

Code: A-032
Date: November 11, 1981
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Revised: August 2003
Approved: David C. Danahar
Revised: September 24, 2004
Approved: David C. Danahar
Revised: October 9, 2008
Approved: David C. Danahar
Revised: April 2012
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SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

POLICY

ACADEMIC HONESTY

I. Academic Honesty

- A. The aim of the academic honesty policy is to maintain the academic integrity of Southwest Minnesota State University and promote an intellectual climate of honesty and integrity. To maintain an environment of academic integrity all students are required to accept personal responsibility for their work at Southwest Minnesota State University. Any offense against the academic honesty policy compromises the educational integrity of Southwest Minnesota State University and will be considered a grave offense.
- B. Offenses against academic honesty are acts which unjustly advance one's academic standing at Southwest Minnesota State University and include knowingly permitting or knowingly aiding a person in an offense against the academic policy.

II. Forms of Academic Dishonesty

In line with the National Association of Student Personnel Administrator (NASPA), Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) academic dishonesty will include the following forms:

- A. *Plagiarism*: Presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own. Plagiarism will include, but not be limited to:
 - 1. Submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own, including but not limited to homework assignments, term papers, research reports, lab reports, group projects, artistic works, tests, or class presentations.
 - 2. Submitting someone else's electronic work as your own, including but not limited to video clips, audio clips, electronic files, electronic programs, and any other copied electronic page, document, article, review, etc.
 - 3. Submitting someone else's work as your own with minor alterations. Paraphrasing without proper citation is also plagiarism.
 - 4. Submitting someone else's work without appropriate use of quotations, paraphrases, footnotes, or references.

- B. *Cheating*: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study guide. Cheating will include, but not be limited to:
1. Copying from someone else during any type of examination.
 2. Communicating answers to an exam with other students and this includes allowing someone else to copy your own exam during a test.
 3. Using any material not permitted by the instructor for an examination.
 4. Requesting, acquiring, possessing, or providing someone else with an examination or portion of an examination without consent of the instructor.
- C. *Fabrication*: Falsifying any information. Fabrication will include, but not be limited to:
1. Submitting or presenting falsified research.
- D. *Tampering*: Tampering with the instructor's evaluation tools and/or documents. Tampering will include, but not be limited to:
1. Changing, attempting to change, or falsifying academic records, including attendance records or sign-in sheets.
 2. Tampering with an examination, homework assignment, or project after it has been corrected.
- E. *Assisting in Dishonesty*: Aiding or attempting to aid someone else to commit an act of dishonesty. Assistance will include, but not be limited to:
1. Any student who aids another student in the performance of the above acts or has clear knowledge of another student's misconduct concerning academic honesty and does not bring it to the attention of the proper authorities (instructor and/or department chair) will be held responsible for their non-action and subject to disciplinary measures for academic dishonesty.
 - F. Any other forms of academic dishonesty as outlined in the instructor's syllabus.

III. Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Academic Dishonesty

A. Procedures

1. The faculty member will meet with the student regarding the specific charge, consider the evidence, and hear the student's explanation. If it is not possible to meet with the student, the faculty member may proceed to number 2 below.
2. If the faculty member determines that the student has violated the Academic Honesty Policy, the faculty member informs the student in person or via U.S. Mail of the consequences of the violation and the grade-related sanctions the faculty member will impose. Faculty members must recommend any additional sanctions, (such as suspension, expulsion, etc.) to the appropriate Dean for action.
3. The faculty member completes an "Academic Dishonesty Incident Report Form" and forwards the completed form to the appropriate Dean. The form is found on the SMSU website at the Academic Deans' Office webpage.
4. The Dean informs the student in writing that:
 - (a) This form has been filed with the Dean's office;
 - (b) The Dean may impose sanctions in addition to those imposed by the faculty member in the event of subsequent, serious, or multiple violations; and
 - (c) the student has a right to appeal the sanction(s) given by the faculty member as described below.
5. The Dean keeps the complaint form, any supporting documentation, and records of the adjudication on file.

B. Sanctions

1. An incident of academic dishonesty that is determined to be minor in nature may result in one or more of the following sanctions: a warning; a verbal or written reprimand; or a reassessment of a resubmitted assignment with an appropriate reduction in points.
2. An incident of academic dishonesty that is determined to be major in nature may result in one or more of the following penalties: a failing grade for the assignment or test; a failing grade for the class; suspension from Southwest Minnesota State University; expulsion from Southwest Minnesota State University; or the revocation of a degree.
3. The punitive options available are not limited to the sanctions specified in the previous sections.

IV. Appeals

A student wishing to appeal the faculty member's decision must submit a written appeal stating the grounds for such appeal within 5 class days of receipt of the written decision of the faculty member. This written appeal is to be routed through the appropriate Academic Dean's office. The Dean will review the appeal, and decide if it meets the criteria for an appeal using the following guidelines:

Except as required to explain the basis of new information, an appeal shall be limited to a review for one or more of the following purposes:

1. To determine whether the decision was rendered fairly in light of the charges and information presented, and in conformity with prescribed procedures giving the complaining party a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present information that the Academic Honesty Policy was violated, and giving the accused student a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present a response to those allegations. Deviations from designated procedures will not be a basis for sustaining an appeal unless significant prejudice results.
2. To determine whether the decision reached regarding the accused student was based on substantial information, that is, whether there were facts in the case that, if believed by the fact finder, were sufficient to establish that a violation of the policy occurred.
3. To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the policy.
4. To consider new information, sufficient to alter a decision or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information and/or facts were not known to the person appealing at the time of the original Hearing.

If an appeal does not meet the criteria for appeal, the appeal may be rejected and the student will be notified in writing.

If the appeal has merit, it is to be routed to the Academic Appeals Committee for a hearing. Procedures for the appeal hearing are found in SMSU Procedure G-005, Academic Appeals Committee.