

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
DECISION OF THE HEARING COMMITTEE
OF THE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE

IN THE MATTER OF A CHARGE OF UNPROFESSIONAL
CONDUCT AGAINST COREY NICHOLAS CONROY

The hearing committee of the Professional Conduct Committee of the Alberta Teachers' Association reports that a charge of unprofessional conduct laid against Corey Nicholas Conroy of [Location Redacted] was duly investigated in accordance with the *Teaching Profession Act*. The hearing was held online, via video conference, on Wednesday, June 23, 2021, at 0847.

The participants were

1. Professional Conduct Committee members appointed as the hearing committee [REDACTED];
2. [REDACTED];
3. [REDACTED];
4. [REDACTED];
5. [REDACTED]

The investigated member, Corey Nicholas Conroy, was not present and was not represented by counsel.

COMPOSITION/JURISDICTION

There was no objection to either the composition of the committee or its jurisdiction to hear the case.

CHARGE AND PLEA

The following charge was read aloud by the secretary to the hearing committee:

1. Corey Nicholas Conroy is charged with unprofessional conduct pursuant to the *Teaching Profession Act* in that he, while a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association, on or about January 1, 2017 to February 28, 2019 inclusive, engaged in conduct for which he, on October 20, 2020, was convicted of an indictable offence, to wit:
On or between January 1, 2017 and February 28, 2019 inclusive in [Location Redacted] did by deceit, falsehood or other fraudulent means defraud the [Name Redacted] of a value exceeding \$5000, contrary to section 380(1)(a) of the Criminal Code of Canada.

The investigated member entered a plea of guilty to the charge, by written submission.

WITNESSES

There were no witnesses called.

EXHIBITS FILED

- Exhibit 1 Declaration of awareness of rights, signed by Conroy, dated June 17, 2021
- Exhibit 2 Certificate of *Criminal Code* conviction dated October 20, 2020
- Exhibit 3 Notice of hearing and Canada Post confirmation of delivery on May 23, 2021
- Exhibit 4 Proof of Conroy's membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association, dated April 29, 2021
- Exhibit 5 Submission on plea, signed by Conroy, dated June 17, 2021
- Exhibit 6 Agreed statement of facts and appendix, signed by Conroy and [REDACTED], dated June 15, 2021 and June 21, 2021, respectively
- Exhibit 7 Joint submission on penalty, signed by Conroy and [REDACTED] dated June 15, 2021 and June 21, 2021, respectively

EVIDENCE ADDUCED AND EXHIBITS FILED INDICATED

1. Conroy was a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association from September 1, 2010 to February 28, 2020. (Exhibit 4)
2. Conroy was a teacher at [School Redacted] and [School Redacted] at the time of the incidents that resulted in the charge. (Exhibit 6, p 2)
3. Conroy was an executive member of the [School Local Redacted] and served as the local president from May 1, 2016 to April 9, 2019. (Exhibit 6, p 2)
4. Conroy was a volunteer with the [Location Redacted] [Name Redacted] and served as the treasurer from September 2016 until February 2019. (Exhibit 6, p 2)
5. Conroy filed a request for investigation of unprofessional conduct with the Association on May 1, 2019. The complaint stated, "I misappropriated and borrowed funds from a nonprofit group of which I was the treasurer. This was done without prior approval of the board." (Exhibit 6, p 2)
6. An investigating officer was assigned on May 10, 2019, and the investigation commenced on May 15, 2019. The investigation report was submitted to the executive secretary on April 19, 2021, with the recommendation that a professional conduct hearing be held. (Exhibit 6, p 2)
The executive secretary ordered a hearing on April 28, 2021. (Exhibit 6, p 2)



7. In September 2016, Conroy became the treasurer of the [REDACTED] and was given signing authority over the [REDACTED] bank accounts, which included (a) a casino account used only to collect and spend revenue received from casinos and (b) a general account for revenues not related to casino funds. (Exhibit 6, Appendix A, p 2)
8. In February 2019, the Audit Branch of the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission (AGLC) audited the [REDACTED]'s casino account, which resulted in a referral for a more detailed follow-up investigation by AGLC. (Exhibit 6, Appendix A, p 2)
9. Investigations were conducted by both the AGLC and the Edmonton Police Service (EPS). (Exhibit 6, Appendix A, p 2)
10. The AGLC audit and investigation concluded that Conroy had defrauded the [REDACTED] of \$30,201.92 from the casino account. Thirty-nine cheques were written by Conroy from January 5, 2017 to March 4, 2019. (Exhibit 6, Appendix A, p 2)
11. The EPS investigation found that Conroy had also committed fraud with respect to funds in the general account, specifically
 - a. Conroy wrote cheques payable to himself for which there was no corresponding debt owed by [REDACTED]; and
 - b. Conroy transferred money from the general account to his personal PayPal account without any legitimate business purpose for the transfers.(Exhibit 6, Appendix A, pp 2–3)
12. After notification of the audit was given to the [REDACTED], Conroy called a meeting with the other two signing authorities for the [REDACTED]'s bank accounts, including the president of the [REDACTED] board, and told them that he had stolen money from the casino account and the general account. He advised the president that he had taken approximately \$40,000 from the general account and \$20,000 from the casino account. He also admitted that he had forged the president's signature on an annual Casino Financial Report to AGLC and that the report contained inaccurate information. (Exhibit 6, Appendix A, p 3)
13. Conroy provided the president of [REDACTED] with a list of cheques that totaled \$27,501.04, which he had fraudulently drawn on the casino account. The AGLC investigation revealed that there was an additional \$2,700.88 in fraudulent transactions that Conroy had not accounted for in his initial list. Conroy also advised the president of [REDACTED] that the total amount he had taken fraudulently through the general account was \$47,548.01. The accuracy of this calculation was admitted for the purpose of Conroy's guilty plea for both criminal proceedings and discipline proceedings. (Exhibit 6, Appendix A, p 3)
14. Conroy admitted that the total amount of the funds defrauded from the [REDACTED] was \$77,749.33. (Exhibit 6, Appendix A, p 3)

15. On October 20, 2020, Conroy was convicted of the following indictable offense:
[Conroy] [o]n or between January 1, 2017 and February 28, 2019 inclusive in Edmonton, Alberta did by deceit, falsehood or other fraudulent means defraud the [REDACTED] [Name Redacted] of a value exceeding \$5000.00, contrary to section 380(1)(a) of the Criminal Code of Canada. Crown proceeded by indictment.
(Exhibit 2)
16. The court ordered imprisonment for a term of six months and restitution payment in the amount of \$6,345.67. (Exhibit 2)
17. Conroy has repaid to [REDACTED] \$77,749.33, the total amount stolen. (Exhibit 7, p 2)

DECISION OF THE HEARING COMMITTEE

Charge 1 Guilty

REASONS FOR DECISION

1. Conroy plead guilty and was convicted of an indictable criminal offence under section 380(1)(a) of the *Criminal Code*. (Exhibit 2)
2. Section 23(2)(a) of the *Teaching Profession Act* states that if a member has been convicted of an indictable offence, the conduct of the member on which the conviction is based is deemed to constitute unprofessional conduct.

SUBMISSION ON PENALTY

Conroy and [REDACTED] in their joint submission on penalty, recommended the following penalty:

1. A letter of severe reprimand;
 2. A declaration of ineligibility in the Association for a period of 2 years; and
 3. A recommendation to the minister of education to suspend Conroy's teaching certificate for a period of 2 years.
- (Exhibit 7, p 4)



PENALTY

The committee ordered the following penalty:

1. A letter of severe reprimand
2. A declaration of ineligibility for membership in the Association for a period of 2 years
3. A recommendation to the minister of education to suspend Conroy's teaching certificate for a period of 2 years

REASONS FOR PENALTY

1. After due consideration of all the circumstances of this case, the hearing committee deferred to the joint submission on penalty.
2. A teacher has an obligation to act in a professional manner at all times. Conroy was in a position of trust with the [REDACTED], his local and his convention board when he committed the acts that resulted in the charge.
3. Through his actions, Conroy caused strife, financial suffering and reputational harm to the [REDACTED]. The type of unprofessional conduct demonstrated by Conroy erodes public faith in the profession.
4. Although Conroy was in his early [age redacted] at the time of his actions that resulted in the charge, his teaching experience and positions of leadership in Association subgroups suggest that Conroy should have had a clear understanding of his obligation to adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct and to honourably fulfill the fiduciary responsibilities of his position with the [REDACTED]. (Exhibit 7, p 1)
5. Conroy reported himself to the [REDACTED] and to the Association. (Exhibit 6, pp 2-3)
6. Conroy cooperated during the ATA investigation and fully repaid the amount he stole. (Exhibit 7, p 2)
7. Conroy has no previous convictions of unprofessional conduct. (Exhibit 7, p 1)
8. ATA precedent cases reviewed by the committee were consistent with the penalties ordered against members found guilty of unprofessional conduct for indictable convictions for similar fraudulent behaviour.

9. The committee determined that the requested penalty was reasonable and appropriate given that Conroy stole a total of \$77,749.33 from the [REDACTED] over three dozen separate fraudulent transactions from January 2017 to March 2019. (Exhibit 6, Appendix A, p 2)

Dated at the City of Edmonton in the Province of Alberta, July 22, 2021.

HEARING COMMITTEE OF THE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE OF
THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

