

Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) Annual Report

Summer Quarter, 2010 – Spring Quarter, 2011

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, and [in instances where a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*] deciding upon suitable disciplinary action" (University Rule 3335-5-487[B]).

COAM is composed of 18 faculty members, seven graduate students (appointed by CGS), and seven 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 accused of 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 serves as a hearing officer and determines the sanctions.

I. SUMMARY OF CASES RESOLVED

For the purposes of this report, the COAM 2010-2011 academic year was considered as 6/19/2010 to 6/13/2011. During the 2010-2011 academic year, COAM resolved 597 cases of alleged academic misconduct. (One hundred of the cases resolved during this period had been received prior to 6/19/2010, but were resolved during this time frame.)

Of the cases resolved, 58% were resolved as administrative decisions and 42% were resolved as panel hearings (**Table 1**). Females and males represented 38% and 62%, respectively, of the cases resolved (**Table 2**).

Table 1.

Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Method of Resolution

2010-2011 Academic Year

	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Administrative Decisions	349	58
Panel Hearings	248	42
Totals	597	100

I. SUMMARY OF CASES RESOLVED

Table 2.

Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Student's Gender 2010-2011 Academic Year

Gender	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Female	224	38
Male	373	62
Totals	597	100

Of the cases resolved by COAM this past year, 86% resulted in verdicts of “in violation,” respectively, and the rates at which males and females were found “in violation” of the *Code of Student Conduct* were similar, 89% for females and 84% for males (Table 3).

Table 3.

Distribution of Cases Resolved Based on Students' Gender and Verdict 2010-2011 Academic Year

Gender	Students Found “Not In Violation”	Students Found “In Violation”	Total Cases	% In Violation (% of Total for Gender)
Female	24	200	224	89
Male	58	315	373	84
Totals	82	515	597	86

II. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT'S COLLEGE OF ENROLLMENT

Over 20 enrollment units on campus were represented by the cases resolved by COAM during the past year (**Table 4**), but the students from four enrollment units (College of Engineering [ENG], Undergraduate Student Academic Services [USAS], College of Social and Behavioral Sciences [SBS], and College of Business [BUS]), when combined, accounted for over half (53%) of all cases.

Table 4.

Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit

2010-2011 Academic Year

Enrollment Unit	Total for Enrollment Unit	% of All Cases
AGR (College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences)	15	3
AHR (School of Architecture)	3	0
AMP (School of Allied Medical Professions)	9	2
ART (College of Art)	13	2
ASC (Colleges of the Arts and Sciences)	11	2
ATI (Agricultural Technical Institute)	22	4
BIO (College of Biological Sciences)	34	6
BUS (College of Business)	116	19
CED (Continuing Education)	6	1
EHE (College of Education and Human Ecology)	32	5

Table 4*Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit (cont'd)*

Enrollment Unit	Total for Enrollment Unit	% of All Cases
ENG (College of Engineering)	83	14
EXP (Exploration Program)	35	6
GRD (Graduate School)	12	2
HUM (College of Humanities)	19	3
MPS (College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences)	23	4
MUS (School of Music)	4	1
NUR (College of Nursing)	6	1
PHR (College of Pharmacy)	2	0
SBS (College of Social and Behavioral Sciences)	68	11
SWK (College of Social Work)	7	1
USAS (Undergraduate Student Academic Services)	72	12
Other	5	1
Totals	597	100

III. Summary of Disciplinary and Grade Sanctions

When COAM finds that a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM imposes sanctions. The sanction nearly always includes a disciplinary component, and, in a majority of cases, the sanction also includes an authorization for a grade-related component.

The disciplinary sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 5**. As these data demonstrate, most students found in violation of the *Code of Student Conduct* received a sanction of "disciplinary probation."

Table 5.
Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions
2010-2011 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	118	23
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 quarter to "until graduation")	366	71
Suspension (range = 1 to 4 quarters)	23	4
Dismissal	8	2
None	0	0
Totals	515	100

The grade sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 6**. 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 the assignment.

Table 6.
Summary of Grade Sanctions
2010-2011 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	22	4
Authorization for a "0" on the assignment	297	58
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final grade (range = ½ letter grade to “0” on the assignment and one full letter grade)	80	16
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or “U” in the course	103	20
Other	13	2
Totals	515	100

IV. Summary of Plagiarism Research

Additional analysis was performed on plagiarism cases resolved during Autumn quarter, 2010. The goal of this research was to examine two factors thought to be important in plagiarism cases, rank of student and weight of assignment. The rank of the students determined to be in violation on plagiarism on the Columbus campus and on Regional campuses is summarized in **Table 7**. For the Columbus campus, over 40% of the cases were Rank 4 students, and nearly 10% were graduate students. This is somewhat surprising as the consequences for plagiarism tend to become more severe as the rank of the student increases. Graduate students face suspension for plagiarism, and Rank 4 students may delay graduation as a result of having to repeat a class. In contrast, nearly two-thirds of the plagiarism cases on the regional campuses involve Rank 1 students.

TABLE 7.

Summary of Rank of Students in Violation of Plagiarism

Autumn 2010

RANK	COLUMBUS		REGIONAL	
	Number of Cases	% of Cases	Number of Cases	% of Cases
1	3	7	17	65
2	6	15	1	4
3	11	27	6	23
4	17	42	1	4
Grad	4	10	1	4
Totals	41	100	26	100

Is plagiarism mainly associated with assignments that carry heavy weight? As the data in **Table 8** shows, the majority of cases on both Columbus and Regional campuses involve assignments worth more than 10% of the grade. This fact has implications for the grade sanctions received by the student. For instance, most students who receive a “0” on the assignment (generally the lightest sanction for a plagiarism case) will suffer a loss of at least one grade level in the course.

TABLE 8.

Summary of Weight of Plagiarized Assignment

Autumn 2010

% WEIGHT	COLUMBUS		REGIONAL		TOTAL	
	Number of Cases	% of Cases	Number of Cases	% of Cases	Number of Cases	% of Cases
0-5	3	7	1	4	4	6
6-10	6	15	5	19	11	16
11-15	8	20	0	0	8	12
16-20	8	20	8	31	16	24
21-25	5	12	3	12	8	12
26-30	5	12	5	20	10	15
31-35	1	2	1	4	2	3
>35	5	12	3	12	8	12
TOTAL	41	100	26	100	67	100