

# **DECKER SCHOOL OF NURSING AD HOC ACADEMIC HONESTY COMMITTEE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

## **PREAMBLE**

The Decker School of Nursing Academic Honesty Committee is not a legal or judicial body but an administrative one. The Committee hears and deliberates on cases involving academic dishonesty but renders no binding verdicts, judgments or decisions. After evaluating a case, the Committee sends to the Dean's Designee, non-binding recommendations as to the action the Dean's Designee might choose to take. The final disposition of a case is not within the jurisdiction or power of the Committee.

The Decker School of Nursing is a professional school. As such, it is in the unique position among schools and colleges of assuming responsibility for attesting to the moral character of the person being educated for professional practice. Honesty is an inherent concept in a professional person's behavior. The school also attests to the graduates' attainment of the programs' objectives that include specific statements relative to ethical and moral behavior.

The profession of nursing has a well defined Code of Ethics as well as statements of Standards of Practice. Socialization into the professional role requires knowledge of these documents. Those who enter the profession are guided by these documents throughout their careers.

Since most professional activities cannot be closely supervised at all times, individuals must assume responsibility for their own behavior. Professional colleagues are responsible for judging their peers in matters relating to honesty, ethical behavior and professional competence. As such, rules governing the confidentiality of human subjects and patients by HIPAA apply to nursing practice and research.

The nursing professional code of ethics would mandate the notification of any determined instance of malpractice or negligence to the appropriate state licensing agency should the involved party be licensed to practice professional nursing.

## **I. MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee shall consist of three faculty members and two student members to be selected by Voting Faculty. The Chair shall be selected in the same manner as the Chair of any other Decker School of Nursing Ad Hoc committee. In the absence of an ad hoc committee, the chair of Voting Faculty will serve as interim Chair of the Academic Honesty Committee.

## II. QUORUM

A Committee quorum shall consist of three committee members with the proviso that at least one of these be a student and two be faculty members. Any member of the Committee who brings a charge is automatically disqualified from that hearing, and, before a hearing begins, if anyone involved in that case accuses a member of being biased, the other members of the Committee shall decide, by a secret ballot, whether that member shall be disqualified from that hearing.

## III. INITIATION OF ACTION

Either faculty members or students may submit charges of academic dishonesty against students. Upon receipt of a signed charge against a student, the Chair shall convene the Committee at the earliest convenient time.

Students who feel that they have been unjustly accused of academic dishonesty or feel that they have been unjustly penalized for alleged academic dishonesty, by a faculty member, may request that the case be heard by the Committee within one month of signing a "Report of Academic Dishonesty Form" as directed in the Binghamton University policy for Category I violations. All such requests shall be granted and shall be handled as in IV-VI below.

## IV. NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT

The Chair or the Chair's designee shall notify the student or students of the charges under consideration. This notification shall be in writing and shall become a part of the committee record. This notification shall inform the student of the following, with sufficient particularity and in sufficient time to insure opportunity to prepare for the hearing.

1. The specific charges brought.
2. The time and place to appear before the Committee for a hearing.
3. The privilege to have one person of the students' own choosing to appear in an advisory capacity.
4. The right to be present during any portion of the meeting when evidence is heard with respect to the case.
5. The right to request that any person involved in the case be present at the time the student appears before the Committee.
6. The right to challenge the impartiality of any member of the Committee in accordance with II above.
7. The right to question witnesses.
8. The right, after the Committee has met and made its recommendation to the Dean's Designee, to appeal the Dean's Designee's decision to the Dean.
9. Students electing to appeal the decision of the Dean's Designee must notify the Dean's Designee within 30 days of the decision of their intent to appeal. The Dean's Designee will then provide information necessary to filing the appeal.

10. The procedures and policy of the Academic Honesty Committee as outlined in the present document.

## V. THE HEARING

The hearing shall consist of at least three parts:

1. The initial presentation of evidence and discussion with the parties bringing evidence. (If a teaching assistant was involved in discovering the alleged academic dishonesty, both faculty member and teaching assistant should be present.)
2. Discussion with the student (and the student's chosen advisor if an advisor is present).
3. The assessment of the evidence by the Committee and the formulation of its recommendation to the Dean's Designee.

The student and the student's advisor have the right to attend part one and part two of the committee meeting. If the student does not appear for the hearing, the case may be heard in absentia, but only after the Committee has made efforts to ascertain the reasons for the student's absence and to encourage the student to attend. No one other than Committee members shall be present during part three and no new evidence may be introduced at that time. As soon as the student appears before the Committee, the Chair shall review the student's rights and privileges as per paragraph IV above and acquaint the student with the purpose of the meeting, namely, to assess the evidence in the light of the full context in which the alleged dishonesty occurred in order to render a fair and equitable recommendation.

## VI. RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE

The recommendation of the Committee will take place in part three of the meeting. The decision will be based on an open vote by all members of the Committee in attendance. The recommendation shall be based on a vote of the majority of the members present. Those members of the Committee who do not concur with the majority vote have the right to append a minority report to the recommendations.

A record of the hearing will be made with sufficient particularity to allow for review by the Dean's Designee or the Dean of Decker School of Nursing, should an appeal be made. A verbatim record is not required.

The Committee can recommend to the Dean's Designee any of the following:

1. No action be taken against the student or students involved.
2. A letter of reprimand be sent to the student.
3. The student be placed on disciplinary probation and in the event the student is responsible for other acts of academic dishonesty, a more stringent penalty could result.

4. Denial of registration for a specified period of time.
5. Expulsion--No opportunity to return to the Decker School of Nursing.
6. Additional actions such as follow-up interviews with the Committee.

The Committee and the Provost's office shall be notified in writing of the Dean's Designee's disposition of each case. For all cases heard by the Committee except those resulting in expulsion, records shall be kept in the Dean's confidential files for a duration in compliance with the university's rules and regulations. For cases resulting in expulsion, a record shall be kept permanently.

## VII. IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC HONESTY CODE

Violations of the Code vary in severity, so that the appropriate punishments vary. Some violations (Category I) may be handled by the instructor and student(s) involved. However, violations requiring more severe penalties (Category II) are appropriately dealt with by the Academic Honesty Committee of the school. (Specific information about what constitutes a Category I or Category II violation can be found in the University's Catalog.)

Category I Violations. If an instructor discovers one of these violations, the instructor should first communicate with the student regarding the nature of the charge and the evidence on which the instructor has relied in reaching the conclusion that a violation has occurred. The student should be given the opportunity to respond. If the instructor remains convinced by the preponderance of evidence that a violation has occurred, the instructor should then contact the Chair of Academic Honesty Committee to see if there is a record of a previous violation by the student. If there is no previous violation, the faculty member should impose the appropriate penalty. The instructor should then fill in a Report of Academic Dishonesty Form describing the violation that occurred and the evidence supporting that finding. The form will also explain to the student the procedures whereby the student may appeal the decision. The student will then be asked to read and sign the form and will be provided with a copy. If the student chooses not to sign the form, the case goes to a hearing before the Committee of the school in which the offense occurred. The instructor will then forward the Report of Academic Dishonesty Form along with the supporting evidence to the chair of Academic Honesty Committee who will then forward it to the Provost's Office, where they will be kept on file. Students who are accused of a second Category I offense will be treated as being charged with a Category II offense and referred to Academic Honesty Committee.

Category II Violations. If an instructor discovers a Category II violation, the instructor should first communicate with the student regarding the nature of the charge and the evidence on which the instructor has relied in reaching the conclusion that a violation has occurred. If the instructor remains convinced that a

Category II violation has occurred, he or she should submit a detailed written charge with supporting evidence to the Academic Honesty Committee. The Provost's Office should be contacted to see if there is a record of a previous violation by the student. The student will be notified of the charge and the date of the hearing and will receive a copy of the committee procedures. The instructor should assign an incomplete grade for the student's work, pending the outcome of the hearing. If, after the hearing, the Committee concludes that the charges were unproven, the faculty member should re-evaluate the student's work in light of that finding. In determination of any penalty for Category II violations, committees will consider all relevant factors, including the nature of the violation and any previous violations that may have been committed by the student. The chair of the Academic Honesty Committee will report any decisions along with the supporting evidence to the Dean's Designee.

Date of Acceptance of Revision  
April 24, 2006  
Pamela Stewart Fahs  
Chair DSON Faculty Council