Procedures For Grievance Of The
Rockefeller College Of Public Affairs & Policy

I. For purposes of this document, a “grievance” shall include any complaint alleging wrongdoing made 1) by students against faculty or against other students, 2) by faculty against other faculty or against students, and 3) by students or faculty against administrative officers of the college or its constituent departments and units. “Faculty” shall include any individuals with appointments enabling them to be designated instructors of record, and “students” shall include any enrolled students.

A “grievance” shall include, but not be limited to, any challenge to the resolution of a dispute over matters of academic honesty (such as plagiarism and cheating) and professional ethics or grades assigned for courses. It shall also include any allegation of improper treatment, including improper treatment on the grounds of age, color, creed, disability, marital status, military status, national origin, race, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. In grievances concerning grades, grievances may be filed only as to any final grade or other final disposition for a course. Dropping of a course shall constitute a final disposition for a course so as to allow grievances over grades or other matters occurring prior to the “drop.”

II. The Grievance Committee shall be composed of three members of the Rockefeller College faculty, appointed by the Chair of the Faculty in accord with the By-Laws of the Faculty, and two student members. This committee shall be appointed annually and shall be responsible for addressing any grievances that arise over the course of the academic year.

Should a grievance concern a faculty member with respect to intra-faculty or faculty-administration matters, the faculty member may choose to be heard by the full panel or by that part of the panel consisting of the faculty member’s peers.

A teaching assistant against whom a grievance is brought in that person’s capacity as a teaching assistant shall for the purposes of this section be considered a member of the faculty.

In the event a question arises as to whether a matter laid before the Committee falls within the “intra-faculty or faculty-administration matters” indicated above, the entire Committee shall decide the appropriate jurisdiction to apply.

III. Any grievance must be filed within five months of the time the complainant was informed of the matter which is the subject of the grievance.

“File” shall mean the submission of a statement from the complainant to either the Dean of the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy or the Chair of the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy Grievance Committee. The statement shall 1) detail the event or events to which the complainant is objecting, identify the person or persons the complainant alleges is responsible, and 3) identify the remedy or remedies sought to address the complaint.

IV. The Committee will respond in writing to the grievance within three calendar weeks of the fall or spring term. If the grievance is submitted near the end of the term, the three calendar weeks may straddle the summer or winter break. A grievance submitted near the end of the spring term may be reconsidered by the newly appointed Grievance Committee in the fall. Upon review, the Grievance Committee may authorize the investigation of the grievance, request a clarification from the complainant, or dismiss the grievance with or without prejudice. A
grievance dismissed with prejudice may not be revised and resubmitted; the Committee should opt for this outcome only if it is clear that no reasonable interpretation of the facts that the complainant presents can ground a grievance.

V. If, after a statement alleging a grievance has been filed with the Committee, the Committee determines that the statement does not state a grievance with sufficient clarity to allow the person or unit complained against to prepare a proper response, the Committee may in its discretion return the statement to the complainant with a request for clarification and/or supplementation. The complainant will have one calendar month within which to submit clarification unless the request for clarification is returned within two weeks of the end of the fall or spring term; in that event, the complainant will have up to four weeks from the beginning of the next academic term to submit a clarification.

VI. Once the Committee has determined that a grievance has been stated, the Committee will solicit a response.

The Committee will provide a copy of the statement and supporting data (if the latter are not already available) to the person or persons whom the complainant names. The person or persons so identified will be given the opportunity to respond in writing, together with such documents as they may wish to submit. A copy of their responses to the original complaint will be provided to the complainant.

If the Committee on Grievances decides upon the basis of the statements submitted by both parties that further inquiry is justified and that oral statements supplementing the written statements are desirable, the Committee normally will invite the complainant and those complained against to meet separately with the Committee and augment their written statements with information given orally.

Alternatively, either party may request of the Grievance Committee a hearing at which all concerned parties are present. If the Committee believes this to be advisable, the Committee will provide notice to all parties and conduct an informal hearing.

In the informal hearing, the complainant and the parties complained against, together with those witnesses for either party whose testimony has relevance to the issues at hand, will be invited to make statements or submit documents to representatives of the Committee on Grievances conducting the informal hearing (a majority of at least four out of six Committee members shall be present). The informal hearing will not entail taking sworn testimony since it is essentially a conference conducted in an orderly manner by the persons in charge of the hearing. Hearings will be recorded (voice only) and copies of the recording will be made available to the parties upon request. Any of the parties attending the hearing may take notes for their own purposes.

If either party wishes to have legal counsel or an advisor present at the hearing, they may do so, but the function of legal counsel or advisor will be limited to advising his/her client and if desired, making a final summing up statement on behalf of the client. His/her role will not include such formal processes as eliciting testimony from her/his client, objecting to statements made in testimony, or cross-examination of witnesses. The Committee may, at its discretion, permit cross-examination of witnesses, but if cross-examination occurs, the opportunity to cross-examine witnesses will be provided to both sides and will be conducted with such oversight and limitations as the Committee sees fit to provide.
Following submission of written statement, or after oral statements are made, if meetings are held with the Committee, or, if an informal hearing is held following that hearing, the Committee on Grievances will make findings of fact and recommendations for appropriate action with reasons to the Dean of the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, or where appropriate, to the Faculty. A copy of the recording of the hearing and the findings and recommendations of the Committee will be on file and fully available to the complainant and those complained against, and photocopies will be furnished at the cost of photocopying to concerned parties desiring them. The complainant and other parties may, if they wish, submit further written statements commenting on the Committee’s findings and recommendations prior to the Dean’s or Faculty’s review, providing there is notification of intent to do so within a reasonably short time to avoid undue delay.

It should be emphasized that since this is a grievance procedure, with the objective of ameliorating or resolving conflict as simply and quickly as possible while preserving the basic element of fair play or due process, the steps in the above process may be foreshortened at any stage providing there is mutual consent by the parties concerned in the interest of achieving an equitable resolution of the issues within a briefer period of time.

**VI. Under the By-Laws, the function of the Committee on Grievances** is that of finding the facts through the process outlined above and making a recommendation to either the Dean or Faculty. The Committee does not have the power to reverse or modify a faculty member’s or an administrator’s decision. However, recommendations of the Committee are normally given weight by the parties involved.