Academic Integrity: Process Change Proposal Overview

The Academic Integrity Team
Spring 2023

What is the Academic Integrity Team?

Diverse workgroup of faculty, administrators, and students collaborating to:

- Develop and promote culture of academic integrity across campus
- Adopt an equity-minded and student-centered framework in all procedures and practices (empower student voices!)
- Update processes and resources for faculty and students, especially to encourage consistency, clarity, and equitable experiences and outcomes for students.

Current team members: Lauren Vaknin, Greg Vega, Tania Jabour, Marissa Salazar, Tammi Marshall, Karen Marrujo, Scott Stambach, Belal Tamimi

Work stems from 2020-2022 Racial Justice and Social Equity Taskforce Student Conduct and Success Inquiry Group; read the full report here.

What is Our Current Process for Academic Misconduct?

- Instructor refers incident to Dean of Student Affairs
- Dean contacts student to arrange a meeting
- Dean meets with student to review Code of Conduct
  - First offense: verbal warning; subsequent offenses: sanction like suspension
- Instructor assigns a zero to the assignment (typically)
- If student contests, conduct hearing process commences (this is rare)

Note: Instructor does not necessarily interact with student regarding incident

Is the Current Academic Misconduct Process Working?

No, it's really not. There are a number of problems with it:

- The process is not consistently applied across divisions or even departments
- The process does not (and cannot) address student questions about the circumstances of the course, including content, assignment directions, expectations, etc.
- Despite the Dean's progressive approach to student development, the process is rooted in a punitive framework
- The process does not address the individual learning needs of students
- Repeat offenses (students who are referred multiple times) are increasing
- Students report culture of fear and lack of clarity
- May be promoting inequitable student experiences and **does not align with mission, vision, and values of College**

So then what process should we adopt instead?

The Process to Change the Process

Steps to gather feedback, data, and ideas for improving how we handle academic misconduct

Open forums with faculty in various contexts (Taskforce, ILAT, etc.)

Focus groups and open forums with students (multiple)

Research and data on student demographics, types of violations, referrals from departments, etc.

Attendance at International Conference on Academic Integrity Fall 2022

Collaboration with Dr. Tricia Bertram Gallant (UCSD)

Overall, we propose a paradigm shift: Disciplinary → Educational Intervention

Proposed Steps for New Academic Misconduct Process

1. **Use the tips and guidelines from the [Process Change Proposal](#) to establish an equity-minded and supportive class culture that encourages students to approach their academic work with integrity (most important step!)**
2. Instructor reports suspected incident via Maxient form for reporting only (does not automatically generate a meeting with the Dean)
3. Student and instructor work together to identify what happened and why, including underlying motivation for the misconduct
4. Student and instructor develop a plan to address what happened and, if relevant, meet the educational need
5. Student and instructor work out how to address the misconduct and next steps to take

Note: the interaction with between the instructor and student is focused on academic integrity, the class content, and the needs of the student and the requirements of the course, not necessarily the Code of Conduct.

Addressing Repeat Offenses or Special Circumstances

1. Instructor reports suspected incident via Maxient (same form)
2. Instructor can still meet with student and go through process outlined on previous page
3. Dean meets with student to review Code of Conduct and discuss a resolution
4. Resolution can include forthcoming seminar on Academic Integrity and Ethical Decision Making in lieu of educational sanction

Note: Especially egregious or repeat offenses may be referred for sanction such as suspension or expulsion

You are invited to review and offer feedback on the full **Academic Integrity Process Change Proposal** document.

Expected Benefits of Proposed Process

- Ideally identifies and addresses the root cause of the misconduct
- Avoids "sending the student to the Dean" as a first step, which many faculty report as a barrier to following current process
- Potentially strengthens instructor-student relationship
- Potentially offers instructor critical feedback about the challenges that students face with coursework (promoting course and program improvements)
- Makes the student an agent in an active, individualized process rather than the recipient of information
- Centers the educational needs and experiences of students
- Aligns with and promotes the mission, vision, and values of the College

But, what if . . . ?

- The student does not respond, won't meet with the instructor or just drops the class?
  - **Maxient form tracks student interaction with the notice, faculty can issue a zero, Dean can put registration hold on account**
- The instructor does not have the interest or time to meet with the student?
  - **Meeting can be referred to the department chair, a faculty proxy, or to the Dean of Student Affairs**
- The student denies the misconduct and/or the instructor does not have proof?
  - **Faculty can use subject matter expertise to proceed, student can contest the misconduct allegation (no change there)**

Academic Integrity Team will explore offering trained faculty proxies

But, what if . . . ? (Continued)

- The instructor feels poorly equipped to handle these incidents?
  - **We have faculty training coming! In the meantime, the instructor can refer to the department chair, a faculty proxy, or the Dean**
- The meeting does not go well?
  - **Faculty can circle back to revisit the issue, refer to a faculty proxy, or refer to the Dean**
- What if multiple students are involved in the same incident?
  - **To protect student privacy, meet with the students individually, ask the Dean with questions; consistency is key, but resolutions might differ for different students depending on involvement**
- What if an instructor discovers multiple plagiarized assignments at once?
  - **Treat the incident as a single incident and proceed with the educational intervention process; after the process, subsequent incidents will be treated as second offenses**

Next Steps for this Process Change Proposal

- Academic Senate
- ILAT, Student Success and Equity Council, College Council
- Student Groups: ASG, focus groups, clubs or classes upon request/invitation
- Department meetings, workgroups, and COPs upon request/invitation

Remember: our current process is not uniformly endorsed by faculty or students, nor is it consistently applied. Any process change will take time, and this new one is subject to feedback, revision, assessment, and adjustment along the way.