

## The University of Alabama School of Law Honor Code

In order to promote the ideals of honor and integrity germane to the study and practice of law, this Honor Code addresses matters of academic misconduct. Academic misconduct injures the Law School Community, the reputation of the Law School, and the academic integrity of the entire institution.

### **I. Academic Misconduct**

- A. Students at the Law School shall refrain from academic misconduct. Enrollment as a student at the Law School acknowledges this Code's existence and confirms the student's knowledge of the contents and duties of this Code.
- B. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academic matter.
  1. Academic matters include all activities related to coursework, including drafts and other intermediate assignments or exercises, whether submitted to a professor or to other students. Academic matters also include non-classroom activities, such as competition for journal membership, trial and appellate advocacy teams and participation in those activities; participation in externships; and other such activities.
  2. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:
    - a. Using the words or ideas of another without proper attribution.
    - b. Receiving unauthorized assistance or using unauthorized materials or resources during an examination or any academic exercise.
    - c. Violating the rules for an examination or other academic exercise.
    - d. Submitting substantially the same work for academic credit in more than one course or activity for which academic credit is awarded without the express advance permission from the relevant instructors or advisors.
    - e. Falsifying or misrepresenting information related to academic matters, including misrepresenting information to the Council, other Law School faculty or staff, employers, bar examiners, and other academic institutions.

- f. Acting to create an unfair competitive advantage over other students in academic matters.
  - g. Facilitating, permitting, or tolerating any of the above.
- C. This Code covers both intentional and non-intentional academic misconduct, but a conclusion that the misconduct was unintentional will be considered in the Council's assessment and imposition of sanctions.

## **II. The Honor Council**

### A. Composition of the Honor Council

1. The Council shall consist of three faculty/professional staff members and four student members. These members shall compose the voting body of the Council.
2. The Dean shall appoint the faculty/professional staff members to the Council. The SBA shall appoint the four student members. The student members shall be appointed yearly after the installation of the new SBA officers. Students who have previously been sanctioned by the Honor Council or who are on academic probation shall not be eligible for appointment.
3. The Dean shall name one of the appointed faculty/professional staff members as the Council Chair.
4. The SBA shall also appoint a Council Ombudsperson to be available to assist any student with issues reported to the Council, including during any appeal, and to seek advisory information from the Council involving the interpretation of this Code.
5. The names of the Council Chair and the members of the Council must be published in Council materials and any other appropriate forum.

### B. Functions of the Honor Council

1. Education of the Student Body  
The Honor Council will strive to inform and advise students on the best practices to avoid academic misconduct throughout their legal education and in preparation for the practice of law.

2. Resolution of Allegations of Academic Misconduct

The Honor Council will investigate and resolve allegations of academic misconduct as described in Section III.

3. Publication

As necessary to educate the Student Body, the Honor Council may publish redacted summaries of its decisions or advisory interpretations.

**III. Allegations of Academic Misconduct**

A. Reporting

Students, faculty members, and administrators must report suspected academic misconduct in violation of this Code to a member of the Honor Council for investigation and resolution by the Council.

B. Investigation and Resolution

1. The Council shall conduct a thorough investigation of alleged academic misconduct as soon as practicable.
2. Following its investigation, the Council shall deliberate as soon as practicable to determine whether academic misconduct occurred. Such determination shall be by a simple majority vote.
3. Upon finding that academic misconduct occurred, the Council shall impose sanctions in conformance with Section IV.
4. After resolving an allegation of academic misconduct, the Council Chair shall report in writing the Council's decision and any sanctions. This decision shall be provided to the student and filed with the Dean's office. A redacted version of this decision may also be published as described in Section II.B.3.
5. The Council Chair shall maintain complete records of the investigation and resolution of any reported misconduct.

### C. Rights of Students Being Investigated

1. The Chair of the Honor Council shall notify a student under investigation as soon as practicable of the investigation and of the student's rights under this Code.
2. The student under investigation shall have the right to appear before the Council. This right may be waived.
3. The student under investigation may concede that academic misconduct occurred, and this concession shall be considered in the determination of the appropriate sanctions.
4. A student found to have engaged in academic misconduct may appeal the Council's decision or the sanction to the Dean pursuant to the process described in Section V.

## **IV. Sanctions for Academic Misconduct**

Upon finding that academic misconduct occurred, the Council shall impose sanctions. After deliberation, the determination of appropriate sanctions shall be by a simple majority vote.

Sanctions for academic misconduct may include but are not limited to:

- A. **Correction of Academic Work:** The Council may require the student to redo and resubmit work compromised by academic misconduct.
- B. **Letter of Reprimand:** The Council may place a letter of reprimand in the student's law school file.
- C. **A grade of "F":** The Council may recommend that a student receive a grade of "F" in the class in which the academic misconduct occurred.
- D. **Probation:** The Council may place a student on probation for one or more semesters. A student on probation is at risk for permanent dismissal if found to have committed any other academic or nonacademic violation within the probationary period.
- E. **Suspension:** The Council may recommend the Law School suspend a student from classes at the Law School for one or more semesters.

- F. Indefinite Suspension: In particularly egregious cases, the Council may recommend the Law School place a student on Indefinite Suspension. In order to be reinstated at the Law School, the student must appear before the Law School's Readmissions Committee and satisfy any other requirements imposed the Council or the Readmissions Committee.
- G. The Council may impose or recommend any combination of the above-listed sanctions and/or other sanctions commensurate with and appropriate for the misconduct.
- H. Sanctions must reflect any relevant mitigating circumstances, such as the Council's finding that a violation was not intentional or the student's admission of a violation. Sanctions may also reflect any relevant aggravating circumstances, such as lying during or otherwise obstructing the Council's investigation.

**V. Reviewing a Determination of Academic Misconduct**

- A. Within 10 business days of the decision's issuance, the student may appeal the decision or sanctions to the Dean. Failure to timely file an appeal shall render the Council's decision final.
- B. An appeal shall present, in written form, any grounds for reconsideration. Such grounds include the denial of any rights afforded to the student under this Code; the existence of newly-discovered information; or the allegation that the Council's decision or sanctions are unsupported by the weight of the information.
- C. Review of any appeal shall be de novo, allowing for reinvestigation of the facts, affirmance or reversal of the Council's decision, or modification of sanctions.
- D. The Dean may render a final decision on an appeal or order reconsideration by the Council.
- E. If the Dean orders reconsideration by the Honor Council, the Council's decision on reconsideration shall be final.

Approved by the Faculty and the SBA March 2013