

Case* #11: Enabling others to cheat

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Allegation: Student A allowed Student B to cheat off her exam which was worth 40% of the final course grade in a first-year mathematics class. The course instructor felt as though this constituted as cheating. According to section 5.16.1 of the university's Academic Calendar, "Cheating on examinations, assignments, reports, or other work used to evaluate student performance. Cheating includes, among other things, copying from another student's work or allowing one's own work to be copied, submitting another person's work as one's own, fabrication of data, consultation with an unauthorized person during an examination, use of unauthorized aids, or submitting work prepared in collaboration with other member(s) of a class, when collaborative work on a project has not been authorized by the instructor."

Background: According to the Report on Academic Misconduct, the course instructor noticed one student allowing a second student to see their exam paper. The course instructor informed the TA and both observed the activity again. The course instructor quietly spoke to the two students, replaced their exam papers with fresh booklets, and moved the students so that they were seated apart. The two students were then allowed to finish their exams. At the end of the exam, the course instructor spoke to both students; they denied cheating, however, the instructor observed that the first part of the exam had a significant number of identical answers, including incorrect answers. The course instructor notified both students that this incident would be submitted to the Faculty's Academic Integrity Committee. Both the course instructor and the TA wrote statements about what they observed. The course instructor provided copies of both students' exams with the similarities highlighted and submitted a Report on Academic Misconduct for each student.

The Academic Integrity Committee compared the answers of the two students' exam booklets, both before and after being caught. The Committee met with each student to hear their version of what happened. Both students continued to deny that any cheating occurred. It was a first offence for both students.

Decision: The Academic Integrity Committee determined that Student A had facilitated cheating during the exam by allowing Student B the opportunity to view her exam answers and that Student B had cheated by copying answers from Student A. The sanction for both students was that only the second part of the examinations (written after the students were separated) would be graded. The first part would be given a grade of 0%. No notation would be made on their transcripts.

Rationale: Because both the course instructor and the TA had observed the students in their actions and because there were significant similarities in the answers (both correct and incorrect answers) in the first part of the students' exams but not in the second part of the exam (written after the students were separated), the Committee determined that there was enough evidence to

* Case studies are based on examples of common problems with academic misconduct. All names and identifying information have been removed.

support the allegation of cheating. Because it was a first offence for both students and they were both in first year, the Committee discussed the significance of their actions at length to educate the students about the importance of academic integrity and what the consequences of a subsequent charge might entail.