**N.  Concerns or Complaints Regarding Compliance with Standards, or  Accusations of Inappropriate Conduct**

AERAC has a commitment to the highest standards of professional conduct.  Organizations, specialized schools and higher education programs that are accredited by AERAC are expected to operate within an ethical milieu and abide by the principles of effective administration and quality service delivery. It is expected that organizations, specialized schools and higher education programs exhibit integrity in carrying out their responsibilities and adhere to the standards throughout the accreditation period. When evidence to the contrary is presented by consumers, employees, or the public at large, AERAC has a mechanism in place to investigate legitimate public concerns and complaints about a higher education program, organization/school serving individuals who are blind or low vision, or AER accreditation program itself.

A concern or complaint report must be submitted in writing to the AERAC chairperson (AERAC@aerbvi.org) describing the nature of the concern as follows:

1. Explain the reasons compliance with standards is being questioned, or facts of the incident(s);
2. When possible, provide the dates during which the alleged activities occurred.

Upon receipt of the concern or complaint report, the HEAC or OSAC will conduct a review. If it is determined to be necessary, a site review per Section K. may be conducted.

HEAC/OSAC will conduct its investigation in as confidential a manner as possible. The organization, specialized school or higher education program will have the opportunity to respond to the allegations. HEAC/OSAC will submit a report to the AERAC indicating that the alleged concern or complaint is valid or not valid and will provide appropriate recommendations for consideration by the Council.

In the case of accredited programs or organizations, consequences may include continued monitoring over a time-specific period, reclassification to Provisional Accreditation status or withdrawal of accreditation. The accredited program or organization will receive a letter specifying the areas of violation and given a time frame to complete corrective action.

In the case of concerns or complaints about the AERAC itself, consequences may include personnel actions, policy changes or specific remedies as appropriate. In the case of illegal activities, the appropriate authorities will be notified.

Appropriate communication to the party expressing the concern or complaint will be provided by the Chair of the Council or Chair of HEAC/OSAC, as appropriate, at the conclusion of the review.