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Chapter 3(CC),4&5
Policy Area Chapter 5
Student Services
References CCLC |
Legally
Advised

AP 5530 Student Rights and Grievances

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a prompt and equitable means of resolving student grievances. These procedures shall be available to any student who reasonably believes a college decision or action by an instructor, college official, or by another student has adversely affected their status, rights or privileges as a student. The procedures shall include, but not be limited to, grievances regarding:

- Academic Grievances: When grades are given for any course of instruction taught in a community college district, the grade given to each student shall be the grade determined by the instructor of the course and the determination of the student's grade by the instructor, in the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency shall be final (Education Code Section 76224). If a student files a grievance relative to grade, he/she/they must prove that "mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency" as the reason for the grade assignment.
- Non-Academic Grievances: Grounds for a non-academic grievance include, but are not limited to:
 - Any act or threat of intimidation;
 - Any act or threat of physical aggression;
 - Arbitrary action, violation of student rights, or imposition of sanctions without proper regard to College policy as specified in the Education Code, Board Policies, and/or Administrative Procedures;
 - Course Repetition, Withdrawals, and Enrollment Fees: Students may file complaints related to course repetition, withdrawals or enrollment fees based on evidence of extenuating circumstances. Students should use the Petition for Exceptional Action form and provide supporting documentation. Action will be taken by the appropriate administrator or by the Board of Appeals. Petition for Exceptional Action forms can be found in the offices of Counseling, Admissions and Records, and Student Life. Petitions may be submitted through the Office of the Dean, Student Services for

review by the Board of Appeals;

- Discrimination Complaints: (i.e. age, ancestry, citizenship status, color, disability, ethnic group identification, gender, marital status, medical condition, national origin, parental status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status), students should contact the Human Resources Department and/or the San Bernardino Community College Police. Staff members in those areas will assist students with the correct processes for resolution. Complaint and investigation procedures related to harassment and discrimination (including sexual assault, sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, and domestic violence) can be found in Administrative Procedure 3435.
- Financial Aid Challenge: Financial aid students wishing to file a complaint regarding the financial aid process and/or determination should refer to (AP 5130 Financial Aid for appeals relating to financial aid);
- The exercise of rights of free expression protected by state and federal constitutions and Education Code Section 76120.

In addition to San Bernardino Community College District Procedures, a student may address a grievance directly to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office by accessing the following website:

<https://www.cccco.edu/complaint-process-notice>

This procedure does not apply to:

- Student disciplinary actions, which are covered under separate Board Policies and Administrative Procedures.
- Police citations (i.e. "tickets"); complaints about citations must be directed to the County Courthouse in the same way as any traffic violation.

Definitions of Terms

Party – The student or any persons claimed to have been responsible for the student's alleged grievance, together with their representatives. "Party" shall not include the Grievance Hearing Committee or the College Grievance Officer.

Chancellor/President – The Chancellor/President or a designated representative of the Chancellor/President.

Grievant – A student who has filed a Grievance.

Student – A currently enrolled student, a person who has filed an application for admission to the college, or a former student. A grievance by an applicant shall be limited to a complaint regarding denial of admission. Former students shall be limited to grievances relating to course grades to the extent permitted by Education Code Section 76224(a).

Respondent – Any person claimed by a grievant to be responsible for the alleged grievance.

Business Day – Unless otherwise provided, day shall mean a day during which the college is in session and regular classes are held, excluding Saturdays and Sundays.

Informal Resolution

Each student who has a grievance shall make a reasonable effort to resolve the matter on an informal basis prior to requesting a grievance hearing, and shall attempt to solve the problem with the person with whom the student has the grievance, that person's immediate supervisor, or the local District administration.

Deans of Student Services shall assist students in seeking resolution by informal means. This person shall also be known as the Grievance Officer. The Grievance Officer and the student may also seek the assistance of the Associated Student Organization in attempting to resolve a Grievance informally.

Informal meetings and discussion between persons directly involved in a grievance are essential at the outset of a dispute and should be encouraged at all stages. An equitable solution should be sought before persons directly involved in the case have stated official or public positions that might tend to polarize the dispute and render a solution more difficult. At no time shall any of the persons directly or indirectly involved in the case use the fact of such informal discussion, the fact that a grievance has been filed, or the character of the informal discussion for the purpose of strengthening the case for or against persons directly involved in the dispute or for any purpose other than the settlement of the grievance.

Formal Process

If informal resolution through discussion or mediation does not resolve the conflict, the student shall have the right to request a grievance hearing, in writing, to the Vice president of Student Services. The request for a hearing must be made within 180 calendar days of the incident being grieved.

The determination of whether the Statement of Grievance presents sufficient grounds for a hearing shall be based on the following:

- The statement contains facts which, if true, would constitute a grievance under these procedures;
- The grievant is a student as defined in these procedures, which include applicants and former students;
- The grievant is personally and directly affected by the alleged grievance;
- The grievance was filed in a timely manner;
- The grievance is not clearly frivolous, clearly without foundation, or clearly filed for purposes of harassment.

If the grievance does not meet each of the requirements, the Vice president of Student Services shall notify the student in writing of the rejection of the Request for a Grievance Hearing, together with the specific reasons for the rejection and the procedures for appeal. This notice will be provided within *five* days of the date the decision is made.

If the Request for Grievance Hearing satisfies each of the requirements, the Vice president of Student Services shall schedule a grievance hearing. The hearing will begin within *ten* days following the decision to grant a Grievance Hearing. All parties to the grievance shall be given not less than *five* days notice of

the date, time and place of the hearing.

Grievance Hearing

The formal grievance hearing will be scheduled within 10 days (during which the college is in session) of receipt of the request.

The grievance hearing committee will be composed of the following:

- One student appointed by the Student Senate president.
- One faculty member appointed by the Academic Senate president if the grievance is against a faculty member.
- One staff member appointed by the Classified Senate president if the grievance is against a staff member.
- Vice president of Student Services, who will chair the committee if the grievance is non-academic, or the Vice president of Instruction if the grievance is academic.

No person shall serve as a member of a Grievance Hearing Committee if that person has been personally involved in any matter giving rise to the grievance, has made any statement on the matters at issue, or could otherwise not act in a neutral manner.

Any party to the grievance may challenge for cause any member of the hearing committee prior to the beginning of the hearing by addressing a challenge to the chair, who shall determine whether cause for disqualification has been shown. If the chair feels that sufficient ground for removal of a member of the committee has been presented, they shall remove the challenged member or members and substitute a member or members from the panel described above. This determination is subject to appeal as defined below.

The chair will conduct the hearing. Possible protective measures that may be utilized include, but are not limited to, no-contact orders, remote participation during the hearing (telephone, videoconferencing, use of a privacy screen, etc.), separate waiting areas during hearing, safety escorts, and prohibitions against retaliation.

The members of the grievance hearing committee will be provided a copy of the grievance and any written response to the grievance.

Each party to the grievance may call witnesses and introduce oral and written testimony. All witnesses must testify under oath; the Grievance Hearing Committee Chair will administer the oath. The Grievance Hearing Committee will only admit written statements of witnesses under penalty of perjury if the witness is unavailable to testify. A witness who refuses to be tape-recorded shall be considered to be unavailable.

Although the hearing is formal, rules of evidence do not apply as they would in a court of law.

Each party to the grievance will be permitted to make an opening statement; thereafter, the grievant will present evidence followed by the respondent.

The student may bring an advocate or attorney to the hearing provided the Vice President of Student

Services is notified at least five calendar days in advance of the hearing. In the event the student serves notification that they will have representation, the respondent has the right to legal counsel and a right to receive notification that the student will have counsel present.

The hearing will be recorded, and the recording shall remain in the custody of the Vice president of Student Services. Any party to the grievance may request a copy of the recording.

Hearings shall be closed and confidential unless all parties request that they be open to the public. Any such request must be made no less than three calendar days prior to the date of the hearing. In a closed hearing, witnesses will testify and be excused.

The grievance hearing committee will recommend a resolution of the grievance after listening to all of the participants. The committee will inform the student and the respondent in writing about its recommendation within 10 days of the hearing. The decision shall be based only on the record of the hearing, and not on matter outside of that record. The record consists of the original grievance, any written response, and the oral and written evidence produced at the hearing.

Within five days following the close of the hearing, the Grievance Hearing Committee shall prepare and send to the Chancellor a written recommendation. The recommendation shall include specific factual findings regarding the grievance. The recommendation shall also include a specific recommendation regarding the relief for the Grievant, if any. The Grievance Hearing Committee will base its recommendation only on the record of the hearing, and not on matter outside of that record. The record consists of the original Grievance, any written response, and the oral and written evidence produced at the hearing.

Appeals

The student may appeal the recommendation of the grievance hearing committee by writing to the president within 10 calendar days of being notified of the grievance hearing committee's recommendation. The president will send the student a final decision in writing within 10 calendar days of receiving the appeal.

Any appeal relating to a Grievance Hearing Committee decision that the Statement of Grievance does not present a grievance as defined in these procedures shall be made in writing to the president within *five* days of that decision. The president shall review the Statement of Grievance and Request for Grievance Hearing in accordance with the requirements for a grievance provided in these procedures, but shall not consider any other matters. The Chancellor's decision whether or not to grant a grievance hearing shall be final and not subject to further appeal.

Any party to the grievance may appeal the decision of the president after a hearing before a Grievance Hearing Committee by filing an appeal with the Chancellor. The Chancellor may designate a District administrator to review the appeal and make a recommendation.

Any such appeal shall be submitted in writing within five days following receipt of the Chancellor's decision and shall state specifically the grounds for appeal.

The written appeal shall be sent to all concerned parties. All parties may submit written statements on

the appeal.

The Chancellor or designee shall review the record of the hearing and the documents submitted in connection with the appeal, but shall not consider any matters outside of the record. Following the review of the record and appeal statements, the Chancellor's designee, if any, shall make a written recommendation to the Chancellor regarding the outcome of the appeal.

The Chancellor's Decision Within five days following receipt of the Grievance Hearing Committee's decision and recommendation(s), the Chancellor shall send to all Parties his/her/their written decision, together with the Hearing Committee's decision and recommendations. The Chancellor may accept or reject the findings, decisions, and recommendations of the Hearing Committee. The factual findings of the Hearing Committee shall be accorded great weight; and if the Chancellor does not accept the decision or a finding or recommendation of the Hearing Committee, the Chancellor shall review the record of the hearing, and shall prepare a new written decision which contains specific factual findings and conclusions. The decision of the Chancellor shall be final.

Time Limits

Any times specified in these procedures may be shortened or lengthened if there is mutual concurrence by all parties.

References:

Education Code Section 76224 subdivision (a);
ACCJC Accreditation Eligibility Requirement 20;
ACCJC Accreditation Standard 4

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Attachments

- [AP 5530 Student Rights and Grievances - Comments](#)
- [AP 5530 Student Rights and Grievances - Legal Citations](#)
- [AP5530 -OLD.pdf](#)
- [SBCCD - Overview for Legal Update 31 Final Version.docx](#)
- [Special Summer 2020 Legal Update Overview.docx](#)

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
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