

McCORMICK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Integrity, honor, and dignity are fundamental characteristics of the engineering profession. Engineers strive to exhibit these characteristics while using their knowledge, skills and experience to improve the world around them. By being honest, straightforward, and impartial in serving the public, their employers and clients, engineers continuously increase the excellence and prestige of the engineering profession. These principles cannot be described by an equation or an integral, but they are rooted in the curricula of the best engineering schools. Adherence to these fundamental principles, essential not only in engineering but also in our entire society, is the responsibility of the students.

Students and faculty are guided in matters of academic integrity at both the University and the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science levels, so it is the responsibility of every member of the engineering academic community to be familiar with the specific policies of our school. McCormick's procedures, described here, operate within the broader Northwestern policy framework detailed in the document *Academic Integrity, A Basic Guide*, available on the Provost's website.

Student Responsibilities

In particular, it is the responsibility of every student in the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science to be familiar with and to adhere to the Policies on Academic Integrity of both Northwestern University and the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science.

Procedures for Cases of Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity

I. INITIATION OF A COMPLAINT

- A. All cases of alleged violations of academic integrity by students in courses in the McCormick School must be referred to the appropriate Assistant or Associate Dean (AD):
- Cases involving undergraduate students are investigated by McCormick's Associate Dean for Undergraduate Engineering.
 - Cases involving students enrolled in McCormick Master's programs are investigated by McCormick's Assistant Dean for Professional Educational Programs.
 - Cases involving graduate students enrolled in The Graduate School (TGS) are investigated by McCormick's Assistant Dean for Graduate Study.

Cases should be referred within one month of the date of the alleged incident, or within one month of the date the reporting individual becomes aware of the alleged incident, whichever is later. However, no action will be taken on any case if more than one year has elapsed since the alleged incident. Once a matter has been referred to the AD, it may not be withdrawn without the AD's approval, nor may the referring faculty member resolve the case without the AD's approval.

- B. The AD shall review the facts of the alleged incident, including statements of the reporting individual and any supporting material. If the AD determines that there is cause for further investigation, he or she shall notify the student by letter of the nature of the concern that has arisen, the course in question, and the instructor. A copy of the current procedures should accompany the letter.

The student will be asked to make an appointment with the AD to discuss the case within seven working days of the date of the letter, at which time the student may present any relevant material or statements in his or her behalf. The student will have the right, prior to meeting with the AD, to request to review relevant evidence, and to discuss the matter with a faculty adviser or other individual.

If the student does not schedule a meeting to take place within seven working days, the AD may decide if a violation took place on the basis of the available evidence. The AD may, at their discretion, grant reasonable requests for an extension of this deadline.

II. MEETING WITH THE DEAN

- A. The AD has the authority to determine, based on a preponderance of the available evidence, whether a violation of academic integrity has occurred. In cases involving graduate students, the investigating Assistant Dean may consult with the relevant academic Associate Dean in reaching a decision.
- B. In meeting with the student, the AD will describe the allegation and detail the evidence provided by the instructor. At this initial meeting, the student may decline to discuss the matter and/or request that the AD defer making a determination until after a subsequent meeting between the student and the AD, at which time the student may present other relevant information or evidence. This second meeting must be requested at the initial meeting and must be scheduled for a time within seven working days of the initial meeting.
- C. After reviewing evidence and the statements made by the student in the meeting, the AD shall inform the student by letter of the finding on whether or not a violation of academic integrity has occurred, and the sanction, if any, to be imposed. If the student is not registered in McCormick, the sanctions in McCormick are limited to the instructor's decision about grading in the course. Further sanctions may be imposed by the relevant academic integrity officer in the school in which the student is registered.

III. SANCTIONS

- A. Any grade entered for a student in a course in which an allegation of academic integrity violation is pending is subject to modification after all proceedings and appeals are concluded. Should the student be found to have violated academic integrity, the course instructor is empowered, in his/her sole discretion, to determine the effect this violation will have on the student's grade in the course. Possible actions range from disregarding the incident in calculating the grade to failing the student in the course.
- B. Additional sanctions that may be imposed by the AD of the student's home school include, but are not limited to: a letter of reprimand and warning; a defined period of suspension up to one year; ineligibility for certain awards, honors or special programs; permanent exclusion from the University (noted on official transcript); revocation of an awarded degree; or any appropriate combination of these sanctions.

IV. APPEALS TO THE ACADEMIC HEARING BOARD

- A. The AD's decision and/or school-level sanctions (Section III.B) incurred as a result of the violation may be appealed to the Academic Hearing Board by filing a written notice of appeal within ten working days of the date of the letter of notification. Grade penalties within the class (Section III.A) may not be appealed. The student's written notice of appeal must state what is being appealed, whether it be the violation finding, the sanction, or both, and it must describe in detail the grounds for the appeal. The student's written

appeal should also state whether the student desires to present the appeal in person to the Academic Hearing Board.

- B. If the student so requests, he or she will be granted an opportunity to appear in person to present his or her case to the Academic Hearing Board and to hear and respond to any testimony provided by the AD or witnesses appearing before the Academic Hearing Board. Likewise, the AD may be present to hear and respond to testimony of the accused student or any witnesses appearing before the Academic Hearing Board. If the student wishes to present witnesses before the Academic Hearing Board, she or he must inform the AD at least seven working days before the appeal is to be heard of the names of the proposed witnesses and of the nature of the evidence they are prepared to present. However, the Academic Hearing Board has sole discretion to determine what witnesses other than the accused student and the AD it will hear. The Academic Hearing Board shall review the appeal as soon as practical after it has been filed.
- C. Following its review, the Academic Hearing Board may sustain or reverse the violation finding, if that portion of the AD's decision is being appealed, and may, if the finding stands, sustain or modify (but not increase) the sanction, if that portion of the decision is being appealed. The Academic Hearing Board shall inform the student by letter of its decision. The student should not communicate with Hearing Board members after the conclusion of the appeal hearing.

V. **APPEAL TO THE PROVOST**

- A. The student may appeal the Academic Hearing Board's decision within ten working days to the Provost of the University. Such appeals must be in writing and include a detailed statement setting forth the grounds for the appeal. Appeals to the Provost will be limited to alleged errors in procedures, interpretation of regulations, or alleged manifest discrepancies between the evidence and a school finding and/or sanction. The Provost will receive appeals only after a sanction has been specified for the alleged violation (see III).

VI. **CROSS-SCHOOL CASES**

- A. In instances where a student who is a degree candidate of another school is alleged to have violated academic integrity in a McCormick School course, the authority of the McCormick School will extend only to determining whether or not the alleged action constitutes a violation of academic integrity and, if so, to the imposition of a grade penalty by the instructor in the course (see Section III.A.). Findings of misconduct will be referred to the appropriate authority of the school in which the student is registered for whatever further sanction that school deems appropriate.

Analogously, the AD will be called upon to determine if further sanctions are appropriate for McCormick School students who have violated academic integrity in courses of another Northwestern school.

- B. In instances where a student who is a degree candidate of the McCormick School has been found to have violated academic integrity in a course offered by another school, the AD will notify the student in writing of the matter. The student will be requested to arrange a meeting with the AD, to take place within seven working days, at which the student present any evidence of mitigating circumstances, but not regarding the underlying question of guilt or innocence. If the student does not schedule an appointment within the allotted time, the AD may make a decision on sanctions based on the available information.

- C. The AD will inform the student in writing of any additional sanction to be imposed and of the student's right to appeal that sanction to the Academic Hearing Board.
- D. In cross-school cases, an appeal of a *finding* of misconduct should take place in the school that offers the course (*i.e.*, the school in which the finding of misconduct was made). An appeal of *sanctions* imposed by the student's home school should take place in the home school (*i.e.*, the school that has imposed the sanctions).

VII. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- A. A student may not change his or her registration or grading basis in a course once an individual with responsibility in that course has become aware of the alleged violation of academic integrity, or in the event that a finding of misconduct is made.
- B. At any stage of the proceedings described above, the student may be accompanied by a fellow student, a faculty member, or another individual of the student's choosing, but not by an attorney. This person may not, however, take part in the proceedings; the student must speak on his or her own behalf.
- C. If the student is not a native English speaker, they may request the presence of an interpreter during any of the proceedings described above. The AD will assume responsibility for finding an appropriate interpreter.
- D. Sanctions specified by the AD, as modified by the Academic Hearing Board or the Provost (if an appeal has been filed), shall take effect at the expiration of the period for appeal of a decision if an appeal has not been filed, and after a decision has been reached by the Academic Hearing Board or the Provost if an appeal has been filed. If the appeal is not granted, the sanction will be applied retroactive to the date specified by the AD, and, if necessary, current registrations may be canceled.
- E. All materials relating to an allegation of an academic integrity violation will be kept until the student has graduated or for ten years after the incident, whichever is earlier.
- F. All references to the AD in these procedures include the AD's designee if circumstances prevent the AD from participating.
- G. Electronic messages may be used to fulfill the requirements of these procedures wherever a letter is specified, and electronic versions of policy statements may be used to comply with required document transmittal.

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