



The City University of New York

Report of the CUNY Committee on Academic Integrity

Approved by the
Board of Trustees
June 28, 2004

Spring 2004

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In the Fall of 2002, the issue of academic integrity was discussed in various forums across the University, at colleges throughout the country and in the media. The CUNY Academic Council and the CUNY Council of Chief Student Affairs Administrators held a joint meeting in October to address this issue. Prof. Don McCabe of Rutgers University was invited to address the group. Dr. McCabe is a founding member of the Center for Academic Integrity, a consortium of over 350 colleges and universities that are joined in an effort to promote academic integrity among college students.

Resulting from that joint meeting, Executive Vice Chancellor Louise Mirrer and Vice Chancellor Otis Hill convened a Committee on Academic Integrity comprised of administrators from both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, faculty and student representation and legal counsel. The goal of the Committee was to establish a culture of academic integrity across all campuses and incorporate it into the context of student learning.

The CUNY Council of Chief Librarians developed an *Information Literacy White Paper* (April, 2001) to teach students information literacy skills (i.e., research techniques) to foster the skills necessary to produce the requisite academic work through legitimate means. A summary of the *White Paper* is appended to the Report.

This spirit of commitment to academic integrity is founded upon and encompasses five essential values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Abiding by these values is essential to promoting and maintaining a high level of academic integrity (The Center for Academic

Integrity *Fundamental Principles of Academic Integrity* 1998). The community of scholars that is The City University of New York, at all times, must promote these values through strict adherence to them.

As the Committee deliberated, it found that much good work has already been done in this area by a number of our colleges and constituents. Since the Committee's mandate was to develop means of articulating and raising awareness of the importance of academic integrity principles and explicating definitions and examples of, as well as sanctions for violations of academic integrity, for faculty, students and administrators across the University, by producing suggestions and resources for supporting adherence to academic integrity principles, a good portion of this report is adapted from various campus and other sources. Toward that end, the Committee has drafted the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity (the "CUNY Policy"), which includes Procedures for Imposition of Sanctions for Violations of the CUNY Policy (the "CUNY Procedures"), which is submitted to the Board of Trustees with this report for approval and adoption.

CUNY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion, as provided herein.

I. Definitions and Examples of Academic Dishonesty

Cheating is the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise.

The following are some examples of cheating, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Copying from another student during an examination or allowing another to copy your work.
- Unauthorized collaboration on a take home assignment or examination.
- Using notes during a closed book examination.
- Taking an examination for another student, or asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you.
- Changing a graded exam and returning it for more credit.
Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to more than one course without consulting with each instructor.
- Preparing answers or writing notes in a blue book (exam booklet) before an examination.
Allowing others to research and write assigned papers or do assigned projects, including use of commercial term paper services.
- Giving assistance to acts of academic misconduct/ dishonesty.
- Fabricating data (all or in part).
- Submitting someone else's work as your own.
- Unauthorized use during an examination of any electronic devices such as cell phones, palm pilots, computers or other technologies to retrieve or send information.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own.

The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source..

- Presenting another person’s ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.
- Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source.
- Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.

Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and “cutting & pasting” from various sources without proper attribution.

Obtaining Unfair Advantage is any activity that intentionally or unintentionally gives a student an unfair advantage in his/her academic work over another student.

The following are some examples of obtaining an unfair advantage, but by no means it is an exhaustive list:

- Stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining advance access to examination materials.
- Depriving other students of access to library materials by stealing, destroying, defacing, or concealing them.
- Retaining, using or circulating examination materials which clearly indicate that they should be returned at the end of the exam.
- Intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student’s work.

Falsification of Records and Official Documents

The following are some examples of falsification, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Forging signatures of authorization.
- Falsifying information on an official academic record.
- Falsifying information on an official document such as a grade report, letter of permission, drop/add form, ID card or other college document.

Adapted with permission from *Baruch College: A Faculty Guide to Student Academic Integrity*. The Baruch College document includes excerpts from University of California’s web page entitled “The Academic Dishonesty Question: A Guide to an Answer through Education, Prevention, Adjudication and Obligation” by Prof. Harry Nelson.

II. METHODS FOR PROMOTING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- **Orientation sessions for all new faculty (full and part-time) and students** should incorporate a discussion of academic integrity. Packets containing information explaining the policy, the procedures that are in place, and examples of infractions should be distributed. These packets should be readily available, throughout the academic year, in the appropriate offices of the college and the locations of those offices should be widely publicized. Colleges using additional resources to detect plagiarism should publicize these resources widely.
- **All college catalogs, student handbooks, and college websites** should include the CUNY and college academic integrity policy and the consequences of not adhering to it. The Policy on Academic Integrity, as adopted by the Board, shall be distributed to all students. **All syllabi and schedules of classes** should make reference to the CUNY and college's academic integrity policy and where they are published in full.
- **A "Faculty Report" form** should be used throughout the University to report incidents of suspected academic dishonesty. (Sample attached) It is strongly recommended that the faculty member should report all such incidents by completing and submitting the form to the chief student affairs officer, the Academic Integrity Committee if the college has established one (see recommendation below), or other appropriate academic integrity official whom the college may designate (collectively referred to hereinafter as the "Academic Integrity Official"). A follow-up form should be submitted to the student's academic integrity file by the adjudicating person or body once the suspected incident has been resolved pursuant to one of the methods described below. Although forms need not be uniform across the University, they need to be uniform within each college. The form should provide at least minimal information such as the name of the instructor and student, course name and number, date of incident, explanation of incident and the instructor's

telephone/email contact information; it should be easy to use and process. Except as otherwise provided in the The CUNY Procedures, the Academic Integrity Official of each college should retain the forms for the purposes of identifying repeat offenders, gathering data, and assessing and reviewing policies.

- **CUNY will develop a website on Academic Integrity.** This website will include suggestions for faculty, students and administrators to reduce cheating or plagiarism, resources on academic integrity and links to relevant sites. Future plans also include the development of an online training program to raise awareness about academic integrity.
- The Committee recommends that this **CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity**, dated Spring 2004, be adopted by the Board of Trustees.
- Colleges should **adopt the “PEN” (Pending) grade** to facilitate the implementation of the Procedures for Imposition of Sanctions. This grade already exists in the University’s Glossary of Grades.
- Colleges may wish to consider **issuing a Student Guide to Academic Integrity**. An excellent example is a document that students at Baruch College developed called “Student Guide to Academic Integrity at Baruch College”. The Guide is in its final stages of approval.
- Each college should consider joining the **Center for Academic Integrity**.
- Colleges should consider subscribing to an **electronic plagiarism detection service**. Any college that does subscribe must notify every student each semester of the fact that such a service is available for use by the faculty.
- Colleges should consider establishing an **Academic Integrity Committee**, to serve in lieu of grade appeals committees in cases of academic dishonesty, which would hear and decide contested grade reductions that faculty members award because of students’ violations of the Academic Integrity Policy and collect and maintain files of Faculty Report forms of suspected and adjudicated violations of the Academic Integrity Policy.

- Establish a mechanism for preventing students from dropping a class in order to avoid an investigation and/or imposition of a sanction for a violation of academic integrity.

III. PROCEDURES FOR IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS FOR VIOLATIONS OF CUNY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A. Introduction

As a legal matter, in disciplining students for violations of policies of academic integrity, CUNY, as a public institution, must conform to the principles of due process mandated by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution -- generally speaking, to provide notice of the charges and some opportunity to be heard. In the context of court-litigated violations, questions as to how much and what kind of process was “due” turn on the courts’ judgment whether the decision on culpability was “disciplinary” (a question of fact) or “academic” (a question of the instructor’s expert judgment). This distinction has proved difficult to apply on campus. Accordingly, these procedures provide for alternative approaches depending on the severity of the sanction(s) being sought. If the instructor desires solely an “academic” sanction, that is, a grade reduction, less process is due than if a “disciplinary” sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, is sought.

A faculty member who suspects that a student has committed a violation of the CUNY or the college Academic Integrity Policy shall review with the student the facts and circumstances of the suspected violation whenever possible. The decision whether to seek an academic sanction only, rather than a disciplinary sanction or both types of sanctions, will rest with the faculty member in the first instance, but the college retains the right to bring disciplinary charges against the student. Among the factors the college should consider in determining whether to seek a disciplinary sanction are whether the student has committed one or more prior violations of the Academic Integrity Policy and

mitigating circumstances if any. It is strongly recommended that every instance of suspected violation should be reported to the Academic Integrity Official on a form provided by the college as described in the third Recommendation for Promoting Academic Integrity, above. Among other things, this reporting will allow the college to determine whether it wishes to seek a disciplinary sanction even where the instructor may not wish to do so.

B. Procedures In Cases Where The Instructor Seeks An Academic Sanction Only

1. Student Accepts Guilt And Does Not Contest The Academic Sanction

If the faculty member wishes to seek only an academic sanction (i.e., a reduced grade¹ only), and the student does not contest either his/her guilt or the particular reduced grade the faculty member has chosen, then the student shall be given the reduced grade, unless the college decides to seek a disciplinary sanction, see Section I above and IV below. The reduced grade may apply to the particular assignment as to which the violation occurred or to the course grade, at the faculty member's discretion.

2. Student Denies Guilt And/Or Contests The Academic Sanction

If the student denies guilt or contests the particular grade awarded by the faculty member, then the matter shall be handled using the college's grade appeals process, including departmental grading committees where applicable, or the Academic Integrity Committee. In either case, the process must, at a minimum, provide the student with an opportunity to be heard and to present evidence.

C. Procedures In Cases Where A Disciplinary Sanction Is Sought

¹ A reduced grade can be an "F," a "D-," or another grade that is lower than the grade that would have been given but for the violation.

If a faculty member suspects a violation and seeks a disciplinary sanction, the faculty member shall refer the matter to the college's Academic Integrity Official using the Faculty Report form, as described in the third Recommendation for Promoting Academic Integrity above, to be adjudicated by the college's Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee under Article 15 of the CUNY Bylaws. As provided for therein, the Faculty-Student Disciplinary may, among other things, investigate, conciliate, or hear evidence on cases in which disciplinary charges are brought². Under certain circumstances, college officials other than the Academic Integrity Official may seek disciplinary sanctions following the procedures outlined above. For the reasons discussed in Item IV below, if a reduced grade is also at issue, then that grade should be held in abeyance, pending the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee's action.

D. Procedures In Cases In Which Both A Disciplinary And An Academic Sanction Are Sought

If a faculty member or the college seeks to have both a disciplinary and an academic sanction imposed, it is not advisable to proceed on both fronts simultaneously lest inconsistent results ensue. Thus, it is best to begin with the disciplinary proceeding seeking imposition of a disciplinary sanction and await its outcome before addressing the academic sanction. If the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee finds that the alleged violation occurred, then the faculty member may reflect that finding in the student's grade. If the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee finds that the alleged violation did not occur, then no sanction of any kind may be imposed. The decision

² Typically, disciplinary sanctions would be sought in cases of the most egregious, or repeated, violations, for example: infraction in ways similar to criminal activity (such as forging a grade form; stealing an examination from a professor or a university office; or forging a transcript); having a substitute take an examination or taking an examination for someone else; sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment; dishonesty that affects a major or essential portion of work done to meet course requirements. [These examples have been taken from a list of violations compiled by Rutgers University.]

whether to pursue both types of sanctions will ordinarily rest with the faculty member.

E. Reporting Requirements

1. By The Faculty Member To The Academic Integrity Official

In cases where a violation of academic integrity has been found to have occurred (whether by admission or a fact-finding process), the faculty member should promptly file with the Academic Integrity Official a report of the adjudication in writing on a Faculty Report form (see sample attached) provided by the college as described above. The Academic Integrity Official shall maintain a confidential file for each student about whom a suspected or adjudicated violation is reported. If either the grade appeals process or the Faculty- Student Disciplinary Committee finds that no violation occurred, the Academic Integrity Official shall remove and destroy all material relating to that incident from the student's confidential academic integrity file. Before determining what sanction(s) to seek, the faculty member or the Academic Integrity Official may consult the student's confidential academic integrity file, if any, to determine whether the student has been found to have previously committed a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the nature of the infraction, and the sanction imposed or action taken.

2. By the Academic Integrity Official To the Faculty Member

Where a matter proceeds to the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee, the Academic Integrity Official shall promptly report its resolution to the faculty member and file a record of the resolution in the student's confidential academic integrity file, unless, as indicated above, the suspected violation was held to be unfounded, in which case all reporting forms concerning that suspected violation shall be destroyed.

Based on a Baruch College Sample

Faculty Report Form For Suspected and/or Adjudicated Incidents of Academic Dishonesty

It is necessary to complete this form to report any instance of suspected and/or adjudicated academic dishonesty. Make a copy for your records and forward the original, along with copies of all available supporting documentation, to the:

Office of the Academic Integrity Official

[Fill in name of college and office on campus to receive reports]

Instructor Name:

Dept.: _____ Tel.No.: _____ email _____

Course:: _____ Section: _____ Semester:: _____

Student Name: _____ Student ID#: _____

Date of Incident: _____

Type of Incident: _____ Cheating _____ Plagiarism _____ Other _____

Explanation of Incident: _____

Did the student admit to the charge of cheating, plagiarism or other act of academic dishonesty? Yes _____ No _____

Explanation _____

Have you resolved the matter informally? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, how?

A failing grade on the exam/paper _____ A failing final grade _____

Other _____ (please explain)

If no, do you advocate further action by the college? Yes ___ No _____

Referral to the Academic Integrity Committee or Grade Appeals Comm. _____

Referral to Faculty Student Disciplinary Committee _____

Signature of Faculty Member _____ Date _____

Adjudication _____

Signature of Adjudicator _____

Please feel free to attach your college's written policy on academic integrity.

Based in part on cases compiled by Hunter College and Queensborough Community College

Examples of Violations of Academic Integrity
And Sanctions Therefor

Infraction	Sanction*
<p>Student was found to have plagiarized one paragraph on a course paper.</p>	<p>Student admitted having plagiarized. The professor gave the student the option of writing a completely different paper or receiving an “F” on the submitted paper. .</p>
<p>Student was in possession of two folded pages of history notes in her handwriting in her exam booklet. Student admitted infraction.</p>	<p>Student wrote a letter of regret to professor and resolved to use better judgment in the future. Student agreed to receive a Grade of “F” for this course.</p>
<p>Student handed in the first of a two-part test. Professor saw a piece of paper on student’s desk. Student told professor he found this piece of paper on the floor. Paper had information relevant to the first part of the test. Since student didn’t need this paper, he picked it up and put it on his desk. Professor indicated that he was going to fail student. Student claimed he was not cheating.</p>	<p>Hearing under Bylaw Article 15 found student guilty. The Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee (FSDC) permitted the student to complete the semester, put him on disciplinary probation for the remainder of the semester, and suspended him for the following semester. Thereafter, professor gave student a grade of “F” for the course.</p>
<p>Student was seen repeatedly putting her left hand in her lab coat during a Biology test. Professor asked student what was in her left hand. A note, which was a photocopy of the laboratory exercise, fell from the inside of the lab coat. Student confessed to cheating.</p>	<p>In a meeting with the professor, student agreed to write a letter of apology to professor and an essay on Academic Integrity and to accept a grade of “F” for this course.</p>

<p>Approximately one (1) year after an initial adjudicated infraction of academic integrity, student was found cheating on a History exam. Professor’s policy is that student would receive an “F” grade for this course. Student appealed to professor for a withdrawal. Professor did not grant a withdrawal. Student then forged professor’s signature to withdrawal slip.</p>	<p>Professor sought a disciplinary sanction as well as an academic sanction. Accordingly, the FSDC held a hearing pursuant to Article 15 of the Bylaws and imposed the following penalty: expulsion from XX College and the City University of New York for an indefinite period.</p> <p>Student appealed to College President who upheld the decision of FSDC..</p> <p>Student appealed to CUNY Board of Trustees. Decision of XX College was upheld.</p> <p>Thereafter professor gave student an “F” grade for the course.</p>
<p>Student submitted a paper which was taken verbatim and without attribution from a website. Student admitted plagiarism.</p>	<p>Student agreed to receive a grade of “F” for this course and to have the “F” reflected on his transcript. Student also agreed to be suspended for one semester. .</p>
<p>After the professor returned the student’s exam, the student requested a reevaluation of two questions. The professor alleged that the student had changed the answers to two questions on the resubmitted exam for the purpose of making it appear that the student had originally been improperly graded. (Before returning the original exam, the professor made a photocopy of it).</p>	<p>Student admitted tampering with the exam. Student agreed to receive a grade of “F” for this course. Student agreed to accept letter of censure in file indicating that the “F” in the course was for infraction of academic integrity and that any further infraction would result in even more serious consequences.</p>
<p>Student submitted a final paper which was taken verbatim and without attribution from various websites. Student contested professor’s conclusion of plagiarism.</p>	<p>The FSDC held a hearing pursuant to Article 15 of the CUNY bylaws.</p> <p>FSDC ruled that student be censured for academic dishonesty and that censure remain on record until student graduates.</p> <p>Professor assigned grade of “F” for the course.</p>

<p>Student “A” copied sections of her exam from student “B”. Student contested the professor’s conclusion of cheating and did not agree to the “F” grade the professor wanted to impose.</p>	<p>The student appealed to the Grade Appeal Committee before which he was given an opportunity to be heard and to present evidence. The Committee found the student guilty of cheating and upheld the professor’s decision to give the student an “F” in the course.</p>
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*In all cases, the faculty member reported the academic integrity infraction on the Faculty Report form to the Dean of Students, Chief Academic Officer, or the Committee on Academic Integrity.

Information Literacy

Outcome 1: The information literate student defines and articulates information needs by:

- < Consulting faculty, librarians, peers, and a variety of resources
- < Utilizing print, media, and Web resources as appropriate considering cost, time, and availability
- < Reviewing and adapting the defined information needs.

Outcome 2: The information literate student accesses information effectively by:

- < Selecting the best method of investigation (research, lab, fieldwork)
- < Designing appropriate search strategies (beyond “keyword” and Web browser)
- < Utilizing available resources (print, human, database)
- < Refining the search strategy as the search progresses
- < Capturing, managing, formatting and recording the information acquired for effective use, including maintaining a record of the sources of the information.

Outcome 3: The information literate student evaluates and incorporates information into his/her knowledge base and value system (context) by:

- < Restating concepts in his/her own terms, attributing the source material
- < Synthesizing and integrating the concepts into knowledge
- < Articulating, expressing, and adapting knowledge in dialogue and communication
- < Reviewing and assessing his/her understanding of the issue at hand.

Outcome 4: The information literate student uses his/her new knowledge (individually or as a group member, as permitted by the terms of the academic assignment) to accomplish his/her purpose by:

- < Planning, revising, and presenting it
- < Utilizing appropriate media and formats.

Outcome 5: The information literate student attributes sources without

- < Plagiarism
- < Invasion of privacy, or
- < Violation of intellectual property rights.

Adapted from CUNY Council of Chief Librarians *Information Literacy White Paper*, April 2001.

The City University of New York
Committee on Academic Integrity

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The Committee acknowledges, with gratitude, the assistance provided by Dennis Slavin, Associate Provost at Baruch College