

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**

**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

**BIOMEDICAL INFORMATICS TRAINING PROGRAM**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

**2006-2007 ACADEMIC YEAR**

The University of Pittsburgh Policies and Regulations on Graduate Studies can be found at the website: <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/policies.html>

Specifically, the Academic Integrity Policy of the University of Pittsburgh can be found on the website: <http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ai1.html>

Specifically, Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Research can be found on the website: <http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ethresearch.html>

Specifically, the Research Integrity Policy can be found on the website: <http://www.pitt.edu/HOME/PP/policies/11/11-01-01.html>

Specifically, for Regulations Governing Graduate Study can be found on the website: <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html>

## **Conduct, Honor, and Integrity Policies and Procedures**

### **University Honor Code / Code of Conduct**

The faculty and the students of the School of Medicine recognize the importance of personal integrity and honor. To achieve this end, each student accepting an offer of admission to the School of Medicine Graduate Division of Biomedical Sciences will accept the obligations of the Honor Code/Code of Conduct and will expect to apply the code to all aspects of his or her professional life regardless of the level of training. Students and faculty of the School of Medicine shall be honor bound to enforce the Honor Code/Code of Conduct and to report violations of it.

The Honor Code/Code of Conduct emphasizes the individual's involvement in and responsibility for the corporate well-being of the community of the Medical School. In keeping with the latter, it is incumbent upon every member of the community to promote the climate which this code seeks to establish. This involves not only counseling with fellow members of the school concerning their actions, but also bringing the sanctions of the School's disciplinary procedures to bear upon those whose conduct is in violation of the Code.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct outlines non-academic standards of conduct appropriate to the University in consonance with the educational goals of the University.

Students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible members of the University community. Those students whose conduct demonstrates a disrespect for law, the rights of others, or the health, welfare and safety of members of the University community will be subject to disciplinary action by the University, only if such conduct takes place on University property or in the course of a University-sponsored or supervised activity, if such conduct results directly from membership in the University community, or if such conduct does not fall into one of the preceding categories but poses a direct, physical threat to the University community or any individual member thereof, even if such conduct occurs off campus.

### **The Honor Code**

The Honor Code is simply stated: "Every student shall be honor bound to refrain from cheating, from presenting work for evaluation which is not his or her own, from giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance during evaluation, and from falsifying data or reports. Every student shall be honor bound from lying under oath. Every student has an obligation to cooperate in the investigation or disposition of any allegation of violation of the Honor Code and to report all violations which come under his or her observation."

Examples of conduct which have been regarded as being in violation of the Honor Code include but are not limited to the following: copying from an examination paper of another student; allowing another to copy from one's examination paper; reading a copy of the examination prior to the date of the examination without consent of the instructor; collaborating with others in writing an examination; plagiarism; revising and resubmitting a quiz for regrading without the instructor's knowledge and consent; giving or receiving unpermitted aid on a take-home examination; representing as one's own the work of another; giving or receiving aid on an examination under circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that such aid was prohibited by the Honor Code; falsifying clinical data; destroying or concealing for his own purpose educational materials meant for simultaneous use by others. If a student, while under pressure, commits a dishonorable act, it shall be considered a valid defense if the student reports him or herself to an appropriate authority and conscientiously attempts to rectify the situation, before any knowledge of an investigation. The faculty has the obligation of providing an environment conducive to independent work during examination. Examinations often will not be monitored by the

faculty, except in order to answer questions or give authorized aid. Students may be asked to add a pledge that "I have neither given or received unauthorized aid prior to or during this examination, and that I will report any known violation on the part of others."

Any student, faculty member, administrative officer or staff member of the School of Medicine may charge a student with violation of the Honor Code. This must be done in a timely manner. Such a charge may be brought to the attention of a member of the Honor Council, to the Dean, or the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, any one of whom can provide advice and counsel as to how to proceed within the School's procedures.

### **Guidelines on Academic Integrity**

These guidelines contain a set of principles which shall be applicable to each of the academic units throughout the University. A student desiring information about an academic unit's specific procedures and makeup of its academic integrity hearing board may obtain a copy of the procedures and other necessary information from the office of the dean, either in the academic unit in which he or she is registered or in the academic unit in which a particular course is taught. Additional information or guidance may be obtained from the Office of the Provost. It is also available in its entirety at web address: <[www.pitt.edu/~graduate/ai1.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/ai1.html)>.

#### *Preface*

Provided here are Academic Integrity Policy Guidelines based on the 1983-86 document which was initially approved by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the University Senate Council. The original document evolved from and represented careful deliberation among staff, Senate committees, and student leaders of the University. The purpose of this document is to clarify and codify the rights and responsibilities that are inherent in traditional faculty-student relationships, and to reflect procedural modifications that were approved, effective January 1, 1989 by the Chancellor.

In following the Guidelines, the faculty of each academic unit of the University are expected to adapt them to the circumstances of their own academic unit.

The Guidelines are designed to assure due process, equity, and prompt and objective review by third parties, with appropriate appeals procedures. There is a general intent to maintain confidentiality, to avoid unnecessary formality, and to resolve issues at the lowest possible level.

Faculty have a particular interest and responsibility in assuring that the Guidelines are adhered to, by virtue of their profession and their role as academic officials of the University. Any failure to follow these Guidelines would be harmful to the whole University community.

All members of the University community have access to advice and interpretation regarding these Guidelines. Students may consult with the Campus Judicial Coordinator, faculty may consult with their dean or school hearing officer, and may ask for any other guidance they need from the Office of the Provost.

In general, we seek to preserve the traditional freedoms and duties associated with academic endeavors.

The University should work to preserve the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with one another. Just as faculty and students must be free to seek truth and to search for knowledge with open minds, they must also accept the responsibility that these activities entail maintaining the highest standards of integrity, mutual respect, and honest inquiry.

## **I. Student Obligations**

A student has an obligation to exhibit honesty, and to respect the ethical standards of the profession in carrying out his or her academic assignments. Without limiting the application of this principle, a student may be found to have violated this obligation if he or she: (see note concerning more appropriate invocation of University of Pittsburgh Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Procedures)

1. Refers during an academic evaluation to materials or sources, or employs devices, not authorized by the instructor.
2. Provides assistance during an academic evaluation to another person in a manner not authorized by the instructor.
3. Receives assistance during an academic evaluation from another person in a manner not authorized by the instructor.
4. Engages in unauthorized possession, buying, selling, obtaining, or using of any materials intended to be used as an instrument of academic evaluation in advance of its administration.
5. Acts as a substitute for another person in any academic evaluation process.
6. Utilizes a substitute in any academic evaluation procedures.
7. Practices any form of deceit in an academic evaluation proceeding.
8. Depends on the aid of others in a manner expressly prohibited by the instructor, in the research, preparation, creation, writing, performing, or publication of work to be submitted for academic credit or evaluation.
9. Provides aid to another person, knowing such aid is expressly prohibited by the instructor, in the research, preparation, creation, writing, performing, or publication of work to be submitted for academic credit or evaluation.
10. Presents as one's own, for academic evaluation, the ideas, representations, or words of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources.
11. Submits the work of another person in a manner which represents the work to be one's own.
12. Knowingly permits one's work to be submitted by another person without the instructor's authorization.
13. Attempts to influence or change one's academic evaluation or record for reasons other than achievement or merit.
14. Indulges, during a class (or examination) session in which one is a student, in conduct which is so disruptive as to infringe upon the rights of the instructor or fellow students.
15. Fails to cooperate, if called upon, in the investigation or disposition of any allegation of dishonesty pertaining to another student, or any other breach of a student's obligation to exhibit honesty.
16. Violates the canons of ethics of scientific research.

## **II. Grievance Procedures**

Any member of the University community having evidence may bring to the attention of the department chairman and/or dean a complaint that a faculty member has failed, in one or more respects, to meet faithfully the obligations set forth in the Faculty Obligations section of the Guidelines on Academic Integrity <[www.pitt.edu/~graduate/aifaccode.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/aifaccode.html)>. The chair or dean, in his or her discretion, will take such action by way of investigation, counseling, or action-in accordance with applicable University procedures-as may appear to be proper under the circumstances. The faculty member's and student's interest in confidentiality, academic freedom, and professional integrity in such matters will be respected.

## **I. Disciplinary Procedures**

### **A. Initiation of Disciplinary Proceedings**

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated only upon formal complaint made to the Dean for Student Affairs (hereinafter "Dean for Student Affairs" shall refer to that specific Associate Dean for Graduate Studies or another Associate Dean designated by the Dean of the Medical School). Any student, faculty member, administrative officer, or staff of the School of Medicine may initiate disciplinary proceedings by complaint. The Dean for Student Affairs will require a complaint to be put in writing and signed before proceeding further.

The Dean for Student Affairs must be informed of a complaint reported to a member of the Honor Council or to another Associate Dean.

### **B. Function and Authority of the Dean for Student Affairs**

- (1) Initial Determination to Proceed on Charge. Upon receipt of a formal complaint, and following such investigation as he/she considers appropriate, the Dean for Student Affairs determines whether further proceedings are warranted. If it is determined that they are not, the Dean for Student Affairs notifies the person making the complaint of the determination and proceeds no further. If it is determined that further proceedings are warranted, the Dean then arranges for written charges to be provided to the student who has been accused of the infraction.
- (2) Formal Statement of Charges. The formal statement of charges must set forth the nature, time and place of the violation charged. It is to be promptly presented to the person charged and in any event within ten working days after receipt of the complaint, by in-hand delivery to him or her or by registered mail to his or her last known school-recorded address if in-hand delivery is impossible. The statement of the charge is accompanied by,
  - (a) a written notification of a date, time and place for administrative conference with the Dean for Student Affairs which date shall not be less than three or more than ten working days after the date of service, and
  - (b) by the following statement of his or her rights:
    - (a) The accused shall be informed in writing of the charges against him or her.
    - (b) The accused shall have adequate time to prepare his or her case. (See specified times in Part II. B3).
    - (c) The accused shall not be required to take any examinations between the time he or she is charged and two days after the decision is delivered to the student.
    - (d) The accused shall have the right to the advice and full assistance of a member of the University community, during the hearing, but participation of extramural legal counsel is not permitted at the School level.
    - (e) The accused shall be assumed innocent until proven guilty by clear and convincing evidence presented to the Dean for Student Affairs or the Honor Council.
    - (f) The accused shall have the right to call a reasonable number of witnesses. The accused or his counsel (from within the University) shall be allowed to question

and cross examine witnesses, and shall have a fair opportunity to present his or her defense.

- (g) The accused shall not be restrained in any manner from the full exercise of his or her rights of appeal.

In order to expedite disposition of a matter, any person charged may, in writing, waive any of the minimum periods required in this section to elapse between notice and the holding of any hearing provided in this section.

At the discretion of the Dean for Student Affairs, official University vacations, holidays, or weekends will not normally be counted as part of the time limit specified for dealing with any case; at his/her own discretion, however, if all parties agree, the Dean may include any such period in numbering the days in compliance with this rule.

- (3) Procedure for Administrative Conference of the Dean for Student Affairs. The person charged shall then be given the following options:
  - (a) to admit the violation charged and submit to the administration imposition of sanctions with a range then specifically enumerated by the Dean, or
  - (b) to deny the violations and have the charge referred for disposition to the Honor Council. The choice shall be recorded in writing over signature of the person charged.
- (4) Procedure for Administrative Disposition of Admitted Violation. If the person charged elects option (a), the Dean for Student Affairs thereupon proceeds with the conference. He/she shall give the person charged the opportunity, within reasonable bounds, to present evidence in mitigation or extenuation of the violation admitted. Upon request he may continue the conference over a reasonable time and allow others to testify for this purpose. Normally the Program Director or representative of the involved training program will attend this conference. Following the conference, the Dean for Student Affairs will, within three working days, prepare a written report to be submitted to the Dean of the School of Medicine, including any recommendation for sanction (which may have been agreed upon by the student and faculty member). The Dean shall send a copy of this report to the person charged.

If a person charged elects option (b), the Dean of Student Affairs shall forthwith terminate the conference and refer the matter to the Student Solicitor for presentation to the Honor Council in accordance with the procedures described below. Referral consists of transmittal of a copy of the formal charge plus any items from his or her files deemed appropriate by the Dean of Student Affairs. The Student Solicitor thereupon prepares and presents a charge to the Honor Council.

### **C. Organization and Function of Honor Council and Student Solicitor**

- (1) **Organization.** The Honor Council is composed of ten students, and three faculty members appointed by the Dean of the School of Medicine. The students will be two, from and elected by, each of the second, third, and fourth year classes, two students elected from the graduate school, and after their election in the Fall, the president, and vice president of the first year class. The Dean for Student Affairs shall be responsible for assisting the council in its operation but shall not be a direct participant in the hearing. Each year the Council shall elect its own chairman and secretary. The Council shall elect one of its student members as Student Solicitor.
- (2) **Function and Authority.** The function of the Honor Council is to hear all charges of violation and to make a recommendation regarding innocence or guilt, and sanctions in the case of those found guilty of a violation.
- (3) **Student Solicitor.** The Student Solicitor is a member of the Honor Council, elected by the Council. He performs a function herein provided for his office. From the time of reviewing a charge until final disposition of the case by the Council, he shall not discuss the case with other members of the Council.
- (4) **Secretary.** The Secretary shall be elected annually by the Honor Council. He or she shall keep a record of all proceedings of the Council, consistent with provisions of III.A. Assistance for this will be provided by the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs.

### **D. Hearing Procedures Before Honor Council**

- (1) **Setting the Hearing.** Promptly upon receipt of referral of a charge from the Dean for Student Affairs, the Student Solicitor notifies the Secretary of the Honor Council of its receipt. The Secretary then promptly confers with the involved parties in order to ascertain the earliest practicable date for hearing, taking into account the time required for adequate preparation. A hearing time, date, and place are set and, through the office of the Dean for Student Affairs, written notice of the setting is given to the members of the Honor Council, the Solicitor and the person charged. Notice to the person charged shall be served by in-hand delivery, or if that is impossible, by registered mail. The hearing date shall be not less than three nor more than ten days from the date of the service of notice upon the person charged. The student charged may on his own initiative waive the three-day limit.
- (2) **When Person Charged Appears.** If the person charged appears at the hearing personally or is represented by a campus representative who is authorized in writing to appear for the defendant, the hearing shall proceed as follows:
  - (a) The Chairman reads the statement of charge and asks the person charged or his or her representative whether he or she admits the substance of the charge, or denies it.
  - (b) If the person charged or his or her representative admits the substance of the charge, the student may then make any statement he or she desires in mitigation or extenuation, and may present a reasonable number of witnesses in substantiation of this statement. Members of the Council may ask questions of such witnesses. A reasonable number of witnesses whose comments may have bearing on the sanction may be called to substantiate the extenuating

circumstances. The Council shall then in executive session consider and determine the sanctions, if any, to be recommended to the Dean.

- (c) If the person charged or his personal representative denies the substance of the charge, the Council proceeds to hear evidence as to the matter in dispute, normally in the following order:
  - 1. Evidence in support of the charge presented under direction of the Student Solicitor;
  - 2. Evidence in support of the accused, under direction of the person charged or his or her representative;
  - 3. Witnesses may be summoned and cross examined by both accused and Council.

Closing oral arguments may then be made by the Solicitor followed by the person charged or his or her representative. The Honor Council then determines in executive session and in the absence of the Student Solicitor whether a violation as charged has occurred and what sanction, if any, to recommend.

- (3) When Person Charged Does Not Appear. If the person charged does not appear personally or is not represented by an authorized student representative at the hearing, the fact that the person charged has been duly notified shall be verified. If it is determined that he or she has not, the hearing is adjourned and the procedures revert to setting and notification of a rescheduled hearing. If it is determined that due notice was given, the hearing proceeds as follows:

- (a) The Solicitor reads the statement of charge;
- (b) The Solicitor presents witnesses and other evidence in support of the charge;
- (c) The Solicitor makes a closing statement. The Honor Council then determines in executive session whether a violation as charged occurred and what sanction, if any, to recommend.

- (4) General Rules of Procedure; Rights Secured to Person Charged.

- (a) General Conduct of Hearing. The Chairman of the Honor Council presides, and makes all rulings in respect to questions of practice and procedure, and controls, by recognition, the participation of members of the Council and others in the hearing.
- (b) Quorum for Hearing. Eight members of the Council including at least one faculty member constitute a quorum for the conduct of any hearing.
- (c) Evidence. No attempt shall be made to apply technical legal rules of evidence. In general, any evidence, whether oral testimony or documentary, which is considered by the Chairman to be relevant to the charge or defense should be received, subject to the power of the Chairman to exclude frivolous, repetitive or merely cumulative testimony. Heresay evidence (testimony by a witness to what a person not present at the hearing has stated) should be received and evaluated with caution, since no opportunity ordinarily exists to question the absent person. Objections to evidence are ruled upon by the Chairman alone.
- (d) Burden and Standard of Proof: Number of Honor Council Required to Determine Violation. No Council member should vote to find that the person charged was in violation as charged unless on weighing all evidence the proof of

violation is clear and convincing to him. The member should not consider any evidence of violation not brought out in the hearing itself. Whenever the charge is not admitted, no violation is found unless three quarters of the Council hearing the matter find it.

- (e) Open or Private Hearing. If the person charged requests a private hearing it shall be granted. Otherwise all hearings shall be open to the University community, subject to the right of the Chairman to exclude persons when required for the orderly conduct of the hearing.
  - (f) Right to Question Adverse Witnesses. Both the Council and the person charged shall have the right within bounds of general relevance, to question adverse witnesses who testify at the hearing.
  - (g) Right to Counsel. The person charged has the right to be advised, assisted, or represented at the hearing, by whomever he or she wishes from the University community, but only one other person may take an active part.
  - (h) Provision of Record for Review. The Secretary of the Council shall prepare a written summary of the proceedings at all hearings. A tape recording shall be provided of the hearing.
  - (i) Number of Honor Council Required to Recommend Particular Sanctions. In order to recommend the sanction of indefinite or definite suspension, two thirds of the members of the Council sitting on the particular hearing must concur in its imposition.
- (5) Notice of Action. The Honor Council may inform the person charged orally of its disposition of the charge following its determination, or it may defer giving any notice for a period not to exceed two school days from formal closing of the hearing. In any event, the Secretary of the Council shall, not later than two days from formal closing of the hearing, give to the person charged and to the Dean of the School of Medicine a written Notice of Finding and Recommendation. This shall include, if violation was not admitted, an entry: "Violation as Charged Found" or "Not Found," and in any case where a sanction is recommended an entry: "Sanction Recommended" (specified with clarity). The notice to the Dean will specify the tally of any votes taken.
- (6) Failure by Honor Council to Convene or to Make a Timely Determination in Referred Case.
- (a) Effect of Failure by Council to Determine Referred Case. Failure of the Council to dispose of the matter in a duly referred case within 30 days after its formal referral by the Dean for Student Affairs to the Student Solicitor shall result in direct referral of the matter to the Dean of the Medical School, for administrative disposition. If the alleged violation is not then admitted in a conference, the Dean of the Medical School may proceed to conduct a hearing, make a determination of violation or non-violation, and impose sanctions as provided in Part II.

## **II. Sanctions for Violations**

When a violation of the Honor Code is admitted or is found by the Honor Council, the matter is referred to the Dean of the School of Medicine for disposition (see I.B.4. and I.D.f.). The range of permissible sanctions for disciplinary action, whether imposed by administrative action or recommended by Honor Council action includes:

### **A. Suspension for a Definite Time**

Exclusion from classes and other activities with forfeiture of academic credit, as set forth in the notice of suspension, for a definite time beginning immediately. Sanction of the violation of cheating shall ordinarily include a recommended failure in the course involved with authorized withdrawal in other concurrent courses, regardless of the term when the offense is committed. If the suspension is for more than one term, the suspension shall begin immediately and shall be served in consecutive terms.

### **B. Indefinite Suspension**

Termination of student's status, subject only to formal readmission, with no right to petition for readmission before the expiration of a calendar year from the date of suspension. Sanction for the violation of cheating shall ordinarily include a recommended failure in the course involved with authorized withdrawals in other courses, regardless of the time in the term when the offense is committed.

### **C. Lesser Sanctions**

Although suspension for a definite or an indefinite time will usually be the sanction imposed for willful violation of the Honor Code, lesser penalties may be imposed because of extenuating or mitigating circumstances.

## **III. Disciplinary Records**

### **A. Custody Separate From Academic Records**

All records pertaining to disciplinary proceedings in which a student is charged with a violation shall be kept separate from his or her academic records. The Dean for Student Affairs shall be sole custodian for all records involving disciplinary proceedings. To this end, all records made or considered by the Honor Council in disciplinary proceedings before them shall be transmitted immediately upon completion of the proceedings to the Dean for Student Affairs for custody.

## **IV. Review and Appeal**

- A. A student may appeal an adjudication to the Provost, who may seek the advice of the University Review Board. Information about how to proceed may be obtained from the office of the Provost. The student may appeal also to the University Review Board, whose recommendation shall be made to the Provost. The action of the Provost, taken with or without the advice of the University Review Board, shall constitute an exhaustion of all required institutional remedies.

Approved by the Executive Committee January 11, 1983

Approved by the Faculty of Medicine February 17, 1983