

**Summary of the March 1, 2007 Forum on the
Proposed Grade Appeal Policy, Forms, and Flowchart
To Replace IGP 45: Grade Appeals (CAA Agenda Item 06-78R; CGS Agenda Item 06-06R)**

The Council on Academic Affairs (CAA) and Council on Graduate Studies (CGS) held a forum on March 1, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. in Room 4440, Booth Library. The purpose of the forum was to review and discuss a proposed policy to replace IGP 45, Grade Appeals.

The following individuals attended the forum:

Dean Robert Augustine, Graduate School & CGS; Ms. Audrey Bachelder, School of Continuing Education; Ms. Linda Barter, Graduate School & CGS; Dr. Kathleen Bower, Geology/Geography & CAA; Dr. David Carwell, Political Science & CAA; Dr. Chuck Costa, Biological Sciences & CGS; Dr. Julie Dietz, Health Studies & CAA; Ms. Jean Dilworth, Family & Consumer Sciences & CAA; Dr. Sace Elder, History & CGS; Mr. Mark Feimer, History Undergraduate Student & CAA; Ms. Janet Fopay, Academic Affairs & CAA; Ms. Chelsea Frederick, Student Government & Alumni Services; Dr. Shelley French, Foreign Languages & CAA; Ms. Lora Green, Academic Advising & CAA; Dr. Assege Haile Mariam, Psychology and Faculty Senate; Dr. Eric Hake, Economics; Dr. Mary Herrington-Perry, Academics Affairs, CAA, & CGS; Ms. Alison Kostelich, Biological Sciences Undergraduate Student & CAA; Dr. Shane Miller, Communication Studies & CGS; Dr. Linda Morford, Education Administration & CGS; Dr. Kathleen O'Rourke, Family & Consumer Sciences & CGS; Mr. Amir Prellberg, *Daily Eastern News*; Dr. Christie Roszkowski, School of Business & CAA; Ms. Ashley Rueff, *Daily Eastern News*; Ms. Elise Sommerfeld, Early Childhood Education Undergraduate Student & CAA; and Dr. Lisa Taylor, Family & Consumer Sciences.

Dr. Kathleen O'Rourke, CGS Chair, opened the forum by welcoming the council members and guests. She explained the purpose of the forum and outlined events preceding today's event. In addition, Dr. O'Rourke explained that the Grade Appeals Ad Hoc Committee collected feedback from various constituencies across campus, including both CAA and CGS, and integrated that feedback into the proposed policy to be discussed today. Also, she mentioned Dean Augustine's memo dated February 19 regarding the final report of the Grade Appeals Ad Hoc Committee. Additionally, she confirmed that individuals attending the forum had received all of the grade appeal policy documents that would be discussed at the forum. Finally, she introduced and thanked the Grade Appeals Ad Hoc Committee for all its work on the grade appeal policy.

Next Dr. Christie Roszkowski, CAA Chair, expressed appreciation to all of the individuals and groups that submitted input regarding the grade appeal policy and process. She explained the procedure by which the Grade Appeals Ad Hoc Committee revised the policy. Dr. Roszkowski indicated that the committee looked at the feedback and each concern that was expressed. She pointed out several major concerns that were addressed and incorporated into the policy. Some of the points mentioned were:

1. A large number of individuals did not like the word "capricious" in the name of the policy. As a result, the committee removed that term from the title and entire policy.
2. It was stated that the grade appeal process in the previous draft of the policy seemed interminable. Therefore, it was shortened. Also, the role of a university grade appeal committee was removed.
3. The committee clarified the department chairs role in the grade appeal process as a result of feedback.
4. The document was shortened into a manageable and readable document.

After that, Dean Augustine lead the group through the revised policy via a Power Point presentation. He explained the grade appeal process. Also, he pointed out the roles and responsibilities of the student, faculty, chair, dean, and College Grade Appeal Committees. In addition, he explained how the duties of the chair were revised.

Following the presentation, Dr. O'Rourke opened the floor to questions and discussion, first by the council members and then by the guests.

The following items were addressed during the questions and discussion period.

1. *The deadline is the same for when the student must initiate an informal meeting with the instructor and when he/she can submit an appeal to a department chair. Is this accurate?*

The deadline is the same as what is in the existing policy. The goal is to have the student contact the instructor of the course first. The chair will verify that a meeting was held between the student and instructor. If no meeting was held, then the chair has to require that one is held before the appeal process can continue.

2. *There was a request for a clarification of the term "confer" found in the following sentence located in the first paragraph below the heading "Informal Conference with Faculty Member" (page one of the policy):*

"Before initiating a formal grade appeal, a student who believes that a semester or term grade was improperly assigned must confer promptly with the faculty member who assigned the grade."

In this instance, what does confer mean – an email, phone, or face-to-face meeting?

The type of meeting would depend on the severity of the situation. It would be up to the faculty member's discretion to determine the appropriate type of meeting.

3. *What happens during the appeal process if the faculty member discovers the student's grade should be lower than what was posted? Does the faculty member have the right to lower the grade?*

There is a standard procedure in place for changing grades. Whether or not the corrected grade is higher or lower, the procedure must be followed. An official change of grade must be submitted with an explanation of the grade change. The department chair's approval is required on the change of grade form.

4. *Can a student terminate the grade appeal process if he/she finds out the grade will be lowered?*

Once the new grade is posted, the student would have the right to appeal it. The process would end if the student does not oppose the new grade.

5. *How much student input was received during the development of the revised grade appeal policy?*

At one time, there were two students on the Grade Appeals Ad Hoc Committee (one undergraduate and one graduate). In addition, the policy was sent to the Student Government's Academic Affairs Committee. That committee surveyed student groups and received student input. Next, the committee reviewed the policy and drafted a document based on the students' input. That document was sent to the Grade Appeals Ad Hoc Committee. Also, Mr. Sean Anderson, Student President, attended the forum last fall. He offered comments at that forum.

6. *Should student representatives on the College Grade Appeal Committees be allowed to vote on grade appeals? This question was brought up at the 9/28/06 CAA/CGS Forum. It was suggested that the question be revisited.*

The question was discussed. The existing policy allows students to vote on grade appeals. Several individuals indicated that students should be allowed to vote because students bring valuable insight and their viewpoints as students would be beneficial to the process. On the other hand, others asked, from a philosophical standpoint, whether students should have a role of

determining another student's grade. Could the role of the student blur when trying to determine the grade of another student?

7. *The role of the department chair appears to more active, but is his/her recommendation concerning a grade appeal binding?*

The department chair cannot stop a student from proceeding with a grade appeal, but is in a position to resolve the issue. The recommendation is binding if the student agrees with the department chair's recommendation. Otherwise, if the student does not agree, then he/she has the right to move to the next step of the grade appeal process.

8. *Is it up to each college to determine the composition of the College Grade Appeal Committees?*

The process for selecting members of the College Grade Appeal Committees is outlined below. The text was taken from the document called "Procedures for Selecting Faculty and Student Representatives to the College Grade Appeal Committees."

1. Six faculty members from the academic college who are elected or appointed according to procedures established by the college faculty will comprise the cohort of faculty who serve on the committee.
 2. For undergraduate appeals, one voting undergraduate student selected from one of the academic programs in the college shall serve on the committee. The voting member will be selected collaboratively by the Student Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
 3. For graduate appeals, one voting graduate student selected from one of the graduate programs in the college shall serve on the committee. The voting member will be selected collaboratively by the Student Dean of the Graduate School and by the Vice President for Academic Affairs."
9. *There were questions in regards to the student grounds for appeal listed on page one of the policy. What if a student feels that there was some sort of sexual or racial discrimination that came into play when the instructor assigned his/her grade? Is there a policy or procedure in place where the Civil Rights Office can refuse to deal with issues pertaining to grade appeals?*

A student has the right to contact the Civil Rights Office if he/she feels there was discrimination involved. Dean Augustine indicated that in the past the Civil Rights Office collaborated with department chairs to determine if the issue could be handled by both the grade appeals and Civil Rights, by the grade appeals only, or by Civil Rights only. Both parties worked together to gather facts to establish whether the student's civil rights had been violated and determine the best course of action for justice. It was noted that the Civil Rights Office could also meet with the College Grade Appeal Committees.

10. *Can a student appealing a grade bring someone, such as a parent or lawyer, to the College Grade Appeal Committee fact finding meeting?*

The purpose of the meeting is to gather facts and all persons attending should provide relevant materials associated to the grade appeal. If legal representation is needed, there are policies and procedures in place to waive the student's privacy rights and FERPA must be observed.

11. *Who would be responsible for reviewing grade appeals for School of Continuing Education courses?*

The appeal should be submitted to the Dean of the School of Continuing Education. At that point, the dean will determine which college grade appeal committee it should go to based on which department the course belongs. Currently, the School of Continuing Education (SCE) does not have a grade appeals committee. Therefore, the dean will have to oversee the procedural

element of the process. Also, it was noted that there are courses that have SCE course prefix. It was questioned how the courses would be handled.

Also, a revision of the policy language was requested in order to clarify which dean is responsible for appeals submitted regarding SCE or graduate-level courses. In addition, clarification was requested on how to handle courses with SCE course prefixes.

Ms. Audrey Bachelder, SCE, indicated that Dean Hine is not opposed to putting together a grade appeals committee. NOTE: If this is done, then the grade appeal policy will have to be revised.

Dr. O'Rourke thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to the discussion.

The Grade Appeal Ad Hoc Committee will update the policy based on discussions held today. The committee will submit the revised document to both councils for review.

The forum concluded at 3:08 p.m.

The forum summary was prepared by Janet Fopay, CAA Recording Secretary, and Linda Barter, CGS Coordinator.
