UNIVERSITY STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

A student academic grievance is appropriate in cases in which the student claims unfair, prejudicial, or capricious evaluation or treatment of an academic nature. A grievance is not appropriate on actions which would impair the exercise of academic freedom. A student non-academic grievance is appropriate in cases involving access to and participation in course offerings, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, or any other act by a University faculty member that is derogatory or discriminatory in nature. No student may pursue the formal part of the following grievance procedure before exhausting all informal procedures. What follows does not preclude a faculty member's appeal to the Faculty Grievance Committee.

The grievance process is intended to deal with matters as expeditiously as possible. Although the times listed below are recommended guidelines for handling the steps of the process, it is expected that they will not be exceeded except under compelling circumstances.

A student who claims grievance as described may consult with the Ombudsman or meet directly with the instructor involved. The grievance process is as follows:

Informal Procedure

- The student shall meet with the instructor in an attempt to resolve the issue within 15 days on a non-academic grievance and normally within 15 days of the beginning of the next semester on an academic grievance. (The student may consult with the Ombudsman.)
- Should the issue not be resolved to mutual satisfaction, the student may, within five days, appeal an academic matter to the Chair of the given Department who shall provide the student and faculty member with a decision within five days of appeal, or appeal a non-academic matter to the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, who will attempt to resolve the matter within 10 working days from the time of appeal. In cases involving a conflict of interest with the Vice President for Student Affairs, the student may appeal a non-academic matter to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. If any unfair or unjustifiable injury or disadvantage occurred, the decision shall include specific remedies to rectify the situation.
- Should an academic issue not be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties, the student or faculty member may, within five days, appeal the decision of the Chair to the Dean(s) of the College(s) in which the given academic concern resides and to the Dean of Graduate Education if a graduate student is involved. This appeal shall specify in writing the alleged grievance. The Dean(s) or Dean(s)' designee(s) should meet with the relevant parties within five days of the appeal. The Dean shall deliver a decision within five days after said meeting. If any unfair or unjustifiable injury or disadvantage occurred, the Dean's decision shall include specific remedies to rectify it.

Formal Procedure

Should the issue not be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties, the student or faculty member may, within five days of the final written decision from the informal procedure, initiate the formal phase of the grievance procedure by written appeal to the Chairperson of the University Student Grievance Committee. Legal counsel may be used by the parties at the parties' cost, as part of the formal procedure. Legal counsel for either party shall act in an advisory capacity only and not be permitted to speak on behalf of any party. The Committee shall have access to the University attorney on procedural matters.

- The Student Grievance Committee shall accept for hearing only those cases considered grievances as described above.
- The Student Grievance Committee shall meet at the call of the Chairperson upon receipt of a formal grievance. The Chairperson will:
  a. Obtain written statements from all parties involved in the appeal.
  b. Call for a meeting of the Committee to review the statements from the parties involved within 10 days of submission of the appeal, unless extraordinary circumstances require a delay, and determine a date and time for the hearing.
- The Committee will:
  a. Notify all parties of the time, date, and place of the hearing at least five days in advance.
  b. Call on other faculty, staff, and students if it would serve the purposes of due process.
  c. Retain records of all written matters dealing with each case.
  d. If the committee decides that a grievance is not in order and the alleged grievance concerned discrimination, a copy of the minutes of the meeting will be sent to the Affirmative Action Officer.
- The Committee shall submit its findings and decision to the appropriate academic officer for review within 45 days after the matter has been formally submitted to the Committee. This time period shall not include University holidays and times when the faculty are not under contract such as during the summer. If the Committee finds that unfair or unjustifiable injury or disadvantage has occurred, it shall forward to the appropriate academic officer its specific suggestions for rectifying it. The appropriate academic officer, within 30 days of the receipt of the findings and recommendations of the Committee, shall notify all concerned parties of agreement or disagreement with the Committee's decision, stating the reasons in writing. Upon agreement of the parties, the grievance process can be concluded at any time before notification by the appropriate academic officer.
- In cases where there are findings of unfair or unjustifiable treatment of students in a non-academic matter, the Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for rectifying the situation per the Committee's findings.