

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY CHAPTER 4
MANUAL OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES
POLICIES, PRACTICES AND REGULATIONS PAGE 4-6

SUBJECT: PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING QUESTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL CONCERN INVOLVING ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY

The document "Procedures for Handling Questions of Professional Concern Involving One or More Members of Faculty" approved by the Academic Senate, September 20, 1988, is approved.

NOTE: The text of the grievance procedure entitled "Procedures for Handling Questions of Professional Concern Involving One or More Members of the Faculty" is reproduced on the following page.

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Preface

A university's affairs ideally are conducted with scrupulous care for free and full inquiry, open and participatory decision-making, and just and equitable judgment based upon known and accepted standards. Nevertheless, a large and complex institution, involving persons with varying duties and perspectives, cannot always achieve this ideal through its normal organizational processes. Thus instances arise where one or more members of a university are concerned that decisions have been made that are unjust or inequitable, or that have been reached in ways that fall short of existing procedural requirements. To the extent that such concerns remain unaddressed, a university as a whole suffers. It is, therefore, necessary that a means be readily available to address and vent concerns and where necessary, remedy the situation that gave rise to such concerns. To that end, the following procedures are established for the faculty of Central Michigan University.

I. Purpose

These procedures have the following general purpose: to ensure that faculty members, in matters involving reappointment, tenure, promotion, salary, or other matters of professional concern, are not adversely affected through decisions substantially resulting from or substantially influenced by one or more of the following: (a) failure to comply with Departmental, College, or University procedures; (b) errors of fact; (c) prejudice or arbitrary and capricious action; (d) factors violative of academic freedom.

II. Definitions

These definitions do not supersede or alter definitions contained in other University policies. They are in effect solely for the purpose and scope of these procedures, and their function and effect within these procedures are not limited by definitions contained in other University policies.

¹This is the only internal grievance procedure available to temporary faculty. However, faculty in tenure track positions may have available for their use the grievance procedure contained in the current Agreement. Regular faculty may use only one internal grievance procedure for an issue and may not have the same issue considered in two different internal grievance procedures available to them. Faculty members should, therefore, carefully consider which internal grievance procedure they would like to follow before filing any grievance.

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Claimant

- A faculty member(s) who file(s) a complaint under this procedure.

Complaint

- An allegation that one or more causes for a grievance exist. A complaint may be withdrawn by the claimant at any time by giving written notice to the Chairperson of the Academic Senate.

Counsel

- A member of the legal profession or any person chosen by the claimant or respondent to represent that party in the formal hearing. If either party chooses to use a member of the legal profession as “counsel” that party at the earliest opportunity shall in writing advise the other party and the Chairperson of the Academic Senate that a member of the legal profession will be serving as “counsel”.

Day

- A 24-hour span of time during which undergraduate or graduate classes are in session on campus, during Fall or Spring semester, and excluding University holidays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Faculty

- Those persons, full-time or part-time, tenured or non-tenured, regular or temporary, who have been appointed by Central Michigan University to faculty rank, and whose responsibilities include teaching or research. This definition includes coaches, counselors, and librarians who hold faculty rank.

Grievance

- A complaint which has been referred to a Formal Hearing Committee. A grievance may be withdrawn by the claimant at any time prior to the presentation of the Formal Hearing Committee’s decision, by giving written notice to the Chairperson of the Academic Senate.

Grounds for Grievance

- Allegations that the claimant, in matters involving reappointment, tenure, promotion, salary, or other matters of professional concern, has been adversely affected through decisions substantially resulting from or substantially influenced by one or more of the following: (a) failure to comply with Departmental, College, or University procedures; (b) errors of fact; (c) prejudice or arbitrary and capricious action; or (d) factors violative of academic freedom.

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Procedures

- (1) Duly developed and ratified written procedures contained in the Faculty Handbook or Agreement in force at the time of the alleged failure to comply, or such written procedures duly develop and ratified in compliance with the Agreement or the Handbook;
- (2) The not necessarily written, but accepted and normally followed practice of decision-making bodies at the Departmental, College, or University level, in which case a claimant must show that a normally followed practice exists and was not followed, to his/her detriment.

Respondent

- The person(s) against whom the complaint is lodged. While a complaint is being brought against specific individuals, Central Michigan University is the respondent because the complaint is an allegation that specific persons, acting on behalf of the University, committed acts or omissions leading to an adverse effect upon the claimant. For purposes of clarity, however, the word “respondent” is used in this document to speak of the specific individuals and not of Central Michigan University.

III. Procedural Stages and Deliberative Bodies

There are three stages in the process, each of which is designed to serve specific functions. These stages are: A. Initiation/Informal Stage; B. Preliminary Review; and C. Formal Hearing. Each of the Stages involves a distinctive group of individuals with a specific charge and set of procedures. These groups and their charges and procedures are as follows:

A. Initiation/Informal Stage

1. Persons Involved: The persons who may be involved in the Initiation/Informal Stage are: the claimant; the respondent; the Chairperson or other members of the Department in which any person, whether claimant or respondent, may be housed; the Dean of the College in which any person, whether claimant or respondent, may be housed; and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Department Chairpersons, Deans, and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs may name designees, provided that the designees are able to serve throughout this stage and are able to settle the matter with the same degree of authority as that vested in the person in whose place they serve. However, when any of the above persons are directly involved in the complaint, they must participate in this stage and may not name designees; persons named above who are not directly involved in the complaint may be asked to participate by either the claimant or respondent.²

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If asked to participate, they or their designees must take part. Such requests shall be made in writing to the person or persons involved and the Chairperson of the Academic Senate.

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2. Charge: The purpose of this stage is to provide for direct consultation among the parties to the disagreement so that the conflict might be resolved through conciliation of differences. If this group reached a resolution satisfactory to claimant and that respondent is authorized to grant, such resolution shall be binding on all of the parties involved.

3. Procedures: When a faculty member has a complaint concerning such matters as those stated in Section II, above he/she shall notify the Chairperson of the Academic Senate in writing, stating the following matters: (a) a summary of the nature of the complaint and the grounds on which is based; (b) the party or parties against whom the complaint is brought; (c) any remedies which are requested. Such complaint must be filed not more than 60 days after the person bringing the complaint reasonably should have known of information giving rise to the complaint.

The Chairperson (or Acting Chairperson) of the Senate, upon receipt of such written notice, shall ascertain which persons named in Paragraph I above are to participate at this stage; and shall, within 15 days, convene a meeting of all persons involved at this stage. The Chairperson of the Senate shall not participate in the meeting or its conclusions, except to convene the meeting and certify that all persons are in attendance.

This meeting shall be conducted under the following procedures:

- (a) A single meeting shall be held, if possible, but in no event should it take more than ten (10) days to complete this stage unless the time limit is extended by mutual agreement by the claimant and respondent.

- (b) If a resolution satisfactory to claimant and within the authority of respondent to grant is reached, a written statement, containing a description of the complaint and its resolution shall be drawn up and signed by all persons participating at this stage. Once signed, this statement shall be binding on all parties and on the University, and shall be forwarded to the President of the University for implementation.

²individuals thus asked to participate may feel that they are be harassed. An individual who feels that he/she is being harassed may indicate that feeling in a letter to the President of the University. The President, after consulting with both parties, shall determine whether harassment is involved and, if he/she so determines, may relieve the individual of designated responsibilities under these procedures.

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otherwise by (a) unanimous vote, where the complaint involves tenure, reappointment or promotion; or (b) two-thirds vote, where the complaint involves matters of professional concern other than tenure, reappointment or promotion.

The committee's decision shall be transmitted in writing to the claimant, the respondent, the Chairperson of the Academic Senate, the Office of the President of the University and other University Personnel as deemed appropriate by the committee. The documents in the case shall be deposited with the Chairperson of the Academic Senate. If the committee decides to refer the matter to a Formal Hearing Committee, the Chairperson of the Academic Senate shall deposit all documents concerning the case with the Chairperson of the Formal Hearing Committee. Where the committee determines that no referral shall be made, and no appeal is made, the Chairperson of the Academic Senate shall return all documents to those who presented them.

4. Appeal: Where a claimant alleges that the Grievance Review Committee has violated the procedures established in 3 above, to his/her detriment, he/she shall appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the Academic Senate within ten (10) days of the receipt of the Grievance Review Committee's decision. The Executive Board of the Senate shall, at its next scheduled meeting, consider the matter and decide whether to forward the complaint to the next stage. If the complaint is sent to a Formal Hearing Committee, the holding of a formal hearing shall constitute the remedy for any error of procedure by the Grievance Review Committee.

C. Formal Proceedings.

1. Persons Involved: The Chairperson of the Academic Senate, having received a referral from the Grievance Review Committee, shall empanel a Formal Hearing Committee. This committee shall be composed of eight (8) members, selected from a panel of twelve (12) regular faculty members to be drawn by lot at an Executive Board meeting from the list of regular faculty to the University, excluding members of the University Grievance Review Committee. Faculty members unwilling or unable to serve shall be excused and others substituted for them to be chosen in the same manner. Claimant and respondent each shall have the right of two peremptory challenges, which, if exercised, would reduce the panel to the required eight members. If not exercised, the Executive Board shall select the committee of eight from the panel. In all cases, peremptory challenges shall be treated confidentially. If after the first meeting of a Formal Hearing committee a member should become ill or for any reason be unable to continue, the committee shall continue without that person. In a case where this reduces the size of the committee to less than five (5) members, the committee shall be discharged and another committee selected in the same manner as the original.

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In order to vote, a committee member must have been present to hear all the evidence presented in a particular case.

2. Charge: The Formal Hearing Committee shall conduct a hearing according to the following procedure and render a written decision. This decision shall include an appropriate remedy, including but not limited to tenure, promotion, retention or financial compensation,

Burden of Proof: The grievant shall have the burden of proof in all grievances except for those involving the following:

- (a) The dismissal of a tenured faculty member.
 - (b) The dismissal of a non-tenured faculty member before the expiration of the individual's contract term.
 - (c) A reprimand in writing, a reduction in compensation as a disciplinary action, or a reduction in rank of a tenured or tenure-track faculty member.
 - (d) Appeals initiated by a respondent under this grievance procedure.
3. Procedures and Conditions: The Formal Hearing Committee's procedures and conditions shall be as follows:
 - (a) The Chairperson of the Academic Senate shall convene the first meeting of the Formal Hearing Committee and explain the charge to the committee.
 - (b) The Formal Hearing Committee shall name its own chairperson who shall have full voting rights along with the other members of the committee.
 - (c) Following the initial meeting, the Chairperson of this committee shall send a written description of procedural rights to the claimant and respondent, These rights include:

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- (1) The right to assistance by counsel.
 - (2) The right to call witnesses to support his/her position.
 - (3) The right to inquire into all written and oral testimony.
 - (4) The right to know the identity of all witnesses and authors of all written testimony, and the opportunity to confront all such persons. Anonymous testimony of hearsay evidence is not admissible.
- (d) The claimant has the right to request that all meetings be closed to the public and that all testimony and evidence be kept confidential during the proceedings. Unless the claimant requests that the Meetings be closed, the meetings will be open to the public.
- (e) The Formal Hearing Committee shall, in conference with the claimant and respondent have the right to:
- (1) Place reasonable time limitations on the testimony of the claimant and respondent.
 - (2) Place reasonable time limitations on summations of the claimant and respondent at the close of the hearings.
- (f) The Chairperson of the Formal Hearing Committee shall have the right to rule as to the relevance of testimony at any time during the hearing. A majority vote of the committee may overrule the Chairperson.
- (g) It is assumed that both claimant and respondent and their counsel will be present at all sessions of the hearing except when decisions are being made. Witnesses shall be present only when their testimony is being given, unless the committee determines, by majority vote, that the presence of any witness(es) during testimony other than their own is appropriate.
- (h) The entire hearing shall be tape-recorded.

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- (i) Within ten (10) days after the close of the hearings, the Formal Hearing Committee shall present its decision to the claimant and respondent involved, to the Chairperson of the Academic Senate, and to the President of the University.
- (j) The Formal Hearing Committee may establish by majority vote any additional procedural rules.
- (k) All requests for acquisition of rooms, recording equipment and personnel shall be handled through the Academic Senate Office.
- (l) The Formal Hearing Committee shall reach its decision by majority vote of those eligible to vote. Should there be an even number of committee members, one committee member shall be excluded through a “short straw” procedure at voting time. Until the vote each member shall be considered a full committee member.

A committee consisting of those members who cast the majority vote shall draft a statement which responds to all charges in the grievance, which states the reasons for the decision, and which specifies an appropriate remedy. The statement shall be sent to all parties of the grievance, to the Chairperson of the Academic Senate and to the President of the University, and shall be signed by the entire committee.

- (m) If a public statement is to be made, it shall be made through the University’s Media Relations.
- (n) The final written statement referred to in (1) above shall be kept permanently on file in the Academic Senate. Upon conclusion of the hearings, other documents and tape recordings shall be placed in a sealed envelope in a locked file. Custody of this file shall be entrusted to the Chairperson of the Academic Senate. This file shall be located in the Office of the Academic Senate. The documents and tape recordings shall be destroyed after a period of seven (7) years, unless needed for the protection of the University’s interest or unless required by law. Where documents and tape recordings are to be retained for longer than seven (7) years, the office of the Academic Senate will be notified by the Administration.

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(o) Where there is no appeal from the decision of the Formal Hearing Committee, the findings of the committee shall be put into effect by the appropriate University personnel.

(p) It is understood that the claimant's personnel records are not to show the fact of his/her having brought a grievance, regardless of whether the grievance affects a personnel decision shown in those records.⁴

4. Appeal: Either the claimant or the respondent shall have the right to appeal the decision of the Formal Hearing Committee to the President. Notice of decisions to appeal must be presented in writing by claimant or respondent within one (1) calendar month of receipt by that party of the decision by the Formal Hearing Committee. The grounds for an appeal shall be an allegation that the Formal Hearing Committee has violated the procedures or charge and conditions (including the appropriateness of remedy) established in 2 and 3 above, to the detriment of the claimant or respondent. The notice of appeal shall be sent to the President, to the Chairperson of the Academic Senate, and to the other party.

Where an appeal is made, the Chairperson of the Academic Senate shall transmit to the President for review the full transcript and report of the Hearing Committee.

The Chairperson of the Formal Hearing Committee and both claimant and respondent shall be present with the President when he/she formally considers the matter. The President shall affirm the decision, unless he/she finds that the Formal Hearing Committee has violated the procedures or charge and conditions (including appropriateness of remedy) established above to the detriment of claimant or respondent. In this latter situation, and when the appeal is by respondent, the President may remand the grievance for final rehearing. When the appeal is by claimant and President finds that a prejudicial error of procedure has occurred, the President shall remand the grievance for final rehearing. A decision to remand shall be rendered in writing to the Chairperson

⁴Personnel files are defined as any records used in making personnel recommendations and decisions.

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of the Academic Senate, the claimant, and the respondent, with an explicit statement of he/her reasons. Upon remand, the Chairperson of the Academic Senate shall empanel an entirely new Formal Hearing Committee.

In any appeal of the appropriateness of remedy, the rehearing shall be restricted to that issue.

The fact that appeals are resolved through faculty hearing committees represents a significant delegation of authority to the faculty and is an expression of confidence in the professional judgment of the faculty. Given these dimensions of this arrangement, the appeals mechanism will be reviewed by the Faculty-Trustees Liaison Committee every four years or following the full resolution of ten grievances using this procedure, whichever occurs first.

IV. Publicity and Costs

A. Publicity

Public statements about a complaint/grievance shall be avoided by the claimant and respondent, by members of the Grievance Review Committee, by members of the Formal Hearing Committee, and by all participants in the procedures and hearing until the complaint/grievance has been finally resolved within this procedure (including any appeal or rehearing process).

B. Costs

The costs of necessary reproduction of material, space, necessary technical personnel, tape-recording and/or steno typing and preparation of typescript of testimony before the Formal Hearing committee shall be borne by the University Administration. Arrangements for these matters shall be made by the Chairperson of the Formal Hearing Committee, through the Chairperson of the Academic Senate.

Approved by Senate: 10-31-81

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