

**Memorandum**

Date: January 8, 2021

From: Charles Taber, Provost and Executive Vice President



To: University Leadership and Faculty

Re: Academic Integrity Recommendations and Tools

Since March the number of reports of academic honor code violations has increased dramatically at Kansas State University. At the request of concerned faculty, the following recommendations and tools are provided so that you may use them to promote academic honesty. Please share these recommendations widely as we work to educate our students and community about academic integrity, especially in an online learning context.

**Syllabus**

The syllabus is the first introduction of your course to your students. Using the syllabus as a tool to help share information about academic integrity is important; however, it is imperative that you also spend time *discussing* it with your students. Please share with your students **why** academic integrity is important to you and why integrity is also important in their future professions. Use examples to illustrate concretely the value of academic honesty and consequences of dishonesty, especially in the context of your course and assignments. Clear expectations can mitigate academic dishonesty. Review your syllabus for information about your overall expectations such as required citation style and practice, and guidelines/rules for collaboration for homework, assignments, exams, etc. When discussing these expectations, offer examples to your students of what you would consider, for instance, acceptable collaboration versus unacceptable cheating. Contact the Honor and Integrity System ([honor@ksu.edu](mailto:honor@ksu.edu)) for additional support on developing your syllabus.

**Written Assignment/Course Expectations**

While your syllabus might have some guidelines and expectations, also be sure to include written expectations for what is expected and allowed/not allowed on your assignments. Tell or remind students what sources or support they may or may not use for the assignment(s).

Questions to think about:

- (1) Is a student allowed to work with another student?
- (2) Do students who work together submit one assignment or does each student submit an individual assignment? If the latter, do students share the names of their collaborators?
- (3) Is a student allowed to access online resources while completing their assignment and, if so, are there limits to what they may access?

**Contract Cheating**

Contract cheating is when a student submits an assignment that has been completed by another person. At Kansas State, contract cheating occurs most frequently by students using

online websites that market themselves as a “helping” site. On these sites, the student can find or self-post questions that are answered within a short time period. While each instructor may determine whether students can access these sites for an assignment (such as for minor homework assignments versus exams), the Honor and Integrity System recommends discouraging/forbidding use of these websites at all times. While there are many websites that fit into this description, the most common at K-State are Chegg.com, Slader.com, CourseHero.com, and Fiverr.com.

### **Lower Stakes Assessments**

Students are more likely to make poor decisions and possibly violate the honor pledge when under severe pressure and/or stress. Cheating is often an act of desperation. College is challenging, and it should be. However, undue stress can get in the way of learning. Faculty can reduce the stress surrounding grades by using multiple lower stakes assessments rather than few higher stakes assessments. Contact the Teaching and Learning Center (<https://www.k-state.edu/tlc/>) for more information about adapting/changing your assessments to promote learning and preserving rigor

### **Build Relationships**

Students are less likely to violate the honor code in your class if you take time to build relationships with your students. When students feel comfortable and have respect for you, they are more willing to come to you for questions. The students also have a sense of obligation to do their work for you because there is mutual respect. Teaching in online/hybrid modalities can make it more challenging for you to build rapport with your students. Think about ways that you can create consistent and recurring points of contact with your students to enhance your connections with them, such as by having Zoom student/office hours (in addition to or instead of in-person contact) and/or weekly review sessions. Communicate with your students and show your interest in their learning to build these relationships with them.

Refer to Resources: Kansas State has a variety of resources available to students. Please be willing to share and refer students to these offices.

- Counseling Center - <https://www.k-state.edu/counseling/>
- Office of Student Life - <https://www.k-state.edu/studentlife/>
- Academic Achievement Center - <https://www.k-state.edu/aac/>
- Educational Supportive Services - <https://www.k-state.edu/ess/>
- Scholars Assisting Scholars (SAS) Tutoring (College of Engineering) - <https://engg.ksu.edu/student-success/sas/>
- Tutoring Services - <https://www.k-state.edu/aac/tutoring/>
- Writing Center - <https://www.k-state.edu/english/writingcenter/>
- K-State Libraries - <https://www.lib.k-state.edu/>

If you have any questions please contact Dr. Brian Niehoff at [niehoff@ksu.edu](mailto:niehoff@ksu.edu). Thank you for your continued commitment to high quality teaching and learning at K-State.