

Chapter XI - Procedure for Recording & Tracking Informal Verbal Student Complaints (11/14/2016)

Whitman College encourages all its constituents, including students, who have academic or other complaints, to resolve them by speaking to the person directly involved with causing the complaint (or alternatively with the person who supervises that individual). In cases where that is not possible because of perceived or actual power differentials, fears of repercussion by being given lower grades, inordinate discomfort, etc., students have the option of filling out the complaint form found here: <http://whitman.edu/assist>, which is also linked within the informal student complaint document here: <https://www.whitman.edu/dean-of-students/right-to-know>.

Once submitted, the form will be sent to the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty. Any necessary and appropriate action will be taken by the Provost's office to resolve the issue, and the complaint will be filed.

It is likely that some student complaints will be expressed verbally to someone in a position of authority, such as a department chair or an administrator. In cases where an administrator receives a verbal student complaint, either directly or through an indirect communication, the administrator will respond to the complainant (if known), work to resolve the issue with the person of concern, and file the complaint for record-keeping purposes on the student's behalf.

Administrators most likely to receive verbal student academic or other complaints (either directly or funneled to them through others) include (but are not necessarily limited to) the Associate Dean of Students and Title IX Administrator; the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students; the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion; the Associate Dean for Faculty Development; the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; and the Provost and Dean of the Faculty.

Department chairs often listen as advisors to students who simply want a sympathetic ear or who want advice on whether or not they want to approach somebody who can look into a complaint. (This situation is often the case when students see the department chair as an advisor or a mentor, rather than as a person in charge who has the ability to do something about the complaint.) Department chairs may also look into the matter in an unofficial manner. If it is the case that a student wants something done about their complaint, the department chair looks into the issue and asks the student to fill out the student complaint form. At the end of the process of looking into the issue, the department chair sends an informational email to the Provost's office (to the Assistant to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty) so that, if the student has failed to fill out the form, someone in the Provost's office can do so. The information in the email will also allow the Assistant to add the resolution of the complaint to the form. The email will not be filed in any of the faculty personnel files.