Grievance Procedure

Purpose
The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is committed to a policy of treating all members of the College community fairly in regard to their personal and professional concerns.

The primary objective of a student grievance procedure is to insure that concerns are promptly dealt with and resolutions reached in a fair and just manner. It is essential that each student be given adequate opportunity to bring complaints and problems to the attention of college administration with the assurance that each will be given fair treatment.

Definition of a Grievance
A grievance is defined as dissatisfaction occurring when a student feels or thinks that any condition affecting him/her is unjust, inequitable, or creates unnecessary hardship. Such grievances include, but are not limited to, the following: Academic problems, (disputes over assignment of grades, decisions about program or degree requirements, or claims that course requirements are unfair), mistreatment by any college employee, wrongful assessment and processing of various fees, records and registration errors, and discrimination because of race, national origin, sex, marital status, religion, age, or handicap. Grievance procedures do not apply to actions involving professional misconduct (dishonest, unethical or irresponsible behavior), sexual harassment, suspension, and dismissal for cause.

Grievance Procedure
This section sets forth the procedures that should be followed by a student who believes that he or she has been unfairly or improperly treated by a faculty member or by staff in connection with the academic process.

a. Informal Procedure
The initial step of the student grievance procedure is for the student to first try to seek resolution or redress through discussions with the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. This meeting should be held as soon as the student first becomes aware of the act or conditions that are the basis for the grievance. If the student feels that a satisfactory solution or relief has not been provided, the student should discuss the grievance with their advisor, Program Director or Chairman. If the grievance is still not resolved, the student should proceed to the formal grievance procedure.

b. Formal Grievance Procedures
1) Step 1: The grievance and the solution requested must be clearly stated in writing on a Student Grievance Form. Regardless of whom the grievance is with, the Grievance Form must be presented to the student’s advisor within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date the student first became aware of the condition or action giving rise to the complaint. An untimely filed grievance is of no effect. The advisor must respond in writing to the grievant within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the Grievance Form.

2) Step 2: If the answer to Step 1 does not resolve the problem, the student may within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the Step 1 answer, file the grievance form with a written request to the Program Director or Chairman. Within fifteen (15) days of receipt
of the Step 2 grievance, the Program Director or Chairman will schedule and conduct a
meeting with the aggrieved student to discuss the grievance and requested solution.
Within five (5) calendar days following this meeting, the Program Director or Chairman
will render a written decision to the student.

3) Step 3: If the Step 2 decision does not resolve the problem, the student may within five
(5) calendar days of receipt of the Step 2 decision, file the grievance form with a written
request to the Dean of the Graduate School, together with all correspondence from Steps
1 and 2. The Dean will refer the matter to the Admissions and Student Welfare
Committee which will review all material. Investigatory meetings with the student,
advisor, Program Director or Chairman may be held, as appropriate. They will gather
data representing all points of view; evaluate the situation and make recommendation to
the Dean within thirty (30) calendar days from the date the Step 3 grievance is filed.
Within ten (10) days of receipt of the Committee's recommendation, the Dean will
prepare a final recommendation. This decision is final.

Special Notes:
The subject and scope of the grievance cannot change at any step in this procedure.
Except when the time limits have been changed by mutual consent of the parties
involved the following will be adhered to:

- If a written answer is not received at any step within the specified time frame,
  the grievance may be appealed to the next step.
- Failure to file a timely appeal of the decision at any step will render that decision
  final.
- Time limits can be extended with approval of the Dean.

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