

A Faculty Guide to Academic Integrity and Civility in the Classroom

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Academic Integrity

The issues of academic integrity and problems such as plagiarism have become increasingly common threads in campus conversations. The following advice and information provides a common framework for focusing on and addressing these issues.

A. Promoting Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the responsibility of all members of the Purdue University North Central (PNC) community. As educators, we are obligated to demonstrate by word and action the importance of this core value. Faculty should be especially attentive to integrity as they interact with freshmen, transfer students, and new graduate students. Because new students may not have been held to the standards demanded at PNC, special attention to this institutional value is necessary. It is important to emphasize the community value of honesty. This emphasis not only teaches the importance of ethical conduct, but should help students understand the impact that unethical conduct has on the reputation of the University from which they will earn their degree.

To foster a culture of academic honesty and integrity, the following ideas may be appropriate for inclusion in course syllabus:

- The course syllabus should include a statement of expectation about the academic integrity policy. This statement should direct students to the **PNC Code of Student Conduct**. - www.pnc.edu/cd/Policy/conduct.html
- Web based courses present special academic integrity challenges. Faculty teaching these courses may seek assistance in designing courses to maximize academic integrity by consulting Dave Pratt, the Director of Learning and Technology (extension 5578 or dpratt@pnc.edu).
- Instructors should use some portion of the course introduction to clarify expectations involving academic integrity questions. For example, “What will be the expectations regarding collaboration?” (Some courses encourage it, some forbid it. Students need clarification to avoid confusion.) Follow-up clarification may be appropriate on subsequent examinations, papers, etc.
- The ethical standards of the specific discipline should be discussed with students and clearly identified as criteria to be used in the determination of academic integrity. These standards (codes of ethics) should be available to students either in written form or by reference to a source (such as a website).

B. The Extent of Academic Dishonesty

Unfortunately, students often have not learned or practiced responsible behavior related to academic integrity. Longitudinal studies of faculty and students in high schools and numerous colleges and universities reveal the following:

- Most campuses report that 70 percent of students surveyed admit to some form of cheating.
- Approximately 25 percent of student respondents admit cheating on tests.
- Fifty percent of these respondents admit to serious cheating on written assignments.
- Nearly 77 percent of the respondents acknowledge Internet plagiarism is a growing problem but do not consider it a serious concern.
- Almost 50 percent of faculty report never responding to or reporting students they discover cheating.
- Students indicate that cheating is common in courses in which instructors are known to ignore cheaters.
- Surveys of high school students indicate similar or higher instances of the type of cheating reported in college surveys.

PNC has an obligation to hold students to high standards and assure that they learn about academic integrity.

Civility in the Classroom

Expectations for decorum and appropriate behavior in the classroom should be clearly established on the first day of class.

- The faculty member may wish to include a statement regarding expectations for classroom decorum. This statement should clearly indicate that the faculty member will determine when a student activity is inappropriate or disruptive.
- Expectations regarding the presence and use of electronic and communication devices need to be established at the first class meeting.
- Without prior approval from the instructor, tardiness (especially chronic) should not be allowed and leaving class sessions early or leaving and returning during the session should be prohibited.
- For further clarification on civility in the classroom contact John Coggins, the Dean of Students, in LSF-131 (extension 5368 or jtcoggin@pnc.edu).

In the May/June 2004 issue of *Change Magazine*, McCabe and Pavela, offer these ten principles of Academic Integrity for Faculty.

1. Affirm the importance of academic integrity.

Institutions of higher education are dedicated to the pursuit of truth. Faculty members need to affirm that the pursuit of truth is grounded in certain core values, including diligence, civility, and honesty.

7. Develop fair and relevant forms of assessment.

Students expect their academic work to be fairly and fully assessed. Faculty members should use – and continuously evaluate and revise – forms of assessment that require active and creative thought, and promote learning opportunities for students.

2. Foster a love of learning.

A commitment to academic integrity is reinforced by high academic standards. Most students will thrive in an atmosphere where academic work is seen as challenging, relevant, useful, and fair.

3. Treat students as ends in themselves.

Faculty members should treat their students as ends in themselves – deserving individual attention and consideration. Students will generally reciprocate by respecting the best values of their teachers, including a commitment to academic integrity.

4. Foster an environment of trust in the classroom.

Most students are mature adults, and value an environment free of arbitrary rules and trivial assignments, where trust is earned, and given.

5. Encourage student responsibility for academic integrity.

With proper guidance, students can be given significant responsibility to help promote and protect the highest standards of academic integrity. Students want to work in communities where competition is fair, integrity is respected, and cheating is punished. They understand that one of the greatest inducements to engaging in academic dishonesty is the perception that academic dishonesty is rampant.

6. Clarify expectations for students.

Faculty members have primary responsibility for designing and cultivating the educational environment and experience. They must clarify their expectations in advance regarding honesty in academic work, including the nature and scope of student collaboration. Most students want such guidance, and welcome it in course syllabi, carefully reviewed by their teachers in class.

8. Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty.

Prevention is a critical line of defense against academic dishonesty. Students should not be tempted or induced to engage in acts of academic dishonesty by ambiguous policies, undefined or unrealistic standards for collaboration, inadequate classroom management, or poor examination security.

9. Challenge academic dishonesty when it occurs.

Students observe how faculty members who behave, and what values they embrace. Faculty members who ignore or trivialize academic dishonesty send the message that the core values of academic life, and community life in general, are not worth any significant effort to enforce.

10. Help define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards.

Acts of academic dishonesty by individual students can occur across artificial divisions of departments and schools. Although faculty members should be the primary role models for academic integrity, responsibility for defining, promoting, and protecting academic integrity must be a community-wide concern – not only to identify repeat offenders and apply consistent due process procedures but also to affirm the shared values that make colleges and universities true communities.

Some aspects of this guide are based on Indiana State University guidelines with permission