Academic Honesty

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Part of the academic endeavor is a notion that academics (students, faculty, researchers, staff) must follow high standards of honesty in their academic work. One component of academic honesty is that academics must clearly indicate which work (ideas, writing, etc.) is theirs and which belongs to others.

Grinnell's student handbook has included the following statement:

> When you study at the College, you join a conversation among scholars, professors, and students, one that helps sustain both the intellectual community here and the larger world of thinkers, researchers, and writers. The tests you take, the research you do, the writing you submit - all these are ways you participate in this conversation.
>
> The College presumes that your work for any course is your own contribution to that scholarly conversation, and it expects you to take responsibility for that contribution. That is, you should acknowledge what is your own individual work and what you have derived from others so that other members of the community can trace the evolution of your ideas.
> (Grinnell College 2008-2009 Student Handbook, p. 39; Downloaded from `http://www.grinnell.edu/offices/studentaffairs/shb/includes/ACADEMIC%20POLICIES%20AND%20PROCEDURES.pdf` on 19 August 2009.)

However, there is much more to academic honesty than just making sure to cite work you've used. In particular, you are expected to provide a true and accurate representation of your work in experimental endeavors (e.g., it is academically dishonest to invent or modify experimental results). It is also academically dishonest to aid another in an academically dishonest act (e.g., to provide aid on a no-aid exam, to write a paper for another student).

Why do we care so much about academic honesty? As the Student Handbook suggests, the advancement of knowledge requires that a trail of ideas be available so that successes and failures can be traced backward. More importantly, your own personal integrity should require you to be academically honest.

In Fall 2000, I had my first serious encounters with academic dishonesty at Grinnell. Since that time, I have tried to be careful in spelling out what I expect from my students. What follows are some general expectations.

I expect you to follow the highest principles of academic honesty. Among other things, this means that any work you turn in should be your own or should have the work of others clearly documented. However, when you explicitly work as part of a group or team, you need not identify the work of each individual (unless I specify otherwise).

You should never "give away" answers to homework assignments or examinations. You may, however, work together in developing answers to most homework assignments. Except as specified on individual assignments, each student should develop his or her own final version of the assignment. On written assignments, each student should write up an individual version of the assignment and cite the discussion.

On non-group programming assignments, each student should do his or her own programming, although students may help each other with design and debugging. If someone else (e.g., a classmate or class mentor) helps you on an assignment, please include a note in the assignment that indicates that you received such help.

When working on examinations, you should not use other students as resources.

If you have a question as to whether a particular action may violate academic standards, please discuss it with me (preferably before you undertake that action).

Collaborative Work

Most of my teaching involves *collaborative work*. I believe (and have found) that students learn better when they can consult with each other. There are few better ways to learn something than to explain that thing to someone else. In computer science, collaboration is particularly important because you often encounter small problems that a second set of eyes can easily identify and fix and because "real world" computer science is almost always a collaborative activity. For example, *pair programming* is a key aspect of a new software design methodology known as Extreme programming.

In each assignment I give, I do my best to make it clear whether the assignment is intended to be primarily collaborative or primarily individual.

For this course, almost all work will be collaborative.

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