

## **HONOR and DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE REPORT 2011-2012**

### **To: Faculty, Staff, and Students**

The Honor and Discipline Committee reports to the College each year about the nature of the cases it has heard, the judgments made, and the penalties it has determined. This report covers the meetings of the committee that reviewed cases that occurred during the 2011-2012 school year. Following this report is a report on disciplinary activity in the Dean's office.

1. A senior was accused of plagiarizing from several internet sources in a paper. The student initially claimed this was an error, but ultimately agreed that she had plagiarized. The committee recommended a sanction of failure in the course.
2. Two juniors were accused of copying portions of a response paper from one another, as their papers were very similar. At the hearing, it became clear that both students had used the detailed notes of a third student, who had taken the course previously, to prepare their papers. Both students were found guilty of violations of the honor code, with a sanction of failure in the course.
3. A first-year student was accused of violating the honor code by using verbatim text, ideas, and paraphrases from an online source, all without citation. The student explained that she had not intended to plagiarize, but had looked at the site in an effort to understand the very challenging readings, and then gradually found herself using the site's ideas and wording more and more as she struggled to write her paper. The sanction for this violation of the honor code was failure in the course.
4. A senior was accused of plagiarism in a paper. A large proportion of the paper appeared to be verbatim from several websites, with no attribution. The student claimed that he had turned in the wrong draft of the paper, and produced a second paper for the committee. That paper also contained significant plagiarism. The committee found the student guilty of violating the honor code. The sanction was failure in the course and disciplinary probation until graduation. The student was one vote from being suspended, due to the unusual level of deception that appeared to have taken place.
5. A first year student was accused of taking lines for a sonnet from a poem available on line. The student explained that the poem on line was, in fact, co-authored by him, and the committee found the evidence for that to be compelling. As a result, the committee found the student had violated the honor code by failing to acknowledge the contributions of a collaborator, but did not find him guilty of plagiarism. The sanction was failure in the assignment.

6. A senior was accused of extensive plagiarism in a paper, with material taken either verbatim or nearly verbatim without citations. The student initially claimed that she had turned in the wrong draft, but the new draft similarly contained extensively plagiarized sections. Because this was a second offence for this student, the committee assigned a sanction of failure in the course with immediate suspension for two semesters.
7. A senior was accused of plagiarism in a paper. The paper was constructed almost entirely from sources such as Wikipedia and SparkNotes, including ideas, exposition, and close paraphrases from those sources completely without citation. The student argued extensively that this did not represent plagiarism. The committee voted a sanction of failure in the course with disciplinary probation until graduation.
8. A first year student turned in a response paper that followed nearly exactly the discussion of the same book on the Sparknotes website. Most paragraphs were laid out in the same structure as the corresponding paragraphs on Sparknotes, and most sentences were also nearly identical to those on Sparknotes, with some small changes of tense and wording. The student argued that the similarities in wording were accidental, and that the absence of verbatim language meant that there was not plagiarism. The committee found the student guilty of plagiarism, and voted for a sanction of failure in the course with disciplinary probation for 3 semesters.
9. A first year student submitted a paper that appeared to have extensive ideas and verbatim phrases taken from an online source without citation. The student explained that she had turned in the wrong paper, and brought to the committee a second version of the paper which did include citations to the website. Unfortunately, the new paper still contained significant plagiarism, and so the Committee voted that the student was guilty of violating the honor code. The sanction was failure in the course.
10. A junior was found to have submitted a paper that contained extensive verbatim text taken from a website, without quotations. The student agreed that there were many sentences in the paper that were not his, and cited a sloppy method of notetaking in which he moved verbatim text into his paper and then intended to change it/cite it, but forgot to do so. The honor committee found the student guilty of violation of the honor code, with a sanction of failure in the course.
11. Two first year students were found to have turned in take home quizzes that were identical in many highly unusual ways. The students stated that they had, indeed, worked together on the quiz, which was forbidden by the professor very explicitly. One student had called the other to explain that he was stuck on the quiz, and the other student, feeling concern for his friend, had helped him complete the quiz. Both students expressed sincere regret about what had taken place. Both students were assigned a sanction of failure in the course.

12. Three first year students were found to have produced nearly identical work on a take home quiz on which no collaboration was permitted. In the hearing, the students explained that two of them had called the third saying they needed help with the quiz. The third student gave them a copy of her quiz, and they used it to produce their own answers. The student who gave the answers seemed to have been somewhat cornered by the others. She was assigned a sanction of failure in the course. The other two students were assigned failure in the course with two semesters of disciplinary probation for the honor code violation alone. However, one of these students was already on disciplinary probation for other matters. As a result, this violation resulted in suspension for one semester plus Winter Study.
13. A senior was found to have submitted a final take-home exam that was very similar to that of another student. The senior admitted to having taken the other student's completed exam from under the professor's door, and to using that exam to change and add to some of his own answers. The committee recommended a sanction of failure in the class. As a result, the senior did not graduate with his class.

Five additional cases were brought to the committee chairs, who, after some examination, decided not to bring them forward. One involved a student whose paper demonstrated a far more sophisticated understanding of the material than normal for any undergraduate; this student was discovered to have a unique background in this area. A second involved a student who saw a classmate rifling through homeworks that had been handed in to the faculty member's mailbox, who claimed when confronted that he was just seeing what others had written. The student was to identify who this was, and so no case could be brought. A third case involved two students who had cited each other, and outside source material, when the assignment instructions prohibited collaboration and use of outside materials. The chairs decided that this constituted a failure to follow instructions rather than an attempt to deceive the professor or to pass off another's work as one's own. A fourth case involved an essay written in different short (1-2 paragraph) sections, in which different fonts and different writing styles were used in each section. Since none of the language could be found on the web or in bound journals, the chairs and professor concluded that the student had written the paper herself, in various moods. In a fifth case, someone overheard two students talking about cheating, but did not know who they were or what the class was.

### **Dean's Office Action**

For the 2011-2012 academic year, there were 21 formal disciplinary actions taken by the Dean's Office;

One student was expelled from the College for an egregious and sustained violation of the College's standards of integrity.

Seven students were suspended for violations of the College's Code of Conduct. These violations included sexual assault, drug distribution, and stealing.

Two students were suspended for Honor Code violations.

Four students were placed on disciplinary probation for Honor Code violations. In addition, seven students were placed on disciplinary probation for exhibiting other behavior not in accordance with the College's Standard of Conduct.

Seven students received written reprimands for exhibiting behavior not in accordance with the College's Standard of Conduct.

The Deans' Office and Security Department conduct initial discussions with students about underage drinking and marijuana smoking; these discussions are not a part of the students' disciplinary record. There were 52 such discussions involving the Dean's office. In many cases these discussions are followed by referrals to a Health Educator.

The Dean's office also conducts conversations over minor disciplinary concerns with students that do not rise to the level of requiring formal action.

Respectfully submitted, 2011-2012 Honor and Discipline Committee

Cheryl Shanks, Faculty Chair

Will Su, Student Chair

Sarah Bolton, Dean of the College