

Memorandum

To: Faculty Senate

From: Faculty Committee on Academic Standards

Re: Proposal to add the XF grade as a sanction option within the Honor System

Introduction

Many institutions now employ the grade of XF on a transcript to communicate the outcome of an Honor System process. The grade of XF is intended to indicate that a student failed a course for academic dishonesty. This element of an honor system has been successfully introduced to a number of schools in recent years, including University of Maryland at College Park, University of Tennessee, University of Georgia, University of Minnesota, and Kansas State University.

The implementation of the XF grade strengthens the College's commitment to academic integrity. In a student culture that increasingly treats cheating as a casual offense, the XF clearly announces that the College of Charleston will not tolerate academic dishonesty.

The existence of the XF grade will itself help convince our students of the importance of academic integrity and the consequences of violations. Nevertheless, given the serious implications of the XF for students, the College will be obligated to discuss this policy continuously and thoroughly, and to continue teaching students about the rules of scholarship.

Those acts that demonstrate a student's deliberate intent to deceive will be sent to the Honor Board for review and action. Those acts that demonstrate mere ignorance and confusion will warrant warnings. These warnings, which are issued by professors, will help students learn at a critical point about how to avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

The faculty are being asked to vote on the proposal: operations and appendixes.

Rationale

To insure consistency in sanctions: Currently each Honor Board or Panel adjudicating a case enjoys wide latitude when designing sanctions. The College does train each Board/Panel member to work within a set range of sanctions, depending on the nature of the offense, relevant mitigating circumstances and other factors. Nevertheless, sanctions can and do vary for roughly similar violations. Faculty have often complained about these variations. The adoption of the XF would guarantee that similar violations would have similar sanctions.

To increase the deterrent value of sanctions: The XF recorded on a transcript would announce to other schools that a College of Charleston student was found guilty of academic dishonesty. Knowing the "public" nature of the XF should make students think hard before performing an act of academic dishonesty. Moreover, the proposal below argues for combining the XF grade

with disciplinary suspension for at least one semester as the minimum sanction for our typical “serious” honor code violations.

To communicate to other institutions a more accurate reflection of a student’s academic record while at the College of Charleston: Many students currently receive Fs from faculty for academic dishonesty, but students transferring to other schools are at liberty to offer any explanation they desire for the failing grade. The XF clearly communicates to admissions officers why the student failed the course. Linda Rowe, former Director of Student Judicial Affairs at Marshall University, states this point well: “In the end when dishonestly earned grades are allowed to stand, a university in effect places its seal on a transcript that it ‘knows’ to be less than correct. . . . Judicial responses to academic dishonesty should create a record that accurately reflects the student’s achievement and the student’s standing in the institution.” (“Academic Integrity Begins With Students’ Beliefs,” *Campus Safety & Student Development*, Vol. 5, No. 4, March/April 2004, p. 64).

To insure uniformity across the College is response to academic dishonesty: Currently, faculty are at liberty to penalize students as heavily or as lightly as they choose even for very serious offenses. A serious violator might receive a slight penalty in one class, while a less serious violator might fail another course. Based on the dean of students’ casual observation, roughly 50% of faculty assign failing grades for acts of academic dishonesty and 50% assign a zero grade for the individual assignment and re-calculate the overall course grade. This proposal helps the faculty as a whole to act in concord, to respond to like offenses with like penalties. All serious violations will result in grade of XF.

Operation

1. Faculty input—When a faculty member believes a student has violated academic dishonesty, he or she will fill out an Honor Code Charge form. The faculty member has the option of designating whether he/she believes that the offense warrants the grade of XF.

2. Schedule of Sanctions for Violations of Academic Dishonesty

A. Class 1. The most serious breaches of academic honesty fall into this category, as well as all second or more offenses of any class. Class 1 violations must be found to involve significant premeditation; conspiracy and/or intent to deceive are included in this class. See Appendix I for examples.

Sanctions: 1) XF grade and suspension, or 2) XF grade and expulsion.

B. Class 2. This class includes acts that are found to involve deliberate failure to comply with assignment(s) directions, some conspiracy and/or intent to deceive are included in this class. See Appendix I for examples.

Sanctions: 1) grade of XF in the course and disciplinary probation and other educational sanctions or 2) grade of XF and suspension.

C. Class 3. This class includes violations due to student confusion and/or ignorance. See Appendix I for examples.

Sanctions: 1) written warning recorded in the Office of Dean of Students and/or 2) other educational sanctions issued by the faculty member and recorded in the Office of the Dean of Students.

3. Class 1 and 2 Violations

- A. When the Honor Board sanctions a student with a course grade of XF, and this sanction is not appealed by the student, the dean of students and the faculty member each notify the Registrar to place a grade of XF for the applicable course on the student's academic record. The grade XF shall be recorded on the student's transcript with the notation "failure due to academic dishonesty."
- B. Student appeals of the XF grade follow the procedure for all other appeals of academic dishonesty sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook. If the Appellate Board denies the right to another hearing, or another hearing is granted and the Honor Board decides to uphold the XF grade sanction, the dean of students and the faculty member each notify the Registrar to assign the XF grade to the student's academic record.
- C. If grades are due while an academic dishonesty hearing is still in progress, the faculty member shall assign a grade of 'I' until the hearing process is complete.
- D. An XF grade shall maintain a quality point value of 0.0. The grade "XF" shall be treated as an "F" for the purposes of Grade Point Average, course repeatability, and determination of academic standing.
- E. The XF must stay on the transcript for at least two years from the date student is found in violation.
- F. After two years, a student may petition the Honor Board in writing to substitute an F for an XF. The petition must provide the reason for removal of the XF. Additionally, the petitioner must appear before the Honor Board to explain the request. If the student petitions and a majority of the Honor Board agree to remove the XF, the Honor Board outlines conditions under which the XF may be removed. When these conditions are met, the dean of students will instruct the registrar to substitute an F for the XF on the transcript, leaving no past evidence of the XF..

- G. If a petition to change an XF grade to an F has been made and denied, from the student must wait at least one year from the date of denial to repetition. A student may petition as often as he or she desires. This stipulation applies after graduation as well as before.
- H. If the student is subsequently found guilty of a second Class 1 or 2 violation of academic honesty, committed either before or after the original violation, the XF cannot be removed. For cases in which the second violation was not discovered until after the original XF was changed to an F, the XF grade is permanently restored for the course.
- I. A student who has received an XF in a course and needs to pass the course for a requirement may retake the course. If the student passes the course, the requirement is met, but the original course grade will remain as an XF until the student successfully petitions for its removal.

4. Class 3 Violations

- A. When a faculty member suspects an Honor Code violation is more of a result of student confusion and/or ignorance, he/she should arrange a conference with the student as soon as possible to discuss the matter.
- B. Together, the faculty member and student review all materials.
- C. The faculty member proposes a response which is discussed with the student, e.g., written warning, resubmission of the work, research on relevant topic, etc.
- D. The faculty member and student agree upon a response and commit the agreement to a form provided by the Office of the Dean of Students.
- E. A written record of the educational response with the signatures of both the faculty member and the student is forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students. The record will remain in the Office of the Dean of Students until the student graduates.
- F. The record of the educational response for this violation will be introduced in subsequent hearings during the sanctioning phase should the same student be found in violation of the Honor Code at a later point in time.
- G. The student has the right to contest the allegation and/or the suggested response and request that the matter be forwarded immediately to the Office of the Dean of Students for adjudication under the procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.

5. Changes to the operation of the XF grade as a sanction option within the Honor System must go through the Faculty Committee on Academic Standards and the Faculty Senate.

Appendix I

Examples of violations for Classes 1-3. The lists below are not meant to be comprehensive but illustrative of the types of acts that generally will be before the Honor Board and faculty members.

Examples of Class 1 violations

1. cheating on a test which involves premeditation and conspiracy of effort,
2. taking a test for someone else, or permitting someone else to take a test or course in one's place,
3. plagiarizing, where the majority of the submitted work was written or created by another,
4. obtaining, stealing, buying, or sharing all or part of an unadministered exam,
5. selling, or giving away all or part of an unadministered test,
6. bribing, or attempting to bribe any other person to obtain an unadministered test or any information about the test,
7. buying, or otherwise acquiring, another's course paper and resubmitting it as one's own work, whether altered or not,
8. entering a building, office, or computer for the purpose of changing a grade in a grade book, on a test, or on other work for which a grade is given,
9. changing, altering, or being an accessory to changing and/or altering a grade in a grade book, on a test, on a "Change of Grade" form, or other official academic college record which relates to grades, and
10. entering a building, office, or computer for the purpose of obtaining an unadministered test.

Examples of Class 2 violations

1. cheating on an exam which does not involve premeditation,
2. copying from another's test or allowing another student to copy from your test, where no prior plans were made for such collaboration,
3. intentionally plagiarizing, where a moderate portion of the submitted work was written or created by another,
4. "unauthorized reuse of previously graded work" (this is straight from the Honor Code),
5. intentionally failing to cite information from the correct source,
6. intentionally listing sources in a bibliography/work cited page that were not used in the paper,
7. copying, or allowing one to copy, homework assignments that are to be submitted for credit, when unauthorized, and
8. unauthorized collaboration on an assignment.

Examples of Class 3 violations

1. record of same offense made on other similar assignments and no feedback provided by the instructor prior to allegation,
2. reusing and/or building upon coursework already submitted for another class without permission of the professor,
3. unintentionally failing to cite information from the correct source, and
4. unintentional violation of the class rules on collaboration.

Appendix 2 -- Sample model of report form for Class 3 Violation

College of Charleston Report of an Academic Integrity Violation*

This form should be used by the faculty to resolve and report alleged academic integrity violations that fall within Class 3. Class 3 violations are due to, for the most part, student confusion, ignorance and/or miscommunication between the faculty member and the class.

Step 1: Meet with the student(s) involved.

Procedures used in the resolution of academic misconduct are available in the *Student Handbook*. The *Handbook* can be found online at:

The Dean of Students is available at 953-5522 for consultation if you have any questions. In the case that it is time report a final grade for the student involved, the faculty member should assign a grade of "I" (incomplete), which will be changed when the case is resolved. If the faculty member is unable to locate the student, this form should be completed through Step 4 and forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students.

It is appropriate for a student to have the opportunity to think about their situation and discuss any questions or concerns with someone in the Office of the Dean of Students. If the student requests time to do this, the faculty member should schedule another appointment with the student, allowing them time to have all their questions answered.

Step 2: Complete the following information

The following student has been charged with violating the College honor code:

Name:

Student ID Number

Dept. and Course Number

Section Number

Type of Violation

- Cheating on test/assignment
- Attempted cheating

- Plagiarism
- Facilitating others to cheat or plagiarize
- Lying related to academics
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Other

Step 3: Please attach a summary of the incident, including copies of all relevant materials.

Step 4: Faculty Recommended Sanction

If you would like to discuss the recommended penalty with the Office of the Dean of Students, please call 953-5522.

- Written warning
- "F" on the assignment, program, paper, test or exam.
- Complete some exercise related to academic integrity. Please describe:
- Complete some exercise related to the class. Please describe:
- Service hours. Amount: Location: Deadline:
- Other

Faculty Name:
 Dept. Address:
 Phone
 E-mail
 Signature
 Date

Step 5: Check here if the student chooses to have a hearing. _____

If the student chooses to have a hearing, stop and send this form, along with supporting information, to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Step 6: If, instead of a hearing, the student admits to the violation and agrees to allow the faculty to assign the sanctions, have him or her read and sign the attached statement.

Step 7: Once the student has signed the form, provide him or her with a copy of the signed form.

For the student: You are advised not to sign this form if you are unclear as to your rights. Call 953-5522, Office of the Dean of Students, for more information. If you do choose to sign, be sure to read the statement below.

I am responsible for the violation with which I am charged, accept faculty disposition, waive my right to a hearing, and accept the sanction. In addition, I have read and understand the following:

- If circumstances warrant and/or I have previous violations, the Office of the Dean of Students may call for a hearing.

- This sanction will be reviewed in a hearing, if there are additional charges of academic misconduct.
- This form will be kept in a confidential file in the Office of the Dean of Students.
- If I wish to proceed to a hearing, I must file a notice in writing with the Office of the Dean of Students on or before five (5) working days after the date below.

I have read and had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the signing of this form. In addition, I have received information regarding my right to a hearing.

Signature of student:

Date:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail

*Significantly adapted from a publication of North Carolina State University.