SON OP  30.408 - Responding to Suspected Plagiarism or Other Academic Misconduct in an Online Course Policy

PURPOSE  The purpose of the School of Nursing Responding to Suspected Plagiarism or Other Academic Misconduct in Online Courses Policy is to establish a protocol for faculty to investigate and manage suspected student academic misconduct in an online course.

REVIEW  The OP will be reviewed biennially by September 1 of each even numbered year (ENY) by the applicable Associate Dean/Department Chair, with recommendations for revisions forwarded to the Dean of the School of Nursing.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. If a Course Facilitator has a concern that a student may have committed academic misconduct as outlined in the TTUHSC Code of Academic Misconduct (See TTUHSC Institutional Student Handbook Student Code, Part II, D. Misconduct, (19) Academic Misconduct) in an online course, the Course Facilitator shall conduct an initial investigation by reviewing all relevant materials and documenting any findings to substantiate any allegation of misconduct.

2. If the investigation provides support for an alleged violation of misconduct per TTUHSC Code of Conduct guidelines the Course Facilitator shall contact Lead Faculty of the Course no later than the next business day to discuss the matter and review relevant materials. This investigation should include plagiarism software results, redacted copy of another student’s submission and may involve section faculty, lead faculty, and/or student advisor.

3. The Lead Faculty will meet with the Course Facilitator within 24 hours of notice. If on review of the materials and documentation in discussion with the faculty agree that resolution cannot be made at the faculty level and further follow-up with the student is warranted, then the Course Facilitator will be referred the matter to the Program Director by the next business day.

4. The Program Director will meet with the Course Facilitator and Lead Faculty by the next business day. If on review of the materials and documentation in discussion with the Course Facilitator and Lead Faculty it is believed that a reasonable person would believe academic misconduct occurred a conference call will be requested with the student as soon as it can be arranged with all parties. Notice of the request for a conference call shall be made through course email and the e-raider Outlook with a deliver and read receipt attached.

5. The Program Director will request Student Affair’s staff and Student Advisor to access the student’s file prior to the conference call to look at relevant records to determine if any prior notices or warnings of academic misconduct have been given previously to the student. If such notices or warnings are noted the Program Director, Lead Faculty and Course Facilitator will determine next course of action. The Department Chair and the Academic Conduct Officer may be notified of the outstanding situation and consulted.
6. If Faculty and the Program Director determine a conference call should be conducted to further explore and investigate, the call will be directed by the Program Director in a respectful manner and the Course Facilitator or Lead Faculty or Student Advisor may interject as deemed appropriate to facilitate the conversation. The objective is to gather as much information on what the student knows and understands. The conference call is not the time for faculty to make a decision on resolution of the suspected misconduct. If the suspicion of misconduct is deemed to have been sufficiently validated either by student admission and/or facts collected during the conversation the student should be informed that a decision will be made on the outcome of the assignment and/or course grade. The student should also be made aware that a possible complaint may be filed after discussion with the Department Chair and Academic Conduct Officer. The student needs to be directed to the TTUHSC and School of Nursing Student Handbook.

7. Document the conversation.

8. A letter of sanction may be placed in the student file if the Lead Faculty, Course Facilitator and Program Director determine the student should have a formal warning of suspected plagiarism filed. The letter of sanction will be documented by the Course Facilitator. The Program Director will send the letter of sanction to the Department Chair for review. After review and any revisions made to the document, the Department Chair will send to the Academic Conduct Officer.

9. If a formal Complaint of Academic Misconduct is being considered by the Course Facilitator it is requested that the faculty discuss the complaint with the Program Director and Department Chair before filing the complaint to clarify procedural guidelines and possible sanctions. See TTUHSC Institutional Student Handbook Student Code, Part II, F. Disciplinary Procedures, (3) Filing Complaint and TTUHSC School of Nursing Student Handbook, section on Academic Misconduct. (Number 9 constitutes following another policy – TTUHSC Code of Conduct: Policy and Procedure)