

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is a *sine qua non* of scholarship, teaching and learning.

Promoting and sustaining an institutional climate of academic integrity requires active participation by all members of a college community and is largely dependent on ongoing system-wide communications that are wedded more to principles of alliance than compliance. Such a climate is an extension of institutional integrity, an understanding that honesty must be woven throughout the fabric of a college.

Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges. (adopted Spring 2007). Promoting and Sustaining an Institutional Climate of Academic Integrity. Educational Policies Committee 2006-07.

A useful, and widely accepted list of principles defining the core of academic integrity is found in the *Ten Principles of Academic Integrity* by Donald L. McCabe and Gary Pavela (1997).

1. Affirm the importance of academic integrity.

Institutions of higher education are dedicated to the pursuit of truth. Faculty members need to affirm that the pursuit of truth is grounded in certain core values, including diligence, civility, and *honesty*.

2. Foster a love of learning.

A commitment to academic integrity is reinforced by high academic standards. Most students will thrive in an atmosphere where academic work is seen as challenging, relevant, useful, and fair.

3. Treat students as ends in themselves. Faculty members should treat their students as ends in themselves—deserving individual attention and consideration. Students will generally reciprocate by respecting the best values of their teachers, including a commitment to academic integrity.

4. Promote an environment of trust in the classroom.

Most students are mature adults, and value an environment free of arbitrary rules and trivial assignments, where trust is earned, and given.

5. Encourage student responsibility for academic integrity.

With proper guidance, students can be given significant responsibility to help protect and promote the highest standards of academic integrity. Students want to work in communities where competition is fair, integrity is respected, and cheating is punished. They understand that one of the greatest inducements to engaging in academic dishonesty is the perception that academic dishonesty is rampant.

6. Clarify expectations for students.

Faculty members have primary responsibility for designing and cultivating the educational environment and experience. They must clarify their expectations in advance regarding honesty in academic work, including the nature and scope of student collaboration. Most students want such guidance, and welcome it in course syllabi, carefully reviewed by their teachers in class.

7. Develop fair and relevant forms of assessment.

Students expect their academic work to be fairly and fully assessed. Faculty members should use--and continuously revise--forms of assessment that require active and creative thought, and promote learning opportunities for students.

8. Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty.

Prevention is a critical line of defense against academic dishonesty. Students should not be

tempted or induced to engage in acts of academic dishonesty by ambiguous policies, undefined or unrealistic standards for collaboration, inadequate classroom management, or poor examination security.

9. Challenge academic dishonesty when it occurs.

Students observe how faculty members behave, and what values they embrace. Faculty members who ignore or trivialize academic dishonesty send the message that the core values of academic life, and community life in general, are not worth any significant effort to enforce.

10. Help define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards.

Acts of academic dishonesty by individual students can occur across artificial divisions of departments and schools. Although faculty members should be the primacy role models for academic integrity, responsibility for defining, promoting, and protecting academic integrity must be a community-wide concern--not only to identify repeat offenders, and apply consistent due process procedures, but to affirm the shared values that make colleges and universities true communities

Center for Academic Integrity. These "Ten Principles" first appeared as "Faculty and Academic Integrity" in the Summer 1997 issue of Synthesis: Law and Policy in Higher Education, Gary Pavela, editor

The Western Cooperative for Educational Technologies has published an excellent list of best practice strategies based on "Institutional Policies/Practices and Course Design Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education," based on feedback from a survey of their higher education institution membership. The five organizational categories for "Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education" are

1. Institutional Context and Commitment
2. Curriculum and Instruction
3. Faculty Support
4. Student Support
5. Assessment and Evaluation

http://wiche.edu/attachment_library/Student_Authentication/BestPractices.pdf

Whether considering issues of academic integrity in a face-to-face or distance education class, instructors should be encouraged to use strategies that develop awareness of academic integrity and foster student honesty in all work completed for a course. Furthermore, students should be fully informed about institutional policies regarding academic integrity and student conduct.

Pasadena City College. Academic Senate Faculty Survey on Student Academic Integrity and Authentication. March 2010.

The College's *Student Conduct and Academic Honesty Policy* No. 4520 makes no distinction between online and face-to-face students. The *Code of Conduct* outlines the expectations of the College and the types of conduct subject to discipline. However, identity of a student registered in any PCC course, whether face-to-face or online, and whether that student is in fact responsible for all work turned in for credit in the course is an ongoing issue of concern for instructors. Research studies have shown that in a comparison between online vs. face-to-face students, that cheating (absence of academic integrity) is comparable across the two modalities (Grijalva, 2003). The fact is that 23% to 45% of higher education students self-

report cheating on tests, while 45% to 56% admit to cheating on writing assignments (McCabe, 2004).

Higher Education Opportunity Act 2008

In the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (H.R. 4137) signed into law in August of 2008, the federal government called for increased accountability regarding accreditation standards and student achievement. The Act states that the U.S. Department of Education may not "...require an accreditor to have separate standards, procedures or policies, for evaluation of distance education. Accreditors must, however, require institutions that offer distance education to establish that a student registered for a distance education course is the same student who completes and receives credit for it." (ACE Analysis of Higher Education Act Reauthorization)

In September of 2008, Dr. Barbara Beno, President of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (WASC) sent a letter to member institutions regarding the need for those institutions to begin evaluating what can be done to assure student authentication and academic integrity in distance education classes. Specifically, the Accrediting Commission wished to know what strategies member institutions, like Pasadena City College, currently use to authenticate students enrolled in distance education courses.

The Distance Education Committee of the Academic Senate felt that a survey looking at these issues would be most useful if ALL PCC faculty including full-time as well as adjunct, AND including all teaching and learning modalities, (face-to-face, hybrid, and fully online distance education courses) took part in an institution-wide survey. Such an institution-wide discussion about academic integrity serves to update stakeholders about important issues and may lead to broader recommendations that include the importance of instructor/staff training, student awareness and expectations, and professional development workshops. The Survey results showed a strong commitment, on the part of all faculty, to ensuring a high level of student conduct and academic integrity, and included some suggestions for future action to improve that commitment.

Recommendation:

1. The Distance Education Committee recommends that the College review the Student Conduct and Academic Honesty Policy No. 4520 to incorporate language that fully responds to technologically challenging educational environments.
2. The Committee further recommends that in order to promote best practices and fulfill the directives in the Higher Education Act regarding student verification in distance education courses, all distance education instructors conscientiously include regular effective contact (Recommendation 110: Regular Effective Contact) in their courses. Furthermore, instructors should be familiar with the list of Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education, Version 2.0 June 2009, as published by WCET.

http://wiche.edu/attachment_library/Student_Authentication/BestPractices.pdf

3. It is also recommended that instructors of distance education courses utilize best practices in online pedagogy (DE Recommendation 106: Pedagogical Readiness) along with the capabilities of a College-supported Learning Management System with secure username and password/ID in order to encourage appropriate student conduct and academic integrity and discourage dishonesty.

Resources

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Recommendation Approved by Academic Senate – June 7, 2010