

## **Notification of the Montana University System and Miles Community College Complaint Process**

The Department of Education's Program Integrity rules (34 CFR 600.9(a)(1)) require each state to have a process for receiving, reviewing and responding to complaints regarding the program integrity of postsecondary educational institutions delivering educational services in that state. Each institution must inform students how to initiate complaints in the state where the student receives instruction. This notification provides information on the complaint process available to students, wherever located, of the Montana postsecondary institutions, and to students receiving instruction in the State of Montana from any postsecondary institution, wherever located.

Complaints regarding program integrity may include one or more of the following categories:

- Complaints that allege a violation of state consumer protection laws that include but are not limited to fraud and false advertising;
- Complaints that allege a violation of state law or rule relating to the licensure of postsecondary universities; and/or
- Complaints related to the quality of education or other State or accreditation requirements.

Montana state law (Mont. Code ann. § 20-25-201 and Title 20, Chapter 15 Mont. Code Ann.) designates and authorizes the Montana University System colleges and universities together with the named community college districts to provide postsecondary education in the State of Montana under the authority and control of the Board of Regents of the Montana University System. Those institutions are as follows:

- Montana State University – Bozeman
- Montana State University – Billings
- City College at Montana State University –Billings
- Montana State University – Northern
- Great Falls College—Montana State University
- The University of Montana – Missoula
- Missoula College—University of Montana
- Helena College –University of Montana
- Montana Technological University
- Highlands College of Montana Tech
- The University of Montana – Western
- Dawson Community College
- Flathead Valley Community College
- Miles Community College

These institutions are accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, 8060 165th Avenue NE, Suite 100, Redmond, Washington 98052, (425) 558-4224, <http://www.nwccu.org/>.

Evidence of each institution's accreditation can be found at: <http://www.nwccu.org/member-institutions/directory/>.

## HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT:

Students and prospective students of the Montana University System and the Community Colleges are encouraged to initially address integrity complaints through the applicable institution's complaint or review procedures. This includes complaints related to state authorization reciprocity agreement standards. Students may contact Richard DeShields, Vice President of Student Engagement at 406-874-6226 or [deshieldsr@milescc.edu](mailto:deshieldsr@milescc.edu), or in person, at the Student Services desk if you wish to file a complaint.

Program integrity complaints that remain unresolved at the college level may be further pursued in the following manner:

- An individual adversely affected by a decision may appeal to the College President.
- An individual may then direct their complaint to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education for review and referral to the appropriate agency, or for resolution (Board of Regents' Policy 221-- <https://www.mus.edu/borpol/bor200/221.pdf> ).
- Complaints concerning broad institutional academic practices, such as those that raise issues regarding an institution's ability to meet accreditation standards, may be filed with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. <http://www.nwccu.org/> .
- Complaints concerning consumer protection violations may be directed to the Montana Department of Justice Office of Consumer Protection. <http://dojmt.gov/consumer/consumer-complaints> .
- For Montana residents and students located in a state or territory that has joined SARA, the SARA State Portal Entity is responsible for conducting the investigation and resolution of complaints that are not resolved at the institutional level. If a person bringing a complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of the institutional process for handling complaints, the complaint (except for complaints about grades or student conduct violations) may be appealed, within two years of the incident about which the complaint is made, to Montana's SARA State Portal Entity at <https://www.mus.edu/che/arsa/StateAuthorization/Students.html> .
- Individuals enrolled in an online or distance course with the Montana University System or the Montana Community Colleges and residing outside of the State of Montana can seek to utilize the complaint processes in their state of residence. A list of information regarding the complaint processes of other states can be found here: <http://www.mus.edu/OnlineStudents-StateContactInfo.asp>