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Grievance Procedure

Caltech provides a variety of routes, most of them informal, by which students may bring complaints to consideration and resolution. In academic matters, for example, they may begin with faculty-student conversations and may extend to the deans, the division chairs, the registrar, or to various committees having faculty and student members. Undergraduate housing matters are dealt with by house officers, the resident associates, the IHC, and the senior director of campus life. The dean of graduate studies is often of assistance in resolving graduate student matters. As the Institute officers responsible for the supervision of many Student Affairs offices, the assistant vice presidents for student affairs may be the appropriate persons to appeal to in case of unresolved complaints involving those offices. The ombudsperson, who acts on behalf of the entire Caltech community, may be consulted confidentially about any problem. The Graduate Student Council and ASCIT may become involved in important complaints, and sometimes ad hoc groups are formed to make recommendations.

The grievance procedure is intended to deal with complaints by currently enrolled students for which reasonable efforts by the available informal routes have not led to an acceptable resolution, and which do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Honor System.

The first step in this procedure is to consult with the person appointed by the president of the Institute as mediator for student grievances. The mediator will assist the student in trying to work out the problem in an informal way. If the student is not satisfied with the results, he or she may appeal the case to the Student Grievance Committee. The members of the committee are undergraduates appointed by the ASCIT Board of Directors, graduate students appointed by the Graduate Student Council, faculty appointed by the faculty chair, and administrative staff appointed by the vice president for student affairs. Two members and two alternates are appointed from each of the four categories. The chair of the committee is appointed by the president and does not vote except in case of a tie. The grievant may present the case to the committee, present documents in support of the case, request that witnesses be called, and be assisted by another member of the Caltech community who is not an attorney. The committee will present its conclusions and recommendations to the president of the Institute, and the president's decision will be final. A complete statement of the student grievance procedure is available from the following offices: Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Dean of Graduate Studies, Women's Center, and the Ombuds Office.