

Jones County Junior College Policies and Procedures for Addressing Student Complaints

1. Purpose

Jones County Junior College (JCJC) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability in its programs, activities, or employment practices. This policy is consistent with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College's (SACSCOC) Federal Requirement 4.5.

2. Policy

JCJC shall provide a reasonable, prompt, orderly, and fairly administered resolution of complaints by an active student, for alleged improper, unfair, arbitrary, or discriminatory treatment by JCJC employees, or employees under contract to JCJC.

A reasonable effort shall be made by JCJC to guide and support students through the complaint procedure to facilitate early and effective resolutions. The procedures herein described shall be conducted on a confidential basis.

Any student raising a complaint shall be treated with respect and shall receive a response as described in the following procedure. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process, including the complainant, witnesses, respondents or college officials is strictly prohibited. In compliance with standards set forth by the U.S. Department of Education and SACSCOC, the college will maintain a record of all formal student complaints.

3. Responsibilities

The Vice President for Student Affairs shall be responsible for developing and maintaining procedures that are consistent with this policy, in order to assure proper services to all students on the JCJC campus. All vice presidents, deans, department directors, and other supervisors shall ensure that the faculty and staff in their areas of responsibility are aware of and in full compliance with this policy.

4. Procedures

The following procedures shall be followed for a fair and equitable process to present an issue of improper, unfair, arbitrary, or discriminatory treatment by students, JCJC employees of the college:

- a. The complainant (charging party) must put the complaint in writing to the Office of Student Affairs.

- b. The Vice President of Student Affairs or his/her designee will decide whether to respond based on an initial investigation.
- c. A decision will be confirmed for the best avenue for a resolution. Options are informal process or the formal process (see 4.1 and 4.2).

4.1. Informal Student Complaint Process

Students are encouraged to make reasonable efforts to have their concerns addressed informally. The complainant is strongly encouraged to discuss the matter in question informally with the respondent(s) (JCJC employee(s) most directly involved).

- The Vice President of Student Affairs and/or the Dean of Student Affairs will assist in resolving the complaint through the informal process. If the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the matter is closed. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the next step is to move to the formal process.
- While the complainant is encouraged to resolve the issue(s) in question through the informal process, he/she may elect to move to the formal process at any time.

4.2. Formal Student Complaint Process

If the complainant does not wish to attempt a resolution of the complaint through the informal process or, in the event the student believes the informal process has been unsuccessful, the complainant may use the formal complaint process. At each step of the formal process, the complainant shall be advised by the Vice President of Student Affairs and/or the Dean of Students Affairs to meet with the student affairs committee to satisfy due process. For hearing procedures, refer the JCJC student handbook.

4.3. Appeal Process

Any outcome from the formal complaint process by the Student Affairs committee may be appealed in writing by the complainant or respondent to the President of the institution within three (3) school days of the decision. This final appeal will exhaust the appeals process.

4.4. Student Complaint Records and Log

In order to comply with standards, set forth by SACSCOC and the federal Department of Education, the Vice President for Student Affairs will maintain a record of all formal complaints, appeals, and outcomes in a secured and centralized location in the Office of Student Affairs.