Confronting & Reporting Alleged Violations

For instructors, one of the more difficult aspects of promoting academic integrity is deciding what to do once academic dishonesty is suspected. The following information is designed to help instructors understand how confront a student who may have engaged in academic dishonesty, and how to submit a referral to the Honor System for review.

STEP 1: Confronting the student

Instructors are encouraged to discuss their concerns with students suspected of academic dishonesty, and to inform the student of their decision to refer the suspected academic misconduct to the Honor System. However, instructors who wish to meet with students should remember to not ask the student any questions that could be considered self-incriminating. Students are afforded the right not to make self-incriminating statements during an Honor System investigation, and the conversation with the student could be used as evidence if the matter is referred to the Honor Court.

Instructors choosing to meet with students prior to referring a case to the Honor System should consider carefully the types of questions they will ask and the nature of the information they will seek prior to meeting with the student.

Some question formats that may be helpful are:

- Open-ended questions, those that can’t be answered with a yes or no, are often good to begin with: How did you prepare for this exam? How do you explain the similarities between your work and what I found on the internet?
- Closed-ended questions, specifically seeking a "yes" or "no", may be both necessary and important: Did you understand my expectations with regard to this exam/paper?
- Directive statements are sometimes best used to get to the point: Please tell me where you found this source? Tell me how you solved this problem on the exam?

Once confronted, some students will immediately accept responsibility; others may act completely surprised or strongly deny any involvement. If, after meeting with the student, a violation is still suspected, instructors should refer the matter to the Student
Attorney General for a review. Instructors should make sure to let students know that the final determination will be made by the Honor System and that the student will have an opportunity to provide their account and respond to the accusation.

**STEP 2: Gather and prepare all relevant material**

You should gather all materials related to the allegations. All this information will be needed by the Student Attorney General in the review of the incident. Some materials which can be considered evidence are:

- Copies of assignment(s) or exam(s) in question
- Instructions for assignment(s) or exam(s) in question
- Relevant email correspondence
- Copy of course syllabus
- Other materials to support the allegation(s)

**STEP 3: Making a referral**

Our referral form for academic dishonesty can be completed online. Referring parties should prepare a written narrative (including the name and PID of the accused student) explaining what they believe occurred, including as much detail as possible. The narrative provides most of the information the Student Attorney General will use to begin the preliminary investigation, thus the more detail and supporting materials provided, the better. Where appropriate, provide additional written statements by other factual witnesses narratives completed by co-instructors or Teaching Assistants. These individuals may be called as factual witnesses should a hearing take place.

**STEP 4: End of term grades**

Once a case is reported to the Office of Student Conduct for an alleged Honor Code violation, we will contact the Registrar's Office and report an “NG” (No Grade) for the course in question until the case has been resolved. Once the case is resolved, a professional staff member with the Office of Student Conduct will reach out to you for a grade.

As always, questions may be directed to the Office of Student Conduct at 919.962.0805 or jpa@unc.edu.

**Knowing Your Rights**
Referring parties, or complainants, have basic procedural rights protected by the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance [3]. These rights outline the level of participation allowed to the referring party as well as the ability to make recommendations regarding sanctioning.

Source URL: https://studentconduct.unc.edu/instructors/confronting-reporting-alleged-violations

Links
[2] mailto:jpa@unc.edu