Honor Council Orientation
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Uh, Mom? Remember that paper you wrote for me about nuclear reactors? What does it mean when the big, red "meltdown" light is flashing?

Smooth move.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
SMALL INVESTMENT. LIFETIME RETURNS.

A Message from SHA - The Student Honor Association

Historical Role of Honor Codes

- Promote Academic Honesty
  - Uphold mutual respect
  - Uphold moral integrity
What Does Academic Integrity Include?

• “True academic integrity means that there is honesty in all matters relating to endeavors of the academic environment” (p. 1122)

  ▸ Teaching and learning of knowledge and skills
  ▸ Discovery and dissemination of new knowledge
  ▸ In health care professional education it includes rendering diagnoses, administering treatment, communicating with patients or clients
  ▸ “...Any service activity in the community made possible by the skills and qualifications of one employed or enrolled in a program of the academy is an extension of that academy.” (p. 1122)

Why Does Academic Integrity Matter?

- Correlation between frequency of cheating in college and work place dishonesty (Nonis and Owens Swift, 2001)

- Ethical Behavior, Professionalism, and Academic Integrity are essential in the Health Care Professions (Uphold Standards and Ethics/Codes of Conduct)

- The reputation of the University depends on ability to assure ourselves, and the outside world, that our faculty, staff, and students observe the very highest standards of ethical behavior in their work, service, research, patient care, and learning (adapted from Griffith University. Why academic integrity matters. Available at http://www.griffith.edu.au/academic-integrity/policy-governance/why-academic-integrity-matters. Accessed October 3, 2014).

- Matter of fundamental fairness.

Reasons for Academic Dishonesty

- Loss of status among peers
- Opinion that others get away with cheating
- Lack of understanding/knowledge of academic dishonesty institutional policies
- Pressure to succeed academically
- Limited time to study
- Negative attitudes toward assignment/class
- Poor understanding of plagiarism & referencing
- Ability to pay back debt if they fail

Theart, C.J. & Smit, I., 2012, 'The status of academic integrity amongst nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape', Curationis 35(1), Art. #27, 8 pages. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/curationis.v35i1.27
UTHSC Honor Code

LOCATION
Centerscope, Student Handbook, available at www.uthsc.edu/centerscope, p. 137

Office of Student Life website
www.uthsc.edu/studentlive/honorcode.php
- Procedures
- Hearing Guidelines
- Honor Code Pledge
- Powerpoint Presentation
Allegations of Infractions must be handled in a sensitive, fair, and CONFIDENTIAL manner!
Most Commonly Cited Types of Infractions

- Cheating on tests/exams
- Improper assistance with oral, written or lab assignments
- Improper handling/falsification of laboratory data
- Improper handling of patient data, falsification of records (falsification can be unauthorized or intentional invention of data, citation, information, or academic/clinical exercise)
- Misuse of Course Materials
Other Infractions

- Willful neglect of clinical duties
- Falsely & maliciously accusing another student of honor code violations
- Revealing confidential information related to Honor Court matters
- Failing to report infractions by other students
- Plagiarism
Can Include:
- Fraudulent record entries,
- Forgery of faculty signatures,
- Lying to patients,
- Lying to faculty to obtain an advantage in a clinical setting,

any of the many aspects of patient care that would deviate from the accepted standard of care within the profession, either as defined in a state practice act or by the commonly accepted practices of the profession, are now academic violations.

- Note: May be unprofessional conduct but still linked to student enrolled in a specific academic program.
Note – Campus now uses SafeAssign Anti-Plagiarism Software

- Students can prescreen papers before submission
- Faculty will be provided with guidelines to interpret reports
- Honor Council will also receive guidelines to avoid misunderstandings
Informal Reports

- Suspicious Activity can be informally reported to a member of the College Honor Council
- Council member will notify the Honor Council President of the suspicious activity
- Member will then counsel suspected student and advise them that continued behavior could lead to formal complaint
Procedure for Formal Complaint

1. Complaint may be filed by student, faculty, or staff – this must be written, signed and presented to member of honor council

2. Complaints forwarded to President of Honor Council

3. President asks one of the council members to investigate the facts and determine whether there is reason to believe a violation has occurred (probable cause)
Notice of Charge

- If investigation suggests that a full hearing is warranted, President issues ‘Notice of Charge’ to accused student; if no further action deemed necessary, charge dismissed

- Identity of the accuser remains confidential during investigation. If Notice of Charge is filed, accused student has right to request name of person filing charge.
Role of Investigator

- If requested by president, member of honor council must carry out investigation and report back to president quickly (within 7 days barring holidays, closings).
- If investigator recommends a formal charge, s/he must present charge at the College or University Honor Court hearing.
- If presenting charge, s/he cannot also vote during proceedings.
Rights of Accused

• Notice of Charge must be specific, listing charges, possible penalties and student’s rights. Student must be advised who/how to contact someone to request a hearing and must be informed of the deadline to request a hearing.

• Has the right to a faculty advisor.
Accused has 5 working days to respond to college honor council president indicating:

- Intent to PLEAD GUILTY and ACCEPT PENALTY from dean, or
- Intent to refute charge and request a hearing using one of 3 available options
Honor Code Student Judicial Process

- Alleged Violation
- Report to HC President, Investigator Assigned
- Investigator Reviews case

  - Student advised, given options
    - Pleading Guilty: STOP
    - Refutes Charge
      - Student chooses hearing option: STOP
      - STOP
Options for Hearings

**Uniform Administrative Procedures**
Chancellor appoints hearing officer, campus counsel prosecutes, student can have lawyer (his/her expense)

**College Honor Court**
President of college HC presides and follows procedures dictated by college; no lawyers but advisor can participate

**University Honor Court**
Each college provides 2 nominees and VCAFSA appoints panel of 7, with 2 from college of accused; advisor but not lawyer
Right to Impartial Hearing

- For College and University Honor Courts, accused can request removal of members deemed biased; students on HC must recuse themselves if they cannot be impartial.
- Honor Council president adjudicates requests relating to College Honor Court. VCAFSA or chair of panel reviews requests relating to University Honor Court.
Hearing Guidelines

• Hearing led by students - faculty and administrators, including advisors, should not participate directly except to testify or advise on process.

• Witnesses cannot be compelled to participate; written or recorded testimony may be considered.

• Sharing of evidence should be limited and only by encrypted email.
• Hearing held as soon as possible.
• Panel members review all relevant documents prior to hearing
• Panel pre-meeting held to discuss hearing process, including who can testify;
• Court not bound by strict legal rules
• Accused hears all evidence and can question witnesses; can request other witnesses and provide additional evidence
• Hearing is recorded
• Hearing closed to public - parents/other supporters cannot attend
• Accused cannot participate in deliberations
• Guilty verdict rendered if *preponderance of evidence supports* accusation
• Votes are recorded; majority required for any decision; quorum required is 5
• Outcomes announced to those involved in case (accusers, witnesses, etc.)
• The formal definition is: A *preponderance of evidence* presented at a hearing means such evidence as, when considered and compared with that opposed to it, has more convincing force and produces in the mind of the person or persons hearing the case, *the belief that the alleged act of misconduct more likely occurred than not.*

• *In other words, is it more likely than not that the student did violate a university policy based on the evidence presented.* The preponderance of the evidence is the standard of proof used in civil matters.

Honor Code Hearing Process

Hearing Chair reads charge & reviews process

Investigator outlines case

Accused makes statement

Witnesses for prosecution called and questioned

Witnesses for defense called and questioned

Panel asks accused final questions

Investigator makes final statement

Accused makes final statement

Panel Deliberates, Investigator cannot vote
Honor Code Hearing Process

Presiding Officer informs Accused, Dean and other hearing participants; delivers all evidence & recordings to Student Affairs

Panel Decision Made

Dean assigns Penalty, informs Accused & Student Affairs

Student Accepts or Appeals

Penalty appealed to Chancellor for Final Decision

Guilty

Not guilty, no further action
Appeal Process

• Appeal of a Dean’s action must be filed with the Chancellor, in writing, within 10 days of receipt of his/her decision. Student has the burden of proving the recommendation was unfair.

• Chancellor or designee must respond in 10 working days after receipt of appeal; his/her decision is final.
• Court members can suggest penalty, but final decision determined by the college Dean; penalty should match the severity of the infraction
• Dean (or designee) must respond within 10 days of receipt of a hearing decision
Responsibilities of Council

- Accusations **must** be investigated promptly
- Confidentiality **must** be maintained – reputations are difficult to rebuild
- Members should seek counsel from faculty advisors, administrators, classmates as needed (ex. Review a tutorial on plagiarism if case involves this charge)/http://www.plagiarism.org/
Important Reminders

✓ Your job is vital to health/reputation of institution – You must be unbiased.

✓ Effectiveness in role requires you to be dispassionate and thorough.

✓ Hearings & Information must remain confidential.

✓ You must be fair.
Can you give us some suggestions for handling the hearings?

Council should discuss how they want to handle testimony beforehand – you should determine who will speak and what is relevant. You should set the ground rules for anyone coming before you and halt the hearing if participants break these rules.
Frequently Asked Questions

Question

Do all students sign the UTHSC Honor Code Pledge?

Yes, all students, upon first-time matriculation, are required to sign the UTHSC Honor Code Pledge. The signed Pledge becomes part of the student’s official academic record, and is maintained in the Registrar’s Office.
In an academic course, who has the sole responsibility for setting the parameters of the academic assignments and methods of examination?

The Instructor of Record/Instructors for the academic course.
Frequently Asked Questions

**Question**

What role should faculty play at hearings?

How do we prevent retaliation against accusers?

**Answer**

Their role is as an advisor or as someone providing testimony, not as a prosecutor or defense lawyer.

These matters are confidential and those spreading rumors are in violation of the honor code. Enforce this principle.
Is a student’s honor code violation record kept separately from the academic records (university transcript, admissions application)?

Yes, a student’s honor code record and documents are not part of the student’s official academic record maintained by the Registrar. Student Honor Code records are kept in a separate location by the Associate VC for Student Affairs.
As part of our Honor Council role, are we legally allowed to review an accused’s academic records related to the charge?

Yes, FERPA allows University officials and officials of agencies acting on behalf of the university with "legitimate educational interest" to access personally identifiable education records. A University official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); contractors, consultants, volunteers and other outside parties to whom the institution has outsourced institutional services or functions instead of using University employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.
Let's Review
The Quest for “The Acceptable” …

Video: Acceptable/Unacceptable

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSfmWIIEhSg

Video Source: University of Alberta's Academic Integrity Video Series. Produced by the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, University of Alberta and Townend Films. Funded in part by Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funds (TLEF). Visit their website!

See also: International Center for Academic Integrity. Rutland Institute for Ethics. Clemson University.

THANK YOU!