

95-21

December 15, 1995

## Student Grievance Procedure

**This policy was recommended by the Academic Senate on October 26, 1995  
and approved by the President on November 13, 1995.**

The California State University, Long Beach Student Grievance Procedure is designed to give the campus community a grievance structure in those instances where no other policy or procedure exists. (This policy does not cover grade appeals, prohibited discrimination etc. where there are existing policies). Students are advised to consult appropriate additional policies and procedural resources (e.g. University Bulletin, Schedule of Classes, "Campus Regulations", "Resolving Differences", and Student Handbook) for information on existing policies.

The Office of the Vice President for Student Services has staff to help students understand the details of the Grievance Procedure and may be called on for assistance.

What are Student Grievance Procedures?

Student Grievance Procedures at California State University, Long Beach are intended to provide a formal, standardized means for students to seek redress concerning actions of the faculty, administrators, or staff of the University. Further, the purpose is to establish standardized procedures and safeguards which shall be followed by the University in the adjudication of grievances.

What is a Grievance?

A grievance is a formal complaint by a student arising out of an alleged action of the faculty, administrators, or staff of the University. The person or entity against who the complaint is made is referred to in this document as the "respondent." Such action is alleged by the student to be an unauthorized or unjustified action which adversely affects the status, rights, or privileges of the student.

Students are reminded that the Grievance Procedure is not designed to replace the open communication and understanding that are vital to the academic process. The student may withdraw the grievance at any stage and the process will immediately terminate. During all stages of the grievance, the burden of proof will be on the student.

What is a Statement of Grievance?

The statement of grievance is a clear, simple statement according to the student's understanding of what happened. It should provide enough information to give the committee a complete understanding of the situation and the nature of the remedy sought from the student's perspective. The following steps are designed to assist in the preparation of a Grievance Statement.

How does one Grieve?

### **INFORMAL PROCEDURE**

Step 1:

Informal discussion between the concerned parties is always the place to start. If attempts to resolve the problem at this level fail, or if the person alleged to have aggrieved the student cannot be reached by reasonable effort, or if the nature of the grievance is such that an informal communication with the respondent is not feasible, the student must meet informally with the employee's department Chair, or the program's Director.

Step 2:

If after ten instructional days beyond the informal meeting a satisfactory solution is not found, the department Chair or program Director will meet with the student. Within 15 instructional days of the receipt by the Chair or program Director of the student's complaint, the Chair or program Director will investigate the allegations and reach a conclusion. The Chair or program Director shall promptly communicate the decision to the student and the respondent. If either the student or the respondent disagrees with the

chair's or program director's findings, recommendations, or decision, that person may appeal under step three.

**Step 3:**

If the student or respondent is not satisfied with the results of step two, or if the grievance is against the Chair of a department or Director of a program, the student may consult with the appropriate college Dean (academic) or responsible person at the next administrative level (non-academic).

**FORMAL PROCEDURE**

**Step 1:**

In the event the informal process does not bring satisfactory resolution to the complaining student or the respondent, then either party may initiate the formal procedures by writing a letter of complaint and submitting it to the appropriate department Chair or program Director. The Chair or Director then submits a copy of the letter of complaint to the dean<sup>1</sup>T and the responding party. The responding party will reply in writing, normally within 10 instructional days, to the Chair or Director. The Chair or Director submits a copy of the reply to the other party and the Dean.

**Step 2:**

The Dean may then: (1) Normally within 10 instructional days after reviewing the letter of complaint and the response, the Dean may seek additional information from the parties or witnesses, and (2) review the matter and render a decision or (3) form a hearing committee which will make a recommendation to the Dean as follows:

- A. The hearing committee in academic matters will consist of two faculty members, two student members and one staff member. The two students and the two faculty shall both be within the college, with one student and one faculty within the department and one student and one faculty outside the department of the respondent. The staff member shall be from within the college.
- B. The hearing shall normally be held within 10 instructional days after the hearing committee is formed unless the letter of complaint is withdrawn or there occurs an earlier settlement of the matter. Internal hearing procedures regarding the conduct of the hearing shall be developed by each college and be made available to both parties. Each party may have one representative at the hearing who may be anyone other than legal counsel.
- C. In matters outside an academic department in which no other policy or procedures apply, the responsible person one level above the employee's supervisor shall have the option of establishing an all University hearing committee consisting of three other employees, two of whom must be from outside the respondent's program, and two students selected in consultation with the A.S.I. President.
- D. The charge of the committee will be to investigate, and recommend a proposed resolution to the Dean. After receiving the recommendation, the Dean shall notify both parties of the decision. In the absence of an appeal, the decision of the Dean is final.

**Step 3:**

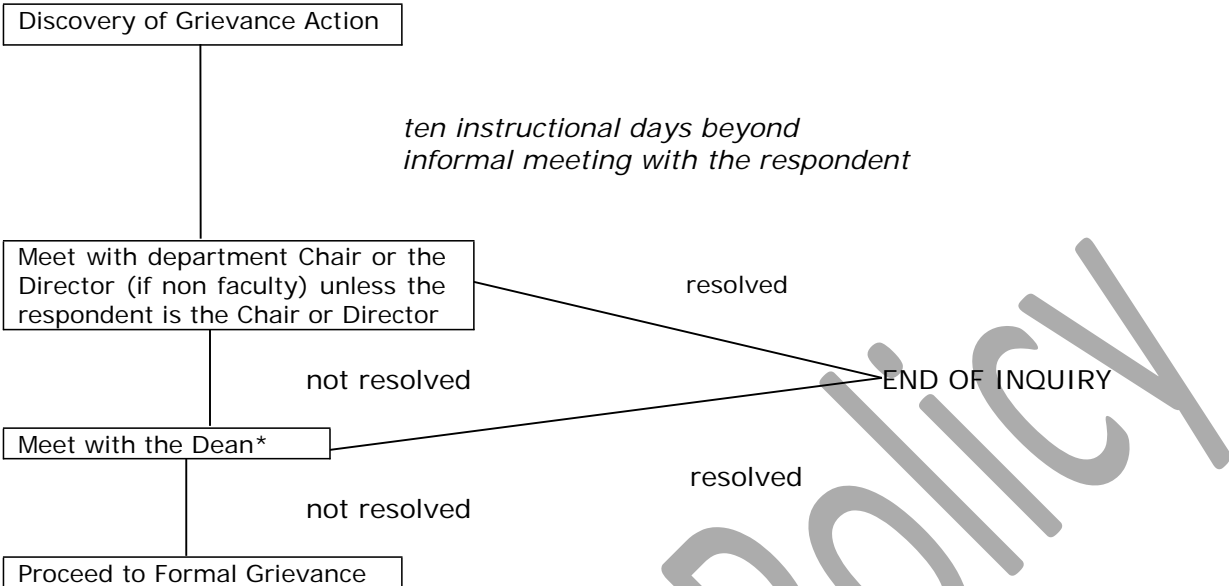
If either party wishes to appeal the decision of the Dean, the appeal, in writing, may be made to the Provost (academic) or appropriate Vice President (non-academic). The appeal must be made within 10 instructional days of the decision (Step 2). The Provost or Vice President will notify both parties of the appeal, review all written documentation and may investigate further or refer back to the Dean for further findings. The Provost or Vice President will then notify both parties of her/his decision.

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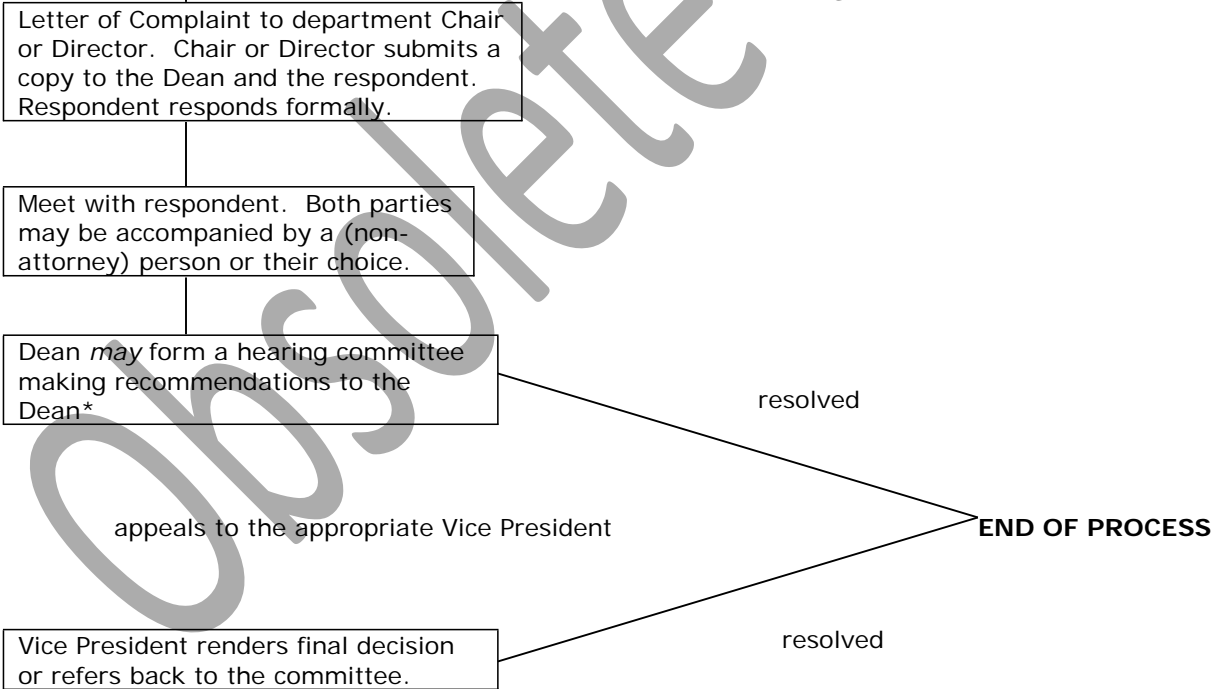
<sup>1</sup> Note: In the event that the respondent is at the level of a Dean or higher, the complaint should be directed to the responsible person at the next administrative level. For non-academic matters, throughout these procedures, the term "Dean" refers to the responsible individual of comparable level e.g., typically an Associate Vice President, or Vice President.

**STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

**INFORMAL PROCEDURE**



**FORMAL PROCEDURE**



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