Academic Grievances

The College of Education has established specific academic grievance procedures that will be followed in the event of a grade dispute between a given student and instructor. A student must initiate the grievance procedure the semester immediately following the semester the grade was awarded. The grievance process will be utilized only after the student has conferred with the instructor and department chairperson in an effort to resolve the issue (as indicated on page 3 of the grievance application).

A student may petition a departmental decision concerning a grade to the College of Education Grievance Committee when a final course grade is alleged to have been given by a faculty member in a capricious, arbitrary, or discriminatory manner. Any other classification of grade grievance must be identified and explained by the student.

a. "capricious" means not resulting from a reasonable and announced grading policy and procedure.

b. "arbitrary" means without a sound academic basis or else based primarily upon personal preference or whim.

c. "discriminatory" means differential treatment based upon race, religion, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or national origin.

Procedural Steps

The steps to be taken in resolving grade disputes are as follows:

1. The student must attempt as soon as is reasonably feasible after receipt of the grade in question, communicate with the instructor in an effort to resolve the issue. If no satisfactory resolution is reached from the communication with the instructor or if the student fails in their attempts to communicate with the instructor, after reasonable effort, the student will then proceed to step 2.
2. A student whose dispute has not been resolved satisfactorily utilizing the directives in step 1 (stated above), should officially submit his/her grievance in writing to the chairperson of the department in which the course is offered. The faculty member of the course will in turn be required to submit a written rebuttal to the student’s grievance. The chairperson will attempt to communicate directly with the instructor and the student in an effort to resolve the grievance. The chair will submit a written summary of his/her findings and submit to the COE Grievance committee along with the student’s grievance application. **NOTE:** When the instructor of the course also serves as department chairperson, the dispute may be filed with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs in the College of Education. In such case, the Associate Dean would assume the responsibilities originally designated for the chairperson as listed above.

3. The College of Education Grievance Committee will review each appeal, speak with both the student and faculty member and/or conduct a hearing if appropriate and necessary in an effort to resolve the academic grievance dispute. Once these procedures have been exhausted the committee will issue written findings and recommendations to the Dean of the College of Education. These findings and recommendations will be forwarded to the Dean as soon as is reasonably feasible once the committee’s decisions have been made.

4. The Dean of the College of Education will review the Grievance Committee findings and recommendations in each appeal in a timely manner. As soon as is reasonably feasible thereafter, he/she will notify the parties to the appeal in writing of his/her decision and also will provide each of the parties a copy of the Grievance Committees’ findings and recommendation(s). If the decision of the committee does not meet a student’s satisfaction, he/she may continue the grievance process at the next level, the Office of Academic Affairs.

5. In the case a College of Education student has a credible grade dispute arising out of a course offered outside of the College of Education, he/she should contact the appropriate College or School to determine the correct procedure(s) for addressing the grade grievance. **The student will be required to abide by the policies and procedures outlined by the specified college or school.**

*Approved April 2010*
I certify that: (1) I have read and understand the "Grievance Procedures" of the College of Education; (2) I have attempted to resolve this dispute by communicating with the instructor of the course; (3) I have informed the departmental chairperson of the department where the course is taught and solicited his/her assistance in resolving this dispute; (4) the attempts mentioned above in 2 and 3 proved unsuccessful thus the dispute is not resolved to my satisfaction; (5) I contend that this grievance is official and serious in nature and (6) the information that I have provided including all relevant documentation is correct, official, and truthful to the best of my knowledge.

_________________________________________       __________________________
Student Signature                                           Date

The signatures below verify that the instructor and the department chairperson have communicated with the above named student in an effort to resolve the dispute contained within this application according to the College of Education Grievance Procedures.

_________________________________________       __________________________
Instructor Signature                                        Date

_________________________________________       __________________________
Department Chairperson Signature                              Date

Approved April 2010
FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY
College of Education

College of Education Academic Grievance Committee
Student Application for Grievance (Grade)

Name of Student______________________________________________________________

SS# or Student ID#__________________________________________ Major________________________

Address (Local)________________________________________________________________________

(Permanent)______________________________________________________________________

(E-mail)__________________________________________________________________________

Telephone number (Local or Cell)____________________ (Permanent)______________________

Classification
  Freshman { }  Sophomore { }  Junior { }  Senior { }  Graduate { }

Nature of Grievance (please check appropriate box(es)):
  Capricious grading { }
  Arbitrary grading { }
  Discriminatory grading { }
  Other (please identify) ________________________________

Course from which dispute arises:

  Course Prefix & Number: ________________________________

  Course Title: ________________________________________

  Instructor: __________________________________________

  Term & Year: _________________________________________

  Grade Awarded: ________________________________
Please briefly and succinctly state the facts of the dispute (attach additional sheets if needed as well as appropriate supporting documentation).
April 9, 2010

Dr. Genniver Bell, Dean
College of Education
302 Gore Education Center
Florida A&M University
Tallahassee, Fl  32307

Dear Dean Bell:

The College of Education Academic Grievance Committee has met in reference to the Grievance Application of , grievance is in reference to Fall 2009 with . The student received a grade of ‘F’ in the course. The student grievance is a result of the instructor refusing to accept an assignment (after an excused absence) that negatively impacted the student’s final grade.

Commensurate with the COE academic grievance procedures, given thorough review of the documentation provided by both parties, the COE Grievance Committee herewith recommends that the instructor accepts the student’s assignment. This recommendation is rendered based upon the evidence that the student followed proper protocol aligned with the course syllabus and university procedures.

Please find enclosed all documentation provided in response to this grievance. If there are further questions concerning the recommendation of the COE Grievance Committee, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please inform us of the final decision regarding this matter.

Cordially,

Janet M. Sermon, Chair
COE Grievance Committee
College of Education
Florida A&M University

COE Grievance Committee Meeting
Lawson Multi-Purpose Complex/Teaching Gymnasium (Room 449)
September 23, 2010
2:00 p.m.

AGENDA
(Janet M. Sermon, (Chair) Presiding)

1. Greetings

2. Overview of Grievance Applications

3. Review of Grievance Applications and Documentation

4. Discussion

5. Recommendation of the Committee

6. Next Step????????

7. Adjournment
Questions of the Academic Grievance Committee
For Grievance Applicant

1. Provide a brief overview of the purpose of your grievance.
2. Explain the protocol for class assignments.
   a. Are students allowed to resubmit assignments prior to receiving the final grade on the assignments?
   b. Were grading rubrics provided to support each assignment? If so, explain the dissemination process?
   c. Were due dates clearly identified for each assignment?
3. Were any assignments renegotiated? If so, explain the details of the renegotiation.
   a. Were there any circumstances where renegotiation of an assignment would not be permitted?
4. Did the instructor allow for the resubmission of the assignment(s) in question? If so, did you comply? If not, why?
5. What responsibility in this matter do you accept?
6. Can this matter be amicably resolved? If so, how?
Questions of the Academic Grievance Committee
For Instructor

1. Provide a brief overview of your response to the grievance.
2. Explain the protocol for class assignments.
   a. Are student allowed to resubmit assignments prior to receiving the final grade on the assignments?
   b. Were grading rubrics provided to support each assignment? If so, explain the dissemination process?
   c. Were due dates clearly identified for each assignment?
3. Were any assignments renegotiated? If so, explain the details of the renegotiation.
   a. Were there any circumstances where renegotiation of an assignment would not be permitted?
4. At any time, were you willing to allow the student to resubmission the assignment(s) in question? If so, did the student comply? If no, was any reason(s) given for the non-compliance?
5. What responsibility in this matter do you accept?
6. Can this matter be amicably resolved? If so, how?
Please find enclosed the recommendations of the College of Education’s Grievance Committee in reference to the Grievance Application of lf there are any questions and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the committee.
Recommendation of the  
College of Education Grievance Committee  
In the Grievance Application of

The following facts were derived from the review of documents submitted with the Application for Grievance and the interviews of the applicant and the Professor of the applicant:

**Nature of Grievance: Capricious Grading, Arbitrary Grading and Discriminatory Practices**

**Discriminatory Practices**

I. A determination of discriminatory practices was evident
   A. Plagiarism was common among students as it relates to the assignment in question as indicated by both instructor and student.
   B. Other students plagiarized work was accepted and graded more favorably with higher passing grades (A and B).

II. Capricious Grading
   I. A determination of capricious grading was evident
      A. Throughout the semester student work was never returned thus disallowing students an opportunity to respond to the instructor's assessment of the product(s).
      B. The professor indicated feedback was not provided as a consequence of "the students never asked."
      C. The professor acknowledged there was never an official dissemination and discussion of the course syllabus with the class.
      D. The grading rubric utilized in assessment of the assignment in question was never officially disseminated or discussed by the instructor with the class.

III. Arbitrary Grading
   I. A determination of arbitrary grading was evident
      A. The professor acknowledged that the student's grade was an 'A' prior to the submission of the final assignment (constituting 65% of the final grade).
      B. According to the "Quick Look" document disseminated to the class by the instructor, the final assignment value was indicated as 20% (rather than 35% as indicated by the professor during the Grievance Committee's interview of the professor) of the final grade.
      C. It is not clear how a final grade of 'C' was recorded, since there is no evidence the student received a failing grade on the final assignment.

Based upon the information presented above as derived from a thorough review of the official documentation of the applicant and interviews of the applicant and instructor, the COE Grievance Committee has determined that **Discriminatory Practices, Capricious and Arbitrary Grading** were evident.
TO: Dr. Genniver Bell, Dean
College of Education

FROM: Janet M. Sermon, Ph.D., Chair
College of Education Grievance Committee

DATE: December 13, 2010

RE: GRIEVANCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

Please find enclosed the recommendations of the College of Education's Grievance Committee in reference to the Grievance Application of . If there are any questions and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the committee.
Recommendation of the  
College of Education Grievance Committee  
In the Grievance Application of

The following facts were derived from the review of documents submitted with the Application for Grievance and the interviews of the applicant and the Professor of the applicant:

**Nature of Grievance: Capricious Grading, Arbitrary Grading and Discriminatory Practices**

**Discriminatory Practices**

II. A determination of discriminatory practices was evident based upon the following  
A. Plagiarism was common among students in the course in question as indicated by the student and the instructor.  
B. Other students were allowed to resubmit assignments during the semester  
C. Some students were absent habitually and received passing grades (A and B)

**Capricious Grading**

II. A determination of capricious grading was evident  
E. Throughout the semester student work was never returned thus disallowing students an opportunity to respond to the instructors assessment of the product(s).  
F. The professor indicated feedback was not provided as a consequence of the students never asked.  
G. The professor acknowledged there was never an official dissemination and discussion of the course syllabus with the class.  
H. The grading rubric utilized in assessment of the assignment in question was never officially disseminated or discussed by the instructor with the class.

**Arbitrary Grading**

J. A determination of arbitrary grading was evident  
D. The professor acknowledged that the student's grade was an 'A' prior to the submission of the final assignment (constituting 65% of the final grade).  
E. According to the "Quick Look" document disseminated to the class by the instructor, the final assignment value was indicated as 20% (rather than 35% as indicated by the professor during the Grievance Committee's interview of the professor) of the final grade.  
F. It is not clear how a final grade of 'C' was recorded, since there is no evidence the student received a failing grade on the final assignment.

A major focus of the student grievance is based upon the understanding of the student at the directives of the instructor, to re-submit an article critique and an issue paper assignment. The student received details from the instructor relative to the assignments and their re-submission. These directives required the student to submit incident reports in order for the instructor to review and accept the assignments. The student subsequently submitted the assignments and incident reports following the instructor’s directives.
At the admission of the instructor, the student was allowed to re-submit an article critique and an issue paper assignment. The instructor failed to act commensurate with the directives provided for the re-submittal of the assignments. Although the instructor received the assignments and incident report, she chose not to evaluate the assignments citing the student had ample time to resubmit the materials, based upon the official date of the incident report. Both the instructor and student admitted there were no conditions other than the submission of the incident report, whereby the assignments would not be accepted and evaluated.

Based upon the information presented above as derived from a thorough review of the official documentation of the applicant and interviews of the applicant and instructor, the COE Grievance Committee has determined that Discriminatory Practices, Capricious and Arbitrary Grading were evident.