

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
GOVERNING COUNCIL**

**REPORT NUMBER 299 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS
COMMITTEE**

May 16, 2004

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a hearing on Wednesday, May 11, 2005, at which the following were present:

Assistant Dean Kaye Joachim, Chair
Professor Raymond Cummins
Professor John Furedy
Dr. Joel Kirsh
Mr. Stefan Neata

Ms. Beverley Stefureak
Acting Secretary of the Academic Appeals Committee

Appearances:

For the student:

Mr. M. (The Student)

For the University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM)

Professor Gordon Anderson

The Appeal

The student is appealing the October 21, 2004 decision of the Academic Appeals Board to refuse his petition for late withdrawal from POL200Y5 and POL486H5.

Facts

The student first enrolled in the Faculty of Arts & Science at the Erindale campus in September 1997. He graduated in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Language Teaching & Learning: French and Political Science.

In September 2000 he was enrolled in several political science courses, including POL200Y5. In May 2001 he petitioned for an extension of time to complete the term work related to that course as a result of ongoing chest pain and anxiety attacks. A medical report supported the request. He was granted an extension to submit the work “as soon as possible.”

In September 2001 he registered for several political science courses, including POL486H5, as well as an oral French course. In November 2001 he petitioned for extensions in both POL200Y5 and POL486H5, based on the continuation of his chest pain. A further medical report supported that request. He was granted extensions until December 2001 and January 2002 respectively. In April 2002 he requested further extensions for both courses. The Committee on Standing granted him final extensions until the end of June 2002 for POL200Y5 and the end of August 2002 for POL486H5.

During the summer of 2002 the student did not complete the term work for either course. He asserts that his chest pains continued to impede his ability to concentrate sufficiently to complete the work in these more difficult political science courses. He did not provide any medical evidence pertaining to the summer of 2002 or beyond. He was able to travel to Laval during the summer of 2002 and complete a French course for credit.

As a result of the missed term work (and in the case of POL200Y5, a missed exam), the student failed both POL200Y5 and POL486H5.

The student did not submit any further petitions pertaining to the missed term work until September 2003 when he asked for further extensions. These were denied by the Committee on Standing. In August 2004, the student made a request for late withdrawal from both courses. That was denied by the Committee on Standing on August 30, 2004. The student appealed to the Academic Appeals Board which denied the appeal on October 21, 2004. The student then appealed to your Committee.

In response to questions from your Committee, the student explained that while he was able to complete some political science courses and all his French courses in 2000 and 2001, the two political science courses in question were more complex and required more research, writing and concentrated mental activity.

In the notice of appeal to your Committee, the student stated that he was not aware of his right to petition for a late withdrawal, rather than an extension. However, at the hearing, the student testified that he *was* aware of the process of seeking a late withdrawal from the courses (the option appearing on the same form as the petition for the extension). However, he asserted that he was not mentally prepared to make the decision to make the

request to withdraw at the time. He believes that if he had made the request for the late withdrawal without academic penalty, instead of the repeated extensions, his request would have been granted. Professor Anderson confirmed that, had the requests been made at a time when the medical evidence confirmed the student's medical difficulties (ie prior to May 2002), he would likely have been granted a late withdrawal.

However, the student also testified that he did not seek the late withdrawal at the time because he believed that he would be able to complete the term work and he wanted to succeed in the courses.

The Decision

Your Committee is unanimously of the view that the student's appeal should be dismissed and late withdrawal from POL200Y5 and POL486H5 denied.

Your Committee was not persuaded that the student was unaware of the option of seeking late withdrawal or incapable of making that decision throughout the period May 2001 to May 2002 when he asked for repeated extensions. The student admitted that, contrary to the statement in his appeal letter, he was aware of the option to withdraw, but he chose to request extensions because he sincerely believed he would be able to complete the term work.

Your Committee finds no basis for permitting a late withdrawal after May 2002. There is no medical evidence to support any ongoing medical condition after May 2002 that would justify either a further extension or a late withdrawal.

The appeal is dismissed.

Beverley Stefureak
Secretary

Kaye Joachim
Chair