

## **Faculty and Student Grievance Committee Procedures**

### **I. Faculty and Student Grievance Committee Purpose and Jurisdiction**

The purpose of School of Public Health (SPH) Faculty and Student Grievance Committee (hereafter, the Committee) is to conduct inquiries into faculty or student grievances and to make recommendations to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA) or Dean, as appropriate. The Committee is not responsible for creating policy. These procedures shall be subject to and consistent with the Bylaws of SPH Faculty Assembly, SPH Policies and Procedures, and the LSUHSC-NO Chancellor's Memoranda of Policies and Procedures for Faculty Grievances/Appeals (CM -24) and CM-56 - Students' Responsibilities and Rights.

The Committee shall have the authority to conduct inquiries into faculty and student grievances and to present its recommendations to the ADAA (students) or Dean (faculty), or it may make the decision of finding no misconduct in the case. The intent is to provide fair procedures to all parties involved in the grievance. All parties should enter the proceedings in good faith. All Committee activities shall be conducted confidentially.

The Committee addresses three major categories of complaints. Each of which follows specific procedures for review and adjudication: 1) student academic misconduct, student professional misconduct, and grievances defined as unresolved complaints involving faculty/work situations or other student academic and professional situations that allege that policy, rule, or regulation has been violated or applied improperly 2) no policy, rule, or regulation exists where one should 3) where there has been unfair or inequitable treatment. Grievances regarding grades are not heard by this Committee, but rather are resolved through a separate procedure outlined in the Student Handbook ([http://publichealth.lsuhs.edu/pdf/Student\\_Handbook.pdf](http://publichealth.lsuhs.edu/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf)).

### **II. Committee Composition**

The Committee shall be composed of five (5) Faculty Assembly members: three elected by the Faculty Assembly, each from different programs, and two appointed by the Dean. Additionally, two (2) students elected by the SGA will serve on the committee only when matters of student grievances are being considered.

### **III. Records and Reports**

The Committee will maintain minutes and such other records of its activities as are necessary for the proper conduct of its duties. The Committee shall report to the School of Public Health Faculty Assembly. This report will include a statement of the number of complaints received and their disposition only. No identifiable information will be disclosed under any circumstances.

Information obtained and reports prepared by the Committee are confidential. However, parties directly involved in the grievance have access to all documents related to the grievance. During the Committee's deliberations, these records shall be retained by the Chair of the Committee. The Chair will ensure the confidentiality of the information obtained. The Committee members will keep their investigation, notes, etc. confidential except if otherwise required by law. After investigation, the files shall be kept confidentially in the Dean or ADAA's office, as appropriate.

### **IV. Grievance Process**

#### **A. Informal Resolution of Grievances**

When grievances arise, faculty and students are strongly encouraged to exhaust all informal avenues to resolve all types of grievances: 1) student professional misconduct, 2) student academic misconduct, or 3) faculty or other student grievances.

- If a faculty member has a grievance, he or she should initially take the matter to the program director or supervisor or to the ADAA.
- If a student has a grievance, he or she should initially take the matter to his or her academic advisor, mentor, or academic program director.

When grievances cannot be resolved satisfactorily at these levels, the student or faculty member with the grievance has the option to file a formal grievance with the Committee as described below.

If a student is charged with academic or professional misconduct by another student or faculty member, resolution should also be attempted prior to Committee referral.

## **B. Formal Resolution of Grievances**

### **1. Student Professional Misconduct**

[Chancellor's Memorandum 56 \(CM-56\)](#) outlines the expectations of students matriculating in all of the Schools of the LSUHSC with regard to personal, academic professional and ethical behavior. CM-56 also provides procedures for addressing issues that arise where these expectations are not met.

Students are responsible for complying with all policies/procedures, rules and regulations and other information published by the LSUHSC. In addition, students are expected to abide by all federal, state and local laws. LSUHSC students are expected to:

- Exhibit the highest standard of personal, academic professional and ethical behavior.
- Treat faculty, staff, peers, clients, patients, and others with dignity and respect.
- Abide by the Code of Conduct that applies to their specific professional discipline.

New students are required to sign the LSUHSC School of Public Health Code of Conduct in which students promise to abide by Chancellor's Memorandum 56 and the School's Professional, Academic and Technical Standards laid out on the following pages of this handbook. Students are sent a copy of their signed Code of Conduct by email.

The School of Public Health's professional standards include the mandate that each student must:

- Demonstrate respect for all people, inclusive of all ethnic backgrounds, religions, ages, sexual orientations, and gender.
- Acknowledge and accept constructive criticism.
- Deal responsibly and civilly with conflict.

Only after attempts to resolve matters at the individual level have failed, reports of failure to adhere to the professional codes of conduct (considered types of professional misconduct) are submitted to the ADAA who will then review the accuracy and nature of the charge. The ADAA shall then take one of the following actions: dismiss the complaint; or propose an administrative decision with sanctions that may include counseling, referral to the Campus Assistance Program, formal censure, temporary separation or permanent dismissal from the School of Public Health. The student may either accept the administrative decision which closes the case or he/she may appeal. Appeals are taken to the LSU Health Sciences Center Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs who may refer the appeal to the Committee. The Vice Chancellor and the committee have the same sanctions at their disposal.

### **2. Student Academic Misconduct**

The faculty and administration in the School of Public Health are committed to maintaining the integrity of its academic requirements and procedures and fostering an environment of honest intellectual inquiry. This policy establishes the School's definition of student misconduct, provides

examples of the categories of unacceptable misconduct, describes the procedures to be followed in suspected cases and outlines the penalties, which may be appropriate in proven cases.

A student who in any manner engages or assists in any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to the following, is guilty of academic misconduct and shall be subject to discipline.

- **Plagiarism** - directly copying from a written or pictorial material, without crediting the source or paraphrasing someone else's work, without crediting the source;
- **Cheating** – using or attempting to use another person's exam or quiz answers, material or information without the expressed permission of the instructor;
- **Fabrication** – presenting, as genuine, any invented or falsified citation, credential, record or material;
- **Academic theft or forgery** – obtaining examinations, quizzes, or other academic materials without authorization;
- **Resubmission of work** – resubmission of work (the same paper or assignment) that was created for another course constitutes academic misconduct, unless,
  - the course director expressly agrees to accept the same work from a previous semester, or
  - the course directors expressly agrees to accept the same work submitted in their respective courses during the same semester.

If the student submits new work built substantially upon work previously conducted for another course, the student must cite the previous work in the submission (course name, course director, title of previously submitted work and date of previous submission);

- **Bribery** – offering, giving, receiving or soliciting anything of value to influence a grade or other academic evaluation;
- **Unfair/disruptive conduct** - deliberately hindering the education of other students;
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty** – knowingly contributing to another's violation of the School's policies on academic misconduct or planning with others to commit academic misconduct.

Any questions regarding these definitions or clarification of the terminology used in the section above should be directed to the course instructor **to whom** the work is being submitted. Questions regarding material submitted outside of a specific course (i.e. journal article, poster, abstract) should be submitted to the student's advisor or the ADAA.

**a. Procedures for addressing alleged misconduct:**

Any student or faculty member may initiate an action charging a student with academic misconduct by filing a written, signed complaint with the ADAA ([See CM-56](#)). The ADAA shall inform the Dean and the chair of the GC that a complaint has been made and give the chair of the Committee copies of the complaint and any materials accompanying it or relevant to it.

The ADAA shall investigate the complaint and recommend on further action. The ADAA's investigation may entail reviewing the complaint and any documentation accompanying it and interviewing the complainant, the charged student, the course instructor, or any other person the ADAA deems relevant to the complaint. In this investigation, the ADAA shall not disclose the existence of the complaint or the identities of any person relevant to the complaint unnecessarily.

After completing this investigation, the ADAA shall inform the Dean and the Committee chair of the results of the investigation and of the recommended action. The Dean shall then take one of the following actions:

- i. Dismiss the complaint.

- ii. Propose an administrative decision with sanctions (see Possible Sanctions below). Within one working day, the charged student may accept or may not accept the proposed administrative decision. The student and the ADAA sign a statement documenting the student's decision.

If the student **accepts**, the ADAA reports the administrative decision and the student's response to the Dean and GC chair, and the case is closed.

If the student **rejects**, the ADAA calls for proceedings before the Grievance Committee<sup>1</sup>.

These proceedings - the ADAA's investigation, the communication with the GC chair, and the action by the ADAA - must be completed within four working days of the day the ADAA receives the complaint.

Within four working days, the GC will be convened and at this time the complaint will be read, relevant information will be presented, and the GC will deliberate and reach a decision by a simple majority. Relevant information includes the presentation of all evidence and testimony. The GC shall subsequently deliberate privately and determine its finding.

The Committee must submit the *finding* to the Dean within two working days of the decision. The *finding* must be a written statement including the decision of the Committee; the recommended sanction of the Committee based on the gravity of the misconduct; and a transcript of the notes of the proceedings. A second copy of the *finding* is provided to the accused student.<sup>2</sup> If the Committee finds that the charged student has not committed academic misconduct, then the case is closed.

Notes and any other records/documentation of the proceedings shall be sealed. Furthermore, all persons and only those persons cognizant of the complaint and the ensuing proceedings shall be informed of this disposition.

#### **b. Possible Sanctions**

A student found in violation of the acceptable standards of student conduct may receive a consequence of censure, separation or expulsion.

##### **i. Censure**

Censure is a written statement reprimanding a student for violating school regulations and stating that another offense will result in more serious action. The censure will state the violation, the persons involved, and will be dated. A copy will be placed in the student's official school file and an electronic copy in the office of academic affairs but not noted on the student's transcript. Upon graduation from the student's current degree program, both copies are to be permanently removed. An email will be sent directing parties involved in censure to remove and destroy their records. Censure may be recommended only for minor, first-time infractions.

<sup>1</sup>Prior to the GC meeting, the student shall be given a list of the GC members to allow the student the opportunity to challenge a committee member for conflict of interest. The chair of the committee shall make the decision regarding this. The ADAA shall review the decision and either uphold the decision or appoint a substituted committee member within five working days. Conflicts of interest may include the following:

- a personal relationship, i.e. family or friendship, between the accused and a hearing committee member;
- an advisor/student relationship between the accused and a hearing committee member; and
- a professional or business relationship between the accused or a member of the accused family and a committee member or a member of the committee family.

A Grievance Committee (GC) member may recuse her/himself from a hearing panel if she/he believes that it is in the best interest of any party in the matter. Should a committee member recuse her/himself, another committee member will be appointed from the faculty or student body respectively as needed.

<sup>2</sup>If the student is dissatisfied with the Committee's decision, the student must submit a written request for review of the decision to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (ADAA) within three working days of receiving the decision.

## **ii. Separation**

Separation is suspension from enrollment with a date established for applying for readmission to the SPH. The period of separation shall be for at least two semesters. After the period of separation, if the student wishes to return, the student must apply for readmission to the LSUHSC School of Public Health. Separation may be issued for first-time infractions that are not minor. A permanent notation of involuntary suspension shall be made on the student's transcript.

## **iii. Expulsion**

Expulsion is the termination of the student for an indefinite period, intended to be permanent. Expulsion is recommended for a second infraction; and may be recommended for a first infraction depending on the nature of the infraction. A notation of expulsion for student misconduct shall be made on the student's transcript. Such notation shall be permanent.

Should a recommendation of either "separation" or "expulsion" be issued, the director for the course in which the infraction occurred has the authority to assign the student a grade of "F" for the course, or if a grade has already been assigned, to change it to "F".

## **c. Appeals**

An accepted administrative decision by the ADAA and student may not be appealed. The Committee finding and/or recommended sanction may be appealed by the student to the Associate Dean on grounds of procedural shortcomings within four working days of the issuance of the decision. On such an appeal, the ADAA may either deny the appeal or require that the case be heard by another hearing panel convened by the Vice Chancellor under CM-56.

## **d. Reporting Requirements**

All meeting proceedings, correspondence, etc. will be scanned and archived in an electronic folder. The virtual files/folders will be organized by academic year and case name. All such electronic documentation noted above will be protected by the most recent LSUHSC security protocols. All such electronic documentation will be hosted in the Office of Academic Affairs.

All faculty, staff, and students involved in a misconduct investigation shall keep the identity of the accused individual/s, witnesses or other people involved as well as the content of any hearing strictly confidential except as required by law or as is necessary to protect the integrity of the School and its employees. Failure to respect the confidentiality of persons or the proceedings shall be grounds for disciplinary actions based on LSU Health Sciences Center policies.

## **3. Other Student or Faculty Grievances**

For grievances other than academic or professional, the aggrieved faculty member or student may request a formal resolution of grievance through the following procedures. Information noted below must be provided to the Chair of the Committee in writing:

- a. Statement of the allegation.
- b. Description of the alleged facts.
- c. Summary of steps the grievant already has taken in an attempt to resolve the problem.
- d. Name(s) of the person(s) thought to be responsible for the alleged events.
- e. Other facts considered to be pertinent to the matter.
- f. Signature of the person initiating the complaint.

On receipt of the complaint, the Committee Chair will convene a meeting to investigate the complaint within ten working days of receipt of the formal complaint, or sooner if possible. The Committee shall make the determination of whether the complaint is a valid grievance and/or otherwise falls within the purview of the Committee. If it does not present a valid grievance, the Committee shall notify the grievant, stating the reasons for the Committee's decision. Otherwise, the grievance is under investigation. The investigation will include separate meeting(s) with the person aggrieved and

the person(s) aggrieved against. The Committee may consult with others as necessary to provide a thorough investigation. On the basis of the assembled information, the Committee will make an effort to conclude the investigation promptly, and will take precautions to ensure the confidentiality of information obtained at meetings.

The Committee will prepare a final report for submission to the Dean. This report will include findings of fact and recommendations, if any. Upon receipt of the report, the Dean may take any action deemed necessary, using the non-binding Committee report as advisory information. The Dean may also return the grievance to the Committee for further consideration. The final action of the Dean constitutes the formal completion of this grievance procedure.