**Policy Statement**

As an American Bar Association (ABA) accredited law school, Valparaiso University Law School is subject to the *ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools* (<http://qa.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards>). Pursuant to ABA Standard 512, any law student may bring a formal complaint to the law school’s administration of a significant problem that directly implicates the law school’s program of legal education and its compliance with ABA Standards.

 **Reason for Policy**

To establish a procedure for:

1. Submitting complaints
2. Resolving complaints
3. Submitting appeals
4. Maintenance of records

**Strategic Direction**

This policy supports the Mission, Vision, and Core Values and Commitments of the Law School.

**Applicability**

This policy applies to all Law School faculty and staff responsible for elevating complaints to the proper authority and/or responsible for responding to complaints.

**Points of Emphasis**

**Confidentiality**

All records and communication pertaining to a student complaint and resolution will remain confidential. The only individuals to have access to files will be the Assistant Dean of Students, those necessary to be involved in an investigation, the appeals panel (if applicable), and the ABA Accrediting site evaluation team.

**Definitions**

N/A

**Procedure for Submitting Complaints**

1. Complaints should be provided in writing to the Assistant Dean of Students.
2. The writing should:
	1. Be submitted on the “Student Complaint Form Regarding Noncompliance with ABA Standard”
	2. Describe in detail the behavior, program, process or other matter that is the subject of the complaint, and
	3. Explain how the matter implicates the law school’s program of legal education *and* its compliance with a specific, identified ABA Standard(s)
	4. Provide the complainant’s name, official law school email address, and street address, for further communication about the complaint
3. The Assistant Dean of Students shall acknowledge the complaint within three business days of receipt. Acknowledgment may be made via email, U.S. mail, or personal delivery, at the option of the Assistant Dean of Students.

**Procedure for Resolving Complaints**

1. Within ten business days of acknowledgment of the complaint, the Assistant Dean of Students shall provide a substantive response either via meeting with the student or in writing. *An extension of time of an additional ten business days, for a substantive response, may be granted for good cause. Instances of good cause would include, but are not limited to, hospitalization, scheduled time away from the office, exam periods, etc.*
2. In the meeting or writing, the student shall be provided with information about what steps are being taken by the law school to address or further investigate the complaint. If further investigation is needed, a timeframe will be provided to the student.
3. Within ten business days of completing an investigation, the Assistant Dean of Students
 shall communicate the findings and, if appropriate, the intended actions to the complaining student.

**Procedure for Appeals**

1. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome or resolution of the law school’s investigation, that student has a right to appeal to a panel consisting of the law school Vice-Dean and Dean.
2. The appeal must be provided in writing, with specificity, within ten business days after communication to the student of the findings of the investigation.
3. The panel’s decision shall be communicated to the student within ten business days and shall be final.

**Maintenance of Records**

A copy of the complaint and a summary of the process and resolution of the complaint shall be kept in the Vice-Dean’s office for a period of eight years from the date of final resolution of the complaint.

**Forms**

Student Complaint Form Regarding Noncompliance with ABA Standard

**Contacts**

**Related Documents/Policies/Guidelines**

**Effective Date**

08/20/12