



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

School of Medicine

Operating Policy and Procedure

SOM OP: 40.06, Dispute Resolution Between/Among Students

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) Policy and Procedure is to establish policies and procedures governing the reporting and resolution of disputes between students.

REVIEW: This SOM Policy and Procedure shall be reviewed within each odd-numbered fiscal year by the Student Affairs Committee. Revisions will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean for approval and publication.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. **General.** On occasion, disputes may arise between students which are disruptive to the learning environment and which are unresolved by usual means. In such instances, this policy provides a means to address such unresolved disputes between students and to provide a mechanism to attempt to mediate and reach resolution to such issues when they emerge.
2. **Procedures.**
 - a. Any party may file a request for resolution of a dispute with one or more other students in writing with the Office of Student Affairs on the student's home campus. The request should include the reasons for pursuing this process and what the party or parties seek to achieve through this process.
 - b. Responsibilities on each campus: This policy will be administered by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs on the Lubbock campus and the Academic Dean responsible for Student Affairs on the Amarillo or Permian Basin campuses.
 - c. Early resolution:
 - 1) Prior to filing a request for a hearing, the student shall attempt to resolve the issue directly with the individuals(s) involved or, if uncomfortable with directly pursuing the matter with the student(s) involved, the student may meet with the Academic Dean for Student Affairs on their home campus, or the Academic Dean's designee, to voice their concerns. The student shall address the issue and initiate action under this policy within ten (10) business days of the event prompting the grievance.
 - 2) If the responsible administrators determine that the dispute is disruptive to the learning environment and not likely to be resolved by other means, the process as described below will proceed.
 - 3) The process may also be initiated if the responsible administrators agree that an existing conflict between students warrants such action. In this instance, the

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will notify the parties in writing that they will be required to participate in the process as described below. Failure by the student to participate in this process under these circumstances will subject the student(s) to a hearing and possible sanctions under the Code of Personal/ Professional and Academic Conduct.

d. Hearing Procedure:

- 1) If the early resolution procedure is unsuccessful, the Office of Student Affairs on the complaining student's home campus will appoint a Dispute Resolution Committee according to the following procedures.
- 2) Each party will propose in writing a list of four faculty members to serve on the committee, listed in order of preference. The Office of Student Affairs will contact the faculty from each list in order of preference to determine their ability and willingness to serve. Two faculty members will thus be selected. These faculty will then select a third faculty member and the three will comprise the Dispute Resolution Committee. They will select a chair among themselves. It is expected that the Office of Student Affairs will constitute the Committee within 14 calendar days of receipt of the preference list. The committee will be expected to meet with the students within seven (7) calendar days of being constituted.
- 3) The Office of Student Affairs will provide technical assistance and support to this committee.
- 4) As soon as the hearing is scheduled, a written notice will be sent to all involved parties. The notice will specify the time, place and nature of the hearing, plus a brief description of the grievance. The notice will also confirm the right of all involved parties to present witnesses and evidence and to be accompanied by counsel for advisory purposes only.
- 5) At least three days prior to the meeting, all parties will provide to the Chair of the Dispute Resolution Committee a list of the names of any witnesses or counsel who will attend the hearing. If legal counsel is in attendance for either/both parties, a representative from the TTUHSC Office of General Counsel will also be present. The student and the involved individuals(s) shall have access to all information to be considered by the Dispute Resolution Committee, including the names of all persons giving evidence.
- 6) Each party in the dispute will meet separately with the committee for up to 1 hour to present their point of view regarding the dispute and the course of action requested. Following these individual meetings, the committee will then jointly meet with all parties to review the information and proposed resolutions from each side. This joint discussion will last up to one (1) hour and will only be extended by a majority vote of the committee.
- 7) The Dispute Resolution Committee Chair shall keep an audio taped record of the hearing, which shall include date, time and location of the hearing, names of those present, and any evidence (e.g., records, written testimony, duplicated materials) introduced.

e. Committee Decision:

- 1) Upon completion of these resolution sessions and any committee deliberations, the committee will, within seven (7) calendar days, submit a written proposal for conflict resolution to each party and each of the responsible administrators described in paragraph 2.b., each of which will have seven (7) days to respond to the proposal in writing to the committee.
- 2) The committee will then have seven (7) calendar days further to submit a final resolution plan to the parties and each of the responsible administrators described in paragraph 2.b. This final resolution plan will be submitted to the Dean of the School of Medicine and, if approved, will be binding on all parties. Failure to abide by the plan or maintain the confidentiality of the committee proceedings will be considered a violation of the Code of Personal/Professional and Academic Conduct and will subject the student(s) to a hearing and possible sanctions under the Code.