

Academic Integrity Policy and Board

Academic Integrity Policy

Truth and justice should be hallmarks of the academic community. Academic study involves a search for truth through critical evaluation of previous academic work. Effective teaching requires that the teacher be able to see the materials with which a student starts and, on the basis of the student's results, judge the quality of the student's effort and thought. Academic honesty is thus essential to effective learning. Any compromise of these moral cornerstones prevents an academic community and all of its members from being true seekers of wisdom. It is therefore very important for all members of the community to clearly understand the standards that define this collective search for wisdom. As the Maryville College Covenant declares, it is important for all students "to act with integrity in all interactions . . . to encourage and support . . . fellow students as they aspire to be honest in their academic endeavors."

Violations of Academic Integrity

Breaches of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Cheating--this includes copying, or claiming as one's own, the work of another student with or without his or her knowledge, and with or without subsequent revision; and the use of any unauthorized notes, crib sheets, or other written or electronic aids in exams or quizzes. Cheating includes .ghost writing,. submitting under the name of one author written work that was done by another author.
2. Plagiarism--inadequately acknowledging intellectual debts, either intentionally or unintentionally, in written work. This includes failure to document facts, ideas, wording, or organization taken from a source. It includes what some people call .mosaic plagiarism,. which involves paraphrasing too closely to the original wording—providing documentation of the source but either not using quotation marks to indicate borrowing of the author's wording, or altering the source's wording but not its sentence structure. It also includes failure to acknowledge informal debts for helpful suggestions—acknowledgement such as professional scholars often make in a footnote or a prefatory statement (e.g. .I am gratefully indebted to Rita Johnson for suggesting this overall direction of inquiry.). The basic principle governing documentation is that anything--facts, ideas, wording, or organization--that is not common knowledge and is not original to the author should be documented. In doubtful cases, providing too much documentation is better than providing too little.
3. Unauthorized collaboration--any academic work on a specific assignment by more than one student without the prior approval of the instructor. Acceptable collaboration varies widely from professor to professor and from one assignment to another. Students must take responsibility to determine whether or not a collaborative effort is appropriate.

4. Fabrication--knowingly presenting false information in oral, written or artistic work, such as faked data in lab reports, falsified bibliographic citations, etc. It includes misrepresentation of academic records or credentials.
5. Unauthorized multiple submission--this includes simultaneous submission of the same piece of work in two courses without the prior approval of both instructors, as well as turning in any assignment for which one has already received credit, without the prior approval of the later instructor. The instructor receiving the later submission should have the opportunity to confer with the earlier instructor about the assignment and to determine whether the multiple submission is appropriate.
6. Abuse of academic materials--destroying, losing, defacing or damaging intellectual resources that belong to someone else. Examples include defacing library materials; introducing viruses to college computers or erasing operational files from them; and abusing instructional tools, equipment, or materials.
7. Electronic dishonesty--this goes beyond plagiarism or fabrication from electronic sources. It includes inappropriate access to network files, accounts, or resources; knowingly spreading viruses; disabling computer hardware or software; software piracy; etc.
8. Unauthorized alteration or forgery of documents and records--this includes such things as forging an advisor's signature or altering the information to which the signature is appended, altering an exam response and then requesting a review of the grade, or altering academic records.
9. Facilitation of academic dishonesty--knowingly helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes knowing of an instance of academic dishonesty and not disclosing it.
10. Failure to secure IRB and/or IACUC approval for human and animal research--research projects involving human participants and animal subjects are required by federal law to undergo review and approval by the Institutional Research Board (for human participants, including questionnaire surveys) and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (for animal subjects).

It is the responsibility of all members of the Maryville College community--students, faculty, staff, and administration--to familiarize themselves with the violations defined above. Students should understand that they have a special responsibility to the community to uphold the standard of conduct for themselves and for their classmates. This includes a responsibility to help ensure that breaches of academic integrity do not remain undiscovered. Faculty must accept the unique responsibility that they have for clearly defining, in course syllabi and assignments, the parameters of legitimate collaboration and any other areas in which the boundaries of academic integrity may be unclear. The administration has a responsibility to assist in the fair and timely implementation of standards and sanctions.

Procedure When a Teacher Suspects a Student

If a teacher has information leading to a reasonable opinion that there has been an incident of academic dishonesty, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. The teacher should confer with his or her academic division chair (or some other trusted colleague if the teacher is also the division chair).
2. If both agree that the evidence establishes with certainty that academic integrity standards have been violated and the extent of the offense, the teacher may proceed to assign without further process a grade penalty on the assignment, a penalty proportioned to the severity of the offense and not exceeding a grade of zero on the assignment. The teacher will place on file in the Registrar's Office a letter of censure recording the offense along with relevant documentation. Such a letter will not become part of the student's permanent academic record, but will be available during the student's time at the college to any faculty member who may later inquire whether the student has previously been found guilty of academic dishonesty. Before assigning a penalty, the teacher should check to see whether any prior letter of censure exists. If there is one letter of censure already on file, action is at the discretion of the faculty member who may either assign penalty or refer the case to the Academic Integrity Board (AIB). If two letters are already on file, the Registrar will notify the faculty member that the case is being referred to the AIB. At such time, the Registrar will initiate the preliminary procedures specified below. The teacher must discuss with the student the offense and the penalty, informing the student of his or her right to appeal the decision and the penalty to the AIB. If the student does appeal to the AIB, the student should notify the Registrar's Office of the appeal, and the Registrar's Office should withhold the letter of censure from the file pending the outcome of the appeal.
3. If the teacher and the academic division chair (or other trusted colleague) find that either a) the severity of the offense calls for a penalty greater than a zero on the assignment, or b) the evidence fails to establish with certainty the suspected student's guilt or the extent of the offense, then the teacher must confer with the student, who will be confronted with the charge. If the student admits guilt, the teacher will place a letter of censure with relevant documentation on file in the Registrar's Office and may assign without further process one or more penalties from among the following:
 - a. a grade penalty on the assignment
 - b. a zero on the assignment
 - c. a failing grade in the course.

The teacher should inform the student of his or her right to appeal the sanction to the Academic Integrity Board. If the student does not admit guilt, the teacher may drop the matter or may refer the case to the AIB. Any case in which the teacher seeks a penalty beyond a letter of censure and a failing grade in the course (e.g. community service, suspension, or expulsion) should be referred to the AIB.

4. In a case of plagiarism or faulty documentation involving a student who has not yet taken First Year Research Seminar (FRS) 140 with its discussions of plagiarism and documentation, the teacher may, upon adequate establishment of the student's guilt as

outlined above, opt to provide the student an opportunity to correct or to redo the assignment either with or without penalty for the sake of the student's learning the requirements of correct documentation. This leniency of procedure applies only to students who have not been informed of the requirements of academic integrity as taught in FRS 140.

5. If the academic division chair (or colleague) does not believe that the evidence warrants pursuit of the case, the teacher is still free to discuss the matter with the student and to refer the case to the Academic Integrity Board, but the teacher must not peremptorily assign a penalty.
6. Any member of the College community wishing to refer a case to the Academic Integrity Board must notify the Registrar, who will notify the other parties involved, request from them for safekeeping any physical evidence connected with the case, and notify the AIB chair.

Academic Integrity Board

Purpose and Jurisdiction

The Academic Integrity Board (AIB) investigates and adjudicates cases of alleged academic dishonesty involving college courses or library use.

Membership

The Board will be composed of three faculty members and two students, and is to be constituted early in the fall term each year. The Vice President and Dean of the College will call an organizational meeting.

The faculty members will be those who have completed a term on the Academic Life Council (ALC) in the previous two years. If there are four such persons, three will be selected by lot and the fourth will serve as an alternate who will replace a faculty member who is unable to serve on a particular case. If an additional alternate is needed, priority will be given to the current ALC member representing the same constituency as the person to be replaced. If that person cannot serve, or is otherwise disqualified, another faculty member of ALC will be selected by lot.

The student members will be the two students with the longest service on ALC. The third student will serve as alternate.

The Board's tenure shall be from the beginning of the academic year up to the beginning of the next academic year. Cases held over from the previous academic year become the responsibility of the newly constituted Board.

For hearings, a quorum will consist of three faculty and two student members.

Officers

Chair: When the Board is convened in the fall, one of the faculty members will be chosen as chair.

Investigator/presenter: The Board will appoint an investigator/presenter (non-voting) for each case. An appropriate alternate member of the AIB, either student or faculty, will substitute for the presenter in hearing the case.

Secretary: The Board will appoint a secretary who will prepare a written record of the proceedings in each case, and prepare written notices of charges, hearings, verdicts, sanctions, appeals, etc. The secretary may not simultaneously serve as investigator/presenter in any case.

Preliminary Procedures

If alleged academic dishonesty is referred by a teacher to the Academic Integrity Board, the teacher shall notify the Registrar, who will notify the accused student, request from both parties for safekeeping any physical evidence connected with the case, and notify the AIB chair.

If academic dishonesty is detected by someone other than the teacher, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The person will notify the Registrar and pass on all physical evidence for safekeeping.
2. The Registrar will notify the chair and the teacher involved.
3. The chair will meet with the person reporting the alleged academic dishonesty to obtain information about the charge.

Upon presentation of the case from the Registrar and following conference with the teacher or person reporting the case, the chair will take the following actions:

1. Appoint one member of the AIB to serve as investigator/presenter (non-voting) for the case.
2. Schedule a hearing and inform the accused and the accuser of the charge and the time and place of the hearing.
3. The hearing will be scheduled as soon as possible after the offense is detected, unless mitigating circumstances (e.g., study abroad) require a delay. In no case should an initial hearing take place more than one year after the offense is detected.
4. The appropriate parties will be notified at least 24 hours prior to the hearing.

Conduct of the Board

Every member of the Board has the right and responsibility to speak and vote freely. It is the responsibility of each voting member to vote "aye" or "nay" on a motion of verdict or sanction. It is the responsibility of all parties involved in the proceedings to maintain confidentiality of the proceedings.

A member of the Board shall disqualify himself or herself in a particular case if he or she is unable to maintain impartiality. Any member who so disqualifies himself or herself shall not be present in any capacity other than that of witness, accuser, accused, or advisor to the accused.

No member will disclose to anyone other than members of the Board the degree of harmony or unanimity of the Board or the opinions or votes of any members of the Board.

The record of Board meetings will be available only to:

1. the accused and his or her advisor
2. Members of the Academic Integrity Board
3. the Vice President and Dean of Students
4. the Vice President and Dean of the College
5. the President of the College

The secretary will report in writing the results of a hearing, including only (a) the charge (excluding the name of the accused), (b) the nature of the evidence, (c) the sentence, and (d) the rationale for the sentence, to the campus newspaper editor.

Rights of the Accused Student

Notice of charges will be received by the accused as soon as possible after the offense is detected.

The student may be assisted by any advisor of his or her choice from the College community. At the hearing said advisor acts only as a consultant and may not address the hearing.

The student may decline to testify and may have witnesses in his or her behalf at the hearing.

The student may challenge for bias any member of the AIB. The AIB (excluding the challenged member) will rule on any challenge.

The student may request an open hearing from the AIB chair no less than 24 hours in advance.

During the appeal period, the student may read the record of the hearing.

Hearing Procedures

Only AIB members, the accuser, the accused, and the advisor to the accused will be present at the hearings, unless an open hearing has been scheduled.

Any student referred to the Board must appear at the time set for the hearing. If a student fails to appear without justifiable reason, the case will be heard in absentia.

The AIB chair may recess the hearing at any time for any reasonable purpose.

The Order of Hearing will be as follows:

1. The chair will introduce the accused student and the AIB members.
2. AIB members may be challenged by the student for bias. Any challenge is deliberated by the AIB in private, and either sustained or denied. If the challenge is sustained, the hearing will be reconvened when an alternate AIB member is available.
3. The presenter states the charge.

4. The accused enters a plea.
5. Evidence in support of the charge is presented in the presence of the accused.
6. Witnesses in support of the charge testify in the presence of the accused and answer questions by the accused.
7. The accused presents a statement in the presence of the accuser.
8. Evidence in support of the accused is presented in the presence of the accuser.
9. Witnesses in support of the accused testify in the presence of the accuser and answer questions by the accuser.
10. The accused, the accuser, or Board members may seek clarification of evidence or reexamine any witness.
11. Board members will deliberate. The Board shall utilize the concept of precedent; however, the specific circumstances of the case shall also bear on the outcome. The Board determines a verdict (guilty, not guilty, or insufficient evidence) and any sanction(s) to be imposed.
12. The chair informs the accused of the verdict and sanctions. If the student is deemed guilty, the chair advises the accused of the right to appeal. Written notice of verdicts and sanctions are prepared by the Secretary.
13. Sanctions are reported to the Vice President and Dean of the College.

Sanctions

A student found guilty of academic dishonesty shall receive a sanction or sanctions deemed appropriate to the offense. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, a formal letter of censure, a requirement to perform community service on or off the campus, a grade of .F. on the assignment in question, dismissal from the course with a grade of .F., suspension, or expulsion from the College. The AIB will be guided by precedent in determining sanctions.

When a verdict of guilty is reached, a record of the offense, the sanctions, and the proceedings shall be kept permanently in the Registrar's office in a file that must remain separate from the Permanent Academic Record.

Appeals

The Vice President and Dean of the College shall have the responsibility to hear appeals of decisions of the Academic Integrity Board.

Appeals must be made in writing to the Office of the Vice President and Dean of the College not more than ten days after the conclusion of the hearing.

Bases for appeal include the following:

1. Faulty procedure
2. Lack of sufficient evidence
3. Excessive sanctions
4. New evidence

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