Academic Integrity Policy and Forms

Use the hyperlinks below to access the appropriate form:

Faculty Report Form

Student Appeal Form

Academic Integrity Policy and the University Mission

A central focus of our university's mission is to prepare students for responsible lives by imparting and expanding knowledge, developing skills, and cultivating enduring values. Two values of quintessential significance are integrity and mercy. We expect that in the realms of academic affairs, students, faculty, and administrators will uphold and cultivate an atmosphere of integrity by placing honesty at the center of their works and relationships. Nevertheless, because we, as imperfect human beings, are always in the process of development, and often make mistakes, this policy should be implemented in a spirit of mercy. This spirit always seeks to restore the members of our community who fail in this area to fuller states of integrity. As a consequence of this spirit of mercy, this policy should never act as a mere legalistic tool for punishment. Furthermore, this integrity policy serves to strengthen the commitment of the university to foster strong faculty mentoring of student scholarship.

I. Defining Academic Integrity, Expectations of Students and Instructors, and Infractions

A. Academic Integrity

Put simply, academic integrity is carrying out scholarship honestly and responsibly. Academic integrity is upheld when individuals work independently when asked, acknowledge the work of others when appropriate, and complete examinations without unauthorized aid.

B. Expectations

Students are required to understand and follow the academic integrity policy outlined here, as well as any specific details addressing academic integrity in each of their course syllabi. When a student observes any violation of the academic integrity policy (see definitions below), the student is expected to report the infraction to their instructor or department chair.

Faculty Members are required to understand and apply the academic integrity policy to their courses. They are also required to include in all course syllabi a detailed written statement addressing how the academic integrity policy will be applied. This discussion should include specific infractions along with penalties (see Part III, A.). Instructors are also expected to take steps to minimize the opportunities for violation by applying best practices (e.g., creating multiple exam versions, using Turnitin, etc.).

Administrators are required to ensure that this integrity policy and all policies related to it are clearly and widely promulgated to the university community. They are required to disseminate all revisions to this policy in a timely and public manner following the procedures outlined for publishing changes outlined in Chapter XII of the Faculty Manual. Most importantly, they are charged with the just and objective administration of both the policy and the appeals process by which violations of the policy are adjudicated.

C. Infractions: Below are the most common forms of infractions to academic integrity, all of which can occur in a classroom or in a hybrid or remote learning environment. These infractions include, but are not limited to the following:

a) Plagiarism: Presenting another's thoughts, words, ideas, arguments, or designs in a scholarly or creative work as your own without attribution or proper citation. Plagiarism can also include duplication, which is submitting identical work for multiple assignments without informing the instructor(s).

b) Fabrication: Making up or altering data or creating fictional citations or sources of information in academic work.

c) Cheating: Knowingly giving, receiving, or using unauthorized aid on an examination or assignment.

d) Collusion: Assisting another student in the commission of a violation of the academic integrity policy. Collusion also includes unauthorized group work on assignments that are intended to be completed independently.

e) Lying/Dishonesty: Intentionally misleading instructors, staff, or other students.

II. Adjudication Process for Academic Misconduct:

A. Initial Determination of Infraction

The faculty member who observes or suspects an act of academic misconduct first must discuss the incident with the student(s), while always maintaining the student's right to privacy. The teacher may request that their department chair be present at that discussion (or another full-time member of the teaching faculty if the chair is the instructor). The faculty member is expected to treat the student(s) respectfully and fairly, and the student(s) are expected to respond honestly to the questions posed. If the faculty member is convinced that an act of academic misconduct has occurred, he/she shall impose an appropriate sanction in the form of compensatory course work, a grade reduction, or a failing grade, consistent with the University's academic integrity policy. Every faculty member is required to spell out their academic integrity policy for the course in the syllabus. It should specify the types of work that will count as infractions as well as the specific penalties for each type of infraction. The faculty member has the discretion to impose a penalty that is lighter than that articulated in the policy, but he/she may not impose a more substantial penalty without the approval of the Academic Integrity Review Board. The sanction should reflect the gravity of the infraction and the instructor's assessment of the student's intent.

If the faculty member imposes a penalty for the misconduct, he/she is required to report, in writing, the infraction to the student(s), to the chair or program director(s) related to that course, to the appropriate academic administrator (the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies), and to the Dean of Students within 7 days of the determination that an act of academic misconduct has occurred. A form for this purpose

is available here. Once the report is filed, the academic dean or vice provost shall notify the student(s) in writing within 7 days. In most cases the process ends here.

Upon receiving the letter from the dean or vice provost, the student can (A) accept the consequences, or (B) exercise their right to an Appeal and Review by completing the online form indicating to the dean or vice provost, within ten days of receiving their letter (see section D, below), that they wish to appeal the decision.

If upon investigation of the alleged infraction, the dean or vice provost learns that other students outside of the course, and beyond the purview of the instructor, in question (e.g., a student from a former class with the professor allows a current student in the class to use an old exam or essay), the dean or vice provost may impose appropriate penalties upon those students. In such a case, the dean or vice provost follows the process above and initiates it by sending a letter to the students involved informing them of the infraction and penalty.

B. Appeal and Review

There are many cases where adjudication by the Academic Integrity Review Board will be required. Some examples are as follows:

1. The student desires to appeal the decision and/or penalty of the faculty member.

2. The dean or vice provost convenes the board to consider additional penalties for a second or third offense.

3. The instructor would like to assign a heavier penalty than those already outlined in the syllabus for the relevant course.

4. Under extraordinary circumstances, the student may report an infraction directly to the dean or vice provost, who then may convene the board to review the case in question.

5. Any other case that the dean or vice provost deems appropriate.

In such cases, the following Academic Integrity Review Boards will be constituted and convened:

C. The Undergraduate Academic Integrity Review Board and Graduate Academic Integrity Review Board

The Undergraduate Academic Integrity Review Board shall consist of 4 regular members, 3 of whom will be voting:

a) One full time faculty member who is mainly responsible for undergraduate teaching and an alternate who is also mainly responsible for undergraduate teaching. Both are to be chosen from a pool of volunteers by the Faculty Assembly and to serve one-year terms.

b) One librarian or other staff member and one alternate staff member. Both to be selected from a pool of volunteers by the Provost and to serve one year terms.

c) One undergraduate student member and one student alternate. The Dean of Students will select students from a pool of five nominees submitted by the Chief Justice of the Student Government Association. The student representative will participate fully in the case deliberations but will not vote. To be eligible to serve, students must not have been cited for any infractions of the integrity policy and must not be under any disciplinary sanctions by the Office of Student Affairs.

d) The Dean of Undergraduate Studies, who will chair the board.

The Graduate Academic Integrity Review Board shall consist of 4 regular members, 3 of whom will be voting:

a) One full time faculty member who is mainly responsible for graduate teaching and an alternate who is also mainly responsible for graduate teaching. Both to be chosen from a pool of volunteers by the Faculty Assembly and to serve one-year terms.

b) One librarian or other staff member and one alternate staff member. Both to be selected from a pool of volunteers by the Provost and to serve one year terms.

c) One graduate student member and one student alternate. The Provost will select students from a pool of five nominees submitted by the Graduate Student Organization, or if that is not possible, graduate student members will be chosen from a pool of volunteers who submit their names to the Provost.

d) The Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies, who will chair the board.

Both Review Boards may choose to consult with faculty members who have expertise in the discipline involved. (For example, for a question involving possible plagiarism of art works, the Review Boards may want to contact a member of the Art Department.)

Faculty and Staff Board members have the responsibility to excuse themselves if they have been involved with the case prior to its coming to the Board. In such cases, the chair of the Academic Integrity Board shall replace them with the alternates.

D. Processing of Cases by the Review Board

Within ten business days of a written appeal by a student, the chair of the appropriate Academic Integrity Review Board must convene the Board to review the case. Time frames may be adjusted for compelling reasons, with notification and an explanation provided to the student and the faculty member. The student may elect a shared hearing (faculty and student meet with

the review board in the same hearing) or private hearings (faculty and student meet separately with the review board).

The chair of the Academic Integrity Review Board shall oversee the hearing(s). During the review, 1) the instructor will have the opportunity to explain why the judgment has been made that there has been an infraction of the academic integrity policy and, where the student has appealed the sanction, to explain the rationale, and 2) the student(s) will have the opportunity to defend themselves against the charge of academic misconduct and/or to explain why they believe the instructor's sanction is not appropriate.

Both the faculty member and the student have the right to have advisors who are current members of the university community (faculty, staff or students). The advisor's role is limited to providing support and consultation; the advisor may not actively participate in the hearing. Faculty members and students may call witnesses or submit evidence, and each must submit their written documentary evidence at least 3 days prior to the hearing (exceptions to this time limit may be granted at the discretion of the chair). To help prepare for the hearing, accused students have the right to review all evidence in advance of the hearing. The hearing(s) will be closed to persons other than those who are directly involved.

The standard of proof that must be met in order to find a student responsible for violating this policy is the "Preponderance of Evidence". The preponderance of evidence standard is defined as the greater weight of the evidence/information or 'more likely than not' that the violation has occurred.

When the Review Board is satisfied that all relevant information has been presented, the chair will excuse the involved persons if they are in attendance. The Review Board will then deliberate on the evidence and decide on the case. A simple majority vote is required in all decisions. Within forty-eight hours, the Review Board chair will notify, in writing, both the student and the instructor of the outcome of the hearing. The dean or vice provost will implement all decisions.

The chairs of the respective Review Boards shall keep a summary record of the number, type, and outcome of hearings, excluding any details that may identify the parties involved, and shall file a single annual summary report that is delivered to the Speaker of the Faculty Assembly and the Provost.

The dean and vice provost are responsible for submitting all information regarding each case to a centralized student conduct reporting system housed in the Dean of Student's office, to include penalties assigned, final determinations, and numbers of offenses.

E. Sanctions Assigned by the Review Board

a. First Offenses

If the Review Board finds the student in violation of the university's policy on academic integrity, and also finds the sanctions imposed by the instructor consistent with stated

course policy, then sanctions previously assigned by the instructor will be upheld and the instructor's initial report will be placed in the student's file until three years after the conferral of the degree for graduation, at which point it shall be destroyed (unless it involved a suspension or dismissal from the University). The Review Board, after consultation with the faculty member, may impose additional sanctions. These may include but are not limited to suspension and dismissal.

If the Review Board determines the charge of academic misconduct is not supported or that the penalty imposed is too severe, then the faculty member's initial report will be destroyed, and the faculty member will be informed that he/she should grade the assignment(s) in question on merit. If a student wishes to appeal a final course grade, the student should follow the university's policy on academic grievances.

b. Subsequent Offenses

If a report of academic misconduct submitted to the dean or vice provost turns out to be a second offense for that student, the report will be submitted to the Review Board for a hearing. During the hearing, the student may challenge the academic misconduct charge. If the Review Board upholds the faculty member's finding of misconduct, the student may be suspended from the University for one semester; however, the Review Board has authority to evaluate relevant factors such as intent, severity, and other circumstances, and to impose a sanction that does not include suspension. If the Review Board decides to impose a sanction other than suspension, it shall articulate in writing its reasons for doing so.

If a student is found responsible for a third offense of misconduct, the student may be dismissed from the University; however, the Review Board has authority to evaluate relevant factors such as intent, severity, and other circumstances, and to impose a sanction that does not include dismissal. If the Review Board decides to impose a sanction other than dismissal, it shall articulate in writing its reasons for doing so.

According to the determination of the dean or vice provost, suspension and dismissal shall be effective either immediately or at the conclusion of the semester in which the determination of the violation of policy occurred.

F. Final Appeals

a. Appeals for sanctions of suspension or dismissal to the Provost:

A student may appeal a suspension or dismissal from the University for reasons of academic misconduct to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Such an appeal must be submitted in writing within five business days of the chair of the Review Board's notification to the student. Possible appellate grounds are:

1. alleged procedural errors that could have affected the determination of the Review Board;

2. newly discovered facts not previously available or known that could have had a significant impact on the determination of the Review Board;[1]

The Provost will decide the appeal based on a meeting with the student and/or written submissions. The Provost will issue an appellate decision within ten business days of the appeal. The Provost may affirm the Review Board's decision, remand the matter to the Review Board with instructions for further review, or dismiss the charges. Decisions made by the Provost are final.

Approved by Salve Regina University Faculty Assembly on April 30, 2021.

Forms and policy updated March 2023 with corrected hyperlinks and position titles.

[1] In such a case, the appeal may be submitted after the five business day limit. After the appeal is submitted, the appeals process moves forward in the same manner as in all other cases.