Academic Grievances

The College of Education has established specific academic grievance procedures that will be followed in the event of a dispute (i.e. grade) between a given student and instructor. A student must initiate the grievance procedure the semester immediately following the semester the dispute occurs. 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 given dispute 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, or some other academic matter is disputed. The classification of the alleged academic dispute must be identified and explained by the student.

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

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

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

c. “other” academic dispute classification as defined by the student.

Procedural Steps

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

1. The student must attempt as soon as is reasonably feasible after receipt of the grade in question, or the occurrence of the “other” academic dispute, communicate with the instructor(s) in an effort to resolve the issue. If no satisfactory resolution is reached from the communication with the instructor(s) or if the student fails in their attempts to communicate with the instructor(s), after reasonable effort, the student will then proceed to step 2.
2. A student whose academic 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: (1) When the faculty member(s) with which the academic dispute lies, 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. (2) When the faculty member(s) with which the academic dispute lies, also serves on the COE Grievance Committee, the faculty member must dismiss himself/herself from the grievance process due to conflict of interest.

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 academic 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 grievance. The student will be required to abide by the policies and procedures outlined by the specified college or school.

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