

## **Complaints and Grievances**

Complaints and grievances are of utmost importance in an institution that deals with speaking truthfully, and thus are considered a priority at CCMPS, worthy of the attention of everyone the complainant wishes to be heard by. The ultimate decision has to be taken by a vote of the combined Board of Directors and the Faculty, excluding the complainant's personal analyst and supervisors.

The grievance procedure involves three levels of discussion, as outlined below. Each step is to insure both that the complainant be able to be heard by as many people as s/he wants, and that accountability/transparency is maximized. To ensure this, all communications relevant to the grievance must be communicated via email, to create reliable documentation.

The combined Board of Directors and the Faculty will serve as the Grievance Committee. The complainant may suggest others to serve in an advisory manner. Should a committee member have any prior or current affiliation with the student or faculty member against which a complaint is made, it will be up to the student whether this person be part of the committee, as their presence might be essential to understanding the issue. These persons will be considered to serve in an advisory capacity. Advisory members do not have a vote.

### **Procedures for Addressing Grievances**

1. If a student has an issue with a member of CCMPS, they are encouraged by the person they are having an issue with to bring the problem to the attention of the Director, or if the problem is with the Director, to the President of the Board. The latter will first explore the steps that the complainant has taken to address the issue personally with the CCMPS member, and will contact the latter with the goal of gathering information and bridging the disagreement.
2. If the complainant does not want to further discuss the matter with the person in question, they will be given the opportunity to address the concern with a subcommittee of four members of the Grievance Committee, two chosen by the complainant, and two by the subject of the complaint. At all times the goal for those that deal with the grievance will be to attempt to the best of their ability, to analyze the situation in a way that expresses empathic understanding and seeks to use this opportunity to foster relational and emotional healing.
3. If this step fails to reach a resolution, at the request of the complainant the Grievance Committee will meet in full session, with the exceptions stated above, and will listen to the complainant's petition, to the advice and understandings of anyone who wishes to participate, and to any outside expert opinions suggested by either the complainant or members of the Committee. Discussion will initially be private to the Committee, to ensure the freedom of members to voice concerns, perceptions and ideas that might be narcissistically injurious to either or both parties to the grievance. The goal of the Committee will be to forge a possible resolution, following the ideals of doing the most good for both parties, while minimizing any harm.

To avoid the splitting that often accompanies a grievance, the final decision must be reached by consensus. The goal is for the Committee to work through, in their own process, the rift between the parties. This is crucial for three reasons. First, it is up to us as the “Elders” to model conflict resolution. Second it helps the emotional healing on both parties’ part to gain feedback from people who have wrestled with the issues, and come to a consensus. Third, it is necessary for the health of the Institute, in that consensus can only happen with a process of bridging and mutual respect and understanding, essential for an institute’s smooth and effective functioning.

After the Committee reaches a resolution, everyone previously involved will reconvene, and participate in the presentation of the decision, and its discussion. The Committee may reconvene one time to amend it’s resolution, this will be decided by a super-majority of two thirds of the Committee, in fairness to the parties needing speedy resolution. The final decision will be by consensus.

If this decision is not acceptable to one or more of the parties, we will seek arbitration from a body suggested by our accrediting agency, ABAP, Inc.

### **Issues of Transparency and Accountability**

In order to ensure transparency in the grievance process, we require that relevant communications, starting from the time of the initial complaint, be sent via email, addressing first the Director/President, and from then on using the using the **ReplyTo All** option. This evidentiary trail is essential to the accountability of our process, and would be useful if the matter needs an appeal to an outside party. Of course the Free Speech Amendment allows any communication between any parties, but only that which is documented can be used in the resolution of the complaint.

Every member of the Board must respond to the complaint within 48 hours, barring vacations, emergencies or other legitimate absences. The Director, or Board President, is responsible for calling a meeting to hear the issue orally, via teleconference, within two weeks if requested by the complainant.