

Policy on Student Rights

(Adopted by the Board of Trustees of Technical-Community Colleges, Section 5.2.2. Adopted October 18, 1976; amended February 19, 1979, April 20, 1981, July 20, 1981, November 16, 1987, February 26, 1990, March 16, 1998, and November 15, 1999; technical amendment May 1, 2002 in compliance with Public Acts 98-180 and 01-28.)

Section 1: Rights of Students

It is the policy of Northwestern Connecticut Community College that its educational offerings be available to students without regard to the individual's race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disability, genetic information, marital status, mental retardation, sexual orientation, learning disability, or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, or prior conviction of a crime (unless the provisions of sections 46a-60(b), 46a-80(b), or 46a-81(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes are controlling or there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in one of the above protected groups). With respect to the foregoing, discrimination on the basis of sex shall include sexual harassment as defined in Section 46a-60(8) of the Connecticut General Statutes. Further, the college will not discriminate against any person on the grounds of political beliefs or veteran status.

Students are entitled to an atmosphere conducive to learning and to impartial treatment in all aspects of the teacher-student relationship. The student should not be forced by the authority inherent in the instructional role to make particular personal choices as to political action or his or her own part in society. Evaluation of students and the award of credit must be based on academic performance professionally judged and not on matters irrelevant to that performance, whether personality, race, religion, degree of political activism, or personal beliefs. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study, but they are responsible for learning the content of the course of study as defined by official college publications.

Community college students are both citizens and members of the academic community. As citizens they enjoy the same freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and right of petition that other citizens enjoy, and as members of the academic community they are subject to the obligations which accrue to them by virtue of this membership.

Section 2 : Student Grievance Procedure

1. *Definition:* A grievance is an allegation by a student that, as to him or her, an agent of the college has violated board or college policies relating to students other than assignment of grades or other academic evaluation (see Section 3: Review of Academic Standing).
2. *How to file a grievance:* A grievance is to be submitted in writing to Dr. Patricia Bouffard, Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, Founders Hall, room 103, 860-738-6320, within thirty days of the date the grievant knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged violation. The written grievance shall specify the right claimed to have been violated and state briefly the underlying facts.
3. *Procedure for grievance resolution:* The Dean shall investigate the grievance and, within thirty days from the time the grievance was submitted recommend to the president a disposition of the grievance, except as provided hereinafter:

a. In the course of each investigation, the Dean shall consult with the dean responsible for the area of college operations in which the grievance arose.

b. In the case of a grievance alleging discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, marital status, mental retardation or physical disability, prior conviction of a crime, political beliefs, veteran status, or sexual preference, the Dean of Academic and Student Affairs shall consult with Fran Almeida Pistilli, Affirmative Action Officer, English House, (860) 738-6325.

c. In the case of a grievance against a dean, the grievance shall be filed with the president.

The president may accept or reject the recommendation, or direct such further investigation as he or she deems appropriate. The president shall notify the student of the final disposition of the grievance within fifteen days of receiving the recommendation, except for good cause or as provided in 4., below.

4. *Advisory Committee*: The president may establish an advisory committee of students and staff which may be charged with the responsibility of making recommendations at either the level of the deans or the president. The president may appoint and remove members of the committee. If an advisory committee is appointed, the president shall establish a reasonable time frame within which the committee must make recommendations.

Section 3: Review of Academic Standing

A student may seek review of the assignment of a grade or other decision affecting academic status in accordance with the following procedure:

1. *The grade or academic decision* affecting academic status should be discussed informally with the instructor or official responsible for the decision within fifteen calendar days of the student's awareness of the decision.
2. *If the matter is not satisfactorily adjusted* within ten calendar days of this appeal or the instructor is not available, the student may refer the matter to the Dean by filing a written appeal. The appeal must be filed with the Dean within thirty calendar days of the student's awareness of the decision which is being appealed.

Upon receipt of such appeal, the Dean shall meet with the instructor, if he or she is available, to determine that step 1 has taken place or is not possible and to receive relevant information from the instructor responsible for the decision. The Dean may then refer the matter to the academic supervisor for informal consideration prior to step 3 below.

3. *The academic dean or other designated official(s) shall afford review* as provided below. The president may designate an official or an academic appeals committee to provide review at this step in lieu of the academic dean.

The student shall be afforded the right to present a statement of appeal and relevant information in support of it. It is the student's responsibility to show that the decision in question is arbitrary, i.e., without a reasonable basis, or was made for improper reasons in violation of section 1 of this policy. The student is entitled to a written response within thirty days of the completion of his or her

presentation. A decision to change the grade or modify the decision which has been appealed is advisory to and subject to the approval of the president.

4. *The foregoing decision may be appealed to the president* by filing a statement of appeal within ten calendar days of the date of the decision. Review by the president shall be on the basis of the written record unless he or she decides that fairness requires broader review. The decision of the president shall be final.
5. *The time frames* provided herein may be modified by the president for good cause shown.