



FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY™
A State and Land-Grant Institution • University System of Georgia

University Grievance and Conflict Resolution Procedure for Faculty and Staff

The Board of Regents Grievance Policy

The University System of Georgia is committed to providing a good working environment for its faculty and staff. Conflicts and disagreements between employees and their supervisors are inevitable. It is the policy of the University System of Georgia to resolve these disputes fairly, and at the lowest possible level. When these conflicts or disagreements occur, employees should first attempt to resolve them through discussion with their supervisor.

Overview

This policy is intended to provide an avenue for resolution of conflicts at the lowest possible level. Attempted resolution may be addressed through the grievance/disciplinary review process or the dispute resolution process.

A grievance or disciplinary review will be available to handle claims that a person has been harmed by any action that violates the policies of either the institution or the Board of Regents.

A grievance will not be available to dispute:

- promotion and tenure decisions,
- performance evaluations,
- hiring decisions,
- classification appeals,
- challenges to grades or assessments,
- challenges to salary decisions,
- challenges to transfers or reassignments,
- termination or layoff because of lack of work or elimination of position,
- investigations or decisions reached under the institution's Harassment Policy,
- normal supervisory counseling

In addition, these formal procedures will not be available to a student or employee who has chosen to seek relief through a department, school or unit's internal grievance procedure unless such procedure failed to provide a fair and impartial hearing and an adequate mechanism for appeal or review;

Circumstances under Which Grievances May be Filed:

An employee may file a grievance only if:

- The employee has been suspended; or

- The employee has been discharged; or
- The employee has been demoted, or their salary has been reduced

An employee may not file a grievance, even in the above circumstances, if:

- The discharge occurred during the six (6)-month provisional period;
- They have been adversely affected by a reorganization, program modification or financial exigency (such employees may apply to the Board of Regents for review);
- The issue underlying the grievance is a charge of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, religion or sexual discrimination. Such charges should be directed to the Affirmative Action/EEO Officer.
- The issues being grieved have been previously heard by an administrative panel at the institution.

Grievance Procedures

An employee may file a grievance by completing a grievance form and submitting it to the chief human resources officer (or other office designated to handle grievances). Unless there is good cause for delay, a grievance must be filed within ten (10) working days of the notice of suspension or discharge. If filed after that time, the grievance must be accompanied by a written explanation for the delay. The Chief Human Resources Officer will rule on whether the employee had good cause for filing the grievance late. Upon submission of the grievance statement, the grievant will be provided with a copy of the formal grievance policy and other documents pertaining to grievance hearing procedures. The employee shall be entitled to the procedural protections of a hearing before a Board of Review. The Board of Review hearing may take place either before or after the effective date of the personnel decision in question.

Human Resources Administrative Practice Manual: Employee Relations: Grievance Policy
http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/grievance_policy/

Human Resources Administrative Practice Manual: Employment: Dismissal, Demotions, or Suspensions
http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/dismissal_demotions_or_suspensions

Notwithstanding any other provisions stated in this policy, faculty members subject to dismissal prior to the end of his/her contract period shall also be afforded the procedural protections as outlined in Board of Regents policy manual 8.3.9. <http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C245/>. Faculty members with concerns relative to academic freedom or promotion and tenure denials are afforded the procedural protections as outlined in the Faculty Handbook. Full-time faculty members subject to non-renewal at the end of a contract period, after receiving the requisite notice, shall be entitled to the procedural protections of a face-to-face meeting with the Provost. If the faculty member wishes to further appeal the decision, s/he may submit his or her concerns in writing within five (5) working days following the meeting with the Provost to the Chief Human Resources Officer. A non-oral review of the non-renewal decision will be conducted by the Chief Human Resources Officer and the Chief Compliance Officer. They will then, within ten (10) working days after the receipt of such appeal, collectively submit their recommendation(s) to the faculty member and the President. In making his/her decision, the President will not be bound by the recommendation(s). The President

should, within ten (10) working days after the receipt of such recommendation(s), advise the faculty member in writing of his/her decision, or the President may refer the matter back for further response and recommendation(s) before rendering his or her final decision. Should the President, in his/her discretion, decide to meet face-to-face with the faculty member, the timeline to respond in writing will be tolled until after the meeting has taken place. The employee should also be advised by the President in writing of his or her right to apply to the Board of Regents Office of Legal Affairs for a discretionary review of the President's decision.

The Board of Regents' Policy on Dispute Resolution

As a first step, complainants should try to resolve problems and complaints by contacting their immediate supervisor or, in the case of a student, the academic department head or unit director. This initial contact should be made within ten (10) working days from the occurrence of the problem. The supervisor or department head should then arrange a meeting with the complainant, and all concerned should make a good faith effort to resolve the problem. The dispute resolution coordinator will be available to assist in these initial efforts to resolve disputes.

If the dispute cannot be resolved through the efforts outlined above, the parties may be referred to the dispute resolution coordinator to discuss whether mediation is an appropriate means for resolving the dispute. Mediation is a process that helps people resolve disputes for themselves in a mutually acceptable way in which everyone involved in the dispute meets with one or more trained mediators. In a private setting, the mediator provides an orderly, simple process for the parties to discuss their dispute along with their feelings, perceptions and needs. The goal is to begin communication and move towards resolving the dispute in a manner agreeable to all.

If the parties are unable to informally resolve the dispute, they do not wish to pursue mediation, or are unsuccessful in resolving the dispute through mediation, the dispute resolution coordinator will advise the person raising the dispute of what other resources may be available, if any.

Human Resources Administrative Practice Manual: Employee Relations: Dispute Resolution
http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/dispute_resolution

The Grievance Policy for Faculty and Staff

The university grievance policy is available to all benefited employees at Fort Valley State University.

Definitions

- "Conflict" or "dispute" refers to any controversy or debate in the workplace that is serious enough in nature that some resolution is required in order to maintain efficiency and civility.
- "Party" refers to a person directly involved in a conflict or dispute.
- "University Grievance Committee" is a university committee, from which a Grievance Hearing Panel may be selected. This committee may make recommendations to the president on general issues of grievance and conflict resolution policies.
- "Grievance Hearing Panel" consists of members selected from the University Grievance Committee to hear a specific case and make recommendations for action on a specific case.

"Formal Grievance" means the filing of a written grievance which results in the use of the University Grievance Committee to resolve the dispute.

- "Mediation" is one form of alternative dispute resolution where a trained third party assists parties in resolving a dispute. Other forms of alternative dispute resolution include facilitated conversations where many of the processes of mediation are used except without the typical structure of mediation.
- "Informal Grievance" shall be deemed to refer to a dispute being made by any means other than a formal grievance, indicating the desire of the complainant to resolve the dispute without the use of the University Grievance Committee.
- "Dispute Resolution Coordinator" is the Chief Human Resources Officer and charged with assisting employees with conflict at all levels of the institution. The dispute resolution coordinator keeps communication regarding conflict confidential to the extent allowed by law.

General Procedures

Conflicts sometimes arise in the relationship between the university, as an employer, and its employees. Conflict also arises among university employees. Both the employee with a grievance and the university benefit when the university responds to grievances promptly and fairly. Grievances of discrimination shall be referred to the Chief Compliance Officer and will be investigated in accordance with university procedures. All employees shall receive fair and equitable treatment at Fort Valley State University.

In keeping with the spirit of collegiality, the goal is to resolve an employee dispute or grievance promptly and fairly and if possible through communication between the parties directly involved in the dispute. This is consistent with our philosophy of building an environment that is fair and equitable and supports and values open communication at all levels. The grievance procedures at Fort Valley State University consist of three parts: Informal Dispute Resolution Procedure (e.g., further discussion, conflict coaching), Alternative Dispute Resolution (e.g., mediation, facilitated discussion), and Formal Grievance Procedures (e.g., grievance hearing, administrative decision).

Informal Dispute Resolution

The employee will seek to resolve the dispute with the colleague directly or immediate supervisor consistent with our practice of resolving disputes at the lowest possible level in the organization. These discussions should be confidential. Verbal or written statements are an acceptable means of requesting a meeting during the informal dispute process.

If the dispute involves the immediate supervisor, the employee and/or the supervisor shall have the option of having a confidential discussion, and/or shall be given an opportunity to have another employee, peer or human resources representative present as a neutral observer.

If the dispute remains unresolved, the employee may then seek to resolve the dispute at each level of supervision.

If the dispute is not resolved or if circumstances of the grievance prevent the employee from using the above mentioned steps, the employee may present the dispute to the dispute resolution coordinator or human resources director at any time during the informal dispute process.

The dispute resolution coordinator shall meet with the employee and the supervisor and others as appropriate, in an attempt to resolve the informal dispute.

If the dispute involves accusations or appearances of discrimination, the dispute resolution coordinator will immediately contact the Chief Compliance Officer.

At any time during the informal grievance/dispute process, an employee may choose to pursue mediation or a formal grievance, keeping in mind the alternatives to the formal process.

Mediation and/or Facilitated Discussion Procedures

Mediation is an informal process that involves a trained facilitator who will assist in effecting a voluntary resolution of the dispute. The objective of a mediation or facilitated discussion process is to come to an agreement that is fair and meets the needs of the parties involved in the conflict. The process is confidential and is conducted in a confidential setting. Fort Valley State University may consult with the University System of Georgia when selecting a trained mediator.

Mediation does not waive the rights of any aggrieved party to seek resolution of his/her grievance through formal avenues. Mediation is a cost effective, voluntary, fast and efficient way to resolve grievances; it encourages reaching a mutually acceptable resolution.

If one or both parties are interested in pursuing mediation or facilitated discussion as an option, they should contact the dispute resolution coordinator. Both parties involved in the dispute must agree to voluntarily request mediation. If the parties agree and a mediator(s) can be utilized; the dispute resolution coordinator will arrange the time and location for the mediation or facilitated discussion.

Reasonable attempts will be made to arrange for the mediation /facilitated discussion within ten (10) working days of the request. The mediator will facilitate the discussion between the disputing parties to help find a mutually agreeable solution to the conflict. The mediator will not impose a solution. At any time during the mediation process, either with or without reaching an agreement, the employee may file a formal grievance.

Formal Grievance Procedures

Faculty or staff employees may pursue resolution of their grievance through a formal grievance process. The following procedures are in place to provide the framework and process to resolve formal grievances.

The Chief Human Resources Officer serves as the grievance coordinator and has the responsibility of managing the expeditious and fair resolution of grievance hearings. The main role of the Chief Human Resources Officer is to assist the parties, the grievance chairperson, and grievance panel in administering procedures. If the grievance involves accusations or appearances of discrimination, including but not limited to sexual harassment, the Chief Human Resources Officer will immediately contact the Chief Compliance Officer. If the conflict involves human resources personnel, then the Chief Legal Officer shall facilitate the grievance process in the place of the Chief Human Resources Officer.

The request for a grievance hearing must be filed with the Chief Human Resources Officer within twenty (20) calendar days of the event that has given rise to the grievance. If filed after that time, the grievance must be accompanied by a written explanation for the delay. The Chief Human Resources will rule on whether the employee had good cause for filing the grievance late. Fort Valley State University encourages the use of our informal procedures as a means of resolving conflict. Therefore, the Chief Human Resources Officer may ask the complainant to discuss the possibility of mediation as an alternative to a hearing with the dispute resolution coordinator.

If mediation is selected as a means to informally resolve the dispute, the Chief Human Resources will extend the time for the submission of the written grievance request up to twenty (20) calendar days following the completion of the mediation process.

To initiate a formal grievance hearing, the grievant is required to prepare and submit a grievance request form (or other such writing that substantially responds to the bullet points below) to the Chief Human Resources Officer to ensure the University Grievance Committee will address the specific issues that concern the grievant. The grievance request form can be obtained from the Chief Human Resources Officer or it can be accessed from the human resources webpage. The information listed below should be included to ensure that the complainant identifies all the issues and facts. The form must include:

- The complainant's name, and job title;
- The department/unit in which the complainant is employed;
- The nature of the problem or dispute;
- The communication that has taken place between the complainant and his or her academic department head, supervisor, and/or second level supervisor concerning the matter;
- The supervisors and/or superiors responsible, if applicable;
- The reason why the grievant disagrees with that response;
- The grievant's suggestion for proper resolution of the matter or remedy sought;
- Identification of any witnesses who may have relevant information regarding the dispute; and
- Identification of any previous recommendations to resolve the issue.

The Chief Human Resources Officer shall determine and respond in writing to the complainant as to whether the grievance is eligible for review by the grievance panel.

- The Chief Human Resources Officer will consult the Board of Regents policies on what is and is not to be accepted for a hearing.
- For faculty, the Board of Regents prohibits the hearing of a grievance for certain decisions and organizational processes, but claims of violating policies or procedures that lead to those decisions and processes may be heard by the committee. If the grievance is accepted for a hearing, the university grievance committee co-chairs will instruct the parties as to the procedures to be followed in selecting the members of the grievance hearing panel and in conducting the hearing. If the grievance is not accepted for hearing, the Chief Human Resources Officer will inform the complainant in writing. The complainant may then request a review by the Chief of Staff. If the Chief of Staff upholds the original decision of the Chief Human Resources Officer, the complainant and other involved participants will

be notified and reasons given. If the Chief of Staff decides the grievance should be heard, the process continues and within ten (10) working days following receipt of a grievance, the chair will have the grievance panel selected as described below. At any time during the formal grievance process the employee may choose to resolve the conflict through mediation. In this event, the grievance process will be suspended pending completion of the mediation process.

Establishment of the University Grievance Committee

The University Grievance Committee shall be a university committee that hears the complaints of university employees who have exhausted other channels but who have not received satisfaction.

There will be a six (6)-member faculty contingent appointed by the president, in consult with the provost, and charged with hearing faculty grievances. There will also be a six (6)-member staff grievance contingent appointed by the president to hear staff grievances. The Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Legal Officer shall be non-voting ex-officio members of the University Grievance Committee.

Nominations for University Grievance Committee membership may be solicited by the president from: the officers of the Faculty Senate, the officers of the Staff Council and the Chief Human Resources Officer. The president shall appoint a tenured faculty member and a staff member to serve as co-chairs. The members of the University Grievance Committee shall be selected at the beginning of the academic year. Members serve in one year appointments and may be renewed at the pleasure of the president. Newly selected members will meet within four weeks following their selection with the co-chairs, the Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Legal Officer for orientation and training.

Eligibility of Service to the University Grievance Committee

All regular employees with at least three (3) years of continuous service at Fort Valley State University are potential University Grievance Committee members. In addition, faculty members must be tenured. If, in an exceptional circumstance, a non-tenured faculty member needs to be placed on the Committee, s/he shall not hear a grievance involving a tenured faculty member in his/her department or college. No Employees' names shall be removed from the pool if an employee is a grievant, or an employee is named or otherwise directly involved in an ongoing grievance.

Procedures of the Grievance Hearing Panel

Each Grievance Hearing Panel shall consist of the grievance panel chair (one of the co-chairs of the University Grievance Committee) and two (2) committee members. If the grievance is between employees with faculty status, then all three members shall be chosen from the faculty contingent. If the grievance is between non-faculty staff then all three members shall be chosen from the staff contingent. If the grievance is between faculty and staff, then two from faculty (inclusive of the faculty co-chair) and one from the staff contingent shall be chosen.

At least one non-voting ex-officio member (i.e., Chief Human Resources Officer or Chief Legal Officer) shall be chosen by the grievance panel chair to be present during the hearing. If an outside attorney is involved in the hearing, both the Chief Human Resources Officer will be present as the

institutional representative and the Chief Legal Officer will be present to oversee the integrity of the process.

Excusing Grievance Hearing Panel Members

Grievance panel members who are drawn as possible grievance hearing panelists may be excused by the hearing panel grievance panel chair upon request, if: there is a bona fide conflict of interest between the hearing panel member and either of the parties of the grievance, the potential hearing panel member is ill, or service on the hearing panel should be excused for good cause shown such as, but not limited to, conferences, job responsibilities, family illness, etc.

Notice to Parties and Grievance Panel Members

After the grievance hearing panel has been selected, written notice of the time and date set for the hearing shall be hand delivered, emailed, and/or mailed to the parties and to the members of the grievance hearing panel by the grievance panel chair, typically no less than ten (10) working days before the scheduled date of the hearing.

The Chief Human Resources Officer or Chief Legal Officer, in concert with the grievance panel chair, will coordinate meeting participation with the selected hearing panel members and parties prior to the delivery of the written meeting notice.

Removal of Grievance Hearing Panel Members for Cause

A party may present a request, in writing, at least five (5) working days in advance of any hearing, to the grievance panel chair, or if not yet determined to the Chief Human Resources Officer, to remove any member of the grievance panel for reasonable cause, including, but not limited to, conflicts of interest or apparent conflicts of interest. A party can make no more than two (2) challenges to panel members.

If the challenge request is granted, he or she shall fill the vacancy from the remaining members of the University Grievance Committee. In addition, the grievance panel chair may, on his or her own motion, remove any member for reasonable cause and replace the member with an alternate member. If a party requests the grievance panel chair is removed, the Chief Human Resources Officer will review this request and, if granted, a new chair for the hearing will be appointed.

Members of the Grievance Hearing Panel may recuse themselves if they determine that for any reason they will be unable to render impartial service on a Grievance Hearing Panel.

Duties of the Grievance Panel Chair

The grievance panel chair of each grievance panel shall not vote (except in the case of a tie) and shall be responsible for the conduct of the hearing and implementation of the grievance procedures. The chair's duties include the following:

- Assuring that all parties are familiar with the grievance procedures.
- Consulting with the dispute resolution coordinator, Chief Human Resources Officer or Chief Legal Officer to determine if the grievance should be heard by the grievance panel.
- Notifying the grievant and other parties in writing as needed regarding the status of the grievance.
- Assuring that the grievance has been submitted as outlined above.

- Following all communication responsibilities in a timely manner as outlined in the review or grievance process.

Grievance Hearing Panel Procedures

The following procedural rules should be observed by the Grievance Committee in hearing complaints of faculty and staff. These hearing procedures shall be adhered to for all procedural protections as afforded by all applicable Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and Fort Valley State University policies.

- The grievance hearing shall be conducted in a confidential setting, and confidentiality of the hearing shall be preserved by the grievance hearing panel members, as applicable pursuant to Georgia open meetings and open records laws.
- The parties have the right to select one (1) person to attend as an observer or advisor. The advisor may be an attorney and participate in the hearing in an advisory capacity to his client only. The advisor may address the grievance hearing chair, but may not address the other parties or grievance hearing panel members. The Chief Human Resources Officer or Chief Legal Officer may assist the grievance hearing chair as needed.
- The hearing shall be recorded or alternatively a written transcript created. The Office of Human Resources shall supply the tapes and recorders for the hearing. The tape recordings of the proceedings shall be kept within a secured area in the human resources office and will be available to the parties concerned at a reasonable cost.
- An oath or affirmation shall be administered to all witnesses by any person authorized by the State of Georgia to administer oaths.
- The parties shall have the right to question all witnesses who appear at the hearing. Should a witness be unable to appear because of illness or other cause acceptable to the grievance panel chair, a sworn statement or affidavit of the witness may be introduced into the record. The panel will not be bound by strict rules of legal evidence. It may receive any evidence deemed by the grievance hearing chair to be of value.
- The hearing shall be investigative in nature and shall not be viewed as or conducted under the rules of evidence or procedures applicable to evidentiary or adversarial hearings. The hearing panel may receive any evidence deemed by the Chair to be of potential value in determining the issues involved. The Chair, in consult with the Chief Legal Officer as necessary, shall decide all questions of the admissibility of evidence or other procedural matters.
- The hearing should only last one session (day). It shall be at the discretion of the grievance hearing chair to reconvene the hearing if another session is needed.
- All persons involved should avoid public statements and publicity about the hearing process.
- The panel should complete the hearing and transmit its recommendations to the President within thirty days after the grievance is filed.

Results of the Hearing

The panel should complete its report within ten (10) working days after the grievance is heard. The Chair should send copies of the report to the President, the parties, Chief Human Resources Officer, and Chief Legal Officer. The panel may discuss the appropriateness of potential

recommendations with the Chief Legal Officer, which shall be advisory only, and shall in no way commit the panel to any suggested course of action.

Grievance Panel Recommendations to the President

Any findings of fact and recommendations made by the hearing panel shall be provided to all parties and to the President and are advisory only.

In making his/her decision, the President will not be bound by the findings of the Grievance Committee. The President should, within ten (10) working days after the receipt of such written notification of the recommendation(s) of the Grievance Committee, advise the faculty member or staff member, Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Legal Officer, and other applicable parties concerned in writing of his/her decision, or the President may refer the matter back to the Chair of the Grievance Committee for further response and recommendation(s) before rendering his or her final decision.

The employee should also be advised by the President in writing of his or her right to apply to the Board of Regents Office of Legal Affairs for a discretionary review of the President's decision.

Time Limits

The time limits as described in this formal grievance procedure (with the exception of time limits imposed by Board of Regents Bylaws or Policies) may be waived or extended with the consent of both parties and/or the president or his/her designee, due to extenuating circumstances or to permit mediation or any other informal process.

Prohibition of Retaliatory Action

No participant shall be harassed, intimidated, or otherwise penalized for involvement in the grievance procedures.

FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

It is the policy of Fort Valley State University to provide affirmative action and equal opportunity for all employees, students and applicants for employment or admission without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin or disability or veteran status.

Fort Valley State University does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment with regard to any opportunity for which the employee is qualified. For additional information or to file a complaint under the provisions of this policy, employees and applicants should contact the Equal Opportunity (EOO) Office, Huntington Hall, Suite 219. Every member of the Fort Valley State University community is expected to uphold this policy as a matter of mutual respect and fundamental fairness in human relations. All members of the faculty, staff, and student body are expected to ensure that nondiscriminatory practices are followed at the University.

Fort Valley State University is committed to a policy that ensures the fulfillment of equal opportunity without unlawful discrimination for all applicants for employment, employees, and students. This policy is administered without regard to race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, disability, or sexual orientation. The university complies with the requirements of Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, Executive Order 11246, as amended, the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), as amended, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 and the Georgia Fair Employment Act of 1978, as amended. In addition, FVSU has implemented an internal policy which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and their implementing and supplemental regulations, save for any Eleventh Amendment legislative and/or judicial interpretations to the contrary.

Faculty, staff and students who feel that any of their rights under these regulations have been violated are entitled to request a review of the matter. Any complaints dealing with any type of discrimination should be addressed to the University's Equal Opportunity Officer (EOO). The procedures for seeking redress under these regulations are as follows:

COMPLAINT PROCESS

1. If at all possible, the person should first make an attempt to consult and work with the individual involved to resolve the matter;
2. If the person cannot obtain satisfactory results from such a conference, s/he must file a complaint within 20 (twenty) working days in writing with the EOO. This timeframe can be extended or waived by the EOO for good cause shown.

3. In situations involving faculty or staff, the EOO will first engage the Director of Human Resources or his/her designee to investigate the complaint (if this has not already occurred) and issue a recommendation. In situations involving a student, the EOO will first engage the Vice President of Student Success or his/her designee to investigate the complaint (if this has not already occurred) and issue a recommendation or decision.
4. If the recommendation or decision is not satisfactory to one or more of the parties, s/he must notify the EOO in writing within five (5) working days. This timeframe can be extended or waived by the EOO for good cause shown.
5. The EOO will then render a decision on the matter within five (5) working days. The EOO will provide a rationale for the decision. Note that if the EOO officer, in his/her discretion, determines that additional investigative measures are necessary, this time frame may be extended accordingly. Ordinarily, the time frame will not exceed thirty (30) working days.
6. If either party is dissatisfied with the decision of the EOO, the party can request in writing, within five (5) business days of receiving the decision of the EOO, that the President of Fort Valley State University review the matter. S/he will inform the parties in writing of his/her decision, and the decision will be final at the institution level. The decision will be in writing, typically within ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the appeal.
7. Either party may appeal the decision of the Fort Valley State University President to the Board of Regents Office of Legal Affairs. In accordance with University System of Georgia Board of Regents Policy 8.6, the appeal must be presented in writing to the Office of Legal Affairs within 20 calendar days after the decision of the president.