Professional Integrity

Undergraduate and graduate students in professional programs must act in accordance with the standards, ethics, and conduct of their profession when fulfilling any of their program requirements (e.g., practicum, externship, internship, research work) and while performing any work or activities related to their profession (e.g., a job or an assistantship).

Exhibiting inappropriate, dishonest, and/or unprofessional behavior according to standards set in and for the student’s professional discipline may be cause for dismissal from a program. The University reserves the right to make final decisions on sanctions and dismissals related to ethical/professional misconduct.

Procedures for Instances of Possible Breach of Professional Integrity

Students, faculty and staff have the duty to report any possible breach of professional integrity to the appropriate authority (i.e., faculty member, program director, Chair, Dean, etc.). When a faculty member (responsible for the course, program, etc.) becomes aware of a possible breach of professional integrity, she or he is responsible for initiating the following procedure:

1. Within 5 business days, the faculty member will investigate the matter thoroughly. This investigation may include, but is not limited to, a review of the student’s file, the use of available resources to analyze the allegation, including possibly speaking with the initiating complainant. It is normative that the faculty member and student have a conversation to discuss the possible breach of professional integrity and to provide the student with an opportunity to present an explanation. If a face to face meeting is not feasible due to schedule or distance, a phone or e-mail conversation will be attempted. All e-mail communication will be directed to the student’s Spalding e-mail address; the Spalding e-mail address is the official address for all communication from Spalding University. (Each attempt should be documented by the faculty member. After the third attempt at contacting the student without response, the process will move forward without this conversation.) If the conversation is held, it is to include:

   a. Faculty member’s rationale for concern of professional misconduct
   b. Student’s response
   c. Clarification of possible consequences

1.1. If the aforementioned conversation is held, within 2 business days of such, the faculty member will write a confirmation that the conversation occurred, with a copy given to the student. If given in person, the student will sign a form confirming the conversation occurred. (Refusal of the student to sign and/or date the note shall not prevent the progression of the decision.) If the meeting is not in person, an email confirmation of the meeting will be sought. This confirmation will only acknowledge that:

   a. the student and faculty spoke of the concern, and
   b. the student had an opportunity to express her/his perspective

1.2. If student contact is attempted three times without response, and no conversation with the student can occur, the faculty member will render a decision about the issue based on all other available information.

2. Faculty Decision:

2.1. If the faculty member determines there has been no incidence of professional misconduct, no further action is required, other than written notification to the student that no action will be taken.
2.2 If the faculty member determines there has been an incidence of professional misconduct, within 5 business days of the conversation with the student (or after the third failed attempt at contacting the student for this conversation), the faculty member will write a formal document articulating her/his findings and sanctions. Copies of this document will be given to the student, in person, with signature verifying receipt or via registered mail with delivery confirmation requested. Further, copies will be disseminated to the student’s program director and the student’s file. A copy will be retained, also, by the faculty member.

3. Sanctions that may be imposed by the responsible faculty member include a formal apology; a resubmission of the assignment, and/or a lowered or failing grade for the course, as may be delineated in each college/school’s printed sanctions policy. More severe sanctions shall be referred immediately to University administration.

4. Each individual School's/College's sanction policy will vary, based upon individual course requirements and/or specific program level standards and may be more stringent in some Schools based upon their external professional accreditation standards and regulatory requirements for the discipline.

NOTE: In instances when a student earns a course grade that prohibits the continuation in a course sequence, the student will not register or attend sequential classes. In instances where the grade results in termination from a program/dismissal from the University, the student will not register or attend any further classes and will be withdrawn from current courses.

5. Copies of all documentation will be retained on file in the School of the responsible faculty member for three years.

6. All disciplinary actions taken will be reported to the Provost and recorded in the student’s official file in the University Registrar’s Office.

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