

Union College Bulletin 2016-2017
Academic Integrity Policy
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Integrity of Scholarship

The Union College community adheres to high academic and ethical standards. Inspired by the values of both the Christian and the scholar, its faculty, staff and students commit to exhibit integrity and truth in all academic endeavors. Thus, scholarly endeavors carry the broad expectation that they have been accomplished with honesty, whether by professors in research and developing coursework or by students preparing assignments and taking examinations.

Among other examples, dishonest conduct by students includes cheating on examinations and the submission of assignments that violate expected standards of integrity. As a result, unauthorized multiple submissions, excessive revision by someone else, unauthorized collaboration, forged signatures, plagiarism (copying of others' published works), misrepresented sources, misused copyrighted material, and fabricated or unauthorized use of data all constitute violations of academic integrity. In addition to exhibiting honesty in creating their own work, students should refrain from suspicious behavior themselves and deny others the opportunity to use their works in an unethical manner. Similarly, Union expects professors to exhibit trustworthiness in their work, both in and out of the classroom, and to commit to working in redemptive ways with students regarding academic honesty.

Academic integrity violations range from incidental to significant to egregious. Descriptions of each level of violation, the processes and corresponding consequences are explained in greater detail in the Integrity Policy on the Academic Administration section of the Union College website.

The consequences of violating integrity can range from remediation to receipt of a failing grade for an assignment to dismissal from the course and even expulsion from the college.

A student who feels unjustly charged with misconduct after following the appropriate process should appeal to the Vice President of Academic Administration, and if still not satisfied then to the President. Reports of academic integrity violations and their consequences are maintained by the Office of Academic Administration, and serious violations may be noted in a student's permanent academic record as explained in the Integrity Policy in the Academic Services section of the website.

Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures

13 April 2017 Revision

Terms and Definitions

AIC: Academic Integrity Committee

OAA: Office of Academic Administration

VPAA: Vice President for Academic Administration

Policy and Procedure

- I. These recommendations will strengthen Union's efforts to foster academic integrity by
 - A. Documenting alleged incidents, to provide a record of them, to permit their classification, and thus to understand better the types and extent of academic dishonesty;
 - B. Providing data that will enable the assignment of similar penalties for similar offenses;
 - C. Strengthening the likelihood of consequences for repeated dishonestly (which currently are rarely recorded and thus typically ignored);
 - D. Providing data to study lapses of integrity and enable the college to adopt better policies to deter them, following the process of plan-do-check-act.

- II. The policy incorporates the following:
 - A. The classification of integrity shortcomings within three levels:
 - a. Level 1: Incidental Violations,
 - b. Level 2: Significant Violations and
 - c. Level 3: Egregious Violations.
 - B. The creation and maintenance of an electronic Academic Integrity Alert System (AIAS) similar to the Early Alert system that will permit filing incidents and documenting evidence and decisions. Until the AIAS is developed, Google forms and sheets will be used to track reported integrity violations. Initially, the following reports are considered necessary as part of the AIAS:
 - a. Academic Integrity Alert: Filed by the professor, and dispatched automatically to the department chair, the academic advisor and the Office of Academic Administration (OAA), where it will be archived. Through a menu, Alert Part I will enable the professor to classify the offense (subject to revision) and provide the essential information (what, when, who, questions, etc.). A copy of the Alert Part I will be provided to the student.
 - b. System Response to each Alert: The system response to Alert Part I will confirm the initial classification of the alleged offense. It will also indicate
 - i. the student's previous academic integrity issues known to the system, and
 - ii. the types of consequences previously assigned for such incidents.

- c. Student Response to each Alert: To be filed by the student (before or after having met with the professor).
 - d. Report of the Student hearing: To be filed by the professor.
 - e. Report of the Recommended Consequence for the integrity violation: To be filed by the professor (Level 1) or Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) chair for Levels 2 and 3.
 - f. Affirmation that the Consequences have been satisfied: To be filed by the professor or AIC chair, as appropriate.
- C. Permanent electronic files maintained by the OAA will be purged of Level 1 offenses when an individual graduates or two years after the last semester on campus. Level 2 files will be retained for five years after graduation or two years after the last semester on campus. Level 3 files and those Level 2 files so designated by an Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) decision become part of the student's permanent academic record.

III. Standard of proof for academic integrity issues

- A. The standard of proof for any instance of academic dishonesty will be clear and convincing evidence – a measure of proof that produces a firm belief in the allegations presented. It is more than the standard of “preponderance of the evidence” and less than the standard of “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

Levels of Academic Integrity Violation and Procedures

Level I: Incidental Violation

These violations are characterized as inadvertent and isolated; they may typically be the result of inexperience or lack of knowledge on the student's part and only affect minor assignments, works in progress or drafts or a small portion of the total coursework. Level I violations may include but are not limited to working on an assignment with another student without a professor's permission, failing to properly cite a source in a limited portion of a paper, summarizing or paraphrasing poorly, or misrepresenting a source.

Incidental violations are ideal “teaching moments.” As such, though Level I violations must be reported, professors address these incidents in consultation with the student and, if necessary, with the department chair. Consequences may include a penalty that affects the student's final grade, but generally less than a full letter grade reduction. Consequences may be reduced due to mitigating factors such as self-reporting.

Consequences vary but can include one or more of the following:

1. additional instruction,
2. tutoring,
3. repeating an assignment,
4. revision or correction of one's coursework,
5. earning no credit on the work in question.

Multiple Level I incidents, either in the same course or in several, call for more concerted intervention and taken together may be considered a higher level of violation.

Process for Addressing Level I Violations

Upon discovering that an incidental violation may have occurred, the professor

1. Contacts the AIC chair to determine if prior violations have been reported for the student (initial discussion with the student may take place before contact with AIC chair is made).
2. Meets with the student about the alleged violation, discussing the alleged offense and the potential consequences if this is a one-time occurrence. It is recommended that, at this time, the student be 1) given a copy of the flowchart outlining the academic integrity violations reporting process and 2) encouraged to provide an electronic response to the AIC chair. (Alternatively, this could happen at the next step.)
3. Reviews the student's perspective, consults the chair as appropriate (required where previous cases have occurred), and informs the student of the consequences. The student is encouraged to provide an electronic response to the AIC chair (if not done previously) and notified if he/she wishes to appeal the decision, he/she has one week to do so via email to the AIC chair.
4. Files the electronic Integrity Alert, including consequences assigned. In response, the professor, the professor's department chair, and the student receive a summary of the Integrity Alert via email. The student's summary email includes notification that the violation will not become part of the student's permanent academic record as well as his/her right to appeal the decision to the AIC chair.
5. A student's failure to fulfill the consequences is considered a Level 2 violation, with reports filed and consequences to be determined by the professor, chair and AIC chair.
6. The professor consults with the department chair if
 - a. The professor desires advice in addressing the violation;
 - b. The student is unresponsive to requests for a meeting, resists the process of remediation, or does not complete any required work as a consequence of the incidental violation; or
 - c. The student contests the incidental violation as reported by the professor.
7. At the end of the year, the professor transfers the documentation to the OAA, *where both documents and their electronic records are only reviewed in cases of a later alleged integrity violation*. Both will be destroyed when the student graduates or two years after the student leaves the college.

Appeal Process

A student who disputes a Level I violation or its consequences may appeal to the AIC chair within one week of being informed of the consequences and thereafter follow the appeal process for higher level violations.

Level 2: Significant Violation

Level 2 violations may include but are not limited to disregarding explicit instructions against collaborating on an assignment, giving or receiving significant or expert assistance on coursework without acknowledgement or attribution, using unauthorized materials on an exam, altering quiz or test answers and submitting for rescoring, submitting the same work to multiple professors without their knowledge or permission, collaborating to exchange information about a test, signing an attendance sheet for an absent peer, consistently citing sources improperly or not citing sources at all in a paper. Consequences for Level 2 violations may vary, ranging from those appropriate to Level I violations to include the following:

1. reduction of the final grade in a course,
2. failure of a course, or
3. academic probation.

Consequences for Level 2 violations may be reduced due to mitigating factors such as self-reporting.

Process for Addressing Level 2 Violations

Having observed evidence that suggests a significant violation has occurred, the professor

1. Contacts the AIC chair to determine if prior violations have been reported for the student; also receives examples of consequences assigned previously for similar offenses (initial discussion with the student may take place before contact with AIC chair is made).
2. Informs the student of the alleged violation, *though without referencing the consequences*. This might occur naturally, e.g., when handing back a paper for discussion in class with the note “Please see me about your use of citations in this paper” or when taking possession of notes observed during an exam. *There is a benefit in obtaining the student’s immediate explanation of the action*. It is recommended that, at this time, the student be 1) given a copy of the flowchart outlining the academic integrity violations reporting process and 2) encouraged to provide an electronic response to the AIC chair. (Alternatively, this could happen at step #4.)
3. Files an electronic Integrity Alert of the alleged offense that informs the AIC chair. In response, the professor, the professor’s department chair, and the student receive a summary of the Integrity Alert via email. The student’s summary email includes an invitation to provide a response directly to the AIC chair. If the student chooses to respond to the AIC chair, they must do so within one week of the date of the emailed Integrity Alert summary.
4. Together with the department chair, provides a hearing to explain the student’s perspective. If the student is absent from campus, this may be done electronically. The student is encouraged to provide an electronic response to the AIC chair (if not done previously).
5. Meets with the department chair, the AIC chair and others as appropriate (e.g., in nursing, the chair of the relevant committee) to review all the evidence and precedents, and determine the consequences. If a previous Level 2 or 3 violation has occurred, the professor and department chair will meet with the AIC to determine the consequences; student name is withheld at the meeting if a previous violation has occurred.
6. Informs the student of the consequences.
7. The student’s failure to meet with the professor or to fulfill the consequences is considered a Level 3 violation, which the AIC will investigate. If such failures are substantiated, the committee will recommend to the Vice President of Academic Administration (VPAA) one of the following alternatives:
 - a. Failure in the course,
 - b. Suspension from all courses until the consequences are fulfilled or
 - c. Dismissal from Union College.
8. At the discretion of the AIC, significant violation reports are added to the student’s permanent academic record.
9. At the end of the year, the professor transfers the Academic Integrity violation documentation to the OAA, *where both documents and their electronic records are only reviewed in cases of a later alleged integrity violation. Both will be destroyed when the student graduates or two years after the student leaves the college, unless determined to be added to the student’s permanent academic record.*

Appeal Process

A student may appeal a decision regarding a Level 2 violation to the VPAA within one week of being informed of the consequences, and if not satisfied then file a grievance with the President, thus invoking the grievance procedure detailed in the academic bulletin and student handbook.

Level 3: Egregious Violation

Level 3 violations may include but are not limited to repeated Level 2 misconduct; taking a quiz or test for a peer; stealing an exam; willfully using major portions of a source without documentation; submitting work that is not one's own; purchasing or selling assignments, exams, or exam aids; electronically recording, photographing, or taking images of other's work, papers or examinations without permission; fabricating or intentionally misrepresenting data; deliberately undermining another student's success; lying when addressed regarding academic integrity violations; falsifying, damaging, or destroying academic, medical, or other legal documents.

Consequences for Level 3 violations may vary, ranging from those appropriate to Level 2 violations to include the following: suspension or dismissal from the college. Consequences for Level 3 violations may be reduced due to mitigating factors such as self-reporting.

Process for Addressing Level 3 Violations

Having observed evidence that suggests an egregious violation has occurred,

1. The professor contacts the AIC chair to determine if prior violations have been reported for the student; also receives examples of consequences assigned previously for similar offenses (initial discussion with the student may take place before contact with AIC chair is made).
2. The professor informs the student of an alleged violation, *though without referencing the consequences*. This might occur naturally, e.g., when handing back a paper for discussion in class with the note "Please see me about your use of citations in this paper" or when taking possession of notes observed during an exam. *There is a benefit in obtaining the student's immediate explanation of the action*. It is recommended that, at this time, the student be 1) given a copy of the flowchart outlining the academic integrity violations reporting process and 2) encouraged to provide an electronic response to the AIC chair. (Alternatively, this could happen at step #4.)
3. The professor files an electronic Integrity Alert of the alleged offense that informs the AIC chair. In response, the professor, the professor's department chair, and the student receive a summary of the Integrity Alert via email. The student's summary email includes an invitation to provide a response directly to the AIC chair. If the student chooses to respond to the AIC chair, they must do so within one week of the date of the emailed Integrity Alert summary.
4. Together with the department chair and AIC chair, the professor provides a hearing to explain the student's perspective. If the student is absent from campus, this may be done electronically. The student is encouraged to provide an electronic response to the AIC chair (if not done previously).
5. The professor then meets with the department chair, the AIC chair and others as appropriate.

6. After reviewing all the evidence, this group joins the AIC to determine the consequences and files the electronic reports. During the meeting with the committee, the student's name is withheld.
7. The AIC chair informs the student of the consequences.
8. If the student fails to fulfill the consequences and the AIC substantiates the failure, this constitutes an additional Level 3 violation. The AIC will recommend to the VPAA one of the following alternatives:
 - a. Failure of the course,
 - b. Suspension from all courses until the consequences are fulfilled or
 - c. Dismissal from Union College.
9. Level 3 violations are added to the student's permanent academic record and are not removed upon graduation or failure to return to Union College.
10. At the end of the year, the professor transfers the documentation to the OAA, *and both documents and their electronic records are added to the student's permanent academic record.*

Appeal Process

A student may appeal a decision regarding a Level 3 violation to the VPAA within one week of being informed of the consequences, and, if not satisfied, then file a grievance with the President, thus likely invoking the grievance procedure detailed in the Academic Bulletin and Student Handbook.

Defined Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Faculty Members

1. Course outlines or syllabi should discuss application of the integrity of scholarship statement and policy within the course and refer students to the Academic Integrity Policy in the Academic Services section of the College's website for further information.
2. Professors should reiterate—at the outset of major assignments, at the start of quizzes and tests, and at other appropriate times—the behaviors expected of students throughout the semester and in each situation. Depending on the nature of an exam, a professor might note, for example, that students are not allowed to leave the room during the test or have electronic devices or notes nearby.
3. Assignments should be thoughtfully designed to discourage or prevent dishonest work, and exams should be actively monitored.
4. Professors are expected to document an alleged integrity violation; this evidence accompanies the formal report.
5. Alleged violations should be kept strictly confidential.

Responsibility of the Office of Academic Administration

1. Provide the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures on the College's website and in the Academic Bulletin.
2. Maintain a confidential record of all reported Level 2 and Level 3 offenses, with the resulting consequences.
3. Review course syllabi to ensure that the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures is referenced.
4. Include discussion of integrity issues in both new faculty orientation and faculty development.
5. Archive documentation of all levels of violations according to the policy described above.

The Academic Integrity Committee

Purpose

The AIC determines the consequences that a student may receive as the result of a “significant” or “egregious” violation of this policy. The committee is empowered to

1. Review the report and collect original and additional information in regard to the incident;
2. Review prior academic integrity violations by the student and the consequences previously assigned to similar violations;
3. Interview the professor and student involved and any other persons who may have information pertinent to the allegation;
4. Together with the professor and department chair determine the commensurate consequences for the student’s violation(s) of academic integrity.
5. Determine if Level 2 violation(s) warrant addition to the student’s permanent academic record;
6. Provide an annual report to the faculty and College regarding academic integrity offenses.

Membership

The committee shall consist of three members, including the following:

1. The Academic Integrity Committee chair, appointed by the Vice President for Academic Administration.
2. Two faculty members appointed for rotating, two-year terms as members nominated by the AIC chair and ratified by the Faculty Senate.
 1. Recommended guidelines for committee composition:
 1. At least one member whose classes include writing papers
 2. At least one member from a division with a high number of academic integrity violations relative to other divisions