

PROCEDURAL SEQUENCE FOR ACADEMIC SENATE APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS

1. Submit all proposals to the Office of Academic Affairs.
2. The Senate President will log items and forward them to the appropriate Senate Subcommittee.
3. The Senate Subcommittee will send the proposals to the Senate. Only curricular items require being sent to the faculty 10 days (not working days) prior to the general faculty meeting.
4. Senate proposals will be considered by the Full Faculty.
5. If approved, the proposals will then be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor.

Proposals that require action to approve/disapprove/table or remand will be sent back to the Senate according to the monthly meeting schedule.

TITLE: An amendment to the Student Grade Appeal Process.

SUBCOMMITTEE: ACAD SENATE PROPOSAL #: 00-34

PROPOSAL: A new subsection should be added to section III.A.2. of the policy, as follows: (See the attached copy of the student grade appeal policy.)

"d) If a chair/dean is the instructor who made the grade decision that is the subject of the grievance, another chair/dean at Montana State University-Northern shall complete the first formal step of the grievance, as described in section III.A.2., subsections a), b) and c) of this policy. That chair/dean will be selected by a process of elimination, the student having the first veto and the instructor having the second veto. The provost will oversee the selection process."

RATIONALE: The current policy, which was recently enacted, does not include a section covering the situation where a chair/dean is the instructor who made the grade decision that is the subject of the grade appeal. In that situation, the chair/dean obviously should only be involved in the grade appeal process as the instructor; he/she should not sit in a decision-making or reviewing capacity. This amendment utilizes other chairs/deans on the campus as the preliminary investigator and decision-maker. They were selected because they already perform that function for their own colleges, and hopefully will have some familiarity with the grade appeal process.

ACTION SIGNATURES:

Terence E. Munson
Submitter

_____ Date

College Chair/Dean

_____ Date

Terence E. Munson
Faculty Committee Chair Academic Senate

2-20-01 APPROVED
Date

Terence E. Munson
Faculty Senate President

2-27-01 Approved
Date

Roger Barber
Provost

2/28/01 approved
Date

Alex Caplan
Chancellor

2/28/01 Approved
Date

PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR A NEW GRADE APPEAL PROCESS. . .
(to replace Campus Policy Number 602.1)

I. INTRODUCTION.

Students who disagree with the assignment of a grade by an instructor may file a grievance under these procedures.

II. GRADE DECISION REVIEWED.

These procedures are available only to review allegedly unfair grade decisions and not mere differences of opinion regarding the professional judgment of the instructor in evaluating a student's work or making a grade decision. The grade decision will be considered unfair if the decision is made:

- a) on some basis other than performance in the course and/or compliance with course assignments and requirements;
- b) by more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the same course section;
- c) by a substantial departure from the instructor's standards as articulated in the course syllabus, catalog descriptions and/or other written materials.

III. STUDENT GRADE GRIEVANCES.

A. Procedures.

A student who wishes to grieve a grade decision must proceed as follows:

1. Informal Meeting.

The student should attempt to resolve the matter directly with the instructor through a personal conference as soon as possible after the grade decision is known.

2. Chair/Dean Review.

a) If the student and the instructor cannot reach a mutually satisfactory resolution to the problem, the student may file a formal grievance. The grievance must be presented in writing to the instructor's chair/dean within 15 working days of the alleged grading incident. If the grievance is based on the final grade in a course, the grievance must be presented in writing to the chair/dean no later than the 15th day of university instruction in the following academic term. The student must describe the grievance, the date(s) of occurrence, why the student believes the decision was unfair, the student's attempts to resolve the grievance informally and the precise relief sought by the student. The student may attach copies of any relevant documents. For purposes of this section, fall semester, spring semester and summer session shall each constitute an academic term.

b) The student shall send a copy of the grievance to the instructor. The instructor shall have ten (10) working days to respond after receipt of the grievance. If the instructor does not respond within that time frame, the chair/dean will consider the grievance with the material formally submitted by the student.

c) The chair/dean will receive and review all evidence, interview persons relevant to the appeal and the evidence submitted in support of the appeal, if possible, and render a written decision with recommendations as to resolution within ten (10) working days of receipt of the instructor's response. A copy of the chair/dean's decision will be given to the instructor and the student. If the grievance is not concluded within this time frame, the student may carry it forward to the Provost for resolution.

3. Provost's Review.

The student or the instructor may appeal the chair/dean's decision. Such appeal will be filed in writing and submitted to the Provost within five (5) working days of receipt of the chair/dean's decision, with copies to the instructor, the student and the chair/dean. The written appeal shall deal only with the part or parts of the chair/dean's decision that the appellant disputes. New evidence, information or supporting documents cannot be included as part of the appeal except when, by clear and convincing evidence, it is established that such information was not available at the time of the original grievance. The Provost may interview the student, the instructor, the chair/dean and other appropriate persons, but only to discuss the issues in dispute in the appeal. The Provost will submit a written decision to the student, the instructor and the chair/dean within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Provost is the final decision of the University.

4. Time Extensions.

The parties at each step of the process may agree to extend the time lines established in this policy. Such extensions should be in writing, and signed by the appropriate parties.

5. Grade Changes.

Grade grievances can occur in two ways, and the grading process shall be governed by the following procedures:

a) if the grievance is the result of an instructor's decision during the semester, the student will be assigned a grade of NR if the grievance has not been decided by the time final grades are awarded in the course; the final grade will be awarded, once the grade grievance is completed, based on the decision of that grievance.

b) if the grievance is based on the final grade awarded in a course, the grade will be changed only if the decision of the grievance requires a change.