

Core Values

Research has demonstrated that academic integrity can be strengthened through the development of the school culture as a learning community that explicitly promotes core values resisting academic dishonesty¹². The clear identification of core values such as honesty, responsibility and fairness provide an important cognitive link to develop ethical arguments that advance academic integrity. Students have been shown to connect to the mission of academic integrity when they understand the goal of achieving fairness and equity in grading and other assessment practices³.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the school board and administration to articulate core values that support the school's mission. An Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) can act as an agent of the school administration to review, clarify and advance the school's core values as they link to the principles of academic integrity.

There are a variety of ways to approach the task of linking core values to academic integrity depending on the status of the school's published mission and core values.

- If the school's mission and core values explicitly identify academic integrity as a stated goal, the AIC should refer to these statements and be consistent to reinforce and publish them in the development of the school's honor policies.
- If the school's mission does not explicitly reference academic integrity but there are core values identified that are related to integrity; the AIC could facilitate a process to link existing value statements to reinforce the development of honor policies and gain the support of the administration, faculty and students.
- If the school's mission and core values offer no explicit link to academic integrity; the AIC could facilitate a process to revise the mission statement to include academic integrity and/or core values that explicitly support the development of honor policies.

The process of identifying core values can proceed through AIC discussion, guided class discussions that feedback to the AIC and/or the solicitation of student, faculty and community opinions via paper or electronic surveys. The goal of this process is to establish some consensus in the school community that clearly defines school values in support of integrity. The following statement of core values is drawn from a synthesis of high school honor policies with the core from Langley High School, McLean VA.

Statement of Core Values

Our school's mission includes the expectation of high standards in ethical behavior as well as scholarship. Academic integrity is an integral component of this mission and we seek to foster respect (for self and others), trust in honest achievement and positive relationships among all stakeholders in our school community. Our Honor Policy, Honor Code and Honor Pledge are intended to clarify the expectations we have for all students to maintain an ethical climate that values honesty, effort and respect for others.

The core values underlying and reflected in this Honor Policy include:

- **Academic honesty** which is demonstrated by students when the ideas and the writing of others are properly cited; students submit their own work for tests and assignments without unauthorized assistance; students do not provide unauthorized assistance to others; and students report their research or accomplishments accurately.
- **Respect** for others and the learning process to demonstrate academic honesty,
- **Trust** in others to act with academic honesty as a positive community-building force in the school,
- **Responsibility** is recognized by all to demonstrate their best effort to prepare and complete academic tasks,
- **Fairness** and equity are demonstrated so that every student can experience an academic environment that is free from the injustices caused by any form of intellectual dishonesty, and
- **Integrity** of all members of the school community as demonstrated by a commitment to academic honesty and support of our quest for authentic learning.

¹ Calabrese, R. and J. Cochran (1990). "The relationship of alienation to cheating among a sample of American adolescents." *Journal of Research and Development in Education* **23**(2): 65-72.

² McCabe, D. and L. K. Trevino (1993). "Academic dishonesty: Honor codes and other contextual influences." *Journal of Higher Education* **64**(5): 522-538.

³ Keith-Spiegel, P. and B. E. Whitley (2001). "Introduction To The Special Issue." *Ethics & Behavior* **11**(3): 217-218.