

## **GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE AND PROCEDURE**

A grievance is a written expression of dissatisfaction about something or someone that is the cause or subject of protest of a non-academic issue. A formal allegation against a party or program expressed in a written, signed statement.

The grievance procedure provides a prompt and fair resolution by providing the student a reason for an appeal of a decision. A grievance is defined as any and all serious non-academic disputes or complaints arising within the student body or between student/students/student body and faculty. A group grievance should be presented to the Grievance Committee by one representative. Guidance through the procedure is available from the Academic Admissions Coordinator/Recruiter. To ensure a prompt resolution, each step must be completed in sequence with strict adherence to time limits. Failure to do so will result in dismissal of the grievance. The grievant has the option of discontinuing the proceeding at any stage of the procedure.

### **I. Objectives**

- A. Provides an opportunity to verbalize non-academic grievances.
- B. Promotes responsibilities and individual freedom.
- C. Improves communicative processes between faculty and students.

### **II. Functions**

- A. Incorporates the Student Bill of Rights into the educational system.
- B. Provides an objective means of handling appeals.
- C. Provides a means for persons to express their dissatisfaction without fear of retaliation.

### **III. Membership**

- A. Two students from each class who are elected each year by class members.
- B. Four faculty members elected each year by the faculty. Administrative faculty is not eligible for membership. The faculty member with the highest number of votes will be elected to act as chairperson retaining voting privilege.
- C. An election will be held by the class or faculty to replace a student or faculty member who is unable to fulfill responsibilities due to: health, personal reasons, failure to attend scheduled meetings, breach of confidentiality or resignation from student body or the faculty. A member unable to fulfill the responsibilities must immediately notify the chairperson in writing.
- D. If a grievance is filed against or by a member of the grievance committee, the member will be replaced for that specific proceeding. The temporary members will be voted on by the remaining members of the Grievance Committee.

### **IV. Authority**

Decisions made by the Grievance Committee are final. It is to be immediately enforced by both faculty and students.

### **V. Procedure**

- A. *Informal Phase*
  - 1) Discuss the incident with individual(s) directly involved within three school days of the incident.
  - 2) If the grievance remains unresolved the grievant and involved individuals may meet with the Director, School of Nursing, within two school days of the interaction.
  - 3) If the grievance remains unresolved, the grievant may follow the formal phase of the procedure.
- B. *Formal Phase* instituted in the event that the grievance is not resolved in the informal phase.

- 1) Request within one school day, **in writing**, a hearing of the Grievance Committee. Such a request shall be made on the “Application for Hearing with Grievance Committee” form, located in the **Student Guide**, and directed to the chairperson of the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee must schedule a hearing within three school days from the date of **the written** application. A copy of the form will be kept on file in the School of Nursing Office.
- 2) Forty-eight hours prior to the scheduled Grievance Committee meeting, the persons involved must present to the chairperson of the Grievance Committee all written documentation concerning the grievance. The grievant and any individual affected by the grievance have a right to be informed of any evidence in advance of the hearing. Immediately upon receipt, the Grievance Committee chairperson shall supply the opposing side with the evidence summary. Evidence not supplied in this fashion by either side shall not be considered by the Grievance Committee.
- 3) All persons involved with the stated grievance will be notified by the chairperson 48 hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting.
- 4) The grievant appears before the Grievance Committee and has the right to have a representative of choice at the meeting. Representative of choice does not testify.
- 5) The grievant may present evidence and witnesses relevant to the issue at hand. The grievant may question witnesses relevant to the issue at hand.
- 6) The grievant must be informed of any evidence against the grievant and its source.
- 7) Persons involved in the grievance have an equal opportunity to speak. The members of the Grievance Committee may only ask objective questions for clarification of the issue.
- 8) In order to obtain a verbatim account of the proceedings, they will be recorded and transcribed in writing, with a copy of all documents to be retained by the School of Nursing.
- 9) Following testimony and formal argument, the record will be closed. The Grievance Committee then will convene behind closed doors to discuss the case and determine its decision. It is the ethical responsibility of the Committee members to maintain strict confidentiality regarding the proceedings.
- 10) The Committee's recommendation will be by simple majority and will be made the same day as the hearing. If a tie vote is registered by the Committee, the documented case proceedings are automatically forwarded to the Director of the School for a decision to break the tie vote.
- 11) The grievant and any individual affected by the grievance will be called before the Committee and the chairperson will present the Committee recommendation orally. Also, the decision of the Committee will be made in writing by the chairperson to the grievant within one week of the hearing.

C. *Right to Appeal*

In the event that the grievant feels that the case has been unfairly handled by the Committee, appeal may be made to Conemaugh’s Chief Nursing Officer or their designee. However, the grievant is bound by the Grievance Committee decision until a decision is rendered by the Chief Nursing Office or a designated institutional official within one week of the Grievance Committee decision.

Application for Hearing with Grievance Committee

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

*OBJECTIVE STATEMENT*

Regarding grievance \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Grievant statement \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The following are named as defendants concerning this grievance:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Grievant \_\_\_\_\_

**GRIEVANCE STATEMENT FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Conemaugh School of Nursing**

**Conemaugh is required by U.S. Department of Education regulations to provide its students and prospective students with contact information for any relevant state official or agency that would appropriately handle a student's complaint about Conemaugh's education programs. Students are encouraged to utilize Conemaugh's internal complaint policies and procedures prior to filing a complaint with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. If a concern cannot be addressed through internal processes, students or prospective students may file a complaint with the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection (16th Floor, Strawberry Square, Harrisburg, PA 17120). Information about the Bureau of Consumer Protection's process for submitting consumer complaints is available at <https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/submit-a-complaint/> or by calling 800-441-2555.**