

1 July 2009

From: Todd D. Sikora, Chairperson, Academic Standards Committee

To: Ana Borger-Greco, Chairperson, Faculty Senate

Re: Annual Report of Academic Standards Committee for Academic Year 2008-2009

1. The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) held all-day dismissal appeal hearings on 7-8 January 2009 and 3-4 June 2009. Results of the hearings are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Dismissal Appeal Hearing Statistics**

	<b>January 2009 Dismissal Appeal Hearings</b>				
	<b>Dismissed</b>	<b>Appealed</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>% of Dismissals Appealed</b>	<b>% of Appeals Approved</b>
<b>1st Dismissal</b>	79	43 (6)	23 (2)	54	53 (33)
<b>2nd Dismissal</b>	16	6 (2)	0 (0)	38	0 (0)
<b>3rd Dismissal</b>	6	6 (0)	5 (N/A)	100	83 (N/A)
<b>Total</b>	101	55 (8)	28 (2)	54	51 (25)

	<b>June 2009 Dismissal Appeal Hearings</b>				
	<b>Dismissed</b>	<b>Appealed</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>% of Dismissals Appealed</b>	<b>% of Appeals Approved</b>
<b>1st Dismissal</b>	130	65 (8)	38 (2)	50	58 (25)
<b>2nd Dismissal</b>	32	13 (2)	7 (0)	41	54 (0)
<b>3rd Dismissal</b>	9	5 (0)	4 (N/A)	56	80 (N/A)
<b>Total</b>	171	83 (10)	49 (2)	48	59 (20)

Non-parenthetic data represent the total number of cases. Parenthetic data represent the portion of total cases that were resolved via letter only as opposed to by letter and in-person hearing. One of the first dismissal appeal approvals for January 2009 was the result of a late appeal that was directed to the Associate Provost for Academic Administration (APAA).

a) At the January hearings, the ASC encountered a student who made threatening statements to ASC members when his appeal was denied. The University Police were summoned and the student was escorted off campus. As a result of the situation, the ASC has asked that the University provide intermittent police patrols around and through the building during hearings.

b) There are usually several students who appeal their dismissals late to the ASC. The ASC Chairperson, in consultation with the Associate Registrar, has decided that all late requests for appeals will be honored by the Academic Standards Committee if the corresponding paperwork is received at the Registrar's Office by 30 June for spring

dismissals and by the last day of the following winter term for fall dismissals. Late appeals must be letter-only. Written appeals and requests for appeals received after the dates listed above will not be honored by the Academic Standards Committee and must be directed to the APAA.

2. ASC subcommittees considered three petitions for academic amnesty during January 2009, two of which were approved. ASC subcommittees considered two petitions for academic amnesty during the June 2009 hearings, both of which were approved.

3. The Director of Admissions asked the ASC to rule on a readmission application during the January 2009 hearings. The applicant in question was previously dismissed from the University three times for academic reasons and had served the requisite three-year dismissal period. An ASC subcommittee approved the readmission application.

4. As described in its 2007-2008 Annual Report, the ASC is continuing its work revising *Governance Manual, Academic Policy: Undergraduate Studies ACADEMIC STANDARDS, PROBATION, and DISMISSAL, Appeals*. (See paragraphs 4, 5, and 7 from the 2007-2008 Annual Report.)

a) Any corresponding changes to the Dismissal Letter and Letter of Appeal Form would be instituted once the revisions to the Academic Policy document are complete. (See paragraph 5 from the 2007-2008 Annual Report.)

b) Chairperson Sikora is continuing to apply his prerogative of not overturning any subcommittee decisions at the hearings and instead is directing further appeals to the Associate Provost for Academic Administration. Moreover, Chairperson Sikora is continuing his prerogative of following the Academic Policy exactly, as it pertains to the consequences of academic dismissals. (See paragraph 7 from the 2007-2008 Annual Report.)

5. The internal rubric described in Paragraph 6 of the 2007-2008 Annual Report has been well-received by the ASC and is continuing to be employed at the hearings.

6. Much of the ASC's work outside of the hearings during AY 08-09 focused on its membership and corresponding bylaws. As described in Paragraph 4 of the 2007-2008 Annual Report, that ASC voted 17-1-1 to eliminate student members on the ASC, with the understanding that corresponding language would be inserted into the proposed ASC bylaws. The rationale for such elimination surrounded the privacy of appellants and the qualifications of the student members.

During summer 2008, the Chairperson Sikora informed Office of Student Affairs of the vote on ASC student membership. The Vice President for Student Affairs expressed concern. Later during summer 2008, Chairperson Sikora met informally with the APAA, who suggested a potential compromise to student membership whereby students would continue to be ASC members but would be prohibited from taking part in hearings. Chairperson Sikora presented the ASC with this compromise and there was no dissent. Chairperson Sikora incorporated the

compromise into the proposed ASC bylaws and presented said proposal to Faculty Senate on 16 September 2008. Shortly thereafter, the APAA contacted Chairperson Sikora with concerns about the student membership issue. The APAA met with AY 07-08 and AY 08-09 members of the ASC on 16 October to discuss his concerns. A healthy discussion ensued during which potential solutions were presented. For example, the APAA suggested the qualification issue surrounding student representation at the hearings could be overcome via training and vetting.

On 21 October 2008, ASC member DiBartolomeis motioned within the ASC to withdraw the ASC bylaws proposal from Faculty Senate. The motion was seconded by ASC member Piperberg. Chairperson Sikora set a period for email debate and asked for a vote, via email, by noon on 25 October 2008. A healthy email discussion ensued. The motion was voted down 13 to 7.

The Faculty Senate debated ASC bylaws proposal on 18 November 2008. Details of that meeting can be found in the Faculty Senate minutes. In short, several faculty members spoke in favor and against the proposal. The Student Senate President voiced concerns with the proposal, as did MU Administrative Officers. Debate on the bylaws proposal continued at Faculty Senate on 2 December 2008, after which it was voted down 15 to 14.

Early during 2009, the Student Senate President asked that the ASC consider increasing its student membership complement from two to four such that one student member could sit on each of the four subcommittees that are typically formed during the hearings. On 3 February 2009, a corresponding motion to increase student membership was made by Piperberg, and seconded by DiBartolomeis. Chairperson Sikora set a period for email debate and asked for a corresponding vote, via email, by 5:00 p.m. on 6 February 2009. The motion was voted down 11 to 6.

With the student membership issues settled, Chairperson Sikora again set about to finalize the ASC bylaws proposal. Major changes between the proposed bylaws and those currently in force at the time were: 1) a request that the hearings conducted by the ASC be closed; 2) the addition of alternate faculty members, which was approved by Faculty Senate in October, 2007; 3) the addition of the ASC function of considering academic amnesty petitions; and 4) the addition of the ASC function of advising the Director of Admissions on admission applications following a third academic dismissal. The ASC approved all these changes on 25 February 2009, by an email vote, of 14 to 1.

Soon thereafter, the ASC was approached by leaders of the AIM program about AIM's involvement with the ASC. About 10 to 20 percent of appellants at the ASC dismissal appeal hearings are historically AIM students. Therefore, AIM personnel have regularly provided the ASC with input on dismissed AIM students prior to the hearings. AIM asked to formalize their relationship with the ASC by having an AIM representative be an ex officio member of the ASC. On 15 April 2009, ASC member Cuthbert subsequently made a motion to add the Director of AIM to the list of ex officio members on the ASC draft bylaws, and that motion was seconded by Piperberg. Chairperson Sikora set a period for email debate and asked for a corresponding vote, via email, by 17 April 2009 at 5:00 p.m. The motion was approved 12 to 1, and Chairperson

Sikora inserted corresponding language in the proposed bylaws. Feedback from ASC members on the AIM ex officio member's involvement at the June 2009 hearings was uniformly positive.

Finally, on 21 April 2009, Faculty Senate approved the proposed bylaws. At Dean's Council, a recommendation was made to remove the closed hearing language from the proposed bylaws and, instead, continue the procedure of the Chairperson exercising his/her prerogative in determining who may and may not be in attendance at hearings. The ASC agreed and Dean's Council approved the bylaws.

7. Recall from (6) above that part of ASC's concern with student members was their qualifications. As a result of corresponding discussions, a subcommittee of ASC was formed to address the training of all ASC members. The subcommittee is chaired by Piperberg and is populated with ASC student member Muller and Ms. Austin of the Office of Student Affairs. Their work is ongoing.

Sincerely,

Associate Professor Todd D. Sikora  
ASC Chairperson

cc: Associate Provost for Academic Administration  
Registrar