



Policy Name:	Student Complaints and Grievances				
Section Number:	5.06	Section Title:	Student Affairs		
Policy Owner:	Vice President of Student Affairs	Last updated:	July 2024	Reviewed:	July 2024
Status:	Active	Due for Review:	July 2029		

Purpose

Jones College 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 Jones employees, or employees under contract to Jones College.

A reasonable effort shall be made by Jones 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. These procedures provide for a prompt and equitable response to Reports and Formal Complaints of Prohibited Conduct, including allegations of Retaliation. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process, including the complainant, witnesses, respondents or college officials is strictly prohibited.

Responsibilities

The Office of the Vice President of 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 Jones 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.

Procedures

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

- a. The student must complete the online complaint form available at: <https://www.jcjc.edu/studentpolicies/complaint/>

- b. The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs or his/her designee will decide whether to respond based on an initial investigation.
- c. The Office of Student Affairs will determine if the student's complaint is better suited to another Jones College Policy. For example, complaints regarding grades will be heard through the Academic Appeals policy and complaints of a sexual nature will be heard through the Sexual Misconduct Policy.
- d. A decision will be confirmed for the best avenue for a resolution. Options are informal process or the formal process.

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) (Jones employee(s) most directly involved).

- The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs will assist in resolving the complaint through an 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 Grievance process.
- While the complainant is encouraged to resolve the issue(s) in question through the complaint process, he/she may elect to move to the Grievance process at any time.

Standard of Evidence

Preponderance of the Evidence Standard is the standard of proof used to investigate and adjudicate Formal Complaints of Prohibited Conduct. This standard requires that "it is more likely than not" that the Prohibited Conduct occurred.

Conflict of Interest

A determination of bias must be based on an objective evaluation of evidence (i.e., whether a reasonable person would believe bias exists). Any person exercising authority under this Policy who believes they may have a conflict of interest or bias that would prevent them from impartially exercising their authority, shall disclose the potential conflict/bias to the VP of Student Affairs (or designee) as soon as practicable after it is discovered. Arrangements will then be made to designate a conflict/bias-free alternative person in the case at issue. Furthermore, if a student believes a person exercising authority under this Policy has a conflict of interest or bias related to the issue may make a prompt objection to the VP of Student Affairs (or designee) within five (5) business days of becoming aware of the potential conflict or bias.

Grievance Process

If the complainant does not wish to attempt a resolution of the complaint through the Complaint process or, in the event the student believes the Complaint process has been unsuccessful, the complainant may use the Grievance process. At each step of the Grievance process, the complainant shall be advised by the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs to meet with the student affairs committee to satisfy due process.

Disciplinary Actions

The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs by delegated authority is assigned the responsibility of dealing with all disciplinary matters concerning the behavior of individuals, groups and/or student organizations. Disciplinary probation, fines, or other action may be imposed by the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs or their designee when involving minor infractions in lieu of an appearance before the disciplinary committee, provided the student agrees to such action as imposed. The student will sign a statement of acceptance which will be maintained in the confidential file in the Office of Student Affairs. Disciplinary probation as imposed by the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs may be accompanied by whatever restrictions the Vice President of Student Affairs deems necessary to impose. If disciplinary procedures are referred to the Student Affairs Committee, the committee may follow several courses of actions. Separation from Jones College may be imposed, which may take any of the following forms:

1. Suspension for the remainder of any semester in progress
2. Suspension for a longer, but definitely stated period of time
3. Indefinite suspension with a date established for the privilege of applying for readmission, such application to be reviewed and acted upon by the Committee
4. To recommend expulsion, which implies permanent separation from Jones College, The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs or their designee will be present at each meeting to confer with the Chairman at their request about procedure. The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs shall designate the person who will present evidence to the Committee on behalf of the College.

Confidentiality: The details relating to all disciplinary cases are confidential records and are maintained in the Office of Student Affairs. These files are not available to anyone outside the area of Student Affairs without the approval of the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs.

Due Process

A student bringing a Grievance against Jones College is guaranteed by the Student Affairs Committee to:

1. Have the Grievance heard by the Student Affairs Committee.
2. Be notified in writing 72 hours in advance the time and place that the proceedings will occur. The College will attempt to conduct the resolution process within a reasonable time frame. However, the time that it takes to complete the process will be affected by circumstances such as the unavailability of parties or witnesses, scheduling conflicts, intervening breaks, the complexity of a case, and the need to avoid interference with a pending law enforcement investigation. The parties will receive written notification if extenuating circumstances are anticipated to result in lengthy delays.
3. Appear alone or with another person to advise and assist him/her before the Student Affairs Committee. Only the student may address the committee.
4. Be present during all phases of the hearing except during the Committee's deliberations.
5. Present evidence in his/her own behalf including witnesses.
6. Have reasonable cross-examination of the testimony against him/her if applicable.

Hearing Procedures

1. Jones College promises all students access to due process.
2. Hearings will not be open to the public.
3. Records of the hearings of the Student Affairs Committee will be documented and a secretary will be provided to keep a written digest of the proceedings. Records will be secured by the Vice President of Student Affairs. Only those persons directly involved in a case may have access to the records pertaining thereto.

4. The hearing will be conducted in an orderly manner.
5. The student will have an opportunity to be heard. All recommendations of action shall be based upon the evidence presented which are determined to be in compliance of policies, rules, and regulations.
6. The student will have the opportunity to hear and refute all testimony against the Grievance. The accused may present any evidence in their own behalf, may reply in kind in their own words, and may present testimony in their behalf or have others present to testify on their behalf only related to the case at hand.
7. All matters upon which the decision is based must be introduced during the hearing.
8. The committee will consider the case in private and deliver the verdict directly to the student.
9. Right to the appeals process by consulting the Office of Student Affairs.

Appeal Process

Any outcome from the Grievance 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. The President will review the written appeal of the complainant, and information from the Complaint process, the documentation from the committee hearing. The President may rule on the appeal or may schedule a meeting with the complainant. The President's ruling will be delivered in writing through the Jones email system.

Student Grievance Records and Log

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

Confidentiality and Privacy

The College is committed to protecting the privacy of all individuals involved in the investigation and resolution of a Notification or Complaint of Prohibited Conduct under this Policy. The College is also committed to providing assistance to help students, employees, third parties, and visitors make informed choices. With respect to any Notification or Complaint of Prohibited Conduct under this Policy, the College will make reasonable efforts to protect the privacy of participants, in accordance with applicable state and federal law, while balancing the need to gather information to assess the Notification and Complaint and take steps to eliminate Prohibited Conduct, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects.

Jones College Statement of Non-Discrimination

Jones County Junior College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability in its programs, activities, or employment practices. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries and grievances regarding the non-discrimination policies: (ADA/ Section 504) Sarah Jones, Director of Counseling & ADA Coordinator, Student Affairs, phone 601-477-4070; email ADACoordinator@jcc.edu and (Title IX) Dr. Brittany Barron, Title IX Coordinator, Hutcheson Hubbard Administration Building, phone 601-477-4127; email brittany.weatherford@jcc.edu. Jones County Junior College, 900 South Court Street, Ellisville, MS 39437.