

Proposed
Policy on Student Academic Integrity
February 2009

Integrity is a principle which permeates all the activities of the University and which guides the behavior of faculty, students and staff. The spirit of academic integrity denotes adherence to the precept that “one’s work is one’s own.” The process by which integrity is upheld assumes clear communication of University expectations, standards and policies and clear communication of students’ and faculty’s rights and responsibilities.

Definitions

This policy is intended to foster student academic integrity and to address cases of student academic misconduct which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

Lying

Communicating untruths or withholding information as part of an investigation, or in order to gain an academic advantage.

Cheating

The act of wrongfully using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids or the ideas or work of another in order to gain an advantage.

Acts of cheating include but are not limited to:

- giving unauthorized aid to another student or receiving unauthorized aid from another person on tests, quizzes, assignments or projects;
- using or consulting unauthorized materials or using unauthorized equipment or devices on tests, quizzes, assignments or projects;
- altering or falsifying any information on tests, quizzes, assignments or projects;
- working on any project, test, quiz or assignment outside of the time constraints imposed;
- submitting an assignment in a somewhat altered form or using any material portion of a paper or project to fulfill the requirements of more than one course unless the student has received prior faculty permission to do so;

- failing to adhere to an instructor's specific directions with respect to the terms of academic integrity or academic honesty;
- using fraudulent methods in laboratory, studio, field, computer work or professional placement;
- other acts generally recognized as dishonorable or dishonest which bear upon academic endeavors.

Plagiarism

Students are responsible for learning proper scholarly procedures which require that all quoted material be identified by quotation marks or indentation on the page, and the source of information and ideas, if from another, must be identified and be attributed to that source. Acts of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- intentionally or unintentionally deceiving or disregarding proper scholarly procedures;
- participating in illicit collaboration with other individuals in the completion of course assignments;
- presenting information, thoughts or ideas from another source as if they are your own, or without giving appropriate attribution;
- other acts generally recognized as plagiarism.

Procedures

The following procedures are intended to provide direction to all parties (e.g., faculty and students) regarding the appropriate steps necessary to initiate and administratively adjudicate a reported academic integrity violation. While the purposed steps are designed with most case and/or situation types in mind, the Dean of Students reserves the right to modify the process to best accommodate special situations or circumstances as necessary.

Course-based Faculty Action

Individual faculty members will, in most cases, have the right and responsibility to deal directly with any cases of academic misconduct that arise in their courses. If a

faculty member believes a student has committed an act of academic misconduct, the following procedures should be followed:

1. *Advise Student* - The faculty member will advise the student in a timely fashion of the accusation and will allow the student an opportunity to question or respond to the charge before implementing a sanction.
2. *Determine Sanction* - The sanction issued should reflect the seriousness of the act. The faculty member may impose the following sanctions:
 - warning
 - reduction in grade recorded for a test, assignment, etc.
 - issuance of an F on test, assignment, etc.
 - issuance of an F and removal from a course

If the faculty member determines that the academic misconduct warrants a sanction greater than issuance of an F and removal from the course (e.g., removal from a program of study, suspension or expulsion from the University) the faculty member may recommend a greater sanction for consideration by the Academic Policy Committee. To recommend a sanction beyond the course level, faculty must submit a letter to the Dean of Students along with letters of support from the Department Chair or program director, as well as the Dean of the School. A copy of all such referrals must be sent to the student.

3. *Complete Report* - The faculty member must complete an Academic Integrity Violation Incident Report form for any incident in which a sanction has been issued or recommended, including a warning sanction. This form must be sent in a timely manner to the Dean of Students and to the student as an official notification of the sanction.
4. *Repeat Offenders* – The Dean of Students will forward to the APC the names of students who have been reported for more than one academic integrity violation. Based on the severity of the offender history, the Academic Policies Committee may elect to impose additional sanctions which may include but is not limited to suspension or expulsion from the university.
5. *Maintain Records* – All materials or documents that may be pertinent to an Academic Integrity violation (e.g. Academic Integrity Violation Incident Report,

correspondence, etc.) must be retained in the department central office for a period of five years. This provides a long-term central location of AI sanctions which is important for a review of repeat offenders.

Dismissal from Department Programs

The sanction of dismissal from a professional accredited program (i.e., MBA, Nursing, Social Work, Education, etc.) based on an academic integrity violation may be issued at the departmental level but must follow a clearly stated departmental policy and procedure that has been made available to students. The department must submit an Academic Integrity Violation Incident Report and a copy of the program dismissal letter to the Dean of Students in a timely manner. A copy of all materials or documents associated with the program dismissal including, but not limited to, the Academic Integrity Violation Incident report form, correspondence, etc. should be forwarded to the Dean of Students, and must also be retained in the department central office for a period of five years.

Student Appeals of Department or Faculty Sanctions

A student has the right to appeal an Academic Integrity sanction issued by a faculty member or department, but must follow the following procedures:

1. *Submit An Appeal* - A student appeal, including a detailed statement of the grounds for the appeal and any supporting documentation, must be submitted in writing to the Dean of Students in the Office of Student Affairs within five working days of receiving the Academic Integrity Violation Incident Report from the Dean of Students and/or Faculty member.

The student's written appeal ordinarily will be forwarded to the Academic Policies Committee by the Dean of Students within a reasonable time of its filing. In the event the Academic Policies Committee is not available, the Dean of Students will forward the appeal to the Provost, who will attempt to create an ad hoc committee to handle the review as soon as practicable. (All further references in this policy to the Academic Policies Committee include the ad hoc committee where appropriate.)

The Dean of Students will send a copy of the student appeal to the faculty member and faculty member's department chair. The Dean of Students will request a copy of all documents used to determine the faculty and/or the department sanction and any additional correspondence or documents pertinent to the case from the faculty and/or department.

2. *Continue Coursework* - In most cases, the student shall remain in the course pending the results of the appeal. However, the Dean of Students does have the discretion to remove the student from a course pending the appeal where appropriate and where course continuation compromises the integrity of the classroom environment.

Academic Policies Committee Actions

Under this policy, the Academic Policies Committee serves to consider student appeals of faculty-imposed and department-imposed sanctions, adjudicates cases referred by faculty members where the recommended sanction may include suspension or expulsion from the University, and considers additional sanctions above and beyond faculty imposed sanctions in cases of repeat offenders. For appeals of faculty-imposed and department-imposed sanctions, the student shall have the burden to prove that the imposition of such sanction was arbitrary and capricious. For all other matters before the APC under this policy, the party imposing sanctions has the burden to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that a violation of this policy did occur. In all matters referred to the Academic Policies Committee, the committee will review all documentation and will have the following options:

- render a written decision based on a review of the evidence submitted, or
 - render a written decision based on further investigation, or
 - initiate a formal hearing and render a written decision.
1. *Review of Evidence* – A written decision may be determined based on the documents and materials submitted with the appeal.
 2. *Investigation* – A written decision may be determined based on a series of interviews, a review of documents, and any other action deemed appropriate for

the purpose of collecting additional information and evidence necessary for an informed and reasoned judgment to be rendered.

3. *Hearing* - A hearing shall be held when a student appeals the dismissal from a program, a faculty member or department recommends suspension or expulsion from the University, or if the APC chooses to hold a hearing in any other case. If a hearing is to be held, written notice of the time, date and location shall be sent to all parties. The hearing shall be conducted as follows:

- The hearing shall be held at a reasonable time when all parties (to the extent possible) are available or have an opportunity to be present.
- The parties shall be entitled to make opening and closing statements.
- The parties shall be entitled to present evidence through witnesses and documents, and shall be entitled to question witnesses. At the discretion of the Chair, direct questioning by a party of a witness, including an opposing party, may not be permitted; rather, the parties may be required to convey their questions to the Chair, who will then convey them to the witness.
- Students are permitted to seek the support of an advocate for assistance in the preparation and presentation of a case before the Academic Policies Committee. The advocate shall otherwise not participate formally in the proceedings. In all cases, the advocate must be a member of the University faculty, staff, or student body.
- Neither party may be represented by an attorney at the hearing, unless the student is facing or is likely to face criminal charges relating to the alleged academic misconduct. Under these circumstances, both the student and the faculty member may elect to have counsel assist them. Counsel for the hearing body must also be present. Legal counsel may not give opening or closing statements, present documents, or question witnesses.
- The hearing shall be closed with attendance limited to individuals directly connected with the case as determined by the Chair of the Academic Policies Committee.
- Formal rules of evidence need not be followed at the hearing. The hearing body may receive such evidence as a reasonable person would consider reliable in making important decisions. If a question arises about the

authenticity of a document or the reasonableness, relevance or redundancy of evidence, the Chair of the Academic Policies Committee shall be the final decision maker on the admissibility of the evidence.

- The parties may request, in writing, that the committee contact specified persons to appear at the hearing to testify on behalf of the parties. The request should normally be made at least five working days before the scheduled hearing in order to allow ample time for the hearing body to make the requests.
 - The Chair of the Academic Policies Committee shall be responsible for conducting the hearing in an efficient and decorous manner and shall rule on all disputes related to the procedures used throughout the proceedings. Reasonable limits may be set on the length and nature of the opening and closing statements, the evidence presented and on the duration of the hearing. At any time, the Chair may seek the advice of legal counsel.
 - Since the University lacks full judicial authority, such as the power to subpoena or place witnesses under oath, a student's due process rights cannot be coextensive with or identical to the rights afforded the accused in a civil or criminal legal proceeding. The procedures outlined are designed, however, to assure fundamental fairness and to protect students from arbitrary or capricious disciplinary action. Deviations from these procedures shall not necessarily invalidate a hearing or the results of a hearing unless significant prejudice results.
4. *Findings* - After the Academic Policies Committee has completed its review, it shall issue a written decision based on findings of fact and conclusions, usually within three to five days, and shall provide a copy of the findings to the student, faculty member, department chair, dean of the school, Registrar and Dean of Students. All parties must abide by these findings unless they are modified by the Provost as part of a limited appeal process in the circumstances outlined in the appeals section of this policy.

Appeals from Academic Policies Committee Findings

For student appeals of faculty and department imposed sanctions the decision of the Academic Policies Committee is final. For sanctions imposed by the APC (e.g. suspension or expulsion from the university or additional sanctions imposed by the Academic Policy Committee for repeat offenders), the student may appeal the Committee's findings to the Provost. Appeals must be filed within five working days of receiving notice of the committee's decision. The written appeal must be filed with the Provost and should set forth all of the reasons that support reversal of the committee's findings. The Provost will review the written appeal and the documentation associated with the case. The Provost has the discretion to take any action necessary to thoroughly complete a review, and then will issue a decision, which will be binding and final. The decision will be conveyed in writing to the student, the faculty member, department chair, dean of the school, Registrar, the Dean of Students and the Academic Policies Committee.

Impact of an Academic Misconduct F Grade

If the sanction imposed is an F in the course, the student shall not be permitted to withdraw from the course even if the sanction was imposed prior to the last day of the University schedule adjustment period. The imposition of an F grade shall stand for the course, unless the student successfully appeals the sanction.

Although students can repeat courses, a course repeated based on an imposed F grade for academic integrity violation(s) will have both grades calculated in the students GPA and not replaced as it is under normal circumstances. The sanction of an F in a course will not be designated on the transcript as an academic integrity F unless it is an action determined by the Academic Policies Committee for an academic integrity violation repeat offender. A student who has received a course grade of F for an academic integrity violation will not be allowed to graduate from the University with honors.

University System of Maryland Policy

In accordance with Board of Regents policy, students expelled or suspended for reasons of academic dishonesty by any institution in the University System of Maryland shall not be admissible to any other System institution if expelled, or during any period of suspension.

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