

The UAF Faculty Senate passed the following at Meeting #222 on April 3, 2017, with amendments at Section II.B.:

MOTION:

The UAF Faculty Senate moves to amend the Appeals Policy for Academic Decisions (other than assignment of grades), as shown below.

EFFECTIVE: Fall 2017

RATIONALE: The Appeal for Academic Decisions Policy was last revised in 2012. The current revisions clarify the informal and formal appeals processes and timelines, and brings the policy in line with Board of Regents' Policy (Chapter 09.03 - Student Dispute Resolution).

 2017-04-04

President, UAF Faculty Senate

APPROVAL: 

Chancellor's Office

DATE: 4/10/2017

DISAPPROVED: _____
Chancellor's Office

DATE: _____

(See attached policy)

Additions in bold italics and deletions indicated with strike-through.

Appeals Policy For Academic Decisions Other Than Assignment of Grades

I. Introduction

The University of Alaska is committed to the ideal of academic freedom and so recognizes that academic decisions are a faculty responsibility. Therefore, the University administration shall not unduly influence or affect the review of academic decisions that are a faculty responsibility.

The following procedures are designed to provide a means for students to seek review of academic decisions alleged to be arbitrary and capricious. These academic decisions may involve non-admission to or dismissal from any UAF program that were made by a department or program through the department chair, or involve pass/fail decisions by a committee of faculty on non-course examinations (such as qualifying, comprehensive or thesis examinations) or satisfactory/unsatisfactory evaluations on student reviews (such as the annual review of graduate student performance). Before taking formal action, a student must attempt to resolve the issue informally. A student who files a written request for review under the following procedures shall be expected to abide by the final disposition of the review, as provided below, and may not seek further review of the matter under any other procedure within the university.

II. Definitions

A. ~~As used in the schedule for review of academic decisions,~~ **A “class day”** is any day of scheduled instruction, excluding Saturday and Sunday, included on the academic calendar in effect at the time of a review, **as defined in university regulations (R09.03.024)**. Final examination periods are counted as class days.

B. ***The term “academic leader” is used to denote the head of the academic department offering the course or program from which the academic decision or action arose*** (e.g., head, chair or coordinator of an academic department, or division coordinator or program chair if the faculty member is in **CRCD**).

~~B. “Department Chair” for the purposes of this policy denotes the administrative head of the academic unit offering the course (e.g., head, chair or coordinator of an academic department, or division coordinator or program chair if the faculty member is in the College of Rural Alaska).~~

C. ~~“Committee of F faculty”~~ **for the purposes of this policy denotes the group of faculty who rendered the initial decision being appealed. Such groups may include, but are not limited to:**

graduate examination committees, graduate advisory committees, and thesis defense committees.

D. The "dean/director" is the administrative head of the college or school offering the course or program from which the academic decision or action arises. For students at extended campuses the director of the campus may substitute for the dean/director of the unit offering the course or program.

E. The "next regular semester" is the fall or spring semester following that in which the disputed academic decision was made. For example, it would be the fall semester **for a decision made during** ~~for a final grade issued for a course completed during~~ the previous spring semester or summer session. The spring semester is the next regular semester for an academic decision made during the previous fall semester.

F. For the purpose of this procedure, "arbitrary and capricious" means:

An academic decision that is based on something other than academic performance or that represents a substantial, unreasonable and unannounced departure from previously articulated standards.

III. Procedures

A. Informal Procedures

A student wishing to appeal an academic decision other than a grade assignment must first request an informal review of the decision.

- 1. Review the UAF Appeal of Academic Decisions other than grades form. [The form is available through the Office of the Provost.]**
- 2. ~~4-~~ Notification must be received by the Provost *academic leader* within ~~30~~ 15 class days after the beginning of the next regular semester.**
- 3. The academic leader notifies the dean that an action has commenced. The dean notifies all relevant parties that an informal review has begun.**
- 4. If the student wishes to appeal an academic decision, the student should work with their committee chair, department chair, associate dean, and dean as necessary to resolve the academic decision. The dean makes the final decision and provides a report to the student and to the affected parties within 10 class days.**
- 5. ~~2-~~ There may be extenuating circumstances when the deadlines cannot be met due to illness, mail disruption, or other situations over which the student may have no control. In such a case, upon request from the student, the *academic leader* Provost, after review**

of supporting documentation provided by the student, ***may recommend to the appeals committee that the deadlines be adjusted accordingly.*** ~~may adjust the deadlines accordingly.~~ ***At the discretion of the academic leader,*** ~~A~~ an extension of the deadline will be limited to one semester but every effort should be made to complete the appeal process within the current semester.

6. ***If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the academic leader, the student can file a formal appeal with the Office of the Provost.*** ~~3. In cases where the decision was rendered by a committee of faculty (such as those dealing with graduate examinations and evaluations), the provost will request the appropriate committee to conduct an informal review of its decision. The committee of faculty will determine whether its original decision should be overturned or changed in any way. The committee of faculty will submit its recommendation to the provost through the department chair and dean/director within 10 days.~~

~~4. In all other matters, the Provost will request the appropriate department chair to conduct an informal review of the decision. The Department chair will determine whether the original decision should be overturned or changed in any way. The department chair will submit his/her recommendation to the provost through the dean/director within 10 days. In the event that the department chair is directly involved, the provost can ask the dean/director to conduct an informal review and submit his/her recommendations directly to him.~~

~~5. The Provost will consult with the student on the committee of faculty's or department chair's recommendation. If the student does not find that recommendation acceptable, he/she may request the Provost to conduct a formal review.~~

B. ***Formal Procedures*** ~~The formal review will be conducted as follows.~~

1. This formal review is initiated by the student through a signed, written request ***in writing*** to the ***Office of the Provost.***
 - a. The student's request for formal review ***must be submitted using the formal Academic Decisions Other Than Assignment of Grades Appeals form*** ~~may be submitted using university forms specifically designed for this purpose and available~~ ***in person or electronically*** from the Office of the Provost.
 - b. By submitting a request for a review, the student acknowledges that no additional mechanisms exist within the university for the ***informal*** ~~formal~~ review of the decision., and that the university's administration including the college dean/director can not influence or affect the outcome of the formal review.

- c. The request for a formal review must be received no later than **5 class** 10 days after the student has learned the outcome of the informal review. ~~(HIA4).~~
 - d. The student will work with the Office of the Provost on collecting appropriate documentation to support their appeal and must submit this documentation with the appeal.
 - d. ~~The request must detail the basis for the allegation that the decision was made on a basis other than sound professional judgment based upon standard academic policies, procedures and practices.~~
2. The ~~5-member~~ review committee will be appointed **by the Provost and the Faculty Senate president** as follows:
- a. The Provost shall appoint one non-voting ~~tenure-track~~ faculty member **holding academic rank, who is represented through the current applicable collective bargaining agreements**, from the academic unit in which the decision was made. This individual shall serve in an advisory role. This faculty member shall not be the individual(s) against whom the appeal is directed.
 - b. Two ~~tenure-track~~ faculty members **holding academic rank, who are represented through the current applicable collective bargaining agreements**, from within the college or school but outside of the unit in which the decision was made shall be appointed. One of these members shall be appointed by the Provost. The other person shall be appointed by the Faculty Senate President and shall be a member of the Faculty Senate (including alternate members), if available.
 - c. One ~~tenure-track~~ faculty member **holding academic rank, who is represented through the current applicable collective bargaining agreements**, from outside the college or school in which the decision was made. This person shall be a member of the Faculty Senate (including alternate members). The Senate member shall be appointed by the Faculty Senate President.
 - d. The fifth member to be appointed by the Provost will be a non-voting student representative.
 - e. **In the case of an appeal from a graduate student, a representative appointed by the Graduate School shall serve on the committee in a non-voting capacity.**
 - f. The **facilitator, appointed by the Provost**, ~~campus judicial officer or his/her designee~~ shall serve as a non-voting **committee member** ~~facilitator~~ for appeals

hearings. This individual shall serve in an advisory role to help preserve consistent hearing protocol and records- ***and insure that appeal policies and procedures are followed.***

3. The committee must schedule a mutually agreeable date, time and location for the appeal hearing within 10 ~~class working~~ days of receipt of the student's formal request. **If the request for appeal is received any time other than during a regular semester, then the hearing must be scheduled on or before the 10th class day of the next regular semester.**
 - a. During this and subsequent meetings, all parties involved shall protect the confidentiality of the matter according to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any other applicable federal, state or university policies.
 - b. To be considered by the committee, all written materials shall be submitted to the ***Office of the Provost along with the formal appeal form*** hearing facilitator no later than **2 class days** ~~48 hours~~ before the ~~day~~ start of the scheduled appeals hearing. To give all interested parties a chance to submit written materials, at least three ~~class~~ business days shall elapse between the time the meeting is announced and the start of the meeting. New written materials presented after the **2 class day** ~~48-hour~~ deadline or presented during the meeting will only be considered by agreement of all voting committee members. These procedures related to written materials also apply to all subsequent meetings.
 - c. Throughout the proceedings, the committee will encourage a mutually agreeable resolution.
 - d. The mandatory first item of business at this meeting is for the committee to rule on the validity of the student's request. Grounds for dismissal of the request for review are:
 - i. The student has not provided sufficient reason in support of the allegation that the academic decision was arbitrary and capricious.
 - ii. This is not the first properly prepared request for appeal.
 - iii. The request was not made within the policy deadlines.
 - e. In the event that the committee votes to dismiss the request, a written notice of dismissal must be forwarded to the student, ~~instructor~~, **academic leader** ~~department chair~~, dean/director and provost within five **class** days of the

decision, and will state clearly the reasoning for the dismissal of the request.

4. Acceptance for consideration of the student's request will result in the following:
 - a. A request for, and receipt of, a formal written response from the **academic leader** ~~program department chair~~ to the student's allegation.
 - b. A second meeting scheduled to meet within 10 **class** days of the decision to review the request.
 - i. The student and the **academic leader** ~~department chair~~ or a representative of the program will be invited to attend the meeting.
 - ii. The meeting will be closed to outside participation, and **either** ~~neither~~ the student **or** ~~nor the instructor or~~ **appropriate academic representative** ~~department chair~~ may be accompanied by an advocate ~~or representative~~. Other matters of format will be announced in advance.
 - iii. The proceedings will be ~~tape~~ recorded and the **recordings** ~~tapes~~ will be stored with the **Office of the Provost** ~~campus Judicial Officer~~.
 - iv. The meeting must be informal, non-confrontational and fact-finding, where both the student and **appropriate academic representative** ~~instructor or department chair~~ may provide additional relevant and useful information and **clarify** ~~can provide clarification of facts for~~ **any** materials previously submitted.
5. The final decision of the committee will be made in private by a majority vote.
 - a. Actions which the committee can take if it accepts the student's allegation may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. direct the **academic leader** ~~program instructor or department chair~~ to reconsider the decision,
 - ii. provide a final alternative decision.
 - b. The academic decision review committee proceedings will result in the preparation of written findings and conclusions.
 - c. A formal, written report of the decision must be forwarded to the student, **academic leader** ~~instructor, program/department chair~~, dean and Provost within five **class** days of the meeting. The Provost shall then be responsible for communicating the decision to other relevant offices (e.g., Admissions, Registrar).
 - d. The decision of the committee is final.

C. The entire process must be completed by the end of the semester in which the decision first took effect.

Record of Changes to the Appeals of Academic Decisions Other Than Assignment of Grades Policy:

The Academic Appeals Policy was passed by the UAF Faculty Senate at its Meeting #96 (Sept. 25, 2000) and amended at its Meeting #101 (April 2, 2001), Meeting #109 (May 6, 2002), Meeting #123 (May 3, 2004), Meeting #157 (March 2, 2009), and Meeting #183 (May 7, 2012).

- Policy at Section III, Procedures, subsection B, Item 2, was revised at Meeting #183 (May 7, 2012).
- Deadlines were revised at Meeting #157 (March 2, 2009).