

Tod Treat - Academic Honesty

From: Tod Treat
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Subject: Academic Honesty

As instruction commences and you begin the important process of helping students meet their learning goals, I'd like to offer the hope that these goals are met through motivation, rich dialogue, and hard work.

Unfortunately, our students are sometimes tempted to meet instructional objectives in a different way, through academic dishonesty. Students may be unaware of the legal and ethical aspects of intellectual property, or they may simply ignore them. As an educational institution, it is our obligation to ensure that students develop appropriate knowledge and skills in this area. The college policy on academic honesty can be found in section 8.06 of the policies and procedures manual (<http://www.parkland.edu/pnp/>). In addition to defining cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism, the policy addresses collaboration. Collaboration is a natural function in the workplace and in life, and we encourage collaboration in the classroom as well. However, collaboration in one discipline or class might not be appropriate in another, so you might consider discussing the boundaries of such activities explicitly to ensure student understanding. Parkland's policy is silent on the issue of intentionality to allow faculty discretion when dealing with violations.

If an incident of academic dishonesty occurs, the concerned faculty member is in the best position to determine an appropriate response- whether developmental or punitive. However, it is critically important to follow procedures to protect the student's right to due process, reinforce the faculty member's decision, and avoid misunderstandings. Your department chair is an excellent resource and should be advised of your decision in any case by filing an incident report. Such a report should also be submitted to me on behalf of the Vice President for Academic Services, as stated in the policy. The report is used to screen for multiple offenders.

My office is here to help. With the help of interested faculty, we have created a web-based resource that may help clarify issues and provide a source for faculty to use with students to help them understand academic honesty and its importance. The resource is available at <http://virtual.parkland.edu/todtreat/honesty.htm>. If you are aware of particularly good sites and are willing to share them, I'd appreciate it. Otherwise, please don't hesitate to contact me if you ever have questions or concerns.

Honesty and Integrity are among Parkland's Core Values. I thank you for practicing these values and helping instill them in our students. In addition, I encourage you to discuss issues related to academic honesty openly with your faculty colleagues. Thank you and have a wonderful semester.

Tod

P.S. Watch this fall for a session in the Center for Excellence, "Supporting classroom efforts through policies and procedures." The session will be hosted by Linda Moore, Dean of Student Services and myself and will use case studies to help faculty learn how policies can be used to support their classroom efforts.

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