

## UNDERSTANDING AND PROTECTING YOUR RIGHTS AS A COLLEGE STUDENT

College students have fundamental rights that protect their access to education, privacy, and fair treatment. These rights include, but are not limited to, access to their educational records, protection from discrimination, freedom of speech, the right to protest, due process in disciplinary matters, and the ability to receive reasonable accommodations for disabilities. Additionally, students have the right to financial aid transparency and a safe learning environment. **If you believe your rights have been violated, it is important to take strategic steps to address the issue and seek resolution.**

The following framework provides guidance on how students can effectively advocate for themselves and protect their educational experience.

1. **Identify the issue** - Define what right may have been violated, review relevant policies published by the university, and gather details such as dates, individuals involved, and documentation.
2. **Document everything** - Keep records of all communications of who you spoke with and when, write a detailed account of the incident(s), and save relevant institutional policies or evidence that support your claim.
3. **Seek internal resolution** - Start by identifying a trusted individual to make aware of the issue. Then go on to address the issue with the appropriate campus official (e.g., professor, academic advisor, Title IX coordinator, student affairs office). If unresolved, consider formal grievance processes.
4. **Utilize resources** - Seek support from campus student groups, trusted individuals, and counseling services to navigate the situation effectively. If you are a Scholarship Foundation student, please contact your Scholarship Foundation Advisor or call in an anonymous report of the issue at (314) 250-9939.
5. **File a formal complaint** - If internal resolutions fail, inquire about the proper federal and state agency to file a formal complaint.
6. **Seek external support if necessary** - Consult civil rights organizations or legal aid groups for further guidance and consider legal action if the violation significantly impacts your education.
7. **Stay engaged and advocate** - If you believe the issue affects more individuals than just you, contact the Foundation's Advocacy team to raise awareness, so that we can help future students navigate similar challenges. Email us at [advocacy@sfstl.org](mailto:advocacy@sfstl.org).

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