EHRA Non-Faculty Grievances

Policy 602.23

1 Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to fair and equitable treatment for all employees. This policy provides a means of grievance and/or appeal for those EHRA Non-faculty employees (including, but not limited to, Senior Academic and Administrative Officers (SAAO), who are not subject to the faculty grievance procedures), to secure a good faith review and attempted resolution of decisions concerning dismissal, or other serious sanctions (disciplinary action that affects compensation), and/or other matters specifically enumerated below.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all EHRA Non-faculty employees.

2.2 A grievance may be filed, subject to all requirements and limitations provided in The UNC Policy Manual, Chapter 100.1, The Code, section 611 and The UNC Policy Manual, policies 300.1.1 and 300.2.1, to seek review and resolution of the following matters:

- unlawful or impermissible harassment or other discrimination (e.g. race, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin and veteran status) when an adverse employment action is taken. The specific protected classes are covered in the University's policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation [hyperlink to 602.2].
- violations of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in matters resulting in serious sanctions, except to the extent of limitations on political activity established by Article 5 of North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 126, Article 5 (“Political Activities of Employees”) and by the Board of Governors' policies regarding political activities as they may be revised from time to time.
- decisions concerning discharge for cause (includes incompetence, unsatisfactory performance, neglect of duty or misconduct that interferes with the capacity of the employee to perform effectively the requirements of the job).
- interpretation and application of EHRA Non-faculty employment policies.
- denial of a request for removal of alleged inaccurate or misleading material contained in the employee's personnel file.
- violations of North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 126, Article 14 (“Protection for Reporting Improper Government Activities”).
- discontinuations, expiration of term appointments or terminations of employment with notice.

3 Definitions

3.1 Hostile Work Environment

is one that both a reasonable person would find hostile or abusive and one that the particular person who is the object of the harassment perceives to be hostile or abusive. Hostile environment is determined by looking at all of the circumstances, including the frequency of the allegedly harassing conduct, its severity, whether it is physically threatening or humiliating, and whether the conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work performance, academic advancement, or access to University services. Examples of conduct that could create or could contribute to hostile environment harassment may include:

1. Unwelcome jokes about disability, race, sex, sexual orientation, etc.
2. Offensive or degrading physical contact or coercive behavior, including stroking, patting or similar physical contact.
3. Pictures, posters, graffiti or written materials displayed in a workplace or classroom which are offensive or obscene.
4. Excluding individuals from meetings or University activities due to their religious beliefs or other protected class status.

3.2 Impermissible Discrimination

is failure or refusal to hire an applicant, discharge of an employee, or discrimination against an employee with respect to compensation or other terms, conditions or privileges of employment because of the applicant’s or employee’s sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.
3.3 Impermissible Workplace Harassment

is unwelcome and unsolicited speech or conduct based upon a person's sexual orientation or gender identity or expression that creates a hostile work environment or involves quid pro quo.

3.4 Quid pro quo harassment

consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic advancement, or access to University services, or (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting that individual related to employment, academic advancement, or access to University services.

Examples of quid pro quo harassment may include:

1. Promising a promotion or higher grade if an individual acquiesces to sexual advances.
2. Denying an employee a pay raise after the employee has declined a request for sexual favors from a supervisor.

3.5 Retaliation

is failure or refusal to hire an applicant, discharge or demotion of an employee, or other discrimination against an employee with respect to compensation or other terms, conditions or privileges of employment because that person filed a complaint about or otherwise opposed harassment or other forms of discrimination, or provided information relative to a complaint, or was involved in the complaint in any way.

3.6 Unlawful Discrimination

is failure or refusal to hire an applicant, discharge of an employee, or discrimination against an employee with respect to compensation or other terms, conditions or privileges of employment because of the applicant’s or employee’s race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, political affiliation, veteran status, disability, or genetic information.

3.7 Unlawful Workplace Harassment

is unwelcome and unsolicited speech or conduct based upon an employee’s race, sex, religion, national origin, age, color, disability, veteran’s status, political affiliation, or genetic information that creates a hostile work environment or involves quid pro quo.

Unless the specific terms or context of this policy indicate otherwise, all references to “harassment” and “discrimination” include both unlawful harassment and discrimination and impermissible harassment and discrimination.

4 Policy and Procedure Statements

4.1 Alternative Dispute Resolution

4.1.1 The University encourages informal means of resolution prior to the use of these procedures. Employees and supervisors, as well as individuals in the administrative line such as department chairs, deans, etc., are encouraged to discuss matters fully and freely and attempt resolution of employment disputes subject to these policies and procedures. Such discussions are considered confidential. Further, the University encourages formal mediation, if desired by both parties to a dispute. Requests for mediation should be made in accordance with the University's Mediation Policy.

4.2 Procedures for Filing Grievances

4.2.1 An employee shall file a grievance on grounds other than unlawful discrimination within fifteen (15) calendar days of the employee's receipt of notice of the decision or other action that forms the basis of the grievance. An employee alleging unlawful discrimination must file a grievance within thirty (30) calendar days of the decision or other action that is alleged to constitute unlawful discrimination. Except as provided in the University's Mediation Policy, the use of an informal appeal as noted above or any other form of resolution does not automatically suspend this time limit. Within the fifteen (15) calendar days, the grievant may seek an informal resolution of the grievance. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the failure to file a timely grievance or request for mediation shall constitute a waiver of the employee's right to use these procedures. For purposes of this policy, where a
4.2.10 At the conclusion of the grievance, all materials reviewed by the committee in preparing the report and any related
documents shall be transferred to the Office of Human Resources for retention.

4.3 Retaliation Prohibited

4.3.1 Any interference, coercion, restraint, reprisal or other form of retaliation directed against any person who files a grievance pursuant to this policy, or who participates as a witness, support person, committee member, or otherwise in a grievance proceeding under this policy, is prohibited. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

4.4 Authorization

4.4.1 The Chancellor is authorized to approve future amendments of this policy.

5 Additional References

The Code, sections 609 and 611
The University of North Carolina Policy Manual, Sections 300.1.1, 300.2.1

6 Authority

N.C.G.S. § 126-25; Chapter 126, Article 5

7 Contact Information

Office of Human Resources, 828.262.6769

8 Original Effective Date

Approved by the Board of Trustees of Appalachian State University June 2, 2006

9 Revision Dates

September 21, 2012