

MSC 2011-2012 Faculty Handbook Amendment:

Academic Integrity Policies of Macon State College

[Approved by EC, 9.15.11; approved by Faculty Senate, 9.16.11; **effective date**, 9.23.11; minor modifications made by JS, MS, KC, and NB January 2012]

Introduction

Academic integrity is a key value of the University System; therefore, upholding academic integrity is the responsibility of all members of the Macon State College community, its faculty, its staff, its administration, and its student body.

Faculty members shall promote academic integrity by including in their course syllabi clear instructions on the components of academic integrity and by defining the penalties for cheating and plagiarism; these penalties shall be measured and should not exceed the penalties set by the College Catalog, the Student Handbook, and this document.

Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Student Code of Conduct as set forth in Section III of the MSC Student Handbook and on all faculty syllabi. All students are expected to do their own work and to uphold high standards of academic integrity. Course sections may use plagiarism-prevention technology. Students may have the option of submitting their written work online through a plagiarism-prevention service or of allowing the instructor to submit their work. The written work may be retained by the service for the sole purpose of checking for plagiarized content in future student submissions.

Please Note: In many instances in this document, definitions and language have been cut and pasted from other such documents in the USG, including the following list, which originates from a Valdosta State University draft; such "boilerplate" language is commonly shared from one institution to another as each school creates and establishes policies system-wide. This notice serves as good-faith attribution in and of itself under commonly understood practices of professional writing within an organization.

I. Violations of Academic Integrity

***The following academic integrity violations are not to be considered all-inclusive:

- A. Cheating: (1) Using notes, study aids, unauthorized technology or information on an examination which are not approved by faculty; (2) improper storage of study aids during an exam such that they are accessible or possible to view; (3) looking at other students' work during an exam or in an assignment where collaboration is not allowed; (4) attempting to communicate with other students in order to get help during an exam or in an assignment where collaboration is not allowed; (5) altering graded work after it has been returned and submitting the work for re-grading; (6) allowing another person to do one's work and submitting that work under one's own name; (7) submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors; (8) submitting evidence of extra credit when, for example, a student has not attended an event.

- B. Plagiarism: (1) Submitting material that in part or whole is not one's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source (including traditional sources as well as internet sources); (2) the misrepresentation of sources used in a work for which the student claims authorship, including "mosaic plagiarism" that involves using language closely based on a source but with a few words changed around; (3) the use of papers purchased online and turned in as one's own work; (4) submitting written work, such as laboratory reports, computer programs, annotated bibliographies, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent (unless authorized in the syllabus).
- C. Fabrication: (1) Falsifying or inventing any information, data, or citation; (2) Presenting data that were not gathered in accordance with standard guidelines that defined the appropriate methods for collecting or generating data and failing to include an accurate account of the method by which the data were gathered or collected; (3) perpetrating hoaxes unbecoming to students in good standing or potentially damaging to the College's reputation or that of the members of its academic community of students and scholars.
- D. Impersonation: (1) Representing oneself as another student in an examination; (2) signing another's name on an attendance roster; (3) in general doing the work required of another student and/or allowing another to do your work.
- E. Interfering with the Work of Others: Stealing, destroying, defacing or concealing College property with the purpose of depriving others of their use or intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work.
- F. Aiding and Abetting Academic Dishonesty: (1) Providing material, information, or other assistance to another person with knowledge that such aid could be used in any of the violations stated above; or (2) providing false information in connection with any inquiry regarding academic integrity.
- G. Improper Access to Materials: Stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining access to examination materials.
- H. Violating Rules Established for a Fair Examination: (1) collaborating on independent exercises, (2) working outside of the timeframe set by the instructor, or (3) using unauthorized materials.
- I. Falsification of Records and Official Documents: (1) Altering documents affecting academic records; (2) forging signatures of authorization or falsifying information on an official academic document, grade report, letter of permission, petition, drop/add form, ID card, or any other official College document; (3) in a clinical or internship setting, altering documents of attendance, or leaving the setting without permission; (4) falsifying patient records.

- J. Unauthorized Access to Computerized Academic or Administrative Records or Systems: (1) altering computer records; (2) modifying computer programs or systems; (3) releasing or dispensing information gained via unauthorized access; or (4) interfering with the use or availability of computer systems of information.
- K. Code of Ethics Violations: Many disciplines have a code of ethics that describes professional/ethical behavior expected of those in the profession. In pre-professional academic programs such as nursing, social work, or education, a student's failure to adhere to the expected standards for professional, ethical conduct will be considered a violation of academic integrity.

Faculty Guidelines for Processing Cases of Academic Misconduct

There are two types of resolutions to cases of Academic Misconduct, defined and described below in 1 and 2 and further outlined later in this document:

- 1) Faculty Resolutions: Faculty resolutions are initiated by the instructor of record; these resolutions are sought by the College when a student has made an error in judgment. Although a faculty resolution, the instructor shall keep a **record***, as described below, and the instructor shall first contact the Student Conduct Officer in the Office of Student Affairs to determine if a previous or concurrent complaint requires a College resolution.

This **record*** (Form A) shall be in the form of an email, to the student's college email address, copied to the instructor of record, the instructor's chair/dean, and the Student Conduct Officer; it shall summarize the charge, the evidence, the resolution, and that the resolution is binding five days after the email is sent, with the sent email itself acting as receipt and agreement. A printout of this email, with the student's signature shall be filed by the faculty member in a single file with any other such notices of faculty resolutions; these records, including copies of all evidence, shall be kept for no less than five (5) years after graduation or date of last attendance, both in the faculty office and the Office of Student Affairs [effective Spring Semester 2012]. *This is in accordance with the Records Managements and Retention policies of the University System of Georgia.*

- 2) College Resolutions: College resolutions are initiated by the instructor of record and usually involve, at least, an "F" for the course. The instructor shall first contact the Student Conduct Officer in the Office of Student Affairs to determine if a previous or concurrent complaint is on record. College resolutions are sought when, in the judgment of the faculty member, a student has made an error in judgment. In cases of College resolutions (just as with faculty resolutions), the instructor shall keep a **record***, as described above. The **record*** shall be supplemented by the current Student Infraction/Complaint Form (Form B) used by the Office of Student Affairs.

Faculty Resolutions to Violations of Academic Misconduct: Further Guidelines

A faculty member, based on his or her judgment, may determine that an academic integrity case does not rise to a level that warrants a College penalty. In such a case, the faculty member should alert the student (s) to the issues involved and explain the risk of incurring a College penalty.

Academic misconduct violations and sanctions shall be outlined in all course syllabi. When there is not a previous infraction and when there is not another case under adjudication, faculty members are encouraged to seek a faculty-level and educational resolution for the alleged violation of academic integrity.

Before seeking a faculty resolution, however, the faculty member must email the Student Conduct Officer in the Office of Student Affairs to ascertain whether another faculty or College adjudication is under way or whether there is a previous infraction on the record. In all cases, the faculty member must email the Student Conduct Officer in the Office of Student Affairs before deciding on or agreeing to a faculty resolution. No faculty resolutions shall take place if there is a previous infraction or an open case.

As a basis for any faculty resolution, the student must admit responsibility for the infraction and acknowledge the seriousness of the error. If a student is not open and honest about his or her complicity in the charges, it shall be incumbent that the student's case goes through a College resolution.

When faculty members apply faculty resolutions, they shall be exceedingly careful to use the same standards from one case to another. Hence, there must be a cautious, fair, and documented pattern to such faculty resolutions. Junior faculty, especially, should consult senior faculty members within the discipline, sometimes, but not necessarily, seeking the advice and guidance of chairs and deans. Instructors shall maintain thorough files of any such faculty resolutions, including an email to that student that defines the violation and the faculty penalty.

Examples of Faculty Solutions (not all inclusive):

1. A reduced grade on the assignment
2. A reduced grade for the course
3. A standardized test on plagiarism, cheating, and the Student Code of Conduct administered by the Testing Center
4. Any combination of the above

College Resolutions for Cases of Academic Misconduct

In the case that a student does not admit to or acknowledge his or her responsibilities in knowing and abiding by the Student Code of Conduct, the faculty member must begin the College process as outlined below.

Regardless of whether a student expresses remorse, if there is a previous infraction or an open case, the complaint shall be forwarded to the Student Conduct Officer in the Office of Student Affairs. In these cases, the faculty member completes the first College-resolution step by filling out the Student Infraction/Complaint Form (Form B) with the student, who, if possible, signs the form.

When a faculty member establishes with evidence that a case for academic misconduct might be made, he or she should immediately email, for the record, his/her chair/dean, and the Student Conduct Officer and take the following steps. If the process of a faculty resolution goes to a hearing panel, the rules and procedures of the Hearing Process shall follow those itemized in the Student Code of Conduct, a process which is then overseen by the Student Conduct Officer.

The following procedures are designed to adjudicate situations involving alleged academic misconduct, recognizing the interests of each of the parties involved:

- A. If there is evidence sufficient to warrant a charge, the following steps shall occur:
 1. In the case of any kind of resolution, faculty or College, the instructor shall gather all pertinent information related to the case, with an emphasis on careful and complete documentation beginning with this step and throughout all following steps.
 2. The instructor shall notify the Student Conduct Officer, as well as his/her chair and/or dean, to inform the Officer of the charge and to register it in the Student Conduct Database. This notification will allow the Student Conduct Officer to determine if the student has a previous academic infraction, which he or she shall then communicate to the instructor.
 3. Although notified, chairs and deans do not intervene or manage the case.
 4. If a College resolution is sought, the instructor shall complete the Student Infraction/Complaint Form (Form B).
 5. The instructor shall adjudicate the case by presenting the evidence and/or documentation to the student. If possible, the instructor should invite another staff or faculty member to sit in on this meeting with the student. When presented with charges by the instructor, the student shall:
 - a. accept responsibility for the charge(s) and accept the instructor's sanction,

- b. or, deny the charge (s) and request a formal hearing in accordance with the Hearing process.
 6. The instructor shall immediately forward all materials to the Student Conduct Officer for further adjudication of the case and to update the file in the Student Conduct Database.
- B. Should a resolution not be reached and should the student continue to deny responsibility for the charges, the student may request a preliminary conference with the Student Conduct Officer within five College business days from the initial meeting with the instructor. During the preliminary conference with the Student Conduct Officer, the student will be provided with the following:
- a. A written explanation of the charges;
 - b. Review of the documentation on which charges are based and names of all witnesses;
 - c. A review of all due process rights and disciplinary procedures;
 - d. An opportunity to review charges and all documentation, to respond to the charges, and to select from adjudication options. A conduct hearing will be scheduled within ten College business days (Monday-Friday) from the date of request.
- C. A conduct hearing follows one of these options:
- a. Student Conduct Panel
 - i. A faculty/staff/student panel shall consist of members appointed by the College President, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Senate, and drawn from the roster of faculty, staff, and students on the Student Conduct Board.
 - ii. These panels shall serve as the adjudicating bodies for resolution of charges of Student Code of Conduct infractions. The panel shall be made up of at least three voting members, one faculty member, one staff member, and one student member. The Student Conduct Officer serves as a non-voting Chairperson of the hearing panel, with four (4) members in total. In order to manage the hearing process (as described later), the Student Conduct Officer shall follow all other steps outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
 - b. Administrative Hearing
 - i. The Provost, or his or her designee, shall serve as the sole member of the hearing body for cases:
 1. In which there is a recommendation from the hearing body for sanctions or expulsions that exceeds two (2) full academic semesters; and
 2. In which suspension or expulsion are involved when the charged student has not requested a hearing by a panel in a timely manner.
 - ii. Students heard by an Administrative Hearing may not return to a Student Conduct Panel for further adjudication.

- iii. Any student has the right to appeal to the Office of the President. See “C” under “Findings of the Hearing Body.”

- D. In instances where a student may have simultaneous cases of academic misconduct and behavioral misconduct, the Student Conduct Board will act upon allegations of behavioral misconduct first. Once adjudicated, the Hearing Panel may then take up the case for academic misconduct.
- E. Please note: Upon the finding of one infraction, schools with one-strike rules can limit student access to certain courses or programs of study; but individual school policies shall not exceed those of the College as defined in these guidelines, especially as such policies might limit a student from study in other course work.

THE HEARING PROCESS

[The following cannot be revised without going through the Student Affairs Committee, the Executive Committee, the Faculty Senate, and without the consultation of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services and the Provost.]

The focus of the Hearing Process in student conduct proceedings shall be determining the responsibility of those accused of violating the Student Code of Conduct. Hearings are not open to observers. Decisions shall be based upon the preponderance of all available evidence in each case. This means the evidence does not have to be enough to free the mind from a reasonable doubt but must be sufficient to incline a reasonable and impartial mind to one side of the issue rather than to the other. Student Conduct Board hearings are not legalistic proceedings, and formal rules of evidence do not apply.

1. If a charged student denies responsibility for alleged charge(s), the hearing will be scheduled within ten College business days (Monday – Friday) after the charged student requests it. Hearings will be held during normal College business hours on the Macon campus. The charged student may request, in writing, a continuance from the Student Conduct Officer if circumstances are such that a delay is warranted. The charged student will be notified, in writing, of the date, time, and location of the rescheduled hearing.

The Student Conduct Officer will serve as nonvoting Chairperson of the Student Conduct Board hearing panels and will select the members of each Student Conduct Board hearing panel. All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the Student Conduct Officer.

2. The party charging a violation of the Code of Conduct has the right to be informed of these hearing procedures and the right to be present throughout the presentation of witnesses and evidence. The Student Conduct Officer will inform the charging party of these rights prior to the hearing.

The records of the student conduct process and of the sanctions imposed, if any, shall be considered to be the education records of both the party charging a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and the charged student(s) because the educational career and chances of success in the academic community of each may be impacted.

3. The charged student will enter a plea to all charges before the hearing body.
4. The Student Conduct Officer will remind the charged student and each witness present of the importance of providing truthful and accurate information during the hearing process. If a witness fails to tell the truth during student conduct proceedings, student conduct action may result.
5. At the hearing, the Student Conduct Officer will present the evidence and facts of the case to the hearing body. The Student Conduct Officer will present witnesses in support of the case against the charged student.
6. The hearing body may question all witnesses or ask for clarification from the Student Conduct Officer or any witness.
7. The charged student may submit questions for witnesses to the Student Conduct Officer. The Student Conduct Officer will direct appropriate questions to the witnesses. The Student Conduct Officer will determine if the charged student's questions are appropriate and if the charged student's questions will be posed verbally or in writing.
8. When the case against the charged student has been presented, opportunity will be given for the charged student to make a statement regarding the charges. The hearing body or the Student Conduct Officer may question the charged student if he or she chooses to make a statement.
9. The charged student will present any evidence or witnesses in his or her behalf. Statements from character witnesses will be accepted only in instances in which the individual providing the information has direct knowledge of the event(s) in question.
10. The charged student will have an opportunity to make a statement at the conclusion of the hearing process. This closing statement by the charged student will precede the closing statement of the Student Conduct Officer.
11. The hearing body may recall any witness after testimony, if clarification is needed.
12. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Student Conduct Officer will call for adjournment.
13. Concerns for the personal safety, well-being, and/or fears of confrontation of the complainant, charged student, and/or other witness during the hearing may be

accommodated by providing separate facilities, by using a visual screen, and/or by permitting participation by telephone, videophone, closed circuit television, video conferencing, videotape, audio tape, written statement, or other means, where and as determined in the sole judgment of Student Conduct Officer to be appropriate.

FINDINGS OF THE HEARING BODY

After hearing both sides of the case, the hearing body will, in a closed session, deliberate and reach a decision regarding the responsibility of the charged student.

In cases heard by a Student Conduct Board panel, a majority vote is necessary to reach a decision regardless of the quorum; therefore, there must always be three panel members.

- A. Upon finding a student responsible for an academic violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the following sanction shall be imposed:
 - a. The student shall receive the grade of "F" for the course. A higher sanction, not limited to the grade of "F" for the course, may be entered at the discretion of the hearing body.
 - b. In addition to the sanction of the instructor or hearing body, the additional sanction of "Disciplinary Probation" may also be imposed.
 - c. If a student is found responsible for a violation of academic misconduct as a repeat offense, the sanction shall be:
 - i. A minimum of "F" in the course and Disciplinary Probation.
 - d. A higher sanction of suspension from the College for a period of time, not to exceed two (2) full academic semesters, may be entered at the discretion of the hearing body.
 - e. Other sanctions greater than those listed above may be recommended to the Provost for further action.

Note: In accordance with the Bylaws of the Faculty Senate (VII, C, 3, c), "Prior to imposition of any sanction involving a student grade, the Dean of Students shall consult with the Vice President for Academic Affairs or his or her duly appointed designee."

- B. If a student is found not responsible for a violation of academic misconduct, the hearing body shall refer the paper, assignment, or test to the appropriate Dean. In consultation with the instructor, the Dean shall facilitate a resolution concerning a fair grade for the work in question. In such cases, no record of academic misconduct will remain on file in the Office of Student Affairs or in the Student Conduct Database.
- C. Students adjudicated under the Student Code of Conduct have the right to appeal decisions of the Student Conduct Officer, Student Conduct Board Panel, and an Administrative Hearing provided specific relevant grounds for appeal are cited, as indicated in the Appeal Policy of the Student Code of Conduct.