GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
AGENDA FOR THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
April 3, 2024
3:00-4:15 p.m.

https://gmu.zoom.us/j/95498844900?pwd=eXpqQUppcDBSalFsSFBHampOYnpWZz09*

I. **Call to Order**

II. **Approval of the Minutes:** March 20, 2024

III. **Opening Remarks**

IV. **Committee Reports**

    A. Senate Standing Committees
        1.Executive Committee
        2.Academic Policies
          AP.5.3.1 Declaration of a Major
        3.Budget and Resources
        4.Faculty Matters
        5.Nominations
        6.Organization and Operations
          Academic Standards Committee Charge

    B. **Other Committees/Faculty Representatives**
        1.Academic Standards Proposal- Tim Leslie
        2.Faculty Handbook Revisions Committee- Solon Simmons

V. **New Business**

VI. **Announcements**
    A. Interim Provost Walsh
    B. EVP Dickenson

VII. **Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty**

VIII. **Adjournment**

* Note: For security purposes, all attendees must login using any valid Zoom account to join the meeting. Having trouble joining the meeting with the link above?

1. If using GMU Zoom Account (required for all Faculty Senators)
    a. Go to https://gmu.zoom.us
    b. Click on [Sign into Your Account]
    c. Use GMU login credentials to login. (May require 2FA authentication)
    d. Once logged in – click on "JOIN A MEETING"
    e. Click on Zoom link on page 1 of agenda

2. Joining Senate Meeting using an account other than GMU Zoom Account
    a. Go to https://zoom.us
    b. Click on [SIGN IN]
    c. Use credentials for your existing zoom account
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    e. Click on Zoom link on page 1 of agenda

CURRENT LANGUAGE	PROPOSED LANGUAGE
AP.5.3.1 Declaration of Major	**AP 5.3.1: Timely Declaration of Major**
To plan a sound academic program, undergraduates should select a degree and major as soon as it is practical but no later than four weeks before the end of the sophomore year. To declare a major, students should confer with the appropriate advisor in the new major program. Students approaching the recommended point for declaring a major, but still uncertain of their choice, should consult:	To ensure timely progress to graduation, undergraduate students must officially declare a degree-granting major before reaching Junior standing, defined as 60 earned credit hours. Students are responsible for confirming they meet the criteria to declare their intended major. Students who have not declared a degree-granting major after earning 60 credit hours will be unable to register for future terms until they are formally declared in a degree- granting major.
Office of Academic Advising Undergraduate Education Johnson Center, Suite 228 advisor@gmu.edu	Students entering the university with 60 or more credits must declare a degree-granting major within one academic year of matriculation.
Note that all degree components including Mason Core, majors and concentrations must be contained in a single catalog year. See AP.4.2.2 Catalog Requirements for Degrees for exception regarding minors.	Students with 60 or more credits who are academically ineligible to continue in a declared major must declare a different degree-granting major within one semester.
	Students who need guidance in choosing an appropriate major should consult:
	Office of Academic Advising Undergraduate Education Johnson Center, Suite 228 advisor@gmu.edu
	Note: All degree requirements, including Mason Core, majors, and concentrations, must be attributed to the same catalog year. See AP.4.2.2 Catalog Requirements for Degrees for the exception regarding minors. Students receiving scholarships, grants, or benefits from external parties (e.g., Veteran's Administration) may be subject to more stringent requirements and should consult their funding organization for additional information.

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS
ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE PROPOSED CHARGE

Justification:
This function is currently being undertaken by an advisory board selected and staffed by the Provost's Office. Moving the group to be a University Standing Committee with more formal membership will assist in having a comprehensive representation from academic units as well as ensure a comprehensive approach to cultivating an institutional culture committed to academic integrity at Mason.

Charge: The Academic Standards Committee is charged with reviewing the policies and procedures utilized to maintain its academic standards, and to collaborate with Office of Academic Integrity and other relevant institutional groups to make revisions as appropriate. The committee will provide recommendations for educational information/efforts about academic standards for students and faculty, with particular attention given to education for students of differing cultural backgrounds. Finally, they will review historical case data and gauge faculty and student understanding of and thoughts about the Academic Standards case resolution processes to inform efforts listed above.

Proposed Composition:
- Six members of the faculty
  - at least one of whom is a Faculty Senator
  - from at least four different colleges or schools
- Two representatives from the Provost's Office
- One student government representative
- One GAPSA representative

Moving from the Honor Code to Academic Standards

Current Academic Integrity Mission Statement:
The mission of the Office of Academic Integrity is to unite Mason under a joint resolution to uphold our values, to promote ethical behavior and to represent Mason as a place where integrity matters. This mission is rooted in a commitment to create an environment at Mason that is innovative, diverse, entrepreneurial, and accessible, circumventing accidental or intentional violations of the Honor code.

Proposed Academic Standards Mission Statement:
Academic Standards works to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students in order to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment.

Signing Statement

In addition to changing the Honor Statement language, we would also adjust the statement we ask students to sign affirming their adherence.

Current:

Honor Code Statement:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University Community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this Honor Code: Student Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

Proposed:

Academic Standards:

The George Mason University Community is committed to upholding our institution's academic standards with a shared sense of responsibility. I commit to honesty in my academic endeavors, ensuring that my work is original, properly acknowledges the contributions of others, and is result of my individual effort.

Full Statement

Current Honor Code Statement
At George Mason University, Academic Integrity is demonstrated in our work, community, classrooms, and research. We maintain this commitment to high academic standards through the Honor Code. It is an agreement made by all members of our community to not "cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Students sign an agreement to adhere to the Honor Code on their application for admission to Mason and are responsible for being aware of the most current version of the Honor Code
Having an Honor Code allows us to ensure that every student does their part to ensure integrity at Mason.

Proposed Academic Standards Statement

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

Honesty: Accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.

Acknowledgement: Proper credit is provided for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, co-authored pieces, and project reports.

Uniqueness of Work: All submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, free from plagiarism or self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in the university's procedures. Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

Violations of Academic Standards

Common Violations

Examples of violations of our academic standards include, but are not limited to, activities such as:

Unauthorized Assistance / Duplicative Work
1. Attempting to benefit from unauthorized assistance
2. Providing unauthorized assistance
3. Unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence software, generative or otherwise
4. Submitting work that was done by someone else
5. Compensating someone else to do your work and/or academic outsourcing
6. Making an unauthorized record (photo, screenshot, download) and/or posting (such as on a public website) of exams or academic content
7. Submitting work that was taken or purchased from websites (Quizlet, Chegg, Course Hero, etc.)

Fabrication
1. Providing false information to bypass classroom expectations or gain an unfair advantage in completing academic work
2. Providing a false excuse for missing a test, assignment, or class
3. Fabricating or providing false sources, data, information, documents, and/or official correspondence. This could include, but is not limited to, referencing material that does not appear in the indicated source.
4. Fabricating documentation to respond to an accusation related to violations of University policies

Plagiarism
1. Submitting someone else's work as your own, either in whole or in part
2. Misrepresenting authorship (may include leaving author names off a document or giving authorship credit that is not warranted)
3. Failure to attempt to cite sources using required citation standards, including both in-text/in-presentation citations and full references lists*

4. Intentionally or unintentionally using portions of one's old work for new assignments without appropriate attribution and advanced permission from the current course instructor (self-plagiarism)

* If someone clearly attempts to appropriately identify or credit sources used but has errors in citation formats or incorrectly uses quotation marks or other ways of identifying source material, this is a misuse of sources rather than plagiarism.

There are some matters that are currently referred for a formal adjudication for which students are generally not found in violation. These often involve plagiarism concerns that do not include submission of another individual's work or falsifying data/information. Some examples are

- Citation issues, such as incomplete citations, open quotations, or poor paraphrasing (including misuse of sources)
- Conduct that would result in a deduction of no more than 10% of the assignment in question.
  - Evidence of attempts to cite work elsewhere in the assignment but also containing sections where citations are missing or inadequate.
  - A small portion of the assignment includes poor paraphrasing that verges on plagiarism
  - Plagiarism in an early draft that will be revised before a final draft of the assignment is submitted
- Submissions where the professor has directed the student to vary from traditional expectations for a specific educational purpose

Faculty are encouraged to work with students directly to remediate these concerns with educational interventions. Additional resources for these interventions are available in the Academic Standards Office, the Writing Center, the Communication Center, Learning Services, and the Stearns Center.

<u>Sanctioning</u>

Violations of Academic Standards are sanctioned according to a common matrix. Sanctions include both educational and administrative components. Student violations of Academic Standards are sanctioned according to following matrix:

 Formal OAI Referral

Appeals for In Violation Decision or Sanction through OAI, only considered based on new evidence or evidence of procedural error

University Integrity Educational Intervention determined by OAI

Finding	Sanction	Process
Level 1	0% on the assessment and an additional letter grade reduction in the final course grade - University Integrity Educational Intervention (*)	Formal Referral Appeals for In Violation Decision or Severity through Academic Standards Office, only considered based on new evidence or evidence of procedural error
Level 2	- Failure of relevant Course or Assessment (comprehensive exams, dissertation, thesis, etc.) - University Integrity Educational Intervention (*)	University Integrity Educational Intervention determined by Academic Standards Office

* Education Interventions may include online learning modules, visits to the writing center, or other programs to assist the student in understanding and remediating the violation.

Level 2 Offenses

Some referrals are of a more serious nature and merit a more severe institutional response. A referral will be sanctioned according to the Level 2 sanctions if at least one of the following situations is met:

- The violation is **egregious, as determined by the Academic Standards panel.** Examples of egregious violations include
    - A substantial portion of the assignment was copied, plagiarized, and/or cheated on
    - Fabricated evidence (e.g., submitted edited screenshots as evidence for a grade adjustment, fake doctor's notes, internship updates, impersonation, fabricated citations)
    - Fabricated project data
    - Financial compensation in exchange for academic work (e.g., contract cheating)
    - Failure to include a co-author on a manuscript submitted for presentation or publication
    - Multiple separate violations related to the same event (e.g., fabricated data with plagiarism, usage of Artificial Intelligence in addition to plagiarism)
    - The violation had an impact on individuals that were not involved in committing the offense, such as a collaborative project

- The individual has a previous record of violating academic standards.

- The student has sufficient experience within the academic environment that a violation would be considered more serious.
    - Undergraduates that have been at Mason for at least a year and have more than 90 credits of completed coursework
    - Graduate students beyond their 1st semester of Graduate study
    - Any violation committed by a Doctoral (e.g., PhD, JD, EdD) student

Suspension, Dismissal, and Termination

In some cases, violations of Academic Standards rise to the level that merits a pause or removal from studies. Suspension, Dismissal, and Termination decisions are based on the program level of the student, the number of previous offenses, and the severity of the offense. The decision to refer a violation for potential suspension or dismissal consideration is made by Academic Standards staff. Decisions to suspend or dismiss are made by Academic Standards committees after decisions of whether the offense violated the Academic Standards.

For undergraduates, the timing and process of suspensions follow the Academic Suspension process as listed in AP5.2.6. Graduate Students can be suspended or terminated from their program. These outcomes are adjudicated through the matrix below:

Student Program Level	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Undergraduate	Potential Referral for Academic Suspension or Permanent Dismissal	Automatic Referral for Academic Suspension Potential Referral for Permanent Dismissal	Automatic Academic Suspension Automatic Referral for Permanent Dismissal	Automatic Permanent Dismissal
Graduate	Automatic Referral for Academic Suspension Potential Referral for Program Termination	Automatic Academic Suspension Automatic Referral for Programs Termination	Automatic Program Termination	

Appeals

Appeals are only granted based on new evidence or procedural error. After a written appeal, the appeal committee will determine whether (i) a case is granted a new review, (ii) the student receives an amended sanction with reduced severity, or (iii) the original decision is upheld. Appeal decisions are final.

Appendix

Specific case examples found in violation.

	Examples
Level 1 (Resulted in Zero on the assignment or grade reduction in course)	• Submitting identical or adapted answers from "study" websites such as Cliff's Notes, Course Hero, or Chegg for minor assessments • Sending quiz answers via group chat/Discord (not during the test, after test before another group of students takes the test) • Plagiarism assignment involving several drafts where feedback was provided but the student continued to submit plagiarized material • Submitting work turned in by another student from a previous course section • Using a smartphone during an in-person exam • Failure to complete an environment scan during an Honorlock/Respondus exam • Submitting coding assignments with high similarities • Copying large portions of a paper from a website without attribution when the assignment was worth less than 10% of the course grade • Cheating off another individual during an in-person exam or collaborating with another individual during an in-person exam
Level 2 Result in Failure of course	• Accessing online study sites/group chats for major assessments • Submitting coding assignments with a 50% or greater similarity to another student • Submitting AI (Artificial Intelligence) generated work • Using outside sources during Honorlock/Respondus proctored exams • Having another individual feed answers during Honorlock/Respondus proctored exams (person in room giving answers)
Suspension or Dismissal Cases	• Contract cheating on several assignments/across several courses • Multiple violations of the same behavior or escalating behavior • Multiple violations in the same discipline/major program across several courses • Fabricating hours on internship/practicum worksheets • Fabricating official signatures from internships/practicum sites

Faculty Handbook Committee (FHBC): Revisions
Final Proposal: April 3, 2024

CONTEXT: After several years of major changes in the Faculty Handbook, especially around term faculty contracts, the FHBC, in collaboration with the administration, elected to move more deliberately this year, allowing the schools and colleges to incorporate those changes in their bylaws and standing rules. This is the major push on handbook issues this year.

However, one issue that was outstanding from last year's revision proposal concerned the issue of outside employment—the so-called conflict of interest/commitment issue. Last spring, a proposed change in § 2.10.7, University Policies, was not adopted in the Handbook, primarily because the proposed changes referenced a policy that had not yet been approved: University Policy 2227. This policy has since been approved, and the FHBC proposes to pass the following two changes: first to add language to § 2.10.1 stipulating that faculty are responsible for complying with the new university policy; second that the existing language from § 2.10.7 simply be removed. The reason for this is that the language current present in the Handbook adds little not already covered in the policy, and best practice dictates that Handbook language remains as operational, parsimonious, and general as possible.

- **§ 2.10.1 University Policies**

  Motion: Add language in red

  University Policy 4021: Outside Professional Activities and Conflict of Commitment
  https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/outside-professional-activities-and-conflict-of-committment/

§ 2.10.7 Outside Employment and/or Business Interests

Motion: Eliminate the entire following section

2.10.7 Outside Employment and/or Business Interests
The University encourages faculty members to keep abreast of developments in their disciplines and to gain practical experience in their fields. In many instances, consulting work affords excellent opportunities for faculty to improve themselves professionally and to bring added prestige to them and to the University. The University looks favorably on appropriate consulting work by faculty members insofar as it does not interfere with full, proper, and effective performance of faculty duties and responsibilities.

Outside employment and paid consulting cannot exceed the equivalent of one day per work week without written authorization from the collegiate Dean. Faculty may be required to document outside employment to insure compliance with these requirements. Although faculty members are state employees, they consult as private individuals, and the University is not responsible for their work outside the University. When consulting, faculty members should take care to preserve the distinction between projects undertaken through individual initiatives and projects sponsored or officially sanctioned by the University. Outside business interests must not violate the Commonwealth's conflict of interests laws at (http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacodepopularnames/state-and-local-government-conflict-of- interests-act) or the University's Conflict of Interests policy 4001.

Faculty members may use university facilities, equipment, supplies or computer time in their consulting only after obtaining the approval of the collegiate Dean. Faculty must also secure approval of the collegiate Dean before using university resources to support the activities of professional organizations.

CONTEXT: It came to the attention of the FHBC that there was difference of opinion about how to classify instructional term faculty with respect to their highest competed degrees. In particular, there were questions raised about which degrees were suitable for appointments in complex, multidisciplinary spaces, which are increasingly common for various reasons. In order to accommodate recent practice and desired outcomes in some of the schools and colleges, the FHBC voted to change the definite article in the two paragraphs of § 2.1.3 to an indefinite article. This clarifies how ranks and degrees are related.

- **§ 2.1.3 Term Appointments** paragraph 2 & 3:

  Motion: Add language in red, Strike ~~language~~

  Instructional term faculty with ~~the~~ a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Instructional Assistant Professor, Instructional Associate Professor, or Instructional Professor. Research term faculty with the terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, or Research Professor. Clinical term faculty with a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, or Clinical Professor.

  Instructional term faculty without ~~the~~ a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Instructor, Senior Instructor, Master Instructor; or Professor of Practice. Clinical term faculty without the terminal degree may hold the rank of Clinical Instructor, Clinical Senior Instructor, or Clinical Master Instructor. Research term faculty without a terminal degree are Research Staff (Section 2.1.6).