

Section: Academic Administration

Section Number: 2.1.11

Subject: Institutional Records of Student Complaints

Date of Present Issue: 01/25/12

Date of Previous Issues: 09/98, 11/11

POLICY:

To comply with federal regulations, Lake Superior State University will maintain records of formal, written student complaints filed with the offices of the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Student Affairs. The records will include information about the disposition of the complaints, including those referred to external agencies for final resolution. These records will be available to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) comprehensive evaluation teams for review.

EXPLANATION

The University understands that the Department of Education expects the HLC evaluation teams to be aware of major complaints or categories of student concerns that may or may not be addressed in the self-study report. One source of that information will be an institutional historic record of student complaints and their disposition.

The University has determined that this federally-mandated obligation for record-keeping will be limited to complaints made formally in writing, signed by a student, and addressed to and submitted to an institutional officer with the responsibility to handle the complaint. The assumption underlying this policy is that when one of the two primary institutional officers named above becomes involved, the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved either at any other institutional level or by other institutional personnel.

The tracking system for the University will be maintained in the Provost's Office. The tracking system will contain the following information:

- the date the complaint was first formally submitted to an appropriate officer;
- the nature of the complaint (e.g. dispute about a grade, allegation of sexual harassment, etc.);
- the steps taken by the institution to resolve the complaint;
- the institution's final decision regarding the complaint, including referral to outside agencies;
- any other external actions initiated by the student to resolve the complaint, if known to the institution (e.g. lawsuit, EEOC investigation, etc.)

Lake Superior State University will only track complaints from students. Complaints from parents, employers, etc. need not be tracked for the purposes of this policy even where those complaints might relate to a student(s).

The University has established this system so that the record provided to any external team insures anonymity. In addition, Lake Superior State University will avoid mentioning by name any other individuals involved in the facts of complaint. The University will inform students and institutional personnel that it must share information about complaints with its accreditor but that individual identities will be protected.

Only written complaints mailed or delivered to an appropriate officer are considered formal complaints. The University will, of course, continue to respond to informal communications from students made through various means without including these exchanges within the tracking system. Records will be maintained for at least 10 years.

Revision Date	Revision Summary	Revision Made By	Title/Dept.
11/07/2011	Corrections to titles and to reference to the HLC	M. Walworth	Provost
01/25/2012	Minor title correction and addition of retention statement	M. Walworth	Provost