EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR’S REPORT, FALL 2014

Yale undergraduates are called before the Executive Committee of Yale College when they are charged with possible violations of the *Undergraduate Regulations*.

The Executive Committee is composed of 3 tenured faculty, 3 junior faculty, 3 undergraduates and the Dean of Yale College Designee, with 3 members (non-student) serving as officers of the Committee: the Chair, the Fact-Finder and the Secretary.

In the majority of cases, students admit the validity of the charge(s) made against them and choose a disposition without a formal hearing before the full Executive Committee. Disposition hearings, held weekly, make up the bulk of Committee work and are conducted by the Coordinating Group which is composed of the 3 officers of the Executive Committee (the Chair, Fact-finder, and Secretary) and 1 of the 3 student members, who rotate in this capacity throughout the term. If the student contests the charge(s), then the case is considered further for a formal hearing before the full Executive Committee.

There has been a procedural change since the Spring 2014 term. The Executive Committee no longer receives referrals/complaints for routine alcohol violations that involve no additional charges, which are now referred to the Alcohol and Other Drugs Harm Reduction Initiative, AODHRI. However, as secretary of the Executive Committee, Dean George meets weekly with AODHRI directors to discuss cases that might require referral for disposition.

In Fall 2014 there were 43 transports for intoxication compared with 25 in Spring 2014 and 31 transports in Fall 2013, so a notable increase.

**Dispositions Without a Formal Hearing**

In the case of disposition without a formal hearing, the charged student appears before the Coordinating Group of the Executive Committee along with his/her advisor (typically the Dean or Master of his/her residential college). The student is read guidelines for the proceedings and may present an opening oral statement followed by a question/answer period based on this statement and on the student’s previously submitted written statement and other documentation such as police reports, e-mail correspondence, papers/exams and other records pertinent to the case. The student’s advisor is invited to make a statement on the student’s behalf followed by closing remarks by the student after which the Coordinating Group deliberates to reach a decision on the penalty. A full dismissal of charges is rare, and standard penalties include: reprimand, probation, suspension and expulsion. Students may also be required to meet additional conditions such as paying for damages to property, restricting use of specific buildings or entryways on campus, seeking counseling for substance abuse or mental health, submitting written reflections or formal written guidelines, (for example, a risk-management plan for groups and organizations hosting parties and other social events).

In Fall 2014 there were 33 dispositions without formal hearings involving 41 students; a significant (28%) decrease from the Spring 2014 term, which may reflect the new
procedures for handling alcohol-related cases. In addition, there were 2 formal hearings and 1 penalty hearing.

Penalties from dispositions and formal hearings were assigned to 43 students as follows: 5 suspensions, 10 probations, 24 reprimands and in 4 cases, charges were withdrawn.

**Penalty Hearings**

In cases were students wish to dispute the penalty resulting from a disposition without a formal hearing, they may petition for a Penalty Hearing which is brought before the full Executive Committee.

There was 1 penalty hearing in Fall 2014 involving a junior charged with academic dishonesty for plagiarizing a final paper. The penalty of 2 terms suspension was upheld by the Executive Committee.

**Formal Hearings**

Although most students admit the validity of the charge(s) made against them and opt for a disposition without a Formal Hearing, if the student contests the charge(s) they will have their case heard by the full Executive Committee in a Formal Hearing. The full committee is composed of three tenured and three untenured faculty members, three undergraduates and the Dean’s designate. The Secretary of the committee also attends full hearings, but is not a voting member.

In Fall 2014 there were 2 formal hearings involving 2 students. One involved a senior charged with imperiling the integrity of the university and other acts of violence or threats made to other undergraduates and university officials, and the charge was withdrawn. The other formal hearing involved a freshman charged with Academic Dishonesty for changing answers on a returned exam and then requesting regrading. The charge was also withdrawn.

**Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism**

In Fall 2014, 18 students were charged with academic dishonesty, a slight decrease from the Spring 2014 semester in which 20 students were charged with academic dishonesty. Seven of the 18 academic dishonesty cases, 39%, involved plagiarism, compared to 45% of cases involving plagiarism in Spring 2014.

In my previous reports for both Spring 2014 and Fall 2013 it was noted that academic dishonesty cases overall were down by ~30% and plagiarism down by ~60% compared with Spring 2012, and that these significant drops in cases of academic dishonesty and plagiarism held steady through the Spring 2014 term. These additional decreases in both overall academic dishonesty and plagiarism from Spring 2014 to Fall 2014 further bolster the conclusion that there has been a firm downward trend in academic dishonesty cases since 2012 and that a “steady-state” has not yet been reached.
Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty

The 11 cases of academic dishonesty that did not involve plagiarism involved variable charges including: referring to notes during an exam, submitting significantly similar laboratory reports, changing answers on a returned exam then requesting re-grading, lying to an instructor about a missed exam, collaborating on an assignment and submitting the same paper for 2 courses.

Alcohol and Illicit Drugs

As stated above, the Executive Committee no longer receives referrals/complaints for routine alcohol violations that involve no additional charges. These cases are now referred to AODHRI as in (“Audrey.”)

There was notable decrease in drug-related cases in Fall 2014. There was only 1 drug-related charge compared to 33 charges in Spring 2014. The single drug-related case in Fall 2014 involved a freshman selling pot brownies to other undergraduates.

Other Violations

Also in Spring 2014, there were cases involving charges of: theft of wallets, bank cards and gift cards, trespassing and defiance for unauthorized entrance into restricted areas of Harkness Tower, defiance for not cooperating with police, falsification of documents/false I.D., hazing, defiance and acts of violence while intoxicated and returning to campus during a period of suspension.

Referred Cases:

In Fall 2014, 47 students were referred to their residential colleges and 45 of the 47 cases involved students who were intoxicated; 43 were transported to YNHH or University Health Services.

Thanks

I sincerely thank all of the members of the Executive Committee for their commitment to service and very thoughtful consideration of all cases brought before the Committee. Very special thanks to the Secretary of the Committee, Dean Pamela George, the Fact-Finder of the committee, Professor Thomas Near and to the student members James Volz SY ’15, Hans Kassier JE ’16 and Susannah Krapf SY ’17 for their excellent input and service each week as part of the Coordinating Group as well as at full hearings and penalty hearings.

I thank Lisa Miller, Lisa Pitoniak and other staff in the Yale Dean’s office for their assistance with organizing cases, communications, distributing documentation and with the day-to-day logistics that allow the Committee to function smoothly. I am also thankful to Susan Sawyer in the General Counsel’s office and Dr. Lorraine Siggins for their critical input and expertise as consultants to the Committee.
Last but not least, I am deeply thankful to each of the residential college Deans, Masters and other advisors who have appeared before the Committee. The value of their most critical role in advising, preparing, counseling and supporting the students who appear before the Executive Committee is immeasurable.

Ruth Blake  
*Chair of the Yale College Executive Committee Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2015*  
*Professor of Geology & Geophysics*  
*Professor of Forestry & Environmental Studies*

**Fall 2014**

**Formal Hearings**  2 formal hearing, involving 2 students  
**Penalty Hearings**  1 penalty hearing involving 1 student  
**Dispositions without Formal Hearings**  33 dispositions without formal hearings, involving 41 students  
**Penalties from dispositions and formal hearings**

The following penalties were assigned to 43 students:  
- expulsions – 0  
- suspensions - 5  
- probations - 10  
- reprimands - 24  
- charge withdrawn – 4  
- withhold degree - 0  

**Academic Dishonesty Charges, including pending cases**  
18 students were charged with Academic Dishonesty which resulted in:  
- suspensions - 2  
- probations - 4  
- reprimands – 5  
- charge withdrawn – 4  
- withhold degree - 0  
- carried over to spring term – 3

**Plagiarism**  
7 of the 18 cheating cases were plagiarism which resulted in:  
- suspensions - 2  
- probations - 1  
- reprimands – 2  
- charges withdrawn – 0  
- withhold degree - 0  
- carried over to the spring term – 2
Other Cheating of the remaining cheating cases were other forms of cheating:

2 Collaborated on an assignment
2 Submitted significantly similar lab reports
1 Changed answers on a returned exam and then requested regrading
3 Copied answers from other student
1 Referred to notes during an exam
1 Lied to an instructor about missing an exam
1 Submitted the same paper for 2 courses

Referred Cases
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