

JMC Student Complaint Policy

From time to time, students may choose to bring complaints to the attention of JMC Department faculty, or the department chair. Complaints about department policy, facilities, curricula or other issues not specific to an individual faculty member or course should be in written form and should be signed by the student(s) who are filing the complaint. Such complaints will be taken to the faculty by the chair for discussion, and students will receive a written response.

The chair will document the nature and date of conversations regarding student complaints in a confidential Student Complaints file.

In regard to student complaints about a specific faculty or staff member, or in regard to a specific course, the Journalism and Mass Communication Department abides by the biblical principle of taking the issue to the offending party before involving others.

Students who have a complaint about a professor are encouraged to discuss the issue with the professor before involving any other parties. If the student feels uncomfortable discussing the issue with the professor alone, the student should contact the department chair. The chair will arrange for a meeting of the student, teacher and chair.

If an issue cannot be resolved in conversation between the student and faculty member within a reasonable amount of time, or if the student is unwilling to meet with the faculty member and chair together, the student should write a formal letter of complaint to the department chair detailing the issue. The letter of complaint will be filed in the Student Complaints file. Once the issue is resolved, or if resolution is not possible, the chair will place copies of the letter and a memo for the file detailing its resolution or attempted resolution in the files of the student and faculty member involved. The faculty member also may submit a written response and/or letter for the file, to be placed in the Student Complaints file and the files of the student and faculty member involved.

Sometimes, a student may request that his or her identity be kept confidential. In such a case, the chair must decide whether or not to raise the issue with the faculty member in the interim. Generally, the chair would not raise the issue with the faculty member until after the semester had ended. Exceptions would include accusations of harassment or other behaviors that clearly violate university policy. In such cases, the chair will notify the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and together the chair and dean will determine when and how to engage the teacher in a conversation about the complaint.

If the subject of complaint should escalate to a point of discipline for a faculty member, then the chair is no longer bound by an initial commitment of confidentiality.

If a student is unsatisfied with the action taken by the chair, the student may file written appeals with the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and subsequently

with the provost and the president of the university.

Throughout this process, the goal of this policy is to:

1. seriously consider and appropriately respond to valid complaints;
2. protect the teacher's academic freedom;
3. protect the teacher from unfounded/unsubstantiated accusations;
4. protect the student's grade from being affected by the complaint.

Matthew 18:15-16

15 If your brother does something wrong to you, go to him. Talk alone to him and tell him what he has done. If he listens to you, you have kept your brother as a friend.

16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two others with you to talk to him. Then two or three people will hear every word and can prove what was said.