

## Case\* # 9: Exam Impersonation

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**Allegation:** Student A attempted to take a final exam for Student B. The course instructor believed this offence constituted impersonation. According to section 5.16.1 of the university's Academic Calendar "Impersonating another student or allowing oneself to be impersonated for purposes of taking examinations, or carrying out laboratory or other assignments."

**Background:** According to the Report on Academic Misconduct, student A attempted to take a final exam for student B worth 50% of Student B's final grade. During the exam, a TA noticed that student B's Student ID card photo did not match student B's appearance. The TA informed the course instructor of her suspicion. The course instructor checked the ID card and took a photo of the student holding the ID card. Because this was a final exam and worth over 25%, the course instructor reported this allegation to the Academic Integrity Committee and included the photo of student A in the evidence. Both students admitted to the offense immediately when notified. Both said that student B was having problems understanding the course material and paid student A to take this exam for him; student A had done well in the same course during the previous year. Student B was in his 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study; student A was in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study. It was a first offence for both students.

**Decision:** Student B received an F (failing) grade for the full course and had a notation about the academic misconduct placed on the transcript. Student A received a formal warning letter and was placed on disciplinary probation with a notation on his transcript.

**Rationale:** The Committee believed that paying someone to take a final exam was a very serious offence. It was a planned and purposeful action. There was no effort on the part of student B to attempt to show his knowledge. The serious nature of the offence required a significant sanction even though it was a first offence. The Committee believed that student A should also receive a significant sanction for agreeing to take part in the deception; however, because of the situation, the usual sanctions related to course work did not apply to this situation (i.e., student A had not cheated on an assignment for which he could be failed, etc.). In the decision letter, the Committee made clear that being on disciplinary probation meant that if the student was caught for any type of academic misconduct in the future, he would be suspended for a period of at least two semesters. Both students could appeal to have the transcript notation removed after three years.

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