




**Alcorn**  
State University

TO: Deans

FR:   
John G. Igwebuike  
Interim Provost & EVPAA

DA: October 29, 2018

RE: **PROTOCOL & CHAIN OF COMMAND**

As we continue to streamline systems to increase customer service to meet our mission, it would be helpful to craft a personal message to your leadership, support staff, instructors and faculty encouraging them to channel all academic issues from the point of origin through the office of the dean. Academic Affairs continues to receive academic requests (advising, graduation, overrides, grade petitions) originated at *Academic Affairs* as opposed to the proper point of origin. As a result, Academic Affairs must remand back to the starting point (e.g. departments) in keeping with due process, to establish facts, verify due diligence, clarify issues, and confirm allegations/assertions. Common issues include grade appeals, grade disputes, missed UWs, unsubmitted midterm grades, grievances, unsubmitted senior grades, unsubmitted final grades, registration closed, missing grades, or unsubstantiated incompletes.

Advise students, instructors/faculty requestors within your units to route academic concerns through departments to the unit dean. This efficiency step keeps the school's academic leader in the loop, informed, and updated on all issues appertaining to their unit; hence, school leaders can more timely respond to the requestor, who will likely feel more served as their issues get addressed in a progressive, stepwise fashion. As many issues need not--nor should not--reach Academic Affairs especially where clear policy outlines the decision, the requestor will not feel they are receiving the proverbial runaround. If a unit's academic matter is to reach Academic Affairs, it should be on a dean's direct request to Academic Affairs after due diligence is best done, issues are sharpened, and facts clarified, and case file furnished.

Of course, no university personnel can guarantee or control where or when requesting parties (student, parent, third party) will initiate their concerns. Still, proper protocols and procedures should be shared--and be documented as shared--with the requester early in the conversation: Academic matters are initiated at the appropriate point of origin and are routed stepwise up the proper chain of command to said unit leader/dean before going to Academic Affairs--or the Office of the President, IHL, or external third party. As already mentioned, Academic Affairs (as well as the Office of the President and IHL) staff will remand requestors--and their requests--back to academic units in order to (a) ensure orderly resolution of matters; (b) avoid procedural error; (c) ensure compliance with the Student Code of Conduct, Faculty Handbook, IHL/university policy, state/federal laws, and relevant due process; as well as (d) keep matters moving through the appropriate chain of command to ensure progressive checks-and-balances.