

Policy Name: Student Grievance Process - SCHS
Policy Number: ADM 1.05
Title of Policy Owner: Dean of Student Affairs
Policy Type: RHEI/Shared Services BSMCON SCHS SOMI
Approved by: RHEI Leadership Team
Effective Date: 8/1/2024
Version: 2.0
Policy Status: Approved

I. Policy

Student Grievance Process

II. Purpose

It is the policy of the Bon Secours Southside College of Health Sciences (“College” or “SCHS”) that appropriate processes and procedures be followed in all matters pertaining to the rights of students.

This policy is applicable to student grievances, including student complaints of unlawful discrimination or unfair treatment on the basis of the following:

- Title IX of Education Amendments of 1972, as amended
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
- Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and its implemented regulations
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992
- Provisions of Executive Order Number 11246 as amended 66 by 11375
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- Governor’s Executive Order Number One, Virginia Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, effective February 6, 1974

III. Note that student complaints of Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment will be investigated and resolved pursuant to ADM 9.06, the Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Policy. Cases pertaining to student conduct and academic integrity are subject to ADM 3.05 Student Conduct – Rights and Responsibilities.

IV. Scope

This policy applies to all SCHS students.

V. Definitions

Grievance Process: a formal process through which a student or student group can appeal a decision made by a faculty or staff member that negatively affects a student/student group’s standing with or treatment by the College. A grievance or complaint may include disputes between a student/student group and an office of the College regarding the interpretation and/or application of the policies, procedures and legal obligations of the College, student governance issues, student activities, and other

concerns that a student might present for redress. A grievance may be based on one of the following claims:

- arbitrary and/or capricious actions by a staff member or administrative office.
- prejudicial, discriminatory, or harassing treatment of a student by a staff or faculty member or the administrative office including such conduct based on race/ethnicity, religion, age, marital status, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, military veteran status, disability or other legally protected status.
- an administrative error in the application of a policy, procedure, or applicable law by a staff or faculty member or administrative office.

Student Grievance Committee: an ad-hoc committee established to hear a Level III grievance. Student Grievance Committee composition includes: the appropriate RHEI Leadership Team member as the committee chair, one (1) faculty member, one (1) student leader from either the Student Government Organization or the College Ambassadors, and one (1) member of the Department of Student Affairs.

Peer Observer: students filing a grievance may choose to have a peer observer present at grievance meetings/hearings as outlined below. The peer observer must be another student and may not be legal counsel or any other type of advisor. Peer observers may not speak or participate in the meetings/hearings but may take notes to share with the student after the conclusion of the meeting/hearing.

RHEIs: Richmond Higher Education Institutions

VI. Policy Details

Initiation of a Grievance:

Grievances may be submitted electronically by email. A grievance must be initiated no later than ten (10) business days from the time the student knows or should have known of the issue that is the subject of the grievance. If a student is unable to travel to campus to meet, meetings may be facilitated by conferencing technology. Students are encouraged to contact the Director of Student and Alumni Affairs if assistance is needed in understanding this policy. In addition, the Director of Student and Alumni Affairs will assist students in determining the appropriate person with whom a student must file a grievance, and providing that person's contact information.

Procedures:

A typical non-academic grievance occurs in the following order:

Level 1	Level II	Level III
College personnel/office whose actions are being grieved (copied to the Administrative Supervisor)	Administrative Supervisor (copied to Appropriate Dean)	Chair of Hearing Committee (RHEI Leadership Team member)
	Dean (copied to Vice President RHEI)	

Level I

1. The student must provide in writing a formal letter/email to the College personnel outlining the decision they are grieving, provide supporting information for the

grievance, and request to meet with the person whose actions they are grieving (“relevant associate”).

The student must submit a copy of the letter/email to the administrative unit supervisor of the relevant associate.

2. The relevant college personnel has a maximum of ten (10) business days from the date the grievance is received to schedule a meeting with the student. The administrative supervisor should follow up to ensure the meeting is held. In the event the relevant associate is unavailable, the administrative supervisor has the discretion to move to Level II or postpone the meeting until the relevant associate is available, but in no event shall the meeting take place more than fifteen (15) business days after the date the grievance is received; any such decision by the administrative supervisor will be communicated to the student in writing. The administrative supervisor must document their efforts to contact the relevant associate.

3. At the meeting, the student must clearly present their grievance and present the resolution that they are seeking. Every reasonable effort should be made by both parties to resolve the matter at this level.

4. Within five (5) business days after the meeting, the relevant associate must provide the student a letter outlining the decision of the meeting, including an agreement if one is reached. All appropriate supporting information, including the formal grievance letter, should be included. A copy of the decision letter or agreement, along with the accompanying information, should be forwarded to the Dean of Student Affairs.

5. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the grievance outcome at Level I, they may continue to Level II.

Level II

1. The student may file a written appeal of the Level I grievance decision with the relevant associate’s administrative supervisor within five (5) business days of the date the written decision from the Level I meeting was provided to the student. The formal grievance letter submitted by the student for the Level I meeting describing the issues grieved must be part of the student’s written appeal. Within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written appeal, the administrative supervisor will fully investigate the grievance. This investigation may include review of material submitted by both parties. Within ten (10) business day investigation period, the administrative supervisor will schedule a meeting with the parties to resolve the grievance (the actual conference may occur after the 10 days, but its date should be established within this time frame, and the administrative supervisor should make every effort to complete the meeting within fifteen (15) business days of receipt of the appeal).

2. The role of the administrative supervisor is to chair the meeting, facilitate the discussion, seek to mediate a resolution between the parties, determine whether any College policies have been violated, and render a decision concerning the matter.

3. Within five (5) business days after the completion of the meeting, the administrative supervisor shall prepare a written Level II decision. Copies must be provided to the student and the relevant associate, with a copy of the written decisions, the formal grievance letter, and the appeal forwarded to the Dean of Student Affairs.

Level III

1. If the student is not satisfied with the decision at Level II, within five (5) business days from the student's receipt of the written Level II decision from the administrative supervisor, the student may file a written appeal to the appropriate RHEI Leadership Team member. Students are encouraged to contact the Director of Student and Alumni Affairs for help determining the name and contact information of the appropriate RHEI Leadership Team member. Within ten (10) business days of receipt of this appeal, the RHEI Leadership Team member will set a date for a hearing for all parties involved.

2. The actual hearing should occur no later than twenty (20) business days after receipt of the appeal letter by the RHEI Leadership Team member, unless reasonable circumstances prevent this meeting from occurring. However, any hearing date scheduled or rescheduled beyond the twenty-day time frame must be mutually agreed upon by the student and the RHEI Leadership Team member.

3. The appropriate RHEI Leadership Team member will serve as the convener and facilitator of the committee for the Level III hearing. The RHEI Leadership Team member will chair the hearing but will not be able to vote. In the event the designated RHEI Leadership Team member is unable to participate in the hearing due to a challenge or conflict of interest, another RHEI Leadership Team member will be selected to convene and facilitate the hearing.

4. The Student Grievance Committee (see "Definitions" section) will be formed in order to objectively hear the facts of the grievance and to render a decision. No individual directly associated with the relevant program (e.g., program director, clinical coordinator, faculty, or administrator who oversees student activities, academic personnel, and programs) shall be a member of the Student Grievance Committee for matters involving that program.

5. Both parties may bring persons to provide testimony that supports their position. If the student intends to bring individuals to provide testimony, the student must provide names and contact information for those individuals to the chairperson at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing.

6. The hearing chairperson is responsible for collecting all pertinent documents, calling the meeting, distributing documentation, determining the issue(s) of the case to be heard, and conducting the hearing in an orderly, efficient, and equitable manner. At the beginning of the meeting, the chairperson will review the issues of the matter for the group and establish the procedure by which testimony will be presented. They may decide on the length of time needed to explore an issue, set time limits for speakers, and ask for testimony by any person deemed important to the investigation of the facts.

The chairperson may request a security officer to be present. Disruptive persons may be asked to leave the room by the chairperson.

7. The Student Grievance Committee shall determine the outcome of the hearing by a majority vote; the RHEI Leadership Team member may not vote. Within five (5) business days after the hearing, the RHEI Leadership Team member will prepare an official letter that includes the final determined outcome.

8. The RHEI Leadership Team member will provide the official letter including the final determined outcome to the student, the relevant associate, and others as appropriate. In addition, a copy of the outcome letter and the formal grievance letter and appeals (Level I, Level II, and Level III) must be forwarded to the Dean of Student Affairs.

9. The final determined outcome of the Student Grievance Committee is final and not appealable.

Note: In some instances, the subject of a student grievance may impact a student's progression in their program. Students participating in the grievance process may be permitted to progress to the next course pending a final decision in their case or may be permitted to go on a standard period of non-enrollment. **Those who progress to the next course are responsible for any tuition and fees associated with such progression and may be at risk of financial loss should their appeal be unsuccessful. A period of non-enrollment will impact the student's anticipated date of graduation, even if successful on appeal.**

Final Disposition of Records

All materials and decisions related to the appeal will remain confidential and will be retained by the Dean of Student Affairs for three years from the date of final decision, and not before the aggrieved student graduates, at which time all materials will be destroyed, unless the Dean of Student Affairs directs otherwise.

Grievance Meetings

At each level of the grievance process, the involved student will meet with a College associate. No attorneys or other professional advisors/counselors may attend these meetings; however, the College associate may have a silent observer present at the meeting and the student may have a peer observer present at the meeting. The student must notify the College associate if a peer observer will be present and the identity of that peer observer at least one (1) business day prior to the meeting, or the peer observer may not attend the meeting. The peer observer will not provide testimony at Level III grievance hearings. No audio taping or other recording will be permitted during these meetings, but both parties are encouraged to make notes as they feel appropriate.

External Complaints

In the event of a complaint about the College, as a last resort, students may contact the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools, American Association of Colleges of

Nursing Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, or the Virginia Board of Nursing or the appropriate agency from other states as listed below. Addresses of these agencies are listed below.

In the event of a written complaint to one of these agencies or a “Standards” non-compliance issue, and subsequent notification to the College, immediate priority will be given to resolution of the deficiency in order to maintain accreditation. The Campus Director and Dean of Academic Affairs is expected to respond to the agency in the time frame provided outlining the resolution/plan for resolution of the issue addressed.

Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES)

6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 730
North Bethesda, MD 20852
(301) 291-7550

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)

655 K Street, NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20001
P: (202) 887-6791
F: (202) 887-8476

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)

101 N. 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 225-2600

Virginia Board of Nursing

9960 Mayland Drive, #300
Henrico, VA 23233
(804) 367-4400

Students residing outside of Virginia may alternatively choose to contact their state’s education agency, which may include:

Colorado

Colorado Department of Higher Education
1600 Broadway
Suite 2200
Denver, CO 80202
<http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Complaints/default.html>

Florida

Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
<http://www.fldoe.org/policy/cie/file-a-complaint.stml>

Kentucky

Kentucky Council on Post-Secondary Education
1024 Capital Center Drive
Frankfort, KY 40601
http://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/consumer_complaint.html

Maryland

Maryland Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division
200 St. Paul St.
Baltimore, MD 21202
(for consumer protection complaints)

Maryland Higher Education Commission
6 N. Liberty Street, 10th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201
https://mhec.maryland.gov/institutions_training/Pages/acadaff/acadaffairsdepartments.aspx
(for all other complaints)

New Jersey

New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs
124 Halsey Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102
(for consumer protection complaints)

Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
ATTN: Complaints
P.O. Box 542
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0542
<https://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/OSHEComplaintInstructions.shtml>
(for all other complaints)

Ohio

Ohio Department of Higher Education
25 South Front Street
Columbus, OH, 43215, US
<https://www.ohiohighered.org/students/complaints>

South Carolina

SC Commission on Higher Education
Academic Affairs
Attn: Student Complaint
1122 Lady Street, Suite 300
Columbia, SC 29201
<https://www.che.sc.gov/Students,FamiliesMilitary/LearningAboutCollege/ConsumerInformation.aspx>

West Virginia

West Virginia Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division
PO Box 1789, Charleston, WV 25326-1789
(for consumer protection complaints)

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
1018 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Suite 700
Charleston, WV 25301
<http://www.wvhepc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Student-Complaint-Process-revised.pdf>(for all other complaints)

VII. Attachments

VIII. Related Policies

- ADM 3.05 Student Conduct - Rights and Responsibilities
- ADM 9.06 Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Policy

IX. Disclaimers

- Nothing in this policy creates a contractual relationship between Bon Secours Southside College of Health Sciences and any party. SCHS, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to amend, terminate or discontinue this policy at any time, with or without advance notice.
- Non-retaliation – Students will not be subjected to adverse actions by any school officials as a result of initiating or participating in the investigation of a complaint.
- Decision Standard - Decisions made in grievance cases are determined on a preponderance of the evidence. A preponderance of the evidence is evidence that as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.

X. Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Prepared by
1.0	4/13/2020	Revisions and new template	Dean of Student Services
1.0	10/22/2020	Correct typographical error	Holly Pugh
1.1	5/11/2022	Title changes	Dean of Student Affairs
2.0	7/24/2024	Updated language to align with U.S. DOE	Dean of Student Affairs