

## **Undergraduate Student Academic Conduct Policy**

(Approved by the Faculty Senate, November 9, 2004)

### **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Academic Conduct policy defines and ensures academic integrity at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC). The policy describes the process for addressing cases of undergraduate student academic misconduct. The underlying philosophy of this policy is that members of the university community view academic integrity as a serious institutional value and that academic misconduct incidents should be resolved by faculty members and students in a cooperative manner.

Some cases of academic misconduct may seem more serious than others; however, all instances of academic misconduct as described in this policy should be reported to the Academic Conduct Committee. Filing a report even when the offense does not appear to be extensive, flagrant, repeated, or intentionally deceitful produces two worthwhile results: it creates a record that can identify a student whose misconduct is repeated in more than one course or over more than one semester, and it sends a message to students that the university takes academic misconduct seriously.

### **II. ADMINISTRATION OF POLICY**

- A. This policy is administered by the University Academic Conduct Committee (ACC). Its membership will consist of four faculty members elected by the Faculty Senate, and four undergraduate students appointed by the Student Government Association (SGA) Senate. The Committee will discharge its duties without bias.
- B. The Academic Conduct Committee reports to the Faculty Senate through its Chair.
- C. The Chair of the Academic Conduct Committee shall be elected from among the tenured faculty members of the Committee and shall sit as an ex officio member of the Faculty Senate unless otherwise entitled to vote.
- D. The ACC Chair will report statistics concerning academic misconduct incidents each year to the Faculty Senate, but this report will contain no information about individual students or faculty members. A brief report of ACC hearings and their outcomes may be published in *The Retriever* or elsewhere, but these reports will not identify the individual students or faculty members involved.
- E. The Office of the Provost will publish the standards of academic integrity required at UMBC.
- F. Faculty members shall maintain academic integrity in their courses, determine whether a student has engaged in academic misconduct, and initiate proper procedures if such a determination is made.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Faculty member** means any individual hired by UMBC to serve as a course instructor whether full or part time, tenure or non tenure track, or visiting.
- B. **Ex officio** means participating, by invitation, in proceedings but without formal voting rights.
- C. **Reporter** means an individual who reports an incident of alleged academic misconduct.
- D. **Cheating** means knowingly using or attempting to use unauthorized material, information, study aids, or another person's work in any academic exercise. For example:
- Working on an assignment with others when the instructor asked for individual work, or
  - Receiving unauthorized help on an assignment, or
  - Getting questions or answers from someone who has already taken a test or exam, or
  - Copying from another student during a test or exam with or without that student's knowledge, or
  - Using unauthorized material (e.g., an instructor's manual) to fulfill an assignment, or
  - Using unauthorized crib notes or cheat sheets during a test or exam, or
  - Using unauthorized aids (e.g., calculator), or
  - Altering a graded test, exam, or paper and submitting it for regrading, or
  - Using a false or forged excuse to obtain an extension on a due date, or
  - Asking someone else to take a test or exam in place of the enrolled student, or
  - Cheating on a test or exam in any other way
- E. **Fabrication** means falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. For example:
- Inventing or falsifying lab or research data, or
  - Inventing or falsifying a bibliography.
- F. **Facilitating academic dishonesty** means intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. For example:
- Writing or providing all or part of a paper, essay, problem set, computer program, or other assignment for another student, or
  - Helping someone else cheat on a test or exam (for example, by permitting someone to copy from a test or exam, or by taking a test or exam for someone else).

- G. **Plagiarism** means knowingly, or by carelessness or negligence, representing as one's own in any academic exercise the words, ideas, works of art or computer-generated information and images of someone else. For example:
- Turning in as your own, work done in whole or in part by someone else, or
  - In a course requiring computer work, copying another person's program rather than creating your own, or
  - Paraphrasing or copying material from a written source, including the Internet, without footnoting or referencing it in a paper, or
  - Copying material from a written source, including the Internet, without using quotation marks to indicate wording that is not yours, or
  - Turning in a paper obtained at least in part from a term paper "mill" or website, or
  - Turning in a paper copied at least in part from another student's paper, whether or not that student is currently taking the same course.
- H. A faculty member may identify in a course syllabus or other written instructions additional forms of academic misconduct and potential penalties. These must be explicitly and unambiguously stated and be consistent with this policy.

#### **IV. PENALTIES FOR ACADEMIC INFRACTIONS**

- A. After consultation with the Chair of the Academic Conduct Committee (if desired or necessary [see section V. B.]), a faculty member may take one or more of the following actions in response to academic misconduct:
1. Adjust the student's grade, including but not limited to an F in the course, a zero on the assignment, and/or a percentage off the final grade, or
  2. Require the completion of additional assignments, or
  3. Give the student a written warning, or
  4. Provide information about forms of assistance from the Counseling Center, the Writing Center, the Learning Resources Center or other resources.
- In all cases, the faculty member shall submit an academic misconduct report to the Academic Conduct Committee.
- B. In cases of egregious misconduct or repeated infractions during the student's course of study at UMBC, a faculty member or the Academic Conduct Committee may recommend more severe penalties. These penalties include but are not limited to:
1. An F in the course with a permanent transcript notation of academic misconduct; or
  2. A recommendation of probation with a permanent transcript notation of academic misconduct; or

3. A recommendation of suspension; or
4. A recommendation of expulsion.

A recommendation of probation with a permanent notation, suspension, or expulsion requires the consideration and concurrence of the Academic Conduct Committee and the Committee's recommendation to the Provost or, in the case of expulsion, to the President.

- C. If a student commits academic misconduct in a course in which he or she is not currently enrolled (e.g., a student takes an exam or does homework for another student not in his or her class), the faculty member in whose course the misconduct occurred shall submit an academic misconduct report to the Academic Conduct Committee. The ACC will recommend an appropriate penalty, which can range from a written warning to probation with a permanent notation of academic misconduct on his or her transcript, or that the student be suspended or expelled.
- D. Occasionally, academic misconduct may not be discovered or reported until after the student has completed the course in which the misconduct is alleged to have occurred. In these cases, the Academic Conduct Committee may recommend to the Provost the imposition of a retroactive penalty. If the penalty involves the revocation of an academic degree already awarded, the ACC will make its recommendation to the President.
- E. The Provost may impose a penalty of probation with a permanent notation on the transcript or suspension for very serious violations of the Undergraduate Student Academic Conduct Policy if so recommended by the Academic Conduct Committee. A sanction of suspension for academic misconduct includes a permanent notation on the student's transcript and terminates the student's status as an enrolled student for one or more semesters.
- F. The President may expel a student upon the recommendation of the Academic Conduct Committee. The sanction of expulsion permanently terminates a student's status as an enrolled student. It includes a permanent notation on the student's transcript that the expulsion was for academic misconduct, and prohibits the student's further matriculation at a University System of Maryland institution.

## **V. PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING INCIDENTS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

- A. Faculty members have the right and responsibility to deal directly with any case of academic misconduct that arises in their course.
- B. In every case, a faculty member shall report the incident to the Academic Conduct Committee. Submission of an academic misconduct report to the Academic Conduct Committee provides a formal record of the infraction and resolution, which helps to identify repeat offenders and infractions that may be endemic to a particular course or department. Before filing the report, the faculty member may contact the chair of the

Academic Conduct Committee for a collaborative assessment of the student's alleged misconduct and the faculty member's options. If the proposed penalty involves more than a grade adjustment (e.g., an F with a permanent notation on the transcript), prior consultation with the ACC chair is required. If, after receiving a misconduct report, the chair has questions or concerns, the chair may contact the faculty member. If the ACC chair finds that a student reported for academic misconduct has been cited in the past, the chair may report this fact to the faculty member filing the most recent report and recommend that a more severe penalty be imposed.

Instances of academic misconduct may be reported in the following ways:

1. A faculty member may assert that an act of academic misconduct has occurred based upon direct observation of student behavior, by comparing the contents of an assignment with that submitted by another student, by reviewing notated sources or references, or by other reasonable means or methods.
2. A Grader, Laboratory Assistant or Teaching Assistant may assert that academic misconduct has occurred. Details of the alleged incident shall be reported to the faculty member academically responsible for the course, or to the course supervisor, or to the course coordinator, as applicable.
3. A student may assert that academic misconduct has occurred. The student should notify the relevant faculty member and/or seek the advice of the department chair if necessary.
4. Administrators or staff members receiving reports or having knowledge of academic misconduct should notify the Chair of the Academic Conduct Committee.
5. Those reporting and those receiving reports of academic misconduct shall treat the incidents and their resolutions as confidential matters. Individuals reporting academic misconduct may if they wish discuss the matter with the relevant department chair without violating confidentiality.
6. Students have the right to respond to any accusation of academic misconduct. Students may:
  - a. Seek redress directly from the faculty member who has made the accusation or imposed a grading or other penalty, or
  - b. Appeal to the Academic Conduct Committee if:
    - i. The student provides evidence that the faculty member has made the charge of misconduct in error or in a biased or capricious manner, and /or
    - ii. There were procedural irregularities, and/or
    - iii. The recommended penalty is an F with a permanent notation on the transcript, or probation with a permanent notation on the transcript, or suspension, or expulsion.

- C. Dissatisfaction with a grade assigned for academic misconduct is not grounds for an appeal to the Academic Conduct Committee. A student may seek redress from the faculty member who assigned the grade. If similarly situated students assert that they received disparate or unfair grading from the same faculty member for academic misconduct, they should contact the Campus Grade Review Panel as described in the UMBC Policy for Review of Arbitrary and Capricious Grading in Undergraduate Courses.

## **VI. REPORTING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

- A. After consulting with the Academic Conduct Committee Chair, if desired or necessary, to discuss the nature of the alleged infraction and possible appropriate penalties, the faculty member shall notify the student of the alleged infraction, describe the proposed resolution, and invite the student for a meeting to discuss the issue. In cases where the recommended penalty involves more than a grade adjustment (e.g., an F with a permanent notation on the transcript that the grade was due to academic misconduct), the faculty member may consider notifying the student via registered or certified mail.
- B. The faculty member will then meet with the student to discuss the alleged infraction, explain the proposed resolution, and offer the student the opportunity to provide an explanation.
- C. After the meeting, or should the student not make himself or herself available for a meeting, the faculty member will complete the Academic Misconduct Report Form and provide it to the Chair of the Academic Conduct Committee and the student. This report must be issued even if the faculty member imposes no penalty. The copy sent to the ACC should include copies of the course syllabus and all documentary evidence (assignment sheets, laboratory reports, cheat sheets, etc.) relied upon by the reporter. The faculty member shall preserve all originals.
- D. No report should be filed if the faculty member finds that no misconduct occurred.
- E. If the penalty imposed by the faculty member is an F in the course, the Chair of the ACC will notify the Registrar. The Registrar shall assure that the student does not drop the course in question or withdraw from the university to avoid a grade of F or a more severe penalty. If the student has already done so, the Registrar will reinstate the student in the course.
- F. Students facing penalties may continue attending classes and complete all remaining academic exercises during the Committee's review or until the case is closed. Students who disrupt any university activity as described in Article V. Section 9 of the UMBC Student Conduct Code should be referred to the Director of Judicial Affairs for appropriate administrative action.

- G. A case may be closed with implementation of the penalty assigned by the faculty member if a student does not appeal to the Academic Conduct Committee and the penalty does not require administrative approval; probation with a permanent notation on the transcript, suspension, and expulsion require the ACC's recommendation to the Provost or the President.

## **VII. REQUESTING A HEARING**

- A. When a report of academic misconduct is received, the Chair of the ACC will notify the student, refer the student to the Undergraduate Student Academic Conduct Policy, and explain the circumstances under which a student is entitled to request a hearing before the ACC (as set forth in Section V. B. 6b, above). If the proposed penalty involves a permanent notation on the student's transcript, the Chair will attempt to be sure that the student understands the penalty and his/her right to request a hearing. The Chair will ask the student to indicate in writing whether or not he/she requests a hearing.
- B. Students have fifteen university working days after notification to request a hearing. A request in writing to the Chair of the Academic Conduct Committee must state the reasons for the appeal and the remedy sought.
- C. Dissatisfaction with a grade assigned as a result of misconduct is not grounds for an appeal to the Academic Conduct Committee.
- D. After hearing the appeal the Academic Conduct Committee may:
  - 1. Decide that the charge of misconduct was made in error and that no charge appear on the student's record, or
  - 2. Find that the circumstances do not justify the penalty that has been requested and recommend that a lesser penalty be imposed, or
  - 3. Find that the charge and penalty are appropriate, or
  - 4. Find that the student has committed multiple acts of academic misconduct and recommend that a more severe penalty be imposed.

## **VIII. HEARING PROCEDURE**

- A. The Chair will schedule a hearing typically within sixty days of the student's notification.
- B. Prior to the hearing the Academic Conduct Committee Chair will compile the charges, documentary or evidentiary materials or witness accounts provided by the student and the faculty member. Copies will be provided to Academic Conduct Committee members, the faculty member and the student. These materials may include:
  - 1. A statement from the faculty member describing the alleged infraction and proposed penalty, and

2. The student's reasons for requesting a hearing and the remedy sought, and
  3. Any statement, documents, or information provided by witnesses, and
  4. Any additional pertinent information requested by the faculty member, the student, or ACC members.
- C. The Chair of the Academic Conduct Committee will conduct the hearing. Either the Chair or the parties may call witnesses, and ACC members may question any of the parties or witnesses during the hearing.
- D. The Chair of the ACC may invite representatives from the offices of the relevant Dean and the Vice President for Student Affairs to participate ex officio in the hearing.
- E. An advisor for the student may attend the hearing but will not be allowed to address the Committee.
- F. Conduct of the hearing:
1. The faculty member shall present a case and offer evidence and /or witnesses; and then
  2. The student shall present a case by offering responses to the evidence and testimony, by questioning the faculty member, the Chair of the ACC and any witnesses, and/or by offering the student's witnesses and evidence; and then
  3. The faculty member may respond to the student's case and witnesses; and then
  4. The student may present final arguments or statements.
- G. ACC members shall deliberate in a closed session as soon as possible after the hearing's conclusion.
- H. A majority of the ACC members (fifty per cent, plus one) deliberating must be persuaded by convincing evidence of wrongdoing to take action.
- I. The ACC Chair shall report the Committee's findings and decision to the student, faculty member, Provost, and, if applicable, the Registrar or other university official for implementation of any penalty.
- J. Except for sanctions requiring approval of the Provost or the President (i.e., probation with a permanent notation on the transcript, suspension, or expulsion), the Academic Conduct Committee's determination is final, and not subject to appeal within the university system on grounds related to academic conduct. If the Committee finds that the sanction of probation with a permanent notation or suspension is warranted, it will recommend that sanction to the Provost for consideration. If the Committee finds that the sanction of expulsion is warranted, it will recommend that sanction to the President of UMBC for consideration.

K. When a hearing has been initiated during summer vacation or between semesters, a graduating senior may:

1. Wait until the next regular semester for a hearing before the full committee, or
2. Have a hearing conducted by a committee consisting of the Chair of the Academic Conduct Committee, a representative of the Provost's office, and a representative from the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. If the Chair of the Academic Conduct Committee is not available, a suitable faculty member will be appointed by the Provost.