

Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM)

Annual Report

Summer Semester 2012 – Spring Semester 2013

Prepared by

Dr. William Johnston, COAM Faculty Chair, 2012-13

Dr. Kathryn Corl, COAM Coordinator

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]). The data for this year's annual report consist of cases resolved from June 18, 2012 to May 5, 2013, 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 related to OSU's conversion to semesters in 2012-13. In addition, other possible effects of conversion to semesters, e.g., changes in enrollment patterns and effects of restructuring of curricula and course offerings may make comparison of the data with those from previous years more difficult and therefore caution is urged interpreting the results. Links to previous annual reports may be found on the COAM website: <http://oaa.osu.edu/coamreports.html>.

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, typically the Coordinator, serves as a hearing officer and determines appropriate sanctions.

I. SUMMARY OF CASES RESOLVED

During the 2012-2013 academic year, COAM resolved 375 cases of alleged academic misconduct. Of the cases resolved, 73.6% were resolved as administrative decisions and 25.3% were resolved as panel hearings (**Table 1**). Females and males represented 34.1% and 65.9%, respectively, of the cases resolved (**Table 2**).

Table 1
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Method of Resolution
2012-2013 Academic Year

Method of Resolution	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Administrative Decisions	276	73.6
Panel Hearings	95	25.3
Charges Dropped	4	1.1
Totals	375	100

Table 2
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Student's Gender
2012-2013 Academic Year

Gender	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Female	128	34.1
Male	247	65.9
Totals	375	100

Of the cases resolved by COAM this past reporting year, 336¹ (89.6%) resulted in verdicts of “in violation.” The rates at which males and females were found “in violation” of the *Code of Student Conduct* were 86.7% for females and 91.1% for males (**Table 3**).

Table 3
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Resolved Based on Students’ Gender and
Verdict 2012-2013 Academic Year

Gender	Students Found “Not In Violation”	Students Found “In Violation”	Total Cases	% In Violation (% of Total for Gender)
Female	17	111	128	86.7
Male	22	225	247	91.1
Totals	39	336	375	89.6

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 charges the student with violating the Code of Student Conduct using terminology based on the Code of Student Conduct that explains the nature of the behavior that led to the allegations. Table 4 summarizes information on academic misconduct charges for the 2012-2013 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 (865). The last two columns list the number of findings of “in violation” associated with each charge and the respective percentage of the number of charges. For example, of 141 charges of plagiarism, 133 (94.3%) were found “in violation.”

Students are often charged with and found “in violation” of more than one charge. Thus, the total number of charges (865) exceeds the total number of cases resolved by COAM (375), and the total for “Number In Violation” (760) exceeds the actual number of students found “in violation” (336).

The relatively low 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

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

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 copying *and* unauthorized collaboration, but, if found “in violation,” they may be found “in violation” of only copying or unauthorized collaboration. 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.

Table 4
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Charges by Type and Verdict
Code of Student Conduct
2012-2013 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	361	41.7%	321	88.9%
Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement	141	16.3%	133	94.3%
Copying the work of another and representing it as one's own work	105	12.1%	83	79.0%
Unauthorized collaboration by sharing information during an academic activity	96	11.1%	78	81.3%
Knowingly requesting, receiving or providing unauthorized assistance during an academic activity	52	6.0%	40	76.9%
Possession or use of unauthorized materials during an academic activity	35	4.0%	33	94.3%
Engaging in activities that place other students at an academic disadvantage	27	3.1%	24	88.9%

Falsification, fabrication or dishonesty in creating or reporting laboratory results, research reports, and/or any other assignments	15	1.7%	15	100.0%
Providing falsified materials, documents, or records to a university official in order to meet academic qualifications, criteria, or requirements	14	1.6%	14	100.0%
Forgery	9	1.0%	9	100.0%
Submission of work not performed in a course or degree program	6	0.7%	6	100.0%
Alteration and resubmission of course materials, grades, or marks in an attempt to change the earned credit or grade	2	0.2%	2	100.0%
Serving as or enlisting the assistance of a substitute for a student during an academic activity	2	0.2%	2	100.0%
Totals	865	100%	760	87.9%

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

Twenty-three *enrollment* units on campus were represented in the cases resolved by COAM during the 2012-13 reporting year (**Table 5**), but cases involving students from three enrollment units (Colleges of the Arts and Sciences [ASC], College of Engineering [ENG] and College of Business [BUS]), when combined, accounted for well over half (60.3%) of all cases.

The cases heard by COAM during the past year were *initiated* from or involved courses from over 70 units across the University (**Table 6**), with the combined cases from History (32 cases), Biology (30), CS&E (Computer Science and Engineering) (28), Chemistry (23), English (16) accounting for 34.4% of the total cases. Five cases were initiated by the Office of Disability Services and two cases were brought forward by Arts and Sciences Advising.

Table 5
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit
2012-2013 Academic Year

Enrollment Unit	Total for Enrollment Unit	% of Total
ASC (Colleges of the Arts and Sciences)	90	24.0%
ENG (College of Engineering)	82	21.9%
BUS (College of Business)	54	14.4%
EHE (College of Education and Human Ecology)	26	6.9%
EXP (Exploration Program)	23	6.1%
SBS (College of Social and Behavioral Sciences)	19	5.1%
GRD (Graduate School)	14	3.7%
MPS (College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences)	9	2.4%
AGR/ENR (College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences)	8	2.1%
SHRS (School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences)	8	2.1%
ATI (Agricultural Technical Institute)	7	1.9%
BIO (College of Biological Sciences)	6	1.6%
SWK (College of Social Work)	6	1.6%
USS (Undergraduate Student Services)	5	1.3%
ENR (School of Environment and Natural Resources)	4	1.1%
AHR (School of Architecture)	3	0.8%
JGS (John Glenn School of Public Policy)	3	0.8%
CED (Continuing Education)	2	0.5%
NUR (College of Nursing)	2	0.5%
AMP (School of Allied Medical Professions)	1	0.3%
ART (College of Art)	1	0.3%
COPH	1	0.3%
HUM (College of Humanities)	1	0.3%
Totals	375	100

Table 6
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit
2012-2013 Academic Year

Course Offering Unit	Number of Cases	% of Total
HISTORY	32	8.5%
BIOLOGY	30	8.0%
CS&E [Computer Science and Engineering]	28	7.5%
CHEM [Chemistry]	23	6.1%
ENGLISH	16	4.3%
ECE [Electrical and Computer Engineering]	13	3.5%
ENGINEER [Engineering]	13	3.5%
ECON [Economics]	12	3.2%
ISE [Integrated Systems Engineering]	11	2.9%
CLASSICS	10	2.7%
PHILOS [Philosophy]	10	2.7%
ACCT&MIS [Accounting and Management Information Systems]	9	2.4%
COMM [Communication]	9	2.4%
GEOG [Geography]	9	2.4%
MECH ENG [Mechanical Engineering]	9	2.4%
POLIT SC [Political Science]	9	2.4%
SOCIOL [Sociology]	9	2.4%
MATH [Mathematics]	8	2.1%
PSYCH [Psychology]	8	2.1%
SPANISH	8	2.1%
COMP STD [Comparative Studies in the Humanities]	5	1.3%
MUSIC	5	1.3%
THEATRE	5	1.3%
BIOMED E [Biomedical Engineering]	4	1.1%
EDU T&L [Education: Teaching and Learning]	4	1.1%
FRENCH	4	1.1%
ANATOMY	3	0.8%
ANIM SCI [Animal Sciences]	3	0.8%
ANTHROP [Anthropology]	3	0.8%
CIVIL ENGINEERING	3	0.8%

EEOB [Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology]	3	0.8%
HUMN NTR [Human Nutrition and Food Management]	3	0.8%
STAT [Statistics]	3	0.8%
AED ECON [Agricultural, Environmental, and Developmental Economics]	2	0.5%
ANML TEC [Animal Sciences Technology]	2	0.5%
ARTS&SCI [Arts and Sciences]	2	0.5%
CIVIL ENVIRON [Civil Environmental Engineering & Geodetic Engineering]	2	0.5%
EDU PAES [Education: Physical Activity and Education Services]	2	0.5%
EN GRAPH [Engineering Graphics]	2	0.5%
ENR [Environment & Natural Resources]	2	0.5%
FD SC&TE [Food Science and Technology]	2	0.5%
GERMAN	2	0.5%
HDFS [Human Development and Family Science]	2	0.5%
HEBREW [Hebrew]	2	0.5%
ITALIAN	2	0.5%
MICROBIOL [Microbiology]	2	0.5%
PORTGESE [Portuguese]	2	0.5%
ARCH [Architecture]	1	0.3%
ART	1	0.3%
ART EDUC [Art Education]	1	0.3%
BIOCHEM [Biochemistry]	1	0.3%
BUS-FIN [Business Administration: Finance]	1	0.3%
BUS-MGT [Business Administration: Management Sciences]	1	0.3%
C&RP [City & Regional Planning]	1	0.3%
CONSCI [Consumer Science]	1	0.3%
CRP&SOIL [Crop and Soil Technology]	1	0.3%
CSHSPMG [Consumer Sciences and Hospitality Management]	1	0.3%
EDU P&L [Education: Educational Policy and Leadership]	1	0.3%
ENG TECH [Engineering Technology]	1	0.3%
HIST ART [History of Art]	1	0.3%
HONORS [Honors, University]	1	0.3%
Laboratory Research, College of Pharmacy	1	0.3%
LINGUIST [Linguistics]	1	0.3%
M&L [Marketing and Logistics]	1	0.3%
MED TECH [Medical Technology]	1	0.3%

MOL GEN [Molecular Genetics]	1	0.3%
Ph.D. Thesis Defense	1	0.3%
PHARMACY	1	0.3%
SPH/HRNG [Speech and Hearing Science]	1	0.3%
WGSS[Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies]	1	0.3%

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

Of the 375 cases resolved by COAM during the 2012-13 reporting year, 89 cases involved courses taught prior to the conversion to semesters in Summer Term 2013 and 286 cases involved semester-based courses. Given the possibility of qualitative differences between levels in quarter and semester systems, the data for course level are reported separately for courses offered under the quarter and semester systems. As shown in Table 7, allegations of misconduct in courses at the 100 level accounted for over 50% of the cases involving quarter courses. Over 75% of cases involving courses taught under the quarter system were associated with 100- and 200-level courses. The data for cases associated with courses offered under the semester system were more evenly distributed between the 1000- and 2000-level courses, with both levels taken together accounting for 65% of the cases. Fewer cases resulted from allegations in progressively higher-level courses for both quarter-based and semester-based courses. **(Table 7).**

Table 7
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Course Level (Number)
2012-2013 Academic Year

Course Level (Quarters)	Number of Cases	% of Quarter Cases
100	47	52.8
200	21	23.6
300	6	6.7
400	3	3.4
500	5	5.6
600	2	2.3
700	3	3.4
800	2	2.3
TOTAL (Quarters)	89	100

Table 7 (continued)
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Course Level (Number)
2012-2013 Academic Year

Course Level (Semesters)	Number of Cases	% of Semester Cases
1000	95	33.2
2000	91	31.8
3000	50	17.5
4000	30	10.5
5000	10	3.5
6000	3	1.0
7000	2	.7
8000	1	.4
Other	4	1.4
TOTAL (Semesters)	286	100

Table 8 summarizes the cases resolved at each level by student class rank. The data reveal that rank 4 students account for 36% of cases. Rank 2 students account for 25.6% of cases, and rank 3 for 18.4%, whereas rank 1 students account for only 15.7% of cases. Possible explanations for this pattern could be the number of students who enter OSU at higher ranks due to transfer or examination credit and the pressure for rank 4 students to complete course or program requirements prior to or just after semester conversion.

Table 8
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student Rank and Course Level
2012-2013 Academic Year

	Class Rank								Totals
	1	2	3	4	T*	UDGND**	M	P	
Course Level (Quarter)									
100	5	15	11	16					47
200	2	7	8	4					21
300		3	3						6
400			2	1					3
500			2	3					5
600		2							2
700							3		3
800								2	2
(Semester)									
1000	35	34	11	15					95
2000	14	28	16	31	1	1			91
3000	3	3	11	33					50
4000		3	5	22					30
5000		1		8			1		10
6000							2	1	3
7000							2		2
8000								1	1
Other				2			1	1	4
TOTAL	59	96	69	135	1	1	9	5	375

*T=transient student (i.e. a student who is enrolled in a degree-granting program at one institution who enrolls for a short period at another institution.)

**UDGND=undergraduate non-degree student

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. 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 9**. Of the 375 cases resolved during the 2012-2013 Academic Year, 336 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
2012-2013 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases “In Violation”	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	87	25.9%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to “until graduation”)	232	69.0%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	16	4.8%
Dismissal	1	0.3%
Totals	336	100%

The grade sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 10**.

Of the 375 cases resolved during the 2012-2013 Academic Year, 336 resulted in a finding of “In Violation.” In 31 of these cases, no grade sanction was authorized. 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.

Table 10
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Grade Sanctions
2012-2013 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	31	9.2
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	242	72.0
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	11	3.3
Authorization for "0" on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	24	7.1
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or "U" in the course	26	7.7
Other	2	0.6
Totals	336	100

VI. Appeals

A student who has been found to have violated 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 338 cases in which the student was found to be in violation by COAM, 14 cases were appealed. Of these cases, 9 appeals were denied. Sanctions were adjusted in three cases and in each of two cases the finding of "in violation" was reversed.