

February 12, 2009

To: Faculty and Academic Councils
From: University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP)
Re: Proposed Policy: Integrity of Scholarship and Grades

Please find attached UCAP's revision to the *All-University Policy: Integrity of Scholarship and Grades* for consideration by academic governance, along with a copy of the current policy for your information. This action constitutes UCAP's response to ASMSU Bill 14-24 (Academic Governance Pending Log 07-08:3, received 11/05), recommending that UCAP re-examine University Academic Integrity Policy.

This revision introduces three substantive changes to the ISG Policy:

- The threshold for requiring that an instance of academic misconduct be brought to the attention of the student's Dean has been changed from the assignment of a failing grade in the course to the instructor's designation of any penalty grade on an individual assignment or a reduced grade - including a failing grade - in a course. This reflects UCAP's view that any violation of academic integrity serious enough to warrant the reduction of a score on an individual assignment or test should be brought to the attention of the student's Dean to ensure that the student will receive education concerning academic integrity and, as noted below, to prevent further incidences of academic misconduct.
- To aid record-keeping and the tracking of continuing offenses by a student, instances of academic misconduct will be recorded in the student's academic record, to which only the student's Dean and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education or the Dean of the Graduate School (or their designees) will have access. This change ensures that multiple offenses committed by a student will be apparent.
- All students who engage in academic misconduct for the first time must attend an educational program on academic integrity provided by either the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of the Graduate School. UCAP believes that MSU should be strongly committed to increasing awareness of issues of academic integrity and misconduct through education in order to prevent recurrences of acts of academic misconduct by a student.

In addition, this revision:

- drops the designation "All-University," in recognition of the fact that this policy has not been submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval;
- makes it easier for instructors, undergraduates, and graduate students to understand the processes triggered by acts of academic misconduct; and
- clarifies the language of the policy.

To arrive at this final version of the revision, UCAP solicited comment on a draft proposal and received responses from other University committees (UCFA, UCSA, UGC), from the Dean of the Graduate School, from the University Ombudsman, from the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education of the College of Natural Science, and from student governance organizations (ASMSU, COGS). All submitted thoughtful comments and suggestions

concerning both policy and implementation. All comments received were supportive of the basic changes being proposed to the existing policy. UCAP's summary of implementation suggestions and its own views can be found as a supplement to this letter.

We summarize below the comments and suggestions UCAP received to the policy issues addressed in the document under consideration and UCAP's responses to them:

- The UGC suggested that the instructor notify the head of the student's unit and the student's academic advisor as well as the Dean of the student's college when academic misconduct by a graduate student occurs. In the interest of keeping the process as streamlined and simple to implement as possible, UCAP chose to require that the instructor notify only the student's Dean. This reduces the chance of misidentifying personnel in unfamiliar units in cases involving the sensitive matter of academic misconduct. At the same time, it does not prevent the Dean from notifying these other individuals in cases where this appropriate.
- The UGC suggested language to cover instances of academic misconduct in which a penalty grade for graduate students does not apply, and UCFA raised a similar point, suggesting that the phrase "or any other sanction" be added to the penalty grade threshold. Note, however, that the policy already requires instructors to "take appropriate action" in any case of academic dishonesty -- the assignment of a penalty grade is not required for action to be taken. UCAP maintains that the assignment of a penalty grade is the appropriate threshold and a clearer standard for requiring an instructor to notify the student's dean of a charge of academic misconduct.
- The UGC argued that in some cases academic misconduct should be stated on a student's transcript. Since there are no standards articulated for what might trigger this sanction, UCAP declined to include this in its revision.
- UCSA and UCFA brought up many instances in which language could be clarified, and UCAP incorporated their suggestions.
- UCSA urged specificity regarding how required communications would be made. UCAP addressed this by stipulating that communications should be in writing.
- ASMSU and COGS expressed deep concern about the confidentiality of records and allegations, and this animated UCAP discussions as well. UCAP addressed this by specifying limited access to records, specifically to the Dean of the student's college, the Director of the University Undergraduate Division, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education or their designees.
- ASMSU, as well as UCSA and UCFA, sought clarification of the appropriate Dean to be informed of instances of academic dishonesty, especially for undergraduate students who have not declared majors. UCAP specified that it is the Dean of the college in which the student's major is housed, or the Director of the University Undergraduate Division in the case of an undeclared major, to whom notification of academic misconduct will be sent.

Finally, we gratefully note that Prof. Stan Soffin, the University Ombudsman, provided numerous suggestions and answers to UCAP questions that aided immeasurably both the process and the outcome of UCAP's work.

Supplement: On Implementation of the Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades

Developing means to implement the policies specified in the Integrity of Scholarship and Grades document does not fall within the purview of the Integrity of Scholarships and Grades policy document. However, it was clear throughout UCAP's deliberations that how well the policy will function depends on the nature and quality of the structures put in place to implement it. The responses to the policy proposal that UCAP received from the committees, organizations, and individuals listed above also provided many suggestions and questions bearing on implementation and procedures. To further the process of developing these structures if this policy revision is adopted, UCAP includes here its views on implementation and those forwarded to UCAP by others.

The following represent the most important implementation issues:

- UCAP suggests that an appropriate field in the student's electronic student folder be developed as a place where the written record of an instance of academic dishonesty is kept in the student's academic record. UCAP emphasizes that access to this information should be restricted to the student's dean or their designees.
- UCAP suggests that Academic Governance consider the possibility of amending item 2 of the Code of Teaching Responsibility to require that the Integrity of Scholarships and Grades Policy be referenced in course syllabi.
- UCAP, UGC, ASMSU, UCSA, and UCFA are concerned about the nature and structure of the educational program that is developed. UCAP is committed to work with the appropriate administrators and other standing committees to ensure that, if this revised policy is adopted, an appropriate education program is created.
- UCAP, UGC, UGSA, and the Ombudsman urge that the relevant committees work together to bring procedures regarding academic misconduct, as found in the AFR, GSRR, and MSRR documents, into alignment as soon as possible.
- UCAP suggests consideration of the following proposal for implementing reporting of academic misconduct, put forward by the UGC:
“We recommend development of a university-wide form onto which the written description of misconduct be placed. This would promote consistency in the amount and type of detail provided. Such a form could be accessible from the registrar's website, perhaps on the instructor systems menu. It could be a downloadable paper form, or an electronic form with options that could be ticked and space to provide additional details. A web-based version of this form could be automatically routed to the individual(s) who should receive notice of misconduct.
“We recommend the registrar's office incorporate a new option on the online semester grade reporting form to assist the reporting and collection of information about misconduct cases. A new box could indicate if the semester grade given (whether it is a

passing grade or a zero) is the result of penalties associated with academic misconduct. If so, the instructor would be required to submit the form indicated above, if the form had not already been submitted when the misconduct occurred.”

Other considerations regarding implementation of the policy are:

- including correct links to web pages where referenced procedures are listed in the published policy (UGC);
- including timelines in descriptions of procedures (COGS);
- fostering faculty discussion and education regarding academic misconduct; and
- avoiding a rigid schedule of sanctions. UCAP views flexibility as necessary in response to the variety of possible offenses and circumstances.

**PROPOSED POLICY:
INTEGRITY OF SCHOLARSHIP AND GRADES**

University Committee on Academic Policy

Feb. 12, 2009

The following statement of University policy addresses principles and procedures to be used in instances of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, and falsification of academic or admission records, herein after referred to as academic misconduct. (See General Student Regulation 1.00, Protection of Scholarship and Grades.)

1. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars. The University expects both instructors and students to honor these principles and, in so doing, to protect the validity of University education and grades. Practices that maintain the integrity of scholarship and grades include providing accurate information for academic and admission records, adherence to unit-approved professional standards and honor codes, and completion of original academic work by the student to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. To encourage adherence to the principles of truth and honesty, instructors should exercise care in planning and supervising academic work.
2. If an instructor alleges a student has committed an act of academic misconduct, the instructor is responsible for taking appropriate action. Depending on the instructor's judgment of a specific instance, the instructor may give the student a penalty grade. A penalty grade may be a reduced score or grade for the assignment or a reduced grade for the course. (For a definition of "penalty grade," see Academic Freedom Report (AFR) 8.1.15 and Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) 8.1.15.)
3. When an instructor gives an **undergraduate or graduate** student a penalty grade for academic misconduct, the instructor must provide a written description of the details of the academic misconduct to the student and to the student's academic dean. The student's academic Dean will add the written description to the student's academic record, where it will remain, unless the student successfully grieves the allegation.
4. In notifying the student's academic dean of the student's act of academic misconduct, the **instructor** may request the student's academic dean to initiate an academic disciplinary hearing to imposed sanctions in addition to, or other than, a penalty grade.
5. When in the judgment of the student's academic **dean**, a sanction in addition to, or other than, a penalty grade is warranted (e.g., dismissal from a unit or program), the dean may call for an academic disciplinary hearing. In calling for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student's academic dean may act independently or in response to a request by the instructor. (See SFR 4.3.1.1, GSRR 5.5.2, and MSRR 5.1.3.1.)
6. A student accused of academic misconduct may request an academic grievance hearing to contest the allegation before the appropriate hearing board of the department, school, or college in which the alleged academic dishonesty occurred. In cases involving academic misconduct, no

student may be dismissed from a course or program of study without an academic disciplinary hearing.

7. On the first offense of academic misconduct, the student must attend an educational program on academic integrity and academic misconduct provided by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies for undergraduate students and the Dean of The Graduate School for graduate students.

8. In cases involving **undergraduate** students in which the student's academic dean, or designee, calls for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student's academic dean will refer the case to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education. The Associate Provost will notify in writing the student of the call for a disciplinary hearing and will invite the student to a meeting to determine the appropriate judiciary for the hearing. (See AFR 4.3.1.1.)

9. In cases involving **graduate** students in which the student's academic dean, or designee, calls for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student's academic dean will refer the case to the Dean of The Graduate School. The dean will notify the student in writing of the call for a disciplinary hearing and will invite the student to a meeting to determine the appropriate judiciary for the hearing. At this meeting, the student will be asked to select either an administrative disciplinary hearing conducted by the Dean of The Graduate School or a disciplinary hearing conducted by the college hearing board within the student's college. In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction involving graduate students, the Dean of The Graduate School will select the appropriate judiciary. (See GSRR 5.5.2.)

10. Either party may appeal a decision of an administrative disciplinary hearing or a disciplinary hearing board to the appropriate appellate board. (See AFR 2.4.7.1; GSRR 5.5.2.1; and MSRR 5.8.1.)

ALL-UNIVERSITY POLICY: INTEGRITY OF SCHOLARSHIP AND GRADES

The following statement of University policy was approved by the Academic Council and the Academic Senate, and serves as the definitive statement of principle and procedure to be used in instances of academic dishonesty.

1. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles and in so doing protect the validity of University grades. This means that all academic work will be done by the student to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. (See General Student Regulation 1.00, Scholarship and Grades, for specific regulations.) Instructors, for their part, will exercise care in the planning and supervision of academic work, so that honest effort will be positively encouraged.
2. If any instance of academic dishonesty is discovered by an instructor, it is his or her responsibility to take appropriate action. Depending on his or her judgment of the particular case, he or she may give a failing grade to the student on the assignment or for the course.
3. In instances where a failing grade in a course is given only for academic dishonesty, the instructor will notify the student's academic dean in writing of the circumstances.
4. The student who receives a failing grade based on a charge of academic dishonesty may appeal a judgment made by a department, school, or a college. Refer to Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University.
5. When in the judgment of the academic dean, action other than, or in addition to, a failing grade is warranted, the dean will refer the case to the college-level hearing board, which shall have original jurisdiction. In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction, the appropriate judiciary will be randomly selected by the Assistant Provost from one of the three core colleges. Appeals from the judgment may be made to the All-University Academic Integrity Review Board. Refer to Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University.
6. In instances of academic dishonesty where the instructor feels that action other than, or in addition to, a failing grade in the course is warranted, the instructor will report the case to his or her departmental or school chairperson and to the student's academic dean. The dean will then refer the case to the college-level hearing board, which shall have original jurisdiction. Refer to Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University.