

Guidelines for Academic Evaluators Regarding Violations of Academic Regulations by Students

Editor's Note: On a request from Senate Chair Colin Stuttard, the Gazette is printing the Senate Discipline Committee's (SDC) new guidelines for dealing with academic violations. The regulations were passed by Senate on July 8th. The major change is that all cases of alleged plagiarism, indeed any alleged breach of any academic standard, must be referred to the SDC for adjudication. The Gazette will keep you posted on any developments.

Preamble

By Statute, subject only to the approval of the Board of Governors, the Senate of Dalhousie University is vested with exclusive authority to determine:

- the academic standards of the University as they relate, inter alia, to students;
- which violations of such academic standards warrant disciplinary action;
- what disciplinary action should be taken; and
- who should adjudicate such cases of alleged violations of academic standards.

The Senate has delegated its authority to adjudicate all cases of alleged violations of academic standards by students exclusively to the Senate Discipline committee. From the decisions of this

committee, an appeal lies to the Senate on such grounds as it determines are appropriate. No one else, including individual members of faculty or other academic evaluators of student performance (hereafter, "evaluator"), had any authority to create new offenses or to adjudicate upon them. Thus, it is a disciplinable offence for an evaluator to undertake personal, unilateral action in relation to alleged violations of any academic regulations. Any attempt by anyone or any body other than the Senate of its Discipline committee to deal with an offence is null and void and leaves the student still liable to discipline for that offence.

While age, inexperience, visa status, immaturity, ignorance, socioeconomic background, cultural traditions or other mitigating factors (in the eyes of an evaluator) may afford some justification for lenience for a first action, e.g. to a falsified transcript or a forged letter of recommendation or any other violation of academic regulations. If mercy is to be extended to an offender, it should be granted by a dispassionate, disinterested body, such as Senate Discipline committee, which includes fellow students of the offender, and not be dependant upon personal and hence widely divergent views or ethical conduct.

Procedures

1. Where an allegation of a breach of academic standards has been made or is pending, the evaluator should not reveal the mark or grade to anyone until the matter has been disposed of by the Senate Discipline committee.

2. An alleged first or later breach of any academic standard by a student should never be dealt with by an evaluator, but in all instances, should be referred with the advice and assistance of a "Student-Discipline Officer" (See 4 below) to the Senate Discipline committee for adjudication.

3. There is a panel of resource-persons known as "Student-Discipline Officers" from whom an evaluator may seek advice or assistance in such matters as:

- (i) whether the conduct of the student amounts, at least arguably, to a violation of the academic standards of the University;
- (ii) how to trigger the formal process of changing the student with a violation;
- (iii) how to prepare the case for presentation to the Senate Discipline Committee at a hearing called to adjudicate the violation; or
- (iv) how to present the case to the Senate Discipline Committee.

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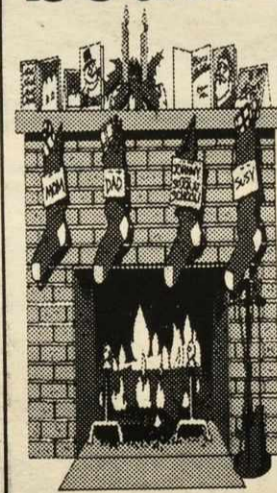
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