

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



### URGE Complaints and Reporting Policies at Pacific Lutheran University

This is what was found by the Department of Geosciences at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. This information was public; answers that were only found through follow up with contacts are noted.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**
  - **Student Code of Conduct** <https://www.plu.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>
  - **University Dispute Resolution Committee** <https://www.plu.edu/udrc/>
  - **Conciliation Committee** (Faculty only)  
<https://www.plu.edu/faculty-handbook/wp-content/uploads/sites/595/2020/11/plu-faculty-handbook.pdf>
    - Article VI Section 1: Grievance, Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures.
  - Department, Lab, Division, Advisor or Supervisor Policies--
    - There is currently no policy at the Department or Divisional level. We are currently drafting our Departmental policy as a result of our URGE pod discussions.
    - Supervisors and professional advisors are covered in a general manner in the PLU employee manual  
<https://www.plu.edu/personnel-manual/general-human-resources-policies/non-discrimination-policy/>
  - Tracking system: **Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT)**  
<https://www.plu.edu/birt/>
  - Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? What is the process for changing policy?
    - **Student Conduct:** Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities
    - **The University Dispute Resolution Committee (UDRC)** advocates for review of university policies and procedures when necessary.
    - **Conciliation Committee** In cases in which problems of inadequate or unclear policy are found, the Conciliation Committee shall inform the faculty of all issues of policy and procedure and shall give its recommendations on corrections (PLU Faculty Handbook)
    - **BIRT:** Tracking system, not linked to policies
  - Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)?

- **BIRT:** Yes  
<https://www.plu.edu/birt/steps-to-birt/#what-happens-to-the-bias-incident-response-form>
- For other processes it is not clear, but seems unlikely.

- **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?** *Note: except for BIRT, these mechanisms are general grievance processes and are not specific to racial incidents. The non-discrimination policy can be found here:*  
<https://www.plu.edu/personnel-manual/general-human-resources-policies/non-discrimination-policy/>
  - Who are the designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents?
    - **For Student Conduct:** When a student's conduct appears to be in violation of university policies, rules or regulations, any student, staff, faculty member, or community member may submit an Incident Report
    - **For UDRC:** Any member of the PLU community who feels they have a grievance of the type the committee addresses, the administration, or the UDRC committee
    - **Conciliation Committee:** Any faculty member who feels that they have cause for grievance and who wants to formally resolve that grievance petition. **Note:** Faculty may use either UDRC OR Conciliation Committee processes. Faculty who receive an unfavorable decision from either group may not appeal or present a grievance to the other group.
    - **For BIRT:** Anyone in the PLU community who experiences/sees/hears of an incident should report it.  
<https://www.plu.edu/birt/steps-to-birt/#who-can-use-birt>
  - Can reports be made online? Where? **Yes**
    - **Student Conduct:** Incident Report: [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?PacificLutheranUniv&layout\\_id=8](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?PacificLutheranUniv&layout_id=8) **Not Anonymous**
    - **UDRC:** email form (<https://www.plu.edu/udrc/documents/>) to [udrc@plu.edu](mailto:udrc@plu.edu). Process tends to be private, but not confidential or anonymous
    - **Conciliation Committee:** email a petition to one or more of the appropriate committee members  
<https://www.plu.edu/faculty-governance/wp-content/uploads/sites/169/2020/11/facultycommitteerooster-2020-21-incl-fec-11-23-20.pdf> or <https://www.plu.edu/faculty-governance/> Process tends to be confidential but not anonymous.
    - **BIRT** <https://www.plu.edu/birt/birt-form/> Anonymously? **Yes**
  - Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
    - **Student Conduct:** The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities-- the Dean of Students (Dr. Eva Frey), the Assistant Dean of Students/ Title IX

Coordinator, and Community Directors as Review Officers. The Assistant Dean of Students is responsible for the effective day-to-day management and operation of the processes. The Assistant Dean of Students coordinates training for Review Officers; provides information and consultation to students, staff, and faculty; assigns Review Officers for each review process; coordinates and schedules Review Meetings; maintains conduct records; serves as a Review Officer when necessary. <https://www.plu.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities-procedures/administration-of-student-rights-and-responsibilities-processes/>

- **UDRC:** Committee members (representing administration, staff & faculty) who serve 2-year terms. Members are appointed by the university president.
- **Conciliation Committee:** Conciliation Committee of the faculty consists of the chairs of five standing committees as follows: Academic Performance & Integrity, Educational Policies, Faculty Affairs, Governance, and Rank and Tenure.
- **BIRT:** Dr. Angie Hambrick, Assistant Vice President of Diversity, Justice and Sustainability, who also serves as the Coordinator for the BIRT
- Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?
  - **Student Conduct:** Students are separately accountable both to local, state, and federal laws and to the PLU Student Code of Conduct. <https://www.plu.edu/student-code-of-conduct/plu-policy-and-the-law/>
  - **UDRC:** Not typically
  - **Conciliation Committee:** Not typically
  - **BIRT:** No
- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**
  - **Student Conduct:** “In particular, the university [PLU] will see as a violation of this policy, any behavior which communicates a message that is threatening, intimidating, or demeaning or which causes physical harm to a person or persons because of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law. Any person or persons who are found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion, or termination.”  
<https://www.plu.edu/student-code-of-conduct/wp-content/uploads/sites/439/2020/08/student-code-of-conduct-2020-2021.pdf>
    - **UDRC:** The full range of disciplinary sanctions, including termination and/or expulsion.
    - **Conciliation Committee:** Usually outcomes are based on what the grievant requests as outcome if grievance is substantiated. (Determined in conversation with a past Rank & Tenure chair)
  - Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?

- **Student Conduct:** Review Officers make decisions regarding consequences/outcomes. Incident reports are reviewed and investigated as needed by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The SRR also determines the process most appropriate to the situation. If a Review Meeting is scheduled, students (complainants, respondents & witnesses) are notified at least 24 hours in advance (not including weekends & holidays). Failure to attend a meeting may result in sanctions. Students have the right to an orderly meeting, witnesses, to speak on their own behalf, fair and impartial decision makers, no retaliation, a written decision, and self-initiated appeal
- **UDRC:** After investigation, the committee recommends actions but does not impose sanctions. Sanctions and other corrective measures for faculty are determined by the Provost, by the Vice President of Student Life for students; and by the appropriate administrative Vice President for staff and administrative personnel. The authority imposing sanctions shall report its action to the Dispute Resolution Committee in writing.
- **Conciliation Committee:** The Committee seeks a settlement among interested parties. If within a period of thirty days (or a longer period acceptable to all parties) the committee reaches the opinion that a settlement is not obtainable, it shall arbitrate the points in dispute. The committee shall report its arbitration decision to the president and the petitioner. Within thirty days of receipt of that decision, the president and the petitioner shall notify each other and the committee of their acceptance or rejection of it. If either rejects the committee's decision, they may appeal to the Board of Regents within thirty days of that rejection.
- Are reports tracked? **Yes** How are they tracked? By who?
  - **Student Conduct:** The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities maintains individual student conduct records for three years after the student graduates, or for seven years after the student has left Pacific Lutheran University. Records of students who have been suspended or expelled from the university may be kept for an indefinite period of time. During their senior year at PLU or after graduation, students who have completed all sanctions in a timely and satisfactory manner may request to have their non-academic Student Conduct file expunged.  
<https://www.plu.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities-procedures/conduct-records/>
  - **UDRC:** The Dispute Resolution Committee will retain records of informal grievances for a minimum of three (3) years. Formal grievances: The Dispute Resolution Committee is the custodian of all records developed during the investigation of a grievance. All records of the Dispute Resolution Committee are considered confidential and will be retained by the Committee for three (3) years, except records relating to grievances involving violations of the University's policies on Equal Opportunity,

Affirmative Action, and Sexual Misconduct, which may be kept indefinitely at the discretion of the Committee.

<https://www.plu.edu/udrc/policies-procedures/>

- **Conciliation Committee:** No, reports are not tracked (follow up with past Rank & Tenure chair)
- Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
  - **Student Conduct:** A student's previous conduct history may also be reviewed as a part of a case if PLU deems it relevant.  
<https://www.plu.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities-procedures/decisions/>
  - **UDRC:** No
  - **Conciliation Committee:** No
  - **BIRT:** No
- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**
  - Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender.
    - **Student Conduct:** In cases of sexual or physical assault a support person is assigned to both the complainant and respondent. In other cases, a student may request to bring support person. This request is made to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.  
<https://www.plu.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities-procedures/student-rights-and-responsibilities-processes>  
Note: The Dean of Inclusive Excellence and the VP for Diversity, Justice and Sustainability are often resources for students who experience racial bias (from a conversation with the Dean & VP)
  - Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations.
    - Maybe. A separate mechanism/pathway exists for challenging grades. Faculty may request Conciliation, which could be used as a way to investigate potential impact on evaluations
  - Protection against retaliation or repercussions, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment.
    - **Student Conduct:** Students within the conduct system have the right to a positive academic learning environment free from retaliation or harassment, regardless of a student's involvement in the incident. If retaliation or perceived retaliation occurs, the student must contact SRR immediately. Retaliation may be grounds for further conduct violations and/or interim measures.  
<https://www.plu.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities-procedures/student-rights-and-responsibilities-processes/>
    - **UDRC:** The University expressly prohibits retaliation against any person who has filed a grievance, or in any way participated in the grievance process. Any person who violates this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination and/or expulsion.

- **Conciliation Committee:** Unclear, except for prohibitions against retaliation in broader university policy.
  - **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**
    - Petitions of # signatures trigger a town hall, meeting with organizational leadership, or policy change. What is the follow-up process for town halls and meetings?
      - We typically do not have a town hall meeting system, but listening and information sessions are commonly scheduled to gather information, get feedback on ideas, or float wording of motions and policy. These sessions may be offered through units (academic departments & divisions), through the governance system, or for different groups (separate sessions for students, for staff, for contingent faculty, for untenured faculty, and for tenured faculty).
    - Working groups or committees with power to change or propose changes to policy.
      - **University Diversity Committee:** One of the charges of this committee is to recommend necessary and appropriate policy changes to the administration and the faculty. This committee charge is set within the Faculty Handbook.
      - **Policies set by Faculty:** Typically, most changes to the Faculty Handbook are brought by faculty or university committees, but any group of 3 or more faculty members may submit motions for consideration during a Faculty Assembly. The Faculty Executive Committee reviews all business and sets the agenda a week prior to the monthly Faculty Assembly meetings. A motion is presented, discussed and voted on. All tenure track, full time contingent and administrative faculty are eligible to vote in Faculty Assembly. Part-time contingent and emeriti faculty may speak to motions, but not vote.
      - **ASPLU:** Student governance passes bills & resolutions to request specific support and changes from the university.  
<https://www.plu.edu/asplu/what-we-do/>
    - Cultural surveys, regular or only after wide-spread reports or high-profile incidents.
    - Leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve.