SUNY Westchester Community College values the health, safety, and well-being of its members, seeks to uphold the integrity of our academic pursuits, upholds the rights of others, and ensures community members are living up to their responsibilities. All concerns, complaints, and reports are treated with sensitivity and seriousness.

SUNY WCC encourages all community members to work together to understand and address concerns without having to resort to formal grievance or complaint procedures. Prior to engaging the processes outlined below, students should have already made every effort to resolve their question or situation with the department(s) or person(s) involved. However, when that is not possible, SUNY WCC has established this student complaint process to allow students to identify problems which need to be evaluated, referred, and addressed in a fair, equitable and timely manner in accordance with the College's policies and procedures. Additionally, tracking student complaints will allow the College to monitor the quality of services provided in accordance with accreditation standards.

I.   Definitions

a. Complaint: A claim that:

   i. College policy or an applicable law has been violated;

   ii. The complaining individual has been impacted by that violation or the complaining individual is the College itself (e.g., Campus Safety & Security, Human Resources) acting to address concerns that College policy has been violated resulting in harm to a specific individual(s) or the College community as a whole;

   iii. The accused individual is a student or employee of the College; and,

   iv. The violation occurred on College owned, operated, or controlled property or at any location affecting the mission of the College and/or the well-being of the College community.

b. Vice President of Student Affairs: The College's Chief Student Affairs Officer or their designee.

II.   Complaints Not Covered by This Procedure

a. Complaints regarding course management that cannot be resolved informally between the student and the faculty member. The grievance process for these disputes is found at: Academic Complaint Policy.

b. Appealing a Final Grade. The process to appeal a final grade is found at: Appealing a Final Grade.

c. Complaints regarding alleged discrimination based on disability. The grievance process for these complaints are found at: Accessibility Services Guidelines & Procedures. Complaints can be filed using the Americans with Disability Act & Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Complaints Complaint Form

d. Complaints of discrimination based on sex, sexual violence or sexual misconduct. The College has a Title IX Grievance Policy and a Sexual Violence Response Policy to address complaints of this nature.

e. <u>Complaints of Bias or Hate Crimes</u>. The College has a <u>Bias or Hate Crime Incident Response Policy</u> to address complaints of this nature.

f. <u>Complaints about student conduct/behavior</u>. The College has a <u>Student Code of Conduct</u> to address complaints of this nature.

g. <u>Appeals to charges of tuition or fees</u>. The College has a <u>Refund Policy</u> to address appeals of this nature.

h. Other established complaint/grievance processes, procedures, or policies.

III. <u>Informal Complaint Resolution</u>

a. Prior to filing a formal complaint against a college department or employee, students are encouraged to attempt a good-faith resolution of the complaint. This attempt may be made with the party directly involved with the disputed matter, or with the supervisor/manager of the department in which the grievance arises.

b. An individual may choose to bypass the informal complaint resolution process and go directly to the formal complaint resolution stage described below.

IV. <u>Formal Complaint Resolution</u>

a. Other than student complaints which may be resolved informally (see, Section II, above), a student may file a formal complaint. A formal student complaint must:

   i. Be of sufficient substance

   ii. Not be a grievance for which a defined policy or process is provided

   iii. Be in writing

   iv. filed electronically using the <u>Student Complaint Form</u> or submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

b. The complaint should include the following:

   i. Name, student ID number, address, and phone number of the person making the complaint;

   ii. Identification of the office or individual against whom the complaint is brought;

   iii. A description of the specific College action or individual behavior resulting in this complaint;

   iv. The date or period of time in which the behavior occurred and the location of the incident; and

   v. A listing of all individuals who witnessed any part of the incident in dispute.

c. The Vice President for Student Affairs determines whether a complaint meets the definitions set forth in this document and is of sufficient substance to be investigated.

d. The Vice President for Student Affairs will forward such complaints to the respective department manager/supervisor for investigation and resolution.

e. If the respective department manager/supervisor determines that no other complaint resolution process is available for this subject matter of the complaint, they will take all necessary steps to bring the complaint to resolution in a reasonable time period.

f. The respective department managers/supervisors will be responsible to track, document and resolve such complaints.

g. The respective department manager/supervisor communicates the resolution, in writing, to the individual who filed the complaint.

h. The respective department managers/supervisors shall provide a report of the resolution to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for record keeping.

i. Complaint records are retained for six (6) years after resolution of the complaint