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34 Duke students accused of cheating

BY STANLEY B. CHAMBERS JR., Staff Writer

DURHAM - In the largest cheating scandal in the history of Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, 34 MBA students face steep penalties after university officials determined they collaborated on answers of an exam.

Nine students face expulsion, said Mike Hemmerich, an associate dean at the business school. Fifteen will receive a one-year suspension from the school along with a failing grade in the course. Nine will only get a failing grade in the course. One student received a failing grade for the exam. Four students were found not guilty. All were from the class of 2008.

Federal privacy laws prevent naming the involved students, said Hemmerich, who wouldn't disclose the affected course or what the test was about. He only said those involved were first-year students taking a required test.

A professor noticed unusual consistencies in the answers of a take-home exam, which students are supposed to do on their own, Hemmerich said. Further investigation disclosed students were meeting in groups to work on the test. Students are allowed to use notes and other materials for the exam. Hemmerich wasn't sure if the convicted students gathered at once or in separate groups. The students were found guilty by Fuqua's judicial board after the panel heard 22 separate cases over several weeks.

"Fuqua depends on every member of its community to uphold the code in both spirit and action," Fuqua dean Douglas T. Breeden said in a written statement. "This is why we require, as a condition for enrollment, that all students acknowledge their personal acceptance of the code."

The honor code is nothing new for Fuqua students, who are provided copies of it when they apply to the school and during student orientation. It is also discussed in a leadership and ethics class and the code's preamble is displayed in classrooms.

Hemmerich expects the students to appeal, which will take about a month. They are considered regular students and can participate in classes and final exams until then.

Staff Writer Stanley B. Chambers Jr. can be reached at 956-2426 or at stan.chambers@newsobserver.com

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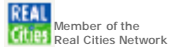


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