ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Concordia community expects all of our members to act with integrity – to act with honesty, uprightness and sincerity. Every member of our academic community is charged with the responsibility of encouraging and maintaining an environment of academic integrity. Faculty are especially important in this regard: they should be models of academic integrity and foster an understanding of its importance and principles. Faculty are responsible for providing students with a syllabus within three class sessions. This syllabus serves as a contract between faculty and students and specifies the expectations of academic integrity, identifies what constitutes as academic misconduct, delineates consequences for academic integrity violations, and states that violations will be reported. Faculty are responsible for adhering to the goals of the course, the assessments of student learning, and fair grading. Students are responsible both for their own integrity and for engendering a respect for its values in their peers, values that apply to all their academic activities.

Although the area of academic integrity is commonly considered to be the province of faculty and students, the responsibility for academic integrity reaches beyond these groups. Because many staff may interact with students as they complete their course assignments, our integrity expectations for staff mirror those for faculty. We recognize that faculty and staff may also violate integrity. In instances involving faculty, the individual detecting a violation should contact the department chair or program director, or in cases involving department chairs or program directors, the Dean of the College/designee or the Dean of Graduate Studies/designee. For cases in which staff violate academic integrity, the supervisor of the staff member should be contacted. All employees of the college are further bound by the contractual responsibilities and consequences specified in the Faculty or Staff Handbooks, which can be consulted for further details about handling academic integrity violations.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is defined as any activity that compromises the academic integrity of the college or undermines the educational process. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- cheating: using a resource other than one's own work to answer questions;
- plagiarism: misrepresenting another's ideas as one's own or not giving credit to the creator of a work;
- falsification: submitting falsified or fabricated information;
- facilitating others' violations: knowingly permitting or facilitating the dishonesty of others;
- impeding: placing barriers in the way of others' academic pursuits.

For additional examples of these types of academic misconduct and for information on poor scholarship, please refer to Appendix A.

Determining Integrity Policy Violations

It may be difficult to determine intent, extent, or motive in cases of academic misconduct. Because of the potential seriousness of these cases, which can potentially result in suspension, it is important to consider the following:

- Has the individual received notification about the institution's academic integrity policy and what constitutes academic misconduct through a course syllabus?
- Was there intent to deceive?
- Does the incident in question represent a pattern of misconduct?
- Was the incident sufficiently egregious to warrant penalty?

When an academic integrity violation is identified, it is important for the faculty involved to determine whether the violation is an instance of academic misconduct or of poor scholarship. Examples of academic misconduct and poor scholarship are provided in Appendix A.

When an academic integrity violation is alleged, the burden of proof rests on the person filing the report of a violation.

When an academic integrity violation is suspected but the person detecting the possible violation is not certain enough to make a report, the person suspecting the violation is encouraged to reach out to the student to discuss the circumstances and determine whether a violation has actually occurred.

Undergraduate academic integrity violations are to be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs, and graduate academic violations are to be reported to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Penalties

Faculty must specify what constitutes academic misconduct in the course syllabus and bear the principal responsibility in prescribing penalties. Appropriate penalties for violations of academic integrity (whether academic misconduct or poor scholarship) are also to be included in the course syllabus. Faculty will be guided by a principle of justice; their response will be measured and appropriate, weighing the seriousness of the offense and the conditions that encouraged it. If a student violates academic integrity in an assignment for credit, the instructor has the option of assigning any grade for that assignment, including a failing grade ("F") or "0" (no credit). Note that a violation of academic integrity might automatically result in failure of a course either because this consequence was specified in the course syllabus or because the "F" or "0" reduced a student's class average below that required for a passing final grade or completion of the assignment is a condition of successfully completing the course. Students may not drop a course or change the grading of the course to pass-fail in order to avoid a penalty in the grade for the course.

Some violations of academic integrity may involve the mutilation and destruction of college or personal property. In such cases, restitution or remuneration may be required of the responsible party in addition to other penalties the college may elect to assess.

The Office of Academic Affairs/Office of Graduate Studies are responsible for the oversight of academic integrity at Concordia, including tracking and adjudicating offenders. The Dean of the College/designee or Dean of Graduate Studies/designee, following an appropriate determination, may institute penalties such as restitution, probation, suspension, or expulsion. Academic integrity violations may combine with other substantive violations of other college policy (e.g., theft, assault, vandalism, etc.) to warrant suspension or expulsion from the college. The preceding examples assume that a student violated academic integrity and a member of the faculty or staff detected that violation.

Students may report violations of academic integrity either by their peers, staff, or faculty. For example, an individual may facilitate an integrity violation in a course while not being currently enrolled in the course. Additionally, a student may detect an integrity violation by a member of the college community. Those aware of this sort of violation should

advise the supervising faculty member and/or consult the Dean of the College/designee or the Dean of Graduate Studies/designee.

Academic Responsibility Conduct Procedures

Every member of the Concordia College community is expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. While we expect violations of academic integrity to be infrequent, we acknowledge that violations may occur. The procedures that are described in this document are for processing academic integrity violations against students. (Procedures for investigation and adjudication of faculty members charged with academic integrity violations are found in the Faculty Handbook. Procedures for investigation and adjudication of staff members charged with academic integrity violations can be accessed at the Office of Human Resources.)

The college recognizes the need for a fundamentally fair conduct system that responds to allegations concerning violations of academic integrity. We presume, therefore, that a conduct system should minimally afford a student the right to receive a written notification of a violation, an opportunity to appeal the violation to objective decision makers, and the right to proportional sanctions.

Steps for Filing a Formal Complaint

Faculty members have the authority and the responsibility to detect and investigate alleged violations of academic integrity in their courses. Please reference "Determining Academic Integrity Violations" in this policy. If, in the faculty member's opinion, there seems to be indicators of academic misconduct or poor scholarship on the part of the student, the faculty member will respond in the following manner:

1. The faculty member should arrange to meet with the student within one week of the suspected violation. At this meeting, the possible violation or instance of poor scholarship should be discussed.
    a. If the faculty member determines, upon meeting with the student that there is no violation, the matter is considered resolved and no additional paperwork or process is required.
    b. Alternatively, if the faculty member is convinced a violation occurred, they should review the violation, sanctions, and options for appeal with the student during this meeting. Note: Additional information on possible violations is described in the "Determining Integrity Violations" section of this policy.
        i. The faculty member should then complete the Notice of Student Academic Integrity Violation online form within three business days of meeting with the student.
        ii. When the Notice of Student Academic Integrity Violation online form is submitted, the completed form should contain details about the violation, a description of the sanction(s) being imposed, and options for appeal.
        iii. Upon submission, the completed online form will automatically be sent to the Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies.
        iv. Once submitted by the faculty member, the student will receive an electronic copy of the form, and this will serve as the student's official notice of the violation.
2. In either of the above cases, if a faculty member is unable to schedule a meeting with the student within one week of the suspected or detected Integrity Violation, the faculty member will submit the Notice of Student Academic Integrity Violation online form to the Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies within 10 business days of the suspected or detected Integrity Violation.

Appeals

In all cases, a student charged with a violation of the academic integrity policy has the right to appeal a determination that the student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy and/or has the right to appeal the imposed sanction(s).

- Appeal of Complaint: If a student wishes to appeal responsibility for a violation, the student must request a hearing of the Student Responsibility Board by submitting a request to the Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies. In order to initiate the appeal process, the student must submit the grounds for the appeal in writing to the Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies within 10 business days of receiving a Notice of Student Academic Integrity Violation. Under extenuating circumstances, this timeline may be slightly extended not to exceed more than 30 days. See section on hearing procedures, findings, and decisions below for more details about the appeal process.
- Appeal of Imposed Sanction(s): If a student wishes to appeal the imposed sanction(s), the student has the right to request that the Dean of the College/ designee(s) or the Dean of Graduate Studies/ designee(s) review the sanction(s). In order to initiate the appeal process, the student must submit the grounds for the appeal in writing to the Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies within 10 business days of receiving a Notice of Student Academic Integrity Violation. Under extenuating circumstances, this timeline may be slightly extended not to exceed more than 30 days. See the section on findings and decisions below for more details about the appeal process.

Student Responsibility Board

The Student Responsibility Board will hear all appeals involving alleged violations of academic integrity. The Board's sole duty is to determine responsibility for alleged violations; it will not determine sanctions nor hear appeals regarding sanctions. The Board will decide appeals with objectivity using the "more likely than not" standard of evidence.

The Student Responsibility Board, as defined in the Faculty Bylaws, is composed of one faculty member, one staff member, and one student, all of whom will be trained on the Board's responsibilities. Student and faculty membership will be determined by their respective governing bodies.[1] Faculty members will serve three-year terms. The college president will appoint the staff member. Strong consideration should be given to reappointment of some members in order to maintain operational continuity of the Board. The Dean of the College/designee(s) or Dean of Graduate Studies/designee(s) may attend any session of the Student Responsibility Board at which testimony is presented but may not attend deliberations of the Board. The college president will appoint the Board chairperson.

[1] See "Hearing Procedures" below for more information about graduate student representation.

Rights of the Individual Issued a Complaint (Respondent)

Clause 1. The right to a fair review of the complaint.

Clause 2. The right to testify on their own behalf.

Clause 3. The right to present information, including supporting documentation and expert witnesses.

Clause 4. The right not to be found in violation of college policy unless information provided meets the standard of "more likely than not."

Clause 5. The right to be notified in writing or electronically of a scheduled hearing no less than two business days in advance.

Clause 6. The right to be assisted by an advocate (a student or one other member of the college community) in preparing a response before the Board. Advocates are not allowed to address the Board unless granted permission by the chairperson.

Clause 7. The right to refuse to answer questions/participate in a hearing. The Board may draw reasonable inferences from refusal to answer or participate.

Clause 8. The right to contest the seating of any member of the Board for demonstrated bias or insufficient representation.

Rights of the Individual Issuing a Complaint (Complainant)

Clause 1. The right to a fair review of the complaint.

Clause 2. The right to present information, including supporting documentation and expert witnesses.

Clause 3. The right to be notified in writing or electronically of a scheduled hearing no less than two business days in advance.

Clause 4. The right to contest the seating of any member of the Board for demonstrated bias or insufficient representation.

Hearing Procedures

Clause 1. The Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies will contact the Student Responsibility Board chairperson to schedule a hearing to take place within two weeks of receiving an appeal of complaint.

Clause 2. All parties have the right to request with good reason that a hearing be rescheduled. Such requests must be presented to the Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies at least one business day in advance. The chairperson has sole authority to decide whether or not to grant the request.

Clause 3. Complainants and respondents must notify the Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies at least two business days before a scheduled hearing to contest the seating of any member of the Board for demonstrated bias or insufficient representation. (For example, graduate students may contest the seating of the Board's undergraduate student representative for insufficient representation and request a graduate student be seated on the Board.) If a board member is contested, the Board chairperson has authority to grant or deny the contest. If the chairperson is contested, the remaining members of the Board will decide whether or not to grant or deny the contest. Board decisions on disqualification are final. Alternates will be appointed to replace contested board members by the college president. See Special Provisions.

Clause 4. If the student requesting the hearing fails to appear at a properly scheduled hearing, the Board may proceed with the hearing.

Clause 5. Hearings are closed to the public.

Clause 6. Both the respondent and the complainant may call witnesses to provide relevant information. The Board may also call witnesses to provide relevant information.

Clause 7. Decision-making deliberations are to be conducted with only members of the Board present. Findings should be determined only on truthful statements and information presented at the hearing. Normally, previous violations of policy may not be considered when making a finding. However, an exception to this practice may be made in rare circumstances where the Dean of the College/designee or the Dean of Graduate Studies/designee determines it is warranted. Participants in the hearing are expected to present all information in a truthful and complete manner. Lying to the Board is a violation of college policy and would be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Clause 8. All records of the hearing proceedings should be maintained in the Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies.

Findings

Following a hearing, the Board will make one of the following findings:

Clause 1. Respondent is responsible. The finding where the information and testimony presented (using the standard of "more likely than not") establishes that the violation was proved.

Clause 2. Respondent is not responsible. The finding where the information and testimony presented (using the standard of "more likely than not") establishes that the violation was not proved.

Decision of Appeal

Clause 1. The Board chairperson will notify the Dean of the College/designee or the Dean of Graduate Studies/designee about the outcome of an appeal of complaint within three business days of the hearing. The Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies will notify the complainant and respondent about the outcome of the appeal within three days of receiving the outcome from the Board chairperson. All decisions about responsibility made by the Board are final.

Clause 2. The Office of Academic Affairs or the Office of Graduate Studies will notify the complainant and respondent about the outcome of an appeal of sanctions within 10 business days of receiving an appeal. All decisions about sanctions made by the Dean of the College/designee(s) or the Dean of Graduate Studies/designee(s) are final.

Special Provisions

These procedures will be in effect year-round. Consequently, interim appointments to the Student Responsibility Board may be made to accommodate these procedures at times other than the official academic year or during breaks.

Appendix A: Examples of Academic Misconduct Violations

The damage done to an academic community through dishonest acts is serious. Its seriousness requires a measured, yet forceful response. Because some may claim that they did not understand what constitutes academic dishonesty, this appendix specifies some of the ways in which

academic integrity may be violated. While the following specifications should not be considered exhaustive, violations of integrity generally may involve one or more of the following violations.

Cheating

One cheats when one uses a resource other than one's own scholarship to answer questions. Cheating can include situations in which individuals:

- Glance at the examination paper of another student during the examination period;
- Write information on paper, clothing, furniture, or person for use during an examination;
- Consult reference materials during an authorized break period during an examination;
- Use electronic devices with information for retrieval during an exam;
- Use one's own work in different classes without permission;
- Obtain unauthorized copies of examinations previously used in a course.
- Use artificial intelligence to generate answers on homework, exams, and other graded assignments without instructor permission.

Plagiarism

When one misrepresents another's ideas as one's own on an assignment or does not give credit to the creator of a work, one commits plagiarism. Examples of plagiarism include:

- Directly quoting from a work without using quotation marks;
- Using a source (directly in a quotation or paraphrasing from it) without crediting the creator in a citation;
- Submitting any part of another person's work as one's own;
- Submitting content generated by artificial intelligence as one's own;
- Not providing oral or written citations for information that is beyond common knowledge.

Falsification

Those who falsify reality do not pursue truth. Rather, they pervert it. Examples of falsification include:

- Listing a false or unconsulted reference in a research paper;
- Creation of false data for a class presentation, laboratory exercise, or class assignment;
- Submission of another person's work, or content generated by artificial intelligence, as one's own;
- Completion of an examination or assignment for another individual;
- Willful misrepresentation of one's academic efforts (e.g., overstating one's contributions to a group project).

Facilitating Others' Violations

When we permit or facilitate the dishonesty of others, we too are guilty of an equally serious violation. Examples of facilitating include:

- Providing another with work to be submitted for credit;
- Laying out an examination book to give another ready access to responses;
- Giving assistance to an individual when such assistance is prohibited;
- Disclosing examination questions to students who have yet to take the same exam;
- Failing to report known violations of academic integrity.

Impeding

We must freely pursue truth without restraint. Barriers placed in the way of others' pursuit of truth will not be tolerated. Impeding can include theft and destruction of the products of the scholarship of others. Examples of impeding include:

- The destruction or intentional misplacement of library materials or instructional specimens;
- The contamination of laboratory samples, reagents, and unknowns;
- The willful decalibration of measuring devices used by others;
- The willful introduction of a computer virus into a program or computer system;
- The disabling or destruction of computers, networks, and other instructional and scholarly works and tools;
- Providing misleading information to, or refusing to cooperate with, college officials investigating other integrity violations.

Poor Scholarship

Occasionally what initially appears to be an act of academic misconduct may turn out to be a case of poor scholarship. Academic misconduct is characterized by intent to deceive, by gross verbatim use or limited alteration of another's work accompanied by explicit or implicit claims that the work is the student's own, and by a general disregard of institutional policies regarding academic honesty and misconduct. Poor scholarship consists of an inadequate understanding of scholarly conventions or an inability to implement those conventions properly in one's work.

Some examples of poor scholarship may include insufficient citation of sources, inappropriate paraphrasing of sources, or accidental misuse of communal resources, such as in a laboratory. While these are serious offenses in the scholarly world, these instances of poor scholarship are often caused by a lack of understanding. In such circumstances instructors are advised to keep in mind that students at Concordia College are in a position of apprenticeship: they are learning the skills of scholarship under the tutelage of their instructors.

Acts of plagiarism that result from poor scholarship should be dealt with in a spirit of apprenticeship and treated as an opportunity for teaching rather than as an infraction that warrants filing of a complaint, particularly for first-year students. An appropriate penalty, therefore, is the same as for any other situation in which students fail to achieve the goals of a course such as a reduced grade for the assignment in question and further instruction to remedy the deficiencies demonstrated by the student. Rarely would poor scholarship be a reason to not report academic misconduct for a capstone project, such as a thesis, professional project, or dissertation, especially at the graduate level.

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