

**Summary of the September 28, 2006 Forum on the
Proposed Policy on Review of Capricious Grades, Forms, and Flowchart
To Replace IGP 45: Grade Appeals (CAA Agenda Item 06-78; CGS Agenda Item 06-06)**

The Council on Academic Affairs (CAA) and Council on Graduate Studies (CGS) held a forum on September 28, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. in the Arcola-Tuscola Room, Martin Luther King Union. The purpose of the forum was to present the proposed revisions to IGP 45, Grade Appeals, and to provide a forum for discussion and questions from various representatives across the campus.

The following individuals attended the forum:

Mr. Sean Anderson, Political Science Undergraduate Student & Student Government; Dean Robert Augustine, Graduate School & CGS; Ms. Linda Barter, Graduate School & CGS; Mr. Mark Bates, College Student Affairs Graduate Student, CSA, SGA, CUPB, & GSAC; Dr. Kathleen Bower, Geology/Geography & CAA; Dr. Lucy Campanis, Family & Consumer Science; Dr. Stephen Canfield, Foreign Languages; Dr. David Carwell, Political Science & CAA; Dr. Chuck Costa, Biological Sciences & CGS; Dr. Julie Dietz, Health Studies & CAA; Mr. Mark Feimer, History Undergraduate Student & CAA; Ms. Janet Fopay, Academic Affairs & CAA; Ms. Chelsea Frederick, Student Government & Alumni Services and Community Relations; Ms. Lora Green, Academic Advising & CAA; Ms. Mini Gupta, Chemistry Graduate Student & CGS; Dr. Assege Haile Mariam, Psychology & Faculty Senate; Dr. Eric Hake, Economics; Dr. Mary Herrington-Perry, Academic Affairs, CAA & CGS; Dr. Diane Hoadley, Lumpkin College of Business & Applied Sciences; Dr. Les Hyder, Journalism & CAA; Dean James Johnson, College of Arts & Humanities; Provost Blair Lord, Academic Affairs, CAA & CGS; Associate Dean Jeffrey Lynch, College of Arts & Humanities; Dr. Parker Melvin, Music & CAA; Dr. Dianne Nelson, Nursing; Associate Dean Godson Obia, College of Sciences; Mr. John Oertling, Theatre Arts; Dr. Kathleen O'Rourke, Family & Consumer Sciences & CGS; Dr. Peter Ping Liu, School of Technology & CGS; Dr. Gail Richard, Communication Disorders & Sciences; Dr. Dana Ringuette, English; Dr. Christie Roszkowski, School of Business & CAA; Dr. Anu Sharma, Psychology; Dr. Jeanne Snyder, Family & Consumer Science; Ms. Elise Sommerfeld, Early Childhood Education Undergraduate Student, SGA & CAA; Dr. Jeff Stowell, Psychology & CAA; Dr. Mukti Upadhyay, Economics & CAA; and Dr. Ed Wehrle, History.

Dr. Kathleen O'Rourke, CGS Chair, opened the forum by explaining the purpose and the structure of the forum. She also listed the names of those individuals serving on the Grades Appeals Subcommittee. In addition, Dr. O'Rourke indicated that the councils have a record of all of the email communications regarding the proposed policy revisions. Those communications will be shared with both councils at the next CAA and CGS meetings.

The forum followed the following format.

1. Three individuals representing the Grade Appeals Subcommittee gave a Power Point presentation.
 - a. Ms. Chelsea Frederick began the presentation. She explained the thought process of the Grade Appeals Committee; concerns of EIU students, faculty members, and administrators regarding the existing IGP; the guiding principles behind the revisions to the policy; and that other institutions were consulted regarding their grade appeal processes.
 - b. Next Dr. Christie Roszkowski compared the four steps of the grade appeal process included in the existing policy to the proposed policy. She noted that the current faculty and chair roles would be retained in the revised policy. However, the departmental grade appeal committees would be removed and replaced by college grade appeal committees. Also, the role of college deans would be removed and in its place a new committee would be created named the University Grade Review Board. Furthermore, Dr. Roszkowski clarified the roles of the individuals and committees involved in each step of the proposed policy and timelines for department chairs and the proposed college grade appeal committees. In addition, she provided an explanation of the proposed grade appeal forms and a rationale and benefits for modifying the departmental committees to college grade appeal committees.
 - c. Finally, Dr. Eric Hake explained the rationale for the elimination of the roles of college deans in regard to grade appeals. In addition, he explained the role, responsibilities, benefits of and timelines for the proposed University Grade Review Board.

2. A discussion, feedback, and question period followed the presentation. Dr. Dana Ringuette requested that his memo to the councils regarding the proposed policy be entered into the minutes of this forum (See Attachment A). Dr. Mary Herrington-Perry recorded the issues raised at the forum. A summary of those issues follow:
 - Is the University Grade Review Board necessary? Could CAA/CGS/Dean/Provost fulfill this role?
 - Should Unit B faculty be represented on the appeal committees?
 - Is “capricious” the appropriate term for all appeal bases?
 - Should the proposal specify whose role (chairs’?) it is to determine—early in the process—whether the appeal is legitimate?
 - Should chairs’ role in the process be expanded? If not, should it be eliminated?
 - Is the proposed process unnecessarily complicated? Does it require too much paperwork?
 - Could the college curriculum committee perform the role of CGAC?
 - Should students’ role on the appeal committees be ex-officio?
3. On behalf of CAA and CGS, Dr. O’Rourke thanked everyone for their contributions to the discussion. She explained that she and Dr. Roszkowski, CAA Chair, welcome other communications regarding the revised policy.

The forum concluded at 3:36 p.m.

At upcoming meetings, both CAA and CGS will hold separate discussions about the proposed policy and decide whether or not to integrate the feedback into the proposal. Each group will consider all communications and today’s discussion, questions, and comments before voting on the issue.

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

Attachment A

To: Dr. Christie Roszkowski, Chair, Council on Academic Affairs
Dr. Kathlene O'Rourke, Chair, Council on Graduate Studies

From: Dana Ringuette, on behalf of the **EIU Council of Chairs**

Date: September 25, 2006

Subject: Policy on Review of Alleged Capricious Grades, revision of IGP #45, Grade Appeals

On behalf of the Council of Chairs, I am writing to respond to the draft Policy on Review of Alleged Capricious Grades and to express the chairs' concerns about elements in it.

First, however, we want to thank the Joint Subcommittee on the Grade Appeal Policy for their efforts to revise what is certainly an existing governing policy fraught with potential problems. Second, we support the committee's proposals for a definite timeline for the review *and* for a definite end to the review process. Third, we appreciate the committee's stipulation that the review is intended only to address alleged capricious grading and not meant to review the judgment of a faculty member in assessing the quality of the student's work.

For the sake of concision, I will simply list our Council's concerns and try to provide some brief explanation for each.

1. We have concerns about "Alleged Capricious Grading" as a title and term. We understand the joint committee's use of this term as modeled on policies from other universities. Yet, in this particular instance, the title is neither accurate nor is the term itself defined accurately. The first "definition" ("A mathematical error in calculation of the grade or clerical error in recording of the grade") denotes an "error" not a grade given capriciously. For this reason, the policy is mis-titled. But, the following three "bases" are instances of possible capricious grading. Because this policy as described does not outline a "grade appeal" (as indicated by the stipulation noted above), we would request that the first "definition" be deleted and that the remaining three constitute the "definitions" of alleged capricious grading.
2. The proposed policy throughout overlooks a key element that should be addressed (even in the present form of IGP #45): no one on any of the multiple levels of review ever reviews the student's appeal itself to determine whether it is germane and pertinent or simply frivolous and inappropriate. Without such a determination at some point early, the entire proposed procedure could be mobilized for no good reason. The Council of Chairs requests that the chair be given the authority to make such a determination on the strength of a student's written appeal. Part of our concern in this regard is that the policy, if implemented as proposed, will actually encourage and increase the number of "allegations" filed.
3. The COC has concerns about the chair's role in the proposed formal review (and, again, in the present IGP #45). In the proposed policy, the chair convenes meetings, takes notes, writes up summaries of those notes, and forwards materials to the dean, all clerical responsibilities that facilitate neither resolution nor an end. In fact, the step of the "Chair Review Meeting" actually prevents the chair from doing what she or he can do best: provide help and direction to the student and the faculty member. In the context of alleged capricious grading, the chair has no authority and no means of helping to resolve the issue. The chair, in effect, becomes a mere scrivener. We would prefer not to be so and would welcome either being given some authority to try to effect resolution or, barring that, being dropped from playing a role in the procedures altogether.

4. We are concerned that the review is overly procedural and overly long, involving much more time, energy, and demands on faculty, chairs, and deans—not to mention students—than is necessary. While we appreciate the joint committee's efforts to be thorough, the procedure for review may (and we think will) become an unwelcome grinding of wheels simply to show that the wheels move. We do not believe a university-wide "Grade Review Board" is necessary. And while we are not in consensus about whether the Departmental Grade Appeal Committee should be eliminated or retained, we are in consensus that *one* review board beyond departmental consideration should be sufficient to arrive at a fair determination of an appeal. It is also for this reason that we urge that a precise, definite, and timely course of action be fixed for either changing or not changing a grade, and that either the dean or the provost be given the authority to bring this definite end to the review process.

The Council of Chairs understands that the current IGP #45 requires revision. In fact, as a council in Fall 2005, chairs proposed revisions to the existing policy that clarified timelines and the role of the chair in the present grade appeal process. However, we are not convinced that such a heavily procedural and complex policy as that proposed is the right response. Again, we support the explicit move (still incomplete in the present draft of the proposal, as noted above) from a "grade appeal process" which is currently vague and too easily used inappropriately to a much more defined and focused "Review of Alleged Capricious Grades." We offer our concerns and suggestions in the spirit of making a policy as strong as it can and should be.

If you have any questions, please let me know. We will have representatives at the September 28 joint CAA/CGS meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.