



Title: Honor Code System

Policy No.: SAP 1.11

Date: 6/26/08 Rev.: 6/28/10

Areas Affected: All BSMCON Faculty & Students

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I. Statement of Philosophy

The Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing believes that integrity is essential to the practice of nursing and the pursuit of education. The Honor System is a code of internal ethics designed to assure the preservation of personal and group integrity, and to provide an opportunity for self-government and self discipline. Nothing contained in the Honor System Constitution shall be deemed to create any basis for a cause of action in any form outside the internal procedures established by the Honor System Constitution. Each student must assume responsibility for acting honorably in all situations and upholding the policies, rules, and regulations of the Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing. Lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and failure to report an honor offense are considered violations of the Honor System, for which a student may be the subject of corrective measures, up to expulsion.

II. The Honor Pledge

Acceptance of admission to Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing also constitutes acceptance of the Honor System. In addition, the following short Honor Pledge statement will be written or stamped on all graded work and signed by the student:

“I have neither given nor received aid, other than acknowledged, on this assignment or test, nor have I seen anyone else do so.”

III. Violations of the Honor Code

Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Honor Code at all times during which they are engaged in their studies or clinical work at Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing (BSMCON) or representing BSMCON.

At BSMCON there are five categories of honor violations:

A. **Lying** –Making any oral or written statement which the individual knows, or should have known, to be untrue.

Examples of lying include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

1. Making a false statement to an instructor or other BSMCON employee.
2. Falsifying evidence or testifying falsely in an Honor proceeding.
3. Altering records or other academic materials.

B. **Cheating** –Giving or receiving, offering or soliciting information on any test or other assignment, not authorized by the instructor.

Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

1. Copying from another student’s paper.

Reference Policy # _____

Approved by:

Signature

Assistant Dean Student Services
Provost/VP

Title

Date

Approval History:

Committees and Dates:

Assistant Dean of Students – 6/10

Student Government Organization- 6/10

Policy Committee – 6/10

2. Use during a test of any unauthorized materials.
 3. Working with another student on any test, take home quiz, nursing care plan, computer or laboratory work, or any other assignment, when the instructor has expected independent and unaided effort. Such collaboration includes the exchange of material or ideas verbally or otherwise.
 4. Submitting, without prior permission, the same care plan or academic work that has been previously submitted in identical or similar form.
 5. Buying, selling, possessing, soliciting, transmitting, or using a test or any material purported to be the unreleased contents of a future examination.
 6. Bribery or solicitation of any person to obtain examination information.
 7. Substitution for another person during an examination.
- C. **Stealing** - Taking or attempting to take, without right or permission. Examples of stealing include, but are not limited to, the following actions:
1. Removing belongings from another's mailbox, locker or room.
 2. Taking library books or journals, exams, computer programs, or any other academic materials.
 3. Destroying, hiding, or otherwise making unavailable for common use, library, computer, or other reference materials.
- D. **Plagiarism** –To steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own, without crediting the source.
Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following actions:
1. Quoting word for word from a source without using quotation marks, footnotes, or bibliographic citation.
 2. Summarizing and paraphrasing ideas without acknowledging the source.
 3. Submitting work for credit which has not been written by the student.
- E. **Failure to Report** - When behavior suspicious of an Honor Code violation is not brought to the attention of Honor Council officials for investigation.

IV. Honor Council Organization

The Honor Council is the judicial body organized for the purpose of hearing, by way of committees, specific cases brought forth by a student or faculty member regarding a possible violation of the Honor Code. The Honor Council presumes the accused student to be innocent until proven otherwise. The Honor Council Advisor, the Honor Council Sponsor, and any alternates who are appointed by the Dean, are required to be employees of BSMCON.

V. Reporting Violations of the Honor Code

- A. **Obligation to Report.** Each student and faculty member is responsible for reporting any suspected Honor Code violation to the Honor Council Advisor within 10 school days of the date on which he or she has knowledge of the violation, unless there are unusual circumstances.
- B. **Meeting.** The Honor Council Advisor, Honor Council Sponsor, and Honor Council Chairperson shall as soon as practicable thereafter meet with the individual who reported the violation to obtain any required clarification and then meet with the accused student. In the meeting with the accused student, the Honor Council Advisor and Honor Chair shall explain the substance of the report and invite the student to explain his or her version of the matter. If the Honor Council Advisor, Sponsor, and Honor Chair believe that a violation may have occurred, the matter shall be referred to the Honor Council for a hearing. If it is determined that the accused has not violated the Honor Code, and there is no appeal by the accused or the accuser, the case shall be finalized. All documents related to the case shall be destroyed.

VI. Hearing

- A. The Honor Council Hearing Committee will be composed of five members, consisting of the Honor Council Chair, three other Honor Council members, and the President of the Student Government Organization (SGO), none of whom is directly involved in the case.
- B. Written notice of the hearing date, time, and location shall be sent to the accused student.
- C. The hearing is in the nature of an administrative hearing in which the rules of evidence and the procedures used in a court of law are not applicable.
- D. A record (stenographic, tape-recorded or other means) will be made of the hearing.
- E. The hearing shall be closed to the public and may not be attended by any person who is not one of the following: an Honor Council member, the Honor Council Advisor, the SGO President, an accused student, another student who accompanies the accused and is in good standing, the accuser(s), or a witness who is called to testify.
- F. Each individual who offers testimony agrees to be truthful and may, at the discretion of the Honor Council Chair, be asked to take an appropriate oath of truthfulness.
- G. The accused and the accuser(s) are invited to be present throughout the hearing of evidence, but not during the deliberations of the Honor Council Hearing Committee.
- H. The accused may be accompanied and assisted by a fellow student who is in good standing; provided, however, only the accused may address the Honor Council or testify during the hearing; the accused may not bring an attorney to the case hearing.
- I. Any witness may be present during his or her testimony only, unless the witness' testimony is received by another means.
- J. Following an introductory statement by the Chair, testimony is given in the following order, unless the Chair decides otherwise in order to accommodate the schedules of those involved or for another good reason:
 1. accuser(s)
 2. witness(es) for the accuser(s)
 3. accused
 4. witness(es) for the accused
 5. rebuttal - opportunity for accuser(s), accused, or Presenters to question any witness who has testified or to question a new witness
 6. recall - opportunity of Hearing Committee to recall any witness
 7. closing statements of accuser(s) and accused
- K. The Honor Council members will have the right to participate in the questioning of any witness.
- L. Deliberations of the Honor Council shall proceed in private in two phases: first, consideration and determination of violation; and second, if a violation is found, consideration and determination of the appropriate corrective measure(s) to be imposed.
- M. The Honor Council shall determine by at least a three-fifths majority (three of the five members) that the accused violated the Honor Code by clear and convincing evidence -- otherwise the accused is exonerated. Clear and convincing evidence is evidence that produces in a person's mind a firm belief or conviction as to the matter at issue. Clear and convincing evidence involves a greater deal of persuasion than is necessary to meet the preponderance of the evidence standard. The clear and convincing standard does not require proof to an absolute certainty or beyond a reasonable doubt.
- N. No prior honor violation may be considered by the Honor Council when making a determination as to whether a violation occurred in this instance. However, prior honor

violation(s) may be considered in deciding upon the appropriate corrective measure(s) to be imposed.

- O. The Honor Council Sponsor may assist the Honor Council in preparing the written decision.
- P. The accused and the Honor Council Advisor shall receive a copy of the written decision of the Honor Council Hearing Committee within 5 school days after conclusion of its deliberations. The accuser(s) will be informed of the result by the Honor Council Advisor or Honor Council Sponsor.
- Q. Failure of the accused student to attend a scheduled hearing shall not prevent the Honor Council from conducting the hearing and making a decision.

VII. Corrective Measures

- A. If the accused is found culpable of an Honor Code violation, the Honor Council members will recommend the appropriate corrective measure(s) based on the nature and severity of the current violation and the history of any prior violations. In deciding upon one or more corrective measures, the Honor Council may consult with the Honor Council Sponsor, but must itself decide by a simple majority vote upon any corrective measure(s) to be imposed. The Honor Council Sponsor and Dean of the College reserve the right to dispute the suggested corrective measure(s) and request that the Honor Council reconvene and reconsider the appropriate corrective measure(s).
- B. The Honor Council may impose one or more corrective measures. Although the Honor Council can consider and assign other sanctions, the recommended sanctions for a student's first violation is a '0' for the assigned course work and placement on Honor Probation. Any student found guilty of an Honor Code violation shall be subject to one or more of the following corrective measures:
 - 1. loss of credit for course work or the course;
 - 2. Honor Probation- a written warning that indicates that a subsequent determination of an Honor Code violation may result in a sanction of suspension and/or expulsion;
 - 3. restitution to pay for the repair or replacement of material items;
 - 4. volunteer or community service for a specified number of hours;
 - 5. a monetary fine to be paid to the Laura Murphy Fund;
 - 6. suspension for one or more semesters (including the current semester);
 - 7. expulsion or permanent dismissal, in which case the student is not eligible to return to the College;
 - 8. other corrective measures as deemed appropriate by the Honor Council and Honor Council Sponsor.
- C. The Honor Council Sponsor or Honor Council Advisor shall provide the accused student with written notification of the corrective measure(s) imposed within 5 school days after the conclusion of the Honor Council's deliberations.
- D. In any hearing resulting in a finding of violation, the corrective measure(s) imposed is entered into the student's official record. Corrective measures, other than suspension and expulsion, will be removed from the record upon the student's graduation or permanent departure from BSMCON. Suspension or expulsion will remain on the student's permanent record.

VIII. Appeal Procedures

- A. The student has the rights of appeal described above and in this section.
- B. The finding of violation or the imposition of corrective measure(s) may be appealed only where the accused student asserts and substantiates one or more of the following:

1. The findings of a violation are unsupported by credible evidence in view of the entire record;
 2. There was substantial departure from the required procedures, which departure materially affected the fairness or reliability of the decision-making process;
 3. There is previously unavailable evidence which, if proven accurate, would substantially alter the finding of violation or the appropriateness of the corrective measure(s) imposed; or
 4. The corrective measure(s) imposed is disproportionate to the gravity of the violation.
- C. On any appeal, copies of the student's written statement of appeal, explaining the reasons therefore and describing the particular relief requested, shall be submitted both to the Dean and to the Honor Council Advisor or Sponsor no later than 4:00 p.m. on the fifth school day after the date of the decision from which an appeal is taken. Failure to timely file an appeal, or to assert as the basis for appeal one or more of the grounds stated in Section (VIII) (B) above, shall constitute a waiver of the right to appeal.
- D. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Dean shall furnish a copy to the Honor Council and request that a written response be submitted within 5 school days, with a copy of the response provided to the student. The Honor Council Sponsor may assist in the preparation of the committee's written response.
- E. The Dean may in his or her discretion elect to schedule a meeting with the student and any other participants in the process, or the Dean may decide the appeal based on the record including the student's statement of appeal and the response. In any meeting, the Dean may be accompanied by another administrator or faculty member.
- F. The Dean may request additional information and may remand the case to the Honor Council with instructions for further proceedings.
- G. The Dean's decision will be in writing and shall be final.

IX. Honor Council Records

- A. All materials used as evidence for a hearing, any written and taped recordings of the hearing, and the ultimate decision are kept in the College office in a locked file. No one has access to these records except members of the Honor Council, the Dean, the Honor Council Advisor, and the Honor Council Sponsor. The Honor Council Advisor, Honor Council Sponsor, or Dean must be present before student access to these materials is permitted.
- B. If a student is involved in an Honor Council proceeding which results in a final decision of violation, past records of the student may then be considered in determining the corrective measure(s) to be imposed.
- C. Hearing records are kept until the student graduates or permanently leaves the College of Nursing. The Honor Council Advisor, Honor Council Sponsor, or Dean then destroy the records.

X. Follow-Up Procedures

- A. Any student found culpable of an Honor Code violation is assigned a Faculty Mentor, who monitors the student's compliance with the corrective measure(s) imposed and reports to the Honor Council Advisor or Sponsor.

XI. Honor Council Officials

A. Honor Council Members

1. Members of the Honor Council include an elected Chair, the three elected

level representatives, and the elected President of the Student Government Organization (SGO). Designated alternates are other Honor Council “alternate” representatives and elected members of the SGO.

2. Each Honor Council member must be a student in good standing (and not on Honor Probation in any way). Each member is charged with fully understanding the Honor System and displaying ethical behavior at all times.
3. Either late in the summer semester or early in the fall semester, Honor Council members and alternates are to meet to review the Honor System and Bylaws, as well as to elect a Vice Chair from within the Council to assume the duties of Chair, if absent. Members are also to elect a Secretary to handle written communication and official records of the Honor Council.
4. In the event of the absence of a regular member of the Honor Council, the designated alternate serves as a committee member throughout the entire hearing.
5. Honor Council members have the obligation to relinquish their vote or ensure alternate representation at a proceeding, if prior involvement with the accused or the situation would prevent an objective opinion.
6. Impeachment of Honor Council members for failure to meet the membership standards can be accomplished by a majority vote of the Honor Council or the Student Government Organization.
7. Honor Council members are to consider all information regarding a hearing or an individual student as strictly confidential.
8. The members of the Honor Council must exhibit integrity and impartiality, maintain confidentiality, and demonstrate extensive knowledge of the Honor System.
9. Each Honor Council member should be willing to serve as an Honor Council officer, if elected or designated.
10. Each Honor Council member will be available for other duties as assigned, which may include helping with honor documentation destruction as necessary, and assisting with the honor awareness educational programs. In addition, Honor Council members for each class will continue to educate their class on the Honor Code during the school year.

B. Honor Council Advisor and Honor Council Sponsor

1. The Honor Council Advisor and Honor Council Sponsor are employees of BSMCON in good standing who serve as liaisons, consultants, and educators to the student body, faculty, administration, and Honor Council on all matters related to the Honor System. The role of Advisor and Sponsor is designated by the Dean of the College; typically, the Honor Council Advisor is the SGO Faculty Advisor; the Honor Council Sponsor is the Assistant Dean of Student Services.
2. The Advisor and the Sponsor have full access to any information regarding the specific honor violation, the hearing, decision and recommended corrective measure(s).
3. The Honor Council Advisor may attend Honor Council Committee hearings, but does not have a vote. The role of the Honor Council Advisor at a hearing is to provide assistance and support to the Honor Council.
4. The Honor Council Advisor also assists with the preparation and organization of an Honor Council meeting or hearing, and clarifies the roles of each Honor Council member.
5. The Honor Council Sponsor may not attend the Honor Council hearings when evidence is presented, but does assist the Hearing Committee in writing its

decision and may attend its deliberations. The Honor Council Sponsor does not have a vote. The Honor Council Sponsor is responsible for oral and written notification of the accused student regarding the corrective measure(s) imposed after the Honor Council committee hearing.

C. Honor Council Chair

1. The Chair of the Honor Council is an upper level student elected by majority vote of the Student Government Organization. This individual must demonstrate high moral standards, responsible leadership, discretion, and extensive knowledge of the Honor System. The Chair must be a student in good standing and have no record of an Honor Code violation.
2. The Chair informs all members of the Honor Council and the student body of their responsibilities and privileges within the Honor System.
3. The Chair is responsible for assuring that the Honor Council Advisor and Honor Council Sponsor are appropriately informed on the Council's functioning, and that lines of communication are adequate and appropriate.
4. The Chair calls and presides over all business meetings and hearings conducted by the Honor Council or a committee thereof.
5. The Chair insures that due process is followed in all Honor Council proceedings in accordance with the procedures stated herein.
6. The Chair, with the assistance of the Honor Council Advisor or Honor Council Sponsor, makes provisions for the security of all information pertaining to Honor System business.

D. Designees

The titles of Honor System or BSMCON officials used herein shall in all events be deemed to include the designees of such officials and any successors in the event of reorganization.

E. No Other Proceedings

Except as outlined herein, no other procedures or avenues for re-address (including, without limitation, the Grade Review Process) shall be applicable in the case of a student who is charged with an Honor System violation in connection with such charge.

References

Langone, M. (2007) Educational innovation: Promoting integrity among nursing students. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 46 (1), 45-47.

Tippitt, M., Ard, N., Kline, J., Tilghman, J., Chamberlain, B., Meagher, P. (2009). Creating environments that foster academic integrity. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 30 (4), 239-244.

BON SECOURS MEMORIAL COLLEGE OF NURSING**THE HONOR PLEDGE**

In accepting admission to Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing:

I, _____, a member of the student body of the Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing, hereby pledge upon my honor to abide by all of the regulations governing the College. I will conduct my personal life with integrity, refraining from any action, which would discredit myself, the members of the student body of the College of Nursing, or the nursing profession.

I hereby pledge that I understand and will uphold the Honor System. I am aware that a breach of the Honor System will result in a trial before the Honor Council as specified in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Honor System of the Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing. I understand completely that, if found guilty by the Honor Council of lying, cheating, stealing, and/or plagiarism, I may be dishonorably dismissed from the College

In addition, the following short Honor Pledge statement will be written or stamped on all graded work and signed by the student: ***"I have neither given nor received aid, other than acknowledged, on this assignment or test, nor have I seen anyone else do so."***