

University Faculty Senate
Ad Hoc Committee on Grading
158th Plenary
SUNY Fredonia
April 16, 2011

Resolution on Grade Change Authority

Whereas, the authority to assign grades rests with the faculty member who is instructor of record, due to that individual's unique position to evaluate the performance of a student in a course, and

Whereas, any change to an initial grade normally is the responsibility of the instructor of record, and

Whereas, under extraordinary circumstances such as a grade having been demonstrably based on impermissible factors such as discrimination, bias, or retaliation, or when the instructor of record is no longer available for a grade change appeal, it may be necessary for someone other than the instructor to assign a different grade, and

Whereas, the assignment of a grade by someone other than the instructor of record remains a faculty responsibility,

Therefore, be it resolved that the University Faculty Senate urges each campus governance body to ensure that the campus has robust due process procedures by which a student can appeal or grieve a grade, which are clearly publicized to students, and

Be it further resolved that the University Faculty Senate urges each campus governance body to ensure that the campus has robust due process policies that address circumstances and procedures under which a grade change can be made by someone other than the instructor of record, consistent with the principles outlined below.

Principles for consideration for a grade change made by someone other than the instructor of record

- Grading is at the heart of an educational institution's integrity
- Each campus should develop its own policies consistent with the Policies of the Board of Trustees, Article XI, Title I, to maintain and encourage full freedom, within the law, of faculty inquiry, teaching and research, as well as a requirement for a corresponding principle of faculty responsibility.
- Grades awarded by an instructor of record should not be changed except in accordance with published campus policies. The policies should clarify the circumstances and procedures for faculty peer review and faculty involvement in the extraordinary circumstances when administrative review is necessary. Such changes of grade should occur as the result of the recommendation of faculty peers. Campus policies may include consultation with outside faculty experts if no local faculty experts are available.

- All changes of grades should be documented to include reasons for the change and personnel involved in the change. Such documents should be available to all parties for a time period consistent with the campus records retention policy.
- Change of grade by someone other than the instructor of record should be in response to exceptional circumstances such as temporary or permanent incapacity of the instructor, unavailability or unwillingness of the instructor to review submitted materials for reasons such as but not limited to sabbatical or other leave, termination of employment or death.
- It is good practice for a campus to periodically review or assess its grade change practices. Such reviews can provide the campus with valuable feedback on whether the campus procedures and policies are followed, and whether they are effective and sufficient.

EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE REASONS FOR GRADE CHANGES (the list is not comprehensive)

- Demonstrable arithmetical, editing, or factual error in calculating the grade
- Omission of assignments or parts of assignments in calculating the grade
- Grade demonstrably based on impermissible factors such as discrimination, bias, retaliation or retribution

EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE REASONS FOR GRADE CHANGES (the list is not comprehensive)

- Save a student from some academic penalty: dismissal, probation, warning, academic integrity issue, etc.
- Allow a student to graduate
- Allow a student to graduate with academic honors, or meet some other established minima
- Personal issues unrelated to academics
- Allow a student to maintain academic eligibility for athletics or any other co-curricular activity
- Manage enrollment levels in order to preserve programs

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Passed without Dissent

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