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MIS 320

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Week 4 Essay

The email exchanges between Frodo Jackson and the faculty at Fourth Square University discuss he leverage and appeal of a charge of academic dishonesty against Frodo. This charge stems from apparent plagiarism found on multiple assignments. The purpose of this writing is to critique the exchange and discuss the misunderstandings created by the impersonal medium that is text. Another goal is to identify situations where personal interaction would have helped mitigate the issues presented in the exchanges, and whether the situation was resolved successfully. Finally, a critique of the quality of the email exchange, such as the professionalism and consideration of those involved.

Issue Resolution

The main misunderstanding presented in the emails between Frodo and Dr. Grey is what the charge of academic dishonesty means. In Frodo’s response to Dr. Grey, he/she says, “You are the first person telling the world that I’m cheater.” (personal communication, MT1 26, 199X). This quote suggests that Frodo does not fully understand what a charge of academic dishonesty can represent. This is backed by Dr. Ranger’s response in a later email, “For you to label yourself as ‘Cheater’ is an over-wrought response as the charge against you is not about intentional cheating” (personal communication, MT2 14, 199X). The initial response by Frodo could have been handled better through personal interaction. Through personal interaction, Dr. Grey could have alleviated any misunderstanding Frodo had about the situation. A fact-to-face meeting could also convey a less accusatory tone, possibly resulting in less feelings of being attacked. Frodo’s emotional response in the initial response email could have been avoided without the perceived negative connotation of an email. This emotional response muddies the resolution of the issue.

Both Frodo and the faculty have a duty to resolve the issue. The faculty is compelled by school guidelines to follow procedures, including independent advisors, to resolve this matter. However, Frodo has a responsibility to follow these same guidelines. While it is understandable to be upset after a perceived accusation of cheating, emotional outbursts such as, “I feel like killing myself” (personal communication, MT1 26, 199X), are unprofessional and add unnecessary tension to those others responsible for handling the matter. As for whether the situation was successfully resolved, it is hard to say. The final email clearly resolves that the charge will stick, but the email does not do so in a way that will bring closure to Frodo. Frodo’s main concern is the label of cheater, and while Dr. Ranger states that Frodo is not charged with cheating, the rest of the email reads as though it comes from a place of condescension rather than trying to promote understanding. “I very much suggest you acquire a handbook or guidebook on academic writing, if you are planning on continuing to work on a degree” (Ranger, personal communication, MT2 14, 199X). This quote is just one example that appears to talk down to Frodo. While in the content may be factual, the negative tone of text can do more harm than good is this instance.

Quality

For the majority of the email exchanges, most parties responded in a professional manner. Frodo’s initial emails were a dark spot regarding professionalism. To make these responses more professional, Frodo should have refrained from typing in all caps, as well as used proper grammar and correcting spelling mistakes. Being upset in understandable, but waiting until he/she was more composed would have gone a long way to resolving this issue faster. On the faculty side, Dr. Ranger’s final response contained a lot of language that appears to be condescending in nature. Along with the quote cited earlier from Dr. Ranger, this quote, “Third, one would rarely start a paper with a direct quote from a secondary source, and certainly never two complete paragraphs, even if the material was properly cited and reference.” (personal communication, MT2 14, 199X), feels like Dr. Ranger overstepped the purpose of this communication. While his advice may be factually accurate, this feels more like questioning intelligence than reporting the reasoning for his decision.