

Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) Annual Report

Summer Semester 2014 – Spring Semester 2015

Prepared by

Dr. Kimberly Arcoleo, COAM Faculty Chair, 2015-16

Dr. Jay Hobgood, 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." 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 5, 2014, to May 10, 2015 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 in 2012-13. The 2014-15 reporting year represents the second full reporting year since 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 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 who is 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 2014-2015 academic year, COAM resolved 553 cases of alleged academic misconduct. Of the cases resolved, 72.5% were resolved as administrative decisions and 27.5% were resolved as panel hearings (**Table 1**). Females and males represented 44% and 56%, respectively, of the cases resolved (**Table 2**).

Table 1
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Method of Resolution
2014-2015 Academic Year

Method of Resolution	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Administrative Decisions	401	72.5
Panel Hearings	152	27.5
Totals	553	100

Table 2
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Student's Gender
2014-2015 Academic Year

Gender	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Female	242	44
Male	311	56
Totals	553	100

Of the cases resolved by COAM this past reporting year, 501¹ (90.6%) resulted in verdicts of "in violation." The rates at which males and females were found "in violation" of the *Code of Student Conduct* were 90.9% for females and 90.4% for males (**Table 3**).

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

Table 3
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases by Verdict and Gender
2014-2015 Academic Year

Gender	Students Found “Not In Violation”	Students Found “In Violation”	Total Cases	% In Violation (% of Total for Gender)
Female	22	220	242	90.9
Male	30	281	311	90.4
Totals	52	501	553	---

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 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 2014-2015 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 (1318). 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 224 charges of plagiarism, 219 (97.8%) were found “in violation.”

Students are often charged with and found “in violation” of more than one charge. Thus, the total number of charges (1318) exceeds the total number of cases resolved by COAM (553), and the total for “Number In Violation” (1216) exceeds the actual number of *students* found “in violation” (501).

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 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
2014-2015 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	507	38.5	461	90.9
Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement	224	17.0	219	97.8
Unauthorized collaboration by sharing information during an academic activity/unauthorized sharing of electronic files	174	13.2	148	85.1
Copying the work of another and representing it as one's own work	111	8.5	93	83.8
Knowingly requesting, receiving or providing unauthorized assistance during an academic activity	27	2.0	25	92.6

Possession or use of unauthorized materials during an academic activity	14	1.1	14	100.0
Compromising the academic integrity of the university/subverting the educational process + "other"	69	5.2	61	88.4
Falsification, fabrication or dishonesty in creating or reporting laboratory results, research reports, and/or any other assignments	17	1.3	17	100.0
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.	90	6.8	75	83.3
Engaging in activities that unfairly place other students at an academic disadvantage.	31	2.4	30	96.8
Alteration and resubmission of course materials, grades, or marks in an attempt to change the earned credit or grade	4	0.3	4	100.0
Forgery	9	0.7	9	100.0
Providing falsified materials, documents, or records to a university official in order to meet academic qualifications, criteria, or requirements	10	0.8	10	100.0
Serving as or enlisting the assistance of a substitute for a student during an academic activity	31	2.4	31	100.0
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.	15	1.1	15	100.0
Violation of program regulations or policies as established by departmental committees and made available to students.	5	0.4	5	100.0
Totals	1318	100%	1216	--

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 2014-15 reporting year, with combined cases from the College of the Arts and Sciences (UASC), College of Engineering (UENG), College of Business (UBUS), and the College of Education and Human Ecology (UEHE) accounting for 69.4% of the total cases (**Table 5**).

The cases heard by COAM during the past year were *initiated* from or involved courses from 91 units across the University, with the combined cases from courses in Biology (50 cases) , CS&E (Computer Science and Engineering) (35), Chemistry (34), Food Science and Technology (27), and Theatre (20) accounting for 30.0% of the total cases (**Table 6**).

Table 5
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit
2014-2015 Academic Year

Enrollment Unit	Total for Enrollment Unit	% of Total
UASC (Colleges of the Arts and Sciences)	221	39.96%
UENG (College of Engineering)	67	12.12%
UBUS (College of Business)	60	10.85%
GRD (Graduate School)	48	8.68%
UEXP (Exploration Program)	40	7.23%
UEHE (Education and Human Ecology)	36	6.51%
UAGR (College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences)	32	5.79%
UNUR (College of Nursing) + UNURP (Nursing Pre-program)	9	1.63%
UHRS (School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences) + UHRSP (Pre-program)	9	1.63%
UPHR (College of Pharmacy)	7	1.27%
USWK (College of Social Work)	6	1.08%
UACD (Academy Program)	5	0.90%
UENR (School of Environment and Natural Resources)	4	0.72%
UNDG (Undergraduate Non-Degree)	3	0.54%
UJGS (John Glenn School of Public Policy)	2	0.36%
UAHR (School of Architecture)	2	0.36%
UPBHP (Public Health Pre-Program)	2	0.36%
Totals	553	100%

Table 6
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit
2014-2015 Academic Year

Course Offering Unit	Number of Cases	% of Total
BIOLOGY	50	9.04%
CSE [Computer Science and Engineering]	35	6.33%
CHEM [Chemistry]	34	6.15%
HISTORY	32	5.79%
FD SC&TE [Food Science and Technology]	27	4.88%
THEATRE	20	3.62%
ENGR [Engineering]	18	3.25%
COMM [Communication]	18	3.25%
GEOG [Geography]	18	3.25%
ENGLISH	17	3.07%
NURSING	15	2.71%
PHILOS [Philosophy]	15	2.71%
FRENCH	14	2.53%
LINGUIST [Linguistics]	12	2.17%
ART EDUC [Art Education]	10	1.81%
EDU T&L [Education Teaching and Learning]	9	1.63%
ENG TECH [Engineering Technology]	9	1.63%
CLASSICS	8	1.45%
KNSFHP [Kinesiology: Sport, Fitness and Health Program]	8	1.45%
MUSIC	8	1.45%
PSYCH [Psychology]	8	1.45%
STAT [Statistics]	8	1.45%
CRPLAN [City and Regional Planning]	7	1.27%
ECON [Economics]	7	1.27%
ES [Educational Studies]	7	1.27%
SOCIOL [Sociology]	7	1.27%
AMIS [Accounting and Management Information Systems]	6	1.08%
ASTRONOMY	6	1.08%
CONSCI [Consumer Science]	6	1.08%
PHYSICS	5	0.94%

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

SOC WORK	5	0.91%
ANIM SCI [Animals Sciences]	4	0.72%
EEOB [Ecology, Evolution and Organismal Biology]	4	0.74%
H & CS [Horticulture and Crop Science]	4	0.74%
ISE [Integrated Systems Engineering]	4	0.74%
MATH [Mathematics]	4	0.74%
MOL GEN [Molecular Genetics]	4	0.74%
RURL SOC [Rural Sociology]	4	0.74%
SPANISH	4	0.74%
AED ECON [Agricultural, Environmental, and Developmental Economics]	3	0.54%
ANTHROP [Anthropology]	3	0.54%
DESIGN	3	0.54%
ECE [Electrical and Computer Engineering]	3	0.54%
GERMAN	3	0.54%
PHARMACY	3	0.54%
POLIT SC	3	0.54%
PUBH [Public Health]	3	0.54%
WGSS [Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies]	3	0.54%
BIOMED E [Biomedical Engineering]	2	0.36%
BUS-FIN [Business Administration: Finance]	2	0.36%
BUS-MGT [Business Administration: Management Sciences]	2	0.36%
CIVIL ENGINEERING	2	0.36%
Comparative Studies	2	0.36%
GEN [General Studies]	2	0.36%
MATSC&EN [Materials Sciences and Engineering]	2	0.36%
MICROBIOL [Microbiology]	2	0.36%
PUBAFRS [Public Affairs]	2	0.36%
SPH/HRNG [Speech and Hearing Science]	2	0.36%
AFAM&AST [African American and African Studies]	1	0.18%
AEE [Agricultural and Extension Education]	1	0.18%
AGR COMM [Agricultural Communications]	1	0.18%
ANML TEC [Animal Sciences Technology]	1	0.18%
ARTS&SCI [Arts and Sciences]	1	0.18%

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

BIOCHEM [Biochemistry]	1	0.18%
BIO SCI [Biological Sciences Interdisciplinary]	1	0.18%
BUS ADM [Business Administration]	1	0.18%
BUS-M&LI [Business Administration: Marketing and Logistics]	1	0.18%
CBE [Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering]	1	0.18%
CHINESE	1	0.18%
EARTHSC [Earth Sciences]	1	0.18%
ENR [Environment and Natural Resources]	1	0.18%
HDFS [Human Development and Family Science]	1	0.18%
ITALIAN	1	0.18%
Law	1	0.18%
MBA [Masters of Business Administration]	1	0.18%
MECH ENG [Mechanical Engineering]	1	0.18%
NELC [Near Eastern Languages and Cultures]	1	0.18%
PLNT PTH [Plant Pathology]	1	0.18%
RUSSIAN	1	0.18%
SCANDNAV [Scandinavian]	1	0.18%
Other	1	0.19%
TOTAL	553	100%

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

Approximately 67% of the cases resolved by COAM during the 2014-15 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)
2014-2015 Academic Year

Course Level (Semesters)	Number of Cases	% of Cases
1000	180	32.5%
2000	192	33.7%
3000	73	13.2%
4000	40	7.2%
5000	25	4.5%
6000	29	5.2%
7000	6	1.1%
8000	2	0.4%
9000	0	0.00%
Other	6	1.1%
TOTAL	553	100%

Table 8 summarizes the number of cases resolved at each level by student class rank. Taken together, students at ranks 1 and 2 accounted for 45% of the cases, but the highest percentage of cases within a single rank was for rank 4 students. Slightly more than 27% of cases involved rank 4 students, and of these cases, 84 (56%) occurred in 2000- and 3000-level courses. However, when cases by rank are expressed as a percentage of total students within each rank based on fifteenth-day student enrollment for Autumn 2014, the distribution of cases was as follows: rank 1=1.04% (10,861 students); rank 2=1.21% (11,527 students), rank 3=0.92% (11,201 students), rank 4=0.85% (17,453 students), and graduate students (excluding graduate professional students)=0.47% (10,461 students).

Table 8
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student Rank and Course Level
2014-2015 Academic Year

Rank	1	2	3	4	GRD	Totals	% by Course Level
Course Level							
1000	62	60	36	21	1	180	32.5%
2000	46	65	39	41	1	192	34.9%
3000	4	10	16	43	0	73	13.3%
4000	0	3	5	32	0	40	7.3%
5000	1	1	6	12	5	25	4.5%
6000	0	0	0	0	29	29	5.3%
7000	0	0	0	0	6	6	1.1%
8000	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.4%
9000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Other	0	0	1	0	5	6	1.1%
TOTAL	113	139	103	149	49	553	100.00%
% by Rank	20.4%	25.1%	18.6%	27.0%	8.9%	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 553 cases resolved during the 2014-2015 Academic Year, 501 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
2014-2015 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases "In Violation"	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	141	28.2%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to "until graduation")	293	58.5%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	51	10.3%
Dismissal	15	3.0%
Totals	501	100%

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

Of the 501 cases in which a student was found "in violation" in 2014-15, no grade sanction was authorized in 24 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. 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
2014-2015 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	24	4.8%
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	250	49.9%
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	14	2.8%
Authorization for “0” on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	85	17.0%
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or “U” in the course	38	7.6%
Final Grade of E/U/NP by “action of University Committee”	61	12.2%
Re-enroll with a final failing grade for the course	2	0.3%
Other	27	5.4%
Totals	501	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 501 cases in which the student was found to be in violation by COAM in 2014-2015, 46 cases were appealed. In 34 instances, the decision of the Committee was upheld. Twelve of the appeals were granted and of these, sanctions were adjusted in ten cases and in two cases the finding of “in violation” was reversed.