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UNO Website: Criss Library Departmental Plagiarism Policy Template

UNO Criss Library University of Nebraska at Omaha

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Plagiarism Policy adopted by the faculty of the _____ Department
[date]

Overview

According to the Bylaws of the board of Regents at the University of Nebraska (Sections 2.9 and 4.1(i)), jurisdiction over violations of academic dishonesty rests with the individual colleges while the faculty are entrusted with the determination of a violation and its resolution.

The _____ Department recognizes the rights of faculty members to carry out their entrusted duties but also recognizes the need to present a unified face on the subject of plagiarism and to have consistent application of disciplinary actions. The _____ Department Plagiarism Policy advises the faculty on a consistent approach to addressing plagiarism in course syllabi and provides guidelines for addressing violations of the plagiarism policy.

Guidelines for Addressing Plagiarism on the Course Syllabus

In order to ensure that students understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, course syllabi should include a definition of plagiarism and explain the consequences of plagiarism. The following language is recommended:

> In this course, you will submit written work in which you make use of information and ideas found in print or online sources. Whenever you use material from another writer, it is important that you quote or paraphrase appropriately and *cite the source.*

> Never let it appear that ideas and information gleaned from other sources are your own. The UNO Academic Integrity policy defines plagiarism as "presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting . . . academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person."

> Failure to cite sources appropriately is plagiarism, a serious academic offense. Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Consequences for plagiarism are up to the discretion of the instructor; they may range, for example, from rewriting all or part of a paper to a grade of F for the course. Students who plagiarize more than once are subject to disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the university.

> **If you have a question about using or citing another writer's work, DO NOT GUESS. Check with your instructor or a consultant at the UNO Writing Center. Bring a printout of the original source and your paper to the consultation.**

Best Practices for Preventing Plagiarism

In "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices," the Council of Writing Program Administrators notes that students are most likely to plagiarize under these circumstances: when they fear failure or lack confidence in their own work; when they mismanage their time and panic over a deadline; when they view a course or assignment as "busywork"; when they confront an assignment that seems generic or "canned"; when faculty fail to report instances of cheating or do not enforce appropriate penalties.

Faculty can reduce the incidence of plagiarism by designing courses in which these circumstances are unlikely to arise.
1. Present the academic field as an ongoing conversation in which students are finding their place. When they write, they're contributing to the conversation. Assign topics on which they have something to contribute.
2. Create fresh assignments. If possible, tie assignments to current events or developments in the field.
3. Assign topics closely related to the content of your course, and if appropriate, require that students make reference to the textbook or other assigned reading in their papers.
4. Require that students submit materials at several stages of the writing process, perhaps a topic proposal, a working bibliography, occasional progress reports, and a draft.
5. Create opportunities for students to help each other. Students investigating similar or related topics can form study groups, sharing ideas and leads on good sources, checking each other's use of sources and citations, and reading each other's drafts.

When Prevention Fails: Guidelines for Responding to Plagiarism

Given the context-specific nature of plagiarism and the uniqueness of each situation, the faculty response will vary. Specifically, the response will depend upon the degree of plagiarism and the intent of the individual(s) involved.

Degree of Plagiarism – The first factor to consider is how blatant or egregious the plagiarism is. For example, plagiarism could be as simple as a faulty paraphrase, one that fails to completely reformulate a reference into one's own words so that a sentence shares too much in common with the original reference. Alternatively the entire written document could be an exact duplicate of a prior student's work or copied from the web. Clearly these cases call for different responses.

Intent – Perhaps the most important factor in determining disciplinary action is intent.

A student might submit a paper containing plagiarized passages without any intent to cheat or deceive. The skill of integrating and documenting material from outside sources is difficult to learn; it requires practice, and as they practice, students sometimes make mistakes. (Paraphrase is especially difficult to master; it is not always clear how much the language of a paraphrase should differ from the language of the original in order to count as "one's own words.") When a student misuses sources unintentionally, it is more important to provide instruction than to initiate discipline. However, *work in which the writer fails to cite sources should not be awarded credit*. A student who misuses sources without an intent to deceive should be required to do the work over again or to complete a substitute assignment.

When a student knows that he or she is failing to do original work – when he or she intentionally takes shortcuts or simply cheats – the student violates the Academic Integrity Policy. The consequences must be severe enough to communicate the point that UNO insists on academic integrity. Both the Undergraduate Catalog and the Graduate Catalog spell out the steps the faculty member should take, beginning with a conversation with the student and proceeding as appropriate, possibly as far as a grade of F for the course and notification of academic administrators.