Academic Honor Code

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General Description

Policy Summary:

The values of honesty, scholarship and the pursuit of excellence are central to the mission of Trinity University. The Academic Honor Code is the system through which Trinity students uphold these values by assuming individual responsibility for integrity. An environment that encourages personal responsibility facilitates one of the highest aims of education, the free pursuit of knowledge.

At its core the Academic Honor Code is based on trust. Because trust is the bond that forms among all members of the Trinity community, it cannot exist independently or in a vacuum. Thus, it is essential that all members of the Trinity community conduct themselves in a way that exemplifies integrity. Trinity students are trusted and expected to be honest in their academic work. Any violation of the Academic Honor Code destroys the value of the work, erodes the spirit of trust, and negatively impacts the mission of the University.

Purpose:

Upon matriculation, students will sign an agreement that they will abide by the Academic Honor Code policy. The Academic Honor Code covers all academic work. Instructors will designate what, if any, type of collaboration or assistance is authorized for each assignment. Students are required to add the statement “On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this work” and their signature to each assignment to reinforce and reaffirm their adherence to the Academic Honor Code. (Instructors may allow students to shorten this statement by simply writing “pledged” followed by a signature.)

Policy Content

Ⓐ Function

It shall be the responsibility of the Academic Honor Council to hear all cases involving infractions against the Academic Honor Code and to determine sanctions in those cases where a violation has occurred. It shall be the responsibility of the Academic Honor Council as well to orient all incoming

students to the Academic Honor Code every fall. The responsibility for annual orientation of the faculty shall reside with the Council's faculty advisers with the support of the Office of Academic Affairs. The Academic Honor Council shall provide an annual report to the University community, detailing the number of cases and sanctions levied. Finally, it shall be within the purview of the Academic Honor Council to review and improve procedures as needed. Procedural changes may be amended by a majority vote of the membership of the Academic Honor Council providing the proposed amendment is distributed in writing to all members at least five (5) class days prior to the meeting at which the amendment is to be considered.

The present document includes both the Honor Code proper and the procedures approved by the Honor Council. (These procedures have previously been known also as Bylaws.) The Honor Code is in roman text, and the procedures are in italics. Amendments to the Honor Code, in roman text, must follow the amendment procedure specified in section VI below, while amendments to the procedures, in italics, require only a majority vote of the Honor Council, as specified in the preceding paragraph.

Class days are defined as any day on which classes are held, any day on which exams are being administered, and any day that the university designates to be a reading day.

In conjunction with Academic Affairs, the Honor Council shall adopt a budget consistent with its function and needs in the spring semester.

Ⓑ Academic Honor Council Selection and Composition

1. **The Philosophical Premises of Selection and Composition**

    a. The composition of the Academic Honor Council is designed to promote diversity, mentoring for underclass members, and experienced leadership within the Council. Ownership of the entire process belongs to students.
    b. The Student Government Association shall recommend to the President the appointment of Academic Honor Council members in order to ensure a well-informed selection process and for the sake of efficiency. Faculty involvement exists in order to ensure procedural consistency and historical guidance but is limited so as not to infringe on student responsibility for the Academic Honor Code.

2. **The Academic Honor Council**

    a. Selection Process

        1. Undergraduate students may apply through the SGA. Applicants must submit a written personal statement explaining their suitability as an Academic Honor Council member. Also, they must report whether or not they have any previous academic Honor Code violations, to be verified by the Office of Academic Affairs.

2. The Academic Honor Council shall consist of up to 35 members from the student body recommended by the SGA and appointed by the President. There shall be, at the time of service, two to four first-year students, at least three sophomores, at least three juniors, and at least three seniors.

3. Academic Honor Council members shall be appointed during the spring semester prior to their term of service (except for the two to four first-year members, who shall be appointed early in the fall). The SGA is to submit its recommendations to the President by September 15 for first-year members and by February 15 for other members. Should either of these deadlines pass without the recommendations being submitted to the President, the Honor Council will have the authority to recruit new members and recommend them to the President. The Academic Honor Council shall be required to meet before the beginning of finals of the spring semester prior to its term of service to familiarize itself with procedure. The members shall swear to uphold the joint statement, rules, regulations, and policies of Trinity University, to serve the University loyally, and to make impartial decisions.

4. The term of office shall be one year. Academic Honor Council members may be reappointed with the approval of the President. They will be terminated if they are found in violation of either the Academic Honor Code or the University Standards of Conduct. In the event of a vacant seat, the SGA shall recommend to the President the replacement in a timely fashion.

   Recommendations for permanent removal of council members will be routed through the faculty advisers. The AVPAA will consult with all appropriate parties and make all final decisions.

b. Composition and responsibilities

1. The Academic Honor Council includes two leading officer positions: the external chair and the internal chair. Both chairs require at least one year of Academic Honor Council experience and are elected from within and by the Council members. The chairs will be elected late in the spring semester by the returning and graduating members of the Academic Honor Council.

2. The external chair receives submitted complaints of violation of the honor code, serves as a liaison with the SGA and the Faculty Senate, coordinates public education forums and ethical development programs, and receives appeals.
   The external chair shall coordinate all educational functions of the Council, including the orientation of new students at the beginning of each academic

year. All new students and transfer students will be oriented to the Honor Code, and will pass an examination testifying to their familiarity with it. The external chair is also charged with coordinating relations with the student body, faculty, and staff. This includes receiving and processing complaints from students, faculty members, and staff, researching and answering any questions students, faculty, or staff might have pertaining to the Code or the Council, addressing any concerns students, faculty, or staff might have pertaining to the Code or the Council, and coordinating the selection of new council members with the SGA. The external chair will coordinate and preside over general meetings of the council, unless the external chair delegates these responsibilities to the internal chair.

3. The internal chair assigns members to each case, coordinates the release of briefs, compiles annual reports, manages all Academic Honor Council records, and sends them to the Office of Academic Affairs. Any member with a conflict of interest shall decline a case with approval by the internal chair.

   The internal chair shall coordinate all internal functions of the Council, including judicial processes and concerns involving the performance of individual council members. It is the responsibility of the internal chair to ensure that the Honor Code and the Bylaws of the Council are being followed, and that the Council is working effectively together. The internal chair is also charged with the creation and maintenance of all records pertaining to the Council's judicial proceedings, including the opening of files, the coordination of all paperwork and filing involved in an open case, and the preservation of closed files. Before assigning an Honor Council member to a case, the internal chair shall check with the member to verify that a conflict of interest does not exist. If a conflict does exist, the member will decline to participate in the case and send a brief written explanation of the conflict to the internal chair to be kept on file. Without such a conflict of interest, members shall only be allowed to decline participation in a case twice per academic year. The internal chair will be given a schedule of foreseeable scheduling conflicts by each council member at the beginning of each semester so that assignments may be made more easily.

   In the event that an accused student appears in front of the Honor Council more than once, it is the responsibility of the internal chair to ensure that Council members do not participate in more than one of the cases.

4. The internal chair appoints two case-presenters for each complaint filed: one will present the complaint on behalf of the University, the other will present the report on behalf of the accused student. First Year members may

not serve as case-presenters.
Case-presenters generally serve no investigative function beyond gathering evidence provided by those they represent. Case-presenters serve to inform the parties of Honor Council procedure, assist them with the presentation of evidence, and present that evidence in a coherent report to be made before the hearing panel. Case-presenters will contact their assigned parties—the complainant or the accused—by the end of the second class day following the opening of the case, that is, after the accused student is first notified. Upon conferring with their assigned parties as soon as it is possible to do so, case-presenters are to answer any questions that their assigned parties may have as to Honor Council procedures, while also gaining a familiarity with the circumstances of the case.

Case-presenters should exchange evidence and statements to be presented at the hearing. All evidences and statements must be approved by the case presenter for relevance and objectivity to be admissible in the hearing. The evidence and statements should then be shared with the accused student and the University at least 48 hours before the scheduled hearing. Both the University and the student can continue editing their statements and adding evidence up until and during the hearing. Case presenters reserve the right to refuse evidences or revisions of statements if not submitted in a timely manner.

Case-presenters are also responsible for composing a witness list if either the accused student or the University wishes the hearing panel to call witnesses. Case-presenters will submit witness lists to the presiding member at least three class days before the hearing. Lists will include a written statement of justification for each potential witness.

The presiding member will approve any lists of witnesses based on a witness' knowledge relevant to the facts of the case. Witnesses testifying to the character of the accused do not satisfy this criterion and will therefore not be accepted. The presiding member shall notify all witnesses of their requested appearance before the hearing panel at least two class days before the hearing.

Within reason, witnesses are to make themselves available throughout the duration of all Honor Council proceedings.

5. The internal chair appoints one presiding member and two additional members to each case.

The presiding member is charged with the primary responsibility of managing the case. He or she is responsible for notifying the complainant and accused student of the date and time of hearing. The notification should indicate to the complainant and student that their presence at the hearing is crucial in serving their own interests. The presiding member, as indicated above, handles the witness lists provided by case-presenters. The presiding member is also responsible for writing the opinion of the hearing panel following the hearing unless he or she is a dissenting member. All procedures involving the hearing are led by the presiding member as well.

The two other members of the hearing panel are to participate fully in the hearing and deliberation that follows. Non-presiding members may be charged with the writing of opinions should the presiding member be in the minority of a decision and choose to author a dissenting opinion.

6. Any member may serve as an adviser in response to informal student inquiries about filing a complaint. If members feel this consultation compromises their ability to decide a given case fairly, they shall notify the internal chair that they are removing themselves from that specific case. *All council members are expected to attend every meeting unless they receive the internal chair's approval to be absent, as well as to fulfill the obligations of any post to which they are assigned. They are expected to adjudicate fairly without bias and to abide at all times by the letter and spirit of the Academic Honor Code and the Council's Bylaws. This obligation applies to all judicial and non-judicial functions, including programs, speaking events, or discussion that might take place at any time between a council member and any other individual, be they on the Council or not. At all times the council member is to behave in accordance with the Code and in a manner that does not undermine it in any way. This obligation also includes maintaining confidentiality regarding all judicial matters before the Council and any sort of discussion that may take place among the council members involving both its judicial and non-judicial functions.*

7. Up to three Academic Honor Council faculty advisers serve staggered, three-year terms. An Academic Honor Council faculty-adviser-elect will be appointed by the Faculty Senate to serve during the final year of a faculty adviser's three-year term. The faculty-adviser-elect, beginning the following year, will then serve a three-year term as Academic Honor Council Adviser.

8. The primary roles of the Academic Honor Code Advisers are to ensure due process, to provide historical continuity for the Academic Honor Council and to assist the Office of Academic Affairs with dissemination of information

concerning the Academic Honor Council and implementation of the Academic Honor Code.

9. The faculty-adviser-elect attends hearings from time to time throughout the year of his or her appointment, alongside one or both of the primary faculty advisers, in order to gain experience prior to their service as a faculty adviser.

10. In cases where both Academic Honor Council advisers are unable to attend a scheduled hearing, the faculty-adviser-elect, if he or she has previously attended at least two hearings as a faculty adviser, may serve as an alternate. Otherwise, the most recent available former Honor Council faculty adviser will be called upon by the currently serving Honor Council advisers to serve as an alternate.

© Complaint, Notification and Investigation

1. **The Philosophical Premises of Filing and Investigation**

    a. Students are more likely to abide by an honor code if they have ownership of the structure and process by which it is implemented.
    b. Guidance in understanding the Academic Honor Code and its implementation should be made available to all members of the university community (thus, inquiries regarding the process, available options, etc., are encouraged).
    c. Faculty must be supportive of the designated process and should not undermine the process by dealing directly with the alleged honor code violation.
    d. Timely implementation is important, particularly in situations involving alleged breaches of the Academic Honor Code near the end of a semester or by a graduating senior.
    e. All adjudications of the case should be conducted in such a manner as to bring to light all the relevant facts, including facts that may exonerate an alleged violator as well as facts that confirm the alleged violation.
    f. The division of case responsibilities provides an evenly distributed workload to cover many complaints; it allows members to remove themselves in cases that present a conflict of interest; and it builds consistent interpretations of the Academic Honor Code by giving each member the opportunity to serve in various aspects of the investigation and decision-making process.

2. **Procedure for Complaint to the Academic Honor Council**

    a. The Academic Honor Council shall have jurisdiction over cases involving a student suspected of violation of the Trinity University Academic Honor Code. The process

begins when the Academic Honor Council receives a written complaint stating the charges alleged.

b. All consultation prior to formal filing of charges is confidential; records of such consultation shall not become part of the official record. Clarification of perceptions of alleged violations at this stage do not constitute formal accusations.
c. A member of the Trinity community, whether student, staff, or faculty member, must file his or her allegation with the Academic Honor Council's external chair via the allegation form found on the Academic Honor Code website under Academic Affairs.
d. A student may turn himself or herself in for a violation of the honor code, following the same procedure.
e. Allegations must be submitted in writing within ten (10) class days of the discovery of the alleged violation. If discovery of alleged violations occurs at times other than during fall or spring semester (as in the case of Incompletes, end of term, and summer school work), allegations must be submitted via the Academic Honor Code website no later than the tenth class day of the succeeding semester. They must include relevant details substantiating the charges and the names of any witnesses. However, the person reporting the alleged incident may remain anonymous to the accused student until the Academic Honor Council decides to hear the case.
f. All records shall be maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs and shall remain confidential.
g. Students accused of violating the Honor Code may not change their registration in a course in which the accusation is pending or in which a responsible finding has been made. If a student drops or withdraws from a course after an alleged violation occurs but before being notified, then the student will still be subject to a hearing. In such cases, if the student is found responsible, then he or she will be subject to the standard sanctions with the exception that there will be no grade penalty in the course, as the student is no longer enrolled in the course, but with the additional sanction of the completion of an annotated bibliography, consisting of 200-250 words per entry, of ten peer-reviewed articles and books dealing with academic integrity, or completion of a 2500 word essay report on a recent book dealing with academic integrity.

3. **Notification Procedure of the Academic Honor Council**

a. The complainant, if an instructor, will be notified of receipt of the complaint by the Honor Council's external chair within one class day following its submission. The faculty member at the same time will be told that his or her presence at the hearing is important to ensure that the evidence in the case is properly explained, and to be available to answer questions from the hearing panel. The faculty member will also be told that a case-presenter will be contacting him or her shortly, with further information about procedures.

b. The complainant, if a student or staff member, will be contacted by the external chair and a meeting arranged to discuss the following three points: 1) for the case to go forward, the student or staff member cannot remain anonymous; 2) unless the accusing student or staff member has solid evidence, the case will go nowhere during the hearing resulting in a finding of "Not Responsible"; and 3) an alternative is for the student or staff member to report suspicions/evidence to the instructor of the class involved. If the student or staff member is not willing to forego anonymity, then the case is dropped at once.
c. The accused student will be notified by the external chair as soon as feasible that an allegation of violating the Academic Honor Code has been made against him or her. In the case of an allegation filed by an instructor, the accused student will be notified and supplied with the relevant details as submitted by the instructor at the same time that the instructor is notified of receipt of the complaint. The external chair will also provide the accused student with an electronic statement of the student's rights. In addition, the external chair will provide the accused student with the name of the internal chair, to whom the accused student should direct any inquiries at this time about the case. At this same time the external chair will notify the internal chair, the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs: Student Academic Issues and Retention charged with oversight of the Honor Council (henceforth "the AVPAA"), and the faculty advisers, providing all of these with a copy of the allegation.
d. In the case of an allegation filed by a student or staff member, the accused student will be notified once the accusing student or staff member has met with the external chair, agreed to forego anonymity, and has submitted solid evidence. The accused student in this latter case will also be given the evidence, or summary of it, against him or her. The external chair will also provide the accused student with an electronic statement of the student's rights. In addition, the external chair will provide the accused student with the name of the internal chair, with whom the accused student should direct any inquiries about the case. At the same time the external chair will notify the internal chair, the AVPAA, and faculty advisers as in the preceding paragraph.
e. Accused students are not to contact instructors or other complainants about the allegation once they have been notified. If they do, this may be considered an instance of "egregious conduct" and would be dealt with accordingly.
f. The internal chair will set the hearing date for at least four days after the accused student has been notified of the case.
g. If the accused student or the person reporting the alleged incident wishes to present witnesses in order to inform the Council of any information relevant to the case, or to inform the Council of his or her inability to appear on the scheduled hearing date, he or she must submit a written request to the presiding member no more than two (2) days after receiving official notification of the date of the hearing. Cases are rescheduled because of conflict only for exceptional reasons.

h. If the accused student desires witnesses, pending approval of the witnesses as valuable to the case, the presiding member shall notify any witnesses to appear for the accused. If approved, the witness or witnesses shall be sent a notice two class days prior to the hearing date to appear at the hearing. The date, time, and location of the hearing shall be included so as to assure his or her presence. Should a witness not be able to attend, the witness may present a statement signed in the presence of the case-presenter.
i. If not called as a witness, the faculty member responsible for the course at issue may attend the hearing as an interested party and offer testimony

4. **Preparation for the Hearing**

a. Upon opening a case, the internal chair will do all of the following: assign a case number, assign a hearing date, and assign from members of the Honor Council one presiding member and two other panel members to hear the case, and two case-presenters. One of the case-presenters will present the complaint on behalf of the University. The other case-presenter will present the report on behalf of the accused student.
   Hearings will be held on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., except under unusual circumstances such as when a heavy backlog of cases occurs, or at the end of a semester. Hearing dates should be scheduled in a timely manner, but should allow at least four days after the accused student is notified, for the student and complainant to prepare for the hearing.
b. Once the presiding member has been determined, the internal chair will turn the case file with all documents pertinent to the case up to that point over to the presiding member.
c. The presiding member will continue to collect all additional information regarding the case in the case file, including any communication (telephone, personal conversation, e-mail) between a member and the accused student or the person reporting the alleged incident. After the hearing is concluded, the presiding member will return to the internal chair to file according to its number in the office of the AVPAA.

(D) Academic Honor Council Hearing Procedures

1. **Hearing Procedures**

a. The Academic Honor Council shall have full authority to establish and define the rules of conduct and procedure that shall govern its hearings and deliberations, so long as they accord with the general principles prescribed in the Honor Code. Such rules shall become a matter of public record. They may be altered by a majority vote of the full body of up to 35 members.

Fifteen minutes prior to the commencement of a hearing, all panel members will be present with the statements of the accuser and accused, and all submitted evidence. It is expected that panel members will avail themselves of these fifteen minutes to review the statements and evidence.

A hearing shall progress first with the presiding member stating the case name, number, and complaint. The accused student will then be asked by the presiding member to submit a plea of “responsible” or “not responsible” for the conduct reported in the complaint. Following an answer to this question, the case-presenter for the University will present evidence, followed by a presentation of evidence by the case-presenter for the accused student. Any witnesses will then be called first by the case-presenter for the University, and then by the case-presenter for the accused. Following the questioning of any witnesses and of the accused and complainant, the originating complainant will be afforded the opportunity to make a final statement. The accused student will then be given the opportunity to do the same. Upon conclusion of final statements, both the accused and the complainant will be asked to recess while the hearing panel deliberates. They will be asked to be prepared to reconvene following deliberation.

In certain cases, such as those involving collaboration, more than one accused student may be heard in a single hearing, following the basic procedures outlined in the preceding paragraph.

All hearings should be tape-recorded for the sake of record keeping and so that proceedings may be available for review should an appeal warrant it.

The presentation of evidence will come in the form of an oral report to be given by each case-presenter. The case-presenter will present all evidence that the hearing panel should consider and give insight into the role of any witnesses that might be called. These presentations will give the University and the accused student equal opportunity to present both sides.

Witnesses will be called by the panel in an order predetermined by the case-presenters, first calling witnesses for the University, and then for the accused student. Witnesses will be asked to respond to questions by the hearing panel, and will not be questioned by either case-presenter. The presiding member of the hearing panel reserves the right to recall witnesses at any time during the proceeding.

The hearing panel under the supervision of the faculty advisers will deliberate on whether the accused student is responsible for violations specified in the complaint. The standard used to determine responsibility is to be “based on clear and

convincing evidence presented by witnesses and case presenters," as specified in the Honor Code (see III.E.2.a below). A simple majority vote of the three hearing panel members is required in any determination of responsibility.

In exceptional cases when the panel feels that there is not sufficient evidence to come to a determination and has good reason to believe that additional relevant evidence can be obtained in a timely manner with further investigation, a hearing may be continued when a majority of panel members feels a continuance best serves the interests of justice and fairness. If a case is continued, the presiding member will ask the case-presenters to obtain the additional evidence, and will send a request to the internal chair to set a new date and time for the case to resume, with a brief explanation of the reasons for the continuance and of the further evidence to be obtained.

After deliberation, the decision of responsibility and the sanction, if applicable, will be announced to the complainant and accused student by the presiding member. Whether the decision was split is not to be disclosed at this time.

Accused students will not contact professors or other complainants about the case once the hearing panel has rendered a decision. If accused students contact the professor once a decision has been rendered by the hearing panel, further disciplinary action may result.

b. All Academic Honor Council hearings are closed sessions, open only to the accused student, witnesses, faculty member for the course, hearing members, case-presenters, and Honor Council Advisers.

   If for some urgent reason, a member of the hearing panel cannot be present at the time of the hearing, the internal chair may hear the case instead of that hearing panel member.

   If the internal chair is also not available, then the external chair may hear the case.

c. The Academic Honor Council reserves the right to make a decision regarding any charge in the absence of a witness or party to the case should they fail to appear as directed. Individuals are warned that any mitigating factors on their behalf may not be considered if they are not present to supply the relevant information.

d. An Academic Honor Council Adviser attends all hearings and deliberations as a silent observer to ensure that procedures and due process are followed but should not intervene otherwise.
   If at any point a faculty adviser finds procedure to be improperly followed or

particular questions asked by the hearing panel to be improper, he or she may instantly call a point of order. This includes calling a point of order in response to any perception a faculty adviser might have of case-presenters failing to follow the appropriate guidelines for their role in the proceeding. If deemed advisable by the faculty adviser, and upon being granted the authority to approach the panel members by the presiding member, the faculty adviser may consult with hearing panel members.

(E) Sanctions for Academic Honor Code Violations

1. The Philosophical Premises of Sanctions for Academic Honor Code Violations

    a. Because violations of the Academic Honor Code constitute an affront against the entire University community, there should be significant consequences for individuals found in violation of the Academic Honor Code. The sanctions are designed to penalize the offender in relevant and proportional ways.
    b. Violations vary in severity, so a range of sanctions is available. Guidelines are offered to facilitate consistency across cases while allowing members the flexibility to consider circumstances unique to a particular incident.
    c. An ethical development seminar or other educational tools shall be designed to educate offenders about the importance of integrity, specifically in an academic setting.
    d. The most severe sanction, expulsion, is reserved for repeat offenders or very serious offenses.

2. Sanctioning Procedures for Academic Honor Code Violations

    a. All three hearing members assigned to the case shall vote on whether or not the accused student violated the Academic Honor Code based on clear and convincing evidence presented by witnesses and case-presenters. A majority of two shall decide a case.

    b. The presiding member is responsible for issuing the majority opinion to the internal chair. A dissenting hearing member may also issue an opinion. The presiding member provides all opinions to the accused student, both case-presenters, and the professor(s) involved within five (5) class days of the hearing.

    The presiding member will also deliver the written majority opinion and any dissenting opinion to the complainant, who may not be the instructor of the course involved, to the external chair, the AVPAA, and the faculty advisers via email. If the originating complainant is not the faculty member in whose course the violation occurred, that faculty member will be delivered the opinion via email.

The majority opinion will contain the finding and an outline of the reasoning the hearing panel followed in making its decision.

Authorship of majority and dissenting opinions is not to be disclosed. The identification of dissenters will be reported by the presiding member only to the internal chair and only in the case that a letter of appeal is filed and an appeals board must be assembled.

The presiding member will also notify the complainant and the accused of the possibility to appeal based on criteria outlined in the Honor Code, and of the appeal process. Following the hearing, questions regarding the appeal process should be directed to the external chair.

c. If a student is found in violation of the Academic Honor Code, the hearing members shall assign sanctions. Sanctioning decisions shall be made by a majority of two out of three hearing members.

   Past academic integrity violations are relevant to these deliberations. The faculty advisers are responsible for obtaining this information from the office of the AVPAA. The faculty advisers will not disclose this information to any hearing panel member unless a determination of responsibility has been made. Such knowledge will be used in determining the specific sanctions.

   Note that, according to the Honor Code, "If a student is suspended or expelled by the Academic Honor Council, an automatic appeal will be registered with the President of Trinity University for a final decision. The dispositive authority of the Council shall not prejudice the executive powers of the President of the University including executive privilege of granting pardon or clemency" (Section III.F.5).

3. Sanctioning Guidelines

Class system based largely on seriousness of violation

Violations on work assigned in a course in which the student is currently enrolled are divided into four classes of increasing seriousness. The person reporting a violation, if an instructor, is encouraged to include a statement, with brief rationale, about which class of violation he or she believes should be considered. Such statements would not bind the Honor Council but would often provide context that is sometimes difficult for the Honor council to determine on its own.

Second and third violations carry more severe sanctions than first violations. In addition to

sanctions for violations on work for a course, sanctions are specified for violations occurring outside the classroom. Provision is also made for a warning letter to accompany some findings of not responsible.

The primary factor in determining the class of violation is the significance of the violation. Significance will be determined in large part by the amount of material in an assignment that is involved in the violation, as well as the degree to which the offending material is critical to accomplishing the goals of the assignment. Determination of the class to which a given violation is assigned will be made on a case-by-case basis, once a student is found responsible. To assist in assessing the significance of a violation, the hearing panel, in cases where the amount and critical nature of the offending material is not clear and the instructor has not provided any indication of the class of violation, may solicit the instructor's views on the matter during deliberations. The hearing panel will take such solicited views into consideration, but will ultimately arrive at its own independent conclusion regarding classification of the offense.

Consistency in findings, classifications, and sanctions will be established by the continual review of precedents as provided in written summaries of debriefings of cases that present problematic issues. These cases will be presented in regular meetings of the Honor Council. To protect the confidentiality of the accused student and the accusing person, the debriefings and summaries will exclude names of all involved in the case, except for the panel hearing members. The written summaries of these problematic cases will be kept on the HC confidential T-Learn website. Such summaries will include the basic findings of the case, the rationale for the finding including where relevant the rationale for the assignment of the case to a particular class, and finally an account or explanation of the problematic issues raised in the case. Honor Council members will be required to review all written summaries of these problematic cases of the current and preceding semester before being allowed to serve on a hearing panel.

a. **Finding of non-responsibility that nevertheless merits a warning**

Guidelines: This classification is merited when one of three conditions applies:

1. The evidence in the final analysis was not clear and convincing but was indicative of a likely violation of the Honor Code.
2. The student's failure to satisfy requirements was due to a reasonable misunderstanding of the instructor's guidelines. However, students have a responsibility to clarify any instructions that they are not certain they have fully heard or correctly understood.
3. The panel finds the alleged violation to be a result of negligent or careless scholarship (e.g., a student properly cites the majority of her sources in her paper but fails to properly use in-text citations in an instance in which she

pulls material from a source in her bibliography). It is important to note that this sanction does not apply to cases in which a student is ignorant of the rules of the Academic Honor Code or proper citation practices. For example, this class would not apply to a case in which a student claimed to be unaware that she needed to cite encyclopedia sources in her paper.

Sanction: In the case of lack of clear and convincing evidence, a letter will be issued warning the accused student that the behavior or actions described in the allegation are not tolerated, and that all future academically related behavior and actions should avoid even the appearance of violating the Academic Honor Code. In the case of unclear or verbal only instructor guidelines, a letter will be issued directing the student to be more aware of the need to be clear about what is and is not allowed, and to seek clarification from the instructor if there is any doubt. In the case of negligent or careless scholarship, a letter will be issued warning the student that extra caution should be taken when completing coursework in the future. In addition, the student will complete a CD-ROM focusing on ethical principles as they apply to academic integrity, or similar assignment at the discretion of the Hearing Panel.

b. **Violations in a class in which the student is currently enrolled**

1. First Violation

- **Class 1: Minor Violation**

  Guidelines: The assignment contains offending material. However, if the offending material were removed, the objectives of the assignment would still be met.

  Sanctions:

  - Completion of a TLEARN program focusing on ethical principles as they apply to academic integrity, or a similar assignment.
  - The instructor gives an appropriate grade to the assignment taking into account the offending material.
  - A 1/3 letter course grade reduction (e.g., an A- to a B+, or a C to a C-), calculated after the grade on the assignment is recorded.

- **Class 2: Substantial Violation**

  Guidelines: The assignment contains a substantial amount of offending material. However, the student has completed a significant

portion of the assignment appropriately.

Sanctions:

- Completion of a TLEARN program focusing on ethical principles as they apply to academic integrity, or a similar assignment.
- The instructor gives an appropriate grade to the assignment, taking into account the offending material.
- A 2/3 letter course grade reduction (e.g., an A- to a B, or a C+ to a C-), calculated after the grade on the assignment is recorded.

- **Class 3: Major Violation**

  Guidelines: The assignment contains offending material that is either extensive or critical to the assignment as a whole. The student made a minimal original contribution, if any to the assignment.

  Sanctions:

  - Completion of a TLEARN program focusing on ethical principles as they apply to academic integrity, or a similar assignment.
  - A zero on the assignment.
  - A 1 letter course grade reduction (e.g., an A to a B, or a C+ to a D+), calculated after the zero on the assignment has been recorded.

2. Second Violation

   Sanctions:

   - F in the course and recommendation of suspension beginning in the next semester.

3. Third Violation

   Sanctions:

   - F in the course and recommendation of expulsion beginning in the next semester.

4. In cases wherein students are found responsible for a second or third violation

but have not yet experienced the full educational process from their first Honor Code violation, the hearing panel will not apply more severe sanctions. Instead, the hearing panel will treat the case as if it were not a repeat offense. For example, a second violation that occurred prior to a student's completion of the full educational process would be treated as a first violation. The mitigating factor of admitting responsibility can be applied to these cases. Students have completed the "full educational process" from their first case when 1) the student has received the official opinion letter from his or her concluded case and 2) the student has completed the T-Learn course on academic integrity with a passing grade within the prescribed time period.

C. **Admission of Responsibility as Mitigating Factor**

For any student that pleads "Responsible" to an Honor Code violation that is his or her first offense and that cooperates with the Honor Council to ensure that the correct finding is reached, the course grade penalty will be reduced by a 1/3 letter grade such that:

- Class 1: Minor Violation will be reduced from a 1/3 letter course grade reduction to a 0 letter course grade reduction.
- Class 2: Substantial Violation will be reduced from a 2/3 letter course grade reduction to a 1/3 letter course grade reduction.
- Class 3: Major Violation will be reduced from a 1 letter course grade reduction to a 2/3 letter course grade reduction.

d. **Other violations**

1. Violations pertaining to a course or courses in which the accused student is not, or is no longer, enrolled
   Guidelines: such violations usually involve activity that takes place beyond the classroom. Examples include but are not limited to: possessing a prohibited test bank, knowingly giving unauthorized help to another student on an assignment or examination, altering or falsifying academic forms or records, and misrepresenting one’s academic achievements at Trinity on the web or to future employers.

   Sanctions:

   - Completion of a T-Learn course focusing on ethical principles as they apply to academic integrity, or similar assignment.
   - Completion of an annotated bibliography, consisting of 200-250 words per entry, of ten peer-reviewed articles and books dealing with academic integrity, or completion of a 2500 word essay report on a recent book dealing with academic integrity.

- In addition to the above, depending on the nature and seriousness of the violation: suspension, expulsion, and revocation of a degree. In the case of expulsion or revocation of degree, the first two sanctions above become irrelevant.

2. Violations committed by student not receiving a grade in a course
   Guidelines: such violations involve students who do not receive official grades for their coursework (e.g., a student or faculty member auditing a course)

   Sanctions:

   It is suggested that students complete the course on ethical principles and the annotated bibliography assignment (where applicable) within two weeks of the sanction being assigned. The registration status of the student will be put on hold until all assignments are completed.

   - Completion of a T-Learn course focusing on ethical principles as they apply to academic integrity
   - Completion of an annotated bibliography, consisting of 200-250 words per entry, of ten peer-reviewed articles and books dealing with academic integrity, or completion of a 2500 word essay report on a recent book dealing with academic integrity.
   - In addition to the above, depending on the nature and seriousness of the violation: suspension, expulsion, or revocation of a degree (when relevant). In the case of expulsion or revocation of degree, the first two sanctions above become irrelevant.

3. Egregious conduct
   Guidelines: such violations include, but are not limited to, threatening, harassing or assaulting another student, professor or staff member involved in an Academic Honor Council proceeding, unruly behavior during a hearing, and violating the confidentiality of an Honor Council case.

   Procedures:

   - Submission of the case to the Student or University Conduct Board (hereafter both referred to as Conduct Board) by the Academic Honor Council external chair.
   - Participate in Conduct Board hearings as needed.

   Outcomes and sanctions:

   - Findings and sanctions to be determined through regular Conduct Board procedures.

- In cases of egregious conduct, the Honor Council recommends either suspension or expulsion, to be in line with the sanctions for repeated substantial and major violations of the Honor Code.

(F) Procedures for Appealing a Decision

1. Philosophical Premises for the Appeals Process

    a. An appeal must have merit and must be sufficiently justified.

    b. The appeals process shall be operated by students in keeping with every other aspect of administration of the Academic Honor Code. An Academic Honor Council faculty adviser shall again be present in order to ensure due process.

2. Basis for Appeal of an Academic Honor Council Decision

    b. The letter of appeal shall include the basis for appeal, substantiation of such assertions, and the names of any pertinent witnesses.

    Students can only appeal responsibility on the basis of improper procedure or the discovery of new evidence. All letters should be sent to the external chair at ahc@trinity.edu.
    Faculty members may also appeal sanctioning as well as appeal responsibility based on improper procedure or the discovery of new evidence.

3. Composition

    a. The Appeals Board shall be made up of seven (7) members of the Academic Honor Council selected by the internal chair.

    b. Among these seven (7) members, there shall be one of the three (3) original hearing members (one who voted with the majority) in order to offer insight into the rationale for the original decision. Therefore, the original hearing member will not have sufficient power to uphold their decision should the majority of the Appeals Board disagree with it.

    The original panel member is not to serve as the presiding member on the Appeals Board. Case-presenters assigned to the original case being appealed cannot serve on the Appeals Board.

    c. The Decision Committee shall be made up of the internal chair, the external chair, and one of the three (3) original hearing panel members (one who voted with the majority). The Decision Committee is responsible for determining, by a majority vote,

whether a petition to appeal a case will be accepted.

The Decision Committee shall meet to decide if the petition has merit. A majority of two shall decide if an appeal should be granted.. A decision committee will be formed for all petitions, including improper procedure, new evidence, or an appeal of sanctioning.

4. Procedures for Appeal Process

    a. Professors, other complainants, or accused students who wish to appeal the Academic Honor Council's decision shall submit their request in writing to the external chair within five (5) class days following receipt of the Academic Honor Council's opinion or the discovery of new information.

    The external chair shall notify the internal chair, the accused student, the initial complainant, the faculty advisers, and the AVPAA of the receipt of any petition for rehearing by the end of the first class day following the day of its receipt.

    The external chair shall notify the internal chair, the accused student, the initial complainant, the faculty advisers, and the AVPAA of the receipt of any petition for rehearing by the end of the first class day following the day of its receipt.

    b. Within five (5) class days following the notification of the receipt of a petition, the Decision Committee will meet and vote whether to grant a rehearing.

    In order to gain insight into the rationale for the original decision, the Decision Committee will have access to the file for the original case. For petitions that request an appeal on the basis of improper procedure, the committee must determine whether the petition has made a "reasonable argument" that the Honor Council has not followed procedure. A "reasonable argument" is an argument that could be substantiated; it is not the job of this committee to determine if proper procedure has been followed.
    For petitions that request an appeal on the basis of additional evidence, the committee must determine whether or not the new evidence is pertinent to the original case. That is, if the evidence were submitted in the original case, would it have been considered relevant by the original Hearing Panel? If so, then the evidence is pertinent. The new evidence submitted does not need to be sufficient to determine responsibility on its own, it must only be worth consideration. In the event the original complainant appeals the sanctioning of an original case, the decision committee will grant an appeals hearing based on the reasoning provided in the petition. Appeals of sanctioning can include but is not limited to, reevaluation of offending material in the assignment, disagreement with reasoning for sanctioning in

the official opinion letter etc.
The internal chair, following confirmation by the committee that the petition has been accepted, will assemble the Appeals Board, appointing one of the seven (7) members to preside over the appeals board. The internal chair will notify these members of their appointment and set a date for all seven (7) members and the faculty adviser(s) to hear the appeal. The internal chair will also notify the accused student and originating complainant of the date, and encourage both to attend.

In order to gain insight into the rationale for the original decision, the Decision Committee will have access to the file for the original case.
For petitions that request an appeal on the basis of improper procedure, the committee must determine whether the petition has made a "reasonable argument" that the Honor Council has not followed procedure. A "reasonable argument" is an argument that could be substantiated; it is not the job of this committee to determine if proper procedure has been followed.
For petitions that request an appeal on the basis of additional evidence, the committee must determine whether or not the new evidence is pertinent to the original case. That is, if the evidence were submitted in the original case, would it have been considered relevant by the original Hearing Panel? If so, then the evidence is pertinent. The new evidence submitted does not need to be sufficient to determine responsibility on its own, it must only be worth consideration.
Petitions that request to amend a sanction will be automatically accepted by the committee.
The internal chair, by the end of the second class day following confirmation by the committee that the petition has been accepted, will assemble the Appeals Board, appointing one of the seven (7) members to preside over the appeals board. The internal chair will notify these members of their appointment and set a date for all seven (7) members and the faculty adviser(s) to meet. The internal chair will also notify the accused student and originating complainant of the date, and encourage both to attend.

c. Any sanctions imposed by the Academic Honor Council shall be delayed during the appeals process.

d. In the case of a rehearing to amend a sanction, the Appeals Board will accept or deny the appeal by majority vote of four.

In the case of an appeal of a sanction, the Appeals Board will hear from the petitioner should he or she be present and willing to address the Board. The Appeals Board will then hear from the student should he or she desire to respond to the petition. A faculty adviser must be present for deliberation to ensure due process.

In addition to the evidence and statements provided by the accused student and the originating complainant, the Appeals Board will receive the file for the original case by the internal chair before the rehearing. The file contains all of the evidence and statements used in the original case, as well as the corresponding opinion letter. The Appeals Board may consider the file during questioning and deliberations.

If the Appeals Board decides to amend a sanction, the Board must assign a sanction under the Honor Council's class-based system.

e. In the case of a rehearing to reconsider a finding of "Responsible" or "Not Responsible," the Appeals Board will accept or deny the appeal by majority vote of four. The rehearing shall follow the same procedures as the original hearing.

"Follow[ing] the same procedures as the original hearing" will be interpreted as allowing both the original complainant and the accused student to make statements, to present evidence, to make comments to the Appeals Board as evidence is reviewed, and to make final statements to the Appeals Board. The role of the Appeals Board is to uphold or overturn the original decision. If the Appeals Board chooses to amend responsibility to "not responsible" they may also assign letters of warning.The Appeals Board holds the right to amend responsibility and sanctioning as they see fit.

A case-presenter will be assigned to the student automatically. The original complainant will also have the ability to request a Case Presenter if they choose to. If possible the case presenter from the original hearing will be assigned to them. If the original case-presenter is not available the internal chair may assign a case-presenter. Should either the student or professor deny a case presenter, any questions or clarifications may be directed to the co-chairs or presiding member of the Appeals Board. A faculty adviser, as usual, must be present to ensure due process.

The presiding member will submit the opinion letter of the Board to the accused student, original complainant, and the AVPAA within 5 class days of the hearing date.

5. Procedure for Appealing Suspension or Expulsion

If a student is recommended for suspension or explusion by the Academic Honor Council, an automatic appeal will be registered with the President of Trinity University for a final decision. The dispositive authority of the Council shall not prejudice the executive powers of the President of the University including executive privilege of granting pardon or clemency.

Miscellaneous Guidelines

The Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members in Relation to the Academic Honor Code

- It is the Academic Honor Council's responsibility to assign sanctions for infractions of the code. Please note that the Council members are not grading a student's work; they are assigning a penalty that will affect the student's grade.
- It is the faculty member's right, if s/he objects to the assigned penalty, to appeal the Council's decision.
- While the responsibility of assigning penalties for violations has been transferred to the Academic Honor Council, the entire University community benefits from the resulting campus-wide consistency of the sanctions.
- It is the faculty member's responsibility to be clear about which assignments are "collaborative" and which are not. For instance, instructors who designate an assignment as collaborative may indicate so on the syllabus as well as on any written instructions. Additionally, instructors may wish to require students to include a "Collaborative Statement" with the assignment on which the student cites the names of other collaborators. A simple statement such as, "I worked on the assignment/problem with. . . and received help from . . ." could suffice.
- It is the faculty member's responsibility to participate in any relevant Academic Honor Council hearing.

Reporting of Violations

- All complaints, whether originating with a student or a faculty member, should go directly to the Academic Honor Council. Students are discouraged from reporting a violation to the professor for two reasons: first, to protect the reputation of the student reporting the violation; and second, to protect the impartiality of the professor toward the accused student should the accusation be found to be false. In some cases, however, it may be advisable for the accusing student to contact the professor, after consultation with the external chair of the Honor Council.

Proctoring of Exams

- It is entirely within the instructor's discretion whether to proctor an exam. Unproctored exams shall be an option.

Maintenance of "Test Files" by Student Organizations

- Keeping records of tests, papers, or other assignments belonging to former students, even for the sake of consultation, violates the spirit of academic honesty. Organizations must not keep such files. Responsible individuals within organizations that have such files may be charged with violations of the Academic Honor Code.

Rights of Students in Academic Honor Council Hearings

- To seek advice from an Academic Honor Council member in confidence before alleging a case against someone.
- To claim that you are responsible or not responsible for the charges.
- To have an appointed Academic Honor Council member serve as a case-presenter on your behalf.
- To call pertinent witnesses to a hearing, pending approval.
- To have a confidential investigation and judicial process as well as a closed hearing.
- To appeal any decisions to the Academic Honor Council, and as a last resort, in cases where a student has been suspended or expelled, to the President of Trinity University.

Responsibilities of Students Involved in an Academic Honor Council Hearing

- To attend the hearing, unless you have a documented academic conflict.
- To represent your case honestly and respectfully.

Assessment Procedures

A. The Academic Honor Council will submit an annual report to the Faculty Senate, the Association of Student Representatives, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs so that the implementation of this Code may be assessed and any necessary changes recommended.

B. A formal review of the Academic Honor Code will be conducted every fifth year, in academic years in which the spring semester ends in -0 or -5. The review will be conducted by a review committee to determine how well the honor code system is operating and to recommend any necessary changes. The review committee will be appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and will consist of two faculty members nominated by the Faculty Senate, two students nominated by the Association of Student Representatives, and one member of the Administration. If the Faculty Senate, the Association of Student Representatives, or the Administration believes that a change to the Academic Honor Code is necessary, the amendment procedures outlined in Chapter 6K, Section VI (Amendments) will be followed.

Amendments

The following procedure will be followed if at any time the faculty, Association of Student Representatives, the Honor Council, or the Vice President for Student Life believes that an amendment to the Academic Honor Code is necessary.

A. Whichever group wishes to propose an amendment must present it in writing to the Faculty Senate, along with a statement outlining the reasons for the amendment.
B. When the Faculty Senate has approved an amendment to the Academic Honor Code, the Faculty Senate will submit the amendment as a motion for consideration at a stated meeting of the Academic Faculty Assembly; the Faculty Senate will circulate the proposed

amendment in writing to the Academic Faculty at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which it will be considered. The Academic Faculty Assembly must approve the amendment by a majority vote.

C. The Association of Student Representatives must pass a Resolution of Adoption of the amendment by a majority vote.
D. The administration must approve the amendment.
E. If the amendment receives a favorable vote from the Academic Faculty Assembly, the Association of Student Representatives, and the administration, it shall become a part of the Academic Honor Code.
F. The Board of Trustees will be advised of any amendment to the Academic Honor Code.

Performance Evaluation

Consequences of Policy Violation:

It is a basic assumption that credit is awarded for the work of the individual student and judged according to its quality. Violations of the Academic Honor Code thus involve an infraction of that basic assumption. Such violations include but are not limited to:

a. Using or giving unauthorized material or assistance in any academic exercise, ranging from a homework assignment to a paper or a final exam. *Unauthorized material includes but is not limited to cell phones, MP3 players, smart watches, laptops, tablets, or other prohibited material as stated in the class syllabus or other written (or electronic) materials or resources.*
b. Turning in someone else's work as one's own or allowing someone else to take an exam for you.
c. Presenting words or ideas of another as one's own, which is plagiarism. While it is often appropriate to use others' work in one's paper, it must be credited as such. Quotation marks should be used for exact quotations, and in all cases, whether paraphrasing or using another's exact wording, footnotes or endnotes should clearly indicate the source and the extent of the borrowing of ideas.
d. Turning in the same work to more than one class without the consent of the instructor(s) involved.
e. Collaborating on an assignment unless specifically authorized to do so by the instructor.
f. Knowingly helping another student violate the Academic Honor Code.
g. Changing or attempting to change grades that have been assigned by the instructor.
h. Falsifying data, creating false data, or fabricating sources.

It is also a basic assumption that violations of academic integrity are not confined to courses taken for credit. Violations of the Academic Honor Code thus include but are not limited to:

a. All of the violations enumerated above in A-H, when committed by a student who is not registered for credit in connection with the action in question.

b. Falsification of academic records by knowingly and improperly changing grades, signatures, or documents related to transcripts, grade sheets, forms and academic reports.

Terms & Definitions

Terms and Definitions:

Term:	Definition:
External Chair	the Academic Honor Council officer primarily in charge of communicating with the University community, for receiving complaints, and for promoting education about the Academic Honor Code.
Internal Chair	the Academic Honor Council officer who manages internal assignments and documents.
Case-Presenters	those assigned to help students, faculty, and/or staff in the presentation of their case--one member presenting the complaint on behalf of the University and one member presenting the report on behalf of the accused student.
Hearing Members	the panel of three members assigned to adjudicate a given case.
Appeals Board	the panel of seven members assigned to consider appeals and rehear cases.
Academic Honor Code Advisor	a faculty member with up to a three-year term responsible for aiding the Academic Honor Council with procedural consistency and for assisting the Office of Academic Affairs with faculty communications.

Revision Management

Revision History Log:

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Enter Vice President(s) that are responsible for approving this document

Name:	Title:
Megan Mustain	Vice President for Academic Affairs