

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 210 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE

Friday, December 8th, 1995

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a hearing Friday, December 8th, 1995, at 2:00 p.m. in the Flavelle Room, Faculty of Law, 78 Queen's Park Crescent, at which the following were present:

Before: Professor Edmund Alexander, Acting Chairman
 Professor Joan Brailey
 Mr. Alan Kenigsberg
 Professor John Mayhall
 Mr. Alexander Waugh

Ms Susan Girard, Acting Secretary

In Attendance:

Mr. P.H., the appellant
Ms Megan Petrie, Downtown Legal Services, Counsel for the Appellant
Professor David Garth, Faculty of Education
Ms Sara McKittrick, Faculty of Education
Ms Sari Springer, Counsel for the Faculty of Education

At a meeting on December 8th, 1995 the Academic Appeals Committee heard the appeal of P.H. from a decision of the Divisional Appeals Committee of the Faculty of Education dismissing his appeal of his failure of the practice teaching course in 1993-94. The decision of the Academic Appeals Committee is that the appeal should be dismissed.

Mr. P.H. was a student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto in 1993-94. He passed his theory courses but failed two of his four practice teaching sessions. The regulations of the Faculty of Education allow one practice session failure to be made up but not two or more. As a result, Mr. P.H. failed the practice teaching course and the year. His appeal of his failure in practice teaching to the Coordinator of Practice Teaching of the Faculty of Education was dismissed as were his further appeals to the Appeals Committee and the Divisional Appeals Committee of the Faculty.

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The grounds of Mr. P.H.'s appeal are that:

- (1) The Faculty of Education's method of evaluating practice teaching did not measure his teaching abilities reliably; and
- (2) The Faculty of Education's policy against allowing students to redo two sessions of practice teaching is unduly harsh.

(1) The Faculty of Education's method of evaluating practice teaching

Practice teaching in the Faculty of Education is evaluated by associate teachers, who are recommended by the principals of their schools and approved by the Faculty of Education. The associate teachers, experienced and qualified in their fields, provide the student teachers with daily feedback as well as with detailed appraisal reports at the end of each two-week practice teaching session. In addition, members of the Faculty of Education observe, and make comments to, student teachers during their practice teaching sessions. Although Mr. P.H. passed two of his four practice teaching sessions (one with reservations), and, not surprisingly, given the different settings and circumstances for each practice session, there were some inconsistencies in the various appraisals, all four associate teachers expressed concern about his ability to communicate with students. The Academic Appeals Committee cannot say that the Faculty of Education's method of evaluating practice teaching did not provide a reliable evaluation of Mr. P.H.'s teaching abilities.

(2) The Faculty of Education's policy against allowing students to redo two sessions of practice teaching

A student teacher who fails two practice teaching sessions fails the practice teaching course and his/her year. Failures in the practice teaching sessions in the Faculty of Education are unusual, and double failures are very unusual. The Coordinator of Practice Teaching told the Academic Appeals Committee that there were only 11 failures out of 2,000 practice teaching sessions (500 student teachers x 4) in 1993-94. Mr. P.H. was the only student teacher in 1993-94 to fail two practice teaching sessions and thus to fail the practice teaching course. Given these statistics, the Academic Appeals Committee cannot say that the Faculty of Education's policy against allowing students to redo two sessions of practice teaching is unduly harsh.

The decision of the Committee is that the appeal be dismissed.

Ms Susan Girard
Acting Secretary

Edmund R. Alexander
Acting Chairman

December 8th, 1995