

**ACADEMIC STANDING COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT: 2016-2017**

This year's committee read and acted on 4575 appeals which is not significantly different from the 4632 appeals processed by last year's committee. The slight change in the number of appeals is caused exclusively by a decrease in the number students seeking a change of grade or withdraw after the deadline. The following statistics summarize the committee's activities from June 2016 to May 20, 2017 as per data provided by the Registrar's office:

Type of appeal:	Total	Granted	Denied
Grade change and/or retroactive withdrawal	647	609 (94.1%)	38 (5.9%)
Re-instatement on special probation after academic dismissal	1364	1171 (85.9%)	193 (14.1%)
Financial aid (TAP or Title IV waiver)	2564	2187 (85.3%)	377 (14.7%)
Totals:	4575	3967 (86.7%)	608 (13.3%)

The rate at which the various categories of appeals were granted increased, did not vary greatly from last year's rates (the grant rates of 94.1, 85.9, and 85.3% compared to last year's rates of 94.1, 85.0, and 78.4% respectively.) The rate of financial aid appeals granted this year is significantly higher than the rate from last year. The overall rate at which appeals were granted went up to 86.7% from 82.8% last year mostly due to the increased rate at which the committee granted financial aid appeals. This is probably due to a combination of factors including more awareness of the criteria used to evaluate those appeals among students and the counselors who assist them in filing the appeals.

The committee discussed several changes this year. The first change was initiated by Jim Blake. He suggested that the committee investigate a way to be more lenient for the financial aid appeals for students who were denied financial aid due to being on academic probation, but have just begun attending the college. The committee passed a resolution to change the way we read the financial aid appeals (hence this change did not need to be sanctioned by Academic Senate). Specifically, we decided "that the Committee not require documentation for extenuating circumstances in order to grant Title IV financial aid appeals for students who have two or fewer semesters at BMCC." This does not require a change in the way counselors assist students with these appeals except that a counselor need not discourage such a student with no documentable extenuating circumstances from filing an appeal if that student has two or fewer semesters on his or her BMCC transcript. Students should still be encouraged to provide documentation to strengthen his or her case as the motion passed does not state that the appeal will automatically be granted. I do not believe that this change was a significant factor in the increased rate at which financial aid appeals were granted. Although I did not formally track the number of appeals in this category, my sense is that it is a relatively small

number- many of which would have been granted even if the way we read the appeals had not been changed. However, it does feel like the committee made a significant change in terms of providing a just outcome for students who had difficulty adjusting to the academic rigors of a college with no formal required orientation.

On May 4th, the committee chair received a set of proposals from the VP of enrollment management for changes in academic standing policies. The committee discussed these proposals at our May 10th meeting. Here is my edited version of the proposal (I separated the cases of W grades and remedial courses, but combined dismissal and probationary students in the proposal regarding grades in summer or winter sessions)

1. Students with W grades in a semester on which they were on probation should not need to file an appeal for reinstatement,
2. Students who took all remedial courses in a semester in which they were on academic probation should not need to file an appeal for reinstatement,
3. Students who were dismissed or on probation but subsequently earned grades in summer or winter semesters that raised their GPA putting them in good academic standing should not need to file an appeal for reinstatement or financial aid, and
4. A proposal to change the required GPA levels for academic standing with a specific change of not monitoring the academic standing of students with 12 or less credits.

The committee discussed all of these proposals. The faculty members on the committee unanimously agreed not to put forward motions on 1, 2 and 4. For 1, while a “W” is not a punitive grade, it often signals that the student was having some extenuating circumstance that affected his or her ability to attend college. These students can often benefit from meeting with a counselor, a mandated part of the appeal process. Often, these students could benefit from learning about the resources the college has to help them re-integrate into college life after an absence. For 2, the administration proposal (and many student appeals of this type) did not discuss whether or not the student PASSED the remedial courses. These students need to file an appeal because the members of the academic standing committee are best suited to determine if the student’s performance in the probationary semester (in light of any documented extenuating circumstances) merits granting an additional semester of special probation. Whether or not the student PASSED the non-credit courses informs the committee about the students’ ability to benefit from BMCC’s course offerings, both credit and non-credit courses. For 4, the committee feels that students who are relatively new to the college are most at-risk and for that reason it is imperative to monitor their academic standing, and, if merited, put the student on probation or dismiss the student. Most student appeals in this category are granted, but the committee believes strongly that there is the benefit of mandating that these at-risk students to meet with a counselor where they might learn of resources at the college (or in the community) that can enhance their likelihood of success at BMCC. Unless or until BMCC has some other intervention in place for students who are having difficulty adjusting to our college (such as a mandatory orientation course), the committee feels it would be unwise not to track new students’ progress and dismiss (ie require counseling for) those who fall below a minimum GPA threshold. The committee does welcome the proposal to not require appeals from

students who have returned to good academic standing due to grades earned in summer or winter sessions subsequent to an earlier semester that caused them to be flagged as on probation or dismissed. I have always been on careful watch for this type of appeal and have occasionally had to speak with committee members to overturn a denial (these students are in good standing!) Having the policy of not having to consider these appeals would lift a burden from the committee in terms of being vigilant to notice the situation. I will make a motion to change this policy at the May Senate meeting. This report is due prior to that meeting so I cannot note the outcome of this recommendation here. The committee was adamant in its recommendation that, in the future, the chair of the Academic Standing Committee ought to be invited to any administration discussions that might result in proposals for our consideration to streamline the process for changing academic standing policies.

The faculty members on this committee have worked tirelessly on students' appeals. Since each appeal is read by two committee members, about 9000 decisions were rendered (about 800 per committee member!) Without their talents, diligent efforts, and dedicated service, our students would not have had the benefit of knowing the outcomes of their appeals in a timely way. I believe that all appeals filed were read and acted on by the committee within 30 days of their submission. Very few cases that appeared to be inconsistent and needed further review came to my attention this year. That fact and the maintenance of the rate at which appeals have been granted over time point to the consistency of the members' actions on appeals.

The Registrar's office (Tanoai Williams, Divine Sikanku, and Raquel Whitter in particular) has provided an outstanding level of service to assist the committee's work. Finally, I would like to commemorate the dedicated service of Owen Meyers to this committee, who I have listed below as a member of our committee although he is deceased.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Miller, Chair

Members:

James Blake
Horace Brockington
Cheryl Christopher
Anthony Creaco
Kathleen Dreyer
Jun Liang
Owen Meyers
Alicia Perdomo
Christine Priano
Cynthia Wiseman (Secretary and representative to the Executive committee)

Hasan Yumak