

Appendix K

Student Grievance and Appeal Procedures for Non-Academic Issues

A student may have a grievance or problem that occurs outside of the classroom or is not related to a student's program of study. Examples of such grievances are:

- A student who receives a fine for mutilating Georgia Southwestern State University library material, by allegedly tearing out an article from periodical, states that she obtained the material from a hometown friend.
- The Exemption for Residency Policy request of a freshman or sophomore student who lives more than 50 miles from Georgia Southwestern State University is denied.
- The meal plan exemption request of a student, who believes that he has health problems which will be complicated by eating on campus, is denied.
- The request for a replacement ID card by a student, who reports that his Georgia Southwestern State University ID card was destroyed by a residence hall washing machine, is denied.
- A request by a president of a Georgia Southwestern State University recognized student organization for the use of a university facility for a social event is denied.

A. INFORMAL PROCEDURE

A student who has a complaint is first expected to resolve the complaint informally. The student should discuss his/her problem with the faculty or staff member involved and try to reach a mutually agreeable solution within the first thirty calendar days of the academic term immediately following the term in which the grievance occurred. Grievances submitted after that date will not be considered. Upon notification of a complaint by the student, the faculty or staff member must meet with the student to discuss the complaint within ten (10) class days. Should the grievance not be mutually resolved, the student will have advance to the formal grievance procedure within ten (10) class days. Should the student elect to advance to the formal grievance procedure he/she will waive the option to seek mediation related to the grievance at a later date.

B . FORMAL PROCEDURE

1. A formal grievance must be filed within ten (10) class days from the time of the conclusion of the Informal Procedure. Waiver of time limits (or extension) may be approved by mutual consent.

2. The student must submit the grievance in writing to the appropriate Department Head.
3. The Department Head will investigate the grievance and may interview the student for further clarification. After the investigation, he or she may either grant or deny the redress sought or provide remedies. The written decision of the Department Head will be issued no later than ten (10) class days following receipt of the written grievance.
4. If the Department Head's decision is not satisfactory to the student, the student has ten (10) class days to appeal the decision in writing to the Vice President of Student Affairs. The Vice President of Student Affairs will review the facts of the grievance and may conduct further inquiry. The Vice President of Student Affairs has ten (10) class days after receipt of the grievance to notify the student in writing of his/her decision.
5. When all previous efforts have failed (informal procedure, mediation, and formal procedure), the student must file with the President of the University a written appeal stating the allegations and providing available documentary evidence within ten (10) class days of the decision of the Vice President of Student Affairs.
6. The President, upon receipt of the formal appeal, will submit the grievance to the Committee on Non-Academic Grievance for consideration.
7. The following rules will apply:
 - a. The committee shall hear the case and forward its recommendations to the President.
 - b. The hearing will be conducted by the Committee on Non-Academic Grievance in an informal and expeditious manner.
 - c. The Committee will be provided with all prior relevant documents from both sides and may request additional information and/or seek further witnesses.
 - d. Only committee members, parties to the action and their advisors (drawn from among the student, faculty, and staff of the University), and witnesses testifying before the Committee shall be permitted in the hearing.
 - e. At the hearing, the complainant, the defendant, and witnesses for each party may testify, and may be questioned by committee members. The student and faculty/staff involved, may ask questions only through the Committee, who will decide whether the questions are appropriate.

- f. The Committee is empowered to rule on procedural matters and relevance of witnesses and/or evidence.
- g. All hearings will begin within ten (10) class days from the time the Committee receives the grievance from the President.
- h. A tape recording or other record of the hearing shall be preserved for reference and review until the grievance has been finally resolved.
- i. The Committee shall arrive at a decision after all evidence has been heard and the parties have been dismissed. Only committee members who have been present for the entire hearing may vote on the case.
- j. A majority vote of qualified members shall constitute a judgment.
- k. Upon receipt of the Committee's recommendations, the President of the University shall render a final decision within ten (10) class days, and may amend a grievance according to his/her best judgment.

C. PROCEDURES FOR GRIEVANCE HEARINGS

1. **Members** - The Committee on Non-Academic Grievances shall consist of two (2) faculty members, two (2) students, one (1) staff member and one member of the faculty and/or administration to serve as moderator for the committee. This moderator will have no vote in decisions made by the committee unless there is a tie in which case the moderator may cast the deciding vote. The faculty members will be selected by the President of the University and will also select an alternate faculty, staff, and student member. This selection will take place during the first two weeks of Fall Semester. Alternate members will serve only in the absence of the regular member, and will serve for the complete hearing of a grievance. The regular appointee will not hear any part of a grievance for which the alternate is serving.
2. **Conflict of Interest** - In the event of any conflict of interest or possible conflict of interest among any of the committee members, or if any committee member is a faculty member, student, or administrator from the same department as the grievant or the person against whom the grievance is filed, the alternate member(s) shall serve in the place of the person(s) having conflict. In the event that there are no further members on the committee, the President of the University shall appoint the replacement(s) as needed. This replacement shall be appointed within ten (10) class days.
3. **Related Grievances** - In the event that identical or closely related grievances are separately submitted by two or more students, these grievances may be consolidated and considered as one by the same committee, provided these

- 4. Recommendations** - The committee shall recommend action to the President of the University within (10) class days after they conclude their deliberations. The President shall respond to the student in writing within ten (10) class days of the President's receipt of the recommendation from the appropriate grievance committee. Time lines may be adjusted if there are compelling reasons for delay offered by any members of the parties.