrator will select another staff member or administrator.

(f) A faculty, staff member, or administrator as appropriate (faculty if complaint is against faculty, staff if complaint is against staff, administrator if complaint is against
administrator) selected by the president of the Student Government Association.

(g) One additional person may be selected by the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management, if needed, to insure a balanced representation.

(h) If attorneys are present, they may advise their clients. They may not present the complaint or defend the complaint before the committee. They may address the committee only at the choice of the Chair.

b. A meeting of the Appeals Committee is scheduled by the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management.

(1) The committee examines the evidence and discusses the complaint with both parties.

(2) The committee arrives at a decision which is sent as a recommendation to the person against whom the complaint was filed. The student, the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management, and appropriate supervisor will be informed of the recommendation.

(3) If appropriate, the recommendation will be sent to Human Resources to be made a part of the records of the individual against whom the complaint was brought.

(4) If the recommendation of the committee is not followed by the person against whom the complaint was made, the President's Executive Council will determine an appropriate course of action.

c. After the Appeals Committee has heard the student's complaint, the process is complete.

4. Disability Complaints/Grievance

Gaston College is committed to providing individuals with disabilities an equal access to a higher education. For information related to disabilities, including procedures for complaints or grievances, please refer to The Student Guide to Disability Policies & Procedures. This guide is available in the Office of Student Services and on the College web site.