Dear Faculty,

I hope this email finds you well and healthy. Given the transition to virtual, remote learning, we in the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities (OSRR) want to direct you to important information about academic integrity. Additional information is also available on the main OSRR website.

Whether students learn on-site or remotely, they are expected to be good citizens and to engage in responsible behaviors that reflect well upon the university, to be civil to one another and others in the campus community, and contribute positively to student and university life. We recognize, however, that opportunities to cheat or plagiarize are more readily available while students work remotely.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities has already experienced an increase in allegations of cheating and plagiarism during winter quarter final exam week. It was reported that students accessed academic content via the internet, PolyLearn, or from others while working remotely. Unless communicated otherwise or deemed acceptable by the instructor of record, these actions are considered as cheating and/or plagiarism.

As a reminder, if an instructor is confident that a student cheated or plagiarized, the instructor should take the appropriate steps outlined in Cal Poly’s Resolution on Academic Dishonesty: Cheating and Plagiarism Procedures:

- If the instructor suspects but has doubts that cheating or plagiarism has occurred, they should first discuss the concern of cheating or plagiarism with the student(s).
- If the instructor is confident that cheating or plagiarism has occurred, they should do the following:
  1) Notify the student via written memorandum. This communication could come in the form of an email and will include the following:
    - The intended outcome for cheating or plagiarism (i.e., the impact on the student’s grade).
    - If the student denies having cheated or plagiarized, then two actions will be afforded to the student:
      - 1) the student will be given the opportunity to meet with the department head to determine if the situation can be resolved, and
      - 2) if the situation remains unresolved, a student appeal of the finding of cheating or plagiarism is available through OSRR.
2) **Submit a report** to OSSR (as required per [Executive Order 1098](https://example.com) and [AS-722-10](https://example.com)). OSRR will process cases as quickly as possible; however, investigations can take up to 40 working days to complete.

3) Determine the grade reduction. Note: Faculty should not use the RP (Report in Progress) notation as they await an investigation by OSRR. Again, faculty should be confident that cheating or plagiarism has occurred before submitting a report to OSRR.

It is important that you and your faculty members understand the role of OSRR in this process.

- OSRR will investigate any report of cheating or plagiarism. If OSRR confirms the incident, OSRR will determine disciplinary action, which is separate from grade assignments.
- **OSRR does NOT have the authority to change a grade based on a finding of cheating or plagiarism.** Grades are the responsibility of the instructor of record for the course.
- Only if the cheating/plagiarism finding has not been substantiated by OSRR, can a student file an appeal to the Fairness Board, which will then make a recommendation to the Provost, the Chief Academic Officer for the campus.

As a best practice, instructors should include an academic integrity policy statement in their **syllabi**. The policy should explain expectations for integrity, particularly within a virtual learning environment and in accordance with their discipline, and should include consequences for not meeting those expectations, such as a grade reduction for the task, assignment, exam, or course.

The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities will continue to offer services remotely, all of which are aimed at being educational and developmental while also holding students accountable to the expectations of the university.

Please contact OSRR at osrr@calpoly.edu if you or your faculty have any questions that arise from, or were not addressed, within this letter. I appreciate your partnership.

Sincerely,

David Groom, PhD
Associate Dean of Students,
Director for Student Rights & Responsibilities