



TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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DATE: February 19, 2009

AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

**Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering: Undergraduate Academic Appeals Board
Terms of Reference**

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee has the authority for approval of changes to academic regulations and other matters affecting divisional calendars, including appeal procedures.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The *Policy on Academic Appeals within Divisions* was approved by Governing Council on December 12, 2005. The associated *Framework for the Divisional Appeals Processes* was developed to provide administrative guidelines and best practices for the implementation of the *Policy*. The goal of the *Policy* is to provide improved consistency in the application of academic policies and regulations for all students, while at the same time preserving the flexibility for divisions to implement processes that are appropriate to local needs.

The Committee considered an earlier form of the proposal on January 20, 2009.

HIGHLIGHTS:

As a result of the approval of the *Policy on Academic Appeals within Divisions*, the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering set a process in place to review the terms of reference of its Ombuds Committee with the aim of aligning its terms of reference with current policies and practices at the University. The terms of reference for the proposed Academic Appeals Board are attached (Appendix 1).

The Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering Ombuds Committee was established in 1972. The Committee serves in an “ombudsman” capacity so that an academic member of the Faculty (staff, undergraduate or graduate student) may challenge any intra-Faculty administrative, executive or policy decision below the level of Council and request reconsideration (Appendix 2).

At the outset of the current review, the Faculty noted that there was no longer a need for a Faculty committee to serve in an “ombudsman” capacity to faculty and staff members as there are now other appropriate structures and organizations in place to do so. Graduate student appeals are now made directly to the School of Graduate Studies Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB). Hence, the Faculty concentrated on aligning with the undergraduate student appeals at the Faculty level as informed by the principles set in the Policy and associated Framework.

The recommendation to establish an Academic Appeals Board to replace the Ombuds Committee was co-ordinated by the Faculty Registrar with input from the Faculty’s Task Force on Governance and in consultation with the Chair of the Policy Committee on Academic Appeals within Divisions.

The Academic Appeals Board will hear appeals of undergraduate students against decisions of Standing Committees of Council. Rulings on such appeals will be binding and final as far as the Faculty is concerned; this Board will develop and disseminate recommendations arising from appeals. The Board will report to the Faculty Council on an annual basis.

After discussion regarding the original proposal which included an alternative remedial option for the Appeal Board to "remit the matter back to the decision maker for reconsideration", the need for that alternative was reconsidered in the context of the Faculty's petition and appeal process. Following that reconsideration it was determined that the Appeal Board would have the necessary expertise and information to enable it to form its own substantive decision in these appeals and that there was no need to set out an alternative remedy of remitting the matter.

The proposed Academic Appeals Board terms of reference were approved by the Applied Science and Engineering Faculty Council on November 26, 2008. The Faculty revised the terms of reference as indicated in Appendix 1 and the revised terms were ratified by the Applied Science and Engineering Faculty Council on February 18, 2009.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs approve:

THAT the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering Academic Appeals Board (Undergraduate) Terms of Reference replace the Ombuds Committee and its terms of reference, effective June 1, 2009.