

A dilemma is defined as an issue or challenge that has no one correct solution and any decision that is made, comes with benefits and costs. In our plagiarism case involving Alexandra Romanov and Professor Stone, the UEC is put in a position with more than one option and any solution we choose will lead to both negative and positive outcomes. With this in mind, we must weigh our options based on our principles and beliefs, also known as our ethics. The mix of ethics within our internal conflict leaves the UEC with an ethical dilemma. We must weigh our options based on how Professor Stone will react with his zero-tolerance policy outlook, how Alexandra's status as a student will be affected, and how her family life will be impacted. With all of these factors in mind, I believe Alexandra should receive an F on the paper, but no other punishment should be enacted.

The first factor we must consider is how Professor Stone's zero-tolerance policy outlook will affect the situation. Since Alexandra committed blatant plagiarism, her most severe punishment could be getting dismissed from the University for a semester. As a 25-year-old mom, Alexandra would be at higher risk for dropping out of school if her education were to be disrupted by her suspension (Milner et al, 2018). It would be insensitive to increase the likelihood of Alexandra risking her education when there are extraneous factors that should be considered. For example, Alexandra is currently taking 5 classes that all have 5 papers due and she takes care of her 2-year-old daughter while battling mono and slight depression. Professor Stone has a zero-tolerance mindset that doesn't fully take into consideration the mental and physical health of Alexandra. He prides himself on failing students and feels personally slighted by plagiarism which creates an emotional tie that could fuel his zero-tolerance mindset. The zero-tolerance policy was created in order to deter potential offenders since all crimes are treated equally with serious consequences (Milner et al, 2018). With the amount of cases that have been

brought to the UEC, we can determine that this policy doesn't work in deterring plagiarism. As demonstrated by Alexandra, students are put in situations where they feel pressured to complete papers even if they do it through illegal and morally wrong ways. That is why Alexandra should be allowed to express her concerns because the zero-tolerance policy dehumanizes the actions and flaws of students.

Alexandra deserves the opportunity to learn from her mistake and find resources in order to help her mental well-being. When assessing Alexandra's background, we can hypothesize that she acted out of desperation and instability. We can determine this by taking into account that her current GPA is an A- and this is the first academic misbehavior on her record. Her act of plagiarism is inconsistent with her past academic behaviors. If the UEC were to suspend Alexandra for a semester or even fail her in this class, she could be deterred from completing her education. Many people might argue that Alexandra bought a paper and turned it in as her own therefore she should suffer the consequences. My argument is that with Alexandra's high achieving background, she will feel severe punishment without hopelessness if she were to receive an F on the paper. I came to this conclusion when looking at how failure affects students such as Alexandra. High success ratios improve learning because successful students are now practicing "correct" responses, while the unsuccessful students are practicing "incorrect" responses (Dickinson, 1989). Therefore, Alexandra's successful academic career will be put in jeopardy when receiving an F on her paper which will elicit an "incorrect" response that will deter future plagiarism.

The end goal of this case is to deter the first-time offender from future plagiarism while helping them maintain hope for completing a degree. Aiding Alexandra in her senior year, working towards her degree is especially important when we consider her family life. She is

currently going through school in order to give herself a better opportunity at a financially stable job. Her career is very important when considering her husband is a seasonal worker with no degree and their combined income must support their family of three. Additionally, it is important to consider that her husband holds resentment towards the time Alexandra spends on school and papers. If Alexandra were to be delayed in her graduation due to suspension or a failed class, there would be high incentive for her to not complete an extra semester and fail to obtain a college degree in order to ease her husband's resentment. As a member of the UEC it is my job to think about the ethics of the situation. At the beginning of this essay, I defined ethics as our principles and beliefs that help us determine decisions. Since I am a current student at the University, my beliefs are that all students should have an opportunity to complete their degree in college especially if their past record implies hard work and good academic standing.

Alexandra may have committed an act of plagiarism but her background shows that she has never done anything like this before. Since the ethical punishment would be one that both deters future punishment as well as encourages her to continue to pursue her degree, we should give her an F on the paper.

In the future, we can change the zero-tolerance mindset at Universities to create an atmosphere where students and teachers can feel safe and acknowledged. Discipline should still be in place, but more teacher-student communication could be present, giving students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and voice their opinions. Giving Alexandra an F on the paper will deter future cheating and still allow for a healthy educational environment.

REFERENCES

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