

Academic Integrity Violations Policy

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Academic Integrity at Otero College

In alignment with the institutional mission, Otero College values academic integrity, and this policy is meant to uphold quality higher education. As such, all employees and students are expected to comply with the standards described in this document whether or not they are directly involved. In short, it is expected we follow the “see something, say something” spirit of quality higher education at Otero College. To understand academic integrity, we must understand academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as actions that result in the student receiving credit for work in any academic exercise or discipline that they themselves did not create. The term “academic exercise” refers to any work the student submits for credit or hours in any course at the institution. In the descriptions below, the term “unauthorized” means without the express permission of the instructor. This policy outlines the types of academic dishonesty, levels of infractions, consequences of said infractions, and the appeals process.

It is noted that this policy exists to protect both the student and the institution. When an academic hearing--explained below--is scheduled, the student has a right to appeal. Academic dishonesty is an academic matter, not a criminal one, so the institution reserves the right to follow the rules of “preponderance of evidence” and not “evidence beyond a reasonable doubt.” The spirit of this policy is to give rights to the accused student, educate students on the consequences of academic dishonesty, and to deter further violations.

The following are examples of academic dishonesty. This list is not exhaustive but rather indicative of common types of academic dishonesty with examples. Other types or examples may exist and are subject to the same consequences described herein:

1. Cheating--intentionally using or attempting to use **unauthorized** materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
 - a. Possessing **unauthorized** notes or additional sources of information during an exam.
 - b. Possessing term papers, exams, lab reports, or other assignments for distribution, which were supposed to be turned in to the instructor.
 - c. Giving or receiving answers by the use of any signals or technology during an exam or quiz.

2. Fabrication--intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
 - a. Inventing data or providing a false account of how the data was generated or collected, also known as counterfeiting data or research results.
 - b. Providing a false research citation--representing an abstract or review as the primary source itself.
 - c. Falsifying documents for the excuse of absences or missed assignments.
3. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty--being party to any infractions of academic dishonesty described herein.
 - a. Allowing another student to submit one's paper as their own.
 - b. Providing **unauthorized** copies of any previously completed coursework for distribution to other students.
4. Plagiarism--deliberately reproducing another's ideas, words, data, etc. as one's own without giving credit to the original author.
 - a. One quotes another, in whole or in part, without acknowledging the original author--this includes print, video, media, and online sources.
 - b. One completely paraphrases another's words, ideas, data, etc. without acknowledging the author--this includes print, video, media, and online sources.
5. Unauthorized Collaboration--also known as "complicity." One intentionally shares academic information or works in collaboration with another student in an **unauthorized** manner.
 - a. Permitting another student to copy answers on an assignment, exam, etc.
 - b. Taking an exam or any portion of a course for another student. This includes allowing a student to copy a paper, lab report, computer program, or any other assignment for another student.
6. Multiple Submissions--also known as "Self-Plagiarism." Recycling previously completed work from one class to another. It is noted that a student may be allowed multiple submissions of an assignment **if and only if** all instructors involved give express permission.
 - a. Submitting a paper written for one class to another.
 - b. A student is retaking a class and submits the work they used in a previous section of that class.

Special Circumstances Regarding Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Students who facilitate academic dishonesty but are no longer enrolled in the course section in which the academic infraction occurred are still subject to consequences. However, because they are no longer enrolled in the course--due to passing, withdrawing, etc--the issue will become a student conduct issue and be judged by student conduct personnel.

Personnel at Otero College are also subject to consequences for facilitating academic dishonesty. Should any personnel at Otero College be found to have facilitated any level of academic dishonesty, the issue and evidence will be submitted to the Vice President of

Academic and Student Affairs and the Director of Human Resources. The issue will then be considered a performance and employment issue to be dealt with by those governing bodies.

Levels of Infraction

It is noted that some infractions of academic dishonesty are more egregious than others. To that end, this policy categorizes them from minor to egregious with consequences for each. It is important to note that multiple minor infractions in the same course or across multiple courses can result in an automatic egregious violation with the appropriate consequences. **Students should be aware that they may not withdraw from a course if they are receiving a failing grade due to academic dishonesty.**

1. Minor Infraction

- a. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - i. Repeated improperly formatted citations.
 - ii. Complete omission of references, bibliography, or Works Cited.
 - iii. Patch-writing--also known as a partial paraphrase. The student attempted to reword the original but still relied too much on the original wording or structure.
 - iv. Cut and paste from a source without proper quotation or citation.
- b. Consequences
 - i. First infraction--the student will schedule training with the Educational Resource Specialist or Coordinator of the Learning Commons.
 - ii. Second infraction--failure of the assignment.
 - iii. Third and all subsequent infractions risk automatic egregious infraction consequence (see "consequences" under "egregious" below).

2. Standard Infractions

- a. Any instances of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or facilitating academic dishonesty as described above.
- b. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - i. Deliberate omission of all sources.
 - ii. Cheating on an exam.
 - iii. Distributing answers.
 - iv. Falsifying any information on an academic exercise.
- c. Consequences
 - i. First infraction (or multiple minor infractions)--failure of the assignment.
 - ii. Second infraction and subsequent infractions risk and automatic egregious infraction consequence (see "consequences" under "egregious" below).

3. Egregious Academic Violations

- a. Above and beyond standard academic violations--what constitutes "above and beyond" will be decided at the discretion of the instructor, the Academic Integrity Review Board, and/or the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.
- b. Examples may include but are not limited to:

- i. Second standard academic violation.
 - ii. Providing prior exams, projects, papers, or coursework for the purpose of cheating.
 - iii. Stealing and/or copying exams.
 - iv. Impersonating another student in any course.
 - v. Obtaining work from another student or professional service.
 - vi. Widespread collusion of student violators.
- c. Consequences
- i. Failure of the course. The student may also risk expulsion from the college.

Procedure

If a faculty member believes any infraction of academic dishonesty has occurred, the faculty member is to conduct an independent investigation and gather evidence of the infraction. If the violation is confirmed, the faculty member must notify the chair with the evidence, report to the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, and make a reasonable effort to contact the student within five business days. The faculty member is required to make a reasonable effort to schedule a meeting with the accused student, either with or without the chair, and present the evidence within five business days of discovery.

During the initial evidentiary meeting, the instructor will present the evidence to the student, tell the student of the consequence they will receive, and give them information about the appeals process. At the end of the meeting, both the instructor and the student will sign the "Academic Violations Form" as proof the student was given this information. This form is **not** an admission of guilt on the part of the student. Rather, it is an artifact proving the student received evidence, notification of their consequence, and information about the appeals process.

Upon completion of the meeting, the instructor will send digital copies of the evidence and completed Academic Violations Form to the Chair and the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. If the student chooses not to appeal the decision, a violation of academic integrity will be placed in their student profile on Navigate in order to track multiple instances of violations across multiple classes. Multiple instances of academic dishonesty across multiple classes can result in an "egregious violation" as described above.

Appeals Process

A student has the right to appeal the decision of the faculty member. During the process, the student is expected to continue to attend class, complete work, and respect the discretion of the process by not sharing with other students. The Academic Integrity Review Board will oversee the hearing for all students. The Academic Integrity Review Board will be made up of the chair of the department from where the accusation was made, the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and two additional faculty members from different departments. Should a student choose to appeal, they must contact the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs within two business days of meeting with the

instructor and signing the “Academic Violations Form.” Within five business days of notification, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs will schedule an appeals meeting with the Academic Integrity Review Board and notify the student of the date of the appeal hearing.

If the appeal is for a minor infraction, the entire Academic Integrity Review Board may not be obligated to meet. One additional faculty member from another department may be called upon to review the evidence and support or challenge the instructor’s decision. If the decision of the faculty is challenged, then the entire Academic Integrity Review Board will meet. Should the decision of the instructor be upheld, the consequences described above will be enacted and a record of the infraction will be placed on the student’s profile in Navigate to track multiple violations.

For standard infractions, two additional people from the Academic Integrity Review Board will be called upon to review the evidence: it will constitute the chair of the department from where the accusation came, two faculty members from another department(s), and the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. A 75% majority will be required to uphold the faculty member’s decision. Should the decision of the instructor be upheld, the consequences described above will be enacted and a record of the infraction will be placed on the student’s profile in Navigate to track multiple violations.

Should a student appeal an accusation of an egregious violation, then the entire Academic Integrity Review Board will meet to review the evidence and decide whether or not to uphold the decision of the instructor. A majority must support upholding the decision. Should the decision of the instructor be upheld, the consequences described above will be enacted and a record of the infraction will be placed on the student’s profile in Navigate to track multiple violations. The student may also risk expulsion from the college should the Academic Integrity Review Board deem it appropriate for the level of egregious violation.

Should the decision of the faculty member be overturned in any of these instances, the student is absolved of guilt, the violation will not be placed on their record, and they will receive a grade for the work as if the accusation never took place. The student has the right to request a “second opinion” on the grade they receive on the work should they have evidence a prejudice exists on the assignment in question.

Special Circumstances Regarding Timing:

There are times when the timeline outlined in this policy may not be appropriate for college or life circumstances: illness, travel, scheduled breaks, etc. In such cases, all parties involved will follow the “good faith” rule to comply with the timeline as closely as possible. Should the violation occur at the end of the semester, returning students will face the consequences outlined above. The issue will need to be resolved within two weeks of the end of the semester or wait until the beginning of the semester. The returning student will receive an “I,” or “Incomplete,” grade in the interim. For non-returning students, the same process will be followed as described for “returning students.” Graduating students suspected of violation may

walk at graduation if all other graduation requirements have been met. However, they will not receive a diploma until the academic integrity matter has been resolved.