

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 117 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS BOARD

April 20th, 1988

To the Academic Affairs Committee,
University of Toronto.

Your Board reports that it held a hearing on Wednesday, April 20th, 1988 at 2:00 p.m., in the Board Room, Simcoe Hall, at which the following were present:

Professor J. B. Dunlop (In the Chair)
Professor F. Flahiff
Mrs. J. Philpott
Mr. D. Power
Professor J. Slater

Ms. Susan Girard, Governing Council Secretariat

In Attendance:

Mr. D. appellant
Mr. Robert Sider, Downtown Legal Services, counsel for the appellant
Professor Eleanor Irwin, Associate Dean (Academic)

THE FOLLOWING ITEM IS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

At a meeting on April 20th, 1988, the Academic Appeals Board heard the appeal of Mr. D. from a decision of the Subcommittee on Academic Appeals of Scarborough College dismissing his appeal for late withdrawal from CHMA02Y, Introductory Chemistry. The appellant had failed the course in the winter session of 1982. He later passed an equivalent course and received a three-year B.Sc. degree in 1986. His interest in withdrawal at this late date is rooted in his desire to apply to a faculty of dentistry. He feels a failure on his transcript will cause difficulty. The appeal was based on compassionate grounds. The decision of the Board is that, while the appellant deserves both sympathy and credit, the appeal should be dismissed.

The appellant's father died in September 1980 when the appellant was in Grade 12. The appellant had great difficulty adjusting to his father's death, as did his mother and two sisters, and whereas previously he had consistently achieved an average of 70-75% in his school work, in Grade 13 it fell to 60.7%. Contributing to the problem was his decision to work for 20 hours weekly while continuing his studies to help support the family. He was granted admission to part-time studies at the College following an appeal on compassionate grounds.

The appellant worked 40 hours weekly in his first year at Scarborough at various jobs - painting, landscaping, baby sitting - and did three courses in the evening. His mother was very dependent on him. His two sisters were also students. One of his courses was Introductory Chemistry, which he failed. His other marks were C- and D.

The appellant took two more courses in the summer of 1983 and four the following year. He continued this pattern until, by the spring of 1986, he satisfied the requirements of a three-year B.Sc. degree with a major program in biology.

Gradually his circumstances improved. The family became more adjusted, his sisters finished their education and went to work. The appellant's grades also improved. His grades in the 1985 winter session on 4.5 courses were A-, B+, B-, C+ and C.

The appellant in 1986-87 completed a further five courses in Fine Arts with a sessional GPA of 3.31 and is taking a full load again this year. He remains intent, however, on applying to dentistry.

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There is no doubt the appellant deserves great credit for his contribution to his family welfare in time of stress and for his perseverance which has certainly been rewarded. The Board believes the appellant would have had a better record if he had not experienced the tribulations that befell him and his family. The Board feels sure that an admission committee, possessed of the same information, would take the same view.

The fact remains that the appellant assessed his situation in 1982, decided that in the circumstances he could manage three courses, and undertook this limited program. He continued it for the full year, although there was an opportunity to withdraw as late as February when he had the results of a Christmas test and lab tests to inform him that he was not doing well. His judgment proved wrong. The Board does not believe it would be appropriate to rewrite the record several years later to imply that this did not happen.

The appropriate way of dealing with the record, in the Board's opinion, is to explain it, not alter it - to ensure that an admissions committee or a potential employer has all the relevant information. They can, the Board believes, be trusted to give the appellant the credit he deserves.

Secretary
May 10th, 1988

Chairman