

Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) Annual Report Summer Quarter, 2009 – Spring Quarter, 2010

Prepared by:
Dr. Rob Coleman, COAM Chairperson, 2009-2010
Dr. Tim Curry, COAM Coordinator

The University's *Code of Student Conduct* defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process" (Faculty Rule 3335-23-04[A]). The Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) is charged with maintaining the University's academic integrity by investigating and adjudicating "all reported cases of student academic misconduct, with the exception of cases in a professional college having a published honor code, and [in instances where a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*] deciding upon suitable disciplinary action" (University Rule 3335-5-487[B]).

COAM is composed of 18 faculty members, seven graduate students (appointed by CGS), and seven undergraduate students (appointed by USG). The work of COAM is facilitated by the Coordinator who (1) receives and processes allegations of academic misconduct, (2) notifies students of allegations of academic misconduct, (3) consults with students and faculty regarding allegations of academic misconduct, (4) schedules hearings to resolve allegations of academic misconduct, and (5) notifies students and faculty of the outcomes of these hearings.

Every student accused of academic misconduct has the right to a hearing before a panel of COAM. A panel consists of at least four members of COAM, and the rules require that each panel have at least two faculty representatives and one student representative. The panel serves as an impartial hearing body that hears evidence and determines (1) if a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct* and (2) an appropriate sanction in cases where a student is found "in violation." If a student agrees with the allegations of academic misconduct and waives his/her right to a hearing, he/she may have the allegations resolved as an administrative decision. For an administrative decision, a member of COAM serves as a hearing officer and determines the sanctions.

I. SUMMARY OF CASES RESOLVED

During the 2009-2010 academic year, COAM resolved 408 cases of alleged academic misconduct. Of the cases resolved, 234 (57%) were resolved as administrative decisions and 174 (43%) were resolved as panel hearings (**Table 1**). Females and males represented 40% and 60%, respectively, of the cases resolved (**Table 2**).

Table 1.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Method of Resolution
2009-2010 Academic Year

	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Administrative Decisions	234	57
Panel Hearings	174	43
Totals	408	100

Table 2.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Student's Gender
2009-2010 Academic Year

Gender	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Female	164	40
Male	244	60
Totals	408	100

Of the 408 cases resolved by COAM this past year, 59 (13%) and 349 (87%) resulted in verdicts of “not in violation” and “in violation,” respectively, and the rates at which males and females were found “in violation” of the *Code of Student Conduct* were approximately equal (**Table 3**).

Table 3.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Resolved Based on Students' Gender and Verdict
2009-2010 Academic Year

Gender	Students Found "Not In Violation"	Students Found "In Violation"	Total Cases	% In Violation (% of Total for Gender)
Female	23	141	164	86
Male	36	208	244	85
Totals	59	349	408	86

II. SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CHARGES

When allegations of academic misconduct arise, a student often does not know or understand what he/she has allegedly done wrong. Since COAM desires that the hearing process be an educational process, the Coordinator charges the student with violating the *Code of Student Conduct* using terminology that explains the nature of the behavior that led to the allegations. **Table 4** summarizes information on academic misconduct charges for the 2009-2010 academic year. The left column is a list of the charges used most commonly by COAM. The "Number of Students" column lists the total number of students charged with a particular violation. The last two columns list the number of students found "in violation" (Number IV) of each charge and the number of students found "in violation" of each charge as a percentage of the total number of students charged. For example, of 174 students charged with plagiarism, 169 (97%) were found "in violation."

Students are often charged with and found "in violation" of more than one charge. Thus, the total number of charges (917) exceeds the total cases resolved by COAM (408), and the total for "Number IV" (724) exceeds the actual number of students found "in violation" (349).

The relatively low values for the percentages of students found "in violation" of unauthorized collaboration and copying are misleading. They result because COAM often treats the charges of "copying" and "unauthorized collaboration" as mutually exclusive. In many of the cases where COAM receives information alleging that one student may have copied the work of another student, it's not clear which student (if any) copied and whether or not there was collusion (working together in an

unauthorized manner). Thus, in many of these cases, all of the students involved are charged with copying **and** unauthorized collaboration, but, if found “in violation,” they are found “in violation” of only copying **or** unauthorized collaboration.

Table 4.

**Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Charges for Which Students Were Found
“In Violation” of the University’s *Code of Student Conduct*
2009-2010 Academic Year**

Charge	Number of Students	Number in Violation	% in Violation
Alteration and resubmission of course materials in an attempt to gain or change the earned credit or grade	6	6	100
Copying (attempting to copy) the work of another in an unauthorized manner and misrepresenting (attempting to misrepresent) it as one's own work	153	70	46
Engaging in activities that place other students at a disadvantage, such as (but not limited to) taking, hiding, or altering resource material, or manipulating a grading system	1	1	100
Failure to comply with course/program policies and/or guidelines	383	341	89
Forgery	5	3	60
Plagiarism (submitting plagiarized work in fulfillment of an academic or work-related assignment)	174	169	97
Possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during an examination or other course activity	12	10	83

Providing false materials, documents or records to a University Official to meet academic qualifications, criteria or requirements while engaged in official University business.	14	13	93
Requesting, receiving, and/or giving unauthorized assistance during an examination, course activity, and/or academic assignment	6	6	100
Serving as or enlisting the assistance of a substitute during the completion of an academic assignment or other course activity	7	6	86
Submission of work not performed in or for a course	13	12	92
Unauthorized collaboration (any instance where two or more students work together and/or share information in a manner that is unauthorized, deceitful, and/or fraudulent)	143	87	61
Totals	917	724	79

III. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT'S COLLEGE OF ENROLLMENT AND REFERRING DEPARTMENT

Over 20 enrollment units on campus were represented by the cases resolved by COAM during the past year (**Table 5**), but the students from four enrollment units (College of Engineering [ENG], Undergraduate Student Academic Services [USAS], College of Social and Behavioral Sciences [SBS], and College of Business [BUS]), when combined, accounted for nearly 59% of all cases.

Table 5.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit
2009-2010 Academic Year

Enrollment Unit	Total for Enrollment Unit	% of All Cases
AGR (College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences)	9	2
AHR (School of Architecture)	2	0
AMP (School of Allied Medical Professions)	6	1
ART (College of Art)	3	0
ASC (Colleges of the Arts and Sciences)	12	3
ATI (Agricultural Technical Institute)	11	3
BIO (College of Biological Sciences)	18	4
BUS (College of Business)	64	16
CED (Continuing Education)	3	0
EHE (College of Education and Human Ecology)	21	5
ENG (College of Engineering)	66	16
EXP (Exploration Program)	23	6
GRD (Graduate School)	25	6
HEC	1	0

Enrollment Unit	Total for Enrollment Unit	% of All Cases
HUM (College of Humanities)	17	4
MPS (College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences)	9	2
MUS (School of Music)	1	0
NUR (College of Nursing)	2	0
PHR (College of Pharmacy)	2	0
SBS (College of Social and Behavioral Sciences)	55	13
USAS (Undergraduate Student Academic Services)	58	14
Totals	408	100

The cases heard by COAM during the past year originated from over 68 units, across the University (**Table 6**), indicating that COAM serves its intended function as a central organization serving the campus community.

Table 6.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Referring Unit
2009-2010 Academic Year

Course (Unit)	Number of Cases	% of Total
ACCT&MIS [Accounting and Management Information Systems]	13	3
ANTHROP [Anthropology]	7	2
ART	1	0
ASTRON [Astronomy]	1	0
ATHLETIC TRAINING	1	0
AVIATION	1	0
BIOCHEM [Biochemistry]	1	0
BIOMED E [Biomedical Engineering]	1	0
BUS TEC [Business Technology]	6	1
CENTER FOR LIFE SCIENCE EDUCATION	24	6
CHEM [Chemistry]	30	7
CIVIL ENVIRON [Civil Environmental Engineering & Geodetic Sciences]	4	1
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN ECOLOGY	7	2
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING	20	5
COLLEGE OF NURSING	1	0
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH	1	0
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK	5	1
COMM [Communications]	7	2
COMP STD [Comparative Studies in the Humanities]	3	1
CS&E [Computer Science and Engineering]	28	7
DIVISION OF HORTICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES	5	1

Course (Unit)	Number of Cases	% of Total
ECON [Economics]	4	1
ENGINEER [Engineering]	4	1
ENGINEERING EDUCATION INNOVATION CENTER	8	2
ENGLISH	17	4
EVOLUTION, ECOLOGY, & ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY	5	1
GEOG [Geography]	24	6
GERMAN	1	0
GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	1	0
GREEK AND LATIN	2	0
HEALTH BEHAVIOR & HEALTH PROMOTION	1	0
HISTORY	16	4
HISTORY OF ART	1	0
HORTICULTURE AND CROP SCIENCES	1	0
HUMN NTR [Human Nutrition and Food Management]	1	0
LINGUISTICS	10	2
MANAGEMENT & HUMAN RESOURCES	8	2
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES	19	5
M & L [Marketing and Logistics]	1	0
MATSC&EN [Material Science and Engineering]	9	2
MATH [Mathematics]	7	2
MECH ENG [Mechanical Engineering]	3	1
MED TEC [Medical Technology]	1	0
MELTON CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES	1	0
MICROBIOLOGY [Microbiology]	2	1
MOL GEN [Molecular Genetics]	1	0
NELC [Near Eastern Languages and Culture]	2	0

Course (Unit)	Number of Cases	% of Total
OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES	4	1
PHILOS [Philosophy]	8	2
PHYSICS	5	1
POLIT SC [Political Science]	12	3
PSYCH [Psychology]	17	4
SASS0 [Student Athlete Support Services]	3	1
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, POLICY, AND LEADERSHIP	2	1
SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP	2	1
SOCIOL [Sociology]	16	4
SPANISH & PORTUGUESE	5	1
SPH/HRNG [Speech and Hearing Science]	2	0
THEATRE	8	2
USAS [Undergraduate Student Academic Services]	2	0
VETERINARY BIOSCIENCES	1	0
WOM STDS [Women's Studies]	4	1
TOTALS	408	100

IV. Summary of Disciplinary and Grade Sanctions

When COAM finds that a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM imposes sanctions. The sanction nearly always includes a disciplinary component, and, in a majority of cases, the sanction also includes an authorization for a grade-related component.

The disciplinary sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 7**. As these data demonstrate, most students found in violation of the *Code of Student Conduct* received a sanction of "disciplinary probation."

Table 7.
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions
2009-2010 Academic Year

(Of the 408 cases heard during the 2009-2010 Academic Year, 349 resulted in a finding of "In Violation," and only these resulted in a disciplinary sanction.)

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	84	24
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 quarter to "until graduation")	250	71
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 quarters)	10	3
Dismissal	2	1
None	3	1
Totals	349	100

The grade sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 8**. As these data demonstrate, the modal grade sanction for students found "in violation" of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is an authorization for a "0" on the assignment.

Table 8
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Grade Sanctions
2009-2010 Academic Year

(Of the 408 cases heard during the 2009-2010 Academic Year, 349 resulted in a finding of "In Violation." In 42 of these cases, no grade sanction was authorized.)

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	42	12
Authorization for a "0" on the assignment	169	48
Authorization for a "0" on the assignment and then a reduction in the student's final grade by one full letter grade	39	11
Authorization of a reduction in the student's final grade by one full letter grade	25	7
Authorization for a final grade of "E" in the course	58	17
Other	16	5
Totals	349	100

V. Proposed Changes to Rules

Revisions of Faculty Rule 3335-5-48.7 (Committee on Academic Conduct) have been proposed and approved by COAM. These changes are designed to more clearly define the role of the Coordinator and the Chair and to strengthen the role of Chair.

Revisions of the Code of Student Conduct have been proposed and approved by COAM. These changes are designed to improve the appeal process, increase the role of the Chair in the investigation process of cases, especially those that involve graduate students, and to clarify the appeals process with respect to the definition of "grossly disproportionate"

Both sets of rule changes have been approved by COAM, by the Office of Student Life, and by the Senate Steering Committee. It is anticipated that these proposed revisions will be presented to Faculty Council during AU10 quarter.