ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Academic Honesty

As members of an academic community, students and faculty assume certain responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is to engage in honest communication. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends.

A common form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. This is the use, whether deliberate or unintentional, of an idea or phrase from a source without proper acknowledgment of that source. The risk of plagiarism can be avoided in written work by clearly indicating, either in footnotes or in the paper itself, the source of any major or unique idea or wording that you did not arrive at on your own. Sources must be given regardless of whether the material is quoted directly or paraphrased. Another form of plagiarism is copying or obtaining information from another student. Submission of written work, such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent, also is plagiarism. In brief, any act that represents someone else’s work as your own is an academically dishonest act.

A second example of academic dishonesty relates to the misuse of library materials. Any act that maliciously hinders the use of or access to library materials is academically dishonest and falls under the terms of this policy. The removing of pages from books or journals disadvantages others in the academic community. Similarly, the removal of books from the libraries without formally checking out the items, or the intentional hiding of materials, or the refusal to return reserve readings to the library is dishonest and harmful to the community.

There are other forms of academic dishonesty, for example, obtaining an examination prior to its administration or using unauthorized aid during an examination. It is also academically dishonest to knowingly assist someone else in an act of academic dishonesty.

A student remains responsible for the academic honesty of work submitted in University of Rochester courses, even after the student has received a final course grade. This rule also applies to students who are no longer matriculated at the University of Rochester, including those who have graduated.

Ignorance of these standards will not be considered a valid excuse or defense.

Orientation Honesty Policy Dissemination

During Orientation, the Dean of Freshmen introduces students to the nature of academic honesty in the College. At that time, they are given a written version of our policy and a form acknowledging that they have received information about academic honesty. Signed acknowledgement forms are collected by faculty advisers before registration. Transfer students receive their briefing on academic honesty from Academic Support.

These Orientation procedures are designed to reinforce the importance of academic honesty. All students (matriculated and non-matriculated) enrolled in the College or in College courses must adhere to our academic honesty policy, even if they do not attend Orientation or sign the acknowledgement form.

Classroom Honesty Policy Discussion

Because academic honesty is of vital concern to the faculty and because each discipline may raise its own specific set of issues, all faculty members are encouraged to discuss the issue of academic dishonesty in their classrooms and to explain how the College policy applies in each of their courses. It is particularly important that faculty members discuss the academic procedures that may vary from discipline to discipline, such as proper and improper forms of academic collaboration.

Faculty members are encouraged to indicate on each course syllabus how the College policy applies in the course. This may take several forms -- an amended set of guidelines formulated by
the instructor, an appended set of guidelines formulated by the department, the address of a Website that contains this information

Cases of Suspected Academic Dishonesty

Because cases of suspected academic dishonesty are usually related to a specific course, any member of the College community can report a probable case by notifying the faculty member or other instructor who is teaching the course. Examination proctors should forward cases, with a written report and pertinent documents, to the instructor. Any instructor who discovers, or who is informed of, a probable case of academic dishonesty should contact a member of the College Board on Academic Honesty, to learn how similar cases have been handled in the past. The instructor should then discuss the matter with the student in a confidential setting.

Except in cases of clear and simple misunderstanding (in which case the matter can simply be dropped), the instructor must choose either to attempt to resolve the matter directly with the student or to pass it, unresolved, to the College Board on Academic Honesty. In the former case the instructor confronts the student with the evidence, suggests an appropriate penalty, and provides the student with a copy of this Academic Honesty Policy. Once notified of the charges, the student will not be allowed to drop the course and will receive an “N” until the case is concluded. The student then has 48 hours to decide whether or not to admit guilt and to accept the suggested penalty. If the student so admits and accepts, then the instructor and student together complete an Academic Dishonesty Incident Report. Once the Report is complete, the instructor forwards it to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty. Copies of any readily-available evidence should be attached to the Report, but a detailed analysis is not required, unless and until the Board discovers that the student has exhibited habitually dishonest behavior. If and when the Board receives a second report of academic dishonesty concerning a given student, it will convene a hearing to determine whether further action is required.

If the instructor chooses not to pursue the matter directly with the student, or if the student declines to admit guilt and accept the penalty suggested by the instructor, then a written report of the incident, including all pertinent documents, must be forwarded to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty. The written report should include any guidelines noted on the course syllabus.

In rare instances, cases of suspected academic dishonesty will not be related to a specific course. Students and members of the College administrative, teaching, and support staff should forward such cases directly to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty.

The College Board on Academic Honesty has the responsibility for reviewing all cases of suspected academic dishonesty by College students or in College courses. For cases not resolved between the instructor and the student, the Board determines if academic misconduct has occurred and recommends a penalty to the Dean of the student’s College or School. The Dean then determines the final penalty. If this penalty is different from the recommendation of the Board, then the Dean shall describe the changes to the Chair of the Board in writing. If the Board determines that the alleged misconduct in any way involves sponsored research (including federal training grants), threatens the integrity of the scientific method, or compromises the creation of new knowledge (including original art, scholarship and research), the matter will be referred to and will follow the procedures outlined in the Policy on Misconduct in Scholarship and Research in the Faculty Handbook.

After receiving an unresolved case, the Chair will notify the student in writing. The notification will explain that a report of suspected dishonesty has been made and will ask the student for a written reply concerning the charges. Once notified of the charges, the student will not be allowed to drop the course and will receive an “N” until the case is concluded. The Chair will also indicate that at an appropriate time the student will be given a hearing. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are entitled to swift disposition of their cases. Cases should be heard as soon as possible, routinely within seven weeks. When the hearing is scheduled, the student is notified.
**Hearing Procedures**

The student who is suspected of academic dishonesty is expected to attend the hearing; if the student does not attend, the Hearing Board can reach a judgment on the case in the student’s absence. The person who made the initial allegation will not be present at the hearing unless the Hearing Board determines that his or her presence is needed. While the student has the right, and has been given the opportunity, to prepare a written response to the allegation, the hearing will not be delayed if the student has not responded after a reasonable interval. The student has the right to advice in preparing a written response to the allegation. At the student’s initiative, up to two additional persons may accompany the student at the hearing. These persons will not speak at the hearing unless requested to do so by the Hearing Board for the case. None of these persons is to be an attorney. Every student who is suspected of academic dishonesty will be given an individual hearing; two or more students will never be heard together. If a student has declined to accept a penalty suggested by the instructor, the hearing will be conducted without reference to this fact.

Although the Board reviews the entire academic honesty file of any student charged, files and proceedings remain confidential and are kept separate from the student’s regular academic file. During the process of reviewing a case of suspected academic dishonesty, only the Chair of the College Academic Honesty Board, the Convener of the Hearing Board (see below), and any other faculty or staff whom the Board determines have a legitimate need to know, have access to the student’s academic file. The Board’s records are available only to its members, the Dean of the College, the President, and any other University officers designated by them. Sanctions assigned, such as a failing grade, may become part of the Registrar’s official records, although no indication will be made that such a penalty is the result of academic dishonesty.

The rules governing hearings shall be informal. Civil or criminal court procedures are not applicable, nor are formal rules of evidence. The Board’s decision is based on whether it is more likely than not (i.e., based on a preponderance of evidence) that academic misconduct occurred.

**Composition of the Board**

The College Academic Honesty Board consists of eleven faculty members appointed by the Dean of the College and a pool of undergraduate students selected by the All Campus Judicial Council (ACJC). The students need not be ACJC members. One faculty member will serve as Chair of the Board. The chair oversees the administration of the Board, particularly the assignment of cases to Board members. Each case is heard by four Board members -- three members of the College faculty and one undergraduate student from the College. One of the three faculty members serves as Convener of the four-member Hearing Board, and investigates the case prior to the hearing. Investigative responsibilities include determining that all necessary background materials for the case are in order, contacting the faculty member or instructor presenting the charges as needed, and preparing the written report of the Hearing Board after the case is completed. The other two faculty members serve as Reader and Listener for the case, respectively. The student member also serves as Listener. The Reader is provided all supporting documents prior to the Hearing, but does not have the investigative responsibilities of the Convener. The Listeners do not have access to any case material before or after the hearing but are given needed access to relevant Board files during the hearing process. In cases involving multiple students the Chair of the Board may elect to expand the Hearing Board and to have related cases heard by the same Hearing Board.

**Disposition of the Cases**

If, after thorough review of all aspects of the case, the Board finds the student guilty of academic dishonesty, the Convener provides a written report of the findings to the Chair of the Board, including a recommended penalty. The Chair then reviews the report and conclusions and presents the report to the Dean of the student’s College or School. After reviewing these materials, the Dean accepts, rejects, or modifies the Board’s recommendation, and notifies the student and the
Board decides that there has been no academic misconduct, the Convener notifies the Chair of the Board, who then notifies the student and the person who reported the case.

Board files on all individual cases remain in the possession of the secretary to the Board for a period of five years, after which they are destroyed.