

Academic Standing and Honors Committee

Annual Report for the 2005-2006 Academic year

The ASH committee for the 2005-2006 academic year comprised of 5 faculty members representing different academic units and representatives from other parts of the university. Committee members were: Henry Aigbedo (School of Business Administration, chair), Eddie Cheng (Mathematics and Statistics), Nancy Joseph (English), Beth Kraemer (Kresge Library), and Diane Petrella (Music); Susan Awbrey (Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education); Charles Clark (Director, Academic Skills Center); Christine Cleary (Engel) (Assistant Director of Housing); Matthew Kelly (Student representative), and Montrell Porter (Student Representative). Ivy Horn (Assistant Director, Academic Skills Center) and Aniesha Mitchell (Retention Coordinator, Academic Skills Center) were two other participants at the meetings. Diane Petrella resigned her appointment with OU effective from July 1, 2006 and so could not participate in the meeting of the full committee which took place on July 7, 2006. Only the 5 faculty representatives are voting members of the committee.

The Senate's charge to the committee is as follows:

To review, propose, and implement university policies concerning academic probation, dismissal, and readmission; to present to the Senate the Registrar's list of candidates for graduation with any recommendations for deletions or additions to the list; and to review and transmit to the Senate nominees for University honors.

The activities of the ASH Committee this year centered mostly on deliberating on dismissal appeal cases and taking appropriate actions. A total of six meetings¹ were held during the year. This comprised of 5 meetings of the full committee and 1 meeting of the current chair, in-coming chair for the 2006-2007 academic year, and the director of the academics skills center (this was the last meeting). Four full committee meetings were held to consider appeals for summer 2005, fall 2005, winter 2006, and spring 2006 semesters. We also had one full committee meeting with Ms. Jennifer Gilroy, Senior Associate Registrar, who provided an orientation for new members on how to read academic transcripts. Summary details for the dismissals and corresponding appeals are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Dismissal details for the 2005-2006 academic year

Item \ Semesters	Summer 2005	Fall 2005	Winter 2006	Spring 2006
Total Dismissals	11	67	106	14
# of appeals received	5	28	34	9
# of appeals approved	3	21	22	8
# of appeals denied	2	7	12	1

¹ September 9, 2005; November 28, 2005; January 9, 2006; May 17, 2006; July 7, 2006; and July 20, 2006.

One major change occurred with respect to the operation of the committee this academic year. Based on discussions of the committee during the latter part of the 2004-2005 academic year and contacts with John Coughlin (OU's E-learning and Instructional Support unit) by Charles Clark, Susan Awbrey requested John Coughlin to develop a secured online system for managing dismissal appeals. This system was used by the committee for all deliberations during the 2005-2006 academic year. Although this system did not obviate the need for meetings of the committee members in person, it had some advantages. For example, it helped contain cost for the university since it became unnecessary to print several copies of student appeal documents for committee members. Furthermore, members of the committee who could not participate for some reason were able to comment on the cases and present their votes online. With the help of Charles Clark and Ivy Horn, Henry Aigbedo developed a flowchart to document the process for managing dismissal appeals – this helps committee members better understand the process.

The committee observed with concern that oftentimes students do not provide sufficient enough documentation to back up claims made in their appeals. This made it difficult to provide fair judgment across students. The committee thus resolved that henceforth, any claims made in the appeals must be backed up by some evidence otherwise they will not count in the committee's deliberations.

During the year, the committee dealt with 2 cases involving students representing OU in athletic programs. The committee saw a need to develop a framework for working closely with the Athletic Director so that such students can be successful in their academic pursuits. This issue will be examined in detail by the committee at a later date.

The committee discussed the issue of receipt of dismissal appeal letters as there have been cases when students either complained that they did not receive the letters or that they received the letter after the committee had met to deliberate on the cases. It was agreed that students should be notified by using e-mail in addition to the postal mail currently used. This will reduce the likelihood that a student did not know about the dismissal. Details of the modalities for this procedure will be worked out by the committee in due course in consultation with the dean of students.

The committee observed that some students do not take advantage of the assistance provided by the Academic Skills Center and yet turn around to appeal after they have been dismissed. The committee agreed that it is important to put in place measures that hold the students accountable for their actions after being notified that they are placed on academic probation.

Submitted by:

Henry Aigbedo
Chair, Academic Standing and Honors
Committee, 2005-2006 Academic year
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