

Yale College Executive Committee Chair's Report

Hearing cycle for Spring 2019

Presented to the Yale College Faculty on Dec 5th, 2019

Report Content

- i) Explanation of Structure and Process
- ii) Summary of Activities
- iii) Chair's Reflections
- iv) Spring 2019 Data

i) Explanation of Structure and Process

The Yale College Executive Committee has 20 regular voting members including 6 members of the faculty (3 tenured and 3 untenured), 14 undergraduate students and the Dean of Yale College or his designate. In addition, the committee has three officers which form the committee's coordinating group. In Spring 2019 these were the chair, Paul North, Professor of German; vice-chair, Laura Wexler, Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, American Studies, and Film and Media; secretary, Gregg Peeples, Assistant Dean for Student Conduct and Community Standards and assistant secretary, Earle Lobo, Assistant Director, Student Conduct and Community Standards.

Spring 2019 represented the first hearing cycle following substantial revisions to the executive committee's procedures.

In a typical case, a report is made to the secretary of the committee by a faculty member, dean or another member of the university staff. The coordinating group reviews the report and decides, if appropriate, to charge the student with a violation of one or more sections of the undergraduate regulations. The student, along with their residential college dean or advisor receives a formal letter explaining the charge along with a copy of the report and relevant evidence. The student is asked to name an advisor and to provide a written response to the charge within three business days. Upon receipt of the statement the coordinating group decides to i) move the matter forward to a hearing, ii) conduct additional fact-finding, or iii) close the matter.

Hearings are generally scheduled two to three weeks after the coordinating group's decision; however, significant backlogs of cases often arise during certain parts of the academic calendar resulting in delays. Hearings are conducted by a panel drawn from the committee and including the chair (or vice-chair), the secretary (or designate), two faculty members and three student members. At least 3 business days before the hearing the student receives all the materials for the case, including any fact-finding reports and evidence received after the initial report. The hearing begins with prepared remarks from the chair which are intended to ensure that the student understands the procedures and has identified any conflict of interest with panel members. The student is invited to make an opening statement to the panel and the panel members follow with questions related to the student's remarks, written statement, and other evidence. In many cases, students admit the validity of the charges in

their written or oral statements and in these circumstances questioning by the panel helps to fill in the circumstances surrounding the events and to determine what steps they have taken to rectify their actions and safeguard against future violations of the undergraduate regulations. In cases where students deny the validity of the charges, questioning by the panel seeks to determine the student's responsibility in the matter while paying particular attention to any information that may exculpate the student. When the panel is satisfied, the student is given an opportunity to have their advisor speak on their behalf. The student is then permitted to make a closing statement. The panel then begins its deliberations.

Deliberations are broken into two phases. In the first phase, the panel addresses the question of whether the student has violated the undergraduate regulations. The panel votes by secret ballot and is charged to give an affirmative answer if the violation is supported by a "*clear preponderance of the evidence*". At this point, the student and their advisor are informed of the panel's decision. If found "not responsible" the matter is closed. If found "responsible", the student and advisor have the opportunity to address the panel again to provide any information that would be relevant for the determination of a penalty. The second phase of deliberations then begins with the secretary informing the panel about the nature of penalties imposed for similar offenses and any previous infractions of a similar nature involving the student. The chair proposes a penalty on which the panel votes by secret ballot.

Penalties are chosen from the following: reprimand, probation, suspension, or expulsion. Each of these is described in detail in the undergraduate regulations. In some circumstances, the panel may impose an additional penalty in the form of work-service or a fee for the repair of damaged property.

ii) Summary of activities

In spring 2019 the executive committee charged 120 students with violations of the undergraduate regulations. Of these, 30 were for academic dishonesty and 90 were for non-academic violations, including 64 cases of trespassing arising from group protests on two separate occasions.

The committee resolved 77 cases and the remaining 43 cases were carried forward to the fall term. Of the 77 cases resolved by the committee, the outcomes were: 3 suspensions, 13 probations, 55 reprimands and 6 findings of no responsibility.

iii) Chair's Reflections

Spring 2019 was the first academic term where the executive committee operated under its newly revised procedures. Formerly, students who admitted the validity of the charges against them would receive a disposition with the coordinating group rather than a full hearing. While this procedure allowed more expedient handling of cases, it put undue pressure on our students to admit responsibility and cede their right to a full hearing. As chair during the current academic term (F19), and in contrast to my experience last fall as the committee's fact-finder, I have found that our students are as likely to make an admission of

responsibility to the committee (in comparison to the previous procedures) while all students benefit from the additional diversity and perspective that hearings (rather than dispositions) provide. In short, the new procedures are working well.

Plagiarism continues to represent a substantial portion of the academic misconduct charges that are issued by the executive committee. While this is not new, it is evident that an increasing number of students are falling victim to digital-age habits that put their integrity at risk. Students commonly cite the practice of copying source material into a workspace and later losing track of the words and ideas that belong to others. While those students remain responsible for their actions, it is clear that it was poor practice, not direct intent, that brought them before the executive committee. Shared documents in online platforms also pose a significant challenge to academic integrity, particularly when students are allowed to collaborate on their methods or research, but not their final product. In all cases, clear expectations on what is deemed appropriate versus inappropriate collaboration on assignments and syllabi are necessary both for our students and for the executive committee.

Lastly, but with great importance, I would like to note that there is a growing need for reconsideration of how student protestors who violate the undergraduate regulations are referred to and handled by the executive committee. In spring 2019, charges stemming from student protests resulted in more than half of the executive committee's cases and at current, many remain unresolved due to the backlog these have generated. Students often use their time before the committee to echo their cause and I worry that they view the executive committee as a conduit for conveying their message and validating their actions. The executive committee has a clear role in upholding the undergraduate regulations and in order to continue to effectively do so, for all of our students, we should provide alternative channels for students to communicate their concerns while at the same time seek an expedient procedure for resolving protest cases.

My reflections stem mainly from my work as chair in the current academic term and from my previous experience as the committee's fact-finder. I am indebted to the excellent leadership and guidance provided by the past chair, Paul North and to the service provided by the committee's current vice-chair, Nancy Levene, secretary, Earle Lobo, and faculty and student members.

Respectfully,

David A. Vasseur
Chair, Yale College Executive Committee and
Associate Professor
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

iv) Spring 2019 Executive Committee Data

There were 120 students charged with a violations of the undergraduate regulations. 77 cases were resolved during the spring term.

Outcomes:

- 3 - Suspensions
- 13 - Probations
- 55 - Reprimands
- 6 – Found not responsible

<p>Academic Dishonesty Cases (30) 24 - plagiarized pset or lab assignment 2 - collaborated inappropriately on a take home assignment or exam 4 - plagiarized a paper, poem or essay</p> <p>Outcomes 1 – suspension – one term 11 - probations 14 - reprimands 3 - found not responsible 1 - carried over to fall 2019</p>	<p>Non-Academic Dishonesty Cases (90) 1 - acts of violence 1 - defiance of authority 1 - defiance of authority/imperil 1 - defiance of authority/campus safety 1 - harassment 2 - hazing 3 - hazing/alcohol 1 - imperil the integrity of the University 3 - trespassing in steam tunnels 2 - trespassing at 1 Prospect Street, SSS, 8 - trespassing at Payne Whitney Gym 62 - trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue 1 - trespassing in vacant student housing 1 - trespassing in a student’s room 1 - unauthorized use of services/imperil 1 - willful property damage</p> <p>Outcomes 2 - suspensions 2 - probations 41 – reprimands 3 – cases were withdrawn 3 - found not responsible 39 – carried over to fall 2019</p>
---	--

Detailed outcomes:

- A senior charged with hazing was found not responsible.
- A senior charged with hazing was found not responsible.
- After investigation, the charges were withdrawn from a senior charged with trespassing.
- A senior who plagiarized a pset was placed on probation.
- A senior who collaborated inappropriately on a pset was placed on probation.
- A senior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior who was charged with trespassing during a protest of the student income contribution was reprimanded.

A senior was reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior was reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior who trespassed in one of the Payne Whitney Gym pools was reprimanded.

A senior was reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior who was charged with trespassing during a protest of the student income contribution was reprimanded.

A senior charged with alcohol and hazing violations was reprimanded.

A senior who trespassed in one of the Payne Whitney Gym pools was reprimanded.

A senior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior was reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior was reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior who trespassed in one of the Payne Whitney Gym pools was reprimanded.

A senior was reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior was reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior was reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior was reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior who trespassed in one of the Payne Whitney Gym pools was reprimanded.

A senior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior who trespassed in the steam tunnel was reprimanded.

A senior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior charged with hazing was reprimanded.

A senior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A senior who plagiarized a senior essay was suspended.

A junior charged with harassment was found not responsible.

A junior charged with plagiarism was found not responsible.

A junior was placed on probation for plagiarizing a pset.

A junior who trespassed in one of the Payne Whitney Gym pools was reprimanded.

A junior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A junior who trespassed in one of the Payne Whitney Gym pools was reprimanded.

A junior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A junior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A junior elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A sophomore charged with inappropriate collaborating on a pset was found not responsible.

A sophomore charged with academic dishonesty was found not responsible.

After investigation, the charges were withdrawn from a sophomore charged with trespassing.

After investigation, the charges were withdrawn from a sophomore charged with trespassing.

A sophomore who plagiarized a pset was placed on probation.

A sophomore charged with defiance of authority and offenses compromising campus safety was placed on probation.

A sophomore who plagiarized a pset was placed on probation.

A sophomore who plagiarized was reprimanded.

A sophomore charged with trespassing and offenses regarding campus housing and university facilities was reprimanded.

A sophomore who trespassed in one of the Payne Whitney Gym pools was reprimanded.

A sophomore who plagiarized a pset was reprimanded.

A sophomore who trespassed in one of the Payne Whitney Gym pools was reprimanded.

A sophomore who plagiarized a pset was reprimanded.

A sophomore was suspended for one term for unauthorized use of services or facilities and for actions that imperil the integrity and values of the Yale community or the well-being of its members. The penalty was changed to four terms probation in the fall 2019.

A sophomore charged with acts of violence or physical force was suspended.

A First-Year who collaborated inappropriately on a pset was placed on probation.

A First-Year who collaborated inappropriately on a pset was placed on probation.

A First-Year charged with defiance of authority, violence/physical force and actions that imperil the integrity and values of the Yale community or the well-being of its members was placed on probation.

The charge of imperil was withdrawn.

A First-Year was placed on probation for collaborating on a take home exam.

A First-Year who plagiarized a pset was placed on probation.

A First-Year who collaborated inappropriately on a pset was placed on probation.

A First-Year was placed on probation for collaborating on a take home exam.

A First-Year who plagiarized code was reprimanded.

A First-Year who plagiarized code was reprimanded.

A First-Year who collaborated inappropriately on a pset was reprimanded.

A First-Year who plagiarized was reprimanded.

A First-Year elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A First-Year was charged with trespassing and willful property damage. The charge of willful property damage was withdrawn and the student was reprimanded.

A First-Year who shared their pset with another student was reprimanded.

A First-Year who plagiarized was reprimanded.

A First-Year who collaborated inappropriately on a pset was reprimanded.

A First-Year who collaborated inappropriately on a lab assignment was reprimanded.

A First-Year who collaborated inappropriately on a pset was reprimanded.

A First-Year who plagiarized a pset was reprimanded.

A First-Year who trespassed in the steam tunnel was reprimanded.

A First-Year elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A First-Year elected to receive a reprimanded for trespassing at 55 Whitney Avenue during a protest at the Investments Office.

A First-Year who trespassed in the steam tunnel was reprimanded.

A First-Year who collaborated inappropriately on a pset was reprimanded.