Memo

To: Faculty and Instructors

From: Margaret L. Usdansky, Director, Center for Learning and Student Success

Date: July 29, 2020

Re: Promoting Academic Integrity in an Uncertain Time: Quick Steps to Take Now

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The myriad uncertainties created by COVID-19 make preparing a fall 2020 syllabus challenging whether you are designing a new course or updating a familiar one. Academic integrity will be a particular concern and merits special attention on your syllabus given the need to conduct assessment online this fall for students who are unable to come to campus, for students in quarantine, and for all students between the end of on-campus instruction (November 24) and the last day of final exams (December 9).

Promoting academic integrity effectively does not require a large investment of time up front. The key is taking three quick steps now to ensure you have sufficient flexibility and opportunity to address academic integrity throughout the semester:

1) [Reviewing your syllabus for effective online assessment](#) via the Academic Continuity pages in [Answers](#) (additional information on Answers);

2) Adding course-specific expectations to the standard [academic integrity syllabus statement](#) (additional information below); and,

3) Identifying potential opportunities and needs for [promoting academic integrity in your class](#) over the course of the semester (additional information below).

This memo, and the links it includes to additional information on and beyond the CLASS website, is designed to accompany and supplement the specific recommendations in Answers for reviewing your syllabus for effective online assessment.

Adding Course-Specific Expectations to the Standard Academic Integrity Syllabus Statement

Review the [Suggested Academic Integrity Syllabus Language](#) on the CLASS website and evaluate what more students need to know to meet academic integrity expectations in your course. If you have course-specific expectations not addressed in the standard suggested language, spell them out in your syllabus. For example, include expectations regarding any group or collaborative work in your course. You may also want to include expectations for online homework, quizzes or exams – and note whether these differ from or mirror expectations for in-person, in-class work. Be sure to include a statement that "Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level" if you wish to exercise your option to fail a student for an academic integrity violation classified as Level 1.

Please also review the [University guidelines on usage of Turnitin](#) if you intend to use this plagiarism detection software. Failure to follow these guidelines may be considered by academic integrity panel members reviewing suspected violations. Questions about this may be directed to aio@syr.edu.

Identifying Opportunities and Needs to Address Academic Integrity In Your Class

Many instructors are re-examining options for promoting academic integrity in light of concern about exam cheating following the sudden shift to online teaching, learning and testing last spring. We recommend evaluating academic integrity in your course based on your learning objectives and the perspectives of your students. For insights into the latter, read the *New York Times* Ethicist's response to "If My Classmates Are Going to Cheat on an Online Exam, Why Can't I?" and *Inside Higher Ed* co-founder Doug Lederman's reporting on what faculty experts say about academic integrity and pedagogy.

We recommend that you address academic integrity incrementally over the course of the semester rather than in a single lecture, document or course meeting. Instead, discuss elements of academic integrity where and when they fit your teaching objectives and assignments and thus are most likely to resonate with students.

To this end, we are providing on our CLASS website a set of materials for [Promoting Academic Integrity in the Classroom](#) including this memo, ideas for engaging students in discussion of academic integrity, case studies, exercises for teaching use of sources and a Power Point presentation you can customize for use in your course.

This approach deliberately embeds discussion of academic integrity expectations in a broader case to students that they will benefit by: 1) learning the academic culture here at SU and in your course rather than assuming they know it; 2) adopting active study strategies backed by research in cognitive science rather than relying on those they used in high school; and 3) understanding that the academic integrity expectations faculty hold for students are rooted in standards of academic research that are critical to the generation of new knowledge.

We encourage you to customize the academic integrity materials on our website and tailor them to your courses. Our goal is to provide a menu from which you may choose what is most relevant to your students. Feel free to modify our materials for your courses. Please credit CLASS when you use our materials. We recommend that you include citations indicating the source of material you provide to students whether in written or oral form. Many students note and puzzle over instructors who emphasize the importance of citation in written assignments but do not consistently include citations in their own class presentations. Please do not hesitate to contact us with comments, questions or requests for additional information by emailing or calling us at aio@syr.edu or 443-5412.