

Protocol for United Campus Ministries Student Concerns and Grievances

United Campus Ministries' members, called Religious Life Advisors, are clergy and faith tradition advisors from the various faiths represented on campus. Students may seek out a Religious Life Advisor for counseling and support on a wide range of issues, personal, academic, and faith-based. Our members are both spiritual leaders of particular faiths, and also available to members of the Columbia Community, regardless of their faith. Each year, Religious Life Advisors sign a covenant accepting membership on the United Campus Ministries. The signed covenant represents the Religious Life Advisor's commitment to further the mission of the UCM and abide by several principles in his or her activity at the University. One such principle is being informed of and abiding by the University policies that govern all UCM activities, such as the policy on responding to student concerns and grievances.

Religious Life Advisors may encounter situations, especially with students, where a need for immediate action exists. An example of this is a student who is threatening to hurt themselves or someone else. Those situations must be reported immediately to the University Chaplain or, in her absence, the Associate Director of Earl Hall so that appropriate action can be taken. If neither is available, the Office of the Provost should be contacted.

Religious Life Advisors may also hear from a student about other issues relating to personal or academic concerns of a student that may require additional if not immediate attention. If a student brings such a concern to a member, he or she should discuss it to see if whether through discussion, the matter can be resolved. Religious Life Advisors have received training about university grievance procedures and the resources available for informal resolution of concerns. Concerns or complaints related to an academic experience must be brought to the attention of the Office of the University Chaplain. The University Chaplain, with appropriate regard to privacy concerns of the student, may refer the student to the Ombuds Office for confidential review of the matter and options. The University Chaplain, with appropriate regard to the privacy concerns of the student, may also raise a matter to the appropriate school officials who will be prepared to discuss and guide the student through the options for resolution.

Finally, the University Chaplain sits on a Coordinating Group that consists of deans of students of the undergraduate schools and selected student services officials. This group will meet periodically to discuss student issues and concerns. With due regard to privacy and confidentiality issues, the University Chaplain will be prepared to discuss student concerns and issues that have come through her office, even where a student has opted not to pursue either formal or informal resolution.

Helpful Contact Information

The Office of the University Chaplain

Jewelnel Davis, University Chaplain & Associate Provost – (212) 854-1493

Suzanne Jung, Associate Director – (212) 854-0480

Office of the Provost

Alan Brinkley, Provost – (212) 854-2404

Ombuds Office

(212) 854-1234 (Morningside Heights Campus)

(212) 304-7026 (Health Sciences Campus)