Statement on Academic Integrity

The Statement on Academic Integrity, found in the faculty, student and staff handbooks, is the first step in Carnegie Mellon University's ongoing effort to identify and implement the kind of society its members wish to enjoy. This statement will be followed by implementation strategies as the Task Force on Academic Integrity continues its work. Please visit the Academic Integrity website for additional information and resources.

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Carnegie Mellon is a self-governing institution that requires ethical behavior of its administration, faculty, staff and students that goes beyond simple compliance with the law. Respect for these requirements creates a moral authority for the university to insist upon appropriate behavior. This authority is essential to the accomplishment of the university's mission. Integrity as described in this statement is a defining feature of the university community's high expectations for the conduct of its members.

Introduction

Carnegie Mellon University educates its students to become professionals who will serve society with integrity. The university also creates and disseminates new knowledge and expressions of knowledge in ways that benefit society. Carnegie Mellon strives to serve the changing needs of society through the three primary goals outlined in its mission statement: to create and disseminate knowledge and art through research and artistic expression, teaching and learning and transfer to society, to serve students by teaching them leadership and problem-solving skills, and the values of quality, ethical behavior, responsibility to society and commitments to work, to pursue the advantages provided by a diverse community, open to the exchange of ideas, where discovery and artistic creativity can flourish.

These statements provide groundwork for academic integrity that includes everyone in the Carnegie Mellon community. Our common objective is to make sure that we teach and learn with commitment, consistency, honesty and fidelity. This process involves at its core interaction between young and old, novice and expert, apprentice and master. Integrity requires that we examine the context in which we do our work. In the university community, young people grow and develop their identities, which mandate that all our dealings follow and foster principles of respect for autonomy, beneficence, justice and fidelity to the mission of the university. The university population is increasingly diverse, faces rapid changes in knowledge and technology that have historically produced uncertainty about the appropriate roles of individuals and professions in the larger society. Each of these facts can and do create issues that we need to be aware of and deal with if we are to successfully achieve our primary missions. When these circumstances are not fully communicated to and understood by all persons in the community, unnecessary suspicions concerning integrity may distract from our teaching and learning and taint the atmosphere on campus. When they are openly discussed and conflicts concerning them openly aired, we all proceed with greater confidence and trust.

All members of the university community have the obligation to serve as models of personal and professional integrity, as well as models for creating, expressing and transferring knowledge. This implies that the faculty not only provide the knowledge and training that prepare students to find their productive roles in society, but also help them discover and maintain integrity in the practice of that role. Staff and administrators are charged with representing the university accurately and forthrightly. Students are responsible for conducting their learning in a similarly honest and committed fashion-by avoiding plagiarism, cheating or taking credit for work not their own-and thus contributing to a campus atmosphere which expects and supports academic integrity.
Practice of the Mission of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity refers to the implicit commitment that every member makes to all others in the community to practice those principles that underlie the mission of the university and define academic integrity. These are: honesty and good faith; clarity in the communication of core values; professional conduct of work; mutual trust and respect; and fairness and exemplary behavior.

Honesty and Good Faith

Underlying all the interactions and transactions of the university is the assumption that all of its members act in good faith and are open with each other. For example, students must be able to assume that they can take faculty, staff and administration at their word and vice versa. If questions about honest communications and good faith arise within the community or among some of its members, the general issue must be aired in a frank and open way. Individual cases involving alleged infractions, on the other hand, are properly handled under conditions that respect confidentiality. Penalties for proven infractions of the university's standards must be dealt with promptly and fairly. The more fully we can come to understand and concur with one another on guiding principles, the fewer such cases will turn up, and the more rewarding the university experience will be for all of us.

Clarity in the Communication of Core Values

Clarity in the communication of the core values and standards of Carnegie Mellon requires explicit understanding of the mission and core values among members of faculty, staff, administration and students; reflection upon and open discussion of standards of practice; identification and resolution of conflicts posed by our mission objectives; and a clear and open communication of our mission to the community. This means we recognize our commitment to the distinct objectives of our vision and mission with all the assessment, certification, evaluation and reorientation that these imply. In direct face-to-face situations students should be dealt with immediately, openly and honestly. Students also need opportunities to learn about and discuss standards, expectations and norms when no immediate "case" is at hand.

Professional Conduct of Work

Professionalism for the faculty involves designing syllabi which accurately indicate the subject matter and practices of each course and meeting all scheduled classes fully prepared for the assigned work. It also involves the certification of students in their areas of expertise. The university is obligated to provide measures of student progress in the form of grades, degrees, and honors. These attest to society that both faculty and students have fulfilled their commitments. Degrees and honors certify that a level of performance has been met in a student's demonstration of acquisition and use of knowledge, so it is imperative that grading be a fair, accurate and honest measure of a student's work. At the same time, faculty need to be cognizant of the pressure on students to view grades, which they see as determining their job prospects, as "the be all and end all" of their university experiences and to devise strategies in the classroom to make learning, rather than receiving grades, the central focus.

The ethics governing research must be understood, practiced and communicated to students. This involves being clear and truthful about the ownership of research results and data, avoiding conflicts of interest (or disclosing them when they cannot be avoided), and making only honest and accurate claims in reporting research. In the context of the university, the professional conduct of work has two distinct dimensions: professionalism in one's discipline or area of expertise and professionalism as a member of the university. The distinction between these aspects of professionalism in the academy must be clearly understood and communicated. In addition, each of the various academic disciplines and fields of endeavor represented at Carnegie Mellon has its own implicit and explicit standards for professional work. These are binding on
faculty, administration and staff, and must be communicated to students as part of their preparation to become professionals. Research ethics also entails the open discussion of the propriety of the university's involvement in work that seems to be detrimental to society given the values of our mission.

Professional research in the academy is involved with several of its unique institutional goals, including the education of undergraduates, graduate education and certification for professional roles, and faculty tenure. These features pose issues specific to the academy, issues which must be acknowledged and treated explicitly if we are to be clear, open and consistent. The practices of other organizations may therefore not be entirely relevant to those in the university. Recognizing that students are learners demands that they be involved in ongoing research in ways which benefit their education, rather than merely as assistants in faculty projects. Students need also to be clearly informed about standards of behavior and performance that are accepted practices in the discipline and held responsible to them. This should be done proactively as a learning experience rather than retroactively as a punitive experience.

**Mutual Trust and Respect**

An environment of mutual trust and respect is necessary if the institution is to promote integrity. Mutual trust and respect are prerequisites for open communication and honest dialogue about values, goals and expectations. They require freedom of expression without fear of retribution, institutional or otherwise, and value the diversity of persons, ideas and choices differing from one's own. They recognize that being in a diverse community is an advantage to encouraging discovery and creativity. Both respect for individuals and respect for institutional values involves balancing the claims of personal autonomy with the goals and mission of the institution. All of us need to be alert to prevent the power structure of the classroom and the university as a whole from suppressing legitimate beliefs and practices. If trust should break down, we need to explore the reasons for the breakdown and identify ways for the community to rebuild trust among its members.

A basis for promoting trust and respect is provided by ensuring that the faculty treat the student's education and the student as ends rather than as a means to some end. For example, the graduate student's development as a researcher and professional, his or her learning and well-being, have to be honored as ends in themselves, rather than treating graduate student work merely as a means to the end of the production of knowledge (from which the professor may benefit more than the student). Students at all levels must be encouraged to value their university experience as learning and personal growth, rather than solely as the means to a career goal. They are responsible for rendering an atmosphere of mistrust by their teachers and among themselves unnecessary by consistently living up to the university's standards.

**Fairness and Exemplary Behavior**

The preservation of academic integrity means not only commitment to ideals but also justice in carrying out these ideals. Faculty, staff and administration must deal fairly in all of the various decisions they make which have consequences for students and all the other stakeholders of the university. When questions arise as to whether such decisions distribute benefits and burdens fairly, significant dialogue and open communications about such decisions should be conducted. The power that teachers wield in the classroom must be exercised with the greatest possible care for maintaining fairness, which means examining classroom practice for any hidden assumptions which might produce confusion or partiality. It also means that we describe to students what the expected commitment for a learning environment is and how to deal with conflicts of commitment, for example time management problems, as they arise. Students must strive to be fair to each other, for example in not claiming unjustified credit in carrying out joint projects and in the appropriate sharing of facilities. Staff must demonstrate impartiality in offering students information, opportunities and perquisites.

Integrity in the campus community is more than just swift punishment of plagiarism or cheating. It is an ongoing process which asks everyone to both consider carefully and practice consistently the honesty, clear
thinking, professionalism, fairness and trust that make learning, teaching and living here rewarding. When misunderstandings or conflicts over what constitutes integrity arise, as they may in a changing society, the campus must use the opportunity to exercise impartiality and wisdom to adjudicate between ideas and parties. Rightly settled, such issues will become the basis for shared understandings in the future. The university expects its members to be leaders in matters concerning integrity, not only here, but in the larger society we serve.