

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT #333 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE

May 15, 2009

Your committee reports that it held a hearing on April 23, 2009 at which the following were present:

Professor Ed Morgan, Chair
Professor Elizabeth Cowper
Professor Michael Marrus
Ms. Anna Okorokov
Ms. Maureen Somerville

In Attendance:

For the Student Appellant:

Mr. A.M. (the Student)

For the University of Toronto at Scarborough:

Vice-Dean Professor John Scherk

I. The Appeal

The Student is appealing the decision of the University of Toronto Scarborough Subcommittee on Academic Appeals dated October 13, 2007 denying him permission to write a deferred examination in the 2005 Fall session Introduction to Micro Economics course ECMB02H3F (the "Course").

The Student's circumstances have changed since his original request to write a deferred examination and he now asks this committee to grant him permission to withdraw from the Course.

II. The Facts

The Student first petitioned to write a deferred examination in the Course on December 21, 2005. This petition was denied due to inadequate medical documentation, and the Student was advised to re-submit a petition with proper medical documentation.

The Student spent January to April 2006 in India in order to undergo medical treatment. On June 5, 2006 he re-petitioned to write a deferred exam for the Course. The petition was granted, and the examination was scheduled for August 23, 2006. The Student did not write the exam on the scheduled date.

On August 25, 2006 the Student again petitioned for an extension of time to write a deferred exam for the Course. The petition was granted. On October 10, 2006, the Student petitioned for a further extension of time to write a deferred exam at an outside centre. He had travelled to India seeking treatment for his medical condition. The petition was denied based on insufficient grounds. On June 11, 2007 the Student petitioned again for an extension of time to write a deferred exam, which petition was again denied.

In the Fall term of 2007, the Student registered to retake the Course. On December 21, 2007 he petitioned to write deferred examinations for several Fall term courses, including the Course in issue. He was granted permission to write the deferred examinations in the April/May 2008 examination period. The Student received a grade of 55 (D) for the 2007 version of the Course.

III. The Decision under appeal

On July 25, 2007 the Student appealed the denial of his petition of June 11, 2007 to the UTSC Subcommittee on Academic Appeals. That appeal was denied on the grounds that the Student failed to provide adequate medical documentation in support of his initial request to write a deferred examination. The Chair of the UTSC Subcommittee, in dismissing the Student's appeal, wrote *inter alia*:

The statement from Dr. Alka Dogra refers to *androgenetic alopecia* – male pattern baldness. While this condition can be disturbing to the sufferer, it is unfortunately a common problem. The committee was not convinced that alopecia has any significant impact on the ability of an individual to write a final exam.

IV. The Decision

As indicated at the outset, the Student changed his request after submitting his written Notice of Appeal, and began this hearing seeking permission for late withdrawal from the Course rather than permission to write a deferred exam. The Student was afforded an opportunity to make submissions on why he wanted this new form of relief. The Student explained that having

already passed the Fall 2007 version of the Course, the Student sought to withdraw from the Fall 2005 version of the Course in order to remove the failing grade from his transcripts.

After brief deliberation the Committee advised the Student that this is an appeal committee, whose jurisdiction is to hear appeals from decisions taken at the Faculty or College level. Since the decision of the UTSC Subcommittee on Academic Appeals was limited to a rejection of the Student's request to write a deferred examination for the 2005 Course, that is the decision presently under appeal. This Committee has no authority to hear new requests that have not yet been submitted to UTSC. Accordingly, the Student was asked to restrict his submissions to the request to take a deferred examination, if that was still relief that the Student wished to pursue. The Student indicated that he was still interested in seeking to write a deferred examination for the 2005 version of the Course, and made full submissions in support of that request.

The Committee is in agreement with the decision of the UTSC Subcommittee on Academic Appeals that there are inadequate medical grounds for seeking permission to write a deferred exam. The Student submitted a doctor's note from a medical practitioner in India indicating that he suffers from male pattern baldness. No other medical evidence was submitted by the Student. Despite his statements at the hearing that he was traumatized by this condition, no psychological or psychiatric report was submitted, and nothing in the medical file tendered by the Student indicated that there were psychological ramifications to his condition. The doctor's diagnosis was *androgenetic alopecia*, a condition which the Chair of the UTSC Subcommittee accurately described as a common problem that does not in the ordinary course impact on a person's ability to take an examination in a university course.

V. Conclusion

The Committee is mindful of the fact that the Student has had numerous opportunities to take the examination in the Course, and failed on each occasion to show up at the appointed examination time. Male pattern baldness is the latest ground in his series of requests. Until this latest request, UTSC had been more than generous in accommodating his various requests. This Committee is of the view that the series of requests for a deferred examination in the Course, which has been going on since 2005, must now come to an end.

The appeal is dismissed.