

Disciplinary Action Case

In the following exercise, your group will be asked to settle a situation in which a college student bribed an instructor to change his grade in a course. This event took place at a prestigious liberal arts college in the eastern U.S. The student, Jack, is a star athlete on the college basketball team. He leads the team in points, assists, blocked shots, and rebounds. He is very popular and has drawn larger crowds at the game than in previous seasons, substantially increasing the college's revenues due to athletics. In fact, Jack is such a good player and is so popular that the school has received a great deal of positive attention from the press, enhancing the college's reputation and attracting student enrollment.

Jack had been concerned about a grade in one of his courses. He needed a B or better on the midterm exam to get a B in the course and remain eligible to play basketball. He received a D on the midterm. To maintain his eligibility, he offered \$200 to the course's graduate student teaching assistant to change his exam grade to a B. The teaching assistant, Tom, accepted the offer.

Another teaching assistant learned of the incident and reported both Jack and Tom to the administration. When confronted, Jack and Tom admitted to what they had done.

As the disciplinary action committee, your group's task is to choose the best courses of disciplinary action. When considering the alternatives for each issue, you should consider the consequences of the various options. In addition, be sure that you do not choose an illogical combination of alternatives (e.g. if you decide to suspend him from the academic program for one semester, then he cannot be suspended from playing basketball for only one game; if you decide to expel Tom from school, then he cannot work for the college as a teacher).

The athletic department does not condone cheating, however, it does not want to lose Jack from the team due to a suspension or expulsion. With Jack on the team, the school has a good chance at winning the conference championship. Without Jack, the college is unlikely to win the championship. In addition, the money brought in from attendance at the games due to Jack's popularity has increased this department's resources, which it does not want to lose. On the grounds that extreme punishment for either Jack or Tom would only hurt the school and serve no useful purpose, the athletic department supports a lenient course of disciplinary action.

The college faculty wishes to uphold the highest academic and ethical principles. After all, the main purpose of the college is as an academic institution. The faculty believes that cheating is reprehensible; is it the academic equivalent of theft and fraud, and the harshest punishment should be given to both Jack and Tom. In addition, a harsh and publicized disciplinary action will send a message to others that cheating is not tolerated at this college. This message will have a positive effect on the college's reputation for high academic standards. If the punishment is too light, then a precedent of lenience will be set for cases in the future, conveying the message that cheating is condoned, or it will convey a message that different standards apply to different students.

Your group represents the college's administration, who wants a solution that takes into account the preferences of both the athletic department and faculty positions and protects the college's public image. The administration wants to ensure the continued success of the athletic program. It also wants to uphold the college's academic standards and principles. Both the athletic and academic programs have contributed to the college's positive reputation. The administration is concerned that this matter be handled very carefully or the college may jeopardize its reputation, future enrollment, and financial support from other institutions and alumni.

As a committee, your task is to agree on how to settle this matter. You all must agree on one option to resolve each of the five issues. *Your goal is to maximize the satisfaction of the different departments.* The more your solution takes into account the concerns of all parties, the better.

Issues and possible courses of action:

Issue 1: Jack's grade in the course

Possible courses of action:

- 1a. Give Jack his original grade on the exam (a D).
- 1b. Give Jack a failing grade on the exam.
- 1c. Give Jack a failing grade in the course.

Issue 2: Jack's status on the basketball team

- 2a. Make no change in Jack's basketball eligibility.
- 2b. Suspend Jack from the next basketball game.
- 2c. Suspend Jack from the basketball team for the rest of the season.
- 2d. Suspend Jack from the basketball team for an indefinite length of time and require that he appeal to be reinstated.
- 2e. Kick Jack off the team.

Issue 3: Jack's status as a college student

- 3a. Make no change in Jack's college status.
- 3b. Give Jack a warning, stating that if he is involved in another incident involving cheating in the future, he will be expelled.
- 3c. Suspend Jack from college (classes and athletics) for the rest of the semester.
- 3d. Suspend Jack from the college for an indefinite length of time and require that he appeal for readmittance.
- 3e. Expel Jack from the college.

Issue 4: Tom's status as an instructor (note: If Tom is restricted from teaching, he loses a source of income that helps pay his way through graduate school.)

- 4a. Make no change in Tom's teaching status.
- 4b. Give Tom a reprimand to be placed in his permanent record, which will be seen by potential employers after is finished with school.
- 4c. Suspend Tom from teaching for the rest of the semester
- 4d. Suspend Tom from teaching for an indefinite length of time and require that he appeal to be reinstated.
- 4e. Do not allow Tom to teach again during his time remaining in graduate school

Issue 5: Tom's status as a graduate student

- 5a. Make no change in Tom's college status
- 5b. Give Tom a warning, stating that if he is involved in another incident involving cheating in the future, he will be expelled.
- 5c. Suspend Tom from the college for the rest of the semester.
- 5d. Suspend Tom from the college for an indefinite length of time and require that he appeal for readmittance.
- 5e. Expel Tom from the college.

Once all group members have finished reading the instructions, please discuss this case as a group and try to resolve as many issues as possible. When prompted, please have one person record the consensus your group has reached on each issue and indicate the rationale for choosing each option.