

**FINGER LAKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE CHECKLIST**

INFORMAL PROCESS: A student must complete the following steps prior to submitting a formal written complaint to the Director of Judicial Affairs.

___ Step 1.

- Schedule a meeting with the instructor outside of class time to explain your complaint.
- It may be helpful for you to:
 - A. prepare notes for your use during the meeting regarding the specific points related to your concern(s); and/or
 - B. prior to the meeting, forward a letter to the instructor outlining your concern(s).
- Be able to produce documentation, as appropriate, that may support your concern(s).
- Inform the instructor that you are considering a formal academic grievance, and you view the meeting as Step 1 in the informal resolution process.
- If the concern(s) is not resolved with the instructor, proceed to Step 2.
- Document the date and time you met with the instructor and any notes you wish to keep regarding the meeting.

___ Step 2.

- Schedule a meeting with the instructor's department chairperson to explain your complaint.
- It may be helpful for you to:
 - A. prepare notes for your use during the meeting regarding the specific points related to your concern(s); and/or
 - B. prior to the meeting, forward a letter to the department chairperson outlining your concern(s).
- Be able to produce documentation, as appropriate, that may support your concern(s).
- Explain to the department chairperson that you have met with the instructor, you are investigating an academic grievance, and you view the meeting as Step 2 in the informal resolution process.
- Explain to the department chairperson the outcome of your meeting with the instructor (that is, what is the instructor's perspective regarding your concerns; what is your perspective having met with the instructor).
- If the concern(s) are not resolved with the department chairperson, proceed to Step 2A or Step 3.
- Document the date and time you met with the department chairperson and any notes you wish to keep regarding the meeting.

___ Step 2A. (optional)

- At the discretion of the department chairperson, meet with the instructor and the department chairperson to review your concern(s).

___ Step 3.

- Meet with the Director of Judicial Affairs to discuss the merits of a formal written complaint and to review the academic grievance hearing procedures.
- Decide if you wish to have a supporter from within the College community (i.e., faculty, staff, or student) to assist you in preparing a formal written complaint and support you during the hearing. If yes, contact the individual to obtain his/her approval to serve as your supporter. Submit the supporter's contact information to the Director of Judicial Affairs. The Director of Judicial Affairs will provide the supporter with guidelines regarding the informal and formal grievance processes and the supporter's role.
- Prepare a formal written complaint, and submit it to the Director of Judicial Affairs. The deadlines to submit a formal written complaint for the Fall/Jan Plan terms and Spring/Summer terms appear in the Student Handbook and Academic Planner. If you don't have a Student Handbook and are unsure of the deadline, please contact the Director of Judicial Affairs at 585/394-3500, ext. 7554 or in room D-356.
- When preparing a written complaint, you must demonstrate how the instructor engaged in prejudiced, capricious or unfair academic appraisal or treatment. Your written statement must include the following:
 - A. Your name and address; the course/section number; the course title; and the name of the instructor.
 - B. An explanation as to the nature of your complaint, and be specific (for example, "I received a grade of D in the class and I believe I deserve a grade of C for the following reasons...").
 - C. An explanation regarding the steps you have taken to resolve the complaint (for example, "I contacted the instructor and left messages on June 1, 8 and 15. I met with the instructor on September 4. The instructor

does not feel my concern is justified because... I met with the department chairperson on September 11. The department chairperson does not feel my concern is justified because..."

- D. Identify how you would like the complaint resolved (for example, "Based on the documentation I have provided, I feel my grade should be changed from a D to a C.").
- E. Copies of appropriate documentation (e.g., course syllabus) that support your complaint.
- F. If appropriate, identify your supporter (name, address and daytime telephone number). It is your responsibility to notify the supporter of the hearing date, time, and location.
- G. Identify the witness(es) (name, address and daytime telephone number) you wish to have available at the grievance hearing and the relationship of the witness(es) to the complaint. It is your responsibility to 1) contact any witnesses to determine whether they will support your grievance and appear at the grievance hearing and 2) notify any witnesses of the grievance hearing date, time and location. The Grievance Board Chairperson reserves the right to approve or deny your witness request.

FORMAL PROCESS:

- Upon receiving your formal written complaint, the Director of Judicial Affairs will notify the Academic Grievance Board and coordinate the grievance hearing date, time and location.
- A copy of your written complaint will be forwarded to the Academic Grievance Board (comprised of three faculty members and two students), the instructor, and the department chairperson.
- The Director of Judicial Affairs will recommend that the instructor respond in writing to your complaint in advance of the hearing. If the instructor submits a written response, you will receive a copy of it prior to the hearing.
- A hearing date, time and location will be arranged based on all involved parties' schedules. You will receive written notification from the Director of Judicial Affairs confirming the hearing date, time, and location, as well as the names of the Academic Grievance Board representatives. The hearing will be scheduled within a reasonable timeframe and not sooner than three College working days after the Director of Judicial Affairs' receipt of the written complaint. In general, hearings will be scheduled to occur on an afternoon during the fall or spring semester.
- You must attend the hearing to present your complaint, and be punctual. If you fail to arrive at the scheduled hearing time, the hearing will not be rescheduled, and the Board Chairperson will decide in the instructor's favor. The following individuals will also be present at the hearing: Academic Grievance Board (comprised of three faculty members and two students), instructor, your supporter (if appropriate), and hearing stenographer. The instructor may request the department chairperson attend the hearing.
- The hearing will be voice recorded using College equipment, and a stenographer will attend the hearing. You may request a written transcript of the hearing from the Director of Judicial Affairs.
- At the conclusion of the hearing, the Academic Grievance Board will meet privately and reach a decision. You will be notified in writing of the decision by the Director of Judicial Affairs.
- If you do not agree with the Board's decision, you may submit a final written appeal to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs within five College working days from the written notification date of the Board's decision.

The complete Academic Grievance Procedures appear in the *Student Code of Conduct Policy* and *Grievance Procedures* that is available from the Director of Judicial Affairs or online at: <http://www.flcc.edu/offices/judicial>.

SUPPORTER'S ROLE IN THE ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Students are afforded the opportunity to have a Supporter from the College community (i.e., currently enrolled student or current employee) to provide assistance and support prior to and during the formal hearing. The supporter shall not include professional lawyers or persons trained in the law.

The Supporter may:

- Advise the student on the merits of his/her grievance;
- Coach the student in fulfilling the informal grievance procedures;
- Review the student's formal written grievance prior to submission to the Director of Judicial Affairs; and
- Attend the formal hearing with the student.

The Supporter may not:

- Accompany the student in fulfilling the informal grievance procedures;
- Investigate the complaint outside of the stated Academic Grievance Procedures;
- Write the student's formal grievance; and
- Question and respond to the Grievance Board or respondent(s) on behalf of the student during the formal hearing.

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