

Compliance, Academic Infractions, and Grievances

Compliance. As the authorized representatives of their departments or programs, chairs are expected to ensure compliance by members of the department with a variety of federal and state regulations. Kenyon's **Office of Environmental Health and Safety**, directed by Gary Sweeney (sweeneyg@kenyon.edu, X5575), is charged with assuring Kenyon's compliance with laboratory safety rules, particularly those dealing with hazardous waste and chemicals. Gary will work with chairs and laboratory technicians to improve lab and studio safety in those departments in which potentially hazardous materials and chemicals are in use.

A compliance issue that affects an even wider array of departments and programs involves the use of human subjects in research. Kenyon has instituted an **Institutional Review Board** to promote ethical treatment of human subjects in research by faculty and students. Included in this section is a short introduction to the role of the IRB. The College maintains an extensive website that can be accessed from <http://www.kenyon.edu/x30101.xml> about IRB rules and procedures. Associate Provost Ric Sheffield chairs the College's IRB committee. The IRB committee's work is supported by Jami Peelle, Faculty Grants and Fellowships Coordinator (peelle@kenyon.edu, X5748).

Chairs should note the following passage from the enclosed web page: "The chairs of individual departments and programs and heads of administrative divisions will be responsible for reviewing and acknowledging by way of signature all research proposals involving human subjects originating with faculty members, staff, or students in their departments or divisions prior to submission of such proposals to the IRB. The chairs and heads will make a recommendation to the IRB as to the level of review: exempt, expedited, or full." ***The capacity of the chair to make the recommendation mentioned in the last sentence depends on the chair's completion of IRB training.*** Hence, if they have not completed IRB training, chairs of those departments in which human subjects research takes place must undertake that training through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program to which the College subscribes. Jami can answer chairs' questions about their essential roles in IRB compliance.

Academic Infractions. Kenyon takes academic honesty very seriously. The College's process for handling cases of alleged academic dishonesty are designed to shield the instructor from undue pressures by requiring the instructor who suspects academic dishonesty to bring the evidence to his or her chair. The chair, then, decides whether to refer the case to the **Academic Infractions Board** (AIB). The AIB will ask that the instructor and the chair provide the evidence that led them to suspect an academic infraction, and the AIB will then determine whether sufficient evidence exists to call a hearing of the AIB. Chairs, hence, play a key role in directing academic infractions on to the AIB. They are also expected to attend the hearing of the AIB on cases they refer and to help to present the evidence that they believe indicates that an academic infraction has taken place.

During the course of new faculty mentoring it is important that chairs introduce these procedures to new colleagues. Processes for handling academic dishonesty vary widely from institution to institution, and new colleagues should be discouraged from addressing academic infractions on their own and instituting their own penalties. Indeed, they need to be informed that they should not directly accuse a student of suspected dishonesty before bringing the case to the chair and the AIB. Chairs can offer new faculty members advice about how to handle students who are suspected of

dishonesty in the interim between the time when they begin to have the suspicion and the date of a hearing on the matter.

We include in this section of the handbook a lengthy discussion from the *Course of Study* that discusses issues of academic honesty, including the procedures from making a charge of academic dishonesty. Again, chairs should review their role in bringing any such accusation.

Grade Changes. Chairs may be asked to mediate claims of unfair grades. The following passage is taken from the *Course of Study* (emphasis added):

Changes in Final Grades

If, after an instructor reports a final grade, an error in calculation or reporting is discovered, the instructor may ask an associate provost for permission to change the grade. Such changes must be requested before the end of the fourth week of the following semester. Changes after the fourth week can be made only through petition to the Academic Standards Committee.

A student who believes his or her grade in a course has been unfairly assigned may, if a written appeal to the instructor is ineffective, carry that appeal to the chair of the instructor's department and, if the problem is not then resolved, to the associate provosts, who will present it to the Academic Standards Committee. If a majority of the committee is persuaded that an injustice has been done, they will authorize the registrar to change the grade.

Conflict and Grievances. By virtue of their roles as representatives of their departments or programs, chairs may be brought into grievances and personnel conflicts even if they are not themselves parties to the conflict. We urge chairs to be aware of their potential roles in grievance procedures, as laid out in section 2.5 of the *Faculty Handbook* (emphasis added):

2.5.1 Informal Consultation

Any grievance shall be brought first to the President or Provost, the choice of which to be made by the aggrieved. The President or Provost will seek to resolve the dispute informally by consultation with the faculty member, *the faculty member's department chair*, and others whose knowledge or experience may be of help in achieving a mutually satisfactory settlement of the dispute. The President or Provost will report the substance of this informal consultation to the faculty member in writing.

We note that this is but the first stage in the grievance procedure, and urge chairs to consult the full text of section 2.5, included as a document in this section of the handbook.

Chairs should also be aware of the services of the Kenyon **Ombuds Office**. The Ombudsperson provides a process for disputing members of the Kenyon staff, administration and faculty to resolve their own differences informally, independently and confidentially. We include documents in this section of the handbook that describe the Ombuds Office.