

GRADE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

I. NEED TO PROTECT FACULTY AND STUDENTS

The Academic Assembly instituted grade grievance procedures to protect individual students against instructors who may have assigned grades unfairly or arbitrarily. It is vital, however, that a procedure set up to ensure fair treatment for students does not become an instrument for unfair treatment of faculty. In fact, the grade grievance subcommittees have no legal authority to change a grade assigned by a faculty member. Accordingly, these procedures should not be used to undermine faculty authority, or to require faculty to spend an inordinate amount of time defending the professional judgment and reputation against meritless complaints.

II. FORMATION OF THE GRADE GRIEVANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Academic Affairs and Planning Committee shall form Grade Grievance Subcommittees as necessary to hear grievances. Each subcommittee shall consist of four persons: three faculty members, and one student representative.

Faculty membership on the subcommittee shall include one member of the Academic Affairs and Planning Committee, who will act as chair. Two additional faculty members will be selected from a pool of faculty members, nominated by each department within the College of Arts and Sciences. Each department may submit two names for the pool, although smaller departments may elect to submit only one name. Each member of the pool should serve for 2 years, with the terms staggered so that approximately half of the members would be replaced every year.

Student membership will be selected from the student pool of Arts and Sciences majors, which will include the AS Vice President of Academics, and two other students appointed annually by the AS President, with approval of the AS Senate. No two students can share the same major.

Faculty and student representatives shall be selected at random from their respective pools, under the following conditions and restrictions: First, at least one faculty member must be from the same area as the instructor whose grade is being challenged (Humanities, Fine Arts, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences), and at least one faculty member must be from a different area as the instructor whose grade is being challenged. Second, no person on the subcommittee shall be from the same department as the instructor being challenged.

III. PROCEDURE FOR GRADE GRIEVANCE

A. Preface

1. It is **hoped** that grievances will be resolved informally by the instructor and student.
2. If a formal grade grievance is filed, the instructor's judgment is **presumed** to be correct. At **every** level of the grade grievance procedure, the burden of substantiating a grievance rests with the student.
3. Grading criteria, course requirements and course content are the exclusive prerogative of the instructor. The presumption is that students have been given ample opportunity for clarification of class requirements at the beginning of a given course.
4. The student **must** frame any grievance by alleging an unfair application of specific evaluative measures.
5. A student cannot use the unfavorable outcome of an academic integrity case as a basis of a grade grievance.

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B. Grade Grievance Procedures *

1. Initial grade grievances must be addressed to the instructor of the course. If informal discussions fail to satisfy the student, the professor must inform the student that should the student wish to begin a formal grade grievance procedure, the following deadlines and rules must be observed:
2. The student shall have **six months**, calculated from the date of submission of the student's final course grade, to initiate a formal grade grievance procedure. Students must file for a grade grievance within the six month time period unless exempted by the Dean. To initiate this procedure, the student must mail or deliver to the professor's campus mailing address or office, a **written, dated** notice of intent to initiate a formal grade grievance.
3. The student shall also send a copy of the notification to the department chair, and contact the department chair for an appointment to review the grievance.
4. If the matter is not satisfactorily settled in #3 the department chair will refer the student to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and will supply the Dean with appropriate background on the grievance as understood by the department chair. If the professor in question is the department chair, the matter will automatically be referred to the Dean.
5. If no agreement is reached in #4, and the Dean feels the student may have a legitimate grievance, the Dean will promptly refer the matter to the Academic Affairs and Planning Committee, which will form a Subcommittee in accordance with the procedures established above.
6. The Subcommittee will conduct a hearing in a timely fashion, and will submit its recommendations to the Academic Affairs and Planning Committee, which will then forward the recommendations to the parties involved. Neither the Subcommittee nor the Committee has the authority to change a student's grade, change the grading option, or remove the course from the student's permanent record.

* At every level in this grievance procedure the instructor must be apprised of the situation.

Approved by the Academic Assembly (1989-1990)