

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

Report #399 of the Academic Appeals Committee (Chair Only)
November 8, 2018

To the Academic Board
University of Toronto

Chair

Professor Hamish Stewart

Student

Ms. J. P. (“the Student”)

Division

Faculty of Arts and Science, Woodsworth College

Preliminary Issue

This appeal was conducted on the basis of written submissions in order to determine jurisdiction as per Section 3.1.7 of the Academic Appeals Committee Terms of Reference. The parties did not attend.

The Student seeks to appeal a decision of the Office of the Registrar, Woodsworth College, refusing to register her as a non-degree student for the Summer 2017 and Fall 2018 terms, owing to outstanding balances in her account with the University.

Throughout, the Registrar has acted pursuant to the *Policy on Academic Sanctions for Students Who Have Outstanding University Obligations* (the “*Policy*”), section 3.3, which provides that “Registration will be refused to a continuing or returning student” who has “outstanding recognized University obligations”. It is not disputed that at the relevant times the Student did have outstanding financial obligations to the University. But the Student’s position is that when attempting to register for the Summer 2017 term, she was a new student, not a continuing or returning student, and that section 3.3 of the *Policy* therefore did not apply to her.

The Student was admitted to Woodsworth College as a non-degree student for the Summer 2017 term. At that time, she had an outstanding balance on her university account resulting from her residence at Graduate House since January 2017. It is not entirely clear from the material filed whether the Student did or did not register for the Summer 2017 term or how she came to be living at Graduate House. In an email of August 24, 2018, Jennifer Guyatt, Associate Registrar of Woodsworth College, states that she did register:

A review of the record indicates that you enrolled as a summer student at the College on April 19, 2017. Presumably, this facilitated your placement at Graduate House residence where the

charges in question were generated. You cancelled the last of your summer courses on May 18, 2017, but remained living at Grad House. Although you again enrolled for the 2017 Fall/Winter session on Aug 15, you were not able to complete the registration because of the outstanding charges.

In contrast, in her reply to Ms. Guyatt on August 27, 2018, the Student states that she did not register:

[In May 2017,] I initiated enrolling in courses when my status on Acorn was “invited”, at that time I was allowed to add courses. However, systematically it got cancelled at some point later. Then my status on Acorn turned into “financially cancelled”. I have never had “registered” status.

The Student states further that she was permitted to live at Graduate House from January 2017 onwards despite the fact that she was not enrolled in any University program at that time.

While the registration status of the Student remains in dispute, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences argues that your Committee should not consider the merits of the appeal. The Faculty submits that your Committee lacks jurisdiction to hear the Student’s appeal because the appeal “concerns a financial obligation to the University as it relates to the practices of registration, [...] not a matter of academic review.” (Faculty response, October 11, 2018). The Student’s reply does not directly address the jurisdictional issue, but restates her position that she was a new student, and speculates that perhaps the Acorn system “could not recognize the difference between a new student with outstanding balance and a continuing/ returning student with outstanding balance” (“Written Submission”, received October 17, 2018).

Section 2.1 of the AAC terms of reference provide that one of the AAC’s functions is

To hear and consider appeals made by students against decisions of faculty, college or school councils (or committees thereof) in the application of academic regulations and requirements ...

The decision of the Registrar to refuse to register the Student was not an “application of academic regulations and requirements”. Applications of academic regulations and requirements typically involve questions that go to the academic merit of a student’s work and the integrity of their academic record, such as the evaluation of their course work, their standing in their programs, or the reasonableness of a division’s response to a request for an accommodation of some kind. The decision here concerns the consequences of the Student’s financial relationship with the University for her ability to register. The AAC does not have jurisdiction over this decision. The registration status of the Student as either “new” or “continuing” in May 2017 is arguable, but that question cannot be heard by the AAC.