

SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Academic Integrity Policy

Introduction

This Academic Integrity Policy addresses willful acts of cheating, dishonesty, and plagiarism and establishes common procedures to be followed when such acts occur. The intent of the policy is to improve students' understanding of academic integrity while affirming the concepts and philosophies established in the Sinclair Community College Honor Code. Furthermore, the policy provides guidance for faculty, and their immediate supervisor(s) as they address violations of academic integrity. This policy is intended to be followed for all courses taught by Sinclair Community College faculty. In all instances, departments may develop and enforce academic integrity policies that are more stringent than, but not in conflict with, this policy.

Definitions

Cheating includes, but is not limited to any act that:

- Aids or assists another in an unfair advantage, which diminishes the educational experience of others.
- Uses or attempts to use unauthorized materials for exams.
- Allows someone else do any part of the student's work.
- Involves doing someone else's work for them, or allowing others to use your work.
- Fails to use reasonable efforts to protect electronic work. In a situation in which a student(s) fails to use reasonable efforts, and another student(s) steals that electronic work, all involved students will have been considered to be cheating.
- Aids and abets dishonesty, including providing material, information, or other assistance to another person to help them cheat.
- Involves collaboration on assignments unless it is a team/group assignment.
- Makes use of any telecommunication, cell phone or other information storage and retrieval equipment during an exam unless pre-approved by the faculty, and
- Other acts not defined above that demonstrate academic dishonesty.

Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Acts of academic fraud (deliberate deception).
- Attempts by a student(s) to deceive an instructor.
- Attempts to hide or cover up information pertinent to student(s) course work.
- Falsification of records and or documentation, and
- Other acts not defined above that demonstrate academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Presenting someone else's written work as your own. This includes the work of other students or any other persons, and works published elsewhere, including the World Wide Web. Students are expected to document all sources following established procedures for source citation.
- Using another's work in whole or in part without providing proper documentation of what and from where it is being borrowed.
- Obtaining another person's work through purchase, or otherwise, and submitting it as one's own, and
- Other acts not defined above that demonstrate academic dishonesty.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Cheating/dishonesty/plagiarism in any academic environment is a serious and delicate issue. In some cases, students are unaware through a lack of educational exposure or diverse cultural mores of their responsibility or the procedure for properly documenting borrowed material. In other situations, students knowingly purchase, steal, and/or copy the works of others for academic gain.

The challenge for any faculty member is to determine whether a case of suspected plagiarism is intentional or not. The faculty member most closely connected with a student's work is best suited to determine willful intent. Faculty may wish to seek guidance from other more experienced faculty, their immediate supervisor, other campus counselors (i.e., Disability Services, Athletic Department, ILP counselors, student mentor, etc.), or through faculty volunteers in the Center for Teaching and Learning. This additional guidance is encouraged but not required.

The process of determining a student's awareness and intent will likely require a conversation with the student(s) involved. A faculty member is advised to invite the student(s) to discuss the issue with him or her in an appropriate location if the question of intentionality is unclear. This discussion can be beneficial to educate and illuminate the faculty member and the student. Furthermore, the student's right to due process requires that students be afforded an opportunity to explain their behavior.

Individual and Group Work

It is imperative that students understand clearly what is considered acceptable as individual versus group work. Some of Sinclair class work is done in groups. Students in those instances are encouraged to help each other understand concepts presented, find needed resources, solve technological problems, and promote each other's learning. Students are expected to be prepared for group work and fully participate with classmates. Working on specific class work as a group does not imply or suggest that individual work can or should include assistance from others. When in doubt a student should check with his or her instructor.

To clarify the issue of individual versus group work, it may be beneficial to include a statement such as the following in class syllabi:

With the exception of assignments designated as group assignments by the instructor, all assignments are presumed to be completed individually, not as a part of a pair or team. Assignments include exams, tests, quizzes, papers, notebooks, extra credit, and any work completed for points.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROCEDURE

1. The faculty member should meet with the student(s) to understand the scope and intentionality of the issue in question.
2. A faculty member who identifies a situation involving intentional cheating, dishonesty or plagiarism as defined above must notify his or her immediate supervisor and then notify the student(s) in writing as to the violation of academic integrity.
3. The faculty member will prepare a written summary of the incident for his or her immediate supervisor.
4. The faculty member's immediate supervisor (or designee) should invite the student(s) to discuss the issue. It is recommended that this interaction take place in a face-to-face meeting if possible. The purpose of this meeting is to afford the student(s) due process to be heard regarding the issue. If the facts concerning the incident are in dispute, the faculty member involved may attend the meeting with the supervisor (or designee) and student.
5. The immediate supervisor (or designee) should review the "Statement of Understanding" with the student(s).
6. At the close of the meeting, all parties should sign a "Statement of Understanding." This statement need not include any admission of fault, but should clearly delineate the agreement regarding how the issue will be resolved.
7. If the incident of cheating, dishonesty or plagiarism is determined not to have occurred, that shall be documented, and a copy provided to the student(s) and communicated to all involved.
8. If the incident of cheating, dishonesty or plagiarism is determined to have occurred, the matter will proceed as set forth below.

Statement of Understanding

If a faculty member identifies a situation involving intentional cheating, dishonesty or plagiarism, said incident will be recorded on a separate "Statement of Understanding," which shall contain:

1. A summary of the events involving the cheating, dishonesty or plagiarism;
2. A statement that the student either agrees with the summary or disputes it;
3. A statement clarifying that the student understands the penalty for cheating, dishonesty or plagiarism in the course as set forth by the "Statement of Understanding;"
4. If appropriate, a statement that the student understands the consequences of withdrawal from the course and that it does count as one attempt toward successfully passing the course;
5. If it is determined that this is the student's second offense, a statement that he/she can have academic privileges restricted (see possible penalties below);

6. The signatures of the student, faculty member, and immediate supervisor;
7. A copy of the supporting documentation or evidence (e.g., copy of the course policies, a copy of the assignment, or other useful documentation), should be attached to the “Statement of Understanding,” and
8. As a last step, the “Statement of Understanding,” with any supporting documentation, would be forwarded to the Student Judicial Affairs Office for inclusion in the Student Code of Conduct database.

Penalties

- First violation: If it is determined that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the student will receive a grade deemed appropriate by the assigning faculty member as outlined in the course policy statement. In most instances, this grade would be a zero for the assignment or possibly an F for the course depending on the course policies.
- Second violation: Any student who violates the academic integrity policy twice in the same term will receive an F for the course.
- Withdrawal: Some students may decide to withdraw from a course rather than receive a failing grade. Withdrawing from a course in which the student has been determined to have cheated, plagiarized or otherwise behaved in an academically dishonest manner counts as an attempt towards successfully passing the course under the Repeating Courses Policy.
- Incomplete grades assigned at the end of a course while academic integrity violations are investigated will naturally convert to an F grade unless lesser sanctions are deemed appropriate. Grade change forms should be used per standard practice in this instance.
- A violation of the Student Code of Conduct involving academic matters will be submitted to the Student Judicial Affairs Office. The signed copy of the “Statement of Understanding,” with supporting documentation, will suffice for this report.
- A record of the violation of Student Code of Conduct B.4, (Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty) will be maintained by the Student Judicial Affairs Office.
- Repeat violators will receive additional sanctions from the college following the procedures set forth in the Student Code of Conduct.

Appeal Procedure

An appeal of the determination of cheating may be made to the Dean (or Dean’s designee) of the division. The faculty member’s immediate supervisor will send a copy of the “Statement of Understanding” to the Dean if the matter is appealed.

Appeals may be made only on the grounds of inappropriate sanction, procedural defects, or new evidence.

Approved by Instructional Council: March 2011

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STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

Summary of events: (to be completed by faculty member; additional pages may be attached)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

I met with the chairperson/supervisor of the [Click here to enter text.](#) Department/Program on (date) [Click here to enter text.](#) to discuss the alleged academic dishonesty incident on [Click here to enter text.](#)

Student statement of agreement – please initial below:

_____ I agree with the faculty member’s summary of the events.

_____ I disagree with the faculty member’s summary of the events.

Student statement of clarification regarding penalty for offense: (complete and initial those that apply)

_____ I understand that because I violated the academic integrity policy, I will receive a grade of _____ for this _____ (course) and this counts as one incident of academic dishonesty.

_____ I understand that I may withdraw from this course, *but this withdrawal counts as one attempt towards successfully passing the course according to the Repeating Courses Policy.

*Ability to withdraw from a course is dependent upon meeting the published deadlines for withdrawal.

_____ I understand that this incident will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs.

_____ I understand that if I have cheated previously in courses, the college can apply additional sanctions, according to the Student Code of Conduct.

By signing this “Statement of Understanding,” I agree that I met with the chairperson/supervisor, and that he/she has reviewed the incident and the procedure with me. My signature does not necessarily indicate that I agree with the department’s decision.

Student name (print)

Student ID number

Student signature

Date

_____ Student met with the supervisor, but refused to sign.

Faculty member (print)

Faculty member (signature)

Date

Chairperson/Supervisor (print)

Chairperson/Supervisor (signature)

Date

Attached is the evidence supporting a finding of academic dishonesty: (Describe attached evidence)

Routing:

The Department Chair will forward the original signed document to the Student Judicial Affairs Office, with copies to the (1) student, (2) department file, and (3) division dean.

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