

## Academic Ombud's Report to the Senate

Thank you Professor McCormick, Senators and guests.

It is my pleasure to present the Academic Ombud Report for the 2015 – 2016 academic year. Before submitting this summary of the activities of the Ombud's Office, I wish to thank Laura Ansel for her excellent 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. Ansel. We calculated that there were 1,666 such minor matters during the past academic year. This number reflects a 50% 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. Ansel for the 2015-16 academic year was 481.

This number, 481, 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 2015-16 academic year, academic departments determined that an academic offense was committed in 92 cases. This number is smaller than the number of academic offense cases for the past three years (120, 132, and 191). Five of the academic offense cases for 2015-16 were second offenses, and the remaining 87 cases were first offenses. Of the 87 first offenses, eleven 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 92 academic offense cases, 78 students did not contact the Ombud's Office. The remaining fourteen students contacted the Ombud's Office, and five students decided to appeal the charge to the University Appeals Board. Two of the five cases appealed by students involved cheating and three involved plagiarism. Of the two students who appealed the charge of cheating, one appeal was upheld and one was denied. Of the three students who appealed the charge of plagiarism, one appeal was upheld and the other two were denied.

The third category is comprised of information about claims of academic rights violations submitted by students. Before being considered by the University Appeals Board, these claims are first reviewed by the Ombud who decides whether the appeal has merit or lacks merit. If the Ombud decides that an appeal lacks merit, the student may appeal that no-merit decision to the University Appeals Board. There were a total of twenty grade appeals during the 2015-16 year. The Ombud determined that eight had merit and twelve lacked merit. Of the eight determined by the Ombud to have merit, all were upheld by the University Appeals Board. Of the twelve appeals determined by the Ombud to lack merit, five students did not appeal the no-merit decision. Students appealed seven no-merit decisions. All seven of these decisions were upheld by the University Appeals Board. There were two other appeals concerning the violation of academic rights. One student appealed the decision of the Senate Retroactive Withdrawal Committee and the appeal was upheld by the University Appeals Board. The other student appealed dismissal from the University and the appeal was upheld 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 2015/16

All Matters

	2015/16	2014/15	
Number of Cases	481	370	
Number of Questions or Referrals	1666	1091	
	2147	1461	Total

Types of Cases	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	
Non-Academic Offense Issues	389	250	365	346	352	
Academic Offense Determinations	92	120	132	191	177	
	481	370	497	537	529	Total

Description of Cases (not including Academic Offenses)		Classification of Source	
Attendance	26	Student	275
Exam/Class Requirements	27	Faculty	96
Grades	126	Staff	12
Instruction	31	Parent	2
Personal Problems	28	Other	4
Policies: Academic Offense Issues	26		389 Total
Policies: General	58		
Progress/Promotion	41		
Retroactive Withdrawals	4		
Speaker Requests	22		
	389 Total		

Description of Quick Questions & Referrals		Classification of Source	
Attendance	213	Student	1160
Exam/Class Requirements	113	Faculty	324
Grades	339	Staff	74
Instruction	85	Parent	92
Personal Problems	110	Other	16
Policies: Academic Offense Issues	111		1666 Total
Policies: General	314		
Progress/Promotion	354		
Retroactive Withdrawals	27		
	1666 Total		

## Determinations and Appeals of Academic Offenses

### Types of Academic Offense Determinations

Cheating	28	
Plagiarism	64	
	92	Total

### Contact with the Ombud

No Contact with the Ombud	78	
Contacted the Ombud: No appeal	9	
Contacted the Ombud: Referred to UAB	5	
	92	Total

Classification of the Student	First w/ Minor Penalty	First w/ Major Penalty	Second	Total
Freshman	17	2	1	20
Sophomore	21	2	1	24
Junior	22	4	1	27
Senior	16	3	2	21
	76	11	5	92 Total

### Origin of Offense Determination

College of Agriculture, Food and Environment	3	
College of Arts & Sciences	56	
Gatton College of Business & Economics	2	
College of Communication & Information	4	
College of Engineering	9	
College of Health Sciences	1	
College of Nursing	12	
College of Public Health	1	
College of Social Work	4	
	92	Total

### Appeals of Determination of Academic Offense Referred to the University Appeals Board\*

	Upheld	Denied	Total
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction			
Plagiarism: Appealed determination	1	1	2
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction and determination		1	1
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction			
Cheating: Appealed determination	1	1	2
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction and determination			
			5 Total

*\*Four additional cases withdrawn before heard by UAB.*

## Allegation of Violation of Student Academic Rights

### Grade Appeals Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Uncontested	Upheld	Denied	Total	
Appeals referred and determined to have merit	n/a	8	0	8	
Appeals referred and determined to lack merit	5	7	0	12	
				20	Total

### Retroactive Withdrawal Appeals Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Upheld	Denied	Total	
Appeal referred and determined to have merit	1	0	1	
			1	Total

### Appeal of Dismissal Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Upheld	Denied	Total	
Appeal referred and determined to have merit	1	0	1	
			1	Total

## Summary of Cases Referred by the Ombud to the University Appeals Board

### Total Number of Appeals

Academic Offense Appeals	5	(2 Upheld / 3 Denied)
Grade Appeals	20	(15 Upheld / 5 Uncontested)
Retroactive Withdrawal Appeals	1	(Upheld)
Other Appeals (Dismissal)	1	(Upheld)
	27	Total

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

	Upheld	Denied	Total
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction			
Plagiarism: Appealed determination	1	1	2
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction and determination		1	1
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction			
Cheating: Appealed determination	1	1	2
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction and determination			
			5 Total

### Grade Appeals Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Upheld	Denied	Uncontested	Total
Appeals referred and determined to have merit	8	0	n/a	8
Appeals referred and determined to lack merit	7	0	5	12
				20 Total