

**THE UNIVERSITY TRIBUNAL
THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

IN THE MATTER OF charges of academic dishonesty filed on August 22, 2024 and January 9, 2025,

AND IN THE MATTER OF the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*, 2019,

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

B E T W E E N:

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

- and -

J [REDACTED] D [REDACTED]

REASONS FOR DECISION

Hearing Date: August 13, 2025, via Zoom

Members of the Panel:

Johanna Braden, Chair
Professor Manfred Schneider, Faculty Panel Member
Charles Buck, Student Panel Member

Appearances:

Lily Harmer, Discipline Counsel, Paliare Roland Rosenberg Rothstein LLP

Hearing Secretary:

Karen Bellinger, Associate Director, Office of Appeals, Discipline and Faculty Grievances

In Attendance:

J [REDACTED] D [REDACTED]

1. The Trial Division of the University Tribunal was convened on August 13, 2025, to consider charges brought by the University of Toronto (the “University”) against J■■■■■ D■■■■■ (the “Student”) under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (the “Code”).

The Charges and Particulars

2. There were two sets of charges against the Student. The first set of charges is dated August 22, 2024, and states as follows.
 1. On or about January 25, 2024, you knowingly forged or in any other way altered or falsified a document or evidence required by the University of Toronto, or uttered, circulated or made use of such forged, altered or falsified document, namely a Verification of Student Illness or Injury form dated April 4, 2022 (“April VOI”), which you submitted in support of your request for academic accommodation or relief in the form of late withdrawal without academic penalty from FAH262H1S: Modern East Asia in Winter 2022 (the “Course”), contrary to Section B.I.1(a) of the Code.
 2. On or about January 25, 2024, you knowingly forged or in any other way altered or falsified a document or evidence required by the University of Toronto, or uttered, circulated or made use of such forged, altered or falsified document, namely a Verification of Student Illness or Injury form dated December 12, 2022 (“December VOI”), which you submitted in support of your request for academic accommodation or relief in the form of late withdrawal without academic penalty from the Course, contrary to Section B.I.1(a) of the Code.
 3. On or about January 25, 2024, you knowingly forged or in any other way altered or falsified a document or evidence required by the University of Toronto, or uttered, circulated or made use of such forged, altered or falsified document, namely a document from Welling Wood Health Center at 103 Howden Road (“Welling Wood Note”) dated October 18, 2022, which you submitted in support of your request for academic accommodation or relief in

the form of late withdrawal without academic penalty from the Course, contrary to Section B.I.1(a) of the Code.

4. In the alternative to the above charges, on or about January 25, 2024, you knowingly engaged in a form of cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct, fraud or misrepresentation not otherwise described in order to obtain academic credit or other academic advantage of any kind, contrary to Section B.I.3.(b) of the Code, by submitting the following documents in support of your request for academic accommodation or relief in the form of late withdrawal without academic penalty from the Course:
 - a) the April VOI;
 - b) the December VOI; and
 - c) the Welling Wood Note.

Particulars

1. At all material times you were a student registered at the University of Toronto Faculty of Arts & Science.
2. In Winter 2022 you enrolled in the Course. You earned a grade of 43 in the Course.
3. On or about January 25, 2024, you submitted petition request for late withdrawal from the Course without academic penalty.
4. In support of that petition, you submitted the April VOI, the December VOI and the Welling Wood Note (collectively the “Medical Notes”), as well as a translated note from a Chinese hospital.
5. Each of the April VOI and the December VOI were purportedly completed and signed by Dr. Cheng Tao Wang, registration #65486 at St. Michael’s located at 30 Bond Street in Toronto, Ontario.
6. You did not attend at St. Michael’s Hospital to obtain medical care in either April or December 2022. You were not seen by Dr. Cheng Tao Wang at either of those times.
7. The Welling Wood Note was purportedly from Welling Wood Health Center at 103 Howden Road, completed by a physiotherapist named Paolo Antonio Agcaoili Cortez from October 18, 2022 indicating you were suffering from a head injury and headache.

8. You were not treated by Paolo Cortez at Welling Wood Health Center at 103 Howden Road in October 2022.
 9. The Medical Notes were forged, altered, or falsified.
 10. You purchased the Medical Notes knowing that they contained false information and that they were forged documents.
 11. You knowingly submitted the forged, altered or falsified Medical Notes:
 - a) understanding that the University of Toronto required legitimate medical documentation and evidence to be presented in order to obtain the academic accommodation or relief you requested;
 - b) with the intention that the University of Toronto rely on the Medical Notes in considering whether or not to provide you with the academic accommodation or relief you requested; and
 - c) in an attempt to obtain academic credit and/or other academic advantage.
 12. In engaging in the above conduct, you knowingly engaged in a form of cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct, fraud or misrepresentation not otherwise described in the Code in order to obtain academic credit or other academic advantage.
3. The second set of charges is dated January 9, 2025, but refers to events that precede the first set of charges. These charges and particulars are as follows.
1. On or about October 28, 2021 and again on January 5, 2022, you knowingly represented as your own an idea or expression of an idea or work of another in your proposal titled Jamaican Patois which you submitted in LIN203H1F: English Words, contrary to section B.1.1(d) of the Code.
 2. In the alternative, on or about October 28, 2021 and again on January 5, 2022, you knowingly engaged in a form of cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct, fraud or misrepresentation not otherwise described in the Code in order to obtain academic credit or other academic advantage of any kind in connection with your proposal titled Jamaican

Patois which you submitted in LIN203H1F: English Words, contrary to section B.I.3(b) of the Code.

Particulars

1. At all material times you were a student registered at the University of Toronto Faculty of Arts & Science.
2. In Fall 2021 you enrolled in LIN203H1F: English Words (the “Course”).
3. On or about October 28, 2021, you submitted a paper titled Jamaican Patois (“Paper”), which was worth 15% of the Course grade.
4. You submitted the Paper:
 - a) to obtain academic credit;
 - b) knowing that it contained ideas, expressions of ideas or work that were not your own, but were the ideas, expressions of ideas or work of others, including the authors of Jamaican Patois, Wikipedia; and
 - c) knowing that you did not properly reference the ideas, expressions of ideas or work that you drew from Wikipedia or from others.
5. You submitted the Paper with the intention that the University rely on it as containing your own ideas or work in considering the appropriate academic credit to be assigned to your work.
6. You knowingly engaged in a form of cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct, fraud or misrepresentation not otherwise described in the Code to obtain academic credit or other academic advantage of any kind in connection with the Paper in the Course.

The Evidence

4. On consent of the parties, the evidence was adduced by way of an Agreed Statement of Facts.

1. Forged medical documents

5. The Student was enrolled in FAH262H1S: Modern East Asia in 2022 Winter. The Student completed the course with a final grade of 43%.
6. The deadline to drop FAH262 without academic penalty was April 8, 2022.
7. If a student wishes to request academic accommodation for such things as missed exams and late withdrawal from courses without academic penalty, they are required to file a petition. Students submit petitions through an online portal where they can upload and submit any supporting documentation and provide details about their petition. In the petition request form, there is a Statement section where students can write and submit a personal statement related to their petition.
8. If illness is cited in support of a petition request, students are required to file supporting documentation in the form of a standard Verification of Student Illness or Injury form ("VOI"). The VOI must show that an eligible medical practitioner registered with their regulating body was consulted. The information in the VOI must be based on examination by the medical practitioner and documented history (where applicable) at the time of illness or injury. The VOI must be signed by the medical practitioner. The VOI includes a warning that if information provided for a petition is altered or falsified, it may constitute an academic offence under the *Code* and students may be subject to prosecution.

9. On January 25, 2024, the Student submitted a petition requesting permission to withdraw late from FAH262 without academic penalty. The Student included a personal statement that stated:

My physical condition has been very poor in 2021-2022. [...] I sincerely request that it really affects my overall gpa. My physical health and mental health are in poor shape in 2022. I was infected with COVID-19 from different viruses many times in 2022. Since I have not had a COVID-19 vaccine, each time I was sick with COVID-19, it caused me great pain and recovery time. My resistance also declined, and I suffered from many various diseases that year. Restoring a healthy body has become my wish for 2022. I am so sorry I missed the best drop time.

10. The Student submitted supporting documents with her petition. These included the following:

1. A VOI dated April 4, 2022, indicating the Student's serious incapacitation from April 4 – 5, 2022, signed by Chang Tao Wang, CPSO # 65486, bearing a business stamp from St. Michael's ("April 4 VOI").

2. A VOI dated December 12, 2022, indicating the Student's serious incapacitation from December 12 – 13, 2022, signed by Chang Tao Wang, CPSO # 65486, bearing a business stamp from St. Michael's ("December 12 VOI").

11. Based upon apparent discrepancies in the St. Michael's business stamps, University staff contacted St. Michael's hospital to verify the authenticity of the April 4 VOI and the December 12 VOI. Both of the VOIs were provided to the hospital together with the Student's date of birth. St. Michael's staff confirmed that the

hospital had no record of the Student having seen any doctor at the hospital, that the business stamps used were very old and not in use by the hospital at the relevant time, and that Dr. Chang Tao Wang was experiencing issues with the use of fraudulent notes bearing their name. The hospital also advised that it is their policy that doctors associated with St. Michael's hospital will include the doctor's name and their medical specialty on signed documents.

12. The Student submitted a third supporting document with her petition in the form of a typewritten document from Welling Wood Health Center at 103 Howden Road, Scarborough, ON ("Welling Wood Note"). It contained the Student's name, date of birth, and a date of injury of October 18, 2022. It indicated that the Student:

is under physiotherapy sessions with us
Client is suffering from following injuries
(Head Injury, Headache)
We recommended client rest until his fully
recovered treatment plans re created for client to
participate Injury Code References
LM99.8 BFZ.018

13. The Welling Wood Note contained the name of a service provider, Paolo Antonio Agcaoili Cortez, with a CPO # 20377.
14. Staff in the petitions office conducted an online search which indicated:
 1. Welling Wood Health Center was located at a different address than 103 Howden Avenue; and
 2. Paolo Alberto Cortez is registered with the College of Physiotherapists

2. Dean's meeting for FAH262

15. On March 27, 2024, the Student met with Dean's Designate. The Student was given the "Dean's warning" pursuant to section C.i (a) 6 of the Code. The Student denied that she had submitted forged medical notes in the form of the April 4 VOI, the December 12 VOI, or the Welling Wood Note, and gave a series of explanations while persisting that the notes were legitimate.
16. The Student was asked to provide copies of several documents she referenced during the meeting. Following the Dean's meeting the Student provided a number of documents to the Vice-Provost's office including: photos of positive Covid tests dated April 6 and 7, 2022; two receipts from Chan Tao Wang – the first for \$70 dated May 4, 2022 and the second for \$180 dated December 2022 (actual day is illegible); translated screenshots of texts with "Mom"; a CML Healthcare Request for Examination; and the Student's Scotiabank account statement for April 2022 and December 2022.

3. Admissions and Acknowledgements re Forged Medical Documents

17. At this hearing, the Student admits that she knowingly:
 1. purchased the April 4 VOI, the December 12 VOI, and the Welling Wood Note ("Purchased Medical Documents") from a third party;
 2. was never a patient of Dr. Chan Tao Wang and did not meet with Dr. Wang either in person or online at any time;

3. submitted the forged, altered or falsified Purchased Medical Documents in support of her petition for late withdrawal without academic penalty from FAH262 when she:
 - (i) understood that the University of Toronto required legitimate medical documentation and evidence to be presented in order to obtain the academic accommodation she requested;
 - (ii) knew or ought to have known that the Purchased Medical Documents contained information that was false;
 - (iii) provided false information in the explanation she gave about the Purchased Medical Documents at her meeting with the Dean's Designate on March 27, 2024;
 - (iv) did so with the intention that the University of Toronto rely on the Purchased Medical Documents in considering whether or not to provide her with the academic accommodation she requested; and
 - (v) did so in an attempt to obtain an academic advantage through her late withdrawal without academic penalty from FAH262, a course which she had completed and for which she had received a failing grade.

18. The Student admits that in engaging in the conduct described above, on or about January 25, 2024, she knowingly:

1. forged or in any other way altered or falsified a document or evidence required by the University of Toronto, or uttered, circulated or made use of such forged, altered, or falsified document, the April 4 VOI, contrary to Section B.I.1(a) of the *Code* (August 22, 2024 Charge #1);
2. forged or in any other way altered or falsified a document or evidence required by the University of Toronto, or uttered, circulated or made use of such forged, altered, or falsified document, the December 12 VOI, contrary to Section B.I.1(a) of the *Code* (August 22, 2024 Charge #2);
3. forged or in any other way altered or falsified a document or evidence required by the University of Toronto, or uttered, circulated or made use of such forged, altered, or falsified document, the Welling Wood Note, contrary to Section B.I.1(a) of the *Code* (August 22, 2024 Charge # 3); and
4. engaged in a form of cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct, fraud or misrepresentation not otherwise described in order to obtain academic credit or other academic advantage of any kind, by submitting a forged, altered or falsified document, the Purchased Medical Documents, contrary to Section B.I.3.(b) of the *Code* (August 22, 2024 Charge #4).

4. Plagiarism

18. In Fall 2021 the Student was enrolled in LIN203H1F: English Words, taught by Marisa Brook. The course syllabus contained a detailed section discussing academic integrity, including a statement about plagiarism which read: "Representing other people's

work as your own is likely to severely affect your academic standing”. Students were advised that they were expected to have read the *Code* and to follow it, and were provided with a link to resources to assist them to avoid plagiarism.

19. Students in the course were required to submit a written proposal worth 15% that served as an intermediary step to a final written paper. It was due on October 27, 2021 at 11:59 a.m. Students were instructed to:

1. Conduct research to decide upon a language to compare certain required aspects to the English language;
2. “Keep careful track of the sources that you have looked at. You will need to cite those sources briefly here when answering the questions (put a bracket after each fact indicating where you learned these things, unless you already knew them).”
3. “Note that blog posts, social-media pages, YouTube/TikTok videos, and non-scholarly websites are not considered reliable sources for this assignment. You can, however, include the Ethnologue entry for the language and the Wikipedia article and the World Atlas of Language Structures Page, but you will need to go beyond these to find some deeper research into the morphology and the vocabulary of the language.”
4. Provide information to respond to six specified questions. Question 6 asked students to “list five or more reliable sources for the morphology and loanwords of your language, using full bibliographic references (APA, MLA,

Chicago, etc. – see the ‘Bibliography’ list at this webpage:
<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/usingsources/documentation/>.”

20. The Student submitted her proposal titled *Jamaican Patois* on October 28, 2021 at 12:04 a.m. (“Proposal”). The Student’s Proposal contained no footnotes or endnote citations and no list of bibliographic references.
21. When marked, similarities became evidence between the Proposal and a Wikipedia page from October 7, 2021 also called *Jamaican Patois* (“Wiki Page”). There was no attribution given in the Proposal to the Wiki Page.
22. A close comparison of the Proposal with the Wiki Page indicates that virtually all of the structure and ideas and many words and phrases are replicated in the Proposal from the Wiki Page. There is little, if any, original work, and the majority of the differences are merely synonyms and re-phrased or re-organized versions of the content of the Wiki Page.
23. Between October 28, 2021 and January 6, 2022, the Student submitted four additional versions of her Proposal to the course instructor:
 1. The second version is the same as the first. It was submitted via Quercus at 12:26 a.m. on October 28, 2021, shortly after version 1.
 2. The third version has the same textual content as the first two, although it is double spaced. It contains what appear to be citations to sources, with names and a year, at the end of most paragraphs. None of these citations included Wikipedia. It also contained a reference list at the end with more

detailed information about the six sources. It had been updated and sent to the instructor via email on January 5, 2022.

3. The fourth version appears to be the same as version 3, and was also sent to the instructor via email on January 5, 2022.
 4. The fifth and last version removed five of the citations that had been included in versions 3 and 4, and changed the last citation in the paper, which had been “Devonish & Carpenter, 2007”, to “Wikipedia, 2021”. The reference list had also been changed to remove Devonish & Carpenter, 2007 and two other references and add Wikipedia, 2021. This was the only version to make reference to Wikipedia. It was sent by the Student to the instructor on January 6, 2022.
24. The Student met with the course instructor to discuss the similarities between her Proposal and the Wiki Notes on February 2, 2022. The file was dormant for some time, then forwarded to the Student Academic Integrity office in the summer of 2024 after a new Associate Chair in the Linguistics department followed-up on an outstanding unassigned grade for the Student in LIN203.

5. Dean’s meeting for LIN203

25. On September 23, 2024, the Student attended a second meeting with the Dean’s Designate. The Student confirmed that she had met with an advisor from her college prior to the meeting and was informed of the Dean’s Warning from the Code. The Student admitted that the first two versions of her Proposal submitted on

October 28, 2021 did not have references, and that she had committed plagiarism in her Proposal.

6. Acknowledgements and Admissions re Plagiarism

26. The Student admits that:

1. she did no meaningful original work on her Proposal which she submitted in LIN302 for academic credit;
2. the structure, ideas, words and phrases in her Proposal were copied directly from the Wiki Page;
3. she re-ordered phrases and substituted words with synonyms to make it appear as if the work had not been copied, and to attempt to avoid detection;
4. at the time she submitted her Proposal for credit she gave no attribution of any kind to the Wiki Page, and no indication that she had used the Wiki Page as the source of the contents of her Proposal;
5. she re-submitted the Proposal four times in order to try to cover-up the fact that she had not used any citations or given appropriate attribution to the Wiki Page, and to try to avoid the consequences of not having done so.

27. The Student admits that she knew or ought to have known that, in submitting her Proposal:

1. she was representing the ideas of another author, the expression of the ideas of the author, and the work of the author as her own and that she was committing plagiarism contrary to section B.I.1(d) of the *Code* (Charge 1);
and
2. he knowingly engaged in a form of cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct, fraud or misrepresentation not otherwise described in the *Code* in order to obtain academic credit or other academic advantage of any kind in connection with the Proposal, contrary to section B.I.3(b) of the *Code* (Charge 2).

Decision of the Tribunal on Charges

28. The onus is on the University to establish on the balance of probabilities, using clear and convincing evidence, that the Student has committed the academic offences as charged.
29. In this case, the Student admitted to three charges relating to the forged medical notes, and one charge of plagiarism. The Student was present at the hearing and was assisted by a support person. The admissions contained in the Agreed Statement of Facts were comprehensive. She reiterated at the hearing that she understood the charges and acknowledged her guilt. The Tribunal was satisfied that the Student's admissions were voluntary, informed and unequivocal.
30. The Agreed Statement of Facts provided ample evidence to support the charges. It was clear that in 2021, the Student had plagiarized an assignment worth 15

percent of her course grade. It was clear that in 2024, the Student submitted multiple forged medical notes to try and withdraw from a class she had failed two years earlier.

31. Accordingly, the Tribunal found the Student guilty of Charges 1, 2 and 3 from the charges dated August 22, 2024, and guilty of Charge 1 from the charges dated January 9, 2025. The other two charges were withdrawn by the University.

Evidence and Submissions on Sanctions

32. At the sanctions phase of the hearing, a second Agreed Statement of Facts established that the Student had been sanctioned for two prior offences.

- (a) In Fall 2020 the Student admitted to committing plagiarism in a group assignment worth 15% in CSC104H1F. She was sanctioned with a grade of 0 on the assignment and a notation from December 13, 2021 to December 31, 2022.

- (b) In Winter 2023 the Student admitted to using Chegg, an online tool that provides answers to posted questions, as an unauthorized aid in an assignment worth 2% in MAT246H1Y. She was sanctioned with a grade reduction of a mark of 0 on the assignment with an additional 8-mark reduction in her overall mark in the course, and a notation from January 29, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

33. The University and the Student jointly requested the Tribunal impose the following sanctions on the Student:

1. a final grade of zero in each of:
 - (i) LIN203H1F in Fall 2021; and
 - (ii) FAS262H1S in Winter 2022;
2. a suspension from the University for four years from the date of the Tribunal's order; and
3. a notation of the offence on the Student's academic record and transcript for a period of five years from the date of the Tribunal's order.

Decision of the Tribunal on Sanctions

34. The Tribunal recognizes that it should defer to a joint submission on sanctions unless the proposed sanction, in its totality, is so unreasonable that it would bring the administration of justice at this Tribunal into disrepute. Joint submissions that are within the range of reasonable options should be respected, and the Tribunal should avoid substituting its opinion on sanctions for the position shared by the parties unless that position is fundamentally offensive to the values of the University.
35. Having considered the joint submission in light of the evidence and in light of similar cases, the Tribunal was satisfied that this joint submission was appropriate.
36. This case presented multiple aggravating factors. The Student sought to take advantage of the University's system for medical accommodation through a cynical and calculated scheme. To make it worse, this dishonest act was not her first.

37. It appears that when graduation was on the horizon, the Student sought to improve her transcript through fraudulent means. She asked the University to go back in time nearly two years and withdraw her from a course she had failed. She submitted not just one but three forged medical documents that she had purchased. Her dishonesty was deliberate and calculated, involving multiple steps and considerable effort. At her meeting with the Dean's designate she repeatedly insisted the medical notes were legitimate. This Dean's designate meeting occurred after the Student had engaged in three other acts of academic dishonesty, two of which she had already admitted, and one which she would admit to a few months later.
38. The irony is that the Student now has enough credits to graduate, but her graduation will be delayed for four years. Her transcript will include a notation for a further year, and the course grades of zero will be on her record permanently. This is a very serious consequence that should deter not only the Student (should she engage in any future academic pursuit) but also other students who consider enhancing their transcript through dishonesty.
39. Accordingly, on August 13, 2025, the Tribunal made an order as follows.
1. The Student is guilty of:
 - (i) three counts of knowingly forging or in any other way altering or falsifying a document or evidence required by the University, or uttering, circulating or making use of such forged, altered or falsified document, contrary to section B.I.1(a) of the *Code*; and

- (ii) one count of knowingly representing as your own an idea or expression of idea or work of another, contrary to section B.I.1(d) of the *Code*.
2. The following sanctions shall be imposed on the Student:
- (i) a final grade of zero in FAH262H1S in Winter 2022
 - (ii) a final grade of zero in LIN203H1F in Fall 2021;
 - (iii) a suspension from the University of Toronto for 4 years from the date of the Tribunal's order; and
 - (iv) a notation of the offence on the Student's academic record and transcript for a period of five years from the date of the Tribunal's order.
3. This case shall be reported to the Provost for publication of a notice of the decision of the University Tribunal and the sanctions imposed, with the name of the Student withheld.

Dated at Toronto, this 12th day of November, 2025

Original signed by:

Johanna Braden, Chair
On Behalf of the Panel