

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 215 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE

October 7, 1996

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a hearing, (*in camera*), on Monday, October 7, 1996, at which the following were present:

Before: Professor Alan Mewett, Acting Chairman
Mrs. Margo Coleman
Professor Joseph Goering
Professor John Mayhall
Ms Ariane West-Pernica

In attendance: The student (appellant)
Mr. S.H., the Appellant's father
Professor Gary Filion, for Erindale College

The student appealed the decision of the Academic Appeals Board of Erindale College of Thursday, August 15, 1996 dismissing her appeal from a decision of the Committee on Standing of July 30, 1996 refusing to lift the one-year suspension imposed upon her. The suspension resulted from the grades received by the student in the 1995-96 Winter session, following unsatisfactory grades obtained in both the 1993-94 Winter session and the 1994-95 Winter session.

In the 1993-94 session, the student's sessional grade-point average was 0.50. In the 1994-95 session it was 0.70, giving her a cumulative grade-point average of 0.63. In the 1995-96 session it was 1.38, bringing her cumulative grade-point average to 0.90. The student would have to have obtained a sessional grade point average of 1.7 in order to have stayed on probation. The Committee notes that a student in a 3-year program needs a cumulative grade-point average of 1.50 and a total of 15 credits in order to graduate. After three years, the student needs 6.5 more credits to complete her program.

The student informed the Committee that the death of a beloved aunt in India in February 1996 had adversely affected her ability to concentrate and study, and this accounted for her failure to reach the required average. She stated that if it had not been for the death of her aunt she would have been able to reach that goal and that, now that these events were in the past, she was confident that she could, if given another chance, reach the required average.

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Furthermore, she had now acquired the necessary study skills and had sought assistance in her studies to make this possible. She therefore asked the Committee to reverse the decision of the Academic Appeals Board of Erindale College and permit her to register this year on academic probation.

In its consideration of her case August 15, the Board took into account the student's reasons and considered her overall record and came to the conclusion that "*Based on your academic record, the Board was unconvinced that you are now prepared to successfully pursue your studies and avoid further academic penalty*". It went on to explain that during the suspension the student will have the opportunity to develop time-management skills and to recognize the need for extra help.

The Committee is of the opinion that the decision of the Academic Appeal Board was an appropriate one and that the student has in no way demonstrated that it should be overturned.

The Committee is not, however, without sympathy for the student and the position in which she, along with many others, finds herself. The cumulative grade-point requirement does mean that a student who has performed poorly in the first year (and, *a fortiori*, in the first two years) will find it extremely difficult, and in some cases, virtually impossible, to surmount the hurdle of obtaining a sufficiently high sessional average to bring the cumulative average to the required level. In this case, Erindale College reached a decision that appears to the Committee to offer the student the best chance of surmounting that hurdle without further and even more drastic penalties and thus the Committee does not allow the appeal.

The Appeal is dismissed.

Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman
Acting Secretary

Alan W. Mewett Q.C.
Acting Chairman

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