

Summary of Responses to the Questions by the Executive Committee March 12, 2009

As a result of presenting the 2008-2009 Academic Standards Committee report to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, suggestions were proposed by Elliot Parker and Bill Follette. The following summary provides the results from a survey of the committee.

Suggestion by Bill Follette: Remove the drop date completely.

Below are the suggestions by Elliott Parker to the grade appeal section:

A grade assigned by an instructor is **only** subject to the appeals procedure if: ~~the grade assignment either~~

- ~~The instructor based a student's course grade was based~~ on factors other than the student's performance in the course and/or completion of course requirements, or
- ~~The instructor held involved one student being held~~ to more demanding standards than other students in the same section of the course.
- ~~The instructor did not make a reasonable effort to communicate course requirements and expectations to students in the course, resulting in a lower grade for the student, and/or~~
- ~~The instructor was clearly arbitrary, capricious, and/or inconsistent in assigning grades.~~

The burden of proof that one of these ~~two~~ conditions ~~holds~~ rests on the student, but a grade appeal committee may request information from the instructor. If a student wishes to appeal a grade received as a sanction for an instance of academic dishonesty, the student must follow the Academic Dishonesty procedure.

Also he wondered if the college grade appeal committee might also have a single student representative? Perhaps, since this makes for a four-person committee, the chair could vote only in case of a tie, which would require one abstention.

Responses from the Committee

1) **Removing the Drop Date: No support. Unanimous to keep a drop date as suggested.**

2) **3rd Bullet – One person supported, the rest are strongly against. –Therefore, no change**

A) I concur that the 3rd bullet is not appropriate on any level.

B) I think we agree that the third bullet is a real killer! I fixed some pretty obvious syntactical problems and do wonder about the Parker request regarding course requirements and expectations. "Reasonable effort" in the hands of many (perhaps too many students) could lead to one taking points off for lack of clarity in a paper and a student claiming that clarity was not made "reasonably" clear as a requirement. If one has to specify every occasion that may lead to a diminished grade, syllabi will get so long as to be absurd.

C) - I echo the sentiments--the grounds in the that bullet are not acceptable for a grade appeal from my perspective.

D) I agree with the others on the third bullet.

E)- I too am in agreement with the others. I don't like that third bullet – too ambiguous. . . could really be opening a can of worms here.

F) - I support the changes Elliott suggested

G) - I do not support the addition of the third bulleted item below

H)- I agree with J) comments about the third bullet. One clear theme in the discussion we had in the subcommittee is that some complaints are cause for a grade appeal, and others are very good reasons to complain to the chair about an instructor but are not grounds for a grade appeal. I think the third bullet item grays the line between these considerably.

I) - I do not agree.

J) - I am not in favor of the third bullet added by Elliott: While of course instructors should do their utmost to clearly communicate course requirements and expectations, I don't believe that the perceived failure to do so should be grounds for grade appeal. It opens the door for too many misuses of the appeal policy, as "reasonable effort" will be difficult to substantiate.

3) 4th Bullet – Not strong support, several said that it is not needed because the first bullet covers it. The point is that if the “arbitrary” would be a factor other than a student performance.

A) - Also, the 4th bullet is not needed, in essence it is the same as the first bullet: "factors other than the student's performance." In addition, these types of issues should be handled by the department chair, not a grade appeal committee.

B)- I am not that crazy about the fourth bullet either--from the stand point of proof, opening up the entire issues of privacy with grades, personalities and unfounded accusations from students who as D said could just be angry—

C) - I support the changes Elliott suggested

D)- I also feel the fourth bullet is redundant, after the first two, except it is more inviting to students who are simply angry at the instructor.

E) - I am in favor of the other changes.

5) Student on Grade Appeal – No Support for Student – no change

A) A single student on the grade appeal committee is not needed.

B) - We have had students on the department level and that makes sense--they know the requirements of the class---can't see it working on the College Committee....

I also feel great frustrations at having to write policy for every possible exception, attitude or circumstance. Where does responsibility and an insight into reality enter in?

C) I don't think that we should add a student to the committee.

D) Also, I don't agree with the idea of adding a student to the committee for a variety of reasons which I will not go into here.

E) I support the changes Elliott suggested, but do not want a student on the grade appeals committee.

F) I do support the addition of a student to the departmental grade appeals committee.

G) I also don't support having a student on the College Grade Appeal Committee.

H) I do not support the idea of having a student in the appeals committee.

I) I am not in favor of adding a student to the College Grade Appeal Committee.

Revised Section

Below are the suggested changes. I left in the “change of format”, the “group of students”, and explicitly stating “that the committee can ask for information”.

Changes with strike out and underline:

A course grade assigned by an instructor is **only** subject to the appeals procedure if: ~~the grade assignment~~ ~~either~~

- The instructor based this student's grade ~~was based~~ on factors other than the student's performance in the course and/or completion of course requirements, or
- The instructor based this student's grade on a ~~involved one student being held to~~ more demanding standards than was applied other students in the same section of the course.

The burden of proof that one of these two conditions holds rests on the student, but a grade appeal committee may request information from the instructor. If a student wishes to appeal a grade received as a sanction for an instance of academic dishonesty, the student must follow the Academic Dishonesty procedure.

New Section with Changes

A course grade assigned by an instructor is **only** subject to the appeals procedure if:

- The instructor based this student's grade on factors other than the student's performance in the course and/or completion of course requirements, or
- The instructor based this student's grade on a more demanding standard than was applied to other students in the same section of the course.

The burden of proof that one of these two conditions holds rests on the student, but a grade appeal committee may request information from the instructor. If a student wishes to appeal a grade received as a sanction for an instance of academic dishonesty, the student must follow the Academic Dishonesty procedure.