

CONFIDENTIAL

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 89 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS BOARD

May 6th, 1985

To the Academic Affairs Committee,  
University of Toronto.

Your Board reports that it held a hearing on Monday, May 6th, 1985 at 2:00 p.m. in the Board Room, Simcoe Hall at which the following were present:

|                                       |                      |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Professor J. B. Dunlop (In the Chair) | Ms. M. Meyer         |
| Professor W. H. Francombe             | Mrs. Joan R. Randall |
| Professor J. T. Mayhall               |                      |
| Professor K. G. McNeill               | Ms. Irene Macpherson |

In Attendance:

Ms. *M<sub>2</sub>* the appellant  
Professor Anna Jean Rouse, Faculty of Nursing  
Professor P. McKeever, Faculty of Nursing  
Ms. M. Jarad, Faculty of Nursing

THE FOLLOWING ITEM IS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

On May 6th, 1985 the Academic Appeals Board heard the appeal of *Ms. M<sub>2</sub>* against a decision of the Academic Appeals Committee of the Faculty of Nursing refusing her request for additional re-evaluation of her examination in NUR 300Y. The appellant had failed the course and was thus ineligible to proceed to the next year. As this was the second occasion on which she had failed to secure the right to advance to a higher year her registration was suspended. The decision of the Board is that the appeal should be dismissed.

The appellant entered the B.Sc.N. programme in September of 1980 and was successful in completing her first year. In the second year, however, she failed to obtain a passing grade in NUR 202Y, Application of Theory, and was required to repeat the course, which she did successfully, in 1982-83. The appellant proceeded to third year in 1983-84 and, as indicated, failed NUR 300Y, Core Content of Nursing.

The appellant advanced a number of grounds of appeal. First, she maintained that her final examination was better than the mark indicated. The only evidence on this issue was the appellant's own opinion to this effect and the opinions of the course instructor, Professor McKeever, and the teaching assistant that the exam was a failure. It appeared to the Board on the basis of this evidence that the exam had been fairly and accurately assessed.

Next the appellant argued that the relative weights of the three parts of the examination were changed twice after they had been announced to the class, once on the examination paper and once during the first few minutes of the examination. Professor McKeever said that the first announcement had been an approximation, not a commitment and that the examination paper was often a bit different. The change during the examination was not substantial and resulted from an error whereby the marks for the different parts did not add up to the total indicated on the paper. The appellant suffered no prejudice as a result of the changes and the Board could not attach any significance to them.

The appellant testified to a discrepancy between the grade which appeared on her examination paper and a grade which had been disclosed to her orally by Professor Rouse. Professor Rouse did not recall telling the appellant her grade and said that she usually did not do such a thing. In any case, it is clear that the grade on the paper is the examiner's grade and that if, indeed, Professor Rouse did say that the mark was otherwise, this was an error which could have no bearing on the appellant's grade for the course.

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The appellant noted that on her examination paper some marks had been "whited out" with liquid paper which she thought was not appropriate for a final exam the result of which was being questioned. Professor McKeever testified that the first addition of the marks had been wrong (addition seeming to be someone's weak point), that someone had "whited out" the original figure and that the correct one had been written in. The Board saw no cause for concern in this procedure.

The appellant pointed out that all "second readings of the exam papers were done by members of the Faculty" and suggested that it would have been more appropriate to have an outside reader. While the procedure suggested by the appellant is not unknown, the Board finds no fault with the internal grading procedure which is far more common.

The appellant complained that in its reasons for its decision the Appeals Committee had focussed on one item in the examination and questioned whether the denial of an appeal should be based on one item. The Board, however, read the reasons of the Academic Appeals Committee somewhat differently. While it is true that only one item is discussed, the reasons indicate that it is being used to illustrate the more general proposition that the examination had not been inaccurately or unfairly evaluated by the three persons who had already read it. It may be that the reasons of the Committee could have been more complete but they stress that the oral and written submissions had been carefully considered. In any event, the appellant had a full hearing before this Board.

Finally the appellant complained that a second photocopy of her examination paper, which she received after the appeal, had had further comments added without the appellant's knowledge. The Faculty witnesses could not explain this although they speculated that the comments might have been added in conjunction with the appeal at the Faculty level. The Board was unable to see any significance in the fact.

The appeal is dismissed.

Secretary  
June 12th, 1985

Chairman