

# Academic Integrity Policy: Revised Draft, 2009-12-04

## Background

After several years of work by a number of groups on campus, including the Faculty Senate, the Council of Deans, and the Student Government Association, a “conference committee” or “reconciliation group” was formed in the summer 2009 and expanded early in the fall semester. This working group included the following faculty, administrators, and students:

Wendy Castro  
Jack Gillean  
Jonathan Glenn  
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The working group developed a proposed Academic Integrity Policy intended to address substantive issues about academic integrity and misconduct at UCA, including those listed here:

- the responsibility shared by all members of the UCA community to uphold academic integrity
- a definition of academic misconduct and some of its possible forms
- assignment of responsibility to inform students about academic integrity and misconduct
- clearly articulated penalties for academic misconduct, with escalating severity related to repeated infractions
- clearly outlined procedures for addressing violations of academic integrity
- provision for and requirement of a permanent record of misconduct infractions and a centralized repository of documentation related to such infractions
- shared ownership of both the academic integrity policy and the consequences of its violation by faculty, students, and staff
- a standing university committee for adjudication and appeals (If the draft policy passes campus muster, additional proposals will be made to effect appropriate committee modifications to accommodate it.)

The working group provided a draft Academic Integrity Policy in mid-November to the representative bodies on campus – Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, SGA – and others with a request for comments, suggestions, and concerns. Comment was accepted through November 30. The working group considered all the comment received and has incorporated much of it in the revised policy presented in this document.

## Summary of Changes Based on Campus Review

This list summarizes major revisions made to the Academic Integrity Policy based on suggestions and comments from the campus community. In addition to the changes listed here, clarifications and corrections have been made in sections B, C, and F.

- Section D (Notification of Charge of Academic Misconduct):  
Added this specification: The University Registrar will provide an Academic Integrity Violation form to be used by instructors in reporting allegations of academic misconduct. (See also section E. Note these additional logistical details, not all appropriate for inclusion in the policy itself: the form has not yet been created but will include information such as the following: name of student, ID #, date; course, instructor's name, instructor's signature; nature of alleged infraction; penalty/penalties. The form is initially completed by the instructor, confirmed by the chair, and submitted by the chair.

It is entered in Banner by registrar's office personnel; the citation is completed after resolution of the incident [e.g., uncontested, appealed] by registrar's office personnel. The information in Banner is available to those with access to student information [essentially advisors and instructors]. The entry is a permanent part of the student record.)

- Section E (Penalties for Academic Misconduct):

Item 1: Indicated that penalties beyond those specified may be appropriate depending on the nature of the misconduct and the context in which it occurs. Additional penalties, if any, will be recommended by the instructor in consultation with the department chair.

Item 1: Clarified how the "official allegation" is made, including the roles of instructor and chair, and disposition of that information.

Institutional Penalties: Clarified the status of academic integrity citations in Banner (they become part of the permanent record). Revised institutional penalties presentation, revising and clarifying the constants and the escalating penalties resulting from repeated misconduct. Consequences escalate differently for undergraduate and graduate students.

- Sections G and H (Appeals Process; Procedures for the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee):

Restructured the department/college level of the appeals process.

Clarified the university level of appeal and worked out some inconsistencies in sections G and H.

## University of Central Arkansas Academic Integrity Policy

### A. Academic Integrity

The mission of the University of Central Arkansas commits all members of the university community to acquiring, sharing, evaluating, and communicating knowledge. Such a commitment includes an expectation of academic integrity, an organizational and individual commitment to honesty and responsibility in teaching and learning. By their affiliation with the University of Central Arkansas, all members of the university community are committed to shared responsibility for maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity. Although this policy focuses on the academic integrity in course-related work, its basis and context is the commitment made by the entire university community.

### B. Academic Misconduct

Violation of the expectation of academic integrity is academic misconduct. Examples of misconduct commonly identified by universities include but are not limited to those listed here (definitions are quoted from the *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, 1999 ed.):

- **Cheating:** to cheat is, in an academic context, "to take an examination or test in a dishonest way, as by improper access to answers." Cheating may also occur in the context of other academic assignments.
- **Plagiarism:** "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." This concept may apply to any kind of intellectual property.
- **Fabrication:** to fabricate is, in this context, "to fake; forge (a document, signature, etc.)." Fabrication is commonly associated with the falsified research findings.

Other forms of academic misconduct may include unauthorized collaboration or submitting the same paper or portions of the same paper to two different courses without the consent of both instructors. The university will provide extensive publicly accessible examples of and information about forms of academic misconduct (see section C, below).

The university's academic integrity policy applies to all students enrolled in courses at the University of Central Arkansas. All forms of academic misconduct at the University of Central Arkansas will be regarded as serious.

### C. Requirement to Inform Students

The Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Services will conduct an academic integrity seminar during new student orientation for freshmen, transfer, and graduate students each fall semester. Beginning in the fall 2010, first-year freshman students will be required to participate in the seminar. Other seminars, including an online version related to academic integrity, will be made available to faculty, students, and staff from time to time each year.

The Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Services will collaboratively develop one or more remedial Academic Integrity Workshops. (See section E, below.)

The Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Services will collaborate in publishing information about academic integrity and misconduct, with explanations and examples intended to help students make informed decisions about how they conduct themselves in their academic work, including the use and presentation of information.

Beginning in the fall semester 2010, every course syllabus, including those for courses offered by distance education, must include the following language: "The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board

Policy No. [###] on [date] and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy." An instructor may include in the course syllabus additional information about academic integrity if he/she wishes to do so.

#### **D. Notification of Charge of Academic Misconduct**

In the event an instructor determines that a student has engaged in academic misconduct, the instructor will notify the student of the allegation and the basis on which it is made and inform him/her of the action or sanction the instructor deems appropriate, consistent with the terms of section E of this policy.

The University Registrar will provide a form to be used by instructors in reporting allegations of academic misconduct.

#### **E. Penalties for Academic Misconduct**

1. Each instructor will decide on a case-by-case basis what penalty will be given to the student for his/her academic misconduct; such penalty may include a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Depending on the nature of the misconduct and the context in which it occurs, other penalties may be appropriate; additional penalties, if any, will be recommended by the instructor in consultation with the department chair. The instructor will submit the signed Academic Integrity Violation form to the department chair as notification of the allegation and penalty/penalties. The chair confirms the allegation by signing the form and submits it to the University Registrar for entry in Banner (the "official allegation").
2. Using the student's preferred email address listed in Banner, the department chair will inform the student of his/her right to appeal. Within ten (10) working days of the department chair's notification, the student has a right to appeal the decision through the procedures set forth below.
3. If the student does not appeal, the department chair will send all documentation provided by the instructor to the University Registrar for creation of the electronic file (see section F, below).

##### **Institutional Penalties**

Institutional responses to allegations of misconduct fall into two categories: (1) automatic penalties based on an official allegation and (2) additional penalties that will result if the student is not exonerated. The institutional responses seek both to educate and reprimand students while promoting academic integrity. These responses vary based on student classification, previous infractions, and their outcome.

All official allegations against a student, whether undergraduate or graduate, made by the instructor and confirmed by the department chair, result in a permanent citation in the student record in Banner. Similarly, every official allegation, made by the instructor and confirmed by the department chair, may result in course-related sanctions determined by the instructor. Other penalties may apply on a first infraction, based on the nature and context of the misconduct. Penalties will escalate on further infractions.

The following escalating consequences apply to undergraduate students:

- Second infraction
  - Automatic additional penalties: completion of compulsory Academic Integrity Workshop
  - Additional penalty, if not exonerated: meeting with administrator (dean or designee)
- Third infraction
  - Additional penalty, if not exonerated: referral to Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee for possible university sanction (e.g., probation, suspension, expulsion)

- Subsequent infractions
  - Automatic additional penalty: referral to Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee for university sanction (e.g., probation, suspension, expulsion)

The following escalating consequences apply to graduate students:

- First infraction
  - Automatic additional penalties: (1) completion of compulsory Academic Integrity Workshop; (2) meeting with graduate dean
- Second infraction
  - Automatic additional penalty: referral to Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee for university sanction (e.g., probation, suspension, expulsion)
- Third infraction
  - Automatic additional penalty: expulsion from the Graduate School

#### **F. Academic Misconduct File**

All documentation relevant to a student's academic misconduct will be maintained in both electronic and paper files. The electronic files will be created and housed in the Office of the Registrar, based on documentation submitted by a department and, if applicable, developed in an appeal process. Hard paper copies will reside on file in the office of the college dean or administrator in whose college/division the alleged misconduct occurred. Academic misconduct files shall only be used by non-student university employees as necessary in the case of an appeal. If the student makes a formal appeal, it will be decided in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

#### **G. Appeals Process**

A student may appeal the charge of academic misconduct and any sanctions or actions taken by the instructor through the procedures set forth below, beginning at the department level and proceeding to the university level if necessary.

##### **1. Appeals at the Department/College Level**

- a. The instructor will advise the student of an accusation of academic misconduct and the penalties to be applied. Within ten (10) working days of receiving this information, a student may meet informally with the instructor to attempt to resolve the matter.
- b. If the student is not satisfied with the action of the instructor, then within ten (10) working days of the meeting with the instructor, the student may submit a formal written appeal to the department chair. Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the written appeal, the chair will meet with the student to attempt to resolve the matter.
- c. If the student is not satisfied with the action of the department chair, then within ten (10) working days of the meeting with the department chair, the student may submit a formal written appeal to the dean of the appropriate college, with copies to the instructor and the department chair.
- d. Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the written appeal, the instructor and department chair must submit the following materials to the dean of the college: a description of the academic misconduct and any penalties assigned, and all pertinent documentation concerning the academic misconduct. The dean of the college may ask for additional documentation from the student's academic misconduct file if such documentation exists.
- e. Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal, the dean of the college will submit a written decision to the student with copies to the instructor and to the department chair. The dean of the college will forward the written decision and documentation to the University

Registrar for the permanent electronic record and retain all pertinent documentation regarding the academic misconduct in the student's academic misconduct file.

## **2. Appeals at the University Level:**

- a. If not satisfied with the action of the dean of the college, the student may submit, within ten (10) working days after receiving notice of the decision, a written appeal to the dean of students for referral to the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee.

[The existence of the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee, as described herein, assumes the successful conclusion of a separate proposal process for modification of the University Discipline Committee.]

- b. Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the student's appeal, the dean of students will refer the appeal to the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee for a hearing and inform the instructor, department chair, college dean, dean of students, and (as appropriate) the undergraduate and graduate deans. The composition of the Committee and the procedures to be followed are set forth in Section H below.
- c. The Committee will submit the report of the hearing and the recommendations of the Committee to the Provost and Vice President for Student Services. The Provost and Vice President for Student Services may choose appropriate designees to act on their behalf. The Provost and Vice President for Student Services (or designees) will render the final decision after considering the recommendations and report of the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee. The Provost and Vice President for Student Services (or designees) will send a report of the final decision to the student, instructor, department chair, college dean, dean of students, and the undergraduate or graduate dean. The report, along with the written recommendation of the Committee and any additional documentation developed in the appeals process, is forwarded to the University Registrar for completion of the Banner record and permanent electronic archiving.

## **H. Procedures for the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee**

The following procedures apply to the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee when it is reviewing cases of academic misconduct.

1. The dean of students will give the Committee a copy of the appeal and all pertinent documentation regarding the charge of academic misconduct. Copies of the appeal will also be sent to the instructor, department chair, college dean, dean of students and (as appropriate) the undergraduate and graduate dean.
2. Six (6) members of the Committee will constitute a quorum, and at least one appointee from the administration, the faculty, and the Student Government Association must be present. Decisions must be reached by a majority of the members present. The chair may cast a deciding vote in the event of a tie. The number of yes, no, and abstention votes will be recorded without designating individual votes.
3. The student, instructor, department chair, and the relevant deans will be entitled to five (5) working days' notice of the date, time, and place of hearing.
4. After the Committee considers the matters referred to it by the dean of students, the student and instructor may present relevant witnesses and documentary evidence. The Committee will accept all relevant oral testimony and documentation that it feels to be relevant and material to the issue. The chair has the power to rule on the admissibility of the evidence and on the relevance of questions. The responsibility for questioning witnesses, securing evidence, and determining the degree of proof will be vested in the Committee.
5. Strict judicial rules of evidence will not be applied. The student, the instructor, the department chair, and the appropriate deans may be accompanied by an advisor, who may be an attorney. The University general counsel may be present to advise the Committee. An attorney will not be provided at University expense. Advisors will only function in an advisory capacity; they will not address the Committee, question witnesses, or otherwise actively participate in the hearing.

6. The student and the instructor (and advisors), the department chair, the college dean, the dean of students, and the undergraduate or graduate dean (as appropriate) may be present at any time testimony is presented and be provided copies of all evidence considered by the Committee.
7. The office of the college dean or administrator in whose unit the alleged misconduct occurred will retain and secure copies of all evidence considered by the Committee.
8. A copy of the minutes and the Committee's recommendation will be provided to the student, the instructor, the department chair, the college dean, dean of students, the undergraduate or graduate dean (as appropriate), the Vice President for Student Services and the Provost within ten (10) working days of the final meeting of the Committee.
9. Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the Committee's recommendation, the Provost and the Vice President for Student Services, or their designees, will render a final decision. The Provost and the Vice President for Student Services, or their designees, will give the student, the instructor, the department chair, the college dean, and the undergraduate and graduate deans (as appropriate) written notice of the final decision. The report, along with the written recommendation of the Committee and any additional documentation developed in the appeals process, is forwarded to the University Registrar for completion of the Banner record and permanent electronic archiving.