

THE CREATION OF AN ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE POLICY FOR GRADUATE
STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

by

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STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT

Universities around the world, including the University of Pennsylvania, construct policies and procedures to help codify manners of behavior in the academic environment. This capstone examines the construction of an academic grievance policy for the graduate school of Arts and Sciences. I present the construction from the perspective of the school of Arts and Sciences led by Dean Ralph M. Rosen and the perspective of a capstone study. I comment on the study and measurement of stakeholders' responses to a survey regarding an academic grievance policy for graduate students, the action learning around the processes, and the consequences of the final result.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

A juxtaposition of my professional position as a Business Administrator in the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences and my education in the Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics program contributed to the discussion about writing a paper regarding the need for an academic grievance policy.

The request for a policy originally came to the Associate Dean, Dr. Jack Nagel, in the spring of 2008, by a graduate student, Lucas Champollion, through his involvement with the School of Arts and Sciences graduate student government (SASgov). Dean Nagel crafted a draft policy and submitted it to Rafael Walker who is a student representative and the new VP of Policy for SASgov. Dean Nagel had given notice of ending his three year term as Associate Dean and was drafting policy, as well as, working through the details of the all encompassing new tuition simplification program that was about to be implemented at Penn. Taking on the project of drafting this policy would not allow adequate attention to the policy and Dean Nagel's remaining term was used to finish the tuition simplification policy. It was decided that the drafting of a final policy for academic grievances would become a project for the incoming Dean.

Dr. Ralph Rosen became the new Associate Dean on July 1, 2008 but due to prior commitments, was traveling and at conferences for the majority of the summer. He listed a follow up request from graduate student and SASgov

representative, Rafael Walker, to create an academic grievance policy as an agenda item of the Graduate Chair meeting on September 17, 2008. At the meeting, there was discussion about the need for a policy, what it would cover, if any of the groups had a policy at the time, and if the other Ivy League universities had academic grievance policies for graduate students.

I developed an interest in the topic for a variety of reasons. I felt the creation of the policy should have input from multiple stakeholders. Dean Nagle had written a personal version, and the Graduate Chairs would likely add information, but that still did not include graduate students or others. As well, I thought the development of a grievance policy could be the basis of my capstone/thesis.

I met with Dean Rosen to discuss the possibility of using my capstone project to help study the process of creating an academic grievance policy for graduate students in SAS. He was open to the idea and said if my advisor felt it was a project that would fit the criteria of a capstone that it was acceptable to him. We discussed my possible approach to the project and what might be involved. Dean Rosen seemed inclined towards seeing what other Ivy League universities and large state schools had done and combining that together with the policy that Dean Nagel had put forward. I expressed interest in getting input from the stakeholders in order to have them buy into the policy. Through my coursework in the Organizational Dynamics program and through personal experience, I had learned that having input and consensus in the creation of the

policy from stakeholders could greatly influence how a policy would be received once it is presented.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders for this academic grievance policy include: the graduate students in SAS, SASgov, (comprised of SAS graduate student representatives), graduate students from other schools within the university that may or may not have a graduate student academic grievance policy, the university wide, Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA), faculty and administrators in the School of Arts and Sciences, faculty and administrators in other schools who may or may not have a graduate student academic grievance policy, and academic support staff in SAS who deal with graduate student issues.

Purpose of Capstone/Thesis

In this capstone/thesis, I propose, through action learning, to observe and at times to participate, in the process of creating a formal academic grievance policy for graduate students in SAS. Chapter two shows the organizational structure of the parts of the university that are relevant for the purpose of this paper. Chapter three contains a brief review of the relationship between action learning and the creation of the academic grievance policy. Chapter four conducts a discussion regarding the two processes; the process that the school, led by Dean Rosen is undergoing and the process of the capstone project, as reviewed through a timeline. In Chapter five, the results of a review of the current status of graduate student academic grievance policies are presented. Survey methodology and the survey are presented in Chapter six. In Chapter

seven, the survey results are presented and analyzed. Chapter eight draws conclusions and presents recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

There are a number of organizational structures relevant to understanding policies within the University of Pennsylvania. The University is an organization that hosts four undergraduate schools and 12 graduate and professional schools. Each of the schools contains departments and/or groups. There are student organizations for the undergraduate and for the graduate students. GAPSA has student representatives from each graduate school within the university. The graduate students of the School of Arts and Sciences have SASgov which has representatives from each of the graduate groups within SAS. This chapter provides a brief description of the components of the organizational structure of the university that are relevant to this capstone/thesis.

The University of Pennsylvania

The University of Pennsylvania is an Ivy League university with origins going back more than 250 years, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

According to Penn's web link;

Today Penn is home to a diverse undergraduate student body of nearly 10,000, hailing from every state in the union and all around the globe. Admissions are among the most selective in the country and Penn consistently ranks among the top 10 universities in the annual U.S. News & World Report survey. Another 10,000 students are enrolled in Penn's 12 graduate and professional schools, which are national leaders in their fields. (Penn: Introduction 2009)

The largest school in the university, with a population of over 8500 graduate and undergraduate students, is the School of Arts and Sciences. (Penn: Facts 2009)

The School of Arts and Sciences

The history of the School of Arts and Sciences is described on the school's web page as follows:

The School's early history is intertwined with that of the first years of the University of Pennsylvania, which was established in 1740. Building on founder Benjamin Franklin's vision of combining a traditional and practical education, the College was the first colonial institution to teach the sciences, government, and commerce, as well as classical subjects such as Latin, literature, and philosophy. The College also had the colonies' only non-sectarian faculty. Graduates and trustees were instrumental in the development of the new nation, serving as members of the Continental Congress and signers of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution. By 1779, however, the state legislature considered the College a hotbed of loyalism and transferred its assets to the new University of the State of Pennsylvania. After a long legal battle, the two institutions were merged, creating the University of Pennsylvania in 1791. (Penn: History 2009)

In the 1880's the university became a research institution, established a graduate division and offered its first fellowship for graduate study. (Penn: History 2009) The Graduate Division of SAS currently has 34 graduate programs. (Penn: SAS 2009)

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

According to the constitution of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) of the University of Pennsylvania, (Graduate: Constitution 2009) the purpose of GAPSA is to be the "coordinating student body charged with representing all graduate and professional students enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania." GAPSA membership includes all graduate and professional students (full and part time) while they are actively enrolled at Penn.

GAPSA acts as a liaison between student organizations, nominates students to University committees, and represents, as well as monitors, the concerns of graduate and professional students to the University administration. GAPSA also acts to “foster dialogue among its members for the purpose of identifying relevant issues of advocacy.” (Graduate: Constitution 2009)

School of Arts and Sciences Graduate Student Government

SASgov is the graduate student organization within SAS. Its mission statement is:

SASgov strives to improve the living, learning, and working experience of graduate students in the School of Arts and Sciences. We foster a vibrant graduate community by planning social activities to bring students together from diverse graduate groups, by coordinating programs to further the academic and career goals of our constituents, and by advocating for the interests of graduate students before the SAS administration. We aim to work closely with our constituents, as well as with other student governments on issues of shared interest. (SASgov 2009)

Relationships

In summary, the Penn community consists of faculty, staff and students from all 12 schools. Many of these community members would also be part of a particular school, and many would also be part of a smaller group or department within the school. The schools each have graduate student representatives in GAPSA which is a university wide organization for graduate students. SASgov is a graduate student organization within SAS that represents students within the School of Arts and Sciences.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

My initial understanding was that I would submit the rough draft of the an academic grievance policy to the Associate Dean in mid to late January 2009, based on survey data, and then write the capstone/thesis. As the survey was being compiled, sent out and awaiting responses, the dean had already had several meetings with his peers, the SASgov representative and with senior stakeholders across the university regarding the policy. I was involved in one of these meetings. The Dean would return and discuss bits and pieces of his interpretations of the rest of those meetings and I would hear about them in passing. When I learned that he was revising the draft from the student representative, I hastily compiled the closed survey data analysis in a very rough format for his review so that he could at least use some of the survey data to incorporate input from the various stakeholders in the next version of his draft policy. I also provided him with policies from other schools, within and outside of the University, for his review. Within a week, he had done several more revisions, incorporating the input of the Dean of SAS, the committee of deans, the SASgov representative, and the data I had given him.

When I updated my advisor as to the turn this project had taken, as well as the difficulty of finding relevant literature regarding the history of academic grievance policies for graduate students, he suggested that my literature review should instead, incorporate a brief study of Action Learning.

Several of the articles that I reviewed on are by Michael Marquardt from George Washington University. His application and examples of action learning are geared more towards the corporate world and not academic, but I saw several areas where it could connect and relate to the process of policy creation that was taking place.

Action learning has many definitions, but Marquardt states that they all “share the elements of real people resolving and taking action on real problems in real time and learning while doing so.” (Marquardt, 2004, p.27)

In his articles, Marquardt extols the many virtues of action learning saying that diverse companies from many parts of the globe have benefited from this tool. “They have created thousand of new products and services, improved service quality, cut costs and delivery times, and made fundamental changes to their organization cultures by unleashing the power of action learning.” (Marquardt, 2004, p.27)

Marquardt goes on to describe the tenets of action learning which are “optimized when it integrates the following components” : (In condensed form he stated the components as follows): “a problem, an action learning group or team, a process that emphasizes insightful questioning and reflective listening, taking action on the problem, a commitment to learning, and an action learning coach.” (Marquardt, 2004, p.28-29)

As stated above, Marquardt describes the components and processes although primarily from the corporate perspective. The SAS Associate Dean and the process that the school went through in the creation of a policy included

many of the same components. Dean Rosen was handed a problem; the revision and creation of an academic grievance policy that would satisfy the stakeholders. He became the conduit between the various stakeholders which included: his peers, administrators, faculty, and students. The stakeholders for the purposes of this paper are expanded upon in Chapter six.

He presented his problem to the various stakeholders through, one on one or small meetings. Presentations were conducted soliciting feedback in larger meetings, such as Graduate Chair meetings and meetings with the other deans in SAS, as well as across the university. He also discussed the problem with his peers and with experts in policy matters at the university. He took on the role of the leader, coach, facilitator and actual policy writer at different stages in the process and has since developed numerous iterations.

In my meetings with the Dean, it appeared that he was solving the problem by developing a policy that satisfied all of the stakeholders, incorporated their input and made sure it was in keeping within the university structure. This was done by including the various stakeholders and involving them in all stages of the policy development with frequent exchanges of information.

Before the winter break, Dean Rosen had asked Rafael Walker to put together a draft of a document incorporating the version that Dr. Nagel, in his capacity as Associate Dean, had written, and the consensus that Rafael and Dean Rosen had come to through emails and a meeting. In January, Rafael sent the Dean a document which was then reviewed by the Dean and discussed with his peers, and senior stakeholders.

“Taking action on the problem” (Marquardt, 2004, p.28)

happened through the Dean taking the inputs from senior stakeholders, drafting a policy and then proactively seeking compromise by providing information as to what others were doing in the university and outside of the university. Then he would revise the draft repeatedly and send out that version with a request for comments, feedback and suggestions to the senior stakeholders.

Although this did not involve a group assigned a task of solving a problem, Dean Rosen incorporated many of the steps suggested for action learning in order to reach the desired goal of an academic grievance policy that would satisfy the various stakeholders. Dean Rosen did this by asking questions from those at the university familiar with policy matters, always seeking compromise and keeping an open mind as to what the results could be. He always kept in mind how his work could affect the stakeholders as a system not just the individuals involved.

After feedback was solicited and received, the Dean drove the process forward, took action and through discussions along the way learned and shared what he was learning throughout the process. The information that was received via the meetings, emails, survey data and was incorporated in successive iterations of the policy he was drafting.

The approach that was used for creating an academic grievance policy was a non linear, sequential approach to problem solving which was an example of action learning. The following model of an “Evolving theory of practice of Action Research” shows in diagram form, the process involved in the many

iterations of the grievance policy. (See Figure 1) (Allen 2001) It was an ongoing process with each successive draft version incorporating information, knowledge and feedback leading to the creation of the next version. The process was then repeated with each new version.

Figure 1: Evolving Theory of Practice

In another article by Marquardt, it was stressed that open ended, thought provoking questions could lead to a more positive atmosphere, increased learning, and in the long run, better results. (Marquardt, 2007, p.92-93) I only participated in a few meetings throughout the process of the creation of the policy, but I observed Dean Rosen ask questions which led to productive and engaged discussion and showed openness towards the ideas of others. For example, in the meeting with Rafael, Dean Rosen used open ended questions to find out what revisions were needed to meet the needs of the graduate students and on how to move forward with the process. This resulted in Rafael putting together the next draft of the policy, which could be viewed as giving an opportunity for significant input to a student representative of SASgov.

Rafael has been involved with policy creation and revision in the past and it is a role in which he seems to be increasingly comfortable. As stated in the article by Marquardt (Marquardt, 2000) with a quote from Iyer (1989) “the action learning process is founded on the concept that one cannot change the system unless one is changed in the process. The change in the system is “action.” The change in the individual is “learning” so that learning to act effectively is also learning how to learn effectively.” Rafael has learned how to be a change agent through his experiences with policy at Washington University and through this process.

Another aspect of action learning that may continue once the policy is in place will be garnished by the committee that would be convened to resolve the future grievances. The six members of that committee will be handed a problem,

a grievance. This committee will have the opportunity to use “insightful questioning and reflective listening” in order to “clarify the exact nature of the problem, reflecting and identifying possible solutions, and moving only toward consideration of strategies and possible action.” (Marquardt, 2004, p.28) Then they will send their resolution of the problem to the Associate Dean to be implemented. Although it is not a stated or implied goal of the policy being created, members of the committee will have an opportunity to learn from the process of resolving a problem. They will do it as individuals and as part of the committee. If the chair of the committee acts in a role of coaching the committee through the process there can be additional learning. The Associate Dean will convene the committee, explain the process and be involved through the selection of a chair for the committee. It is possible that the Associate Dean can discuss the role of the chair as a coach. He can explain that the process is to resolve the student’s grievance and also for them all to view it as an opportunity to learn in the process.

CHAPTER 4

TWO PROCESSES

Over the last year, there were two processes taking place concurrently. First was, that of SAS and second was that of the capstone/thesis project. Both processes were interested in the resolution of the problem of creating an academic grievance policy for the graduate students in SAS.

Evolution of the School's Process

The task of writing an academic grievance policy was presented by Lucas Champollion from SASgov to Dean Nagel. Dean Nagel created a draft of the policy which was sent to Raphael Walker, the new VP of Policy from SASgov for review and comment. Raphael responded to the policy with his suggestions.

During the summer of 2008 there was a transition in the leadership of the Graduate Division of SAS and Dr. Ralph M. Rosen takes on/inherits the problem of creating a policy as the new Dean.

The idea of creating a new grievance policy is introduced at the Graduate Chair meeting.

Dean Rosen meets with Raphael and the meeting ends with Raphael agreeing to draft a policy based on Dr. Nagel's original ideas, but incorporating what he feels the students need to have to feel that the policy serves their needs. This new draft is submitted to the Dean and then shared with the Council of Deans and the university faculty.

At various meetings, Dean Rosen receives input and feedback regarding policies from the past, capstone survey data, information regarding other

universities' policies and suggestions ranging from the number of students on the committee to necessary legal verbiage for any Penn policy. It is decided that the policy should be reconstructed in a manner to cover all of SAS, including the College of Liberal and Professional Studies.

As of 2/27/09, Dean Rosen has revised the policy more than a dozen times and has a list of the steps that he needs to take to complete the process and submit for final review.

Evolution of the Capstone/Thesis Project Process

An original proposal was submitted regarding the project:

There is no formal grievance policy in place for the graduate students of the University of Pennsylvania. SASGOV has requested that a policy be created. I propose to drive the process of creating a formal grievance policy that satisfies SASGOV, students, faculty and the administration. The end result will be a document which includes: a narrative of the process, accumulated research used in the development of the policy and a proposed draft of a policy which integrates the interests of all stakeholders.

Stakeholders for the project were determined. Gathering of information regarding existing university policies was collected and a survey was created.

The survey was compiled to collect data from a sample of stakeholders in order to determine: awareness of existing academic grievance policies, what the stakeholders would like to see in an academic grievance policy for graduate students, relevance of a grievance policy based on current methods of resolving academic grievances for graduate students, and the current discussion taking place around the topic of establishing an academic grievance policy for graduate students.

The survey population was determined and the survey was sent out to be completed. The data was compiled and analyzed.

A grid was completed based on web searches of the graduate groups in SAS and the graduate schools across the university to determine the current state of academic grievance policies for graduate students at Penn.

Action Learning and Action Research literature was reviewed during the process.

During the time span of the project observations were being made based on conversations, meetings and emails regarding the policy creation.

The purpose of the capstone evolved to one involving Action Learning and Action Research as the process occurred due to changes in the expected actions of Dean Rosen and timing of survey results.

Table 1, below, follows the timeline of the process for SAS and for the Capstone/Thesis. An expanded text of a few of the dates follows the table.

Table 1 – Timeline of the Process for SAS and the Capstone/Thesis

	SAS Process	Capstone/Thesis Process
3/3/2008	Lucas Champollion – SASgov representative emails Dean Nagel referring to Penn Book policy which refers to the policy of the school the student is attending.	
3/6/2008	Dean Nagel sends an email response that he will create a statement and get back to Lucas after the admissions process slows down.	
3/19/2008	Lucas thanks Dean Nagel saying he will create a policy, says that he told students at a SASgov meeting that the Dean is working on it, they are enthusiastic and he offered their assistance in developing a policy. Some have come from universities where there are existing policies.	

6/1/2008	Letter from Rafael Walker to Dean Nagel stating he is new in the position of Vice President for Policy on SASgov and asserting that he is trying to move forward with "unfinished business...the establishment of a grievance procedure in GSAS". He asks what has been done regarding the policy and offers to submit a draft to Dean Nagel or future Dean Rosen.	
6/6/2008	Dean Nagel submits a draft of a policy to Rafael and copies, Dr. Ralph Rosen and Associate Provost Binns. (Appendix C) He solicits feedback and says the finished version will be posted on the GAS website.	
6/12/2008	Rafael responds that he and Caroline have reviewed the policy and thank Dean Nagel for his effort. He offers the suggestion of a grievance committee.	
6/13/2008	Dean Nagel responds that due to time constraints and the upcoming transition to a new Dean who would actually implement the policy, the issue will be passed along to incoming Dean Rosen.	
6/13/2008	Dr. Rosen responds that he agrees that this should be discussed with others and wants to talk with Dean Nagel in their next meeting about which committees handle these policies.	
7/1/2008	Dr. Ralph Rosen became the new Associate Dean on July 1, 2008. He was traveling and at conferences for the majority of the summer. At one of the first senior staff meeting he listed a follow up request from Rafael Walker to create an academic grievance policy as an agenda item of the Graduate Chair meeting on September 17, 2008.	Dr. Ralph Rosen became the new Associate Dean on July 1, 2008. He was traveling and at conferences for the majority of the summer. At one of the first senior staff meeting he listed a follow up request from Rafael Walker to create an academic grievance policy as an agenda item of the Graduate Chair meeting on September 17, 2008.
9/17/2008	At the Graduate Chair meeting there was discussion about the need for a policy, what it would cover, if any of the groups had a policy at the time, and if the other Ivy League universities had academic grievance policies for graduate students.	At the Graduate Chair meeting there was discussion about the need for a policy, what it would cover, if any of the groups had a policy at the time, and if the other Ivy League universities had academic grievance policies for graduate students.

9/23/2008	A meeting with Dean Rosen and Judy Tjiattas to discuss the capstone/thesis topic of the academic grievance policy.	A meeting with Dean Rosen and Judy Tjiattas to discuss the capstone/thesis topic of the academic grievance policy.
9/24/2008		Proposal was submitted to Dr. Larry Starr and accepted to do a capstone/thesis on the Process and Creation of an Academic Grievance Policy for Graduate Students in SAS.
10/08 thru 1/09		The establishment of a committee for the capstone/thesis consisting of Dr. Larry M. Starr, PhD, Advisor, Ralph M. Rosen, PhD, Reader, and Jack H. Nagel, PhD, Reader
10/08 thru 1/09		During this time information on academic grievance policies was gathered, a survey was created. It was then approved by the committee and disseminated.
11/25/2008		Judy met with Rafael Walker. Rafael Walker in his capacity of Vice President of Policy in SASgov acted as a change agent in this process.
12/17/2008	Meeting with Dean Rosen and Rafael Walker. At this meeting the main concern expressed by Rafael was that a committee be included in the policy. The Dean asked Rafael to draft a version of the policy including Dr. Jack Nagel's draft and incorporating the committee structure that SASgov wanted then submitting back to the Dean for review and take to the council of Deans and the faculty.	Meeting with Dean Rosen and Rafael Walker. At this meeting the main concern expressed by Rafael was that a committee be included in the policy. The Dean asked Rafael to draft a version of the policy including Dr. Jack Nagel's draft and incorporating the committee structure that SASgov wanted then submitting back to the Dean for review and take to the council of Deans and the faculty.
1/4/2009		Phone interview with Andrew J. Rennekamp, Graduate student and Chair of GAPSA, was conducted. He agreed to assist in the distribution of the survey to the representatives of GAPSA from the various schools across the university.
1/18/2009		The survey was closed for responses.
1/09 thru 2/09	The Dean attended several meetings where the policy was discussed such as: the Council of Deans and the Faculty Committee. He also had email correspondence regarding the policy with the senior stakeholders and created revised versions.	Data was compiled and analyzed. The rough data was shown to the committee for comment. A rough draft of the data chapter was shown to Dean Rosen in order for data results in order to have stakeholder feedback from the survey be part of the Dean's awareness for the policy with which he was moving ahead with the drafts.

		Inclusion in much of the email correspondence and Dean Rosen would often provide a short update from the various meetings he had attended. I provided him with examples of policies from other universities which he passed along to other senior stakeholders.
2/27/2009	The policy is as shown in Appendix E. This policy was attached to an email in which Dean Rosen states the steps he anticipates are necessary to complete the process.	
3/16/2009		Completion of rough draft of full manuscript for committee review.

On 3/3/08, Lucas Champollion, a student representative from SASgov had sent a request for a policy to Dean Nagel referring to a Penn Book web link which states:

Academic Grievances Schools and academic departments within the University have established procedures for the resolution of student grievances concerning academic matters. Students should contact the Dean's Office of the particular school for a copy of the appropriate procedures and for guidance regarding the grievance process. A student who wishes to register a grievance regarding the evaluation of his/her academic work should follow the academic grievance procedure applicable in the school or department in which the academic work was performed. (Penn: Student Grievance Procedures, 2009)

Dean Nagel submits a draft of a policy to Rafael and copies, Dr. Ralph Rosen and to the Associate Provost on 6/6/08. (See Appendix C). On 6/12/08 Rafael responds with his reasons for wanting a committee:

to which an aggrieved student would address himself or herself after exhausting all departmental resources (i.e., the graduate chair and department chair).

I suggest the committee because it seems to me that, if a problem has escalated beyond a department's administration, the problem is probably in need of special attention--attention that a single individual might not be ideal for providing (even if that individual is the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies). And having a committee that is solely devoted to graduate grievances would ensure that GSAS gave to each escalated case the care and deliberation that it warrants.

Moreover, if students know that their cases have been considered by an entire

committee (composed of both faculty and his or her peers), students will, I suspect, feel more comfortable accepting the determinations that emerge from the grievance procedure.

Rafael suggests Yale and Cornell's policies as possible models and states that using those as well as his own experience on a grievance committee, he has drafted how to include a committee. (See draft in Appendix D) He also suggests a webpage, based on the Yale model as a resource for all potential graduate student problems. He copied Dr. Rosen and asks for Dean Nagel's feedback.

On 6/13/08 Dean Nagel responds that:

Such a system may have merits, though I expect it will usually be slower than a direct appeal to the Associate Dean. The question requires more consultation and consideration than I can give it in my final two weeks as graduate dean, and in any case Ralph Rosen should be centrally involved in decisions about a system he will have to work with over the next several years. Therefore, I will defer the question for him to handle after July 1, or really after September 1, when he can confer with such groups as the SAS Committee on Graduate Education and the SAS graduate chairs, as well as the leadership of SASgov.

On 11/25/08 I met with Rafael Walker in his capacity of Vice President of Policy in SASgov. He has been involved with policy creation and revision in the past.

In the phone interview with Andrew J. Rennekamp, graduate student and Chair of GAPSA, on 1/4/09, he agreed to assist in the distribution of the survey to the representatives of GAPSA from the various schools across the university. He said that he would be interested in seeing the survey results and would like to take the end result of the process of the development of an academic grievance policy for graduate students in SAS and forward it to be used by other schools and departments. He thought that possibly it could be adapted to fit the other

schools at the university. When asked what he felt the components of a good academic grievance policy would be, he suggested that it would be informal and one that the students would know about and understand. Also, he would like it to be concrete and he felt students would prefer the involvement of a third party, other than the ombudsman.

As of the writing of this capstone/thesis in March 2009, the latest version of the policy from a revised 2/27/09 draft is as shown in Appendix E. This policy was attached to an email in which Dean Rosen states the following:

I think we're close to something we can call a final version. I assume the next steps, in order, will be:

- 1) Get approval from SAS deans (Admin Comm)
 - 2) Get approval from SAS Committee on Graduate Education
 - 3) Have Rafael present to SASgov? (Rafael can advise-- maybe his OK as VP for policy is sufficient)
 - 4) Discuss with graduate chairs
 - 5) Present to and discuss in SAS faculty meeting (can we get this on the agenda for the next meeting, whenever that will be)
 - 6) Assuming approval all around, then post on the SAS GradDiv and Grad- LPS websites (and any other appropriate ones I'm missing).
- In the mean time, let me know if you have any further thoughts or suggestions on this draft.

CHAPTER 5

ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE AT PENN

A search of the 35 graduate groups within SAS was performed as well as a search of the 12 schools across the university to determine if academic grievance policies exist for graduate students. If a policy exists, it was checked to see if it met several basic criteria established using the survey data, interviews and existing policies from other universities.

The search consisted of exploring a school or group's web page to find a link to a student handbook and/or academic grievance policy. If a policy was found, it was used to respond to the criteria questions. If no policy was found, then a phone call was made to a graduate coordinator. This coordinator would be asked if there was a policy that was being used, but that had not been located. In all but three cases it was confirmed that a policy did not exist.

The answers were recorded in a grid and then transferred to text form for this paper. The results are presented in aggregate rather than listing the individual programs.

Within the 35 SAS groups that were reviewed, two or less than 6%, have a posted form of academic grievance policy on the group level. Conversely, 33 or 94% of the graduate groups within SAS do not have an academic grievance policy. Within the two groups that have a posted policy, neither had a definition of an academic grievance, a mediation option, addressed retaliation, recommended informal solutions as a first step or had a clearly defined documentation process. Both groups have a clearly defined explanation of academic duties and

responsibilities of graduate students, a student handbook with rights and responsibilities of graduate students, a decentralized policy, and involve a committee in the process. One has a more formal process than the other and includes the opportunity for an appeal, and has a clearer chain of command to the process. The less formal one provides a link to; “University –Wide Academic Rules for Research Doctorate and Masters Degrees”.

Of the 12 graduate schools within the university, all except for SAS and Wharton have a formal written academic grievance policy posted for students. The Graduate Division of SAS website states the following: “Graduate groups are the best initial contact not only for information about program content, but also for assistance with problems related to funding, grades, fulfillment of degree requirements, leaves, and transfers.” (Penn: Graduate Division, 2009) The Wharton website stated the following:

Schools and academic departments within the University have established procedures for the resolution of student grievances concerning academic matters. Students should contact the Dean's Office of the particular school for a copy of the appropriate procedures and for guidance regarding the grievance process. A student who wishes to register a grievance regarding the evaluation of his/her academic work should follow the academic grievance procedure applicable in the school or department in which the academic work was performed. (Wharton: MBA, 2009)

Within the 10 groups that have a posted policy, all of them have a clear chain of command, a handbook that describes the rights and responsibilities of the students and a decentralized approach where the grievances are handled for the most part on the school or group level.

Three (30%) had a definition of an academic grievance policy, but, three (30%) others mention that their policy pertains to grades and one adds that theirs also relates to dismissal. Of the schools with policies, eight (80%) recommended informal solutions as the first step in the process, six (60%) had an appeal process and six (60%) use a committee in their process.

CHAPTER 6

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The academic grievance policy that is being discussed in this paper concerns the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) and is to apply to graduate students. SAS is part of the larger community of The University of Pennsylvania which has a total population of approximately 43,000. This population is comprised of 10,367 undergraduate students, 12,256 graduate students as of fall 2008 and a workforce of 20,381 (Fall 2007), which includes faculty.

The University has 4 undergraduate programs:

The College at Penn (School of Arts and Sciences)

School of Engineering and Applied Science

School of Nursing

The Wharton School

The University has 12 graduate and professional programs:

Annenberg School for Communication

School of Arts and Sciences

School of Dental Medicine

Graduate School of Education

School of Engineering and Applied Science

School of Design

Law School

School of Medicine

School of Nursing

School of Social Policy & Practice

School of Veterinary Medicine

The Wharton School

Stakeholders

The stakeholders for the purpose of this paper:

Graduate students in SAS

Part of the surveyed population consisted of 46 SASgov representatives and six members of the SASgov executive board. The Constitution of GAPSA states that there shall be a representative from each program with at least one professional student and one research student from each school (as long as there are such students in the school's student body). Additional representatives are at a ratio of one representative per 300 research students and the same ratio for professional students per school. For purposes of this survey, the surveys were sent to the 67 GAPSA representatives as of December 2008. Of these, 11 were from SAS (one executive board member, two deputy board members, eight general assembly members.)

The student representatives from GAPSA and SASgov were chosen to participate in the survey because they are students who were chosen within their

schools/groups to represent their constituent groups. By nature of their positions in these groups and their interest in student government they are not necessarily representative of the typical PhD and Master's students, but they were selected based on the assumption that they have an increased awareness of the group that they are from as well as the university as a whole just by their participating in these student groups. They should also be a contact person for their groups and have an increased awareness of issues and goings on with in their areas of interest through involvement with the student organizations. The leaders of both organizations facilitated the sending out of the surveys to their listserv list of representatives.

Faculty

There are graduate chairs or directors of 34 graduate groups and two professional programs who represent the rest of the faculty at Graduate Chair meetings and in admissions meetings with the Associate Dean. They are familiar with academic issues in their groups and meet with administrators, faculty and students throughout their term. Graduate Chairs participate in the administrative role and functions, and are tenured members of the teaching faculty. During and after their turn as Graduate Chair they continue to teach. The list of Graduate Chairs was obtained from the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences as of December 2008.

Input from the other 11 schools was obtained through surveying faculty/administrators from the 11 other graduate schools. Two representatives

were obtained from each school's respective web site. The chosen included chairs, deans and directors of the programs.

Academic support staff in SAS was represented by the Graduate Coordinators of the graduate groups and two professional programs in SAS. These are the administrators who have contact with the students, faculty and other administrators. They are a resource to both the faculty and the students. The list of Coordinators was obtained from the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences as of December 2008.

Table 2 presents the stakeholder groups and how many of each stakeholder group is in the total population at the University of Pennsylvania. The total population at the University in the stakeholders' groups is approximately 19,000. Of this population, 203 were sent surveys. Of the 203 chosen to survey, 125 or 62% are from SAS.

Table 2. Survey Population Statistics

Stakeholder	Number	Sample of Stakeholders	Number Surveyed	% of the Population available who were surveyed	SAS	% of Population surveyed that are in SAS
Graduate students in SAS	2,239	SASgov student representatives and the executive board	52	2.32%	52	100%
Graduate students from all schools that may or may not have a graduate student academic grievance policy	12,256	General Assembly student representatives from GAPSA -	67	0.55%	11	16%
Faculty/administrators in SAS	495	Graduate chairs/directors of the graduate groups and professional programs	36	7.27%	36	100%
Faculty/administrators in other schools who may or may not have a graduate student academic grievance policy	3543(Dec 2007)	Chairs/Deans/Administrators from the 11 other graduate schools	22	0.60%	0	0%
Academic support staff in SAS	670	Graduate Coordinators from the graduate groups in SAS	26	3.88%	26	100%
Total	19,203		203	1%	125	62%

Materials

The survey which is shown in Appendix A consists of 21 questions. The respondents could choose to answer any question but also had the option to skip any question to which they did not want to respond. The first 4 questions were regarding demographics: which school in the university, primary role, length of service and gender. The demographic questions were in a multiple choice format with a list of options from which they could choose one response.

The next series of questions were concerning awareness of grievance policies for undergraduate students, faculty, staff and graduate students on both the school and department/program level. These questions were in a multiple choice format with a list of options from which they could choose one response. If they were aware of a policy, they were asked to provide a web link to the policy. There was a space provided to type or paste a web link if the respondent chose to do so.

The next question asked was if the respondent had an awareness of a graduate student with an academic grievance without a policy to address it. The format provided the opportunity to answer either yes or no. There was a follow up, open ended question of how the grievance had been resolved. The next question was open ended and was to solicit suggestions regarding what the respondent would consider some components of a good academic grievance policy for graduate students. As with all of the open ended questions; the respondents had unlimited space to list one, several, or no response to the question.

The last two questions were regarding not only awareness, but rather to detect any actual movement or active discussion towards creation of an academic grievance policy for graduate students in schools where no policy currently exists. The options were to answer yes or no. The final question in the survey was an open ended question extending from an answer of “yes” to the prior question. The respondent had the opportunity to provide a response regarding what the results were to any discussion about the topic of a policy being created in their school.

Distribution

The survey was sent out by email to the various stakeholder groups listed in Table 2, from 12/16/08 until 1/18/09 when the link to surveymonkey.com was stopped. A letter was sent to the stakeholders by email (see Appendix B). It requested participation in a brief survey by responding to the link in the letter and that it should take “less than 10 minutes” of their time to respond.

On 1/11/09 a follow up email was sent which was a repeat of the original letter with the following heading:

If you have already taken the time to complete this survey, thank you for your time and your participation.
 If you have not yet completed the survey, please take a few moments to add your input through our survey.
 After January 18th, the survey will no longer be available.

Survey monkey was selected as the tool to retrieve the responses due to the anonymity it provides the respondents, the ease of collection, and data

compilation features in the software. After the data were received, reports could be run with the count and percentages of responses. Also, some data cross tabulation reports were created and run. These were downloaded onto Excel spreadsheets for further analysis.

CHAPTER 7

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The survey was available online through surveymonkey.com for 34 days from December 16, 2008 until January 18, 2009. Two hundred and three members of the University of Pennsylvania community of students, faculty and administrators were contacted and of those, 93 people participated, producing an overall response rate of 45.8%. From this sample, 72 people (77.4%) responded to all items. Not all items were answered by respondents.

Demographics

Item 1 asked to identify the primary school in which one is affiliated within the University. Table 3 shows that 65 (69.9%) of the respondents were from the School of Arts and Sciences. This is followed by five (5.4%) each from Wharton, the School of Design, and the School of Medicine. The high rate for SAS was expected because 62% of the surveys were sent to people within SAS. Also, the email and the survey itself states that it is concerning a policy within the School of Arts and Sciences which may have been a factor in the high response rate as well.

Table 3 Item 1 – With What School are You Affiliated?

School	Number	%
Annenberg School	1	1.10%
Law School	0	0.00%
Other	1	1.10%
School of Arts and Sciences	65	69.90%
School of Dental Medicine	5	5.40%
School of Design	3	3.20%
School of Education	3	3.20%
School of Engineering and Applied Sciences	1	1.10%
School of Medicine	5	5.40%
School of Nursing	2	2.20%
School of Social Policy and Practice	1	1.10%
School of Veterinary Medicine	1	1.10%
Wharton	5	5.40%
Total	93	100%

As shown in Table 4, item 2, “In the school selected in question 1, my primary role is:” had three possible choices: faculty, administration and student. For primary roles, over 48% of the responses across the university were from students, 28% from faculty and 23% from staff. In SAS, the students represented 38%, faculty was 35% and staff was 26%.

Table 4 – Item 2 – Primary Role at the University

	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Primary Role				
Faculty	23	35%	26	28%
Staff	17	26%	22	24%
Student	25	39%	45	48%
Skipped	0		0	
Total	65	100%	93	100%

Table 4 shows that in SAS, 61% of the responses were from faculty and staff, combined, and 39% were from students. Across the university, the responses from faculty and staff, combined, were 52% and the responses from students were 48%. This could lead one to the impression that there was less of a response from students in SAS as compared to students from the rest of the university and more of a response from SAS faculty and staff as compared to the rest of the university.

According to Table 2, Survey of Population Statistics in Chapter six, 63 (53%) of the 119 students surveyed were from SAS. Of that 63 surveyed, 25 (40%) responded. Across the university, 56 (47%) of the students surveyed were not in SAS. Of the 56 surveyed, 20 (36%) responded. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the response rates of the students surveyed across the university as compared to those surveyed who responded in SAS.

When doing a similar comparison with the faculty and staff, 62 (74%) of the faculty and staff surveyed are from SAS. Of that 62, 40 (65%) responded. Across the university, 22 (26%) of the faculty and staff surveyed were not from

SAS. Of the 22 surveyed, eight (36%) faculty and staff responded. There is a slightly higher response rate of faculty and staff outside of SAS.

Overall, when referring to both Table 2 and Table 4, it is shown that of the 119 students surveyed, 45 (38%) responded and of the 84 faculty and staff surveyed 48 (57%) responded. This shows that for any variety of reasons, the response rate to the survey regarding academic grievance policies for graduate students was higher by faculty and staff then it was from students.

Item 3 (see Table 5) asked “How long have you been in your current, primary role within the university?”

Table 5 – Item 3 – Length of service at the University

Length of Service	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
< 1 year	3	5%	11	12%
1 to 3 years	16	25%	25	27%
3 to 5 years	9	14%	14	15%
> 5 years	37	57%	43	46%
Skipped	0		0	
Total	65	101%	93	100%

Table 5 shows that university wide, 12% of the respondents have been affiliated with the university for less than one year, 27% have been with the university from one to three years, 15% have been with the university from three to five years and 46% have been with the university for more than five years. For responses within SAS, 5% of the respondents have been affiliated with the university for less than one year, 25% have been with the university from one to three years, 14% have been with the university from three to five years and 57% have been with the university for more than five years. Of the university

respondents, 61% have been at the Penn more than three years. Within SAS, the responses ranged from less than 5% having been at the University less than one year to more than 70% have been there for more than three years.

When considering that 61% of the respondents have been at the Penn for more than three years it could be that the university values longevity. It could also be more of a function of the sample of stakeholders selected. By selecting only student representatives rather than a random selection of students, it may be that more senior students would be chosen or interested in serving in student organizations. When looking at the faculty and administrators selected for the survey, the selection of graduate chairs or directors to represent the faculty would tend towards longer service because they are usually faculty members of standing who are chosen to lead and represent their groups, therefore, most would have been at the university for a longer time.

Item 4 requested the respondent's gender. As shown in Table 6, across the university, almost 61% of the responses were from females and in SAS 55% of the responses were from females.

Table 6 – Item 4 – Gender

	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Gender				
Female	36	55%	57	61%
Male	24	37%	31	33%
No response	5	8%	5	5%
Total	65	100%	93	99%

Questions five through 16 disclosed knowledge about academic grievance policies for undergraduate students, faculty, staff and graduate students

For each, they were asked if their school has an academic grievance policy for the role in question, and then if their department or program has a policy for the role in question. If they answered yes to either question they were asked to provide a web link to the policy.

Item 5 asked, “If your school has an academic grievance policy for: Undergraduate Students”. The responses in Table 7 below showed that 32% of the respondents within SAS are aware of an undergraduate policy within their school and 25% of the respondents university wide are aware of an undergraduate policy within their school. There was one response within SAS of no, and four no responses across the university. The majority responded that they did not know: 66% within SAS and 60% across the university. Across the university nine respondents selected the option “School does not have an undergraduate program”. This is accurate.

Table 7 - Item 5 – Undergraduate Grievance Policy within the School

Undergraduate Grievance Policy within School	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	19	32.2%	21	25.0%
No	1	1.7%	4	4.8%
I don't know	39	66.1%	50	59.5%
School does not have an undergrad program	0	0.0%	9	10.7%
	59	100%	84	100%
Answered	59		84	
Skipped	6		9	

Item 6 asked, “If your DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM has an academic grievance policy for: Undergraduate Students”. The responses in Table 8 note that 5% of the SAS respondents were aware of an undergraduate policy within their department or program compared to 6% of the SAS respondents university wide. There were 14 (25%) responses within SAS of no, and 18 (22%) no responses across the university. The majority responded that they did not know: 65% within SAS and 59% across the university.

Table 8 – Item 6 - Undergraduate Grievance Policy within Department or Program

Undergraduate Grievance Policy within Department	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	3	5.3%	5	6.1%
No	14	24.6%	18	22.0%
I don't know	37	64.9%	48	58.5%
School does not have an undergrad program	3	5.3%	11	13.4%
Total	57	100.1%	82	100%
Answered	57		82	
Skipped	8		11	

Item 7 asked, “If the answer to questions five or six is “yes”, please provide the web link.” Table 9 shows the number of respondents who provided a web link to the undergraduate policy for their school, department or program. Within SAS, there were seven responses, however, only four (6%) of the total SAS respondents to the survey provided a web link. University wide, there were 14 responses, however, only four (4%) of the total university wide respondents to

the survey provided a web link. All of these links were provided from respondents within SAS.

This lack of response could be from a lack of awareness of a policy or from any variety of factors ranging from too much time would be involved to looking up the link to lack of interest. This would be totally speculative as there are no data to explain.

Table 9 – Item 7 – Provide Web Link to Undergraduate Policy

Provided web link to Undergrad Policy	Within SAS	Within SAS and provided link	Across the University %	Across the University and provided a link	%
Answered question	7	4	6%	14	4%
Skipped Question	58		85		

The purpose of the questions regarding undergraduate policies was to see if there is awareness in the surveyed Penn community of academic grievance policies for undergraduate students. The results showed that across the university, of the 84 respondents who have undergraduate programs in their school 50 (60%) did not know if there are academic grievance policies for the undergraduates in their school. Also, across the university, of the 82 respondents to the question 48 (59%) of the respondents who have undergraduate programs in their departments said that they did not know if there were academic grievance policies for undergraduates shows that more than 50% not have an awareness of

an undergraduate policy. The results from the surveyed members of the community from Table 2 shows that in the first two groups, graduate students from SASgov and graduate student representatives. Therefore, the results to this set of questions are not surprising.

Item 8 on the survey asks if their school has an academic grievance policy for faculty. They had three options: yes, no, and I don't know. The responses in Table 10 below showed that 32% of the respondents within SAS are aware of a faculty policy within their school and 31% of the respondents university wide are aware of a faculty policy within their school. There was one response within SAS of no, and one, no response across the university. The majority responded that they did not know: 67% within SAS and 68% across the university.

Table 10 – Item 8 – Faculty Grievance Policy within Your School

Faculty Grievance Policy within School	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	18	31.6%	25	30.9%
No	1	1.8%	1	1.2%
I don't know	38	66.7%	55	67.9%
Total		100.1%		100%
Answered	57		81	
Skipped	8		12	

Approximately 30% of the respondents within SAS and across the university were aware of a policy for faculty. In order to determine if these responses would coincide with the approximately 30% response rate to the survey by faculty members, a cross tabulation was performed and the results are displayed in Table 11. The results show that 56% of the university response was

“yes” by faculty and of the 25 faculty members who responded, 10 responded that they did not know. This shows that the positive response to Question 8 on the survey was not a result of the faculty responses, alone, but rather that 44% of the positive response to the question was a result of the combined staff and student responses. Also, 18% of the faculty responded that they did not know if there was a policy.

Table 11 - Primary Role Cross Tabulated with Item 8 (Faculty Grievance Policy within Your School)

Primary role cross tabulated with question 8.	Yes	%	No	%	I don't know	%	Total responses	%
Faculty	14	56.0%	1	100.0%	10	18.2%	25	30.9%
Staff	7	28.0%	0	0.0%	8	14.5%	15	18.5%
Student	4	16.0%	0	0.0%	37	67.3%	41	50.6%
Skipped	0		0		0		0	
Total	25		1		55		81	

Next, Item 8 was cross tabulated with the length of time a respondent had been with the university. Of the 25 respondents who answered “yes”, 72% have been with the university more than five years. Of the 55 respondents who answered “I don’t know”, 67% have been with the university less than five years. This shows a more direct relationship between length of time and awareness of a faculty academic grievance policy than the primary role of a respondent.

Table 12 – Length of Time Cross Tabulated with Item 8 (Faculty Grievance Policy within Your School)

Length of service cross tabulated with question 8.	Yes	%	No	%	I don't know	%	Total responses	%
< 1 year	1	4.0%	0	0.0%	8	14.5%	9	11.1%
1 to 3 years	5	20.0%	1	100.0%	17	30.9%	23	28.4%
3 to 5 years	1	4.0%	0	0.0%	12	21.8%	13	16.0%
> 5 years	18	72.0%	0	0.0%	18	32.7%	36	44.4%
Answered	25		1		55		81	
Skipped	0		0					

Item 9 on the survey asks if their department or program has an academic grievance policy for faculty. They had three options: yes, no and I don't know.

The responses in Table 13 below showed that 5% of the respondents within SAS are aware of a faculty policy within their department or program and 7% of the respondents university wide are aware of a faculty within their department or program. There were 12 (25%) responses within SAS of no, and 12 (15%) no responses across the university. The majority responded that they did not know: 65% within SAS and 78% across the university.

Over 92% of respondents, university wide either responded no or I don't know about a policy for faculty with in their groups or departments. When combined with Item 8, the results show that the faculty grievance policies are not

perceived to be held within the groups or departments, but rather reside to a greater extent within the school.

Table 13 – Item 9 – Faculty Grievance Policy within Your Program or Department

Faculty Grievance Policy within Department	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	3	5.3%	6	7.4%
No	12	24.6%	12	14.8%
I don't know	42	64.9%	63	77.8%
Answered	57		81	
Skipped	8		12	

Table 14 shows the number of respondents who provided a web link to the faculty policy for their school, department or program in response to Item 10.

Within SAS, there were eight responses, however, only three (5%) of the total SAS respondents to the survey provided a web link. University wide, there were 12 responses, however, only four (4%) of the total university wide respondents to the survey provided a web link.

Table 14 - Item 10 - Provide Web Link to Faculty Policy

Provided web link to Faculty Policy	Within SAS	% of Total Survey Respondents Within SAS	Across the University	% of Total Survey Respondents Across the University
Answered question	8	12 %	12	13 %
Skipped Question	57	88 %	81	87%

Also, approximately 13 % of the respondents provided a link to the policy. Yet approximately 30% said there is a policy within their school.

This lack of response could be from a lack of awareness of a policy or from any variety of factors ranging from too much time would be involved to looking up the link to lack of interest. This would be totally speculative as there is no data to explain.

Item 11 on the survey asks if their school has an academic grievance policy for staff. They had three options: yes, no, and I don't know. The responses in Table 15 below showed that 24% of the respondents within SAS are aware of a staff policy within their school and 20% of the respondents university wide are aware of a staff policy within their school. There was one response within SAS of no, and three, no responses across the university. The majority responded that they did not know: 75% within SAS and 76% across the university.

Table 15 – Item 11 - Staff Grievance Policy within Your School

Staff Grievance Policy within School	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	13	23.6%	16	20.3%
No	1	1.8%	3	3.8%
I don't know	41	74.5%	60	75.9%
Answered	55		79	
Skipped	10		14	

Item 12 on the survey asks if their department or program has an academic grievance policy for staff. They had 3 options: yes, no and I don't know. The responses in Table 16 below showed that 6% of the respondents within SAS are aware of a staff policy within their department or program and 4% of the respondents university wide are aware of a staff policy within their department or program. There were 13 (24%) responses within SAS of no, and

15 (19%) no responses across the university. The majority responded that they did not know: 71% within SAS and 77% across the university.

Over 96% of respondents, university wide either responded no or I don't know about a policy for staff with in their groups or departments.

Table 16 – Item 12 - Staff Grievance Policy within Your Program or Department

Staff Grievance Policy within Department	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	3	5.5%	3	3.8%
No	13	23.6%	15	19.0%
I don't know	39	70.9%	61	77.2%
Answered	55		79	
Skipped	10		14	

Table 17 shows the number of respondents who provided a web link to the staff policy for their school, department or program. Within SAS, there were three responses; however, none of the total SAS respondents to the survey provided a web link. University wide, there were five responses, however, only two (2%) of the total university wide respondents to the survey provided a web link.

Table 17 – Item 13 - Provide Web Link to Staff Policy

Provided web link to Staff Policy	Within SAS	% of Total Survey Respondents Within SAS	Across the University	% of Total Survey Respondents Across the University
Answered question	3	4.6%	5	5.4%
Skipped Question	62	95.4%	88	94.6%

Also, Table 17 shows that approximately 2% of the respondents provided a link to the policy. Yet approximately 20% said there is a policy within their school as shown in Table 16.

This lack of response could be from a lack of awareness of a policy or from any variety of factors ranging from too much time would be involved to looking up the link to lack of interest. This could also be the result of the fact that there is no reason for there to be an academic grievance policy for staff. If a staff member is taking a graduate course they would most likely fall under the role of a graduate student if filing an academic grievance.

Item 14 on the survey asks if their school has an academic grievance policy for graduate students. The responses in Table 18 below show that 21% of the respondents within SAS are aware of a graduate student policy within their school and 24% of the respondents university wide are aware of a graduate student policy within their school. The results for SAS were similar to those of the university with less than a quarter of the respondents giving a positive response to the question of there being an academic grievance policy at the school level for graduate students.

Table 18 – Item 14 – Graduate Student Grievance Policy within Your School

Graduate Grievance Policy within School	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	12	21.4%	19	24.1%
No	8	14.3%	9	11.4%
I don't know	36	64.3%	51	64.6%
Answered	56		79	
Skipped	9		14	

There were eight responses within SAS of “no”, and nine, “no” responses across the university. The majority responded that they did not know: 64% within SAS and 65% across the university.

Over 21% of the respondents within SAS and across the university were aware of a policy for graduate students. In order to determine if these responses would coincide with the response rate to the survey by role of the respondent, a cross tabulation was performed and the results are displayed in Table 19. The results show that 20% of the university response was “yes” by faculty and of the 25 faculty members who responded, 60% responded that they did not know. The results show that 57% of the university response was “yes” by staff and of the 14 staff members who responded, 36% responded that they did not know. The results show that 15% of the university response was “yes” by students and of the 40 students members who responded, 78% responded that they did not know.

Over 50% of the response to item 14 was from graduate students and 85% responded “no” or “I don’t know” to there being an academic grievance policy for graduate students within their school. Slightly less than 50% of the responses were a result of the combined responses from faculty and staff. Of this combined group, 77% responded that there is an academic grievance policy with in their school.

Table 19 - Primary Role Cross Tabulated with Item 14 (Graduate Student
Grievance Policy within Your School)

Primary role cross tabulated with question 14.	Yes	%	No	%	I don't know	%	Total responses	%
Faculty	5	20.0%	5	20.0%	15	60%	25	31.6%
Staff	8	57.1%	1	7.1%	5	35.7%	14	17.7%
Student	6	15.0%	3	7.5%	31	77.5%	40	50.6%
Skipped	0		0		0		14	99.9%
Total	25		1		55		79	

Item 14 was cross tabulated with the length of time a respondent had been with the university in Table 20. Of the 11 respondents who answered “yes”, 46% have been with the university more than three years. Of the 46 respondents who answered “I don’t know”, almost 90% have been with the university more than three years. This table shows that 86% of the respondents said there is no policy or they did not know of a policy for graduate students. Only 14% are aware of a policy. The table shows that the longer a respondent has been with the university the more likely they are to respond that they are not aware of a policy for graduate students.

Table 20 – Length of Time Cross Tabulated with Item 14 (Graduate Student Grievance Policy within Your School)

Length of service cross tabulated with question 14.	Yes	%	No	%	I don't know	%	Total responses	%
< 1 year	1	11.1%	1	11.1%	7	77.8%	9	11.4%
1 to 3 years	1	4.5%	3	13.6%	18	81.8	22	27.8%
3 to 5 years	4	30.8%	3	23.1%	6	46.2%	13	16.5%
> 5 years	5	14.3%	15	42.9%	15	42.9%	35	44.3%
Answered	11		22		46		79	100%
Skipped							14	

Item 15 on the survey asks if, “your DEPARTMENT or GROUP has an academic grievance policy for Graduate students”. The responses in Table 21 below showed that 11% of the respondents within SAS are aware of a graduate student policy within their department or program and 14% of the respondents university wide are aware of a graduate student policy within their department or program. There were 21 (38%) responses within SAS of no, and 22 (28%) no responses across the university. More than half responded that they did not know: 52% within SAS and 58% across the university.

Over 86% of respondents, university wide either responded no or I don’t know about a policy for graduate students with in their groups or departments. When combined with Question 8 the results of this survey show that the graduate

student grievance policies are not perceived to be held within the groups or departments, but rather reside to a greater extent within the school.

Table 21 – Item 15 – Graduate Student Grievance Policy within Your Program or Department

Provided web link to Graduate Policy	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Answered question	8	12%	15	16%
Skipped Question	57	88%	78	84%

Table 22 shows the number of respondents who provided a web link to the graduate policy for their school, department or program. Within SAS, there were 8 responses of which five (7.6%) of the total SAS respondents to the survey provided a web link. University wide, there were 15 responses of which 10 (11%) of the total university wide respondents to the survey provided a web link.

Table 22 - Item 16 - Provide Web Link to Graduate Student Policy

Graduate Grievance Policy within Department	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	6	10.7%	11	13.9%
No	21	37.5%	22	27.8%
I don't know	29	51.8%	46	58.2%
Answered	56		79	
Skipped	9		14	

The next question on the survey, item 17, is to discern if the respondent has any personal knowledge of a graduate student with an academic grievance when there was not policy to address it. This question is to establish whether or not there is any need for a policy based on actual experience.

According to the responses shown in Table 23, within SAS, 17(32%) of the respondents reported at least one grievance and across the university 21(27%) are aware of at least one grievance without a policy to address it. The only other yes response in the survey that was higher was to question 20 which was asking if academic grievance policies had been discussed in their department.

Table 23 – Item 17 – Awareness of grievance?

Are you aware of instances when a grad student had an academic grievance and there was no policy to address it?	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	17	32.1%	21	27.3%
No	36	67.9%	56	72.7%
Answered	59		77	
Skipped	6		16	

Next, item 17 was cross tabulated with the length of time a respondent has been affiliated with the university in Table 24. Of those who have been with the university for less than one year, no one responded “yes”, 26% of those who have been with the university from one to three years responded “yes”, 46% of those who have been with the university from three to five years responded “yes”, and 28% of those who have been with the university for more than five years responded “yes”. Of the yes responses to question 17, 71% were from respondents who have been with the university for more than three years.

Table 24 – Length of Time Cross Tabulated with Item 17 (Awareness of a Grievance)

Length of service cross tabulated with question 17.	Yes	%	No	%	Total responses	% of Responses to Item 17
< 1 year	0	0%	9	100%	9	11.7%
1 to 3 years	6	26.1%	17	73.9%	23	29.9%
3 to 5 years	6	46.2%	7	53.8%	13	16.9%
> 5 years	9	28.1%	23	71.9%	32	41.5%
Answered	21		56		77	100%
Skipped					16	

Item 18 provides an opportunity for the respondents to give an open ended, unlimited response as to how the grievance or grievances they are aware of have been managed in the absence of a policy to address it. Within SAS 18 (28%) of the respondents provided open ended responses and across the university, 23 (25%) of the respondents provided open ended responses to item

Table 25 groups the responses into four sections:

- Resolutions external to the department – grievance was resolved with the assistance of those outside of the department, but within the university
- Internal resolutions – grievance was resolved within the department
- No resolution – unable to resolve the grievance
- Other – various, miscellaneous responses

Of the open ended responses, 19% were from administrators, 35% were from faculty and 46% were from students. Table 25 shows 26 responses because several respondents had known of more than one grievance and responded about the management of each instance.

Of the 26 open ended responses, 31% were in the External Resolution section. Of those, around 12 % were from administrators, 75% were from faculty and around 12% from students. The section for Internal Responses contained 19% of the open ended responses. 60% of the responses were from administrators, 40% from students, and 0 % from faculty. The section for No Resolution contained 23% of the responses and 17 % were from administrators, 0% were from faculty and 83% from students. The section labeled Other included 27% of the responses with 0% from administrators, 43% from faculty and 57% from students.

Of the 26 respondents to this question, eight or almost 31% said that the grievance was not resolved. 18 of those responses were from SAS and of those, five have not been resolved. 46% of the responses were from students and five of those 12 responses stated that they were not resolved. Of the nine faculty responses, none of the responses referred to faculty involvement in the resolution directly, but possibly could have been included in their reference to committees.

From Table 25, it can be seen that from the total of the responses involved, the involvement of the various levels in academic grievances had a small range from two with faculty involvement to five involving the graduate chair.

Also, there were no responses that went across all three roles.

Table 25 – Item 18 – How was the Resolution Managed?

If the previous answer was "yes", how was the resolution managed?	Frequency of responses			Totals
	ADMIN	FACULTY	Students	
External to Department Resolution				
Chair and dean and committee		1		1
Dean and chair	1	1		2
Graduate dean and ombudsman		1		1
Graduate executive committee		1		1
Ombudsman		2		2
Resolved with aid of student organization			1	1
Total External Resolution	1	6	1	8
Internal Resolution				
Graduate chairs and students advisor	1			1
Graduate chairs, department chair and student committee chairs	1			1
Resolved with help from chair	1			1
Resolved with help from graduate chair				0
Told to talk with faculty			2	2
Total Internal Resolution	3	0	2	5
No Resolution				
Not resolved			2	2
Not resolved - can't be without harm to student	1		3	4
Total No Resolution	1	0	5	6
Others				
Counseling and discussion		1		1
Not had to deal with in the last 3 years - good administration means fewer grievances		1		1
Politics are complicated - no policy at this time that helps			1	1
Students have grievances all of the time		1		1
Unsure of details			3	3
Total Others	0	3	4	7
Totals	5	9	12	26
	19.2%	34.6%	46.2%	

Item 19 of the survey posed the question, “What would you consider to be some of the components of a good academic grievance policy for graduate students?” Within SAS, 38 (58%) of the SAS respondents to the survey provided their suggestions on the components of a good policy. Across the university, 54 (58%) of the university wide respondents to the survey provided their suggestions on the components of a good policy.

This question was designed to solicit any and all feedback that a respondent desires to provide. It is an unlimited format in the number of suggestions that they could provide and the length of the suggestion they chose to provide. Therefore, although 54 respondents provided suggestions, there were actually 105 ideas submitted.

Data organization included breaking the responses into three main groups based on the topics mentioned.

The Transparency group, shown in Table 26, contains responses related to transparency, formality, clarity, procedure and process. There are 46 responses in the Transparency group. Of the responses, 24% were from administrators, 28% were from faculty and 48% of the total responses in this group were from students.

Of the Transparency responses, two of the responses crossed all three role groups. The opportunity to have the right to appeal the decision had six responses with one response from administration, one from faculty and four from the student groups. The other response that crossed all three categories and has

the highest response rate for this question is the need for a clearly stated, step by step process.

Table 26 – Item 19 – Components of a good policy. Transparency Group

Transparency, formality, clarity	ADMIN	FACULTY	Students	Totals
Admin and faculty responsible to be sure process is adhered to	1			1
Allow for informal internal solutions first		2		2
Anonymity/confidentiality			3	3
Appeal	1	1	4	6
Clearly stated step by step process/ flow chart	4	8	4	16
Connection to university policies	1			1
Definition	1			1
Dept first....dept/programs should have a policy as well	1			1
Explicitness		1		1
Foster clear communication in grad groups		1		1
Policy shared at orientation/awareness increased/available accessible			4	4
Procedures including how to document	1			1
Rights and responsibilities of students			1	1
Specific conditions as to when process is applied	1			1
Transparency			1	1
Point of contact			1	1
Reasons to file a grievance/when to use			1	1
All processes in dept need to be more transparent			1	1
Should include info about student organizations aid to students availability			1	1
Familiarity with people to bring the issue to			1	1
	11	13	22	46
	23.9%	28.3%	47.8%	

The Fairness group, shown in Table 27, contains responses related to fairness, due process and impartiality. There are 34 responses in the Fairness group. There are 34 responses in the Fairness group. Of the responses, 15% were from administrators, around 20% were from faculty and 65% of the total responses in this group were from students.

Of the Fairness responses, having an arbitrator/advocate/ombudsperson for the student had five responses that crossed all three role groups. The whistleblower/retaliation responses were the highest response rate in the Fairness group with seven responses. Five of the responses were from students, two from administration and zero from faculty.

Table 27 – Item 19 – Components of a good policy. Fairness Group

Fairness, due process	ADMIN	FACULTY	Students	Totals
Arbitrator/advocate for student/ombudsperson	2	1	2	5
Both sides questioned/explain	1			1
Fairness/equitable/no conflicts of interest		1	3	4
High standard of proof			2	2
Independent resources on different tiers should be available to students		1		1
Input from all parties		1		1
Mediation/ombudsperson		1	1	2
Neutrality			2	2
No double standard - faculty, student, staff			1	1
Non-punitive, non-judgmental, initial inquiry with option of anonymity (though faculty also need protection from malicious anonymous reports!)		1		1
Protection of funding			1	1
Reasons given for actions			1	1
Retaliation/whistleblower	2		5	7
Speed		1	1	2
Mediation by people outside the school			2	2
Handled internally with external review			1	1
	5	7	22	34
	14.7%	20.6%	64.7%	

The Participation group, show in Table 28, contains responses concerned with participation by students. There are 12 responses in the Participation group. Of the responses, almost 17% were from administrators, 58% were from faculty and 25% of the total responses in this group were from students.

It is interesting to note that the faculty responses were more than double the student responses for this section.

Table 28 – Item 19 – Components of a good policy. Participation Group

Participation by students	ADMIN	FACULTY	Students	Totals
Committee to include students and faculty/board		3	1	4
Committee under, for and by the grad school		1		1
Give some power to grad students before decision is made			1	1
Panel/ committee/board	2	1		3
Procedures drawn up by faculty, admin and students		1	1	2
Separate grad student conduct committee		1		1
	2	7	3	12
	16.7%	58.3%	25.0%	

The Informal group, shown in Table 29 contains responses related to informality and flexibility. There are seven responses in the Informal group. Of the responses, almost 43% were from administrators, 28% were from faculty and 28% of the total responses in this group were from students.

Table 29 – Item 19 – Components of a good policy. Informality Group

Informality	ADMIN	FACULTY	Students	Totals
Flexible, compassionate, not legalistic		1		1
Hierarchy	1			1
Simplicity		1	2	3
Special circumstances	2			2
	3	2	2	7
	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	

In Table 30 contains responses that were not related and did not fit into the rest of the groups. There are six responses in the Other group. Of the responses, 0% was from administrators, 50% were from faculty and 50% of the total responses in this group were from students.

Table 30 – Item 19 – Components of a good policy. Other Group

Other	ADMIN	FACULTY	Students	Totals
Decision made by committee is to be implemented		1		1
Distrust of the university		1		1
Off topic completely - forum for thoughts			1	1
Provide protection from negligent or wrongful academic behavior by faculty			1	1
Should allow for attrition as normal course of business in some cases		1		1
A system similar to the academic freedom and responsibility used by faculty would work for graduate students.			1	1
	0	3	3	6
	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	

Item 20 was included in the survey to explore the need for a policy and to determine if there is discussion taking place about creating one. The respondents were asked, “If your school does not currently have an academic grievance policy, has the creation of a grievance policy for graduate students been discussed?” The results in Table 31 reveal that of the 37 responses to this item within SAS, 17 (46%) answered yes and across the university, 19(38%) answered yes. Of the 50 total responses to this question, 37 (74%) of the responses were from SAS. Of the 19 university wide “yes” responses, 17 (89%) were from SAS. When compared with the total number of respondents to the survey 26% of the SAS respondents and 20% university wide said there have been discussions about a policy in the schools that do not have a grievance policy.

Table 31 – Item 20 – If your school does not have grievance policy, has it been discussed?

Question 20				
If your school does not currently have a policy has it been discussed?	Within SAS	%	Across the University	%
Yes	17	45.9%	19	38.0%
No	37	54.1%	31	62.0%
Answered	37		50	
Skipped	28		43	

Table 32 contains the open ended responses to question 21. The item asks if they answered yes to question 20, what the results of the discussions were. This question was included in the survey to solicit any and all feedback that a respondent desires to provide. It is an unlimited format in the number of thoughts or discussion points that they could provide and the length of the points they chose to provide.

Of the responses, 16(80%) were from SAS. Of those responses, three (15%) were from administrators, seven (35%) from faculty and six (50%) from students. One quarter of the respondents was aware of the process taking place through the survey and 40% are aware that the policy is in the process of being developed. All but two were non specific and just expressed an awareness of a discussion taking place. Two faculty members gave more specific information about the direction their discussions had gone.

Table 32 – Item 21 – Open ended answers to if the answer to 20 was “yes”, what were the results?

If the answer to question was "yes", what were the results?	Admin	Faculty	Students	Totals
Did not follow details/not sure/don't know			5	5
Discussion	1	2		3
I bring it up often because faculty/advisors have unfair control, affects student's career	1			1
In process	1		2	3
In process through this survey		2	3	5
Looking into expanding, streamlining the grievance procedures. Discussing models for channeling grievance complaints.		1		1
Recommendation that a committee be convened to examine policies at peer institutions and draft a policy for comment		1		1
Would be good to have policy		1		1
Totals	3	7	10	20
Percentages	15.0%	35.0%	50.0%	

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

As discussed in Chapter six, there were two processes taking place regarding the creation of an academic grievance policy. The capstone process started in late September 2008 and has run through February 2008. The SAS process began in March 2007 and is still ongoing. The following summary contains some conclusions drawn regarding each process.

Capstone Process

After closing down the survey in mid January I met with Dr. Nagel to review and discuss the data. At this time, he brought up the issue that surveyed students may not be truly representative of the student population. At first, this was cause for concern, because just the fact that a student chooses to be a student representative may show that they have a different focus than the typical graduate student. This can put a different perspective on the data, but the assumption made when selecting the student representatives for the survey was not so much that they were the typical student, but rather that they would be informed students because they are representing the other students and are potentially exposed, through the student organizations to more administrative policies.

Survey data showed very clearly that of the students who responded to the survey, 78% (Table 19) do not know if there is a policy in place. If this group of students, who may have more of an opportunity to be aware of university policies has little or no awareness, it could be assumed that the other students

would have even less or no awareness. This lack of awareness of a policy or lack of a policy, that could directly affect them is worthy of note. This could be explained by the possibility that a student may only have an interest in an academic grievance policy if the student or someone the student knows has a grievance. When this is looked at in relation to Item 17 which asked, "Are you aware of instances when a grad student had an academic grievance and there was no policy to address it?", 32% of the respondents from SAS replied, Yes, of the 59 who responded. A conclusion to draw from this survey data is that it is critical that once the policy is created it is easily accessible to the students on the school website along with other similar policies and information that a student might need if they are having difficulty. Each fall during orientation, that website, with a variety of resources should be made known to the students.

Another conclusion is that the sample size, along with possibly not being representative of all students is too small in sample size to be statistically significant. In order to confirm that the results are meaningful a larger sample would need to be collected.

When the open ended question was asked regarding what the components of a good policy would be, it is notable that 46 responses related to transparency and 34 were related to fairness. This is at least three to four times the response rate for participation and informality respectively. The largest number of responses, which was also one of the few that crossed all roles, was Item 16 for a clearly stated, step by step process. The evolving policy that is actually being created has a clearly stated step by step process.

The next highest response rate, with seven responses, to the component question was regarding retaliation or a whistleblower clause. Again, this may not be statistically significant, but it was of concern primarily to students. A student's fears of retaliation may keep them from using the newly created policy, particularly if they do not feel sufficiently protected.

SAS Process

It was a wise decision by Dr. Nagel, to not hastily redraft the academic grievance policy at the end of his term as Associate Dean. I have learned by observing this process that creating a meaningful policy takes more time than he had remaining in his term.

My observation is that to lead a process involving many senior stakeholders through an evolving process with several iterations of the policy using action learning is challenging.

A grievance policy has been created which should garnish acceptance from the stakeholders because of the perseverance, energy and drive of Dean Rosen. He has tenaciously and relentlessly approached this task and it appears that it will be worth the effort because so many stakeholders were able to be involved in the creation process. Their input was not only received, but heard, accepted and incorporated. It is difficult to imagine that anyone involved in this process could take exception to the result that they had a part in creating.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY

APPENDIX B

Subject: Questionnaire Regarding Academic Grievance Policy for the Graduate
Division Office of SAS

INSTRUCTIONS

Ralph M. Rosen, Associate Dean of the Graduate Division of SAS, is proposing to revise the Academic Grievance Policy for graduate students within the school. The Academic Grievance Policy concerns conflicts and concerns in meeting academic obligations by SAS graduate students. This policy does not apply to members of the SAS administration or to faculty.

To help in the policy revision process, we are gathering information and opinions from selected members of our community including you. Please help in this process by responding to the brief questionnaire accessed via the web link below. This will take less than 10 minutes.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=cmpPWnGMjISMU2v_2fSCWCaw_3d_3d

If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire, or if you feel you are not the appropriate person to complete this survey, please contact Judy Tjiattas at judithr@sas.upenn.edu or at 215-573-5818.

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX C

Dean Nagel's original draft of policy

DRAFT FOR COMMENT (Jack Nagel, 6/6/08)

[Material to be posted on SAS Graduate Division Website]

Procedures for Complaints and Grievances

For students enrolled within the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences, the first person to consult about most problems is the Graduate Group Chair or, in the case of master's degrees not associated with a Ph.D. graduate group, the Program Director.

If the Graduate Group Chair or Program Director does not provide a satisfactory resolution, or is seen as part of the problem, the next recourse is to the Department Chair if the student's graduate program is founded on an academic department and if the issue is one for which department chairs usually have responsibility—e.g., the behavior of departmental faculty or staff, the use of departmental resources, and teaching assignments. If the student's program is not founded on an academic department or if it is but the student is not satisfied with the Department Chair's response, the line of appeal is to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

The Associate Dean should also be consulted directly (after the Graduate Chair or Program Director) for non-departmental issues, such as financial aid funded by SAS or decisions related to academic policies, requirements, standards, and procedures.

Appeals beyond the Associate Dean should be made to the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences for most faculty, financial and administrative issues, or to the Associate Provost for Education for issues involving academic policies, requirements, standards, and procedures. The next appeal after the Dean or Associate Provost is to the Provost, who is the chief academic officer of the University. The final recourse is to the President of the University. However, the help of the Provost or President should be sought only as a last resort.

In addition to the channels outlined above, students may take problems to the Office of the Ombudsman. <http://www.upenn.edu/ombudsman/> The Ombudsman does not have decision-making authority, but serves as an impartial mediator in helping to resolve disputes.

Resources for Personal Problems [contact details will be added when posted to web]

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Vice Provost for University Life

Student Intervention Services

Penn Women's Center

Special Services Unit, Department of Public Safety

APPENDIX D

Rafael Walkers Draft of the Policy

GSAS Grievance Committee

Submitted by Rafael Walker, Vice President for Policy, SASgov

12 June 2008

Procedure for the committee's handling of grievances

This committee is a standing committee in GSAS to which any graduate student may submit grievances that cannot be resolved within his or her department, to his or her satisfaction. This committee should be invoked only as a last resort (that is, after the student has exhausted all viable channels within his or her department).

If the student fails to reach a resolution within his or her department, the student may file a formal grievance with the GSAS Grievance Committee by e-mailing the committee at [this is a make-believe address] gradgrievance@sas.upenn.edu [which address would connect to the chair of the committee and the Associate Dean for the Graduate School]. The grievance submission should include, in an attachment, a description of the grievance and a description of the outcomes of the student's attempts at resolution through the preceding channels of redress (that is, through departmental means).

Upon receipt of a grievance, the chair of the committee will e-mail the grievance to the committee members within twenty-four hours and will arrange a meeting of the committee, at which the committee will discuss the grievance and decide whether a hearing with the student is in order.

After committee meetings are finished and the committee has reached a determination, the chair will draft a recommendation, which, in most cases, will be addressed to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (the recommendation would go elsewhere only if the Associate Dean were somehow implicated in the grievance). Before being submitted to its addressee, however, the recommendation must be sent to all of the committee members for approval. The committee will present its recommendation to the Associate Dean (or other applicable entity) in no fewer than twenty days after the grievance was submitted, and the Associate Dean (or other applicable entity) will reply to the aggrieved student within one month (thirty days) of the student's filing of the grievance.

Committee Constitution

- The committee is composed of six voting members, three GSAS faculty members and three GSAS students, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, who serves as an ex officio member. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies is responsible for appointing the three faculty members, who should come from diverse departments within SAS and whom he will draw from the members of the SAS Committee on Graduate Education at the beginning of each academic year; SASgov is responsible for appointing the three graduate student members of the committee. All appointments are for one-year terms.
- The committee has a chair, who is elected at the first meeting of the year, which the Associate Dean calls once all six members have been appointed. At this first meeting, the Associate Dean serves as chair, reviewing the role of

the committee with all members and orchestrating the election of the chair. All six appointed members are eligible to be chair.

- The chair is responsible both for convening and organizing meetings when a grievance is submitted, and for drafting the recommendation after a grievance has been fully deliberated upon by the committee (the recommendation should provide a brief overview of the committee's discussion and of any hearings conducted) as well as the committee's recommended course of action in response to the grievance.
- In the event that a committee member cannot participate in a grievance deliberation (either because he or she is unavailable and no mutually agreeable meeting time could be found, or because of a conflict of interests between him or her and the aggrieved student), the Associate Dean is responsible for finding a substitute for the committee member if the member is a faculty member, and SASgov is responsible for finding a substitute if the member is a graduate student.

In cases where the Associate Dean disagrees with the determination of the committee and the two parties cannot be brought into agreement, the matter should be forwarded to the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences and to the Provost in a document that is fashioned collaboratively between the committee and the Associate Dean. If this is the course the grievance takes, the aggrieved student must be apprised of this and of the consequent delay to his or her grievance's resolution.

APPENDIX E

Dean Rosen's last version as 2/27/09 email

(w/ suggested revisions from OGC)

**Academic Grievance Procedure for Graduate Students in the
School of Arts and Sciences**
(draft 2/16/09)

The following procedures should be followed in the event of an academic grievance. Academic grievances concern only matters pertaining to a student's performance and progress in his or her academic program, such as coursework, grading, evaluations, teaching and research responsibilities, examinations, dissertation, and time-to-degree.

These procedures apply to **current** students enrolled in two kinds of graduate programs in SAS, **and may also be used by former students within 3 years after leaving the University:**

1. Ph.D.-track degrees that are governed by the University's Graduate Council of the Faculties. Within SAS these degrees are administered at the School level by the SAS Graduate Division and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and at the local level by a Graduate Group Chair. A standing faculty committee, the SAS Committee on Graduate Education, advises the Associate Dean on these programs.
2. School based-Master's degrees that are administered either by the College of Liberal and Professional Studies (and the Associate Dean for Continuing Education) or the SAS Graduate Division and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. At the local level they are overseen by a Program Director. A standing faculty committee, the SAS Committee on Graduate Continuing Education, advises the two Associate Deans on these programs.

A list of SAS graduate degrees and their reporting lines appears as Appendix A.

1) Procedure for Appeal of an Evaluation, Exam or Course Grade

(a) **Faculty members have the authority to make academic judgments in relation to their students and to make decisions in the interests of furthering their students' education. Therefore, ordinarily, only the instructor who gives an evaluation, exam or course grade has authority to change the evaluation, exam or course grade.**

(b) In cases in which **the instructor who gave the evaluation, exam or course grade no longer has an appointment at the University, the authority to change** an evaluation rests with the Graduate Chair of the student's graduate group or Program Director of the relevant graduate program.

(c) Graduate students who wish to have an evaluation, exam or course grade reviewed must first discuss the matter with the instructor who gave the evaluation **provided the instructor retains an appointment (including that of emeritus faculty) at the University. (In cases in which the instructor no longer retains an appointment at the University, the student must first discuss the matter with the Graduate Group Chair or Program Director.)** Should this **discussion** not yield a resolution that is satisfactory to both the student and the instructor, or should a **discussion** not be possible, the student may **submit a request, in writing, to** the Graduate Chair or Program Director of the relevant graduate program for assistance in the matter.

(d) Should the matter not be resolved with the aid of the Graduate Chair or Program Director, the student may seek the assistance of the appropriate Associate Dean. The role of the Associate Deans is to ensure that the involved SAS graduate group or program has arranged for a proper review of the matter **and that the evaluation was fair and impartial and in accordance with applicable University policies.**

2) Procedure for Requesting Waiver of a Graduate Group Requirement and Transcript Changes

(a) Students may petition their graduate group chair or program director, as applicable, for waivers of requirements. Approval requires the positive vote of the graduate group or the program committee. The graduate group chair or program director will forward all approved requests for waiving requirements to the appropriate Associate Dean for final consent and transcript change. Proposals for waivers in Ph.D.-track programs that violate the rules and regulations of Graduate Council of Faculties will be denied. In cases where **there is a request to drop courses** from the transcript, consultation of the involved faculty, if the faculty members are still at the University, is required.

3) Procedure for all other Academic Grievances

(a) For graduate students in the School of Arts and Sciences, the first person to consult about most academic problems is the Graduate Group Chair or Program Director.

(b) If the Graduate Group Chair or Program Director does not provide a satisfactory resolution, or is seen as part of the problem, Graduate students in the

Graduate Division of Arts and Sciences whose graduate groups are associated with an academic department may next bring the grievance to the Department Chair. Students whose programs are not associated with specific academic departments, may follow the procedures beginning in the next paragraph (3c), which describe appeals to the Associate Dean.

(c) If the student cannot reach a satisfactory solution after following the preceding procedures, s/he may take the problem directly to the appropriate Associate Dean. If such a meeting fails to resolve the problem, the student may request a hearing before the Graduate Academic Grievance Committee of the School of Arts and Sciences (on which see below, #4). This request should be made only as a last resort (that is, after the student has exhausted all viable channels discussed above). To file a formal grievance with the Graduate Academic Grievance Committee, the student must contact the office of his or her Associate Dean by letter or email that includes a description of the grievance and a description of the outcomes of the student's attempts at resolution through the channels described above.

(d) Upon receipt of a grievance, the Associate Dean will convene the Grievance Committee, which will discuss the grievance and decide whether a hearing with the student is appropriate. The committee's decision about whether or not to hear the case will be final.

In cases where a hearing is held, after committee meetings are finished and the committee has reached a determination, the chair will draft a recommendation, which, in most cases, will be addressed to the Associate Dean (the recommendation would go directly to the Dean if the Associate Dean were implicated in the grievance). To the best of its abilities, the committee will present its recommendation to the Associate Dean (or other applicable entity in no more than twenty days after **the hearing**, and the Associate Dean (or other applicable entity) will strive to reply to the aggrieved student within one month (thirty days) of **the hearing**.

4) Composition of the Academic Grievance Committee

(a) The committee is composed of six voting members, three SAS faculty members and three SAS graduate students. The Associate Dean appropriate to the student's program will convene the committee and serve as a non-voting, ex officio member. The Associate Dean is responsible for appointing the three faculty members, who should come from diverse departments within SAS and whom s/he will draw from the members of either the standing SAS Committee on Graduate Education or the Committee on Graduate Continuing Education, as appropriate to the student's program. SASGov is responsible for appointing the three graduate student members of the committee.

(b) The committee has a faculty chair, who is elected at the first meeting of the

hearing. At the first meeting, the Associate Dean serves as chair, reviewing the role of the committee with all members and orchestrating the election of the faculty chair. Only the faculty members are eligible to be chair.

(c) The chair is responsible for drafting a recommendation for the disposition of a grievance after full deliberation by the committee. This recommendation is then transmitted to the Associate Dean for consideration and a decision about implementation. The decision of the Associate Dean will be final, unless verifiable procedural objections are raised. In such cases, the matter will be referred to the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences for final disposition.

In addition to the channels outlined above, students may take problems to the Office of the Ombudsman (<http://www.upenn.edu/ombudsman/>). The Ombudsman does not have decision-making authority, but serves as an impartial mediator in helping to resolve disputes. **Further, any student who feels that he or she has been subject to discrimination may take his or her complaint to the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity Programs. The role of the Office of Affirmative Action is to coordinate compliance with certain anti-discrimination laws.**

Source Information

1. Please select the school that you represent from the list below: (If you have multiple affiliations, please answer in your primary capacity.)

☐ Annenberg School

☐ Law School

☐ School of Arts and Sciences

☐ School of Dental Medicine

☐ School of Design

☐ School of Education

☐ School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

☐ School of Medicine

☐ School of Nursing

☐ School of Social Policy and Practice

☐ School of Veterinary Medicine

☐ Wharton School

☐ Other (please specify)

Source information

2. In the school selected in question 1, my primary role is:

☐ Faculty

☐ Administration

☐ Student

3. How long have you been in your current, primary role within the university?

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ 1 to 3 years

☐ 3 to 5 years

☐ More than 5 years

4. Your gender: (optional)

☐ Male

☐ Female

5. Please indicate if your SCHOOL has an academic grievance policy for:

Undergraduate Students

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

☐ School does not have an undergraduate program

6. Please indicate if your DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM has an academic grievance policy for:

Undergraduate Students

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

☐ School does not have an undergraduate program

7. If the answer to questions 5 or 6 is "yes", please provide the web link:

8. Please indicate if your SCHOOL has an academic grievance policy for:

Faculty

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

9. Please indicate if your DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM has an academic grievance policy for:

FACULTY

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

10. If the answer to questions 8 or 9 is "yes", please provide the web link:

11. Please indicate if your SCHOOL has an academic grievance policy for:

Staff

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

12. Please indicate if your DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM has an academic grievance policy for:

Staff

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

13. If the answer to question 11 or 12 is "yes", please provide the web link:

14. Please indicate if your SCHOOL has an academic grievance policy for:

Graduate Students

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

15. Please indicate if your DEPARTMENT OR GROUP has an academic grievance policy for:

Graduate students

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

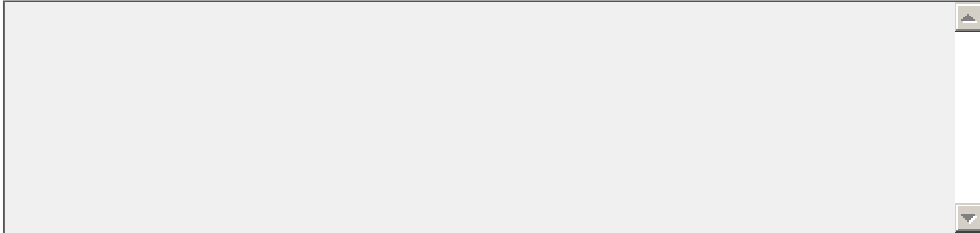
16. If the answer to question 14 or 15 is "yes", please provide the web link:

17. Are you aware of instances when a graduate student had an academic grievance and there was no policy to address it?

☐ Yes

☐ No

18. If the previous answer was "yes", how was the resolution managed?



19. What would you consider to be some of the components of a good academic grievance policy for graduate students?

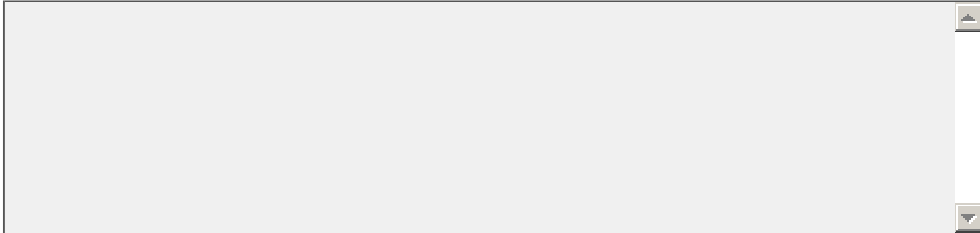


20. If your school does not currently have an academic grievance policy, has the creation of a grievance policy for graduate students been discussed?

☐ Yes

☐ No

21. If the answer to question was "yes", what were the results?



Thank you for completing this questionnaire.