



MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty Council of October 25, 2016

From: Professor Jason Foster
Chair, Academic Appeals Board

Date: October 11, 2016

Re: **Annual Report of the Academic Appeals Board to Faculty Council for the Period of September 2015 to September 2016**

REPORT CLASSIFICATION

This is a routine matter for Faculty Council's information.

ACADEMIC APPEALS BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

To hear appeals of undergraduate students against decisions of the standing committees of Council relating to petitions for exemptions from the application of academic regulations or standards and to make rulings on such appeals.

The Academic Appeals Board (AAB) shall report annually to Council at the regular fall meeting indicating the number of appeals brought in the previous year and the disposition of those appeals. No information identifying appellants may be included in the annual report.

SUMMARY OF APPEALS AND DISPOSITIONS

Since its last report, the AAB has considered 24 appeals – a 26 % increase from the previous year – on decisions made by the Examinations Committee. These appeals can be further categorized as:

- Fifteen (15) for special consideration regarding Faculty policies
- Nine (9) for consideration on final examinations

In ten of the appeals, many of which introduced new documentation or elicited additional information during the hearing, the AAB found cause to intervene. The specific remedies granted were as follows:

- For two (2) appeals, permission to write deferred exams
- A grade of “Credit” (“CR”) in one (1) course
- Aegrotat standing (“AEG”) in one (1) course
- A changed grade in one (1) course
- Final examination re-reads in two (2) courses
- Permission to take two (2) courses during a prescribed withdrawal period
- Probation relief which permitted return to studies at U of T Engineering
- Probation relief which permitted retaining credit for two (2) courses taken during a failed term
- Permission for a reduction in a prescribed withdrawal period and permission to return to studies with a full course load

The AAB found insufficient grounds to intervene in the remaining 14 appeals and rendered decisions of “no action” in these instances.

In the past year, the AAB also received three appeals to its decisions through the University’s Governing Council. In all cases, agreements were reached with the appellant prior to a hearing date with Governing Council. In these cases, the Faculty, as represented by Professor Pierre Sullivan in consultation with Faculty Registrar, Don MacMillan, granted the following:

- A designation of Late Withdrawal (“WDR”) for one (1) course, and probation relief
- A designation of Late Withdrawal (“WDR”) for one (1) course, and probation relief permitting the student to return to studies at U of T Engineering
- Aegrotat standing (“AEG”) in one (1) course

EMERGING TRENDS WITHIN APPEALS

While there was significant variation in the nature of the appeals heard over the last year, two broad trends emerged:

- Gaps in student and faculty member understanding of Faculty and University policies in the areas of verification of student illness and accommodations made through Accessibility Services

- Challenges faced by students in accessing support services and preparing for successful reintegration caused by the Faculty's current academic standing and prescribed withdrawal period regulations

The AAB would like to acknowledge and support the efforts of the Faculty Registrar towards improved collaboration with Accessibility Services, and of the Examination Committee and First Year Office towards reviewing and revising the regulations on prescribed withdrawal periods.

Respectfully submitted,

Prof. Jason Foster
Chair, Academic Appeals Board
Associate Professor, Teaching Stream