Policy on Academic Integrity

Computer Science & Computer Engineering students are required to adhere to University guidelines for academic integrity. These guidelines are outlined in the *CSUS University Policy Manual on Academic Honesty*, available at https://www.csus.edu/umanual/student/stu-100.htm.

Cheating in CSc/CpE courses

In any academic setting, taking credit for work that is not one's own is considered cheating. Computer Science & Computer Engineering courses often involve materials that are easily copied or transmitted electronically (such as computer files) which can facilitate plagiarism.

The decision as to whether a student has cheated rests with the instructor, and can take into consideration a variety of factors including the nature of the assignment, the material turned in, and the behavior of the student(s). While it is impossible to give a complete and exact definition of cheating, departmental guidelines may help in evaluating individual cases. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

- Turning in someone else's work as one's own, such as code, pseudocode, diagrams, documents, etc., with or without the original author's knowledge.
- Allowing others to turn in one's work as their own.
- Several people writing one program, and submitting multiple copies.
- Making changes to plagiarized code in an attempt to cover-up an offense.
- Submitting code written by someone else, whether or not they are in the class.
- Using any part of someone else's work without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Stealing any portion of an exam or key from an instructor, physically or electronically.
- Deleting or modifying someone else's computer file(s).
- Faking output in an attempt to make an incorrect program appear correct.

Examples of situations that may lead an instructor to suspect cheating include:

- Two or more assignments that appear unusually similar (in whole or in part), or in which one can be converted to the other through some transformation.
- When a student is unable to explain either the intricacies of his/her solution, or the techniques used to generate that solution.

Avoiding Cheating

Students can avoid being involved in a cheating incident by understanding what constitutes cheating, and using common sense in avoiding such behaviors. Examples of ways in which students are expected to protect themselves include:

- *Avoid excessive collaboration on individual assignments.* A healthy amount of discussion between students is a valuable part of learning. But it is not acceptable to collaborate in developing the details of a solution, unless the assignment is a team project.
- *Do not give answers to other students.* Giving fellow students answers they were supposed to determine on their own is cheating. Doing so also deprives them of the learning experience of reaching a solution through their own efforts.
- *Keep all printouts, diskettes, notes, etc. secure*, so that other students will not find them and use your solutions in their work. This also includes shared network drives, printer queues, temporary directories in lab workstations, etc.

- *Limit discussion to high-level concepts.* Discussing concepts, assignment requirements, syntax errors, coding tricks, or programming environments is generally encouraged. When discussion involves specific code or solutions, it may cross the line into cheating.
- *Always stop and think before copying or emailing <u>any</u> source code.*
- *Ask your instructor if you are unsure.* Students who are unsure whether their activities might be considered cheating are encouraged to consult with their instructor. Openness can make a cheating instance considerably less flagrant than if it were covered-up.

Consequences of Cheating

When an instructor suspects that cheating has occurred, a meeting with the student(s) is arranged, if possible. After reviewing the evidence and the students' explanation, the instructor will make a determination as to whether cheating has occurred, the flagrancy of the offense, and sanctions to impose. The severity of possible sanctions varies widely. Examples of departmental sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- Lowered grade for the assignment, possibly as low as a 0 or a negative score.
- Lowered grade for the course, possibly as low as an F.
- Expulsion from the course, or being disallowed from attending the course.
- Denial of admission to the National Computer Science Honor Society.
- Denial of change of major from pre-CSc/CpE to full major status.
- Removal of CSc/CpE major status.

In addition, per standard University procedure, the incident will be reported to the Vice President for Student Affairs, who will investigate the incident, place appropriate documentation in the student's file, and consider imposing additional University-wide sanction(s). Sanctions may include any of the departmental sanctions listed above, as well as additional sanctions. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Notice of cheating placed in student record.
- Academic probation.
- Academic suspension, with period of time depending on the circumstances.
- Expulsion from CSUS.

The student will have an opportunity to defend his or her case to an independent adjudicating body. A copy of the report will be kept in the departmental file. If the student is found innocent, he/she may request that the report be removed from the departmental file.

Additional Course-Specific Policies

In addition to the policies outlined in this document, there may be specific policies or guidelines for certain courses. In this case, the instructor should provide a supplemental document relating to academic honesty in his/her class. An instructor may choose to require their students to submit a signed verification that they have read and understand this document, and/or any related course-specific supplements.