



WNCC Administrative Procedure

Title: Academic Freedom – Grievance Review

Division: General Institutional

Reference: Board Policy 221 (Academic Freedom)
Board Policy 425 (Employee Grievances)
Administrative Procedure 425 (Employee Grievances)
Board Policy 426 (Discipline Policy)
Administrative Procedure 426.01 (Disciplinary Procedure)
Board Policy 562 (Student Complaint and Grievance)
President’s Procedure 562 (Student Complaint and Grievance)
President Procedure 720 (Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation Complaint Procedure)
“Advancing Academic Freedom,” American Association of University Professors
“1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure,” American Association of University Professors
Current Negotiated Agreement of the WNCC Faculty

Number: AP-221.01

Date of Approval: September 21, 2026

Approval: Greg Dart, President

Procedure

An infringement of academic freedom constitutes an “adverse effect,” and therefore, all provisions and terms of College policies and procedures and the current Negotiated Agreement are applicable to resolving questions or concerns regarding academic freedom.

If an employee of WNCC believes that an infringement of their academic freedom has occurred, they may utilize the grievance procedure in the current Negotiated Agreement if they are a faculty member and as outlined in Board Policy 425 and Administrative Policy 425 (Employee Grievances) for non-faculty employees. Students will follow the process outlined in Board Policy 562 and President's Procedure 562 (Student Complaint and Grievance Procedure)

All grievances alleging a violation of academic freedom will follow the grievance review process outlined below.

I. Grievance Review

- a. When an employee alleges the infringement of academic freedom in a disciplinary action or evaluation process, the disciplinary action or evaluation process shall be paused until the grievance has been resolved through this grievance process.
- b. In those disciplinary situations where concerns about the health and safety of WNCC faculty, staff, or students are reasonably implicated, the President or designee may issue a temporary decision in writing that takes into account the best interests of the College. The President or designee shall provide the temporary decision commensurate with the nature of the emergent situation to the grievant and the respective grievance committee as soon as is practical. The temporary decision shall dissolve and have no controlling authority upon the issuance of a determination from the grievance committee.
- c. If the grievance committee issues a determination affirming the academic freedom of the grievant, the pause shall dissolve, and the disciplinary action or the evaluation process shall cease insofar as the disciplinary action or evaluation was based on the academic freedom issue raised by the grievant and as resolved by the grievance committee. No record of the disciplinary action or the evaluation shall be maintained by the College insofar the record was based on the academic freedom issue raised by the grievant and as resolved by the grievance committee.
- d. If the grievance committee issues a determination denying the academic freedom issue raised by the grievant, the pause shall dissolve and the disciplinary action or the evaluation process shall proceed.
- e. The determination of the grievance committee as published shall be considered a precedent in similar academic freedom disputes.
- f. Due to the nature of academic freedom issues, the grievance process shall be expedited.
- g. The grievant, grievant's supervisor, and the administration will work collaboratively and expeditiously on an interim resolution and permissible activities while the academic freedom dispute proceeds through the grievance process.

- h. Retaliation or harassment by the grievant's supervisor, the administration, or others is prohibited by other College policies.
- i. This procedure does not govern complaints alleging:
 - 1. Sex-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking that fall within the scope of Title IX and its implementing regulations, or
 - 2. Other illegal discrimination or retaliation based on protected characteristics including race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or other classification protected under federal, state, or local civil rights laws.

Such complaints shall be investigated and resolved exclusively under the College's grievance procedures for Title IX and discrimination, respectively.

- j. If a grievance under this procedure involves allegations that reasonably may constitute both an academic freedom violation and one or more civil rights violations, the Chief Academic Officer shall confer with the Title IX Coordinator / Civil Rights Officer to determine which jurisdiction applies and the distinct processes that are warranted.

Given the nature of academic freedom issues, the College shall provide regular training for all employees regarding academic freedom issues and for members of the respective grievance committees prior to any grievance hearing.

Revising this Procedure

This Administrative Procedure supersedes any prior WNCC procedure, guideline, or handbook on this subject matter.

WNCC reserves the right to revise this procedure, as necessary, and for the changes to become effective immediately.

Original Adoption Date: September 21, 2026

Revision Date:

Sponsoring Division: President's Office