

## College of Education: Student Concern and Resolution Process

The NC State College of Education is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all students. We take the health and safety of our college community seriously and want to be sure that we provide a safe setting where services and resources are available for students.

A central element of the college's commitment to a safe and inclusive community is to maintain an environment that is absent of conduct that unreasonably interferes with the academic and professional experience of any member of our community. The college affirms this commitment by holding all of its community members responsible for their behavior and recognizing their obligations under all relevant laws and policies, rules, and regulations of NC State and the College of Education. These include behaviors that unreasonably hinder a student's academic performance, adversely affect a student's learning opportunities, or create an offensive, intimidating, or hostile environment.

If a concern involves discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, NC State encourages all members of the university community, including the College of Education, to report the matter directly to the **Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity**. Some College of Education employees are designated as **Responsible Employees**, who are required by law or university policy to report certain matters related to harassment, relationship violence, sexual misconduct, or stalking to NC State's Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity, even if a student asks them not to. More information about reporting harassment, discrimination, or retaliation can be found on the **Safe at NC State** website and on the NC State **Written Student Complaint** webpage.

For all other academic and non-academic matters, to further mutual trust, understanding, and learning, the university encourages students to address matters through informal resolution before filing a formal Written Student Complaint. In some instances, students may not feel comfortable directly dealing with the individual with whom they have concerns. When such concerns emerge, we have outlined recommendations below for how to proceed with the informal resolution process:

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## College of Education: Student Concern and Resolution Process for Students

### For Students: If You Have an Academic Concern

A student in the NC State College of Education who has an **academic concern** within their program area is encouraged to do the following:

- When possible, reach out to the individual (e.g., faculty member, staff member, or another student) first and try to work it out with them.
- If a resolution cannot be reached, meet with a trusted faculty member within your program or your **Program Coordinator**. You may contact your advisor as well.
- You may also contact the relevant **Director of Undergraduate Programs (DUP) or Director of Graduate Programs (DGP)** in your department for additional advice on resolving academic concerns.
- If a resolution cannot be reached after meeting with a faculty member in the program and/or the DUP or DGP, schedule a meeting with the program's **Department Head**.
- If the academic concern is with the coordinator within your program area, your first point of contact should be the **Department Head**. If the concern is with the Department Head, you are encouraged to contact the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs.
- If an acceptable resolution cannot be reached between you and the faculty member with the involvement of the Department Head, contact the **Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs** for further assistance.
- If your academic concern is with a staff member, you should contact the immediate supervisor. If you do not know who their supervisor is or do not feel comfortable going directly to the supervisor, contact the **College of Education's Director of Human Resources**.
- If you have questions, want assistance with the resolution of an academic concern, or want an explanation of the options and resources for resolving and redressing your concern, contact the **Associate Dean for Student Success and Strategic Community Engagement**.
- If the academic concern is not resolved within the College of Education and needs to be advanced to the university level, the **Associate Dean for Student Success and Strategic Community Engagement** can advise you on the appropriate options and processes for filing a formal complaint through the **Written Student Complaint** website.

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### For Students: If You Have a Non-academic Concern

A student in the NC State College of Education is encouraged to report any non-academic concerns related to harassment, discrimination, or retaliation directly to the **Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED)**. Information about reporting harassment, discrimination, or retaliation can be found on the **Safe at NC State** website and on the NC State **Written Student Complaint** webpage.

For other non-academic concerns or if you are unsure if a situation should be reported directly to the Office **for Institutional Equity and Diversity**, a student in the College of Education is encouraged to follow the steps below.

- Seek counsel from a trusted supervisor, faculty or staff member, advisor, or the relevant Director of Undergraduate or Graduate Student Success or Department Head, or seek out the Associate Dean for Student Success and Strategic Community Engagement, who serves as a student advocate, regarding how to resolve the non-academic concern. This preliminary consultation does not require a formal investigation. Based on consultation, apply the following steps:
  - If your non-academic concern is with another student, the first point of contact should be a trusted faculty or staff member, academic advisor, or the Department Head.
  - If your non-academic concern is with a faculty member within a student's program area, the first point of contact should be the Department Head.
  - If your non-academic concern is with a Department Head, contact the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs.
  - If the concern is with a staff member, contact their immediate supervisor. If you do not know who the supervisor is or do not feel comfortable going directly to the supervisor, contact the College of Education's **Director of Human Resources**.
- If you have questions and/or want more information about the informal process for a resolution, would like guidance on the situation, or feel that a concern was not resolved at the college level, contact the **Associate Dean for Student Success and Strategic Community Engagement**, who serves as a student advocate.
- If the non-academic concern is unable to be resolved within the College of Education and needs to be advanced to the university level, you may file a formal complaint through the **Written Student concerns** website.

The College of Education, like NC State University, is committed to providing a place where students can be heard and where there is open and safe communication between all parties. The **Student Ombuds Service** serves as an independent, neutral, confidential, and informal office at NC State to provide support for students in conflict management, prevention, and resolution while advocating for fair processes and empowering students to successfully navigate NC State. The Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED) provides support to the campus community and strives to create a campus environment where everyone is welcome. Students can learn more about the resources and services available through OIED by visiting the **Safe at NC State** website.

## **College of Education: Student Concern and Resolution Process for Faculty and Staff as Responsive University Employees**

As a faculty or staff member in the college, if you become aware of a student who has experienced an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation, you are expected to provide support

and assistance to the student in seeking a resolution. Keep in mind that if you are designated as a **Responsible Employee**, you are required to report issues related to harassment, relationship violence, sexual misconduct, or stalking to NC State's **Title IX Office** even if the student asks you not to. Further guidelines are provided below.

### **For Employees: If a Student Reports an Academic Concern**

If you have a student who has reported an **academic concern** within your program area, you are expected to do the following:

- Be a careful listener to the student to understand the issue and how the student is impacted. If it seems appropriate, ask the student if they have tried to resolve the concern with the individual directly. If not, encourage them to meet with the individual.
- If the student met with the individual and did not receive an acceptable resolution, they should contact the Department Head. In most cases, the Department Head should be the first point of contact if initial efforts to resolve the issue have proven to be unsuccessful.
- In some instances, a faculty or staff member might refer the student to a Director of Undergraduate or Graduate Programs first and then to the Department Head. If you are unsure about the most appropriate action to take, contact the Associate Dean for Student Success and Strategic Community Engagement.
- If a concern is with a Department Head, communicate the concern to the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs.
- If the concern is with a staff member, help the student locate the staff member's immediate supervisor and refer them to that person. If you do not know who their supervisor is or do not feel comfortable going directly to their supervisor, contact the College of Education's Director of Human Resources.
- If the concern is unable to be resolved within the College of Education and needs to be advanced to the university level, encourage the student to file a concern through the **Written Student Complaint** website.

### **For Employees: If a Student Reports a Non-academic Concern**

If a student informs a faculty or staff member they have experienced a **non-academic concern**, the faculty or staff member is expected to do the following:

- Provide a safe and supportive opportunity for the student to share their non-academic concern and their suggestions for how to redress.
- Seek counsel from your supervisor or Department Head regarding how to respond to the student's concern.
- In further consultation with the supervisor or Department Head, and as appropriate, implement a strategy for addressing the concern.
- If the non-academic concern is with the Department Head, then contact the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs.

- If an acceptable resolution cannot be reached between both parties, refer the concern to the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs for further assistance.
- If the non-academic concern is with a staff member, help the student locate the staff member's immediate supervisor and send them to that person. Their immediate supervisor should serve as the first point of contact. If it is unclear who the supervisor is or there are reservations about discussing the matter with the supervisor, then contact the College of Education's Director of Human Resources.
- If the concern is unable to be resolved within the College of Education and needs to be routed to the university level, then encourage the student to submit through the **Written Student Complaint** website.

### **Retaliation**

The College of Education will not tolerate retaliation against a student or faculty and staff member for raising a concern or for assisting an individual with a concern. Retaliation is defined as attempting or taking negative action against a person or a group of persons because that person or persons participated in a good faith effort to report or assist with a concern. Retaliation can include but is not limited to bullying, intimidation, emotional abuse, or exclusion from an activity or event. If an individual believes they have been subjected to retaliation, report it to the **Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity**.

### **Confidentiality**

While investigating and working to understand and to address concerns through these procedures, we will also work to balance individual's preferences regarding confidentiality with the university's legal obligations. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, and information may be shared with partners on campus when necessary to investigate and to respond to the concerns.

### **College of Education Resource Contacts**

#### **John Lee, Ph.D.**

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#### **Anona Smith Williams, Ed.D.**

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**[View Department Heads and Program Coordinators](#)**