

Shared Governance Proposal – Academic Misconduct

- I. Date: November 10, 2020
- II. Sponsoring Constituent: Chairs Council
- III. Statement of the Issue:

The Chairs Council proposes that the Academic Misconduct policy as found in the Student Handbook (p.18) be revised to create:

- 1) A comprehensive reporting and standardized sanctioning process
- 2) A centralized clearinghouse for consideration in determining appropriate sanctions

- IV. Rationale for Proposal:

- 1) **The restructured policy streamlines the reporting and sanction process of academic misconduct cases.**

- a. **The restructured policy creates a standardized reporting process and centralized clearinghouse for documentation of academic misconduct.**

Under the current academic misconduct policy, there is no requirement or procedure for reporting academic misconduct. The absence of a reporting mechanism creates a scenario in which a student may commit multiple acts of academic misconduct without receiving a proportionate sanction. Under the proposed policy, the faculty member retains complete control over the course-related sanction, and the department and college, in conjunction with Academic Affairs and Research, will have the ability to consider the student's full academic misconduct record when determining whether additional sanctions are appropriate.

- b. **The introduction of a sanction rubric allows for standardized sanctions**

The current academic misconduct policy suggests possible sanctions but does not offer guidance in sanction determination. Under the restructured policy a sanction rubric for use by faculty and administration (not for publication or distribution to students) is proposed (attached). The rubric will allow for a standardization of sanctions.

- c. **The restructured policy avoids the appearance of partiality in the appeals process.**

Under the current procedure, a student who disagrees with the sanction issued for academic misconduct must utilize the Academic Grievance Procedure to appeal. The Academic Grievance Procedure relies on those who are involved in and/or potentially invested in the outcome of the academic misconduct appeal for resolution (the faculty member, chair, and ultimately a college committee). The proposed procedure will remove the appeals process from the college entirely, and rely on an outside committee; the University Academic Integrity Committee comprised of three faculty members, two undergraduates, and one graduate student from each academic college.

V. Type of review (i.e., expedited, full, or extended)

Full

P. 18, Student Handbook – See attachments.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Arkansas State University **enthusiastically** promotes academic integrity and professional ethics among all members of the A-State academic community. Violations of this policy are considered as serious misconduct and may result in severe penalties, up to and including expulsion from Arkansas State University. A student deemed to have engaged in academic misconduct may not avoid academic sanctions by withdrawing from a class, a program, or the University. Students that participate in the Honors College and/or Athletics program(s) are subject to dismissal from those programs in addition to the penalties set forth below. The respective program(s) will be notified of any offense. Colleges and Departments may add to these prohibitions and standards applicable to all students in order to enforce academic integrity and professional ethics to meet their special needs for a specific degree program.

A. PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the act of taking, ~~and/or~~ using, and/or presenting the idea(s), work(s), and/or writing(s) of another person as one's own. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

1. Submitting as one's own any theme, paper, report, computer program, presentation, creative work, or scholarly work of any nature belonging to, or written or created by another person.
 - a) To avoid plagiarism, give written credit and acknowledgment to the source of thoughts, ideas, and/or words, whether you have used direct quotation, paraphrasing, or just a reference to a general idea.
 - b) If you directly quote works written by someone else, enclose the quotation with quotation marks and provide an appropriate citation (e.g., footnote, endnote, bibliographical reference).
 - c) Research for an assignment, as well as the complete ~~written paper assignment~~, must be the work of the person seeking academic credit for the course. "Assignments" include but are not limited to (P)papers, book reports, projects, and/or other class assignments) course requirements.

~~Discipline: Faculty members may respond to cases of plagiarism in any of the following ways:~~

- ~~1. Return the paper or other item for rewriting; the grade may be lowered.~~
- ~~2. Give a failing grade on the paper or other item — "F" if a letter grade is used or zero if a numerical grade is used.~~
- ~~3. Give the student who plagiarized a failing grade in the course.~~
- ~~4. Recommend sanctions, including disciplinary expulsion from the university.~~

B. CHEATING/UNAPPROVED COLLABORATION

Cheating is an act of dishonesty with the intent of obtaining and/or using information in a fraudulent or unauthorized manner. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

1. Observing and/or copying from another student's test, paper, reports, computer files and/or other class assignments.
2. Giving or receiving assistance during an examination period. This includes providing specific answers to subsequent examinees and/or dispensing or receiving information that would allow the student to have an unfair advantage in the examination over students who did not possess such information.
3. Using class notes, outlines, and/or other unauthorized information during an examination.

4. Using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting, in part or in whole, the contents of an examination or other assignment when such action is not authorized by the ~~professor~~ instructor of the class.
5. Using for credit in a subsequent class a paper, book report, project, or other class assignment written for credit in a previous ~~another~~ class without the knowledge and permission of the ~~professor~~ instructor of the subsequent class.
6. ~~Exchanging places with another person for the purpose of taking an examination or completing other assignments.~~ Impersonating or attempting to impersonate another person, or permitting or requesting another person to impersonate you for the purpose of taking an examination or completing other assignments.
7. Unauthorized collaborating during an examination, lab, or any course requirement with any other person by giving or receiving information without specific permission of the instructor.
8. Altering grades or official records.
9. Falsifying or signing another person's name on any academically-related University form or document.
10. Sabotaging or interfering with the academic progress of others.
11. Submitting altered, fraudulent, or falsified data, course, degree program requirements, including but not limited to honor's thesis; doctoral dissertation; qualifying exam; dissertation defense, and university records/forms.

Discipline: Faculty members may respond to cases of cheating in any of the following ways:

1. Allow the testing to progress without interruption, informing the offending student about the offense—and award a failing grade on the test—"F" if a letter grade is used or zero if a numerical grade is used.
2. Seize the test of the offending student and give a failing grade on the paper.
3. Give the offending student a failing grade in the course.
4. Recommend sanctions, including disciplinary expulsion from the university.

Sanctions for Academic Misconduct

Sanctions for Academic Misconduct may be imposed by the faculty member or instructor discovering the Academic Misconduct except in the case of dismissal from a particular program which shall be made by the department chair or program director, or suspension or expulsion from the university, which shall be made by the dean. The following sanctions may be imposed for Academic Misconduct:

- A failing grade on the paper or project;
- Rewriting or repeat performance of course work;
- A failing grade for the class;
- Dismissal from the class;
- Dismissal from a particular program;
- Suspension or Expulsion from the university;
- Other appropriate sanctions as warranted by the specific acts of the student.

A Student may not avoid academic sanctions by withdrawing from a class, a program, or the university.

NOTE: Colleges and Departments (e.g., Art, Nursing, Biology) may add to these guidelines in order to enforce academic integrity and professional ethics to meet their special needs (e.g., clinical, computer, laboratory experiences).

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CHARGES ~~FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE STANDARDS OF STUDENT CONDUCT~~

~~A student disagreeing with the sanction issued based on Academic Misconduct should follow the Academic Grievance Procedure.~~

1. **Step One:** Any faculty member or university official who suspects an act of academic misconduct occurred must report this information, along with a recommended course-level sanction, directly to the Office of Academic Affairs within five (5) business days of becoming aware of the act. Academic Affairs will consult with the reporting college, and review any prior academic misconduct the student was found responsible for, to determine if administrative-level sanctions should be added. No sanction will go into effect until a finding of responsibility is made.
2. **Step Two:** Within five (5) business days of receipt of the academic misconduct referral, Academic Affairs will notify the student via their A-State email account of the alleged offense and related sanction(s). Additionally, an academic misconduct meeting will be arranged to apprise the student of the allegation and related sanction(s). The student will accept or deny responsibility at this time. Students who do not respond to the email notification will be deemed to have waived their denial of the alleged act and any objection to the related sanction(s). A student who accepts responsibility will be found responsible and the related sanctions will be imposed.
3. **Step Three:** Within five (5) business days of receipt of the meeting with Academic Affairs, a student disagreeing with the allegation must submit their request, in writing to Academic Affairs, for an academic misconduct hearing before the University Academic Integrity Committee (UAIC), along with any written material the student would like the Committee to consider. The UAIC will consist of three faculty members, two undergraduates, and one graduate student from each academic college. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Services and the Graduate Dean will serve as Ex Officio members. The convening committee for academic misconduct hearings is three faculty members and one student. For cases involving academic misconduct of a graduate student, the student representative will be a graduate student
4. **Step Four:** Within five (5) business days of receipt of the written request for Committee hearing, the case goes to the University Academic Integrity Committee for determination of responsibility.
5. **Step Five:** Within three (3) business days of receipt of the Committee's determination, a student disagreeing with the hearing outcome may appeal in writing to the Provost. If the student does not appeal within the applicable timeframe, the Office of Academic Affairs will notify the involved parties, and the sanction(s) related to the academic misconduct the student was found responsible for will be imposed by the appropriate party.
6. **Step Six:** Within three (3) business days of the Provost's receipt of the written appeal, the Provost will make a final determination based upon the written appeal and all documents related to the allegation and hearing. The Office of Academic Affairs will notify all involved parties of the determination. If the finding of responsibility stands, the sanction(s) related to the academic misconduct the student was found responsible for will be imposed by the appropriate party.

All cases of academic misconduct will be housed within Academic Affairs. Prior offenses will be considered when determining the sanction(s).

Sanctions for Academic Misconduct

Course-level sanctions for Academic Misconduct can be imposed by the faculty member or instructor who discovered the Academic Misconduct upon a finding of responsibility (see Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct Charges).

The following course-level sanctions may be imposed by the instructor for academic misconduct:

- A reduction of grade for assignment/exam;
- An alternative assignment;
- A failing grade on the paper or project;
- Rewriting or repeat performance of course work; and, or
- A failing grade for the class;

In addition, the following administrative-level sanctions may be imposed for Academic Misconduct upon a finding of responsibility based on the seriousness and/or prior acts of academic misconduct of the respective student:

- Completion of education modules;
- A failing grade for the class;
- Removal from the class;
- Dismissal from a particular program;
- Suspension from the University;
- Expulsion from the University; and/or
- Other appropriate sanctions as warranted by the specific acts of the student.