

Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) Annual Report Summer Quarter, 2002 – Spring Quarter, 2003

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) notifies students of allegations of academic misconduct, (2) consults with students and faculty regarding allegations of academic misconduct, (3) schedules hearings to resolve allegations of academic misconduct, and (4) notifies students and faculty of the outcomes of these hearings. The Coordinator also serves as a hearing officer in instances where students elect to have allegations of academic misconduct resolved as an administrative decision.

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 every panel have both faculty and student representatives. 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 students are found "in violation." If a student agrees with the allegations of academic misconduct, he/she may elect to have the allegations resolved as an administrative decision. For an administrative decision, a student must admit in writing to the allegations of academic misconduct and waive his/her right to a panel hearing. The Coordinator then determines the sanction(s) for the misconduct.

I. NOTEWORTHY CHANGES IN COAM

Several noteworthy changes occurred in the past year. Ms. Katherine Kisker, Coordinator of COAM for the past ten years and a faculty member in the College of Nursing for 35 years, retired December 31, 2002. On January 1, 2003, Dr. Peter Pappas replaced Ms. Kisker. Prior to replacing Ms. Kisker, Dr. Pappas was a faculty member in the College of Biological Sciences for 27 years and Chairperson of the Department of Zoology for nine years. While a member of the faculty, Dr. Pappas served on COAM for over 10 years and on the University Judicial Panel for over 6 years.

COAM now has its own web site (oaa.ohio-state.edu/coam/home.html). The web site includes general information about COAM and academic misconduct, links to COAM's procedures and rules and the University's Code of Student Conduct, and an extensive list of FAQ's (frequently asked questions) regarding academic misconduct. This web site should be a very useful resource for both faculty and students.

II. SUMMARY OF CASES RESOLVED

During the previous (2001-2002) academic year, COAM heard 331 cases of alleged academic misconduct. During the current (2002-2003) academic year, COAM heard 371 cases, an increase of 40 cases (12%). Of the cases resolved during the past year, 62 students (17%) were found "not in violation" and 309 students (83%) were found "in violation" (**Table 1**). Males and females represented 61% and 39%, respectively, of the cases heard (**Table 2**).

Table 1
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Total Cases Processed and Their Outcomes
2002-2003 Academic Year

Total Cases	Not in Violation	In Violation	In Violation (% of Total)
371	62	309	83%

Table 2
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student Gender
2002-2003 Academic Year

Gender	Not in Violation	In Violation	Total	In Violation (% of Total for Gender)
Female	27	116	143 (39% of 371)	81%
Male	35	193	228 (61% of 371)	85%
Totals	62	309	371	83% (% of Total Cases)

III. 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 also be an educational process, the Coordinator charges the student with violating the Code using terminology that explains the nature of the behavior that lead to the allegations. As list of the charges used by COAM and the number of students found “in violation” of each charge are provided in **Table 3**. As in previous years, plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), and copying the work of another student were the most common types of academic misconduct.

Students are often found “in violation” of more than one charge. For example, “Submission of work not performed in a course” might also be a violation of “Failure to comply with course/program policies and/or requirements.” Thus, the total numbers of charges for which students were found “in violation” [432] exceeds the actual number of students found “in violation” [309].

Table 3.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Charges for Which Students Were Found
“In Violation” of the University’s Code of Student Conduct
2002-2003 Academic Year

Charge	Number of Charges “In Violation”	% of All “In Violation”
Plagiarism	118	38.1%
Collusion	112	36.2%
Copying or attempting to copy the work of another student in an unauthorized manner and misrepresenting it or attempting to misrepresent it as one’s own work	96	31.1%
Submission of work not performed in a course	33	10.7%
Failure to comply with course/program policies and/or requirements	17	5.5%
Alteration and resubmission of course materials in an attempt to change the earned credit or grade	14	4.5%
Forgery	13	4.2%
Possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during an examination or other course activity	12	3.9%
Other	11	3.6%
Acting as a substitute (“ringer”) for another student during an examination or other course activity	2	0.6%
Requesting that another student take your place during an examination or other course activity	2	0.6%
Engaging in activities that place other students at an unfair advantage, such as taking, hiding or altering resource material, or manipulating a grading system	2	0.6%
Totals	432	

(The right column presents the percentage of students found “In Violation” of each charge relative to the total number of students found “In Violation” (i.e., $(\text{number of students})/309 \times 100$). Since students might be found “in violation” of multiple charges, the total for this column exceeds 100%.)

IV. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT'S COLLEGE OF ENROLLMENT AND REFEREEING DEPARTMENT

Virtually every enrollment unit on campus was represented in the cases heard by COAM (**Table 4**), but three enrollment units (College of Engineering, Undergraduate Student Academic Services, College of Business), when combined, accounted for over 50% of all cases.

Table 4.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit
2002-2003 Academic Year

Enrollment Unit	Cases	Cases (% of Total)
Agricultural Technical Institute	2	0.5%
School of Allied Medical Professions	2	0.5%
School of Architecture	1	0.3%
Colleges of the Arts & Sciences	10	2.7%
College of Art	6	1.6%
College of Biological Sciences	26	7.0%
College of Business	56	15.1%
Continuing Education	1	0.3%
College of Education	6	1.6%
College of Engineering	71	19.1%
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences	9	2.4%
Graduate School (M)	12	3.2%
Graduate School (P)	13	3.5%
College of Human Ecology	25	6.7%
College of Humanities	10	2.7%
College of Mathematical & Physical Sciences	8	2.2%
School of Music	2	0.5%

Enrollment Unit	Cases	Cases (% of Total)
College of Nursing	1	0.3%
College of Pharmacy	5	1.3%
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	37	10.0%
Undergraduate Student Academic Services (USS)	68	18.3%
Totals	371	100.0%

The cases heard by COAM the past year originated from over 60 departments across the campus (**Table 5**), with cases from Chemistry (10.0% of all cases), Computer and Information Science (10.0%), History (9.2%), Biology (6.7%), Management Sciences (5.7%), and English (4.6%) accounting for nearly 50% of the cases.

Table 5.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Referring Department
2002-2003 Academic Year

Referring Department	Cases	Cases (% of Total)
ACCT&MIS [Accounting and Management Information Systems]	8	2.2%
AED ECON [Agricultural, Environmental, and Developmental Economics]	1	0.3%
AFAM&AST [African American and African Studies]	3	0.8%
ANTHROP [Anthropology]	5	1.3%
ASTRON [Astronomy]	2	0.5%
BIOLOGY	25	6.7%
BUS-FIN [Business Administration-Finance]	1	0.3%
BUS-MGT [Business Administration-Management Sciences]	21	5.7%
CHEM [Chemistry]	37	10.0%
CIVIL EN [Civil Engineering]	5	1.3%

Referring Department	Cases	Cases (% of Total)
CLASSICS	2	0.5%
COMP STD [Comparative Studies in the Humanities]	1	0.3%
CPTR/INF [Computer and Information Science]	37	10.0%
DANCE	1	0.3%
ECON [Economics]	2	0.5%
EDU P&L [Education-Educational Policy and Leadership]	4	1.1%
EDU PAES [Education-Physical Activity and Education Services]	4	1.1%
EDU T&L [Education-Teaching and Learning]	1	0.3%
EEOB [Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology]	1	0.3%
ELEC ENG [Electrical Engineering]	3	0.8%
ENGINEER [Engineering]	9	2.4%
ENGLISH	17	4.6%
ENTOMOL [Entomology]	1	0.3%
FM RES M [Family Resource Management]	5	1.3%
FRENCH	2	0.5%
GEOG [Geography]	1	0.3%
GERMAN	2	0.5%
HDFS [Human Development and Family Science]	1	0.3%
HISTORY	34	9.2%
IND DSGN [Industrial, Interior, and Visual Communication Design]	1	0.3%
IND ENG [Industrial and Systems Engineering]	10	2.7%
ITALIAN	2	0.5%
JCOM [Journalism and Communication]	2	0.5%
LARCH [Landscape Architecture]	1	0.3%
LINGUIST [Linguistics]	3	0.8%
MATH [Mathematics]	5	1.3%
MATSC&EN [Materials Science and Engineering]	2	0.5%
MBA [Masters of Business Administration]	2	0.5%
MECH ENG [Mechanical Engineering]	12	3.2%

Referring Department	Cases	Cases (% of Total)
MED TECH [Medical Technology]	1	0.3%
MICROBIOL [Microbiology]	1	0.3%
MOL GEN [Molecular Genetics]	1	0.3%
MUSIC	6	1.6%
NAVAL SC [Naval Science]	1	0.3%
NURSING	2	0.5%
OTHER	2	0.5%
PHARMACY	1	0.3%
PHILOS [Philosophy]	4	1.1%
PHYSICS	8	2.2%
PLNT BIO [Plant Biology]	4	1.1%
POLIT SC [Political Science]	13	3.5%
PSYCH [Psychology]	4	1.1%
SOC WORK [Social Work]	1	0.3%
SOCIOL [Sociology]	10	2.7%
SPANISH	8	2.2%
STAT [Statistics]	8	2.2%
THEATRE	7	1.9%
TXTL&CLO [Textiles and Clothing]	6	1.6%
WOM STDS [Women's Studies]	5	1.3%
YIDDISH	2	0.5%
Totals	371	100.0%

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

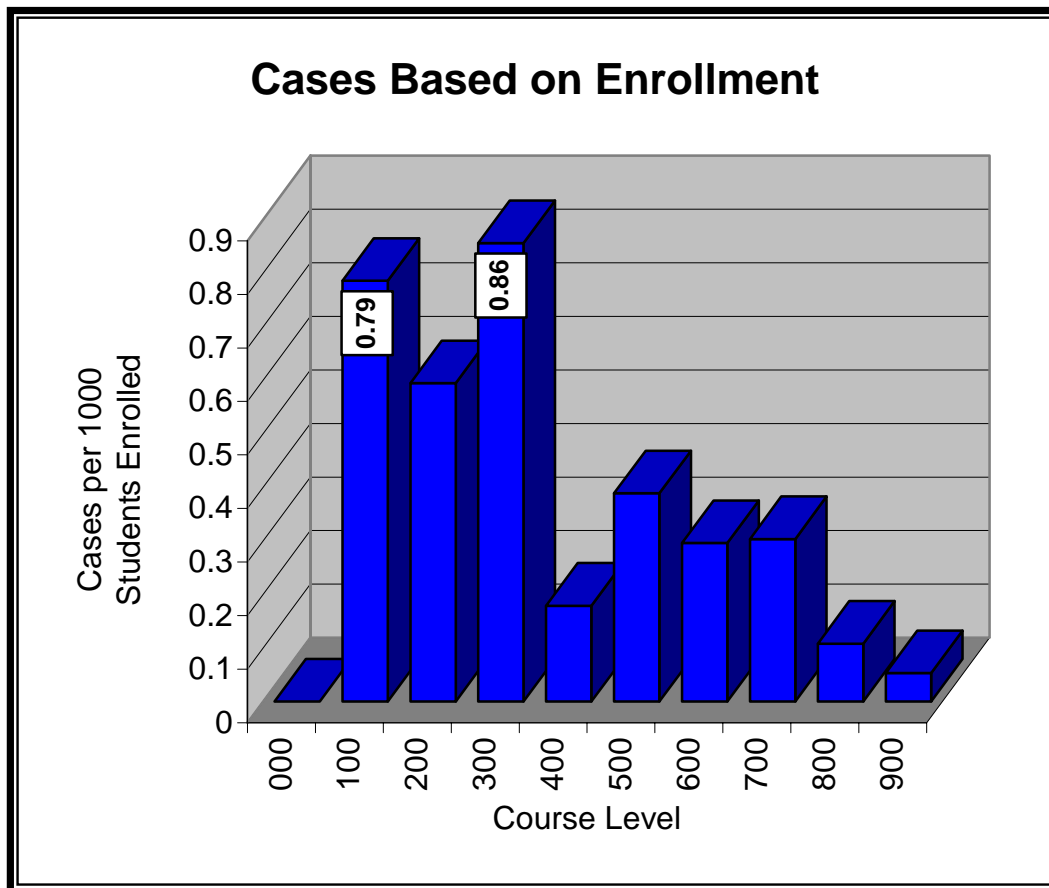
Nearly 50% of the cases heard by COAM during the past year were the result of allegations of misconduct in 100-level courses. Progressively fewer cases resulted from allegations in progressively higher-level courses (**Table 6**).

Table 6.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Course Level (Number)
2002-2003 Academic Year

Course Level	Cases	Cases (% of Total)
000	0	0
100	179	48.2%
200	58	15.6%
300	46	12.4%
400	7	1.9%
500	29	7.8%
600	25	6.7%
700	20	5.4%
800	4	1.1%
900	1	0.3%
Other	2	0.5%
Totals	371	100%

Although 100-level courses accounted for nearly 50% of the allegations of academic misconduct, the “rate” (i.e., number of allegations based on student enrollment) was actually higher in 300-level courses (0.86 allegations/1000 students enrolled) than in 100-level courses (0.79 allegations/1000 students enrolled) (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Course Level and Enrollment
2002-2003 Academic Year



(For each course-level, the total number of cases for that level was divided by the total enrollment of courses for that level, and the resulting number was multiplied by 1000. Enrollment data for Autumn Quarter, 2002, were obtained from the Registrar’s Office and used for these calculations.)

As summarized in **Table 7**, students in progressively higher class ranks tended to be charged with academic misconduct in progressively higher level courses.

For example, almost all cases involving rank 1 students (75 of 80 = 94%) occurred in 100 and 200-level courses, while nearly half of the cases involving rank 4 students (51 of 103 = 49.6%) occurred in courses at the 400-level and above. Also notable is the observation that rank 4 students accounted for more cases (103) than any other student rank.

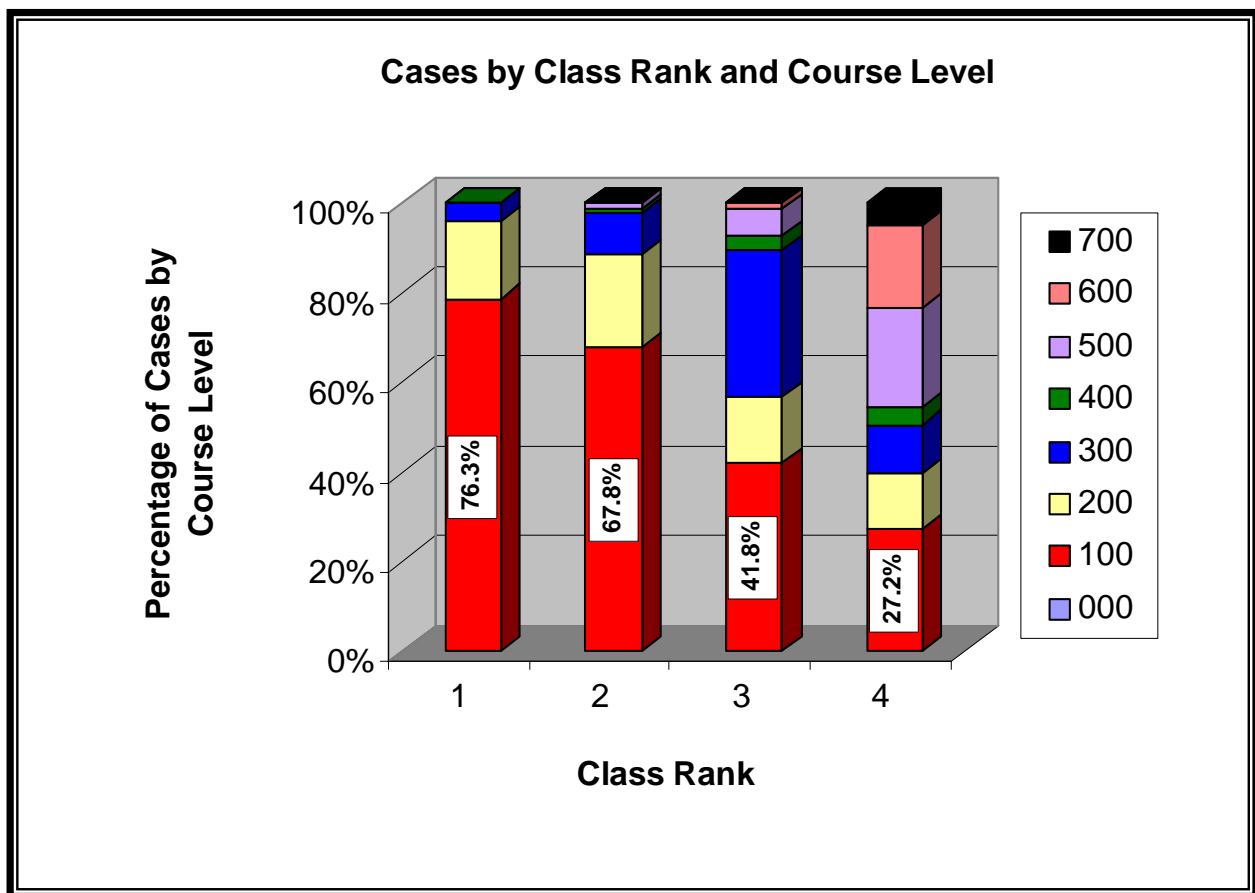
Table 7.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student Rank and Course Level
2002-2003 Academic Year

Course Level	Class Rank				Totals
	1	2	3	4	
0	0	0	0	0	0
100	61	59	28	28	176
200	14	18	10	13	55
300	3	8	22	11	40
400	0	1	2	4	7
500	0	1	4	23	28
600	1	0	1	19	21
700	0	0	0	5	5
Other	1	0	0	0	1
Totals	80	87	67	103	337

(The above table includes data for only rank 1, 2, 3, and 4 students, so the total number of cases in this table [337] is less than the total number of cases for students of all ranks [371].)

Figure 2 summarizes the distribution of cases among different course levels when calculated as a percentage of the total students within each class rank. This figure demonstrates clearly that a majority of allegations involving rank 100 students (76.3%) occurred in 100-level courses. What is even more surprising, however, is that the highest percentage (27.2%) of allegations involving rank 4 students also occurred in 100-level courses.

Figure 2.
Distribution of Cases by Course Level and Student's Class Rank
2002-2003 Academic Year



VI. 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 always includes a disciplinary component; in a majority of cases, the sanction also includes a grade-related component.

The disciplinary sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 7**. As these data demonstrate, most students found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct received a sanction of "probation." Of the students who were suspended, all but one had a previous violation of the Code. All of the students who were dismissed had two previous violations of the Code.

Table 7.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions
2002-2003 Academic Year

Sanction	Cases	Cases (% of Total)
Reprimand	20	6.5%
Probation	274	88.7%
Suspension	11	3.6%
Dismissal	4	1.3%
Total	309	100.0%

(Of the 371 cases heard during the 2002-2003 Academic Year, 309 resulted in a finding of "In Violation," and only these resulted in a disciplinary sanction.)

The grade sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 8**. As these data demonstrate, the sanctions of "authorize a 0 on the assignment" and "authorize a final grade of "E" in the course" were used most commonly and with approximately equal frequencies.

Table 8.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Grade Sanctions
2002-2003 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	No. of Sanctions	Cases (% of Total Cases)
None	41	13.3%
Lower Assignment Grade	1	0.3%
"0" on Assignment	130	42.1%
Lower Final Course Grade	42	13.6%
"E" in Course	123	39.8%
Total	337	

(Of the 371 cases heard during the 2002-2003 Academic Year, 309 resulted in a finding of "In Violation." The number of grade sanctions [337] exceeds 309 because some students received more than one grade sanction [e.g., authorization for a "0" on the assignment plus lowering the final grade]. The data in the right column represent the percentage of students that received the indicated sanction. These data were calculated using the total cases found "In Violation" [309] not the total number of sanctions, so the total for this column exceeds 100%.)

As noted above, when a student is found "in violation" of the University's Code of Student Conduct, COAM imposes both disciplinary and grade-related sanctions. Thus, by using various combinations of these two sanctions, COAM can impose sanctions that are commensurate with the severity of the academic misconduct. **Table 9** contains a summary of all of the combinations of disciplinary and grade-related sanctions imposed by COAM during the past year.

Table 9.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Disciplinary and Grade Sanctions, Combined Summary
2002-2003 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Grade Sanction	RANK							
		1	2	3	4	M	P	Other	Total
Formal Reprimand	None (NGA) (see footnote)	1	1	1	1	2	1		7
	Authorize a grade of "O" on assignment	7	2	1	1				11
	Authorize a final grade of "A-" in the course		1						1
	Authorize a final grade of "E" in the course	1							1
Disciplinary Probation (1 quarter)	None (D)	1							1
	Authorize a grade of "O" on the assignment, plus a reduction in the student's final grade by one full letter grade	1							1
	Authorize a final grade of "B" in the course		1						1
Disciplinary Probation (2 quarters)	None (NGA)	1							1
	Authorize a grade of "O" on the assignment	1	1	3	1				6
	Authorize a grade of "O" on the assignment, plus a reduction in the student's final grade by one full letter grade		3	1					4
	Authorize a final grade of "D" in the course	1							1
	Authorize a final grade of "E" in the course	1	1						2
Disciplinary Probation (3 quarters)	None (NGA)		5	1					6
	None (D)		1						1
	Authorize a grade of "O" on the assignment	13	18	6	5		1	1	44
	Authorize a reduction in the student's final grade by one full letter grade	2							2

Disciplinary Sanction	Grade Sanction	RANK							
		1	2	3	4	M	P	Other	Total
	Authorize a final grade of "D" in the course	1	1						2
	Authorize a final grade of "E" in the course	9	6	4	1			1	21
Disciplinary Probation (4 quarters)	None (D)		1	1				1	3
	Authorize a grade of "0" on the assignment	3	3	1					7
	Authorize a grade of "0" on the assignment, plus a reduction in the student's final grade by one full letter grade	5	5	7	1			1	19
	Authorize a grade of "0" on the assignment, plus a reduction in the student's final grade by two full letter grades		2						2
	Authorize a final grade of "D" in the course	1							1
	Authorize a final grade of "E" in the course	10	11	12	2	4	2	1	42
Disciplinary Probation (6 quarters)	None (D)	1							1
	None (NA)		1		4			1	6
Disciplinary Probation (7 quarters)	None (D)	1							1
Disciplinary Probation (until graduation)	None (D)			1	5				6
	None (NA)		1				1		2
	None (NGA)				3				3
	Authorize a grade of "E" on the assignment				1				1
	Authorize a grade of "0" on the assignment	1	1	6	20	2	1	2	33
	Authorize a grade of "0" on the assignment, plus a reduction in the student's final grade by one full letter grade				2				2
	Authorize a reduction in the student's final course grade by one full letter grade			1	1				2

Disciplinary Sanction	Grade Sanction	RANK							
		1	2	3	4	M	P	Other	Total
	Authorize a final grade of "C" in the course						1		1
	Authorize a final grade of "D" in the course				3				3
	Authorize a final grade of "E" in the course	4	3	4	29	2	3	1	46
Suspension (1 quarter)	None (NA)	1							1
	Authorize a final grade of "E" in the course		1	2	3				6
Suspension (2 quarters)	None (D)				1				1
	Authorize a grade of "0" on the assignment		1						1
Suspension (4 quarters)	Authorize a final grade of "E" in the course				2				2
Dismissal	None (NA)			1					1
	Authorize a final grade of "E" in the course			1	2				3
Subtotals		67	71	54	88	10	10	9	309
Not in Violation		13	16	13	15	2	3	0	62
Totals		80	87	67	103	12	13	9	371

(1) "NGA" = no grade authorization (i.e., the panel did not feel that the misconduct warranted a change in the student's grade); "D" = student dropped course before the allegations of misconduct were resolved; "NA" = not applicable (the student was not enrolled in a formal course, so a grade sanction was not applicable).

VII. SUMMARY

Academic misconduct has been and continues to be a problem at The Ohio State University. There was a 12% increase in cases this year compared to last year, and a 58% increase in cases compared to just 5 years ago. Moreover, the cases forwarded to COAM probably reflect only a fraction of the incidents of misconduct that actually occur. As in past years, plagiarism, collusion, and copying were the most common forms of misconduct this year.

COAM is well aware of and appreciates the fact that faculty members often spend significant amounts of time and effort in maintaining the academic integrity of their courses. In support of faculty members' efforts, COAM follows carefully its established rules and procedures to ensure that students earn their degrees through honest work and effort.

The Committee and, in particular, the Committee's Coordinator are available to serve as an educational resource to any member of the academic community. To this end, during the last half of the current academic year, the Coordinator visited 28 departments on campus and answered questions about COAM and academic misconduct.