

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES



BENNETT COLLEGE STUDENT COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE FORM

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Students may email grievances/complaints to

studentcomplaint@Bennett.edu.

You may also call 1-800-413-5323.

Student Grievances

A grievance is a formal complaint made by a student arising from an alleged action of the College or any of its faculty members, administrators, staff or students. Such action is one that is claimed to be unauthorized or unjustified and adversely affects the status, rights, or privileges of the student, including actions based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age or disability.

Any student who has a complaint shall make a reasonable effort to resolve the matter on an informal basis before initiating a grievance. Student may request a grievance hearing. A grievance hearing committee will be organized and a committee decision will be presented to the Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Academic Affairs, and President.

All student grievances proceeding correspondence will be handled via email or otherwise documented and placed in a secure file. An electronic copy of all correspondence will also be maintained. Copies of this information will be placed in the student's official school file.

Student Grievance Policy

A grievance shall herein be defined as any act allegedly depriving a student of any the rights set forth in the statement of "Student Rights and Responsibility", or any State Federal, or local codes.

Student Grievance Procedure

Informal Action

The student (or group of students), who believes that an injustice has been done to him/her (them), shall first attempt to resolve the complaint by informal discussion with the employee(s) involved.

If the problem is not resolved in Step 1, an informal discussion should take place with the person at the lowest level of authority directly above the person(s) at which the complaint is directed, where authority exists to take corrective action.

The Dean of Students shall attempt to resolve the problem through informal meeting and discussion among the pertinent parties while remaining neutral on all issues involved. This informal meeting and discussion will attempt to involve the levels of administration concerned with the problem and should be completed within ten (10) school days. In the event the informal procedure fails, the formal procedure would be implemented.

Formal Action

The grievant may obtain a student grievance form from the office of the Dean of Students. After completion of this form, specifying the time, place, nature of the complaint and remedy or correction requested, it should be submitted to the Student Affairs Dean. This request must be submitted within (5) five school days after the failure of the informal procedure. A day is defined as any day Monday through Friday that all normal college business is conducted.

The Dean of Student Affairs shall call a meeting of the Student Grievance Hearing Committee. This committee is comprised of the Dean of Students, the administrative designee, the Faculty Senate President or designee, and the Student Government President or designee. The Dean of Student Affairs serves as chair of the committee and shall not have a vote on the committee's decision. The Faculty Senate selects four voting members and submits names to the Dean of Student Affairs. The administrative designee shall serve as the Hearing Committee Executive Secretary, a voting member of the committee, and shall keep necessary records of the hearings. Grievance Committee members are to deal with all grievances in a confidential manner, except when both parties agree to a public hearing.

Formal Hearing

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee shall conduct its proceedings according to the following procedures:

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee must meet within ten (10) school days after informal action has been completed and grievant has requested a formal hearing.

The chair must notify both parties involved within five (5) school days before the hearing along with the written complaint, a copy of the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and a copy of the Grievance Policy.

Four members shall constitute a quorum by which business may proceed. The quorum must include at least one student member, one faculty member, and one administrative member.

Both parties shall have the right to present personal statements, testimonies, evidence, and witnesses. Each party shall have the right to be present, to be accompanied by the person of this choice, and to question witnesses who are present.

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee shall discuss the charge, hear the testimony, examine the witnesses, and receive all available evidence to the charge.

The hearing shall be closed to the public unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by both parties.

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee shall make decisions in private. The Committee shall record all findings and decisions. Copies of the findings and decisions, including majority and minority reports, are to be sent to each party and the College President. The Committee's decision shall be final unless appealed.

A recording of the proceedings shall be kept in a confidential file in the Office of Student Affairs and shall be available upon request to parties directly from the personnel files of the participants. After a period of four years, the grievance file shall be destroyed.

Reprisals of any kind will not be taken by the Board of Trustees or any of its agents, any party of interest, or any other participant in the grievance procedure by person of such participation.

Evidence and testimony given in each case presented shall not be the sole cause of initiating or filing further grievances.

If the grieved party does not respond within the time limits defined herein, the grievance is considered terminated and no further action will be taken.

The number of working days indicated at each step herein should be considered a maximum and every effort must be made to expedite the process. Time limits may be extended by mutual consent in writing or by decision of the Student Grievance Hearing Committee.

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee should attempt to reach a decision by discussion and consensus on a workable solution. Voting should be the last course of action.

The Appeal Process

If either party is dissatisfied with the recommendation of the Student Grievance Hearing Committee, he/she may appeal within ten days to the college president if the President is not a party to the grievance. If the President is a party to the grievance, and the other party is dissatisfied with the recommendation of the Hearing Committee, an appeal may be submitted directly to the Board of Trustees.

Upon receiving the findings and recommendations of the Hearing Committee, and after examination of the appeal as requested by either party, the president may accept or reject the committee's decision.

If the President rejects the committee's decision, he/she shall submit his/her decision with the stated reasons for the objection to the Student Grievance Hearing Committee within ten school days. The Student Grievance Hearing Committee shall reconsider its decision within five school days and resubmit it to the president for his/her final decision.

The President shall send his/her final decision to both parties and the Faculty Senate within five school days. An appeal of the president's decision may be submitted to the Board of Trustees by either party. If unresolved, the appeal must be submitted within ten school days after the president's decision. The Board may review the appeal at its earliest reasonable opportunity before making a final determination of the matter on the college level.

In the event that a student, faculty, or staff member matriculates through the adopted and approved grievance process, outlined in the Human Resource Manual, Student Handbook, and/or Faculty and Staff handbook, and believes that the resolution reached remains unacceptable, the student has the right to escalate said grievance by filing a complaint with a relevant and appropriate government agency outside of the Shorter College campus.

One such agency is the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS). The student may reach TRACS by mail at P. O. Box 328, Forest, VA 24551; by Telephone at (434)-525-9539; or by E-mail at info@tracs.org. The above process may be followed related to any relevant and appropriate government agency.

OUT OF STATE STUDENTS:

Out of state students enrolling in programs must follow the institution's published grievance process first.

Out of state students may also email studentcomplaint@bennett.edu or call 1-800-413-5323.

If the student is not satisfied, he/she may contact the SARA North Carolina Director by U.S. Mail to SARA North Carolina Directo, NCSEAA, P.O. Box 41349, Raleigh, NOC 27629 or email at

complaint@saranc.org. The grievant must also provide written documentation from the college/university verifying that the institution's appeal process has not been followed.

BENNETT COLLEGE STUDENT COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE FORM

Student Grievances

A grievance is a formal complaint made by a student arising from an alleged action of the College or any of its faculty members, administrators, staff or students. Such action is one that is claimed to be unauthorized or unjustified and adversely affects the status, rights, or privileges of the student, including actions based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age or disability.

Student Information

Student Name:	
Address:	City/State/Zip:
Student ID#:	Semester & Year:
Home Phone Number:	Work Phone Number:
Cell Phone Number:	Email address:

Complaint/Grievance Information
Reprisals of any kind will not be taken by the Board of Trustees or any of its agents, any party of interest, or any other participant in the grievance procedure. To do so constitutes a violation of college policy.
Name of Individual and/or department against whom the complaint/grievance is filed:
Describe your complaint/grievance in detail. Include date/s of occurrence (be as specific as Possible). Attach additional sheets, if necessary, along with any documentation that will help describe and substantiate the complaint. Are there any witnesses who should be interviewed? If yes, list names and contact information.
Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate instructor or campus administrator. Have you made an attempt to resolve this complaint or grievance with the individual and/or department involved? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, describe the outcome: (Attach any additional comments, if necessary)
What outcome do you hope to achieve after talking with the appropriate college official(s)? Attach additional sheets, if necessary.

I understand that information contained in the grievance form will be held confidential to the extent possible. Grievance information may be shared with college officials in order to conduct a thorough investigation. I hereby declare that the information on this form is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any misrepresentation of information may result in disciplinary actions, accordance with college disciplinary policies.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

SARA North Carolina Student Complaint Process

The North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA) serves as the SARA portal entity for North Carolina with the responsibilities defined by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA). Among the responsibilities assigned to the state portal entity is shepherding the resolution of, investigating and resolving as necessary complaints from distance education students who reside outside of the state and who have complaints regarding the institutions that participate in SARA North Carolina.

Students not residing in North Carolina and enrolled in a North Carolina institution that operates under SARA North Carolina may submit complaints to NCSEAA only after completing the complaint process established by the institution attended by the student.

Initial responsibility for the investigation and resolution of student complaints resides with the institution against which the complaint is made. Students must exhaust all opportunities for resolution at the institution before filing a complaint with the NCSEAA. Complaints regarding grades or student conduct violations are governed entirely by institutional policy and are not subject to review by NCSEAA.

Students who have exhausted institutional grievance processes and remain dissatisfied with the outcome may file a written complaint with NCSEAA within two years of the incident that is the issue of the complaint. Anonymous complaints will not be reviewed.

Filing a Complaint against a SARA North Carolina Institution

- 1) Using the student complaint form available at www.saranc.org, describe your complaint and provide supporting documentation, including the outcome of the institutional complaint process. Follow the instructions on the web site to submit your form.
 - a. The NCSEAA will review a complaint that falls within its authority within 30 calendar days upon receipt. Qualifying complaints will be forwarded to the appropriate entity, as described below, for resolution:
 - i. Complaints against any of the 17 UNC constituent institutions will be forwarded to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs at UNC General Administration;
 - ii. Complaints against any of the 58 state community colleges will be forwarded to the North Carolina Community College System;
 - iii. Complaints against any of the 36 independent colleges and universities will be forwarded to the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities; and
 - iv. Complaints against any other institution will be reviewed by the NCSEAA.
 - b. Reviews will be completed within 60 calendar days of the date a complaint is received. Staff representing the entities listed above will conduct initial reviews and submit findings and recommendations for resolution, if any, to the SARA North Carolina Director. The Director may

extend the review by an additional 30 calendar days for a total of 90 days if necessary to ensure full understanding of the issues related to the complaint.

- c. If a complaint cannot be resolved by mutual agreement within the allotted period of time, the SARA North Carolina Director may deem that no action is needed, seek more information, or recommend action against an institution.
- d. The SARA North Carolina Director may consult with the SARA North Carolina Advisory Council before recommending action against an institution. Action may include direction to the institution to adhere to its institutional refund policy when the institution has not done so voluntarily.
- e. Any disposition by the SARA North Carolina Director is final with the exception of the decision to take an action against an institution based on a complaint. Should the Director choose to recommend action against an institution, such an action must be approved by the NCSEAA Board of Directors. The recommendation becomes final and binding following the Board's approval. Nothing in this process precludes the State of North Carolina from using the laws of North Carolina to pursue action against an institution that violates those laws.
- f. The SARA NC Director will communicate the finding to the complainant and the institution involved in the complaint.

**State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement
North Carolina (SARA NC)
Student Complaint Form**

First Name:

Middle Initial:

Last Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Primary daytime phone number:

Alternate daytime phone number:

Email address:

Preferred method of contact: Phone

Email

I am submitting a complaint against

located in North Carolina.

Institution Location – City:

Did you use a different name at the time of enrollment?

If yes, please provide.

Name of program of study:

Program start date:

Program end date:

Current enrollment status:

Currently attending above institution: Yes

No

Last date of attendance:

Graduated:

Withdrew/terminated:

Other:

Complaint Information:

Student must follow the institutional complaint process provided by the college or university before submitting a complaint to the State Portal Agency (NCSEAA). Did you submit a complaint to the institution according to their complaint policy? YES NO

Please submit documentation that you have exhausted your appeals with the institution. You should include documentation that you submitted to the institution regarding your complaint and any letters from the institution documenting its final decision regarding your complaint. Documentation should be submitted by U.S. Mail to: SARA North Carolina Director, NCSEAA, PO Box 41349, Raleigh, NC 27629 or email to complaint@saranc.org.

Please keep a copy of your submission to NCSEAA for your records.

Please describe your complaint in detail, including the nature of the incident, dates and names of individuals involved and institutional employees with whom you have discussed your complaint. You may submit on a separate document.