Chapter 18
Suspensions of Cheating in an Online Class

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dr. John Dobson is an Assistant Professor of Education Leadership at Northern New England State University (NNESU) who teaches traditional classes and online classes for his department. As the level of state financial support has decreased, online classes have become increasingly important to NNESU. They are one of the few growing revenue streams at the institution. While teaching a summer online course, Dr. Dobson comes to believe that one of his students is cheating. In this case, Dr. Dobson attempts to navigate the process of proving that the student is cheating, holding the student accountable for his/her actions, and garnering the institutional support necessary to hold the student accountable.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Northern New England State University (NNESU) is a four-year comprehensive state-supported institution located in a small city near the Canadian border. The university is comprised of three colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business and Finance, and Education and Professional Studies. It is the largest employer in the surrounding community.

Enrollment at NNESU is comprised of approximately 6,000 undergraduate students and 600 graduate students. Of the total student body, 90% come from the state and 60% hail from the four counties surrounding NNESU. There are 350 international students from 38 different countries attending the university, as well
as approximately 400 full-time and adjunct faculty employed by NNESU. The hierarchy and reporting structure of the upper administration can be seen in Figure 1. The organizational chart shows the President’s cabinet as well as each of their direct reports.

The organizational structure of the College of Education and Professional Studies is represented in Figure 2. The Dean employs an Associate Dean and an Assistant Dean, who are both tenured faculty members within the College of Education and Professional Studies. The Associate Dean is the first contact for student and personnel issues. The Assistant Dean works primarily on the various accreditation reports produced by the College. Department Chairs for each of the academic departments within the College of Education and Professional Studies report directly to the Dean.

*Figure 1. NNESU president’s cabinet organizational chart*
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