



## Student kicked off ship in Greece for plagiarism

### U.Va. single-sanction honor code in force for Semester at Sea

Friday, Aug 08, 2008 - 12:08 AM Updated: 07:06 PM

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An Ohio University student was ejected from the Semester at Sea program this week, put ashore in Greece for violating the University of Virginia's single-sanction honor code.

Allison Routman says she was expelled from the U.Va.-sponsored program for plagiarism because of three factual sentence fragments and a paraphrased summary of a movie she looked up on Wikipedia.

Routman, a 21-year-old senior, arrived at her home in Minneapolis yesterday. She said she had no idea she had done anything wrong until she was accused of plagiarism.

"I had no clue," she said.

Her father, Brent, has complained about her treatment to the U.Va. Board of Visitors, arguing that the "death penalty" expulsion for academic dishonesty lacks the safeguards that would be in place for students on the U.Va. campus.

U.Va. is the academic partner with the Institute for Shipboard Education for the Semester at Sea program, which operates three voyages a year aboard a passenger ship.

U.Va. spokeswoman Carol Wood says the students who take part in the program are well-informed about requirements of the honor code. An honor-code representative conducts an all-hands meeting about the system for students during the first week.

"We understand that not all students live under this at their home universities," she said.

But students who take part in the program are held to the same standards as U.Va. students because they are receiving academic credit from the university, she said.

U.Va.'s honor code and its single-penalty consequences have been challenged before. Opponents last year sought to have it revised to allow for punishments less harsh than expulsion. However, students voted in a referendum to keep the single sanction.

Wood, citing the honor code's confidentiality rules, said she could not speak about specifics of the case. She said she did not know how many students have been expelled from the Semester At Sea program.

Routman was nearing the end of the summer voyage when she was accused of plagiarism. Her class had been assigned to watch a movie and write a paper comparing it with personal experiences from the voyage.

She chose "Europa Europa," a film about the Holocaust, and related it to her experience growing up Jewish.

She said she watched the movie but looked up the synopsis on Wikipedia to make sure she used the right historical terminology.

The day before the papers were returned, she said, the professor told the class there were some suspected cases of plagiarism and asked students to come forward and make a "conscientious retraction."

"Had I had any idea I had done something wrong, I would have absolutely come forward," she said.

Several students did, however, and were not expelled, she said. But she and another student were ordered off the ship.

She said she did not realize she was in trouble until she was called in by the program's registrar, Laurie Casteen. Casteen, daughter-in-law of U.Va. President John Casteen, is the university's assistant to the vice president for student affairs.

As registrar, it was her role to determine whether Routman would be formally accused after the allegation was made by the professor.

Jess Huang, chairman of the student-run honor committee at U.Va., said different procedures were set up for investigating violations in the Semester At Sea program.

Those procedural changes were made by the committee with legal consultation because not enough U.Va. students with honor-code

training are generally on board the ship, she said.

On campus, students would handle the investigation and trial and act as adviser for the accused, she said, but "on the ship we don't have those resources."

While the procedures might differ, "the spirit and philosophy" to uphold the integrity of U.Va.'s standards is the same, she said.

But Routman questions whether her case warranted investigation under the code's criteria, which include dishonest intent and non-triviality.

She said she had been taught to rephrase to avoid plagiarism and that was what she did. The three sentence fragments she quoted verbatim, she said, were factual.

The program administrators at first wanted to set her ashore in Egypt, the next port call, she said. But her parents raised safety concerns because she is Jewish, and she was allowed to stay on the ship until it reached Greece.

Routman said she and the other expelled student were put in a cab at the port of Piraeus in Greece and arrived at the Athens airport about 7 p.m. Wednesday. They spent most of the night in the airport awaiting their flights home.

Their former classmates on the ship, which set sail June 15 from Nova Scotia, are scheduled to return to Norfolk on Aug. 22. Contact Karin Kapsidelis at (804) 649-6119 or [kkapsidelis@timesdispatch.com](mailto:kkapsidelis@timesdispatch.com).

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