



Date: April 21, 2021
To: Members of Senate
From: Senate Committee on Appeals
Re: **2021/2022 Annual Report**

The Terms of Reference for the Senate Committee on Appeals require that the Chair provide an annual report to Senate at its May meeting. This report covers the 2021/2022 academic year.

Appeals Received

The Senate Committee on Appeals (the "Committee") received 13 appeals in 2021/2022.

Non-Academic Misconduct Appeals:

The Committee did not receive any non-academic misconduct appeals in 2021/2022.

Academic Appeals

The Committee received 13 academic appeals in 2021/2022. Of these appeals, 11 have been resolved (decided, reached a mediated solution, or withdrawn) and 2 are ongoing. Below is a brief description of each of these appeals:

1. The first case involved a second violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity regarding sharing information during an online quiz. The Hearing Panel conducted the appeal on the basis of written materials and the case was dismissed.
2. The second case involved a third violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity regarding sharing information during a homework assignment. The Hearing Panel conducted the appeal on the basis of written materials and the case was dismissed.
3. The third case involved a violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity regarding plagiarism during a homework assignment. The parties attempted to reach a mediated agreement but failed. This appeal is ongoing.
4. The fourth case involved a second violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity regarding the sharing of information during a final examination. The Hearing Panel conducted the appeal on the basis of written materials and the case was dismissed.
5. The fifth case involved a second violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity regarding the sharing of information during a final examination. The Hearing Panel conducted the appeal on the basis of written materials and the case was dismissed.
6. The sixth case involved a second violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity regarding plagiarism during a homework assignment. The Hearing Panel conducted the appeal on the basis of written materials and the case was allowed.

7. The seventh case involved a second violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity regarding plagiarism during a homework assignment. The parties attempted to reach a mediated agreement but failed. The Hearing Panel conducted the appeal on the basis of written materials and the case was dismissed.
8. The eighth case involved an appeal regarding a decision to overturn a grade change form. The parties reached a mediated agreement, and the matter did not proceed to a hearing.
9. The ninth case involved an appeal regarding the denial of a request for an academic concession. The Hearing Panel conducted the appeal on the basis of written materials and the case was allowed.
10. The tenth case involved an appeal regarding the denial of a Request for an Academic Concession. The parties attempted to reach a mediated agreement but failed. The Hearing Panel conducted the appeal on the basis of written materials and the case was dismissed.
11. The eleventh case involved an appeal regarding the denial of a Request for an Academic Concession. The Appellant withdrew their appeal.
12. The twelfth case involved an appeal regarding the process regarding a grade change. The Hearing Panel conducted the appeal on the basis of written materials and the case was allowed.
13. The thirteen case involves an appeal regarding a request for a back-dated grade change. This appeal is ongoing.

Recommendations

As in 2020/21, a substantial number of appeal cases in 2021-22 related to academic integrity challenges arising from the new arena of online learning and teaching. The online administration of exams and the continuance of at-home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to the high number of appeals this year, although some of the online contexts for the academic integrity concerns raised in these appeals are not pandemic specific.

The Senate Committee on Academic Standards (SCAS) has consulted the Committee regarding its review of the Policy on Academic Integrity. The Committee has recommended that SCAS pay particular attention to online learning and evaluation in its review, so as to reduce the disagreements that sometimes arise in academic appeals about how the Policy applies in an online context. Similarly, SCAS could consider greater attention to the way in which violations of academic integrity occur during online examinations and assignments. The Committee has recommended that SCAS clarify the standard of proof required for a finding that a student has breached the Policy and include examples of the types of evidence that may support a finding that a student breached the Policy. The Committee has also recommended that the Policy clarify the way in which breaches of the policy are determined and penalties assigned. The general purpose of these recommendations is to promote greater transparency, and to assist students to understand how the disciplinary process works.

The Committee is also concerned about the continued lack of clarity regarding the authority of Chairs and Directors to change the instructor's assignment of students' final grades. It is recommended that the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost clarify this matter.

Within its appeal processes, the Committee strives to reduce barriers to student participation. However, the Committee notes with concern the disparity between those who

do and those who do not have the resources to support their appeal during the pre-hearing and hearing processes, and the inequities that arise from that disparity. The Committee is reviewing the appeal submission form as well as considering whether changes to the Terms of Reference are in order to make the Senate appeal process more accessible. The Committee would also like to thank the Office of Student Life for their support of students in need during what is a stressful and challenging time.

With more than half of the Committee’s cases from the last year arising in relation to the Policy on Academic Integrity, the Committee believes that some of the changes that SCAS is proposing to the Policy on Academic Integrity will also help address the transparency and accessibility issues that appear in substance of the Committee’s appeals. In particular, the Committee recommends that the University formalize and standardize the reporting of “first instance” decision-making on academic integrity allegations and ensure that the student’s responses to any allegations are recorded at the time they are made.

Below is a chart showing the number of appeals filed in recent years:

| Year | Number of appeals |
|-----------|-------------------|
| 2021/2022 | 13 |
| 2020/2021 | 15 |
| 2019/2020 | 11 |
| 2018/2019 | 10 |
| 2017/2018 | 2 |
| 2016/2017 | 4 |
| 2015/2016 | 1 |
| 2014/2015 | 1 |
| 2013/2014 | 0 |

For the past three years, the workload of the Senate Committee on Appeals and those staff members within the University Secretary’s office responsible for supporting the work of the committee has consistently increased.

Conclusion

Thank-you to all members of the Senate Committee on Appeals. The work of this Committee is very important to the just operation of the university and your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Respectively submitted,

2021/2022 Senate Committee on Appeals

- Kathryn Chan, Faculty of Law, (Chair until December 31, 2020)
- Janna Promislow, Faculty of Law (Chair effective January 1, 2021)
- Mauricio Garcia-Barrera (Vice-Chair), Faculty of Graduate Studies
- Dale Ganley, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business
- Daniel Gudino Perez, GSS Student Representative
- Kylie Jack, Student Senator
- Mark Laidlaw, Faculty of Science
- Lynne Marks, Faculty of Humanities
- Jillian Roberts, Faculty of Education
- CindyAnn Rose-Redwood, Faculty of Social Sciences
- Maureen Ryan, Faculty of Human and Social Development
- Joseph Salem, Faculty of Fine Arts
- Poman So, Faculty of Engineering
- Anona Wiebe, Student Senator
- Aiden Witts, Student Senator
- Ada Saab (Secretary), Associate University Secretary