Academic Integrity Policy

Source Committee: Student Affairs Committee

Unit(s) Responsible for Implementation: Faculty, Departments, Colleges, Office of Student Conduct, Academic Senate, Academic Integrity Review Committee (a new committee)

History

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Rationale

Academic honesty is essential to the University’s dedication to intellectual, creative, and personal development. Honestly representing one’s own words, ideas, and ingenuity, while honoring and respecting the work of others, is foundational for learning, equity, and innovation. Together we can increase awareness of academic integrity, cultivate skills to realize it, and actively sustain practices to achieve it within our community. This policy aims to achieve these vital goals.

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I. Defining Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to intellectual growth, creativity, and equity. Honestly representing one’s own ideas and labor, while honoring and respecting the work of others is foundational for learning. San Francisco State University prepares its students to become productive and ethical members of the community and academic integrity is integral to those processes.

All forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, deceit, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, unauthorized altering of records or submitting false documents, unauthorized collaboration, unauthorized submission of work previously given credit, and other forms of academic misconduct are violations of the San Francisco State Code of Conduct (https://conduct.sfsu.edu/). In accordance with EO 1098 (https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/8453518/latest/), each suspected instance of academic dishonesty is to be reported to the Office of Student Conduct using their documented reporting procedures. When academic integrity violations occur, having students take responsibility for their behavior and learning from it are essential steps in addressing misconduct.

II. Upholding Academic Integrity Standards

Faculty should model academic integrity and make it a key component of instruction. Faculty at San Francisco State University are expected to promote academic integrity in many ways, including

- demonstrating it in their own work
- facilitating students’ learning about academic integrity and the instructor’s expectations regarding it
- providing educational experiences which promote academic integrity
- describing the relevance of academic integrity to the mission and core values of our university
- holding students responsible for their own academic integrity

Faculty are encouraged to provide the following statement, or a similar one, to students at the beginning of the semester:

Academic integrity, the ethical presentation of one’s own work in accordance with the rules established for this class, is required. Instances of academic misconduct will be reported to the College in which the course is housed, the Division of Graduate Studies (if a graduate student), and the Office of Student Conduct with the report being kept in those offices until a student earns his/her degree. Any instances of cheating, deceit, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, unauthorized altering of records or submitting false documents, unauthorized collaboration, unauthorized submission of work previously given credit, or other forms of academic misconduct will be assigned a grade penalty, likely an F or a grade of zero. Failing one or more assignments or examinations for reasons of academic integrity violations may result in a final class grade of F. Students may not withdraw from classes in which they have committed academic misconduct. Consequences for violations of academic integrity may exceed an F on the assignment, examination, or class as determined by the Academic Integrity Review Committee (see section on sanctions below).

Members of our academic community have a responsibility to develop an awareness of academic integrity, to cultivate skills to realize honesty in academic and community work, and to sustain actively academic honor as a core value of our community. Students are expected to engage in behaviors that reflect well upon the university. In addition to attending to one’s own actions, the Standards for Student Conduct require that students who witness academic dishonesty notify their faculty/instructor, department chair, or the Office of Student Conduct. Supporting academic integrity enhances the reputation of the University and the value attributed to degrees awarded by the University.

III. Managing Academic Integrity Violations

Reporting Violations
For instances of suspected academic dishonesty on submitted work, the instructor of record for a class, or a relevant academic leader (e.g. Chair of a research or creative work competition) for instances outside of a class, may initiate adjudicating processes by completing a Report of Suspected Academic Integrity Violation. Before the completion of a Report of Suspected Academic Integrity Violation, the instructor or academic leader should discuss the violation with the reported student, re-enforce the importance of academic integrity, and explain the consequences of a violation.

A Report of Suspected Academic Integrity Violation shall include the accusation of an academic integrity violation, evidence supporting the accusation, a description of actions already taken, the response of the reported student if any, a report of any grade implications, and recommended additional sanctions, if any beyond grade related sanctions.

The Standards for Student Conduct require that students who witness academic dishonesty notify any of the following individuals: an instructor, the Chair or Director of the Department/School and College Dean or Designee where the violation occurred, the Division of Graduate Studies (if a graduate student), or the Office of Student Conduct.

Upon receiving a report from a student, the receiving party shall discuss incident with the instructor who can discuss the incident with the student in question, to determine if a Report of Suspected Academic Integrity Violation should be filed.

Communication

Upon receiving a Report of Suspected Academic Integrity Violation, the Office of Student Conduct will inform the student that a report has been filed, that the office considers a violation of academic integrity to be a serious matter, and that the report will be kept in a secure file until the student graduates. Reports shall be retained by the Office of Student Conduct. The student shall receive a copy of any a Report of Suspected Academic Integrity Violations submitted from the Office of Student Conduct. The student will also be informed how to contest the claims made in the report, including time limits, if the student wishes to do so. The student may file a written response to the report with the Office of Student Conduct. If the student does not submit a written challenge to the assigned grade for work suspected to be academically dishonest or file a grade appeal following Academic Senate $S19-230 policy, the grade on the suspected work will stand.

Faculty Actions & Consequences

As part of their grading responsibilities, and dependent on how substantial the academic integrity violation is, the instructor of record may reduce a student’s grade or assign an F to work associated with the violation and/or an F in class. Disputes about these grades will be evaluated through the grade appeal process specified in the Academic Senate Policy on grade appeals (S$19-230). As part of their academic leader responsibilities, a leader may disqualify a student from a research or creative work competition if a student violates academic integrity.

Other types of sanctions (e.g., warning letter, discipline or administrative probation, suspension, removal from class, removal or being barred from a major/minor, expulsion) will be evaluated by the Academic Integrity Review Committee and the procedures of the Office of Student Conduct (see below). Faculty may not drop or remove a student from class, because of one or more academic integrity violations. Only the Academic Integrity Review Committee and the Manager of Student Rights and Responsibilities from the Office of Student Conduct can recommend removal from a class or any other sanctions beyond grades associated with classes.

The most common sanctions for violating academic integrity are a reduction in the grade assigned or a grade of F on an assignment or examination, or in more serious cases, an F as a final grade in the class. If a student considers the claim of an academic integrity violation to be inaccurate or the grading sanction to be too severe, the student may use the Academic Senate’s grade appeal process to seek a remedy regarding a grade. Instructors may not impose any sanctions other than grades. Academic leaders may not impose any sanctions other than removal from a competition.

In the case of severe violations, repeat offenders, or violations that don’t occur in classes or student competitions, recommendations for additional sanctions may be referred to the Manager of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Additional sanctions could include suspension, removal from a class, removal from a specific major, expulsion, or other appropriate actions. The Manager will make use of a subcommittee of the Academic Integrity Review Committee to make recommendations regarding sanctions beyond grades. No additional sanctions can be imposed before the recommendations of the Academic Integrity Review Committee have been reviewed and affirmed or changed by the University President or Designee.

Students Rights

Students have the right to be informed of the charges and nature of the evidence supporting the charges and to have a meeting with the faculty member, academic leader, Office of Student Conduct, or other decision makers. Students who are contesting claims of academic integrity violations about them need to file their challenge within twenty working days of being informed of a claim. Students can submit statements and evidence on their behalf during an investigation or meeting.

Students have a right to expedient reviews of contested claims; contested claims shall be adjudicated by the grade appeal process or the Academic Integrity Review Committee within 30 working days of a student contesting a claim in writing.
FERPA rights protect the student from having information about accusations and sanctions being shared outside of official university procedures and designated university personnel.

Students have the right to appeal any decision based on the traditional university channels, except for the President’s decision which is final.

Student Actions

If a student contests a claim of academic integrity violation related to a grade on an assignment or examination or the final grade for the class, a grade of RD (report delay) will be recorded for the class until the matter is resolved. As RD grades can keep a student from making progress (e.g., when the course is a prerequisite for another course) and/or graduating, efforts will be made to resolve the matter quickly by using either the grade appeal process or a review by the Academic Integrity Review Committee, which ever will be most expedient.

If a student does not contest the accusation of an academic integrity violation and the resulting grade or removal from a competition, the matter will end there unless the student had committed prior violations and/or the Manager of Student Rights and Responsibilities in the Office of Student Conduct concludes that additional actions are warranted. If the Manager thinks additional sanctions are potentially warranted, the Manager will meet with the student to discuss additional sanctions. If additional sanctions are agreed upon by the Manager and the student, they will be enacted. If sanctions other than grades are contested, the Manager will refer the matter to the Academic Integrity Review Committee for a review and recommendation.

III. Academic Integrity Review Committee

The Office of Student Conduct has resources to help faculty deal with instances of academic dishonesty (http://conduct.sfsu.edu/faculty). In instances where it becomes necessary for a formal review to take place, an Academic Integrity Review Committee will be convened to review cases. An Academic Integrity Review Committee will be created by the Academic Senate with one elected representative from each of the following units:

- College of Ethnic Studies
- College of Health and Social Sciences
- College of Liberal & Creative Arts
- College of Science and Engineering
- Division of Graduate Studies
- Graduate College of Education
- Lam Family College of Business
- Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
- University Library

Representatives will serve two-year terms and may be elected for additional terms.

All reports of an academic integrity violation in which the reported student challenges the appropriateness of sanctions other than grades will be submitted to the Manager of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Manager will refer the matter to a subcommittee of three members of the Academic Integrity Review Committee and the Associated Student’s representative on that committee who are not affiliated with the College or unit where the alleged violation occurred. This appointed subcommittee will adjudicate any appeals regarding accusations of academic integrity violations and recommended sanctions for those violations.

The subcommittee will receive all documents submitted to the Manager of Student Rights and Responsibilities and they will interview the reported student and the claimant submitting the Report of Suspected Academic Integrity Violation. They will interview the reported student and the claimant, and may request that witnesses be interviewed as well. The subcommittee may seek additional information from others.
Decisions by the subcommittee on individual cases will be communicated to the reported student, the claimant, the Chair/Director, the College Dean or Designee, and the Manager of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Manager of Student Rights and Responsibilities will forward the recommendations of the subcommittee to the University President or Designee for a final decision.

IV. Dissemination of Information

When a Report of Suspected Academic Integrity Violation remains uncontested or is upheld upon appeal, the student may not withdraw from the class without the express permission from the instructor. Withdrawals cannot take place in an effort to avoid academic or conduct outcome. The reports will be kept in secure locations and not shared with others unless part of university official business. Uncontested and affirmed reports of academic integrity violations will be kept by those receiving them until the student earns a degree as noted on their transcript. The student needs to inform those holding the records that they have graduated for the record to be removed.

College Deans or their Designees will include in their annual grade-appeal report information about appeals related to academic integrity. These reports are to be submitted to the Provost. The Provost will provide the Academic Senate a summary of these College reports. The Manager of Student Rights and Responsibilities will provide an annual report to the University President and Academic Senate Chair about academic integrity reports submit to that office and the activities of the Academic Integrity Review Committee for that academic year. None of these reports will contain names or other identifying information for those involved. The Academic Senate Chair will share these reports with the Academic Senate who may then decide if any policy changes are warranted.

Signed Memo:
S22-298 memo