I. INTRODUCTION

The University of South Florida System (USF System) is committed to mutual respect among all constituents of the University community. This commitment includes students, faculty, staff, and administration alike. In all concerns about fair treatment, we seek to work together to understand and address those concerns in an informal setting. As there are several offices designated to address Grievances throughout the University, with specific processes applicable to USF Health, students should first identify the topic or substance of a Grievance and file the Grievance with the appropriate office as specified below.

II. STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCESSES

A listing of applicable System processes for specific student concerns (not inclusive of all processes) is referenced below. Regarding the Applicability section below, the USF System includes USF Tampa, USF St. Petersburg (USFSP), USF Sarasota-Manatee (USFSM) and USF in Lakeland, and the title of offices and administrators are unique at each campus or institution. Accordingly, the appropriate office or officer vested with the authority described in each section may be substituted when applying this Policy.

A. ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:

Student grievances related to academic units are governed by Policy 10-002 Academic Grievance Procedure for Students.

B. DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT PROCESSES:

Student complaints or grievances related to discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, marital status, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or veteran status are governed by Policy 0-007 Diversity and Equal Opportunity: Discrimination and Harassment.
Student complaints or grievances related to sexual misconduct/sexual harassment are governed by Policy 0-004 Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Harassment (Including Sexual Violence).

C. CONFIDENTIAL GUIDANCE ON PROCESSES OR ACCESS:

Students may contact the Office of the Student Ombudsman at the applicable campus or institution to identify the processes available or to speak generally about concerns. According to section 1006.51, Florida Statutes, appeals (from a decision that is related to the student’s access to courses and credit granted toward a specific degree) may be made in writing to the Student Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman may not initiate a grade change or academic adjustment, however, the Ombudsman may refer the student to the appropriate academic officer as provided by Florida Board of Governors (BOG) Regulation 6.011.

D. STUDENT PROCESSES FOR SPECIFIC CONCERNS:

The USF System has several Regulations and Policies available to review different types of possible student concerns. The index for Regulations and Policies may be accessed at: http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/ and the index may be searched by topic. Examples of those processes for specific concerns include:

1. Academic integrity violations (USF3.027 Academic Integrity of Students)
2. Student Conduct Code (USF6.0021 Student Code of Conduct)
3. Hazing (USF6.0023 Prohibition of Hazing)
4. Disability Accommodations (Policy 0-108 Disability and Accommodations (Public/Employees/Students))
5. The designated liaison for general questions on USF student concerns regarding student tuition waivers is the USF Associate Controller for Student Financial Services. For more information, students may refer to USF4.0108 Waiver of Tuition and Fees.

In addition, there are specific internal complaint and grievance processes for Law Enforcement or Police Departments, Parking and Transportation, and Human Resources for each campus.

E. NON-ACADEMIC STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:
Student grievances related to NON-academic issues and issues not listed above may be addressed by the Non-Academic Student Complaint and Grievance Process as set forth below in section III.

### III. NON-ACADEMIC STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS:

**A. INFORMAL Non-Academic Grievance or Complaint** is a *non-written* claim by a student alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary treatment by a USF System department administrator, and/or staff member or an attempt to seek guidance on how to find the appropriate office or person to assist in informally resolving a complaint with a department administrator or staff member. Although a student may contact the University Ombudsman at any time, it is recommended that the student first attempt to address their complaint by discussing it with the person most directly involved with their complaint. If the complaint is not resolved, the student may initiate a *Formal* non-academic grievance as set forth below. If the student chooses to contact the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman may redirect the student to the appropriate office for review or formal resolution.

**B. FORMAL Non-Academic Grievance or Complaint** is a *written* claim raised by a student alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary action by a USF System department, administrator, and/or staff member involving the application of a specific provision of a USF System regulation, policy or procedure. The Process below outlines this Formal Non-Academic Grievance Process.

1. **Definitions and Applicability:**

   a. **Time Limits:** “Time” shall mean “academic time,” that is, periods when USF System classes are in session, exclusive of weekends. The person vested with authority at the appropriate level may extend any of the time periods contained herein for good cause. Extensions must be communicated in writing to all parties. For the purposes of this Policy, each step shall be afforded three (3) weeks as a standard time limit. If the complaint or grievance is not presented within the established limits, it shall not be considered. If a complaint or grievance is not appealed to the next step within the established time limits, it shall be considered settled (on the basis of the last answer). If, after presentation at any step, a USF System department, administrator, and/or staff member does not discuss and/or answer the complaint or grievance with the student within the established time limits, the student may treat the complaint or grievance as denied at that step and may appeal the complaint or grievance to the next step.

   b. **Written Communication:** Where written communication is required, either
e-mail or postal mail will be acceptable.

c.  **Applicability:** This Policy is established as a general guideline for the USF System. As each separately accredited institution, campus and specific colleges may have established internal grievance policies, those more local policies shall be applied in place of, or as a first step to this Policy depending on the actual terms of that more local policy. In addition, as individual USF System institutions, colleges or campuses may have different levels of authority or titles, the applicable levels and titles will replace the terms of this Policy.

2. **Formal Non-Academic Grievance Process Steps:**

a. The Student must first attempt to address his/her complaint by discussing it with the person most directly involved with their complaint. If the complaint is not resolved, the student may elect to initiate a formal grievance in writing within the time line as defined above to the concerned USF System department, administrator, and/or staff member most directly responsible for the alleged action(s) and/or decision(s). The time line shall begin at the time of the first occurrence or at the time a student, using reasonable due diligence, should have obtained knowledge of the first occurrence of the event giving rise to the grievance.

b. If possible, the USF System department, administrator, and/or staff member should respond by meeting with the student to attempt an agreement or resolution.

c. If there is no agreement or resolution reached by a meeting, or if either party determines a meeting is not a viable alternative, the student may schedule a time to discuss the complaint with the employee’s direct supervisor. The student is responsible for providing copies of all relevant documents including emails and previous determinations from the incident and any attempt at resolution.

d. The direct supervisor will review previous resolution steps, discuss the complaint with the student and other appropriate individuals, and communicate a final answer to the student in writing.

e. If the student feels that the answer or action of the supervisor has violated published policies and procedures or has been applied to the student in a manner different from other students, the student may file a written grievance to the Director or Dean of the area in question as listed below or directly to
the **Office of the Dean for Students** (who may refer the student back to the appropriate area for review) within ten (10) days of the triggering incident. ([http://www.sa.usf.edu/dean/page.asp?id=108](http://www.sa.usf.edu/dean/page.asp?id=108))

**f.** If the student feels the answer of the Director or Dean has violated published policies and procedures or has been applied to the student in a manner different from other students, the student may file an appeal to the next appropriate Student Affairs administrative officer (Dean for Students, the Vice President of Student Affairs or the highest administrative officer vested with the authority over student affairs issues at the campus or institution) referred to below as “Administrator” within ten (10) days of the decision rendered.

**g.** At this level, the Administrator will review the material submitted by the student to see if the material constitutes a grievance.

**h.** If the Administrator determines that the material does not constitute a grievance, the Administrator will communicate to the student (in writing) and the involved USF System department, administrator, and/or staff member, that the matter is not a grievance and no recommendation will be forthcoming.

**i.** If the Administrator’s review produces a conclusion that the matter constitutes a grievance (the rights of the student may have been violated), this will be communicated in writing to the student and the USF System department. Specific remedies will be proposed and corrective action will be recommended by the Administrator. It is important to note that the Administrator can only recommend corrective action and assist in communicating that action to the parties.

**j.** For those campuses and institutions where there is another level of administrative review within a Division of Student Affairs, if the student disagrees with the determination or recommendation of the Administrator, the student may appeal the determination to the highest Student Affairs administrator in writing within ten (10) days of the determination for review and final recommendation.

*Current Responsible Office: Student Affairs and Student Success*

*Refer to the appropriate Responsible Office website for a current name of the Vice President or other Responsible Officer.*

*History: New 8-23-11, Amended 3-24-16 (technical).*