

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 226 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE¹

March 4, 1998

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a hearing on Wednesday, March 4, 1998, at which the following were present:

Professor Emeritus Edmund Alexander, Acting Chairman
Professor Ethel Auster
Professor Frank DiCosmo
Mr. Paul Lomic
Professor Emmet Robbins

Ms Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman, Secretary

In Attendance:

Mr. G.L., the Appellant
Mr. Shawn Hamilton, Downtown Legal Services, counsel for the Appellant
Professor Joe Desloges, Associate Dean, Social Sciences

Mr. G.L. transferred from the University of Waterloo to Woodsworth College at the University of Toronto in September, 1993. During his time at Waterloo and Toronto, Mr. G.L. suffered from chronic health problems which appeared to affect his academic performance at both institutions. Mr. G.L. took courses at Woodsworth during the 1993-94 Winter session, the 1994 Summer Session, the 1994-95 Winter Session, the 1995 Summer Session, and the 1995-96 Winter Session. After the 1995 Summer Session his cumulative Grade-Point Average at Woodsworth was 1.18 and he was placed on academic probation. After the 1995-96 Winter Session, his sessional Grade-Point Average was 0.84 and his cumulative Grade-Point Average was 1.02. As a result of this poor performance, Mr. G.L. was suspended for the 1996-97 academic year.

On November 16, 1996, Mr. G.L. petitioned the Committee on Standing of Woodsworth College to be allowed to withdraw late without academic penalty from three of the courses that he had completed during the 1995-96 Winter Season. He did very poorly in the term work in these courses as well as in the final exams. The normal deadline for withdrawing from these courses, without academic penalty was February 16, 1996 in the case of the two full-year courses, and March 1, 1996 in the case of the second-term course. The Committee on Standing

¹ **Editor's Note:** See also Report 220 of the Academic Appeals Committee.

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dismissed Mr. G.L.'s petition on December 20, 1996 and affirmed that dismissal on May 9, 1997. Mr. G.L.'s appeal to the Academic Appeals Board of the Faculty of Arts and Science was dismissed on November 20, 1997.

Mr. G.L. appealed to the Academic Appeals Committee of Governing Council. At a hearing held on March 4, 1998, the Academic Appeals Committee dismissed the appeal. The Committee accepted Mr. G.L.'s evidence that he suffered from chronic health problems throughout his academic career. In addition, the Committee accepted his evidence that during the 1995-96 Winter Session these health problems were exacerbated by a number of family problems. However, despite his health and family difficulties, Mr. G.L. did not withdraw from the three courses in which he received poor term marks in the 1995-96 Winter Session. He chose to write the final examinations in all his courses, with disastrous results. He did not seek counseling from advisors at Woodsworth College prior to the course withdrawal dates in the Winter of 1995-1996, or prior to writing the final examinations in the Spring of 1996. He did not seek advice from the College until after he received his final results in June, 1996. If he had sought advice earlier, he likely would have been advised to withdraw from one or more of the 1995-96 courses and/or to seek permission to defer writing one or more of his exams for health reasons. In the end, Mr. G.L. must take full responsibility for his present situation.

Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman
Secretary

Edmund R. Alexander
Acting Chairperson

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