

## **Academic Integrity Policy<sup>1</sup>** **La Salle University**

### **Purpose and mission<sup>2</sup>:**

The central academic mission of La Salle University's undergraduate programs is to maintain, as a foundation of all learning, a common, comprehensive liberal arts core which will challenge all students with courses that address the analytic process (philosophical and/or scientific); the communication process (oral and written; emitted and received); and, the historical, intellectual and creative growth of humanity. The purpose of graduate study at La Salle University is to enhance both practical and theoretical knowledge in order to augment and enrich professional competencies. All programs are designed to prepare students for informed service and progressive leadership in their chosen fields.

The mission of La Salle University underscores the importance of providing students with a values-based education that occurs in the context of an inter-faith educational community. As its basic purpose, the University promotes free search for truth by teaching students basic skills, knowledge and values that they will need to lead a life of dignity. Thus, it is through active engagement in learning that students' personal, social, and religious values may take root and foster mature, value-driven attitudes and behavior. All students and faculty who choose to become part of the La Salle University community also have a moral or ethical obligation to pursue all forms of learning with integrity, dignity, and responsibility towards others.

### **What is academic integrity?<sup>3</sup>**

Integrity is defined as "adherence to moral and ethical principles; uprightness, honesty, and sincerity." The key to academic integrity is setting personal standards for oneself and living up to those standards each day. Routinely displaying honesty, responsibility, respect for others, and fairness will serve as a model of integrity to others, the campus community, region, state, and world. One who has integrity follows moral and ethical standards even when circumstances arise that challenge those standards.

Trust is an essential trait of integrity. A lapse of trust negatively impacts our relationships with others. Who can trust someone who is dishonest or unfair? The act of learning is not a solitary venture and thus requires the scaffolding of a competent instructor or peer. Group work is rooted in trust. Team members must be able to trust that each person's contributions will enhance the group effort and instructors must trust that each student is contributing his or her fair share.

Thus, by becoming a member of La Salle University's community the individual enters an academic world where distinguished faculty, dedicated staff, and students of great potential work collaboratively to achieve and learn from one another. It is only through a strong commitment to La Salle's learning community that the student can live the moral and ethical principles that are supported and maintained by its mission. The faculty has a special responsibility to model appropriate academic integrity and to ensure that these policies are communicated, understood, and maintained at all times.

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<sup>1</sup> Approved by University Academic Affairs Committee 11/11/14

<sup>2</sup> Abstracted from the La Salle University mission statement

<sup>3</sup> Sources used: UC Davis Web site (<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/academic-integrity.html>), Webster's New World Dictionary. The Duke University site was used at the time of the AIP's creation, but Duke transitioned to an honor code in 2007 (<http://integrity.duke.edu/new.html>).

## Why have an Academic Integrity Policy?<sup>4</sup>

All too frequently academic integrity and plagiarism policies are regarded as disciplinary tools employed to ferret out misconduct. It is important, then, to recognize the positive implications of such a policy for students, faculty, and the campus as a whole.

### Fairness

A policy that applies to all students and faculty can provide the reassurance that everyone on campus is held to the same ethical standards. Students can be confident that their attempts to present honest work are not undermined by the dishonest work of others. Faculty may find comfort in the knowledge that they are not alone in aggressively responding to instances of academic dishonesty. Rather, they are a part of a community endeavor to maintain high standards of integrity.

### Benefits for students

This policy provides a forum through which students can be educated about the nature of academic integrity. By discouraging “passive” methods of learning and research, the policy can create an atmosphere that promotes active understanding and engagement, thus encouraging students to develop intellectually.

### Benefits for faculty

The policy creates an optimal learning environment because it encourages mutual respect and high standards among all members of the classroom learning community. This enables faculty to fulfill course goals without the need for establishing individual academic integrity policies.

### Benefits for the La Salle Community

By promoting academic integrity and ethical behavior in the classroom, the policy helps to ensure an environment that fosters trust, mutual respect, and love of learning.

## Academic Dishonesty

*“If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”*

*Isaac Newton*

Often, when we develop ideas, they are not free of the effects and influences of others’ previous findings, claims, and analyses. This suggests that much of the thinking that we do in a university setting is motivated, shaped, and focused in response to work that may have been published or stated by others. Usually, our ideas evolve in response to reading others’ writings. We base research on earlier scholarship and communication with others.<sup>5</sup> We give credit where credit is due. Therefore, we cite the intellectual contributions of others.

Academic Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

### Cheating

Cheating is the act of wrongly using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or the ideas or work of another. This includes giving or receiving unauthorized aid in the

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<sup>4</sup> La Salle University English Department Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Honesty; La Salle University Graduate Psychology student handbook.

<sup>5</sup> Duke University: (<http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/>)

completion of such things as written assignments, quizzes, or tests. Submitting the same written work for two different courses qualifies as another form of cheating.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of other people's ideas, both written and unwritten.<sup>6</sup> Scholarly authors generously acknowledge their debts to predecessors by carefully giving credit to each source. Whenever one draws on another's work, one must specify what has been borrowed - whether facts, opinions, or quotations - and its source. Using another person's ideas or expressions in writing without acknowledging the source constitutes plagiarism. Derived from the Latin *plagiarius* ("kidnapper"), plagiarism refers to a form of intellectual theft. In short, to plagiarize is to give the impression that the author wrote or thought something that in fact was borrowed from someone else, and to do so is a violation of professional ethics. (Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: MLA, 1998: 151).

### *Avoiding Plagiarism*

Since plagiarism can be a temptation for those students who are facing an imminent deadline, students can use the following procedures that may help to ensure a project is properly documented.

- Make sure you understand the material you are using before incorporating it into your work.
- Avoid relying too heavily on the ideas of others.
- Make sure you know how to cite correctly. This includes Internet-based sources as well as traditional scholarly works.
- Talk to a librarian and attend library instruction workshops.
- *Do not use* Internet "paper mills."

This is what must be referenced:

- Direct quotes
- Paraphrasing
- Ideas acquired via reading, conversation, or correspondence
- Statistics and data that are not yours

### **Cooperative or Group Learning**

When group projects or cooperative learning activities require collaboration, students must understand clearly what is proper and improper cooperation and collaboration and how individuals are expected to contribute to the project.<sup>7</sup> If a group member plagiarizes, the entire group may be held accountable. Concern about copying must be dealt with as soon as plagiarism is suspected. Related to plagiarism is the fact that some students may over-rely on other group members to do the majority of the work while they all receive the same mark.<sup>8</sup> To ensure fairness, faculty should develop a system of communication whereby students have an opportunity to express their concerns.

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<sup>6</sup> National Louis University. <http://www3.nl.edu/library/Tutorials/avoidingplagiarism.cfm>

<sup>7</sup> *Strategies for Avoiding Plagiarism* - Westmont College -

[http://www.westmont.edu/offices/registrar/academic\\_policies/academic-dishonesty.html](http://www.westmont.edu/offices/registrar/academic_policies/academic-dishonesty.html)

<sup>8</sup> *Designing Assessment Tasks to Minimize Plagiarism*, University of Wollongong, Australia - <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/teaching/goodpractice/UOW008507.html>

## Academic Integrity Violation Procedures

**Step 1.** When a faculty member suspects an academic integrity violation, the faculty member must discuss the suspected violation with the student within one calendar week. This discussion must take place through face-to-face, telephone, or electronic (e.g., Skype) means. Email is *not* an appropriate medium through which to discuss an alleged academic integrity violation.

**Step 2.** If, after the discussion with the student, the faculty member believes there to be an academic integrity violation, the faculty member will file a written Academic Dishonesty Report (ADR) within one calendar week of the discussion with the student. The ADR prepared by the faculty member must contain the following:

- a. Date of the ADR, name of instructor, instructor's department/school, name of student accused of committing the academic integrity violation, student's major/school, date of the violation, and place of the violation.
- b. A written summary of the incident, fully detailing the academic integrity violation.
- c. Evidence of the academic integrity violation. In the case where other students have reported the academic violation to the instructor, the instructor will summarize these accusations and evidence gathered. In the case where the instructor has physical evidence of the violation, the evidence should be attached to the ADR.

The ADR will be mailed to the student to his/her home address and campus address (if any). Email in this instance is not an appropriate form of transmittal. A copy of the ADR also must be sent by the faculty member to the Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs, to the faculty member's Department Chair, and to the Director of the Program in which the violation occurred.

**Step 3.** The student who has been accused of the academic integrity violation has one calendar week from the date that the faculty member's ADR is received to send a rebuttal to the faculty member making the accusation.

**Step 4.** After receipt of the student's rebuttal, the faculty member has one calendar week to make a final judgment as to whether an academic integrity violation has occurred. In making a final judgment, the faculty member should prepare a written response to the student's rebuttal. If the faculty member continues to believe an academic integrity violation occurred, the faculty member may choose to impose one or more of the following sanctions on the student. The choice of sanction(s) will necessarily be matched to the number of previous violations and to the level of the infraction in the faculty member's judgment.

- a. A reduction in grade recorded for the assignment/test.
- b. A zero recorded for the assignment/test.
- c. An "F" grade assigned for the course.

In some Programs, a sanction for an academic integrity violation might result in dismissal from the Program and from the University. The student should consult program information in the catalog, Program Handbook, and course syllabus for more details.

If the faculty member recommends a sanction other than one of those specified in Step 4 (a-c), each of the stages (i.e., 1 through 5) described below in Step 5 *must* be followed.

In determining the sanction(s), the faculty member will contact the Assistant Provost to ascertain whether prior ADRs have been filed on this student.

The faculty member's final judgment and sanction(s) will be communicated to the student in writing within one calendar week of the final decision through a hard copy letter *and* via email with a delivered receipt and a read receipt. The faculty member's ADR, the student's rebuttal, and the faculty member's response to the rebuttal will be sent by the faculty member within one calendar week to the office of the Dean of the School in which the academic integrity violation occurred, the office of the department Chair in which the academic integrity violation occurred, the student's academic advisor, and the Assistant Provost.

**Step 5.** Students accused of academic integrity violations are protected by certain rights and privileges described below.

**Individual Rights:** Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, every registered student has the right to review his or her educational records, which in this case, include records pertaining to academic integrity violations. After reviewing his or her records, the student has a right to attach an explanatory note to academic integrity ADRs that are contained in that file. The student also has a right to request that his/her records be amended if they are inaccurate, misleading, or violate personal privacy or other rights. If the student's request is denied, the student is entitled to a hearing according to established University procedures.

If the student believes that the charge of academic dishonesty or the sanctions imposed as a result of an alleged academic integrity violation are unfounded, unfair, or based on instructor bias, whimsy, or caprice, the student may appeal the faculty member's decision within two weeks of the date of the faculty member's final judgment and sanction(s) following the steps outlined below.

1. If dissatisfied with the instructor's decision, the student may appeal to the department Chair of the relevant department who has assigned the faculty member to the course in which the violation occurred. The Chair will consider the evidence presented in the ADR, the student's written appeal, and the instructor's written response to the appeal. The Chair may confer with the student accused of having committed an academic integrity violation and the member of the faculty who brought the charge. The department Chair will respond in writing to the student and instructor within two weeks of receiving all the evidence in the case and forward a copy of her/his response to the Dean's office in which the violation occurred.
2. If dissatisfied with the department Chair's decision, the student may appeal within two weeks of the Chair's decision to the Dean of the School in which the academic integrity violation occurred. The Dean will consider the evidence presented in the ADR, the student's written appeal, the instructor's written response to the appeal, and the Chair's response. The Dean may confer with the student accused of having committed an academic integrity violation, the faculty member who brought the charge, and/or the Chair. The Dean will respond in writing to the department Chair, student, and instructor within two weeks of receiving all the evidence in the case and forward a copy of that ADR, reports from the Instructor and Chair, and her/his response to the Assistant Provost.
3. If dissatisfied with the decision of the Dean, the student may appeal to the Provost within two weeks of the Dean's decision. The Provost will consider the evidence presented in the ADR, the student's written appeal, the instructor's written response to the appeal, the Chair's

response, and the Dean's response. The Provost may confer with the student accused of having committed an academic integrity violation, the faculty member who brought the charge, the Chair, and/or the Dean. Recommendations for further action will be made by the Provost. The Provost will respond in writing to the Dean, department Chair, faculty member, and student within two weeks of receiving all the evidence in the case. The Provost represents the final appeal in the process.

The only exception to Steps 1-3 is if the faculty member, Chair, or Dean recommends a sanction of suspension or dismissal. If suspension or dismissal is recommended, the violation will be appealed to the University Academic Integrity Violation Appeals Committee prior to consideration by the Provost.

4. The Appeals Committee is convened *only* for a recommendation other than that specified in Step 4 (a-c). The Appeals Committee will be convened by the Provost. The Appeals Committee will be composed of six faculty members and/or academic administrators, all chosen by the Provost. Of the six members of the Appeals Committee, there will be at least one member from each of the three Schools. Additionally, of the six members, three will be members of the faculty. The following individuals will be excluded from membership on the Appeals Committee: the faculty member who made the accusation of the academic integrity violation, the Chair associated with the student's program of study/major, the Chair in which the violation occurred, and the Dean of the School in which the violation occurred. Once convened, the members will choose a chair. The Chair of the Appeals Committee, typically a member of the faculty, will be charged with convening the group and presenting both sides of the case. The Chair of the Appeals Committee is to confer with the student accused of having committed an academic integrity violation and the member of the faculty who brought the charge and may confer with the relevant department Chair and/or Dean. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will gather information from the student, faculty member, and other relevant sources for the purpose of reporting this information to the Appeals Committee. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will also provide an overview of information gathered from meetings with the student charged with the academic integrity violation, the faculty member who made the charge, and other relevant sources. Copies of the original ADR prepared by the faculty member, the student's response, and the subsequent responses from the faculty member, department Chair, and Dean will be reviewed by Appeals Committee members during this meeting. The Appeals Committee meeting will convene within a reasonable amount of time (depending on circumstances, three or four weeks) after receiving notice. If necessary, the chair of the Appeals Committee may request an extension from the Provost. Recommendations for further action will be made by the Appeals Committee by majority vote. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will respond in writing to the Dean, department Chair, faculty member, student, and Provost within two weeks of receiving all the evidence in the case.
5. Once the Provost receives the report from the Appeals Committee, s/he will confer with the student accused of having committed an academic integrity violation, the member of the faculty who brought the charge, the department Chair, and/or Dean. Following these discussions, the Provost will respond in writing to the Chair of the Appeals Committee, the Dean, department Chair, the Director of the student's program, faculty member, and student within two weeks of receiving all the evidence in the case and forward a copy of her/his report to the Assistant Dean in the School where the violation occurred. If the student is dismissed from the University, the Provost will communicate that sanction in writing to the Registrar's office. The Provost represents the final step in the process and determines the ultimate sanction.