

## Academic Ombud's Report to the Senate

Thank you Professor Hippisley, Senators and guests.

It is my pleasure to present the Academic Ombud Report for the 2014 – 2015 academic year. I would like to first thank Laura Anshel for all of her work in the Ombud's Office and for the statistical report, which will be included in the senate minutes for your future reference.

This annual report provides four categories of information that summarize the work performed by the Office of the Academic Ombud during the year. The first category presents the total number of matters handled by the Office during the year. Within this category, we have distinguished between "Cases" and "Questions or Referrals." This latter category includes a wide variety of minor matters that take less than one hour to resolve. Virtually all of the matters in this latter group are handled by Ms. Anshel. We calculated that there were 1091 such minor matters during the past academic year. This number reflects a 25% increase above last year's number. We believe that part of this increase is a consequence of better records of such contacts. The number of cases that took more than one hour and typically involved work by both the Ombud and Ms. Anshel for the 2014-15 academic year was 370. This number was about 25% less than the previous year, with much of the change attributable to better record keeping.

This number, 370, includes all appeals that were considered by the Ombud prior to being adjudicated by the University Appeals Board. Those appeals are specifically identified in the other two categories of information provided in this report: the number of academic offense cases, including appeals, and the number of submitted grade appeals. (A student may consult with the Ombud's Office about bringing a grade appeal and decide not to bring an appeal. This report accounts for such matters as one of the "Questions or Referrals" or as one of the "Cases," depending on how much time is spent on the matter.)

The first part of the report also provides information about the types of non-academic offense cases considered by the Office. Two types of information are provided about such cases: the subject of the case and the source of the case.

The second category of information relates to cases in which a University department determined that a student committed an academic offense. During the 2014-15 academic year, academic departments determined that an academic offense was committed in 120 cases. This number is smaller than the number of academic offense cases for the past three years (132, 191, and 177). Seven of the academic offense cases for 2014-15 were second offenses, and the remaining 113 cases were first offenses. Of the 113 first offenses, nine students were charged with a major offense resulting in a penalty of E, XE, dismissal, or expulsion. The report provides aggregated, anonymous information about the students who were determined to have committed academic offenses and the Colleges that determined that the academic offenses had occurred.

Of the 120 academic offense cases, 105 students did not contact the Ombud's Office. The remaining fifteen students contacted the Ombud's Office, and seven students decided to appeal the charge to the University Appeals Board. Five of the seven cases appealed by students involved cheating and two involved plagiarism. Of the five students who appealed the charge of cheating, one appeal was upheld, three were denied, and one case was not heard because the student was expelled for other reasons before the case was heard. Both appeals of plagiarism were denied.

The third category is comprised information about grade appeals submitted by students. Before being considered by the University Appeals Board, a grade appeal is first reviewed by the Ombud who decides whether the appeal has merit or lacks merit. If the Ombud decides that a grade appeal lacks merit, the student may appeal that decision to the University Appeals Board. There were a total of fourteen grade appeals during the 2014-15 year. The Ombud determined that four had merit and ten lacked merit. Of the four determined by the Ombud to have merit, two appeals were upheld and two were denied. Of the ten appeals determined by the Ombud to lack merit, six students did not appeal the no-merit decision. Students appealed four no-merit decisions. Three of these decisions were upheld and one was overturned by the University Appeals Board.

The final category of information is a summary of the total number of cases (academic offense appeals and grade appeals) that the Ombud transmitted to the University Appeals Board. This summary table repeats information presented earlier in the report.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this annual report and to serve as the Academic Ombud.



Michael P. Healy

**ACADEMIC OMBUD SERVICES STATISTICAL REPORT**  
**Michael Healy 2014/15**

**I. All Matters**

Total Numbers	2014/15	2013/14	
Number of cases	370*	497	
Questions or Referrals, typically single contacts of less than an hour	~ 1091*	~875	
	<b>1461</b>	<b>1372</b>	Total

Types of Cases with Yearly Comparisons	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	
Non-Academic Offense Issues	250	365	346	352	367	
Academic Offense Determinations	120	132	191	177	139	
	<b>370</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>506</b>	Total

Information About Cases that Do Not Involve Academic Offenses

Description of Cases	
Attendance	17
Classroom Policy Violations	0
Exam/Class Requirements	17
Grades	111
Instruction	19
Personal Problems	17
Policies: Academic Offense Issues	11
Policies: General	15
Progress/Promotion	43
Retroactive Withdrawal	0
	<b>250</b> Total

Classification of Source	
Non-Degree	2
Freshman	31
Sophomore	35
Junior	43
Senior	60
Graduate Student	42
Professional Program Student	9
Faculty Member	18
Staff Member	2
Parent	4
Other	4
	<b>250</b> Total

*\*Reduction in numbers for the 2014/15 academic year results from improved records about whether or not a case requires more than an hour. These records also explain the increase in minor matters that are typically single contacts of less than an hour.*

## II. Determinations and Appeals of Academic Offenses

### Type of Academic Offense Determinations

Cheating	26
Plagiarism	94
	<b>120 Total</b>

### Contact with Ombud

No Contact with Ombud	105
Contacted Ombud; No appeal	8
Contacted Ombud; Referred to UAB	7
	<b>120 Total</b>

Classification of the Student	First w/ Minor Penalty	First w/ Major Penalty	Second Offense	Total
Freshman	47	1	1	<b>49</b>
Sophomore	13	0	2	<b>15</b>
Junior	21	2	1	<b>24</b>
Senior	16	4	2	<b>22</b>
Graduate student	7	2	1	<b>10</b>
				<b>120 Total</b>

### Origin of Determination of Offense

College of Agriculture, Food and Environment	4
College of Arts & Sciences	73
Gatton College of Business & Economics	8
College of Communication & Information	17
College of Dentistry	0
College of Design	4
College of Education	1
College of Engineering	5
College of Fine Arts	1
College of Health Sciences	4
College of Law	0
College of Nursing	1
College of Pharmacy	1
College of Public Health	0
College of Social Work	1
Honors Program	0
Martin School of Public Policy	0
Patterson School of Diplomacy	0
	<b>120 Total</b>

### Academic Offense Appeals Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Upheld	Denied	Total
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction		1	<b>1</b>
Plagiarism: Appealed determination		1	<b>1</b>
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction and determination			<b>0</b>
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction			<b>0</b>
Cheating: Appealed determination	1	1	<b>3*</b>
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction and determination		2	<b>2</b>
			<b>7 Total</b>

\*One student was expelled before case went before UAB

### III. Grade Appeals

Grade Appeals Referred to the University Appeals Board	Upheld	Denied	Uncontested	Total
Appeals referred and determined to have merit	2	2	n/a	<b>4</b>
Appeals referred and determined to lack merit	3	1	6	<b>10</b>
				<b>14 Total</b>

## IV. Summary of Cases Transmitted by the Ombud to the University Appeals Board

Total Number of Appeals

Academic Offense Appeals	7
Grade Appeals	14
Retroactive Withdrawal Appeals	0
Other Appeals	0
	<b>21 Total</b>

Academic Offense Appeals Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Upheld	Denied	Total
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction		1	<b>1</b>
Plagiarism: Appealed determination		1	<b>1</b>
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction and determination			<b>0</b>
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction			<b>0</b>
Cheating: Appealed determination	1	1	<b>3*</b>
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction and determination		2	<b>2</b>
			<b>7 Total</b>

\*One student was expelled before case went before UAB

Grade Appeals Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Upheld	Denied	Uncontested	Total
Appeals referred with merit from the Ombud	2	2	n/a	<b>4</b>
Appeals referred with no merit from the Ombud	3	1	6	<b>10</b>
				<b>14 Total</b>