

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 229 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE

April 27, 1998

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a hearing on Monday, April 27, 1998, at which the following were present:

Professor Emeritus Alan Mewett, Acting Chair
Professor Ethel Auster
Professor Frank DiCosmo
Professor John Mayhall
Mr. Faisal Raja

Ms Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman, Secretary, Academic Appeals Committee

In Attendance:

Mr. U.M., the Appellant
Associate Dean Ian McDonald, Scarborough College

The student appeals the decision of the Sub-committee on Academic Appeals of Scarborough College dismissing his appeal from the decision of the Sub-committee on Standing dismissing his petition for exemption from the following Rule:

...students who are registered as University of Toronto at Scarborough students must adhere to the requirements that at least half their courses (defined as the total number of courses that they have passed plus those they are currently taking) are University of Toronto at Scarborough courses....

At the end of the 1994 Winter Session, the student was placed on academic probation for not having obtained a sessional GPA of 1.6. At the end of the 1995 Winter Session he was suspended for one year for not having obtained either a sessional or a cumulative GPA of 1.6. He enrolled in two half courses in the 1997 Summer Session on the St. George campus, receiving a grade of C in one. He did not write the examination in the other. Again, he obtained neither a sessional nor a cumulative GPA of 1.6 and, in accordance with the College Rules, he was suspended for three years. This decision was communicated to him in August 1997. On August 18, the student petitioned for permission to write a deferred examination in

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the course in which he had failed to write the examination on the ground of ill health. This was granted. The student wrote the deferred examination and received a grade of C-. As a result, his GPA was raised to 1.85, and this amended his status from "suspended for three years" to "on academic probation", making him eligible to register in the Spring Term of the 1997 Winter Session.

This decision was communicated to the student by letter, mailed on January 14, 1998. The last day to register in spring courses was January 16 and the student petitioned to be allowed to register late in three Spring Term half courses on the St. George campus. The Secretary phoned Mr. U.M. telling him that he was in violation of the Rule and asked him which course he wished to keep. He informed her that he would keep CSC238S.

On February 24, Mr. U.M. petitioned for permission to register late also in CSC258S and MAT224S on the St. George campus and for an exemption from the Rule requiring that at least half his classes must be taken at Scarborough. This was denied on the basis that no acceptable academic reasons had been adduced for the exemption. Mr. U.M. had informed the Committee that he had, despite the refusal to allow him to register, continued to attend the two classes, with the permission of the instructors, and that he needed the registrations in the two courses in order to qualify for an OSAP loan. The Committee held that neither of these reasons justified granting the petition.

An appeal to the Scarborough Sub-committee on Academic Appeals was dismissed on April 2. At both proceedings (at which the student did not personally appear), erroneous information was presented. The Committees relied on the amended Statement of Results, showing that the student was on academic probation and they thus assumed that Mr. U.M. was eligible to register for courses in September 1997. However, at that time, i.e. September 1997, Mr. U.M. was not eligible to register since his Statement of Results then showed that he had been suspended. It was not until his petition was granted that his status was changed and the Statement accordingly amended. In fact, in this particular case, the error is of little consequence, but care should be taken at the Committee stages to ensure that information is accurate. It is no answer to say that the student could have attended and would have been able to point out the error, since that in effect puts an onus on the student to attend and there is no such onus.

The Committee had some trouble in sorting out precisely why Mr. U.M. was seeking exemption from the Rule. He stated in his petition that CSC238S was a prerequisite for other courses he was planning to take in the future, but was vague as to what those courses were; MAT224S was not offered at Scarborough this session and he needed that course in order to obtain a full-credit course for Linear Algebra MATA04Y, though as the Sub-committee pointed out, there was no necessity for him to take it in this session. In fact, as the student himself admitted, he needed three half-credit courses in order to qualify for a student loan and is currently experiencing heavy financial difficulties. He further alleged that because of the distances between the two campuses, it would be impossible for him to take CSCA58S (the same as CSC258S) at Scarborough and also MAT224S and CSC238S at St. George, but "difficult" or "inconvenient" is not the same as "impossible".

In short, this Committee is of the opinion that Mr. U.M.'s reasons for seeking the exemption from the Rule are primarily, if not entirely, based on considerations of finance and

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convenience. Whatever the reason for the Rule, it is clear that these considerations are not justifications for departing from it. Mr. U.M. was, at all times, fully aware of the Rule.

The decision of the Committee is that the appeal should be rejected and the decision of the Sub-committee on Academic Appeals be affirmed.

Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman
Secretary

Alan Mewett
Acting Chairman

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