THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Senate Committee on Appeals on Academic Standing
c/o
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6 May 2011

To: Vancouver Senate

From: Committee on Appeals on Academic Standing

Re: Annual Report 2010-2011

Senate has delegated to the *Senate Committee on Appeals on Academic Standing* the authority to hear and dispose of student appeals from decisions of Faculties in matters of academic standing. The Committee shall allow an appeal where it is decided that the decision of the Faculty was arrived at through improper or unfair procedures, and that as a result, a wrong decision on the merits has or may have been arrived at. However, the Committee has no jurisdiction where the sole question raised in an appeal turns on the exercise of academic judgment by a Faculty. The decision of the Committee on an appeal is a final disposition of that appeal. The Vancouver Senate has conferred on the Committee the power of making final decisions pursuant to section 37(1)(b) of the *University Act* (reference: *UBC Calendar, Academic Regulations, Senate Appeals on Academic Standing, section 2).*

Students may also appeal to the Committee the refusal of the Registrar to extend the time line for accepting an appeal, namely within 10 days of being informed in writing of the Faculty's final decision.

As per section 39(a) of the Rules and Procedures of the Vancouver Senate, the Committee is required to make an annual report to Senate, including the number of appeals heard, their disposition and the general nature of the appeals.

Since last reporting to Senate in May 2010, 14 appeals proceeded to Committee hearings (as compared with 8 in the prior year), of which 3 were allowed and 11 were dismissed.

In addition to the 14 appeals concluded, which are summarized below, the Committee has been advised that in the past year an additional 13 appeals were presented to the Registrar, of which 2 were resolved prior to a Committee hearing; 3 were withdrawn by the appellant prior to a Committee hearing; 6 were dismissed by the Registrar due to lack of timely prosecution and 2 are in progress and are expected to be heard by the Committee in the upcoming weeks.

To provide for more hearing scheduling options for Appellants and Faculty, the Committee appointed a Co-Chair.

Appeals Allowed

- The student appealed a decision of the Faculty to deny a change of grade in response to a request for a Review of Assigned Standing. The Committee held that the Review of Assigned Standing was not properly conducted. The decision of the Faculty was quashed and the matter was sent back to the Faculty to be dealt with in accordance with proper procedures.

- The student appealed a decision of the Faculty regarding standing in a course, following an appeal at the Faculty-level. The Committee held that the Faculty did not properly re-evaluate assignments at the Faculty-level appeal. The Committee quashed the decision of the Faculty and sent the matter back to the Faculty to be dealt with in accordance with proper procedures.

- The student appealed a decision of the Faculty to deny a change of grade in response to a request for a Review of Assigned Standing. The Committee held that the Review of Assigned Standing was not properly conducted. The Committee reversed the decision of the Faculty and granted such academic standing to the student as it saw fit in the circumstances.

Appeals Dismissed:

- The student appealed a decision of the Faculty requiring the student's withdrawal due to the student's failure to meet program requirements. The Committee held that the Faculty duly considered all information that ought to have been considered and found no unfairness or impropriety on the part of the Faculty as a result of the Faculty following its academic regulations.

- The student appealed a decision of the Faculty requiring the student's withdrawal due to the student's failure to meet program requirements. The Committee held that the Faculty duly considered all information that ought to have been considered and found no unfairness or impropriety on the part of the Faculty as a result of the Faculty following its academic regulations.

- The student appealed a decision of the Faculty to deny a request for academic concession for illness in connection with two final examinations. The Committee dismissed the appeal on the basis that there was no unfairness or impropriety on the part of the Faculty and its decision had been arrived at in accordance with proper procedures.

- The student appealed a decision of the Faculty requiring the student's withdrawal after a second failed year. The Committee found that the Faculty duly considered the student's extenuating circumstances and arrived at its decision in accordance with its published academic regulations.

- The student appealed a decision of the Faculty requiring the student's withdrawal for failed standing. The Committee found that the Faculty duly considered the student's extenuating circumstances and arrived at its decision through fair and proper procedures.

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- The student appealed a decision of the Faculty to deny a change of grade in response to a request for a Review of Assigned Standing. The Committee held that the Review of Assigned Standing was undertaken in accordance with proper procedures and found no unfairness or impropriety on the part of the Faculty.

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General Observations

The Committee continues to draw to the attention of faculty and departments the importance of following due process in all matters relating to student assessment, promotion and appeal; of maintaining scrupulous records of course requirements, grade schemes, and student performance; as well as drawing such regulations and requirements to the attention of students.

The Committee has become aware of the differing processes of the faculties regarding the flagging of, and notification to students who are encountering academic problems, in order that the student be advised of the problematic, probationary or failing standing – even if the student has shifted e-mail accounts or if the Faculty e-mail notifications are being filtered by the student computer mail service as Junk or SPAM.

The Committee notes, for example, that the Faculty of Science has implemented a protocol to address such challenges so as to ensure that the student is made aware of issues related to their academic standing – student registration is blocked when on probation, and can only be unblocked after the student speaks to a Faculty advisor.

We would recommend that in order to avoid some of the challenges encountered in the rapidly evolving realm of communicating with students, that the appropriate Senate

Committee – perhaps the Academic Policy Committee – consider if it is appropriate that communication protocols and safeguards be implemented by all UBC Faculties.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Ronald Yaworsky, Chair
Senate Committee on Appeals on Academic Standing

Members of the Committee, 2010-2011:

- Dr. Ronald Yaworsky (Chair)
- Dr. Lance Rucker (Co-Chair)
- Dr. Brian Cairns
- Ms. Cheryle Colombe
- Prof. Bonnie Craig
- Dr. William Dunford
- Dr. Bikkar S. Lalli
- Dr. Peter Leung
- Mr. Matt Murray
- Prof. Benjamin Perrin
- Mr. Joseph Scafe