

Clarification of Expectations of Academic Conduct

The Elected Faculty Council

Unanimously Endorsed by the Elected Faculty Council on May 6, 2003

Appropriate academic conduct is the foundation for the academic environment of the university. As The University of Iowa's Code of Student Life notes,

"The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus, and in the larger community. Students are expected to exercise their freedom to learn with responsibility and to respect the general conditions conducive to such freedom."

The Code, with which each student should become familiar, continues with a list of behaviors that are not appropriate. The first of these is:

"Academic misconduct, including the acquisition of honors, awards, certification (including language proficiency) or professional endorsements, degrees, academic credits, or grades by means of cheating, plagiarism, or falsification, including forgery, with respect to any examination, paper, project, application, recommendation, transcript, or test, or registration document or by any other dishonest means whatsoever, or aiding or abetting another student to do so."

Recent technological developments have blurred the boundary between appropriate academic conduct and misconduct, and as a result, expectations of students and the faculty may have become misaligned. The intent of this document is to help clarify the message of the Student Code, and to realign student and faculty expectations of academic conduct.

Student Responsibility

The Henry B. Tippie College of Business Honor Code, Section II.A outlines student responsibilities as:

"Each student accepts personal responsibility to uphold the Honor Code upon enrollment into the Henry B. Tippie College of Business. A person who stands by and does nothing when confronted with academic dishonesty threatens the spirit and effectiveness of the principle of academic honor. It is the student's responsibility to understand the level of collaboration allowed in completing assignments. *Students should assume that they are to complete each assignment individually unless instructed otherwise by the professor. In the event that a student does not understand as to how an assignment should be completed, he or she has a duty to seek clarification from the instructor.*"

Instructor Responsibility

The Henry B. Tippie College of Business Honor Code, Section II.A outlines instructor responsibilities as:

"Tippie College students expect the faculty to support them in upholding the Honor Code. Instructors shall be responsible for defining the manner in which assignments should be completed. This should be clarified on the class syllabus and verbally, and would include group work, daily class preparation, examinations, and research."

However, the Honor Code does not give specific recommendations for communicating expectations clearly.

We believe that concrete and common statements clarifying faculty expectations on assignments, exams, syllabi and college documents serve two purposes. First, they minimize questions of academic integrity that arise from confusion. Second, they aid identification of instances of misconduct that in turn may be

addressed appropriately. Such concrete and common statements of expectations will help fulfill instructors' responsibilities regarding academic integrity in the Tippie College of Business Honor Code.

Recommendations

While the Honor Code indicates that expectations for assignments should be given on the syllabus and verbally, we recommend that the faculty communicate expectations at the same time (i.e., at each instance) and in the same way (on the assignment if it is a handout, in the document file if it is in electronic form) that the assignment is issued.

- We recommend wording like the following to address the general issue:

"I expect you to adhere to ethical principles in your academic work as set forth in the University of Iowa's Code of Student Life and the Tippie College of Business Honor Code. At a minimum, I expect no cheating, plagiarism or falsification of any work you turn in for this class. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, such things as obtaining case analyses on line, falsely claiming to have done your fair share of group work without having done so, cutting and pasting to or from documents developed by other people, sharing analyses across groups, working together or receiving help from others on individual assignments, copying on exams or using notes from prior students to complete cases or assignments. Any incident of academic dishonesty will be turned over to the College Judicial Board, which will apply the Honor Code remedies. If you have *any* questions about what is expected of you generally or on any specific assignment, please ask me."

- We recommend wording like the following appear on each individual assignment, exercise or case:

"This is an individual assignment (exercise or case). This means that you are to complete all the requirements on your own, without working with or receiving assistance from any person or source other than the materials allowed in this assignment (exercise or case) and the course's instructors and teaching assistants. All sources you use must be cited as required by the instructor."

- We recommend wording like the following for group work:

"This is a group assignment (exercise or case). This means that you are to complete the requirements in groups as assigned by the instructor, without working with or receiving assistance from any other people or sources other than group members, the materials allowed in this assignment (exercise or case) and the course's instructors and teaching assistants. All sources you use must be cited as required by the instructor. Each group should turn in one assignment (exercise or case) with the names of all group members on it. By placing your name on a group assignment, you are indicating that you have done your fair share of the work for the assignment."

For group work, we also recommend that faculty members use mechanisms to discourage "free riding" (such as peer evaluations, signed effort logs, etc.).

- It is our experience that collaborative work with separate submissions of a final product can create confusion on the part of students regarding the distinctions between and expectations of individual and group work. It may be best to avoid such statements unless there is a clear pedagogical reason to encourage joint work with separate submissions of final products and unless the format of the final product enables verification of the uniqueness of each student's final product. If such an assignment is to be made, we recommend wording like the following to communicate expectations about how students should complete it:

"This assignment (exercise or case) allows collaboration but requires separate submissions of the final product. Working with other students is allowed and encouraged. It is your responsibility, however, to make sure you understand and agree with everything submitted. To encourage such understanding, I

require separate submissions of the assignment (exercise or case) by each student, and that your submission be in your own handwriting. That includes all drawings, algebra and text. Photo-copies are not allowed.”

Additional Resources

- The Tippie College of Business Honor Code can be found at:
<http://www.biz.uiowa.edu/upo/honorcode.html>
- The University of Iowa Code of Student Life and other policies affecting students can be found at
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~vpss/policies/ii.html>
- The University of Iowa College of Engineering Center for Technical Communication has an excellent handout addressing plagiarism and how to avoid it at:
http://www.engineering.uiowa.edu/%7Ectc/docs/ctc_guides/ctc_guide_avoiding_plagiarism.html