

Memo

To: Faculty and Instructors
From: Margaret L. Usdansky, Director, Center for Learning and Student Success
Date: August 24, 2021
Re: Promoting Academic Integrity Amid Continuing Uncertainty

Campuses around the country reported unprecedented increases in academic integrity violations accompanying the pandemic and online assessment. Here at Syracuse, reporting of suspected violations surged from 200-300 cases annually between 2012-13 and 2018-19 to 511 cases in 2019-20 and approximately 450 cases in 2020-21. (The window for reporting extends until two weeks after the Sept. 9 grading deadline for summer courses.) Not only have suspected violations risen, but so has the complexity of cases, with increased reports involving collaboration by two or more students, use of online websites such as Chegg and Course Hero, and students who have a prior violation.

CLASS worked with the Senate Committee on Instruction last spring to make limited changes to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) to help streamline procedures for resolving our growing number of cases. The updated Policy went into effect in May following a vote of support by the Senate. No changes were made to university-wide academic integrity expectations established by the Policy. Additional information about these policy changes is available on the [CLASS website](#).

We are taking additional steps this fall in an effort to support you in promoting academic integrity in the classroom and reporting suspected violations when they occur.

- 1. Updates to suggested integrity syllabus language about academic integrity:**
The [Important Syllabus Reminders](#) message and related website emailed to faculty and instructors by Associate Provost Chris Johnson on August 9 modifies language in the [suggested general syllabus paragraph](#) about academic integrity to draw attention to three sometimes overlooked Policy requirements: a) instructors who seek to penalize a student for a suspected violation must report the case and wait to assign a final course grade until the suspected violation is reviewed and decided; b) students may not drop or withdraw from a course in which they face a suspected violation; and, c) students must abide by instructors' individual course expectations, which may include protection of their intellectual property and sharing of course materials. Please consider

updating your syllabus or Blackboard course site with this updated language. Please also review the suggested syllabus language and steps you need to take if you wish to use [Turnitin](#) or [reserve the option to apply course failure as a sanction for cases upheld as Level 1 violations](#).

2. With generous support from the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the School of Information Studies, and Information Technology Services, **CLASS is piloting a new online, comprehensive, five-module academic integrity education program** for incoming first-year and transfer students. The modules will be imbedded in required courses for new students in each school. We hope to learn from this pilot and revise and expand it in coming years.
3. **Critical academic integrity information for faculty and instructors:** CLASS has created a new one-page summary of academic integrity information for instructors. This document, available on the CLASS website, conveys 10 points to help faculty and instructors take steps to promote academic integrity in their classrooms and navigate instances in which they suspect a violation has occurred. Please review this document early in the semester and email aio@syr.edu, our dedicated email address for academic integrity matters, or me (mlusdans@syr.edu) with questions, concerns or suggestions.
4. **CLASS continues to partner with the [Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence](#) (CTLE) to support you in promoting academic integrity** as you design and deliver your courses. Promoting academic integrity need not require large investments of planning or class time. Small changes in assessment plans and short, strategic mention of academic integrity can be powerful tools. Please consider using materials on the [Promoting Academic Integrity](#) page of the CLASS website, [Reviewing your syllabus for effective online assessment](#) via the Academic Continuity pages in [Answers](#), or contacting CTLE Director Martha Diede (madiede@syr.edu) or me (mlusdans@syr.edu) for additional information and support.