

# Academic Honesty

(Senate: 7/25/00, 7/27/04, 10/23/07, 6/1/10; President: 2/5/01, 11/24/04, 11/29/07, 6/21/10;  
Editorial Amendment: 8/01, 09/09)

Governing documents: Executive Order 1043, Student Conduct Procedures

## Preamble

The University in its quest for truth and knowledge embraces honesty and integrity. These fundamental values must not be compromised. The trust and respect among professors, students and the society need to be vigilantly protected. Cheating and plagiarism can be neither justified nor condoned, as this would destroy the ideals and purposes of higher education. Students enter the University to gain the knowledge and tools necessary for participation in society. Academic integrity is one foundation for a society based on trust and honesty. Therefore, the University takes seriously its responsibility for academic honesty.

## I. Definitions

### A. Cheating

At Cal State L. A., cheating is defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. The following examples are intended to be representative, but not all-inclusive:

#### a) Examinations/Tests Administered by Faculty or the University

- Copying from another student's paper
- Employing signals to obtain answers from or provide answers to others
- Stealing or arranging for the theft of an examination
- Knowingly reviewing an unauthorized copy of an examination
- Using lecture notes or textbooks during an examination when prohibited
- Possessing crib notes at the location and during the time of the examination
- Having someone else take an examination in your place
- Feigning illness or telling falsehoods to avoid taking an examination at the scheduled time
- Claiming falsely that you took an examination at the scheduled time
- Storing and/or accessing course subject matter in a calculator, computer or recording device, without authorization from the instructor, when such instruments are otherwise permitted to be used during an examination period
- Utilizing calculators and/or other learning aids forbidden by the instructor
- Obtaining assistance in answering questions on a take-home examination, when such action is specifically prohibited
- Attempting to use or using bribery to obtain an undeserved grade
- Changing an answer on a graded test and claiming the student's response to the question was incorrectly marked wrong

## b) Papers/Reports, Laboratory/Homework

- Copying the work of other persons in whole or in part and claiming authorship
- Submitting a paper obtained from any source that provides research/term papers
- Using a ghost writer to compose a paper and claiming authorship
- Claiming an assigned share of a team report, toward which insufficient or no contribution was made
- Lying about the reason for not submitting a report on time
- Pretending to have submitted a paper to an instructor
- Stealing another student's report and submitting it as one's own work
- Submitting the same term paper to two or more different instructors for credit in their courses without their prior permission
- Inventing, falsifying, or altering data for a research survey or laboratory experiment
- Misrepresenting the authorship of an experiment or exercise
- Depending upon others to complete laboratory assignments or homework when instructions call for independent work
- Sabotaging someone else's laboratory work or other exercise
- Fabricating bibliographic references

Cheating on any academic assignment, including course work, comprehensive exams, or theses, is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty.

### **B. Plagiarism**

At Cal State L. A., plagiarism is defined as the act of using ideas, words, or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own, without giving proper credit to the original sources.

The following examples of plagiarism are intended to be representative, but not all-inclusive:

- Failing to give credit via proper citations for others' ideas and concepts, data and information, statements and phrases, and/or interpretations and conclusions
- Failing to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or a part thereof
- Paraphrasing the expressions of thought by others without appropriate quotation marks or attribution
- Assembling parts from various works and submitting the synthesis or single paper as one's own creation
- Representing another's artistic/scholarly works, such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawings, sculptures, or similar works as one's own

Plagiarizing on any academic assignment, including course work, comprehensive exam, or thesis, in whole or in part, is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty.

### **C. Misrepresentation**

Knowingly furnishing false academic information to a University official, faculty member, or campus office is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty.

#### **D. Collusion**

Any student who intentionally helps another student perform any of the above acts of cheating, plagiarism or misrepresentation is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty.

### **II. Consequences and Sanctions**

Violations of academic honesty have a dual aspect, constituting both a breach of ethics and a form of academic non-performance. Hence the consequences of violating this policy may fall into two categories. Addressing the violation as an academic matter does not preclude the imposition of further administrative sanctions.

#### **Academic Consequences:**

Faculty have the right to establish the standards by which the academic performance of students will be evaluated, including the consequences of students not meeting some portion or all of the academic requirements of a course through acts of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation or collusion. These consequences may include but are not limited to assigning a lowered grade, zero or "F" on an individual assignment, or lowering the student's grade or assigning an "F" in the course. Faculty may alternatively permit the student to repeat an assignment/test or complete and submit additional assignments. Furthermore, before these consequences can be effected, the faculty member must have verified instances of academic dishonesty by personal observation and/or documentation.

#### **Administrative Sanctions:**

In addition to academic consequences imposed by faculty members or other reporting parties, the University can impose administrative sanctions. Cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation or collusion, in connection with an academic program or campus may warrant actions such as, but not necessarily limited to,

- Expulsion
- Suspension
- Probation
- Withdrawal of a degree.
- Restitution

Although sanctions can be imposed for a single offense, repeat offenders will receive particular consideration for administrative sanctions. Multiple offenses committed in more than one course, even when discovered simultaneously, shall be considered repeat offenses.

### **III. Reporting Procedures**

For the purposes of reporting findings of academic dishonesty, the 'reporting party' may refer to a probationary, tenured or temporary faculty member, a librarian, a person in an academic administrative position, a counselor, coach, administrator of a testing center or another person in a position of authority over a student's academic work. Throughout this policy, the term 'faculty member' shall be used to stand in for any reporting party. Teaching assistants, graduate assistants and staff should report allegations of academic dishonesty to their authorized university supervisor. Allegations shall be made against individual students rather than groups of students.

When a faculty member suspects that a student has committed an academically dishonest act, it is the faculty member's responsibility to take the following steps:

1. The faculty member must first carefully consider the evidence of the apparent dishonesty. A perception that is not supported by reasonable evidence, will not suffice. Examples (not necessarily comprehensive) of evidence sufficient to pursue action are:
  - Documentation regarding the source of text which the student has used without proper attribution or has attempted to represent as his/her own work
  - A demonstrably marked difference in the writing style of the student, as compared to his/her work on previous assignments
  - Testimony from others regarding a student's use of dishonest means to fulfill the assignment at hand
  - Firsthand observation of the student engaging in a dishonest act, in a situation in which the student cannot effectively deny that the act took place
  - Admission by the student that he or she undertook a dishonest act in fulfillment of the assignment at hand
  - A suspicious degree of similarity in work done by different students

Faculty members are encouraged to discuss any perception of dishonesty and the evidentiary basis for an action with their department/division chair or school director and/or associate dean prior to discussing perceptions of wrongdoing with the affected student.

2. When satisfied that a reasonable evidentiary standard has been met and as soon as possible after discovering the alleged violation, the faculty member should arrange an office conference in order to inform the student of the allegations and the intended academic consequences of the violations. At the conference, the student should be informed of the supporting evidence, the intended consequences, and the Academic Honesty Policy.

In the event that the student disputes the findings of academic dishonesty, he or she shall be given the opportunity to respond (orally or writing). The faculty member must consider any information or evidence that the student presents during or after the conference, and determine whether or not such information or evidence mitigates or refutes the charge of academic dishonesty. In every case the student shall have ten (10) days beyond the date of the conference to respond to the allegations, before a report is made (as outlined in #3, below).

At the conference, the student should also be informed of the University's Grade Appeals/Academic Grievance Policy. Under that policy, the student may appeal the determination that he or she has committed academic dishonesty, the academic consequences stemming from such a determination, or the administrative sanctions.

3. If after consideration of all evidence (including any provided by the student), it is determined that a preponderance of the evidence favors a finding of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall proceed as directed below.

The faculty member shall use the Academic Dishonesty Report Form to report the finding of academic dishonesty. This report shall be the statement of charges against the student and the record of the academic consequence(s) imposed; all supporting documentation shall be attached to the form and submitted to the University Judicial Affairs Office and made available to the student. If a student appeals a grade or other adverse consequence of an allegation of academic dishonesty, this report and the related documentation shall be subject to review.

In cases where the student fails to attend the scheduled conference to discuss the alleged dishonesty, or when the alleged dishonesty is detected at the close of the quarter and the faculty member has not been successful in a good-faith effort to contact the student, an Academic Dishonesty Report Form describing the alleged incident and documents supporting the allegation shall be sent to the University Judicial Affairs Officer and made available to the student.

In cases where the faculty member cannot, for serious and compelling reasons, participate in any one or more parts of the above process, the department/division chair or school director shall represent the reporting party.

#### **IV. Confidentiality**

All parties to the initial conference between a faculty member and a student accused of academic dishonesty and all subsequent deliberations regarding incidents of academic dishonesty have the right to expect that such deliberations will occur in a setting of strictest confidentiality.

Concomitant with this right of confidentiality is the obligation of all parties to refrain from any discussions of these issues regarding cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation or collusion outside of the informal and formal conferences and meetings as outlined elsewhere in this document and in related policies (including the Grade Appeal/Academic Grievance Policy). Confidentiality shall be maintained unless a legitimate need to know is established by the department/division chair or school director in order for the faculty to complete their responsibilities as University employees or in any legal action, and in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (Student Records Administration - 011, Sec 5.8) and any other applicable law. The department/division chair or school director may consult with, or request documentation of a student's history of academic dishonesty from the Judicial Affairs Officer only on a strict need to know basis. Violators of this principle of confidentiality are themselves subject to university disciplinary action.

In the matter of student records and according to Federal and State privacy laws, students have the right to protections against improper disclosure of personal information. However, it is permissible for transcripts of student academic records to contain information regarding a student's academic status including such disciplinary actions as suspension or expulsion. Being a temporary action, suspension may be expunged from the record upon the student's reinstatement.

**Threats/Retaliation:**

Any threats or acts of retaliation against any member of the faculty or staff as a consequence of implementing this policy on Academic Honesty will be cause for disciplinary action under section 41301, Title 5, California Code of Regulations, in addition to civil and criminal liabilities.