1 Introduction

1.1 Appalachian State University supports employees resolving many workplace differences through relatively informal University procedures. Board of Governors policy 101.3.2 endorses the establishment of a mediation program to serve as an alternative dispute resolution process. This policy addresses the procedures to be followed by employees wishing to pursue the mediation of an employment related dispute.

2 Scope

3 Definitions

4 Policy and Procedure Statements

4.1 Eligibility

4.1.1 Any faculty member or EHRA administrative employee may request mediation services by contacting the director of the Equity Office or named designee, or by submitting a Mediation Request Form to the Equity Office. Mediation Request Forms may be obtained from the Equity Office, the Faculty Senate chair, or the chair of the Faculty Grievance Committee. Requests for mediation must be filed within the time period in which the employee would be eligible to file a grievance under applicable University policies. Faculty should direct their requests to the Faculty Senate chair or to the director of the Equity Office, and EHRA administrative personnel should direct their requests to the director of the Equity Office.

4.2 Issues to be Mediated

1. The mediation service provided under this policy is intended to be an informal dispute resolution process alternative to existing University grievance procedures. Mediation is a voluntary process. No party is obligated to attempt or participate in mediation. Participation in mediation does not preclude the possibility of future grievance proceedings. If mediation is successful, however, neither party may pursue a pending grievance nor, at a later date, file a grievance on the matters addressed in the mediation. If the mediation agreement is breached, a new grievance may be filed if the claimed breach is otherwise within the jurisdiction of the applicable grievance procedure.

2. Prior to the initiation of any grievance proceeding involving EHRA employees, the parties to the potential grievance must be offered the opportunity to have the pertinent issues mediated by a certified mediator. Before the formal commencement of a hearing, the Faculty Grievance Hearing Committee should ascertain that all parties to the grievance have been apprised of the availability of mediation and that it has either failed or been refused by one or both. This determination should be made in such a manner that neither party is shown to bear particular responsibility for the failure or refusal of mediation. In order to protect the integrity and encourage the openness of the mediation process, no mediator who has attempted to mediate the dispute in question will be permitted to appear, provide testimony, or otherwise provide facts or opinions in any formal hearing that may follow on the matter.

4.3 Process

1. The director of the Equity Office is responsible for maintaining a list of approved, trained mediators and will facilitate the administration and coordination of the mediation process. Either or both parties to a dispute may request of the director of the Equity Office that a mediation process be initiated. If both parties consent to engage in the process, the Director will attempt to identify a mutually acceptable certified mediator from among personnel of Appalachian State University, another UNC institution, another North Carolina state agency, or the private sector. The process will begin as soon as is convenient for all concerned parties.

2. Appalachian State University will bear necessary and reasonable costs incident to the mediation process. If no mutually acceptable mediator can be identified within thirty (30) calendar days, mediation may be considered as having failed.

3. Within ten (10) business days of the initial request, the mediator(s) will contact all parties separately to explain the mediation process, to secure an agreement to mediate, and to schedule the first mediation meeting, if the parties agree to mediation. All parties must jointly agree to meeting dates, extensions, and deadline changes.

4. During the mediation process each party will have an opportunity to describe the situation from his or her viewpoint. Issues
4.7.1 The director of the Equity Office will submit an annual report to the chancellor reporting the number of mediations requested.
as well as the number of successful and unsuccessful mediations during the preceding year. Copies of the report will be provided to the provost and to the chair of the Faculty Senate.

5 Additional References

6 Authority

7 Contact Information

8 Original Effective Date

   March 5, 2004

9 Revision Dates