

# Academic Standards Committee Meeting Agenda

Thursday, January 18, 2024

1. Welcome
2. Information:
  - a. Staci Warnert has left the committee to attend to her new duties as Dean. Thank you to Staci for her service.
  - b. Data has been requested from CIT 129, CS 135, EDU 214, GIS 109, GRC 119, and IS 101 for assessment report on Technological Proficiency. Our next meeting will focus on reorganizing that report.
3. Discussion and action: What do we want the grade appeal policy to look like? Old policy and current draft below for reference.

Notes from discussion: We want the policy to be solid. Grades are not opinions. We need a line at the start of the policy that specifically says “these are grounds to appeal a grade”. Through discussion it was decided that we are happy with the current policy, especially the clear path it lays out for students to complete the grade appeal process. The committee only wants to clarify for students what is and is not grounds for a grade appeal. Yvonne presented an alteration to the draft policy that had a nice format for a paragraph covering these topics. It was decided to draft this paragraph and add it directly below the current first paragraph of the current policy (which expresses support for instructors to run courses as they see fit). Below is a list of what situations that the committee discussed are grounds for an appeal and what situations are not grounds for an appeal. Susanne Bentley and Dean Straight said that they could work on drafting the paragraph to add to the current policy.

What can be appealed?

- Teacher not following grading policies on syllabus.
- The instructor made a major error of some kind, either in grading the assignments or accumulating the grade data.

What *isn't* an appeal?

- Title IX
- Didn't like grade
- Didn't like instructor/instructor style
- Disagree with assignments
- Effects on GPA
- Previous grades

4. Scheduling for future meetings.
5. New Business: None
6. Adjournment

In Attendance:

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Present</b>
<b>Daniel Murphree, Chair</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Susanne Bentley</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Eric Andersen</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Glen Tenney</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Yvonne Naungayan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Dean Straight</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Sheila Staszak</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Steven Hrdlicka</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Stephanie Davis</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Kara Coates</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Rebecca Hawley</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Current Grade Appeal Policy:**

Grade Appeals Great Basin College respects an instructor's qualifications and upholds the right of an instructor to determine academic standards. With faculty approval, an instructor establishes the scope, objectives, and methodology of the course being taught and is responsible for informing students of the requirements for completion of the course of study in the class. The instructor evaluates student performance according to written grading criteria made available to students at the beginning of the class.

Should students have questions about a grade, the following published procedures shall be followed. The procedures do not apply to cases of grades issued because of academic dishonesty.

Student concerns about instructor conduct or activities unrelated directly to grades should follow the student grievance procedure on page 42.

The burden of proof in these procedures rests with the student. Students may consult with the Office of the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs in Berg Hall or their local Center Directors for assistance with the procedures and policies for appeal.

Failure to initiate these procedures within 30 calendar days of the end of the semester will result in the forfeiture of the right to challenge a grade.

**These are the steps that must be taken:**

**Step One:** The student must first communicate with the instructor in writing or by email to discuss the complaint and attempt satisfactory resolution. If successful, no further action need be taken.

**Step Two:** If unsuccessful in step one, the student will write a letter to the chair of the instructor's department (this information is available at the admissions and records office in Elko or from your center) requesting a meeting between the student, the instructor, and the department chair. The department chair will respond within 15 days of receipt of the written request and establish a mutually agreeable date and time for the resolution meeting. After hearing both sides, the department chair will recommend a solution. Acceptance of this solution by both the student and the instructor ends the complaint procedure and no further action will be taken. (Note: In the event that the instructor is also the department chair, the student will write the request for a resolution meeting to the chair of the faculty senate. The senate chair or a designee of the senate chair will fulfill the responsibilities of a department chair as outlined above.)

**Step Three:** Failure of remedy in step two requires a written complaint to be submitted to the academic standards committee of the faculty senate. This complaint may be submitted by either the student or the instructor if either is not satisfied by the recommended solution of step two (this action must be accomplished within five days of the failure of step two). Within 15 days of receipt of the written complaint,

the academic standards committee will arrange for the student and the instructor to be heard before a full or quorum meeting of the academic standards committee; the chair involved in step two will be in attendance if deemed necessary by the student or the instructor. Within 15 days of this meeting the chair of the academic standards committee will provide a written recommendation to resolve the issue. Copies will be given to the student, the instructor, and the department chair or senate chair designee (as appropriate).

**Step Four:** If the issue is still unresolved to the satisfaction of either party, a written request of review must be lodged in the Office of the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs within three calendar days of issuance of the academic standards committee's recommendations. The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs will, after reviewing the documentation of the previous three steps, issue a written decision which will be the final determination.

**Note:** During summer months, faculty may not be available to complete the appeal process. The student still must initiate the appeal within 30 calendar days of the end of the semester, but it is possible that an appeal relating to spring semester may not be resolved until fall semester.

#### **Current Revision Draft:**

#### **Procedure**

This process is for students who want to appeal a grade they received. It doesn't apply if an instructor decides to change a grade without a student's request.

This procedure doesn't address cases where grades result from academic dishonesty or misconduct. It also doesn't handle grade appeals related to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation as per GBC's Sexual Harassment Policy, which should be directed to the appropriate GBC office.

The grade appeal procedure is designed to amicably resolve disagreements between students and instructors regarding grade assignments and to address personal hardships. Its goal is to encourage informal discussions to resolve differences of opinion or address hardship cases, resorting to formal faculty adjudication only when absolutely necessary. In all cases, students who believe their grade is incorrect should first attempt to resolve the issue informally with their instructor. If an informal resolution is not achievable, the student should promptly follow the outlined procedure below.

A student who wishes to appeal a grade must do so within 90 days of the official ending date of the class.

#### **Student Grade Appeal Procedure**

Whatever the nature of the grade appeal, the student must make an effort to discuss the matter with the faculty member of record. This may be done through a scheduled meeting, phone conversation, or in writing. The faculty member is expected to discuss the matter with the student in a timely manner, provide a clarifying response to the student's inquiry, and, if appropriate, adjust the disputed academic decision or grade. If submitting a grade change for a personal hardship, faculty may assign an AU, W, I or other appropriate grade. During periods of regular instruction, faculty should attempt to acknowledge or fully respond to a student's inquiry within ten academic days after it is received.

If the student is not satisfied with the faculty member's response, or if a timely response (within ten academic days during periods of regular instruction and fifteen work days during other periods) is not received, the student shall attempt to discuss the potential complaint with the chair or program coordinator of the appropriate academic department or school in which the academic decision was made or the course taught.

If, after the above outlined pre-complaint efforts are exhausted, a student chooses to bring a formal complaint, the student must file the formal complaint through the appropriate instructional dean in which the academic decision was made or the course taught.

- The student must complete a GBC Official Grade Appeal form
- A written statement of the facts and circumstances giving rise to the grade appeal must be attached to the Official Grade Appeal form. This statement must be clear, complete, accurate, and truthful, and may not exceed two pages.

Students appealing a grade should be able to provide all tests, papers and other evidence they may have to support their appeal. The complaint must be justified based on at least one of the four conditions listed above that form the basis for a grade appeal.

When properly completed, the Official Grade Appeal form is submitted to the appropriate instructional dean. The appeal will be returned to the student without processing if:

- The Official Grade Appeal form is incomplete
- The appeal is not filed within 90 days of the official ending date of the class
- The student has not initiated pre-complaint efforts with the faculty member, or
- The complaint describes issues or concerns that fall outside of the grounds listed above for a grade appeal.

The dean will forward a copy of the Official Grade Appeal form to the faculty member. The faculty member must provide a written response to the appeal within 10 academic days of the date it is received. The faculty member shall immediately inform the dean of circumstances that might prevent a timely reply.

A copy of the faculty response, along with a copy of the Official Grade Appeal form, will be sent to the appropriate department chair/program coordinator. The department chair/program coordinator will assess the appeal and provide a written recommendation with regard to dispensation of the appeal. The chair/coordinator may call a meeting with the student and the faculty member in an effort to mediate the dispute. Typically, this meeting will be arranged within three weeks after the dean has been notified of the complaint, or as soon as the schedules of all

participants permit. If possible, the chair/coordinator will propose a solution. Any solution to which the student and faculty member agree should be placed in writing and communicated to the dean and all interested parties. The chair/coordinator will provide a written response to the student appeal to the dean within five academic days after the meeting or within ten days of receiving the appeal if no meeting is held.

The dean will provide a final assessment of the student appeal by evaluating all written responses. If the dean finds that a grade was improperly given a grade change card will be filed on behalf of the student. The dean will inform the student in writing as to the decision of the appeal. The dean's decision is final.