Guidelines to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Classes

Statement of Purpose:

This document serves to provide e-Learning faculty with guidelines and strategies to promote academic integrity in online classes. More specifically, general guidelines to prevent and curb cheating in the online learning environment are presented. Specific strategies to thwart cheating on written work and high-stake assessments are also provided.

Please contact Instructional Technology with questions and/or for additional information regarding this document.

General Guidelines:

- **Define Cheating.** Students often engage in academic misconduct because they do not know what constitutes cheating. Accordingly, faculty should:
    - o Provide students with a clear definition of cheating and a list of unacceptable behaviors.
    - o Convey the importance of academic integrity to students by incorporating an 'Academic Honesty' policy into the Course Syllabus.
    - o Include the repercussions for academic dishonesty.

- **Employ an Academic Honesty Statement into Every Assessment.** Faculty can implement an academic honesty statement into every assignment and exam. For example:
    - o Include the following true/false question (statement) into Blackboard assessments: "I pledge my honor that I have not violated the Broward College Honor Code during this examination."
    - o Require students to include the following statement into the 'Comments' section of their assignments: "I pledge my honor that I have not violated the Broward College Honor Code during this assignment."

- **Present Students with Learning Outcomes and Make Subject Matter Meaningful.** Cheating significantly decreases when students believe that learning has a purpose. Conversely, students are more likely to cheat when they perceive subject matter to be unimportant or insignificant.

- **Build Positive Relationships with Students.** Students' perception of faculty can also affect cheating. More specifically, students are less likely to cheat when they respect their instructors and find instructors to be friendly.

- **Vary Assessment Strategies.** Whenever possible, use a variety of assessment strategies in online courses including discussions, papers, projects, tests, etc. Additionally, modify test questions and assignment topics each semester.

- **Provide Detailed Grading Criteria.** Present students with rubrics at the onset of assignments so they know exactly how they will be graded.

- **Demonstrate Intolerance for Academic Dishonesty.** Students are also less likely to cheat when faculty members demonstrate a true intolerance for academic misconduct and take appropriate action when cheating does occur.

Guidelines for Written Work:

- **Make Use of Available Plagiarism Detection Tools (www.Turnitin.com).** Turnitin (or www.Turnitin.com) is a program that aims to detect plagiarism by searching and comparing word sequences of submitted documents (i.e., student writings) with word sequences in the Turnitin database and the Internet. Turnitin reportedly reviews 10,000 plus papers per day, of which 3,000 reveal significant plagiarism. Regardless of whether plagiarism is detected, all submitted works are added to the Turnitin database to be used for future word sequence comparisons. The database grows exponentially, and this in turn prevents original papers from being plagiarized in the future.

- **Require References.** To encourage authentic written work, faculty can require students to:
  - Submit copies of reference articles (with cited text highlighted).
  - Submit annotated bibliographies.
  - Use specific references (e.g., course textbook).
  - Submit several drafts, an outline, or a concept paper prior to submitting the final version.

Guidelines for High-Stake Assessments (Tests & Exams):

- **Take Full Advantage of Blackboard Functionality.** Blackboard enables multiple strategies to inhibit student cheating on online tests/exams that are not possible in the traditional classroom. Faculty can:
  - *Implement narrow testing windows.* Permit student access to tests only on a specific date and time.
  - *Employ testing time limits.* Regulate the amount of time students have to complete assessments; For example, approximately 45 seconds per multiple choice question.
  - *Generate unique tests/exams for every student.* Randomize questions in a question set and/or select subsets of questions from test banks.
  - *Employ passwords.* Password protect Blackboard exams, and email the password to students 15 minutes before an exam opens.
  - *Withhold feedback until all students have completed tests/exams.* Other than grades, do not provide students with feedback on tests/exams until the testing window has closed.
  - *Prohibit printing and copying and pasting of exams.* Present test questions one at a time to make printing and/or copying and pasting of exams a timely process.

    Alternatively, insert the following Javascript codes into the "**Custom Instructions**" section (the last section within the assessment "Edit Properties" page) to prohibit students from printing and copying/pasting test/exam questions:

    ```
    <SCRIPT language=Javascript
    src="http://www.broward.edu/itech/bbscript/noprintcopy.js"></script>
    <STYLE type=text/css>@media print {BODY {display:none}}</STYLE>
    ```

- **Employ Proctored Exams.** Require able-bodied students who live in close proximity to Broward College to take proctored exams either in a classroom or campus testing center. Require all other students to identify objective, remote proctors to administer their exams.

  Remote proctors are responsible for receiving exams, following guidelines for administering the exams as given by the instructor, and returning completed exams to the instructor. Employers, librarians, former professors, and testing center employees are viable remote proctors. Fellow students, friends, colleagues, family members, and employees are not viable remote proctors.

- **Administer Numerous Tests throughout the Semester and Develop High-Quality Assessments.** By administering numerous tests throughout the semester, it will become too time-consuming and cost prohibitive for students to get outside help. Additionally, effectively designed assessments can curb cheating on online tests. Creating high-quality multiple choice questions takes considerable time and effort. Below are guidelines for creating question *stems* (the questions or incomplete statements), and associated *alternatives* (answer choices).

  Guidelines for question stems include:
  o Employ clear and straightforward language.
  o Provide a single, definitive statement to be completed by one of the alternatives provided.
  o Avoid unnecessary and irrelevant material.
  o State the stem in positive form whenever possible.
  o Include as much of the question in the stem as possible.

  Guidelines for question alternatives include:
  o Provide only one correct response.
  o Ensure that all alternatives are grammatically correct and consistent with the stem and parallel in form.
  o Avoid common verbal associations to words in the stem.
  o Keep the relative length of all alternatives consistent.
  o Present only possible and attractive distracting alternatives.
  o Avoid the use of overlapping alternatives as well as 'always' and 'never' choices.
  o Provide at least three viable alternatives.

- **Utilize Higher Order Levels in Bloom's Taxonomy and Give Open-Book Exams.** The use of higher order level questions greatly minimizes the advantages of using outside resources on high-stake assessments. Thus, faculty should create test questions that utilize higher order levels in Bloom's Taxonomy and allow students to use 'outside resources' during exams (e.g., textbooks, notes, and the Internet). More specifically, test questions that require application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are preferred over recall and comprehension questions.

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