

Academic Integrity Policy

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Academic Integrity

Integrity in academics is a fundamental principle at Heartland Community College (HCC) and the world in which we live; therefore, is essential to the credibility of the College's educational programs. It is important that all credit and recognition earned at this institution reflect the honest work of each individual. Academic Integrity protects the value of your educational achievement at Heartland Community College. Integrity, respect and honest achievement are necessary principles for an educated person, and the College is committed to helping students achieve these ideals through development and growth. The College therefore views any act of academic dishonesty as a serious offense against the HCC community, which includes all students and staff.

Heartland Honor Code: In the continuous pursuit of excellence, the HCC community is dedicated to the principles of integrity, respect, and honest achievement. As a member of this community, we each have the responsibility to uphold these ideals with the expectation they be upheld by others.

Student Validation of Work: The signing of a student's name, whether manual or electronic, will declare that the product being signed is the student's own work completed according to instructor guidelines and rules.

Academic Integrity Is Promoted When Students:

- **Are aware of faculty and college policies.** It is vital that students are knowledgeable about the parameters set forth for each assignment, as well as the policies in the HCC Catalog and Student Handbook. Unfamiliarity with this information will not excuse the student of the consequences.
- **Focus on the process of learning.** Mastering the material and the process of learning are more important than having a "grade-only" or a "succeed at whatever cost" mentality. This mentality can lead to short term gains with long term consequences.
- **Employ good time management and study skill techniques.** Poor time management, trying to take on too much in one semester, and ineffective study skills often lead to lack of preparation and an inability to meet deadlines. Acts of academic dishonesty are often desperate attempts to cover-up for lack of time and preparation.

Promoting Academic Integrity:

- **Seek help.** Free services are available. If you are overwhelmed by course content, meet with the faculty member to discuss your concerns. Heartland also provides free tutoring, free help with papers at the Writing Center, and on-campus workshops in time-management and study skills. Contact the Academic Support Center for more information.
- **Familiarize yourself with the policies.** Policies established by each faculty member are most often found in the course syllabus; the College policies are found in the HCC Catalog and Student Handbook.

- **Communicate upfront.** Collaborate only when it is permitted by that faculty member, and maintain the HCC Academic Integrity standards if academic dishonesty is suggested. Let study partners know where you stand on issues of academic integrity.
- **Improve time-management and study skills.** Schedule adequate time for studying and writing papers. Keep a balance between school, work, family, and extra-curricular activities.
- **Withdraw from the course.** If you are doing poorly in a course or if a crisis has caused you to fall too far behind, first consider talking to your instructor or a tutor. Also, consult with your academic advisor about the withdrawal date, and to discuss your questions and concerns. Don't ever consider academic dishonesty as an option to try to achieve your goals.
- **Reexamine goals.** HCC offers free career counseling through Enrollment Services to help you determine the best use of your interests and abilities. Know that family and friends may try to influence you, but the choice of your future is ultimately up to you.

Violations of Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, the following:

Misrepresentation of Data:

- Fabricating data or deliberately presenting in an assignment data that was not obtained in accordance with assigned guidelines for data collection or generation;
- Providing an inaccurate account of the method used in collecting/gathering data.

Falsification of Academic Records or Documents:

- Altering without proper authorization any documents affecting academic records;
- Forging signatures of authorization;
- Falsifying information on an official academic document such as a grade report, ID card, letter of permission, a document meant to exempt a student from an academic requirement, or any other document pertaining to academic requirements.

Cheating:

- Any unauthorized use of notes, study aids or information from class work or examination from another student;
- Surreptitiously obtaining test information prior to taking that exam;
- Altering graded work and then resubmitting it for a grade;
- Altering or destroying grade records;
- Allowing another person to take an exam in one's place;
- Submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without obtaining prior permission from the course instructors involved.

Aiding Cheating or Other Acts of Academic Dishonesty:

- Providing material or information with the knowledge that it will be used improperly;
- Any actions that intentionally form an unfair advantage over fellow students' work;
- Postponing the taking of an exam by reporting an untrue circumstance (illness, emergency, etc.);
- Developing relationships with college personnel to obtain information or an advantage not provided to all students.
- Falsifying information that would be used to acquire privileges such as obtaining an incomplete for a course.

Plagiarism:

- Presenting as one's own work ideas or information that are not considered to be common knowledge;
- Representations or words of another person without customary and proper acknowledgement of that authorship or collaboration;

To learn more about the definition and scope of plagiarism, please see your instructor or a Heartland librarian. Unfamiliarity of this term will not excuse a student from the penalties of such conduct.

Unauthorized Access to Computerized Academic or Administrative Records or Systems:

- Viewing or altering the College's computer records without authorization;
- Copying or modifying the College's computer programs or systems without authorization;
- Releasing or dispensing information gained through unauthorized access;
- Interfering with the use or availability of computer systems or information;
- Using College computing resources to illegally obtain or distribute copyrighted material;
- At locations where College-sponsored activities are held, the unauthorized use, viewing, copying, or altering of other institutions' computer records, systems, or programs is in violation of academic integrity.

Witnessing Academic Dishonesty: If you become aware of an issue involving academic dishonesty, you are encouraged to inform your instructor, an advisor, or other appropriate HCC staff. Your concern will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Your action or inaction about academic dishonesty has consequences either way. The HCC Community encourages each student to choose to promote honesty.

Disciplinary Procedures: Consequences for violation of academic integrity vary from individual course sanctions up to expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the expectations of academic integrity that each instructor presents in the syllabus and all other course materials. Ignorance of these policies does not excuse a violation. Basic due process protections for students are outlined in the HCC Catalog and Student Handbook under Student Disciplinary Procedures and Student Appeals Procedures and should be consulted regarding issues of academic integrity. Acts of academic dishonesty may impact both the student and the College well into the future. If you have questions about academic integrity issues, consult an advisor, instructor, or librarian.

Acknowledgments

The section Aiding Cheating and Other Acts of Dishonesty are adapted from Baruch College Academic Integrity Policy and the ISU Disciplinary Guide for Faculty. The section Student Validation of Work is taken from the ISU Disciplinary Guide for Faculty. The sections, Academic Integrity is Promoted When Students, Promoting Academic Integrity, and Witnessing Academic Dishonesty, are adapted from Baruch College Academic Integrity Policy.

Works Consulted

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Hexam, Irving. "Items of Academic Interest." *The Plague of Plagiarism*. n.p. 1999. Web. 21 Sept. 2011.

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