

DRAFT MOTION:

The UAF Faculty Senate moves to amend the Appeals Policy for Academic Decisions Other Than Assignment of Grades, as shown below.

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

RATIONALE: TO BE ADDED BY SADAC

President, UAF Faculty Senate

APPROVAL: _____ DATE: _____
Chancellor's Office

DISAPPROVED: _____ DATE: _____
Chancellor's Office

CAPS and **Bolded** – Addition; [[]] – Deletion

**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. Final examination periods are counted as class days.
- B. "Department chair" for the purposes of this policy denotes the [[administrative chair]] **ELECTED FACULTY MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE** [[of the]] academic unit offering the course (e.g., [[head,]] chair [[or coordinator]] of an academic department, or the campus director if the faculty member is in the College of Rural Alaska).
- C. "Committee of 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 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.

III. Procedures

- A. A student wishing to appeal an academic decision other than a grade assignment must first request an informal review of the decision.
 - 1. Notification must be received by the Provost within 30 CLASS DAYS AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT REGULAR SEMESTER.

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 Provost, after review of supporting documentation provided by the student, may adjust the deadlines accordingly. 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.
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]] **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 [[d]]Department chair and dean/director within 10 days.
4. In all other matters, the Provost will request the appropriate [[d]]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 [[d]]Department chair will submit his/her recommendation to the provost through the dean/director within 10 days. In the event that the [[d]]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 [[d]]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. The formal review will be conducted as follows.

1. This formal review is initiated by the student through a signed, written request to the Provost.
 - a. The student's request for formal review may be submitted using university forms specifically designed for this purpose and available 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 formal review of the decision, and that the university's administration including the college dean/director cannot influence or affect the outcome of the formal review.
 - c. The request for a formal review must be received no later than 10 days after the student has learned the outcome of the informal review (IIIA4).
 - 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 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. The campus judicial officer or his/her designee shall serve as a nonvoting facilitator for appeals hearings. This individual shall serve in an advisory role to help preserve consistent hearing protocol and records.

3. The committee must schedule a mutually agreeable date, time and location for the appeal hearing within 10 working days of receipt of the student's formal request.

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 hearing facilitator no later than 48 hours before the start of the scheduled appeals hearing. To give all interested parties a chance to submit written materials, at least three business days shall elapse between the time the meeting is announced and the start of the meeting. New written materials presented after the 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:

- 1) The student has not provided sufficient reason in support of the allegation that the academic decision was arbitrary and capricious.
- 2) This is not the first properly prepared request for appeal.
- 3) 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, [[d]]Department chair, dean/director and provost within five days of the decision, and will state clearly the reasoning for the dismissal of the request.

Comment [DM1]: Should this be "Committee of Faculty" instead?

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 program [[d]]Department chair to the student's allegation.

b. A second meeting scheduled to meet within 10 days of the decision to review the request.

- 1) The student and the [[d]]Department chair or a representative of the program will be invited to attend the meeting.
- 2) The meeting will be closed to outside participation, and neither the student nor the instructor or [[d]]Department chair may be accompanied by an advocate or representative. Other matters of format will be announced in advance.
- 3) The proceedings will be tape recorded and the tapes will be stored with the campus Judicial Officer.
- 4) The meeting must be informal, non-confrontational and fact-finding, where both the student and instructor or [[d]]Department chair may provide additional relevant and useful information and can provide clarification of facts for materials previously submitted.

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Comment [DM3]: Please see comment above

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:

1) direct the program instructor or [[d]]Department chair to reconsider the decision,

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2) 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, instructor, [[program/department chair]] **PROGRAM DEPARTMENT CHAIR**, dean/**DIRECTOR** and Provost within five days of the meeting. The Provost shall then be responsible for communicating the decision to other relevant offices (e.g., Admissions, Registrar).

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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 following is a complete copy of the Academic Appeals Policy as 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 \(March 2, 2009\)](#).