Faculty Senate Resolution Number S-2017-09

To: Joe Bertolino, Ed.D., President, Southern Connecticut State University
From: Maria Diamantis, Ed.D., President, SCSU Faculty Senate

The attached Resolution of the Faculty Senate is entitled:
RESOLUTION REGARDING GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURES

This Resolution was approved by Faculty Senate on: May 3, 2017

[X ] This Resolution is presented for APPROVAL

[ ] This Resolution is presented for INFORMATION

In accordance with the CSU-AAUP Contract (Article 5.10), “When the Senate makes a written recommendation to the President, the President shall acknowledge and respond to the recommendation in writing within fifteen (15) school days of receiving the Senate’s recommendation.”

After considering this resolution, please indicate your action on this form and return it to the President of the Faculty Senate.

Maria Diamantis, Ed.D., President, Faculty Senate
5/5/17

cc: Ellen Durnin, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

ACTION OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

To: Maria Diamantis, Ed.D., President, SCSU Faculty Senate
From: Joe Bertolino, Ed.D., President, SCSU

Resolution for approval:
[ ] Resolution APPROVED
[ ] Resolution DISAPPROVED (Provide comments below or attach statement)

Comments

Resolution for information:
[ ] Resolution NOTED (applies to Informational Resolutions only)

Comments

Joe Bertolino, Ed.D., President, SCSU
6-6-17
Whereas, Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) exists for the primary purpose of furthering academic excellence;

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate is the official representative body of the Academic Faculty;

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate is committed to shared governance;

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate values and is committed to academic freedom;

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate has designed and implemented a Grade Appeal Procedure providing SCSU students with the right and opportunity to appeal a grade if they think that a palpable injustice has occurred;

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate seeks to provide a Grade Appeal Procedure that is fair, equitable and transparent for all concerned;

Resolved, The Grade Appeal Procedures be revised to involve three levels of appeal:
1) The Instructor;
2) The Chairperson (who serves a mediator between the Instructor and the Student); and 3) The University Academic Standing Committee.

Resolved, The relevant school Dean will be notified and will monitor the process when the appeal is made to the University Academic Standing Committee.

Resolved, The revised Grade Appeal Procedures include a Grade Appeal Form that provides documentation of an appeal, as well the dated record of the outcome at each level of appeal as necessary.

Attachments: Grade Appeal Form Instructions, Grade Appeal Procedure, Grade Appeal Form, Grade Appeal Form Part 2: Documentation, Flowchart
Grade Appeal Form Instructions

A student may submit a grade appeal only in instances in which a palpable injustice can be claimed. A palpable injustice occurs when a faculty member has been demonstrably inconsistent and unfair to the student. Grade appeals can be submitted only in the fall or spring semester after the grade is received (Appeal Semester). This includes courses taken during summer, winter, or spring break sessions. See Grade Appeal Procedure document for additional details and important deadlines.

The Grade Appeal Procedure consists of three levels:
1) Level 1 – Discussion with Instructor
2) Level 2 – Mediation with Chairperson
3) Level 3 – University Academic Standing Committee (UASC)

Grade Appeal Procedures and Deadlines

LEVEL 1 – DISCUSSION WITH INSTRUCTOR

If a student decides to appeal grade based upon palpable injustice, the student completes and submits the Grade Appeal Form to the Instructor before the end of Week 1 of the Appeal Semester. The student and Instructor will attempt to reach a resolution regarding grade appeal.

Level 1 Resolution Deadline: End of Week 2 of the Appeal Semester

LEVEL 2 – MEDIATION WITH CHAIRPERSON

(Note: If Instructor is also Department Chairperson, student may skip to Level 3)

If a resolution regarding the grade appeal is not reached between the student and the instructor after Week 2, the student may submit the Grade Appeal Form to the Department Chairperson before the end of Week 3 of the Appeal Semester. The Chairperson will act as mediator during the continued grade appeal discussion between the student and Instructor.

Level 2 Resolution Deadline: End of Week 5 of the Appeal Semester

LEVEL 3 – UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STANDING COMMITTEE (UASC)

If a resolution regarding the grade appeal is not reached after the Week 5 and following mediation with the Chairperson, the student may submit the Grade Appeal Form to UASC by the end of Week 6 of the Appeal Semester. UASC will review the grade appeal and render a final decision.

Level 3 Final Decision Deadline: End of Week 9 of the Appeal Semester
Southern Connecticut State University

Grade Appeal Procedure

Approved ____________

Preliminary Information:

In accordance with SCSU educational mission, this policy articulates the procedure and criteria for the appeal of a final course grade. This Grade Appeal Procedure is intended to be fair, equitable and transparent.

The Grade Appeal Procedure consists of three levels:
1) Level 1 – Discussion with instructor
2) Level 2 – Mediation with chairperson
3) Level 3 – University Academic Standing Committee (UASC)

I. Assumptions

A. The award of grades\(^1\) is the responsibility of the instructor of the course.

B. In order to ensure fairness in grading, protect academic freedom and promote academic integrity, grade appeals must be based on a claim of palpable injustice. A palpable injustice occurs when a faculty member has been demonstrably inconsistent or unfair to the student. It is a clear and blatant violation of a reasonable evaluation procedure, regardless of whether that procedure is stated or implied. For example, palpable injustice is NOT warranted when other faculty members simply disagree with the grade, would have graded differently, would have rounded off to the next highest grade, or would have preferred a different evaluation procedure. In this case, the issue would be whether or not the faculty member applied the policy appropriately.

C. These procedures apply only to the change of a grade under conditions specified in section 4.2.2.2 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. They may be implemented after a final grade has been submitted or after a request for a late withdrawal has been denied by the instructor.

D. All parties work in good faith to arrive at a resolution during all stages of the process.

II. General Guidelines

A. Grade appeals must be initiated on an individual basis.

B. Grade appeals are made only in the fall or spring semester that comes immediately after the grade is received, hereafter referred to as the Appeal Semester. Summer and spring break courses are appealed in the following fall semester; winter session courses are appealed in the following spring semester.

C. Graduating students will typically appeal the grade following the established Grade Appeal Procedure. If however, a graduating student is appealing a grade that prevents the student from graduating, it is recognized that time of graduation may be affected if the established Grade Appeal Procedure is followed. In this case, attempts will be made by the instructor, Department Chairperson, and UASC to resolve the issue in an expedited manner.

D. The week of Spring Break shall not be counted when determining how long the grade appeal has been in process.

E. If a student’s progress towards graduation may be delayed by a grade brought into question by the appeal process, permission may be given by the Chairperson to take subsequent or required courses within the Department.

F. All parties shall retain all records of the process. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that any agreed upon change to a grade has been implemented by the end of the appeal semester. At Level 1 or Level 2, the student is encouraged, in this regard, to seek assistance, if necessary, from the Department Chairperson. At Level 3, the student is directed to contact the Chairperson of the Academic Standing Committee.
III. Required Procedures

A. Level 1 - Discussion with instructor
   Deadlines - end of week 1 of the Appeal Semester for student to submit Grade Appeal Form to instructor; end of week 2 to reach agreement.

   Student attempts to resolve the issue through discussion with the instructor. The student and instructor attempt to settle the matter in good faith. If an agreement is reached to change the grade, the instructor shall submit the grade change form to the Registrar’s Office within two weeks of the agreement. If an agreement is not reached by the end of week 2; or if the student has been unsuccessful in contacting the instructor (with the help of the instructor’s Chairperson, if needed); or if the instructor refuses to participate, the student may go to Level 2 by submitting the Grade Appeal Form to the instructor’s chairperson by the end of week 3.

B. Level 2 - Mediation with Instructor’s Chairperson
   Deadlines – end of week 3 of the Appeal Semester for student to submit Grade Appeal Form to instructor’s chairperson; end of week 5 to reach agreement.

   The student completes the Grade Appeal Form and sends it to the chairperson/program director by the end of week 6. The chairperson/program director shall assist the instructor and the student in an attempt to settle the matter. If an agreement is reached to change the grade, the instructor shall submit the grade change form to the Registrar’s Office within two weeks of the agreement. If these parties fail to reach an agreement by the end of week 5, the student may go to Level 3 by submitting the Grade Appeal Form to the UASC by the end of week 6.

   If the instructor is either unavailable or is chairperson, proceed directly to Level 3.

C. Level 3 – UASC
   Deadlines – end of week 6 of the Appeal Semester for student to submit grade appeal form to UASC; end of week 9 for UASC to render decision.

   The student completes the Grade Appeal Form and sends it to the UASC by the end of week 6. Upon receipt of the Grade Appeal Form, the UASC shall forward the document to the appropriate Dean. The Dean shall monitor the appeal process thereafter to insure that the procedures and schedule are followed.

   The UASC shall render its decision following consultation with the instructor, student, and others whom it deems appropriate by the end of week 9. The student, instructor, department chair/director, and the relevant Dean shall be notified in writing of the committee’s decision, which shall include a written rationale. The UASC shall notify the Registrar if a grade change is required within two weeks of the decision. The decision of the UASC shall be final, unless the Dean determines that a procedural violation has occurred (see, for example III. D. Deadlines and deadline extensions). In such an instance, the matter shall be returned to the UASC for its reconsideration.

D. Deadlines and deadline extensions

1. “By the 2nd week” means 2 weeks (14 calendar days) into the semester, starting with the 1st day of classes. Other deadlines are to be interpreted similarly.

2. A Dean of the appropriate school may extend any grade appeal deadline only at the student’s request and only if the student provides written evidence that physical or mental incapacitation led to the missed deadline. The request must be made, in writing, no later than the end of the first week of classes following the original grade appeal semester.

IV. Interpretation

This section may not be invoked with respect to the interpretation of any item of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. If an issue develops concerning interpretation of this Document whether initiated by the Senate, a faculty member, or any member of the administration, a binding decision on such an issue shall be made:

A. by agreement between the President of the University and a majority of the Executive Committee of the
Faculty Senate or, failing to obtain agreement on an issue by this method;

B. by a committee consisting of one member selected by the Senate Executive Committee, one selected by the President of the University, and one selected by the first two committee members, who, by a two-thirds vote shall decide such an issue.

V. Implementation and Amendment

A. This document shall take effect upon approval by a two-thirds vote of the Faculty Senate and the concurrence of the President of the University.

B. This document may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Faculty Senate with the concurrence of the University President.

Notes:
1. By grade is meant any of the grades specified in the University Undergraduate or Graduate Catalogs.
2. Semester means the January to May or the August to December sessions of classes.
Southern Connecticut State University

Grade Appeal Form

Name: (Last) __________________________ (First) __________________________ (M.I.) ______________

Student ID: __________________________

Course Department Code: _______ Course Number: ________ Section: ______

Semester course taken: (circle) FALL SPRING WINTER SUMMER

Year course taken: __________ Instructor: __________________________

Explain, in detail, why you think a palpable injustice has occurred. Please also attach any relevant documentation.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Use additional sheets if necessary.
GRADE APPEAL FORM PART 2: DOCUMENTATION

I. LEVEL 1 – Discussion with the Instructor

To be completed by the student

1. Were you able to contact the Instructor regarding grade appeal? (circle)  Y  N

   Date of contact/s or meeting/s (dd) _____ \ (mm) _____ \ (yr) _____

   (dd) _____ \ (mm) _____ \ (yr) _____

2. If resolution reached, Instructor should provide summary below. (Use additional sheets if necessary)

   ____________________________________________

   ____________________________________________

   ____________________________________________

   ____________________________________________

   ____________________________________________

   ____________________________________________

A signature from both parties signifies an agreement has been reached regarding the grade appeal and concludes the grade appeal process.

STUDENT SIGNATURE ____________________________ Date: __________

INSTRUCTOR SIGNATURE ____________________________ Date: __________

II. LEVEL 2 – Mediation with the Chairperson

To be completed by the student

1. Were you able to contact the Department Chairperson? (circle)  Y  N

   Date of contact/s or meeting/s (dd) _____ \ (mm) _____ \ (yr) _____

   (dd) _____ \ (mm) _____ \ (yr) _____
2. If resolution reached, Chairperson should provide summary below. (Use additional sheets if necessary)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

A signature from all parties signifies an agreement has been reached regarding the grade appeal and concludes the grade appeal process.

STUDENT SIGNATURE ___________________________ Date: __________

INSTRUCTOR SIGNATURE ___________________________ Date: __________

CHAIRPERSON SIGNATURE ___________________________ Date: __________

III. LEVEL 3 - University Academic Standing Committee (UASC)

To be completed by student

1. Date of grade appeal submission to UASC (dd) _____ \ (mm) _____ \ (yr) _____

The following is to be completed by UASC

2. Provide a summary of grade appeal decision. (Use additional sheets if necessary)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
SIGNATURE OF UASC CHAIRPERSON

DATE OF GRADE APPEAL FINAL DECISION:

DATE OF GRADE CHANGE SUBMISSION TO REGISTRAR:
Student decides to appeal grade based upon palpable injustice

Student completes and submits Grade Appeal Form to Instructor
Deadline: End of Week 1 of Appeal Semester

LEVEL 1
Discussion with Instructor
Deadline: End of Week 2 of Appeal Semester

If grade appeal not resolved by Week 2, student may submit Grade Appeal Form to Dept. Chairperson
Deadline: End of Week 3 of Appeal Semester
If instructor of course is also Dept. Chairperson, student may skip to Level 3 of Grade Appeal

LEVEL 2
Mediation with Dept. Chairperson
Deadline: End of Week 5 of Appeal Semester

If grade appeal not resolved by Week 5, student may submit Grade Appeal Form to University Academic Standing Committee (UASC)
Deadline: End of Week 6 of Appeal Semester
If instructor of course is also Dept. Chairperson, student may skip to Level 3 of Grade Appeal

LEVEL 3
University Academic Standing Committee (UASC) reviews grade appeal and renders final decision
Deadline: End of Week 9 of Appeal Semester

If grade appeal resolved, Instructor submits any grade change to Registrar
If grade appeal resolved, Instructor submits any grade change to Registrar
UASC submits any grade change to Registrar