

WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Approved March 13, 2007

Preface

Wittenberg University is dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and truth. At the heart of our search for knowledge is personal honesty, an honesty that makes possible an open and vibrant exchange of ideas. True community and academic excellence thrive at Wittenberg through honesty, trust, and mutual respect. It is the aim of this Code of Academic Integrity to foster an atmosphere in which each individual can reach their fullest potential as students and teachers and, ultimately, as human beings.

Honor Statement

All academic work submitted at Wittenberg will carry the honor statement. ***“I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance.”***

Definitions of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of community standards. It undermines the bonds between members of the community and defrauds those who may eventually depend upon our knowledge and integrity. Such dishonesty includes:

Cheating

Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or assistance in any academic exercise.

Fabrication

Falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitating academic dishonesty

Helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this code.

Plagiarism

Representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, either knowingly or through negligence.

Student and Faculty Responsibilities

To achieve the aims of this code of academic integrity, every student, faculty member, and administrator is responsible for upholding the highest standards of personal integrity. It is expected that every member of the Wittenberg community will honor the spirit of the code by refusing to tolerate academic dishonesty.

It is the responsibility of the instructor to provide students with clear guidelines for what constitutes “authorized” and “unauthorized” assistance, and the responsibility of every student to seek clarification if in doubt about those guidelines. In cases of collaborative work, the Honor Statement applies to the contributions of each individual student within the collaborative group.

Honor Council

The Honor Council is composed of six (6) faculty, two (2) administrators, and ten (10) students. Every year the faculty will elect two of its members to serve three- year terms. The Provost and the Dean of Students will each appoint an administrator to serve a three- year term. The students will be selected by a committee consisting of the chair and vice- chair of the Honor Council, two additional volunteer members of the Honor Council, and three students appointed by Student Senate.

This committee will strive to make the Honor Council representative of the diverse nature of the Wittenberg community. At least one student from each class will be a member of the council, and, once selected, student members will serve until they graduate. The Honor Council will elect a chair and vice- chair from its membership. The chair will be a student with at least one year’s service on the council. The vice- chair will be a faculty member with at least one year’s service on the council.

The Honor Council has the following responsibilities and authority:

- (a) To maintain and enforce standards of academic integrity.
- (b) To create and conduct educational programming designed to promote academic integrity.
- (c) To advise and consult with the student body, faculty members, and administrative officers on matters pertaining to academic integrity.
- (d) To designate from among its members, students, administrators, and faculty to serve on Council Hearing Boards.
- (e) To consider petitions for removal of the grade of *XF* from university records.
- (f) To issue an annual report to students, faculty and staff, which would typically include a summary of cases and a description of the Council’s activities.
- (g) To review policies and procedures of the Code of Academic Integrity and the Honor Council on at least a bi-annual basis and to recommend changes to the faculty and students.

The Honor Council will be advised by a faculty member appointed by the Provost, in consultation with the Faculty Executive Board, who will be known as the Honor Council

Faculty Advisor. The advisor will be responsible for the oversight of the Honor Council and its processes.

Procedures

Allegations of Academic Dishonesty

If a faculty member suspects that a violation has occurred, the faculty member will make a reasonable effort to meet with the student(s) to inform him/her of the allegation. The faculty member and student will discuss the allegation, and agree to either pursue student/faculty resolution or refer the case to the Honor Council. If the student does not admit responsibility for the violation or disagrees with the sanction to be imposed by the faculty member, the student may request that the case be referred to the Honor Council. Faculty members are responsible for informing students of their option to refer the incident to the Honor Council for review at any time during the student/faculty resolution.

If the student is either unwilling or unable to meet with the faculty member within two weeks of notification, then the faculty member must refer the case to the Honor Council for review by a Hearing Board.

A student who suspects that a violation of the code of academic integrity has occurred should take some form of action. Ideally, the student will report that violation to the Honor Council using the form for student reports. In this report, the student should describe any action taken, such as talking with the person involved, or with a faculty or staff member. Every effort will be made to preserve the anonymity of the student reporting the incident; however, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Students may also report anonymously to the instructor, with or without naming individuals, or confront the individual(s) believed to be in violation of the code.

Student/Faculty Resolution

If the student and faculty member agree to student/faculty resolution, they will discuss the case and the sanction to be imposed by the faculty member. If both student and faculty agree to the student's responsibility for the violation and to the sanction to be imposed by the faculty member, the faculty member writes a report to the Honor Council describing the incident giving rise to the allegations and informing them of

- (a) the date, time, and location of meeting or meetings with student,
- (b) the nature of their conversations,
- (c) the student's admission of responsibility for the violation,
- (d) evidence and relevant supporting information,
- (e) the sanction to be imposed,
- (f) whether or not a hearing has been requested.

The faculty member will send copies of the report to the student and to the Office of the Assistant Provost for Academic Services as the office of record.

All reports of academic dishonesty will be reviewed by the Assistant Provost for Academic Services to verify whether reports have been received indicating that the student has been found responsible for any other act of academic dishonesty. If the Assistant Provost for Academic Services finds that the case is a repeat offense, the case is automatically referred to the Honor Council for review by an Honor Council Hearing Board.

Honor Council Resolution

Cases not resolved through student/faculty resolution will be referred for a hearing. A hearing is initiated when the Honor Council receives a report from the Assistant Provost for Academic Services of a request for a hearing by either the student or the faculty member.

Composition of Hearing Boards

A hearing is conducted by a Hearing Board. The panel will normally consist of seven persons, six of whom will be voting members. Hearing Boards are made up of three students, two faculty members and one administrator selected by the Honor Council chair from the membership of the Honor Council. Determinations of the board will be by a majority vote (four votes or more). The chair or vice chair of the Honor Council will serve as the Hearing Board chair and will vote only in the event of a tie. If the chair or vice-chair is unavailable or the caseload becomes unmanageable, the Faculty Advisor will appoint another member of the Honor Council to serve as chair of the Hearing Board.

Preliminary Procedures

The initial report of an allegation of academic dishonesty will be reviewed by the Honor Council Chair and the Faculty Advisor, who will then appoint a Hearing Board and designate a chair of the Hearing Board. Following this, the chair of the Hearing Board will inform the student of the allegation in writing, including the faculty member's report. The chair of the Hearing Board will request a written statement from the student in response to the allegation, and, if the student so desires, he or she can submit a list of witnesses to appear at the hearing on the student's behalf. Witnesses are limited to individuals who can present evidence that bears directly on the allegation. The student's written statement will become part of the case and be reviewed by the Hearing Board in preparation for hearing the case, but it will not take the place of the student's presence at or comments within the hearing.

The chair will select the date, time, and place for the hearing and notify both the referring faculty member and the student by personal delivery or campus mailbox a minimum of five (5) business days prior to the hearing. Either the chair or vice chair (whichever one

is not presiding at the hearing) or the faculty advisor will meet with the student to review hearing procedures and process. He/she will also meet with the student following the hearing to discuss the ramifications of the findings and the student's options for appeal

Students have the right to object to any member of the Hearing Board they believe to be biased in the case. In cases where the student objects to a member of the Hearing Board, the chair of the Honor Council and the Faculty Advisor will decide whether or not to act on that objection. Members of the Hearing Board have the responsibility to recuse themselves from cases in which there is a conflict of interest.

The Hearing Board Process

The purpose of a hearing is to explore and investigate the incident giving rise to the appearance of academic dishonesty and to reach an informed conclusion as to whether or not academic dishonesty occurred. All persons at a hearing are expected to assist in a thorough and honest exposition of all related facts. Honor Council Hearing Board proceedings are not a court of law, and attorneys are not permitted to be present at any hearings.

The sequence of a hearing is necessarily controlled by the nature of the incident to be investigated and the information to be examined. It lies within the judgment of the presiding officer to determine the most reasonable approach. The following steps are generally recommended:

- (a) The referring faculty member or the individual reporting an alleged violation, and then the student, will briefly summarize the matter before the Hearing Board, including any relevant information or arguments. The faculty member may recommend a sanction.
- (b) Witnesses will be called who have knowledge of the incident and can offer documents or other materials bearing on the case.
- (c) Members of the Hearing Board may request additional material or the appearance of other persons, as needed.
- (d) The referring faculty member or individual reporting the allegation and the student may make brief closing statements.
- (e) The Hearing Board will meet privately to discuss the case and determine whether a violation has taken place based on a preponderance of evidence.
- (f) If the student is found in violation, the Hearing Board will determine an appropriate sanction. When determining the sanction, the Hearing Board will be informed of any other violations of academic integrity on the part of the student.
- (g) The Hearing Board chair will provide the referring faculty member or reporting individual, the student, and the Assistant Provost for Academic Services with a written report of the facts found, identifying the parts of the policy that have been violated and describing the sanction, if any, to be imposed.

The Hearing Board chair will ensure that the following rules and points of order are observed:

- (a) The student may be accompanied by a person of his or her choosing for emotional support only, provided that the support person is not a parent, an attorney, or a party to the case. This person will not actively participate in the hearing process in any way.
- (b) Hearings will be tape-recorded for the purposes of the Hearing Board's deliberations and/or any Student Appellate Board action.
- (c) Presence at a hearing lies within the judgment of the Hearing Board chair. A hearing requires a deliberative and candid atmosphere, free from distraction. Accordingly, it is not open to the public or other "interested" persons. The Hearing Board chair may cause to be removed from the hearing any person, including the student, who disrupts or impedes the investigation, or who fails to adhere to the rulings of the chair. The Hearing Board chair will direct that persons, other than the student, who are to be called upon to provide information be excluded from the hearing except for that purpose. The members of the Hearing Board may conduct private deliberations at such times and places as they deem proper.
- (d) Failure to appear before a Hearing Board will not preclude the Hearing Board from hearing evidence and determining outcomes.
- (e) It is the responsibility of the person desiring the presence of a witness before a Hearing Board to ensure that the witness appears. Because experience has demonstrated that the actual appearance of an individual is of greater value than a written statement, the latter is discouraged and should not be used unless the individual cannot reasonably be expected to appear. Any written statement must be dated, signed by the person making it, and witnessed by a University employee. The work of a Hearing Board will not, as a general practice, be delayed due to the unavailability of a witness.
- (f) A hearing is not a trial. The Hearing Board will consider all relevant, probative, and credible evidence. The Hearing Board chair will determine what evidence will be considered.

If the Honor Council Faculty Advisor determines that a Hearing Board cannot be convened within a reasonable period of time after an allegation is made, two students and one faculty will be appointed as an ad hoc Hearing Board. Members of ad hoc Hearing Boards shall be current or former members of the Honor Council. A non-voting Hearing Board chair will also be appointed.

Hearing Board Outcomes

If the Hearing Board determines that the allegations of academic dishonesty are unfounded, no record of the allegation and/or hearing is kept and no sanctions are imposed.

Sanctions

Sanctions available to faculty members for informal resolution include:

- Formal warning. (The violation is kept on file and no other sanction is imposed.)
- A reduction in grade for the assignment and/or an additional reduction in the grade for the course.
- A failing grade for the assignment and/or an additional reduction in the grade for the course.
- A failing grade in the course (XF).

Sanctions available to the Honor Council include:

- Formal warning. (The violation is kept on file and no other sanction is imposed.)
- A reduction in grade for the assignment and/or an additional reduction in the grade for the course.
- A failing grade for the assignment and/or an additional reduction in the grade for the course.
- A failing grade in the course (XF).
- Community work assignment.
- Removal of the privilege of representing the university in extracurricular activities including athletics, as well as the privilege of running for or holding office in any student organization that is allowed to use university facilities or receives university funds.
- Suspension from the university for one to two semesters, excluding summer terms. Students suspended for academic dishonesty must apply for readmission according to the Board of Academic Standards guidelines. However, students suspended for academic dishonesty cannot transfer into Wittenberg any credits earned during the suspension. Readmission applications by students suspended for academic dishonesty must be approved by the Honor Council.
- Dismissal from the university.

The grade of XF

An XF will be recorded on the student's transcript with the notation "failure due to academic dishonesty." The grade of XF shall be treated in the same way as an F for the purposes of grade point average, course repeatability, and the determination of academic standing.

A student may file a written petition to the Honor Council to have the grade of XF removed and replaced with the grade of F. The decision to remove the grade of XF and replace it with a grade of F requires a majority of a quorum of the council (quorum for the Honor Council is five students and three faculty members), provided that:

- (a) at the time the petition is received, at least twelve months shall have elapsed since the grade of XF was imposed; and,

- (b) at the time the petition is received, the student shall have successfully completed a non-credit seminar on academic integrity; or, for the person no longer enrolled at the university, an equivalent educational activity to be determined by the Honor Council; and,
- (c) the Assistant Provost for Academic Services certifies that no reports have been received indicating that the student has been found responsible for any other act of academic dishonesty at the university or at another institution.

Prior to deciding a petition, the Honor Council will review the record of the case and consult with the Honor Council advisor and, whenever possible, the faculty member who originally reported the violation. Both the Honor Council advisor and the faculty member serve in an advisory capacity only. If the Honor Council denies the petition, the student cannot submit another petition for four years, unless the Honor Council specifies an earlier date.

Subsequent Allegations of Academic Dishonesty

In the event of a subsequent allegation of academic dishonesty, the case is automatically referred to the Honor Council and reviewed by an Honor Council Hearing Board. Ordinarily, a second substantiated allegation of academic dishonesty results in either suspension for one or two full semesters, excluding summer terms, or permanent dismissal from the university. In the event of extraordinary or extenuating circumstances, the Hearing Board has the right to assign a lesser sanction.

Unless otherwise designated by the Honor Council, suspension for academic dishonesty will take place immediately. In the case of an appeal, the suspension is held in abeyance until the appeal process is completed.

Appeals

A student is allowed one opportunity to appeal the decision of the Hearing Board to the Student Appellate Board. Appeals must be received by the Student Appellate Board at the Student Development office within five (5) business days of receipt of the Honor Council Hearing Board decision. Appeals must be based on one or more of the following three conditions:

1. New and significant evidence is presented which may further clarify and support the defense of the student, at which point the case will be referred back to the original Hearing Board for reconsideration.
2. There is clear reason to believe that the sanction is not consistent with the seriousness of the violation. In cases where the Student Appellate Board determines that this is the case, it may issue a different sanction.
3. There is substantial credible evidence that the initial hearing was not fair and impartial, or that the established process was not followed, in which case the Student Appellate Board will request that a new Hearing Board be selected from the Honor Council to rehear the case.

In cases of academic dishonesty, decisions of the Student Appellate Board are final and may not be appealed.

The Honor Council will review the policies and procedures describe in the Code of Academic Integrity at least bi-annually and will recommend any revisions to students and faculty.

The Committee for Academic Integrity is indebted to the Center for Academic Integrity for key ideas found within this Code of Academic Integrity. Please refer to their web site at <http://www.academicintegrity.org/>. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Gary Pavela who provided us with a model code of academic integrity, a copy of which can be found in the following: Pavela, Gary. "A model code of academic integrity" in Synthesis: Law and Policy in Higher Education, 9:1 (Summer 1997), p. 640.

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