Collaborating with others: Examples

Real life examples from UW*:

Master’s students were given a take-home final examination, which contained instructions that the answers “are to be your work alone”. Part of the exam required that the students prepare a particular item. These four students used a sample item found on the web, without attribution.

Consequence: Each student was given 0 out of 45 for that part of the final exam, and a signed copy of a letter admitting to the exam offence was placed in each student’s academic file.

Two PhD students submitted work that was similar. The professor and an Associate Dean reviewed that work and the original pieces on which the copies were based, and evidence of plagiarism was found. Close comparison of the work and that provided by the second/other student also indicated significant collusion in spite of the students' protestations that they had completed their assignments separately. Another professor provided convincing proof that the second/other student had also used unacknowledged material from several websites in an assignment for his/her course in spite of explicit instructions regarding penalties for plagiarism.

Consequence: The first student received a mark of 55 in the course and a three-term suspension from UW. The second student received a mark of 57 for the course and a six-term suspension from UW. The six-term suspension reflects a second plagiarism offence – the second student’s first offence was committed the year before in work for 2 Master’s courses (the student not then penalized, the case not reported at that time).

* These examples were obtained from the Academic Discipline and Student Grievance Activity section of the UW Office of Academic Integrity website.