Proposal For a Blockchain Student Grievance Redressal Portal

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Introduction

What does student satisfaction have in common with consumer satisfaction? Everything, given that modern higher education is both a service and a product. Thus, a dissatisfied student is a dissatisfied consumer, and this reality intensifies the gravity of grievance redressal outcomes because it not only raises the stakes overall, but it also pits each stake against each other. By no means ordered by importance, stakes include the following: student safety, student academic outcomes, law adherence, university reputation, monetary value, academic integrity, status quo, and subsequent student and staff behavior. In addition to competing interests, the transparency, privacy, effectiveness, presentation, and navigability of grievance redressal systems also affect the outcomes. Due to the varying sizes and needs of institutions, there is no one-size-fits-all grievance redressal system. Therefore, universities must meticulously choose and implement the best system to serve their students and staff. Tiffin University [TU] particularly would benefit from amending their grievance redressal processes and utilizing blockchain technology for a grievance redressal portal.

Problem Statement

TU's current online student grievance redressal form is a close equivalent to a physical complaint box, being that it is…

- Opaque: While the page that houses the online form provides information about ways to file the complaint, the page does not detail what to expect and what exactly happens after submission. That information can only be found by reviewing the 61-page policy book.
- Insecure: Despite the sensitivity of grievance details and documents, Tiffin University does not disclose the measures being taken to ensure that the form isn't vulnerable to malicious attacks.
- Inefficient: Because the complaints are addressed and stored through email, it is harder to streamline, track, and compile the data of complaints to inform changes to procedure. Moreover, according to Kumar et al. (2024) email presents a single point of failure.

Moreover, the grievance redressal process itself is insufficiently advertised because students would only know about it by diligently searching. Not only is the student and staff grievance page sequestered to the footer of the Current Student and Student Support pages, but it is also not intuitive to check the Offices & Departments list and check the Center for Compliance, Accessibility, Resources, and Education [CARE] page (TU, 2025; TU, 2026a; TU, 2026b). The current system also does not properly serve students because despite the varying issues that students have, only Title IX complaints are accepted. The narrow focus, combined with the word "compliance" in the department title, communicates Tiffin University's sole priority to comply with the law, not provide a transparent mechanism for students to lodge complaints unrelated to gender and race discrimination. To name a few alternate concerns, grievances can include interpersonal conflicts and concerns regarding policy and procedures according to Sheth et al. (2024). Thus, it is imperative to address a wider scope of issues because students deserve to feel heard on all fronts in an uncomplicated and centralized manner.

Solution

To refine TU's current student grievance redressal system, administrators must first collaborate with the IT department to choose and implement the right blockchain technology for TU's needs. Then, in an effort to shift the culture surrounding grievance redressal, administrators must educate staff and students on the process and facilitate the portal's proper integration.

Why Blockchain?

Implementing a grievance redressal portal using Blockchain technology is the best way to address transparency, security, effectiveness, and student awareness. Blockchain, as explained by the U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO] is a distributed ledger, a secure decentralized network of cryptographically secure and permanent transactions as well as digital assets that allow multiple individuals and organizations to view transactions in real time (Persons et al., 2019). Despite initially being used for cryptocurrency, various sectors utilize this technology, including healthcare and the government (Kumar et al., 2026). Moreover, per Kumar et al. (2026), blockchain does not have a single point of failure due to its extensive information logging and categorization capabilities, granting it easy

auditability. Additionally, blockchain eliminates the need for the third-party verification of users (Kumar et al., 2026).

The trust that healthcare systems and the government place in blockchain technologies is a testament to their security, effectiveness, and feasibility. There are also several studies of systems that illustrate the superiority of blockchain-based student grievance systems, such as Tripathi et al.'s (2021) iGRAM program implementation, Tijare et al.'s. (2023) grievance system developed on GitHub, and Kumar et al.'s (2026) study of a Hyperledger Fabric grievance system. Notably, Tripathi et al. (2021) found that iGRAM helped management better track grievances at different levels amongst multiple related entities, providing the opportunity to consolidate when necessary.

Choosing the Right Blockchain Host

In Kumar et al.'s (2024) comparison of the benefits and drawbacks of public and permission blockchain, they found that consortium blockchain is more fitting for university needs because it combines the benefits of both public and permission, including security and scalability. Furthermore, in their subsequent 2026 study, they state that Hyperledger Fabric with RATH consensus, as opposed to Kafka, Solo, and Zookeeper, is more reliable and fit for real applications. Ultimately, IT's expertise will inform the decision.

Change of Culture Surrounding Grievance Redressal

Across 100 institutions in the UK, Scottland, and Wales, Gedye et al. (2021) conducted a survey amongst Complaints and Appeals staff. In addition to highlighting the efficiency of online grievance portals, respondents expressed the need for the culture surrounding grievance redressal to change overall. They find culture changes necessary to improve resolution time, clarify student expectations, and mitigate the negative impact on student/staff relationships caused by complaints. An online portal would aid the administration of such changes in the following ways:

- The portal's transparency decreases expectation misalignment, preventing the waste of time caused by miscommunication.

- The portal simplifies the complaint process, directing students to the correct process early on and avoiding the frustration caused by long resolution time. Decreased frustration means improved student/staff interactions.
- Administration must also raise awareness of the grievance portal by including it, along with comprehensive instructions and guidance, in the university's homepage. There should be multiple dedicated banners to it in Student Support and Current Students, and adding it to student dashboards, such as MyApps and Self-Service.

Cost

Based on TU's 2022-2023 Fact Book, the Student Services budget is $17,107,139 (TU, 2024). Moreover, TU has 3,726 enrolled students (TU, 2026c). Based on TU's needs, a grievance portal implementation and maintenance cost estimate is $100,000, 0.6% of the Student Services budget (GeeksForGeeks, 2022).

Conclusion

Efficient grievance redressal is an integral part to maintaining student satisfaction, student safety, positive academic outcomes, positive university reputation, academic integrity, and monetary value. Further, an online grievance redressal portal is crucial to effective complaint management, increased privacy and security, and transparency. When I was going through an email-based grievance redressal system myself, it was informal and I had no idea who the right person to go to was. My concern did not end up being resolved or even properly addressed. I wish I had an online portal to ease the process. Blockchain technology is the best way to host that portal and meet TU's needs.

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