2506 – Degree Revocation

Academic integrity rests with all members of the college community, and academic decisions are based upon trust between faculty and students. The college's award of academic credit and degrees is its certification of student achievement. If students acquire their academic credentials by deceit, fraud, misrepresentation, or the dishonest acts of others, they deceive not only the college but also those who may eventually rely upon the knowledge and integrity of its graduates. Such misconduct may not be discovered until the student has left the college or received a degree. In such instances, the college reserves the right to decertify credit (either in whole or in part), revoke grade(s) or degree(s) and rescind any Barton County Community College certification that warrants that the student successfully completed course work or requirements for a degree. Decisions to take such actions will be made only after careful consideration of all the available evidence.

1. Upon receipt of a charge that a degree recipient improperly completed or failed to complete the course work or requirements for a degree at Barton County Community College, the Chief Academic Officer shall appoint an investigatory panel including at least three faculty members. This panel shall determine if there is reasonable cause to believe the charges against the degree recipient.

    1.1. The degree recipient shall be notified of the investigation.
    1.2. The degree recipient shall be afforded 30 days from notification of the investigation to supply any material appropriate to the charge and such material shall be provided to the panel.
    1.3. The panel may obtain any material deemed relevant to the investigation. All College departments and offices shall cooperate with the panel.
    1.4. The investigation shall be conducted in a confidential manner.
    1.5. The panel shall file a report and recommendation to the Chief Academic Officer.

2. If the Chief Academic Officer, after reviewing the report of the investigatory panel, finds that there is reasonable cause to believe that the degree recipient improperly completed or failed to complete the course work or requirements for a degree, the Chief Academic Officer shall notify the office of the President to request that a hearing be conducted.

    2.1. Upon receipt of such notification from the Chief Academic Officer, the President shall convene an ad hoc hearing panel to consider the case. The panel shall be composed of seven tenured faculty members. Tenured faculty who hold administrative appointments shall not be members of the panel.
    2.2. The panel shall be charged by the President to hear the case and determine whether the degree recipient improperly completed or failed to complete the course work or requirements for a degree.
    2.3. The panel members will select a hearing officer who shall correspond with the degree recipient and direct the proceedings hearing. The panel will also entertain written requests to excuse panel members at this time.
    2.4. The panel will set a hearing date, providing at least 30 days notice of the hearing to the degree recipient. At this time, the college will also provide the degree recipient with the names of the panel members. Both the degree

recipient and college shall exchange copies of all documents to be introduced at the hearing at least 15 days prior to the hearing.

2.5. The degree recipient shall have the right to have an advisor present, who may be an attorney, to participate in the hearing. Any cost required shall be the responsibility of the student. In the event that the degree recipient is represented by an advisor, the college may also be represented by counsel who may also participate in the hearing. Any expense incurred shall be the responsibility of the degree recipient.

2.6. The formal rules of evidence shall not apply to the proceedings. Any participant who becomes disruptive or engages in harassment may be asked to leave the hearing.

2.7. The panel, at its discretion, may conduct a pre-hearing conference with the degree recipient. The degree recipient may be accompanied by an advisor.

2.8. The Chief Academic Officer shall present the charge at the hearing, including the material considered by the investigatory panel.

2.9. The degree recipient shall be afforded an opportunity to present any and all relevant evidence, including relevant witnesses and cross-examine any witnesses presented by the Chief Academic Officer. The panel members may question the witnesses. Opening and closing statements in this order will be allowed: the Chief Academic Officer, the college's legal counsel and the degree recipient and/or the advisor.

2.10. The panel will provide for the hearing to be recorded by tape recorder or stenographer. A copy of the recording shall be provided to the degree recipient or the advisor at his/her own cost upon request.

2.11. After hearing the case, the panel shall render a decision regarding the allegation. If the panel finds by the greater weight of the evidence that the degree recipient engaged in misconduct concerning the degree, certification or course work, the panel shall recommend an appropriate sanction to the President.

2.12. Sanctions may include revocation of grade(s), the degree, decertification of credit and/or rescission of certification.

3. If the panel finds against the degree recipient, the degree recipient may file an appeal to the President within 15 days of the panel's decision.

3.1. Appeals must be in writing and include the degree recipient's valid mailing address. The Chief Academic Officer will be afforded an opportunity to respond to the appeal in writing. A copy of the response will be made available to the degree recipient.

3.2. The only grounds for appeal are errors of due process, findings of fact not supported by the greater weight of the evidence, or discovery of substantial new facts not available at the time of the hearing.

3.3. The President shall consider the appeal prior to acting upon the recommendation of the hearing panel. If no appeal is made within the 15-day requirement or if the appeal is denied, the President shall then act upon the panel's findings and recommendation.

3.4. In reaching a decision, the President may review all or any part of the proceedings and shall then make a decision.

4. If the decision is to revoke a degree, the degree recipient's official transcript will be corrected to reflect the sanction. A corrected transcript will be forwarded to all

individuals and entities who were sent an official transcript after the degree was initially posted to the transcript.

5. If at any time during the proceedings the responsible body or person finds in favor of the degree recipient, the charges will be dropped and no further record shall be made. All documents collected in reference to the charges will be placed in a sealed file in the office of the President.

(Based on policy 1505; revised and approved by President on 1/14/08) (with permission of the University of Houston.)