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Academic Standing and Honors Committee

Annual Report

2001-2002

August 25, 2002

TO: Senate Steering Committee

FROM: Bill Keane, Chair, 2001-2002
Academic Standing and Honors Committee

SUBJECT: Annual Report

Please excuse the tardy transmittal of the annual report by the Academic Standing and Honors Committee for the 2001-2002 year. We were advised that it was the obligation of this year's committee to hear appeals from the spring, 2002 session dismissals. This meeting was held on Friday, July 10 and data from this meeting are included in this report.

Our report consists of three sections: (1) data regarding the standard work of the committee; that is, hearing appeals from students who have qualified for dismissal from the university; (2) recommendations for policy changes; (3) request for clarification of committee charge.

I. Dismissal Report 2001-2002

Attachment A summarizes the statistics regarding dismissal cases heard by the ASH Committee for the 2001-2002 academic year, which here includes two summers. As chairperson I would make several observations about the data and this year's appeals:

1. The Senate Steering Committee's attention is called to the large number of appeals of dismissals. This represents a considerable workload for the committee in the winter. More importantly, it is recommended that the university carefully monitor this dismissal data as the university pursues its strategic goal of growing beyond the present enrollment.
2. It was a matter of concern to note how many students asserted that their academic insufficiency was related to clinical depression. Most of these students asserted that they were under doctor's care and on medication.
3. Credit belongs to someone, perhaps the staff of the Academic Skills Center, for working with students to take responsibility for their own lives. It was a rare case where, in the appeal, a student placed the blame for his/her academic problems on particular faculty or the university in general.

II. Request for Policy Changes

At mid-year the committee was advised that a state auditor had identified a discrepancy between the stated policies of the university regarding dismissal and the method being used to identify students for dismissal. Conversation about this issue led the committee to consider another problem; namely, students who have a history of registering for courses and then dropping them before grades are received. Extremely poor performance can be masked by a plethora of W grades. The committee therefore recommends the following changes to current policy to address these issues.

1. Qualification for Dismissal

The root cause of the problem is that the current policy requires students placed on probation to get to the grade required by policy, depending on the number of credits earned, within one semester. See chart on page 68 of 2001-2002 undergraduate catalogue. (Students who are placed on Dismissal Option Status, a reprieve of dismissal for one semester, also are supposed to achieve the required grade within one semester.)

It is sometimes highly impractical to expect a student who may have severely bad grades earned under intolerable personal circumstances to get to this level of achievement within one semester. The committee believes that it is wiser policy to expect the student to achieve satisfactory grades (2.0 GPA per semester) in subsequent semesters as the student progresses toward achieving the grade now required in current policy.

2. Substitution of Credits Attempted for Credits Earned

The ASH Committee believes that calculation of a student's eligibility for probation or dismissal ought to be based on the number of credits used to determine GPA (credits earned at Oakland University) rather than on the number of credits earned. This policy change will avoid a situation whereby a transfer student takes only one or two courses at Oakland and does poorly (for any number of reasons) and must be placed on probation or dismissed though the prior record at another institution may be quite positive. This record, however, does not count in computing GPA.

3. Elimination of Academic Forgiveness Policy

The ASH Committee recommends elimination of the Academic Forgiveness policy (cited on page 69 of 2001-2002 Undergraduate Catalogue) because it would no longer be needed if the other recommended policy changes are made.

III. Committee Charge

During the year an appeal by a student dismissed from the School of Nursing was brought to the committee. The dismissal raised

issues beyond one of grades, which are the heart of the standard dismissal appeals brought to the committee. Charges of negligence on the part of the student in her hospital-based learning were stated as a cause for dismissal. This student was close to graduation and felt the issue resulted from a conflict with an instructor. No patient injury was charged.

A careful reading of the charge to the ASH Committee by university attorneys led to the conclusion that the committee did not have jurisdiction in such dismissals.

Several members of the committee felt strongly that such a student was without due process rights within the university since the charging party was also the judge and jury. Others felt that such cases may require more expertise about substantive issues involved in the case than might be available on a committee drawn from all parts of the university.

The ASH Committee requests that the Senate consider dismissals from professional schools and determine whether such cases should fall within the purview of the ASH Committee and, if not, whether other due process procedures should be available to such students.

ATTACHMENT A

Academic Standing and Honors Committee Dismissal Decisions by Semester: 2001-2002				
	SU01	FA01	WI02	SP02
Total Dismissals	10	93	192	34
Dismissals Rescinded	5	68	0	0
Dismissal Letters Sent	5	25	192	34
Appeals	5	7	73	16
Appeals Denied	3	6	44	9
Appeals Granted	2	1	29	7



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