

PROCEDURAL SEQUENCE FOR ACADEMIC SENATE APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS

1. Submit all proposals to the Office of Academic Affairs.
2. The Senate President will log items and forward them to the appropriate Senate Subcommittee.
3. The Senate Subcommittee will send the proposals to the Senate. Only curricular items require being sent to the faculty 10 days (not working days) prior to the general faculty meeting.
4. Senate proposals will be considered by the Full Faculty.
5. If approved, the proposals will then be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor

Proposals that require action to approve/disapprove/table or remand will be sent back to the Senate according to the monthly meeting schedule.

TITLE: An amendment to the grade appeal policy.

SUBCOMMITTEE: ACAD SENATE PROPOSAL #: 00-10

PROPOSAL: A new subsection should be added to section III.A., "Student Grade Grievances. Procedures", of the policy, as follows: (See the attached copy of the Grade Appeal Policy.)

"Section III.A.4. Because of regulations established by the State Board of Nursing, the grade appeal process for students taking nursing courses must be different. The following procedures will apply when the grade appeal involves a student taking a nursing course from the College of Nursing:

- a) Sections I and II still apply.
- b) Section III.A. 1, 2. applies in all situations where the chair/dean of nursing is not the instructor whose grade decision is the subject of the student grievance.
- c) In situations where the chair/dean of nursing is the instructor whose grade decision is the subject of the student grievance, the provisions of section III.2.a), b) and c) shall be completed by a member of the nursing faculty in the College of Nursing. The faculty member shall be selected using the following process:
  - 1) Three (3) faculty members shall be selected by a random drawing to make up the initial pool.
  - 2) The student involved in the grade appeal shall have the first veto and the chair/dean of nursing shall have the second veto. The remaining nursing faculty member shall conduct the investigation and make the decision described in section III.A.2.c).
  - 3) The provost will oversee the selection process.
- d) Section III.A.3. shall be completed by the entire faculty of the College of Nursing, sitting as an appeal board. A decision of a majority of the nursing faculty shall be the decision of the appeal board. The senior faculty member on the appeal board shall serve as its chair and assume the responsibilities necessary to make the appeal process work. All other provisions of Section III.A.3. shall govern the appeal process as it is conducted in the College of Nursing. The decision of the appeal board shall be the final decision of the University.
  - 1) The nursing faculty member whose grade decision is the subject of the grievance shall not serve on the appeal board.
  - 2) The chair/dean of the College of Nursing shall not serve on the appeal board.
  - 3) In the situation where a member of the nursing faculty has

completed the investigation and decision described in Section III.A.4.c. above, that faculty member shall not serve on the appeal board.

- 4) If the exclusions listed in the preceding three (3) subsections result in an even number of members on the appeal board, the least senior member of the College of Nursing faculty shall not serve on the board.

All sections of the current student grade appeal process shall be numbered or re-lettered to accommodate this new provision.

RATIONALE: The recently enacted grade appeal process apparently violates regulations of the State Board of Nursing. Those regulations require that only licensed nurses should make grade decisions involving students enrolled in nursing classes. The original grade appeal process did leave most grade decisions to nursing faculty on the MSU-Northern campus, except in the final appeal process. That final appeal responsibility was given to the Provost, who is not currently a licensed nurse. In the future, the Provost may not be a licensed nurse either.

The grade appeal process at MSU-Northern is complicated by the fact that the chair/dean of nursing also has teaching responsibilities. Therefore, the policy had to be rewritten to accommodate situations where the chair/dean is the faculty member whose grading decision is being challenged by a student.

This proposed policy keeps the responsibility for all grading decisions in the College of Nursing within that College. It also tries to accommodate situations where the chair/dean is the faculty member whose grading decisions are being challenged by a student.

ACTION SIGNATURES:

Rogn Barbn  
Submitter

3/20/01  
Date

College Chair/Dean Approved  Disapproved  Date \_\_\_\_\_

Terence E. Munson  
Faculty Committee Chair Approved  Disapproved  Date \_\_\_\_\_

Terence E. Munson  
Faculty Senate President Approved  3/20/01 Disapproved  Date 3/20/01

Terence E. Munson  
Full Faculty Approved  Disapproved  Date 3/27/01

Rogn Barbn  
Provost Approved  Disapproved  Date 3/29/01

[Signature]  
Chancellor Approved  Disapproved  Date \_\_\_\_\_

PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR A NEW GRADE APPEAL PROCESS. . .  
(to replace Campus Policy Number 602.1)

I. INTRODUCTION.

Students who disagree with the assignment of a grade by an instructor may file a grievance under these procedures.

II. GRADE DECISION REVIEWED.

These procedures are available only to review allegedly unfair grade decisions and not mere differences of opinion regarding the professional judgment of the instructor in evaluating a student's work or making a grade decision. The grade decision will be considered unfair if the decision is made:

- a) on some basis other than performance in the course and/or compliance with course assignments and requirements;
- b) by more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the same course section;
- c) by a substantial departure from the instructor's standards as articulated in the course syllabus, catalog descriptions and/or other written materials.

III. STUDENT GRADE GRIEVANCES.

A. Procedures.

A student who wishes to grieve a grade decision must proceed as follows:

1. Informal Meeting.

The student should attempt to resolve the matter directly with the instructor through a personal conference as soon as possible after the grade decision is known.

2. Chair/Dean Review.

a) If the student and the instructor cannot reach a mutually satisfactory resolution to the problem, the student may file a formal grievance. The grievance must be presented in writing to the instructor's chair/dean within 15 working days of the alleged grading incident. If the grievance is based on the final grade in a course, the grievance must be presented in writing to the chair/dean no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> day of university instruction in the following academic term. The student must describe the grievance, the date(s) of occurrence, why the student believes the decision was unfair, the student's attempts to resolve the grievance informally and the precise relief sought by the student. The student may attach copies of any relevant documents. For purposes of this section, fall semester, spring semester and summer session shall each constitute an academic term.

b) The student shall send a copy of the grievance to the instructor. The instructor shall have ten (10) working days to respond after receipt of the grievance. If the instructor does not respond within that time frame, the chair/dean will consider the grievance with the material formally submitted by the student.

c) The chair/dean will receive and review all evidence, interview persons relevant to the appeal and the evidence submitted in support of the appeal, if possible, and render a written decision with recommendations as to resolution within ten (10) working days of receipt of the instructor's response. A copy of the chair/dean's decision will be given to the instructor and the student. If the grievance is not concluded within this time frame, the student may carry it forward to the Provost for resolution.

3. Provost's Review.

The student or the instructor may appeal the chair/dean's decision. Such appeal will be filed in writing and submitted to the Provost within five (5) working days of receipt of the chair/dean's decision, with copies to the instructor, the student and the chair/dean. The written appeal shall deal only with the part or parts of the chair/dean's decision that the appellant disputes. New evidence, information or supporting documents cannot be included as part of the appeal except when, by clear and convincing evidence, it is established that such information was not available at the time of the original grievance. The Provost may interview the student, the instructor, the chair/dean and other appropriate persons, but only to discuss the issues in dispute in the appeal. The Provost will submit a written decision to the student, the instructor and the chair/dean within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Provost is the final decision of the University.

4. Time Extensions.

The parties at each step of the process may agree to extend the time lines established in this policy. Such extensions should be in writing, and signed by the appropriate parties.

5. Grade Changes.

Grade grievances can occur in two ways, and the grading process shall be governed by the following procedures:

a) if the grievance is the result of an instructor's decision during the semester, the student will be assigned a grade of NR if the grievance has not been decided by the time final grades are awarded in the course; the final grade will be awarded, once the grade grievance is completed, based on the decision of that grievance.

b) if the grievance is based on the final grade awarded in a course, the grade will be changed only if the decision of the grievance requires a change.

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TITLE: An Amendment to the Recently Approved Grade Appeal Process

SUBCOMMITTEE: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPOSAL #: 00-10

**PROPOSAL:**

Under Section III, Student Grade Grievances, Part A.2., the following sentence should be added to the end of that section:

"In the case of a grade appeal involving a student in a nursing (NURS) class, the decision of the chair/dean of the College of Nursing shall be the final decision of the University."

Rationale: The Montana Board of Nursing has expressed a concern about our current grade appeal policy, which permits an appeal beyond the faculty in the College of Nursing. While that Board's policies do not mandate the policy change proposed by this amendment, the change is their preference. To quote from a letter sent to Chancellor Mike Rao in April, 2000: "While the Board of Nursing recognizes that it does not set policy for institutions, it does review faculty qualifications. As such, the Board would prefer that only those individuals approved as faculty of nursing education programs review grade challenges." That letter also expresses a concern for the lack of preparation of nursing students whose performance may be evaluated by unqualified individuals.

The amendment is proposed to protect the nursing program at MSU-Northern; and to insure that its internal procedures do not compromise the nursing program at MSUN and its relationship with the state accrediting body.

A copy of the letter from the Board of Nursing attorney is attached to this policy change as an exhibit.

**Action Signatures:**

Roger A. Barber 10/9/00  
 Submitter Date College Chair/Dean Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Committee Chair Approve \_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Shirley E. Munson 3/20/01  
 Committee Chair Academic Senate Approve  Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_ Date 3/20/01

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Faculty Senate President Approve \_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Provost/Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Approve \_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*replaced  
3/20/01*



# MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Professional and Occupational Licensing Division

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Montana State University-Northern  
P.O. Box 7751  
Havre, Montana 59501  
Attention: Dr. Rau

April 14, 2000

Re: Individuals approved as faculty for grade reviews


Dr. Rau:

The Montana Board of Nursing was apprised of a situation in which a grade of an exam was challenged and was reviewed for appropriateness. As this grade was in the School of Nursing, there is concern that unqualified individuals may make decisions involving grades - thus, perhaps, allowing incorrect or insufficient answers to be graded inappropriately. The Board is of the concern that this could adversely effect the qualifications of the individual and this could possibly adversely effect the welfare of the public at some future time.

While the Board of Nursing recognizes that it does not set policy for institutions, it does review faculty qualifications. As such, the Board would prefer that only those individuals approved as faculty of nursing education programs review grade challenges.

If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

  
Lon Mitchell,  
Legal Counsel  
Board of Nursing

