

Case No. 1676

THE UNIVERSITY TRIBUNAL  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

IN THE MATTER OF charges of academic dishonesty filed on September 11, 2024,

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 -

Y [REDACTED] W [REDACTED]

REASONS FOR DECISION

**Hearing Date:** December 5, 2025, via Zoom

**Members of the Panel:**

Alexi Wood, Chair

Professor Marvin Zuker, Faculty Panel Member

Maria Dzevitski, Student Panel Member

**Appearances:**

Lily Harmer, Discipline Counsel, Paliare Roland Rosenberg Rothstein LLP

Hillson Tse, Counsel for the Student, RGZ Law

**Hearing Secretary:**

Itzel Rendon Jimenez, Office of Appeals, Discipline and Faculty Grievances

**Not in Attendance:**

Y [REDACTED] W [REDACTED]

**A. OVERVIEW**

1. The Student is alleged to have committed two acts of academic misconduct around the same time, both in the Fall 2023. The Student did not attend the hearing, but they had counsel present on their behalf. The Panel received an Agreed Statement of Facts (“ASF”) and a Joint Submission on Penalty (“JSP”). After deliberation, the Panel found the Student guilty of two counts of academic misconduct. The Panel also imposed the penalty jointly proposed by the parties.

**B. THE CHARGES**

2. By letter dated September 11, 2024, the University outlined the charges against the Student as follows:

1. In or about September to December 2023, the Student knowingly engaged in personation when they had another person sign the attendance sheets on their behalf in their absence in CAS350H1F, contrary to section B.I.1(c) of the Code.
2. In the alternative to charge 1, in or about September to December 2023, the Student knowingly engaged in a form of cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct, fraud or misrepresentation not otherwise described in the Code when they had another person sign the attendance sheets on their behalf in their absence in CAS350H1F, contrary to section B.I.3(b) of the Code.
3. On or about December 22, 2023,<sup>1</sup> the Student knowingly represented as their own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination

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<sup>1</sup> We note that these are the dates in the Charges. However, they appear to be out of order and are not reproduced in the Agreed Statement of Facts. The correct dates are likely that the Student submitted the Original Paper on November 26, 2023 and the Revised Paper on December 22, 2023.

or term test or in connection with any other form of academic when they submitted their term paper titled *Neoliberalism and Gender Transformation in South Korea: A Foucauld [sic] View Analysis* in CAS350H1F, contrary to section B.I.1(d) of the Code.

4. Shortly after November 26, 2023, the Student knowingly submitted academic work containing a purported statement of fact or references to sources that were concocted in their revised term paper titled *Neoliberalism and Gender Transformation in South Korea: A Foucauld View Analysis* in CAS350H1F, contrary to section B.I.1(f) of the Code.
5. In the alternative to charges 3 and 4 above, in or about late November 2023, the Student knowingly engaged in a form of cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct, fraud or misrepresentation not otherwise described in the Code in connection with their term paper titled *Neoliberalism and Gender Transformation in South Korea: A Foucauld View Analysis* in order to obtain academic credit or other academic advantage of any kind, contrary to section B.I.3(b) of the Code.

(Collectively, the “Charges”)

3. The Particulars of the Charges are as follows:

1. At all material times the Student was a student enrolled at the University of Toronto Faculty of Arts and Science.

**A. *Personation***

2. In Fall 2023 the Student was enrolled in CAS350H1F: Asian Youth Cultures (the “Course”).
3. 10% of the evaluation in the Course was based on the Student’s level of participation.
4. On numerous dates when the Student was absent from the Course they had another student, S.W., sign the attendance sheet on their behalf, to make it appear that they were in attendance in class in order to earn attendance marks.

**B. *Original Paper***

5. On November 26, 2023, the Student submitted a term paper titled Neoliberalism and Gender Transformation in South Korea: A Foucauld View Analysis (“Original Paper”) to fulfill another requirement for the Course. The term paper was worth 25% of the Course grade.
6. The Student did not write some or all of the Original Paper. It was written at a higher level of English fluency and theoretical sophistication than their other written work in the Course.
7. The Student submitted the Original Paper:
  - a) to obtain academic credit;
  - b) knowing that it contained ideas, expressions of ideas or work that were not their own, but were the ideas, expressions of ideas or work of others;

- c) knowing that the Student did not properly reference the ideas, expressions of ideas or work that was not their own; and
- d) with the intention that the University rely on it as containing the Student's own ideas or work in considering the appropriate academic credit to be assigned to their work.

**C. *Revised Paper***

- 8. The Student was required to use at least three sources from a given list in their term paper, and to use only sources on that list.
- 9. The Student did not include citations to sources from which they obtained words and ideas in the Original Paper. The Course instructor provided the Student with feedback that citations were required, and gave the Student an opportunity to submit a revised paper to address the missing citations.
- 10. On December 22, 2023, the Student submitted a revised version of the paper, in which the Student included multiple citations to several sources ("Revised Paper").
- 11. The sources cited in the Revised Paper did not contain the words or ideas for which they were cited.
- 12. The Student knew that the Revised Paper contained references to sources that had been concocted.
- 13. The Student knowingly submitted the Revised Paper containing references to concocted sources to obtain academic credit.

4. Discipline Counsel advised at the outset of the Hearing that the Charges listed in paragraph 2 (1), (3) and (4) were the primary charges. Discipline Counsel advised that if the Panel made a finding on those Charges, then the Provost would withdraw the Charges at paragraph 2 (2) and (5).

### **C. FINDINGS AND ORDER**

5. The Student did not attend the hearing; their counsel attended. The parties provided an Agreed Statement of Facts. These facts, as will be discussed below, provided sufficient evidence for this Panel to conclude that Provost met its burden in establishing that the Student committed the offences listed in paragraph 2 (1), (3) and (4), specifically that the Student:

- a. knowingly engaged in personation in connection with sign-in sheets in CAS350H1F, contrary to section B.I.1(c) of the Code;
- b. knowingly represented as their own an idea or expression of an idea or work of another in connection with a term paper in CAS350H1F, contrary to section B.I.1(d) of the Code; and
- c. knowingly submitted academic work containing a purported statement of fact or references to sources that were concocted in a revised term paper in CAS350H1F, contrary to section B.I.1(f) of the Code.

6. As a result of these findings, the Provost withdrew the remaining charges.

7. The parties also made a Joint Submission on Penalty, which was, after deliberation, accepted by this Panel. At the conclusion of the hearing, this Panel ordered that:

- a. The Student receive a final grade of zero in CAS350H1F in Fall 2023;

- b. The Student be suspended from the University for a period of three years from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2027; and
- c. a notation of the sanction be placed on the Student's academic record and transcript for a period of four years from the date of this Order.

8. The Panel also ordered that the case 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.

**D. AGREED FACTS**

9. The Student first registered as a student at the University of Toronto Faculty of Arts & Science in Fall 2021. The Student enrolled in courses in Fall 2024, but then took a leave of absence. The last time the Student earned academic credit was the Winter 2024.

10. The Student enrolled in CAS350H1: Asian Youth Cultures in Fall 2023 (the "Course"). The Course was taught by Dr. Dylan Clark. Students' marks in the Course were determined based on:

- a. a term paper worth 25% due November 26, 2023;
- b. a participation grade of 10% based on attendance and active listening (8%) and oral and/or online contributions (2%);
- c. a mid-term worth 25% on October 12; and
- d. a final exam worth 40%.

11. The Course syllabus included a section on plagiarism and academic integrity.

**Sign-in sheets for participation**

12. Students in the Course were required to sign a sign-in sheet when attending each class. This sign-in sheet was used to verify attendance for purposes of the participation mark for each student.

13. The Student was enrolled in another course, PHL205, which overlapped with the time scheduled for the Course. The Student did not discuss their scheduling conflict with Dr. Clark, or anyone else involved with the Course. The Student did not attend most of the classes in the Course. As they were regularly absent, the Student arranged with a fellow student in the Course, S.W., to sign the attendance sheet on the Student's behalf on those dates when the Student did not attend the Course. The Student did so in order to make it appear as if the Student was in attendance and entitled to participation marks when they were not.

**Term Paper**

14. The Student wrote the mid-term in the Course in mid-October, 2023. They received a grade of 49. The Student earned a grade of 52 on the final exam. These exam grades were among the lowest grades in the Course. The narrative answers given by the Student in each of the mid-term and final exams in the Course demonstrated a level of basic English grammar that indicated the Student is not fluent in written English.

15. For the term paper, students were expected to cite at least four scholarly sources not on the syllabus, but chosen only from a specific list of sources provided. All sources were required to be cited within the paper rather than in footnotes, showing author and page.

16. On November 26, 2023,<sup>2</sup> the Student submitted their Original Paper titled *Neoliberalism and Gender Transformation in South Korea: A Foucauld View Analysis*.

17. Dr. Clark read the Original Paper. He concluded that the Original Paper reflected a level of English fluency and theoretical sophistication that he felt was virtually impossible for the Student to have written, given their challenges with basic English grammar and their low grade in the mid-term exam in the Course. In addition, the Original Paper contained very few citations. Dr. Clark asked the Student to resubmit their term paper.

18. On December 22, 2023, the Student submitted the Revised Paper. This time the Revised Paper contained many inline citations.

19. Dr. Clark reviewed the Revised Paper and determined that many of the citations in the Revised Paper did not correlate to the ideas for which they were cited. Dr. Clark concluded that most, if not all, of the citations in the Revised Paper were concocted.

20. The office of Student Academic Integrity subsequently undertook its own investigation. That investigation also concluded that many sources in the Revised Paper were concocted.

21. The Student attended a meeting with Dr. Clark to discuss Dr. Clark's concerns on January 25, 2024.

### **Dean's meeting**

22. The Student attended a meeting with the Dean's Designate on April 4, 2024 ("Dean's Meeting"). The Student was provided the Dean's Warning under the Code. The Student admitted

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<sup>2</sup> These are not the dates reflected in the Charges, but they are likely the correct dates.

that they had conspired with a friend to have the friend sign in as if they were the Student on the Course sign-in sheets on many dates when the Student did not attend class.

23. However, the Student claimed that they wrote the Original Paper and the Revised Paper and denied that any of the sources cited were concocted.

24. Following the Dean's Meeting, the Student sent a document to SAI in which they attempted to set out in detail connections between the content in the Revised Paper to the cited sources.

25. The Student subsequently provided a detailed explanation to the Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life on April 22, 2024, to support their claim that they had written the Revised Paper and to justify the citations.

26. In summary, at the Dean's Meeting, the Student acknowledged that they had a friend personate them and sign the sign-in sheet. However, the Student initially denied any plagiarism in the Original Paper and Revised Paper.

27. By the time of the Hearing, the Student acknowledged the acts necessary for the plagiarism offences as well. They admit that they plagiarized the Original Paper and that the sources in the Revised Paper are concocted.

#### **E. FINDINGS ON OFFENCE**

28. The Panel finds the Provost has shown through clear and convincing evidence that the Student committed the offence of personation and plagiarism, contrary to sections B.I.1(c), B.I.1(d), and B.I.1(f) of the *Code*.

#### **G. PENALTY**

29. The parties jointly submitted the penalty ordered at paragraphs 7 and 8.

30. In the 2016 M.A. decision, the Discipline Appeals Board (“DAB”) reiterated the applicable principles when the parties submit a joint submission on penalty.<sup>3</sup> While “a panel is not obliged or required to accept a joint submission,”<sup>4</sup> such a submission “may be rejected by a panel only in circumstances where to give effect to it would be contrary to the public interest or would bring the administration of justice into disrepute.”<sup>5</sup> The DAB further stated that this is an objective test, and that the joint submission should only be rejected if it is “truly unreasonable or unconscionable.”<sup>6</sup>

31. In reaching its decision on penalty, the Panel is guided by the factors established in the case of *University of Toronto and Mr. C.*<sup>7</sup> which are:

- a. the character of the person charged;
- b. the likelihood of a repetition of the offence;
- c. the nature of the offence committed;
- d. any extenuating circumstances surrounding the commission of the offence;
- e. the detriment to the University occasioned by the offence; and
- f. the need to deter others from committing a similar offence.

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<sup>3</sup> *University of Toronto and M.A.*, Case No. 837, December 22, 2016, at para 22. (“M.A.”)

<sup>4</sup> M.A. para 23.

<sup>5</sup> M.A. para 24.

<sup>6</sup> M.A. para 26.

<sup>7</sup> Case No. 1976/77-3, November 5, 1976

**Joint Submission on Penalty**

32. The Student did not attend the hearing but was represented by counsel. The parties submitted a Joint Submission on Penalty to the Panel. The parties submitted that the penalty jointly proposed was within the range of sanctions for similar offences. There are essentially four components to the sanction.

33. First, a zero in the Course. All three acts – the personation, the plagiarized Original Paper, and the Revised Paper with concocted sources – occurred in the same Course. As a result, there is only one course at issue.

34. Second, a suspension from the University for three years. The parties submitted that this suspension should commence on September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2027. In other words, backdated by 15 months from when the hearing took place.

35. Third, a notation in the Student's academic record and transcript for four years from the date of the Order.

36. Fourth, publication of the decision with the Student's name removed.

**The Mr. C Factors and the Position of the Parties**

37. The parties submitted that although the Student was not present at the Hearing, and although they initially denied the allegations, they admitted the facts necessary for the findings and had entered into an ASF and JSP. This, the parties submitted, argues in favour of their character.

38. Mr. Tse, counsel for the Student, submitted that the Student did not have a prior record of offences, and that they had admitted to the charges.

39. While there are three separate acts in this case, the parties submitted that this does not necessarily mean there is a high likelihood of repetition. The Provost submitted that while there are three instances of academic misconduct, they all occurred in the same term, in the same course. Ultimately, the Provost submitted, that there were neither aggravating nor mitigating facts about whether the Student is likely to reoffend.

40. The Provost had no submissions on extenuating circumstances. Mr. Tse, however, submitted that the Student had had challenges which included being an international student and facing significant family pressure. According to Mr. Tse, the Student was facing mental health challenges at the time, and their family was not aware of these issues. The Student had since returned to China, their family was now aware of their mental health challenges and was supportive.

41. The Provost's submissions on nature of the offence, detriment to the University, and need for deterrence were joined together. The Provost submitted that these offences are serious and that there is a need for deterrence. In addition, the Provost submitted that cases with multiple acts of misconduct must attract a more serious penalty.

42. The Provost submitted that the precedent cases indicate that a suspension between two and four years is within the range of suspension in similar cases. However, in this case, the requested Order would see the suspension backdated by 15 months. This would mean, in effect, that the suspension was for a little more than a year and a half. Discipline Counsel advised that this matter had taken a while to address, through no fault of the Student.

43. The Panel asked the parties for their submissions on the issue of backdating the timing of the suspension by 15 months. In particular, the Panel asked for submissions about whether the backdating was part of the joint submission on penalty or if that was to the Panel's discretion.

44. The Provost directed the Panel's attention to the R.H. case.<sup>8</sup> In R.H., the Panel held that the backdating of a suspension was part of the joint submission on penalty. Therefore, the Panel hearing R.H. concluded that it could only decline to impose that term if it "would be contrary to the public interest or would bring the administration of justice into disrepute."<sup>9</sup> The parties in this matter both submitted that this is the approach that ought to be followed by this Panel.

### **The Panel's Decision**

45. There is no question that the Student engaged in plagiarism in both the Original Paper and the Revised Paper. As this Tribunal has repeatedly held, "it cannot be overstated how serious the offence of plagiarism is in an academic setting. It allows students to obtain credit for work that is not their own to the detriment of not just the University of their fellow students. It results in gross unfairness to students who produce their own work and can ultimately undermine the reputation of the University."<sup>10</sup>

46. Personation is one of the most serious offences. The penalty is usually a recommendation for expulsion. However, at the Hearing, Discipline Counsel argued that the conduct – having a fellow student sign a sign-in sheet – was not the type of conduct that warranted expulsion.

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<sup>8</sup> *University of Toronto and R.H.*, Case No. 1650, October 24, 2025

<sup>9</sup> R.H., para 29, citing to M.A. at para 25.

<sup>10</sup> *University of Toronto and T.P.*, Case No. 1513, August 27, 2024, at para 54.

47. The parties were unable to provide any precedent cases with similar actions. Discipline Counsel pointed to the Q.Z. case,<sup>11</sup> where the student engaged in two separate acts of misconduct: plagiarism and a falsified medical note. The Panel in Q.Z. noted that plagiarism “is a serious offence, which as this Panel has repeatedly noted, risks damaging the reputation of the University.”<sup>12</sup> The Panel in Q.Z. also noted that “forging a document is deliberate, premeditated and egregious.”<sup>13</sup>

48. This Panel agrees with the comments made in Q.Z. While asking a fellow student to sign a sign-in sheet may not attract the most serious of punishments – a recommendation for expulsion – it must still attract a serious penalty because it is a calculated attempt to mislead the University. It also implicates a fellow student in the misconduct.<sup>14</sup>

49. In Q.Z., the Student did not attend or participate in the hearing. The Panel imposed a 3-year suspension and a 4-year notation on the transcript. The Joint Submission on Penalty proposed in this case is in line with the penalty imposed in Q.Z. This Panel concludes that imposing the same penalty here would not bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

50. However, this Panel is concerned about the backdating of the suspension. Fifteen months is a significant period of time; it is almost half of the entire suspension. That said, the case law is clear that a joint submission on penalty “may be rejected by a panel only in circumstances where to give effect to it would be contrary to the public interest or would bring the administration of

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<sup>11</sup> *University of Toronto and Q.Z.*, Case No. 1601, November 17, 2025

<sup>12</sup> Para 69.

<sup>13</sup> Para 69.

<sup>14</sup> Discipline Counsel had no information on whether S.W. had also faced academic misconduct repercussions for their involvement. Discipline Counsel did confirm that S.W. was another student in the Course.

justice into disrepute.”<sup>15</sup> While this Panel may not have backdated the suspension, it cannot be said that backdating it is “truly unreasonable or unconscionable,” which is the standard set by the DAB in the M.A. case.

51. The Panel therefore accepts the joint submission on penalty. This Panel orders that:

- a. The Student receive a final grade of zero in CAS350H1F in Fall 2023;
- b. The Student be suspended from the University for a period of three years from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2027; and
- c. a notation of the sanction be placed on the Student’s academic record and transcript for a period of four years from the date of this Order.

52. The Panel also ordered that the case 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.

53. The Panel wishes to thank counsel for their assistance and submissions.

Dated at Toronto at this 6<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026.

Original signed by:

Alexi Wood, Chair  
On behalf of the Panel

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<sup>15</sup> M.A., at para 24.