

## **Academic Conduct Committee**

### **Academic Year 2020-2021**

**Composition:** The co-chairs of this committee were Julian Rrushi, Raquel Prieta, and Greg Thrasher. This committee drew on a large number of faculty who served as members throughout the academic year.

**Charge:** This committee reviews reports of academic misconduct by students, and also conducts hearings on the basis of those reports to make sanction recommendations to the Dean of Students. Cases in which students admit responsibility undergo shortened administrative hearings. Full hearings take place for cases in which students need to challenge the allegations of academic misconduct. All hearings, full and administrative, this past academic year took place online due to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Meetings:** Unlike most other committees, this committee did not have a predetermined schedule of meetings. When a full hearing needed to be conducted, the Dean of Students Office created a poll of available dates and times. Faculty replied online by selecting dates and times at which they were available. Upon receiving the poll results, the Dean of Students Office constituted the committee in preparation for the full hearing. In the case of administrative hearings, the Dean of Students Office scheduled those hearings directly based on the availability of the chairs.

**Activity Description:** This committee worked on an extremely large volume of cases of academic misconduct, especially in the Fall 2020 semester. Reports were typically submitted by course instructors. Our experience with administrative hearings this past year appears to suggest that the covid-19 pandemic had a significant negative impact on the students' learning process. Heightened levels of stress and disruption appear to have turned into moments of weakness, which in turn resulted in violations of academic conduct policies. Full hearings were characterized by evidence that often included program-specific content, such as exams or homework exercises. Zoom appeared to be a working tool with regards to enabling all parties to share their screens and make their case to the committee.

While the committee made sanction recommendations to the Dean of Students Office, we also sought ways of helping those students who were found responsible. We provided advice, guidance, and information on resources that Oakland University makes available to students. The majority of hearings were single occurrences. Most students who admitted responsibility or were found responsible did not repeat the violations.

The work of this committee was mostly reactive, in the sense that we acted after the alleged violations of academic conduct policies transpired. Our experience with such a large volume of cases of academic misconduct may be quite useful to a preventive and hence proactive academic effort to help students avoid the trap of unethical actions. Within the committee itself, there were no difficulties or conflicts of a personal nature, unprofessional interactions, or complexities of any kind. We worked together on the many challenges of cases of academic misconduct.