STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Any student who feels that he/she has been unduly wronged or unfairly treated by a member of the University faculty, administration, or staff may appeal to have his/her grievance heard through the following processes. This procedure does not apply in situations involving grade appeals and student code of conduct issues. A separate procedure has been developed for those cases.

1. The student should, whenever possible and after a reasonable cooling off period, talk with the faculty, administrator, or staff person stating carefully and precisely why he/she believes a grievance exists. An attempt should be made in this conference to resolve the issue. If the University official involved in the grievance is not available on the campus (such as during the summer or other such breaks, leaves of absence, etc.) or the situation itself is such as to obviously preclude this step, the student should talk with the person’s immediate supervisor.

2. If no resolution of the issue can be made in the initial conference with the University official against whom the grievance is directed, the student may initiate a formal, written appeal process with the person’s immediate supervisor for the purpose of mediation. This written appeal will form the basis for a conference between the supervisor, the student, and the University official against whom the grievance is directed. The written appeal must state in detail the grievance and reasons for appealing and must be presented in four copies, one each for the supervisor, the official against whom the grievance is being made, the student bringing the grievance, and for the record. Since the document is of primary importance, the student may seek assistance in preparing it for presentation. Any student or member of the University community may assist the student in preparing the written appeal. The formal written process must begin within thirty (30) days of the most recent incident precipitating the grievance. Supporting documentation and/or evidence related to the precipitating incident, such as earlier documentation and/or evidence related to the precipitating incident, such as earlier incidents, may be included in the appeal. The same information, however, should also be available in the earlier stages of the grievance process.

3. If the conference between the supervisor, the student, and the official against whom the grievance is directed does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the student or the official in question may request (using the same procedure as stated above) a conference with the authority on the next level of administrative supervision.

4. If the conference with the administrative division head does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the student or the official against whom the grievance is directed may request the division head to convene an ad hoc Grievance Committee to hear the issue. The decision whether or not to convene an ad hoc Grievance Committee to further hear the issue will rest with the appropriate administrative division head. In cases involving administrative division heads, the decision rests with the President. Decisions at this level will be final.

5. The ad hoc Grievance Committee shall be composed of five (5) persons. The President shall nominate an administrator to chair the committee, one additional administrator and two faculty members. A student shall be nominated by the S.G.A. President.
6. The Grievance Committee shall hear the testimony of both the student and the University official and shall guarantee each the right to hear the other's testimony. An audio tape shall be made of the hearing proceedings and shall be made available to both parties. If the student or the University official fails to appear at a scheduled session of the Committee, and fails within seven (7) days to provide a satisfactory explanation to the chairperson for the absence, that person shall be considered to have waived his/her right to further consideration.

The ruling of the Grievance Committee shall be final. During all formal proceedings, beginning with item #2 of this procedure, both the University official and the student are entitled to the following due process rights:

a. To be present at all formal hearings
b. To be represented by an advisor. Any party may seek from within the University community of students, faculty, administrators, and staff a person who is willing to act as an advisor to assist him/her. Lawyers may not represent parties in these proceedings
c. To cross-examine witnesses.

The records of the Committee shall be on file in the Office of the President for a period of five years. Only the President, the respective Vice President, and the Board of Trustees shall have access to the records. Members of the Committee shall observe strict confidentiality regarding the case.

The entire formal proceeding, beginning with the written appeal to the supervisor, shall be completed within thirty (30) days.

**Academic Grievance Procedure**

Should a student have a grievance which is academic in nature (i.e. with a particular faculty member regarding a particular course, etc.), the student should complete a Methodist University Academic Grievance Form. Forms can be obtained from the Registrar's Office. Once the grievance form is completed by the student, it should be submitted first to the faculty member who taught the course, second to the Department Head, third to the Division Director of the faculty member, and fourth to the Associate Academic Dean. If the student feels that the problem has not been resolved, he/she can appeal to the Academic Standards Committee of the University. The committee then makes a recommendation on the matter to the Executive Vice President and Academic Dean. Students who have questions regarding the Academic Grievance Procedure should contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Students’ academic complaints will not be heard unless this procedure is followed.

**Consumer Affairs Division part of the North Carolina Department of Justice**

If the complaint cannot be resolved after exhausting Methodist University's grievance procedure, the student may file a complaint with the Consumer Affairs Division part of the North Carolina Department of Justice.

Consumer Affairs Division of the North Carolina Department of Justice: North Carolina Department of Justice Consumer Protection Division, 9001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-9001, or call 877-566-7226. An online complaint form is available at: www.ncdoj.gov/complaint.