



**MSCHE**  
**Standard II: Ethics and Integrity**  
**Final Report**











### ***Summary of evidence:***

The Student Grievance Policy is located on the Mercyhurst Website under the Student Consumer Information page as well as in the Student Handbook. The Employee and Faculty Handbooks also indicate a grievance procedure. These are readily available to all Employees and Faculty.

For students, the policy on the Student Consumer Information page outlines who they should contact/email with complaints. For example, if they have a complaint related to their living arrangements, they should initially work with their Resident Assistant. If there is no resolution, the students may go to their Hall Director or Assistant Director of Residence Life. If the issue is still not solved, they can contact the Office of Residence Life via the email provided.

The Employee Handbook explains a problem-solving procedure that employees should follow when they have a complaint. The complaint should initially be brought to the attention of the immediate supervisor. If the issue is not solved, the employee may take the complaint up with the supervisors' superior, followed by Human Resources and the Vice President. The procedure also explains that no discriminatory or disciplinary action will be taken against any employee for using the problem-solving procedure.

The Faculty handbook outlines the Faculty grievance policy. It states that Faculty should go to their relevant academic department and college leadership with complaints. The complaint may be brought to the attention of the department chair, dean and/or provost.

### ***Summary of compliance:***

This working group could not find any specific form that is to be used when a student, faculty, or staff member submits a grievance. There is no formal procedure or timeframe outlined for grievances. There is no way to track whether grievances are addressed appropriately and in a fair and timely manner. It is recommended that grievances become more streamlined with formal documentation and procedures.

Standard II workgroup has found it necessary to address the need for an ombudsperson position at Mercyhurst University. The review of ethics and integrity has led to a discussion on oversight and direction during conflict resolution and identifying issues of concern that have not surfaced by other means. The International Ombudsman Association (IOA) describes the role of the ombudsperson as "akin to a conflict coach, helping all parties define the problem, understand each other's concerns, and explore options that may resolve or manage the dispute." The current system of conflict resolution is lacking in the IOA's four ethical standards of practice, which are independence, confidentiality, impartiality, and informality. At Mercyhurst, grievances are often enough received by peers and people in power, which in certain circumstances may lead employees to feel uncomfortable about coming forward, especially if they are in lower-level positions or are seeking to move through a promotion system. The University, no doubt, has good intentions in assisting in conflict resolution; but it should always strive to make improvements and to create an environment that respects the concerns of all its members. Establishing an ombudsperson office could provide numerous benefits, such as enabling the University to manage better workplace related conflict, prevent poor behavior, motivate ethical behavior, and effectively deal with concerns. At the same time, the ombudsperson could aid in providing clarity and direction to policies, processes, and practices that already exist at the University. Too often, people and institutions find themselves reacting to conflicts rather than proactively cultivating a safe

place for employees to voice their concerns. Ideally, an ombudsperson would be someone sufficiently knowledgeable of the university's policies and processes to welcome grievances without fear of negative repercussions or judgement'(f)07 m814.3 (ev)-2 5 s 01 scn/(lic)]TJ-0.007 Tc 02001 Tw 21 -063811 72 704.y 26 (es-6.4hs)-



Handbook's conflict of interest policy, along with the Faculty Handbook's two confidentiality policies and the Faculty Senate's Roberts Rules of Order, to guide the removal and replacement of a member of a committee. Additional examples could be provided of faculty who have recused themselves from one committee or another and/or recused themselves from the consideration of various issues for various reasons. Finally, a very recent (and public) example can be found in the replacement of a member of the university's Presidential Search Committee who was promoted to an upper administration position that could cause a conflict of interest if the person had remained on the search committee.

***Summary of Compliance:***

As evidenced by the many examples above, Mercyhurst demonstrates a commitment to avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents. The Employee and Faculty Handbooks show evidence that conflicts of interest that may occur among the faculty and staff are addressed and have the mechanism for being appropriately handled. Likewise, the Board of Trustees collects and shares with Human Relations conflict of interest statements.

**5. Fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees;**

**Standard: II-5**

***Potential evidence:*** Employee Handbook, Faculty Handbook

***Summary of evidence:***

Mercyhurst University abides by the following practices when (t)-6 (i)MCID 7 (b)-11.4 cngg(o)1.7 (l)-5.3 ()-7 (i)nd h-S





- a. to promote affordability and accessibility;
- b. to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt;

**Standard: II-7a. To promote affordability and accessibility**

**Potential evidence:** Undergraduate Course Catalog, Graduate Course Catalog, Student Financial Services HUB and external websites, Student Scholarship Program website, Admissions and Aid external website, Awards and Scholarships website

**Summary of evidence:**

Mercyhurst strives to promote affordability and accessibility to prospective and current students through various policies, practices, and programs that are made available to all.

The Undergraduate and Graduate course catalogs are updated annually by the Office of Academic Affairs. Both Undergraduate and Graduate course catalogs are available electronically on the university's internal (HUB) and external webpage. Students can also easily access the Student Financial Aid office through the HUB or schedule an appointment to meet with their assigned Student Financial Services (SFS) advisor. Each student is assigned a financial services counselor if they have any concerns regarding their bill, loans, payment, and if they have any questions. The course catalogs provide updated information about the areas of student billing schedule, tuition and fees, scholarships, financial aid awarding policies, and loan repayment options. The sections provide a thorough examination of tuition, fees, room and board costs, loan and grant education, the financial aid awarding process, campus amenities, SFS calendar and procedures, and enrollment requirements. The catalogs and SFS webpage also provide comprehensive information regarding scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds.

The Student HUB provides information regarding the university's financial services and policies.

Finally, Mercyhurst also assists students financially by supporting Federal and Institutional work study programs. Students qualify for Federal aid due to personal and family financial situations. Students also can earn money on campus by applying for institutional work-study programs.

***Summary of compliance:***

The summary of the evidence shows that Mercyhurst promotes affordability and accessibility. There is compelling evidence of easy access to information about the cost, financial aid opportunities, calculation of cost, external and internal scholarships, and awards. The alumni office focuses on fundraising efforts to support a range of student scholarship programs that benefit all students and targets specifically those who may have greater financial need or have been marginalized.

**Standard: II 7.b. to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt.**

***Potential Evidence:*** 2019-2020 Undergraduate Course Catalog, Graduate Student Course Catalog, Mercyhurst.edu external website, Student Financial Services HUB page

***Summary of evidence:***

The Undergraduate and Graduate course catalogs provide a thorough examination of tuition, fees, room and board, loan and grant education, the financial aid awarding process, campus amenities, SFS calendar and procedures, and enrollment requirements. This document is updated by the office of academic affairs on an annual basis. The undergraduate and graduate course catalogs are made available to all students on both the university's internal and external websites.

Students are mandated to take the Entrance Loan Interview provided by the federal government prior to taking out a loan and they are required to complete an Exit Loan Interview prior to graduation. This is mandated by the federal government but is not a mandatory graduation requirement for Mercyhurst University.

Students are provided with access to accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds through the undergraduate and graduate Course catalogs. Financial aid is a topic of discussion during week 6 of the Fall iMU course that all traditional first-year students are required to take and complete successfully. This discussion revolves around students understanding the value of their education both holistically and financially.

Students can determine the net price of their education by using the net price calculator located on the external Mercyhurst website. This calculator is intended to provide estimated net price information, which is defined as the estimated cost of attendance (including tuition

otherwise noted, all MU financial aid is automatically renewable for four years of study. Some scholarships do include enrollment and grade requirements for renewal.

Finally, students are made aware of alternative methods to repay student loans through post-graduate

graduation rates, licensing and accreditation, retention rates, and more. All the links direct an individual to the proper information described under the title, and most of the information accessible via those links are up to date. Regarding assessment, a separate page located on the external website labeled Assessment and Planning includes information about strategic plans, institutional research, and compliance. This page contains active links and is available to the general public.

Mercyhurst provides information about the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation via the inclusion of the Self-Study Guide available on the external website. The MSCHE Statement of Accreditation is updated when warranted by the Assessment and Planning office and is available on their webpage. The Self-Study is evidence of the university's campus wide commitment to complete the on-going assessment process to fulfill the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation.

Mercyhurst reports substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues in a timely fashion. This is evidenced by the information found on the external website's Student Consumer Information page. There are various reports that the university submits on an annual or scheduled cycle for assessment. This includes, but is not limited to, the CMHE self-study, NCAA academic success rate, Clery Report, EADA, crime log, graduation reports, licensure, and certification pass rates, MSCHE accreditation, Student Right to Know Act information. These reports, which are updated and disclosed in a timely manner, are the responsibility of many offices at the university. Coordination of required consumer information occurs through the Assessment and Planning Department, which houses institutional research.

Finally, the university demonstrates compliance with all federal, state, and commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements. To meet the reporting requirements outlined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, the university has a Student Consumer Information page on the external website, which includes information about 7.2 (l)-5.3 (,)-2. 2008ou-183>18.5 (0.8 (t)(x)-1.4 (kn3 (bo kn3 (bo kn8 (tg (r)5.6 (e)(y de)9.9 -.4 (5.11.300)-2.5 (a)8.3 and Prnay dense8.5 (e)9.1 ((c)6.8)-5.4 (r)5 ia su-183>18 (n33(u-183-18.4 (t)9

Regarding the assessment data, this work group recommends that there should be a more robust use of the data collected within the college community. There should also be a centralized location to access the evidence and a calendar of due dates for submission of data.

**9. Periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.**

**Standard: II-9**

*Potential evidence: Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook; Undergraduate & Graduate Catalogs; CMHE Self Study; Board Committee Charters; Equity, Inclusion, & Justice Strategic Plan document; Assessment HUB page*

**Summary of evidence:**

Mercyhurst University engages in a constant informal evaluation of the ethics and integrity standards and policies at the institution. These informal evaluations occur each time an incident, however large or small, is brought to the attention of the administration. Evidence of this ongoing evaluation can be seen in the adaptations to the policies that have happened over time.



Within the 5-year program review cycle, both internal and external review processes and bodies are involved