

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

*\*Adapted from "Reference for Faculty: Academic Integrity & Disruptive Behavior" compiled by Sandra Rhoten, Associate Dean, Judicial Affairs, Division of Student Affairs, CSU Fullerton.*

Integrity is an essential component of all students' academic experience. The academic evaluation a student receives for a course becomes a permanent college student record, and it is critical that such records be accurate and consistent. In addition, the integrity students learn and exhibit at the college will be a model for the professional integrity they practice when they complete their academic work.

While integrity involves all members of the academic community, faculty, staff and students - you, as an educator and instructor, are uniquely positioned to teach, model and assure integrity in students' academic assignment.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating is defined as obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive, fraudulent, or unauthorized means helping someone commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Unacceptable examination behavior - communicating with fellow students, copying material from another student's exam or allowing another student to copy from an exam, possessing or using unauthorized materials, or any behavior that defeats the intent of an exam.
2. Plagiarism - taking the work of another and offering it as one's own without giving credit to that source, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near verbatim form.
3. Unauthorized collaboration on a project, homework or other assignment where an instructor expressly forbids such collaboration.
4. Documentary falsification including forgery, altering of campus documents or records, tampering with grading procedures, fabricating lab assignments, or altering medical excuses.

## STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

**Class Syllabus:** Include a statement explaining what constitutes academic dishonesty for your course and what the consequences will be. It may include allowable materials and behaviors during in-class exams, standards, for citation and editorial assistance in written assignments, and expectations concerning completion of homework assignments. In addition, include a statement such as:

"Students who violate college standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions, including failure in the course. Policies on academic integrity are strictly enforced. I expect that you will familiarize yourself with the academic integrity guidelines found in the current student handbook".

**Initial Class Meeting:** During the class meeting in which expectations and structure for the course are discussed, include a discussion of the academic integrity standards for the course (this may follow what is outlined in the syllabus). Encourage students to consult with you before completing assignments, and preferably before beginning them to ensure their greatest success.

**Instructional/Class Environment:** Discussing ethical issues within your discipline provides important information and a positive model for students. Such discussions underscore the importance of academic integrity as preparation for ethical and successful professional practice.

Fostering an environment of respect in the classroom promotes respect in return. Students are less likely to exhibit dishonest behavior when they believe they are treated fairly.

**Written Assignments:** Explain to students what constitutes plagiarism. Provide examples of citations you expect in written assignments. Tell students about software which detects plagiarism.

Students are often tempted to misuse electronic sources (e.g. academic papers are readily available on the Web for acquisition or purchase). Remind students of their obligation to do their own work, and of the ease with which electronic sources can be located if students' work is called into question.

**Examinations:** Remind students of the standards for your examination (materials allowed/disallowed, prohibition of communicating with other students, etc.) during the class period prior to the exam. Also explaining the strategies used to safeguard the exam (different versions, photocopying before returning, etc.) can help students avoid dishonest behavior.

**Unauthorized Collaboration:** When homework or projects are to be completed outside of class, standards for completing the assignments should be stated at the outset. Whether students are allowed to work together or share information, **and, if so, to what degree, should be made explicit in the course syllabus.**

**Documentary Falsification:** Faculty may encounter falsified documents in various forms, including forged letters of recommendation, altered or fictitious medical excuses fabricated lab assignments and forged lab attendance slips.

### **STRATEGIES FOR CONFRONTING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

**Examinations:** If a student appears to be using unauthorized materials or collaborating with another student, have another proctor observe the behavior, if possible. If another proctor is not available, observe the behavior from different positions in the room to confirm the observation.

When you believe a violation is occurring during the exam, discreetly stop the behavior (e.g., confiscate the notes, separate collaborators), and identify the involved student(s) for yourself, but allow the student(s) to complete the exam. This is least disruptive to other students, and if it is later determined that a violation did not occur, provide a basis for assigning a grade. When a suspected violation concerns unauthorized materials, retain the materials as evidence.

**Out-of-Class Assignments:** When a student's solution to the assignment appears copied from a solution manual taken from a previous semester's assignment for the class, does not follow solution methods covered in class or assigned readings, or appears beyond the student's capabilities (as indicated by his/her previous work in class), meet with the student and ask for an explanation of how the assignment was completed.

When students are suspected of copying from one another's assignments, it is best to speak with each student individually. Inform each student that the assignment corresponds to another student's in ways that you do not believe could have occurred independently. Ask how the assignment was completed.

**Research Papers:** When material in a student's paper appears plagiarized, attempt to locate the source text before meeting with the student. Colleagues may be of assistance in identifying the source (the student's identity should not be revealed).

Students increasingly use electronic means to locate and retrieve source materials. Consequently, it may be worthwhile to perform a search of the Web using one of the popular search engines (e.g. Lycos, Magellan, Infoseek, Yahoo).

When material appears plagiarized but the source cannot be identified, question the student about the information in the paper. Ask for the definition of terms used and for further explanation of ideas expressed.

Ask the student about his or her research for the paper, how reference materials were chosen, and from which library they were obtained. Request that the student submit his/her rough draft and/or notes to you.

Change your tests and assignments frequently.

## RESPONDING/REPORTING & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATION

If an instructor believes that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred in a class, the following steps should be taken. Gather all pertinent information such as tests, reports, computer programs and other academic assignments. As soon as possible, meet with the student to discuss the incident. This is the student's opportunity to understand why the behavior is unacceptable and how the situation might have been handled differently. If circumstances prevent consultation with the student, the instructor may take whatever action he or she deems appropriate.

If the student denies the violation, the student should explain what he or she believed happened. If the instructor determines that the student has violated the standards, he or she should be informed that a grade penalty will be assessed (e.g., F in the course, 0 on the assignment, etc). Tell the student that you will be reporting the incident to the Division Dean or Department Director and the Dean of Student Life.

The student may appeal the grade sanction to the Rio Hondo College Review Board (refer to RHC Student Grievances Policy).

The instructor will submit a written report of the violation and grade sanction to the Division Dean or Department Director and to Dean of Student Life.

## STUDENT DISCIPLINE RECORD

When a student has been found responsible for a violation of academic integrity, the instructor's report shall be kept as part of a disciplinary file on the student. This record shall be kept in the Office of Student Life.

