

# **College of Agriculture and Food Sciences**

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This document contains procedures and policies for resolving student academic grievances which may originate in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Florida A&M University (cf. FAMU Rule 6C3-4.002, Florida Administrative Code).

#### **STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Definition - A grievance is defined as a dissatisfaction which results when a student feels that an action by another student or a representative of the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences is unjust, inequitable and, or punitive.

The purpose of this appeal process is to provide an aggrieved student with the necessary procedural guidelines to process any academic grievance or circumstance. The student has a one-year statute of limitation to file a grievance (Example: Dissatisfaction occurs during the spring semester: the student must file no later than the following spring semester). The student grievance procedure, with the prescribed processing time allotments, can take approximately 2 1/2 months to complete. Due to the gravity of the student grievance process and to maintain its integrity, it is imperative that all parties adhere to the time constraints delineated, unless extenuating circumstance dictate otherwise.

#### **INITIATION OF COMPLAINT**

### **Step 1**

The student must meet with the individual(s) concerned (i.e., instructor, administrator, advisor, or other student or students) to discuss the grievance and attempt to resolve it. For each meeting, a copy of the Record of Action Taken Form (Appendix 1), which synoptically documents the meeting proceedings, must be completed, signed and dated by both parties. If the student remains dissatisfied, the student may proceed to Step 2.

### **Step 2**

The student must meet with the individual(s) concerned and the appropriate Advisor/Area Coordinator to attempt the resolution of the grievance. This meeting must be requested by the student in writing and submitted to the appropriate Advisor/Area Coordinator within fourteen (14) business days of the Step 1 meeting. Within fourteen (14) business days from the receipt of the student's written request, the appropriate Advisor/Area Coordinator must contact the other individual(s) concerned, schedule and convene this meeting. A copy of the Record of Action Form (Appendix 1) must be completed, signed, and dated by all parties present. If the student remains dissatisfied, the student may proceed to Step 3.

### **Step 3**

The student must file a written request delineating the complaint(s) or each allegation(s) with the Division Director within seven (7) days of the Step 2 meeting, asking for a meeting with the student, the individual(s) concerned, the appropriate Advisor/Area Coordinator and the Division Director. The Division Director shall contact all parties concerned and convene this meeting concerned in Step 3 within seven (7) days of the date the request for such a meeting is received. A copy of the Record of Action Taken Form (Appendix 1) must be completed, signed and dated by all parties present. If the student is still dissatisfied, the student may proceed to Step 4.

### **Step 4**

The student must file a written request with the Associate Dean for Academic Programs within seven (7) business days of the Step 3 meeting, asking for a meeting with the student, the individual(s) concerned, the appropriate Advisor/Area Coordinator, the Division Director and the Associate Dean. The Associate Dean shall contact all parties concerned and convene this meeting concerned in Step 4 within seven (7) days of the date the request for such a meeting is received. A copy of the Record of Action Taken Form (Appendix 1) must be completed, signed and dated by all parties present. If at this stage the student is still dissatisfied, the student may proceed to Step 5.

### **Step 5**

The student must, in writing, petition the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences for a hearing with the Grievance Committee of the College Agriculture and Food Sciences. This petition must be submitted within seven (7) business days of the Step 4 meeting and must be filed in the Dean's Office.

Upon receipt of the petition, the Dean shall submit the student's complete grievance package to the CAFS Grievance Committee to hear the complaint. The CAFS Grievance Committee shall be appointed by the Dean and/or Associate Dean for Academic Programs for a two-year (2) period and shall be comprised of three (3) faculty members,

one (1) A&P employee (Student Support Services), one (1) USPS employee, one (1) undergraduate student, and one (1) graduate student. If any CAFS Grievance Committee Member is named as a party in a grievance, they must be excused from the committee for the pertinent grievance filed. The Dean and/or Associate Dean for Academic Programs can temporarily replace any excused committee member(s) with faculty, staff or students they deem appropriate for the duration of the filed grievance. The Chairperson of the Grievance Committee will be the employee who serves as the CAFS Representative on the university-wide Undergraduate Academic Regulation Appeal Committee. The hearing shall take place within fourteen (14) business days of the date that the request for such a hearing is received.

### **Step 6**

The Chairperson of the Grievance Committee shall cause to be issued and served to the individual(s) concerned, in the name of the Grievance Committee of the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, a copy of the complaint(s) or allegation(s) together with a written notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing. Emailing is acceptable with return receipt, "read" notification, etc.

### **Step 7**

- A. Hearing - If a hearing is ordered, the individual(s) concerned must file a written, verified answer within seven (7) business days from the service of the complaint and notice of the hearing.
- B. Place and Manner of Filing - The answer must be returned to the committee Chairperson and copied and filed in the Dean's Office, Room 217 Perry-Paige Building, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences. The filing shall be by personal delivery or by registered mail, return receipt requested or email.
- C. Form of Answer - The answer shall contain a specific response to each and every allegation of the complaint contested by the respondent, or a knowledge or information sufficient to a belief, and a statement on any matter constituting a defense.
- D. Amendment of Answer - The answer or any part of it may be amended as a matter of right at any time before the first hearing and, thereafter, at the discretion of the Grievance Committee.
- E. Failure to File Answer - The Grievance Committee may proceed, notwithstanding failure of the individual(s) concerned to file an answer within the time provided to hold a hearing, and make its finding of facts and recommendation based upon the testimony taken during the hearing.

### **Step 8**

#### **Hearing**

- A. Opening Statement - Each party shall be given an opportunity to make an opening statement.
- B. Power of the Grievance Committee - The CAFS Grievance Committee may call and examine witnesses, direct the production of papers or other documents, and introduce documentary or other evidence. The CAFS Grievance Committee shall have full authority to control the process during the hearing to admit or exclude testimony, or objections.
- C. Majority Rule - All rulings and determinations of the CAFS Grievance Committee shall be by a majority of the committee members.
- D. Rule of Evidence - The CAFS Grievance Committee shall not be bound by rules of evidence applicable in the courts of record in the State of Florida, but all hearings shall be conducted with regard to fundamental fairness to all parties.

- E. Rights of Parties - The Chairperson of the CAFS Grievance Committee may choose to have the proceedings of the hearing recorded either by tape recorder or a written documentation by a CAFS employee appointed by the Dean or Associate Dean for Academic Programs. No recordings of proceedings will be permitted other than for the official record of the CAFS Grievance Committee.

## **Step 9**

### **Report of Findings**

- A. Written Report and Recommendation - At the conclusion of the hearing and upon due consideration of the evidence, the CAFS Grievance Committee shall submit its findings of fact and recommendation for action(s) to be taken. The CAFS Grievance Committee shall also submit a copy of the complaint and answer or amended answer, and the Official Record of the Proceedings to the CAFS Dean and Associate Dean for Academic Programs.
- B. Action Taken - Upon receipt of a written report from the CAFS Grievance Committee, the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences shall promptly review the findings and recommendation(s) of the Committee. After such a review, the Dean shall immediately send to each party, a copy of the decision and the action that will be taken based upon the review of the recommendations of the CAFS Grievance Committee.

## **Step 10**

### **Amending Procedures**

These procedures for Student Grievances and Hearings may be amended at any time by the majority vote of the faculty of the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences. Any amendments must be published and distributed before becoming effective, and may not be applied to the prejudice of any party.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University**  
**College of Agriculture and Food Sciences**  
***RECORD OF ACTION FORM***

STEP NO. \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start time: \_\_\_\_\_ End time \_\_\_\_\_  
Meeting location: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Accused of Grievance: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student (Grieved): \_\_\_\_\_ ID number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Grievance (please state grievance here, or attach document):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Action taken as a result of this meeting: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the action above (circle one) **RESOLVED** – **DID NOT RESOLVE** the grievance

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Individual Accused of Grievance                      Date

In my opinion, the action above (circle one) **RESOLVED** – **DID NOT RESOLVE** the grievance

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student    Date

Deadline Date for Step No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Copy: Individual Concerned  
Student/Grievant  
Advisor  
Division Director  
Associate Dean for Academic Programs  
Dean