

# MEMORANDUM

July 31, 1994

TO: Gary D. Russi  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

FROM: Frank J. Lepkowski *FJL*  
Chair, Academic Conduct Committee

RE: Annual report, 1993/94

The last academic year has been a tumultuous one for the Academic Conduct Committee. In the course of following its charge to investigate cases of academic misconduct and impose sanctions on the perpetrators, the ACC lost one Chair to resignation, which caused it to reconsider the ways its business is conducted, and to consider alternatives. In absolute terms, there was a sharp decline in both the numbers of cases heard and students charged with respect to last year:

Year	Number of Cases	Number of Students
1993/94	18	34
1992/93	26	42
1991/92	20	40
1990/91	15	15

Of the cases heard, 14 or 78% resulted in at least one guilty verdict; of the students charged, 25 or 74% were found guilty.

## Committee Caseload

Once again, the committee found itself handling cases from a broad spectrum of units within the university:

Department or School	Number of Cases
Accounting	3
Registrar	2
English	2
Economics	2
History	2
Nursing	1
MIS	1
Rhetoric	1
Mathematics	1
CSE	1
Philosophy	1
Counseling	1

The charges of misconduct were more evenly distributed this year than last across the several categories of wrongdoing. Cheating

was charged in 6 or 33% of the cases, plagiarism in 6 (33%), unauthorized collaboration in 4 (22%) and falsifying documents in 2 (11%). The caseload distribution by term was as follows:

Term	Number of Cases
Summer 1993	1
Fall 1993	13
Winter 1994	3
Spring 1994	1

The notable discrepancy between the caseload for fall and winter puzzles us. During the fall the committee seemed to be well on the way to a new record for cases heard, with a backlog of cases arising from finals which lasted well into February, at which point the first Chair of the committee resigned. The drop off in cases arising from the winter term either indicates a nearly miraculous outbreak of academic honesty, or perhaps a slackening of vigilance, or perhaps worse, reluctance to bring cases before the committee. Although all remaining members of the ACC were grateful for the break in the action, the magnitude of the drop remains puzzling, and troubling.

### Sanctions

Of the range of penalties available to be imposed on those found guilty by the committee, suspension historically has been the most frequently used, which continued to be the case in 1993/94:

Sanction	Number of Students
Reprimand	0
Probation	1
Suspension	22
Expulsion	2

One of the suspended students initially had been expelled; after the Steering Committee recommended on appeal that the ACC reconsider the case, new information was entered into the record which resulted in a change in sanction from expulsion to suspension. All other appeals to the Steering Committee were denied. Periods of suspension ranged from one semester to one year. All suspended students remain on probation for the remainder of their career at Oakland.

### Other Developments

The most disconcerting development of the last year was the resignation of the previous chair, Larry Lilliston, in February, at which time the present occupant was induced to take up these responsibilities once more for the remainder of the year. When one as experienced on the committee and as dedicated to its

mission as Prof. Lilliston resigns, it obliges us to consider seriously the way the committee has been functioning in the recent past.

Chief among the committee's problems has been the unpredictable way its workload develops. The large number of cases arising from Fall finals led to an intense workload for the first 2 months of 1994, during which time the committee was unable to adhere to its theoretical regular schedule of meetings even once. It was very difficult for our assistant in the Student Affairs office to gather enough members for a hearing, and a disproportionate share of the committee's work was done by a relatively small group of its members.

The chair's role on this committee is somewhat different from that of other university committees. Rather than policy, this committee produces verdicts, and imposes sanctions. The chair serves in a position at times analogous to that of the foreman of the jury and at times to that of the judge. That is, he must try at some point to get the committee to reach a verdict, then decide on the sanction as appropriate, and finally to deliver the verdict and the sanction to the student with enough ancillary eloquence to attempt to induce some moral reflection on the student's part. It is indeed a weighty responsibility, and when many cases are heard over a short period of time the weight seems to increase logarithmically.

One additional factor increases the difficulties faced by the Chair. The actual hearings may drag on for quite a long time, especially when more than one student is involved, and the committee's deliberations can be quite extensive, as members consider both the issue of guilt or innocence, and the appropriate sanction. With the even number of members (6) typically present, the prospect of a tie vote often extends the discussions even further. A tie vote acquits the student, but it is quite galling to have a decision of such magnitude rendered as it were by default, after hours of exertion, by a spent committee unable to make up its mind.

### **Directions for the Future**

After reflecting on these matters the Committee has decided to change some of its procedures internally, as well as to ask the Senate to alter our membership. We ask that the Senate appoint 2 co-chairs to serve out the year, with the two of them to divide up the caseload between them. We also ask that the Senate expand our membership by 3 faculty members and remove the designation of alternate. These changes will allow for an expansion of the "jury pool" and thus make it easier to schedule hearings and spread the work out among committee members more equitably, and make the role of the Chair less onerous.

One adjustment to our procedures to be implemented this Fall will be to designate one faculty member as an alternate for each hearing, to be excused if the student does not use his/her right of challenge. This will ensure that a 5 member committee will render all verdicts as opposed to the current situation where 5 or 6 may do the job depending on whether a challenge is offered or not. More rigorous adherence to a uniform schedule of meetings set at the beginning of each semester should help avoid the time consuming and frustrating necessity of scheduling each hearing from scratch.

### **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks are due to the efforts of the Dean of Students Office, providers of the statistical information on which this report is based. Both the exertions of Jan Baker in scheduling meetings and distributing materials, and Nancy Schmitz in handling the initial contacts and preparation of the students for the hearings are to be applauded.

Special thanks for their service in this trying year go to the members of the committee. Our faculty members were Lawrence Lilliston, William Fish, Subbaiah Perla, Ren-Jyh Gu, Natalie Cole, Mary Mittelstaedt, and Michael Latcha, and alternates Sean Moran, Billy Minor and Jane Walter. David Herman, Helen Woodman, and Lisa McGill served as Student Affairs members, and Heather Nicholson and Genevieve Long as our students, with Kelly Cashman as alternate. Thanks to all of them for their efforts.

<u>Case Number</u>	<u>Date Reported</u>	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Academic Department</u>	<u>Student Name</u>	<u>Student Number</u>	<u>Pre Hearing Interview</u>	<u>Hearing Date</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Sanction</u>	<u>Final Letter</u>	<u>Appeal</u>
93-15	07/08/93	Falsifying Transcript	Registrar's Ofc.			07/12/93	07/29/93	Guilty	Permanent Expulsion	07/30/93	No
93-16	11/02/93	cheating/	Accounting			11/09/93	11/16/93	Guilty	Susp. for fall '93 and prob. 'til graduation.	11/16/93	No
93-16	11/02/93	Cheating	Accounting			11/10/93	11/16/93	Guilty	Susp. for fall '93 and prob. 'til graduation.	11/16/93	No
93-17	11/08/93	unauthoriz. collaboration	Nursing			11/15/93	11/30/93	Not Guilty	N/A	12/06/93	No
93-17	11/08/93	/unauthoriz. collaboration	Nursing			11/15/93	11/30/93	Not Guilty	N/A	12/06/93	No
93-18	11/22/93	Plagiarism	English			11/29/93	12/10/93	Guilty	Suspension for wt. 94 and prob. 'til graduation.	12/14/93	No
93-19	11/29/93	Forgery	Registrar			12/03/93	12/09/93	Guilty	Expulsion *Susp. 4/94 to 4/95 & prob. for duration of time at OU.	12/13/93	Yes*

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93-20	12/08/93	Cheating on examination	MIS			12/16/93	01/19/94	Guilty	Suspension winter '94 through summer '94 and prob. 'til graduation	01/19/94	Yes
93-20	12/08/93	Cheating on examination	MIS			12/17/93	01/19/94	Guilty	Suspension winter '94 through summer '94 and prob. 'til graduation.	01/19/94	Yes
93-20	12/08/93	Cheating on examination	MIS			01/05/94	01/19/94	Guilty	Suspension winter '94 through summer '94 and prob. 'til graduation.	01/19/94	Yes
93-21	12/13/93	Plagiarism	Economics			12/21/93	01/26/94	Guilty	Suspension for wt. 94 & paper to insure proper citation techniques.	01/02/94	No
93-21	12/13/93	Plagiarism	Economics			12/20/93	01/26/94	Guilty	Suspension for wt. 94 & paper to insure proper citation techniques.	02/01/94	No
93-22	12/16/93	Plagiarism	Rhetoric			01/04/94	01/21/94	Guilty	Susp. thru summer '94, prob. 'til grad., and psychological eval. w/ Dr. Fink at GHC.	01/24/94	No
93-23	12/17/93	Cheating on examination	History			01/03/94	02/03/94	Not Guilty	N.A.	02/07/94	No
93-23	12/17/93	Cheating on examination	History			01/03/94	02/03/94	Not Guilty	N.A.	02/07/94	No

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93-23	12/17/93	Cheating on examination	History			01/04/94	02/03/94	GUILTY	Immed. susp. through winter '94 and prob. thereafter. *decision upheld by Steering	02/04/94	Yes*
93-23	12/17/93	Cheating on examination	History			01/03/94	02/03/94	Guilty	Immed. susp. through summer '94 & prob. thereafter. *decision upheld by steer. comm.	02/04/94	Yes*
93-24	12/20/93	Unauthoriz. Collaboration	Accounting			01/10/94	02/04/94	N.G.	N.A.	02/07/94	No
93-24	12/20/93	Unauthoriz. Collaboration	Accounting			01/10/94	02/04/94	N.G.	N.A.	02/07/94	No
93-25	12/20/93	Unauthor. Collaborat.	Accounting			01/05/94	02/02/94	Guilty	Suspension with immediate readmission and prob. thereafter.	02/04/94	No
93-25	12/20/93	Unauthor. Collaborat.	Accounting			01/04/94	02/02/94	Guilty	Immed. susp. for winter '94 and ptoation thereafter for duration at OU.	02/04/94	No
93-25	12/20/93	Unauthoriz. Collaborat.	Accounting			01/05/94	02/02/94	Guilty	Immed. susp. for winter'94 and probation thereafter for duration at OU.	02/04/94	No
93-25	12/20/93	Unauthoriz. Collaborat.	Accounting			01/05/94	02/02/94	Guilty	Immed. susp. for winter '94 and probation thereafter for duration of time at OU.	02/04/94	No

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93-26	12/20/93	Cheating	Math			01/06/94	01/28/94	N.G.	N.A.	01/31/94	No
93-26	12/20/93	Cheating	Math			01/06/94	01/28/94	Guilty	Susp. for Winter '94 & prob. thereafter. *decision upheld by Steering Committee.	01/31/94	Yes*
93-27	12/20/93	Plagiarism	English			01/03/94	01/28/94	Guilty	Susp. through spring '94 and probation thereafter for duration at OU.	01/31/94	No
93-28	12/20/94	Plagiarism/ cheating	Economics			01/11/94	02/11/94	Guilty	Suspension winter '94 and probation until graduation.	02/11/94	No
94-01	03/30/94	unauthorized collaboration	CSE			04/11/94	04/19/94	Guilty	Susp. sp. '94 through fall '94 and prob. thereafter. *Decision Upheld.	04/20/94	Yes*
94-01	03/30/94	unauthorized collaboration	CSE			04/13/94	04/19/94	Guilty	Probation 'til graduation	04/20/94	No
94-01	03/30/94	unauthorized collaboration	CSE			04/13/94	04/19/94	Guilty	Susp. sp. '94 through fall '94 and probation thereafter. *decision upheld.	04/20/94	Yes*
94-02	04/06/94	Cheating	Philosophy			4/08/94	04/20/94	Guilty	Susp. sp. '94 through wt. '95 and probation thereafter.	04/20/94	

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94-02	04/06/94	Cheating	Philosophy			04/12/94	04/20/94	Not Guilty	N/A	04/20/94	No
94-03	04/11/94	Plagiarism	Counseling			04/13/94	04/20/94	Guilty	Expulsion *Decision upheld.	04/20/94	Yes*
94-04	05/03/94	Cheating	History			05/09/94	05/20/94	Not Guilty	N.A.	05/23/94	No