

ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PANELS: Principle and Procedures

Faculty Approval: April, 1985

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PREAMBLE

The academic grievance process is designed to efficiently and effectively resolve complaints outside the purviews of the Faculty Grievance Committee and the College Court between any and all parties involved. The **process** has specific procedures of due process that must be followed by a party in initiating a complaint. The **design** for resolution of the complaint reflects a concept of mediation and not binding arbitration. The parties involved in the grievance may be student-faculty, student-student and faculty-faculty.

The specific procedure for due process of the resolution of a complaint is as follows:

1. The parties shall first attempt to resolve the grievance between them.
2. If no resolution of the grievance is achieved, a party may appeal her/his complaint to the chair of the department in whose department the complaint originated for further attempt at resolution.
3. If the grievance still is not resolved, a party may appeal her/his complaint in writing to the Dean of the College for further attempt at resolution. A complaint regarding a final grade must be made in writing to the Dean of the College within 40 calendar days of the next regular (non-summer) date of registration after the end of the semester in which the grade was earned. In the case of I grades, a party must make the complaint in writing within 40 calendar days after the I grade was changed. The letter should confirm that steps 1 and 2 were accomplished.
4. If the grievance is yet unresolved, the Dean of the College may convene an *ad hoc* Academic Grievance Panel (AGP). A party does not enjoy the privilege of self-referral to an AGP or of any other administrative recourse.

The AGP is considered by the faculty to be the last source of appeal for an academic grievance. Any further recourse would take the form of a legal process.

I. Purpose

The purpose of the AGP is to receive and mediate complaints lodged by students and professors regarding academic behavior. It is understood that the AGP will hear complaints only after due process procedures (outlined in 1-4, above) has been exhausted.

II. Rationale

The basic concept that governs the function of the AGP is mediation. This concept of mediation implies the AGP believes a resolution of grievance can be satisfactorily achieved through consultation with the parties involved in the complaint. Because of basic rights accorded to students and faculty by academia preclude any arbitrary decisions, the AGP cannot assume any mandatory powers in the resolution of complaints.

III. Membership, Appointment and Term of Office

An AGP shall be composed of eight members: four professors and four students. The faculty membership shall represent the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor with one member-at-large from any rank. The student membership shall represent the classes of sophomore, junior, and senior with one member-at-large from any class.

An AGP will be convened by the Dean in the event that a complaint remains unresolved by steps 1-3 under the Preamble. Panel members will be drawn from the Faculty Senate and the SGA. If the complaint is filed outside the regular fall and spring academic sessions, action will be deferred until the following regular session when a pool of Panel members becomes available. However, if both parties agree, the Dean of the

College can establish an AGP composed of fewer members (the exact number and specific composition to be approved by both parties) to consider the complaint between regular academic sessions.

Panel members will serve only until a recommendation about the complaint is issued.

IV. Operational Procedures

Procedures for processing grievances by the AGP are as follows:

1. The Dean of the College will convene an AGP and designate one faculty panel member to serve as chair, to whom the Dean will refer the complaint;
2. The chair will request two members of the AGP (a professor and a student) to conduct a preliminary hearing of the grievance. If this hearing deems the grievance valid, the full AGP will be scheduled to hear the grievance within seven days;
3. The party lodging the grievance will be asked to present supporting evidence for her/his grievance. A copy of this material will be presented, prior to the AGP hearing, to the party against whom the grievance is lodged; and
4. The AGP will attempt to resolve the grievance. If no resolution of the complaint is achieved, the AGP will make a recommendation to both parties involved. Compliance with the recommendations of the AGP is voluntary. Both parties are requested to accept or reject the recommendations within 10 days. The failure of either party to respond will be considered an act of rejection by that party. Rejection of the recommendations by either or both parties implies the action of the AGP is null and void.

V. Confidentiality of Records

All proceedings of the AGP will be held in confidence. Records will be stored in locked files Dean's Office and maintained for five calendar years from the date of ACP recommendations, after which time they will be destroyed.

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