

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

Student Grievance Policy

It is inevitable that students will sometimes disagree with faculty decisions regarding grades, instructional techniques, advising, course content and classroom experiences. Students with concerns regarding any of the aforementioned are provided with the following grievance process:

Grievances Regarding Grading

Each course syllabus must clearly delineate the grading process in a course. The weight given to each assignment should be reflected and adhered to consistently in the class. Students should receive clear instructions regarding the prerequisites for successful completion of the course requirements, i.e., on what basis would a student not receive a passing grade ("C" or above).

If a student receives a grade that she believes does not reflect her performance in a class, she has a right to meet with the professor to discuss the grading process. The student should be prepared to present evidence of work completed in the class. If, after meeting with the faculty member, the student reasonably believes that she has still been graded unfairly, she should meet with the Department Chairperson to discuss her grievance.

The department chair should consult with the faculty member to determine if there is sufficient evidence (grades and written assignments and work) to substantiate the grade received by the student. Once the department chairperson consults with the faculty member she/he should make a decision to either uphold the decision of the faculty member or to ask the faculty member to reevaluate the student's grade.

If the student is not satisfied that the department chairperson and faculty member have offered a fair evaluation of her grievance, she should submit an official grievance report to the Office of the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will meet with the student, faculty member and department chair individually and, if necessary, in a group meeting to discuss the grading process and resulting grade assignment.

The Academic Dean will render a decision on the basis of the fact-finding process. The decision of the Academic Dean will be final. If necessary, the Academic Dean will enlist the services of faculty members within the department to assist in the disposition of the grievance. The Academic Dean and department faculty will review the evidence submitted by the student. The Academic Dean will issue a written response of disposition to the student, faculty member and department chair.

Grievances regarding the grading process should be filed and addressed by the mid-semester of the semester following the semester that the aggrieved incident occurred.

Grievances Regarding Course Requirements

Course syllabi should reflect all course requirements. Course requirements must be directly related to the course objectives. Students must not be required to complete any requirement that could prove

injurious to their physical or mental health. Any student who believes that she is being required to complete and/or adhere to unreasonable requirements should voice her concern to the instructor.

The instructor must meet with the student to discuss her grievance and render some decision regarding the contested matter. If the instructor does not believe that there is any reason to reevaluate course requirements, the student has a right to then take the matter to the department chairperson for discussion and evaluation.

The department chairperson, after meeting with the aggrieved student, should thereafter speak with the faculty member regarding the reasonableness of the course requirements. The department chairperson should make an assessment of the validity of the grievance and render a decision. If the department chair believes that unreasonable requirements exist, he/she must request that the faculty member remove the requirement in question.

If a student is not satisfied with the decision of the department chairperson, she should file an official grievance with the Office of the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will meet with the student, faculty member and department chairperson individually, and if necessary, in a group to attempt to resolve the situation. The Academic Dean will render a final decision regarding the course requirement in question. The Academic Dean will issue a written response of disposition to the student, the faculty member and the department chair.

Grievances regarding course requirements should be filed before the end of the semester in which the student is enrolled in the course.

Grievances Regarding Classroom Atmosphere

The classroom should reflect an environment where teaching and learning occur in a cooperative fashion between students and the instructor. Inappropriate behavior on the part of students or faculty will not be tolerated. Inappropriate behavior includes excessive absences, tardiness and lack of preparedness for class. In addition, the use of profanity or sexist or racist characterizations, or sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior, including talking during presentations and lectures will not be tolerated. Faculty members are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner throughout the class period.

If a student believes that the classroom atmosphere is inappropriate or improper as defined herein, she should share her concerns with the faculty member. If the faculty member does not address the student's complaint in what she considers a satisfactory manner, the student should submit a written grievance report to the department chairperson.

The department chairperson should give due consideration to the student's grievance and speak with the faculty member and other students in the class, if necessary, to determine the validity of the grievance.

If the grievance is not resolved at the department chair level of intervention, the student should file an official grievance with the Office of the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will meet with the faculty member and the department chairperson to discuss the grievance. If necessary, the Academic Dean will meet with other students in the class. On the basis of the investigation, the Academic Dean will render a decision. The Academic Dean will issue a written response of disposition to the student, the faculty member and the department chairperson.

Grievances regarding inappropriate classroom conduct should be filed before the end of the semester in which the alleged inappropriate behavior occurs.

Grievances Regarding the Advising Process

Students are assigned academic advisors upon first year enrollment and have a right to effective advising throughout their matriculation. Academic advisors are required to provide accurate and timely information regarding course and graduation requirements and academic support programs for their advisees.

If a student believes that she is not receiving adequate advising she should bring her grievance to the attention of the Coordinator of First and Second Year Advising or the department chairperson. The Coordinator of First and Second Year Advising/Department Chairperson should discuss the grievance with the student to determine the validity of the student's concerns. If the Coordinator of First and Second Year Advising/ Department chairperson believe that the student has a valid grievance he/she should speak with the advisor to address the student's concerns. If the student wishes to be switched to another advisor, the Coordinator for First and Second Year Advising and/or Department Chairperson should honor the student's request.

If a student reasonably believes that her academic progress toward completion of required courses has been hindered because of poor or inaccurate advising, the student should bring the matter to the attention of the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean, in consultation with the Department chair, will evaluate then-existing options for the student. The Academic Dean will issue a written response of disposition to the student and her department chairperson.

Grievances regarding the advising process should be filed as soon as the student believes that she is or has been ineffectively advised.