

Grade Appeals Policy – for Faculty Senate meeting, April 11, 2011

Summary of Changes

1. Items 1 through 4 now have bold titles, to emphasize the four steps of the procedure (meeting with instructor, appeal to the department chairperson, appeal to the Dean, appeal to the Grade Appeals Committee).
2. The “second week of the semester” is now the “second week of classes of the semester”. That’s because technically, the “semester” begins one week before the beginning of classes, so the two are not the same.
3. Submit the appeal in writing to the department chairperson before the end of the 4th week of classes of the semester: previously, the policy said that the student has “two more weeks” to submit the appeal to the chair. 2 weeks + 2 weeks = 4 weeks.
4. Item 2b now has a list of documents that should be in a written appeal was much later in the policy. Previously, item 2 simply said that the appeal should be in writing, clear and complete, but it didn’t say what a clear and complete appeal is. One of the documents is the original syllabus that the student was given at the beginning of the semester (that was a suggestion from the Grade Appeals Committee). The student should submit all written documents to the Chair, who forwards them to the Dean, who forwards them to the Grade Appeals Committee, as this appears to be current practice.
5. Previous versions state that the appeal moves to the Dean’s office if no resolution has occurred at the departmental level. This clarifies what “no resolution at the departmental level” means: either the chairperson says the student has a case, but the instructor disagrees; or the chairperson says the student doesn’t have a case, but the student wants to pursue the appeal.
6. Same issue with “no resolution at the school level”.
7. “Written decision” has been replaced with “written recommendation” in a few places, because the chairperson and the dean do not “decide” anything, they just make recommendations. This emphasizes that make a change of grade without the instructor’s consent, except the Provost (and even then, only with the recommendation of the Grade Appeals Committee).

8. Item 5c: original says “the Provost may make the appropriate grade change or issue a W”; new version states “may make the recommended grade change or issue a W”. If the Provost needs to change a grade, he can only change it to what the Committee recommends; his only other option is to issue a “W”. This is based on a suggestion from the Grade Appeals Committee.
9. Item 7b): Faculty shall provide anyone with all documents that the committee needs, including graded student work and a syllabus: based on a suggestion from the Grade Appeals Committee.
10. Item 7c): Faculty should meet with students ASAP, preferably before add/drop deadline. Some cases can be resolved with a simple meeting, especially those involving a calculation error. This should preferably be done before a student has to drop a class because of a missing prerequisite.
11. Item 9c): The Grade Appeals Committee has the right to ask the instructor for what it needs, including a syllabus, and a clear grading policy if there isn’t one on the syllabus. This is based on the Grade Appeals Committee’s suggestion.
12. Item 9d): The Grade Appeals Committee reserves the right to deny an incomplete appeal, if a student refuses to produce a document that the committee needs. This reminds students that they have the responsibility to produce necessary documents when asked by the committee. Note that the Committee “reserves the right to deny”, meaning that the denial is discretionary, not automatic. If the Committee believes it can make a decision based on the documents received, the Committee is allowed to do so. This is based on the Grade Appeals Committee’s suggestion.
13. Item 9m) is brand new and addresses the interaction between Grade Appeals and Academic Misconduct; the Grade Appeals Committee cannot decide that a student didn’t “cheat” if it has already been determined that the student did.