



**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
EDWARDSVILLE**

**2023-2024 Complaints  
Summary Report**

# Introduction

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This report summarizes the complaints submitted by the University main administrative areas (Academic Affairs, Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Administration, Student Affairs, and the SIUE Foundation), using a common reporting template. The report identifies the noted areas of concern and common issues. The complaints report documents were reviewed by the University Quality Council. Those included complaint reports submitted by academic schools and college and other functional areas reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (AY24), the Equal Opportunity, Access, and Title IX Coordination Office (EOA) which reports to the Vice Chancellor for Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (FY23 and FY24), the Police Department which reports to the Vice Chancellor for Administration and various units reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The University Foundation did not have any complaints to report. Below is a qualitative summary of key areas of concern and common themes in Academic Affairs and the Office of EOA–Title IX Coordination. The remainder of the functional areas complaint data is quantified in **Table 1**.

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## Academic Affairs Complaints (AY24): Common Areas of Concern

Across academic (College and Schools) and support (Registrar, Financial Aid, Advising, etc.) units, the following themes emerge as common areas of concern:

- **Instruction/Classroom/Grading:** A number of complaints were related to grading disputes, faculty behavior, and unclear policies. In the Academic Affairs report, multiple complaints were recorded regarding grading fairness and faculty interactions. Issues surrounding course content clarity, faculty turnover, and grading concerns were also noted.
- **Financial Concerns:** A number of complaints across virtually all units stemmed from financial concerns, including issues with tuition waivers, fees, and the accessibility of financial support. The Graduate School reported a high volume of financial complaints, particularly regarding Graduate Assistantship (GA) salaries and financial hardship support. Similarly, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) reports complaints in regards to refund policies.
- **Academic Advising:** Complaints about academic advising, with students expressing frustration about unclear advice, delays in responses, and the availability of advisors, were also noted. Both the Graduate School and CAS reports indicate the need for clearer communication and more efficient advising processes.
- **Discrimination and Inclusivity:** Issues related to discrimination, particularly regarding campus safety and the accessibility of resources for diverse groups, have also been raised. CAS highlighted concerns related to discrimination, which requires better coordination with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access. The Graduate School has made procedural changes to address inclusivity in various policies.

- **Administrative and Policy Confusion:**
    - Registrar: Complaints about degree denial processes, application fees, and commencement issues.
    - Legal: FERPA-related complaints and access to student information.
    - Technology: CougarNet navigation issues and PIN resets.
  - **Student Support Services:**
    - Nursing: Nine complaints were noted, but specifics were not provided.
    - Engineering: One complaint, resolved quickly.
    - Military and Veteran Services: Issues with military tuition rates and summer class availability.
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## EOA-Title IX Coordination Summary of Complaints (FY24)

Across offices reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI), the following themes emerge as areas of concern:

- **Discrimination and Harassment:**
    - Most complaints related to discrimination, sexual harassment, and domestic violence.
    - Significant number of campus climate reports and bias incidents.
  - **Campus Climate Concerns:**
    - Campus Climate Reports show a need for better coordination between departments and more proactive measures when dealing with repeated issues.
  - **Policy and Procedural Changes:**
    - Implementation of new Title IX regulations and processes.
    - Development of case management models for pregnant and post-natal students.
  - **Response and Resolution Processes:**
    - Creation of detailed response processes for various types of complaints (campus climate, discrimination, Title IX).
    - Use of Maxient case management software to track and manage complaints.
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# TABLE 1: Summary of Complaints

Complaint Category	Number of Complaints (Total)	Resolutions Provided (Total)	Procedural Changes (Total)	Policy Changes (Total)	Average Days to Resolution
Instruction/Classroom/Grading	16	15	2	1	3
Academic-Other*	18	17	0	0	2
Academic-Advising	7	7	4	1	2
Financial	5	4	0	0	1
Interpersonal Conflict	5	2	1	1	3
Health/Wellness	10	9	1	1	2
Facilities/Technology	1	1	0	0	1
Housing/Parking/Dining	6	6	1	1	4
Legal	1	1	0	0	2
Communication	10	9	1	1	2
Student Workplace/Employment	5	4	0	0	4
Other (Admissions)	3	3	0	0	2
Miscellaneous	11	7	1	0	4
Instruction: Quality and Preparation	4	2	0	0	2
Academic-Other: Building and Lab Conditions	10	3	3	0	2
Health-Wellness: Pandemic Response	4	3	0	0	2
Financial: Wages and Tuition Waivers	17	1	0	1	2
Discrimination/EOA: Academic	7	1	1	1	3
Discrimination/EOA: Access	2	0	0	0	2
Discrimination/EOA: Title IX	76	94	3	1	94
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6.95</b>

\*Other may include: library resources, class scheduling issues, etc.

# Policy Changes Examples

- **Campus Climate Reports** – During FY24, Campus Climate reports changed from a committee response to EOA taking the lead on responses. As a result, a process for responding to the Campus Climate reports was created (see below for detailed response process). Additionally, for reports that demonstrate repeated issues, EOA may coordinate with other departments to respond to the issue with education or awareness to the campus community (i.e. providing education regarding transgender and nonbinary members in our community to prevent hygiene products in the restrooms from being tampered with).
- **Pregnant Student Support (Title IX)** – In an effort to ensure compliance with the Department of Education’s published expectations pertaining to the rights of pregnant and post-natal student pursuant to Title IX, EOA, in FY24, adopted a case management model to support students and ensure their success.
- A process was developed to receive and respond **to requests for academic accommodations** (see below for detailed response process), from pregnant and post-natal students. The case management model used by EOA staff ensures that students are aware of their rights under the SIUE Pregnancy Policy and Title IX and have their needs met so they can be successful.

*In May 2024, the Department of Education released new Title IX regulations with an implementation deadline of August 1, 2024. As a result, it was necessary to review the SIUE Title IX policy and procedures to ensure they met the new regulations. EOA spent the summer of 2024 working on revising the policy and procedures, and they went into effect on August 1.*

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## Emerging Patterns

- **Information Gaps:** Several complaints across all units revolve around insufficient or unclear information regarding academic policies, advising, and financial matters. There is a pressing need for better communication and clarity, particularly in the Graduate School, where logistical and program-specific complaints are prevalent.
- **Faculty-Student Interactions:** Several complaints highlight concerns with faculty interactions, including grading issues and lack of responsiveness. This indicates a need for continuous faculty training, especially in handling student concerns, grading issues and communication as larger transparency and communication on academic policies.
- **Need for Better Coordination:** Complaints often involve multiple units, for example, the Graduate School collaborating with Student Affairs and CAS to improve communication with the ACCESS office. Strengthening inter-unit communication and collaboration can streamline complaint resolutions and prevent issues from escalating.

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# Recommendations

1. **Options for Faculty Training:** Additional training for faculty on issues related to handling grading complaints and addressing inclusivity can mitigate many complaints in the Instruction/Classroom/Grading category.
2. **Better Communication on Matter Related to Financial Cost:** Both Graduate School and CAS would benefit from revising their financial communication strategies. Offering clearer, more transparent guidelines on tuition, fees, and support mechanisms can help alleviate confusion and frustration, particularly for students facing financial difficulties.
3. **Advising System Overhaul:** Given the frequency of advising-related complaints, a review of the current advising structure, including the expansion of drop-in advising sessions and assigning advisors will need to be prioritized. This could significantly reduce complaints regarding academic advising.
4. **Improved Complaint Tracking:** Both Graduate School and CAS should consider refining their complaint tracking systems, ensuring that there is a clear follow-up process for complaints that are referred to other department. An overall university tracking system that allows for better coordination across units and faster response, when multiple departments are involved in finding a common resolution, should be designed and implemented for better complaints tracking.

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# Conclusion

The summary of complaints presented in this report reveals some common concerns in regards to faculty interactions, administrative processes, communication and addressing grades and the availability of support services. Addressing these areas through consistent quality improvements in policy application and regular and prompt communication, improved faculty training, and enhancing student support will be instrumental to improving the overall student experience. Regular review and streamlining of complaint handling processes, as well as proactive measures based on analysis of complaint data, will contribute to a more responsive and supportive academic environment. By addressing the identified common concerns and implementing the recommendations above, SIUE can continue to improve student satisfaction and the academic experience across all divisions.