

**THE UNIVERSITY TRIBUNAL  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

**IN THE MATTER OF** charges of academic dishonesty made on November 26, 2020.

**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.

**B E T W E E N:**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO (the “University”)**

- and -

**M [REDACTED] W [REDACTED] (the “Student”)**

**REASONS FOR DECISION**

**Date of Hearing:** February 10, 2021, via Zoom

**Members of the Panel:**

Mr. Michael Hines, Chair  
Professor Pascal van Lieshout, Faculty Panel Member  
Ms. Emily Hawes, Student Panel Member

**Appearances:**

Mr. Robert Centa, Assistant Discipline Counsel, Paliare Roland Rosenberg Rothstein LLP

**Hearing Secretary:**

Ms. Krista Kennedy, Administrative Clerk & Hearing Secretary, Appeals, Discipline and Faculty Grievance

**Not in Attendance:**

The Student

## **Charges and Hearing**

1. This panel of the University Tribunal held a hearing on February 10, 2021 to consider the charges brought by the University of Toronto against the Student under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, 1995* (“Code”).
2. The Student was charged with the Offences set out in Appendix A, attached. Essentially, they relate to the alleged falsification of a degree certificate purportedly issued by the University concerning the Student, and the subsequent use of that forged certificate by the Student in an attempt to obtain employment.

## **Procedural Issues**

3. The Student did not appear at the hearing. The hearing took place based upon an Agreed Statement of Facts (“ASF”) signed by the Student and by Assistant Discipline Counsel.
4. In the ASF, the Student acknowledged that he had received a copy of the charges, had waived the reading of the charges, and pled guilty to Charge #1 (ASF, para. 3).
5. The ASF also confirmed that the Student did not wish to attend or participate in these proceedings. The Student requested that the University Tribunal proceed in their absence and waived their right to any further notice of these proceedings. The Student acknowledged their understanding that, in their absence, the University Tribunal might find that the Student had committed an act or acts of academic misconduct, and might impose sanctions against the Student as set out in the Code. (ASF, para. 4).

## **Evidence and Findings**

6. The ASF set out the following facts:
  - (a) The Student first registered as a student at the University of Toronto Mississauga in Fall 2013. Since that time, he has earned 4.5 credits. In Winter 2016, he was suspended from the University for one year because of poor academic performance. He did not return to his studies after the completion of that suspension. At all material times, he remained a student member of the University.
  - (b) The Student admitted that, as part of an application for employment, he represented that he had graduated from the University of Toronto.
  - (c) On February 19, 2020, a Verifications Researcher for Hire Right, a third party verification service, attempted to confirm that the University awarded the Student a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in 2017. The University

advised that, according to its records, no such degree had been granted to him.

- (d) On February 24, 2020, the Verifications Researcher again emailed the University and stated “we just received a copy of the student’s degree. Could you please let us know why no degree could be found? Please see attached.”
  - (e) The Student admitted that this degree certificate was forged and that he circulated the forged degree certificate.
  - (f) The Student purchased the forged transcript on-line from a person he met over the Internet. He communicated with the forger over the messaging app, WeChat. The Student knew when he was communicating with the forger that they were selling forged degree certificates.
  - (g) The Student paid \$40,000 for the forged degree certificate. He did so in an attempt to obtain employment to provide a stable income for his family, including his wife and child.
  - (h) The Student represented that he had graduated from the University of Toronto knowing that statement to be false. He knowingly circulated a forged degree certificate in an attempt to confirm his graduation from University of Toronto.
7. Based upon these agreed facts, the Tribunal entered a finding of guilty on Count 1 of the Charges as set out in Appendix A.

### **Penalty**

8. The Provost submitted that the offences as proven demonstrate the most serious lack of academic and personal integrity. They threaten the reputation of the University and the students who pursue their degrees honestly and diligently. The University sought a penalty that would include a recommendation from the Tribunal that the Student be expelled from the University.
9. The Tribunal is in full agreement with the Provost in terms of the gravity of the offences and the need to impose the most severe penalty available to it. This conclusion is consistent with the other similar cases that the Provost brought to the Panel’s attention. Accordingly, we hereby;
- (a) order that the Student shall be suspended from the University for five years; and
  - (b) recommend to the President that he recommend to Governing Council that the Student be expelled from the University of Toronto;

10. We further order that this case shall be reported to the Provost for publication of a notice of the decision of the Tribunal and the sanctions imposed, with the name of the student withheld.

Dated at Toronto this 22nd day of April, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hines", written in a cursive style.

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Michael Hines, Chair

# APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

M [REDACTED] W [REDACTED] ([REDACTED])

## CHARGES

Note: Wherever in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, 1995 (“Code”) an offence is described as depending on “knowing”, the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known.

1. You knowingly forged or in any other way altered or falsified an academic record, and/or uttered, circulated or made use of such forged, altered or falsified record, namely, a document which purported to be a degree certificate from the University of Toronto dated June 27, 2017, contrary to section B.I.3(a) of the Code.

### ***Particulars of charges***

- (a) You have been a registered student in the University of Toronto Mississauga since Fall 2013. You earned 4.5 credits. You did not graduate from the University of Toronto.
- (b) You circulated and made use of a document that purported to be your degree certificate from the University of Toronto dated June 27, 2017.
- (c) You forged this documents and falsely represented your academic history and status and/or you knew that this document was forged, altered, and/or falsified when you circulated or made use of it.
- (d) You had an obligation to provide accurate and truthful information and not to misrepresent your academic record.

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**B E T W E E N:**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

- and -

M■■■■ W■■■■

**Agreed Statement of Facts**

1. For the purposes of this hearing under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (“Code”), the Provost of the University of Toronto (the “Provost”) and M■■■■ W■■■■ (“Mr. W■■■■”) have prepared this Agreed Statement of Facts (“ASF”) and a joint book of documents (“JBD”). The Provost and Mr. W■■■■ agree that:

- (a) each document contained in the JBD may be admitted into evidence before the Tribunal for all purposes, including for the truth of the document’s contents, without further need to prove the document; and
- (b) if a document indicates that it was sent or received by someone, that is *prima facie* proof that the document was sent and received as indicated.

2. This hearing arises out of charges of academic misconduct filed by the Provost on November 26, 2020. A copy of the charges is included in the JBD at Tab 1.

3. Mr. W■■■■ acknowledges that he received a copy of the charges, waives the reading of the charges, and pleads guilty to charge #1.

4. Mr. W■■■■ does not wish to attend or participate further in these proceedings. Mr. W■■■■ requests that the University Tribunal proceed in his absence and he waives his right to any further notice of these proceedings. He understands that, in his absence, the University Tribunal may find that he has committed an act or acts of academic misconduct, and may impose sanctions against him as set out in the University of Toronto, *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, 1995*. He understands that the University Tribunal is not bound by the terms of the joint submission on penalty.

5. Mr. W■■■■ first registered as a student at the University of Toronto Mississauga in Fall 2013. Since that time he has earned 4.5 credits. In Winter 2016, he was suspended from the University for one year because of poor academic performance. He did not return to his studies after the completion of that suspension. At all material times, he remained a student member of the University. A copy of Mr. W■■■■'s academic record is included in the JBD at Tab 2.

6. Mr. W■■■■ admits that, as part of an application for employment, he represented that he had graduated from the University of Toronto.

7. On February 19, 2020, Kathleen Mamaril, a Verifications Researcher for Hire Right, a third party verification service, attempted to confirm that the University awarded Mr. W■■■■ a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in 2017. The University advised Ms. Mamaril that, according to its records, no degree had been granted to Mr. W■■■■.

8. On February 24, 2020, Ms. Mamaril emailed the University and stated "we just received a copy of the student's degree. Could you please let us know why no degree could be found? Please see attached." A copy of this email chain, and the attachment is included in the JBD at Tab 3.

9. Mr. W■■■■ admits that this degree certificate is forged and that he circulated the forged degree certificate.

10. Mr. W [REDACTED] states that he purchased the forged transcript on-line from a person he met over the Internet. He communicated with the forger over the messaging app, WeChat. Mr. W [REDACTED] knew when he was communicating with the forger that they were selling forged degree certificates.

11. Mr. W [REDACTED] states that he paid \$40,000 for the forged degree certificate. He did so in an attempt to obtain employment to provide a stable income for his family, including his wife and child.

12. Mr. W [REDACTED] represented that he had graduated from the University of Toronto knowing that statement to be false. He knowingly circulated a forged degree certificate in an attempt to confirm his graduation from University of Toronto.

13. Mr. W [REDACTED] acknowledges that he is signing this ASF freely and voluntarily, knowing of the potential consequences he faces, and does having had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel.

Date: January [REDACTED], 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
M [REDACTED] W [REDACTED]

Date: January 22, 2021



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Robert A. Centa  
Assistant discipline counsel  
University of Toronto



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**JOINT SUBMISSION ON PENALTY**

1. This hearing arises out of charges of academic misconduct filed by the Provost of the University of Toronto (the “Provost”) under the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (“Code”). For the purpose of the sanction phase of the hearing, the Provost and M [REDACTED] W [REDACTED] (“Mr. W [REDACTED]”) have prepared this Joint Submission on Penalty (“JSP”).

2. Mr. W [REDACTED] understands that the University Tribunal may depart from the recommendations contained in this joint submission on penalty and may impose sanctions against him as set out in the Code.

**A. *Joint Submission on Penalty***

3. The Provost and Mr. W [REDACTED] submit that, in all the circumstances of the case, the University Tribunal should suspend Mr. W [REDACTED] from the University for five years from the date of this order.

4. The parties agree that the Tribunal should also recommend to the President that he recommend to Governing Council that Mr. W [REDACTED] be expelled from the University of Toronto.

5. The parties agree that this case shall be reported to the Provost for publication of a notice of the decision of the Tribunal and the sanction imposed, with the name of the student withheld.

**B. Acknowledgments**

6. Mr. W [REDACTED] acknowledges that:

(a) the Provost advised him of the right to obtain legal counsel and that he obtained that advice or declined to do so; and

(b) he is signing this JSP freely and voluntarily, knowing of the potential consequences he faces and knowing that the Tribunal is not bound by this JSP and has the discretion to impose a different penalty.

Signed on January , 2021

[REDACTED]

M [REDACTED] W [REDACTED]



Signed on January 22 , 2021

Robert A. Centa  
Assistant Discipline Counsel  
University of Toronto