

## College Operating Procedures (COP)



**Procedure Title:** Student Academic Grievance Procedure  
**Procedure Number:** 06-0803  
**Originating Department:** Student Services

**Specific Authority:**

Board Policy  
Florida Statute 1001.65  
Florida Administrative Code

**Procedure Actions:** Adopted: 01/10/10, 02/01/11, 07/29/11; 9/27/11

**Purpose Statement:** The academic grievance procedure outlines a process through which students can resolve academic issues, both informally and formally. The procedure defines the role of campus and district personnel.

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### **Guidelines**

Florida SouthWestern State College Student Grievance Procedures are based on providing resolution to legitimate academic issues. State Board Rules and College Policies are not subject to grievance; only the application or interpretation of rules or policies may be grieved.

As with most procedures included in this Catalog, the academic grievance policy is based on the assumption that academic disagreements should be resolved by student and faculty interaction via the informal process. The formal grievance procedures are intended to provide all Florida SouthWestern State College students with opportunities for objective review of facts and events that are related to the cause of a grievance when the involved faculty members and students are not able to resolve a dispute on their own. These reviews will be accomplished in a collegial, non-judicial atmosphere. All parties are expected to behave in a civil manner.

When a student feels that an error has been made in the assignment of a course grade, it is the responsibility of the student to first meet with the Professor to try to resolve the issue. The Academic Associate Dean in the area may be consulted if necessary. Grades are assigned solely by the faculty member of record. This assignment of grades is not subject to change through the Formal Academic Grievance process. The decision of the professor is binding, except in cases where a grade can be shown to have been arbitrary, capricious, and/or retaliatory in nature.

**Rationale:** The aggrieved student feels that published college policies or procedures have been violated, and that this has negatively affected his/her academic status.

## **Procedures**

### **Informal Grievance Procedure**

1. The student shall meet with the faculty member and both shall make an effort to reach a mutual resolution. The syllabus will be the guiding document. The appropriate administrator (see Table 1) may assist in the informal resolution. Every effort should be made to resolve the problem at this level.
2. If the grievance remains unresolved, the District Dean, Arts and Sciences/Professional and Technical Studies (or the dean's designee) shall be consulted, and a second attempt will be made to solve the grievance informally.
3. If resolution is not successful, then the student may move to place a formal grievance. The formal grievance must be submitted within five (5) working days of denial of the informal grievance.

### **Formal Grievance Procedure**

The aggrieved student should submit a request, in writing, to the District Dean, Arts and Sciences and/or Professional and Technical Studies on the Lee Campus, or a campus dean and/or campus president for a formal student grievance hearing. It shall set forth the nature of the grievance, the person(s) involved, and the resolution desired.

1. The dean shall appoint an ad hoc grievance committee consisting of the faculty department chair (or faculty designee), and two other members: one regular, full-time administrative employee, and one member of the Student Government Association Board. The department chair will serve as the chairperson.
2. The dean or his/her designee will serve as recording secretary to the committee, but shall have no vote.
3. The committee shall, within seven (7) working days of being constituted, meet to hear the grievance, review documentation, and interview all witnesses deemed pertinent to the matter.
4. The committee shall, within four (4) working days after the close of the hearing, report its findings, and make a recommendation for resolution of the matter.
5. The district dean will report the finding to the Vice President, Academic Affairs for a final decision. That decision is binding.
6. When the grievance has been resolved, all paperwork shall be forwarded to the Dean of Students for archiving.

### **Time Limits**

A grievance must be filed in a timely fashion. If a student is filing a grievance, it must involve a specific event or incident occurring within thirty (30) days of the filing. Informal grievance must precede a formal grievance. Attempts to resolve potential grievances normally will not require more than 30 days. If more time is required, all parties involved must agree in writing to the extension. If agreement is not reached, the District Dean, Arts and Sciences and/or Professional and Technical Studies (or the dean's designee), will make a time determination.

**Table 1 – Reporting Structure**

<b>Campus/Department/School</b>	<b>Initial Complaint*</b>
Charlotte	Dean
Collier	Dean
Lee	Discipline Associate Deans
Online	Dean
Education	Dean
Nursing	Dean

\*In areas with discipline overlap, administrators should consult each other in order to reach a consensus.