

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA
ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AA-010-178

Request to Modify the Grade Appeal Policy (1605)

Academic Affairs Committee

Date: 10 September 2018

Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded

Date: 03 October 2018

Academic Senate

Date: 10 October 2018
First Reading

Background

Cal Poly Pomona policy allows students to appeal their grades during the term following assignment. University policy 1605 (revised for semester schedule) dictates the flow of the appeal process. Our concern is that the timeline does not leave sufficient time for committee review and recommendation processing, and does not align with other campus process deadlines (e.g., the Academic Standing Process, and grade posting). Moreover, if the student submits their formal grade appeal during the last week of the regular semester, the Committee is unable to meet until the following academic term. This will cause the committee to fall out of compliance with campus policy.

It is our opinion that students (and the Grade Appeal Committee) are disadvantaged by this timeline, as it may impact a student's ability to graduate in a timely manner or inhibit their ability to enroll in sequence courses while their appeal is under review.* We ask for a revision of the appeal process that will:

1. Alter the time period to the first three (3) weeks of the semester during which the student speaks to the course instructor.
2. Change the time frame during which the student initiates the second level of appeal to the department chair or dean to no later than week five (5) of the semester.
3. Require submission of the formal grade appeal to be no later than the 6th semester week but no later than the Friday of the 7th week of the semester term, thereby providing the committee with sufficient time to conduct its review before grades are posted and the Academic Standing process occurs.
4. Finally, the Chair of the University Course Grade Appeal Committee will forward the student's statement to the instructor. The instructor will submit a written response within 2 weeks. The student's statement and the instructor's response will then be reviewed by the entire committee, normally within two weeks of receipt of the instructor's response.

The Committee's activities during its review cycle will remain the same.

Please refer to attached proposed grade appeal timeline.

This revised timeline also allows the committee to request additional information in the event further investigation is necessary.

In addition, we ask that the policy recognize the Office of Student Success as the designated office for grade appeals, and substitute this office in place of Academic Programs.

If these changes are approved before May 2, 2018, it will allow sufficient time for implementation before the start of the Fall 2018 semester.

*Note: The grade appeal process is suspended during the summer term when fewer students and faculty members are expected to be on campus. The grade appeal process is also suspended if the faculty member is on leave or on sabbatical.

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Recommended Resources: Policy 1605
Academic Senate Report - AS-2704-167-AA

Attachment 1: Grade Appeal Timeline

GRADE APPEAL TIMELINE

WEEK	SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2 (Spring 2019)	
	Fall 2018	Appeal Timeline (as adopted 5/17/2017)	Campus Deadlines
1		Step 1: Student speaks to instructor within the first 3 weeks.	1/19/2019: Classes Begin for all Students
2			
3			
4		Step 2: If grading issue is not resolved, appeal to Chair (or Dean), no later than the 5th week of the semester.	
5			
6		Step 3: Student may submit a written statement within 10 working days to the Grade Appeals Committee. The formal grade appeal should be submitted <i>during the 6th week, but no later than the Friday of the 7th week of the semester term.</i>	
7			
8		Step 4: Grade Appeal Committee requests response from course instructor (2 weeks to respond)	
9			
10		Committee Process: Appeal review scheduled within 2 weeks of Instructor's response, subject to availability of committee members. Members include faculty and student representatives. Appeals are not reviewed during the Summer term.	
11			
12		Committee meeting held.	
13			
14			

15		Grade Appeal Committee recommendation processing occurs.	
16	Finals		5/11-17/2019: Spring 2019 Finals
17	Grades Posted		5/21/2019: End of Semester for Faculty 5/22/2019: Grades due; Academic Standing Process (generally the following Friday)

Attachment 2: Revision of Policy 1605 and AS2704-167 AA, Policies to be Translated from Q2S Values

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA
POLICY NO: 1605* GRADE APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Under the provisions of Executive Order 1037, "Grading Symbols, Minimum Standards Governing the Assignment of Grades, Policies on the Repetition of Courses, Policies on Academic Renewal, and Grade Appeals" and the University's "Statement of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Grievance Procedures," students may appeal grades that they consider to be unfair.

The Executive Order governs the assignment of grades by faculty and requires an appeal procedure to ensure that the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students are properly recognized and protected. Occasionally, a circumstance will prevent assignment of an earned grade or will cause an assigned grade to be questioned by a student.

The following policy has been adopted by Cal Poly Pomona to provide the mechanism to deal with such unusual occurrences:

- Course grades assigned by instructors are presumed to be correct. It is the responsibility of the student who appeals an assigned grade to demonstrate clerical error, prejudice, or capriciousness in the assignment of the grade, or that a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability was requested and not appropriately provided; otherwise, the judgment of the instructor is final.
- A student who believes that a course grade has been assigned inappropriately must follow the proper steps in the appeal process, observing the time limits for completion of various steps in the process as follows:

Step 1: The student should speak face-to-face with the instructor during the first **three** weeks of the **semester** following the assignment of the grade. If a face-to-face appointment cannot be arranged, the student should attempt to communicate with the instructor by phone, e-mail or fax during the same time period. Note: If the grade is assigned in the spring **semester**, the student should follow these procedures in the following fall **semester**. If the instructor is on leave, on sabbatical, or is not currently on the faculty including FERP faculty at the time of the appeal, the University shall attempt to contact the instructor on behalf of the student.^{1 2}

~~If an appointment cannot be arranged, the student should attempt to communicate with the instructor by phone, e-mail or fax.~~ If a grade has been assigned in error, the instructor can quickly correct the error by submitting a ~~change of grade form to the Registrar's Office~~ Grade Change Request via the online grading system.

¹ Revised AY 2016-2017

² The grade appeal process is suspended during the summer term when fewer students and faculty members are expected to be on campus. The grade appeal process is also suspended if the faculty member is on leave or on sabbatical. Thus, for spring semester, "the following semester" will be the following fall semester. For appeals of summer term grades, the following semester is the following fall semester. For appeals when the faculty member is either on leave or on sabbatical "the following semester" is the semester the faculty member returns to CPP.

Step 2: If the grade dispute is not resolved with the instructor and the student intends to appeal the grade, the student must appeal to the next level as soon as possible, but no later than the **fifth** week of the following **semester**. In most cases, the student will appeal to the chair of the academic department that offered the class. If the instructor is a department chair, the student should appeal to the dean of the college that offered the class. If the instructor is a dean, the student should appeal to the Provost. The person to whom the student appealed will discuss the issue with the instructor and respond to the student, usually within two weeks.

~~*Note: The grade appeal process is suspended during the summer quarter when fewer students and faculty members are expected to be on campus. The grade appeal process is also suspended if the faculty member is on leave or on sabbatical. Thus, for spring quarter, "the following quarter" will be the following fall quarter. For appeals of summer quarter grades, the following quarter is the following fall quarter. For appeals when the faculty member is either on leave or on sabbatical "the following quarter" is the quarter the faculty member returns to CPP.~~

Step 3: If the student is still not satisfied after receiving the response from this second level of appeal, the student may submit a formal grade appeal no later than the **6th** semester week but no later than the Friday of the 7th week of the semester term ~~written statement within ten working days~~ to the University Course Grade Appeal Committee through the designated **Office of Student Success**. The formal grade appeal should be submitted prior to the end of the regular quarter semester following the quarter semester for which the grade was assigned.

Step 4: The Chair of the University Course Grade Appeal Committee will forward the student's statement to the instructor. The instructor will **submit a written response within 2 weeks** ~~be asked to respond in writing by a specified date (normally within two weeks)~~. The student's statement and the instructor's response will then be reviewed by the **entire** Grade Appeal committee, normally within two weeks of receipt of the instructor's response.

The Committee will take one of the following actions:

- a. Request additional information from the student and/or the instructor.
- b. If the University Course Grade Appeal Committee finds that the student has grounds for complaint based on discrimination, caprice, or clerical error, then the instructor of record will be asked to reevaluate the grade. If the instructor refuses to reevaluate the grade or the instructor's reevaluation results in the same grade, then the chair of the academic department that offered the class shall be asked to find a qualified faculty member with academic training comparable to the instructor of record to evaluate the student's work and assign a grade. If the instructor is a department chair, the dean of the college that offered the class shall be asked to find a qualified faculty member with academic training comparable to the instructor of record to evaluate the student's work and assign a grade. If the instructor is a dean, the provost shall be asked to find a qualified faculty member with academic training comparable to the instructor of record to evaluate the student's work and assign a grade.
- c. Recommend to the instructor that the grade be maintained as given.
- d. Call for a formal hearing.

Step 5: When the Committee has made its recommendation, the student will be notified of it in writing, and be given a copy of the instructor's written response to the student's statement. This grade appeal procedure may take six to eight weeks to complete. The outcome of the formal grade appeal procedure is final; there is no higher level of appeal.

Additional information on preparing a written grade appeal is available from the Office of **Student Success**.

Discussion:

Overall, the committee agrees that insufficient time is allocated for the committee to meet. We are concerned however, that vulnerable students may not have sufficient time to file appeals. In some extreme circumstances, students may have a valid reason for not meeting deadlines (such as an outstanding Title IX case, or a personal crisis). However, we also recognize the need to ensure timeliness of claims for the protection and benefit of both faculty and students.

CSU LA gives 20 days from the start of the semester, which is roughly equivalent and more ambiguous in wording. CSUN did not seem to limit this, which also seems like a bad idea, except in exceptional cases. CSUMB specifies the following semester (excluding summers), but does not lay out a timeline, and CSU Stanislaus limits to the first four weeks.

Recommendation:

That in addition to the adoption of the following policies, that students receive separate notification of deadlines at the end of each semester and during the first week of each semester. We want to ensure that students are aware of the new timeline to ensure that students who may face hardships are not prevented from filing grade appeals, we also ask that students with extenuating circumstances be able to appeal the timeline if necessary. Otherwise we recommend the following timeline and policies be adopted.

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8		Step 4: Grade Appeal Committee requests response from course instructor (2 weeks to respond)	
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10		Committee Process: Appeal review scheduled within 2 weeks of Instructor's response, subject to availability of committee members. Members include faculty and student representatives. Appeals are not reviewed during the Summer term.	
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Step 1: The student should speak face-to-face with the instructor during the first three weeks of the semester following the assignment of the grade. If a face-to-face appointment cannot be arranged, the student should attempt to communicate with the instructor by phone, e-mail or fax during the same time period. Note: If the grade is assigned in the spring semester, the student should follow these procedures in the following fall semester. If the instructor is on leave, on sabbatical, or is not currently on the faculty including FERP faculty at the time of the appeal, the University shall attempt to contact the instructor on behalf of the student.^{3 4}

If a grade has been assigned in error, the instructor can quickly correct the error by submitting a Grade Change Request via the online grading system.

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Step 3: If the student is still not satisfied after receiving the response from this second level of appeal, the student may submit a formal grade appeal no later than the 6th semester week but no later than the Friday of the 7th week of the semester term to the University Course Grade Appeal Committee through the Office of Student Success.

Step 4: The Chair of the University Course Grade Appeal Committee will forward the student's statement to the instructor. The instructor will submit a written response within 2 weeks -in writing. The student's statement and the instructor's response will then be reviewed by the Grade Appeal committee, normally within two weeks of receipt of the instructor's response.

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- e. Request additional information from the student and/or the instructor.
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