The SCU Academic Integrity Pledge

Highlights

September 28, 2015

Executive Summary

- Santa Clara University has enhanced its long-time commitment to integrity of all kinds – and to academic integrity in particular -- with a pledge, to be affirmed by students, designed to deepen the understanding of and commitment to honesty and academic integrity throughout the various communities in which students participate.
- The Academic Integrity Pledge states:
  "I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code."
- The Pledge was initially proposed by a group of students who conducted extensive research on honor pledges at other colleges and universities and administered a survey to SCU students.
- The Academic Integrity Pledge was approved in 2014 after discussions with faculty, staff, and students through the University governance processes, culminating in a recommendation to the Provost by the Academic Affairs University Policy Committee.
- The pledge was added to the Student Conduct Code published in the 2014-15 Student Handbook.
- The Pledge will be affirmed in Signing Ceremonies and other Signing Opportunities in the Residential Learning Communities and in Benson Center.

Report on 2014-15 Academic Integrity Pledge Pilot Project

A working group chaired by Phyllis Brown and Matthew Duncan was convened in 2014-15 to pilot the use of the Pledge to design full implementation for academic year 2015-16. Working group members included Ruth Davis, David deCosse, Brian McNelis, Jo-Anne Shibles, and Austin Smith.

In fall, winter, and spring quarters of 2014-15, thirty-five faculty in fifteen departments or programs participated in pilot implementation of the academic integrity pledge. Over 1500 students were enrolled in classes in which faculty explored how they might use the pledge in their classes to enhance the commitment of undergraduate students to the highest standards of academic integrity.
An assessment of the pilot implementation, including surveys and focus groups of faculty and students, is under way. An assessment report is forthcoming.

**Academic Integrity Pledge in Future Years**

**Communication and Affirmation (Signing Ceremonies)**

Each year the academic integrity pledge will be featured by the University President and the Associated Student Body President early in the fall quarter.

The pledge will be described in relevant University publications and websites.

Orientation Leaders and Community Facilitators in Residential Learning Communities will emphasize the value of the pledge and the importance of affirming academic integrity. The Associated Student Government, the Office of Student Life, and other groups will continue to educate the student body about the importance and value of integrity, including academic integrity.

Residential Learning Communities will develop pledge-affirmation ceremonies and other programming associated with communications about the student conduct code and Santa Clara’s culture of academic integrity.

Additional books will be available in other locations. Leaders of clubs and other SCU organizations will be encouraged to accompany students to Benson to sign as a group. Individuals can also sign independently. Outreach will also be extended to continuing students, who have implicitly agreed to SCU’s conduct code and commitment to integrity, including academic integrity. Groups, including, perhaps, the Athletic Department, may opt to have their own books signifying their commitment to academic integrity.

**Other current initiatives related to academic integrity**

In addition to the work associated with the Academic Integrity Pledge, two other significant initiatives are underway to enhance the climate for honesty and academic integrity:

1. A task force appointed by the University Coordinating Committee will review and update the University’s procedures for adjudication of allegations of violation of academic integrity.
2. An informal working group is reviewing tutorials and online modules designed to prevent plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Faculty and students will be invited to pilot these tutorials in coming months.