



# Transforming Lives Changing the World at John F. Kennedy University

## Conflict Resolution Policy for Students

### I: Policy Statement

It is the policy of John F. Kennedy University to encourage informal reconciliation of differences between students and either faculty or staff members. Despite the close relationship which students, staff and faculty enjoy, occasionally disagreements cannot be resolved informally. If such efforts have been unsuccessful, the review process stated in this policy is available to students. (Student to student conflicts should go to the Ombudsman.)

### II: Purpose

This policy contains steps to address conflicts which students have with faculty or staff members with the goal of a mutually satisfactory resolution.

### III. Applicability

This policy applies University-wide to all programs and departments.

### IV. Definitions

**Conflict:** Disagreements, misunderstandings or differences which place two parties in opposition to one another's position on a matter related to education at JFK University.

**Advocate:** An individual familiar with the facts involved in the conflict. Examples: faculty advisor, student government representative, fellow student.

### V. Procedures

*Note: At each step, if student is not comfortable discussing an issue with the person(s) specified below due to fear of retribution or other reasons, the student may contact the Ombudsman as described on the University's web site: <http://www.jfku.edu/About-Us/Diversity-at-JFKU/Office-of-the-Ombudsman.html> The Ombudsman is also a source of mediation for conflicts between students.*

#### A. Steps to resolution

1. Student will discuss issue with the faculty or staff member involved. Requests for confidentiality will be honored.
2. If no resolution occurs, student will notify the faculty or staff member that he/she intends to pursue the matter with the supervisor to whom the faculty or staff member reports, unless requesting an "Exception to Policy" is appropriate. Also, see note above regarding use of Ombudsman. When

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a faculty member is involved, the Program Chair would be the next level of authority, followed by the Dean. For matters involving staff, the next levels of authority are the staff member's immediate supervisor, followed by the Dean or Director of Student Services. If no resolution occurs, the Academic Vice President is usually the final step.

3. In rare circumstances, the President of the University will become involved in the dispute, and is empowered by the Board of Trustees of JFK University to make all final decisions in the matter.

## **B. Actions during and following meetings**

1. Documentation: after each meeting described in V.A. above, the person with the highest level of authority is responsible for documenting in writing the issues and outcome. This documentation should be limited to describing the facts involved, and not include personal reactions. The documentation should be made available to all parties within 5 working days. If there are disagreements about the wording of the documentation, involved parties have an additional 5 days to submit an appeal to the person who is responsible for documenting the issue. That person will take the appeal into account and will have the final determination with regard to wording and description.
2. Timeliness: When the student has requested a meeting, no more than 10 working days may elapse before such meeting occurs.
3. Impartial arbitrator: At any time during the meeting process, either party may wish to ask an impartial party, such as the University Ombudsman, to facilitate discussion.
4. Advocate: The student may bring an advocate of their choosing to any meeting, such as their representative from the Student Association. If the student wishes to use legal representation, the University President's Office must be notified immediately to allow sufficient time for University counsel to be present.

## **VI. Responsibility for Policy Implementation, Communication and Revision**

The Director of Student Services will post and publicize this policy as appropriate, monitor its implementation, and revise the policy as necessary.

## **VII. Related Links**

<http://www.jfku.edu/About-Us/Diversity-at-JFKU/Office-of-the-Ombudsman.html>

<http://www.jfku.edu/Student-Service/Current-Students/Student-Government.html>

## **VIII. Evaluation**

The Director of Student Services will evaluate the efficacy of this policy and submit it for revision as necessary.

