

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

HONOR CODES DECODED

Should Truman have an Honor Code? Part of the Truman State University Mission Statement says we are to strive to "cultivate in [our] students: intellectual integrity, tolerance of difference and diversity, informed ethical values, and courageous aspiration toward the best for oneself, one's family, one's society, and the world." One way that we can cultivate integrity and ethical values is through developing and reaffirming a set of principles, values and expectations known as an Honor Code.



What is an Honor Code? Honor Codes involve three things: a shared culture of integrity, specific commitment by individuals to integrity, and enforcement that is clear, centralized and rigorous.

How do they work? They begin with proper orientation to a University culture that embraces honor and integrity. There is a constant reaffirmation to the central values of the Honor Code through publications, presentations, and reprinting of the Code on exams, projects and papers. All members of the learning community are expected to look for and report acts of dishonesty. If an infraction occurs, there is an immediate referral to a honor board who conducts an investigation of the allegations and assigns appropriate sanctions.

Why should we want one? Research shows that students at institutions with honor codes cheat less often and (continued on back)

HOW TO TALK TO A STUDENT YOU SUSPECT HAS CHEATED

Confronting students about academic misconduct is not easy to do, but if we ignore the incidents that do occur, it is impossible to maintain Truman's standard for academic excellence. Some guidelines may be helpful in confronting a student.

1. Have a plan for how you would like your conversation to go. Imagine the different reactions the student may have and prepare some answers.
2. Meet with a student promptly in private. It may be beneficial to have a third party, such as another faculty member, available for this meeting to take notes and to act as a witness.
3. Begin the meeting by describing your suspicions and to present the evidence collected or observed. Tell them how you feel about their actions and the effect their misconduct has on the classroom environment.
4. Allow the student an opportunity to respond and listen to their explanation. If the student states that they did not cheat, you may have to investigate the incident further. You may ask the student questions about the material in the test or paper. If the student identifies witnesses that will corroborate their story, you may contact them.
5. After the discussion with the student and any further investigation, make your decision using a preponderance of evidence. A preponderance of evidence means it is more likely than not that the student committed the accused act.
6. If you find that the student has committed an act of dishonesty, you may determine appropriate punitive grading, based on the provisions set out in your syllabus. Inform your Division Head, and complete the Academic Dishonesty Report Form. Your Division Head will sign the form and forward it to the VPAA and Dean of Student Affairs offices.
7. Maintain a file with the evidence in the case and documentation of your conversations with the student. These may be useful if the student appeals their grade or if there is university judicial action taken against the student.



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN YOU WITNESS CHEATING ON AN EXAM*

Do not stop a student from completing the exam, even if you believe that he/she is cheating. Instead interrupt the misconduct as described below, and identify those involved by setting their exams aside and recording their names. Review the exams to see if you can find evidence of cheating.

- If a student is using notes or has notes visible, immediately and discreetly confiscate the notes. These materials may be important as evidence if a student denies cheating. Make a note on the student's exam indicating when the notes were taken.
- If students are talking, announce that no talking is permitted during exams, and/or quietly ask the students to stop talking.
- If students are talking or otherwise exchanging information, they can be asked to change seats or move apart.
- If you learn that a substitute or "ringer" may be taking an exam for another, quietly approach him/her and ask for identification
- If a student is looking at others' work, announce to the class that all work is individual, and/or quietly tell the student that eyes must be kept on one's own paper.

* from Purdue University, (1996) "Deterring, Detecting & Dealing with Academic Dishonesty: Guidelines for Faculty."

Truman State University

Keep an eye out for our new Judicial Affairs website jaffairs.truman.edu

In January, we will have a new brochure for Students regarding

HONOR CODES DECODED (CONTINUED)

their character develops from the expectation of integrity. Additionally, many feel that an Honor Code is a hallmark of a liberal arts and sciences university.

How do we get one? Honor codes are a function of a culture that embraces integrity and strives to teach values. Cultures do not change overnight and the process to develop a Code at Truman will take time and effort by all members of the learning community. Faculty, staff and students will have a role to play in shaping our culture and developing our set of values.

If you are interested in learning more about Honor Codes or research regarding academic integrity, please check out: http://www.academicintegrity.org/cai_research.asp

This newsletter was developed to assist faculty in dealing with the serious issue of academic integrity.

Contributions, ideas and suggestions are welcome.

Please contact Victoria Burke, the Assistant to the Dean of Student Affairs, with your comments at 785-4111, in 112 Kirk Building or at vicburke@truman.edu

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM: INTERNET RESOURCES FOR STUDENT USE

When asked, many of our students can define the word plagiarism, but do they understand how plagiarism works? There are many websites available for student use that provide concrete examples of plagiarism and information about proper citations.

<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/policies/acaddish.html>

This site has several examples of academic dishonesty.

<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/defines.html>

This site has some basic types of academic dishonesty behaviors that are unacceptable.

<http://osu.orst.edu/admin/stucon/plag.htm>

This page has some examples on 'acceptable borrowing'.

<http://statewide.orst.edu/student-services/dishonesty.html>

This site offers a list of suggestions on preventing academic dishonesty.

<http://www.law.gwu.edu/resources/citing.asp>

This site has a list of bookmarks that give different examples of academic dishonesty and also good examples for citations.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/index.html>

This site offers a comprehensive guide for conducting research, proper citations (APA, MLA, and electronic) and writing papers.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN NAME?!

Imagine finding a copy of the advisor's Add/Drop form for one of your advisees and you don't recognize your own signature. What should you do?

- Call the student and find out who signed their form.
- Forget about it. You would have approved of the classes that student chose anyway.
- Send a copy of the forged form to the Student Affairs office and a note requesting judicial action (with your real signature).
- Both "a" and "c."

The correct answer is "d."

Some of our students forge an advisor's signature on their forms. They may not understand that one's signature is essentially one's property and by using it without permission they are committing a form of theft. They are also short-



changing their education at Truman and missing out on having a strong advising relationship.

Speaking with the student directly will allow you to express your thoughts openly. Ask the student what happened and discuss how this will affect your advising relationship.

Since trust is central to the advising relationship, you may suggest to the student a change in advisors. Speak with your Division Head about these concerns.

It is a violation of the Student Conduct Code (8.050.01.3) to commit an act of "forgery, alteration or misuse of any document, record, or instrument of identification." The judicial process conducted in the Student Affairs office will assist the student in understanding that this behavior is inappropriate and educational sanctions may result.