

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
UNIVERSITY TRIBUNAL – TRIAL DIVISION

IN THE MATTER of charges of academic dishonesty made on April 21, 2008;

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

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

BETWEEN:

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

-and-

L.P.

Members of the panel:

- Ms. Roslyn Tsao, Chair
- Professor Magdy Hassouna, Faculty Member
- Mr. Paul Byron, Student Panel Member

Appearances:

- Mr. Robert Centa, Assistant Discipline Counsel for the University of Toronto

- L.P., the Student, did not attend

REASONS FOR DECISION

Background

1. The Trial Division of the University Tribunal was convened on October 14, 2008 to consider two charges brought under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, 1995* ("Code") laid against the Student by letter dated September 15, 2008 from the Vice-Provost, Academic, Professor Edith Hillan:
 - i. On or about November 29, 2007, you knowingly represented as your own an idea or an expression of an idea, or the work of another, in connection with an essay "Contemplating the Female Narrative: Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea"

("Essay"), which you submitted for academic credit in ENGB50H3, Women and Literature ("Course"), contrary to section B.I.1(d) of the Code.

- ii. In the alternative, contrary to section B.I.3(b) of the Code, on or about November 29, 2007, 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 academic advantage of any kind in connection with the Essay, which you submitted for academic credit in the Course.
2. The parties submitted an Agreed Statement of Facts, the details of which are summarized here:
 - In Fall, 2006, the Student registered at the University of Toronto at Scarborough in the Specialist in English program.
 - In Fall, 2007, the Student enrolled in ENGB50H3 which was taught by Dr. Natalie Rose. The Student was provided with a course outline which contained a reference to the University's policy on plagiarism.
 - On November 29, 2007, the Student submitted the Essay which was worth 30% of the final grade in the Course.
 - The Student admits that she took all of the Essay verbatim or virtually verbatim, and without attribution from an essay available on the internet.
 - The Student admits that she did no meaningful academic work on the Essay, and that she knowingly represented as her own an idea or expression of an idea and/or the work of another, contrary to Section B.I.1(d) of the Code.
 3. The Student did not attend the Hearing, waived her right to notice of the Hearing and consented to the Hearing being held at any time that was convenient to the Tribunal.
 4. The Student was given the opportunity to obtain independent legal advice before signing the Agreed Statement of Facts.

Decision

5. The panel accepts the Student's plea and enters a verdict of guilty on Charge 1. The University withdrew the remaining charge.

Penalty

6. The parties submitted a Joint Submission on Penalty in which they jointly recommended:
 - i. A grade of zero be imposed in the Course ENGB50H3;

- ii. The Student be suspended from the University of Toronto for a period of two years from October 5, 2008 until October 5, 2010;
 - iii. The Student's academic record and transcript bear a notation for a period of two years, from October 5, 2008 to October 5, 2010, indicating that she has been found guilty of an academic offence;
 - iv. The parties submit that the University Tribunal should report this case to the Provost who may publish a notice of the decision of the University Tribunal and the sanctions imposed with the Student's withheld.
7. In support of the recommended sanction, counsel for the University set out the following factors:
 - i. The Student cooperated with the prosecution and has acknowledged her guilt; and
 - ii. In similar cases, namely first time plagiarism offences, the Tribunal has imposed this degree of penalty (two year suspension).
8. The Panel acknowledges the guilty plea entered by the Student and her cooperation with the prosecution as mitigating factors. The Panel is also mindful that a Joint Submission on Penalty has been provided. Although the instance of plagiarism in this case was serious, the Panel will accept and impose the sanctions as proposed in the Joint Submission on Penalty.
9. The Panel thanks Mr. Centa for his presentation of the matter on behalf of the University and the Student.

October 23/08

Date



Roslyn Tsao, Chair