

**West Virginia State University
Academic Appeals Committee
Faculty Senate Report
Friday March 1, 2013**

The Academic Appeals Committee made recommendations on 4 grade appeals since our last report. Our synopses of the appeals and our recommendations are below.

Meeting Date: February 12, 2013

Synopsis: A student appealed the failing (F) grade received in English 101 taught by Dr. Kent Shaw. The student felt that a failure to receive graded materials in a timely manner contributed to his/her poor performance in the class. Dr. Shaw contended that the grade was earned as a result of inadequate performance on three major written assignments that contributed a significant portion of the total available points in the class. After receipt of the first paper, he advised the student to have that and subsequent papers reviewed by the Writing Center. He did provide editorial comments on that first paper, however the student felt these comments were neither extensive nor sufficiently informative.

The Committee determined that based on the materials submitted, there was no basis for the grade to be changed. Furthermore, the Committee felt that the writing on the assignment provided (only the first essay) was not a level that the Committee felt was indicative of a university level student.

Recommendation: No grade change

Synopsis: A student appealed the grade received in Health and Human Performance 280 taught by Ms. Patricia King. HHP 280 is a class whose grade is largely, if not entirely, contingent upon earning 150 hours of service. The student contended that Ms. King did not properly credit the hours he/she worked. The student also felt that Ms. King "... has continuously misplaced my work from other classes" and that she "... need(s) to address this matter as soon as possible". Ms. King countered that the student's appeal was submitted past the deadline (within 2 weeks of the initial oral appeal), and that the grade would not be subject to being changed on that basis.

The Committee agreed that the appeal was submitted late, but we also found it very difficult to review the materials submitted because there were no assignments included from the class in question (HHP 280). There *were* completed assignments for HHP 286 and HHP 289, but none for HHP 280 – we could only assume that this paperwork represented assignments submitted by the student to Mrs. King in some of the aforementioned classes that were subsequently misplaced. There was also no documentation of the 150 hours of supervised field experience that are required of participants in the class. Because of the lack of any pertinent materials, the Committee saw no credible reason to change the grade from what was originally assigned.

Recommendation: No grade change

Synopsis: A student appealed the failing (F) grade he/she received in Business Administration 320, a class taught by Mr. Thomas Nelson. The student contended that he/she failed the class because although they had taken the final exam after the due time (exams were administered online, on WebCT), they had done likewise with other exams during the semester, but earned a failing grade on that exam (an exam that scored a 196 out

of a possible 200), and thus failed the class. The student also reported that other students had taken their exams past the allotted time and had all passed the final and the class, and felt that they should pass as well.

Mr. Nelson stated in e-mails to his chair and dean that he became aware of the loophole that allowed students to take exams beyond their allotted time, but could do nothing about it because he could not identify the students who had done so (but if he could, that those students would fail as well). In a letter to Dean Abainesh Mitiku, Dr. Nelson stated the following regarding the student's situation: He/she "is being penalized for repeatedly gaming the system. Keeping a test which had a two-hour time limit open for many hours violates both the idea and the stated rules of the test.... Not only did (the student) not finish the test within the allotted time for the test, he/she did not finish it for the allotted time for the entire course.... He/she began the test with enough time to complete the test before the final was due, but in order to save (the) grade he/she kept the test open after when the entire course was closed and I was required to turn in grades".

The Committee agreed with the assessments of Mr. Nelson, the Chair (Mrs. Deborah Williams) and the Dean (Dr. Abainesh Mitiku) that the student's grade for BA 320 should remain unchanged.

Recommendation: No grade change

Synopsis: A student appealed their grade received in Art 101, a class taught by Ms. Joy Doss. This Art 100 class was a web 100 course where all work and assignments were composed, completed and graded online. The student contended that he/she had a difficult time reaching Ms. Doss at the beginning of the class. Later, the student asserted that he/she was having a difficult time completing assignments in a timely manner or at all because of connectivity problems with their personal computer. Further complicating matters was the fact that the student has a disability and lives in Virginia (the class was a summer offering, so the student was not on campus). The student contacted several people on campus, including Ms. Doss, Bobbie Seyedmonir, Kellie Toledo, and Tiffany Clark in an attempt to figure out a solution to her issues. While all these people tried to help him/her, the student still had difficulties completing assignments, and efforts to assist, particularly by Ms. Doss and Ms. Seyedmonir, were either unsuccessful or deemed unacceptable (by the student). The Committee could not find any instance where the instructor acted inappropriately or in a manner that would merit changing the student's grade. The Committee, however, felt that there could have been efforts made to grant the student an incomplete (I) grade. This would have allowed him/her to take the class after having had sufficient time to correct her connectivity problems.

Recommendation: No grade change

As always, I thank the members of the Committee on Academic Appeals (Kim Cobb, Patricia Wilson and Arnold Hartstein) for being a collegial, hardworking body, and for your contributions. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sean A. Collins
Chair, Academic Appeals Committee