Academic Dishonesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism

By

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What is academic dishonesty?

Academic dishonesty includes "cheating" and "plagiarism," the theft of ideas and other forms of intellectual property—whether they are published or not.

Florida Tech's Academic Advising Handbook says, "Cheating and/or plagiarism are extremely serious matters. Even the suspicion of cheating or plagiarizing has jeopardized promising careers. The university has an obligation to itself, its alumni and its students to deal with such cases with unmistakably clear, forthright and fair action."¹

According to Florida Tech's Student Handbook, "All forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism… are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from the university."² Similarly, U.S. Army ROTC regulations state "cheating" and "any forms of academic dishonesty" are indicators of "undesirable character" that can result in "disenrollment" from the program.³

Example

Your best friend is having trouble in a class and needs a "C" to keep her athletic scholarship. She asks if she can copy off your exam "just this once."

You agree since you think you aren't doing anything wrong. Is this cheating? Yes. By allowing someone to copy off your exam, you are guilty of giving information and are thus cheating.

What is cheating?

Cheating includes the following:

- giving or receiving information during an exam ("exam" includes tests and quizzes)
- using unauthorized material (like notes) during an exam; unauthorized dissemination or receipt of exams, exam materials, contents, or answer keys
- taking an exam or writing a paper for another student or asking someone to take an exam or write a paper for you (this includes shared work and/or group-produced answers on take-home exams).
- submitting the same paper—or different versions of what is substantially the same paper—for more than one course
- misrepresenting or fabricating written work, sources, research, or results as well as helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty or lying to protect a student who has committed such an act.
What are the penalties for cheating?

The penalties for cheating are at the instructor’s discretion. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the penalties range from receiving an "F" (0 points) on the exam or the assignment to receiving an "F" grade in the course. Cases of cheating may be forwarded to the Dean of Students Office and could result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from Florida Tech.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is "[t]he use of another writer’s words or ideas without acknowledging the source" and is "[a]kin to theft," according to the Harbrace College Handbook. In Writing with Sources, plagiarism means "passing off a source’s information, ideas, or words as your own by omitting to cite them—an act of lying, cheating, and stealing."

Simply put, plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property belonging to another. This includes both the theft of unwritten ideas and concepts as well as the theft of written texts, notes, computer programs, designs, and/or visual materials. In most cases, the theft of intellectual property is intentional and, in some cases, malicious in its nature. Such students simply don’t think they will get caught. In some cases, the theft of intellectual property seems to be the result of ignorance and could have been avoided had the student better understood the nature of plagiarism. Since instructors cannot know what a student really intended to do, they have no choice but to treat each case of plagiarism as a serious offense.

According to one professor, "Ignorance of plagiarism and its penalties tends to play a minor role in the cases I have encountered at Florida Tech. More often, plagiarizers have difficulty writing and managing their time well. Usually they have become desperate and copied madly at midnight to fill the requisite pages by daybreak. Sometimes they are ignorant of plagiarism and its penalties, but upon further investigation, one discovers this failing to be just one among the many possible effects of their general cluelessness."
What are the penalties for plagiarism?

Again, the penalties for plagiarism are at the instructor’s discretion. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the penalties for acts of plagiarism that seem intentional range from an "F" (0 points) on the assignment to an "F" grade for the course. Even minor and seemingly unintentional acts of plagiarism are likely to be rewarded with an "F." Acts of plagiarism that seem intentional will be forwarded to the Dean of Students Office with a recommendation for formal disciplinary action.

"Taking someone else’s words or ideas," according to the Harbrace College Handbook, "and presenting them as your own leaves you open to criminal charges. In the film, video, music, and software business this act of theft is called piracy. In publishing and education it is called plagiarism and/or cheating. Whatever it is called and for whatever reason it occurs, it is wrong.... Although the act may escape criminal prosecution, employers generally fire an employee who uses material illegally, and teachers often fail careless students."

Taking an example from technology industry, Harris Corporation’s Standards of Business Conduct states that “Patents, Copyrights and Trademarks are protected by the laws of the United States. Unauthorized copying, manufacture, use ... [of protected items] will subject Harris to civil and criminal liability." Employees in violation of such standards risk "disciplinary actions, including … suspensions, termination, civil liability or criminal prosecution." On August 11, 2000, a six-member jury ruled that The Walt Disney Co. stole ideas for a sports complex from two businessmen and should pay $240 million in damages.

Types of Plagiarism

1. Unauthorized and/or unacknowledged collaborative work constitutes plagiarism. While students are expected to do their own research and writing, instructors also understand that students may discuss their own research projects with other students in the same course. Instructors strongly suspect collaborative plagiarism when the same or similar phrases, quotations, sentences, and/or parallel constructions appear in two or more papers on the same topic. To protect yourself, you should acknowledge—in a footnote or endnote—any significant discussions you have had with others as well as any advice, comments, or suggestions that you have received from others.

2. Attempting to pass off, as your own work, a whole work or any part of a work belonging to another person or group constitutes plagiarism. This includes borrowing, buying, copying, receiving, downloading, taking, using, and/or stealing a paper that is not your own.

The use of ANY AMOUNT OF MATERIAL—either without a citation or cited improperly—TAKEN DIRECTLY from a text, from the web or a
digital source, from a broadcast, recording, or from another person’s unpublished work constitutes plagiarism.

**Example A**

The use of such material without any attribution, citation, acknowledgment or quotation marks is plagiarism. You must use quotation marks on ANY text taken directly from another source, even from the course textbooks; moreover, such material must be cited.

**Source Text**

“A worldwide increase in toxic phytoplankton blooms over the past 20 years has coincided with increasing reports of fish diseases and deaths of unknown cause.”


**Plagiarized Version**

A worldwide increase in toxic phytoplankton blooms over the past 20 years has coincided with increasing reports of fish diseases and deaths of unknown cause.

**Example B**

The use of such material with false attributions/citations and/or the use of deceptive or fabricated citations to disguise direct plagiarism is still plagiarism. Students who intentionally plagiarize often attempt to disguise the plagiarized material in their papers with fake citations.

**Example C**

The use of such material with quotation marks but without any attribution, citation, or with inadequate/improper attribution/citation is considered plagiarism. You must use proper citations for all quoted and paraphrased material taken from another source. In the following example, the student used quotation marks and seems to cite the quoted text but, by neglecting to refer to the page from which this quotation was taken, has failed to cite properly. Failing to cite properly throughout the paper earned this student an "F."

**Student’s Work**

Once in Egypt he murdered Cleopatra’s son Ptolmey and annexed Egypt under his direct power. Once he took all of Egypt’s money he paid off everyone he was endebted to and “finally became the master of all the Greco-Roman world”(The Deeds of the Divine Augustus, Augustus).

**Example D**

The use of such material—correctly attributed and properly cited—but without quotation marks is plagiarism. You must use quotation marks on ANY amount of text taken from another source. In the following example, the student cited material that was copied, in large part, directly from the source text but the student failed to indicate the quoted material by using quotation marks. The student pretended to be paraphrasing but was really plagiarizing. Had the student used quotation marks, the paper would not have received an "F."
IX. For all that, he presently made a more daring attempt at Rome: for a few days before he entered upon his aedileship he was suspected of having made a conspiracy with Marcus Crassus, an ex-consul, and likewise with Publius Sulla and Lucius Autronius, who, after their election to the consulsipship, had been found guilty of corrupt practices. The design was to set upon the senate at the opening of the year and put to the sword as many as they thought good; then Crassus was to usurp the dictatorship, naming Caesar as his master of horse, and when they had organized the state according to their pleasure, the consulsipship was to be restored to Sulla and Autronius. This plot is mentioned by Tanusius Geminus in his History, by Marcus Bibulus in his edicts, and by Gaius Curio the elder in his speeches. Cicero too seems to hint at it in a letter to Axius, where he says that Caesar in his consulship established the despotism which he had had in mind when he was aedile. Tanusius adds that Crassus, either conscience-stricken or moved by fear, did not appear on the day appointed for the massacre, and that therefore Caesar did not give the signal which it had been agreed that he should give; and Curio says that the arrangement was that Caesar should let his toga fall from his shoulder. Not only Curio, but Marcus Actorius Naso as well declare that Caesar made another

Conspiracy and bribery were very popular tools used by Caesar prior to his reign as Imperator. For instance just before he entered aedileship he was suspected of having made a conspiracy with Marcus Crassus, an ex-consul, and with Publius Sulla and Lucius Autronius, who were found guilty of corrupt practices. The plan supposedly was to kill as many of the senate as they thought good, then for Crassus to usurp power and then declare Caesar his master of horse. Further when they had reorganized the state according to their own pleasures, then they would restore the consulship to Sulla and Autronius. This particular plot did not actually occur, because, and it is suggested in Suetonius, that Crassus was either conscience-stricken or moved by fear and consequently did not show up for the planned massacre.  

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5 Suetonius 43
6 This paragraph was mostly based on info from page 45.

Example A 3. The use of ANY AMOUNT of text that has been IMPROPERLY PARAPHRASED constitutes plagiarism. Suggesting an improper reliance on a single source, this includes "mosaic plagiarism" or "cut-and-paste plagiarism."

To paraphrase improperly is simply to put the words of a source text in a different order or form while retaining the main idea that is the intellectual property of the original author/translator. When you simply alter the text itself (but not the author’s idea), all that you have done is to eliminate the obvious need for quotation marks; you have not eliminated the need for an explanatory citation/attribute. The idea itself remains the intellectual property of the original author/translator and, therefore, must be cited as such. In the previous example, the student assumed that by simply changing a few words
in the source text there was no need to use quotation marks in the paper. Not only are significant portions of the student’s text lifted directly from the source text but the structure of the source text is followed too closely as well.

According to the Harbrace College Handbook, "[a] paraphrase is a restatement of a source in about the same number of words. […] Your paraphrase of someone else’s work should honor two important principles: Your version should be almost entirely in your own words, and your words should accurately convey the content of the original passage. […] Unless you enclose an author's words in quotation marks, do not mix them with your own even if the sentence structure is different. Equally important, do not make the mistake of thinking that you can substitute synonyms for an author’s words while you preserve his or her sentence structure. Both of these are plagiarism, even if you cite the source."13

To paraphrase properly, your work must contain a distinctly different idea—that is, the paraphrase must contain your original idea. Simply changing the word order or sentence structure/order, deleting words or phrases, and/or substituting synonyms is not enough if the original author's idea remains unchanged in "your" text. If you can't find a way to paraphrase it properly, then quote it and cite it. Cutting and pasting together improperly paraphrased texts from multiple sources only compounds the severity of the offense.

In the following example, the student in a physical chemistry lab course copied material, in large part, directly from a student report submitted the previous year. The chemical compound used in the experiment was different but the objective and the procedure remained the same. Although a few words in each sentence and a few characters in each equation were changed, the ideas and selection of equations are clearly identical. This is considered plagiarism and not simply paraphrasing.

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**Introduction**

The purpose of this experiment is to measure the molar heat of combustion of maleic acid. In order to find this quantity, the heat capacity (Cs) of the calorimeter must first be measured. This was found using the following equation:

1. \( Cs = \frac{\Delta E(\text{ben}) + \Delta E(\text{wire})}{T2 - T1} \)

Where \( \Delta E(\text{ben}) \) represents the internal energy of benzoic acid and \( \Delta E(\text{wire}) \) represents the internal energy of the wire holding the benzoic acid during combustion. The variable \( T \) is the temperature. \( T2 \) being the ending temp. and \( T1 \) being the starting temp. both in Celsius. For these samples the amounts of benzoic acid, maleic acid and wire were all known.

The heat of combustion was then calculated from the following equation:

2. \( \Delta E = Cs(T2 - T1) - \Delta E(\text{wire}) \)

Where \( Cs \) is the average value of the heat capacities found in the first equation. When the heat of combustion is quantified it is now possible to find the molar heat of combustion, also known as enthalpy or \( \Delta H \). This is found using the following equation:

3. \( \Delta H = \Delta E + RT \Delta n \)

Where \( \Delta n \) is the change in moles for the system found by stoichiometry and \( R \) is the universal gas constant in Joules/mol*Kelvin.
Introduction

The purpose of this experiment is to measure the molar heat of combustion of Naphthalene. In order to do this, the heat capacity (Cs) of the calorimeter needed to be determined through the use of the following formula:

\[
(1) \quad Cs = \frac{\Delta E_{ba} = \Delta E_{wire}}{T_2 - T_1}
\]

Where \(\Delta E_{ba}\) represents the known heat of combustion of benzoic acid and \(\Delta E_{wire}\) represents the heat of combustion for the wire holding the benzoic acid pellet during combustion. The variable \(T\) represents the temperature in Celsius before and after the trial. The procedure for this determination involves combustion of each of the samples within a bomb calorimeter. For such sample, the amounts of benzoic acid, naphthalene, and wire were known.

The heat of combustion (\(\Delta E\)) was then calculated from the following equation:

\[
(2) \quad \Delta E = Cs (T_2 - T_1) - \Delta E_{wire}
\]

Where \(Cs\) is the average value of the heat capacities determined through the use of equation (1). Once the heat of combustion for naphthalene is determined we can determine the molar heat of combustion (\(\Delta H\)) represented through the following equation:

\[
(3) \quad \Delta H = \Delta E + RT\Delta n
\]

where \(\Delta n\) is the change in moles for the system and \(R\) is the universal gas constant in Joules. Due to the fact that the pressure within the system is not constant we can not assume that \(\Delta H\) is equal to \(\Delta E\), and will be determined in kJ per mole naphthalene.

The following is an example of "mosaic" or "cut-and-paste" "plagiarism. The student has stitched together texts from two web sites—copying directly, paraphrasing improperly, and failing to cite. The only citation is false—an attempt to disguise and authenticate the plagiarized passages.

Julius Caesar was born on July 13 in the year 100 BC. His full name was Gaius Julius Caesar, the exact same name as his father. Although patrician and claiming descent from Venus, Caesar’s family never achieved real prominence. Around 86BC Caesar’s uncle Marius, just before his death, saw to it that young Caesar was appointed flamen dialis, one of an archaic priesthood with no power. This then identified him with his uncle’s extremist politics. Julius Caesar’s father died in 85 BC. In 84 BC, at the age of sixteen, he married Cornelia, the daughter of Lucius Cornelius Cinna, one of Marius’ associates. This marriage further confirmed him as a radical. Soon after his marriage he had a daughter, Julia. When Lucius Cornelius Sulla, Marius’s enemy and leader of the Optimates, was made dictator in 82 BC, he issued a list of enemies to be executed. Although Caesar was not harmed, he was ordered by Sulla to divorce Cornelia. Refusing that order, he found it prudent to leave Rome. He did not return to the city until 78 BC, after Sulla’s resignation. (Plutarch wrote in more detail about this in his work, The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans.)
THE POWER OF CAESAR
Julius Caesar rose from relative obscurity to supreme power in the late Roman republic. A brilliant general and formidable politician, he defeated all rivals to become dictator of Rome. Fear that he would make himself king prompted his assassination in 44 BC. But Caesar's adopted son, Octavian, later rose to become the emperor Augustus.

Early Life
Gaius Julius Caesar was born on July 13, 100 BC. Although patrician and claiming descent from Venus through Aeneas's son Iulus (Ascanius), Caesar's family had not achieved real prominence. His father, also named Gaius Julius Caesar, was the brother-in-law of Gaius Marius and married Aurelia, who was connected with the prominent Aurelii family; he died about 85 BC, however, before reaching the consulship. In 84, Caesar married Cornelia, daughter of Marius's old partner Lucius Cornelius Cinna. When Lucius Cornelius Sulla ordered him to divorce her, he refused and escaped harm through the intervention of such people as his mother's relative, Gaius Aurelius Cotta.
Improper paraphrasing often results from the use of a single source. In such cases, it is virtually impossible to separate your own ideas from those of the author and/or translator. This form of plagiarism is especially apparent when the order and structure of a student’s paper (or even part of a paragraph) is virtually identical to that of the source text.

Example B

When Professor Richard M. McMurry was asked to review the book *War So Terrible: Sherman and Atlanta* by James Lee McDonough and James Pickett Jones (since withdrawn), McMurry discovered much of the book had been "pilfered" from his own doctoral dissertation. This example from *War So Terrible*, reproduced in McMurry’s review, is an excellent example of improper paraphrasing and structural paraphrase plagiarism.¹⁴

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4. The use of any amount of text, that is properly paraphrased—but which is either not cited or which is improperly cited—constitutes plagiarism. This includes papers in which a general failure to cite sources or a gross negligence in citing sources is apparent. Moreover, attaching false, misleading, or improper attributions/citations to properly paraphrased texts still constitutes plagiarism.

When is plagiarism suspected?

Instructors may suspect a student of plagiarism if you do one or more of the following:

1. **Use or turn in a paper from a previous year or from another course.**

   Instructors talk with one another and many keep copies of papers on file—just like fraternities, sororities, and other groups. If you must use something from someone else’s work, cite it properly as the work of another!
Include citations and/or title pages typed/printed in different fonts and type sizes than the body of the paper. Students who do not take the time to research and write their own papers usually do not take the time to correct citations and fix inconsistent fonts.

2. Use words and concepts that are not likely to be understood in an introductory course. This is readily noticed by professors.

3. Write a paper in a distinctly different style. Every student has a unique "style" of writing—an intellectual fingerprint. After reading papers and exams throughout the semester, instructors come to know the particular writing styles of their students.

4. Use the same or similar passages that "coincidentally" another student used in a paper. When plagiarizing from the web or from books, some students seem to think that they live in a vacuum! When tempted to plagiarize a "great" passage from a web site or a book, remember that you are not alone—someone else is bound to think and do the same thing.

5. Include conflicting or contradictory passages—especially when written in different "voices" or "styles."

What about "common knowledge"?

According to the Harbrace College Handbook, "Common knowledge includes such information as ‘December has thirty-one days,’ and well-known proverbs (‘a penny saved is a penny earned’) or historical information such as the date of the Declaration of Independence."

Beware of the popular myth: "if it appears in three different sources, then it’s common knowledge and I don’t have to cite it." Don’t look for reasons not to cite; this will only cause you problems. If you are in doubt about whether to cite something, the rule is that you should cite it.

Don’t assume anything you read—especially on the web or in your textbooks—is common knowledge. Many texts on the web are simply plagiarized from other pages or from printed sources. If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

According to The Holt Handbook, you need not document your own opinion, ideas, observations, and conclusions but you must document:

- direct quotations
- opinions, judgments, and insights of others that you summarize or paraphrase
• information that is not widely known
• information that is open to dispute
• information that is not commonly accepted
• tables, charts, graphs, statistics taken [directly or paraphrased] from a source

Keep in mind, however, that the use of too much material requiring quotation marks and attributions/citations is an indication that too few of your ideas are present in the paper. Students who plagiarize intentionally usually do so simply because they have not thought enough about their papers—either because they didn’t want to spend the time on it or because they waited until the last minute.

How to use and cite sources properly

In *Writing with Sources*, "three basic principles" are given for the proper use of sources.17

1. "Use sources as concisely as possible, so your own thinking isn’t crowded out by your presentation of other people’s thinking, or your own voice by your quoting of other sources."

2. "Never leave your reader in doubt as to when you are speaking and when you are using materials from a source."

3. "Always make clear how each source you use relates to your argument."

Be sure to use the proper citation format designated by your instructor. All student work—whether written, oral, or digital—must contain proper citations and/or attributions. Some instructors require their students to use "in-text citations." In-text citations are an abbreviated form of citation usually containing only the author’s name and the relevant page number (publications dates may also be required in some instances). Example of in-text citations referring to this page of this publication are (Jones 11) and, in APA style, (Jones, 2000, 11). When using in-text citations, be sure to include a bibliography in which you give the full publication information. In-text citations are treated in the *Harbrace College Handbook*, 485–574.

Some instructors require their students to use "endnotes" or "footnotes" for their citations. Endnotes and footnotes tend to be explanatory in nature although some footnotes and endnotes may only contain simple citations of editions and page numbers. Be sure to include a bibliography if required by your professor/instructor. If no bibliography is required for the assignment, be sure to give full publication information in the first footnote or endnote. For footnote and endnote style, consult your professor/instructor and the *Harbrace College Handbook*, 538–541.
The *Harbrace College Handbook* is the required text for Com 1100, 1101, 1102 and should be kept and used as a reference in future courses at Florida Tech. Copies of the *Harbrace College Handbook* are on reserve in Evans Library and a copy is also available for consultation during regular business hours at the Department of Humanities and Communications and the Academic Support Center.
Endnotes


2Florida Institute of Technology, Student Handbook, 1999, 33. According to the Student Handbook, students are responsible for knowing all Florida Tech rules and regulations concerning academic dishonesty (see 33 & 43–44). Moreover, the Student Handbook says that ignorance is not an excuse for a violation of these rules and regulations (1).

3U.S. Army Regulation 145-1, Section VI, paragraph 3–43 a (14).


5Gordon Harvey, Writing with Sources; A Guide for Harvard Students, 1995, 21. (This source is also available on-line at http://icg.harvard.edu/~sources/)

6Alan Rosiene, letter, March 20, 2000; used with permission.

7Hodges, et al., 472–473.

8Hodges, et al., 472.


17Harvey, 3–4.
Further Resources


WWW.canexus.com
This Essay Verification Engine is designed to break a paper down and detect even plagiarized word fragments.

WWW.cs.berkeley.edu/~aiken/moss.html
The MOSS program can be used in computer science courses to uncover plagiarism in computer programs.

WWW.dogpile.com
A collection of search engines offering free key word searches of numerous web sites on the Internet.

WWW.Integriguard.com
A private company that labels its services "an Internet-based plagiarism deterrent system."

WWW.plagiarism.com
Glatt Plagiarism Services offers three different software programs to help deter and detect student plagiarism.

WWW.plagiarism.org
A non-profit service which will analyze student papers and prepare a color-coded report of the results for a nominal fee. Texts must be submitted in a digital format.

WWW.webtop.com
This site offers a free downloadable search engine called "WebCheck." According to this site, "WebCheck allows you to check [any text by dragging and dropping] against sentences, paragraphs, and even whole documents–as you surf the Web, or read or write in an email or other desktop applications."
Suggested Guidelines for Instructors

As at most universities, instructors’ approaches to cases of academic dishonesty typically range from giving it the “blind eye” to verbally bullying the student until a confession is given, to spending thoughtful but sleepless nights considering the facts and circumstances. While the handling of academic dishonesty cases remains at the instructor’s discretion, the university community ultimately benefits when such problems are dealt with consistently. With this in mind, the following guidelines are suggested:

1. Be proactive:

   • Make clear the penalty for academic dishonesty in your course syllabus, for example:

     *Any form of academic dishonesty will result in an “F” grade for this course.*

   • Eliminate the ignorance argument: Early in the semester, briefly explain cheating and plagiarism with respect to the requirements of your course. A discussion of previous cases or examples is always helpful (just be sure they are anonymous examples).

   • Consider requiring students to sign an academic honesty agreement (an example follows on page 18).

2. Be informed:

   • Do a thorough investigation and collect all possible documentation (keeping the original documents). Use caution—and be ready to give the student the benefit of the doubt—even when strong suspicions of academic dishonesty are not supported by documents.

   • Familiarize yourself with Florida Tech policies and publications on academic dishonesty, including the Student Handbook. (See also the summary flow chart on page 23.)

   • **Telephone the associate dean of students to determine if the student has previously committed acts of academic dishonesty.** This may affect how you proceed. A student who has cheated or plagiarized in your course may have already done so in other courses; moreover, the student is likely to continue to do so in future courses unless he/she knows a record is being kept and that a repeat offense could result in expulsion.

3. Communicate clearly:

   • When making charges of academic dishonesty, inform your department head and the student’s advisor. The student’s advisor may be able to help you contextualize the case.

   • Whether you notify the student in person and/or in writing (a sample notification letter follows on pages 19–20), give the student every opportunity to present his/her defense and give due consideration to any supporting documentation and written statements provided. Know the rights of students, including the student’s right to have his/her academic advisor
present at any meeting.

• When making charges of academic dishonesty, let students know they have rights too (Student Handbook, pp. 39–40 & 62–68). Know that if a student requests a hearing, he/she cannot be barred from attending class pending a final decision on the matter.

4. Penalize fairly:

• Does the punishment fit the offense? How is the student being treated with respect to other students involved? Are there mitigating circumstances? Behind every case is a person, and that clemency is sometimes far more effective than punishment.

• Consider each case individually while aiming for consistency with respect to your previous actions and the actions of your colleagues in similar circumstances.

• Inform the student as soon as you have reached a decision (a sample preliminary determination letter follows on pages 21–22). Also send a letter detailing the case along with supporting documentation to the associate dean of students. Doing so—even if the matter has already been resolved—can be an effective deterrent.
Academic Honesty Agreement

Academic dishonesty includes: plagiarism; cheating—giving, receiving, or sharing information during an in-class or take-home exam, test, or quiz, using unauthorized material (like notes) during an exam, submitting the same paper (or different versions of what is substantially the same paper) for more than one course—fabricating written work, sources, research and/or results; helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty; and lying to protect another student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty.

According to Florida Tech’s Student Handbook, “all forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism . . . are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from the university.”

I have received, read, and understand the Florida Tech booklet Academic Dishonesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism. Further, I understand that I am responsible for knowing all Florida Tech rules and regulations concerning academic dishonesty and that ignorance of these rules and regulations is not an excuse for a violation of said rules. If I have any questions or doubts, I realize that it is my responsibility to keep seeking an answer until I understand.

I understand that I am bound by this policy to act with honesty and integrity, and that I must do my own work. I also understand that if I commit any act of academic dishonesty, my professor can assign me an “F” grade in this course and may recommend that I be suspended or expelled from the university.

Signed,

__________________________________  ____________________________________
(Student’s signature)     (Student’s name spelled out)

__________________________________  ____________________________________
Date                      Instructor & Course number
Sample Notification Letter

DATE

STUDENT NAME
ID NUMBER
COURSE

RE: Notification of Academic Dishonesty Charges

Dear NAME:

According to Florida Tech’s Student Handbook, “All forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism ... are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from the university” (35 & 62–63). Students are responsible for knowing all Florida Tech rules and regulations concerning academic dishonesty. Moreover, ignorance is not an excuse for a violation of these rules and regulations (Student Handbook, 1; copies of the Handbook are available from the office of the Associate Dean of Students Office on the second floor of the SUB).

Florida Tech’s Academic Advising Handbook says, “Cheating and/or plagiarism are extremely serious matters. Even the suspicion of cheating or plagiarizing has jeopardized promising careers. The university has an obligation to itself, its alumni and its students to deal with such cases with unmistakably clear, forthright and fair action” (14).

I also call your attention to your course syllabus where, on page 1, it reads as follows: “Any form of academic dishonesty will result in an ‘F’ grade for this course.”

This letter is to notify you that you are charged with committing one or more acts of academic dishonesty in violation of university, department, and/or course policies. Specifically, you are accused of:

– LIST OF CHARGES

According to Florida Tech’s 2000–2001 Student Handbook (39–40) and FIT’s Faculty Handbook (24–25), upon receipt of this notification, you have the right to:

1) Meet with your instructor and/or the head of his/her department to discuss these charges; your academic advisor may accompany you to any meeting.

2) Additionally–or alternatively–you may submit a written statement (plus any supporting documentation) defending yourself and/or refuting these charges. If you wish, your academic advisor can assist you with this.

3) Request an administrative hearing from the associate dean of students or seek a

4) Refuse to exercise any of the above options. In this case, I will have no choice but to proceed with the charges against you; this may lead to your receiving a grade of “F” for course for academic dishonesty and may entail forwarding your case to the University Disciplinary Committee for formal disciplinary action that could result in your suspension or expulsion from Florida Tech (see your 2000-2001 Student Handbook, 62–68).

These are serious charges that jeopardize your academic standing and status. I encourage you to seek the assistance of your academic advisor and to exercise your student rights by defending yourself against the charges in both oral and written forms.

I expect a response from you within 24 hours. If I have not heard from you by that time, a preliminary determination on these charges will be made. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of this investigation at which time you will be given 48 hours to appeal the decision to me or request a formal review by the associate dean of students. After 48 hours, the decision will stand as final and a letter will be placed on file with the Dean of Students Office regarding this incident.

Sincerely,

INSTRUCTOR’S NAME
ACADEMIC UNIT NAME
EXTENSION

cc: Dr. NAME chair, ACADEMIC UNIT
    Dr. NAME, student’s advisor
Sample Preliminary Determination Letter

DATE

STUDENT NAME
ID NUMBER
COURSE

RE: Preliminary Determination of Charges of Academic Dishonesty

Dear NAME:

After reviewing the documents, information, and the relevant statements made by those involved, I have determined that:

5) On DATE, in COURSE NAME, you LIST CHARGES. This constitutes cheating and/or plagiarism. BRIEFLY EXPLAIN CHARGES.

In this case, the information presented was unambiguous. Your actions were intentional and were obviously in violation of university policy on academic dishonesty. Regarding your statements that you did not know your actions were inappropriate, I cannot accept such an excuse, particularly in light of the fact that you have been told repeatedly, both verbally and in writing, what constitutes academic dishonesty. Your behavior in this matter was completely intolerable and not in keeping with the mission and purpose of the university.

While my every inclination is to fail you in this course after due consideration of these findings and your circumstances, I have come up with the following options; the courses of action I leave to you are:

1) Contact the associate dean of students and seek a University Disciplinary Committee (UDC) hearing on these charges (see your Florida Tech 2000–2001 Student Handbook, 62–68). If you exercise this option, you will be allowed to remain in class pending the outcome of the UDC hearing.

2) Waive your right to a University Disciplinary Committee hearing, accept these charges, and the following penalties in writing:

   – LIST PENALTIES (or the conditions for remaining in the course)
3) If you refuse either to seek a UDC hearing or to accept these charges and penalties by not replying to this preliminary determination in writing within 24 hours, you will receive a grade of ‘F’ for the course for academic dishonesty and the matter will be forwarded to the associate dean of students. This could result in a UDC hearing and formal disciplinary sanctioning by the university, up to and including suspension or expulsion from the university.

My decision in this matter is final. I will not consider further pleas or requests for additional options. You must indicate your choice of one of these options in a written response delivered to me by the close of business on DATE. If you feel that you are being treated unfairly, I urge you to plead your case before the University Disciplinary Committee.

Please note, that whatever your choice, a letter detailing your act(s) of academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the office of the Dean of Students Office for inclusion in your permanent student file. According to university policy, if another such letter is placed in your file, it will lead to your immediate referral to the dean of students office for formal disciplinary action, the result of which could be your suspension or expulsion from Florida Tech.

Sincerely,

INSTRUCTOR’S NAME
ACADEMIC UNIT NAME
EXTENSION

cc: Douglas A. Nolder, Associate Dean of Students
Dr. NAME chair, ACADEMIC UNIT
Dr. NAME, student’s advisor
Breaches of Academic Honesty Policy

When an Instructor Suspects Cheating/Plagiarism has Occurred:

Assemble Documentation

Telephone the Associate Dean of Students about prior offenses

Instructor meets with department head

Both agree: No charges

No agreement reached

Dean of school/college decides

Both agree: Pursue charges

Student notified in writing and

Meeting occurs and/or statement made

Instructor & department head make preliminary decision on charges

Agree innocent

No agreement

Agreed guilty

Dean of school/college decides

Dean of Students Office determines if case is student’s first instance

First instance

Second instance

Student given opportunity to respond

Accepts charges & agrees to penalty in writing (waives UDC hearing)

Requests UDC hearing

Refuses written acceptance/ agreement

Maximum penalty:
Course grade of “F,” withdrawal denial, no grade replacement, charges excluded from registrar’s file

Instructor sends to file maintained by dean of students:
Description of incident plus student’s signed waiver of UDC hearing & acceptance of penalty

Review by Associate Dean of Students and/or University Disciplinary Committee (UDC) Hearing