

Task Force Recommendations for Temporary Policy Adjustments During the COVID-19 Pandemic 2020

Task Force Members

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Introduction

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, current academic policies were reviewed for either temporary or permanent revisions. We have recommended revisions to the following policies:

- [Promotion, Tenure/Reappointment and Merit \(PTRM\) Policy](#)
- [Attendance/Absence Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#)
- [Faculty members and the Syllabus Guidelines](#)

Promotion, Tenure/Reappointment and Merit (PTRM) Policy
<https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/senate/committees/ptrm.html>

The Task Force makes recommendations in the following areas of the current PTRM Policy:

1. Departmental Meetings and PTRM Committee Meetings
2. Committee Voting
3. Submission of Annual Evaluation Portfolios (Binders)
4. Guidance for Committee Discussion and Evaluation of Materials
5. Confidentiality
6. Tenure Clock and Review Delays
7. Teaching Evaluations
8. Merit

1. **Departmental Meetings and PTRM Committee Meetings**

Task Force Recommendation:

- To help control the population density on campus and to accommodate those faculty who may be uncomfortable coming to campus, all meetings should be held on a video conferencing platform. Should committees want some or all members to meet face to face, approval should be sought from Department Chair and Dean.

2. **Committee Voting**

All votes regarding tenure or promotion, reappointment, merit, and/or comprehensive reviews taken by any committee and/or the department are required to be by confidential ballot, signed with the Towson University ID number, dated by the voting member, and tallied by the committee chair. This process will be challenging through virtual meetings.

Task Force Recommendation:

- OTS should provide direction on process and platform. If that is not possible, Departments, in consultation with their college Dean, should determine a process and platform that can accommodate their needs (e.g. Google forms, Qualtrics). Ballots need to be confidential but also discoverable.

3. **Submission of Annual Evaluation Portfolios (Binders)**

ART Document: Appendix 3, Section I.B.3 “Evaluation portfolios shall be organized, indexed, and placed in a three-ring binder or submitted as an electronic portfolio.” However, under current circumstances the Provost will recommend which electronic platform to be used by all colleges of the university. The deadline for submission of materials is moved to the third Friday in August (8/21/20) and any outcomes achieved through this date can be included in submitted materials. Signatures should be done electronically. Faculty should be advised to build their signatures into Adobe, rather than using a script font in MS Word.

Task Force Recommendations:

- Faculty should upload materials as directed by OTS and/or Department/College. The PDF file(s) can contain links to ancillary material such as published papers or books or creative products.
- Teaching: faculty are encouraged to describe the efforts involved in transforming their teaching onto the remote learning environment. Reviewers should take this into consideration when evaluating. Faculty could also provide a “before” and “after” syllabus to demonstrate how they adjusted their courses in response to COVID-19. An accompanying narrative can include reflections about the move to remote teaching, the training involved, the resources used or needed to move classes online, and the additional support needed to be effective remote educators in the future. It could also include examples of how the faculty member supported students during this time with “check-in” meetings or additional

trainings they attended to develop emotional intelligence skills for supporting students.

- Scholarship: faculty are encouraged to describe the COVID-related impact, if any, to their scholarship and how they may have pivoted their plans to move forward during the pandemic.
- Service: faculty are encouraged to detail service work occurring outside of their 10-month contracts. In particular, faculty who are devoting considerable time to ReTUrn to TU efforts should provide an explanation of their efforts. PTRM committees are encouraged to recognize this substantive contribution and significant work extending beyond the faculty contract.
- Docusign should be used to sign PTRM letters.
- The deadline for submission of materials should be permanently moved to the second Friday in August annually beginning in 2021. Outcomes through July 31 should be included in submitted materials. This will help ensure consistency of evaluation on an annual basis (i.e. AY 20-21 would only be 9 months if reverting to a May 31 end date which is highly problematic given the potential and differential impact of COVID on scholarship productivity for various disciplines).

4. **Guidance for Committee Discussion and Evaluation of Materials**

Task Force Recommendations:

- Many conferences, exhibitions, reviews, etc. were cancelled, postponed, or moved online in response to travel restrictions and shelter-in-place recommendations. Equal weight should be given by committees to scholarly work accepted to conferences regardless of whether a presentation occurred. These circumstances were beyond faculty control and the intent/acceptance to present should be given the same consideration as an executed presentation.
- Only content presented in the binder should be evaluated by committees. Undocumented commentary regarding teaching effectiveness or methodologies once virtual operations began should not be a part of committee discussion.
- Committees should not seek out evaluations for faculty teaching during spring 2020. Content included in portfolios can be reviewed and considered as helpful context, but should not be referenced in formal write-ups/reviews of performance even if a faculty member included documentation.

- Since nine months of the review cycle occurred as normal, faculty should have substantive scholarship, fall teaching evaluations, and service outcomes to report. These should be evaluated as normal.
- Consideration is being given to accommodate delayed scholarship outcomes via the revised August submission date. Faculty should not be mandated to use May 31, 2020 as the end date of the academic year, rather they should have until August 21, 2020 to produce outcomes.
- Committees should also consider any COVID-related extenuating circumstances that a faculty member details regarding their scholarship outcomes.
- Committees should consider extensive changes to workload due to the transition to online learning in March 2020 as well as significant service work performed by faculty in the ReTUrn to TU effort.

5. **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality remains an important issue during the PTRM process. Department Chairs, PTRM Chairs, and Committee members all need to ensure they are approaching the evaluation process from a strong ethical standpoint and managing interactions, discussion and documentation with strict confidentiality.

Task Force Recommendations:

- Committee chairs will read a statement regarding confidentiality before deliberations occur.
- Committee members are reminded not to text or chat privately about PTRM deliberations during or after meetings adjourn.
- Committee members are reminded that sessions should not be recorded or observed by others.
- Individual members of the committee should avoid gathering face to face for the purpose of attending an online meeting together.

Task Force Question:

- *Can we ask PTRM committee members to sign a confidentiality agreement along with the reminder statement given the need for virtual meetings?*

6. **Tenure Clock and Review Delays**

Any tenure-track faculty may be granted a one-year extension of the Mandatory Tenure-Review Year upon written request without “subsequent recommendations by the department chair and the dean of the college” (see ART document). Per the ART document, any agreement to change the Mandatory Tenure-Review Year stated in the faculty member’s contract shall not be effective unless the faculty member’s contract is amended and signed by both the faculty member and the Provost. Per Provost Perrault, COVID-related tenure clock extension requests should be submitted to Department Chairs in an email, forwarded on to College Deans, and further forwarded to the Provost. Per Provost Perrault, five-year reviews that were to occur following the 20-21 AY may be deferred one year. There are no other adjustments occurring to five-year review timelines.

Task Force Recommendations:

- Adopt an “opt-out” policy, rather than the current “opt-in” policy for tenure clock extensions related to COVID-19. This assists in supporting faculty early on in their careers and increases equity around the extension policy.
- Faculty should be advised not to opt-out until they are positive it is the appropriate decision. The decision to opt-out will not be reversible. Opting out allows the faculty member to revert to their original promotion and tenure review timeline.
- Should faculty opt-out, they can signal this via notification to their department chair at any time through the third Friday in September of the fall in which they declare their intent to be reviewed for tenure and promotion.
- Third year reviews should not be delayed with an opt-out policy and should proceed as scheduled. Third year reviews are meant to be supportive and developmental. They may aid in opt-out decision making and provide valuable feedback early in one’s career.
- Third year review timelines should shift. Currently third year reviews occur at 2.5 years (materials due in January of year 3). Third year reviews should occur with annual, comprehensive, and promotion/tenure reviews in the fall of the academic year. Submission of materials should occur on the same timeline.
- Faculty who were hired during the 19-20 AY with a start date during the 20-21 AY should be included in any policy regarding tenure clock delays. Many will arrive to campus unable to start up a program of research due to COVID restrictions.

7. Teaching Evaluations

Task Force Recommendations:

- Peer evaluations can be conducted by review of a synchronous online class by joining the meeting or reviewing a video of an asynchronous class or a face to face class that is recorded.
- The peer evaluator should not join a class meeting face-to-face in person during COVID; all peer evaluations should occur virtually.
- The evaluator should consider the effectiveness of the instructor's Blackboard site for the course and any other virtual materials/teaching tools utilized by the instructor.
- The reviewer's written recommendation will be in an electronic format; debriefing meetings will be held via video conferencing platform; signatures and submission of review should occur electronically.
- Departments should be more flexible regarding standardized forms required per their PTRM documents. Evaluators should provide a narrative regarding faculty strengths and areas for improvement based on the observation.
- The number of required peer evaluations should be appropriate and considered by Departments during COVID.
- Student evaluations will be tabulated by the Office of Institutional Research. Faculty should include an annotation indicating that the course was taught during COVID.
- Faculty are encouraged to add a narrative statement accompanying any evaluation that clarifies how they shifted their instruction to manage COVID-related changes to their teaching.

8. **Merit**

Evaluating faculty for merit will be very difficult given some will have accomplished a lot in the six months prior to COVID, and some will have planned to accomplish a lot in the six months that they were impacted by COVID. The pandemic will likely have a greater impact on productivity related to the upcoming AY 2020-2021, rather than the previous AY 2019-2020.

Task Force Recommendations:

- Because of work required to adjust courses, teaching may require more time and effort than is typical in other semesters. Research productivity may also

be temporarily reduced. Changes in workload ratios due to COVID should not be detrimental to the evaluation of a faculty member.

- Due to the significant schedule modifications, teaching modality changes, and workload associated with preparing courses, managing issues (personal or professional) associated with the pandemic and the uncertainty of the electronic platform, voting procedures, etc., considerations regarding merit evaluation should be adjusted accordingly.

Task Force Questions:

In order to make a more informed recommendation, we need to understand the following:

- *Is there flexibility for consideration of merit? That is, if we wanted to forgo merit evaluation this fall, is that an option (it would reduce committee review work substantially as tenured faculty materials would not need to be reviewed)?*
 - *Committee discussed the purpose of merit – recognition versus additional pay. Clarification around this would aid in a recognition, however this discussion is beyond the scope of the committee’s charge.*
- *Could we operate with a temporary merit status during COVID, for example a rating of either satisfactory/unsatisfactory?*
- *The impact of COVID on scholarship productivity is more likely to be discernable during fall 2021 reviews, rather than fall 2020. Should we provide recommendations for the next cycle of reviews? Should the recommendation we present cover this year and next year?*
- *Will there be merit money? If not, will multiple years be reviewed together for merit awards in the future? A few years back, merit pay had not been received for many years and TU collectively reviewed a 3-year period to award merit.*

Attendance/Absence Policy

(See [Appendix A](#) for redline edits to the current Attendance/Absence Policy)

Consistent attendance offers the most effective opportunity for students to understand concepts, materials and expectations of those courses in which they are enrolled. Although some courses do not use attendance as a criterion for grading, there are others where class participation is an integral part of the course. Examples include, but are not limited to, seminars and courses that require public speaking, laboratories, language learning, group discussions or internships. Frequent absences from these types of courses, whether excused

or unexcused, may affect the final grade. Faculty who use absences as a factor in grading must explain in the course syllabus what effect even an excused absence might have on the evaluation of a student's work. It is important that students check the course syllabus for specific attendance and participation requirements.

Faculty expect students to spend at least three hours working on course activities for each credit hour being earned. For example, a student should expect to spend nine hours per week engaged in course activities for a three-credit course.

"Attendance" in a course that is fully online or has an online component may be evaluated differently. Online attendance, like in-person attendance, is more than just logging into the course or being physically present. Attendance in any case is measured by your intellectual and active engagement with the course content, course tools, course instructor, and with other students in the course. Faculty will outline on the course syllabus the types of participation, attendance, and engagement required for the course.

I. For in-person, asynchronous or synchronous coursework:

1. It is the regular policy of the university to excuse the absences of students for the following reasons:
 - illness or injury when the student is unable to attend class
 - death of a family member (see the [Student Bereavement Procedure](#) on the website)
 - religious observance where the nature of the observance prevents the student from attending class
 - participation in university activities at the request of university authorities (e.g., Intercollegiate Athletics, Forensics Team, Dance Company, etc.)
 - compelling verifiable circumstances beyond the control of the student
2. The exceptional circumstances presented by the COVID pandemic create the potential for additional flexibility in qualifying absences as excused. Such extenuations might include: absences related to extended illness, quarantine, caring for family members, childcare (and support of children's online learning) due to school closures, or urgent job concerns related to financial need, emergency situations, or food insecurity.

Students requesting an excused absence must provide documentation to the instructor two weeks prior to the scheduled absence when known in advance or as soon as possible when not known in advance. Absences that do not fall into any of the above categories are unexcused. Faculty may set a limit on the number of unexcused absences.3. Students who will be representing TU at events, conferences, or other official activities should obtain verification of absence from the appropriate official.a Notification of Absence from Class Form from the Office of Campus Life, University Union 232, to be given to their instructors to verify the excused absence.

Students are encouraged to notify faculty of anticipated class absences as soon as they learn they will be missing class.

II. Students who are absent from class are responsible for any missed work, assignments or assessments (e.g., quizzes, tests, papers, etc.). Student responsibility for missed work is particularly important in the event of an absence due to an extenuating circumstance of the pandemic. Faculty members are required to allow students with documented excused absences to make up missed work or assignments when this is feasible. Only in the case that the nature of the assignment makes this impossible, should faculty members be expected to make a reasonable adjustment of the assignment.

III. Students who fail to appear for the first two class sessions, or the first session of evening classes, may forfeit their space in class. Instructors have the right to release these spaces to other students wishing to add the class to their schedules. Students who lose their spaces must officially withdraw from the course through the Registrar's Office to avoid earning an FX grade for non-attendance. See the sections on [Changing a Schedule](#) and [Grades/Grading](#) for further information.

IV. Students may not attend a class until they are registered for the class, and they must satisfy all financial obligations to the institution before they register. Family members, including children, of students are not permitted to attend classes. Generally, on rare occasions, this might be permitted if related to a course activity such as a presentation, with the permission of the instructor. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, no one except for registered students may attend class in person.

Academic Integrity Policy

Overview of the task:

Representatives from the Academic Policy return to TU workgroup (E. Fehskens and S. Flaherty) and the Distance Learning workgroup (C. Finkelstein) worked with the 2018 revision of the Academic Integrity Policy as a foundation and built our recommendations around its format and language. (See [Appendix B](#) for redline edits to the 2019 revision document).

We identified four main areas of concern raised in an environment of predominantly online instruction:

1. Clarifying what constitutes cheating and complicity in cheating in coursework
2. Clarifying the use of email for procedural communication throughout a violation of academic integrity
3. Creating a disclaimer regarding the nature of a “meeting” between instructor and student when meeting in person may not be possible (our current environment) or when meeting in person is not part of the course modality (a fully online course in any semester)

4. Recommending repeated discussion of the policy with students throughout the semester to deter academic integrity violations

The committee believes that points 1 and 3 should be permanent revisions to the policy. Point 2 will be necessary while the university continues to operate under extraordinary conditions. Point 4 is meant to be a recommendation regarding pedagogical “best practices” and is not part of the policy itself.

Point #1: Clarifying what constitutes cheating and complicity in cheating in coursework

II. D. Cheating – Using, attempting to use, and/or disseminating unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids, videos or other devices in any academic exercise. This includes unauthorized communication of information during an exercise.

Some examples include but are not limited to: Copying from another student’s paper or receiving unauthorized assistance during any graded deliverable; using books, notes or other devices (e.g., calculators, phones, watches, laptops, or other internet enabled devices) when these are not authorized; procuring without authorization tests or examinations before the scheduled exercise (including discussion of the substance of examinations and tests when it is expected these will not be discussed); copying reports, laboratory work, computer programs or files and the like from other students; collaborating on laboratory or computer programs or files and the like with other students; collaborating on laboratory or computer work without authorization and without indication of the nature and extent of the collaboration; sending a substitute to take an examination, using solutions manuals, providing exam and assignment questions to student websites or using such a website to complete an assignment and/or exam (including free or pay websites that maintain textbook and/or instructor solutions). To clarify, copying or collaborating with other students or using external resources, including other people, on any type of assignments that are expressly designed to be completed individually is cheating.

Recorded sessions and any associated materials are designated ONLY for registered students in the class. Any sharing or dissemination of recordings beyond the student body registered in the course and section constitutes a violation of privacy and may also be categorized as cheating or defamation of character (depending on the circumstance), a possible copyright infringement and will result in penalty according to the Student Conduct Code and/or the Academic Integrity Policy.

II. E. Complicity in Academic Dishonesty - helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Some examples include but are not limited to: Allowing another to copy from one’s paper during an examination or test; distributing test questions or substantive information about the material to be tested without authorization before the scheduled exercise; collaborating on academic work that is expressly designed to be completed individually; taking an examination or test for another student; signing a false name on an academic exercise; or sharing assignment or exam information before, during, or after the deliverable in written,

electronic, video, or verbal form. (Note: Collaboration and sharing information are characteristics of academic communities. These become violations when they involve dishonesty. Instructors should make expectations about acceptable collaborations clear to students. Students should seek clarification when in doubt).

Point #2: Clarifying the use of email for procedural communication throughout a violation of academic integrity

To be included in section VI: All written communication transmitted during the process should occur through email.

Point #3: Creating a disclaimer regarding the nature of a “meeting” between instructor and student when meeting in person may not be possible (our current environment) or when meeting in person is not part of the course modality (a fully online course in any semester)

To be included in section VI: When an instructor suspects a student has violated the academic integrity policy, they should request a meeting with the student. Issues of privacy during a meeting may become more complex in a virtual environment. When a course is taught in a hybrid or fully online format, “meeting” can refer to any form of synchronous communication, provided that the interaction meets with FERPA requirements. Some alternative formats for meeting can include a video conference, phone conversation, or online chat. If privacy during synchronous communication cannot be guaranteed by either party, then the instructor can alert the student to their suspicion of an academic integrity violation in an email. In the email, the instructor should provide the student with clear instructions and timeline for a reply. The student should reply to the initial email from the instructor within two business days. If the student has not responded after two business days, the instructor may proceed with any reporting and sanctions necessary.

Point #4: Recommending repeated discussion of the policy with students throughout the semester to deter academic integrity violations

We encourage instructors to share the following information with their students multiple times throughout the semester, particularly prior to any high stakes assignment.

Intellectual Property Policy

Issues to Consider

- The [current TU IP policy](#) language regarding online course content is not written in a clear and understandable manner. The IP policy regarding online course content can be interpreted in a number of ways and does not specifically protect basic copyright and IP rights of faculty.

- The current TU IP policy does not protect a faculty member from a chairperson requiring them to turn over all online course content to another faculty member under the following circumstances:
 - Where there has been no additional compensation for the creation of the online course content (no written agreement)
 - Where the author/faculty member has not signed a written agreement authorizing the University (department chair) to use their course content in the manner outlined above.

The current TU IP policy is written to protect the university's interests which would be necessary to allow for the use of the content if the faculty member were to separate from the university.

Copyright Ownership

Let's recommend the paragraph of text Ashley Hoover (university counsel) included in her response to Harald Beck be suggested for use in syllabi to address and clarify to students who owns the copyright of courseware and course materials.

My lectures and course materials, including, but not limited to power point presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use, however, you may not, nor may you allow others to, reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly whether or not a fee is charged without my express written consent. Similarly, you own copyright in your original papers and exam essays. If I am interested in posting your answers or papers on the course web site, I will ask for your written permission

Recommendations

Reword the TU IP Policy to recognize by default that copyright ownership sits with the faculty member even when the course content is Technology-Mediated Instructional Materials. A required written agreement between the faculty member and University would permit the University the rights to use, adapt, reproduce, transmit, distribute, perform and/or display for research and educational purposes any technology mediated instructional materials. Exceptions (when there is no written agreement) can be outlined to protect the University in specific scenarios (examples: a faculty member becomes ill and someone else must teach the course that semester, a faculty member separates from the university but their courseware stays to keep a program running and available to students).

Faculty have always been free to share their course content with other faculty as they like, it is their content to share.

During the COVID pandemic TU faculty in huge numbers and all ranks are creating courseware for no additional compensation: recorded lectures, video demonstrations, extensive and elaborate written content, etc. The production of these Technology-Mediated Instructional Materials is time intensive and requires the acquisition of advanced

technological skills. There are no written agreements protecting the faculty copyright ownership under our current circumstances. It is a perfect opportunity and a profound gesture of goodwill for the University to update the TU IP Policy to more specifically recognize and protect faculty copyright ownership.

Clarify ownership of courseware and course materials to students by use of the following paragraph:

My lectures and course materials, including, but not limited to power point presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use, however, you may not, nor may you allow others to, reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly whether or not a fee is charged without my express written consent. Similarly, you own copyright in your original papers and exam essays. If I am interested in posting your answers or papers on the course web site, I will ask for your written permission.

Faculty Members and the Syllabus Guidelines

Faculty members have considerable discretion in establishing policies for their courses that are communicated to students through the course syllabus. Many faculty, for example, choose to provide in their syllabi:

- standards of civility to guide course conversations and student behaviors,
- guidelines for the use or exclusion of personal technology devices,
- expectations surrounding tardiness or leaving the classroom during course sessions,
- statements with explanations of how the faculty member will respond if such guidelines are not observed.

In addition to these regular syllabus notes, given the extenuating circumstances, increased online teaching, and the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty may want to add some or all of the following notes:

- expectations regarding academic integrity during online exams or other coursework,
- expectations regarding presence and engagement whether in person or online,
- expectations regarding obtaining material from missed classes or missed work,
- prohibitions against sharing any recorded class sessions, whether whole or in part.

Such policies need to be reasonable, as do any sanctions that they may contain. Announcing a harsh sanction for particular violations of class policies and then modifying them in a specific case is certainly a departure from, and may be a violation of, the faculty member's own policy. Think carefully, for example, about policies on the use of cell phones in class that threaten dire grade penalties or confiscation of property.

During a pandemic such as COVID-19, faculty and students will have to approach class time and coursework with a certain amount of flexibility and compassion. This does not, however, mean lowering standards of performance. Nor should it entail significant extra work for faculty, who are already working overtime to deliver classes in new and/or multiple formats. You may want to include some observations about this on your syllabus.

Syllabus Guidelines approved by the Academic Senate identify more fundamental areas of course policy that should regularly be addressed in each syllabus (https://www.towson.edu/provost/academicresources/documents/syllabus_guidelines_best_practices_4-18-16upload.pdf). Meeting these expectations sounds simple but is not always so. Faculty preferences for course practices should steer clear of conflict with University policies, and there are a sufficient number of policies with enough twists and turns to make it difficult at times for even the most attentive faculty members to avoid tangles. The guidance that follows is intended to assist faculty members in stating and implementing course policies in ways that will remain consistent with University requirements and avoid unnecessary appeals.

And now, avoiding the pitfalls.

I. **Student absences from class:**

University policy indicates that “Students are expected to attend all classes” but also mandates that certain student absences must be **excused**. The reasons listed for excused absences include illness or injury, religious observance, participation in University activities *at the request of university authorities* [emphasis added], and compelling verifiable circumstances beyond the student’s control. Students receiving an **excused** absence remain responsible for missed work. Faculty may require scheduled work to be completed before an anticipated absence when appropriate. Especially for **excused** absences beyond the student’s control, faculty are responsible for providing an opportunity to make up work when feasible. Additional information may be found in the full policy at <https://catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies/class-attendance-absence-policy/>.

In light of this policy, Faculty are advised not to indicate on their syllabus or apply in practice a general rule that makes all absences alike, as in saying, for example, that after three absences points will be deducted for each additional absence. Such statements do not distinguish between **excused** and **unexcused** absences and thus do not align with the policy on classroom attendance.

Faculty may set a limit on the number of **unexcused** absences and indicate a grade penalty for **unexcused** absences beyond that limit. Thus, indicating that more than three **unexcused** absences would result in a grade penalty does not run afoul of the policy. Faculty who exercise this option and expect to consider **unexcused** absences as part of a final grade are responsible for

- providing a specific explanation on the syllabus for what deduction will apply (or how many points will be lost) for each **unexcused** absence beyond the limit (or describing any other pattern of deduction that will be applied).
- maintaining a record of attendance, since a grade penalty based on absences may be unsupportable on appeal without such a record.

Obviously, absences are tricky during the extenuating circumstances of a pandemic, which may cause lengthy illness or may involve students (or faculty) missing class on account of caring for a family member or coping with unexpected circumstances arising from homeschooling children, erratic work schedules, or other challenges related to the pandemic. Even the definition of “absence” can be tricky when classes are asynchronous. Therefore, faculty and students should expect to be as flexible as possible while still maintaining expectations of class participation (where so much of the important work of learning happens) and ensuring that students take responsibility for making up missed work.

Providing clear guidance and expectations on your syllabus, particularly in these uncertain times, will be key to managing such potential issues and supporting student success.

II. **Late papers or assignments:**

Faculty may (and generally should) establish due dates for course assignments in the syllabus and state what their practice will be in grading any assignments turned in or completed after that due date. Because grading structures and language may be somewhat different from course to course, it is important that this information be as clear as possible. For instance, if a syllabus indicates that grades for an assignment will be reduced by one grade increment for each day the assignment is late, providing an example of what “one grade increment” means might help clarify the policy. Most faculty include a provision that allows wiggle room on the idea of automatic penalties in the case of circumstances beyond the student’s control.

Faculty generally do not intend to, and should not, apply different penalties for different students whose circumstances are similar. Defining a practice and sticking to it generally avoids claims of differential treatment. As with attendance, maintaining records is important to any subsequent discussion of grades affected by penalties for late submission.

III. **Work not completed:**

The following statements appear as part of University grading policies in the section on FX grades (<https://www.towson.edu/registrar/grades/policies.html>). The first applies to students who essentially disappear from a course: “A grade of FX is given to students who never attend class or who stop attending during the term without

officially withdrawing. . . . A grade of FX is given to students who stop attending before they have completed more than half of the course work.” The second applies to those who fail to appear for a final exam: “Students who attend most classes but miss the final examination without a legitimate excuse, will receive a zero or F grade for the final examination and have that value or grade calculated with other grades earned during the term to determine the final grade.”

As a result of this statement, faculty are limited in what they may establish as course policy. It would conflict with the University’s grading policies to assert that any student who fails to complete and submit all assignments for the course will fail the course or that any student who misses the final exam will fail the course.

Faculty may under the policy assign a zero for a missing assignment or for missing the final exam (or, at their discretion, an F, which may produce a quite different final result), and they may point out to students the mathematical consequences of a zero on any significant assignment.

IV. **Participation:**

Faculty have discretion over whether to make course participation an activity within a course that contributes to the final grade. If they do so, the Syllabus Guidelines approved by the Academic Senate indicate that “how participation is graded must be clearly explicated so that students cannot question the grade (if applicable).” The University Curriculum Committee in reviewing syllabi for proposed courses has generally expected that an explicit grading scheme for participation is necessary when participation is designated to account for more than 10% of the final grade.

Faculty may assign a grade for participation associated with a range of activities in the course, accounting for a portion of the final grade as defined in the syllabus.

Faculty should show caution in assigning a significant portion of the final grade to participation (especially any portion greater than 10%) without defining as clearly as possible in the syllabus what is meant by participation and how participation will be recorded and evaluated. Faculty should have supporting documentation to provide a performance-based explanation for the assigned participation grade in the case of a question or appeal.

V. **Academic integrity:**

The Student Academic Integrity Policy (<https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/documents/policies/03-01-00-student-academic-integrity-policy.pdf>) provides definitions of academic dishonesty and procedures for handling violations. Faculty have considerable

discretion on some matters in the process but have an obligation to follow University procedures when identifying the violation to the student and applying a judgment.

Faculty may determine the scope or weight of the penalty for academic dishonesty within the considerable leeway allowed by the University policy, ranging from revision of work to failure in the course. Faculty who intend to apply a specific penalty for all occurrences should normally state that penalty on their syllabus.

Faculty may not apply a penalty for academic dishonesty without properly informing the student of the basis for the action taken. Procedures specified in the policy require that

- the faculty member “meets with the student to present the evidence of a violation and request an explanation.” If the explanation is accepted, there is no further action. If it is not accepted,
- When a course is taught in a hybrid or fully online format, “meeting” can refer to any form of synchronous communication, provided that the interaction meets with FERPA requirements. Some alternative formats for meeting can include a video conference, phone conversation, or online chat. If privacy during synchronous communication cannot be guaranteed by either party, then the instructor can alert the student to their suspicion of an academic integrity violation in an email. In the email, the instructor should provide the student with clear instructions and timeline for a reply. The student should reply to the initial email from the instructor within two business days. If the student has not responded after two business days, the instructor may proceed with any reporting and sanctions against the student.
- the faculty member “informs the student, in writing, of the academic penalty and of the student’s rights of appeal.” A copy of this letter and any evidence goes to the department chair and the Office of Student Conduct and Civility Education.

If a faculty member does not follow this procedure to explain the charge and the academic penalty in writing, absence of the written documentation may complicate both the faculty member’s ability to apply a grading sanction and the student’s right to appeal. A student who has not received notification in writing may pursue an appeal of a sanction, but the student would be responding only to oral communication subject to varied interpretation. Moreover, the situation would inherently involve a lapse in performance by the instructor. For the faculty member, any effort to apply a sanction for academic dishonesty in the absence of written communication to the student would be operating outside of the policy that authorizes such sanctions. Any grade penalty under these circumstances would call into question the legitimacy of the instructor’s actions and might lead to the sanction being overturned upon appeal. A meeting with the student and, when indicated, the written charge should follow closely on the discovery of a violation.

VI. **Accessibility and Disability Support Services and the classroom:**

Students whose learning is affected by a diagnosed disability are eligible for reasonable accommodations that allow for “equal access” to educational opportunities. The office of Accessibility and Disability Support Services determines eligibility and defines appropriate accommodations that faculty may be required to provide for these students. The ADS webpage (<https://www.towson.edu/ADS/faculty.html>) recommends this statement for faculty syllabi, with separate statements for online courses and internships also provided:

If you are a student with a disability and believe you may need accommodations for this course, please notify me with a memo from Accessibility and Disability Support Services (ADS). Since accommodations are not retroactive, it is strongly recommended that you provide me with notification as early as possible in the term. To register with ADS, or if you have questions about disability accommodations, contact Accessibility and Disability Support Services at 410-704-2638, or visit the ADS office in the Administration Building, Room 232.

Syllabus guidelines approved by the Academic Senate contain a recommended paragraph with a similar message that adds a sentence that faculty may find important: “A memo from ADS authorizing your accommodation is needed before any accommodation can be made” (https://www.towson.edu/provost/academicresources/documents/syllabus_guidelines_best_practices_4-18-16upload.pdf). Here are a few principles to keep in mind.

Faculty must receive a memo from ADS listing any approved accommodations before providing adjustments for individual students. Faculty may consult with ADS before implementing those accommodations if they have questions or concerns, assuming they do so with all deliberate speed.

Faculty may (and should) expect all students, with or without accommodations, to meet essential course requirements and standards. All students are expected to abide by the Code of Student Conduct and avoid class disruption.

Faculty should not provide any accommodations for individual students that have not been approved by ADS and conveyed through an official memo from the ADS office.

VII. **Core Courses:**

A note for Core Curriculum courses: The syllabus for a Core course is expected (when proposed and when taught) to include “the course learning outcomes that apply to Core Curriculum category for your course. These should be copied verbatim from the

source.” The source for course learning outcomes is the document New Core Learning Goals and Related Course Outcomes linked on the Core Curriculum Reporting Committee webpage: <https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/senate/committees/universitycurriculum/corereporting.html>. In addition, as indicated in that committee’s guidelines for proposing Core courses (https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/senate/committees/universitycurriculum/documents/guidelines_course_submissions_for_core_curriculum_approved_4-12-2018.pdf), “The syllabus must also disclose what requirements (e.g., assignments, exams, etc.) are linked to each course learning outcome for assessment purposes.” In short, all faculty teaching Core courses, whether tenure track, lecturer, or adjunct faculty, are expected to be aware of course outcomes associated with the Core category, to state those outcomes on the syllabus, and to indicate those specific assignments that relate to the achievement of specific goals. Awareness of the purposes and intended outcomes for a course, and communication of these objectives to students, is especially important when there are multiple sections of the same course. Departments as well as individual faculty should be able to answer the question of what multiple sections of the same course have in common and how each address the course outcomes associated with the Core category.

VIII. Intellectual Property

Because there are now occasional opportunities for students to submit copies of class-related materials (usually to a website) for payment, some faculty have been concerned about the protection of their intellectual property rights in materials created for a course. This will be of particular concern in the online environment, as many faculty will be recording class sessions for those who may need to connect asynchronously. Normally the faculty member can attempt to limit student use for commercial purposes of ideas and materials presented in the course by a faculty member. At the same time, there cannot normally be a prohibition of a student sharing, without cost, notes the student has taken.

Faculty may include a notice such as the one that follows that was proposed for a syllabus and has passed legal review:

Copyright Notice

My lectures and course materials, including, but not limited to power point presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use; however, you may not, nor may you allow others to, reproduce or distribute lecture notes, recorded class sessions (in whole or part), or course materials publicly, regardless of whether a fee is charged,

without my express written consent. Similarly, you own copyright in your original papers and exam essays. If I am interested in posting your answers or papers on the course web site, I will ask for your written permission.

A separate question may arise about a student recording course lectures that does not involve any commercial purpose. Although a faculty member normally may limit recording in a class, faculty may not prohibit recording in the case of a student receiving an ADS accommodation. Here is an opinion on what the institution or the faculty member may do or cannot do.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of General Counsel ("OGC") guidance states that instructors "may not forbid a student's use of an [auxiliary] aid if that prohibition limits the student's participation in the school program." However, the University "may require the student to sign an agreement so as not to infringe on a potential copyright or to limit freedom of speech." It might also be reasonable to ask the accommodated student to stop recording during a specific part of a class (e.g., when it involves sensitive self-disclosure by other students).

IX: Diversity & Inclusion:

Towson University (TU) is committed to ensuring a safe, productive learning environment on our campus that does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or intimate partner violence [Policy 06.01.60]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff, but keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. It is a goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions and in one-on-one meetings. However, it is required to share information with the Title IX Coordinator regarding disclosures, but know that the information will be kept private to the greatest extent possible. If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the TU Counseling Center 410-704-2512 to schedule an appointment, and locally within the community at TurnAround, Inc., 443-279-0379 (24-hour hotline) or 410-377-8111 to schedule an appointment.

In addition, TU is committed to maintaining an inclusive and equitable campus community and the Department of Kinesiology promotes these values among all students. Should you be seeking resources and support related to these issues, please visit: <https://www.towson.edu/inclusionequity/>. This link provides information on reporting sexual misconduct, incidents of hate or bias, as well as accessibility and non-discrimination.

Appendix A:

CLASS ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE POLICY

~~Students are expected to attend all classes.~~ Consistent attendance offers the most effective opportunity for students to understand concepts, materials and expectations of those courses in which they are enrolled. Although some courses do not use attendance as a criterion for grading, there are others where in-class participation is an integral part of the course. Examples include, but are not limited to, seminars and courses that require public speaking, laboratories, language learning, group discussions or student teaching. Frequent absences from these types of courses, whether excused or unexcused, may affect the final grade. Faculty who use absences as a factor in grading must explain in the course syllabus what effect even an excused absence might have on the evaluation of a student's work. **It is important that students check the course syllabus for specific attendance and participation requirements.**

Faculty expect students to spend at least three hours working on course activities for each credit hour being earned. For example, a student should expect to spend nine hours per week engaged in course activities for a three-credit course.

"Attendance" in a course that is fully online or has an online component may be evaluated differently. Online attendance, like in-person attendance, is more than just logging into the course or being physically present. Attendance in any case is measured by your intellectual and active engagement with the course content, course tools, course instructor, and with other students in the course. Faculty will outline on the course syllabus the types of participation, attendance, and engagement required for the course.

I. For in-person, asynchronous or synchronous coursework:

- 1. It is policy of the university to excuse the absences of students for the following reasons:**
 - illness or injury when the student is unable to attend class
 - religious observance where the nature of the observance prevents the student from attending class
 - participation in university activities at the request of university authorities (e.g., Intercollegiate Athletics, Forensics Team, Dance Company, etc.)
 - compelling verifiable circumstances beyond the control of the student

- 2. The exceptional circumstances presented by the COVID pandemic create the potential for additional flexibility in qualifying absences as excused. Such extenuations might include: absences related to extended illness, quarantine, caring for family members, childcare (and support of children's online learning) due to school closures, or urgent job concerns related to financial need, emergency situations, or food insecurity.**

Students requesting an excused absence must provide documentation to the instructor two weeks prior to the scheduled absence when known in advance or as soon as possible when not known in advance.

Absences that do not fall into any of the **above** categories ~~outlined in item number two~~ are unexcused. Faculty may set a limit on the number of unexcused absences.

3. Students who will be representing TU at events, conferences, or other official activities should obtain a Notification of Absence from Class Form from the Office of Student Activities, University Union **232**, to be given to their instructors to verify the excused absence. Students are encouraged to notify faculty of anticipated class absences as soon as they learn they will be missing class.

II. Students who are absent from class are responsible for any missed work, assignments, or assessments (e.g., quizzes, tests, papers, etc.). **Student responsibility for missed work is particularly important in the event of an absence due to an extenuating circumstance of the pandemic.** Faculty members are required to allow students with documented excused absences to make up missed work or assignments when this is feasible. **Only in the case that the nature of the assignment makes this impossible, should faculty members be expected to make a reasonable adjustment of the assignment.** ~~When the nature of the assignment makes this impossible, faculty members should attempt to make a reasonable adjustment of the assignment.~~

III. **Important!** Students who fail to appear for the first two class sessions, or the first session of evening classes, may forfeit their space in class. Instructors have the right to release these spaces to other students wishing to add the class to their schedules. Students who lose their spaces must officially withdraw from the course through the Registrar's Office to avoid earning an FX grade for non-attendance. See the sections on Changing a Schedule and Grades/Grading for further information.

IV. **Students may not attend a class until they are registered for the class, and they must satisfy all financial obligations to the institution before they register.** Family members, including children, of students are not permitted to attend classes. Generally, on rare occasions, this might be permitted if related to a course activity such as a presentation, with the permission of the instructor. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, no one except for registered students may attend class in person.

Appendix B

University Policies and Procedures

03-01.00 – STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

I. Policy Statement: Integrity is essential to an academic community's core mission of acquiring, evaluating, sharing, and communicating knowledge. All members of that academic community are responsible for maintaining standards of integrity.

Faculty members preserve and transmit the values of the academic community through the learning environment they create for students and through the example they set in their own scholarly pursuits. Faculty are expected to instill in students respect for integrity and a desire to behave honestly.

Faculty also have a responsibility to the community to take measures to detect and discourage academic dishonesty and to thus maintain the integrity and trust of the University. Faculty members set academic standards and award academic credit, Therefore they must assess work submitted for academic credit by students to ensure that it is authentic, consistent with established academic standards, and free from academic dishonesty of any type.

Students are responsible members of the academic community and they are therefore obligated not to violate the basic standards of integrity. They are also expected to take an active role in encouraging other members of the community to respect those standards. Should students have reason to believe that a violation of academic integrity has occurred, they are encouraged to make the suspicion known to a member of the faculty or University administration. Students should familiarize themselves with the University's policies, procedures, and definitions of types of violations.

We encourage Faculty to share the following information with their students multiple times throughout the semester, particularly prior to any high stakes assignment.

II. Definitions:

The following definitions and examples are not mean to be exhaustive. The University reserves the right to determine, in a given instance, what action constitutes a violation of academic integrity.

A. Student – includes all persons taking courses at the University, both full-time and part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, professional, and certificate or continuing studies.

B. Plagiarism is defined as presenting work, products, ideas, words, or data of another as one's own. Plagiarism can occur in both drafts and finished work, and the standards apply to oral presentations as well as written work.

Students must acknowledge the sources of all words and ideas used in their academic work, including providing citations for direct quotations, paraphrase, summary, or any other replication of a part of a product created by someone else. Students must acknowledge any material taken from books or articles, any material taken from digital or online sources (including but not limited to websites, data, and code), and any material taken from oral communications, including but not limited to lectures, presentations, and personal communications with students, professors, and other content experts. Students should consult with their instructors and read course syllabi to understand specific rules and norms of different academic disciplines.

C. Fabrication and Falsification - making unauthorized alterations to information or inventing any information or citation in an academic exercise. Fabrication is a matter of inventing or counterfeiting information or citation, while falsification is a matter of altering information.

Some Examples: Fabrication--inventing or counterfeiting data, research results, information or procedures; inventing data or fabricating research procedures to make it appear that the results of one process are actually the results of several processes.

Falsification--altering the record of data or experimental procedures or results; false citation of the source of information (e.g., reproducing a quotation from a book review while indicating that the quotation was obtained from the book itself); altering the record, or reporting false information about, a practicum, clinical experience, or internship; altering grade reports or other academic records; submitting a false excuse for absence or tardiness in a scheduled academic exercise; altering a returned examination paper and seeking re-grading.

D. Cheating - Using or attempting to use, **and/or disseminating** unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices in any academic exercise. This includes unauthorized communication of information during an exercise.

Some Examples **include but are not limited to:** Copying from another student's paper or receiving unauthorized assistance during **any graded deliverable**; using books, notes or other devices (e.g., calculators, phones, watches, **laptops** or other internet enabled devices) when these are not authorized; procuring without authorization tests or examinations before the scheduled exercise (including discussion of the substance of examinations and tests when it is expected these will not be discussed); copying reports, laboratory work, computer programs or files and the like from other students; collaborating on laboratory or computer programs or files and the like from other students; collaborating on laboratory or computer work without authorization and without indication of the nature and extent of the collaboration; sending a substitute to take an examination, **using solutions manuals, providing exam and assignment**

questions to student websites or using such a website to complete an assignment and/or exam (including free or pay websites that maintain textbook and/or instructor solutions). To clarify, copying or collaborating with other students or using external resources, including other people, on any type of assignments that are expressly designed to be completed individually is cheating.

Recorded sessions and any associated materials are designated ONLY for registered students in the class. Any sharing or dissemination of recordings beyond the student body registered in the course and section constitutes a violation of privacy and may also be categorized as cheating or defamation of character (depending on the circumstance), a possible copyright infringement and will result in penalty according to the Student Conduct Code and/or the Academic Integrity Policy.

E. Complicity in Academic Dishonesty - helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Some examples include but are not limited to: Allowing another to copy from one's paper during an examination or test; distributing test questions or substantive information about the material to be tested without authorization before the scheduled exercise; collaborating on academic work that is expressly designed to be completed individually; ~~knowing that the collaboration will not be reported~~; taking an examination or test for another student; ~~or~~ signing a false name on an academic exercise; ~~or sharing assignment or exam information before, during, or after the deliverable in written, electronic, video, or verbal form.~~ (Note: Collaboration and sharing information are characteristics of academic communities. These become violations when they involve dishonesty. Instructors should make expectations about acceptable collaborations clear to students. Students should seek clarification when in doubt).

F. Abuse of Academic Materials - destroying, stealing, or making inaccessible library or other resource materials.

Some Examples: Stealing or destroying library or reference materials needed for common academic exercises; hiding resource materials so others may not use them; destroying computer programs or files needed in academic work; stealing or intentionally destroying another student's notes or laboratory experiments; receiving assistance in locating or using sources of information in an assignment where such assistance has been forbidden by the instructor. (Note: The offense of abuse of academic materials shall be dealt with under this policy only when the abuse violates standards of integrity in academic matters, usually in a course or experience for which academic credit is awarded).

G. Multiple Submissions - submitting substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization of the instructor(s). What constitutes a "substantial portion" of the same work is determined solely by the university.

Some Examples: Submitting the same or substantially the same work for credit in more than one course without prior permission of the instructor. Building upon or reworking prior work is acceptable with permission of the instructor.

H. Course Related – an alleged violation that occurs in a course being taken for academic credit.

I. Non Course Related – an alleged violation that relates to any aspect of a student’s program of studies that is not part of a course being taken for academic credit.

III. Responsible Executive and Office:

Responsible Executive: Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Enrollment Management

IV. Entities Affected by this Policy: This policy applies to all enrolled students, undergraduate and graduate, regardless of teaching site (e. g., off-campus), or teaching mode (e. g., distance learning).

V. Standard of Review: Preponderance of evidence. The preponderance of the evidence corresponds to an amount of evidence indicating that the alleged misconduct is more than 50% likely to have occurred.

VI. Procedures:

All written communication transmitted during the process should occur through email. When a faculty member suspects a student has violated the academic integrity policy, they should request a meeting with the student. Issues of privacy during a meeting may become more complex in a virtual environment. When a course is taught in a hybrid or fully online format, “meeting” can refer to any form of synchronous communication, provided that the interaction meets with FERPA requirements. Some alternative formats for meeting can include a video conference, phone conversation, or online chat. If privacy during synchronous communication cannot be guaranteed by either party, then the instructor can alert the student to their suspicion of an academic integrity violation in an email. In the email, the instructor should provide the student with clear instructions and timeline for a reply. The student should reply to the initial email from the instructor within two business days. If the student has not responded after two business days, the instructor may proceed with any reporting and sanctions necessary.

A. Procedures for handling cases.

This Policy will cover two types of academic integrity violations: course related and non course related.

1. Course-related violations.

- a. A faculty member responsible for assigning final grades in a course may charge a student with violating the Academic Integrity Policy. That faculty member should collect available evidence and meet with the student to discuss the situation. The faculty member may acquire evidence either directly or through information supplied by others.

If the faculty member accepts the student's explanation, no further action is taken. If they determine that the preponderance of evidence shows that a violation has occurred, then they decide on an academic penalty and write a formal letter to the student informing them of that academic penalty and of the student's rights of appeal. A copy of the letter, together with any additional information, is sent to the department chairperson, to the dean of the college, and to the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education. The letter should include:

- (i) nature of the policy violation/evidence against the student;
- (ii) brief summary of the meeting with the student;
- (iii) faculty member's decision;
- (iv) right of appeal to the department chair.

- b. If the student is subsequently found not responsible for the charge, the student may either:

- (i) remain in the course without penalty, or
- (ii) withdraw from the course regardless of any published deadlines.

The student may not withdraw from the course once a faculty member has begun the academic integrity process. If a student withdraws from a course before the faculty member has sent the formal letter charging them with a violation of the Policy, then the student may be reregistered for the course so that appropriate action can be taken. If the student is found responsible for violating the Student Academic Integrity Policy, they may not withdraw from the course and will receive the sanction imposed by the instructor or other academic authority.

2. Non course-related violations.

- a. When a violation of academic integrity takes place in a non-classroom setting such as a departmental or comprehensive exam, or other departmental activity, then the evidence should be reported to the depart chair or other academic authority. After collecting the evidence available, they meet with the student to present the evidence of a violation and request an explanation.

If the chair, or other academic authority, accepts the student's explanation, no further action is taken. If they determine that the preponderance of evidence shows that a violation has occurred, then they send a letter to the student informing them of the academic penalty and of the student's rights of appeal. A copy of the letter, together with any additional information, is

sent to the college dean and to the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education. The letter should include:

- (i) nature of the policy violation/evidence against the student;
- (ii) brief summary of the meeting with the student;
- (iii) chair or designee's decision;
- (iv) right of appeal to the college dean.

B. Procedures for group projects.

When academic dishonesty occurs in a group project, faculty should make a concerted effort to determine who was responsible for the violation of the academic integrity by examining each student's part of the project, and by meeting with each student individually and then collectively.

If the faculty member finds that the preponderance of evidence identifies the violator(s), then the faculty member may charge that student (or students), not the group, with a violation of the academic integrity policy and then inform the student(s) of the penalty to be assessed.

In cases where the identity of the violator(s) is not easily determined with reasonable certainty, or when the violator(s) are not forthcoming, the faculty member may then hold the entire group responsible for a violation of the academic integrity policy, and assess a penalty to each member of the project team.

C. Penalties.

Penalties for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are determined by the faculty member teaching the course in which they occur, or by an academic department or college. In addition, students found to have violated the policy will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Civility Education, which will keep a record of offenses and determine disciplinary sanctions in accordance with this policy and the Code of Student Conduct.

For a course-related violation, a faculty member may assess the following academic penalties:

1. revision of the work in question and/or completion of alternative work, with or without a grade reduction;
2. reduced grade (including "F" or zero) for the assignment;
3. reduced grade (including "F") for the entire course.

For a non course-related violation, a department, college, or other academic authority may assess the following academic penalties:

1. failure of a comprehensive exam;
2. dismissal from an academic program;
3. dismissal from a Graduate program;
4. referral to the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education.

Note: If a department or college has its own code of professional standards, any academic integrity violation, whether course related or non course related, may be sanctioned under the process described in those professional standards, in addition to those penalties outlined above.

Whatever the penalty, the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education will keep the letter describing the incident and recording the decision for seven years. The purpose of this record keeping is to ensure that students who violate the university's Student Academic Integrity Policy a second time are dealt with appropriately. A second purpose is to deter students from repeating offenses. The first-offense file is an internal record, not part of the student's disciplinary record or of the academic transcript.

Students found responsible for a first violation of this policy will be subject to an educational task assigned by the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education. The purpose of this task is to assist with the student's understanding of academic integrity at institutions of higher education and to avoid future violations of this policy. Students will be expected to complete the task as outlined by the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary charges against the student as per the Code of Student Conduct.

Students found responsible for violating this Policy a second time will be subject to formal disciplinary charges being brought by the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education under the Code of Student Conduct. Disciplinary sanctions for a second or subsequent violation may include:

1. suspension from the university for a designated period of time;
2. expulsion from the university;
3. any sanctions listed in the Code of Student Conduct or Graduate School Catalog.

In the determination of penalties, the following factors may be considered:

1. the nature and seriousness of the offense;
2. the injury or damage resulting from the misconduct;
3. the student's prior disciplinary record;
4. frequency of academic integrity violations.

D. Appeal procedures.

A student may appeal a finding of Policy violation or disciplinary sanction. A student who submits an appeal must provide evidence that supports the appeal. In any level of appeal, the decision-maker may let the original decision stand, may overturn the decision, or may modify the penalty after considering all the information presented. The Office of the Provost will ensure that the decision is implemented.

a. A student may choose to appeal a course-related academic penalty. When a student receives the faculty member's letter of decision, the student then has five working days to send a letter of appeal to the department chairperson. If a department chairperson is also the instructor of the course where the infraction occurred, the letter will be sent to the dean of the college. After receiving the student's appeal letter, the chairperson will:

(i) arrange a meeting with the student within five business days, unless there is a compelling reason to extend this time period. If the time is extended, the meeting will be held as soon as possible after the five days;

(ii) arrange, if appropriate, a meeting with the faculty member, either separately or with the student in attendance;

(iii) notify the student in writing of his/her decision within five business days following their meeting, unless there is a compelling reason to extend this time period. If the time is extended, the student will be notified as soon as possible after the five days;

(iv) send copies of the decision to the faculty member, the dean of the college, and the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education.

b. A student may appeal a chairperson's decision to the dean of the college in the case of either a course-related violation or a non course-related violation. The student must submit a letter to the dean within five business days following the receipt of the chair's letter. After receiving the student's appeal letter, the dean or designee will:

(i) arrange a meeting with the student within five business days, unless there is a compelling reason to extend this time period. If the time is extended, the meeting will be held as soon as possible after the five days;

(ii) arrange, if appropriate, a meeting with the faculty member, either separately or with the student in attendance;

(iii) notify the student in writing of his/her decision within five business days following their meeting, unless there is a compelling reason to extend this time period. If the time is extended, the student will be notified as soon as possible after the five days;

(iv) send copies of the decision to the faculty member, the department chairperson, and the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education.

c. A student may appeal the dean of the college's decision to the Student Appeals Committee (SAC) as a final right of appeal. The student must submit a letter of appeal to the SAC (studentappeals@towson.edu) within five business days of the dean's decision, unless there is a

compelling reason to extend this time period. If the time is extended, the letter of appeal will be due as soon as possible after the five days. Once the Committee has received the appeal, it will:

- i. Convene a meeting where both student and faculty or departmental representative will be invited to give testimony to the Committee. This meeting will be arranged in consideration of the student's and the faculty member's schedules, as well as the Committee's requirement for quorum attendance. Every attempt will be made to schedule this meeting within ten business days of the receipt of an appeal;
- ii. Notify the student in writing of their decision within five business days following their meeting, unless there is a compelling reason to extend this time period. If the time is extended, the student will be notified as soon as possible after five days.
- iii. send copies of the decision to the faculty member, the department chairperson, and the office of the dean of the college.

Related Policies: USM III-1.00 Policy on Faculty, Student and Institutional Rights and Responsibilities for Academic Integrity.

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