

# WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## President's Procedure

<b>TITLE:</b>	Academic Integrity
<b>DIVISION:</b>	Student Services
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	Student Rights and Responsibilities
<b>REFERENCE:</b>	BP-560 Student Code of Conduct BP-562 Student Complaints and Grievances <u>Neb. Rev. Stat. §85-1511(11).</u>
<b>NUMBER:</b>	PP-561
<b>DATE OF REVIEW:</b>	November 25, 2019
<b>APPROVAL:</b>	John Harms, Interim President

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### **Purpose**

To define academic integrity (academic dishonesty), establish guidelines for the handling of alleged violations of academic integrity, and define the rights and responsibilities of students in such cases.

### **Scope**

This procedure applies to all students enrolled at Western Nebraska Community College, including high school and non-degree seeking students.

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Academic integrity forms a fundamental bond of trust between colleagues, peers, instructors, and students, and it underlies all genuine learning. At WNCC, there is no tolerance for plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form, including unacknowledged “borrowing” of proprietary material, copying answers or papers, using crib sheets or unauthorized help during exams, altering tests, or passing off someone else’s work as one’s own. A student can be accused of an academic integrity policy violation by an instructor, staff member or another student(s).

A breach of ethics or act of dishonesty can result in:

- Failure of graded material (including but not limited to, an assignment, paper, project, quiz or an exam within a course (instructor-level)
- Failure of an entire course (institutional-level)
- Suspension or expulsion from the College (institutional-level)

Any form of academic dishonesty represents a grave breach of personal integrity and of the rules governing WNCC’s community of learners. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating in any form
- Plagiarizing in any form
- Aiding someone else in cheating or plagiarizing

### **Cheating**

Cheating is defined as the giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid, assistance, or unfair advantage in any form of academic work, such as in-class quizzes and tests, take-home tests, lab assignments, problem sets, term papers, and research projects. “Unauthorized” means without the instructor’s permission.

*Common examples of cheating include:*

- Using unauthorized materials or information during a quiz or exam (e.g., material written on a “cheat sheet,” bluebook, desk, piece of clothing, etc.)
- Looking at another student’s quiz or exam (or knowingly allowing him/her to look at yours)
- Telling students in another section of the same course what questions were on an earlier exam (or willingly receiving such information from another student)
- Changing answers on a quiz or exam and claiming the changed answer was the original answer

Ordinarily, cheating also includes submitting work that counts towards a grade or degree that is not the sole product of individual effort (unless, for example, the instructor explicitly allows group work or other forms of collective or cooperative efforts). It may also mean submitting work done in a previous course in response to an assignment required in a class in which a person is currently registered.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism consists of using—WITHOUT providing proper attribution—someone else’s proprietary material in the form of:

- Words
- Ideas (even paraphrases of general ideas, if they derive from a proprietary source)
- Information
- Facts

Plagiarism also includes:

- Copying passages from any course texts or materials without giving proper attribution to the author(s)
- Using material from the Internet without providing proper acknowledgment to the Internet site.

If a student has any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, he/she must consult the instructor immediately.

## **Process for Handling Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity**

### **A. Level One Offenses (see Attachment A)**

These are offenses the instructor determines are not severe and can be addressed informally with the student(s) involved. The assignment grade does not put the student in any danger of failing the class.

#### ***Process***

1. An instructor has reason to believe that a student has violated academic integrity.
2. The instructor requests an informal meeting with the student to discuss the details of the alleged violation and the student is informed of his/her rights (see below).\* The instructor provides the student with the “Report of Alleged Violation of Academic Integrity” form (see Attachment C).
3. If, after completing the informal meeting with the student the instructor believes there is a preponderance of evidence the student violated the academic integrity policy, the instructor imposes a sanction(s). The student has the right to appeal the instructor decision.
4. The instructor informs the student that he/she has five (5) business days to meet with the Curricular Lead/designee if he/she wishes to appeal the sanction for the violation, once determined. All appeals must be in writing. If appealed, the Curricular Lead’s/designee’s decision is final. The Curricular Lead /designee will notify the instructor of the outcome.
5. The instructor will not assign a sanction until after meeting with a student, the appeal process has been exhausted, or ten (10) business days have expired.
6. The instructor informs the Dean of Students in writing of the situation and the resulting sanction or action. The Dean of Students determines if additional sanctions are necessary under other portions of the Student Code of Conduct.
7. In cases where the student declines to discuss the matter or attend a meeting with the instructor, or is unavailable for more than ten (10) business days, the instructor shall make a determination as to whether a violation of academic integrity has occurred and the appropriate sanction.

*\* In some instances for on-line students, the meeting/process may occur in a manner other than face-to-face.*

#### ***Student Rights***

1. Review the written evidence in support of the allegations.
2. Ask any questions.
3. Offer an explanation as to what occurred.
4. Present any material that would cast doubt on the accuracy of the allegation.
5. Receive a determination of the validity of the allegation without reference to any past record of misconduct.

## ***Student Responsibilities***

1. Provide truthful information regarding the allegation.
2. If appropriate, admit the violation and accept the decision of the instructor and corresponding sanctions.
3. Deny the allegation or if appropriate, deny the allegation and file an appeal.

### **B. Level Two Offenses** (see Attachment B)

These are offenses more serious in nature. The instructor assigns an F as a course grade or an F on an individual project or assignment that carries sufficient points to result in the eventual failure of the course.

#### ***Process***

1. An instructor has reason to believe that a student has violated academic integrity.
2. The instructor requests an informal meeting with the student to discuss the details of the alleged violation and the student is informed of his/her rights (see below).\* The instructor provides the student with the “Report of Alleged Violation of Academic Integrity” form (see Attachment C).
3. If, after completing the meeting with the student the instructor believes there is a preponderance of evidence that the student violated academic integrity, the instructor will inform the student of his/her intention to assign a failing grade or failure of the class and explains why that is the appropriate action to be taken. At that time, the student has the right to appeal the instructor decision. (see Attachment D)
4. A letter will be sent to the student informing him/her of the process to appeal the failing grade awarded, he/she should continue to attend class until the appeal is resolved and the student should continue to engage fully in the class by submitting assignments, participating in discussions, taking exams, etc. The instructor will inform the student that he/she has five (5) business days to a) meet with the Curricular Lead /designee and b) file an appeal for the failing grade sanction with the Dean of Instruction. All appeals must be in writing.
5. In cases where the student declines to discuss the matter or attend a meeting with the instructor, or is unavailable for more than ten (10) business days, the instructor shall make a determination as to whether a violation of academic integrity occurred and assign the failing grade or failure of the class.
6. The instructor will not assign a sanction until after meeting with a student, the appeal process has been exhausted, or ten (10) business days have expired.
7. In the rare event that a student cannot discuss the situation with the Curricular Lead /designee within the specified five (5) days, his or her right of appeal is not suspended as long as he or she has made a good-faith effort to do so. Once a student notifies the Curricular Lead /designee in writing that he or she wishes to file an appeal, no time limitations are placed upon the process for the student.

### *Academic Integrity Appeal Committee Process*

- a) An Academic Integrity Appeal Committee shall consist of the Dean of Instruction, who serves as a non-voting chairperson unless there is a tie in which case he/she casts the deciding vote, three faculty members, and either a student representative or a representation of Student Services. The three voting faculty members are initially selected by the five Curricular Leads /designees from a pool of ten faculty members (two members from each division). The faculty member of the particular division involved in the grade appeal will not be eligible to serve on the Academic Integrity Appeal Committee. The student voting member will be selected at the beginning of each academic term by the Dean of Students. If the student selected is unavailable to serve, a Student Services representative, identified at the beginning of the academic term will serve and vote.
- b) The instructor informs the Dean of Students of the situation as soon as possible and gathers information for presentation to the Dean of Instruction and the panel assembled for the appeal, if necessary. The Dean of Students meets with the student to reiterate the student's rights to an appeal and the procedures involved. The Dean of Students also determines if additional sanctions are necessary under other portions of the Student Code of Conduct.
- c) Upon receipt of the student's written appeal, the Dean of Instruction shall convene a hearing of the Academic Integrity Appeal Committee. The Committee meets **as soon as is reasonably possible** after an appeal is filed. The purpose of the Academic Integrity Appeal Committee is to determine whether an academic integrity violation has occurred and/or whether the suggested sanction should be applied.
- d) Hearings shall be conducted in private. Present will be the Dean of Instruction, committee members, the student filing the appeal if he/she so desires, *the student may have legal counsel, or another advisor, present at the hearing, but such counsel or advisor may not participate in the hearing* , and the instructor of the class in question if he/she so desires. Neither the student nor the instructor are required to be present but may elect to do so should they have additional evidence to provide and/or questions arise.
- e) The Dean of Instruction will open the meeting by stating the date, time, purpose of the proceedings, and the identity of all participants. In addition, he or she will explain the confidential nature of the meeting and that no materials are to be taken from the room. No discussions of the conversations occurring during the meeting may take place after the meeting or outside the meeting room.
- f) The student making the appeal will have five (5) minutes to provide the committee with any information he/she believed pertinent to the appeal. Any committee member or the instructor may ask questions of the student. Such questions are asked directly, unless an antagonistic or uncomfortable atmosphere develops, at which time any questions will be addressed through the Dean of Instruction.
- g) The instructor will have five minutes to provide the committee with any information he/she believes pertinent to the appeal. Any committee member or the student may ask questions of the instructor. The same rules about the nature and tone of the questions apply as in "e" above.

- h) The student making the appeal and the instructor both have the right to call witnesses whose testimony will be directly pertinent to the issues at hand, as determined and approved in advance by the Dean of Instruction. Witnesses will not be present during the committee's discussions; they will wait outside the room and be called in one at a time. After the questioning is finished, the witness will be excused from the room. Any person present in the room may ask a question of a witness to seek clarification of testimony. The same rules apply to questions as in "e" above.
- i) Following the discussions, the Committee will meet in closed session to determine a finding of: a) a violation of academic integrity occurred, and/or b) the sanction recommended by the instructor should be upheld. **A finding will be confirmed by a majority vote (2 of 3) of the committee members that day.**
- j) The Committee will provide this determination in writing to the student appealing, the instructor, the chair, and the Dean of Students.

*\*In some instances, for on-line students the meeting/process may occur in a manner other than face-to-face.*

### **Student Rights**

1. Review the written evidence in support of the alleged violation.
2. Ask any questions.
3. Offer an explanation as to what occurred.
4. Present any material that would cast doubt on the accuracy of the alleged violation.
5. Receive a determination of the validity of the allegation without reference to any past record of misconduct.

### **Student Responsibilities**

1. Provide truthful information regarding the allegation.
2. If appropriate, admit the violation and accept the decision of the instructor and sanctions.
3. Deny the allegation or if appropriate, deny the allegation and file an appeal.
4. Continue to attend class until a final decision is made.

Any questions about WNCC's academic integrity guidelines should be directed to the Dean of Students.

## **Attachment A**

### **Faculty Procedures for Addressing Academic Integrity Violations**

#### **Level One**

1. An instructor has reason to believe that a student has violated academic integrity.
2. The instructor requests a meeting with the student to discuss the details of the alleged violation, and the student is informed about the process, potential sanctions, and the student's right to appeal a determination or decision.

#### ***Steps if the student admits the violation AND accepts the sanction***

- a) If, after completing the meeting with the student and listening to the student's explanation, the instructor believes there is a preponderance of evidence that the student violated academic integrity, AND the student admits to the violation, the instructor imposes a sanction(s)—which may happen then or at a later meeting (as quickly as possible).
- b) The form "Report of Alleged Violation of Academic Integrity" (Attachment C) is completed by the instructor and both the student and the Instructor sign the form. The student is provided with a copy.
- c) A copy of this form will be forwarded to the Curricular Lead, Dean of Instruction, and Dean of Students.

#### ***Steps if the student chooses to appeal either the violation or the sanction imposed for Level One offenses:***

- a) If, after completing the meeting with the student and listening to the student's explanation, the instructor believes there is a preponderance of evidence that the student violated academic integrity, BUT the student denies the violation AND/OR disagrees with the sanction and wishes to appeal the determination or sanction, the appeal is forwarded to the Curricular Lead.
- b) The form "Report of Alleged Violation of Academic Integrity" is completed by the Instructor and both the student and the Instructor sign the form.
- c) The appeal portion of this form is completed, and a copy given to the student.
- d) The instructor informs the student that he/she has five (5) business days to meet with the Curricular Lead.
- e) The instructor attaches any pertinent documentation to the form and provides copies to both the student and the Curricular Lead.
- f) No sanction is implemented by the instructor until the appeal process is completed.

g) Student meets with the Curricular Lead who makes the final determination as to the disposition of the student's appeal. No further appeal is allowed for Level One offenses. The Curricular Lead documents, on the form, the final disposition, including his or her signature and forwards a copy of this to the instructor. The student is provided a copy as well.

h) A copy of the final decision is forwarded to the Dean of Instruction and the Dean of Students.

### ***Possible Sanctions***

Possible Level One sanctions include but are not limited to:

- A failing grade assigned for the assignment.
- A failing grade assigned for the quiz.
- A failing grade assigned for the test.

Imposed sanctions for Level One offenses must not cause the student to fail the course unless the student would most likely fail without the imposed sanction.



## **Attachment B**

### **Faculty Procedures for Addressing Academic Integrity Violations Level Two**

1. An instructor has reason to believe that a student has violated academic integrity.
2. The instructor requests a meeting with the student to discuss the details of the alleged violation and the student is informed about the process, potential sanctions, and the student's right to appeal a determination or decision.

#### ***Steps if the student admits the violation AND accepts the sanction:***

- a) If, after completing the meeting with the student and listening to the student's explanation, the instructor believes there is a preponderance of evidence that the student violated academic integrity, AND the student admits to the violation, the instructor imposes a sanction of failure of the class or a zero on an assignment, exam, or project which will result in the student failing the class.
- b) The form "Report of Alleged Violation of Academic Integrity" (Attachment C) is completed by the instructor. Both the student and the instructor must sign the form. A copy is given to the student.
- c) A copy of this form is forwarded to the Curricular Lead, Dean of Instruction, and Dean of Students.

**NOTE:** In cases where the student declines to discuss the matter or refuses to attend a meeting with the instructor, the instructor may make a determination as to whether a violation of academic integrity occurred and assign the failing grade or failure of the class.

If the sanction is applied after ten (10) business days because of the circumstances outlined above, and after the instructor has made a good faith effort to contact the student or resolve the issue, the student, the Curricular Lead, and the Dean of Students will all receive written notice that the action has been taken.

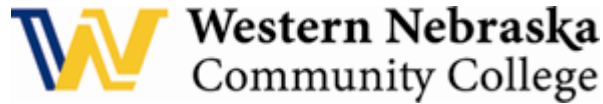
#### ***Steps if the student chooses to appeal either the violation or the sanction imposed for Level Two offenses:***

- a) If, after completing the meeting, the student denies the violation AND/OR disagrees with the sanction and wishes to appeal the allegation; the completed "Report of Alleged Violation of Academic Integrity" form is forwarded by the instructor to the Curricular Lead.
- b) The instructor gives the student the "Appeal of Violation of Academic Integrity" form (Attachment D) which informs the student that he/she has five business days to meet with the Curricular Lead to begin the appeal process. The student must then file an appeal in

writing with the Dean of Instruction within five (5) days of meeting with the Curricular Lead.

- c) The instructor attaches any pertinent documentation to the forms and provides copies to the student, the Curricular Lead, the Dean of Students, and the Dean of Instruction.
- d) No sanction may be assigned by the Instructor until this appeal process is completed.
- e) The Curricular Lead meets with the student to reiterate the student's rights to an appeal and the procedures involved. The Curricular Lead copies the form and submits a dated copy to the Dean of Instruction.
- f) The student submits any pertinent documentation and explanations to the Dean of Instruction.
- g) An appeal through the Dean of Instruction's office is limited to the question of a grade, not issues of alleged bias on the part of the instructor or facets of the instructor/student relationship prior to the academic violation.
- h) A meeting is held with the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee, the instructor, and the student to hear all evidence and arguments. Either the student or the instructor can elect not to be present.
- i) The Academic Integrity Appeals Committee then meets to determine the outcome of the appeal relating to the final course grade (whether direct by failure of the course or indirectly by the zero on the one significant course component will result in the failure of the course).
- j) A letter is sent by the Dean of Instruction to the student, the instructor, the Curricular Lead, and the Dean of Students detailing the outcome of the panel's decision.

**Attachment C**



**Report of Alleged Violation of Academic Integrity**

Student:

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Instructor:

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Class:

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Date of Discovery:

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Date of Initial Contact:

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**Nature of the offense:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Level One Offense:** addressed informally with the student(s) involved. The assignment grade does not put the student in danger of failing the class.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Level Two Offense:** the instructor assigns an F as a course grade or an F on an individual project or assignment that carries sufficient points to result in the eventual failure of the course.

**Date/Method of Instructor/Student meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of the offense (provide attachments and include copies of all electronic forms of communication with the student/s):**

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**Instructor Recommended Sanction:**

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**Student Rights**

- Review the written evidence in support of the alleged violation.
- Ask any questions.
- Offer an explanation as to what occurred.
- Present any material that would cast doubt on the accuracy of the alleged violation.
- Receive a determination of the validity of the allegation without reference to any past record of misconduct.

**Student Responsibilities**

- Provide truthful information regarding the allegation.
- If appropriate, admit the violation and accept the decision of the instructor and sanctions.
- Deny the allegation or if appropriate, deny the allegation and file an appeal.\*
- If the offense is listed as Level Two, the student should continue to attend class until a final decision is made.

\*See the Student Code of Conduct in the *Student Handbook* or visit with the Dean of Students for an explanation of this process and its requirements. This process must be initiated within five (5) business days of the meeting with the instructor. If the student does not respond to the instructor’s good faith attempt at communication within five (5) business days, the recommended sanction will be imposed.

**Student Response**

\_\_\_\_\_ I admit the violation and accept the imposed sanctions. (The recommended sanction becomes the imposed sanction at this point.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I deny the allegation and wish to appeal the instructor’s decision.

\_\_\_\_\_ I admit the violation but wish to appeal the imposed sanction.

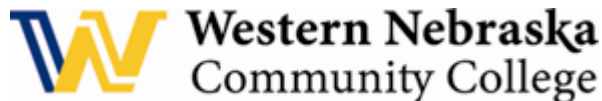
This form serves as the appeal form if the student chooses to appeal either the decision or the sanction imposed for a Level One violation only. Students who wish to appeal a decision or sanction imposed for a Level Two violation will receive the “Appeal of Violation of Academic Integrity” form.

**Curricular Lead Imposed Sanction for Level One Violation**

The Dean of Students determines whether sanctions are applicable under the Student Code of Conduct.

Student:	_____	Date:	_____
Instructor:	_____	Date:	_____
Curricular Lead:	_____	Date:	_____
Dean of Students:	_____	Date:	_____
Dean of Instruction:	_____	Date:	_____

## Attachment D



### Appeal of Violation of Academic Integrity-Level Two Offenses Only

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the Offense: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Offense:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You have elected to appeal the above named instructor's decision regarding the violation of WNCC's academic integrity policy. You are receiving this letter to notify you of the appeal process.

1. You **MUST** continue attending class, submitting assignments, participating in discussions, taking exams, and meeting all class expectations until a decision regarding your appeal has been rendered.
2. You **MUST** meet with the Curricular Lead within five (5) business days of your meeting with your instructor to notify him/her of your decision to appeal your instructor's decision regarding the alleged violation.

Curricular Lead \_\_\_\_\_  
Office number \_\_\_\_\_  
Office phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address \_\_\_\_\_

3. Your appeal must be filed in writing with the office of the Dean of Instruction.

Dean of Instruction \_\_\_\_\_  
Office location \_\_\_\_\_  
Office phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Failure to follow steps 2 and 3 above-may result in the instructor's recommendation for failure of the project/assignment and/or failure of the course being enforced.

Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_