APPEALS PROCESS

Students who wish to appeal any decision of the Teacher Education Candidate Review Committee may do so within 10 business days of the date of the decision letter. Appeals are to be submitted to the dean of the student's academic school, and will be reviewed by a committee comprised of the deans of the three academic schools and the vice president for student affairs. Some grounds for an appeal might include: unjustified decision, personal hardship, disproportionate consequence, or new information. Further information may be sought from the student's dean.

DUE PROCESS RIGHTS WITHIN THE TEACHER EDUCATION CANDIDATE REVIEW

Students have the right to:

1) Be informed in writing of the steps involved with background checks and disposition reviews pertaining to their education record.
2) The right to written notification of the outcome of a TECRC decision within 10 school days of the date of decision.
3) The right to respond to all information used in making decisions that negatively impact upon the student's academic major.
4) The right to appeal the outcome of a decision.
5) The right to know what information is kept in the student's file, and the right to know where the student file is maintained and how long it is kept.

Approved by the Teacher Education Council (TEC) on 4/7/2005

SUNY Cortland
Teacher Education
Candidate Review
Committee

INFORMATION FOR TEACHER EDUCATION CANDIDATES

DUE PROCESS INFORMATION

What you need to know about background checks

For more information, contact:
Associate Dean Marley Barduhn, Chair
Teacher Education Candidate Review Committee
(607) 753-5431 Cornish Hall Room 206
barduhn@cortland.edu; www.cortland.edu/ncate

INTRODUCTION

Teacher candidates have a special responsibility to be positive role models. The teacher certification process involves assessing "good moral character." SUNY Cortland, therefore, has identified important dispositions for all teacher education candidates to emulate. Each department may set its own individual disposition requirements. Additionally, the Teacher Education Candidate Review Committee reviews information relative to any patterns of alcohol, drug, or violent behavior as part of reviewing character requirements for aspiring teachers.

Teacher candidates in all programs of study are expected to develop and reflect the dispositions that are delineated in professional, state, and institutions standards. Compulsory character dispositions include: honesty; integrity; caring and empathy for others; work ethic; diligence; personal and social responsibility; and accountability. Professional dispositions include the following essential traits: collegiality; dedication to profession; leadership; change agent; cooperation and collaboration; respect and value education; confidentiality; and professional conduct that includes demonstrating good moral character and ethical behavior. [Source: 2004-05 Student Teaching Handbook, introduction and page 7.]

CHARGE & AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION CANDIDATE REVIEW COMMITTEE (TECRC)

The Teacher Education Council (TEC) has charged a subcommittee (TECRC) with reviewing applications to the teacher education program; developing a rubric for evaluation; continually assessing candidate qualifications at various check points, and notifying questionable applicants of the committee's decision.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

1) When students apply for admission into their teaching major, the application asks students if they have ever been convicted of a felony, misdemeanor, or violation, and if they have ever received a discharge other than honorable from armed services, and if they have ever been found in violation of the *Code of Student Conduct*. It also asks about any incidents of academic dishonesty and if the student is a registered sex offender. Transfer students are asked if they have had a judicial record, or have been suspended or dismissed from a prior institution. All applicants are also asked if they have previously had a teaching certificate denied.
*[*NOTE: Applicants are required to sign a statement indicating that if they have any change in status relative to violations of this nature, they are obligated to inform their associate dean.]*

2) The academic departments forward names of any students who mark "yes" for any of these items to the Teacher Education Candidate Review Committee (TECRC) for further review.

3) Those who self-reported any "yes" answers go through a judicial background check, or other review such as a review of academic integrity, to verify the information that has been submitted.

4) The TECRC uses a rubric to review judicial histories. (A copy of the rubric may be requested from the Associate Dean's Office.) Most violations are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If a student has a pattern of alcohol or drug use or a history of violent or harassing behavior and/or if the student is on disciplinary probation or has been found in violation of academic dishonesty and is not considered to be a student in good standing, the committee may choose to conditionally accept or deny an application. A conditional acceptance typically restricts a student's ability to enroll in coursework with a field component (such as student teaching) until the student is off disciplinary probation and/or may require the student to submit a reflection paper for review by the committee. Students are informed that further violations could jeopardize their continuance in the teacher education program.

5) If the TECRC decides on a conditional acceptance or denial, the chair of the committee sends a certified, return-receipt letter to the student with any other requirements (e.g., a reflection essay) to complete. The student is notified that he/she has a right to appeal the decision to his/her academic dean, and an appeals committee, comprised of the deans of the three academic schools and the vice president for student affairs, will be convened.

6) Another checkpoint for TECRC review occurs prior to student teaching. Each semester, the Field Placement Office sends a list of names of all students planning to student teach the following semester to Judicial Affairs. All records are checked, and a report is generated for review by the TECRC. The committee also reviews any academic dishonesty or subsequent convictions which may have occurred after the initial background check. TECRC ascertains if each student is eligible to student teach based on the same rubric used during the initial application check. It is important to note that if a student was not truthful in self reporting on the initial application OR if the student has subsequent convictions, incidents of academic dishonesty, or judicial violations from the time of application, their status is evaluated again, and there may be consequences. *NOTE: The TECRC reserves the right to review disciplinary matters involving teacher education candidates that come to its attention at any time while the candidate is enrolled at SUNY Cortland.*