

Ohio U. Punishes 2 Professors Who Approved Plagiarized Theses

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Ohio University is turning up the heat on faculty members at the Russ College of Engineering and Technology who signed off on some 40 mechanical-engineering theses over the past 20 years that turned out to have contained plagiarized material (The Chronicle, June 2).

Jay Gunasekera, who stepped down in June as department chairman, has been relieved of the "privilege" of advising graduate students for the next three years, according to a university news release. As has Bhavin V. Mehta, a nontenured professor whose contract at the university expires at the end of the 2006-7 academic year. The two professors, who were identified by the university as having been the advisers on the most theses with plagiarism, will not receive merit pay increases for the next academic year.

Possible further sanctions are still to come. Dennis Irwin, dean of the engineering college, and other faculty members will meet this fall to determine whether the university should also strip Mr. Gunasekera of his Distinguished Moss Professorship.