I. INTRODUCTION

Any health sciences student at Tulsa Community College who wishes to file a grievance may do so according to a prescribed procedure. Health Science students who disagree with an academic decision made by a faculty member, including the assignment of a course grade or decision about progression in the program of study, may file a grievance under these procedures. Generally, academic concerns that are eligible for a grievance process include two categories of student concerns: 1) student concerns regarding those academic decisions pertaining to the assignment of a final course grade; and 2) “other” student concerns regarding academic decisions of a more limited scope, (for example, student concerns pertaining to a single grade on a paper or other similar course assignment, or sub-set of course assignments) that do not involve a final course grade determination.

II. PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF ACADEMIC DECISIONS

The following procedures are intended to expand upon and further explain the procedural steps, associated timelines and due process rights of health science students who wish to bring an academic grievance pertaining to a final course grade assignment versus “other” academic grievances pertaining to a single assignment or other academic concern that does not involve a final course grade appeal, (in addition to the guidelines published in the TCC Student Handbook Policies and Resources).

A. Academic Grievances: Policies for Final Course Grade Assignments. It should be noted by the student that grades are the prerogative of the faculty, and that appeals or questions concerning assigned grades should be directed to the faculty member who assigned the grade. An appeal to an assigned final course grade may be initiated by a student only on the contention that the grade is clearly erroneous or was assigned in an arbitrary or capricious manner. The procedure must be initiated no later than the end of the 4th week of instruction during the semester immediately following the semester in which the final course grade was officially transcripted. Students are encouraged to initiate the process as soon as possible. (TCC Student Handbook Policies and Resources)

The standard at TCC for a grade appeal is based on whether the grade given is “erroneous or was assigned in an arbitrary and/or capricious manner”. These procedures are available only to review allegedly erroneous, arbitrary or capricious academic decisions and not mere differences of opinion regarding the professional judgment of the faculty member in evaluating a student’s work or making an academic decision.
The academic decision, including the assignment of a grade, will be considered erroneous if it may be shown, for example, that the grade assigned was inaccurate based upon a mathematical or calculation error.

The academic decision, including the assignment of a grade, will be considered arbitrary and/or capricious if the decision is made:

1) On some basis other than performance in the course and/or compliance with the course assignments and requirements;

2) By more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the same section or course; or

3) By a substantial departure from the faculty member’s, divisions’ or college’s announced standards as articulated in the course syllabus, catalog descriptions, blackboard announcements, or other written materials.

B. **Student Academic Grievances- Procedures for Final Course Grade Appeals**

**Procedure.** A student who wishes to grieve an academic decision pertaining to a final course grade must proceed as follows:

1. **Informal Meeting with the Individual Faculty Member**

The student should attempt to resolve the matter directly with the individual Faculty member who assigned the final course grade, as soon as possible after the academic decision is known, through submission of a written request for a meeting that includes in writing the course grade and rationale for the grievance with an explanation supporting the perception that the grade received was assigned in either an erroneous, capricious or arbitrary manner. This written request may be in the form of an email communication. Upon receipt of the written grievance and request for a meeting, the Faculty member will establish an appointment and will timely hold a personal conference with the student to discuss the grievance.

2. **Formal Meeting with the Course/Level/Program Faculty Team**

If the student and the individual Faculty member cannot reach a mutually satisfactory resolution to the final academic decision/grade, the student should submit a written request for review of their grievance by the Faculty Team (Nursing Course/Level Faculty or AHS Program Faculty) with a description of the grievance and explanation supporting their perception that the grade received was assigned in either an erroneous, capricious or arbitrary manner. The student must describe the academic grievance, the specific course grade, why the student believes the final course grade decision was erroneous, capricious and/or arbitrary, the student’s attempts to resolve the grievance informally, and the precise
relief sought by the student. The student may attach copies of any relevant documents with their written grievance.

3. **Formal Written Grievance Submitted to Associate Dean.**

If the student and the Faculty Team cannot reach a mutually satisfactory resolution to the final course grade, the student may file a formal grievance. The grievance must be presented in writing to the Associate Dean for the division in which the course is offered and copied to the individual Faculty member as soon as possible and no later than the 4th week of college instruction in the following semester. (In the case of an MLT student, the written grievance will be directed to the Dean of Health Sciences).

The student must describe in a formal written petition the academic grievance, the specific course grade, why the student believes the final course grade decision was erroneous, capricious and/or arbitrary, the student’s attempts to resolve the grievance informally with the individual Faculty member, formally with the Faculty Team, and the precise relief sought by the student. The student may attach copies of any relevant documents with their written grievance. The student should ensure that the division has the student’s most current contact information on file, including mailing address and telephone number and email address, if indicated. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that their current contact information is maintained in all college offices.

The Associate Dean will review all evidence, interview the Faculty member and student, and will hold joint conferences with the student and Faculty member(s) to attempt to resolve the grievance. The Associate Dean will submit a written decision to the student, Faculty member, and Faculty Team leader, with recommendations as to the resolution of the appeal within seven (7) working days or less of receipt of the written grievance unless extenuating circumstances apply, (for example, the Associate Dean is out of the office due to illness or other extended leave).

“Working days” is defined as periods when college classes are in session. The person vested with authority at the appropriate level may extend any of the time periods contained herein for good cause. Any extensions must be communicated in writing to all parties. For the purposes of this procedure, each step shall be afforded 7 working days as a standard time limit. If the grievance is not resolved within the timeframe, the student or faculty member may carry it forward to the Dean of Health Sciences for resolution.

4. **Formal Written Grievance Submitted to the Dean of Health Sciences**

The student may appeal the Associate Dean’s decision in writing to the Dean of Health Sciences with copies, as indicated, to the faculty member and Associate Dean. The appeal must be filed within seven (7) working days of receipt of the Associate Dean’s determination.

The Dean of Health Sciences will review all evidence, interview the Associate Dean, faculty member and student, if indicated, and may hold joint conferences with the Associate Dean, student and faculty member to attempt to resolve the grievance. The Dean may convene a “peer review” process involving
at least three health sciences faculty members, conducted through a formal polling process and/or a hearing, in order to attempt to resolve the grievance. Faculty members involved in the peer review process/hearing will not include those faculty members directly involved with assignment of the course grade. The Dean will submit a written decision to the student, faculty member and Associate Dean, with recommendations as to the resolution of the appeal within seven (7) working days or less of receipt of the written grievance unless extenuating circumstances apply, (for example, the Dean is out of the office due to illness or other extended leave).

5. **Final Course Grade Appeal: Academic Appeals Committee.**

If the academic grievance concerning a final course grade appeal has not been resolved by meeting with the Faculty member(s), Associate Dean, or Dean, the student may file an appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee by completing the Academic Appeals Form (located in the TCC Student Handbook Policies and Resources) and submitting it to the Dean of Health Sciences, and copied to the Academic and Campus Services Office no later than the end of the sixth week of classes during the subsequent semester after the grade has been officially transcripted. The Dean of Health Sciences will contact the student, the faculty member, and Chair of the Academic Appeals Committee within seven (7) business days regarding the appeal after receiving a signed Academic Appeals Form. (TCC Student Handbook Policies and Resources 2009-2010)

a. **Academic Appeals Committee Membership**

The Academic Appeals Committee will be composed of three members of the college community from each campus and one student from each campus for a total of sixteen (16) members.

The composition of each campus’s representatives will be as follows:

1) Director of Student Development or his/her counselor designate;

2) A faculty representative chosen by the faculty;

3) A member appointed by the Provost;

4) The Student Government Association will recommend one student member from each campus for approval and appointment by the Dean of Student Services from each campus. With the approval of the President, additional members may be appointed to the Academic Appeals Committee if circumstances warrant an increase in the number of committee members, such as a large case load or the unavailability of committee members. The Committee will convene and select a Chairperson annually by the fourth week of classes during the fall semester.

b. **Academic Appeals Committee Procedures for Final Course Grade Appeal**

Upon receipt of a completed Academic Appeal Form, the Committee Chair shall promptly appoint a panel to preside over the hearing, usually within fifteen (15) business days. The panel will consist of five (5) members, at least one (1) of which will be a faculty member, and one (1) student.
The Chair of the committee will be responsible for all correspondence with a student that has submitted a request for a final course grade appeal. Hearings shall be conducted in a timely manner, consistent with established procedures. The student may expect that a final resolution of the final course grade appeal may be reached no later than the end of the semester following the date that the course grade was transcripted.

The Academic Appeals Committee’s decision shall be final.

C. Other Academic Grievances—Grievances other than final course grade appeals

Procedure. A student who wishes to grieve an academic decision pertaining to a single assignment or sub-set of course assignments other than a final course grade must proceed as follows:

1. Informal Meeting with Faculty Member.

The student should attempt to resolve the matter directly with the individual Faculty member who assigned the grade, as soon as possible after the academic decision is known and prior to the end of the course semester, through submission of a written request for a meeting that includes in writing the grade and rationale for the grievance. The written request may be in the form of an email message. Upon receipt of the written grievance and request for a meeting, the individual Faculty member will establish an appointment within 7 working days of the receipt of the request and will timely hold a personal conference with the student to discuss the grievance.

2. Formal Meeting with the Course/Level/Program Faculty Team

If the student and the Faculty member cannot reach a mutually satisfactory resolution to the academic decision/grade, the student may request a formal review of their grievance with the Faculty Team (Course/Level/Program). The student must describe the grievance related to the course assignment grade(s), the date(s) of occurrence, why the student believes the course assignment grade(s) decision was/were erroneous, capricious and/or arbitrary, the student’s attempts to resolve the grievance informally with the individual Faculty member, and the precise relief sought by the student. The student may attach copies of any relevant documents with their written grievance. The grievance must be presented in writing to the Lead Faculty for the course before the end of the course semester in which the grade is received. The grievance may be written and submitted in an email communication. The Faculty Team will schedule a meeting with the student within 7 working days of receipt of the student’s request for formal review, and will render a decision in writing within 7 working days of the meeting with the student, with written recommendations for resolution of the grievance sent to the student and individual Faculty member.

3. Formal Written Grievance Submitted to Associate Dean.
If the student and the Faculty Team cannot reach a mutually satisfactory resolution to the academic decision/grade, the student may file a formal grievance with the Associate Dean, within 7 working days of receipt of the written decision of the Faculty Team. The grievance must be presented in writing to the Associate Dean for the division in which the course is offered and before the end of the course semester in which the grade is received.

The student must describe the grievance related to the course assignment grade(s), the date(s) of occurrence, why the student believes the course assignment grade(s) decision was/were erroneous, capricious and/or arbitrary, the student’s attempts to resolve the grievance informally and formally, and the precise relief sought by the student. The student may attach copies of any relevant documents with their written grievance. The student should ensure that the division has the student’s most current contact information on file, including mailing address and telephone number and email address, if indicated. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that their current contact information is maintained in all college offices.

The Associate Dean will review all evidence, interview the Faculty member, Faculty Team, and student, and will hold joint conferences with the Course Facilitator/Program Director, student and Faculty member(s) to attempt to resolve the grievance. The Associate Dean will submit a written decision, to the student, Faculty member and Course Facilitator/Program Director, as indicated, with recommendations as to the resolution of the appeal within seven (7) working days of receipt of the written grievance. The decision of the Associate Dean in the case of an academic grievance that DOES NOT pertain to a final course grade appeal is final.