



WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS SEMESTER: The Status of Academic Integrity and Cura Personalis

What follows is a letter from Dr. Jacob Rieff, Academic Integrity Director and Teaching Associate Professor. In it, he provides some insights about what he's seeing as emerging issues related to academic integrity on campus as well as steps we can take—even this semester—to help alleviate pressure points and concerns.

Evolving Thoughts About Academic Integrity, Student Formation, and Truthfulness

There's an intimate link between "caring for the whole person" (cura personalis) and academic integrity. Pope Leo's recent words on Catholic education celebrate the integral development and relational approach that pervades the best of this tradition: "Christian education is a collective endeavour: no one educates alone. The educational community is a 'we' where teachers, students, families, administrative and service staff, pastors and civil society converge to generate life. This 'we' prevents water from stagnating in the swamp of 'it has always been done this way' and forces it to flow, to nourish, to irrigate. The foundation remains the same: the person, image of God (Gen 1:26), capable of truth and relationship" (New Maps of Hope 3.1).

Our call at a Catholic, Jesuit university is to educate not only for information transfer or occupational skills but to invite the whole person into education, body and soul. That means that how we walk with and communicate with our students as fellow members of our academic community matters in and of itself, not only as a means for "covering the material."

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Likewise, "academic integrity," rather than being "a lack of cheating," is really about **the habit of truthfulness and openness that allows trust to flourish among the members of our academic community**—students, staff, and faculty—as whole persons, together. When the community

practices integrity together, we can rely on one another and jointly walk the path of education with confidence.

When a student's self-discipline around academic integrity (i.e., conveying honestly in their academic work what they know to be true about that work to others) falters, the Academic Integrity Council is standing by to help members of our academic community reclaim that confidence of walking together in truthfulness. Instructors can help us do that work in their course planning, their ways of communicating with our students, and preparing themselves through their own learning.

What You Can Do to Help

1. The Academic Integrity Council has seen several cases in different colleges that have been complicated by a lack of clarity about the ability of and extent to which students can collaborate in their academic work. Part of our contribution as instructors to academic integrity is to **make explicit on syllabi, in class time, and on assignment sheets** what expectations are, not only for the content to be submitted but for the various ways students can talk together and/or compose together as they work.
2. We have also seen several situations in which allegations of cheating or plagiarism were dismissed that may well have been clarified before an allegation was reported by instructors and students sitting down together in person to discuss a situation. While this can be a difficult and uncomfortable moment, the **AIC encourages you to speak with your student, face to face if possible**, to learn the context of what you've noticed and to discern as best you can whether the misrepresentation is real or if there is another readily plausible explanation. Reporting and investigating allegations of academic misconduct proceed more smoothly when students are prepared for the process by personal discussion beforehand; sometimes these discussions lead to clarity that prevents the need to report at all.
 - To make such conversations as fruitful as they can be, you can familiarize yourself with the [Honor Code's definitions of academic misconduct and the AIC's policies and procedures](#) (under the dropdown menus) if you are not already familiar with them.
3. Remind your students as we head toward finals what academic integrity is (the virtue that when practiced enables us all to trust one another as a community), why you think it matters for them, and things to be watching for in the context of your own courses and the summative assessments headed their way.
4. If academic integrity is about the whole academic community being as transparent and honest as possible with one another about our academic work, making clear to one another when we

are employing generative software systems (“artificial intelligence,” or AI) to communicate is incumbent upon each of us. If instructors and administrators expect students to be open and honest about the use of such systems, we too must be open and honest whenever we mediate our communication with one another by the use of generative software systems.

5. To help us navigate the ongoing context of generative software’s (“artificial intelligence’s,” or AI’s) presence in our lives with care and clarity, you can read the doctrinal Note *Antiqua et nova* on this issue, which includes a section specifically on education (§ 77-84). Putting the integral development of our students first in all things calls for thinking about the larger Context of our pedagogy and praxis, and this document is an excellent support for thinking through education based in an integral humanism that has been praised by secular tech critics in addition to Christian theologians.
6. We can practice cura personalis by inviting personal connections with our students regularly, by doing the moment-to-moment connecting so many of us already do, and also reminding students about the possibility of attending office hours, holding personal conferences when possible to discuss academic work one-on-one, structuring personal reflection into coursework in line with the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in all disciplines, etc. **The more we know one another, the readier we can commit to one another as a community.**
 - We can also start to lean into and use the language of Marquette’s new [Teaching Quality Framework](#), infused by three main Jesuit values, including cura personalis, in our own approaches to teaching and in conversation with students.
7. Reach out to Academic Integrity Director Jacob Riyeff (jacob.riyeff@marquette.edu) if you have questions about academic integrity expectations at Marquette or if you have suggestions for programming or ways the AIC can help the campus community.

Pope Leo said in his remarks on education in October that “**to educate is an act of hope**” (3.2), and I see many signs of hope around our campus in all the people gathered here on our little patch of the Earth in Milwaukee. Let us continue to care for one another and continue to grow in the hope our time together in this life affords us.

+AMDG —Jacob Riyeff



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