School of Education and Human Development
Student Committee Appeals Process
Approved January 27, 2014

Purposes
One purpose of the Student Committee (SC) is to review students' academic appeals regarding retention, disenrollment, dismissal and other academic matters such as grade appeal, academic dishonesty, or honor code issues. The committee assumes an impartial and unbiased stance toward all participants in the academic appeal process, and focuses on adherence to university policy and basic standards of fairness and professionalism. Appeals are heard by this committee at the written request of an SEHD student. Appeals may originate from students in any degree or licensure program in the SEHD to which the student has been admitted. The SC’s decision will be communicated to the student, faculty involved in the decision under appeal, the Associate Dean who oversees the program, and the Dean. The SC’s decision will be considered final unless the student chooses to appeal directly to the Dean according to the procedures outlined below.

Committee Composition
The committee is composed of faculty members from multiple SEHD programs and one SEHD staff representative. Typically, faculty members serve for two years, with the possibility of continuing to serve longer. Each year a committee chair is elected from the members of the SC. The chair directs regular SC meetings and, in conjunction with the Director of Academic Services and/or his/her designee, advises students and faculty on SC policies and procedures and schedules the committee for appeal hearings.

Student Academic Appeals
The SC hears appeals that relate directly to academic issues. These issues may include, but are not limited to:
- dismissal from an SEHD degree program;
- grade appeals and problems related to course grades;
- appeals related to comprehensive examinations or activities and qualifying examinations or activities;
- academic honor code issues.

The SC might refer non academic appeals to other avenues of appeal, including, but not limited to:
- sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind - CU Denver Civil Rights Officer;
- financial concerns - Bursar's Office or Financial Aid;
- student conduct - Student Code of Conduct;
- teacher licensure - Colorado Department of Education;
- other, or more general concerns - CU Denver Ombuds Office.

When appeals are reviewed by the committee, only materials directly relevant to the appeal will be considered. The student and the faculty member or members involved in the appeal should
keep documentation of and materials related to the appeal for a period of five years from the beginning of the semester in which the issue(s) relevant to the appeal began. An official file of all materials will be kept by the SEHD (see "Retention of Academic Appeals Materials" below).

**Faculty Participants in Student Academic Appeals**

Faculty participants in the academic appeal process are those faculty members who have been part of the decision making process under appeal, witness(es) to student/faculty discussions, administrators and other CU Denver officials as required for purposes of clarity, safety and procedural propriety. Other examples of participants include a course instructor or instructors, program area faculty, internship supervisors, and program teams.

**Student Participants in the Student Academic Appeals Process**

Student participants in the academic appeals process are the student who has filed an appeal for the SC to review and another person to accompany the grievant to Appeal Level 3(if applicable). The other person may be a friend, colleague, classmate or faculty member, but not a member of the SEHD staff.

**Academic Appeal Procedures**

**Appeal Level One--Initial Decision**

1. The first step in an appeal is for the student to meet with the faculty member or members who made the decision the student wishes to contest. Issues pertaining to the student's grade or performance, evaluation criteria for decision making or differences of opinion that exist should be discussed in an attempt to work through the disagreement. This first step of meeting with faculty member(s) should take place as soon as possible after the precipitating decision and in no case later than 30 days after the end of the term in which this decision took place. All such initial meetings should be attended by at least one additional (neutral) CU Denver faculty member or administrator who will serve as observer and note-taker.

**Appeal Level Two--Student Committee Review**

2. If the issue remains unresolved after the student/faculty member meeting, the student may appeal to the SC through a written request submitted to the chair of the SEHD SC within 30 days after the meeting with faculty member(s) outlined in Appeal Level 1 above. Academic Services may offer advice to the student regarding how to compose and file the appeal. The written appeal must be in the form of a letter submitted by the student to the SC Chair describing the complaint in detail. The letter should answer these questions:

   a. **What is the term/year you are appealing?** Note: Appeals should be submitted within one semester following the occurrence of the academic issue being appealed. See number 4 below.
b. **What, exactly, is being appealed?** Clearly provide the course number and title for a grade appeal or the specific program for retention, dismissal, or honor code appeal.

c. **What are your specific objections to the decision under appeal?** Refer to specifics on the course syllabus or to specific program or SEHD policies and procedures, handbooks, forms and signed documents.

d. **What is the rationale for your objections?** Provide a succinct narrative which clearly indicates why you believe the decision under appeal was not appropriate. Refer to the available materials (e.g. syllabi, policies and procedures documents) as appropriate in providing your rationale. Focus specifically on your individual appeal and refrain from referring to other students or faculty.

e. **What changes do you request and what are your specific reasons to support your request?** Indicate clearly what you believe would be a fair resolution to the issue under appeal.

3. As noted above, the letter of appeal should be submitted within 30 days following the meeting with the faculty member or members outlined in the first level of the appeal process. The SC chair will review the appeal letter and request further information if necessary, and, if he/she deems the appeal to be within the purview of the committee, will forward the letter to SC committee members and the Associate Dean responsible for the program to which the student was admitted. If the letter is submitted between the end of the spring and the beginning of the fall semester, the letter will be reviewed at the first SC meeting in the fall semester. Academic appeals will be reviewed and responded to during the months of September through November and February until the first week in May.

4. The faculty member or members named in the student’s appeal will be notified of the student’s appeal and provided with a copy of the student’s appeal letter. The faculty member or members will respond to the appeal in a written statement to the SC within 14 days of their receipt of the notification of appeal. Exceptions to this 14-day limit may be allowed in special circumstances if the SC deems appropriate. Additionally, all parties involved in the appeal may receive copies of all submitted documentation pertaining to this case on a need-to-know basis as determined by the SC chair.

5. The student's written appeal request (containing all required information) and faculty response will be reviewed by the SC at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The SC chair may ask for additional materials as needed.

6. If students or faculty member/members fail to provide requested information in writing, the SC will proceed based on the available evidence.

7. The SC will reach a decision based on the documentation. The SC’s decision will be communicated in writing to the student, faculty member/members, and Dean within 14 days of the SC decision. If deemed appropriate by the SC, a formal appeal hearing may
be scheduled for the next regular meeting time of the SC. A majority vote of the SC is necessary in order to schedule a formal appeal hearing.

**Appeal Level Three--Student Committee Formal Hearing**

8. At the appeal hearing, the student and the faculty member/members both have the opportunity to make a 20-minute (maximum) oral presentation.

9. During the appeal hearing, SC members may request further information or ask questions.

10. The student and faculty member/members may bring one advocate to the appeal hearing. This individual may listen, take notes and advise the student but may not present to the committee. Advocates may be faculty, classmates, students or friends, but may not be staff members of SEHD. In addition, the SC may also request the presence of any administrators and/or other university officials as required for purposes of clarity, safety and procedural propriety.

11. The SC will review all information and render a timely decision. In most cases, and depending on their scheduled meetings, the SC will reach a decision within 40 days after the appeal hearing. Neither the student nor the faculty member or members involved in the appeal may be present, or consulted by, the SC during these deliberations.

12. The student and faculty member or members will be notified by letter within 45 days of the concluding decision of the SC. A copy of this decision will be forwarded to the Dean of the SEHD.

**Appeal Level Four--Dean, School of Education & Human Development**

The student or faculty member’s next level of appeal is the Dean of the SEHD. Appeals materials provided to the SC will be shared with the Dean. The Dean may also request additional information as needed. This appeal to the Dean must occur within 30 days of the SC decision.

**Student Committee composition for formal appeal hearings**

- A SEHD Associate Dean serves as the non-voting committee convener during the formal appeal hearing.

- A majority of voting members or their appointed substitutes must be present for the formal appeal hearing.

- The student, the faculty member/members and the SC may each have one non-voting representative at the appeal hearing. This representative may listen and advise but not participate in the presentations to the committee. The representative may not be a staff...
• Both the involved faculty member/members and the student may be present during the entire appeal hearing.

• If a SC member has extensive knowledge of the case or the student (e.g. is a member of the decision team which is being appealed or is the student’s advisor) he or she will be asked to recues him or herself from the appeal hearing.

• Appeal hearings may be video or audio taped only if all parties at the hearing agree to this procedure. Requests for video or audio taping must be made in writing, addressed to the SC committee chair and received at least one week before a hearing is scheduled. The chair will contact participants for a yes or no vote and alert all participants of the outcome of the vote prior to the meeting.

Retention of Academic Appeal Materials

_SEHD responsibilities_
All materials related to an academic appeal, including written statements from students and faculty, written decisions by the SC and requests for materials from the Dean of the SEHD and the CU Denver Graduate School will be housed in a secure confidential file in the Academic Services Office. This official file will be maintained under the name of the student originating the appeal. The official file will be retained for at least five years.

_Student responsibilities_
The student is responsible for keeping copies of all written materials submitted to both the faculty member and members and those submitted to the SC. It would be appropriate for the student to keep records of times, dates, content of conversations and suggested solutions discussed during the process of trying to resolve the problem.

_Faculty responsibilities_
The faculty member or members should keep copies of all written materials related to student appeal. This would include student letters, responses, and course or program documents related to the appeal. It is also recommended that faculty members keep records of times, dates, content of conversations and suggested solutions discussed during the process of trying to resolve the problem with a student.