

THE UNIVERSITY TRIBUNAL
THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

IN THE MATTER OF charges of academic dishonesty made on July 8, 2009;

AND IN THE MATTER OF the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*, 1995;

AND IN THE MATTER OF the *University of Toronto Act*, 1971, S.O. 1971, c. 56 as amended S.O. 1978, c. 88

BETWEEN:

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

- and -

I J

Hearing Date: October 6, 2009

Members of the Panel:

- Ms. Janet Minor, Barrister and Solicitor, Chair
- Professor Graham Trope, Faculty Panel Member
- Ms. Elena Kuzmin, Student Panel Member

Appearances:

- Ms. Lily Harmer, Assistant Discipline Counsel for the University, Paliare Roland Barristers
- Ms. Betty-Ann Campbell, Law Clerk, Paliare Roland Barristers
- Professor Ryan Balot, Department of Political Science, Political Theory
- Ms. Larissa Atkinson, Teaching Assistant, Department of Political Science
- Dr. Tamara Jones, Academic Integrity Officer, Office of Student Academic Integrity

In Attendance:

- Professor Sam Solecki, Dean's Designate, Office of Academic Integrity
- Ms. Natalie Ramtahal, Coordinator, Appeals, Discipline and Faculty Grievances, Office of Appeals, Discipline and Faculty Grievances
- I . J , the Student, not in attendance

Transcription of Oral Reasons Delivered by the Chair at the Conclusion of the Hearing

[1] We have had an opportunity to review the evidence and we have heard from Professor Balot and Teaching Assistant Atchison. We have also reviewed the paper provided by Mr. J . There are internet sources provided to us by the University and also a purchased essay from donotreply@123helpme.com.

[2] We are satisfied that significant portions, if not, the entire paper, provided Mr. J in this course was plagiarised. It has verbatim passages from the purchased essay and online sources. It also has passages which have slight changes, either editorial or word changes. However, on review of the totality of the paragraphs, the phraseology is similar, the content is similar, turns of phrase are similar, leaving us no doubt that these portions are also plagiarised.

[3] We are satisfied that the University has demonstrated that Charge 1 has been made out and we find the Student to have committed plagiarism contrary to the Code of Academic Conduct. The University has withdrawn all the other charges in this matter.

[4] We have concluded that the appropriate sanction in this case is a zero in the course, a four-year suspension from the University running after the Student completes his academic suspension for poor performance, a notation on his record for five years commencing the date of this suspension, and a recommendation to the Provost that the decision be published with the Student's name withheld.

[5] We have reviewed the matter taking into account the principles on sanction which are outlined in the C case and note the following: The paper submitted by the Student was plagiarized. No meaningful academic work was done by the Student. The paper was either verbatim or mildly edited, primarily from a paper which was available online for purchase. However, there was in addition one paragraph which was virtually verbatim from another online source.

[6] The Student did not attend this hearing. As a result, we have received no character evidence, no explanation of any potentially extenuating circumstances, and no indication of either insight or remorse from the Student.

[7] The offence of plagiarism has been commented upon by other panels hearing discipline matters. We note the comments of Chair Lax in the *University of Toronto vs. M.H.H.* (January 12, 2009, Case No. 521) I am quoting from paragraph 29:

Other panels have noted that the seriousness of the offence of plagiarism is that it undermines the relationship of trust which must exist between the University and its students.

[8] That Panel referred to the *University of Toronto vs. S.B.* (November 24, 2007, Case No. 488) and quotes:

It hardly needs to be said that the credibility and academic mission of the University and the degrees it awards students can be greatly harmed by the commission of offences such as plagiarism and concoction.

[9] Likewise, the Panel referred to the *University of Toronto and A.K.* (October 12, 2007, Case No. 481), noting among other things that in recent years plagiarism has been a particular problem for the University and Tribunals.

[10] In *University of Toronto vs. V.W.S.L.* (April 6, 2006, Case No. 440), that Panel commented that the enterprise of purchasing work for submission to the University is emblematic of the highest and greatest detriment to the University community.

[11] We also note the description of plagiarism in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. The description of plagiarism is at once a perversion of originality and the denial of the interdependence and mutuality which are at the heart of scholarship itself and hence of the academic experience.

[12] We are aware that the recommended penalty for plagiarism where a student submits the work of another is two years and that the recommendation when a student has submitted purchased work is expulsion. We accept the submission of the University that the bulk of the paper was likely purchased and that the remainder was plagiarized from another source.

[13] In these circumstances, we accept the recommendation of the University that a four-year suspension be imposed. We are of the view that this is appropriate in all the circumstances.

[14] As I have noted above, the Panel orders:

- 1) A four-year suspension, which should run from the time that the three-year suspension for poor performance is completed;
- 2) A notation on record should continue for a year after this suspension had been completed.
- 3) The Student should receive a grade of zero in the course; and,

- 4) The matter should be referred to the Provost for publication, if he sees fit, and that publication would be without the Student's name being disclosed.

I certify that this is the decision of the Panel

April 15, 2010 , Janet E. Minor
Date Janet Minor, Barrister and Solicitor (Chair)