

Procedures for Allegations of Capricious, Unfair, or Arbitrary Grading* (For situations where there is no allegation of student dishonesty)

The assignment of course grades is one of the chief means by which instructors communicate to students and the University about student achievement in their courses. Therefore, grades must be assigned after careful evaluation of students' work and meticulous consideration of the weighted value of all students' work as based on the criteria and procedures communicated to the students by the instructors.

The classroom context that is assumed in a learning community is one in which [a] grading policies are fair and clearly communicated to students, [b] grading practices are characterized by relatively good reliability and validity, and [c] grading error or bias is neutralized by enlightened sensitivity and attention to the possibility of such error or bias. Even within this context, it is possible for students to perceive that they have been graded unfairly and to seek redress. These procedures provide a description of the circumstances and a procedure for such redress within the College of Arts and Sciences.

A student or students might allege that undeserved grade(s) was/were assigned as a result of computation error, injustice, or bias on the part of the instructor.

Should this happen, the allegation can be resolved as described below:

- 1) A student with a complaint must first discuss the matter with the faculty member. Any procedural complaint regarding a change of grade must be initiated within four weeks of the beginning of the next scheduled term, not including the summer session.
- 2) If the matter is not resolved at this level, the student may then take the matter to the chair of the department involved. The chair will discuss the case with the faculty member and may recommend that the faculty member review the grade.
- 3) Upon request of the student, the dean will proceed in similar fashion. Specifically, the student should provide a written complaint to the appropriate associate dean. The associate dean will review the complaint and may recommend that the faculty member review the grade. After review by the associate dean, upon request of the student, the dean may review the complaint. The dean may convene a panel of faculty to assist in the review. After consulting with the panel of faculty, the dean may recommend that the faculty member review the grade.
- 4) This process of review gives the chair and dean the right to discuss the matter with the faculty member, and if they think it appropriate, request that the faculty member review the grade. Any recommendations made will not be binding upon the faculty member against whom the complaint is lodged. The decision to change a grade remains with the faculty member.
- 5) The Faculty Handbook, Appendix E, describes the procedure and includes a final appeal to the provost.

* These procedures are based on the Policies and Procedures on Student Appeals of Grades from Appendix E of the Faculty Handbook and approved on November 15, 1978 by the Faculty Senate.

Procedures for Student Grievances Concerning Unfair Treatment by Faculty* (Established September 5, 2006)

Santa Clara is dedicated to being a community enriched by men and women of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, respectful of difference and enlivened by open dialogue, caring and just toward others, and committed to broad participation in achieving the common good. In the same way that we require faculty to be collegial in their practice of scholarship, teaching, and service, we expect faculty of the College to be professional and fair in all their interactions with students, both in and outside of the classroom.

A student who feels that he/she has been disadvantaged by capricious or biased decision-making by faculty/staff may initiate a formal grievance. The allegation can be resolved as described below:

- 1) A student with a complaint must first discuss the matter with the faculty member. Any complaint must be initiated within four weeks of the beginning of the next scheduled term, not including the summer session.
- 2) If the matter is not resolved at this level, the student may then take the matter to the chair of the department involved. The chair will discuss the case with the faculty member and may counsel the faculty member.
- 3) If the matter is not resolved at this level, upon request of the student, the dean will proceed in similar fashion. Specifically, the student should provide a written complaint to the dean, who may delegate the investigation to an associate dean. The associate dean will review the complaint and respond in writing to the student.
- 4) If the matter is not resolved at this level, upon request of the student, the dean may review the complaint. The dean may convene a panel of faculty to assist in the review. After consulting with the panel of faculty, the dean will respond in writing to the student.

* For situations not covered by “Policies and Procedures on Student Appeals of Grades” (Faculty Handbook, Appendix E) and “Policy on Unlawful Harassment and Unlawful Discrimination” (Faculty Handbook, Appendix F).