STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Integrity, honor, and dignity are fundamental characteristics of the engineering profession. Engineers strive to exhibit these characteristics while using their knowledge, skills and experience to improve the world around them. By being honest, straightforward, and impartial in serving the public, their employers and clients, engineers continuously increase the excellence and prestige of the engineering profession. These principles cannot be described by an equation or an integral, but they are rooted in the curricula of the best engineering schools. Adherence to these fundamental principles, essential not only in engineering but also in our entire society, is the responsibility of the students.

Students and faculty are guided in matters of academic integrity at both the University and the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science levels, so it is the responsibility of every member of the engineering academic community to be familiar with the specific policies of our school.

Student Responsibilities

In particular, it is the responsibility of every student in the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science to be familiar with and to adhere to the Policies on Academic Integrity of both Northwestern University and the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science.

Procedures for Cases of Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity

I. INITIATION OF A COMPLAINT

A. All cases of alleged violations of academic integrity by undergraduates in courses in the McCormick School must be referred to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Engineering (ADUE). 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 Once a matter has been referred to the ADUE, it may not be withdrawn without the ADUE’s approval, nor may the referring faculty member resolve the case without the ADUE’s approval.

B. The ADUE shall review the facts of the alleged incident, including statements of the reporting individual and any supporting material. If the ADUE determines that there is cause for further investigation, he or she shall notify the student by letter of 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 will be asked to make an appointment with the ADUE 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 ADUE, to review relevant original materials in the Undergraduate Engineering 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 Undergraduate Engineering Office within seven working days of the date of the ADUE’s letter.

If the student does not schedule a meeting to take place within seven working days, the ADUE may make his/her determination on the basis of the evidence before him/her at that time. The ADUE 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, verbal notification may be made, but such verbal notification should be followed by a letter.

II. MEETING WITH THE ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR UNDERGRADUATE ENGINEERING (ADUE)

A. The ADUE has the authority to determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence available, whether a violation of academic integrity has occurred.

B. In meeting with the student, the ADUE 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 ADUE defer making a determination until after a subsequent meeting between the student and the ADUE, at which time the student may present other 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, the ADUE 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 McCormick School, the sanction of the ADUE will be limited to a recommendation related to grading in the course. Additional sanctions may be imposed by the associate dean for undergraduate studies in the school in which the student is registered; see section VI.

III. SANCTIONS

A. Sanctions that may be imposed by the ADUE 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 these sanctions.

B. Any grade entered for a student in a course in which an allegation of academic integrity violation is pending against him/her 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 ACADEMIC HEARING BOARD

A. The ADUE’s decision and/or sanctions incurred as a result of the violation may be appealed to the Academic Hearing Board 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 it be the violation finding, the sanction, or both, and it 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 Academic Hearing Board.

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 Academic Hearing Board and to hear and respond to any testimony provided by the ADUE or witnesses appearing before the Academic Hearing Board. Likewise, the ADUE may be present to hear and respond to testimony of the accused student or any witnesses appearing before the Academic Hearing Board. If the student wishes to present witnesses before the Academic Hearing Board, she or he must
inform the ASUE 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 Academic Hearing Board has sole discretion to determine what witnesses other than the accused student and the ADUE it will hear. The Academic Hearing Board shall review the appeal as soon as practical after it has been filed.

C. Following its review, the Academic Hearing Board may sustain or reverse the violation finding, if that portion of the ADUE’s decision were being appealed, and may, if the finding stands, sustain or modify (but not increase) the sanction, if that portion of the decision is what was being appealed. The Academic Hearing Board shall inform the student by letter of its decision.

V. APPEAL TO THE PROVOST

A. The student may appeal the Academic Hearing Board’s 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).

VI. CROSS-SCHOOL CASES

A. In instances where a student who is a degree candidate of another school is alleged to have violated academic integrity in a McCormick School course, the authority of the McCormick School will extend only to determining whether or not the alleged action constitutes a violation of academic integrity 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, 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.

Analogously, the ADUE will be called upon to determine if further sanctions for McCormick School students who have violated academic integrity in courses of another Northwestern school will be appropriate.

B. In instances where a student who is a degree candidate of the McCormick School has been found to have violated academic integrity in a course offered by another school, the ADUE will notify the student in writing of the matter. The ADUE may apply an additional sanction based on the nature of the violation. Such notification will inform the student that he/she may schedule an appointment with the ADUE, 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 ADUE may grant in his/her sole discretion, the ADUE will make a decision on sanctions based on the available information.

C. The ADUE will inform the student in writing of any additional sanction to be imposed and of the student’s right to appeal that sanction to the Academic Hearing Board.

VII. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. A student may not change his or her registration in a course once an individual with responsibility in that course has become aware of the alleged violation of academic integrity.
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 the ADUE, as modified by the Academic Hearing Board 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 Academic Hearing Board 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 ADUE, and, if necessary, current registrations may be canceled.

D. All materials relating to an allegation of an academic integrity violation will be kept in the McCormick School’s Undergraduate Engineering until the student has graduated or for ten years after the incident, whichever is earlier.

E. All references to the ADUE in these procedures include the ADUE’s designee if circumstances prevent the ADUE from participating.

F. Electronic messages may be used to fulfill the requirements of these procedures wherever a letter is specified, and electronic versions of policy statements may be used to comply with required document transmittal.

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