DISCS Academic Integrity Policy

The Department of Information Systems and Computer Science values academic integrity and the highest standards of academic conduct. Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to exert all efforts to avoid any violations to these ideals. This document defines what constitutes academic dishonesty and guidelines to deal with violations to academic integrity policy.

Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) misrepresenting facts, fabricating or doctoring data or results, representing another's work or knowledge as one's own, disrupting or destroying the work of others, and abetting anyone who engages in such practices. Here are some specific examples to guide the students:

- Any instance of copying the language, structure, ideas, and/or thought of another and passing it off as your own constitutes plagiarism.
- Use of sources explicitly provided for the course in question is allowed, but make sure that the textbook author's words, ideas, or algorithms are properly cited.
- Using another person's solutions to programming assignments (whether the solution was prepared by another student or by an instructor) from previous terms is considered cheating.
- Basing your solutions to a current programming assignment on a solution used in previous terms (whether the solution was prepared by another student or by an instructor) is considered cheating.
- Students are free to use programs they wrote themselves in the past and programs (including utilities and library functions) provided or authorized by the instructor. Any use of programs except those the instructor has authorized in preparing any program assignment to be handed in for a grade constitutes cheating.
- Obtaining solutions to homework commercially (e.g., from a tutor, buying from websites, etc.) is cheating.
- Other forms of cheating include giving or receiving any unauthorized aid, assistance, or unfair advantage on any form of academic work. Note that those providing unauthorized assistance are as guilty as those receiving it.
- For assignments that involve written work, any instance of copying or quoting words and ideas and passing it off as your own without proper citation is considered plagiarism. This is most relevant in graduate research work. All sources must be duly acknowledged to avoid dishonesty, inclusive of the smallest detail.

Academic dishonesty may also take the form of carelessness, which, while not intentionally deceptive, has the same outcome and may be treated as academic dishonesty. Therefore, a student is expected to take every precaution in ensuring that his work is not accessed by others. Carelessness is found (but not limited to) in the following situations:

- Leaving your source code in computers in the school’s laboratories.
- Leaving your account open giving another person opportunity to use your account.
- Allowing someone else to use your username and password.
- Leaving written (non-programming) work open for others to copy.

The Department recognizes that in certain situations, students may not be aware that they are committing academic dishonesty because the collaboration and use of other
external sources on certain project and/or homework vary. Unless otherwise specified, however, DISCS requires all work to be the result of individual effort, performed without the help of other individuals or outside sources. This means:

- Students may not work together on any homework unless it is explicitly stated that they may.
- Students may not consult with one another on any programming project unless it is explicitly stated that they may.
- Students may not debug each other’s code, tell each other how to get around problems, or provide each other with fragments of code no matter how small, unless it is explicitly stated that they may.

If a question arises about the type of external materials that may be used or the amount of collaboration that is permitted for a given task, each individual involved is responsible for verifying the rules with the course instructor/s before engaging in collaborative activities, using external materials, or accepting help from others.

The Department recognizes that the intellectual substance of an assignment or an answer on an examination can be contained in very few words, mathematical symbols, or lines of code. Therefore, academic dishonesty is assessed on the basis of substance, not on the basis of quantity of material copied.

Independent of any handout, posting, or discussion, it is the student's responsibility to determine what constitutes academic dishonesty in a particular course. If a question arises, the student must contact the course instructor before proceeding.

Every program/report/project submitted in each course will be accompanied by a Certificate of Authorship (template to be provided by the course instructor) stating that the work has been prepared by the student himself and all external sources have been cited. There is a separate certification for group work.

Source code for submission should include the following certification:

I hereby attest to the truth of the following facts:

- I have not discussed the <programming language used> language code in my program with anyone other than my instructor or the teaching assistants assigned to this course.
- I have not used <programming language used> language code obtained from another student, or any other unauthorized source, either modified or unmodified.
- If any <programming language used> language code or documentation used in my program was obtained from another source, such as a text book or course notes, that has been clearly noted with a proper citation in the comments of my program.

Guidelines for Cases of Academic Dishonesty

1. A student accused of academic dishonesty is shown evidence by the faculty member and given a chance to respond. If the faculty member determines that academic dishonesty has occurred, the faculty member will determine the penalty. If a student does not agree with the faculty decision, he or she may use the Discipline Committee process to seek another opportunity for the case to be reconsidered.
2. Penalties for academic dishonesty can include (but are not limited to) any of the following -- a warning with no reduction in grade, a reduction in grade or grade of F for the coursework in question, a reduction in course grade at the end of the semester, or a grade of F for the entire course. Penalties are entirely at the discretion of the faculty member but should not be conflicting with the rules of the University. The faculty member may seek advice on penalties from the Department Chairman.

3. The Department strongly encourages faculty to send a Report of Academic Dishonesty, including those incidents for which no penalty is assessed, to both the Chairman of the Department and the Discipline Committee.

4. The Discipline Committee may choose to act independently of the Department and impose a penalty that it deems fit for the violation. The action depends upon the severity of the offense and the history of previous offenses.

Academic Integrity Policy Implementation (Effective SY 2012 – 2013)

1. The Academic Integrity Policy appears on the DISCS website. In addition, the syllabus and website of each DISCS course should reference the Academic Integrity Policy and the faculty members should remind students of their obligations.

2. The Academic Integrity Policy states that all work must be performed individually. The course instructor who chooses to allow or encourage collaboration on any aspect of coursework must put in writing and explain the exact nature of collaboration that is allowed.

3. Faculty members should spend time at the start of each semester discussing the document with the students and citing examples of what they would consider to be intellectually dishonest acts.

Sources:

http://www.cleary.edu/Fac_Stu/plagiarism.htm

http://www.cs.purdue.edu/resources/policies/academic/integrity.shtml

http://ei.cs.vt.edu/~dept/koofers.html

http://courses.cs.vt.edu/~cs1044/summer04/projects/pledge.txt