



# Anne Arundel Community College

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## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

### *Preamble*

Anne Arundel Community College, with a central mission of producing learning and a basic conviction that individuals be given the opportunity to discover and develop their talents and unique potentials, is committed to upholding rigorous and fair standards of student achievement. The spirit of education goes beyond teaching and learning subject matter and technical skills; ethical values are an implicit component of that spirit. Academic integrity is a common goal, approached through the understanding, the cooperation and the mutual respect among all members of the college community.

### 1. POLICY

All students are required to exhibit academic honesty in all academic exercises and assignments.

### 2. DEFINITIONS\*

An incident of academic dishonesty occurs when any of the following acts is committed by a student:

- A. Cheating refers to the use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in an academic exercise or assignment.
  
- B. Fabrication refers to the unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
  
- C. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty is the act of helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of the institutional policy on academic dishonesty.
  
- D. Plagiarism describes the unacknowledged adoption or reproduction of the ideas, words or statements of another person, including classroom peers.

### 3. PROCEDURES

#### 3.1 CONFERENCE

When academic dishonesty is alleged, the student involved shall have an opportunity to admit or deny the allegation. In a timely manner, the instructor shall confer with the student, explaining the reasons why he or she believes that the student has committed the act of academic dishonesty and what academic sanction could be imposed by the instructor. In on-line courses only, a conference may be conducted using WebCT. The instructor has the right and obligation to impose a reasonable academic sanction including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Assign a grade of failing for the assignment;
  - B. Assign a grade reduction for the course;
  - C. Assign a failing grade for the course; or
  - D. Assign an alternative learning experience or activity which shall be completed by the student as specified by the instructor.
- If the instructor believes that there is sufficient evidence of academic dishonesty, he/she shall then proceed as outlined in Section 3.2.

\* "Academic Integrity and Student Development," College Administration Publications. Reproduced and adapted with permission of the publisher.

#### 3.2 NOTICE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY REPORT

- A. In all incidents of academic dishonesty, the instructor shall record the incident on the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report and note on the report any recommended academic sanction(s).
- B. If the student admits academic dishonesty and accepts the academic sanction imposed by the instructor, it shall be so noted on the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report and the matter shall be closed after compliance with Section 3.2(D) and Section 3.3(B)(1).

- C. In cases in which the student denies the allegations of academic dishonesty or admits academic dishonesty but challenges the academic sanction imposed by the instructor, the instructor shall record a grade status "NG" (meaning No Grade) on the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report, and after compliance with Section 3.2(D) the matter shall proceed in accordance with the procedures hereafter.
- D. In cases under 3.2(B) and 3.2(C), the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report shall be completed, dated and signed by both the instructor and the student at the completion of the conference required by Section 3.1. The instructor and the student shall each retain a copy of the report. Should the student refuse to sign the report, the instructor shall so indicate on the report. Within three working days from the date of the report having been signed, the instructor shall forward copies of the report to the academic department chair and the college representative (Section 3.3).
- E. In the event the student suspected of academic dishonesty is unavailable for the conference, in accordance with Section 3.1, the instructor shall record a grade status of "NG" and forward copies of the report to the academic department chair and the college representative. The "NG" status shall be assigned as the term grade pending the outcome of a hearing by the Student Review Committee (Section 3.4; 3.5) or a resolution in accordance with Section 3.2(B).
- F. If within 20 working days of the notice being sent to the student, in accordance with Section 3.3(B)(3), a resolution under 3.2(B) is not reached or a hearing is not conducted due to either non-availability of the student or lack of response from the student, the NG status shall be changed to an F grade no later than one month after the start of the next regular term.
- G. If a student withdraws from a course under a pending charge of academic dishonesty, the resulting grade of "W" may be changed to an "F" by the instructor at the end of the current semester unless the student chooses to contest the charge, pursuant to the procedures governing academic dishonesty, and is successful in his/her defense. A withdrawal from a course under a pending charge of academic dishonesty shall serve as a de facto admission of the guilt absent a successful contest of the charge. From the moment an alleged incident of academic dishonesty occurs a charge is considered pending. Additionally, a student cannot evade a sanction by withdrawing from a course after admitting guilt and accepting the sanction on the Notice of Academic Dishonesty.

### 3.3 COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE

- A. The vice president for learning shall designate as the college representative a dean who holds membership in the Council of Deans. He/she shall not be a member of the Student Review Committee.
- B. Duties of the College Representative:
  - 1. In cases under 3.2(B):
    - a. To receive and file the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report(s). If there are no prior "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report(s) filed on the student, the matter shall be closed.
    - b. If the student's file contains a prior "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report(s) evidencing that the student committed a prior act(s) of academic dishonesty, or if the current offense is determined to be very serious, the college representative shall review the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report(s) to determine the appropriateness of a hearing to consider imposition of a disciplinary sanction(s). The College representative also shall investigate a student's academic background, additionally considering what a student knew or should have known regarding the offense. If the college representative determines that a hearing is not appropriate, he/she shall write a report indicating that a review has been conducted, setting forth the reasons to support his/her decision. This report shall be placed in the student's file, and the matter shall be closed. If the college representative determines that a disciplinary sanction may be appropriate, the matter will be decided by the Student Review Committee in a hearing procedure.
    - c. If the college representative determines, based on his/her review, that a hearing to consider disciplinary sanctions is appropriate, the college representative shall notify the student by mail that a hearing will be held before the Student Review Committee. The college representative shall forward a written request to the chair of the Student Review Committee, with a copy to the student, and request a hearing date. Thereafter, the college representative shall handle the matter in accordance with the procedures under 3.3, the only difference being that the issue to be presented to and decided by the Student Review Committee shall be limited to whether or not, based on the present act of academic dishonesty noted in the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report under 3.2(B), and the reports of prior proven act(s) of academic dishonesty contained in the student's file, imposition of a disciplinary sanction is warranted. All other procedures regarding hearings and appeals shall be applicable to this situation.

2. In cases under 3.2(C) to:

- a. Receive and file the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report(s).
- b. Within seven working days of receipt of the report, forward a copy of same to the chair of the Student Review Committee and request, in writing, a hearing date.
- c. Contact the instructor, meet witnesses and collect any relevant evidence pertaining to the case.
- d. Act as the college advocate, prepare the case for hearing and present the case at the hearing before the Student Review Committee.
- e. Within three working days of receipt of the notice of hearing from the Student Review Committee, notify the student, by mail, of the hearing. The notice shall include the time, date, and place of the hearing. It shall also include the copy of the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report along with a copy of this policy and procedures. Notice of hearing shall also be forwarded to the instructor and academic department chair. A student must respond to the notice of hearing within twenty (20) working days of the notice being sent. If student does not respond to the notice of hearing, or responds yet chooses not to attend the hearing, the hearing will proceed without the student's participation. In the case of on-line courses only, official notice of hearing may be sent via WebCT.

3. In cases under Section 3.2(E) receive and file the "Notice of Academic dishonesty" report. Within three working days of receipt of such report, forward a copy of same to the student by regular mail. If the unavailable student, upon notification and within the time limits as expressed in Section 3.2(F), admits academic dishonesty and accepts the academic sanction imposed by the instructor in accordance with 3.2(B), the college representative shall file the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" report. The report must be completed by the instructor and the matter shall be handled in accordance with Section 3.3(B)(1)(b). If the student requests a hearing, the college representative shall follow the same procedures as in 3.3(B)(2).

4. Within three working days from date of receipt of the decision of the Student Review Committee [Section 3.5 (I)], forward a copy of same to the student by mail. A copy shall also be forwarded to the instructor and academic department chair.

5. In all cases of appeal to the vice president for learning, forward all relevant materials to the vice president for learning in accordance with Section 3.6(B).

6. Place copies of all materials and decisions relating to academic dishonesty matters in the student's file. Student files relating to academic dishonesty shall be retained for five years, after which they shall be destroyed.

7. Maintain the confidentiality of student academic dishonesty files except for use as provided by this policy and procedures.

### 3.4 THE STUDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Student Review Committee, an established committee at the college, shall act as a hearing board to hear all academic dishonesty cases in which a hearing is required under these procedures (see Academic Forum charter regarding the composition of the committee).

### 3.5 HEARINGS

A. Within seven working days of receipt of the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" and request for hearing forwarded by the college representative [Section 3.3(B)(2)(b)], the chair of the Student Review Committee shall notify the college representative, in writing, of the date, and time and place of hearing. Said hearing shall not be scheduled earlier than 10, nor later than 20, working days from the date of notice of hearing.

B. Once begun, hearings shall be conducted on consecutive working days until completed, except in cases of health or personal emergency. The hearing shall be completed as expeditiously as possible.

C. Hearings shall be closed to all except the parties and their advisers, if any, and witnesses. The student and the committee may each have an individual in an advisory role present at the hearing; that individual may be an attorney. The adviser(s) shall not function as an advocate at the hearing. The student must present his/her own case and question all witnesses.

D. The chair of the Student Review Committee shall govern all proceedings at the hearing. At the hearing, the college representative, on behalf of the college administration, shall have the burden of proof to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that an offense of academic dishonesty has occurred. The instructor shall have the right to participate with the college representative in the presentation of the evidence.

E. At the hearing, the Student Review Committee shall not be bound by strict rules of legal evidence and may admit any evidence or testimony it considers to be of value in determining the issues involved. Every effort shall be made to obtain the most reliable evidence available.

F. The hearing shall be recorded. The college representative shall arrange and the college shall pay for such recording. If the student requests a copy of the recording, it shall be provided.

G. No later than seven working days after conclusion of the hearing, the Student Review Committee shall determine, based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, whether or not the college representative has established by a preponderance of the evidence that an offense of academic dishonesty has occurred. If the student is found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty, the Student Review Committee shall adopt the academic sanction recommended by the instructor, unless the committee determines that the academic sanction recommended by the instructor is unreasonable. In this event, the committee shall consult with the instructor in an attempt to arrive at a more reasonable academic sanction. If the instructor and Student Review Committee cannot come to a consensus on the academic sanction, then the committee shall impose the academic sanction it believes to be reasonable. The committee may not make the sanction more severe. The "NG" status on the "Notice of Academic Dishonesty" shall then be changed to a grade consistent with the academic sanction imposed by the Student Review Committee. If the student is found not to have committed the act of academic dishonesty, the "NG" status shall be replaced by the grade the student had for the assignment(s) in question, if a grade had been assigned, prior to the allegation of academic dishonesty. If no grade had been assigned earlier, the instructor shall review the material and assign a suitable grade based solely on the quality of work by the student.

H. In addition to academic sanction(s), when deemed appropriate by the Student Review Committee, a disciplinary sanction (Student Conduct Code) may be imposed on the student found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty. In determining whether a disciplinary sanction is appropriate, the Student Review Committee shall have the right to review any other "Notices of Academic Dishonesty" filed with the college representative.

I. The Student Review Committee shall record its specific findings of fact and decision in a written memorandum, which shall be forwarded to the college representative no later than seven working days after conclusion of the hearing.

### 3.6 APPEAL FROM DECISION OF THE STUDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

A. The student shall have the right to appeal to the vice president for learning. The appeal shall be made within 10 working days from the date that the decision was forwarded to the student by the college representative in accordance with Section 3.3(B)(4). The appeal shall be in writing setting forth the basis for the appeal. The appeal must be received by the vice president for learning within the time limit established herein.

B. Upon receipt of the written appeal, the vice president for learning, or his/her designee(s), shall forward a copy to the college representative and request copies of the decision of the Student Review Committee and all material provided to the Student Review Committee at the hearing.

C. The vice president for learning, or his/her designee(s), shall review the written decision of the Student Review Committee and the written appeal of the student. The vice president for learning, or his/her designee(s), shall have the right, but not the obligation, to review only the material, including the taped testimony, provided to the Student Review Committee at the hearing.

D. The vice president for learning, or his/her designee(s), shall complete the review and issue a written decision within 20 working days of receipt of the student's appeal.

E. The vice president for learning, or his/her designee(s), shall forward a copy of the written decision to the student by mail within three working days from the date of the decision. A copy shall also be forwarded to the college representative, instructor and the academic department chair.

F. The written decision of the vice president for learning, or his/her designee(s), shall be final.