

Dispute Resolution Procedures

Dispute Resolution for Evangel University

This procedure applies whenever a student at the University has an interpersonal dispute against another student that does not involve sexual discrimination as defined in the Sexual Misconduct Policy, nor student misconduct that otherwise requires formal student disciplinary proceedings. In some instances, a dispute may involve a low-level infraction of the student conduct standards, which has been or will be handled consistent with the Student Handbook but also results in ongoing interpersonal conflict. This procedure may still be utilized to resolve the interpersonal conflict in such circumstances.

The University includes students at Evangel University School of Arts and Science, the College of Online Learning, and the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (Hereafter the “University” or “Evangel” collectively). Each respective school designates an individual (the “Dispute Resolution Coordinator”) to oversee these dispute resolution procedures. Whenever a dispute arises between students from different schools at Evangel, the Vice President for Student Development will consult with the Dispute Resolution Coordinator from each respective school to determine who will manage the resolution process.

Purpose: From time to time, students experience interpersonal conflict and seek guidance on appropriate resolution. This procedure aims to provide a clear and biblical approach to resolving disputes within the Evangel community, based on Matthew 18:15-17, while ensuring compliance with applicable state and federal laws and other University policies.

Interpersonal disputes and disagreements are a part of living in community. As such, Evangel believes students should develop the skills to address disagreements with advocacy, humility, and introspection. This procedure is presented as a resource to students to aid in a biblical process of reconciliation. University officials are available to coach individuals through this process, and to intervene appropriately when other policies have been violated.

Scope: This procedure applies to all disputes between students who are currently enrolled at Evangel. Exceptions to this procedure are 1) between a student and a member of the faculty, staff, and administrators within the university, which require the involvement of the Director of Human Resources, 2) disputes which are sex-based and determined by the Title IX Coordinator to rise to the level of a potential violation of the *Sexual Misconduct Policy*, and 3) reports of student misconduct requiring resolution through the Community Accountability Program, as outlined in the student handbook, or other applicable policy.

Confidentiality: All dispute proceedings will be conducted with the utmost confidentiality to protect the privacy of all parties involved. Parties are advised against speaking about these proceedings with members of the community as it can harm the reputation of other individuals and tends to obstruct a meaningful resolution. In some cases it can be perceived as retaliatory in nature.

Contact Information: For questions or to file a formal dispute, please contact the Vice President for Student Development (studentdevelopment@evangel.edu).

Dispute Resolution

The University affirms that reconciliation among people from all walks of life is central to our identity as a Christian institution. We seek to create a welcoming community which is characterized by the Biblical vision for justice, respect, diversity, and shalom. Therefore, Evangel University seeks to provide a restorative process, whenever possible, between individuals who have disagreements and/or when an offense occurs that does not implicate other applicable policies.

Whenever an unresolved dispute is reported to the Dispute Resolution Coordinator, this procedure will be consulted to determine which steps have been engaged, and what additional steps should be attempted. Depending on that assessment, the Dispute Resolution Coordinator may take the opportunity to encourage this procedure even though one or both parties may report attempts have been made. This fulfills the developmental purpose of this procedure while retaining the goal of resolution.

Resolution Process

Evangel holds to the teachings contained within Scripture. As such, the teachings of Jesus serve as a foundation for resolving disputes.

Biblical Foundation:

1 Corinthians 6:1-3 ⁶ When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? ² Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

Paul admonishes believers to attempt to settle disputes among themselves whenever possible. We believe the teachings of Jesus as outlined in Matthew 18 (below) provide a proper framework for resolving disputes among our campus family. However, in situations which require formal disciplinary proceedings, the *Sexual Misconduct Policy* or other egregious violations, we also adhere to a more formal process of evaluating the facts, determining an outcome, and providing corrective measures. Since Evangel is also under the authority of the government, it complies with applicable laws and regulations to the extent they do not undermine, or require violation of, the University's religious convictions.

Matthew 18:15-17 outlines the steps for addressing disputes: ¹⁵ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to

listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

1. **Private Resolution:** The first step is individuals address the matter privately. The Dispute Resolution Coordinator will provide guidance and, if necessary, help facilitate a time and place for students to meet.
2. **Witnesses Resolution:** The second step is to establish a meeting for the purpose of resolution that involves a witness on behalf of each party who serves to provide accountability for progress made and agreed upon action steps.
3. **Community Resolution:** If the issue remains unresolved after the Witness Resolution, Community Life staff or Dispute Resolution Coordinator will render a decision based on the facts and testimony regarding the dispute.

The Dispute Resolution Coordinator guides the process in several ways:

1. Ensures an adequate review of the dispute and determines the applicability of this procedure. Since interpersonal conflicts may arise out of circumstances that involve alleged behavior that would violate the Code of Conduct, and therefore require further investigation and possible discipline, the Dispute Resolution Coordinator will forward all reports to the Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator for review.
2. For disputes within the scope of this procedure, the Dispute Resolution Coordinator will gather facts, party and witness testimony regarding the dispute, and the input and support of appropriate University resources related to the situation (such as those with applicable expertise, i.e., the Counseling Center, no-contact directives, academic support, etc.)
3. Facilitate conversations and the meetings to address the matter with all parties involved to identify the problematic behavior and render a decision regarding the dispute
4. Monitor and enforce the resolution process and outcomes as necessary

The Private Resolution and Witness Resolution processes are less formal and rely on effective, open, and honest communication from both parties and must end in the divisive or problematic behavior coming to an end. This process is corrective in intent but may not be deemed disciplinary in all situations. It typically leads to an informal resolution (such as a meeting to make the offending party aware of the impact of their actions and establishing an appropriate resolution).

In the event the more formal Community Resolution is required, the Dispute Resolution Coordinator will document the process outcome, inform the parties and enforce the decision to uphold the determined resolution outcome.

NOTE: In situations where the safety of a student is of concern and validated by a member of Student Development, immediate actions will be taken to remove the risk of harm. This should be viewed as a separate action from dispute resolution.