

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 295 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE

March 21, 2005

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a hearing on Friday, December 3rd, 2004, at which the following were present:

Professor Ed Morgan, Chair
Professor Pamela Catton
Ms Yuki Johnson
Mr. Ari Kopolovic
Ms. Maureen Somerville

Mr. Paul Holmes, Judicial Affairs Officer

In Attendance:

Mr. P., the Appellant
Professor Gordon Anderson, University of Toronto at Mississauga

The student, Mr. P., appeals from the decision of the Academic Appeals Board of the University of Toronto at Mississauga ["UTM"], which denied his petition for withdrawal without penalty from three courses (COM120F5, PSY100Y5, SOC101Y5) and to graduate with a CGPA of less than 1.5.

Mr. P. commenced his university studies in 1989, and received failing grades that year. Due to his low grades he was on academic probation during the 1991-92 school year. As a result of unimproved grades, he was suspended for a year in 1992-93. He returned to his studies in 1993-94, and due to further poor academic performance was put on suspension for a three-year period at the end of that academic year. After petitioning for permission to return he was allowed to come back to studies on probation in the 1994-95 winter session. He registered for one course in the summer session of 1996 and received a D+ in that course, earning him another suspension for a period of three years. He returned to the university in the fall term of 2000. In 2004 he

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petitioned to graduate with less than the required 1.50 CGPA; in the alternative, he seeks to withdraw from three courses that he took, and failed, in 1989-90 – i.e. his first year of university.

Mr. P. states that he needs this relief from the University's requirements for graduation, or the elimination of the failing grades he received in the three 15 year old courses, because of job requirements at the automobile manufacturing plant at which he is employed. He explained that he has had a difficult home life and is not in an economic position to give up his current job. The petition is a result of the fact that his employer requires him to have a university degree in order to keep his job.

Professor Gordon Anderson, the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board, contends on behalf of the University that the relief sought by Mr. P. would be precedent setting and should be denied. The Committee agrees. Much as the Committee has sympathy for his personal situation, Mr. P. has presented no university-related grounds on which to grant the relief he seeks. After a lengthy history of poor academic performance, Mr. P. has simply not met the academic standards that the university sets for its graduates. The requirement of a cumulative GPA of 1.50 is a bare minimum that the Committee would only waive in the most extraordinary circumstances, if ever. The student's need to keep his job is simply not an adequate ground for such extraordinary relief, especially after the passage of so much time and after so many unsuccessful attempts to re-register and to raise his CGPA. In general, it is the Committee's view that the student's need for a degree in order to satisfy an employer cannot be the basis on which it grants such a petition. The University's academic standards are set for sound reasons of academic policy and cannot simply be waived by this Committee for reasons extraneous to the university environment.

For these reasons the appeal is dismissed.

Paul Holmes
Secretary

Ed Morgan
Chair

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