

ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY¹

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary provides a means by which students may file a grievance for academic and student life issues. The processes described below include informal (i.e., by mutual agreement of all parties involved) and formal procedures. Whenever possible, the formal grievance process should be used after all informal means have been exhausted.

In the event that the informal procedures fail to resolve the problem, the student will indicate in writing the nature of the grievance, the evidence upon which it is based, and the redress sought, and submit the document(s) to the Office of the Academic Dean for academic matters or to the Office of the Dean of Student for non-academic matters. Guidelines for this document are listed in section III, B, 2. Upon receipt of a formal grievance, a Grievance Committee will be convened and proceed according to the guidelines stated below.

I. Definitions²

A grievance arises when a student believes, based on established institutional policies and procedures, that he or she has been treated in an arbitrary or capricious manner by a faculty member, staff member, or any representative of the Seminary. Grievances may include, but are not limited to: perceived unfairness in the assigning of grades, perceived arbitrary assessment of school fees or fines, perceived violations of the school's written policies, perceived moral failings, and sexual harassment.

II. Informal Grievance Procedure³

Students are encouraged to attempt one or more of the following informal procedures to address the grievance.

1. **Direct Discussion:** Students wishing to grieve an alleged violation of the Seminary's policies are encouraged to contact, within twenty (20) working days of any occurrence giving rise to the grievance or the time they could reasonably have learned of such occurrence, the person responsible for the matter being grieved (the respondent) and attempt to resolve the grievance informally.
2. **Intermediary Discussion:** If, due to shame or power distance, the student is unable or unwilling to face the respondent directly, the student may request the Academic Dean or the Dean of Students to attempt informally to resolve the grievance in his or her behalf.
3. **Informal Mediation:** At the request of the grievant or respondent, the Academic Dean or the Dean of Students shall arrange for a meeting of the parties, attend such meeting(s), and attempt to aid in the resolution of the grievance.
4. **Advisement:** Students uncertain about how to proceed may consult the Student Body President or the Office of Dean of Students who shall identify the appropriate person.

¹ Except where otherwise indicated, this policy is adapted from Azusa Pacific University's Grievance Policy. <http://www.apu.edu/registrar/undergraduate/policies/grievance/>. Accessed September 10, 2013.

² Adapted from <http://scampus.usc.edu/student-grievance-procedures/>. Accessed September 10, 2013.

³ Adapted from <http://www.nyu.edu/life/student-life/student-communitystandards/student-grievance-procedure-.html>. Accessed September 10, 2013.

III. Formal Grievance Procedure

A. Grievance Committee Organization

A. Membership:	Seminary President (or designee) Academic Dean Dean of Students One faculty member (For cases involving Seminary faculty only. Selected by the vote of the faculty at the beginning of each school year) Human Resources Manager (for cases involving Seminary staff only) SBO President *If the members of the committee deem that any of the above is biased for or against the grievant or respondent, they shall designate an appropriate substitute.
B. Chairperson:	For academic grievances, the Academic Dean shall preside. For non-academic grievances, the Dean of Students shall preside. The Academic Dean or Dean of Students may request that the Seminary President serve as chairperson in his or her stead.
C. Voting:	All members have equal vote and there shall be no alternates or substitutes unless one member must disqualify him/herself due to conflict of interest. If the Seminary President appoints a designee, the designee shall serve as a committee member throughout the duration of the grievance process.
D. Meeting Time:	The meeting will be scheduled within five working days following the filing of a written petition.

B. Guidelines

1. The grievant is encouraged to undertake the aforementioned informal grievance procedures before initiating the formal grievance procedures described here. The student has no more than 20 working days after the incident that occasioned the grievance in which to file his/her written petition. However, the student whose grievance involves alleged moral failures may file his/her written petition any time, so long as he/she is still a student at the Seminary.
2. The grievance process is initiated by submission of a written, signed petition to the chairperson of the Grievance Committee. The petition must include:
 - a. Names of the parties involved
 - b. A clear statement of the nature of the grievance
 - c. A narrative of the incident including
 1. what occurred
 2. when it occurred
 3. where it occurred
 4. who was present
 - d. The evidence on which the grievance is based
 - e. Why this constitutes capricious, arbitrary, or immoral action on behalf of a staff or faculty member
 - f. What has been done to resolve the grievance
 - g. The desired outcome(s)

h. Any supporting documentation

3. If, in the judgment of the chairperson, there is emotional or physical danger to the grievant or other community members, appropriate actions may be taken to protect the safety of the grievant up to and including immediate suspension and restriction from campus of the respondent during the course of the grievance process.
4. If the respondent is a member of the clergy and if the respondent is accused of misconduct, conduct unbecoming a minister, or of teaching doctrines out of harmony with the doctrinal statement of the Church of the Nazarene, or of serious laxity in the enforcement of the Covenant of Christian Character or the Covenant of Christian Conduct of the church, if and when it is prudent in the judgment of the committee, the chairperson shall notify the District superintendent or equivalent where the person implicated is a member. The chairperson shall notify the District superintendent or equivalent of the nature of the allegations and of the details of the grievance process being undertaken as described herein.⁴
5. The chairperson of the Grievance Committee will submit a copy of the grievance to each person who will serve on the Grievance Committee for this incident, as well as to the faculty or staff members involved.
6. A meeting of the Grievance Committee will be scheduled to consider the matter within five working days of the date on which the petition was filed.
7. Meetings of the Grievance Committee shall be attended only by the parties named in the grievance, members of the Grievance Committee, the adviser(s) chosen by the grievant and/or respondent, and witnesses invited by the Grievance Committee (See III, C, 5). No one other than members of the Grievance Committee may be present during deliberations (i.e., when the committee is meeting without the presence of the grievant or respondent in order to determine the committee's conclusions).
8. Neither the student nor the respondent may bring legal counsel, nor have another individual represent him/her as counsel. The Grievance Committee may not have legal counsel present.
9. No printed materials or notes may be taken from the meeting (other than the official minutes described in section C, 5).
10. Except for communications with the applicable administrators after the conclusion of the Grievance Committee proceedings and communications with the faculty member(s) and student(s) involved advising them of the Grievance Committee's final decision, the parties and committee members may not discuss the case outside the meeting.
11. If a committee member is approached prior to a meeting by a grievant or respondent whose case is to be heard, the member should refuse to discuss the issue and should disclose, at the time of the meeting, that he/she was been approached.
12. Any committee member who has a potential conflict of interest, or who holds a bias or preconceived notion as to the facts of the case and has formed an opinion about them, or who may hold ill will toward a particular grievant or respondent, must disclose to the chairperson the nature of such feelings, bias, or potential conflict. The committee member may request to be excused from participation, or in the discretion of the chairperson, and replaced by the chairperson with a substitute committee member of comparable station to the extent possible under the circumstances.

C. Committee Process

⁴ Adapted from the Nazarene Manual, 501.2 and 505.1.

1. The grievance procedure shall act as a vehicle for communication and decision-making between students, staff, and faculty, and provide, through prescribed procedures, a process through which a student-initiated grievance can be resolved internally.
2. As noted above, the student should attempt to resolve his/her grievance informally with the faculty member involved and, if necessary, the appropriate department chairperson and dean before commencing the formal process. The formal procedure must be initiated within the time limits set forth above; however, the time limit may be extended by the Dean of Students or Academic Dean, in their sole discretion, upon showing a good cause.
3. Justifiable cause for grievance shall be defined as any act which, in the opinion of the student, adversely affects the student and is perceived as prejudicial, capricious, or immoral action on the part of any Seminary faculty or staff member.
4. The grievance process is initiated by submission of a grievance petition in writing to the Dean of Students in nonacademic matters, or Academic Dean in academic matters. The petition must contain the names of the parties involved, narrative about the incident, and the remedies requested. The Dean of Students or Academic Dean will submit a copy of the grievance to each member of the grievance committee prior to the hearing. Thereupon, the committee will be activated and a meeting will be held to consider the matter.
5. The involved student and faculty or community member may be present at the committee meetings, except during deliberation as noted above (III, B, 7). The meetings shall be held at times when both parties are available to testify. Either party may seek an advisor who must be a faculty member, staff member, or student in the Seminary. The function of the advisor shall be to lend support by his or her presence, but the advisor may not address the committee unless requested to do so by a committee member.
6. Accurate minutes of the grievance procedure shall be written and kept in a confidential file of the committee's proceedings.
7. If, due to shame or power distance, the student wishes to address the committee without the respondent present, the chairperson may so arrange. In such a case, a complete written transcript, redacted to remove the grievant's name, shall be provided to the respondent to enable him/her to respond to the accusations before the committee.
8. In cases of conflicting information and/or when additional information is desired, the committees may request testimony from additional witnesses having information pertinent to the grievance.
9. The committee will decide on the matter by vote. The committee has the power to determine the appropriate response to the grievance up to and including dismissal from the Seminary of the faculty or staff member. However, the grievance committee does not have the right to terminate the employment relationship of a respondent with another institution or organization (such as the General Board, Church of the Nazarene).
10. Both parties will be notified, in writing, within two days of the decision. In cases that involve discipline of a faculty or staff member, the grievant will not be informed of the precise details of that discipline.

D. Appeal⁵

The decision of the Grievance Committee is final. Neither the grievant nor the respondent has the right of appeal.

⁵ Adapted from <http://www.nyu.edu/life/student-life/student-communitystandards/student-grievance-procedure-.html>. Accessed September 10, 2013.