



Policy on Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. As the following statement indicates, plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and integrity of the Christian community:

Plagiarism injures the community by inhibiting the recognition and cultivation of gifts imparted by the Spirit. Clearly unattributed use of the words and/or ideas of others fails to give appreciative recognition of their gifts. But this illegitimate appropriation of the gifts of others also blocks the recognition and cultivation of the actual gifts of the person engaged in plagiarism.

Plagiarism creates an atmosphere of falsehood in the community's discernment and cultivation of gifts, both within the Christian community and in God's larger creation. Since freedom comes only by way of truth, such falsehood can only result in captivity, and therefore has no place in the Christian community.

On this basis, Central Seminary adheres to the following general requirements for the acknowledgement of sources of academic work. These requirements apply to both print and electronic media.

1. Quotations. Any sentence or phrase that a student uses from another source must be placed in quotation marks or, in the case of longer quotations, clearly indented beyond the regular margin. Any quotation must be accompanied (either within the text or in a note) by a precise indication of the source.
2. Paraphrasing. Any material that is paraphrased or summarized must also be specifically acknowledged in a note or in the text.
3. Ideas. Specific ideas that are borrowed should be acknowledged in a note or in the text, even if the idea has been further elaborated by the student.
4. Bibliography. All the sources consulted in the preparation of an essay or report should be listed in a bibliography.

In addition to plagiarism, the following related practices are also unacceptable compromises of the truth requisite to a free community:

1. Multiple submission. Failure to obtain prior written permission of the relevant instructors to submit work which has been submitted in identical or similar form in fulfillment of any other academic requirement at any institution.
2. False citation. The deliberate attribution to, or citation of, a source from which the material in question was not, in fact, obtained.
3. Submission of work done by someone else, either with or without that person's knowledge. Neither ignorance of the regulations concerning academic violations nor personal extenuating circumstances are an adequate defense against charges of plagiarism. The Seminary's provisions for "due process" apply in cases of alleged plagiarism.

[The italicized statements above are adapted and used by permission of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, based upon a document adapted by LTSP, with permission, from "Princeton University Rights, Rules and Responsibilities," 1990 Edition. Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.]

Occurrences of plagiarism shall be considered "documented" when the instructor is able to produce documentary evidence that plagiarism has occurred, and when the instructor has reason to believe that the plagiarism was motivated by a deliberate attempt to receive credit for ideas or work not the student's own.

Procedures for Addressing Plagiarism and Related Academic Dishonesty

When a student is suspected of plagiarism or related cases of academic dishonesty, and sufficient proof exists to substantiate the suspicion, the situation should be reported to the Provost. If the incident involved a student and course at a distance site, the problem might be first reported to the site director, in which case the site director should report the situation to the Provost.

If the case involves a student enrolled in a Shawnee or online course, the following procedures will be followed:

1. If this is the first report of such an infraction to the Provost, then:
 - a. The Provost will consult with the professor making the report to ascertain the details of the infraction.
 - b. Depending upon the circumstances surrounding the infraction, the Provost may consult with other professors and/or pertinent administrators and staff for additional information regarding the situation and/or student.
 - c. A meeting will be scheduled that will include the Provost, the faculty member reporting the infraction, the student, and possibly other persons as the situation warrants.
 - d. If the online student cannot be physically present for the meeting, electronic means will be used. This might include video conferencing or similar technologies.
 - e. The student will be confronted with the infraction and given an opportunity to explain his or her side of the story.
 - f. If the Provost and professor making the report are satisfied that plagiarism or academic dishonesty has occurred and that a first-time infraction penalty is appropriate to the case, the Provost will give verbal instruction to the student regarding the infraction, necessary steps to correct the misconduct, warning regarding the penalties that might be imposed should another such infraction occur, and a temporary notation will be made in the student's record. If the student complies with required remediation and no further such incident occurs, the notation will be removed at graduation.
 - g. If the Provost and professor making the report conclude that the infraction is too serious for a first-time infraction penalty, the case may be subjected immediately to second or subsequent report procedures.
2. If this is a second or subsequent report of such an infraction or if the infraction is considered egregious, then:
 - a. The Provost will consult with the professor making the report to ascertain the details of the infraction.

- b. Depending upon the circumstances surrounding the infraction, the Provost may consult with the seminary counselor, other professors, and/or pertinent administrators and staff for additional information regarding the situation and/or student.
- c. The Provost will compose a discipline committee to investigate the infraction. The committee will be composed of the Provost, the professor making the report, and two other professors (if possible the director of the educational program in which the student is concentrating and the director of language development for that language program).
- d. The student concerned will appear before the committee to respond to the allegation. If the online student cannot be physically present for the meeting, electronic means will be used. This might include video conferencing or similar technologies.
- e. The committee, by majority vote, has the authority to decide whether or not sufficient grounds exist to determine that a pattern or an egregious incident of plagiarism or academic dishonesty has occurred and that a penalty is appropriate to the case. If the committee decides that a penalty is appropriate, the committee may recommend to the Provost either (1) mandatory failure and repetition of the course, (2) official censure, (3) official censure with required remedial action by the student as determined by the committee, (4) probation for a period of time determined by the committee or (5) dismissal from the seminary.
- f. In the event that dismissal should be recommended, the Provost shall take the recommendation to the president, who shall have the final decision regarding the matter.
- g. Decisions of the committee will be officially communicated to the student by the Provost and a copy of the action will go into the student's record.

If the case involves a student enrolled at a distance site, the following procedures will be followed:

1. If this is the first report of such an infraction to the Provost, then:
 - a. The Provost will request that the site director be in charge of the investigation and at each stage report findings to the Provost. The site director should consult with the professor making the report to ascertain the details of the infraction.
 - b. Depending upon the circumstances surrounding the infraction, the site director may consult with a designated seminary counselor on site, a designated Shawnee seminary counselor, other professors, and/or pertinent administrators and staff for additional information regarding the situation and/or student.
 - c. A meeting will be scheduled that will include the site director, the faculty member reporting the infraction, the student, and possibly other persons as the situation warrants.
 - d. The student will be confronted with the infraction and given an opportunity to explain his or her side of the story.
 - e. If the site director and professor making the report are satisfied that plagiarism or academic dishonesty has occurred and that a first-time infraction penalty is appropriate to the case, the site director will give verbal instruction to the student regarding the infraction, necessary steps to correct the misconduct, and warning regarding the penalties that might be imposed should another such infraction occur. This should be

reported to the Provost, who will place a temporary notation in the student's record. The site director should keep the Provost informed of the student's progress in compliance with required remediation. If the student complies with required remediation and no further such incident occurs, the notation will be removed at graduation.

- f. If the Provost, the site director and professor making the report conclude that the infraction is too serious for a first-time infraction penalty, the case may be subjected immediately to second or subsequent report procedures.
2. If this is a second or subsequent report of such an infraction or if the infraction is considered egregious, then:
- a. The Provost will request that the site director be in charge of the investigation and at each stage report findings to the Provost. The site director should consult with the professor making the report to ascertain the details of the infraction.
 - b. Depending upon the circumstances surrounding the infraction, the site director may consult with a seminary designated counselor on site, a designated Shawnee seminary counselor, other professors, and/or pertinent administrators and staff for additional information regarding the situation and/or student.
 - c. The site director, in consultation with the Provost, will compose a discipline committee to investigate the infraction. The committee will be composed of the site director, the professor making the report, a designated seminary counselor on site (or site director of student life), and one other professor.
 - d. The student concerned will appear before the committee to respond to the allegation.
 - e. The committee, by majority vote, has the authority to decide whether or not sufficient grounds exist to determine that a pattern or an egregious incident of plagiarism or academic dishonesty has occurred and that a penalty is appropriate to the case. If the committee decides that a penalty is appropriate, the committee may recommend to the Provost, through the site director, either (1) mandatory failure and repetition of the course, (2) official censure, (3) official censure with required remedial action by the student as determined by the committee, (4) probation for a period of time determined by the committee or (5) dismissal from the seminary.
 - f. In the event that dismissal should be recommended, the Provost shall take the recommendation to the president, who shall have the final decision regarding the matter.
 - g. Decisions of the committee will be officially communicated to the student by the Provost and a copy of the action will go into the student's record.

Should a student who has been subjected to disciplinary action wish to appeal a decision reached by a discipline committee, the following procedure will be followed:

- a. The student should submit a letter to the seminary president requesting reconsideration of the committee's decision and explaining in detail why the matter should be reviewed.
- b. The president might either determine that the request has no merit and deny the request for reconsideration or that it does have merit and should be reviewed.

- c. Should the president determine that the request does have merit, then the president would constitute a discipline review committee consisting of a faculty member, a current student, a seminary staff member, and other persons deemed appropriate and necessary to the case. Generally, effort would be made to avoid including on this committee persons who had served on the original discipline committee. The president would at that time appoint one member of the committee to serve as chairperson, who would have responsibility for guiding the work of the committee and reporting its actions and decisions to the president.
- d. After gathering necessary information about the case, the review committee might require that the student appear before it to respond to additional questions as the case might require.
- e. After completing its deliberations, the discipline review committee might recommend to the president that either (1) the decision of the original discipline committee be upheld, (2) the decision be overturned and the case dismissed, (3) the decision be overturned and a new committee be formed to reconsider the case, or (4) the decision of the original discipline committee be upheld but the penalty that was imposed be altered.
- f. The president shall meet with the faculty senate in executive session for its counsel regarding the discipline review committee's recommendations.
- g. The president shall have the final decision regarding actions that might be taken based on the discipline review committee's recommendation.
- h. The president's decision will be officially communicated to the student by the president and a copy of the action will go into the student's record.