



STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES – ACADEMIC EVALUATION

Policy Number: 5035

Applicable Code/Law: N/A

Purpose and background

The student grievance procedure provides a means of resolving disagreements or misunderstandings in the assignment of grades and other academic evaluations. The assignment of grades and other academic evaluations are solely the responsibility of faculty. Grades may not be changed except by approval of the instructor(s) of a course or by decision of a Committee for the Resolution of Academic Grievances (CRAG), which will be implemented by the Executive Vice President for Student Learning and Success (EVP).

Grade changes will be considered only if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- a. a mistake was made in the calculation of the grade
- b. the instructor(s) did not follow the grading policy stated in the course syllabus or applied the policy selectively
- c. the grading policy for a course was unclear or incomprehensible
- d. the instructor(s) acted in bad faith or in a fraudulent manner*

It is the responsibility of the student filing the complaint to provide clear evidence that one or more of these conditions apply.

*When applicable, the College will conduct due diligence in following up on allegations of fraudulent behavior on the part of the faculty.

Definitions

- a. Unclear or incomprehensible grading policy
A grading policy is unclear or incomprehensible if a reasonable person reading the policy could not determine how grades are assigned.
- b. Bad faith
The instructor(s) act(s) in bad faith if they evaluate academic work in a manner that indicates the intent to mislead students. For instance, an instructor who tells

students that an assignment will not affect their grade but then uses the results of that assignment as part of the final grade calculation has acted in bad faith.

c. Fraudulent behavior

The instructor(s) act(s) in a fraudulent manner if they misrepresent the process of evaluating academic work. For instance, an instructor who gives the responsibility of grading student work to an unqualified person has committed fraud by representing the evaluations as their own.

d. Academic evaluation

Academic evaluations include any of the following: assignment of final course grades; assignment of grades to academic work completed in response to course requirements; administration of examinations and quizzes; evaluation which takes place at an internship site where the instructor(s) and key contact at the site help to develop the grade; and evaluation of laboratory or clinical performance.

e. Conflict of Interest

For the purposes of this policy a conflict of interest occurs when members of the CRAG have prior knowledge of the student grievance through a relationship with the student and/or faculty member(s).

1. Representation and use of designees

Both the student and the involved faculty member(s) are entitled to counsel at any of the meetings described below. The student may choose to be accompanied by a representative designated by the Director of Student Life, or by personal counsel of their choosing. The faculty member(s) may choose to be accompanied by a representative of the faculty bargaining unit.

If at any point during the grievance process the involved faculty member(s) is incapacitated or has not responded after ten instructional days (class days) or twenty-one calendar days (whichever is less) to a good faith effort to be contacted, the Faculty Senate Chair will appoint a faculty designee to assume the role of the involved faculty member(s) in the grievance process as described below.

If the Dean or EVP is unavailable, their roles may be fulfilled by a designee.

2. Student Grievance Procedures

Step 1. A student with a complaint about a grade or academic evaluation should seek out the involved faculty member(s), state the nature of the grievance, and make a serious attempt to resolve the issue. The student can contact the Director of Student Life for support in this process, and in the event that the student has concerns about issues of discrimination or harassment, this step can be bypassed and the student proceed directly to Step 2.

- Step 2 If the meeting with the instructor(s) does not resolve the complaint, the student may request a meeting to discuss the grievance with the division dean. This meeting must take place no later than the 20th instructional day (class day) of the next regular academic quarter, excluding summer quarter. The division dean will attempt to achieve a resolution of the grievance.
- Step 3 If the meeting with the division dean does not resolve the grievance, the division dean will call a meeting with the student and the involved faculty member(s). This meeting shall take place within ten instructional days (class days) of the meeting described in Step 2. The student will provide clear written evidence in support of their grievance and to document completion of Step 1. The division dean will conduct the meeting and attempt to achieve a resolution of the grievance.
- Step 4 If the meeting with the division dean and involved faculty member(s) does not produce a mutually satisfactory solution, the student may present the complaint to the Committee for Resolution of Academic Grievances (CRAG). The student must file a written request for a CRAG session with the EVP within ten instructional days (class days) of the meeting described in Step 3; the Office of the Executive Vice President will assist the student through the process. The request must identify the faculty member(s) involved, state the nature of the grievance, and provide clear evidence that the complaint meets the conditions for a grade or academic evaluation change (see Purpose).

3. Procedures for convening and conducting a CRAG session

Within five instructional (class) days of the receipt of a student request for a CRAG session, the EVP will furnish a copy of the complaint to the faculty member(s) named in the grievance. The faculty member(s) will submit a written response to the grievance along with relevant documentation within five instructional (class) days after receiving the complaint from the EVP.

The EVP will schedule a session of the CRAG to occur no sooner than ten instructional (class) days and no later than twenty instructional days from the date of receipt of the CRAG session request from the aggrieved student.

The EVP will preside over the CRAG session, but will not have a vote. The CRAG will review the written statements from the student and the faculty member(s). The decision of the CRAG will be based on the evidence contained in these statements alone. There will be no verbal testimony. The CRAG will then deliberate, and vote to decide whether the criteria for a grade change are met and a remedy is warranted. The CRAG will have the power to provide remedy in those cases where it judges the grievance to have been sustained. This remedy may include, but not be limited to, changing scores or grades of the faculty member(s). It is the responsibility of the EVP to provide a copy of the decision of the CRAG to the student and faculty member(s). In addition, he or she will see that a written account of the session is maintained for five years, including the findings of the CRAG.

The decision of the CRAG is final. In the event that the CRAG orders a change of grade on a student's transcript, the change will be made such that the old grade is replaced, as in the correction of an error. In the event that the CRAG does not order a change of grade on a student's transcript, the grade assigned by the faculty member(s) will remain.

4. Composition of the CRAG as an annual standing committee

The CRAG shall consist of four faculty members, two students, and one administrator in addition to the EVP, or their designee, who serves as the non-voting presiding officer.

The faculty members shall be selected in the following manner not later than October 31 of each academic year:

- a. The names of ten tenured faculty members who are actively teaching, thus not on leave, shall be chosen by the President of the Federation by a random selection process and submitted to an all-faculty vote whereby the four voting members are determined. The other six faculty members shall be considered alternates and may be called to serve in the order of the descending number of votes each received. Alternates may be asked to serve for a variety of reasons including a conflict of interest affecting a standing member, as determined by that member. The President of the Federation shall not serve on a CRAG given their role in its selection process. Each tenured faculty member shall serve for the entire academic year.
- b. The two students will be appointed by the President of the Associated Student Government.
- c. The administrative representative will be appointed by the College President.