

STUDENT ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES (CAS)

Found on p. 36 of 2012 *Department Chair Manual*: www.albany.edu/cas/docs/2012-chairs-manual_compiled.doc

The following procedure has been established for undergraduate and graduate students who seek adjudication of an academic grievance against faculty members or instructors in the College of Arts and Sciences. Such grievances may concern grades assigned or penalties imposed for alleged academic infractions.

University policy states: “It is expected that the grounds upon which an academic grievance may be based should be clearly identified. Such grounds may include variance from University grading standards/policies, grade calculation inconsistencies with that announced in published course syllabi, procedural abnormalities, or other factors that are alleged to have denied the student a fair evaluation. It is not expected that grievances will propose that the professional obligation of faculty to fairly evaluate academic material within their field of expertise will be supplanted by alternate means without procedural cause” (University Senate Bill 0203-10).

Step 1: The Department Level

A student who seeks to dispute a grade or evaluation, or seeks to appeal a penalty that has been imposed by a faculty member for academic dishonesty or alleged academic infractions, must initially pursue the matter directly with the faculty member involved. If the case is not satisfactorily resolved with the faculty member, a written grievance may be filed with the department chairperson or program director, according to departmental procedure. If the grievance is specifically against the chair/director, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will appoint a designee from the department in question to serve in his or her place.

The chair/director shall consult with the faculty member in question and request a written response to the grievance, copied to the student. The chair/director then provides his or her own recommendation, copied to the student and to the faculty member.

Step 2: The College Level

If the student is not satisfied with the efforts made in Step 1 to achieve a resolution of the grievance, she/he may then submit a request to the College of Arts and Sciences’ Academic Programs Committee, via the Dean’s Office, to consider the grievance. This request must be filed within one year from the end of the semester during which the incident occurred.

An assistant or associate dean of the College will discuss the grievance with the petitioner, the instructor, and the chair/director, and will make a written recommendation to all parties. The matter may be resolved at this stage. If the petitioner wishes to continue the grievance, the assistant/associate dean will coordinate the document file including relevant e-mails and any other materials such as syllabi, excuse notes, or graded assignments that either party wishes to be taken into consideration. The petitioner, the faculty member, and the chair/director shall receive copies of the completed file.

The College of Arts and Sciences Academic Programs Committee will convene an Ad Hoc Grievance Committee according to its bylaws to review the case. Staff support for the committee will be provided by a member of the College office other than the assistant/ associate

dean mentioned above.

Neither the petitioner nor the faculty member appears before the committee, whose assessment is based on the written record.

Upon receiving a completed grievance file for its review, the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee will first determine by majority vote whether the file provides sufficient grounds for it to act. If the Committee agrees to consider the grievance, it will conduct as thorough an investigation as the case warrants to arrive at a statement of findings and a recommendation. The Ad Hoc Grievance Committee shall prepare and send a written statement of its findings, together with its recommendation of resolution to: (1) the petitioner(s), (2) the respondent(s), (3) the Chairperson of the respondent(s), and (4) the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Students should realize that the function of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee is advisory. The Committee will find for or against the student's grievance and it may recommend remedies to the appropriate person(s). It does not have the power to enforce any of its findings.

Step 3: The University Level

If the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee declines to consider the case, or finds against the petitioner, or if the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee is not accepted by the instructor, the student may petition the Committee on Academic Standing of the Undergraduate Academic Council (via the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education) or the Graduate Academic Council (via the Office of the Dean for Graduate Studies), as appropriate, to consider the grievance.

The decision of the Academic Standing Committee of the Undergraduate or Graduate Academic Council is final (Senate Bill No. 0203-10).