

# Academic Integrity Report – AY 2020–2021

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## RELATION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Integrity lies at the center of our core values at Marquette University and is central to the pursuit of academic excellence. Integrity becomes even more important when we humans are reminded of the shifting sands of our life on Earth, dependent upon the constants of our world, yet reacting to sudden, humankind-affecting change, such as COVID-19 has been. In times of uncertainty, trust and truth is precious, when it can be found,

The Academic Integrity Council supports two of our strategic themes in particular: 1) Pursuit of Academic Excellence for Well Being; 2) Formation of the Mind and the Heart. Academic integrity is fundamental to academic excellence; without it there is no way to determine the excellence of our students. If students' work is not their own, then how do faculty know whom they are evaluating? Additionally, integrity is an essential virtue for the development of our students as future leaders in their life beyond the academy.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This past academic year was the seventh year of the new policies and procedures and the third of the director's three-year term. The Director studied and collaborated on both the Council's general and detailed processes, because at times the timing and quantity of the Council's workload meant that the work just had to be shared between the Council's Coordinator (Tyler Haro) and the Director. A benefit of the work resulted, again, in increased awareness of places where efficiencies could be produced with intelligent choices regarding data-design and use of software tools that would expedite document-production. More on that later.

The academic year was marked by the continuation of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and the University's decision to provide as much in-person instruction as possible. But the effort towards in-person instruction did not mark a return to "normal." Often instruction was blended between in-person instruction and virtual instruction. Assessment, as well, oscillated between in-person and virtual. The latter modality especially made possible for students the use of multiple communication devices during virtual assessment, where one device (a computer) was aided by another (a phone or even a person). Even in classes where instructors took advantage of D2L's randomization features, plus shrewd test-design decisions, there were reports of student misconduct. Groupwork was hard to assess, as the sharing of files in digital form made it hard for instructors to discern who was the origin of a given assignment's work.

The flow of the year's and last summer's cases (with another swell at the very end of the first semester) showed again how the AIC office's processes do not scale well. With every AIC case defaulting to an average of nine Microsoft Word documents per student, plus innumerable e-mail communications to at least six people, and the need to gather key data manually from University web sites, the office was pressed to receive, structure, and then process the many cases. The Council's Coordinator is both an employee and a student with required assignments, resulting in slow case-process times, with AIC missing its stated timing aims. A benefit was a realization of where bottlenecks arose, so the Director and the Coordinator were able to design and code key automations that improved the 'throughput' of cases. The decision to embrace the Microsoft Power Automate Flow system, with its Word Connector (at the University's expense) aided this effort, though the real test will be AY 2021–2022.

## ADMINISTRATION OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CASES

- Thanks to attentive deans and supportive faculty we have 23 investigative officers (IOs).
- There are 15 students trained to serve on hearing boards. We have also had inquiries from students, both undergraduate and graduate, about participating in the AIC.
- All told the Council administered 160 student-cases.

## FOSTERING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In addition to administering cases of academic misconduct on campus, a goal of the office is to promote academic integrity among both faculty and students. This takes place in individual meetings with students and faculty, in presentations primarily to graduate student assistants and faculty in advance of the upcoming school year (usually in August and early September), as well as in campus wide presentations by outside speakers. Highlights of the past year are:

- Numerous sit-down meetings (all via Teams) with students as part of their sanctions, to learn more about their mindset, and to explain in troublesome cases the importance of academic integrity.
- A successful use of automating technologies in the second semester that help produce key documents quickly and accurately; our use of this technology will only increase, and it will improve the efficiency of the Office tremendously.
- We successfully interviewed and selected an incoming GA for the Office, Ms. Alecia Conway (Xavier University), and said "goodbye" to Tyler Haro, who served us for two years.

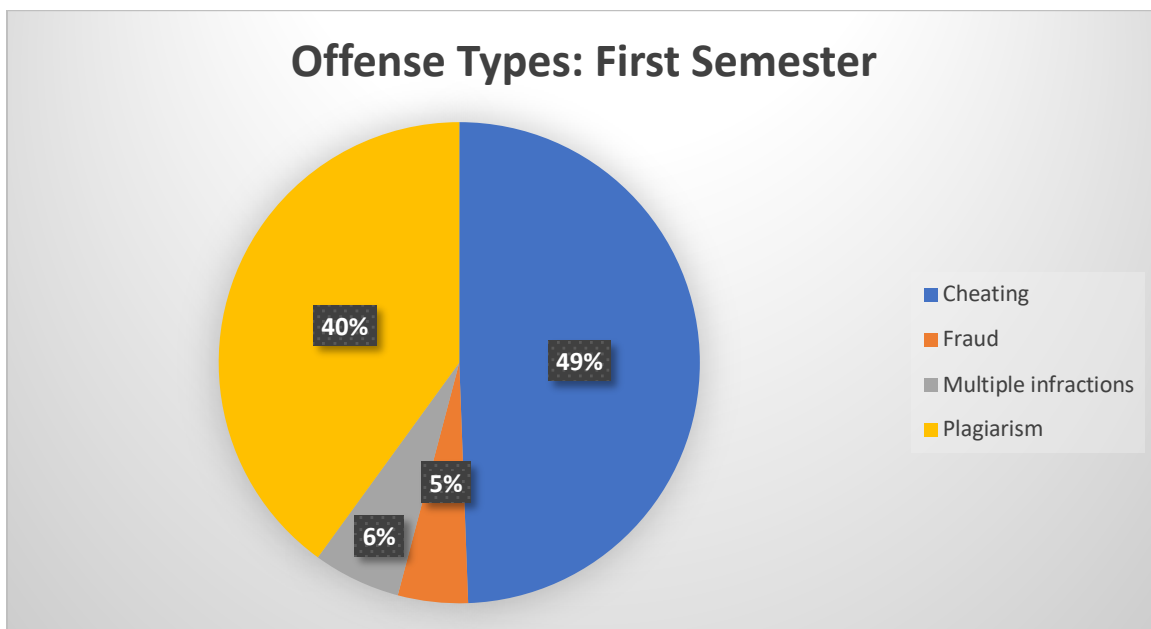
## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CASES

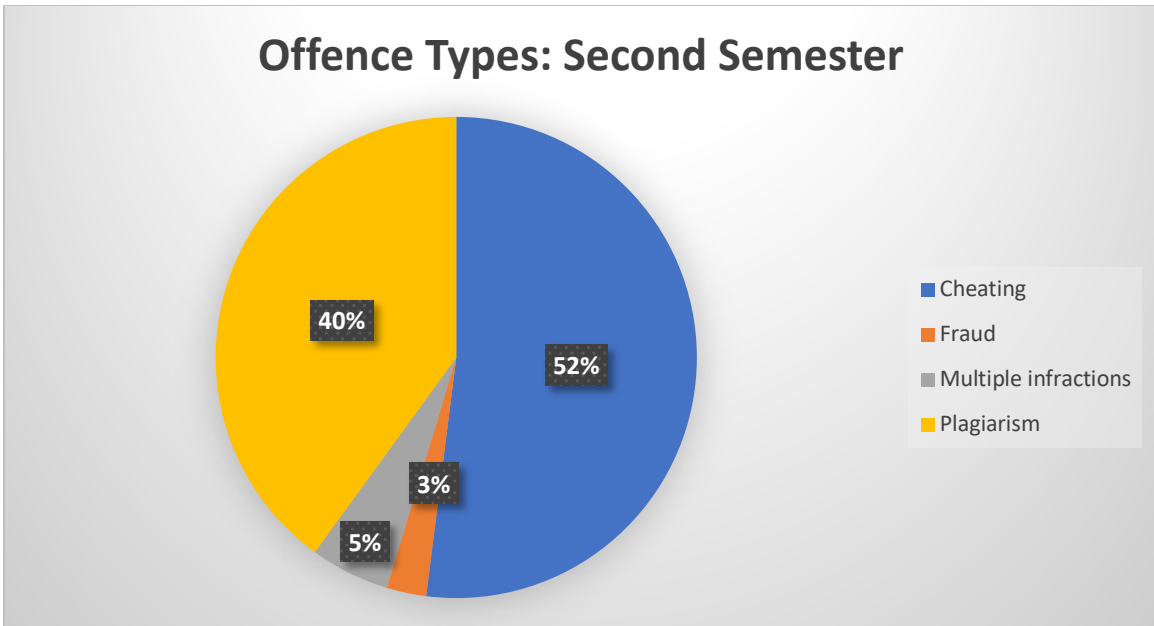
This year continued last year's trend of more cheating than plagiarism—possibly because of the increased use of D2L's quiz feature for class assessment, where students would communicate with one another while taking the quiz remotely. Approximately 97.5% of the students

were first offenders, with 2.5% as second offenders. No students were suspended or expelled for Academic Integrity reasons this Academic Year.

## Offense Types

Some comment is warranted about the types of offense we experienced this year. Dishonesty is the common thread running through all types of academic misconduct, and while cheating seems to have a character that is easy to define and detect, other types of misconduct of boundaries that can overlap. Plagiarism, for instance, is the use of ideas or text from someone else without proper attribution in an academic paper. But if one uses another's paper entirely, and then submits it, we think of that "use of ideas or text from someone else without proper attribution" as fraud. In both semesters we encountered instances of fraud where students would obtain Marquette University assignments that had been completed in the past, and then simply submit them as though they were the student's own, changing only the name of the student, and other simple information (e.g., date, course number, MUID number, etc.). It is timesaving for faculty to reuse assignments from the past—especially when there is an authoritative textbook that the course depends upon—but a price is paid when students realize that their upcoming assignment has already been completed by someone else, albeit last year. We use the category of 'multiple infractions' to distinguish cases such as self-plagiarism (which shares features with fraud and plagiarism) as well as, say, having a paper-writing service do one's work for one (plagiarism and fraud). We have also been seeing cases of self-plagiarism where a student will retake a course in the spring that they took in the fall (Organic Chemistry being the key instance), and will recycle lab reports they did in the fall for the spring assignment, as those assignments are often the same, semester-to-semester.

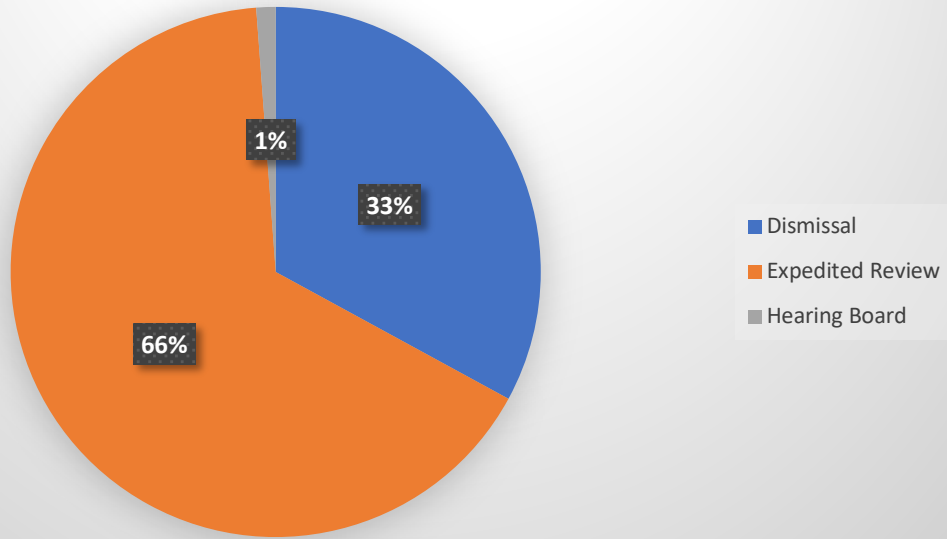




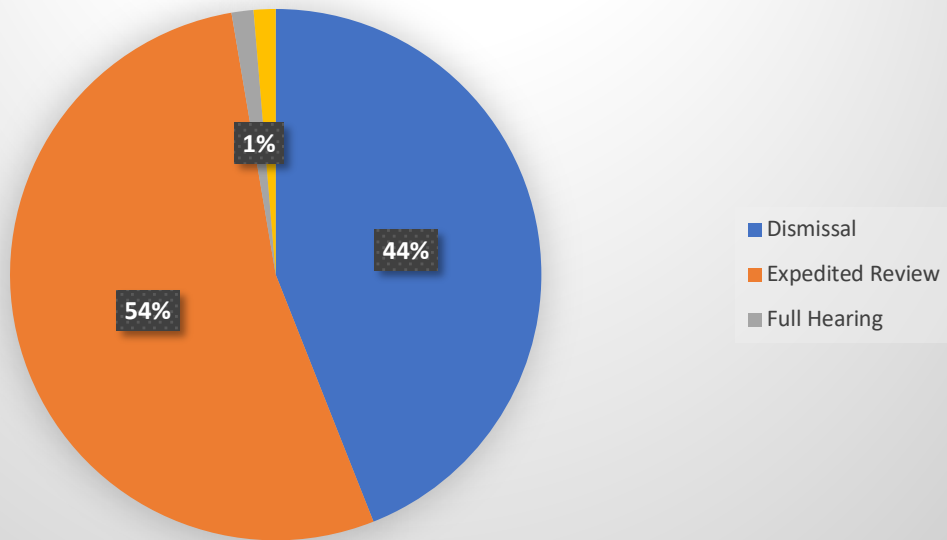
## Case Outcomes

The ratio of students whose cases were dismissed, those who accepted responsibility and an expedited sanction, and those who went to a full hearing, have produced a general ratio of three out of four cases having a student accept responsibility for academic misconduct via the Council’s ‘Expedited Review offer.’ Here the Council makes an offer to the student to bring their case to a swift conclusion with a genuine but not severe class sanction (e.g., receiving a zero for an assignment where misconduct occurred, rather than, say, the loss of an entire letter grade for the course). Of the 160 total students on the AIC docket for AY20–21, 1 went to a Hearing Board, resulting in a finding. 61 students (~38%) had their cases dismissed by the investigative process, and 96 students accepted responsibility via the expedited review process (60%). This year’s increased dismissal rate reflects the fact that the Council’s Investigative Officers (IOs) understood that certainties were few during the pandemic, and that erring on the side of caution was prudent.

### Case Outcomes: Fall Semester



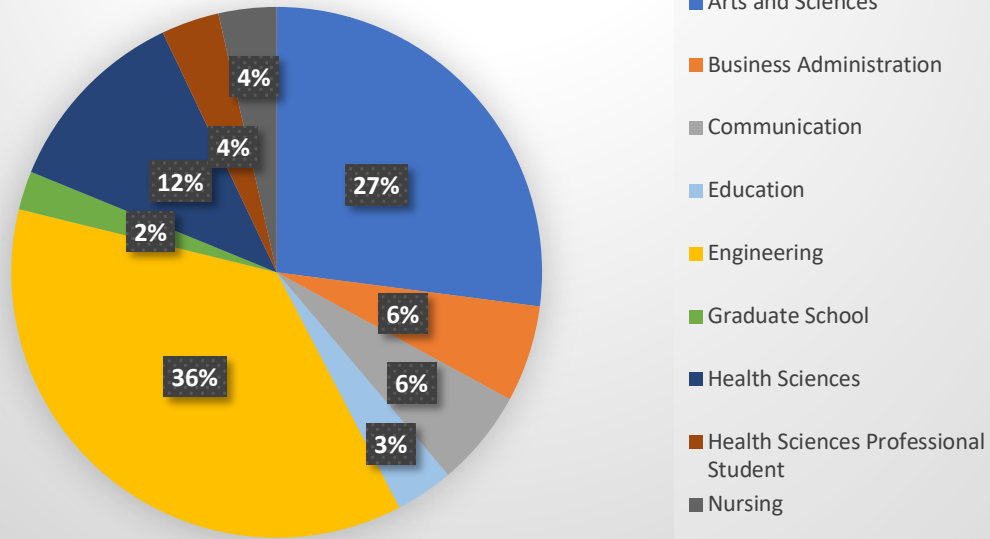
### Case Outcomes: Spring Semester



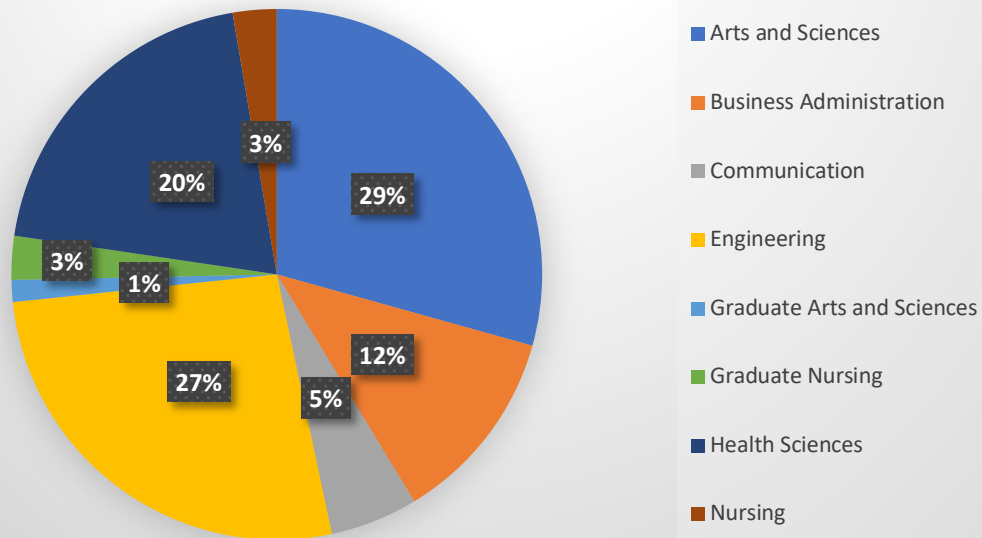
### Students' Home College (number of cases)

Analyzing the students by home college, the largest percentage of offenders remains tied to our largest undergraduate colleges. Arts and Sciences and Engineering contain the highest number of student cases, with an increase noticed from students in Health Sciences.

## College of Student Cases: Fall Semester

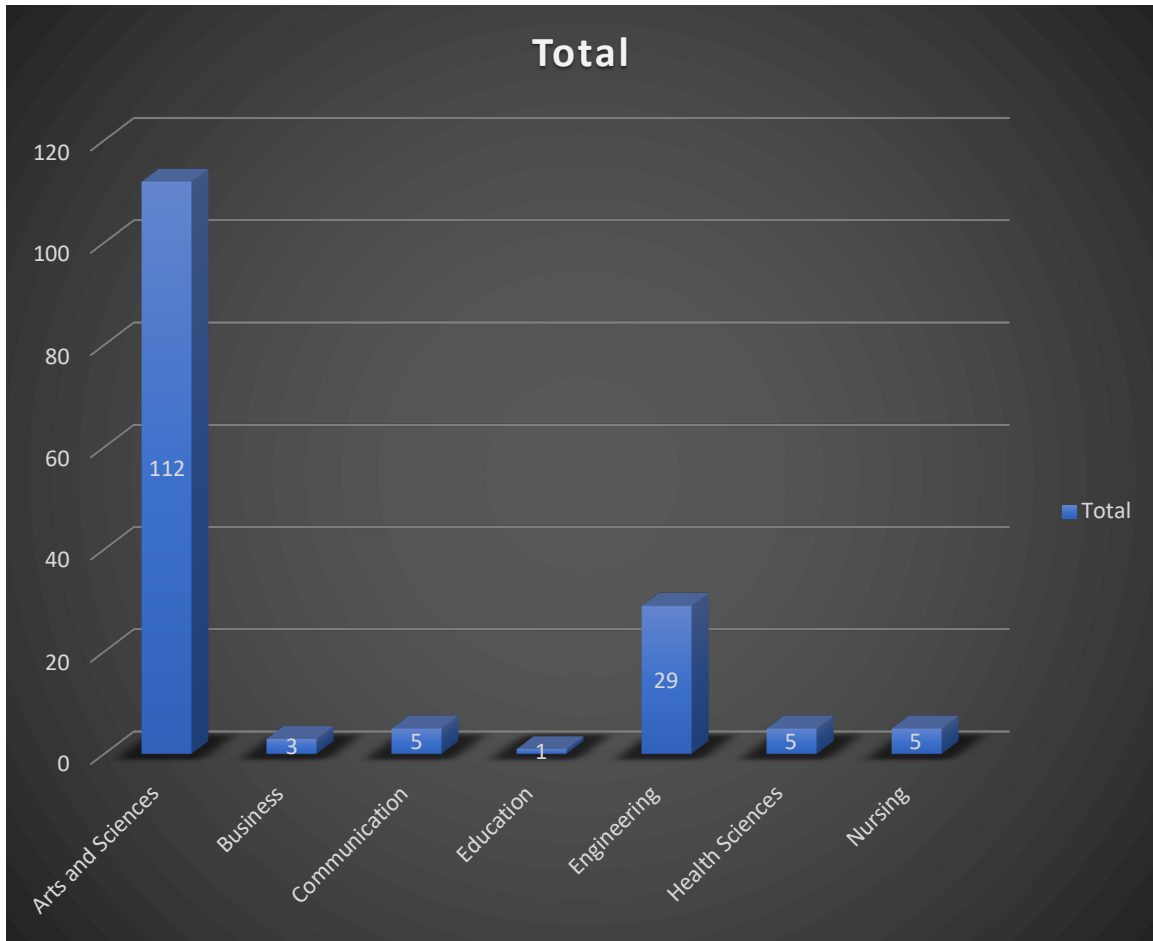


## College of Student Cases: Spring Semester



### Number of Cases (distributed across units)

The chart that follows reveals an eye-popping slant towards the College of Arts and Sciences as being the unit that had the most cases occurring in its classes. That A&S should have the highest number of cases is nothing new, but that it should do so by such a margin is something to study. Engineering keeps its spot in second place and Business has lowered the cases that transpire in its courses dramatically—all credit to the College of BUAD.



## Thoughts for the Coming Year

In his fourth year the Director plans to:

- Continue the digital organization of the Council's documents in its SharePoint site.
- Prepare and make available videos and audio-recordings for ready consultation by faculty and students on the processes and features of the Council's activities. Having links to click that can provide instant information without the need to ferret through long web pages will increase understanding of the meaning and import of the Council's work.
- Visit with the Council's Deans' Representatives about updating the Council's policies and procedures as we head into a year that, please God, may have some normalcy.
- Prepare for a search in the fall for the next Director of Academic Integrity. The last search met with little interest, given the past year's flux in work and employment concerns.
- If possible, reach out to member institutions of the AJCU to consider whether there is a distinctly Jesuit way in which academic integrity could operate.

*Mich. F. Johnson*