

# CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

## Principle

Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of University resources. While both students and faculty of Cornell assume the responsibility of maintaining and furthering these values, this document is concerned specifically with the conduct of students.

A Cornell student's submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic position truthfully reported at all times. In addition, Cornell students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers.

## I. GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

### A. General Responsibilities

1. A student shall in no way misrepresent his or her work.
2. A student shall in no way fraudulently or unfairly advance his or her academic position.
3. A student shall refuse to be a party to another student's failure to maintain academic integrity.
4. A student shall not in any other manner violate the principle of academic integrity.

### B. Examples of Violations

The following actions are examples of activities that violate the Code of Academic Integrity and subject their actors to proceedings under the Code. This is not a definitive list.

1. Knowingly representing the work of others as one's own.
2. Using, obtaining, or providing unauthorized assistance on examinations, papers, or any other academic work.
3. Fabricating data in support of laboratory or field work.
4. Forging a signature to certify completion of a course assignment or a recommendation to graduate school.
5. Unfairly advancing one's academic position by hoarding or damaging library materials.
6. Misrepresenting one's academic accomplishments.

## C. Specific Guidelines for Courses

**1. Examinations.** During in-class examinations no student may use, give, or receive any assistance or information not given in the examination or by the proctor. No student may take an examination for another student. Between the time a take-home examination is distributed and the time it is submitted by the student for grading, the student may not consult with any persons other than the course professor and teaching assistants regarding the examination. The student is responsible for understanding the conditions under which the examination will be taken.

**2. Course Assignments.** Students are encouraged to discuss the content of a course among themselves and to help each other to master it, but no student should receive help in doing a course assignment that is meant to test what he or she can do without help from others. Representing another's work as one's own is plagiarism and a violation of this Code. If materials are taken from published sources the student must clearly and completely cite the source of such materials. Work submitted by a student and used by a faculty member in the determination of a grade in a course may not be submitted by that student in a second course, unless such submission is approved in advance by the faculty member in the second course. If a student is submitting all or part of the same work simultaneously for the determination of a grade in two or more different courses, all faculty members in the courses involved must approve such submissions.

### **3. Classroom Misconduct and Other Behavior Disruptive to the Educational Process.**

A faculty member may impose a grade penalty for any misconduct. Students are not authorized to replicate, reproduce, copy, or transmit lectures and course materials presented, or "derivative" materials including class notes, for sale or general distribution to others without the written consent of the faculty or academic staff member or class participant who is the original source of such materials. Other examples of classroom misconduct include, but are not limited to, talking during an examination, bringing unauthorized materials into the examination room, using unauthorized electronic technology during an examination, and disruptive behavior in the classroom.

- a. The faculty member must promptly notify the student of the reason for the imposition of a penalty for classroom misconduct and the degree to which his or her grade will be affected.
- b. Classroom misconduct is not a violation of academic integrity. The student may, however, seek review by the Academic Integrity Hearing Board on the basis either that the finding of guilt is arbitrary and capricious or that the penalty for misconduct is excessive or inappropriate to the circumstances involved. ("Arbitrary and capricious" describes actions which have no sound basis in law, fact, or reason or are grounded solely in bad faith or personal desires. A determination is arbitrary and capricious only if it is one no reasonable mind could reach.)
- c. This section does not limit a faculty member's prerogative to remove a disruptive student from a classroom under appropriate circumstances.

**4. Academic Misconduct.** Academic misconduct related to integrity in the conduct of scholarly and scientific research and communication is addressed in Cornell University Policy 1.2

(<http://www.dfa.cornell.edu/dfa/treasurer/policyoffice/policies/volumes/academic/misconduct.cfm>). Policy 1.2 applies to faculty, staff, and students.

## **D. Principles for Computer Use and Network Systems**

The use of computers and network systems in no way exempts students from the normal requirements of ethical behavior in the Cornell University community. Use of a computer and network system that is shared by many users imposes certain additional obligations. In particular, data, software and computer capacity have value and must be treated accordingly.

Although some rules are built into computer and network systems, such restrictions cannot limit completely what students can do. In any event students are responsible for their actions whether or not rules are built in, and whether or not they can circumvent them.

### **Standards of behavior include:**

1. Respect for the privacy of other users' information, even when that information is not securely protected.
2. Respect for the ownership of proprietary software. For example, unauthorized copies of such software for one's own use, even when that software is not protected against copying is inappropriate.
3. Respect for the finite capacity of the system and limitation of use so as not to interfere unreasonably with the activity of other users.
4. Respect for the procedures established to manage the use of the system.

## **E. Variances**

A faculty member is responsible for informing his or her students and teaching assistants of variances from this Code that apply to work in his or her course. These variances should be clearly stated in writing at the beginning of the course or activity to which they apply.

## **F. Jurisdiction and Penalties**

The authority to determine whether a specific action shall be treated as a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity lies with the Academic Integrity Hearing Board. Those who violate the Code of Academic Integrity will be subject to penalties under this Code and may also be subject to penalties under state and federal laws.

# **II. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE**

**A.** Students and staff members discovering an apparent violation should report the matter to the faculty member in charge of the course or to the chairperson of the appropriate Hearing Board. The chairperson is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school or college know to whom the report should be made.

## **B. Primary Hearing**

**1. Primary hearings** are to be held by the faculty member unless the penalties available to him or her are inadequate, in which case, she or he may refer the case directly to the Hearing Board.

**2. Notification.** If, after investigation, possibly including discussion with the student, a faculty member believes that a student has violated the Code of Academic Integrity, the faculty member shall present the student with the charge. The charge shall include notification of a primary hearing to be held as soon as practical after the alleged infraction has come to the attention of the faculty member, but with at least one week's notice to the student. This notification period may be shortened by the agreement of both parties. The charge shall also include notice of the availability of the Judicial Codes Counselor.

**3. Composition.** At the primary hearing the following shall be present: the faculty member concerned, the student in question, and a third-party independent witness. The independent witness shall be a faculty member or a student appointed by the Hearing Board Chairperson or the chairperson of the faculty member's department. The student may also bring to the hearing an advisor and additional witnesses to testify to his or her innocence.

#### **4. Procedure**

a. At the primary hearing, the faculty member shall present evidence in support of the charge against the student. The student shall be given the opportunity to respond and, if he or she wishes, to present evidence refuting the charge.

b. The function of the independent witness is to observe the proceedings impartially, and in the event of an appeal from the judgment of the faculty member, be prepared to testify as to the procedures followed.

c. After hearing the student, the faculty member may either dismiss the charge or, if there is clear and convincing evidence that the student has violated this Code, find the student guilty. ("Clear and convincing" as a standard of proof refers to a quantum of evidence beyond a mere preponderance but below that characterized as "beyond a reasonable doubt" and such that it will produce in the mind of the trier of fact a firm belief as to the facts sought to be established.) If the student is found guilty, the faculty member may impose any suitable grade punishment including failure in the course.

d. A student wishing to seek review of the decision may bring the case before the Academic Integrity Hearing Board of the faculty member's college.

e. A faculty member who gives a penalty for a violation of academic integrity *shall immediately report this action and the nature of the violation in writing to the student and to the record keeper of the faculty member's Academic Integrity Hearing Board.* This record keeper shall then be responsible for its communication to the record keeper in the student's college.

f. If the student fails to attend the primary hearing without a compelling excuse, the hearing may proceed in his or her absence.

g. A student charged with violating the Code of Academic Integrity in a course may not drop that course without the consent of the instructor unless the student has subsequently been cleared of the charges.

## C. College Academic Integrity Hearing Boards

**1. Composition.** Each college and school in the University, including the Graduate School and the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions, shall establish its own Academic Integrity Hearing Board. A model Hearing Board consists of the following:

- a. A chairperson who is a member of the faculty and, preferably, an experienced Board member, appointed by the dean of the college for a two-year term.
- b. Three faculty members elected for three-year terms by the faculty of the college, except that in the case of the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions, the faculty members shall be appointed by the dean.
- c. Three students elected by the student body of the college or appointed by the dean of the college for at least one year, and preferably two-year terms. When possible, student terms should be staggered.
- d. A nonvoting record keeper responsible for keeping clear and complete records of the proceedings.

## 2. Jurisdiction

- a. The student may seek review of the decision of the primary hearing if:
  - i. He or she believes the procedure was improper or unfair.
  - ii. She or he contests the finding of the faculty member.
  - iii. He or she believes the penalty was too strict considering the offense.
- b. After holding a primary hearing, the faculty member may bring the case to the Hearing Board if she or he believes a failing grade is too lenient considering the offense.
- c. A student found guilty of more than one violation of the Code may be summoned before the college Hearing Board by the dean of his or her college. The Hearing Board may impose an additional penalty for such repeated offenses.
- d. The dean of a student's college who receives a report that a student has committed a violation of academic integrity while attending another academic institution or while enrolled in a Cornell-sponsored off-campus program may, if she or he feels the situation warrants, summon the student to appear before the College Hearing Board. The Hearing Board may impose any penalty, including an additional penalty, it feels appropriate for the violation involved.
- e. The Academic Integrity Hearing Board shall hear all cases that come before it *de novo*. While the Hearing Board may recommend an increase in any penalty imposed at the primary hearing, it should consider raising the penalty, if it is the student seeking review, only in the exceptional case.
- f. The individual seeking review shall notify the chairperson of the Hearing Board of the faculty member's college within ten working days of the primary hearing. An exception to this deadline

may be granted at the discretion of the chairperson of the Hearing Board on a showing of good cause.

### 3. Procedures

- a. Each Board shall conform to procedures established by the Faculty Senate.\* Any college or school wishing to adopt a Board or procedures varying from this model must receive prior approval from the Dean of the Faculty.
- b. The Academic Integrity Hearing Board shall convene as soon as practical after notification of a request for review, although seven days notice should be given to all parties if possible. If a grade for the student in the course must be submitted before a case can be decided, the faculty member shall record a grade of incomplete, pending a decision by the Hearing Board.
- c. Those present at the hearing shall be:
  - i. The student, who has the right to be accompanied by an advisor and/or relevant witnesses
  - ii. The faculty member, who has the right to bring relevant witnesses
  - iii. The third party independent witness, if a primary hearing was held
  - iv. Any other person called by the chairperson
- d. Should the student or faculty member fail to appear before the Hearing Board, the Board shall have full authority to proceed in his or her absence.
- e. The Board members shall hear all available parties to the dispute and examine all the evidence presented. The Board may solicit outside advice at the discretion of the chairperson. *The chairperson shall preside over the hearing to ensure that no party threatens, intimidates, or coerces any of the participants.*
- f. The student shall have the right to present her or his case and to challenge the charges or the evidence. The student's advisor may assist the student in the presentation and questioning.
- g. At least two-thirds of the voting Board members shall be present at every hearing, including two students and two faculty members. Both parties may agree in writing to waive this quorum. Of those present, a simple majority shall decide the issue. The chairperson shall vote only in the case of a tie vote. The Board shall find the student guilty only if there is clear and convincing (see the definition at section II.B.4.c.) evidence indicating that the student has violated this Code.
- h. The chairperson shall notify each party to the dispute, in writing, of the Board's decision and, if appropriate, the penalty imposed. If the judgment of the faculty member is affirmed by the Board, or if the Board decides a different penalty is warranted, the dean of the faculty member's college and the dean of the student's college shall also receive the report.

-----

\*Reflects change in nomenclature from Faculty Council of Representatives to Faculty Senate.

- i. If the student's college is different from the faculty member's, the chairperson shall alter the composition of the Board hearing the case by substituting or adding one faculty member and one student from the Hearing Board of the student's college.

#### **4. The Board may act in one or more of the following ways:**

- a. Find the student innocent of the charge
- b. Find the student guilty of the charge and
  - i. Recommend to the faculty member that he or she reduce the penalty given
  - ii. Affirm the faculty member's decision
  - iii. Recommend that the faculty member record a failing grade for the course, or for some portion of it
  - iv. Recommend to the dean of the student's college that the student be placed on probation (or the college's equivalent)
  - v. Recommend to the dean of the student's college that the student be suspended from the University for a period of time
  - vi. Recommend to the dean of the student's college that the words "declared guilty of violation of the Code of Academic Integrity" be recorded on the student's transcript. The Hearing Board may set a date after which the student may petition the Board to have these words deleted from the transcript
  - vii. Recommend to the dean of the student's college that the student be expelled from the University
  - viii. Recommend to the dean of the student's college any other suitable action, including counseling, community service, or reprimand
- c. The dean of the student's college shall be notified of the decision of the college Hearing Board within 7 days. Unless an appeal is filed under the guidelines established below, the dean of the student's college shall ensure that the decision of the Hearing Board is carried out and shall notify all parties of the implementation and the decision.

**5. Review of Decision.** The student may appeal a decision of the Hearing Board. The appeal must be directed to the dean of the student's college, in writing, and shall be constructed according to one or both of the guidelines established below. The appeal shall normally be submitted within 4 weeks of notification of the Board's decision, but exceptions to this deadline may be granted by the dean on showing of good cause. If the Board's decision involves students from more than one college, the deans involved shall consult with each other.

- a. **Appeal of a finding of guilt.** A student who has received a finding of guilt from the Board, or whose finding of guilt in a Primary Hearing was upheld by the Board, may appeal on one or both of the following grounds:

- i. Additional evidence which might have affected the outcome of the hearing became available following the hearing.
- ii. A violation of procedure by the Hearing Board that might have prejudiced the outcome of the hearing.

The dean may deny the appeal or send the case back to the Hearing Board for reconsideration.

**b. Appeal of a penalty.** The student may appeal the findings of the Hearing Board regarding penalties. The appeal shall specify the reasons why the student believes the penalty is inappropriate. After consultation with the Hearing Board, the dean may take one of the following actions:

- i. If a grade penalty has been exacted (II.C.4.b.i-iii), the dean may recommend to the faculty member that the grade penalty be reduced.
- ii. If another penalty has been exacted (II.C.4.b.iv-viii), the dean may modify or decline to carry out the recommended penalty.

In all but the most unusual circumstances, it is the expectation that the findings and recommendations of the Hearing Board will be upheld by the dean. The dean's decision cannot be appealed.

**Annual Reports.** Each college Academic Integrity Hearing Board shall submit a summary report of its proceedings (without identifying any particular student) to the Dean of the Faculty at the end of the academic year. The names of the members of the Board and any significant departures in procedure should be reported as well.

**7. Honor Codes.** The existing school honor codes as in the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Law School are not governed by the foregoing legislation, but current versions of these honor codes must be kept on file with the Office of the Dean of the Faculty. In the case of allegations against a student enrolled in a course subject to a school honor code but registered in another college, all actions beyond the primary hearing revert to the Hearing Board of the student's college.

**8. Records of Action.** If the student is found guilty, a record of the outcome of the case and the nature of the violation shall be kept by the Hearing Board, and copies shall be sent to the record keeper in the student's college, if different from the college in which the violation occurred. The record keeper shall disclose this record to Hearing Boards considering other charges against the same student, to deans or associate deans of colleges in furtherance of legitimate educational interests, to the Registrar for notation on the transcript when provided by the decision of the Hearing Board and the dean, but to no one else unless specifically directed by the student.

**If the student is found not guilty by the Hearing Board, all records of the case, including the report of the primary hearing, shall be expunged from the files of the record keeper.**

---

Adopted by the Faculty Council of Representatives, May 24, 1976, Appendix A; with subsequent amendments March 11, 1981, May 12, 1982, April 10, 1985, May 15, 1985, and May 9, 1990; amended by the Faculty Senate, February 12, 1997; December 8, 1999, Records, pp. 8873-79S; September 13, 2006.