

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE  
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 2620S  
Date of Senate Approval 03/05/20

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**FWDC 2:** **Revise ([SD 2981](#)) Student Grievance Procedure  
Faculty Handbook [Section 8.3.4](#)**

**Effective Date:** Immediately

**Summary:** This document allows for faculty and the Office of Accessibility to provide their perspective on a case brought forward by a student *before* a hearing. It also includes some editorial changes to update existing language to be more in line with recommendations for inclusive language use.

**Rationale:** The current policy only allows for the Academic Appeals Board to have the student grievance ahead of the hearing. It is more balanced to also have the instructor perspective prior to the hearing. Having statements from both parties ahead of time also allows the AAB to formulate more specific questions. Since some cases involve the application of accommodations, having input from the Office of Accessibility provides important clarification for the AAB in their consideration of those cases.

**Revise 8.3.4. as follows:**

A student grievance procedure exists to serve all enrolled students at UNC Asheville in the event that they judge they have been improperly or unfairly treated in academic matters. The detailed procedure may be found in the Student Handbook. It should be noted that written notice of the grievance must be filed with the Faculty Conciliator within 20 class days of the incident or of the time a student could reasonably be expected to know of the incident.

Purpose

The purpose of the student grievance procedure is to provide each student enrolled at UNC Asheville with a standardized, formal process for seeking a resolution when, in ~~his/her~~ **their** judgment, ~~he or she has~~ **they have** been treated unfairly or improperly in an academic matter by a faculty member of this University.

## Definitions

Unfair or improper treatment of a student by a faculty member is defined to be:

1. The instructor's failure to abide by stated university policies, or failure to abide by written or stated course policies in such a way as to adversely affect the student's academic standing;
2. abusive or improper conduct on the part of the instructor that clearly has an adverse effect on the student's academic standing,
3. the instructor's prejudiced or capricious grading practices.

## Grievance Procedure

Step 1. If a student believes that ~~he or she has~~ **they have** been treated unfairly or improperly by a faculty member, a conference must be scheduled with the instructor to discuss the matter. The student must explain ~~his or her~~ **their** position to the instructor and attempt to understand the justification for the instructor's actions. The purpose of this meeting is to attempt to reach a mutual understanding of the student's situation and the instructor's actions and to resolve all differences in an informal, cooperative manner.

Step 2. If, because of the circumstances of the grievance, it is impractical to consult promptly with the instructor, or if the student is unsatisfied with the results of Step 1, the student must seek the assistance of the Faculty Conciliator within 20 class days after the incident, or after the time the student could reasonably be expected to know of the incident. The Conciliator's role is to guide the student through the remaining steps.

Step 3. Within five class days after the initial meeting with the student, the Conciliator must then meet with the instructor and the instructor's chairperson in order to seek an amicable solution. If, when the Conciliator reports to the student the substance of the meeting, the student is still dissatisfied, ~~he or she~~ **they** may then wish to proceed to Step 4 and file a formal grievance.

Step 4. To file a grievance, the student must obtain a grievance petition from the Conciliator. The petition must specify the date of the incident and detail the student's grievance against the instructor. The student must then file the petition with the Conciliator. This filing must occur within 20 class days of the incident or of the time a student could reasonably be expected to know of the incident. In cases of doubt concerning the application of the time limit, the Conciliator will decide. Failure to meet this deadline forfeits the right of appeal. The Conciliator must then immediately forward a copy of the petition to the instructor, to the instructor's department Chair, and the Chair of the AAB.

**Step 5. Upon receipt of the student complaint, the Chair of the AAB will invite the instructor to provide a written response. If the grievance is related to any form of accommodation, the Office of Accessibility will also be invited to provide clarification of the relevant accommodation policy.**

Step ~~5~~ **6**. The Chair of the AAB shall convene a meeting of the Board no sooner than five class days nor longer than ten class days after receipt of the Grievance Petition. In a closed hearing,

the student shall present ~~his or her~~ **their** grievance, along with relevant supporting evidence and pertinent arguments. ~~He or she~~ **They** may only address issues that are described in the Grievance Petition. The instructor shall be given an opportunity to respond to the charges. The votes of two faculty members and two student members that are in concurrence with the student's position shall be required in order for the grievance to be found valid.

~~Step 6~~ **7.** If a grievance is unfounded the AAB shall provide written notification of that fact to the student, the faculty member, and the departmental Chair. If a grievance is deemed valid, the Board shall forward a written account of its deliberations, including its recommendations for redress, to the student, the faculty member, the department Chair, and the VCAA. The Chair of the AAB, after consultation with the VCAA, shall convene a meeting of ~~himself- themselves~~, the VCAA, the Conciliator, and the faculty member to discuss the matter and suggest strategies for resolving the grievance.