

# PROMOTING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

August 1, 2011

In the spring of 2011 Provost Tony Waldrop commissioned a task force to review and recommend improvements in UCF's academic integrity policies and processes. The task force concentrated its efforts on the following:

- 1) the evaluation and reform of the existing system for resolving reported instances of academic misconduct
- 2) the identification of concrete and sustainable strategies for enhancing the culture at UCF to place greater emphasis on our commitment to academic integrity.

The 10-member team created a series of recommendations for revising the current system and made suggestions for further action in the areas of faculty teaching and learning resources, policy review and reform, and student resources and support. Below is an overview of the team's recommendations.

## **Challenge One: Reforming the System**

The development of a new streamlined system that will improve efficiency, reduce duplication, and align course and program actions with conduct actions is recommended in order to address the lack of a coordinated, integrated, understandable, and efficient system for resolving academic misconduct allegations.

### *Highlights of the new model.*

- UCF will have one system for managing course, program, and conduct-level actions in instances of alleged academic misconduct, and the actions will be completed in a reasonable timeframe. The proposed system allows for the coordination of both conduct and academic processes by requiring that the conduct process be resolved prior to the implementation of any academic sanctions.
- A revised notification system will minimize confusing communications to both students and faculty members. It includes a new form, the Alleged Academic Misconduct Report, which will support the tracking of cases and consistency in their disposition.
- Consequences for proven instances of academic misconduct will be applied more consistently and fairly among students at the course, program, and college levels.
- The system binds all parties to uphold regulations and consequences.
- The system involves five streamlined stages to be accomplished within nine weeks:
  - Stage One: A faculty member, or in some cases a student, identifies academic misconduct. In consultation with a chair or dean if necessary, the faculty member develops course-related sanctions. *The projected timeframe is 10 business days.*
  - Stage Two: A formal meeting occurs between a student and a faculty member to sign the Alleged Academic Misconduct Report that gives a student the opportunity to accept responsibility. The Z designation (for undergraduates only) and completion of an Academic

Integrity Seminar will be a requirement in all instances. Grade appeals will not be considered. *The projected timeframe is 10 business days.*

- Stage Three: The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities — using a new Academic Integrity Panel comprised of specially trained faculty members, staff members, and student Conduct Board members — reviews the incident and may impose conduct-related sanctions. A review will occur if there are previous academic misconduct incidents, the situation is judged to be egregious, or the student has not accepted the Alleged Academic Misconduct Report and the sanctions. *The projected timeframe is 10 business days.*
- Stage Four: Academic course-related sanctions and possible academic program-related sanctions are given after a review by the appropriate academic departments and colleges. There will be one communication to the student describing both the conduct and academic sanctions. *The projected timeframe is 10 business days.*
- Stage Five: An appeals process to the provost or designee is available based on one or more of the following grounds: irregularities in fairness and stated procedures, discovery of new and significant information, and disproportionate sanctions. *The appeal must be filed within seven business days after receipt of letter.*

### **Challenge Two: Changing the Culture**

The task force recommends university-wide efforts in the following three areas to promote a campus culture that demonstrates a commitment to academic integrity.

#### *Faculty Teaching and Learning Resources*

1. The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and the Center for Distributed Learning will provide support for relevant pedagogical training.
2. The provost will charge various entities with responsibility for development and dissemination of policies and practices.
3. The provost will recommend that course syllabi will include academic integrity expectations as a required component.
4. College and department leaders will establish support systems such as faculty mentors and create specific plans to keep academic integrity issues a priority.

#### *Policy Review and Reform*

1. The Faculty Senate Ethics Task Force will review definitions of academic integrity and explore ways in which to reach consensus on appropriate expectations as well as to accommodate differences among fields of study.
2. The Office of Academic Affairs will establish guidelines for implementation and reporting of these policies and processes across colleges, including plans for informing faculty and making academic integrity plans transparent.
3. The Office of Undergraduate Studies and College of Graduate Studies will investigate the means for recurring academic integrity dialogues, such as “Ethics across the Curriculum,” the GEP, the Unifying Theme.

### *Student Resources and Support*

1. The UCF INTEGRITY website will be updated and promoted regularly by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
2. Academic integrity learning modules will be required for all new undergraduate students. All students newly admitted to doctoral programs will complete training in conducting research responsibly as well as other academic integrity issues.
3. Students will be involved in creating recurring incentives, communications, and promotional campaigns focused on the importance of upholding academic integrity. Student focus groups will regularly be held to assess student needs and concerns regarding the intricacies of understanding how to demonstrate academic integrity.
4. Annual events will be planned — such as “Ethics Week” — to highlight these issues.
5. All efforts will recognize cultural differences among our students and adjust communications, incentives, and programs accordingly.

### **Task Force Members**

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