


MEMORANDUM

To: Timothy Newman
President, Faculty Senate

From: Darren Dawson 
President

Christine W. Curtis
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Subject: Response to Faculty Senate Resolution 20/21-02: Academic Misconduct Policy

Date: January 15, 2021

We thank the Faculty Senate for its work on the Academic Misconduct Policy. The purpose of this memo is to describe our response to the proposed revision to the Academic Misconduct Policy as presented in Senate Resolution 20/21-02: Academic Misconduct.

The *Interim Academic Misconduct Policy* has been in effect for one and one-half years. Several departments, colleges, associate deans, and deans have had substantial experience implementing it during this time. Through this experience, many have had a chance to observe what works and does not work with the implementation of the interim policy. In addition, the changes in testing and other graded assignments caused by restrictions caused by COVID-19 have highlighted strengths and issues with our approach to misconduct.

After careful review of the version proposed by the Faculty Senate resolution by the associate deans, deans, and Associate Provost Wren, we propose the attached policy. The changes given below were made to the version of the Academic Misconduct Policy presented by the Faculty Senate. As you will read, key elements recommended by the Faculty Senate were incorporated into the attached revised policy. Because of the length of the policy, cumbersomeness in following the steps, repetition, and some ambiguity, the policy was condensed and edited for better readability and clarity.

As discussed below, one proposal came forward from our many discussions and experiences which, if we adopt as an institution, we believe will not only decrease the number of academic misconduct violations but will also improve the academic integrity of our institution. We propose the adoption of an “Academic Honor Code”. We seek your input and suggestions on the proposed Academic Honor Code as drafted in the attached revised policy and your thoughts on the best ways to incorporate an Academic Honor Code into our academic culture.

The specific changes to the attached revised Academic Misconduct Policy presented by the Faculty Senate are given in the following:

1. All suggested grammatical and editorial changes were accepted.
2. The Faculty Senate's recommendation on the number of days for review and response to appeals was adopted. Reviews have pointed out that if each person in each stage of review takes the maximum number of days for action, the entire appeal process stretches to over two months. Our observation has been that reviews are moving quicker than the maximum days, but stretching misconduct cases out the potential maximum can lead to a situation where a student cannot recover and successfully complete a course, even if found not responsible on appeal.
3. The Faculty Senate's proposal for the addition of an Academic Misconduct Monitor within each college was adopted. The attached revised policy adds a definition of the role and responsibilities of the monitors, and inserts them in the appeal process at appropriate stages. In addition, at the request the associate deans, the flexibility was added to the policy of allowing a college to have an Academic Misconduct Monitor Committee rather than one individual to serve as Academic Misconduct Monitor.
4. A university-level Academic Misconduct Board, consisting of all Academic Misconduct Monitors was added. The role and responsibilities of this board is defined and added to the process at appropriate stages in the attached revised policy.
5. An "Academic Honor Code" statement is included at the beginning of the attached policy. The purpose of the Academic Honor Code is to notify the students of our expectations of academic honesty from every student and to make the students sign/affirm that they will abide by the Academic Honor Code. It is recommended that faculty add this statement to all course syllabi and/or ask students to sign such an affirmation at the beginning of the course or before each test.
6. Through formatting and removal of redundant language, the policy has been streamlined and shortened. The version presented by the Faculty Senate (partly due to the track changes and comments) was 17 pages long. This length is almost three times longer than that of UA (6 pages) and 5 times longer than that of UAB (3 pages). The group that reviewed the policy felt that it was unwieldy and unworkable for faculty, students, and administrators. The attached revised version is shorter and clearer, but still comes in much longer than our peers because of the detail contained in various stages of the appeal and definitions of every form of misconduct. An even shorter version is desirable, but the policy in its current format is at least more user friendly.

We look forward to your response. We hope to have this policy through the entire review process and in place for fall semester.

Cc: Brent Wren, Associate Provost