

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC PERSONNEL  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

(as approved by the Faculty of the College on April 23, 1975)  
(Amended October 1982)  
AMENDED November 2005

The following procedures are formulated in accordance with *Cornell University Policy 6.2.10, Establishment of College-Level Academic Employee Grievance Procedures approved by the Board of Trustee Legislation of March 13, 1975, page 8964, as amended on March 13, 2002. This policy is accessible on-line at the following URL: [http://www.policy.cornell.edu/vol6\\_2\\_10.cfm](http://www.policy.cornell.edu/vol6_2_10.cfm). It should be emphasized that these procedures represent primarily a mechanism for arbitration and are not formally judicial in character. Any grievance proceeding is advisory in nature to the respective deans and to the President and Trustees of the university.*

*The university policy spells out the objectives, definitions, assumptions, and coverage of college-level grievance procedures (including both who may lodge a grievance and what actions are grievable). It specifies that "An academic grievance procedure can be applied to the substantive and/or procedural aspects of any grievance arising out of the academician's execution of his or her designated responsibilities" and that "These grievance procedures are not applicable to complaints about appointment, reappointment, promotion, or any tenure decision." Separate procedures exist for complaints about those decisions. Grievances that allege any form of prohibited discrimination or harassment must be immediately referred to the Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality for resolution under the procedures established under University Policy 6.4.*

PROCEDURES

- I. Submitting a Grievance. If an academician has a grievance and has made all reasonable efforts to exhaust all avenues of personal negotiation at levels up to and including the College Dean, (s)he may submit a written statement of grievance to the Chairman of the college Grievance Committee, indicating the specific nature of the complaint and the remedies sought. *If the Grievance committee determines that the merits of the case do not warrant invoking the college grievance procedures and the dean accepts the committee's recommendation, or if the dean is the principal party against whom the grievance is directed, the author of the complaint may appeal directly to the university-level Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty.*

II. Grievance Committee. *Independent of the existence of any particular grievance, a standing, three-member Grievance Committee, serving overlapping three-year terms, shall be appointed by the College Dean from among the elected membership of the Academic Integrity Hearing Board. The Dean of the College shall designate the chairperson of this committee from among the committee members. When a written grievance is submitted, and unless its nature requires referral, as noted above, to the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty, the Grievance Committee shall encourage further direct negotiation between the parties if the committee believes this avenue has not been exhausted; failing a resolution, the Committee shall decide on the basis of the information it has in hand or may request whether the merits of the case are such that a grievance procedure (requiring the composition of a Select Committee) is to be initiated. It shall also determine, in cases of ambiguity, which party is to be considered the principal against whom the grievance is properly directed.*

III. Select Committee. Upon initiation of a grievance procedure, a Select Committee shall be formed as follows: each of the two principals in the case designates one member; these two members jointly select *one more member who will chair the committee. No individual directly affected by this issue and no one who has taken part in the decision that is being grieved shall be a member of this committee.* All committee members shall be academicians as defined in the university policy and at least *two of the three* must be members of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Upon its formation, the Select Committee shall transmit copies of the statement of grievance to all persons directly involved in the case. It shall invite these persons to submit written responses within ten days. The committee shall begin its deliberations within twenty-one days of its formation.

IV. Select Committee Aims and Procedures.

- (a) The foremost aims shall be to clarify the issues underlying the grievance and to help the contending parties reach a decision acceptable on all sides.
- (b) Failing an accommodation, the Committee shall render a recommendation for action to the Dean of the College. Such recommendation will be advisory.
- (c) The Committee shall determine the facts of the case by using all available documentation, supplemented as necessary by interviews, hearing, and depositions. The Committee shall keep minutes of all its proceedings and there shall be no undue delay in its procedures.
- (d) Strict confidentiality shall be maintained with regard to all matters relevant to an individual grievance. At the request of a party to the issue, the Committee may publish a summary notice of the case, the issue, and its resolution, with omission of personal references as it deems appropriate.

- (e) At the termination of the case, the Select Committee is dissolved and its records are transferred to the office of the Dean of the College for safekeeping.
- (f) The Dean of the College shall promptly notify all parties to the case, in writing, stating the Select Committee's recommendation and his or her decision with respect to implementing it. A similar notification shall be sent to the Dean of the Faculty and to the Provost. If the college Dean decides not to comply with the committee's recommendations, (s)he shall fully state his or her reasons.

Appeal. *When one of the interested parties disagrees with a dean's decision, he or she may ask for a university-level review of that decision according to the procedures of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty.* These procedures are available from the office of the Dean of Faculty.

- V. Conformance with University Policy. Decisions made under the academic grievance procedures must conform to existing university policies. Such decisions may lead to the establishment of new policies, but they may not, in and of themselves, constitute new policies.
- VI. Grievance Expenses. See the University Policy at the following URL: [http://www.policy.cornell.edu/vol6\\_2\\_10.cfm](http://www.policy.cornell.edu/vol6_2_10.cfm).