Academic Honesty in the LFC Biology Department (Student Handout)

Your educational experience at Lake Forest College and the benefits you derive from it depend on the work you do for your courses. The work you do for your courses needs to be work that is done yourself, adhering to the stated guidelines for academic honesty, both for Lake Forest College and for the Biology Department. When the burdens of academic work are high or your confidence is waverering, there can be a lot of pressure to take shortcuts; this is where you are at risk of engaging in academic dishonesty and suffering the consequences when you are caught at it. The Biology Department recognizes that a culture of “everyone does it so I have to do it too” has developed, and we aim to eliminate it.

This handout is intended to help you understand academic dishonesty, the attitude of the biology department towards it, the consequences of engaging in it and how to avoid it.

1. What is Academic dishonesty?
   Academic honesty means that all of the work you do for your courses is your own original effort. Academic dishonesty occurs when a student misrepresents work as his or her own when in fact that work included inappropriate use of materials or ideas obtained from others without giving proper credit.

   Please see details appended at the end of this document, or at http://www.lakeforest.edu/academics/curriculum/honesty.php

Major categories of academic dishonesty include the following:

• Plagiarism of written work: use of text lifted or minimally paraphrased from a current classmate’s work, previous students’ work, and other sources, including online materials (papers for sale, material available on the web, published works). Be very careful if you take notes by cutting and pasting from source materials. Paraphrasing by changing a few words is plagiarism. Biology department policy forbids you from consulting the work of other students unless specifically allowed. You should know that it is very easy for your instructors to notice when a student’s paper contains phrases lifted or even adapted from another source.

• Cheating on exams: obtaining unauthorized exam materials, copying from classmates, and using notes and materials during an exam unless specifically allowed by the instructor. Biology department policy forbids you from obtaining copies of previous exams unless specifically provided by the instructor.

• Copying or falsifying other materials: data, images, graphs, tables, etc; also misrepresentation of work done to obtain information, such as lab work, attendance at an event, reading a book or article, etc. When you turn in lab reports, seminar summaries and book responses, you are implicitly stating that you did the work on which your writing is based and that components such as images, graphs and data are original and accurate representations of your own work.
• **Aiding another student’s dishonest behavior:** unauthorized sharing of materials such as exams and lab reports to another student, doing assignments for another student, allowing another student to copy one’s work, and allowing group members to include dishonestly obtained material in a group project. Note that when working in a group, students must take active measures to be sure that the work turned in by the group adheres to strict standards of academic honesty. If your name is on a project or lab report, you are responsible for the quality of that work. Biology department policy is that all group members may be held responsible if dishonesty is detected in a group project.

The most frequently detected and obvious incidents in Biology have been plagiarism (of published material or current/previous students' work) and cheating on exams (copying from a neighbor or using cheat sheets).

2. **What is Biology Department policy in cases of academic dishonesty?**

ALL cases of academic dishonesty in the Biology Department will result in charges brought to the Academic Honesty Judicial Board (AJHB). Biology faculty will suggest that the project, assignment or exam in question receive zero points, in addition to the college-wide sanctions, which can include suspension or dismissal from the college.

3. **What are stated LFC policies about academic honesty?**

(Also see details at [http://www.lakeforest.edu/academics/curriculum/honesty.php](http://www.lakeforest.edu/academics/curriculum/honesty.php))

All academic honesty convictions bring a penalty ranging from zero on the exam or assignment, to failure of the course, at the instructor’s discretion, plus additional consequences for first, second, and third offenses. Note that a conviction on a first offense does not bring consequences outside the course, but sets up for serious consequences on subsequent convictions.

*Expected consequences for first, second, third offenses (in addition to grade penalty):*

**1st offense:** educational component regarding academic honesty and/or repetition of the assignment.

**2nd offense:** suspension for one semester plus educational component.

**3rd offense:** dismissal from the college.
Examples of Academic Dishonesty include:

- Procuring in an unauthorized manner the questions or answers of any examination or employing unauthorized aids while taking an examination.
- Representing any work product as one's own that was done in whole or in part by another person or in collaboration with another person without attribution or proper citation.
- Engaging in any form of conduct or action that violates the letter or spirit of the College's Academic Honesty Policy, including but not limited to: copying, closely paraphrasing, or using another work without explicit acknowledgement of author and source.
- Submitting the same paper for credit in more than one course without the written consent of all instructors involved.
- Falsifying data, citations, or other information for academic work of any sort.
- Misrepresenting work done, including submitting a report on a performance or exhibit one did not attend.
- Aiding another scholar in the violation of the Academic Honesty Policy.

Procedures

A faculty member may bring a charge of academic dishonesty against a student if, in his or her judgment, the student has violated the Academic Honesty Policy.

The faculty member shall inform the student of the allegation in writing along with a recommended sanction. Faculty are encouraged to consult with the AHJB Chair regarding appropriate sanctions. The faculty member must allow an accused student up to five business days to consider the allegation and submit a statement admitting or denying the allegation, and agreeing or disagreeing with the recommended sanction. If the faculty member is unable to contact the student despite making a good faith effort to do so, he or she should submit a formal charge and any appropriate documentation to the AHJB Chair. In this case, the Chair will inform the student of the formal charge and will instruct the student how to proceed.

If an accused student admits to violating the Academic Honesty Policy and agrees with the faculty member’s recommended sanction:

- The faculty member and student submit their respective statements to the AHJB Chair.
- For a first offense, the AHJB simply records the violation and sanction, notifying all appropriate parties (see “Sanctions” below).
- For second and subsequent offenses, the AHJB meets to determine the sanction. The faculty member and student are invited to address the AHJB before sanctioning.

If an accused student denies violating the Academic Honesty Policy or disagrees with the faculty member’s recommended sanction, the AHJB hears the case according to the following the procedure:

- The faculty member and student each submit a statement and evidence to the AHJB Chair.
- The Chair sets a date for the hearing, normally within one week of receiving the student's statement, and notifies the student by email and by registered campus mail or registered U.S. mail. The hearing date may be postponed at the discretion of the Chair.
- The Chair, upon consultation with the faculty member and the student, may summon a reasonable number of relevant witnesses to the hearing.
- Any party may consult with the Chair at any time.
- The student has the right to be assisted at the hearing by an advisor drawn from within the campus community.
- The hearing consists of the Chair (who does not vote) and of a jury of three faculty members and four
student members from the AHJB. A finding of responsibility requires four votes of the seven voting members.

- In the event that the AHJB members agree on the finding of responsibility but are divided on the issue of an appropriate sanction, the AHJB first votes on the most severe of the contemplated sanctions, proceeding through lesser sanctions until a sanction receives at least four votes.
- Evidence must pertain to the charge as determined by the Chair.
- The Chair will notify the student and faculty member of the AHJB’s decisions by registered campus mail or registered U.S. mail.
- When a case arises between semesters or during summer session, the AHJB ordinarily defers consideration until the following semester. However, the student involved may elect to have his or her case determined by an ad hoc AHJB convened by the Dean of the Faculty and drawn, insofar as possible, from the regular AHJB, consisting of three voting faculty members, four students, and a non-voting faculty Chair.

Sanctions

The faculty member, Dean of the Faculty, Dean of Students, Chair of AHJB, and the faculty advisor are notified of any sanctions assessed for Academic Honesty Policy violations. Furthermore, the Registrar is notified of any course failures. Suspensions or dismissals from the College are recorded on the student's transcript and on their permanent record.

- **For first offenses, the expected minimum sanction is zero points awarded for the project, examination, or assignment.** The maximum sanction is failure of the course. The sanction should also include one or more educational components, such as informational sessions with library or Ethics Center staff, or repetition of the assignment for no credit.
- **For second offenses, the expected minimum sanction is zero points awarded for the project, examination, or assignment, an educational component, and suspension from the College for the following semester.** If the AHJB recommends suspension from the College, this recommendation is submitted to the President by the Chair along with a recommendation regarding whether the College should accept courses taken at another institution while the student serves his or her suspension. The President then notifies the student and AHJB Chair of his or her decision by registered campus mail or registered U.S. mail.
- **For third offenses, the expected minimum sanction is zero points awarded for the project, examination, or assignment and dismissal from the College.** The Chair informs the President of the AHJB’s recommendation. The President then notifies the student and AHJB Chair of his or her decision by registered campus mail or registered U.S. mail.