Proposition: 06-06/07
Sponsors: Creider (Chair),
Actual Committee Assignment: University Affairs 11/16/06
Title: Procedure for Initiating Grievance Complaints in the Undergraduate Catalog
Proposal: Amend the existing Academic Appeals section of the Undergraduate Catalog by inserting the phrase “or appropriate unit designee” after “department head” in portions 1-3 of the catalog and by deleting the last sentence of the current section 1.

Existing text with changes tracked:

Academic Appeals

Procedure for Initiating Grievance Complaints: This procedure has been established to provide a method to resolve undergraduate student grievances at the lowest administrative level in a fair and expeditious manner. For the purpose of this procedure, grievances are limited to alleged violations of university policy or procedures by the university or its employees, disputes with faculty and/or alleged unfair treatment. Usually this method is used to appeal a grade the student feels was not justified. Under no condition should these policies be used when the student has allegedly violated the University Code of Conduct or a contractual agreement, and at no hearing should either party have a lawyer. Any student who believes that he/she has been unjustly treated within the academic process may proceed as far as necessary in the steps detailed below. Should the alleged grievance not involve a faculty member or course, the student is to appeal directly to the department head or associate dean for academics in whose area or college the alleged grievance occurred.

1) Appeal to the faculty member: The student is to submit a written appeal to the faculty member within 30 days after the start of the semester following the semester in which the alleged grievance occurred. Semester in this case refers to fall and spring only. If the alleged grievance occurs during the summer session, the student is to submit an appeal no later than 30 days into the fall semester following the summer session in which the alleged grievance occurred. The faculty member and the student are to discuss the problem. The faculty member will submit a written report outlining his or her decision to the student and department head or appropriate unit designee within ten working days of receipt of the student’s written appeal.

2) Appeal to the department head or appropriate unit designee: If a decision satisfactory to the student cannot be reached, the student may submit a written appeal to the department head or appropriate unit designee in which the course in question is taught. This is to be done within ten days of the receipt of the faculty member’s written decision. The faculty member, the department head or appropriate unit designee, and the student are to meet to discuss the problem. The department head or appropriate unit designee will send a written response outlining his or her decision to the student and faculty member within ten days of this meeting.
3) **Appeals to the associate dean for academics or associate dean of the library:** If a satisfactory decision cannot be reached among the department head or appropriate unit designee, the faculty member, and the student, the student or the faculty member may submit a written state of appeal to the associate dean for academics of the college in which the course was taught. This is to be done within ten working days after the receipt of the written decision by the department head or appropriate unit designee. The associate dean may request a written recommendation from an Academic Appeals Board. Should this be the case, the Academic Appeals Board will conduct a hearing with the student and faculty member (not necessarily at the same time) to review the merits of the appeal. They may also ask for supporting evidence for or against the appeal. The Academic Appeals Board will submit the written recommendation to the associate dean within five working days following the conclusion of their process. The associate dean may meet with the student, faculty member, and department head or appropriate unit designee to discuss the appeal (not necessarily at the same time). The associate dean will submit a written response outlining his or her decision to the student, faculty member, department head or appropriate unit designee, and dean within ten days of the last meeting.

4) **Appeals to the dean:** The dean of the college or library in which the course is taught or in whose college the alleged grievance occurred may, at his or her discretion, review the appeal upon the written request of the student or faculty member and render a final decision. An appeal to the dean is the last step in the appeals process and the dean’s decision cannot be appealed further. Should the dean not choose to review the appeal, the decision of the associate dean for academics or associate dean of the library is final.

5) **Exceptions to the time involved:** The associate dean for academics or associate dean of the library may waive the normal time frame for appeals for compelling reasons. Regardless of circumstances, academic appeals must be initiated with the course instructor within two years of the conclusion of the semester or summer session in which the course was taken.

6) **Enrollment:** A student need not be enrolled at the university to initiate an appeal.

**Academic Appeals Board:** Within each college of the university or the library an academic appeals board will be appointed by the associate dean for academics to hear student appeals. The appeals board will consist of three faculty members and two students.

**Maintenance of Records:** Instructors and/or departments shall keep records used to compute individual grades for two years after the completion of a course. If a grade has been appealed, these records shall be kept for at least two years after completion of the appeal. Departments, colleges, or library may require that records be kept for longer periods.
Rationale: The current academic appeals procedures were written for academic departments with traditional academic organizational structures. Under the existing language, appeals in the Library go first to the instructor and then to the Associate Dean of the Library while the department head is bypassed. These language changes would allow the Library to have appeals go from the instructor to the department head to the Associate Dean. The proposed language would also permit other academic units who have varying organizational structures to have a clearer appeals procedure based on their organizational needs. This measure was approved by the Associate Deans Advisory Council on March 13, 2006 and by the Academic Deans Council on September 27, 2006.