Academic Misconduct

Glenn Puffer
Assistant Dean of Students
Montana State University-Bozeman

At Montana State University “Cheating” is but one of several examples of Academic Misconduct which are addressed in the booklet Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures for Students (http://www.montana.edu/wwwfachb/policy/acguide.html). The booklet is reviewed and revised as necessary each year, and is provided to every entering student. Additional hard copies are available from the Dean of Students, and the entire publication may be found online at http://www.montana.edu/wwwfachb/policy/acguide.html.

Definition
(http://www.montana.edu/wwwfachb/policy/acguide.html#ACADEMIC%20MISCONDUCT)
Academic Misconduct is defined as including, but not limited to, “cheating, plagiarism, forgery, falsification, facilitation or aiding academic dishonesty: multiple submission, theft of instructional materials or tests; unauthorized access to, manipulation of or tampering with laboratory equipment, experiments, computer programs, or animals without proper authorization; alteration of grades or files; misuse of research data in reporting results; use of personal relationships to gain grades or favors, or otherwise attempting to obtain grades or credit through fraudulent means.” Examples in each of these categories are provided in the Guide.

MSU Philosophy
(http://www.montana.edu/wwwfachb/policy/acguide.html#ACADEMIC%20MISCONDUCT)(same as above)
The administration, faculty and students of Montana State University believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of Higher Education. The University has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to assure the highest ethical and professional standards and behavior in the classroom” (Guide 2002, p3). The University has developed procedures that address instances of academic dishonesty. Students who violate these standards commit academic misconduct and are subject to academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions range from a simple verbal reprimand to separation from the University, even withdrawal of an academic degree.

Notification
(http://www.montana.edu/wwwfachb/policy/acguide.html#IV.%20%20ACADEMIC%20MISCONDUCT%20PROCEDURES)
Academic misconduct is almost always discovered by the instructor. When this is so the instructor is obligated under University policy to determine whether the misconduct actually occurred and to confront the student. If the instructor finds that there was academic misconduct he/she should prepare an Academic Misconduct Notification Form (AMNF) and present the form to the student. The AMNF provides for the identity of the instructor and the student; the date, time, and place of the offense; a description of the offense; and the assignment of one or more sanctions selected from those listed on the form. The original AMNF is given to the student, and copies are distributed to the instructor, the Department Head, and the Dean of Students.
**Instructor Sanctions**

Under University policy the instructor may impose one or more of five (5) sanctions including (1) an oral reprimand; (2) a written reprimand; (3) an assignment to repeat the work or an alternate assignment or test; (4) a lower or failing grade on the particular assignment or test, and; (5) a lower or failing grade in the course.

**Other Sanctions**

The instructor may, in the case of particularly egregious or repeated academic misconduct, also recommend that stronger sanctions be imposed. In this event the instructor so annotates the AMNF, providing his/her recommendation and stating his/her rationale. Sanctions beyond those authorized to the instructor must be imposed as the result of a Student Conduct Hearing and include: (1) removal of the student from the course in progress; (2) removal of the student from a major, college or program; (3) withdrawal of degree or academic credit previously bestowed; and (4) any sanction that may be imposed for violation of the Student Conduct Code section VI (Guide, p14)

**Appeal of Notice of Academic Misconduct**

A student who wishes to contest an instructor’s finding of academic misconduct may appeal to the Dean of Students by meeting with the Dean and declaring the intent to dispute the instructor’s finding. The procedures under the Student Conduct Code (Section V) will be followed in which the Dean of Students investigates the alleged academic misconduct, then brings the matter before a Student Conduct Board for adjudication. The Student Conduct Board is an impartial Board comprised of faculty, professional staff, and students who hear the evidence of the case and who (1) determine if there is sufficient evidence to support the finding of academic misconduct, and (2) if there is a finding of academic misconduct, recommend sanctions. The Dean of Students is responsible for imposing sanctions recommended by the Board.

**Appeal of Conduct Board Findings**

If the Student Conduct Board upholds the original finding of academic misconduct and recommends sanctions, the student may make a final appeal to the University Provost. The appeal to the Provost is made in accordance with Section VII of the Student Conduct Code (Guide, pp 5-6, 14-15). In the event the Board finds there was no academic misconduct the instructor may appeal the Board’s decision to the Provost. The decision of the Provost is the final decision of the University.

**Useful Links**

The Center for Academic Integrity at [http://www.academicintegrity.org/](http://www.academicintegrity.org/)

Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity, USC Santa Barbara at [http://www.id.ucsb.edu/IC/Resources/Teaching/Integrity.html](http://www.id.ucsb.edu/IC/Resources/Teaching/Integrity.html)

PlagiServe Global Academic Integrity Service at [http://www.plagiserve.com](http://www.plagiserve.com)

Academic Integrity at Princeton at [http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity](http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity)

Academic Integrity at the University of Texas at [http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/academicintegrity.html](http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/academicintegrity.html)

Policy on Academic Integrity, Rutgers New Brunswick at [http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html](http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html)
