1. Purpose

The University has a duty to develop policy and procedures which safeguard the freedom to teach and learn in an environment where honor, fairness, and equity are upheld. Academic integrity embodies ethical principles to act responsibly and take responsibility for one’s actions. Integrity and honor function as forms of a “social contract” where individuals have a duty to follow the rules and norms of academia as well as a duty to ensure their peers also follow such rules and norms. Undergraduate and graduate students at the University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct; if violated, the University takes a strong and clear stand regarding academic dishonesty.

This policy and its procedures implement SDBOR policies and set forth the standards and protocols to address first, how academic dishonesty will be handled by the faculty member and University, and secondly, how students may appeal a grade or academic decision when they believe the decision or grade is unfair or inaccurate. Any conflict or omission arising between the SDBOR policies and this policy and its procedures will be resolved in favor of SDBOR policies.

2. Definitions

a. Appeal: The process for requesting a formal change to an official academic decision. Student Code determinations must be appealed through the procedures set forth in University Policy 3:1 and SDBOR Policy 3:4.

b. Academic Dishonesty: includes but is not limited to the following:

   i. Cheating: Includes, but is not limited to, the following: use of or giving of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; or acquisition, without
permission of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the institutional faculty or staff.

ii. Plagiarism: Includes, but is not limited to, the following: the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person (words, ideas or arguments) without full and clear acknowledgment consistent with accepted practices of the discipline; the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling or provision of term papers or other academic materials.

iii. Fabrication: Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

iv. Facilitating academic dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

v. Misrepresentation: Claiming to represent or act on behalf of the University when not authorized to so, represent, or so act.

vi. Other forms of dishonesty relating to academic achievement, research results, thesis dissertation on comprehensive, written or oral exams, or academically related public service, or academic dishonesty as defined in other SDBOR or University policy sections, or federal or state law.

3. Policy

a. Academic Dishonesty

i. This policy and its procedures govern academic dishonesty and academic appeals. Policies governing research misconduct and other provisions are to be followed when applicable.

ii. Faculty will inform students at the beginning of each course, the objectives, requirements, performance standards, and evaluation procedures for the course. The faculty member determines course content, attendance requirements, performance requirements, and grading procedures for courses under their direct supervision, and they must distribute these in written form to their students at the beginning of each semester. Further, faculty members should call to the attention of students the University policy regarding academic dishonesty. These provisions will be distributed in the course syllabus.

iii. The evaluation of students involves the exercise of professional judgment informed by prolonged and specialized training in an academic subject matter and by experience in presenting those techniques and knowledge to persons who may be unfamiliar with them. Student performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Deference should be given to judgments that reflect the
academic standards accepted by the University as appropriate to the discipline involved in the dispute and for instruction in that discipline. No deference should be given to actions that do not embody accepted academic standards, particularly if the motive for such actions is unrelated to academic concerns.

iv. Academic dishonesty occurs when a faculty member has significant evidence that a student has cheated, plagiarized, fabricated or otherwise misrepresented their work. It also involves contributing to or facilitating academic dishonesty with others.

b. Academic Appeals

i. This policy also governs academic appeals which commonly arise as a result of student dissatisfaction with assigned grades; however, students may also invoke the standards and procedures provided under this policy to challenge academic responses to challenge other academic decisions, justified on academic grounds, which affect their participation in or completion of University academic programs, except for decisions made through Student Code processes. Student Code process appeals are applicable in those situations. Academic appeals may be brought only from final course grades or other actions that have similar finality (e.g. no academic appeals for quiz/exam grades, assignment grades, etc.).

ii. Academic appeals may challenge: an academic decision from administrative error or misapprehension of fact; an academic decision departing substantially from accepted academic standards for the discipline of the University; or circumstances that suggest an academic decision reflected the prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards, of student status protected under policy or law, or of other considerations that are inconsistent with the bona fide exercise of academic judgment.

iii. When an academic outcome (e.g. grade, suspension from an academic course or program) is determined by a faculty member or other University official, the student has a right to appeal the decision if the student believes they were treated unfairly or important information was not considered in the decision. To appeal the academic outcome, the following procedures must be followed.

4. Procedures

a. Academic Dishonesty

i. Alleging academic dishonesty is the responsibility of the faculty member who will follow these procedures:

1. Thoroughly document all communications, actions, materials, and evidence regarding academic dishonesty;

2. Review and retain the material (i.e., exam, quiz, report, term paper, etc.) and other data to ensure sufficient evidence for a charge of academic
dishonesty;

3. Inform applicable Department Head(s) and Dean(s);

4. Meet with the student to notify them of, and explain, the alleged academic dishonesty without determination of responsibility;

5. At the meeting with the student:
   a. Provide student the opportunity to respond to the allegation of academic dishonesty;
   b. If it is determined the student is not responsible for academic dishonesty, the matter is closed, the work is graded and recorded as normal;
   c. If the student admits responsibility for academic dishonesty or evidence is conclusive, proceed to response options through the following section 4.a.i.6 below;
   d. If the student does not admit responsibility for academic dishonesty, but the faculty member has evidence of such conduct, proceed through the Student Code prior to implementation of remedy through section 4.a.i.7 below.

6. Student’s case is referred to the Dean of Students, or designee, and may be resolved upon a meeting with the faculty member, student, and a representative of the Student Code process.
   a. At that meeting, the parties may seek informal resolution and, if appropriate, will reach academic remedy as agreed by the faculty member depending on severity of academic misconduct and will document such resolution in the Academic Integrity Resolution Form:
      i. Student is asked to re-do the work with or without academic penalty;
      ii. Student is awarded a lower or failing grade for the specific work;
      iii. Student is awarded a lower or failing grade for the course; or
      iv. Student is removed from the course.
   b. A joint meeting is effectuated if the faculty and student met and reached agreement on the policy violation and accompanying sanction and the following steps are taken:
i. The *Academic Integrity Resolution Form* is completed and remitted to the Dean of Students, or designee.

ii. Upon receipt of the completed *Academic Integrity Resolution Form*, the Dean of Students, or designee, subsequently confers with the student to verify that their rights to due process were observed and the student does not wish to proceed through a student conduct proceeding.

iii. If the student agrees, the Dean of Students, or designee, will contact the faculty to advise them of the outcome.

iv. If the student prefers a student conduct proceeding, the faculty will be advised and the case will be referred to a student conduct officer for investigation and resolution per 4.a.i.7.

Failure to reach an agreement under this informal process, and cases where suspension or dismissal are considered require process pursuant to section 4.a.i.7 below.

7. Student’s case is referred to the Dean of Students, or designee, and the procedures referenced in the Student Code are enacted. Written allegations of academic dishonesty may be filed against a student by any member of the University community. The Student Code should be referred to for information regarding the invoked process. It is important to understand the following about the Student Code:

   a. Student Affairs discipline procedures evaluate whether policy was violated;

   b. Academic Affairs determine the grading of academic products and if a syllabus was followed and provide this information to the Student Affairs process;

   c. Student Affairs discipline procedures may be engaged prior to, or subsequent to, Academic Affairs review(s) of the incident;

   d. Sanctions of suspension or expulsion, as referenced in SDBOR Policy 3:4 and University Policy 3:1, can only be implemented through Student Code process;

   e. The range of sanctions for each of the academic dishonesty offenses of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and facilitating is disciplinary warning to expulsion, depending on a set of criteria, of which the offense is evaluated against.

8. Upon conclusion of Student Code process, the faculty member will be notified of the outcome and may then proceed with academic grade assignment in conformity with the Student Code process outcome,
policies, syllabus, and other applicable provisions.

9. Provide appropriate notice of remedy to student and Department Head(s) and Dean(s).

10. Allegations of violations of SDBOR Policies 1:17, 1:17:1, 1:18 or 1:19 and University Policies 4:3, 4:4, 4:5, or 4:6, which prohibit sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination, will be referred to the University Title IX/EEO Coordinator and addressed as required by said provisions. The current contact information for the University Title IX/EEO Coordinator is available in the Title IX/EEO Coordinator Office located in the Office of Human Resources, or successor unit.

11. Appeals of academic remedy are processed through the academic appeals process herein. The Student Code appeals process applies to appeals based on lack of procedural due process, new information not available at the time of the hearing, sufficiency of evidence, or severity of the sanction assigned by the student conduct hearing officer.

b. Academic Appeals

i. When a student pursues an academic appeal, the following conditions must be met:

1. Academic appeals must be brought within thirty (30) calendar days from the date that the student received official notification of the action. If this action occurs within fifteen (15) calendar days before the end of the term, the student must bring an appeal within fifteen (15) calendar days after the beginning of the academic term (fall, spring, or summer) following the term in which the challenged action was taken.

2. When a complainant presents details that would suggest that the challenged action stemmed from conduct violating SDBOR Policies 1:17, 1:17:1, 1:18 or 1:19, and University Policies 4:3, 4:4, 4:5, or 4:6, which prohibit sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination, the matter will be referred under SDBOR Policy 1:18 and University Policy 4:6 to the University Title IX/EEO Coordinator, or designee, for investigation and resolution under those policies. No further action will be taken under SDBOR Policy 2:9 or this policy pending the completion of proceedings under SDBOR Policy 1:18 and University Policy 4:6.

3. If the SDBOR Policy 1:18 and University Policy 4:6 proceedings result in findings that the academic action stemmed from prohibited discrimination, the proceedings pursuant to SDBOR Policy 2:9 or pursuant to this policy shall be dismissed, unless there are other factors that may have independently been subject to challenge under this policy.

4. If the SDBOR Policy 1:18 and University Policy 4:6 proceedings do not result in findings that the academic action stemmed from prohibited discrimination, the proceedings pursuant to SDBOR Policy 2:9 or this
policy will resume determining what action is proper.

5. The appeal is initiated by completion of the Academic Appeals Reporting Form. The matter must first be discussed in person with the course instructor or the person responsible for the decision. The instructor shall document the contact date, decision, and rationale for the decision by completing the Academic Appeals Reporting Form within ten (10) calendar days after the student makes the initial contact. The instructor sends a copy of the completed form (and any documentation) to the student, Department Head, Dean, and Graduate Dean (if applicable).

6. If, after discussion with the instructor (or academic decision-maker), the student’s concerns remain unresolved, the student may appeal the matter to the appropriate immediate supervisor, who in most instances is the Department Head of the department in which the course was delivered, within ten (10) calendar days after the instructor's decision. The Department Head will document contact with the student, the decision, and rationale for the decision by completing the Academic Appeals Reporting Form within ten (10) calendar days after the student makes contact with the Department Head. A copy of the form (and documentation) is sent to the student, Department Head, Dean, and Graduate Dean (if applicable).

7. If the matter still remains unresolved, the student may appeal the matter to the Dean of the college in which the course was delivered within ten (10) calendar days after the Department Head’s decision. The dispute for graduate courses shall be referred to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean shall document contact with the student, the decision, and rationale for the decision by completing the Academic Appeals Reporting Form within ten (10) calendar days after the student makes contact with the Dean. A copy of the form (and any documentation) is sent to the student, instructor, Department Head and Provost.

8. If, after discussion with the appropriate Dean, the student’s concerns remain unresolved, the student may appeal the matter to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, or designee, within ten (10) calendar days after the Dean’s decision. Appeals at this level are referred for review to the Academic Appeals Committee, which meets monthly. The committee may, at its discretion, hear an appeal at an earlier date. The Academic Appeals Committee Chair will forward the committee’s recommendation to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will make the final decision and document it by completing the Academic Appeals Reporting Form. A copy of the form (and documentation) is sent to the student, instructor, Department Head, Dean, and Graduate Dean (if applicable).

9. Additional documentation and correspondence to be attached to the Academic Appeals Reporting Form may include a statement from the instructor, a copy of the course syllabus, D2L records, or other material as appropriate.
5. Responsible Administrator

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, successor, or designee is responsible for annual and ad hoc review of this policy and its procedures. The University President is responsible for approval of this policy.

SOURCE: Approved by President on 08/20/2013; Revised, approved by President on 10/24/2013; Revised, approved by President on 08/05/2014.