Academic Governing Council

Decision Form

This form is to be used when the Academic Governing Council makes a decision on an issue. This form is sent to the Provost.

Decision: AGC adopted a new Grade Grievance Process. The Process is listed below:

Grade Grievance Process

The purpose of this process is to resolve grade disputes between students and instructors in a manner that is timely and upholds academic integrity.*

This process is to be used only for disputes regarding final grades. A student who perceives an individual grade received during a course to be unfair must resolve the matter informally with his or her instructor. Only when an individual grade has impacted a student’s final grade, or when a student perceives a final grade to be otherwise unfair, may the student invoke the formal grievance process noted below.

Informal Process

Step 1: The student shall contact the instructor within **15 school days** after the posting of a perceived unfair final grade to try to resolve the matter informally.

Step 2: If the grade dispute is not resolved at Step 1, the student has **5 school days** to contact the appropriate Department Head or Program Director to try to reach a resolution that is mutually agreeable to the student and instructor. A written description of the grievance may be requested by the Department Head or Program Director.

Formal Process

Step 3: If the issue is not resolved at Step 2, the student has **5 school days** to initiate the Formal Grade Grievance Process by completing a Grade Appeal Form and delivering it to the Assistant Dean of the academic department responsible for the course. (Grade Appeal Forms are available in all Assistant Deans’ offices and on the College website under “Current Students.”)

The Assistant Dean has **15 school days** from receipt of the Grade Appeal Form to discuss the situation with the student and instructor, and, if necessary, Department Head/Program Director, and make a written decision to:

1) deny the request for a change of grade, or
2) move forward with the Formal Grade Grievance Process by convening the Academic Governing Council (AGC) Grade Appeal Hearing Committee.

The Assistant Dean may deny a request for a change of grade and decline to refer the grievance to the AGC Grade Appeal Hearing Committee in the following instances:

1) When the instructor has followed the guidelines set forth in his or her syllabus.
2) When the instructor has followed College policies and procedures that would impact the student’s grade.
3) When the student provides no evidence that he or she was treated in a partial or otherwise unfair manner.
4) When the student provides no evidence that a grade was miscalculated.
5) Other cases may exist in which an Assistant Dean may deny a grade change request.

Written notification of the Assistant Dean’s decision and rationale will be sent to the student (via first-class mail), instructor, and appropriate Department Head/Program Director.

The Assistant Dean’s decision at this stage is final and binding. However, cases in which a student’s final grade results in expulsion from a program progress from the Assistant Dean to the AGC Grade Appeal Hearing Committee, if the student so requests and if the student has followed all the steps of the Informal Process.*

Step 4: If the Assistant Dean’s decision is to convene the AGC Grade Appeal Hearing Committee, its Chair shall do so within 10 school days.

The Grade Appeal Hearing Committee shall be a standing committee of the Academic Governing Council. The Committee shall be comprised of 5 members and shall include 3 faculty members, 1 academic administrator, and 1 student. The Chair of the Hearing Committee shall be an appointed faculty member. The student shall be a member of the Student Congress. In a case where any member of the AGC Grade Appeal Hearing Committee (faculty member, student, or administrator) is involved in the grade dispute at hand or is otherwise unavailable, an appropriate substitute member will be appointed by the AGC Executive Board to the Committee for that case. The Educational Support Professional working with the academic administrator serving on the Hearing Committee shall serve as Recording Secretary (a non-voting position) for the Committee. Hearings also will be audio-recorded. Hearings are not open to the public.

Both the student and the instructor shall be invited to attend the Hearing Committee. If either the student or the instructor fails to appear before the Hearing Committee, a decision will be made based upon the information that is presented at the Hearing and evidence already submitted during the grievance process.

The Hearing Committee will present its written decision to the student (via first-class mail), instructor, and appropriate Assistant Dean within 5 school days of the hearing.

If the Hearing Committee finds in favor of the student, it shall ask the instructor and, if necessary, the appropriate Assistant Dean to submit a Change of Grade Form to the Registrar’s Office within 5 school days of the written notification.

The decision of the AGC Grade Appeal Hearing Committee is final and binding.

*For Students in Health Programs: When the appeal involves a grade awarded or an expulsion from the component of a health course or program (Nursing, Dental, Radiologic Technology, and Occupational Therapy Assistant), the student will follow that program’s specific grade grievance process. The Student Handbook for each program contains the grade grievance process and can be found on Blackboard.

**School days are Mondays through Fridays, while classes are in session.
Rationale: There are problems with the current Academic Grievance Process. The Academic Grievance Process is lacking in clarity and efficiency. This process is also lacking in impartiality. A new process should also reduce the time spent on cases without merit. This issue impacts all students with a grade complaint and the faculty to whom the complaints are directed. In addition the respective Department Heads, Assistant Deans and potential Ad Hoc Committee members would be impacted.

Supporting Data: See above….See committee notes (Contact: Steve Abid)

Implications for Action: See above

Evaluation Plan: Plan to be evaluated by Provost/Deans in conjunction with the Grade Grievance Committee on an annual basis.

Date of Decision by AGC: May 9, 2006

Response from Provost:
I approve the Grade Grievance Procedure as approved by AGC on May 9, 2006. Please note that this process will replace the current Academic Grievance Procedure in Section 7.3 of the College’s Policy Manual. This change will be reflected in the 2007/08 College catalog. This policy will also be disseminated to faculty and staff ASAP.

Donald Boyer, Ph.D.
Interim, Provost/Executive Vice President
October 20, 2006