

**ACADEMIC STANDING COMMITTEE  
FINAL REPORT: 2018-2019**

This year's committee read and acted on 5,675 student appeals which represents a 14.7% increase over the number of appeals processed by last year's committee and is a record number of appeals acted on in a year. The number of all three types of appeals considered by the committee increased with the greatest increase in the number of appeals for reinstatement (23.4% more than prior year) and the lowest rate of increase in the number of financial aid appeals (10.4%). The following statistics summarize the committee's activities from June 2018 to May 14, 2019 as per data provided by the Registrar's office:

Type of appeal:	Total	Granted	Denied
Grade change and/or retroactive withdrawal	656	619 (94.4%)	37 (5.6%)
Re-instatement on special probation after academic dismissal	1,856	1,631 (87.8%)	225 (12.2%)
Financial aid (TAP or Title IV waiver)	3,163	2,797 (88.4%)	366 (11.6%)
Totals:	5,675	5,047 (88.9%)	628 (11.1%)

It is a testament to the consistency of the members' application of our appeal reading standards that the rate at which appeals were granted this year is exactly the same (to the nearest tenth of a percent) as that of the prior year's appeals! The rate of grade changes increased slightly, the rate of granting re-instatement appeals decreased slightly, and the grant rate for financial aid appeals was virtually unchanged from last year's.

Some of the increase in the number of appeals for reinstatement might be attributed to a policy change enacted by the committee. In October, the committee voted to change the current language in the academic standing policy regarding student appeals following three academic dismissals: proposing that the current language be changed from "Students who are academically dismissed a third time cannot appeal their dismissal." to "Appeals for a third or subsequent dismissal will be granted only in extremely rare instances and when it is clear that the student can return to good academic standing within one semester." This change was adopted by the Senate. So, the committee read an additional category of appeals for the remainder of the year that were previously intercepted and rejected by the Registrar without the committee making any decision.

At our February meeting, the committee voted to consider appeals for students who want to request an NC even though they had missed the deadline for requesting that grade during the semester. The deadline has just recently been imposed due to a CUNY mandate. The Senate ratified the committee's resolution on considering NC grades.

Another major policy discussion occurred at our April meeting and was prompted by a proposal to change the definition of good academic standing and the way that financial aid appeals and appeals for reinstatement are read by the committee. The full response is in our April minutes. Briefly, the VP of Enrollment Management and the Senior Registrar proposed that students' academic progress not be formally tracked until students reach 12 credits which would reduce the number of students on probation. While lowering the number of students on probation is certainly a laudable goal, the committee feels that tracking, warning, and mandating intervention for these vulnerable freshmen students is essential. If there were other systems in place to track and support these at-risk students, then a change to the current policies for probation and dismissal could be re-considered. The committee specifically recommended:

- a mandatory orientation for all incoming freshmen to decrease the number who are put on probation due to not being aware of the expectations at BMCC and not having effective strategies to be successful,
- another mandatory intervention for students who are not achieving a satisfactory level of academic performance, and
- improved communication and targeted advisement programs for students who have fallen below key thresholds.

Another proposal sought to eliminate the need for students who had taken only non-credit bearing courses or withdrew from all courses in the prior semester to file appeals for re-admission, but, again, the committee sees a benefit from having those students meet with a counselor (even though we rule favorably in most of those cases.) Finally, it was proposed that students who file both reinstatement and financial aid appeals be given the same decision for both. The committee has different standards for these two types of appeals: for a financial aid appeal the student must document an extenuating circumstance that affected his or her academic performance, while for re-instatement, the committee evaluates a wider range of evidence to judge if the student is likely to be able to obtain his or her degree based on his or her current standing and circumstances. Forcing the same decision for both appeals might cause more appeals to be denied since currently the standards for financial aid appeals are somewhat less strict. Also, committee members feel that we are able to read all appeals consistently with the current guidelines. Our response to these proposals has many recommendations that could be helpful as the college undertakes a concerted effort to reduce the number of students experiencing academic difficulty, especially in their first year attending BMCC.

Most of the faculty members on this committee have worked tirelessly on students' appeals. Since each appeal is read by two committee members, over 10,000 decisions were rendered (about 900 per committee member!) Unfortunately, I regret to report that the distribution of appeals to members of the committee was not uniform, with some members reading thousands of appeals and others reading hundreds. Rectifying this would require some method of monitoring the number read by each committee member. There have been ongoing discussions about having an online appeals process and that would provide the required productivity data. An added benefit is that it would be easier to glean data from the appeals to help craft the type of interventions to provide effective

assistance to students in jeopardy of an unsuccessful outcome. However, we would lose the benefit of the discussions that take place when the committee members get together and read the appeals in one place and time. These discussions often lead directly to recommendations on policy issues that are part of the committee's charge.

Without the talents, diligent efforts, and dedicated service of this committee's members, 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 cooperation between the Counseling Center and the committee has led to an increase in the number of appeals granted in recent years in my opinion. The chair of this committee is in frequent contact with the department of student life and its members to ensure that all understand how the committee reads appeals, and they assist students in filing appeals that are likely to be granted. All 5,675 appeals that the committee were read represent a meeting between a counselor and a student and that often leads to a student being more aware of resources and strategies to reach the goal of a BMCC diploma. Both the Counseling Center and the registrar's office have facilitated the service that this committee performs for our students and this institution.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Miller, Chair

Members:

James Blake  
Horace Brockington  
Arthur Cain  
Cheryl Christopher  
Anthony Creaco (representative to the Executive Committee)  
Kathleen Dreyer  
Alicia Perdomo  
Colin Persaud  
Christine Priano (Secretary)  
Ali Syed  
Cynthia Wiseman