

# SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

## Procedures for Cases of Alleged Academic Dishonesty

### I. INITIATION OF A COMPLAINT

- A. All cases of alleged academic dishonesty by undergraduates in courses in the School of Communication must be referred to the Undergraduate Dean. Cases should be referred within one month of the date of the alleged incident, or within one month of the date the reporting individual becomes aware of the alleged incident, whichever is later. However, no action will be taken on any case if more than one year has elapsed since the alleged incident. Once a matter has been referred to the Undergraduate Dean, it may not be withdrawn without the Undergraduate Dean's approval, nor may the referring faculty member resolve the case without the Undergraduate Dean's approval.
- B. The Undergraduate Dean shall review the facts of the alleged incident, including statements of the reporting individual, the instructor(s), and any supporting material. If, after the review, the Undergraduate Dean determines that there is cause for further investigation, he or she shall draft an official letter for the student including the date of the incident (if known), the course and instructor, and the nature of the alleged violation. A copy of the current procedures should accompany the letter. The student shall be notified via email that they are to report to the office to receive the letter in person.
- The student will be asked to make an appointment with the Undergraduate Dean to discuss the case within seven working days of the date of the letter, at which time the student may present any relevant material or statements in his or her behalf. The student will have the right, prior to meeting with the Undergraduate Dean, to review relevant original materials in the Communication Undergraduate Office, to obtain copies of such materials if desired, and to discuss the matter with a faculty adviser or other individual. Review of original materials must take place by appointment during normal working hours at the Communication Undergraduate Office within seven working days of the date of the Undergraduate Dean's letter.
- If the student does not schedule a meeting to take place within seven working days, the Undergraduate Dean may make his/her determination on the basis of the evidence before him/her at that time. The Undergraduate Dean may grant reasonable requests for an extension of this time deadline in his/her sole discretion.
- C. In certain cases where timely notification is important-as, for instance, if a student is about to leave campus for vacation-oral notification may be made, but such notification should be followed by a letter.

## II. MEETING WITH THE UNDERGRADUATE DEAN

- A. The **Undergraduate Dean** has the authority to determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence available to the Undergraduate Dean, whether a violation of academic integrity has occurred.
  
- B. In meeting with the student, the Undergraduate Dean will describe the charges made and detail the evidence supporting those charges. At this initial meeting, the student may decline to discuss the matter and/or request that the Undergraduate Dean defer making a determination until after a subsequent meeting between the student and the Undergraduate Dean, at which the student may present relevant information or evidence. This second meeting must be requested at the initial meeting and must be scheduled for a time within seven working days of the initial meeting.
  
- C. After his/her review, Undergraduate Dean shall inform the student by letter of his or her decision and the sanction, if any, to be imposed. (If the student is not registered in the School of Communication the sanction will be determined by the school in which the student is registered; see VI. below.)

## III. SANCTIONS

- A. Sanctions which may be imposed by the Undergraduate Dean include, but are not limited to: a letter of warning; a defined period of probation with the attachment of conditions; a defined period of suspension, with or without the attachment of conditions; permanent exclusion from the University; notation on the official record; revocation of an awarded degree; or any combination of the previously listed sanctions.
  
- B. Any grade entered for a student in a course in which an allegation of academic dishonesty is pending against him/her, whether for the course as a whole or for a piece of work submitted in the course, is subject to modification after all proceedings and appeals are concluded. Should the student be found to have violated academic integrity, the course instructor is empowered, in his/her sole discretion, to determine the effect this violation will have on the student's grade in the course; possible actions range from disregarding the incident in calculating the grade to failing the student in the course.

#### **IV. APPEALS TO THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC APPEALS**

- A. The Undergraduate Dean's decision and/or sanction may be appealed to the Committee on Academic Appeals by filing a written notice of appeal within ten working days of the date of the letter of notification. The student's written notice of appeal must state what is being appealed-whether the finding of academic dishonesty, the sanction imposed, or both-and must describe in detail the grounds for the appeal. The student's written notice of appeal should also state whether the student desires to present the appeal in person to the Committee on Academic Appeals.
  
- B. If the student so requests, he or she will be granted an opportunity to appear in person to present his or her case to the Committee on Academic Appeals and to hear and respond to any testimony provided by the Undergraduate Dean or witnesses appearing before the Committee on Academic Appeals. Likewise, the Undergraduate Dean may be present to hear and respond to testimony of the accused student or any witnesses appearing before the Committee on Academic Appeals. If the student wishes to present witnesses before the Committee on Academic Appeals, s/he must inform the Secretary to the Committee on Academic Appeals at least seven working days before the appeal is to be heard of the names of the proposed witnesses and of the nature of the evidence they are prepared to present. However, the Committee on Academic Appeals has sole discretion to determine what witnesses other than the accused student and the Undergraduate Dean it will hear, if any. The Committee on Academic Appeals shall review the appeal as soon as practical after it has been filed.
  
- C. Following its review, the Committee on Academic Appeals may sustain or reverse the finding of academic dishonesty, if that portion of Undergraduate Dean's decision was appealed, and may, if a finding of academic dishonesty stands, sustain or modify (but not increase) the sanction, if that portion of the decision was appealed. The Committee on Academic Appeals shall inform the student by letter of its decision.

#### **V. APPEAL TO THE PROVOST**

- A. The student may appeal the Committee on Academic Appeals' decision within ten working days to the Provost of the University. Such appeals must be in writing and include a detailed statement setting forth the grounds for the appeal. Appeals to the Provost will be limited to alleged errors in procedures, interpretation of regulations, or alleged manifest discrepancies between the evidence and a school finding and/or sanction. The Provost will receive appeals only after a sanction has been specified for the alleged violation (see VI. below); an appeal to the Provost may concern the finding and/or the proposed sanction.

## VI. **CROSS-SCHOOL CASES**

- A. In instances where a student registered in another school is alleged to have committed an act of academic dishonesty in a School of Communication course, the authority of the School of Communication will extend only to determining whether or not the alleged action constitutes academic dishonesty and, if so, to the imposition of a grade penalty by the instructor in the course (see IIIB.). If the finding is affirmative and all appeals have been exhausted or the time for appeals has expired in the first school, the case will be formally referred to the appropriate authority of the school in which the student is registered for whatever further sanction that school deems appropriate.

Similarly, the Undergraduate Dean may be called upon to determine further sanctions for School of Communication students who have been guilty of academic dishonesty in courses in another Northwestern school.

- B. In instances where a student registered in the School of Communication has been found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty in a course offered by another school, the Undergraduate Dean will notify the student in writing of the formal referral of the matter to the School of Communication for determination of a School of Communication sanction, if any. Such notification will inform the student that he/she may schedule an appointment with the Undergraduate Dean, to take place within seven working days, to present any evidence of mitigating circumstances, but not on the underlying question of guilt or innocence. If the student does not schedule an appointment within the allotted time, or within such extension of time as the Undergraduate Dean may grant in his/her sole discretion, the Undergraduate Dean will make a decision on sanctions based on the available information.
- C. The Undergraduate Dean will inform the student in writing of any sanction imposed and of the student's right to appeal that sanction (but not issues of guilt or innocence) to the Committee on Academic Appeals.

## VII. **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- A. A student charged with academic dishonesty may not change his or her registration in the course(s) in which a charge is pending or in which a finding of academic dishonesty has been made.
- B. At any stage of the proceedings described above, the student may be accompanied by a fellow student, a faculty member, or another individual of the student's choosing, but not by an attorney. This person may not, however, take part in the proceedings; the student must speak on his or her own behalf.

- C. Sanctions specified by Undergraduate Dean, as modified by the Committee on Academic Appeals or the Provost (if an appeal has been filed), shall take effect at the expiration of the period for appeal of a decision if an appeal has not been filed, and after a decision has been reached by the Committee on Academic Appeals or the Provost if an appeal has been filed. If the appeal is not granted, the sanction will be applied retroactive to the date specified by the Undergraduate Dean, and, if necessary, current registrations may be canceled.
  
- D. All materials relating to an allegation of academic dishonesty will be kept in the School of Communication Undergraduate Office for ten years after the incident,
  
- E. All references to the Undergraduate Dean in these procedures include the Undergraduate Dean's designee if circumstances prevent the Undergraduate Dean from participating.