

## **Grade Appeal, Program Dismissal Appeal and Hardship Withdrawal Appeal (GAPDAC)**

Thank you for agreeing to serve GAPDAC! These processes are critical to the retention and matriculation of our students and allow due diligence to be provided in cases where an appeal is the appropriate course of action.

GAPDAC panels review three different types of appeal processes: Appeal for a Hardship Withdrawal, Grade Appeals, and Program Dismissal Appeals. Policies and procedures for these appeal processes are established by the Faculty Senate and signed off on by Administration; the Office of the Ombudsman facilitates of the processes.

When scheduling an appeal meeting, I will send an email to the entire GAPDAC pool requesting 2-hour blocks of available time and wait for responses. I then identify three individuals with common availability and schedule a meeting from there. Appeals for Hardship Withdrawal panels meet most frequently, with those meetings taking place every 2-3 weeks. You should be able to commit to approximately 2-3 meetings per semester, depending on the volume of appeals we receive. Grade appeal and Program Dismissal appeal meetings are scheduled on an "as needed" basis. Below is a brief description of all three processes.

**Hardship Withdrawal:** This process is for students who experience a hardship circumstance beyond their control that prevents them from successfully completing courses. They are required to submit an Appeal for a Hardship Withdrawal form (you can view the form at [www.wmich.edu/ombudsman](http://www.wmich.edu/ombudsman)), a typed statement describing the hardship circumstance, and third-party documentation to support their stated hardship. A GAPDAC panel reviews the documents only; students are not present at these meetings. The panel determines if a hardship circumstance was evident during the semester in question, and if approved, the grades for that semester are changed to Ws by the Registrar's office.

**Grade Appeal:** This set of policies applies when a student wants to appeal a final grade that has been recorded by the Registrar on the student's academic record. Students are required to meet with both the instructor of record and the department chair prior to their appeal going before GAPDAC. Students may not appeal grades that were assigned as the result of charges of academic integrity violations. The following is the criteria for appealing a grade:

- a) Grades were calculated in a manner inconsistent with University policy, the syllabus, or changes to the syllabus;
- b) The grade(s) was/were erroneously calculated;
- c) Grading/performance standards were arbitrarily or unequally applied;
- d) The instructor failed to assign or remove an Incomplete or to initiate a grade change as agreed upon with the student.

The GAPDAC panel is charged with determining whether the grade was appropriately assigned and, if not, for determining how the grade should be re-evaluated. The grade change can be determined by the panel, or if the panel deems it necessary, by a designee from the department in which the grade was assigned. In cases of Grade Appeals, both student and instructor of record who assigned the grade are invited to speak before the committee.

**Program Dismissal Appeal:** This process applies when a student is dismissed from a program and wants to appeal the dismissal. Students cannot appeal a dismissal that is the result of an academic integrity violation. The criteria for engaging in the Program Dismissal Appeal process are:

- a) The program dismissal decision was made in a manner inconsistent with University, policy or the program policy;
- b) The program dismissal procedures were not followed;
- c) Evaluation/performance standards were arbitrarily or unequally applied.

The GAPDAC panel is charged with determining whether the program dismissal was appropriately applied and, if not, for determining if the student should be reinstated in the program. In Program Dismissal Appeals, student and program representative are invited to speak before the committee.