

Academic Dishonesty by Students

a. Definitions:

- i) Academic dishonesty includes all forms of unethical or illegal behavior which affects a student's academic standing, including, but not limited to, cheating on exams, plagiarism, forgery of academic documents, falsification of information on academic documents, or unauthorized access to computer files containing academic information.
- ii) Plagiarism is a special kind of cheating which often is poorly understood. It is defined as follows: Plagiarism is the conscious presentation of someone else's ideas, words, or material as one's own, without properly indicating by footnote or some other appropriate form of citation the source or origin of the material. Other author's ideas, interpretations, and words are their personal and legal property. In the event that one wishes to use such material, one is required to give full credit to the original source. This also includes material that is paraphrased from another source or person.

Plagiarism may be avoided by acknowledging, through some standard procedure, the sources for the ideas and interpretations as well as quoted phrases, sentences, or paragraphs. No matter the source of material used, whether quoted or paraphrased, acknowledgment of the source is required. Failure to give credit is plagiarism.

b. Policy Statement on Academic Dishonesty by Students

- i) Honesty in academic matters must be of vital concern to all members of the College community. Academic fraud undermines our every purpose, for, in learning, dishonest methods always produce hollow accomplishments.
- ii) The faculty has a direct responsibility for honesty in all learning endeavors. This responsibility focuses upon helping each student develop a mature academic integrity. For example, discussing the research mores for a given field and genuine displays of intellectual honesty are invaluable in defining academic integrity at the College level.
- iii) Sometimes students disobey the fundamental rules by cheating on exams, stealing work from peers, submitting spurious papers, and similar actions. Faculty should face these infractions in a deliberate manner that recognizes the gravity of the infraction and encourages the student towards honesty. In such instances, the student is not helped by pretending the incident did not occur, by embarrassment over juvenile behavior, or by angry indignation. Rather, the student and community are best served by a gathering and weighing of evidence, a calm confrontation with those involved, sensitivity toward unusual circumstances, and an awareness of the right of the accused to the due process offered by the Academic Standards Committee.

c. Procedures for Handling Allegations of Academic Dishonesty

i) Introduction

(1) To Whom Academic Dishonesty Concerns are Addressed

The Provost (hereafter referred to as the "Vice President") and the Academic Standards Committee (hereafter referred to as the "ASC") are responsible for promoting academic honesty, supporting the faculty in

their attempts to deal with dishonesty in the classroom, enforcing the provisions of the Policy Statement on Academic Dishonesty by Students, and acting on violations of that Policy. The Vice-Chair of the ASC or his/her designee (hereafter referred to collectively as “Vice-Chair”), will serve as the primary agent for the Vice President and the ASC in initiating actions pursuant to these responsibilities.

(2) Role of Faculty

The faculty bears primary responsibility for detecting and penalizing academic dishonesty. When an Instructor suspects dishonesty, he/she should gather all the relevant evidence and make a reasonable attempt to contact and interview the students involved. If the preponderance of evidence suggests that dishonesty has occurred, the Instructor may levy an academic penalty. An academic penalty may range from a simple reprimand, through a lowered or failing grade on the assignment, up to, and including, failing the course, as the Instructor deems appropriate. Upon assessment of an academic penalty, the Instructor should send a memorandum to the Vice President, or designee, describing the offense, outlining the action he/she took to investigate, and detailing the penalty (if any) assessed against the student(s). Copies of all the relevant evidence should accompany the memorandum. This material will be included in the file described below. If, in the judgment of the Instructor, the dishonest act may be serious enough to warrant additional penalties beyond that which an Instructor can assign (such as the sanctions outlined in Subsection d., “Sanctions” below), he/she may request review by the ASC.

(3) Role of Academic Community

Other members of the academic community may also refer suspected cases of dishonesty to the Provost or designee. These allegations will be investigated by the Vice-Chair and penalties assigned by the ASC.

(4) Filing of Documentation

A permanent file of cases of academic dishonesty (hereafter referred to as the “File”) is maintained in the Office of the Vice President. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to submit to the File all documented cases of dishonesty involving students in their classes. The student will be notified by certified mail of any case of academic dishonesty that is referred to the Vice President or designee. This letter will include the name of the Instructor and the course in which the dishonesty occurred. A copy of these procedures (Section 1, “Academic Dishonesty by Students”) will be attached. The student has 30 days from the postmarked date of this letter to dispute the allegations of academic dishonesty. If the allegations are undisputed or if the allegations are unsuccessfully disputed, within 30 days s/he must schedule an appointment with the Vice President or designee to discuss the seriousness of the charge. (The 30 days will be calculated from the postmarked date on the certified letter from the ASC Vice President or designee. Failure to comply will result in (a) an academic hold to prevent release of the student transcript and (b) referral to the Coordinator of Judicial Affairs or designee. The File is confidential, and

is accessible only to the Vice President or designee, the Vice-Chair of the ASC or their designees. The material is also accessible to the student, though any reference to other student(s) will be redacted to protect their privacy. The purpose of the File is to allow the Vice-Chair access to evidence in case the student wishes to dispute the allegations (Paragraph ii), “Procedure if Student Disputes Allegation of Dishonesty” below) and to initiate action in the case of second offenses (Paragraph iii), “Procedure to Assess Further Penalties” below). When students graduate, material in the File will be sealed and marked “Confidential—Not To Be Opened Except Upon Request of Legal Counsel”. (Revised Mar 5, 2007)

ii) Procedure if Student Disputes Allegation of Dishonesty

To ensure due process for students accused of, and/or penalized for, academic dishonesty, the following procedure will be followed if the student chooses to dispute the allegation.

(1) Continued Class Participation

The student will be allowed to continue to attend and participate in class pending resolution

(2) Review File

The Vice-Chair will immediately review all materials submitted to the File by the Instructor. The Vice-Chair may contact the faculty member for additional information if necessary.

(3) Presentation of Charges

The Vice-Chair will present the written charges and the evidence on which they were based to the student in person, at which time the process will be explained and possible outcomes discussed. At this time, the student may place additional information in the File.

(4) Meeting of the Academic Standards Committee

The Vice-Chair will convene a meeting of the ASC to hear the student’s case and review the evidence. The student will be notified by certified mail of the time and place of the meeting. The scheduling of the meeting will be designed to allow at least seven (7) calendar days from the date of the first attempted delivery of the letter for the student to prepare for the hearing, unless the student waives this right. If the hearing date would fall between regularly scheduled terms, it will be delayed until the beginning of the next term, unless the student requests an earlier hearing time.

(5) Failure to Appear

Failure by the student to appear for the scheduled hearing before the Academic Standards Committee will result in action by the Academic Standards Committee based on the evidence available in the File.

(6) Hearing Protocol

In the hearing, the student will have the opportunity to present witnesses and evidence in his/her behalf and to hear and question those presenting

evidence or testimony supporting the charges. The meeting will be closed to the public, with the exception of witnesses who are called in by the Vice-Chair or the student.

(7) Recording of Meeting

The meeting will be tape-recorded and a staff secretary will take notes.

(8) Rules of Hearing

Conformity to technical rules of judicial procedure is not required. The Committee may make any procedural rulings necessary to expedite the hearing, to exclude unreliable or prejudicial evidence, and to safeguard the confidentiality of statements and evidence given at the hearing. The Vice-Chair will explain the procedures to be followed and purposes of the hearing at the beginning of the meeting.

(9) Possible Attendees:

The student may have an advisor present of his/her choice. This advisor may consult with the student but may not take any other active role in the proceedings.

(10) Failure to Comply with Procedures/Rulings

The Vice-Chair may expel from the hearing any person who refuses to comply with the procedures or rulings of the Vice-Chair, including the student.

(11) Evaluation and Recommendation

Following the review of the evidence and hearing the witnesses, the student will leave. The ASC will evaluate the evidence and decide, by majority vote of those present, whether the evidence supports or fails to support the allegations. The Vice-Chair shall not participate in the hearing as a voting member of the Committee, but all other members present must vote "yea" or "nay." If the preponderance of the evidence supports the allegations of dishonesty, the ASC will uphold the charges and penalties. If the evidence appears inconclusive, the ASC will recommend dismissal of the charges and penalties. The ASC cannot compel the Instructor to change any penalty he/she may have assessed; it can only recommend such changes.

(12) Communication of Decision

The decision of the ASC will be communicated in writing to the student and faculty member within seven (7) days.

(13) Student Appeal

Within seven (7) days of receipt of the decision or ten (10) days after mailing, whichever is longer, the student may appeal the decision of the Committee to the Vice President or designee (see Subsection e, "Procedure for Student Appeal of the Decision by the ASC").

iii) Procedure to assess further penalties

If the faculty member has recommended ASC review, or in the case of repeated offenses, the ASC may initiate a penalty hearing as follows.

(1) Initiate a Hearing

The Vice-Chair will initiate a hearing as described in paragraph ii), “Procedure if Student Disputes Allegation of Dishonesty” above, to determine the validity of the charges.

(2) First Offense

In the case of a first offense, if the allegations are supported, the members present must decide, by majority vote, if the offense is serious enough to warrant further penalty. If so, the ASC may impose one of the sanctions described below (Subsection d, “Sanctions”).

(3) Repeated Offense

In the case of a repeated offense, if the allegations are supported, the ASC will impose one of the sanctions described below (Subsection d, “Sanctions”).

(4) Communication of Decision

The decision of the ASC will be communicated in writing to the student within seven (7) days.

(5) Student Appeal

Within seven (7) days of receipt of the decision, or ten (10) days after mailing, whichever is longer, the student may appeal the decision of the Committee to the Vice President or designee (see Subsection e, “Procedure for Student Appeal of the Decision by the ASC” below).

d. Sanctions

- i) Probation: the postponement of a major sanction (suspension or dismissal) based on the student’s meeting certain conditions specified in the letter. If the student does not meet the conditions of the probation or is found to have participated in another act of academic dishonesty, the Vice President or designee may summarily impose the postponed sanction.
- ii) Suspension: the involuntary separation of the student from Fort Lewis College for a period not less than the remainder of the current trimester nor more than two calendar years. Readmission to Fort Lewis College is not automatic. At the expiration of the suspension period, the student must contact the Office of Admission to determine the procedure for readmission to the College. The permanent record of a student suspended for academic dishonesty shall include the notation “Suspended for Academic Dishonesty” and include the duration of the suspension.
- iii) Dismissal: The involuntary permanent separation of the student from Fort Lewis College. The permanent record of a student dismissed for academic dishonesty shall include the notation “Dismissed for Academic Dishonesty”.

e. Procedure for Student Appeal of the Decision by the ASC:

i) Definition of Appeal

An appeal is a request made by the student to have the Vice President or designee review a decision or disciplinary action by the Academic Standards Committee.

ii) Time Period of Appeal

The request for an appeal must be submitted in writing to the Vice President or designee within seven (7) days of delivery, or ten (10) days after mailing, to the student of the written decision of the ASC. This period may be extended at the discretion of the Vice President or designee.

iii) Material Consideration and Possible Decisions

All records of the Committee hearing will be provided to the Vice President or designee. The Vice President or designee will consider only material and testimonial evidence considered by the Committee and its Vice-Chair. The Vice President or designee may allow an oral presentation by the student. The Vice President or designee may affirm the decision by the ASC, impose a lesser sanction, or find no cause for disciplinary action. The decision of the Vice President or designee shall be final and shall be delivered in writing to the Committee and concerned parties within seven (7) days.