**Academic Integrity Policy**

1. **General**

This policy addresses academic integrity violations of undergraduate and graduate students.

Students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Western Carolina University (WCU) strive to achieve the highest standards of scholarship and integrity. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offense because it threatens the quality of scholarship and undermines the integrity of the community. While academic in scope, any violation of this policy is by nature, a violation of the Western Carolina University Code of Student Conduct (Code). The Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) shall apply the Code pursuant to policy and procedure.

Instructors have the right to determine the appropriate academic sanction(s) for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy within their courses, up to and including a final grade of “F” in the course.

Any violation of this Academic Integrity Policy, including a first offense, may place the student in jeopardy of suspension from the university, as such; a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy shall be deemed a “Serious Violation” as defined by the Code. Disciplinary records for any act of academic dishonesty are retained by the DSCE for at least eight (8) years from the date of final adjudication (per the Code, Section XX). These records are available to prospective employers and other educational institutions in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations. Students may inspect their conduct files in accordance with University Policy #74 – Records Requests.

1. **Definitions**

**Cheating** - Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.  **Fabrication** – Creating and/or falsifying information or citation in any academic exercise. **Plagiarism** - Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise.

**Facilitation** - Helping or attempting to help someone to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in any academic exercise (e.g. allowing another to copy information during an examination)

1. **Academic Integrity Board**

The Academic Integrity Board and/or Graduate Academic Integrity Board (collectively referred to as the “Hearing Board”) will consist of no less than (1) student and (2) instructors. All Hearing Board members must be trained by the DSCE prior to service in an Academic Integrity Hearing. The Hearing Board will be chaired by a WCU instructor. Each college dean will appoint two (2) instructors from his/her college to comprise the pool of faculty hearing board members. The DSCE shall select an instructor from the pool of faculty hearing board members to staff the Hearing Board. The DSCE shall select the student from an approved pool to staff the Hearing Board.

1. **Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Dishonesty Process:**
2. Within five (5) days of the instructor’s knowledge of the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the instructor will inform his/her department head (or Associate Dean of the Graduate School as applicable) in writing of the allegation and proposed sanction(s) and shall complete an Academic Integrity Violation Form (AIV Form).
3. Within ten (10) days of the instructor’s knowledge of the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the instructor will inform the student of the allegation, including proposed sanctions, in writing and shall provide the student with a copy of the AIV Form. The instructor will inform the student that he/she may request a meeting[[1]](#footnote-1) with the instructor to discuss the allegation. If the student does not request a meeting with the instructor within five (5) days of the written allegation and proposed sanction(s), the student shall be deemed to have mutually resolved the allegation and shall be bound by the sanction and not subject to further review and/or appeal including any hearing before the Hearing Board.
4. Within five (5) days of the meeting with the instructor, the student shall either dispute the allegation(s) and proposed sanction(s) from the instructor or shall accept the allegation(s) and proposed sanction(s). No action by the student within five (5) days of the meeting shall constitute a waiver of the student’s rights pursuant to this Academic Integrity Policy and the Code. If the student disputes the allegation(s), the student shall request a hearing before the Hearing Board. In all cases, the instructor shall submit a copy of any and all documentation in support of the allegation(s) and sanction(s) to the DSCE.
5. Upon receipt of the AIV Form (and supporting documentation) and/or a hearing request, the DSCE will proceed as described in Section XIII of the Code (Section XIII). The summons meeting, as described in Section XIII, shall be considered a Hearing Orientation Meeting for allegations of violation of this Academic Integrity Policy. If the student – now the Respondent - appears at the Hearing Orientation Meeting, a hearing date will be scheduled in compliance with hearing procedures set forth in the Code (excluding the composition of the Hearing Board). If the Respondent does not appear at the Hearing Orientation meeting, the meeting may be held in absentia and a hearing date will be set as specified by the Code. The date of the hearing will not be fewer than ten (10) days after the Hearing Orientation Meeting. The Respondent will be notified of the hearing date, time, and location. If the Respondent fails to appear at the hearing, it may be held in absentia pursuant to Section XIII and Section XVII of the Code. Failure to receive the notifications and respond will not constitute grounds for dismissal of charges, cancellation or negation of a hearing before a Hearing Board, or appeal of findings or sanctions. The Respondent can waive minimum notice of a hearing; however, extensions are at the sole discretion of the DSCE.

The Respondent should remain enrolled in the course related to the case until all hearing timelines, notifications, and appeals have been completed.

Hearings shall be conducted by the Hearing Board pursuant to the procedure specified in the Code or as otherwise noted in this Academic Integrity Policy.

1. Hearing Board Outcomes:
   1. A decision by the Hearing Board on responsibility or non-responsibility for the alleged violation(s) shall be made in private and shall be made by a majority vote, based solely on the information presented at the hearing.
   2. A finding of responsibility on any charge shall be followed by a confirmation of the sanctions levied by the instructor or a determination of appropriate sanction(s) to replace the sanctions levied by the instructor. The prior history of the Respondent, with respect to academic integrity and/or this Academic Integrity Policy may be considered in determining the appropriate sanction(s).
   3. After private deliberation, the Hearing Body will announce their decision to the Respondent. If the Hearing Body determines that expulsion is an appropriate sanction, a recommendation to that effect will be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for a final administrative decision.
   4. The final outcome(s) of the hearing must be transmitted to the Respondent in writing within ten (10) days of the hearing. This decision letter must contain a brief summary of the information upon which the decision is based, a summary of the hearing board’s findings, all sanctions imposed, and it shall specify appeal rights, including the time in which to appeal and the permitted grounds for the appeal.
2. Upon final resolution of a case involving suspension or expulsion, the DSCE will inform the appropriate dean, department head (Graduate Program Director), the Office of the Provost (Division of Student Success), and the administrator in the Advising Center who is responsible for University Withdrawals of the sanction(s). Any sanction of suspension or expulsion will affect the respondent’s course completion record.
3. **Appeal:**

A Respondent who has been found to be in violation of this Academic Integrity Policy by Hearing Board, pursuant to Section III.4 above, shall have the right to appeal to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, or designee.

A formal notice of appeal must be in writing and must be delivered to the appellate body within five (5) days after the party’s receipt of the University's final administrative decision.

Appeals must be limited to the following grounds:

1. a violation of due process or
2. a material deviation from Substantive and Procedural Standards by the UNC Board of Governors, as set forth in the UNC Policy Manual 700.4.1.

If the Respondent chooses to appeal, they should remain enrolled in the course related to the case until all appellate timelines have been completed.   
  
Respondents are not expected to complete any assigned sanctions during this process until they have exhausted their appellate process and the case is complete.

1. **Sanctions**

The Hearing Board may impose any sanction(s) as outlined in Article VIII of the Code, in addition to any academic sanctions as it deems appropriate. Respondents given a sanction of probation for a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy will remain on probation at WCU until graduation. In the event the Hearing Board assigns additional educational sanctions which require review[[2]](#footnote-2), the chair of the Hearing Board will determine if the sanction is satisfactory. These additional educational sanctions are independent from course work and do not have any bearing on a Respondent’s evaluative grade.

1. **Forms:**

Academic Integrity Violation Form

1. If the student is part of a distance learning program and does not have face-to-face interaction with the instructor, the meeting may take place over the phone or through other forms of communication technology (Blackboard, GoToMeeting software, Skype), as long as the meeting can be and is documented by the parties participating in the meeting. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please see Article VIII of the Code for more information. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)