

West Virginia State University
 Academic Appeals Committee
 Faculty Senate Report
 Friday March 3, 2017
Redacted Draft April 3, 2017

The Academic Appeals Committee has met four (4) times in the 2016-2017 academic year. Seven (7) students formally appealed grades during this period. The following is a synopsis of these meetings.

Committee Members

- Michael Kane, Chair
 Abainesh Mitiku, Member
 Kimberly Cobb, Member

Alternates

- Billie Hauser
 Matthew Carrol

Students

- Senaia Harris
 Victoria Ramey
 Daniel Holcombe

Case Summaries

August 2016

Student Name	College/ Course	Professor/ Instructor	Awarded Grade	Synopsis	Committee Action
Redacted for Privacy Concerns	<i>ENG 150 Introduction to Literature.</i>	Redacted for Privacy Concerns	B	Student asserted that an assignment was submitted late, but not counted. The submitted assignment was originally sent in the wrong software format. Professor awarded student half credit, but both agreed assignment was late. Professor documented several discussions with student about proper submission.	Grade was upheld (B). Recommended that an intervention be addressed because some of the student's communications were hateful and aggressive, but not directly threatening.

September 2016

Student Name	College/ Course	Professor/ Instructor	Awarded Grade	Synopsis	Committee Action
Redacted for Privacy Concerns	ART 101 <i>Introduction to Art.</i>	Redacted for Privacy Concerns	D	Student asserted that a family emergency caused her to be late and tardy to class on several assignments causing unfair deductions to her grade. Instructor produced a clear absence and tardy policy, allowed for make-up work, but demonstrated the grade was primarily based on submitted work.	Upheld the grade of D. recommended revisiting the relationships between mentor of the collaborative program and course instructors regarding clear expectations. Favorably acknowledged the student's efforts and recommended repeating the course for overall college GPA.
Redacted for Privacy Concerns	MATH 111 <i>Mathematics for Liberal Arts.</i>	Redacted for Privacy Concerns	F	Student asserted that 2 points were not awarded as promised and that a written and oral presentation should be scored higher. Professor demonstrated accurate tabulations of the student's scores. He also contended that the scores were accurate.	Upheld the grade of F. Committee found that even if the 2 points were given and full credit on the paper was awarded, the total scores would not exceed 60%. Recommended that based on low scores, student repeat the course.

February 10 2017

Student Name	College/ Course	Professor/ Instructor	Awarded Grade	Synopsis	Committee Action
Redacted for Privacy Concerns	HHP 331 <i>Athletic Training I</i>	Redacted for Privacy Concerns	D	Student asserted that instructor gave misleading information regarding grading strategies and was unfairly deducted for points for being tardy. Instructor provided a clear syllabus on grading policies, including tardiness policies, and a series of text message exchanges addressing the student's assertions.	Upheld the grade of D. The committee did find some inconsistencies in the syllabus, namely 100 points of extra activities that determined final grade. However, the text message exchanges were clear on these assignments. Recommended the syllabus be more detailed on extra activities.

February 22 2017

Student Name	College/ Course	Professor/ Instructor	Awarded Grade	Synopsis	Committee Action
Redacted for Privacy Concerns	BA 115 <i>Business Information Skills</i>	Redacted for Privacy Concerns	C	Student asserted professor was unfair in grading, was not interested in helping students, and that it was difficult to arrange meetings. Student also asserted the online course was closed early. Professor produced copies of course documentation, documentation of meetings, announcements, and clear student feedback.	Upheld the grade of C. The closing of the course was moot as the student was allowed to submit work late. See recommendations below:
Recommendations: The committee felt that student's complaints on the professor's teaching effectiveness and demeanor should not be ignored however, and the student should be allowed to more effectively pursue these concerns through a <i>Student Complaint Form</i> as that these matters are best addressed on the college or departmental level.					

February 22 2017

Student Name	College/ Course	Professor/ Instructor	Awarded Grade	Synopsis	Committee Action
Redacted for Privacy Concerns	BA 115 <i>Business Information Skills</i>	Redacted for Privacy Concerns	D	Student asserted that the professor's grading of her work was harsh and unreasonable. She asserted she had difficulty in gaining assistance from the professor, especially regarding the requirements for discussion word counts. She asserted the final examination grade of 90 best reflected her score in the class. The professor provided copies of course documentation, documentation of meetings, announcements, and clear student feedback.	The grade of D was upheld. The syllabus clearly demonstrated the score distribution for the final examination. The professor demonstrated feedback and clear course expectations. It was recommended that more clarity on the counting of words on discussion exercises be made in future classes. See further recommendations below:
Recommendations: The committee felt that student's complaints on the professor's teaching effectiveness and demeanor should not be ignored however, and the student should be allowed to more effectively pursue these concerns through a <i>Student Complaint Form</i> as that these matters are best addressed on the college or departmental level.					

February 22 2017

Student Name	College/ Course	Professor/ Instructor	Awarded Grade	Synopsis	Committee Action
Redacted for Privacy Concerns	BA 115 <i>Business Information Skills</i>	Redacted for Privacy Concerns	D	Student asserted that "I feel along with others that she [the professor] didn't make her assignments clear and she gets an attitude when asked to explain." No other documents or comments were given. Professor produced a written response regarding the events as well as various course material and documentations.	As presented, the committee upheld the grade of D. Not enough information regarding the appeal was provided by the student. See recommendations below:

Recommendations: The committee felt that student's complaints on the professor's teaching effectiveness and demeanor should not be ignored however, and the student should be allowed to more effectively pursue these concerns through a *Student Complaint Form* as that these matters are best addressed on the college or departmental level.

The Committee additionally feels that the student should be allowed to resubmit a more detailed *Appeal of Final Grade* form with supporting documents if he desires, and a thorough review will be conducted.

Note on February 22, 2017 cases: The Academic Appeals Committee evaluates documents and supported statements only, taking a "four corners" approach, i.e., a self-standing review of documents only. As these appeals were in a series of three students complaining about the professors' demeanor, teaching effectiveness, and unfair grading, the committee felt that the avenue of a grade change was not an effective one for the student's complaints to be heard and a *Student Complaint* form was a better option for these matters.

Committee Concern:

Starting in the 2017 Spring Semester, three student members were added to the committee and share in case evaluations. The three student members have demonstrated seriousness and effectiveness in our discussions. In practice, I have found them quite impressive. However, the concern is one of privacy. Is it proper, legal or otherwise, to allow students to review privileged documents regarding faculty's comments and other student's grade?

Secondly, what is the precise role of the student members, i.e., equal votes as members, advising to members, etc...?

Please do not hesitate to contact me for clarifications or concerns. I thank the Faculty Senate for their attention to these matters.

With warm regards, I am



Michael J. Kane, Ph.D.
Chair, Academic Appeals Committee
Associate Professor of Criminal Justice