

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
GOVERNING COUNCIL**

**ADDENDUM TO REPORT NUMBER 268  
OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE**

August 1, 2002

To the Academic Board,  
University of Toronto

Your Committee reports that it held a hearing on Thursday August 1, 2002, at which the following were present:

Assistant Dean Bonnie Goldberg, Chair  
Professor David Jenkins  
Professor John Furedy  
Mr Harmeet Gill  
Professor Luigi Girolametto

Mr Paul Holmes, Judicial Affairs Officer

In Attendance:

Mr A.M., the Appellant  
Mr Rashmi Desai, Associate Dean, Physical Sciences and Engineering for the  
School of Graduate Studies  
Professor Shamim Sheikh, Graduate Studies Coordinator, Physical Sciences and  
Engineering, School of Graduates Studies

Report Number 268 of the Academic Appeals Committee was released on August 22, 2002. The decision was not unanimous. The Chair has consented to the release of an additional minority opinion as an addendum to the previously released decision.

The release of the minority opinion does not change the result: the appeal is denied for the reasons specified in Report Number 268.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul J. Holmes  
Secretary

Bonnie Goldberg  
Chair

## **Addendum to Report Number 268 of the Academic Appeals Committee**

### **Minority Opinion**

While we have no concerns over the majority decision, based on technical grounds, where the emphasis has been on grades as the single criterion on which to base academic judgements, we feel we must write a dissenting opinion based on compassionate grounds.

From this vantage point we see a young man, driven by financial concerns, who took on too many activities, a night watchman's job, additional courses at Yorkdale Adult Learning Centre and a full U of T course load to ensure future eligibility for OSAP funding. As a consequence he failed to meet the requirements in two of his U of T courses (borderline failures).

We are grateful for the frank comments made by Dr. Sheikh representing the Faculty of Engineering Graduate Department who came from the same background as the student and said that even a bright student who does not devote himself full time to this engineering graduate program would be expected to fail.

We acknowledge that our colleagues in the majority recognized the compassionate dimension to this case but were convinced that grades must be the overriding criterion on which all academic decisions should be made. They considered that failure in this regard would compromise academic excellence and rigor as The University's standard.

We in the minority, while acknowledging the importance of grades, considered that financial hardship may have had more to do with the present unfortunate outcome than a true test of the student's ability. Had universal assured graduate student funding been in place, which is the goal of the university, we believe this situation would have been avoided. Our hope is that some form of ad hoc arrangement can be made, possibly on a part time basis to allow the student to continue his studies at the University of Toronto.

We do not believe this sets a dangerous precedent but rather might be seen as a degree of flexibility towards individual needs in the conduct of university affairs.