



Type:	Services	Created:	2018
Adopted By:	Board of Directors	Last Amended:	June 2022
Executive Responsibility:	Advocacy and Governance	Procedure:	

PREAMBLE:

As mandated by the Bylaws, the Students' Union will provide an advocate service to assist members.

STATEMENT

The Student Advocate shall provide confidential and informal assistance to members in, resolving appeals, conflicts and disputes and in addressing fairness issues at Vancouver Community College. The Student Advocate shall work to ensure that in dealing with student appeals and complaints, Vancouver Community College is following its procedures and procedural fairness to its procedures and structures.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The Student Advocate will provide the following informal assistance to members:

- Listen to student concerns and assess the situation presented;
- Answer questions or help find others who can;
- Provide information on college policies and procedures, as well as related student rights and responsibilities;
- Assist students in gathering information about their case;
- Discuss possible courses of action, including steps to resolve problems informally;
- Assist students in filing appeals;
- Assist students in preparing for conversations with supervisors, instructors or administrators, or for formal hearings;
- Participate in meetings between students and College officials as a witness; and,
- Refer students to service departments, or external agencies, for assistance and/or advice.

The Student Advocate will not:

- offer counseling; or
- act as a legal or other representative for students.
- act on behalf of students

SERVICE USAGE AND ACCESS

This service shall be open to all current Students' Union members. When resources or circumstances allow, both former members and prospective students may also access the Student Advocate.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The following operating principles shall be applied by the Student Advocate service:

Confidentiality – the Students’ Union will maintain the confidentiality of information provided to the Student Advocate unless directed otherwise by the student providing the information. This confidentiality is enables students to discuss matters with the Student Advocate and receive advice without taking action. Confidentiality will be deemed void if a student makes comments about doing harm to themselves or others, or if a student speaks to the Student Advocate about a criminal act. The Student Advocate is neither a lawyer nor medical professional, and there is no legal privilege attached to communications between students and the Ombudsperson.

Independence – The Students’ Union operates independently from Vancouver Community College and is responsible to students who are Students’ Union members.

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest – The Student Advocate will seek to avoid conflicts of interest between their work in the role of the Student Advocate and other duties they perform for the Students’ Union, and with respect to their working relationships with members of the campus community. The Student Advocate shall not represent a member in their dealings with the Students’ Union.

No Duty to Assist – The Student Advocate shall review each request for assistance and shall, at their sole discretion, determine wither the Student Advocate service shall be provided to the requesting student based on the merits of the case and the structures under which Vancouver Community College processes student complains and appeals. The Students’ Union does not have a legal duty to represent a member regardless of their circumstances.

Zero Tolerance for Abusive Behavior – The Students’ Union has zero tolerance for abusive, harassing or bullying behavior and any student acting in such a manner with the Student Advocate shall be immediately released from the service.

REPORTING

The Student Advocate will maintain records on assistance provided and annually produce a report on the service.

END OF DOCUMENT