


OFFICE OF THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

The University Of Oklahoma

Norman Campus

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: C. LeRoy Blank, Chair, Faculty Senate

FROM: Gregory M. Heiser, Associate Provost 

DATE: October 7, 2010

SUBJECT: Academic integrity policy draft

Attached please find a newly updated version of the academic integrity policy document considered at the September 13 Faculty Senate meeting.

This version retains the changes made in the September 29 version at the suggestion of certain Faculty Senate members and also corrects a typographical error noted in section 1.2. Specifically, the suggestion was to clarify the "Integrity Pledge" provision (sec. 1.5). That provision now incorporates verbatim the language suggested by Professor Murray Tabb.

Another question received from several Senate members is whether, since the current document will need to be implemented through additional policies and procedures, faculty will have input in the drafting process for those documents. The answer must clearly be yes. I am requesting that the Faculty Senate supply the names of five faculty who could serve on the Provost's academic integrity task force in the coming months, along with student representatives. These five would constitute the faculty representation on an advisory group of no more than ten who can help the Provost and Legal Counsel draft policy and procedures. My hope is still that the drafting work could be completed in time for the 2011-2012 academic year.

As we discussed, the primary aim of this effort will be to implement the attached policy proposal, which aims to create a less adversarial system while preserving due process and enhancing student involvement and "buy-in" in the university's integrity system. Nothing in these changes should or will lower standards of integrity. No substantial change is intended beyond the terms and clear intent of the policy document, and every effort will be made to retain current forms and procedures not covered therein.

attachment

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Basic Principle of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

1.2 Scope

This Code applies to all work for any class or other academic activity conducted by a Norman Campus unit, excluding the College of Law. It also applies to other academic activities such as enrollment, withdrawal from classes and the like. Misconduct in admissions is not covered except when discovered after the student's classes begin. Violations of expectations for orderly conduct in instructional activities shall be governed by the Student Code and by such rules as the Provost may establish or approve.

1.3 Definition of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. The Provost shall develop policies and instructional materials to illustrate specific forms of misconduct such as fraud, plagiarism, and improper collaboration.

1.4 Integrity Council

The Integrity Council shall be an organization of students that maintains and promotes academic integrity on the Norman Campus. Assisted by faculty, staff and administrators, it shall fulfill the investigative, adjudicative, and advisory functions provided in this Code and otherwise promote integrity on the Norman Campus. The Provost shall approve the Council's procedures as well as bylaws and membership requirements. The Integrity Council shall be advised by a board appointed by the President, with representation from faculty, students, and others as appropriate.

1.5 Integrity Pledge

Instructors are encouraged to advise students of the requirements of the University Academic Integrity Code and its application to any assignments, examinations, policies and procedures in the course. Although the Code is binding on student conduct by its own force, instructors may additionally choose to remind students of the importance of the Code by formal or informal means. An example of a formal reminder would be to have students attest in writing that they have complied with the Code with regard to a specific assignment or examination. An informal reminder may be an oral statement made to the class that the Code is binding with respect to a collaboration or research project.

2 REPORTING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Any person may report suspected misconduct to an instructor (or to the relevant administrator as appropriate), or to the Integrity Council. Instructors and administrators who receive a report or otherwise learn of suspected misconduct may first investigate and should report the matter to the Integrity Council as described below.

3 INFORMAL RESOLUTION: THE ADMONITION

3.1 Choosing the admonition. An admonition is a warning from the instructor to the student. It may be accompanied by a grade reduction up to a zero on the assignment and/or additional required work. An admonition is not an adjudication of academic misconduct. However, in any subsequent misconduct proceeding the admonition will establish the student's familiarity with integrity standards. Admonitions are typically appropriate when the student's conduct would count as misconduct but is better addressed through an immediate instructional response rather than referral to the Integrity Council. Admonitions are not appropriate for egregious misconduct, or for cumulative examinations, and other semester-long assignments, or for graduate assignments such as general examinations. Ordinarily no student should receive more than one admonition.

3.2 Conditions for imposing the admonition. An instructor who elects to use the admonition option shall inform the student of the nature of and basis for the misconduct; explain the grade reduction or other requirement to be imposed; and inform the student how to contest the decision. The Provost shall approve rules to report admonitions, ensure that students may contest them, and restrict their use in repeat or egregious cases.

4 INTEGRITY COUNCIL INVESTIGATION

Upon receipt of a report of misconduct, the Integrity Council shall investigate unless the case is referred back to the instructor for review and informal resolution. The Integrity Council shall adopt investigation procedures that ensure fundamental fairness to the students involved, protect the community's interest in enforcement of standards, and prompt resolution of cases. These procedures shall include:

- (a) Notice to the student, no later than 30 regular class days of when the incident is discovered;
- (b) a grade of "N", a temporary neutral grade, to be assigned while the matter is pending;
- (c) referral to an appropriate Integrity Council designee(s), who will answer questions and counsel the student as to the rights available under the Code, and be available to the student throughout the investigation process as an informative resource only;
- (d) the option to seek further advice or counsel from a designated student advisor, including UOSA general counsel;

(e) a report of findings, in writing, that shall be provided to the student, the instructor or other administrator reporting the incident, and other university officials with a need to know.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the matter may be concluded by dismissal, if insufficient evidence exists to support a finding of responsibility; default, if the student fails to respond to reasonable notice; admission of responsibility by the student; or hearing.

5 HEARINGS

Upon the student's request for a hearing, the matter shall be assigned to an Integrity Council Inquiry Panel. The Inquiry Panel shall consist of two students, two faculty members, and a student chair. The case shall be adjudicated according to procedures that honor the following principles:

- (a) Students are entitled to the presumption of innocence.
- (b) Students are entitled to a reasonably prompt hearing.
- (c) Hearings are not adversarial: the Panel shall be primarily responsible for eliciting information from all relevant sources, which shall ordinarily include the instructor, investigator, and student.
- (d) The student shall represent himself or herself but may be advised by his or her Integrity Council advisor.
- (e) Responsibility for misconduct must be established by a preponderance of the evidence.
- (f) At the conclusion of the hearing the Panel shall deliberate and decide by majority vote whether the student is responsible for an act of misconduct.

If a student is found not responsible for misconduct, the matter shall be dismissed. If a student is found responsible, the Panel shall recommend an institutional penalty to the Provost and may make recommendations to the instructor as to the grade penalty.

6 REMEDIATION FOR MISCONDUCT

In any case resolved with a finding of responsibility for misconduct, a grade reduction may be imposed by the instructor and institutional remediation may be imposed by the Provost.

6.1 Grade reduction. Grade reductions are determined and imposed by instructors. Grade reductions may exceed the value of the assignment in which the misconduct occurred and may also be accompanied by requirements to complete a substitute assignment or examination.

6.2 Institutional remediation. The remedial sanctions noted below shall be imposed by the Provost, upon consultation with the Integrity Council. Additional guidelines and interpretations for these sanctions may be adopted by the Provost. The Integrity Council shall publish descriptions of typical cases in which particular consequences are imposed.

Censure. Censure is a written reprimand for violation of integrity standards and a warning that a further act of academic misconduct will result in more severe action. Censure shall not be noted on a student's transcript, but will be noted in the student's education record.

Service and Instructional Alternatives. In appropriate cases, a student may be allowed to complete a voluntary community service or instructional exercise in lieu of suspension or expulsion.

Suspension. Suspension is loss of student status for a period of not less than one academic session. Credits earned elsewhere during the suspension shall not be accepted by the university. A notation of the suspension shall be made on the student's transcript and shall remain there until the student graduates, or permanently, depending on the severity of the offense.

Expulsion. Expulsion is termination of student status for an indefinite period, usually intended to be permanent. A notation of expulsion for academic misconduct shall be made on the student's transcript and will remain there permanently. Reconsideration of any expulsion is not guaranteed; it occurs at the discretion of the Provost, in consultation with the Integrity Council.

7. RECORDS

The Provost shall establish a schedule for the maintenance of misconduct records and procedures for students to request early expungement of records for good cause shown.

8. APPEALS AND RECONSIDERATION

Appeals must be based on procedural irregularities so substantial as to deny the student a fair hearing; or on new and significant evidence that could not have been discovered by a reasonably diligent student. Appeals shall be decided by the Provost. The President and the Board of Regents reserve the right to review, at their discretion, any decision for manifest error or inequity.

9 EFFECTIVE DATE

This Code shall be effective when the President and Provost complete the initial appointment of officers and approve the Integrity Council policies and procedures described herein.