

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, SOCIAL WORK, AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

PROCEDURES FOR THE RESOLUTION OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS

The purpose of the following set of procedures is to provide an equitable system for resolving problems that may arise between students and faculty or staff of the department.

The procedures are available for the review of problems such as the following:

1. all aspects of the degree-granting process, including grading, evaluation, or status, in cases where other university procedures are not mandated;
2. alleged professional misconduct toward a student by a faculty member or staff member of the department, while that faculty or staff member is performing duties under the purview of the department;
3. alleged illegal, discriminatory, unfair, or intimidating treatment of students, including sexual or racial harassment, or failure to accommodate handicapped students;
4. allegations concerning the application or propriety of regulations, policies, or procedures governing student behavior or student rights.

PROCEDURES

These procedures shall be administered by the Chair of the Department, or in his/her absence, by the Acting Chair. In a situation where the Chair or the Acting Chair is the subject of a complaint, the Dean of the College shall appoint a substitute for the purpose of administering these procedures. The procedures shall be as follows:

1. A student who has a complaint with respect to any Sociology/Anthropology/Social Work/Criminal Justice class or the faculty or staff assigned by the department to that class should normally make the complaint to the instructor of the class in question. Whenever possible, resolution should be attempted at this level, i.e., the student should first speak with the instructor regarding his/her complaint. Where this is not possible or appropriate, the complaint may then be considered by the chair.
2. The chair shall: 1) hear the student complaint, 2) hear the faculty's or staff member's response to the complaint, and 3) assess the gravity of the complaint and its *prima facie* validity. Having done so, the chair shall attempt to mediate a resolution of the situation.
3. If efforts at mediation fail, the chair shall require that the student put the complaint in writing. The faculty member or staff member shall respond in writing to the student complaint. Such formal complaints should be filed not later than the end of the next regular (i.e., Fall or Winter) semester after the occurrence of the incident or incidents that are the basis of the complaint. In extraordinary cases, such as the illness or absence of either the complainant or the faculty member in question, the chair may permit a filing up to one year after the initial incident.

If the faculty member is unavoidably absent from the area due to an official leave of absence, the faculty member may either 1) designate a colleague with authority to represent him/her and to make academic decisions in the faculty member's behalf; or 2) may request that the hearing be postponed until the faculty member's return from leave.

4. If, having studied the document, the chair believes the complaint to be frivolous or without substance, the chair shall so advise the student, and shall inform him/her of the right to appeal the decision of the chair to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

5. If the chair believes the complaint has some substance, the chair shall appoint a committee of two tenured faculty members. This committee of two shall nominate to the chair a third member of the tenured faculty who, when appointed, shall join the now constituted Committee of Inquiry. If the chair, the student, or the faculty or staff member in the dispute so requests, the committee of two shall be required to draw the third member of the Committee of Inquiry from outside the department.

The Committee of Inquiry may take testimony from the faculty member, or the faculty member's representative, from the student or students involved, and others who may contribute to an understanding of the case.

The Committee of Inquiry shall 1) report the facts in the case, and 2) make recommendations to the chair for a resolution of the case, or for further action to be taken. A vote of two of the three members of the committee shall give authority to the recommendations of the committee.

6. The chair shall study the report of the Committee of Inquiry, make a determination in the case and inform the student and the faculty or staff member of the decision.

In cases where the Committee of Inquiry has recommended that a grade or grades be changed, the chair may decide that the chair, or a faculty member designated by the chair, shall become the instructor of record for the section in which the dispute occurred. The new instructor of record shall have the right to petition the Committee on Instruction of the College of Arts and Sciences to make grade changes for that section for the purpose of rectifying the situation that gave rise to the dispute.

7. In cases where the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the chair, the student shall have the right to appeal the matter to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

8. When in the course of complaint procedures the chair has decided to call a Committee of Inquiry, the chair shall have the duty to inform the faculty member of the right to seek advice and assistance as provided in the Faculty Agreement.

Adopted: October 1, 1990

Revised & Adopted: November 19, 2004 (Minor Revision March 25, 2019, to reflect name change of the department to Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice)