Grievance Procedures:

Luther Seminary provides a grievance procedure process as a part of its effort to ensure fair treatment of students in regard to their personal and educational concerns. Any student who believes that an employee of the Seminary has subjected him or her to treatment that violates Seminary policy or practices may seek to have his/her grievance heard.

Most student complaints against faculty, administrators or other staff are resolved by discussions with the person or group involved. When this approach proves unfruitful or seems undesirable or inappropriate, the grievance procedures are available. Except for complaints of discrimination or harassment, the complaint must be registered within six months of the occurrence of the event cited in the grievance.

Students are encouraged to make complaints of discrimination or harassment immediately after the event complained of, but such complaints will be received at any time (even more than six months after the occurrence of the event). Students making complaints of harassment or discrimination are not required to go through the grievance procedure but may bring their complaints directly to the Dean of Students office or the Vice President for Human Resources, for appropriate action by the Seminary.

Complaints regarding student employment issues are not heard through the grievance process but are handled as with other Seminary employee matters. Student employees are encouraged to talk with their supervisors or with Human Resources about issues of concern. Ultimately, the appropriate vice president has responsibility for final resolution of student employment-related complaints. Complaints of sexual misconduct should be made pursuant to the terms of the Seminary's sexual misconduct policy, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Grievance Procedure Process:

First Level

In a matter where there is a disagreement or divergence of opinion between students, between a student and a member of the faculty, or between a student and a member of the staff, the various parties involved shall first speak with one another, clarifying the nature of the problem, the issues involved, and possible responses or solutions to the conflict, with the goal of coming to a mutually agreed upon resolution of the matter among themselves without additional participation from other members of the community.

Second Level
If the conflict is of a nature or intensity that the procedure outlined in the First Level is not adequate or appropriate and is between students, any of the parties involved in the dispute may request the Associate Dean of Students to join them in a conversation where the following alternative process will be followed:

1. The persons involved in the conflict will attempt to state the nature of the conflict and describe their understanding of what is at stake in the disagreement. Each party will also describe his or her involvement thus far in this situation. The persons involved will then have the opportunity to suggest ways in which they believe this conflict might be resolved.

2. The persons involved will then have the opportunity to suggest ways in which they believe this conflict might be resolved.

3. With the leadership of the Director of Residential and Community Life, the persons involved will work in a collaborative effort to explore and then choose a satisfactory response and resolution to the conflict.

4. The persons involved in the conflict, with continuing leadership of the Associate Dean of Students, will seek reconciliation among themselves.

If the conflict is of a nature or intensity that the procedure outlined in the First Level is not adequate or appropriate and is between a student and faculty or a student and staff, any of the parties involved in the dispute may request, within 30 days, that the Dean of Students (and the Academic Dean, when the dispute involves both a faculty member and a student and the Vice President of Human Resources & Organizational Development, when the dispute involves both a student and a staff member) to join them in a conversation where the following alternative process will be followed:

1. The persons involved in the conflict will attempt to state the nature of the conflict and describe their understanding of what is at stake in the disagreement. Each party will also describe his or her involvement thus far in this situation.

2. The persons involved will then have the opportunity to suggest ways in which they believe this conflict might be resolved.

3. With the leadership of the Dean of Students (and the Academic Dean, when a faculty is involved; and the Vice President for Human Resources & Organizational Development when a staff member is involved) the persons involved will work in a collaborative effort to explore and then choose a satisfactory response and resolution to the conflict.
4. The persons involved in the conflict, with continuing leadership of the Dean of Students (and the Academic Dean, when a student is involved; and the Vice President for Human Resources & Organizational Development when a staff member is involved), will seek reconciliation among themselves.

**Third Level**

In a dispute where a resolution satisfactory to both parties is not achieved at the first and/or second levels within 30 days, the Dean of Students (and the Academic Dean, when a faculty is involved; and the Vice President for Human Resources & Organizational Development when a staff member is involved), will meet with the parties involved in the dispute individually and then together, with each party involved in the conflict having the opportunity to describe:

1. The nature of the problem as he or she perceives it;

2. the intellectual, theological, communal, personal, or emotional issues involved; and

3. the significance of the issues and what is at stake for each person involved.

Following these meetings, the Dean of Students will convene the standing committee on discipline (Associate Dean of Student Resources and Candidacy, the Dean of Students and three student representatives selected by the Dean of Students). When a faculty is involved, the standing committee on discipline will be added, when a staff person is involved, three staff members will be selected by the Vice President for Human Resources & Organizational Development to serve with this committee. In addition, each member of the faculty involved in the conflict may choose one member from the faculty to be included as part of this committee. Under the leadership of the Dean of Students, this group will meet with the parties involved in the conflict, and may meet with the witnesses, and will focus the discussion on the concerns listed above. This group will follow the following additional steps:

1. The Dean of Students, together with the standing committee on discipline, will privately hold counsel and arrive at an evaluation or judgment in regard to the dispute.

2. At a meeting at which all parties involved are present, the Dean of Students will report the evaluation or judgment reached by the Dean of Students and the standing committee on discipline. At such time, in a spirit of collaboration, each person in this group (the parties involved in the dispute, the members of the faculty committee, and the Dean of Students), will suggest various responses and resolutions to this conflict. Where such collaboration is not possible because of the dimensions or intensity of the conflict, the Dean of Students and the standing committee on discipline will determine what measures will be taken in an effort to resolve the dispute, including the possibility of formal mediation.
At a final meeting, the standing committee on discipline and the parties involved in the conflict, led by the Dean of Students (and the Academic Dean, when a faculty is involved; and the VP for human resources when a staff member is involved), will seek reconciliation among those involved.

The right to confidentiality of all members of the Seminary community will be respected in both informal and formal procedures, insofar as possible. The Seminary will limit disclosure of confidential information to a need-to-know basis. Legal or other obligations of the Seminary may, in some circumstances, require investigations or other actions wherein confidentiality requests may not be honored.