ACADEMIC ETHICS

Mutual respect and concern for one another in the atmosphere of a Christian caring community is the basic principle which should govern the relationship between student and instructor. Faculty are professional in their expectations of academic excellence and students respond with an appropriate level of effort and commitment. Unprofessional conduct and unethical behavioral are serious breaches of the academic contract.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is the foundation of our education institution. Without it, we make a mockery of the academic endeavor and the ultimate rewards associated with a degree in higher education. At Concordia, honesty is central to our Christian identity and way of relating to one another. The names of students found guilty of engaging in academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Office. Types of academic dishonesty can be defined in the following manner:

- Cheating: includes, but is not limited to: a) the use of unauthorized assistance in taking any type of test or completing any type of classroom assignment; b) assisting another student in cheating on a test or class assignment, including impersonation of another student.
- Plagiarism: includes, but is not limited to: a) failure to give full and clear acknowledgement of the source of any idea that is not your own; b) handing in the same assignment for two different courses without the consent of the instructors.
- Fabrication: includes, but is not limited to: the forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University academic document, record, or instrument of instruction.
- Academic misconduct: includes, but is not limited to: intentionally or recklessly interfering with teaching, research, and/or other academic functions.

Disciplinary Actions

- First instance: The faculty member determines the penalty. This may include any of the following: an opportunity to redo the assignment or test, a reduced grade on the assignment or test, a failing grade on the assignment or test, a lower grade in the course, a failing grade in the course, or removal of the student from the course.
- Second instance: The faculty member determines the penalty, and the campus-specific Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or designee connects with the student at which time additional sanctions may be imposed.
- Third instance: The faculty member determines the penalty, and the Academic Conduct Board meets with the student at which time additional sanctions may be imposed, including suspension or expulsion. The Academic Conduct Board (ACB) consists of the CAO, Assistant Vice President of Academics, and the appropriate Dean. If the student is in an accelerated post-traditional program, the appropriate Center Director joins the ACB. If the student is a graduate student, the appropriate Program Director joins the ACB.

Appeal Process

Students may appeal a faculty-issued academic dishonesty decision or penalty in writing to the Dean of the School in which the course was offered within 15 working days of receiving the report. The Dean (in consultation with the Department Chair or Program Director or Center Director) will consider the appeal and render a decision within 10 working days of receiving the appeal and issue a written response to the student.

Final Course Grade Appeal

Rights Concerning Grading Practices

The determination of grades is the responsibility of the course instructor. Instructors are required to inform students, through the course syllabus at the beginning of each semester, of the grading criteria for assignments and all grading policies. Instructors must apply all grading criteria uniformly and in a timely manner. A final grade is defined as the grade recorded on the student's academic record by term for each course. Final grades submitted to the Registrar's Office are presumed to be accurate and final.

Grounds For A Final Course Grade Appeal

Students and faculty should make every effort to resolve questions about grades without seeking a grade appeal. A Final Course Grade Appeal is a last resort and should be pursued only if evidence exists that the student's final grade does not accurately reflect the grading policy. The responsibility for developing and presenting the case for changing a grade rests with the student making the appeal. In addition, depending on the nature of the appeal, a final grade appeal may involve re-examination of all components that constitute the final grade.

Procedure For Final Course Grade Appeal

This procedure involves specific deadlines for pursuing an appeal. Students are required to follow the steps and timeline outlined within this procedure. At any step in the appeal process, issues presented past the deadlines will not be considered.

The steps listed below are to be carried out by all parties with an attitude of Christian love and concern for academic, moral, and spiritual growth. Face-to-face meetings are expected throughout the process, but may not be possible depending on the specific circumstances. In such cases, a phone call or other real-time conversation may be substituted. All parties will be expected to act in a professional and civil manner and make good-faith attempts to resolve the grievance.

Step 1: The student must take the appeal, in writing, to the instructor no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the final grade is posted on the transcript. The instructor has ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal to respond to the student, in writing. If the issue is rectified, or the student is satisfied in this meeting with the instructor, the matter is settled. The dean of the school in which the class is offered has the authority to extend the deadline for an appeal due to extenuating circumstances.

Step 2: If the student is dissatisfied with the instructor's response to the appeal, the student may take an appeal to the chair of the department in which the instructor involved is a member. If the instructor is one of these officials, the appeal should be made to the instructor's immediate supervisor. This appeal must be brought within ten (10) business days of the unsatisfactory response to the initial statement of appeal. The student must provide, in writing, relevant evidence that supports the argument that the final grade was assigned incorrectly, based on the criteria established in the Grounds for Final Course Grade Appeal section.

The department chair will review the material submitted by the student. The reviewer may choose to meet individually with the student and the

faculty member, or may choose to meet together, in an attempt to resolve the grade.

The reviewer's decision will be given to the student in writing within ten (10) business days of receiving the student's appeal, and a written record of the decision and its basis must be kept by the chair and shared with the instructor. The chair must confine the grade analysis to the fidelity of the scoring as presented in the syllabus, along with the published grade scale and other pertinent information, and not rescore assessments as he/she wishes. The decision of the department chair is final.

General Student Grievances

Concordia University is committed to providing students with an avenue to express concerns and to work with CU officials toward amicable resolutions. CU believes engaging in this process can also be an inherently valuable educational experience for students and can help prepare students to address issues in a professional and productive manner after they leave CU.

Grievances applicable under this policy:

- Arbitrary and/or capricious actions by a college employee or administrative office that caused demonstrable harm to a student;
- Policy or procedure applied unfairly and/or in a different manner than it was applied to others in like circumstances; or
- Administrative error in the application of a policy or procedure.

Grievances not applicable under this policy (but which may be covered under other existing policies):

- Accessibility services (e.g., student accommodations through the ARC);
- Final grade appeals;
- Academic misconduct;
- The Code of Student Conduct and the conduct system;
- Title IX (e.g., sexual harassment);
- Residence Life;
- Parking tickets;
- Financial debt to the University;
- Financial Aid appeals; and
- University-wide requirements (e.g., student fees).

The steps listed below shall be carried out by all parties with an attitude of Christian love and concern for academic, moral, and spiritual growth. Face-to-face meetings are expected throughout the process, but may not be possible depending on the specific circumstances. All parties will be expected to act in a professional and civil manner and make good-faith attempts to resolve the grievance in the spirit of Matthew 18.

General Grievance Procedure

There are specific deadlines for pursuing a grievance. Students are required to follow the steps and timeline outlined within this procedure. At any step in the grievance procedure, issues presented past the deadlines will not be considered.

CU is committed to the Peacemakers model of conflict resolution (i.e., Biblical reconciliation). Peacemakers encourages all parties to discuss conflicts in person, when possible. Therefore, when a student does not feel comfortable directly confronting the alleged, the student is encouraged to schedule a "coaching session" with our Director of Counseling or his/her designee to help prepare the student for the conversation. The Assistant Vice President of Academics (for academic grievances) and the Dean of Students (for non-academic grievances) may also serve as resources for the grievance process.

Informal Resolution

Step 1: Student complaints should first be communicated to the appropriate person[1] to resolve the matter informally. Resolution of a majority of complaints can likely be resolved at this informal level. This communication must take place within ten (10) business days of the alleged injustice. If the complaint is resolved, or the student is satisfied with the outcome of this meeting, the matter is settled. If resolution does not occur, the student may elect to file a formal grievance.

Formal Resolution

Step 2: Within ten (10) business days of the informal resolution attempt, a student may present the grievance in writing to the chair or director (or the dean if the complaint involves a chair or director), who hereinafter is referred to as the University Official, of the department or area where the person alleged to have caused the grievance is employed. The student shall include the following elements in his/her written grievance:

- a clear description of the incident(s) and the parties involved;
- a chronological timeline of all relevant communications and events;
- the efforts taken to resolve the matter (e.g., Informal Resolution);
- a list of potential witnesses (e.g., someone who overheard a conversation or observed something);
- the outcome being sought.

The student may use the help of an advisor or support person but the student must be the sole author of the document. The University Official will conduct an inquiry, gathering additional information if needed. Following this, the University Official will issue a formal written response within ten (10) business days of receiving the written grievance. If the student is satisfied, the matter is settled.

Step 3: If the student is dissatisfied with the decision regarding the grievance rendered by the individual at step 2, he/she may grieve the decision within ten (10) business days of the unsatisfactory decision to the supervising vice president (non-academic) or dean (academic). This grievance must be in writing, include the same elements described above, and also must indicate why a grievance should be heard.

The vice president/dean will review the documentation, may request a meeting with one or both parties, and will issue a decision within ten (10) business days of receiving the written grievance. Decisions at this level are final.

Who may file a grievance under this policy? Any student who is admitted, enrolled, or registered for study at the University for any academic period and/or those who may attend other educational institutions and reside in a University residence hall or attend University classes. The full definition of a student is listed in the Code of Student Conduct. Please note that third parties (e.g., parents, faculty) are not allowed to file a grievance on behalf of a student under this policy.

Utilizing an Advisor. The University encourages the student to create a support network with an advisor. The advisor may be a member of the campus community or a family member of the student. The advisor may not make a presentation, speak on behalf of the student, or write the documentation. During any meetings, the student and advisor may speak quietly, request a short break to talk, or communicate in writing.

Sanctions/Consequences. Please note that any administrative actions or decisions imposed on a student stand until “overturned” in any of the steps listed above. For example, a student who has been dismissed from an athletic team remains dismissed until otherwise determined by the University.

Retaliation Prohibited. Retaliation against a complainant (i.e., student) or witness involved in the investigation is prohibited. Retaliation may be an implicit or explicit act (e.g., intimidation, hostility). The University will investigate any reports of retaliation and take appropriate action.

Privacy. All communications and investigative actions related to a grievance will be treated with as much privacy as possible without compromising the thoroughness and fairness of the process. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

[1] (https://catalog.cuw.edu/graduate/university/academic-policies/#_ftnref1) Typically, the appropriate person in Step 1 is the person who has allegedly violated the student’s rights. In some instances, the appropriate person could be the direct supervisor of the alleged.