Academic Honesty

Statement on Academic Honesty, Intellectual Responsibility and Plagiarism

At Wilkes the faculty and the entire University community share a deep commitment to academic honesty and integrity. The following are considered to be serious violations and will not be tolerated:

1. **Plagiarism**: the use of another’s ideas, programs, or words without proper acknowledgment.

2. **Collusion**: improper collaboration with another in preparing assignments, computer programs, or in taking examinations.

3. **Cheating**: giving improper aid to another, or receiving such aid from another, or from some other source.

4. **Falsifying**: the fabrication, misrepresentation, or alteration of citations, experimental data, laboratory data, or data derived from other empirical methods. Instructors are expected to report violations to both the Dean of Students and the Provost.

Penalties for violations may range from failure in the particular assignment, program, or test, to failure for the course. The instructor may also refer the case for disposition to the Student Affairs Cabinet. The academic sanctions imposed are the purview of the Faculty; the Student Affairs Cabinet determines disciplinary sanctions.

The appeal of a failing grade for academic dishonesty will follow the academic grievance policy. The appeal of a disciplinary sanction will follow the disciplinary action policy. Students assume the responsibility for providing original work in their courses without plagiarizing. According to the seventh edition of the Little, Brown Handbook, plagiarism “is the presentation of someone else’s ideas or words as your own” (578).

Similarly, the seventh edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers states, “using another person’s ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledgement of that person’s work constitutes intellectual theft. Passing off another person’s ideas, information, or 75 expressions as your own to gain an advantage constitutes fraud” (26).

Academic writing assignments that require the use of outside sources generally are not intended to teach students to assemble a collection of ideas and quotes, but rather to synthesize the ideas they find elsewhere in order to construct new knowledge for themselves. This process requires a higher level of thinking than some students may have been trained to engage in, and inexperienced writers may be sorely tempted to copy wording they feel inadequate to improve or even restate. Plagiarism is a serious issue that violates most people’s sense of property rights, honest representation, and fairness.

The University considers the following as three separate forms of plagiarism:

- **Deliberate plagiarism** centers on the issue of intent. If students deliberately claim another’s language, ideas, or other intellectual or creative work as their own, they are engaged in a form of intellectual theft. This is not tolerated in academic, business, and professional communities, and confirmed instances of plagiarism usually result in serious consequences. Similarly, submitting the work of another person or submitting a paper purchased from another person or agency is a clear case of intentional plagiarism for which students will be subject to the severest penalties.

- **Unintentional plagiarism** often results from misunderstanding conventional documentation, oversight, or inattentive scholarship. Unintentional plagiarism can include forgetting to give authors credit for their ideas, transcribing from poor notes, and even omitting relevant punctuation marks.

- **Self-plagiarism** occurs when students submit papers presented for another course, whether for the English department or another department or school. Students may submit papers for more than one course only if all instructors involved grant permission for such simultaneous or recycled submissions. Penalties for plagiarism may range from failure for the particular assignment to failure for the course. In accordance with the academic grievance procedures of Wilkes University, cases of plagiarism will be addressed first by the instructor. Any appeal by the student should be directed to the department chairperson. Students can avoid plagiarizing by carefully organizing and documenting materials gathered during the research process. Notes attached to these materials, whether in the form of informal notes, photocopied articles, or printouts of electronic sources, should carefully identify the origin of the information. Such attention to detail at every stage of the process will ensure an accurate bibliography that documents all the outside sources consulted and used.

Students should follow these general principles when incorporating the ideas and words of others into their writing:

1. The exact language of another person (whether a single distinctive word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph) must be identified as a direct quotation and must be provided with a specific acknowledgment of the source of the quoted matter.

2. Paraphrases and summaries of the language and ideas of another person must be clearly restated in the author’s own words, not those of the original source, and must be provided with a specific acknowledgment of the source of the paraphrased or summarized matter.

3. All visual media, including graphs, tables, illustrations, raw data, audio and digital material, are covered by the notion of intellectual property and, like print sources, must be provided with a specific acknowledgment of the source.
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4. Sources must be acknowledged using the systematic documentation method required by the instructor for specific assignments and courses.

5. As a general rule, when in doubt, provide acknowledgment for all borrowed material.

Different disciplines use different documentation methods; therefore, students should consult instructors about the correct use of the appropriate documentation style. Style manuals detailing correct forms for acknowledging sources are available in the Farley Library, at the Writing Center, and at the college bookstore. Additional resources and guidance in the correct use of sources can be obtained at the Writing Center and from individual instructors.