PROCEDURE FOR ACADEMIC REVIEW FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

SECTION I: PURPOSES OF PROCEDURE

The purpose of Academic Review is to provide students and faculty of the CONHS (CONHS) with objective appraisal regarding academic matters. The Academic Grievance Committee comprised of faculty and students, serves only in an advisory capacity to the dean and is not a decision-making body. The Dean in consultation with the Academic Grievance Committee will make the final decision.

"The procedure for pursuing grievances related to grades described in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi “University Rules”. It is the obligation of the student to make a serious effort to resolve grievances concerning grades with the student's instructor. In grievances relating to grades it is important to remember that the instructor has primary responsibility for assigning grades. Appeals of grades, therefore, will not be considered at levels above the course instructor unless the student offers evidence of discrimination, differential treatment, or procedural irregularities. A mere disagreement with the judgment made by the instructor is not a valid basis for an appeal. Appeals must be made through appropriate channels as described in the procedures." The Academic Grievance Committee may consider questions only as to whether or not any grade given reflects the student’s achievement or the stated objectives for the grade. The board may review grades given on any of the following:

1. Clinical performance
2. Papers
3. Projects
4. Discussion & Participation grades
5. Final course grade

The Academic Grievance Committee will not review questions concerning:

1. Criteria for grading
2. Specific exam questions or examination results
3. Personal conflict

The process for an academic review in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences is as follows:

1. Student talks to faculty of record regarding concern.
2. If the student wishes to pursue the review, administrative channels are established for this purpose and involve a review by the Associate Dean.
3. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, then a review by the University Academic Review Committee can be initiated.
4. Students may seek counsel or advice concerning the academic review process from the Associate Dean of the CONHS.
5. The student may request an academic review of the same grade only once.
6. Confidentiality is essential for all academic review procedures.

The College adheres to the University Rules 13.02.99.C2 Student Grade Appeals Revised January 16, 2002
http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/students/130299C2.htm

1. GENERAL

1.1 A basic aspect of the teaching-learning process in a university is the evaluation of student performances in a course and the assignment of grades in the class. The professor in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression. Student performance, however, should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, and not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.*

1.2 Faculty are responsible for outlining the objectives and setting standards for each course, and for making clear the means of evaluation for purposes of grading students. Students are responsible for class attendance, for learning the content of any course of study and for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled. Students who violate academic integrity and regulations (see current University Catalog) by plagiarism, other academic dishonesty or disruptive behavior will be held accountable by faculty and may have their grades adjusted accordingly.

1.3 The University has the duty and corollary disciplinary power to maintain standards of scholarship and conduct for students who attend classes. Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. Therefore, the following grievance and appeal procedures are established.

1.4 A student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal.

1.5 A student who has failed a prerequisite course and has decided to appeal the failing grade is not allowed to register for the subsequent course(s) unless a decision has been reached in the grade appeal process to change the prerequisite course grade to passing.

1.6 For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeals process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
SECTION II: PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED FOR COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES.

STEPS IN THE GRADE APPEAL PROCESS:

1. Most problems or complaints can be resolved through discussions between the student and the instructor. Therefore, the student is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. In those instances in which the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may follow the steps discussed below. The student has the right to withdraw an appeal or grievance at anytime during the process. If an appeal is not processed in a timely manner in accordance with the procedures, the student may proceed to the next level. Any statement about the number of days allowed for completing a particular step will refer to work/calendar days. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeals process, students may contact the Associate Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

1.1. Step one: Appeal to Instructor:
   1.1.1. A student will present the matter of grievance, in writing, to the instructor within 14 work/calendar days after the beginning of the next term.
   1.1.2. Within 7 work/calendar days after receiving the written grievance, the faculty member will either sustain the original grade assigned or make a change.
   1.1.3. The faculty member will notify the student in writing or by email regarding this action.
   1.1.4. If the instructor does not act within this period, the student may appeal to the appropriate program coordinator.

1.2. Step two: Appeal to Undergraduate or Graduate Program Coordinator
   1.2.1. If the student believes the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at the student-faculty level, the grievance may be submitted to the appropriate undergraduate or graduate coordinator in the CONHS. The student will present the appeal in writing within 7 work/calendar days after the instructor has acted, or, if there has been no action by the instructor, within 7 work/calendar days after the time period for action has ended. If the student does not submit an appeal by these dates, the College is not required to process the grievance.

   1.2.2. The undergraduate or graduate coordinator will review all facts and evidence in the case, consulting with the student and the instructor, and attempt a successful mediation within fourteen calendar days. The undergraduate or graduate coordinator will issue to the student and instructor a written statement of findings, indicating that this stage of the appeal process is completed. If the grievance is not further appealed, it will be considered resolved. In the case of the
instructor and the graduate or undergraduate coordinator being the same person, the student will submit the appeal to the Associate Dean.

1.2.3. The Associate Dean will review the petition for completeness of process and convene the Academic Grievance Committee if warranted.

1.3. Appeal to the CONHS Academic Grievance Committee

1.3.1. The CONHS Academic Grievance Committee is a committee composed of six faculty members and two students. The student request must be made in writing and must include the basis for the appeal. A suggested format for the student’s appeal is shown as Attachment A.

1.3.2. Along with the appeal; the student must deliver any graded course work that was returned to the student by the instructor or provide a copy of the work.

1.3.3. The request must be submitted within fourteen calendar days following the issuance of the statement of findings in step 1.2.2.

1.3.4. If the student does not submit a written appeal within fourteen calendar days, the College is not required to process the grievance. The Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences will notify the faculty member and coordinator that a grade appeal has been received.

1.4. SECTION IV: COMPOSITION AND FUNCTION OF THE ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

The Academic Grievance Committee will be selected by the student in the following manner:

1. The Academic Grievance Committee will be comprised of six faculty and two students. (At least three of the faculty will be tenured faculty members.)

2. The student will select, by lot, six faculty names from the CONHS, as appropriate, in the presence of the Associate Dean. The six persons chosen will serve as members.

3. The student will select, by lot, the names of two students. The students’ names will be determined by the following mechanism:

   a. The undergraduate students select 14 students and the graduate students will select 5 students each semester to serve as potential student members of review boards.
   b. The student petitioning will draw the two names from this pool.
4. In selecting members of the Academic Grievance Committee, the following guidelines should be used:

   a. Faculty and/or students who have knowledge of the situation will be eligible to serve on the Committee.
   b. Members selected for the Committee should not be eliminated because the student does not know him/her.
   c. Part-time faculty and students may be asked to sit on the Committee.

   The faculty and student selected will be notified by the Associate Dean. Selected faculty members have an obligation to serve on the Review Committee. In the rare instance when a member cannot serve, an alternate will be appointed. The chairperson will be elected by the members of the Committee.

   The Chairperson of the Academic Grievance Committee will set a time for a hearing within seven work/calendar days of receipt of the request from the Associate Dean. The Chairperson of the Academic Grievance Committee will notify the student, faculty, witnesses and Committee Members of the date, time and place of the hearing.

   The Academic Grievance Committee will hear all evidence presented and make a recommendation to the student and faculty member involved. The Committee may make only one of two recommendations:

   1. The grade given is indicative of the student’s achievement and should stand.
   2. The grade given is not indicative of the student’s achievement and the faculty member should reconsider it.

SECTION V: CONDUCT OF THE ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE HEARING

The initial hearing will be held within seven work/calendar days of the Academic Grievance Committee’s receipt of the petition.

Prior to the hearing, the faculty member involved will submit to the Academic Grievance Committee Chairperson any of the following materials appropriate to the item under consideration:

   1. Criteria
   2. Objectives
   3. Syllabus
   4. Copy of the paper/project
   5. Other as needed
Members of the Committee should not discuss the student’s petition with the faculty member or the student prior to the Committee Meeting. If the faculty or student involved approaches a Committee Member for consultation, the Committee Member should direct the individual to the Associate Dean of the CONHS.

Prior to the Committee Meeting, the Chair should share with Committee Members any material submitted by the faculty member or the student that is pertinent to the present situation. This material must be kept confidential. During the Committee Meeting, participants/witnesses should be allowed to present their information without interruption. They should present information relevant only to the present situation. After witnesses have presented their information, they should leave the Meeting.

Those who may be present at the Board Hearing are:

1. Committee Members
2. Student involved in situation
3. Faculty member involved in situation
4. Witnesses as requested by the Review Committee, involved faculty member or petitioning student

**Process for the Academic Grievance Committee Hearing**

1. At the Hearing, the Chairperson of the Academic Grievance Committee will be the spokesperson for the Committee.
2. The Chairperson will review the procedure for the student and faculty member and clarify the function of the Committee. The Chairperson will read the petition from the student and proceed with statements.
3. The student will present the petition and rationale for the petition.
4. The faculty member will respond to the petition.
5. Witnesses for either party may be called by the Committee Chairperson during the hearing whenever appropriate. Witnesses will wait in an adjoining room and will be present for only their testimony. Visitors are not allowed during a Committee Review.
6. Only the petition presented in writing will be discussed during an Academic Review. The student and faculty member may respond only to the petition. The Committee Chairperson is responsible for monitoring responses and assuring adherence to this rule.
7. The Committee will be given a maximum of one week after the initial hearing to review the case. The Committee may reconvene at any time to request additional data.
8. When the Committee is ready to give its decision, a meeting with the Committee, faculty and student will be conducted. At the meeting, the student and faculty member will be provided written copies of the decision.
9. The decision of the Committee will be directed specifically to the charge (Possible decisions are specified in Section IV.). They will state rationale for the decision made. The Committee will not supply specific suggestions to the student or the faculty member. The names of Committee Members, list of witnesses, date of hearing and date of decision are included in the written document.

10. If the Committee recommends reconsideration of the grade, the faculty member will review the Committee’s decision and inform the student and Academic Grievance Committee Chairperson within 72* hours of action taken on the grade.

11. The Chairperson of the Academic Grievance Committee is responsible for maintaining and summarizing comments made during the meeting. Once the Committee completes its actions, the Chairperson forwards to the Dean of the CONHS a copy of the decision, which includes a summary of the data presented at the Review Committee Meeting, rationale for the decision and any action taken by the faculty member. Once the final written decision is given to the student and faculty member at a meeting, the Chairperson will notify the Dean of the CONHS. The Dean of the CONHS will inform the Faculty of the Whole of the action of the Committee. Names of persons involved will not be divulged.

12. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Review, the possibility of further review or other considerations may be discussed with the Associate Dean of the CONHS.

13. All evidence accumulated during an Academic Review will be kept in a separate file in the Office of the Dean of the CONHS.
Sample Format for Written Appeal

(address)
Corpus Christi, Texas (zip code)

Dr. Bunny Forgione
Associate Dean
College of Nursing & Health Sciences
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
6300 Ocean Drive
Corpus Christi, Texas 78412

Dear . . .,

In accordance with the procedure for Academic Review for Undergraduate and Graduate Students in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, I would like to appeal the grade I received in (course number), (title of the course). I took this course in the (. . .) semester of (year). The instructor was . . .

I am appealing the grade I received in this course because . . .

. . .I would like the following corrective action to be taken.

I have discussed this situation with . . ., the instructor concerned and subsequently with the program coordinator, but have been unable to resolve the situation to my satisfaction. I have attached all graded course work that the instructor has returned to me or a copy of that work.

Sincerely,

(typed out name)
(social security number)