

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 1 OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC APPEALS

To the Academic Affairs Committee,
University of Toronto.

Your Subcommittee reports that it held a meeting on September 5th, 1973, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Faculty of Pharmacy, at which the following were present:

Professor J. B. Dunlop (In the Chair)	Mr. B. Mitchell
Mr. J. Creelman	Mr. C. I. P. Tate
Professor V. E. Graham	Professor A. M. Wall
Dr. J. C. Laidlaw	Miss M. Salter, Secretary
Professor M. R. Maniates	

By Invitation:

Professor F. A. Sherk, Assistant Dean, School of Graduate Studies	Professor L. Dolezel, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
Professor C. H. Bedford, Chairman, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures	Professor P. Lindheim, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
Professor H. E. Bowman, Graduate Secretary, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures	Professor G. Zakulin, Vice-Chairman, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
Professor B. V. Budurowycz, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures	

THE FOLLOWING ITEM IS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

Mr. Re

Mr. R. appeared before the Subcommittee to appeal a decision of the School of Graduate Studies that his M.A. candidacy be cancelled because plagiarism in two major essays in Slavic 1050 and Slavic 1209 had resulted in failure in these two courses. Mr. R. appealed on the basis of extenuating circumstances.

The Subcommittee, after considering the written and oral evidence agreed that there had been serious plagiarism in the two essays and that the extenuating circumstances claimed by Mr. R. did not justify his course of action.

It was duly moved and seconded,

THAT the appeal of Mr. Re against
a decision of the School of Graduate
Studies be denied.

The motion was carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Secretary
September 11th, 1973.

Chairman



SUBCOMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC APPEALSSEPTEMBER 5th, 1973

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC APPEALS OF THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, held on Wednesday, September 5th, 1973, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Faculty of Pharmacy, at which the following were present:

Professor J. B. Dunlop (In the Chair)	Mr. B. Mitchell
Mr. J. Creelman	Mr. C. I. P. Tate
Professor V. E. Graham	Professor A. M. Wall
Dr. J. C. Laidlaw	Miss M. Salter, Secretary
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Department of Slavic Languages
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Professor P. Lindheim,
Department of Slavic Languages
and Literatures

Professor H. E. Bowman,
Graduate Secretary,
Department of Slavic Languages
and Literatures

Professor G. Zakulin,
Vice-Chairman,
Department of Slavic Languages
and Literatures

Professor B. V. Budurowycz,
Department of Slavic Languages
and Literatures

1. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman introduced members of the Subcommittee and welcomed them to the first meeting.

He noted that part of the terms of reference of the Subcommittee were "to advise the Academic Affairs Committee from time to time on policy and procedures with respect to appeals throughout the University and to determine detailed procedures in its own operations." He suggested that the Subcommittee schedule a meeting or meetings in the near future to consider its own procedures. He also suggested that the divisions of the University be asked to provide an outline of the procedures they were presently following with regard to academic appeals to serve as a basis for discussion by the Subcommittee.

2. Appeal of Mr. R.

The Chairman briefly outlined the procedures to be followed in hearing the appeal.

Mr. R. entered the meeting along with representatives of the School of Graduate Studies and the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Mr. R. was appearing before the Subcommittee to appeal a decision of the School of Graduate Studies that his M.A. candidacy be withdrawn because plagiarism in two major essays in Slavic 1050 and Slavic 1209 had resulted in failure in these two courses. He was invited by the Chairman to make a statement in his own behalf and to present any additional evidence to the Subcommittee. The Chairman explained that there would be an opportunity for the Department to make a statement also and for the members of the Subcommittee to ask questions. At the close of the hearing Mr. R. and representatives of the Department would be permitted to make a final statement.

2. Appeal of Mr. R. (Cont'd)

Mr. R. explained that he was appealing on the grounds of extenuating circumstances. A serious disagreement at home had forced him to leave shortly before the end of the academic year and he found himself virtually without financial resources. Research for essays in two of his courses was already completed and he was able to write these without too much difficulty, but he was forced to do the research in Slavic 1050 and Slavic 1209 very hastily and under considerable emotional strain. He stated that he had relied a great deal on his memory, which was exceptionally good, and he had inadvertently reproduced segments of his sources.

It was pointed out to Mr. R. that an extension would have been granted for the essays if he had requested one in the circumstances. He replied that he had been very anxious to receive his marks in order to include them in his application for law school because he thought they would assist him in being granted admission. He had therefore made every effort to have the essays in by the middle of April.

Questioned about his understanding of plagiarism, Mr. R. stated that it was only after discussing the charges with his professors that he had come to understand what plagiarism meant. He had thought that plagiarism was the reproduction of a work either in its entirety or in large part and the representation of this as one's own work. He admitted that he had done a great deal of paraphrasing, but to him, this did not constitute plagiarism. He added that it had not been his intention to deliberately deceive. It was suggested to him that after four years at York University he should have had a better appreciation as to what constituted plagiarism. In answer to a further question, Mr. R. admitted that he had lifted passages and re-worded them.

Mr. R. was questioned as to whether he had ever seen written regulations concerning the acknowledgment of sources either at York University during his undergraduate training, or at the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Toronto. He replied that he had not. He had taken it as a matter of course that acknowledgments must be made, but did not know that there were any particular rules. He had never seen a reference to this in a calendar or other publication.

Mr. R. was also questioned about his understanding of the importance of the essays to his year's work. Since he admitted writing the essays hastily and superficially, he was asked if he had expected to receive a passing grade. In answer to this, Mr. R. said that he had hoped to be judged on his year's work and on his classroom contribution and had not thought that the essays would constitute an important part of his mark.

Dean Sherk, representing the School of Graduate Studies and Professor Bedford, representing the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, summed up the reasons for refusing the previous appeals and stated that the previous appeal committees had been satisfied that gross plagiarism had taken place on the basis of the evidence. Members of the Department were questioned about the information given to their classes concerning the value assigned to the essays and noted that their classes had all been informed that the essays would constitute a large percentage of the final mark. With regard to Mr. R.'s statement that the plagiarism had been unintentional, one of his instructors pointed out that in his essay on Peter the Great, Mr. R. had cited a French translation of one of his sources, but had actually used passages from the English translation. Mr. R. and representatives of the School of Graduate Studies and the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures left the meeting at this point.

The Chairman pointed out that the Subcommittee had a number of courses open to it; it could reverse the decision of the School of Graduate Studies; it could uphold the decision or vary it in some way, possibly by substituting another penalty for the one imposed, if the Subcommittee was convinced that the student was guilty of plagiarism. Members considered their decision at some length and agreed on the basis of the documentary and other evidence that there was serious plagiarism in essays in course 1050, Studies in Slavic Civilization and in course 1209, Chekov. They rejected

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2. Appeal of Mr. R. (Cont'd)

Mr. N's assertion that he did not understand the impropriety of his conduct and that he had no intention to deceive. They also agreed that the extenuating circumstances advanced by Mr. R. - did not justify his course of action. The Subcommittee therefore agreed to uphold the decision of the School of Graduate Studies that Mr. R. receive a failing grade in two courses and that his candidacy for the M.A. degree be withdrawn and to so report to the Academic Affairs Committee.

During the discussion, it was suggested that the Subcommittee might consider making a recommendation that regulations concerning plagiarism be published in some readily available source, such as the calendars.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Secretary
October 15th, 1973.

Chairman

