



FOR INFORMATION

OPEN SESSION

TO: Academic Board

SPONSOR: Mr. Christopher Lang, Director, Appeals, Discipline and Faculty Grievances

CONTACT INFO: christopher.lang@utoronto.ca

PRESENTER: See Sponsor

CONTACT INFO:

DATE: May 23, 2019 for May 30, 2019

AGENDA ITEM: 18(c)

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

University Tribunal, Information Reports, Spring 2019

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The University Tribunal hears cases of academic discipline under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, 1995* (the “Code”)¹ which are not disposed of under the terms of the *Code* by the Division.

Section 5.2.6 (b) of the *Terms of Reference* of the Academic Board provides for the Board to receive for information reports, without names, on the disposition of cases in accordance with the *Code*.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. Academic Board [for information] (May 30, 2019)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The last semi-annual report came to the Academic Board on November 22, 2018.

¹ <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>

HIGHLIGHTS:

The purpose of the information package is to fulfill the requirements of the University Tribunal and, in so doing, inform the Board of the Tribunal's work and the matters it considers, and the process it follows. It is not intended to create a discussion regarding individual cases, their specifics or the sanctions imposed, as these were dealt with by an adjudicative body with a legally qualified chair, bound by due process and fairness, and based on the record of evidence and submissions put before it by the parties.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

- Information Reports of Tribunal Decisions under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, 1995* (Spring 2019)

TRIBUNAL DECISIONS UNDER THE
CODE OF BEHAVIOUR ON ACADEMIC MATTERS
(SPRING 2019)

FORGERY OF AN ACADEMIC RECORD

Expulsion; up to five-year suspension; permanent notation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student falsified and circulated a degree certificate purportedly issued by the University to a degree verification institution. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the offence is very serious; it is critical to the integrity and reputation of the University that others be able to rely on its official records; the sanction is similar to other cases; and the Student failed to participate and as such no mitigating circumstances were presented to militate in favour of a lesser sanction.

CONCOCTED SOURCES

Grade of zero in the course; two-year suspension (backdated 8 months); three-year notation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student was found guilty of concocting references to sources in an essay submitted for credit, but there was no evidence to find that the Student plagiarized from an original source, or obtained unauthorized assistance in relation to the essay. In finding the Student guilty of concoction, and in imposing the sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the Student had no prior disciplinary history; rehabilitation was of minor importance given that the Student had been inactive at the University since 2016; it was important that the sanction allow the Student to return to the degree if desired; and the sanction is in keeping with the outcome of other similar cases.

FORGERY OF AN ACADEMIC RECORD

Expulsion; immediate suspension up to five-years or until Governing Council makes its decision on expulsion, whichever is first; corresponding notation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student falsified and circulated a degree certificate purportedly issued by the University to a degree verification company. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the importance of the University as an educational institution and degree-granting body; the public must

be able to rely on degree certificates allegedly issued by the University as accurate; the offence is of utmost seriousness because it undermines the credibility of the University and others who legitimately earned their degrees; the conduct was premeditated and egregious; no mitigating circumstances were presented as the Student did not participate; and the sanction is consistent with other cases.

PLAGIARISM

Grade of zero in two courses; approximately three-year suspension; notation until one year after graduation, withdrawal or program termination; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student plagiarized one assignment in each of two courses. The Student agreed with the facts and the proposed sanctions. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the agreed-upon sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the sanctions are consistent with previous Tribunal decisions; the standard established by previous Tribunal decisions to depart from joint submissions on penalty is very high and there was no reason to do so in this case; the penalty strikes an appropriate balance between the seriousness of the offence and the Student's prior misconduct; and the Student's recognition of the seriousness of the offence and remorse.

FALSIFIED ACADEMIC RECORD

Expulsion; up to five-year suspension or until the Governing Council makes its decision, whichever is first; corresponding notation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student falsified her academic record by misrepresenting online, including on her LinkedIn profile, that she held a Doctor of Philosophy degree and a Doctorate in Education from the University. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the Student showed blatant disregard for the discipline process; the Student did not stop making the misrepresentations even after being requested to do so by the University; the offence is serious; there are no mitigating circumstances presented as the Student did not participate; the offence is detrimental to the academic integrity of the University; there is a need to deter others; and sanctions are consistent with similar cases.

PLAGIARISM

Grade of zero in the course; three-year suspension; notation until graduation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld;

The Student plagiarized an assignment submitted for course credit. The Student agreed with the facts and the proposed sanctions. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the agreed-upon sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the threshold to deviate from a joint submission on penalty is high; the Student has three prior academic offences, including plagiarism; the Student's cooperation in the process and undertaking to complete programs and workshops to improve academic and writing skills are mitigating factors.

FALSIFIED ACADEMIC RECORD

Expulsion; up to five-year suspension from the date of the Order or until Governing Council makes its decision, whichever is earlier; corresponding notation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student submitted a falsified academic record in support of an application for admission to the University. The Student agreed with the facts and proposed sanctions. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the agreed-upon sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the Student's responses and denials mitigated against a finding of remorse from their guilty plea; the Student went to significant lengths to mislead the University; the evidence indicates a propensity to re-offend; the nature of the offence and the detriment to the University are significant; the penalty of expulsion will create general deterrence; the penalty is within the appropriate range of sanctions in similar cases; and there is a very high threshold for departing from a jointly proposed submission, and in this case there are no exceptional circumstances to warrant rejecting the parties' joint submissions on penalty.

PLAGIARISM

Grade of zero in the course; two-year suspension; three-year notation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student plagiarized an essay submitted for course credit. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the sanctions, the Panel noted the following: plagiarism is a serious offence that undermines the relationship of trust, learning, and teaching between students and the University; plagiarism warrants a strong penalty that will serve as a general deterrent to others; there was no evidence before the Panel of remorse, understanding, mitigation or extenuating circumstances that could justify a more lenient sentence.

PLAGIARISM

Grade of zero in the course; two-year suspension; notation of sanction for three years or until graduation, whichever is earlier; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student plagiarized a final paper submitted for course credit. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the penalty is well within the range of reasonable sanctions for similar offences; the Student had no prior academic offences; there was a lack of remorse by the Student; the Student consistently refused to accept responsibility for the plagiarism and instead mounted an attack on the professor's integrity; the Student did not present any extenuating factors; and the Student gave no indication of learning from a mistake.

PLAGIARISM

Grade of zero in the course; two-year suspension; three-year notation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student plagiarized an essay. In finding the Student guilty and imposing the sanctions, the Panel noted the following: past Tribunal decisions establish the seriousness of plagiarism as an offence; students are reminded by professors and instructors throughout their time at the University of the importance of integrity and the prohibition on any form of academic cheating, including plagiarism, and they are given significant guidance on how to specifically avoid plagiarism; there were no mitigating circumstances for consideration, as the Student did not participate in the process.

PLAGIARISM

Grade of zero in three courses; slightly less than a four-year suspension; notation until graduation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student plagiarized several assignments in three courses. The Student agreed to the facts. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the sanctions, the Panel noted the following: plagiarism is a serious breach of the University's standards of ethical behavior; the Student's admission of guilt and co-operation in the process are positive factors and demonstrate the Student's acknowledgement that their acts were wrong; the series of plagiarized papers amount to the Student's first offence; the Student failed to attend the hearing in person; given past conduct, there is good reason to expect the Student will reoffend unless given a significant penalty; there is no evidence of extenuating circumstances; only a serious penalty will deter other students; the sanction is appropriate taking into consideration

other Tribunal decisions; if the Student returns to the University to complete his studies, he should be able to move forward after graduation without a notation of sanction on his academic record.

PLAGIARISM

Grade of zero in the course; five-year suspension; approximately six-year notation; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student plagiarized a film review submitted for credit in one course. The Student agreed with the facts and proposed sanctions. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the agreed-upon sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the Student was previously sanctioned for plagiarism; the Student co-operated with the University and demonstrated remorse; the Student was facing difficult personal circumstances, including serious mental health issues; and a joint submission on penalty should only be rejected if it is fundamentally offensive to the values of the University community.

PLAGIARISM

Grade of zero in one course; five-year suspension (backdated approximately one year); notation for five years or until graduation, whichever is first; publication of decision and sanction with name of Student withheld

The Student purchased an essay online and submitted it for course credit. The Student agreed with the facts and proposed sanctions. In finding the Student guilty, and in imposing the agreed-upon sanctions, the Panel noted the following: the Student had no prior history of academic misconduct and demonstrated remorse with an early admission of guilt at the Dean's Designate meeting; the Student did not contribute to the delay in resolving the charges and sought to have the charges resolved as early as possible; the Student indicated they had a heavy course load at the relevant time; the nature of the offence and detriment to the University are significant; the requested penalty is in the appropriate range of sanctions in these circumstances; and there is a very high threshold for departing from a joint submission on penalty which is not met in this case.