

## **YEARLY REPORT**

### **GRADE APPEALS COMMITTEE, 2005-2006**

The Undergraduate Grade Appeals Committee met a total of 13 times over the academic year 2005-2006. The majority of appeals came from students in the College of Health, Education, and Professional Studies, closely followed by the College of Business Administration.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the disproportionate number of appeals from the Nursing Department. Over the 2005-2006 calendar year, over 60% of all appeals heard originated in this Department. These were primarily the result of the way that their grading policy is explained in individual syllabi, a matter that they can speak to. However, generally there have been an increasing number of appeals since I began serving on the committee. This growing number is, I suspect, a result of the requirements of the Hope Scholarship and other types of financial aid.

The types of appeals heard seem to primarily be a result of Faculty Syllabi, which can be unclear. This is particularly true when it comes to less objective methods of grading such as participation. We have also heard a number of appeals dealing with the strictness of attendance policies. Of course the Committee only hears from students at the very end of need, and thus these observations are somewhat skewed towards the most problematic cases.

There appears to be a clear need to standardize the Appeals process. Currently every School deals with the actual process differently, with the most effective requiring students to complete a form that explicitly asks them to demonstrate which of the three categories they are appealing under. At the other end of the spectrum, another school is more casual in its process, allowing observers to remain in the room for the deliberations. Since the charge of the Committee is standardized under the Faculty Handbook, the Committee feels that the actual process itself should also fall under its direction, allowing Deans to follow the same system. In this way, should they appeal in multiple schools, students will have more confidence in the system. We also feel that Department Heads should ensure that students filing appeals have a clear understanding of the process itself and most importantly the reasons for their appeal. Too often have we faced students who are unaware of the three categories, and/or have no clear understanding of the terms listed. It is for this reason that Deans try to meet with students before the 'trial' but it would certainly save time if Department Heads also took some responsibility for the process to hopefully limit the number of frivolous suits or suits that have no possibility of a student ruling.

In the end, I suspect that the number of appeals will continue to increase as students find themselves more financially invested in their grades.

Melissa Anyiwo, Chair Grade Appeals