Murray State College
Academic Integrity Statement

Definition and Application

Murray State College strictly adheres to upholding the principles of academic integrity, while striving to incorporate, assess, and recognize the scholarly excellence of its students. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain the integrity of his/her class-assigned work, and to be familiar with what constitutes academic integrity; it is the responsibility of both student and faculty to deal with infractions against this integrity code.

For many reasons, including a surge in the use of digital technology, the prevalence and availability of electronic and non-electronic sources, and the sometimes lack of earlier educational training in what constitutes plagiarism and misrepresentation, a growing number of students seem unaware of what constitutes academic misconduct. Students practicing integrity will implement honesty and make socially-acceptable choices in creating any academic work. This involves purposefully avoiding such actions as lying, stealing, cheating, or plagiarizing when it comes to any class assignment or project.

Academic Misconduct

Listed below are examples of, but not limited to, what constitutes academic misconduct in Murray State College classes.

- Plagiarism, intentional or unintentional. It is the student's responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism, and take steps to prevent plagiarism in class work. (See below for specifics.)
- Cheating and the use of unauthorized outside sources or unauthorized materials on tests, exams, or any assigned writing or class project
- Improper collaboration between student and unauthorized person(s)
- Submitting the same assignment for more than one class without express permission from instructor(s)
- Lying, fabrication, forgery or alteration of documents, etc. to gain academic advantage. This deals with, but is not limited to, obtaining an excused absence; gaining additional time to make up or complete an assignment; forging drop slips; falsifying diplomas, transcripts, etc.; fabricating data or sources for research papers or lab work; assisting others with perpetrating academic misconduct; destroying or stealing another's information, work, assignment, etc.; computer manipulation (hacking) to access tests, change grades, etc.; or interfering with or intimidating someone reporting academic misconduct

Plagiarism

To plagiarize is defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own**:** use (another's production) without crediting the source" (May 2012). Be mindful that plagiarism does not apply only to text; it can also apply to obscure facts or data, photos and graphics, maps, charts, drawings or other images, and even unfounded opinions. Plagiarizing someone else's words, facts or images does more than break Murray State College code; it is also illegal. These words and items are property and have value. They are

protected by copyright law. If you cannot copyright the words and ideas presented in your class work, it should be cited. Specifically, plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copying words and presenting them as your own writing.
- Copying exact wordage, even if the source is listed, if the wording is not indicated within quotation marks as being someone else's wording arrangement.
- Copying exact wordage and making small, minimal changes ("patchwork" plagiarism), even if the source is listed. The student should *paraphrase*, which means coming up with his/her own interpretation and complete rewriting of the quoted material.
- Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, even if they are paraphrased (in your own words).
- Plagiarism must be avoided in *all* class work.
- Pleading ignorance as to what constitutes plagiarism is not a defense. It is the student's responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism, as well as other forms of academic misconduct.

Penalties

Academic integrity is of pivotal concern to all students and faculty. Students who participate in academic misconduct not only denote baser character traits among themselves, but also mar the reputation of the college. Therefore, all reports of academic misconduct are treated as serious offenses.

How an academic misconduct incident is handled rests first and primarily with the faculty member overseeing the work assignment or project, and details and severity should be addressed in the class syllabus. Penalties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Admonition (warning) and possible assignment grade reduction –** The instructor may admonish the student in various ways. This may result in a grade reduction that does not exceed the value of the assignment; requiring the assignment to be redone and resubmitted; or simply assigning a zero (0) or failing (F) score to the particular assignment. Admonishment is for lesser offenses only.
- **Failure in and/or expulsion from the class –** The instructor may drop the student immediately from class with an "F" (failing) or "AW" (administrative withdrawal) grade. This action should be accompanied by a written detailed account to the Department Chair of the incident, including supporting document(s) if possible, and the instructor's recommendation of action.
- **Administrative expulsion from college –** Especially in the case of a second misconduct incident and other mitigating circumstances, the instructor may choose to take the issue to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and request the student be withdrawn from the college with an "F" (failing) grade. This action should be accompanied by a written detailed account of the incident, including supporting document(s) if possible, and the instructor's recommendation of action.
- **Incidents of academic dishonesty should be reported by memorandum to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.**

Appeal

A student accused of academic misconduct may choose to appeal the decision of his//her instructor by going to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for rescinding the instructor's

decision or for validation of that decision. The student (someone taking at least one current class) must bring his/her grievance in writing within ten (10) days of the instructor's decision as announced to the student. If the student wishes to pursue grievance resolution beyond the second validation of penalty, he/she must provide a complete, formal Written Grievance Request (see "Chapter VII—Student Grievance Procedures" in the *Murray State College Student Handbook*, Section 5). A Grievance Committee will be formed consisting of a random choice of MSC employees, students, and the Vice President of Student Affairs or a designee (Sections 6, 7).