

TO: Lawrence Williams, Chair
Undergraduate Committee

FROM: Richard Scamell
Academic Policies and Procedures Committee

SUBJECT: UC 12666 13F: Proposed Changes to the College of Natural Sciences and
Mathematics Grievance Policy

DATE: November 26, 2013

APPROVED JAN 22 2014
M.H.

The Academic Policies and Procedures Committee met on Wednesday, November 20 to consider a proposal to modify the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics grievance procedures concerning academic matters*. Participating in consideration of this proposal were committee members Ognjen Miljanic, William Munson, Richard Scamell, Shishir Shah, Lesley Sisk, and Stephen Soutullo. Ian Evans attended the meeting as a guest.

Both the current as well as the proposed grievance procedures consist of the following three steps. Modifications to the current grievance procedures are shown by strikethroughs and bolded highlighted text.

1. Every effort shall be made by the student, faculty, and department chair to resolve the grievance within the department structure. If step one does not resolve the grievance, the student may **within fifteen class days of the receipt of the departmental decision regarding the grievance**, go to step two.
2. Petition the dean or his/her designee first by informal discussion and then, if necessary, by filing a formal written complaint detailing specifics of the complaint **along with relevant supporting evidence and desired resolution**. If the dean proposes a solution it shall be binding on the department, but not on the student. If the student does not find the dean's proposal acceptable, the student may, within fifteen ~~calendar~~ **class** days of the receipt of the dean's decision, go to step three.
3. Request that the case be heard by the NSM Academic Grievance Subcommittee, a three—member faculty panel chosen from the College Curriculum Committee. **The decision of the Academic Grievance Subcommittee shall be binding on both the department and the student and rendered in writing within fifteen class days of the subcommittee's consideration of the case.**

Discussion

The bolded and highlighted revisions result in three improvements to the policy. First, introducing a time limit in step one during which an appeal can be made will allow for a more timely resolution of grievance cases. Second, by specifying in step two "supporting evidence and desired resolution" as part of the written complaint, it is expected that all parties will benefit from the added clarity brought to the process. Third, by indicating in step three that the

* The grievances considered in this proposal do not include matters of academic honesty which are covered by the University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy (<http://www.uh.edu/provost/shared-interest/policy-guidelines/honesty-policy/AcademicHonestyPolicy2013.pdf>).

subcommittee decision is binding on both parties, it is hoped that some sense of closure will be brought to the process at least as related to the substantive component of the grievance itself. Any appeal beyond the college would typically be in regard to evaluations of procedural errors.

Recommendation

The Committee unanimously recommends approval of UC 12666 13F as revised. As part of the approval of this proposal, the committee endorses the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics' request that the following statement accompany the policy at the time it appears in the catalog:

Grievances submitted within the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics after [certain date] will be governed by the following policy:

*The date could be September 1, 20XX, January 1, 20XX, or June 1, 20XX (or the dates when all changes in the catalog become effective).