

## **Report and disposition of Honor Code Matter 005**

**Spring, 2001**

### **Excerpts from the Report of the Honor Code Prosecutor to the SBA**

#### **Executive Board (June 12, 2001):**

In the spring semester of 2001, Student 005 was enrolled in a class taught by Professor E. Students enrolled in the class were required to write a 2-draft paper as their only grade in the class. After the students turned their papers in to Professor E, s/he made comments and in some cases changed the direction of some of the research, and then returned the papers. Students then turned in a final paper at the end of the semester. Student 005 turned the paper in for his/her only grade in Professor E's class. The paper was entitled "[omitted]."

As Professor E graded the first draft of Student 005's paper, s/he noted that the student had taken wholesale sections of four law review articles and used them verbatim in his/her paper. In other places, the student took large verbatim sections, but changed a few words to make the sentence fit in the context of the others. In other situations, the student simply followed the pattern already laid out by the author of the law review article.

Professor E returned the paper to Student 005 along with a typed memo (Appendix A), which began, "This paper needs to be radically overhauled." The memo went on to say, in pertinent part:

The most significant problem is that the paper takes substantial portions verbatim from the Martin and Osborn articles without indicating that the material is direct quotation. Similarly, there are significant additional portions of the paper that are simply paraphrases, with only minor wording changes from those articles. Of course, material that is taken directly must be quoted, and, in any event, your paper cannot be simply derivative of these two works.

At the end of the semester, Student 005, having received Professor E's memo with his/her returned first draft, presumably made corrections and turned in a final paper. Student 005 had clearly been put on notice that his/her method of writing without proper citation and quotation marks was a serious problem and needed to be corrected.

As Professor E graded this final paper s/he noticed the same problems that had occurred in the first draft. Professor E counted no less than 31 instances in his/her paper which were plagiarism in some form. In some, Student 005 had quoted one of four law review articles verbatim, including footnotes, but had not mentioned either that the text was verbatim by using quotation marks, or that the passage was taken from a law review article. In other instances, Student 005 had quoted one of the articles nearly verbatim, changing a few words or deleting a phrase to make the sentence fit into the larger paragraph, again without citation or quotation marks. In yet more instances, Student 005 did quoted verbatim from an article, cited that article in a footnote, but did not put the text in quotation marks as required by the Honor Code.

At one point, there is a 6-page stretch in the middle of the paper that is entirely taken verbatim from the four articles.

Professor E informed Dean Mayer Freed of the situation on May 22 in a memo (Appendix B). Dean Theresa Cropper informed the Honor Code Prosecutor that he needed to speak with Mayer Freed. The Honor Code Prosecutor contacted Mayer Freed, who told the Prosecutor to contact Professor E. On May 29, 2001, the Honor Code Prosecutor spoke with Professor E by telephone and received notification of the alleged violation.

**SBA Executive Board Finding of Probable Cause (edited to preserve anonymity)(June 19, 2001):**

On June 19, 2001, the Executive Board of the Student Bar Association of the Northwestern University School of Law returned a finding of probable cause against the accused, [Student 005], in the above matter. Specifically, the SBA determined that probable cause exists that [Student 005] violated Art. I, §2(e) of the Law School Honor Code by plagiarizing substantial portions of [his/her] final paper for Professor E's [omitted] class in the spring 2001 semester.

In compliance with Art. IV, §4(b) of the Honor Code, this notice is being provided to [Student 005] within a week of the Executive Committee's finding of probable cause.

Because [Student 005] is a third-year law student and the alleged violation occurred within two months of her graduation date, this matter and all evidence is hereby referred to David Van Zandt, Dean of the Law School, for consideration and adjudication. (Art. IV, §5)

**Disposition:**

1. The Law School will notify the relevant bar examiners of the charge and disposition.
2. You are hereby placed on academic suspension until August 31, 2002. No credits can be earned toward your degree until your suspension has run.
3. Notation of this Honor Code violation will be placed on your transcript.
4. A grade of "F" will be entered for you in the class.
5. You will be required to earn the credits remaining toward your degree in courses taken at the Law School and while in residence.
6. Prior to recommencing your studies at the Law School, you will resubmit to the Dean of Students a new version of your paper, entitled "[omitted]," revised so that it no longer violates the Honor Code.