

## Academic Honesty Policy

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Academic Honesty Policy is to provide a clear statement of expectations on academic integrity and a fair process to handle alleged violations.

### POLICY

#### 1. Underlying Principles

- A. Academic honesty, a necessary foundation of a learning community, is expected of all members of the university community. Academic freedom depends on honesty and integrity. The university makes academic integrity a priority and the administration must provide support services to address issues of academic honesty.
- B. Maintaining the standards of academic honesty requires the mutual cooperation of all members of the campus community. Both students and faculty/librarians are called upon to promote the pursuit of truth and learning, and respect for the intellectual accomplishment of others. Students are responsible for understanding the principles of academic integrity and for the academic integrity of all work submitted for credit. All members of the academic community also are expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the faculty member teaching the course or the department chair. In addition to the entire community's responsibility, faculty will promote academic integrity through clear expectations on syllabi for homework, collaborative assignments, research papers, exams, use of the internet, and so on. If any member of the academic community finds evidence of academic dishonesty, she/he is expected to report it promptly (see process and deadlines below).
- C. Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy are unacceptable and are subject to academic penalties, including reduced grade, failure of the course, and suspension or dismissal from the university.
- D. Violations of academic honesty include, but are not limited to, cheating on examinations, plagiarism, submission of papers for credit in two or more courses, interference with the ability of other students to make use of permitted course materials, facilitating academic dishonesty, engaging in research on human or animal subjects without permission from the appropriate campus committee, and failure to report academic dishonesty.

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- E. Once a student has been charged with a violation of this policy, the student's status will continue until the conclusion of Academic Honesty proceedings, but no degree will be awarded until the matter is resolved. Withdrawal from the course may not be used to avoid a formal charge of academic dishonesty.
  - F. Parties involved in this process, including the student, faculty member, department chair, appropriate dean, vice president for academic affairs, and the academic honesty committee shall maintain strict confidentiality during and after this process.

## 2. Violations

### A. Cheating on Examinations

Violations of academic honesty with regard to examinations consist of the following:

1. Receiving assistance or assisting others while the examination is in progress.
2. Obtaining or attempting to obtain prior to an examination, copies of the examination or the questions to appear on the examination.
3. Disseminating any written or verbal information regarding the contents of an examination to students who have not yet completed or taken the examination.
4. Using or consulting any unauthorized information, such as notes or books, during an examination.

### B. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the intellectual work of others (works, ideas, artwork, computer programming code, etc.) as if it were one's own work. Some common forms of plagiarism are submitting someone else's paper as one's own, copying a passage from another source without citing the source, and expressing a published idea of theory in different words without crediting the source of the idea. Plagiarism constitutes intellectual dishonesty and a theft of intellectual property. Plagiarism is the most serious charge in academia, for it undermines the integrity of academic inquiry and scholarship. All scholars — faculty, librarians, and students alike — are to be held to the same standards. Issues of plagiarism may be subtle; therefore, students are encouraged to discuss any questions they have with the faculty member teaching the course and other support services on campus.

### C. Fabrication

A student may not fabricate — that is, falsify or invent — information or citation in an academic assignment. This includes information used in laboratory

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experiments or reports, and reproduction of a quote from a book review or other secondary source while indicating that the quotation was obtained from the book itself.

## **D. Multiple Submissions of a Single Paper**

A student may not submit the same paper, presentation, or other work for credit in more than one course without prior written consent from the instructors of the courses involved.

## **E. Interference with Use of Materials**

A student may not interfere with the ability of other students to make use of permitted course materials. This includes denying others access to scholarly resources or deliberately interfering with the progress of another student or scholar such as by giving false or misleading information, making library materials unavailable by stealing or defacing books or journals, deliberately misplacing or destroying reserve materials, or altering computer files that belong to another.

## **F. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty**

A student may not knowingly or negligently allow their work to be used by another student or otherwise help others violate any aspect of the Academic Honesty Policy. Students who help others in this way are guilty of academic dishonesty even if they do not personally benefit from the dishonest act.

## **G. Improper use of Human and Animal Subjects**

Research involving human beings requires review and approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. Such research requires informed written consent. Students and faculty engaged in research involving animals requires review and approval by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

## **H. Failure to Report Academic Dishonesty**

Failing to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the faculty member teaching the course or the department chair is an example of academic dishonesty and is liable to the same sanctions.

### **3. Recommended syllabus text**

It is recommended that instructors discuss academic honesty on the first day of class, and that they include the following text in their syllabus:

Academic honesty is expected of all members of the academic community. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on examinations, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions of a single paper, interference with use of materials, facilitating academic dishonesty, improper use of human and animal subjects, and failure to report incidents of academic dishonesty. Violations may result in failure of the assignment, failure of the course, or suspension or dismissal from the university.

#### **4. Establishment and Role of the Academic Honesty Committee**

- A. The Academic Honesty Committee (AHC) will be comprised of four (4) faculty members/librarians and one (1) student member. Faculty members/librarians shall be selected or appointed by the MSCA. It is recommended that no more than one faculty member/librarian from a department serve on the AHC. The student member will be selected by SGA.
- B. The AHC is charged with evaluating evidence, determining responsibility, considering mitigating circumstances, and deciding sanctions. All evidence and deliberations before the AHC are confidential.

#### **5. Process for Charges of Academic Dishonesty**

- A. Faculty members are encouraged to seek an informal resolution of the violation with the student within fifteen (15) business days from the discovery of the violation.
- B. The faculty member will notify the student of the alleged violation within five (5) business days of the discovery and offer the student a reasonable opportunity to discuss the issue before taking any action. This notification may be by campus mail or email. The notification should include documentation of the date of discovery and set a deadline for the student to meet with the faculty member. This deadline should be no fewer than five (5) and no more than ten (10) business days from the notification. Either the student or the faculty member may invite the department chair to attend the meeting, but neither is required to do so.
- C. Withdrawal from the course may not be used to avoid a formal charge of academic dishonesty.
- D. If the faculty member and the student agree during their discussions that the violation does not rise to the level of a formal charge of Academic Dishonesty, the matter is ended in an informal resolution. Such a resolution could include repeating the assignment, completing additional work, a grade penalty for the assignment or the course, or some other settlement.

- E. If the faculty member and the student agree that academic dishonesty did occur, the student will sign the form included at the end of this policy that admits the violation of the policy. The form will be filed with the Dean who will maintain all such records.
- F. If the student and faculty member cannot agree, the faculty member must file a formal charge of academic dishonesty with the Dean within fifteen (15) business days from the date the student and faculty member reached an impasse, which sets in motion the hearing process. The faculty member may not issue sanctions (see Sanctions below) without admission of a violation by the student or the resolution of formal charges. Included in the charges will be a letter of explanation and all case materials that document or led to the charges.
- G. The Dean will schedule a hearing to take place within fifteen (15) business days of the formal filing of the charge. If the charge occurs with fewer than twenty-one (21) calendar days remaining before the final day of classes in the academic semester, the case may be carried over to the next semester. No hearings will be held between June 1 and August 31, or between the Fall and Spring semesters. At any point in the process the student may admit the violation as charged, or the faculty member may withdraw the charges.
- H. The student charged will receive notification from the Dean of the date, time and place of the hearing; the source and nature of the charge; a list of the Academic Honesty Committee members; and the possible sanctions. Evidence to be submitted at the hearing by the faculty member bringing the charge must be available at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing for review by the student in the Office of Academic Affairs.
- I. At the hearing, at least four (4) members of the committee, including the student member, must be present to establish a quorum. The hearing will be a closed meeting, and may be attended by the hearing committee, the faculty member, the student charged, and the Dean. The student and faculty member may each be accompanied by one (1) person; said person(s) may not be present as formal legal representation or participate in the process in any way. If the student charged or the faculty member making the charge chooses not to participate, the hearing will proceed as scheduled.
- J. The Dean will convene the hearing. The charge will be presented, along with relevant evidence and witnesses. The student has an opportunity to respond to the charge and present evidence, in which case, the faculty member making the charge and the hearing committee may question the student at the conclusion of his or her presentation. The hearing will conclude with closing statements by the faculty member bringing the charge and then by the student charged.

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- K. Immediately following the hearing, the AHC will meet privately to deliberate and to determine the outcome by a majority vote through secret ballot. Committee members may not abstain from voting. Once the finding is reached, the AHC will then decide the sanction appropriate to the case. The Dean will mail written notification of the decision and any sanction within five (5) business days to the student and the faculty member involved. The finding of the Committee with regard to the question of academic honesty is final.
  - L. Appeals may be based only on procedural error or sanction imposed, and they must be filed within five (5) business days of the notification of the decision. The appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for adjudication.

## 6. Sanctions

Recommended minimum sanctions after an admission or finding of academic dishonesty follow. Committee members are urged to take into account the seriousness of the offense and to seek the recommendation of the faculty member making the charge.

- A. First Offense: failure of the course or suspension from the university.
- B. Second Offense: suspension or dismissal from the university.

If a student receives a grade sanction for the course because of an admission or finding of academic dishonesty, he or she may repeat that course but the grade substitution policy will not apply. The grade submitted for the course in question will continue to be counted in the student's cumulative grade point average.

No sanctions will be imposed until all aspects of the case are concluded.

## 7. Official Records

The Office of Academic Affairs will maintain official records of disciplinary action. Records will not be released to individuals outside the university except by the written authorization of the student involved or under the conditions specified in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Access to the official records of disciplinary action must be authorized by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, or the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or Graduate and Continuing Education.

## REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Vice President of Academic Affairs.