

Academic Integrity in Action: Case Study #1

Scenario:

You are grading a paper when you detect a shift to a more sophisticated style of writing. Curious, you check google.com and discover a Web site with verbatim and nearly verbatim text contained in the paper. Attribution for some of the copied text is to a book. None of the verbatim text is in quotes.

>>What considerations do you make in deciding how to respond? What do you do?

Advice from the Office of Judicial Affairs:

Call us at 684-6938, before you approach the student. Share with us what you suspect. We can also review the entire paper for you, if you haven't already done that. We'll check the student's disciplinary record to see if there have been any academic integrity issues in the past. Based on the student's history and the extent of the plagiarism, you will either be able to resolve the matter directly with the student through a faculty-student resolution, or, must refer the case to our office. (The form for a faculty-student resolution is available on our Web site at <http://judicial.studentaffairs.duke.edu>.) Look for the "Information for Faculty/Instructors" link.

You email the student with your concerns . You receive a response back the next morning. The student said that he accidentally emailed you the wrong version of his paper, and attaches another file.

>>What do you do?

This happens more often than you may think. Sometimes the student made a legitimate mistake. Other times the student's deception continues. We can use a variety of tools to help discern whether or not the student's claim is substantiated. Forward the email to our office, and we will consult with you again on how to proceed.

You refer the matter to the Office of Judicial Affairs. The next day, you receive a phone call and an email from the father of the student. The father's signature at the end of his email suggests he is an attorney.

>> Do you respond to the father?

You should not be burdened by this. Call us immediately and we'll respond to the parent—that's what we're here for, and do it everyday, so we have the expertise! Your focus is on teaching, not to be unsettled by helicopter parents.

Our office has indicated it is OK to resolve this directly between you and the student. You download the form. You meet with the student, discuss your proposed resolution, and he signs the form.

>>What do you do next?

Be sure to send us the form at Box 90893. It is not necessary to send us the student's work.

Our office has said that the case must be referred to our office.

>>What happens next?

Write us a cover letter (via email is fine) summarizing what you have found. We'll take it from there! Your additional involvement may or may not be needed. If you need to appear before the UJB, we'll guide you through this process.