

Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM)

Annual Report

Summer Semester 2018 – Spring Semester 2019

Prepared by

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The University's *Code of Student Conduct* defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process" (Faculty Rule 3335-23-04[A]). The Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) is charged with maintaining the University's academic integrity by investigating and adjudicating "all reported cases of student academic misconduct, with the exception of cases in a professional college having a published honor code." In instances where a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM decides upon "suitable disciplinary action" (University Rule 3335-5-487[B]). The data for this year's annual report consist of cases resolved from May 6, 2018, to May 5, 2019 and the report follows the templates for reporting developed by previous COAM chairs and coordinators. It should be noted that the 2012-13 reporting year was shorter in comparison with previous years because of calendar changes associated with OSU's conversion to semesters. Links to previous annual reports can be found on the Senate website http://senate.osu.edu/?page_id=183 or at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coamreports.html>.

COAM is composed of 22 faculty members, nine graduate students (appointed by CGS), and nine undergraduate students (appointed by USG). The work of COAM is facilitated by the Coordinator who (1) receives and processes allegations of academic misconduct, (2) notifies students of allegations of academic misconduct, (3) consults with students and faculty regarding allegations of academic misconduct, (4) schedules hearings to resolve allegations of academic misconduct, and (5) notifies students and faculty of the outcomes of these hearings.

Every student who is charged with academic misconduct has the right to a hearing before a panel of COAM. A panel consists of at least four members of COAM, and the rules require that each panel have at least two faculty representatives and one student representative. The panel serves as an impartial hearing body that hears evidence and determines (1) if a student has

violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, and (2) an appropriate sanction in cases where a student is found "in violation." If a student agrees with the allegations of academic misconduct and waives his/her right to a hearing, he/she may have the allegations resolved as an administrative decision. For an administrative decision, a member of COAM, typically the Coordinator, serves as a hearing officer and determines appropriate sanctions.

I. SUMMARY OF CASES RESOLVED

During the 2018-2019 academic year, COAM resolved 961 cases of alleged academic misconduct. Of the cases resolved, 67.5% were resolved as administrative decisions and 32.5% were resolved as panel hearings (**Table 1**). Females and males represented 39.3% and 60.1%, respectively, of the cases resolved (**Table 2**). Five students (0.6%) did not specify a gender.

Table 1
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Method of Resolution
2018-2019 Academic Year

Method of Resolution	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Administrative Decisions	649	67.5
Panel Hearings	312	32.5
Totals	961	100

Table 2
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Student's Gender
2018-2019 Academic Year

Gender	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Female	378	39.3
Male	578	60.1
Preferred not to answer	5	0.6
Totals	961	100

Of the cases resolved by COAM this past reporting year, 864¹ (89.9%) resulted in verdicts of “in violation.” The rates at which males and females were found “in violation” of the *Code of Student Conduct* were 89.9% for females, 89.8% for males and 100.0% for other (**Table 3**).

Table 3
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases by Verdict and Gender
2018-2019 Academic Year

Gender	Students Found “Not In Violation”	Students Found “In Violation”	Total Cases	% In Violation (% of Total for Gender)
Female	38	340	378	89.9
Male	59	519	578	89.8
Preferred not to answer	0	5	5	100.0
Totals	97	864	961	---

II. SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CHARGES

When allegations of academic misconduct arise, a student often does not know or understand what he/she has allegedly done wrong. Since COAM desires that the hearing process be an educational process, the Coordinator meets with students upon request charged with violating the Code of Student Conduct and explains the nature of the behavior that led to the allegations. Table 4 summarizes information on academic misconduct charges for the 2018-2019 academic year. The left column is a list of the types of charges used most commonly by COAM. The “Number of Charges” column lists the total number of charges assigned by COAM for each particular violation, and the “% of Total Charges” column lists the number of charges as a percentage of the total charges (2186). The last two columns list the number of findings of “in violation” associated with each charge and the respective percentage for each. For example, of 192 charges of plagiarism, 184 (95.9%) were found “in violation.”

Students are often charged with and found “in violation” of more than one charge. Thus, the total number of charges (2186) exceeds the total number of cases resolved by COAM (961), and the total for “Number In Violation” (1883) exceeds the actual number of *students* found “in violation” (864).

¹ Total verdicts adjusted after appeals, as noted in Section VI of this report.

The relatively lower values for the percentages of students found “in violation” of unauthorized collaboration and copying are potentially misleading. They result because COAM often treats the charges of “copying” and “unauthorized collaboration” as mutually exclusive. In many of the cases where COAM receives information alleging that one student may have copied the work of another student, it is not clear which student (if any) copied and whether or not there was collusion (working together in an unauthorized manner). Thus, in many of these cases, the students involved are charged with both copying *and* unauthorized collaboration, but may be found “in violation” of only one of those charges. In other words, copying is considered to be a unilateral act, where one student copies from another, whereas unauthorized collaboration involves two students working together.

“Failure to comply with course/program policies/guidelines” generally accompanies the other more specific charges, and so a student who is found in violation on a specific charge may also be found—by entailment—in violation of course policy. In the majority of COAM cases, charges against students stem from the failure to follow course or assignment guidelines, and this charge may be used by itself alone if the allegations stem directly from a failure to follow course guidelines.

COAM’s list of standard charges was updated in 2013-14 to better correspond to the examples listed in the revised Code of Student Conduct. The following charges were added to COAM’s standard charges in 2013-14: (1) “Knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations”, and (2) “Compromising the academic integrity of the university/subverting the educational process”, which refers to rule 3335-23-04 A of the Code of Student Conduct. It should be noted that alleged violations related to examinations might also be covered by other charges such as copying or unauthorized collaboration/ unauthorized assistance and thus the number of cases associated with this charge likely underestimates the number of incidents that occur during exams or other assessments. The latter charge is generally qualified with a specific description of the alleged misconduct when it falls outside of the most frequent charges or when the standard charges do not adequately capture the nature of the alleged misconduct.

Table 4
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Academic Misconduct Charges by Type and Verdict
2018-2019 Academic Year

Charge	Number of Charges	% of Total Charges	Number in Violation	% in Violation
Violation of course rules or assignment guidelines as contained in the course syllabus or other information provided to the student	848	38.8	771	90.9
Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement	192	8.8	184	95.9
Unauthorized collaboration by sharing information during an academic activity/unauthorized sharing of electronic files	386	17.7	304	78.8
Copying the work of another and representing it as one's own work	365	16.7	311	85.2
Knowingly requesting, receiving or providing unauthorized assistance during an academic activity	10	0.5	8	80.0
Possession or use of unauthorized materials during an academic activity	5	0.2	5	100.0
Compromising the academic integrity of the university/subverting the educational process + "other"	79	3.6	60	75.9
Falsification, fabrication or dishonesty in creating or reporting laboratory results, research reports, and/or any other assignments	22	1.0	20	90.9
Knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations.	181	8.3	133	73.5
Engaging in activities that unfairly place other students at an academic disadvantage.	8	0.4	6	75.0

Alteration and resubmission of course materials, grades, or marks in an attempt to change the earned credit or grade	8	0.4	5	62.5
Forgery	7	0.3	7	100.0
Providing falsified materials, documents, or records to a university official in order to meet academic qualifications, criteria, or requirements	11	0.5	10	90.9
Serving as or enlisting the assistance of a substitute for a student during an academic activity	13	0.6	9	69.2
Submission of work not performed in a course or degree program/ Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course or academic requirement that has been submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course or academic requirement without permission.	51	2.3	50	98.0
Violation of program regulations or policies as established by departmental committees and made available to students.	0	0.0	0	0.0
Totals	2186	100%	1883	--

III. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT'S ENROLLMENT UNIT AND THE INITIATING UNIT

Eighteen enrollment units on campus were represented in the cases resolved by COAM during the 2018-19 reporting year, with combined cases from the College of the Arts and Sciences (UASC), College of Engineering (UENG), and the Fisher College of Business (UBUS) accounting for 73.0% of the total cases (**Table 5**). It should be noted that although the Graduate School is listed as the enrollment units for 44 cases, those students were in graduate programs offered by other academic departments and/or colleges.

The cases heard by COAM during the past year were *initiated* from or involved courses from 81 units across the University, with the combined cases from courses in Computer Science and Engineering (262 cases), Chemistry and Biochemistry (168), Electrical and Computer Engineering (45), Biology (31), and English (29) accounting for 55.7% of the total cases (**Table 6**). Some units of the university now offer instruction as part of certification programs that may not

involve courses listed in the official course catalog maintained by the Registrar. Since the definition of a student in the Code of Student Conduct includes any person who entered into agreement with the university to take instruction, allegations of academic misconduct in these certification programs are reported to COAM. Those cases are included in the “Other” category at the bottom of **Tables 6, 7 and 8.**

Table 5
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit
2018-2019 Academic Year

Enrollment Unit	Total for Enrollment Unit	% of Total
UASC (College of the Arts and Sciences)	377	39.23%
UENG (College of Engineering)	205	21.33%
UBUS (College of Business)	120	12.87%
UEXP (Exploration Program)	68	7.08%
GRD (Graduate School)	44	4.58%
UEHE (Education and Human Ecology)	40	4.16%
UAGR (College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences)	22	2.29%
UHRS (School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences) + UHRSP (Pre-program)	21	2.19%
UNUR (College of Nursing) +UNURP (Nursing Pre-program)	12	1.25%
UPHR (College of Pharmacy)	10	1.04%
UDHY (Dental Hygiene) + UDHYP (Dental Hygiene Pre-program)	7	0.73%
ATI (Agricultural Technical Institute)	6	0.62%
UNDG (Undergraduate Non-Degree)	6	0.62%
UENR (School of Environment and Natural Resources)	5	0.52%
UPBH (College of Public Health)	5	0.52%
USWK (College of Social Work)	3	0.31%
UAHR (School of Architecture)	3	0.31%
UJGS (John Glenn College of Public Affairs)	2	0.21%
UMED (College of Medicine)	2	0.21%
UACD (Academy)	1	0.10%
PHP (Pharmacy Professional)	1	0.10%
UVSTR (Visitor)	1	0.10%
Totals	961	100%

Table 6
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit
2018-2019 Academic Year

Course Offering Unit	Number of Cases	% of Total
CSE [Computer Science and Engineering]	262	27.26%
CHEM [Chemistry and Biochemistry]	168	17.48%
SPANISH	55	5.72%
ECE [Electrical and Computer Engineering]	45	4.68%
BIOLOGY	31	3.23%
ENGLISH	29	3.02%
MATH [Mathematics]	20	2.08%
HISTORY	19	1.98%
MECH ENG [Mechanical Engineering]	19	1.98%
STAT [Statistics]	19	1.98%
BUSMGT [Business Management]	16	1.66%
ECON [Economics]	16	1.66%
ENGR [Engineering]	16	1.66%
SOCIOL [Sociology]	15	1.56%
ACCTMIS [Accounting and Management Information Systems]	14	1.46%
GEOG [Geography]	12	1.25%
NURSING	12	1.25%
POLIT SC [Political Science]	10	1.05%
ANTHROP [Anthropology]	7	0.73%
CIVILEN [Civil Engineering]	7	0.73%
FD SC&TE [Food Science and Technology}	7	0.73%
PHR [Pharmacy]	7	0.73%
PSYCH [Psychology]	7	0.73%
COMM [Communications]	6	0.62%
KNSFHP [Kinesiology: Sorts, Fitness and Health Program]	6	0.62%
EDU T&L [Education Teaching and Learning]	5	0.52%
ENGTECH [Engineering Technology]	5	0.52%
MICROBIO [Microbiology]	5	0.52%
PUBHHBP [Public Health: Healthy Behavior and Health Promotion]	5	0.52%
SPHHRNG [Speech and Hearing]	5	0.52%

Table 6 (continued) Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit

BUS-ADM [Business Administration	4	0.42%
HISTART [History of Art]	4	0.42%
PHILOS [Philosophy]	4	0.42%
SOC WORK [Social Work]	4	0.42%
THEATER	4	0.42%
AED ECON [Agricultural, Environmental and Developmental Economics]	3	0.31%
ANATOMY	3	0.31%
ARTSSCI [Arts and Sciences]	3	0.31%
BIOMED E [Biomedical Engineering]	3	0.31%
BUS-FIN [Business Administration: Finance	3	0.31%
CBE [Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering]	3	0.31%
DENTHYG [Dental Hygiene]	3	0.31%
LINGUIST [Linguistics]	3	0.31%
MATSC&EN [Materials Science and Engineering]	3	0.31%
SCANDVN [Scandinavian]	3	0.31%
ART	2	0.21%
ASTRON [Astronomy]	2	0.21%
COMPSTD [Comparative Studies]	2	0.21%
FABENG [Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering]	2	0.21%
INS STDS [International Studies]	2	0.21%
ISE [Integrated Systems Engineering]	2	0.21%
JEWSHST [Jewish Studies]	2	0.21%
MEATSCI [Meat Sciences]	2	0.21%
MUSIC	2	0.21%
NRSADV [Nursing Advancement]	2	0.21%
PHYSICS	2	0.21%
RUSSIAN	2	0.21%
AFAM&AST [African American and African Studies]	1	0.10%
ARTEDUC [Art Education]	1	0.10%
AVIATN [Aviation]	1	0.10%
BUS-MHR [Business Administration: Management and Human Resources]	1	0.10%
BUS-ML [Business Administration: Marketing and Logistics]	1	0.10%
DESIGN	1	0.10%

Table 6 (continued) Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit

EARTHSC [Earth Sciences]	1	0.10%
ENR [Environment and Natural Resources]	1	0.10%
ENTMLGY [Entomology]	1	0.10%
ESCE [Educational Studies: Counselor Education]	1	0.10%
ESEPSY [Educational Studies: School Psychology]	1	0.10%
ESHESA [Educational Studies: Higher Education and Student Affairs]	1	0.10%
ESWDE [Educational Studies: Workforce Development and Education]	1	0.10%
EXP [University Exploration Survey]	1	0.10%
FRENCH	1	0.10%
HDFS [Human Development & Family Science]	1	0.10%
HTHRHS [Health and Rehabilitation Sciences]	1	0.10%
ITALIAN	1	0.10%
LAW	1	0.10%
MEDLBS [Medical Labs]	1	0.10%
MOLGEN [Molecular Genetics]	1	0.10%
PORTGSE [Portuguese]	1	0.10%
RELSTDS [Religious Studies]	1	0.10%
WGGST [Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies]	1	0.10%
Other	13	1.35%
TOTAL	961	100%

IV. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT’S RANK AND COURSE LEVEL

Approximately 75% of the cases resolved by COAM during the 2018-19 reporting year were the result of misconduct allegations in 1000- and 2000-level courses (Table 7). Fewer cases resulted from allegations in progressively higher-level courses. Some cases of academic misconduct occur outside of a formal class taken for academic credit. Those cases are included in the category “Other”.

Table 7
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Course Level (Number)
2018-2019 Academic Year

Course Level (Semesters)	Number of Cases	% of Cases
1000	394	41.0%
2000	330	34.3%
3000	107	11.1%
4000	48	5.0%
5000	38	3.9%
6000	7	0.7%
7000	21	2.2%
8000	3	0.3%
Other	13	1.4%
TOTAL	961	100%

Table 8 summarizes the number of cases resolved at each level by student class rank. The distribution of cases for undergraduates is fairly evenly distributed across all ranks. The greatest number of cases and the highest percentage of cases within a single rank was for rank 2 students. Undergraduates are entering the university with more credit hours, which means that some rank 2 students are in their first year at the university. The number of cases involving ranks 1, 2, 3 and 4 students was fairly evenly distributed. When cases by rank are expressed as a percentage of total students within each rank based on fifteenth-day student enrollment for Autumn 2018, the distribution of cases was as follows: rank 1=1.95% (11,042 students); rank 2=2.30% (11,448 students), rank 3=1.64% (12,135 students), rank 4=1.20% (18,943 students), and graduate students (excluding graduate professional students)=0.39% (11,113 students). Note: a rank of “Other” may represent visitor or other individuals who took courses as non-degree students and/or were enrolled in a certification program.

Table 8
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student Rank and Course Level
2018-2019 Academic Year

Rank	1	2	3	4	GRD	Other	Totals	% by Course Level
Course Level								
1000	124	136	79	54	1	0	394	41.0%
2000	86	105	77	62	0	0	330	34.3%
3000	4	14	22	66	1	0	107	11.1%
4000	0	3	16	29	0	0	48	5.0%
5000	1	5	5	17	10	0	38	3.9%
6000	0	0	0	0	7	0	7	0.7%
7000	0	0	0	0	21	0	21	2.2%
8000	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0.3%
Other	0	0	0	0	0	13	13	1.4%
TOTAL	215	263	199	228	43	13	961	100.00%
% by Rank	22.4%	27.4%	20.7%	23.7%	4.5%	1.4%	100.00%	

V. Summary of Disciplinary and Grade Sanctions

When COAM finds that a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM imposes sanctions. A sanction typically includes a disciplinary component and a grade-related component.

The disciplinary sanctions imposed by COAM and the number of cases involved are summarized in **Table 9**. Of the 906 cases resolved during the 2018-2019 Academic Year, 864 resulted in a finding of "in violation" and these were accompanied by a disciplinary sanction. As these data demonstrate, most students found *in violation of the Code of Student Conduct* received a sanction of "disciplinary probation."

Table 9
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions
2018-2019 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases "In Violation"	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	43	5.0%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to "until graduation")	783	90.6%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	30	3.5%
Dismissal	8	0.9%
Totals	864	100%

The grade sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 10**. Of the 864 cases in which a student was found "in violation" in 2018-19, no grade sanction was authorized in 23 of the cases. As these data demonstrate, the modal grade sanction for students found "in violation" of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is an authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment and a further reduction of the student's final grade. In most instances, COAM authorizes the instructor to award a grade sanction. In some instances, COAM imposes the sanction of a failing grade directly via the Registrar: "re-enroll with a failing grade" and "E" by action of University Committee. These

failing grades may not be removed from the advising report or transcript by petition or retroactive withdrawal from the course. Hearing panels and hearing officers have the option to create grade sanctions appropriate to individual cases of academic misconduct. Grade sanctions created by hearing panels or hearing officers are included in the category “Other”.

Table 10
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Grade Sanctions
2018-2019 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	23	2.9%
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	189	21.9%
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	99	11.5%
Authorization for “0” on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	509	58.9%
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or “U” in the course	10	1.2%
Final Grade of E/U/NP by “action of University Committee”	27	3.1%
Re-enroll with a final failing grade for the course	2	0.2%
Other	5	0.6%
Totals	864	100%

A summary of the disciplinary sanctions received by graduate students who were found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct is given in **Table 11**.

Table 11
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions for Graduate Students
2018-2019 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases “In Violation”	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	1	2.9%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to “until graduation”)	31	88.6%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	3	8.6%
Dismissal	0	0.0%
Totals	35	100%

A summary of the grade sanctions received by graduate students during the 2018-2019 academic year is provided in **Table 12**.

Table 12
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Grade Sanctions for Graduate Students
2018-2019 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	1	2.9%
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	9	25.7%
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	4	11.5%
Authorization for "0" on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	14	40.06%
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or "U" in the course	4	11.4%
Final Grade of E/U/NP by "action of University Committee"	2	25.7
Re-enroll with a final failing grade for the course	0	0.0%
Other	1	2.9%
Totals	35	100

VI. Appeals

A student who has been found in violation of the *Code of Student Conduct* has the right to appeal the original decision of the hearing panel or hearing officer. The appeal is not intended to re-hear or re-argue the same case, and is limited to specific grounds as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. Appeals of decisions of the Committee on Academic Misconduct or its Coordinator are submitted for decision to the Executive Vice President and Provost or designee. Of the 864 cases in which the student was found to be in violation by COAM in 2018-2019, 71 cases were appealed. In 53 instances, the decision of the Committee was upheld. Eighteen of the appeals were granted. In one case the charges were dismissed. In eleven cases the dates of the disciplinary probation were adjusted to allow students to participate in studies abroad. In three cases the grade sanctions were adjusted and in two cases the disciplinary sanctions were adjusted. In one case the student's appeal was granted and the disciplinary sanction was altered. The student subsequently requested that the original sanction be reinstated and the student's request was granted.