

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Approved by Academic Council and Administration

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**GONZAGA
UNIVERSITY**

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Preface

Gonzaga has had a stated policy of promoting academic honesty for many years. However In recent years the context in which we operate has changed. On one hand, court decisions have made universities more vulnerable to the threat of litigation by students who want to challenge university penalties for academic dishonesty. On the other hand, survey evidence shows that cheating seems to have become much more common in American high schools and universities.

This document presents the University's standards for Academic Honesty. Within this framework, the University's Schools and Departments are free to develop or maintain their own systems for protecting academic honesty. But they **will** be required to meet the threshold standards of this University-wide system, and their decisions will be subject to review by this system (as Section III below explains).

I. Code of Academic Honesty

The University's Mission Statement expresses Gonzaga's self-understanding in terms of humanist, Catholic, and Jesuit traditions. The Statement also explains Gonzaga's educational mission in terms of the ideals of creativity, intelligence, self-knowledge, desire for the truth, mature concern for others, and a thirst for justice. The Statement makes these traditions and ideals concrete and practical by relating them to academic programs whose goals are to teach professional expertise and the mastery of a particular body of knowledge. Honesty is an essential part of these traditions, ideals, and practical goals. A university such as Gonzaga's Mission Statement promises must, therefore, maintain high standards of academic honesty.

Without honesty the humanist, Catholic and Jesuit traditions could not continue; knowledge would be neither taught nor learned. Even the less obvious ethical and educational principles in our Mission Statement require honesty. Creativity without honesty becomes self-indulgence, intelligence without honesty degenerates into mere mental power. Self-knowledge without honesty cannot rise above self-deception, and the desire for truth becomes a craving for the rewards of those who have honestly found the truth. Without honesty, a concern for others may easily serve as a disguise for manipulation. The commitment to justice requires honesty, for to cheat, to fabricate, or to plagiarize is to act unjustly. Professional expertise requires honesty: cheating or plagiarizing denies the essence of what it means to be a professional in any field.

Because honesty is so essential to the traditions, ideals, and goals that define its kind of education, Gonzaga is committed to protecting academic honesty. This commitment entails practical consequences. To be fair to all members of the University, the University must explain clearly what are these practical consequences of its commitment to academic honesty. We do so here:

ACADEMIC HONESTY consists of truth-telling and truthful representations in all academic contexts;

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY consists of any of the following activities, which are defined and illustrated in Section II below: **cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating academic dishonesty;**

PENALTIES for academic dishonesty will be imposed through this Academic Honesty Policy, which all faculty and students are expected to understand and adhere to.

The University will publish copies of this description of the Academic Honesty Policy. Sections I, II, and III will be printed in the University catalogues. Students will be informed of the policy at orientation and advisors are encouraged to discuss the Academic Honesty Policy with their advisees. Instructors are strongly encouraged to inform each of their classes about the Academic Honesty Policy. This might include noting the existence of the Academic Honesty Policy on their course syllabus as well as discussing the Academic Honesty Policy in the first class.

II. Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is an attempt to deceive, to distort someone's perception of reality, in order to gain a record of academic accomplishment greater than deserved. This section gives general definitions and illustrations of the four kinds of academic dishonesty which are penalized at Gonzaga. But academic dishonesty is not limited to the conduct illustrated here, because it is not possible to illustrate all the possible ways of being dishonest academically. A student in doubt about whether a particular course of conduct might violate Gonzaga's standards of academic honesty should talk with the course instructor before engaging in that conduct.

CHEATING consists of intentionally using or attempting to use prohibited materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. In-class tests and exams are not the only place cheating may occur. Any required academic assignment - for example, papers, lab reports, computer programming, studio work - may involve cheating. Unless a particular instructor stipulates otherwise, the following constitute cheating. (These are not rules, simply illustrations.)

- A student obtains a copy of a test to be given in a course;
- A student brings notes to an exam and keeps them where he or she can see them during the exam (whether or not there is proof they are used);
- A student communicates to another student during a test about the test, or copies another student's answer;
- A student programs information into a portable computer's memory and brings the computer to a test (a technologically advanced crib sheet)
- A student misrepresents practicum or internship hours or experience;
- A student submits the same paper or report for assignments in two courses when an instructor has announced that assignments should be original work for that course only.

FABRICATION is a special kind of cheating which consists of intentional falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. For example, to make up data, bibliographic sources, and lab or research results is fabrication. For present purposes, fabrication also includes any action which alters (or destroys) the work of another student.

PLAGIARISM consists of intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, written or oral. Compositions, term papers, lab reports, or computer programs acquired in part or in whole from published or internet sources, commercial sources, or from other students and submitted as one's own work is plagiarism. It is not plagiarism to use lecture notes in the same course without acknowledgement, but any other source must be acknowledged. For example, it is plagiarism to copy material from a web site and then present that material, or a summary of that information, as one's own reflection without acknowledgment.

Texts used in Gonzaga's English Composition courses (ENL 101) usually explain and illustrate plagiarism and how to avoid it by acknowledgement, formal citation, or quotation. A student who is not sure what plagiarism is or how to avoid it should check such references, or ask the instructor.

FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY consists of intentionally helping or attempting to help someone do any of the above. For example, to tell a classmate who is going to take a make-up test what kinds of questions were on the test would facilitate the classmate's academic dishonesty. However, since copying lecture notes is not cheating, to let someone who missed a course lecture copy one's own lecture notes would not facilitate academic dishonesty.

III. Penalties and Appeals

Within the following guidelines, each School or College in the University is free to work out its own procedures and penalties. The Deans may delegate whatever authority they wish to associate deans and departmental chairs. although the Dean is ultimately responsible (As an example, the Law School's process is consistent with these guidelines.)

Although their duties are not identical, students and faculty share responsibility for enforcing this Academic Honesty Policy. This system reflects an assumption of innocence. Therefore, instructors should discuss any suspicions with the student(s) in question to determine if, in fact, a violation has occurred. Any proctor, T.A., or faculty member who has good reason to believe that a violation of academic honesty has occurred must report this to the relevant course instructor, department chair, or dean. It would be contrary to the spirit of this Academic Honesty Policy for a student to tell other students that a violation of academic honesty has occurred if that student has not reported it first to the class instructor or dean. Such an act would deprive the accused of the ability to reply, and project an unfair image of a class instructor without opportunity for the instructor to correct or to respond to the problem.

An instructor who is convinced that a violation of academic honesty has occurred in his or her course must discuss this with the student and with the department chair or academic dean before imposing any penalty. If the student and instructor are able to reach a mutually acceptable remedy which is sanctioned by the dean/chair, the violation may be dealt with at this informal level. Even in the event of an informal resolution, a written report must still be sent to the department chair or academic dean, and the chair or dean's approval is needed before a penalty is imposed. It will be a violation of the University's norms of academic citizenship for an instructor to impose a penalty for an alleged violation of academic honesty without such permission. In the event that a mutually acceptable remedy is not reached at the informal level, an allegation of academic dishonesty shall be brought to the dean/chair for the formal process to begin.

A dean or chair will, upon receiving a formal allegation of academic dishonesty, notify the student of the charge in writing within five working days. The student must meet with the dean/chair within five class days of receiving this notice. At their first meeting, whatever else happens, the dean/chair must: (a) ask the student if they understand the allegation and evidence; (b) inform the student that if a decision is reached that they have violated the Academic Honesty Policy, it may become known by prospective employers, graduate schools, etc. (Faculty and administrators in some professional schools can be legally required to testify to such decisions. All faculty and administrators may be asked about such matters by prospective employers, graduate schools, professional associations, etc., in such a way that it would be dishonest to deny that such a decision was reached.) In addition, the dean/chair must give the student this choice: (c) the allegation may be resolved immediately with the student's consent, or the student may have five more class days to reflect on it (without jeopardy) before the dean/chair reaches a conclusion. (In a case where a student is not expected to return to campus, special steps will be taken to ensure compliance with the Academic Honesty Policy.)

The dean/chair will determine whether an allegation of academic dishonesty is supported by the evidence. "Hard" evidence - e.g., a confiscated crib sheet, the word-for-word original of a plagiarized term paper, sufficiently identical answers on two tests of students seen communicating with each other, a student caught red-handed stealing an exam, etc. - will normally be sufficient to decide a case. Instructors and students who allege academic dishonesty has occurred are not required to prove it "beyond a reasonable doubt." The dean will take such allegations seriously in any case, and will deal with them flexibly to do justice to all the rights and obligations involved in each particular case. When academic dishonesty is determined to have occurred, the dean/chair will also determine the appropriate penalty, depending on the quality of the evidence, the severity of the alleged infraction, and whether it is a first or repeated offense. The recommendation of the proposed penalty is made by the teacher who initially discovers the alleged violation. When appropriate, a warning Instead of a penalty may be given. Penalties in the past have

included: a grade of zero for the assignment, an F grade in the course (which cannot be replaced by an X grade), loss of institutional financial aid, suspension from the University, a expulsion. Abuse of computer, library, or laboratory privileges may also result in their restriction. If a penalty (not a warning) is imposed, the dean/chair will so notify the student in writing and send a copy of that letter along with a written report explaining it to the Academic and Student Life Vice Presidents and the dean of the school in which the student is enrolled. Ordinarily the dean/chair's decision is final.

(The Academic Honesty Review Board described below will help deans/chairs to ensure that penalties in all academic units are not arbitrarily different for the same type of violation, and to ensure that penalized students who transfer from one unit to another do not lose their records.)

A student may appeal a dean/chair's decision to the Academic Vice President (AVP). Such appeals must be received in the AVP's office, in writing, within five class days from the student's receipt of the letter stating the penalty. Unsupported assertions of innocence will not re-open a case. The appeal-letter must state specific reasons for the appeal, such as a procedural error, a finding of fact not supported by the evidence, a harsh or arbitrary penalty, or new information not available to the dean/chair. If the AVP believes an appeal has such a reason to support it, the appeal will be sent to the Academic Honor Review Board within ten class days from receipt of the written appeal.

The Academic Honor Review Board will handle all such appeals approved by the AVP. The Board will consist of two students, two faculty members, and one representative from the Student Life Office. It will be chaired ex officio by the AVP, and in his absence he will appoint a Chair pro tern. The members of the Board will be appointed by the President of the University to serve staggered terms to ensure continuity. Alternate members from the same categories will also be designated, to ensure that the Board can always meet.

A student making an appeal may ask for the removal of any member of the Board. The AVP will consider the request and make a decision based on the circumstances. Members of the Board must remove themselves from a particular case if there is a conflict of interest. When Board members are removed for either of these reasons, the AVP will appoint alternates from the previously designated list of alternate members.

In any case referred to it by the AVP, the Academic Honor Review Board will have authority to decide whether or not to re-open the entire case, and will proceed according to the following guidelines.

- All five members of the Board will receive copies of the student's appeal-letter and the Dean's report before the process begins.
- If the Board receives notice from the AVP during the academic semester, it will meet within five class days. Otherwise, it will meet as soon as four members or alternates are able.
- The penalized student will have the opportunity to be heard in person by the Board. At this hearing the student may be assisted by an advisor and may be accompanied by appropriate family. (Since this hearing is not intended to be a trial, the role of the advisor shall be to assist the penalized student in presenting his or her case, and not as a trial advocate.)
- The Board may call witnesses, including but not limited to the parties involved in the case a when the dean/chair decided it.
- Hearings may be tape recorded or transcribed, upon agreement of all participants.
- The final decision will be by majority vote.

- The Board will provide the AVP a brief written statement of the reasons for its decision. The Board will notify the student of its conclusion and briefly explain it in a letter to his or her official school address within five class days of its final decision. This letter will be filed with the rest of the case information in the Academic and Student We Vice Presidents' offices.

1/02