STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – Academic
Adopted by the Faculty Senate (Action #148) and approved by the President, March 1978; modified by Faculty Senate Action #556 approved by the President, spring 2004.

Introduction

If a student believes that he has been unjustly treated by a member(s) of the faculty, he may wish to complain in the form of a grievance. A grievance consists of a complaint and a request for action that will remove the cause(s) of that complaint. Unjust treatment will be understood to be treatment which results in the significant deprivation of the student's rights relative to an academic matter. Student rights include (but are not necessarily limited to) those rights stated in the AAUP Bulletin (cf. Appendix A). A student may not grieve an allegation of academic dishonesty. Contested allegations of academic dishonesty must be handled through the Procedures for Addressing Suspected Academic Dishonesty. In no case should unjust treatment be confused with an instructor's right and obligation to evaluate a student's course work.

Grievance Procedure Steps

A. Informal Level

1. The student should contact the faculty member(s) involved either in writing or in person to attempt an informal resolution of the grievance. Note: Every attempt should be made by both parties to resolve the grievance at this level.
2. If the above step does not resolve the issue, the student should meet with the departmental chairperson who engages in further informal discussion with both parties to attempt a reconciliation. The chairperson's decision to accept or not to accept a grievance must be conveyed in writing with a copy to the appropriate Dean. Note: (a) the purpose of this step is to solicit the assistance of a third party not directly involved in the grievance in hopes that a third viewpoint will help resolve the issue at the informal level; (b) after discussing the grievance with both parties, the departmental chairperson may take this opportunity to make either a written or oral recommendation to either or both parties concerned; (c) in the event that the departmental chairperson is the party grieved, the student should meet the appropriate Dean who will inform the student of the alternate serving the chairperson's function in this case.

B. Formal Level

1. **Filing of the Grievance Statement** - If neither of the above informal measures resolves the issue, the student should immediately prepare a written statement of his grievance and submit copies of it to the departmental chairperson (one copy each for the chairperson, grievance committee, and faculty member(s) grieved against). This step must be completed within 45 days after the alleged unjust treatment took place. However, if there are extenuating circumstances, the student may be allowed up to an additional 45 days in which to submit his written grievance statement provided he obtains the written permission of the departmental chairperson. Note: For the purposes of this procedure a day is defined as an academic calendar weekday falling during the spring or fall semesters.

Note: The written grievance statement submitted by the student should include:
a) a description of the action(s) which led to the grievance including the name of the instructor(s) involved, the course number and title, and the time and place of the alleged grievance;
b) a list of those persons who can supply information concerning the grieved action(s);
c) a description of any written documents related to the grievance;
d) a statement of the relief requested by the student;
e) a statement establishing that a good faith attempt at informal resolution has been made;
f) the grievance should be dated and addressed to the departmental chairperson and include the student's signature, local telephone number and local address.

2. Acceptance of the Grievance Statement - If, in the opinion of the departmental chairperson, the grievance is not of a significant nature, or if the unjust treatment did not occur within an academic context, the grievance will not be accepted at this level and the process terminates.

3. Constitution of the Grievance Committee - Upon receipt and acceptance of the written grievance statement, the department chairperson shall have 10 days (after the date of receipt) to convene a meeting of the department's grievance committee. This committee may be established during this time-frame or may be a standing committee already in existence. Note: (a) the departmental chairperson may or may not serve on this committee but both of the parties involved are disqualified from membership, (b) the departmental grievance committee should consist of three persons, it should have one and only one student serve on that committee. If the committee consists of five persons, it should have two and only two students serve on that committee. At the beginning of each academic year, the chairperson of the department will select the student representative(s) to serve on the departmental grievance committee, subject to approval by the Student Association Vice President for Academics.

4. Committee Meetings - The department grievance committee should attempt to discover the relevant facts concerning the grievance. The following guidelines apply to the meetings of the committee:

a) Both the student and the faculty member should have the opportunity to meet with the committee.

b) The student or faculty member may be represented by another member of the college community (including students, faculty and administrators).

c) At any point in the process, the student or faculty member has the right to submit additional information to the committee.

d) The student or faculty member may present witnesses or written statements of others for consideration by the committee.

e) No attorneys are allowed to represent either party at any stage of the grievance process.
f) No tape recordings or verbatim written transcripts are allowed at any committee meetings.

g) The student's address as given in the written grievance statement shall be the official address for all written correspondence to the student.

h) A serious attempt should be made by all of the parties involved to arrive at a prompt resolution of the grievance, if possible before the end of the semester in which the alleged unjust treatment occurred.

5. Withdrawal of the Grievance Statement - The student may withdraw his written grievance statement at any time by notifying the departmental chairperson of his/her desire to do so. In the event that this is done, the chairperson shall notify the grievance committee and the faculty member(s) grieved against of the student's decision and the grievance procedure shall stop.

6. Committee Recommendations - The department grievance committee should arrive at a recommendation with regard to the relief requested by the student in the grievance statement. This recommendation should be transmitted in writing to both parties and the Dean of the faculty within 10 (but not to exceed 20) days after the committee has been convened to consider the grievance. Copies of the student's written grievance statement along with the written recommendation of the committee are to be kept in departmental files.

Appeals
Should the recommendation of the department chairperson (cf. II, B, 2.) or the recommendation of the department grievance committee (cf. II, B, 6.) be unacceptable to either party involved, each has the right of further appeal to the Dean of the faculty. This appeal should be made within 10 days of the recommendation of the committee.

This procedure supersedes all previous grievance procedures.

APPENDIX A OF STUDENT'S GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE
Excerpt from the Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students, , AAUP Bulletin, Summer I.68.

The professor in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry and expression. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matter unrelated to academic standards.

a. Protection of Freedom of Expression

Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the date or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

b. Protection Against Improper Academic Evaluation

Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.
c. **Protection Against Improper Disclosure**

Information about student views, beliefs and political associations which professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisors, or counselors should be considered confidential. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Judgments of ability and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances, normally with the knowledge or consent of the student.