

# Code of Academic Integrity

## Preamble

We, the Students, Faculty, Librarians and Administration of The George Washington University, believing academic honesty to be central to the mission of the University, commit ourselves to its high standards and to the promotion of academic integrity. Commitment to academic honesty upholds the mutual respect and moral integrity that our community values and nurtures. To this end, we have established The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity.

## Article I: The Authority of the Code of Academic Integrity

### Section 1: Jurisdiction of the Code of Academic Integrity

The Code of Academic Integrity shall have jurisdiction over the following schools within the University:

- 1) the College of Professional Studies;
- 2) the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences;
- 3) the Elliott School of International Affairs;
- 4) the Graduate School of Education and Human Development;
- 5) the School of Business;
- 6) the School of Engineering and Applied Science;
- 7) the School of Nursing;
- 8) the Milken Institute School of Public Health;
- 9) all programs in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, except the Doctor of Medicine program.

### Section 2: Repeal of Prior University Policies on Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty policies of The George Washington University applicable to the aforementioned schools previous to the time of the passage of this Code of Academic Integrity are hereby repealed and are for all intents and purposes null and void. The George Washington University Law School maintains its own code of academic integrity and is excluded from this Code.

### Section 3: Interpretation

Conflicts or questions about the Code of Academic Integrity (including its interaction with other policies of the University) should be forwarded to the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or a designee shall be the final interpreter of the Code of Academic Integrity.

## Article II: Basic Considerations

Students are responsible for the honesty and integrity of their own academic work, in addition to any group or collaborative academic work attributed to them which is submitted for academic evaluation or credit in an academic course.

### Section 1: Definition of Academic Dishonesty

(a) Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.

(b) Common examples of academically dishonest behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) *Cheating* - intentionally or knowingly using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise; engaging in unauthorized collaboration in any academic exercise; copying from another student's examination; submitting work for an in-class examination that has been prepared in advance; representing material prepared by another as one's own work; submitting the same or substantially the same work in more than one course without prior permission of both instructors; violating rules governing administration of examinations; violating any rules relating to academic conduct of a course or program.
- 2) *Fabrication* - intentionally or knowingly, or unauthorized falsification or invention of any data, information, or citation in an academic exercise; giving false or misleading information regarding an academic matter.
- 3) *Plagiarism* - intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; or failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.
- 4) *Falsification and forgery of University academic documents* - intentionally or knowingly making a false statement, concealing material information, or forging a University official's signature on any University academic document or record; making false statements to or concealing material information from a university employee that results in the creation of a false academic record or document. Such academic documents or records may include transcripts, registration/add-drop forms, requests for advanced standing, requests to register for undergraduate or graduate-level courses, etc. (Falsification or forgery of non-academic University documents, such as financial aid forms, shall be considered a violation of the non-academic student disciplinary code.)
- 5) *Facilitating academic dishonesty* - intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- 6) *Sanction Violation* - violating the terms of any disciplinary sanction imposed in accordance with this "Code".

### Section 2: Reportage

(a) It is the moral responsibility but not the sanctioned obligation (unless otherwise provided herein) of each member of The George Washington University community to respond to suspected acts of academic dishonesty by:

- 1) consulting the individual(s) thought to be involved and encouraging them to report it themselves, and/or
- 2) reporting it to the instructor involved, and/or
- 3) reporting it to the Academic Integrity Council.

- (b) Reporting oneself after committing academic dishonesty is strongly encouraged and may be considered in determining sanctions.

### **Section 3: Assignments and Examinations**

- (a) Instructors are solely responsible for establishing academic assignments and methods of examination.
- (b) Instructors are encouraged to provide to students clear explanations of their expectations regarding the completion of assignments and examinations, including permissible collaboration.
- (c) Instructors are encouraged to choose assignments and methods of examination believed to promote academic honesty. Examples of these include careful proctoring of examinations and the constant creation of fresh exams. Collaborative projects and unproctored examinations do not violate the promotion of academic integrity. When assigning collaborative projects or using unproctored examinations, the instructor should explicitly state the expectations of performance for all participants.
- (d) Instructors are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to affirm their commitment to academic integrity in various settings, including examinations and other assignments. The following statement may be used for this purpose: "I, (student's name), affirm that I have completed this assignment/examination in accordance with the Code of Academic Integrity."

## **Article III: The Academic Integrity Council**

### **Section 1: Mission of the Academic Integrity Council**

- (a) The Academic Integrity Council will be responsible for promoting academic integrity and for administering all procedures in this Code.
- (b) Administrative and logistical support for the Academic Integrity Council shall be provided by the Office of Academic Integrity, within the Division of Student Affairs. The office shall be the repository for records pertaining to the Code of Academic Integrity and Academic Integrity Council.

### **Section 2: Composition of the Academic Integrity Council and the Hearing Panels**

- (a) The Academic Integrity Council shall have members from each of the participating schools. There will be six students and four faculty members from the Columbian School of Arts and Sciences. There will be four students and two faculty members from each of the following schools: the Elliott School of International Affairs, the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, the College of Professional Studies, the School of Business, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the School of Nursing, the Milken Institute School of Public Health, and the programs of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (except the Doctor of Medicine program). The terms of all members shall be one academic year. Members may reapply for additional terms. The process for identifying and selecting candidates to serve on the Academic Integrity Council shall be determined by the Office of Academic Integrity.
- (b) At the beginning of each academic year, a minimum of five presiding officers will be elected by the full membership of the Council, from among the student members, at a meeting convened by the Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee. Insofar as possible, these Officers shall rotate responsibility for presiding over cases. The presiding officer will have no vote in the deliberations on establishing responsibility or recommending a sanction at the hearing.

(c) Hearing Panels selected from members of the Academic Integrity Council shall adjudicate all cases arising under this Code. The Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee will select and convene hearing panels as needed. A Hearing Panel shall be comprised of a presiding officer, two student members and two faculty members. Two of the members shall be from the home school of the respondent(s). One of the members shall be from the home school of the course. Should Academic Integrity Council members from the home schools of the respondent and course be unavailable to adjudicate a case, the Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee may appoint other Academic Integrity Council members as substitutes.

(d) Any case that arises before or during a summer, academic or holiday break period may be heard during that same break period providing that members of the Academic Integrity Council are available. Otherwise the case will be adjudicated during the following academic semester.

(e) All members of the Academic Integrity Council shall participate in training organized by the Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee.

### **Section 3: Selection and Removal of Academic Integrity Council Members**

(a) During each spring semester, the Office of Academic Integrity will handle the nomination, application and selection processes of the Academic Integrity Council members who will serve in the next academic year. The Office of Academic Integrity may utilize a Selection Committee to assist in this process. This committee shall be convened by the Dean of Student Affairs or a designee, and may be comprised of the following members:

- 1) the Faculty Co-Chair of the Joint Committee of Faculty and Students;
- 2) the Student Co-Chair of the Joint Committee of Faculty and Students;
- 3) the Chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Educational Policy;
- 4) the Chair of the Student Association Senate Academic Affairs Committee;
- 5) the Chair of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee or a designee;
- 6) the President of the Student Association or a designee.

(b) The following criteria shall be used in the selection of the student members:

- 1) must be students registered for at least three credit hours in a degree-granting program of the School which they are representing;
- 2) must have made satisfactory academic progress and be in good academic standing;
- 3) may not have any disciplinary record or probation of any sort;
- 4) may not hold any position, either elected or appointed, in the Student Association.

(c) The following criteria shall be used in the selection of the Faculty members:

- 1) must be full-time faculty members in the School that they are representing;
- 2) may not be elected members of the Faculty Senate.

(d) Members of the Academic Integrity Council who are charged with any violation of this Code or the "Code of Student Conduct" shall be suspended from participation during the pendency of the charges against them. Members found in violation of any violation of this Code or the "Code of Student Conduct" shall be disqualified from any further participation in the Academic Integrity Council. Faculty members involved in a pending case shall not participate on a Hearing Panel during the pendency of the charge.

(e) The Academic Integrity Council, by a two-thirds vote of the membership, or the Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee may remove a member for non-participation. The Office of Academic Integrity shall, define an expectation of participation for the Academic Integrity Council membership.

(f) Vacancies, as they occur, shall be filled by by the Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee.

#### **Section 4: Case Procedures**

(a) Charges involving violations of the Code of Academic Integrity may be initiated by either faculty, students, librarians or administrators. Any charges should be made as expeditiously as is reasonably possible (normally within twelve working days except in the summer or during academic breaks and holidays) from the discovery of the infraction. Charges may be initiated as follows:

- 1) A student may initiate a charge of academic dishonesty against another student, by referring the case to the faculty member involved and/or to the Academic Integrity Council. If the case is brought directly to the Academic Integrity Council, for action by a Hearing Panel, then the Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee shall promptly notify the instructor of the involved course.
- 2) When a faculty member initiates a charge or is made aware of a violation which the faculty member determines to be substantive, the faculty member shall contact the Office of Academic Integrity in order to discover whether the student has ever been found in violation of a charge of academic dishonesty.
  - i) In first offense cases, the instructor shall either act directly, in consultation with the Department Chair, or refer the case to the Academic Integrity Council for action by a Hearing Panel. An instructor who acts directly must present the student with specific charges and a proposed sanction. Sanctions will be determined in accordance with Article III, Section 5 and Article II, Section 2 of this Code.
  - ii) If the faculty member acts directly then the accused student shall have the right to appeal directly to the Academic Integrity Council, for action by a Hearing Panel, should he or she disagree with the validity of the charge or the appropriateness of the sanction.

iii) If the student agrees with the nature of the charge and accepts the sanction, the faculty member must notify the Office of Academic Integrity of the violation.

iv) Second or subsequent offenses shall go directly to the Academic Integrity Council, for action by a Hearing Panel.

v) If a faculty member is made aware of a violation which the faculty member determines not to be substantive, the faculty member shall notify the complaining student promptly.

3) All charges initiated by members of the administration or librarians shall go directly to the Academic Integrity Council, for action by a Hearing Panel.

4) All actions, on any level, shall be recorded with the Office of Academic Integrity. This includes cases handled directly by faculty and instructors as first offense cases. Faculty and instructors must notify and submit the appropriate documentation about any violation of the Code of Academic Integrity to the Office of Academic Integrity for proper retention of records.

(b) Deliberation of the hearing shall occur in two stages: the establishment of responsibility and the recommendation of sanction. To find a respondent in violation, three-quarters of the voting panel members must agree. If the panel finds a respondent in violation, they shall also make a recommendation of sanction. A sanction other than expulsion can be recommended by three-quarters of the voting panel members. A sanction of expulsion can only be recommended by a unanimous vote of the voting panel members.

(c) Reports of the Hearing Panel shall include a finding of fact and a determination of the responsibility of the respondent. If the respondent is found in violation, then the report will also include a recommendation of sanction. Sanctions will be determined in accordance with Article III, Section 5 and Article II, Section 2 of this Code. This report shall be forwarded to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee, who will review the report of the Hearing Panel. If in the judgment of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee the sanction recommended by the Panel is significantly at variance with sanctions imposed in closely similar cases, the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee may revise the sanction before notifying the respondent of the Hearing Panel's decision of responsibility and the decision as to sanction. The complainant, appropriate Department Chair and Dean shall receive a copy of the Hearing Panel's report and the Provost and Executive Vice President or designee's decision as to sanction.

(d) These proceedings should be concluded as expeditiously as possible. The Hearing Panels should strive to have proceedings concluded within seven weeks of the report of the violation. However, failure to do so shall not constitute improper procedure under the Code.

#### **Section 5: Sanctions**

(a) The recommended minimum sanction in first offense cases shall be failure of the assignment in question. The recommended minimum sanction in repeat violation cases shall be failure of the course. For more serious offenses sanction may be suspension from the University for a specified minimum time or expulsion from the University. Other sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the reduction of academic credit for the assignment or course in question, and/or educational sanctions may be appropriate for particular cases.

(b) Sanction recommendations of suspension or expulsion, as a result of academic dishonesty, may only be determined by a Hearing Panel.

(c) Attempts to commit acts prohibited by this Code may be punished to the same extent as completed violations.

(d) Respondents found in violation of this Code may also be removed from or determined to be ineligible for certain University programs, in accordance with the regulations and bylaws of that program.

(e) All sanctions except failure of the assignment in question shall be marked on the respondent's permanent record (i.e., transcript) with the phrase "Academic Dishonesty". In the case of failure of the course, the notation shall remain on the transcript of the respondent for a minimum of two years. In the case of suspension or expulsion, the notation shall remain on the transcript of the respondent for a minimum of three years. After the minimum time has elapsed, the respondent may petition to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee for the removal of the sanction notation from the transcript. This provision shall not, however, prohibit any program, department, college or school of the University from retaining records of violations and reporting violations as required by their professional standards; the University may retain, for appropriate administrative purposes, records of all proceedings regarding violations of the Code of Academic Integrity.

(f) Sanctions imposed upon a Respondent found in violation of this Code may also have subsequent ramifications upon their academic standing in an academic course or academic program in accordance with the faculty member's syllabus, and/or the academic college or department's regulations and bylaws.

(g) The Hearing Panel may consider significant mitigating or aggravating circumstances when making a sanction recommendation, which may include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the offense and/or the student's prior disciplinary record.

### **Section 6: Hearing Panel Procedural Guidelines**

(a) All attendant procedures and records of the Academic Integrity Council and its Hearing Panels, from the initial charge to the final resolution, shall be strictly confidential.

(b) Respondents and complainants shall be given notice of the hearing date and the specific charges against them at least five calendar days in advance and shall be accorded reasonable access to the case file, which will be retained in the Office of Academic Integrity. The instructor of the involved course, appropriate academic Dean, Department Chair and the Dean of Student Affairs shall also receive notification of the pending charges within five calendar days of the hearing.

(c) The Office of Academic Integrity or the presiding officer may request the attendance of witnesses upon motion of any panel member, or of either party. Only witnesses who can provide direct knowledge about the given case shall be called. Requests must be approved by the Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee, and shall be personally delivered or sent by electronic or certified mail, return receipt requested. University students and employees are expected to comply with such requests. Complainants and respondents shall be accorded an opportunity to question those witnesses who testify for either party at the hearing. Failure of witnesses to appear will not invalidate the proceedings.

(d) Hearings will occur in the absence of respondents who fail to appear after proper notice. In this instance, complainants will still be required to present a case.

(e) Hearings will be closed to the public, without exception. Prospective witnesses, other than the complainant and respondent, shall be excluded from the hearing during the testimony of other witnesses. All parties and witnesses shall be excluded from Panel deliberations. Both the complainant and the respondent may be accompanied by an advisor. The role of these advisors shall be limited to consultation. Under no circumstances are advisors permitted to address the Panel or question witnesses. At the discretion of the presiding officer, violations of this limitation will result in the advisor being ejected from the hearing. The University retains the right to have legal counsel present at any hearing.

(f) Hearings shall be conducted in accordance with the investigatory model of administrative hearings, in which the Hearing Panel assumes responsibility for the questioning of witnesses and the eliciting of relevant evidence. The purpose of the hearing is to establish the facts. The burden of proof shall be upon the complainant, who must establish the violation of the respondent by a preponderance of the evidence. "Preponderance of the evidence" is that evidence, which when fairly considered, produces the stronger impression, has the greater weight, and is more convincing as to its truth when weighed against the evidence offered in opposition.

(g) Formal rules of evidence shall not be applicable in proceedings conducted pursuant to this Code. The presiding officer shall have the discretion to admit all matters into evidence that reasonable persons would accept as having probative value. Panel members may take into consideration matters that would be within the general experience of University students and faculty members.

(h) The presiding officer shall exercise control over the proceedings to achieve orderly and timely completion of the hearing. Any person, including the complainant and respondent, who disrupts a hearing may be excluded by the presiding officer. The presiding officer shall direct the hearing through the following: statements from both the complainant and respondent, questioning and cross-examination of witnesses by both the complainant and respondent, the questioning of the complainant, respondent and any witnesses by panel members, and concluding statements by the complainant and respondent.

(i) Hearings shall be recorded. These recordings will be retained for a period of three years.

(j) Any party may challenge a panel member on the grounds of personal bias. In such cases, panel members may be disqualified from the hearing by the Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee, or upon majority vote of the remaining members of the Panel, conducted by secret ballot.

(k) Witnesses shall be asked to affirm that their testimony is truthful. False testimony will be subject to charges of intentionally providing false information to the University, pursuant to Article 11(i) of the "Code of Student Conduct".

(l) Affidavits shall only be admitted into evidence if signed by the affiant and witnessed by the Director of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities or a designee. An affiant who is unable to appear may submit an affidavit which has been witnessed by a notary.

### **Section 7: Appeals**

Appeals of the decision of the Hearing Panel or of the sanction imposed by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee shall only be based on new evidence or evidence

of bias. After a decision has been confirmed by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee, either party may file, within three working days, an intention to appeal with the Office of Academic Integrity. A petition of appeal must be filed with the Office of Academic Integrity within five working days of the declaration of intention. Appeals will be reviewed by the President of the University or a designee. The President or a designee will then make a decision on the appeal, based on the petition and the reports of the Hearing Panel and the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee.

The decision of the President or designee in connection with the appeal shall be final and conclusive and no further appeals will be permitted.

## **Article IV: Amendments to the Code of Academic Integrity**

### **Section 1: Amendments**

(a) Amendments to the Code of Academic Integrity shall be referred to or initiated by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee. Amendments may also be referred to or initiated by either the Faculty Senate or the Student Association. In order for an amendment to pass, both must approve the measure with a simple majority vote.

(b) Amendments will then be forwarded to the President of the University for confirmation and submission to the Board of Trustees with the President's recommendation for action.

### **Section 2: Reports and Reviews**

(a) The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs shall make an annual report to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, Joint Committee of Faculty and Students, the Faculty Senate Educational Policy Committee, the Student Association Senate Academic Affairs Committee, and the Council of Deans on the work of the Academic Integrity Council.

(b) The Academic Integrity Council may, from time to time, make reports and recommendations to the Faculty Senate, the Student Association Senate or the Joint Committee of Faculty and Students about the state of the Code of Academic Integrity.

(c) The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs shall coordinate with the Joint Committee of Faculty and Students to conduct a review of the Code of Academic Integrity after its first year of operation, and then at least once every five years after that.

## **Article V: Implementation**

### **Section 1: Mission of the Implementation Team**

(a) The mission of the Implementation Team will be to plan for effective implementation of the Code of Academic Integrity and to ensure that appropriate, adequate, and timely preparation is completed prior to the date of implementation.

(b) The types of preparation essential to effective implementation include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1) publication and distribution of the Code itself;
- 2) preparation of documents that relate the Code to practical student and faculty experience and that provide both groups with strategies for avoiding academic dishonesty;
- 3) inclusion of the Code of Academic Integrity in the recruitment of prospective students and faculty;

- 4) planning for student, faculty, and graduate teaching assistant orientation, guidance and training;
- 5) working out practical details of implementation not explicitly covered in the Code, such as the organization of the Academic Integrity Council, the process for identifying candidates for the Academic Integrity Council, and the development of an application for Academic Integrity Council members;
- 6) prepare a fuller listing of potential sanctions and guidelines about the offenses for which they might be appropriate;
- 7) planning ways to maintain a high level of visibility for the Code;
- 8) developing ways to educate faculty and students about the importance of academic integrity and its impact on the University.

### **Section 2: Composition of the Implementation Team**

(a) The Implementation Team will be convened by the Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee, upon adoption of the Code of Academic Integrity.

(b) The Implementation Team will be comprised of the following members:

- 1) the Faculty Co-Chair of the Joint Committee of Faculty and Students;
- 2) the Student Co-Chair of the Joint Committee of Faculty and Students;
- 3) the Chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Educational Policy;
- 4) the Chair of the Student Association Senate Academic Affairs Committee;
- 5) the Chair of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee or a designate;
- 6) the President of the Student Association or a designate;
- 7) the University's General Counsel or a designate;
- 8) the Dean of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences or a designate;
- 9) the Dean of the Elliott School of International Affairs or a designate;
- 10) the Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development or a designate;
- 11) the Dean of the School of Business or a designate;
- 12) the Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Science or a designate;
- 13) the Associate Dean of the Health Sciences Program in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences or a designate;
- 14) the Dean of Student Affairs or a designate;

15) any other members of the University the Dean of Student Affairs or a designate may deem necessary.

*Approved by the Board of Trustees - May 12, 1995*