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2-12-2004

## Faculty Grievance Process

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*Georgia Southern University*

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TO: Dr. Marc Cyr, Chair, Faculty Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Bruce Grube, President 

DATE: February 12, 2004

SUBJECT: **FACULTY GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

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Issues involving fairness and due process for concerned parties in faculty grievance proceedings have arisen since the start of the academic year. In December, I asked for an examination of the manner in which the procedures of the faculty grievance process were being operationalized in order to remedy flaws in the process which impeded the provision of fundamental fairness to those being accused of wrong doing. In particular, attention was focused on the procedure requiring a written summary to be given to individuals accused of wrongdoing. Currently, the "written summary" requirement in practice is no more than a yes or no statement regarding the existence of a grievance. Unfortunately, this brevity does not meet a reasonable standard of fairness that one should be able to expect when accused of wrongdoing. One of the most fundamental values to which we should adhere in a process in which a member of the Georgia Southern University community is accused of wrong doing is, at a minimum, to inform that individual in writing, in advance of meeting with an investigatory body, of the nature of the charge or charges being alleged. Simply providing a description of the nature of the accusation in the required written summary would solve much of the problem.

I have not taken on the task of raising these issues lightly. I am fully aware of sensitivities of faculty in matters affecting the policies and procedures which provide the opportunity to redress grievances. I was fully aware as well, when I chose to make an issue of the grievance procedures, there would be controversy. Significantly, I knew I would run the risk of having my intentions misunderstood or, worse yet, offending those whom I did not wish to offend. Nonetheless, I would fail my responsibilities if I did not draw our attention to these very substantive matters. To fail to provide for the rights of all individuals who are parties to a grievance, is to erode the legitimacy of the grievance process itself. None of us are served well when there is a failure to honor a value as fundamental as informing a person in writing of the nature of the complaint in advance when that person is accused.

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As of this date I have not received any communication from the Faculty Grievance Committee. Therefore, I request the Senate Executive Committee to examine the procedures of the faculty grievance process in their entirety and forward recommendations to me before the end of the spring semester which address the issues of equity, fairness, and due process for all parties to a grievance. I would encourage the SEC to consult with members of the Faculty Grievance Committee, academic administrators, and the Office of Institutional Compliance in the process of developing recommendations

Thank you.

c: Dr. Vaughn Vandegrift  
Provost

Dr. Clara Krug  
Chair, Faculty Grievance Committee

bc: Dr. Linda Bleichen  
Dr. Jeff McSellan