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Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Grievance Policy

Policy Number: None

Functional Area(s) Responsible: Academic & Student Affairs

Owner(s) of Policy: Center for Student Well Being

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Policy Statement:

Finger Lakes Community College is committed to fostering an academic environment that upholds the fundamental values of academic integrity and supports student learning through transparent, fair, and educational processes.

Attached

Reason(s) for Policy:

The Academic Integrity and Grievance Policy ensures a fair, transparent, and equitable process to address allegations of academic dishonesty and/or grievances related to academic evaluation.

Neither student nor Instructor(s) of Record shall be deprived of the tenets of academic freedom, including open discussion and investigation, and the College shall be ever conscious of and shall promote the motto of the State University of New York System — “To Learn - To Search - To Serve.”

Instructor(s) of Record shall evaluate student performance according to current academic guidelines and students shall have the right to challenge a grade or academic treatment in the classroom according to the procedures outlined in this policy.

For most cases,* the student will be required to seek resolution through the **Academic Grievance: Informal Process** before proceeding to file a formal grievance. The Informal Process starts by a student contacting the Instructor(s) of Record, the Instructor(s) of Record's department chair, the Associate Provost of Curriculum and Instruction (AP of CI).

Academic dishonesty, “cheating” and other forms of misrepresenting others’ work as your own, such as plagiarism, are considered serious breaches of academic integrity and as such can be handled at the individual course level and/or through the Student Code of Conduct process.

FLCC endorses the six fundamental values of academic integrity as established by the International Center for Academic Integrity:

1. Honesty: Upholding truth and integrity in all academic endeavors.
2. Trust: Building a community where members believe in the integrity of others.
3. Fairness: Ensuring equality and impartiality in academic processes.

4. Respect: Valuing the dignity and contributions of all members of the academic community.
5. Responsibility: Acknowledging and owning the outcomes of one's actions.
6. Courage: Demonstrating the resolve to uphold these values, even in the face of challenges.

All members of the FLCC community are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism: Submitting work that is not one's own without proper attribution.
- Self-plagiarism: Submitting work for a current course (e.g., paper, project, research) that is substantially the same as a previous course without getting the current Instructor(s) of Record's permission.
- Cheating: Using unauthorized materials or assistance during an academic exercise.
- Fabrication: Falsifying data, information, or citations.
- Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Helping others commit acts of academic dishonesty.
- Unauthorized Collaboration: Working with others without explicit permission.
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as described below:
 - Unauthorized use of AI tools when explicitly prohibited
 - Failure to disclose AI tool usage as required by course policy
 - Misrepresenting AI-generated content as original work
 - Using AI tools to circumvent learning objectives
 - Sharing access to restricted AI tools or using another student's AI access credentials
 - Failing to properly cite or attribute AI-generated content when permitted

The **Academic Grievance: Formal Process** may only begin after a student has gone through the Informal Process and the student files a request for a formal grievance. Formal grievances must be initiated no later than four weeks into the next semester or thirty days after the assigned grade is received if the course is taught in the winter and summer. Please see the [FLCC Academic Calendar](#) for specific dates each academic year.

This policy upholds the values of academic integrity, fosters mutual respect, and provides a clear framework for resolving conflicts between students and Instructor(s) of Record.

Applicability of Policy:

FLCC College Community

Definitions:

The following selected terms are defined to facilitate a more thorough understanding of the academic grievance process.

Right to an Advisor: In accordance with Due Process Rights, the student and instructor(s) of record have the right to an advisor to be with them during the informal and formal grievance process. The advisor to a student can be someone of the student's choosing who is affiliated with the Institution and may be a faculty, staff, or student. The advisor to a faculty can be someone of the faculty's choosing who is a faculty, staff, or Union Representation member affiliated with the Institution. [Attorneys are not permitted to be an advisor in the informal or formal grievance process.]

The student and instructor(s) of record are each permitted to have **one advisor** with them during the grievance process. Individuals who are advisors are not allowed to be called as a witness or serve as a character reference.

In formal grievances, students may have a non-FLCC affiliated advisor at the sole discretion of the hearing board advisor, the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee, Provost and/or designee. The individual may not be a legal representative. The role of the advisor is to be supportive and give consultations to the party they are supporting. The advisor is not allowed to speak on behalf of the party they represent. [Specifics of the advisor role are outlined in Appendix B.]

Academic Grievance Board: Formal grievances are heard by an Academic Grievance Board composed of a five- or seven-member panel. The Board members represent faculty, staff, and students. Student Board members must have completed at least one semester at FLCC and be in good academic and conduct standing. In most cases the Board will be a seven-member panel composed of three faculty, two staff, and two students. In the event a conflict arises when scheduling an Academic Grievance Board hearing, a five-member board may be utilized. The five-member Board is composed of three faculty, one staff, and one student. The chair of the Board will be a member of the faculty. Members of the Academic Grievance Board may be recommended in a number of ways; most often the recommendations come from Faculty Department Chairs, the AC of PI, Provost, Assoc Provost of Student Affairs, and or Director of Student Life.

Standard of Evidence: The standard of evidence used to determine responsibility or uphold a complaint is a preponderance of evidence, which means it is more likely than not that the incident occurred. This burden of proof is different than beyond a reasonable doubt, which is a more stringent standard that is applicable to criminal procedures. The technical rules of evidence used in civil and criminal proceedings do not apply to the Student Code of Conduct or Academic Grievance standards of evidence policy.

Prejudiced: This term in academic appraisal includes, but is not limited to, a preconceived judgment or opinion, an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or sufficient evidence, or a tendency for a decision on an improper basis.

Capricious: This term in academic appraisal includes, but is not limited to, an appraisal not supported by the weight of evidence, or an appraisal characterized by impulse or whim.

Unfair: This term in academic appraisal includes, but is not limited to, an appraisal that is not equitable, marked by partiality or deception.

*Registered Nursing and Licensed Practical Nursing students will move to the formal process, after the informal process has occurred according to the Nursing Student Handbook.

Related Documents:

None

Procedures:

Reporting Academic Dishonesty Violations:

1. Instructor(s) of Record who suspect a violation of academic integrity must document the incident and notify the student in writing within five business days of discovery.

In rare circumstance if the timeframe may not be achieved, it is expected that Instructor(s) of Record notify the student as soon as possible after determining the concern, and outline why the delay in timing occurred.

The documentation for suspected violations must include:

- Specific portions of work suspected of academic dishonesty.
 - For AI usage violations: course-specific AI use guidelines and description of how requirements were violated.
 - Comparative analysis showing discrepancies between student's typical work and suspected violations, if applicable.
 - A sanction for such violation.
 - The student's right to have a conversation about the alleged violation.
2. The Instructor(s) of Record must discuss the allegation with the student to provide an opportunity for clarification.
 - If the student and Instructor(s) of Record reach consensus on the violation, then the Instructor(s) of Record will submit: an Academic Integrity Incident Report, which will be submitted to the Associate Provost of Curriculum and Instruction for record-keeping purposes. This report will document the alleged violation and the sanction(s) that were imposed.
 - Course Outlines should address how academic dishonesty may be handled including, but not limited to:
 - A failing grade for the assignment and/or course;
 - Additional academic work, such as:
 - Completion of AI literacy training
 - Workshop on proper citation and attribution practices
 - Reflective essay on academic integrity
 - Referral to the FLCC Student Code of Conduct process
 3. Instructor(s) of Record If the student disagrees with the finding of academic dishonesty, they can request a review by the Academic Department Chair.*
- *In cases where the department chair is the Instructor(s) of Record, another academic department chair will be appointed to assess the situation by the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction or designee.
4. The review will include an interview with both the Instructor(s) of Record and student and reviewing all written correspondence about the incident(s). The Department Chair will assess whether sufficient evidence exists to support the finding of academic dishonesty. The department chair may work with the parties to find a successful resolution.
 5. At the conclusion of the review by the Department Chair, the findings will be submitted in writing to the parties involved and a copy sent to the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction for record-keeping.

6. If the student is still unsatisfied with the outcome of the decision by department chair, they may move to the formal academic grievance process.

Progressive Sanctions for Multiple Violations

The College maintains records of academic integrity violations to identify patterns and implement appropriate interventions:

First Violation:

Educational intervention and grade-related (assignment or course) sanctions at Instructor(s) of Record's discretion
Meeting with the Instructor(s) of Record and documentation of the incident

Second Violation:

Formal warning letter from the Associate Provost of Curriculum and Instruction
Mandatory completion of academic integrity workshop
Possible course failure at Instructor(s) of Record's discretion
Conference with academic advisor about potential program implications
Formal Student Code of Conduct charge

Third Violation:

Formal review by the Associate Provost of Curriculum and Instruction
Possible suspension or dismissal from specific academic program(s)
Potential college suspension for one or more semesters
Required petition for readmission demonstrating understanding of academic integrity

Records of violations will be maintained in accordance with all record retention policies.

Academic Grievance: Informal Process

Students charging an Instructor(s) of Record of record with prejudiced, capricious, or unfair academic appraisal (e.g., grading, assessment, evaluation, examination, judgment) shall notify and discuss the complaint with the Instructor(s) of Record without fear of reprisal. This will be a meeting between the student and the Instructor(s) of Record.

- If the problem remains unresolved after the first meeting with the student and Instructor(s) of Record, the student should notify and discuss the complaint with the Instructor(s) of Record's department chairperson.
- At the department chairperson's discretion, a meeting may occur with the student, Instructor(s) of Record, and department chairperson. Upon receipt of the complaint the department should attempt to offer resolution to the complaint within a reasonable timeframe. Any resolution will be provided in writing to the student(s). Resolution at this level may include:
 1. Written clarification of grading criteria
 2. Re-evaluation of disputed work with specific feedback
 3. Alternative assignment or assessment opportunity when appropriate
 4. Mediated discussion between student and Instructor(s) of Record
 5. Written agreement on moving forward with specific expectations

- If there is no resolution, the student may file to have a formal academic grievance hearing. The student must submit a request for an Academic Grievance in writing with a description of the complaint outlining the alleged prejudiced, capricious or unfair academic appraisal. The complaint must also include the Instructor(s) of Record's name, course number and title.

Once documentation has been received, the Associate Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee, will review the documentation to determine if the complaint warrants moving forward with the formal process. The decision maker may seek out information from any person(s) associated with the informal process to gain an understanding of what has transpired during the informal process. Once a request for a formal grievance is received, the decision to determine merit or not should take no more than 20 regular college business days.

If it is determined that the complaint warrants moving forward, the formal process will begin. The Associate Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee, will notify the student and Instructor(s) of Record in writing of their determination and outline next steps if applicable. If it is determined that the complaint does not warrant moving forward, the Associate Provost of Curriculum and Instruction will notify the student and the Instructor(s) of Record in writing of the finding.

Academic Grievance: Formal Process

Within **five business days** of the notification identifying that the complaint warrants moving forward, the student and instructor(s) of record have the right to meet individually with the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee, to review the formal grievance procedures and answer any process related questions.

Within **fifteen business days** of the notification identifying that the complaint warrants moving forward, the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee, will convene the Academic Grievance Board. The timeline may be adjusted for various reasons, including but not limited to, compliance with contractual stipulations, pending enrollments for academic programs, and transfer admissions requirement.

The Board is charged with determining, based on a review of all documents available and individual accounts presented during the hearing, if they believe more likely than not that prejudice, capricious or unfair academic appraisal has occurred.

1. Within **seven business days** of the scheduled hearing, both the student and the instructor(s) of record will receive a list of the Board members. The parties will have 24 hours of receipt of the names to identify if there is a concern about a potential conflict of interest. A request for a change of board member will be entertained by the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee. If a conflict exists, the board make up will be adjusted and all parties will be notified.
2. The student and instructor(s) of record must submit all materials and a list of witnesses (including full name, contact information and purpose of their desired attendance at the hearing) which they wish to include in the hearing process. This must be submitted to the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee, **five business days** before the hearing date.
3. The Board and the participants will receive all documents submitted for consideration and witness lists no less than **three business days** from the date of the hearing. [Any individual who will be called as a witness may not serve in a role as advisor to either party.]
4. If either the student or instructor(s) of record fails to schedule or appear before the Academic Grievance Board, following proper written notification, the Board may render a decision using the

information available and without the benefit of having the party's input or information. Such decisions do not presume a finding on behalf of the student or instructor(s) of record.

5. It is the responsibility of the instructor(s) of record and/or student to notify and arrange for the attendance of any witnesses they are requesting. Hearings will not be postponed for late or absent witnesses. If a desired witness is unable to attend the designated hearing date and time, the witness should submit their statement electronically within **five business days** prior to the hearing date, directly to the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee,.
6. The hearing shall be closed to the public. The following individuals associated with the grievance may attend the hearing: the student, the student's advisor, Academic Grievance Board, instructor(s) of record, instructor(s) of record's advisor, and hearing board advisor or the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee,.
7. The presentation of witnesses for both parties will occur at the allotted witness time during the hearing procedures (see Appendix A).
8. The Grievance hearing shall be recorded on equipment supplied by the College for the purpose of formal record keeping and will be maintained in accordance with FLCC Record Keeping policy. See Appendix A for additional details. All participants in the hearing are prohibited from making their own recording during the hearing (including but not limited to audio, video, photographic, and/or written recording).
9. At the time of the hearing, the hearing board advisor or the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee, will ensure that all parties are adhering to the formal academic grievance process and ensure all rights of the parties are retained.
10. At the close of the hearing, the Academic Grievance Board shall deliberate privately. The Board will seek to reach a consensus in resolving cases. In the event there is no consensus, a majority vote will determine the outcome.
11. Within **five college business days** after the close of the hearing, the Academic Grievance Board shall report its findings to the hearing board advisor or the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee,.
12. The hearing board advisor or the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee, will notify the student and instructor(s) of record in writing of the Board's decision and rationale within **five college business days** upon notification of the Board's decision.
13. If the Board's decision is to uphold the student's grievance, the Board will provide a written recommendation of the action(s) to be taken, which may include but is not limited to changing an assessment or grade. The written recommendation of action(s) and the rationale for the decision will be included in the final outcome letter.
14. If the Board's decision is that the student's grievance is unfounded, the Board will provide its rationale for the decision in the final outcome letter.
15. The decision of the Academic Grievance Board is final.

Additional Appeals

Finger Lakes Community College is a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) and follows the complaint resolution policies and procedures outlined in the [SARA Policy Manual](#). A summary of the [SARA student complaint process](#) is available online. Consumer protection complaints resulting from distance education courses, activities, and operations may be submitted to Finger Lakes Community College as outlined below for investigation and resolution.

In the event the campus grievance procedures have been followed and all avenues of appeals exhausted and documented, and the issue remains unresolved, a complaint may be submitted to SUNY Student Concerns.

Please note, this does not include complaints related to grades or student conduct violations, both of which are to be fully addressed via campus processes. See the section on Out-of-State Distance Education Complaints for complaints related to distance education programs when a student resides outside of New York State.

Students who exhaust the campus processes for addressing an academic grievance without success may contact New York State Department of Education. The Office of College and University Evaluation will not review a complaint until all grievance procedures at the institution have been followed and all avenues of appeal exhausted and documentation provided that such procedures have been exhausted. Please note: Every New York State college and university is required to establish, publish, and enforce explicit policies related to redress of grievances.

Please do not send a complaint to the Office of College and University Evaluation until you have read all the information below. This will assure that you are sending your complaint to the appropriate agency or office.

The Office of College and University Evaluation handles only those complaints that concern educational programs or practices of degree-granting institutions subject to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, with the exceptions, noted below.

- The Office does not handle anonymous complaints.
- The Office does not intervene in matters concerning an individual's grades or examination results, as these are the prerogative of the college's faculty.
- The Office does not handle complaints concerning actions that occurred more than five years ago.
- The Office does not intervene in matters that are or have been in litigation.

Complaints concerning programs in fields leading to professional licensure (e.g., nursing) should be directed to:

Office of the Professions
Professional Education Program Review
Education Building, 2 West
Albany, NY 12234

A complaint against a college in the State University system should be sent to:

State University of New York
System Administration
SUNY Plaza
353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12207

Forms/Online Processes:

None

Appendix:

Academic Grievance Policy – Appendix A

Academic Grievance Board Hearing Procedures

The Board Chair will introduce themselves and identify their role in presiding over the hearing.

1. The Board Chair will identify the purpose of the hearing, specifying it is a Formal Academic Grievance Board Hearing, noting the date and time of the hearing, and the Board Chair will acknowledge to all participants that the hearing is being recorded for record keeping purposes. The Board Chair will verify that the recording is functioning and remind all participants that they are prohibited from making their own recording during the hearing (including but not limited to audio, video, photographic and/or written recording).
2. Introductions: the members of the board will introduce themselves, followed by the student, student's advisor (if present), instructor(s) of record*, instructor(s) of record's advisor (if present), and the hearing board advisor or designee.
3. The Board Chair will review the role of the advisors in the hearing process and answer any related questions.
4. The Board Chair will ask all participants if there are any questions regarding the process, procedures, or their rights in the process.
5. The Board Chair will begin the hearing using the following order of proceeding:
 - a. Opening Statements are given by the student and instructor;
 - b. Questioning of the student and instructor by the board;
 - c. Presentation and questioning of the student's witnesses by the student, the instructor, and the board;
 - d. Presentation and questioning of the instructor's witnesses by the instructor, the student and the board;
 - e. Questioning of the instructor by the student (these questions will be written, and the Board Chair will ask the questions aloud to the instructor);
 - f. Questioning of the student by the instructor (these questions will be written, and the Board Chair will ask the questions aloud to the student);
 - g. Final questioning of the student and instructor by the board;
 - h. Closing statements are given by the student and instructor;
 - i. The Board Chair will thank all participants for their time and remind all participants to keep the details of the hearing private as to protect the integrity of the process and those individuals involved in the process;
 - j. The Board Chair will bring the hearing to a close and note the time and request that the recording be stopped.
 - k. The board will stay and deliberate in private to determine an outcome.

*Instructor(s) of record will be referred to as the instructor for purposes of this document.

Academic Grievance Policy – Appendix B

Role of an Advisor

The role of an advisor is to be supportive and give consultations to the student and instructor(s) of record.

1. The student and instructor(s) of record both may have **one advisor** present throughout the Academic Grievance Process.
2. The advisor's role is limited to providing support and guidance during the grievance process.
3. The advisor may not act as a witness for the student or instructor(s) of record during the grievance process.
4. A current member of the Academic Grievance Board may not serve as an advisor to the student or instructor(s) of record during the grievance process.
5. During the Academic Grievance process the advisor may not speak on behalf of the student or instructor(s) of record.
6. During a formal Academic Grievance Board hearing, the advisor may not speak directly to the board, witnesses, or the opposite party in the hearing.
7. The advisor may confer in a reasonable manner with the student and instructor(s) of record for whom he or she is advising.
8. The student and instructor(s) of record are responsible for notifying their advisor of the date, time and location of the informal meeting and/or formal Academic Grievance Board hearing.
9. In a formal Academic Grievance Board hearing, the student and instructor(s) of record must notify the hearing board advisor or the Assoc. Provost of Curriculum and Instruction, or designee, who their advisor will be within **five business days** of the hearing date.
10. The advisor to a student can be someone of the student's choosing who is affiliated with the Institution and may be a faculty, staff, or student. [Attorneys are not permissible in the academic grievance processes.]
11. The advisor to a faculty can be someone of the faculty's choosing who is a faculty, staff or Union Representation member affiliated with the Institution. [Attorneys are not permissible in the academic grievance processes.]