

Wofford College

The Honor Code

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2012-2013

Preamble

Wofford College is committed to the moral as well as the intellectual growth of its students and staff. Freedom and responsibility in such a community demand that its members embrace unambiguous principles of good conduct. Thus, the Wofford College *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* emphasizes personal integrity as its highest value, and members of the community are expected to be honest, trustworthy, responsible, and honorable.

Dishonesty (lying, cheating, defrauding, and or stealing) is especially destructive of the academic process. Integrity being necessary in research, discovery, and expression of ideas, Wofford College has an Honor Code to express its intolerance for academic dishonesty. The Honor Code requires faculty, staff, and students to be honest in their own work and their use of ideas, and to encourage others to do the same. The Code demands a high standard of personal honor. It requires students to pledge honesty in their academic work and it sets forth appropriate responses to those who violate that pledge.

Academic Dishonesty

The Honor Code at Wofford College governs academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is a general term referring here to any cheating, misrepresentation, and or stealing in academic or intellectual work submitted by a student of Wofford College in courses or projects or for college publications. It also applies to dishonesty in academic activities in which students may represent Wofford College (college bowl or mathematics competitions, internships, research projects, for example), even if these activities occur when the classes are not in session.

It is impossible to list all acts of academic dishonesty, but acts of academic dishonesty include:

1. Any conduct that involves the unauthorized use of information obtained by any means.
2. Unauthorized receiving, buying, selling, or theft of any assignment, examination, or quiz prior to its administration.
3. Unauthorized use of any electronic or mechanical device during any academic course.
4. Unauthorized collaboration on any test, assignment, or project.
5. Plagiarism, which is defined as:
 - (a) Verbatim repetition, without acknowledgement, of the writings of another author.
 - (b) Borrowing or using information developed by another without acknowledging the source.
 - (c) Paraphrasing or translating the work or thought of another writer without acknowledgment.
 - (d) Allowing any other person or organization to prepare work which one then submits as his/her own.
6. Preparing any assignment for another to submit as his/her own.
7. Misrepresenting personal circumstances (such as conflicting responsibilities, personal illness, or illness or death of loved ones) in an effort to avoid an assignment or deadline or as an excuse for not meeting academic responsibilities in a course.
8. Submitting for credit in a course any work previously submitted for credit in this course or in another course.
9. Any other incident of lying, cheating, or stealing in the preparation or presentation of academic work.
10. Lying to members of the faculty, administration, or Honor Council who are conducting an investigation or a hearing of academic dishonesty.

Honor Pledge

A condition of matriculation at Wofford College is the signing of the Honor Pledge in which students promise the faculty and fellow students they will not engage in any act of academic dishonesty. The pledge reads as follows:

I understand that Wofford College seeks to develop the character as well as the intellect of its students. I understand that Wofford students are expected to be honest, trustworthy, and honorable. Further, I understand that behavior contrary to these expectations threatens the values of the college and destroys trust among members of our campus community.

I have read and understand the provisions of the Wofford College Honor Code governing academic dishonesty. I understand that academic dishonesty reflects poor judgment and character, undermines the integrity of the academic program, and diminishes the value of the credentials of the graduates of the college.

As a sign of my membership in the Wofford College community and of my allegiance to its principle of honor, I promise the faculty and my fellow students that I will never engage in an act of dishonesty in my academic work.

As a reinforcement of the promise, students will sign work submitted in a course with the word “pledged” and their signature.

Honor Council

The Honor Council, a component of the student government at Wofford College, administers the provisions of the Honor Code. The Council is composed of fifteen students. Members of the Honor Council are selected each spring for the following year. Early in each spring semester the Chair of the Honor Council will solicit the student body for applicants for membership on the Council. Candidates will submit an application letter and two recommendations, one from a student and one from a faculty/staff member. The applicants are screened by the Electoral Board which consists of the outgoing chair of the Judicial Commission, the four outgoing officers of the Campus Union, the six outgoing senior delegates of the Campus Union, the Dean of Students, and two members of the faculty. The Board will pass the names of those applicants it approves to the six outgoing members of the Honor Council who will elect from those approved by the Board the Honor Council members for the upcoming year. In making its selection of new members of the Honor Council, the Board and the seniors on the Council give primary consideration to a candidate’s moral character and commitment to the promotion of academic honesty.

The newly elected members of the Honor Council are eligible to assume their Council responsibilities effective the beginning of spring semester academic holidays. The Honor Council elects its chair, vice chair, and secretary. If for any reason a member of the Honor Council vacates a position, the seniors on the Council will name a replacement.

The chair of the Honor Council presides at hearings of accusations of academic dishonesty. For each case, the chair appoints a member of the Council to serve as prosecutor for that case. The chair also appoints a student requested by the accused to serve as student advocate. If the accused has no request, the chair will appoint a student advocate from the Council. If for any reason the chair is unavailable, the vice chair will act in his or her place. The secretary is responsible for all records and communications from the Council. The Dean of the College* will appoint a faculty member to observe meetings of the Council and its hearings and to give advice and guidance to the Council in meeting its duties. The faculty advisor will not vote. He or she will not attempt to persuade the Council in its verdict or sanction.

*At the beginning of each academic year, the Dean of the College may designate and announce to the faculty an appropriate person to represent the Office of the Dean of the College in all matters pertaining to the Honor Code. The Dean's choice for the designate will be a member of the Wofford faculty or administration who has familiarity and experience with the Honor Code. The designate may not also serve as the faculty advisor to the Honor Council. If the designate brings a case to the Honor Court as a faculty member, he/she will not serve as designate in that case. This provision applies throughout the Code.

Reporting Procedures

While failure to report an act of academic dishonesty is not an infraction of the Code, all persons in the Wofford College community are to uphold the values of the Honor Code, and they should not tolerate academic dishonesty by others. When anyone in the Wofford College community has reason to believe that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, it is appropriate and right to report the matter in writing to the Dean of the College or to the faculty member involved. If the report goes to the faculty member, he or she will notify the Dean of the College. Upon receiving a report, the Dean of the College will notify the chair of the Honor Council (and the faculty member, if the report came directly to the dean). The Dean of the College, the faculty member, and the prosecutor for the case will meet to decide if there is probable cause for a charge. If two of the three agree that evidence is sufficient, the Dean of the College will notify the chair of the Honor Council, who will formally charge the student and convene a court to hear the case.

If the Dean of the College, faculty member, and prosecutor do not find sufficient evidence to make a charge, the dean will inform the accuser that the claim has been investigated and that no charge is being made. The matter is not recorded in the file of the accused student and the faculty member must not consider the alleged violation in determining the student's grade in the course. Any written records pertaining to the case will be destroyed.

Members of the Wofford College community must use their best judgment in determining whether or not acts are covered by the definitions of this Code and therefore constitute academic dishonesty. Faculty members must exercise care to differentiate careless and inadequate work from dishonest work. The professor will handle, as always, work judged to be careless and inadequate. In the suspicion of plagiarism, if the professor decides that the work is the result of the student's lack of knowledge of proper referencing, rather than the result of deception, the professor must report his or her handling of the case to the Dean. Normally, repeat offenses will be considered violations of the Honor Code and will be dealt with as such.

Hearings

During the academic year, the chair of the Honor Council will convene six members of the Council to conduct a hearing. During vacation periods, including summer terms, the chair has the option to convene a panel with as few as three members of the Council to conduct a hearing. During such periods, if the accused wishes to wait until a full court can be convened, he or she may do so with the knowledge that the hearing may be delayed as necessary until the College is in session. The Honor Council members so appointed will be the hearing court for the case. That number shall include the Council chair, but not include the prosecutor or the student advocate. Any member who has kinship or a close personal relationship with the accused will be expected to recuse himself or herself from the case. Conviction of a violation of the Honor Code requires that at least four of the six members (or a 2/3 majority during the vacation periods) of the hearing court vote that the accused is guilty beyond reasonable doubt. Beyond reasonable doubt is a strict standard of evidence. If the standard is not met, the accused will be found not guilty.

If the process leads to conviction, the Dean of the College or the Dean's representative will inform the hearing court of any previous conviction the offender may have for academic dishonesty. After the report from the Dean of the College, the court will set the sanction. At least four of the six members of the court must concur with the sanction. If there is no agreement, the least severe punishment under consideration will be administered. The verdict and the sanction will be announced by the Court to the convicted student, the prosecutor, and the student advocate immediately after the Court completes deliberation and makes a decision.

A student accused of academic dishonesty may elect to enter a guilty plea. In the case of a guilty plea, the six-person court will meet only to determine a sanction. The student may attend the meeting to make a statement or may choose to be absent, but must be present for the announcement of the sanction immediately after the Court completes deliberation and makes a decision.

If the accused is found not guilty, the verdict will be announced to the accused, the prosecutor, and the student advocate immediately after the decision is made. All materials relating to the case will be destroyed. The faculty member must not consider the alleged violation in determining the student's grade in the course.

Meetings of a hearing of academic dishonesty are closed, attended only by the members of the court, other members of the Council as observers, the faculty advisor, the accused and the student advocate, and persons invited by the court to give information or testimony. In addition, the Dean of the College may aid the prosecution and the Dean of Students may aid the defense. The proceedings of the Court will be audio taped for purposes of reference. The tapes of hearings will be maintained in the office of the Dean of the College for two years.

Sanctions

Students convicted by the Honor Council of a violation of the Code will be subject to the following sanction or sanctions:

- a. **Grading sanction** – mandatory withdrawal of a student from the course, resulting in the professor's assignment of a grade of WF (or F if the determination is made after the course has been completed).
- b. **Suspension** – separation of a student from Wofford College for a fixed period of time determined by the Court, usually from the time remaining in the academic term to an academic year in length. Wofford will not accept for credit any work undertaken at other institutions by a student during his or her suspension from Wofford College.
- c. **Exclusion** – separation of a student from Wofford College for an indeterminate period of time with no guarantee of readmission.
- d. **Research Workshop** – For convictions for plagiarism, the Court may impose an additional sanction requiring the student to complete a workshop, directed by the reference librarian and the Director of the Writing Center, on proper use of references in research and proper citation of materials used. Failure to complete the workshop at the earliest opportunity is grounds for the student's suspension by the Court.

1. First Offense

For a first offense, the Court has the discretion to impose one of two sanctions: (1) a grading sanction, or (2) both the grading sanction and suspension from Wofford College. On the motion of the Dean of the College, a student may be excluded from Wofford College for a first offense that is flagrant or egregious. In the case of plagiarism, the Court may also require the completion of the research workshop.

2. Subsequent Offense

For a subsequent offense, the sanction is (1) both the grading sanction and suspension as outlined above, or (2) both a grading sanction and exclusion from Wofford College. In the case of plagiarism, the Court may also require the completion of the research workshop as a condition for re-entry.

All sanctions take effect at the expiration of the 48-hour appeal period or as soon as the ruling on an appeal is made, except that, if the infraction occurs late in a semester, the Court may delay the beginning of a suspension or exclusion until the next term or semester. In the case of suspension or exclusion, grades for the other courses in which the student is enrolled will be WF or WP as assigned by the professor, depending on whether the student is passing or failing at the time.

Students who have been suspended or excluded must apply to the registrar for re-admission at least six weeks before the date they seek to return. Wofford will not accept for credit any work undertaken at other institutions by a student during his or her suspension or exclusion from Wofford under this Code .

3. Communications

Prior to the resolution of a charge, all parties shall hold the names of students suspected of acts of academic dishonesty in confidence. Once each semester, the secretary of the Council will provide the student body, faculty, and administration with a report on the number of cases tried, the verdicts, and the sanctions imposed. The names of persons charged will be withheld.

When a student is found guilty of an act of academic dishonesty, all records of the court, including copies of all correspondence, will be maintained in the office of the Dean of the College.

Formal charges of academic dishonesty will be communicated by the Court to the accused, to the Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, and the faculty member. In addition to the announcement immediately after the Court's decision, the results of hearings, including the verdict and the sanctions, will be communicated in writing by the Court to the accused, the Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, and the faculty member. The Dean of the College will notify the Registrar of sanctions and in a case involving a student-athlete will notify the Director of Athletics of the results of the hearing.

Formal charges of academic dishonesty, verdicts, and sanctions will be communicated by the Dean of Students to parents or guardians of a student unless the student is independent as determined by college officials according to the FERPA Act, which protects the privacy of educational records.

4. Safeguards and Appeals

A student who is charged with violating the Honor Code is guaranteed the following procedural safeguards.

- a. The student must be informed in writing of any charge or charges at least 72 hours before the case is heard.
- b. The student must be informed orally or in writing of the procedural rights set forth in these numbered paragraphs below.
- c. The student has the option of being excused from any tests or examinations for a period of 48 hours before and after the scheduled hearing.
- d. The student will be represented by a member of the Honor Council who is appointed by the Chair as the student's advocate or the Chair will appoint a non-Council (another Wofford student) as requested by the charged student.
- e. The student has the right to ask the Court to invite persons to testify on his or her behalf regarding the facts of the case and the Court will invite such persons.
- f. The student has the right to remain silent, and such silence does not constitute evidence of guilt.
- g. The student and his or her student counsel and the Honor Court prosecutor are required to exchange all evidence and materials for use in the proceeding at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.
- h. The student has the right of appeal as outlined in the Honor Code. Any person found guilty of academic dishonesty may appeal the verdict or sanction. The appeal must be submitted to the

President of the College within 48 hours (excluding holidays and weekends) after the student has been notified orally by the Court at the end of the hearing of the verdict or sanction. Grounds for appeal are those listed in section VII.D.4 of the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. Appeals must be submitted in writing and provide specific reasons. The President of the College, whose decision is final, will act on the appeal, giving the decision in writing within one week to the appellant and to the chair of the Honor Council. The President of the College may uphold or reverse the decisions, or may remand the case back to the court for further discussion before making a final decision on the appeal.

4. Revision

The Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, the faculty advisor to the Honor Council, and the chair of the Honor Council constitute a committee charged to review the Code and its workings annually and to make revisions as needed. Revisions must be approved by the faculty.

(Revised, September 2012)