Undergraduate Honor Statement

We, the undergraduate students of The Catholic University of America, recognize that integrity within our university is fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and personal development. We understand honor to be an outward expression of our respect for each other and ourselves in accordance with the ethical standards of the Catholic faith. We believe that a strong commitment to personal integrity and honor is vital to a full participation in our community, and we expect that our conduct as students reflect that responsibility in our daily lives. As active participants in our community, where integrity and accountability are valued, we accept the responsibility to consistently uphold the honor of our university. It is, then, through the initiative of the undergraduate students that we affirm these principles to guide the conduct of our entire undergraduate student body at The Catholic University of America.

Academic Graduate and Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty

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Related Policies:
Additional References:
Responsible Official: Provost 202-319-5244

I. Introduction

Academic honesty is one of the foundations of the educational mission and Catholic commitment of this university. Academic dishonesty, including such practices as cheating, plagiarism and fabrication, undermines the learning experience, and, as it involves fraud and deceit, is corrosive of the intellectual principles and is inconsistent with the ethical standards of this university. Ultimately, academic dishonesty destroys the sense of trust and community among students, faculty, and administrators.

This Policy sets forth the standards of honesty which student members of our academic community are expected to follow. The faculty is also bound to adhere to the strictest standards of academic honesty. All members of the academic community have an obligation to familiarize
themselves with these standards and to conduct themselves in accordance with both their letter and their spirit. Individual Schools in the university have committed themselves to implementing these standards and to educating faculty, staff and students on the importance of academic honesty and on the application of these standards in a variety of academic settings.

This Policy also sets forth a system for enforcement of these standards, including the application of sanctions where violations have been found. Sanctions are necessary to demonstrate that the university treats violations of academic honesty seriously and will act aggressively, when necessary, to deter wrongdoing. The effectiveness of the enforcement scheme depends in large measure on the conscientious cooperation of members of faculty in the implementation of the standards. Faculty members are therefore charged with the responsibility of seeking to assure student compliance with the requirements and initiating enforcement proceedings where appropriate.

II. General Provisions

A. This Policy applies to each School in the university and to all students enrolled in these Schools. As detailed below, individual schools (or departments) are initially responsible for handling individual cases of alleged academic dishonesty. A School (or Department) may follow more elaborate procedures if it has its own established procedures for handling suspected cases of academic dishonesty or if required by its professional accrediting agency and particularly if required by the rules and practice of the particular professional discipline involved.

B. This Policy supersedes all earlier and other statements on academic dishonesty published or appearing anywhere before its approval.

C. This Policy applies to all academic conduct, including coursework, research, comprehensive examinations, and the preparation of theses or dissertations.

D. Sanctions for violations of this Policy, which may include the revocation of a previously awarded degree, certificate or award, may be applied whenever a determination is made that a violation has taken place.

E. Confidentiality shall be observed in all proceedings under this Policy, to the extent possible, except where otherwise specifically provided.

F. The faculty member is the individual who has initial responsibility for initiating the procedures provided in this Policy. The term “faculty member” includes any individual or committee with responsibility for a class, project or activity, for example, a director of composition in the School of Arts and Sciences or a dissertation committee. Other university employees, such as graduate assistants, are expected to bring any suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the attention of the responsible faculty member who will proceed in accordance with the procedures stated in this Policy.

G. The Office of the Provost will maintain a Register, which will include a listing of incidents of academic dishonesty. Incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Provost and entered in the Register in accordance with this Policy. The Register will be confidential and information contained therein will be made available only as authorized by this Policy.
III. Categories of Academic Dishonesty

The following are the major categories of academic dishonesty:

A. **Plagiarism** is the act of presenting the work of another as if it were one's own. It includes quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, or utilizing the published work of others without proper acknowledgment, or, where appropriate, quotation marks. Most frequently, it involves the unacknowledged use of published books or articles in periodicals, magazines, newspapers and electronic media. However, any unacknowledged use of another's ideas constitutes plagiarism, including the use of papers written by other students, interviews, radio or TV broadcasts, and any published or unpublished materials (including web-based materials, letters, pamphlets, leaflets, notes or other electronic or print documents).

B. **Improper use of one's own work** is the unauthorized act of submitting work for a course that includes work done for previous courses and/or projects as though the work in question were newly done for the present course/project.

C. **Fabrication** is the act of artificially contriving or making up material, data or other information and submitting this as fact.

D. **Cheating** is the act of deceiving, which includes such acts as receiving or communicating or receiving information from another during an examination, looking at another's examination, (during the exam), using notes when prohibited during examinations, using electronic equipment to receive or communicate information during examinations, using any unauthorized electronic equipment during examinations, obtaining information about the questions or answers for an examination prior to the administering of the examination, or whatever else is deemed contrary to the rules of fairness, including special rules designated by the professor in the course.

Attempts to engage in any of the conduct described above or the facilitation of any of this conduct by another individual will be treated as conduct constituting academic dishonesty for purposes of this Policy.

The preceding forms of academic dishonesty are stated in general terms. The individual Schools (or Departments) may deem it appropriate to supplement the present statement of policy with specific interpretations that relate its terms and provisions to the individual programs of the Schools (or Departments). In addition, the individual Schools (or Departments) are responsible for implementing programs to educate faculty, staff and students in the requirements of this Policy and to answer any questions that may arise regarding specific interpretations of this Policy.

IV. Sanctions

The availability and the imposition of meaningful sanctions communicate a message to the community that the university treats the standards of honesty set forth in this Policy with the greatest seriousness and that infractions of these requirements will be pursued and punished.

Since in the normal case, student dishonesty will occur in the context of an examination or project that is an essential part of a course, the normal sanction for the dishonesty will be failure for the course. There may be circumstances, however, where, perhaps because of a student’s past record, a more serious sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, would be appropriate. In the
more unusual case, mitigating circumstances may exist that would warrant a lesser sanction than failure for the course.

While the appropriate sanction will depend on the specific facts in the case, in determining the appropriate level of sanction, the university official must appreciate the central role that a meaningful enforcement program plays in achieving the goals of the honesty program.

When a graduate of the university is found to have engaged in academic dishonesty, revocation of a degree, certificate, or other recognition previously awarded may be considered as a possible sanction.

V. Enforcement Procedures

A. When a faculty member suspects that an incident of academic dishonesty has occurred, he or she should promptly arrange a conference with the student to discuss the matter. The faculty member may consult with the Dean of the School and/or the Chair of the Department (where applicable) on the issues involved. At the conference, the faculty member will inform the student of his or her concerns, and the student will be given the opportunity to present his or her version of the facts. Legal counsel will not be present at this conference.

B. Once an allegation of suspected academic dishonesty has been communicated to the student, the student may not withdraw from the course or academic project in question.

C. After their conference, or if the student does not respond in a timely fashion to the offer to confer with the faculty member, the faculty member may conduct further investigation as he or she deems appropriate. On the basis of the facts, he or she will decide whether an act of academic dishonesty has taken place, and, after referring to the Register in the Office of the Provost, determine the appropriate sanction.

D. If the faculty member decides that an act of academic dishonesty has taken place and imposes a sanction, he or she will make a written record of the disposition of the matter, including the facts on which he or she relied. He or she will retain a copy for his or her file, and communicate his or her decision to the student. He or she will also report this decision to the Dean of the School where the academic dishonesty occurred, to the Chair of the Department (in departmentalized schools), and to the Dean of the School in which the student is matriculated (if different from that where the dishonesty took place). He or she will also report the incident and its disposition to the Provost’s office to be recorded in the Register.

E. A decision to suspend or expel a student from the university may only be made by the Dean of the School where the student is matriculated. Where the faculty member believes that the additional sanction of suspension or expulsion is appropriate, he or she shall communicate this recommendation to the Dean of his or her School who will forward the recommendation to the Dean of the School where the student is matriculated. The appropriate Dean shall prepare a written decision, which states his or her conclusions and the facts upon which he or she relied. The student shall be informed in writing in a timely fashion of the decision. A copy of the written decision shall also be sent, as appropriate, to the faculty member, the Chair of the Department, and the Dean of the School where the violation took place, and to the Office of the Provost to be recorded in the Register.
F. If information is received by a member of the university community alleging that a graduate of the university engaged in academic dishonesty at the time he or she was a registered student but the alleged dishonesty was discovered after graduation, the information shall be brought to the attention of the Dean of the School where the graduate was matriculated, who shall determine the procedures to follow and the appropriate sanction.

VI. Appeals

A. Requests for Review

1. A student may appeal a determination that he or she committed an act of academic dishonesty by filing a request for a review of that finding. No appeal is permissible against the sanction only.

2. The request for review shall be filed within 15 school days of being notified of the matter. The request for review shall be submitted in writing to the Dean of the School where the incident of alleged academic dishonesty took place, and must specify with particularity the basis of the student’s appeal.

3. If the student does not request a review within the specified time period the decision of the faculty member or of the Dean of the School shall be final.

4. The Office of the Dean receiving the request for review will proceed in accordance with the provisions below.

B. Sanction Imposed by a Faculty Member

1. It is anticipated that each school will establish an academic dishonesty appeals procedure that affords the student the opportunity to present his or her version of the facts to a School Hearing Board composed of faculty and students appointed by the Dean of the School or his or her designee.

2. If the School has established an academic dishonesty appeals procedure, the Dean or an Associate or Assistant Dean designated by the Dean shall evaluate the request for review. He or she may affirm the faculty member’s decision without the need for a hearing if he or she deems the appeal to be frivolous or without merit. Otherwise the Dean or the designated official shall refer the matter to the School Hearing Board to consider the appeal and to render a decision in accordance with the procedures established by the School. The decision of the School Hearing Board will be final, and no further appeal will be permitted.

3. If the School has chosen not to establish an academic dishonesty appeals procedure within the School, the Dean or his or her designee will forward the request for review to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies or to the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies, as appropriate. The procedures for handling such requests by a vice provost are detailed below in Section F.

C. Sanction Imposed by a Dean

If the Dean of the School in which the student is matriculated determines that the student engaged in academic dishonesty and that the student be suspended or expelled, the student may request review of the determination. Upon receiving the student’s request for review, the Dean of the School where the alleged academic dishonesty took place or his or her designee will forward it to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies or to the
Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies, as appropriate. The procedures for handling such requests by a vice provost are detailed below in Section F.

D. Successful Appeals If the student is found not to have engaged in academic dishonesty, the entire entry relating to the incident will be removed from the Register. If, on appeal, the determination of academic dishonesty is upheld but the sanction is modified, the Register entry will be changed to reflect that modification.

VII. University Appeal Procedures

To handle certain student appeals in cases of Academic Dishonesty, the Academic Senate will appoint a University Academic Dishonesty Appeal Panel of five faculty members, two graduate students and two undergraduate students. Faculty members on the panel will serve three-year terms, which will be staggered. Student members will ordinarily serve one-year terms, although they may be appointed for additional terms. One of the faculty members will be appointed annually as Chair, another as Vice Chair. Upon receipt of an appeal, the administering Vice Provost will have available to him or her the options of

A. Affirming the faculty member's decision without the need for a hearing if the appeal is judged to be frivolous or without merit; or

B. Convening a University Hearing Board to hear the appeal and to render a final decision on the matter. The members of the Hearing Board will be selected from the University Academic Dishonesty Appeal Panel and shall be composed of two faculty members and one student or of three faculty members if none of the student members of the panel are available. Ordinarily one of the faculty members on the Hearing Board will be either the Chair or Vice Chair of the panel, and this person will serve as Chair of the Hearing Board. The written determination and information from the Register in the Provost's Office shall be made available to members of the Hearing Board.

The Procedures for the operation of the Hearing Board shall be as follows.

A. The Hearing Board shall provide that the student shall receive adequate and timely notice of the date, time and place of the hearing.

B. The Hearing Board shall inform the student that he or she shall have an opportunity to present his or her position through written memoranda, oral arguments, and witnesses. The Board shall consider all requests for witnesses and shall invite only those that the Board deems can contribute relevant information to appear before it or to submit written testimony.

C. The faculty member, Department Chair, or Dean who made the initial allegation of academic dishonesty shall be invited to appear at the hearing. When suspension or expulsion has been imposed as a penalty, the Dean who imposed that sanction will also be invited.

D. A copy of all written material provided by the student will be provided to the faculty member at least 72 hours prior to the hearing.

E. No persons other than the members of the Hearing Board, the student, the faculty member, or any person that the Hearing Board judges can contribute to assisting it in reaching a decision shall be admitted to any meeting of the Board. Legal counsel shall not be admitted at any of the meetings of the Board.
F. A record shall be kept of the hearing. Formal evidentiary rules shall not be applicable to the hearing.

G. The Hearing Board shall issue a decision, which will be communicated promptly to the student, the faculty member, the student’s dean and the cognizant vice provost. That decision will be to

1. Affirm the determination of academic dishonesty and uphold the imposed sanction; or
2. Affirm the determination of academic dishonesty, but to modify the imposed sanction (making it either more or less severe); or
3. Reject the determination of academic dishonesty and thus to eliminate any sanction.

H. A brief statement of the reasons for the decision will also be sent to the administering vice provost, and a copy of that statement will be retained in the committee’s files. If the Hearing Board rejects the determination of academic dishonesty and eliminates any sanction, the previous record will be expunged from the Register.

I. The decision of the Hearing Board shall be final.