

Undergraduate Academic Policy

Standards of Academic Conduct

Traditional B.S.N. and Accelerated B.S.N.

The College has two codes of conduct: one for academic conduct and one for student conduct.

A student may be disciplined or dismissed from the nursing program for either academic misconduct or student misconduct. The standards of academic conduct address meeting established academic criteria and behavioral integrity in performing the academic work of the College. The standards of student conduct relate to matters outside the context of academic courses. The Student Conduct Policy can be found in the Research College of Nursing Guide to Student Life.

Honesty and integrity are prerequisites to academic life and more specifically, to the practice of nursing. Honesty is defined as being truthful, free of deceit and having integrity (Webster, 1976). Integrity is defined as utter honesty and adherence to a code of values (Webster, 1976). Integrity also encompasses "being truthful, avoiding acts of cheating, fraud or outright lying, and refusing to engage in deception or false representation in practice" (Hoyer, Booth, Spelman & Richardson, 1991, p. 171). Professional integrity in nursing is reflected in the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code for Nurses (2001), ANA Standards of Professional Nursing Practice and Performance (1991).

Nursing practice is further guided by institutional standards. Nursing students must adhere to both institutional and professional standards in the classroom, clinical sites, and the community to meet the College's standards of conduct.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a breach of honesty or integrity and standards. Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to the following:

1. Cheating: giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in any assignment.
2. Plagiarism: the use of ideas, language or work of another without sufficient acknowledgment that the material is not one's own or submission of the work of another, whether altered or unaltered, as one's own. Students are to be guided by the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.
3. Manipulation or alteration of another student's or faculty's academic work.
4. Unauthorized use, removal, concealment or defacement of library, Learning Resource Center or faculty resources, e.g., books, equipment, files, papers, tests.
5. Submitting the same work or portions of work for more than one class without prior written approval of faculty.
6. Collusion: assisting another student in an act of dishonesty.
7. Lying: conveying any untruth either verbal or written.
8. Disregarding the well-being and needs of patients: acts of commission or omission that could adversely affect the patient, e.g., medication errors, failure to provide safe appropriate care, failure to follow supervisor/faculty instructions for care, breach of client confidentiality.

Sanctions imposed by faculty for academic misconduct include but are not limited to:

1. Written notification of the student's act of academic misconduct and potential consequences placed in the student's file.
2. Giving a "0" (no points) for a test, assignment or paper.
3. Giving a failing course grade.
4. Recommending dismissal from the program.

Resolution of Situations of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct issues may be resolved either informally or formally at the discretion of the faculty. Face to face meetings to resolve academic misconduct issues are the preferred method. However, meetings may be conducted using speakerphone or other electronic transmission methods for students who are unable to participate in a face to face meeting.

Informal Resolution:

The faculty should request a meeting with the student suspected of dishonesty and inform him or her of the exact nature of the perceived problem.

1. The student should be informed that the meeting is not mandatory, but if the student refuses to meet the matter may be referred for formal resolution. The student should also be informed that he or she may request formal resolution.
2. It is recommended that another faculty member be present at the meeting as a witness.
3. If the student admits dishonesty, he or she should agree to the penalty selected by the faculty. This agreement must be obtained in writing and a copy placed in the student's academic file.
4. Faculty members have the right to impose sanctions described in the Academic Misconduct Policy in the College Catalog.
5. A student who receives a failing course grade as a result of a faculty imposed sanction for academic misconduct may appeal the failing course grade through the Academic Appeal process as described in the College Catalog.

Formal Resolution:

1. The faculty and/or student(s) notify the chair of the Academic Integrity Review Committee (AIRC) that it is believed academic misconduct has occurred and request that the AIRC meet to hear evidence. To assure credibility of charges, students may not report academic misconduct anonymously.
2. Within three (3) College working days the faculty and/or student(s) submit a written description of the alleged incident and any evidence to the chair of the committee.
3. Within three (3) College working days the chair of the committee notifies committee members that a hearing is pending.
4. The involved student(s) will be notified of the charges by letter sent to the most recent address of record. The letter will contain a description of the charges and referral to this policy.
5. The chair of the committee establishes a date for the hearing and notifies all parties involved.
6. The hearing will be held within ten (10) College working days of the initial complaint.
7. Prior to the hearing, the chair of the committee will distribute copies of the description of the incident and any evidence to committee members and the involved student(s).
8. All evidence and discussion presented at the hearing is confidential.
9. All parties choosing to present evidence to the committee will be heard individually and committee members will be given an opportunity to seek clarification from all parties.
10. The accused student(s) may choose a peer (student) or faculty support person to help them prepare for the hearing and to accompany them to the hearing. This person is present for support only and may not contribute to the hearing process.

11. When all parties have been heard, the committee will discuss the evidence presented and determine, by majority vote, to dismiss the charges or to impose a sanction(s).
12. If a sanction is to be imposed, the committee will discuss the options and by majority vote, select an appropriate sanction(s). The committee may review the student's academic record for past academic misconduct. Evidence of past academic misconduct may be considered when imposing sanctions.
13. Minutes of the hearing and its outcome will be recorded by the chair of the committee.
14. The minutes, copies of letters notifying faculty and the accused student(s) of the outcome of the hearing and copies of any evidence will be kept in a locked file in the office of the Dean's secretary. If the accused student is found to have committed academic misconduct, a letter will be placed in the student's academic file. If the charges of academic misconduct are dismissed, there will be no indication in the student's academic record that a hearing occurred.
15. All parties will be notified in writing of the outcome of the hearing and recommendations of the committee. An explanation of the reasons for the decision will be provided.

Sanctions:

The committee may

1. Place a letter of sanction in the student's academic record describing the incident.
2. Recommend that the faculty give a "0" on the exam, paper or assignment.
3. Recommend that the faculty assign a failing course grade.
4. Recommend that the APG Committee hear the case for possible recommendation of dismissal from the program.

If the student(s) initiates formal resolution, the faculty is encouraged to abide by the recommendations of the committee. If faculty chooses to use the formal procedure to resolve issues of academic misconduct, the faculty agrees to abide by the recommendations of the AIRC.

Composition of the Academic Integrity Review Committee (AIRC):

1. Four students, one from the Sophomore, Junior and Senior classes and one from the Accelerated Option class will be appointed by the Traditional B.S.N. or Accelerated B.S.N. Program Directors.
2. Three faculty who are not members of the APG committee, will be appointed by the Associate Dean for Academic Programs as needed.
3. Chair of the APG committee to serve a non-voting member and chair of the committee.

Responsibilities:

1. Review policies and procedures related to academic integrity biennially.
2. Conduct hearings related to academic dishonesty.
3. Impose and recommend sanctions for academic dishonesty.

Conflict of Interest:

1. Any faculty member of the committee who is directly involved in requesting a hearing will be replaced by another faculty member. Superficial knowledge of the case or the persons involved does not disqualify a member.
2. Any student member of the committee, who is accused of academic misconduct, will be replaced for the hearing by another member of the same class. The replacement member will be selected by the other student members of the committee.
3. Any student member of the committee, who is sanctioned in any way for academic misconduct, will be removed from the committee. The student may state to peers that he/she needed to resign from the committee. A new committee member will be elected from the same class.

Guidelines for Students

Students often become aware or suspicious of academic misconduct first. In order for the College to maintain an environment that is supportive of academic integrity, students are encouraged to maintain the standards for academic conduct. In situations where students are in doubt as to the integrity of one's own or one's peer's actions, it is advisable to consult one of the following: course faculty, course coordinator, program director, or academic advisor. As noted in a previous section, students must adhere to both institutional and professional standards in the classroom, clinical sites, and the community.