

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences

Review Procedure for Cases of Alleged Arbitrary or Capricious Academic Evaluation

Section II. B. Protection Against Improper Academic Evaluation, Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities (2007-08), states:

Except in instances that involve a Student grievance based on allegations of illegal discrimination for which other remedy is provided under “Student Grievance Procedures,” a Student who alleges an instance of arbitrary or capricious academic evaluation shall be heard and the allegation reviewed through Faculty peer review procedures established by the Associate Dean and Faculty of the school in which the contested academic evaluation took place. Should the peer review processes find in favor of and uphold the complaint of the Student, yet the Faculty member were to persist in refusing to alter the academic evaluation at issue, the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Associate Dean shall afford the Student an appropriate remedy after consultation with the peer review body.

Section III. C. Professional Responsibilities, Faculty Code (2004), states:

If a Student alleges an instance of arbitrary or capricious academic evaluation, the allegation shall be heard and reviewed by orderly Faculty peer review procedures established by the Associate Dean and Faculty of the school in which the contested academic evaluation takes place; should such peer review processes find in favor of and uphold the complaint of the Student, yet the Faculty member persists in refusing to alter the academic evaluation at issue, the Undergraduate Studies Committee and Associate Dean shall afford the Student an appropriate remedy after consultation with the peer review body.

Consistent with these University documents, the review procedure for cases of alleged arbitrary or capricious academic evaluation in the Columbian College is a three-step process as indicated below. In order to assure the availability of relevant materials, and unless a specific deadline is listed, each step should be pursued as expeditiously as possible.

1. The Student contacts the Faculty member or – if the Faculty member is unavailable – the relevant department chair or program director to discuss thoroughly the manner and substance of the academic evaluation and try to reach a resolution. The Student must make such contact within the first four weeks of the semester following the semester during which the evaluation occurred (excepting summers).
2. If resolution is not achieved in step #1, the Student contacts the department chair or program director who undertakes a complete review of the manner and substance of the academic evaluation, meets with the Student, and tries to reach a resolution. Should the Chair or Program Director be the Faculty member providing the evaluation, a senior member of the Faculty to be selected by the Associate Dean and who is not involved in the academic evaluation will conduct this step of the review.
3. If resolution is not achieved in step #2, the Student files a grievance form requesting the Associate Dean to initiate the formal review process. The Associate Dean forms a 3-person Faculty review committee. All Faculty involved in the review process are to be full-time, active-status members of the Faculty

The review committee gives the Faculty member the opportunity to prepare a written explanation of his or her view of the situation and then convenes to review the entire academic evaluation process and outcome. The committee invites the Student and the Faculty member to appear, separately, before the committee to make additional comments and to answer questions. The committee deliberates and communicates its decision to the Associate Dean in a written report, which the Associate Dean conveys to the Student and Faculty member.

If the review committee “find[s] in favor of and uphold[s] the complaint of the Student, yet the Faculty member persists in refusing to alter the academic evaluation at issue,” the Associate Dean arranges for the Undergraduate Studies Committee to meet with the review committee. The Undergraduate Studies Committee then advises the Associate Dean on the steps to be taken to afford the Student an appropriate remedy.

If the committee finds in favor of the Faculty member, there is no further appeal of the academic evaluation, except on procedural grounds. If the Student believes that in some identifiable manner the procedures outlined above have not been followed in some material and prejudicial way, the Student may request the Associate Dean to review the procedural aspects of the case. Requests for review must be submitted in writing, including an explanation of the basis for the appeal, within ten (10) days after the review committee report has been given to the Student. If the Associate Dean suspects that procedural violations may have occurred, the case is sent to the Undergraduate Studies Committee which examines the procedural aspects of the case. If it concludes that there have been material and prejudicial procedural violations, the Undergraduate Studies Committee may remand the case to the department or program for a re-hearing or may advise the Associate Dean on the steps to be taken to afford the Student an appropriate remedy.

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