MEMORANDUM

August 2016

To: Faculty
From: Prabhat Hajela, Provost
Subject: IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REMINDERS FOR THE FALL TERM

In preparing for the coming semester, please read this memorandum carefully and completely. It is long, but contains a great deal of important information. We have highlighted significant dates and information to ensure that faculty, students, and staff have a productive and effective academic semester. The first page highlights key dates and required information/action. The remaining pages provide additional detail. Please report any academic integrity violations (see page 5) and note the new student complaint process.

Dates of Interest:
August 29  Classes begin, all course syllabi documented in DigitalMeasures® (https://www.digitalmeasures.com/login/rpi/faculty/)
September 5  Labor Day–Institute holiday
October 10  No classes scheduled
October 11  Follow a Monday class schedule
October 7  All Instructors for All Courses Input EWS Information (Even if nothing to report)
October 21  Fall 2016 Course Drop Deadline – All Students must have received a major assessment grade by this time (Preferably 2)
October 24-November 4  Consultation weeks, advising for course selection
November 7-21  Registration for Spring Classes
November 22  Pass / No Credit Deadline
November 23-25  Thankgiving break–No classes
December 9  Last day of classes
December 12-13  Study Review Days–No Classes or Final Exams to be held
December 14  Grades due for courses with no scheduled final exam
December 14–16, 19-20  Final Exams–The only dates that final exams may be given
January 3, 2016  Grades for courses with scheduled final exams are due 48 hours after the exam

Please check the academic calendar for other dates of interest.

Key Required Information For / Actions From Faculty:
1. A major grade returned to the students before the spring course drop deadline (Page 2)
2. Participation in the Early Warning System (EWS) (Page 2)
3. Accommodation of students with special needs (Page 2)
4. Digital Measures Scheduled Teaching records created by first week of classes and actual distributed syllabi attached thereto (Pages 2-3)
5. Course Assessment Action Forms completed within a month of semester ending (Pages 2-3)
6. Follow the guidelines for the timing of exams, final exams, and final projects (Page 4)
7. Student Complaint Process (Page 5)
8. Academic Integrity reporting if a violation has occurred (Pages 5-11)
1. Midterm Grade by 6th week of the term

In order for students to determine their progress in a course (and make final decisions on add/drop), it is important that they receive a mid-term assessment a week before the drop deadline. This can be an exam, performance, major written report, or other key assessment.

2. Early Warning System Participation

The early warning system is used to identify both undergraduate and graduate students who need additional help (academic and otherwise). It is absolutely critical that faculty use this system to help us identify students at risk.

You can access EWS from your Summary Class List on SIS. To enter warnings, navigate to the student’s name, move to the EWS column and click. On the new page, follow the dropdown menu for submission of warning alert. If no warnings are needed, go to the bottom of your class list and click the “no warnings to enter” link. Completing either process makes you compliant. You can always update or add warnings later in the semester.

Additional EWS information will be mailed to you during the semester from the Advising and Learning Assistance Center.

3. Students with Special Needs

Some students may show you a memo from Disability Services for Students authorizing extended time on exams or other forms of accommodation. Federal law requires all colleges and universities to provide specified types of assistance to students with learning disabilities like dyslexia or attention deficit disorder, and students with physical or psychological disabilities. If students request special assistance but do not have an authorizing memo from Disability Services for Students, you should direct them to the Office of Disability Services for Students, x8197. Faculty members with questions can also contact the Office of Disability Services for Students.

Reminder: Information about a student’s special needs should be treated as confidential.

Note: It is up to the Department or faculty member to identify space for these exams with extra time. Neither ALAC nor Disabilities Services are set up to give exams.

4 & 5. Syllabi and Course Assessment Action Forms

As required by the Institute’s accreditor, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), we must archive all syllabi and document the full cycle of learning outcomes assessment in every course taught, in every semester each course is taught. Thus, faculty are required to create a Scheduled Teaching Record for their BANNER assigned courses in the DigitalMeasures® online system (accessible via rpinfo.rpi.edu -- listed under “Faculty & Staff”) with a copy of the actual syllabus distributed to students attached to this record. In setting up Scheduled Teaching records, please pay particular attention to the section on Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures on the system’s Scheduled Teaching screens.


For assistance in preparing Scheduled Teaching records generating syllabi via the DigitalMeasures® system, and attaching your final syllabus to the DM record, please contact Josephine Seddon ([carneg2@rpi.edu](mailto:carneg2@rpi.edu), 518.276.3884) of Institutional Research & Assessment.
The Institute Standard Syllabus

The Faculty Handbook requires that instructors provide students with the following information at the beginning of each semester for every course. This information is contained in required fields in Identification/Contact and Scheduled Teaching screens in DigitalMeasures®. Thus, syllabi generated using DM will include all of the following required information.

1. Course number and title.
2. Instructor’s name, office number and campus telephone numbers.
3. Title of text(s) or other reading materials. (If you do not plan to rely heavily on the text, please inform students so they may consider whether or not to purchase the text.)
4. Times and location(s) of instructor’s office hours. (Please also post these outside of your office).
5. Wherever possible, dates and times of all major exams and major papers should be provided to the students (so students can practice time management). Reminder: the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee has discouraged giving midterm or hourly exams outside of scheduled class hours.
6. In some courses, it is helpful to include due dates for specific assignments (at least for the first few weeks). This is particularly important in undergraduate courses.
7. Attendance policy: Documentation for excused absences is processed by the Student Experience office (these were previously processed through the Dean of Students office). If students need an official excuse, please direct them to the Student Experience office – 4th floor of Academy Hall, x8022, se@rpi.edu.
8. A specific statement regarding academic integrity (see discussion below).
9. Specific grading criteria. The grading criteria for a course should include the following information:
   - The fraction of the total grade determined by each course assessment (e.g., exams, papers, recitation performance, homework, labs, projects, etc.).
   - Whether a single poor performance will be dropped or weighted lower, or if some form of “resurrection” will be built into the grading system.
   - The means by which students may appeal grades.
10. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures. Developing your syllabus in DigitalMeasures® ensures that this section exists and properly associates outcomes and assessments. If you need guidance in developing learning outcomes statements, please see http://provost.rpi.edu/learning-assessment/learning-outcomes-lo, or contact the Institute Learning Assessment Specialist, Josephine Seddon (x3884 carneg2@rpi.edu).

Course Assessment Actions Form

The Course Assessment Actions section of each course’s Scheduled Teaching record in DigitalMeasures® MUST be completed for each course every semester—and as soon as possible after the semester’s end.

Completing course assessment actions fields (findings, evaluations, and outcome changes) in DigitalMeasures®, and subsequent “closing the loop”, are essential in meeting accreditation requirements. Findings related to student achievement of learning outcomes, your reflections on the findings and implications with respect to teaching and learning, and recommended changes with emphasis on learning outcomes for subsequent offerings of the course are documented as part of course assessment actions.

A custom report, Course Assessment Actions Form, serves to combine course learning outcomes, assessment measures, findings, evaluations, and outcome changes together for easy reference and comprehensive documenting of the assessment cycle.
Grading Policy
The available grades, and the numerical weighting associated with these grades in computing the GPA will be as follows.

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\begin{align*}
A &= 4.0 \\
A- &= 3.67 \\
B+ &= 3.33 \\
B &= 3.0 \\
B- &= 2.67 \\
C+ &= 2.33 \\
C &= 2.0 \\
C- &= 1.67 \\
D+ &= 1.33 \\
D &= 1.0 \\
F &= 0.0
\end{align*}
\]

There is no D- grade and the minimum grade to pass a course is a D.

Exams Outside of Class Time
The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee discourages exams outside of course meeting times, but concedes select cases warrant this practice. When exams are scheduled outside of class hours, the faculty member must accommodate students who have a conflict. No student should be required to miss a scheduled class, have to negotiate an absence in a conflicting class, or be put at any disadvantage to attend an exam held outside of scheduled class hours.

For those cases when an exam is to be scheduled outside of class hours, the exam time should be clearly noted in the syllabus at the start of the semester. Faculty members can contact the Registrar’s office for assistance in determining potential conflicts with other scheduled classes.

Study Review Days
Two days following classes are set aside to allow students to rest, recover, and prepare for final exams over the next five days. No classes, final exams, or assignments (i.e. take-home exams) may be scheduled/due on those days. Please feel free to use time on these days for help sessions or extra office hours.

Final Exams
Scheduling: All final exams must be given during the scheduled final exam time for the class. Please do not give students the option of voting for a final exam or third exam during the last week of classes. The process for scheduling final exams attempts to minimize final exam conflicts and makes final exam schedules available early in the semester. This allows students adequate time to make travel plans that don’t conflict with their exams.

Any student with more than two final exams in one day can request that a conflict exam for the third exam be given on a different day.

Policy on Conflicting Exams
Students who have conflicts between two or more exams given at the same time will resolve the matter of who will give the makeup exam in the following manner:

1) The lower level course has precedence. (e.g. for a conflict between a 2000 and 4000 level course, the 4000 level course must give a makeup exam.

2) If both courses are the same level (i.e. both are 2000 level courses) the student should approach each instructor to determine if one of the instructors will give a makeup exam.

3) If both instructors refuse to give a makeup exam when requested under the circumstances of item # 2, the student should see the department scheduler. It will be that scheduler’s responsibility to call his/her counterpart in the other department to determine who should give the makeup exam.

4) If the two schedulers cannot reach a compromise, the scheduler originally approached by the student should call the Associate Dean in his/her school and ask that Dean to flip a coin and the loser of the toss will have to give a makeup exam.
7. Student Complaint Process

In compliance with Middle States Accreditation, there is now a central complaint procedure for students. These processes apply to all students regardless of school, status, classification, type or location. Complaints not addressed using this process include:

1. Complaints related to alleged violations of Rensselaer’s Student Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures, which also includes complaints regarding Title IX violations, available from the Institute’s Sexual Misconduct Awareness website.

2. Substantive complaints regarding the quality of the institution or its academic programs which should be directed to the Institute’s Accrediting Body: Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

8. Academic Integrity Reporting Issues

If there has been a violation of the academic integrity policy, faculty are strongly encouraged to report this to the Dean of Students Office. The form is available at the end of this memo. This allows the Dean of Students to identify students who are multiple policy offenders. Faculty can choose to have the information purged upon graduation, or request academic judicial action. As part of faculty academic integrity, it is important that we cultivate a culture of professional integrity, which means enforcing our academic integrity policies. Below is information that can be used in the syllabus and a portion of the student and faculty handbook.

Student-teacher relationships are built on trust. For example, students must trust that teachers have made appropriate decisions about the structure and content of the courses they teach, and teachers must trust that the assignments that students turn in are their own. Acts that violate this trust undermine the educational process.

1. The Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the Rensselaer Graduate Student Supplement define various forms of Academic Dishonesty and procedures for responding to them. All forms are violations of the trust between students and teachers. Please feel free to make reference to these documents and, if need be, define the terms in the context of your coursework.

2. Collaborative or group work should be encouraged at all times. Make clear to the students when collaboration will be explicitly forbidden (e.g., take home exams or computer projects).

3. The syllabus should also contain, in writing, your guidelines for what is and is not considered cheating and, most importantly, the associated penalty for violations.

The following statement could serve as a model for what to include in your syllabus (it is pre-loaded into the Academic Integrity field of the Course Policy and Syllabus-Related Information popup in DigitalMeasures).

Student-teacher relationships are built on trust. For example, students must trust that teachers have made appropriate decisions about the structure and content of the courses they teach, and teachers must trust that the assignments that students turn in are their own. Acts that violate this trust undermine the educational process. The Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities and The Graduate Student Supplement define various forms of Academic Dishonesty and you should make yourself familiar with these. In this class, all assignments that are turned in for a grade must represent the student’s own work. In cases where help was received, or teamwork was allowed, a notation on the assignment should indicate your collaboration.

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1 The Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities
2 The Rensselaer Graduate Student Supplement
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
(2014-2016 Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights & Responsibilities, August 2014)

Intellectual integrity and credibility are the foundation of all academic work. A violation of Academic Integrity policy is, by definition, considered a flagrant offense to the educational process. It is taken seriously by students, faculty, and Rensselaer and will be addressed in an effective manner.

If found responsible for committing academic dishonesty, a student may be subject to one or both types of penalties: an academic (grade) penalty administered by the professor and/or disciplinary action through the Rensselaer judicial process described in this handbook.

Academic dishonesty is a violation of the Grounds for Disciplinary Action as described in this handbook. A student may be subject to any of the following types of disciplinary action should disciplinary action be pursued by the professor: disciplinary warning; disciplinary probation; disciplinary suspension, expulsion and/or alternative actions as agreed on by the student and hearing officer. It should be noted that no student who allegedly commits academic dishonesty will be able to drop or change the grade option for the course in question and is not eligible to have the opportunity to sit for an "F Examination" for the course.

The definitions and examples presented below are a sampling of types of academic dishonesty and are not to be construed as an exhaustive or exclusive list. The academic integrity policy applies to all students, undergraduate and graduate, and to scholarly pursuits and research. Additionally, attempts to commit academic dishonesty or to assist in the commission or attempt of such an act are also violations of this policy.

**Academic Fraud:** The alteration of documentation relating to the grading process. For example, changing exam solutions to negotiate for a higher grade or tampering with an instructor’s grade book.

**Collaboration:** Deliberately facilitating an act of academic dishonesty in any way or form. For example, allowing another student to observe an exam paper or allowing another student to “recycle” one’s old term paper or using one another’s work in a paper or lab report without citing it as another’s work.

**Copying:** Obtaining information pertaining to a graded exercise by deliberately observing the paper of another student. For example, noting which alternative a neighboring student has circled on a multiple-choice exam.

**Cribbing:** Use or attempted use of prohibited materials, information, or study aids in an academic exercise. For example, using an unauthorized formal sheet during an exam.

**Fabrication:** Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information in an academic exercise. For example, use of “bought” or “ready-made” term papers, or falsifying lab records or reports.

**Plagiarism:** Representing the work or words of another as one’s own through the omission of acknowledgment or reference. For example, using sentences verbatim from a published source in a term paper without appropriate referencing, or presenting as one’s own the detailed argument of a published source, or presenting as one’s own electronically or digitally enhanced graphic representations from any form of media.
**Sabotage:** Destruction of another student’s work. For example, destroying a model, lab experiment, computer program, or term paper developed by another student.

**Substitution:** Utilizing a proxy, or acting as a proxy, in any academic exercise. For example, taking an exam for another student or having a homework assignment done by someone else.

**FACULTY PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (as stated in the Rensselaer Faculty Handbook)**

“If there is reason to believe a student in a course may have been involved in academic dishonesty, then contact the student(s) and schedule a meeting to discuss the allegations. This meeting should occur within ten (10) Institute business days of having discovered the possible dishonesty.

When meeting with the student, review the circumstances and evidence related to the suspicion of academic dishonesty and allows them the opportunity to provide his or her perspective on the situation. Take notes during the meeting to document important information. After reviewing the situation, including speaking with others who might be involved or have knowledge of the situation, then the Professor will issue a finding as to the nature and extent of the violation, if any, by the accused student. If it is concluded that a student has violated the Institute academic dishonesty policy, it is the faculty member’s responsibility to determine the academic (grade) penalty (i.e., failure of the course, significant reduction of the final grade, etc.) and to communicate this decision to the student in writing. This communication should occur within five (5) Institute business days of having met with the student. Included in this written notification should be information regarding the student’s option to appeal the grade decision and of the procedure/time limit in which to do so.

Faculty who choose to apply an academic sanction to a student found responsible for committing academic dishonesty must complete the Academic Integrity Violation Case Summary and Report Form. Documentation should be submitted with the report that includes exams/assignments involving the cheating, crib sheets, witness statements, or other materials deemed relevant to the case. The incident shall remain on file in the Dean of Students Office as a record of the incident and a way to track repeat/multiple offenses by the same student(s). The incident shall remain on record until said student graduates except where disciplinary action has also been taken. If disciplinary action is taken, the incident remains permanently on record.

In addition to the academic penalty, the faculty member can request that judicial action be taken against a student for violating Grounds for Disciplinary Action, specifically academic dishonesty. Such requests should be made in writing to the Senior Judicial Administrator or Dean of Students. The documentation will be reviewed, assigned to a hearing officer, and proceed in accordance with Institute protocol.”
APPEAL PROCESS FOR ACADEMIC PENALTY FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (as stated in the Rensselaer Faculty Handbook)

Decisions regarding grades are initially the responsibility and jurisdiction of the course professor, and the school in which the academic dishonesty occurred, as there is no one in a better position to make this determination. Any appeal of a grade or academic penalty for academic dishonesty falls under the same authority. Therefore, a student can submit a written appeal of an academic penalty to the Department Chair within five (5) Institute business days of being notified of the faculty member’s decision. If the course professor is the Department Chair or Dean of the school or there are other circumstances that could create the perception of bias, steps must be taken to use other appropriate individuals for the appeal process.

The Department Chair (or designee) will then make a determination based on the facts/circumstances of the case and the appropriateness of the original sanction. This determination should be made and communicated to the student and the professor within ten (10) Institute business days of receiving the appeal. Included in this written notification should be information regarding the student’s option to appeal the grade decision and of the procedure/time limit in which to do so.

If the student or professor believes he or she has grounds for appealing the decision of the Department Chair (e.g., new evidence), both parties have the option to submit a written appeal to the Dean of the School within five (5) business days of receiving the decision. The Dean will then render a decision based on the facts/circumstance of the case and the appropriateness of the sanction. This determination should be made and communicated to the student and the professor within ten (10) Institute business days of receiving the appeal.

The decision of the Dean of the School may be subject to final determination by the Provost (or designee), with good cause and at the written request of either party involved, within five (5) Institute business days of notification of the Dean of the School’s decision. The Provost is unconstrained in the procedure he or she chooses to employ in the context of such a review. The Provost is the final level of appeal and his/her decision stands as final for both the student(s) and professor involved. The Provost will render a decision based on the circumstances of the case and the appropriateness of the sanction. This determination should be made and communicated to the student and the professor within ten (10) Institute business days of receiving the appeal.

Students found in violation of the academic integrity policy are prohibited from dropping a course in order to avoid the academic penalty.

PREVENTION OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

For those courses or academic exercises in which either the instructor or student considers proper definition of academic dishonesty to be open to interpretation, the instructor is expected to outline his or her particular standards. An example for which such definition seems particularly necessary would be collaboration on out-of-class assignments.

Course supervisors are expected to provide adequate and conscientious proctoring for exams. Faculty and proctors may ask a student for identification during an exam or exercise, and take reasonable precautions to lessen probability of academic dishonesty occurring, such as requiring that all personal belongings, texts, etc., be placed away from desks in the exam room.
# Academic Integrity Violation Case Summary & Report Form

**Student Name:** ____________________________  **RIN #** ____________________________

**Semester:** Fall _____  Spring _____  Summer _____  **Date:** ____________________________

**Course Name:** ____________________________  **Professor:** ____________________________

**Section Number:** ____________________________  **Teaching Assistant / Grader:** ____________________________

**Description of Assignment under Review:** ____________________________________________

**Noticed By:** ____________________________  **Date First Noticed:** ____________________________

**Reported To:** ____________________________  **Date Reported:** ____________________________

**Description of questionable material and reason for suspecting a violation of academic integrity:** ____________________________________________

**Student Notification Date:** __________  **Notification Type (Circle ONE):** Verbal  Letter  Email  Other  ______

**Student / Professor Meeting Date to discuss violation:** ____________________________

**Summary of Meeting with Student and Outcome:** ____________________________________________

**Sanction Issued and Rationale:** ____________________________________________

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*Items noted on this page are for reference of the Dean of Students and Faculty member submitting this report. The summary and outcome should be sent to the Dean of Students Office, Academy Hall, 4th Floor, with a copy retained by the faculty member, for reference only. It shall remain in the student's file until graduation or until the student is no longer affiliated with Rensselaer. This paper should not be given to anyone nor its contents discussed without appropriate approval.*
### Check One:

- [ ] I am making NOTIFICATION of Academic Sanction to the Dean of Students Office only for purpose to identify other incidents of academic dishonesty. *(Record Expunged Upon Graduation)*

- [ ] I am making NOTIFICATION of Academic Sanction to the Dean of Students Office and authorize a Letter of Warning be sent to the student. *(Record Expunged Upon Graduation)*

- [ ] I request that judicial action be taken, in addition to the above stated academic sanction, as a violation of the Grounds for Disciplinary Action, specifically a violation of Academic Integrity Policy. *(Permanent Record)*

Faculty Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

*(Please submit this completed form to the Dean of Students Office, 4th Floor, Academy Hall. Include all relevant information and/or documentation supporting your decision.)*

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### Student Section

I have read and understand the Academic Integrity Policy as stated in the 2014-2016 Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities, pages 15 – 18. I have met with the faculty member, discussed the violation(s) of the academic integrity policy, and

**Check One:**

- [ ] **Accept** this decision as final and decline to appeal.

- [ ] **Decline** to accept the decision and understand I must submit my appeal in writing to the Department Chairperson Or Designee no later than 4:00 PM on ____ (five Institute business days). The written appeal must state the specific reasons for appealing this decision as stated in the 2014-2016 Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities, *Grounds for Appeal*, page 11.

Student Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

*(Please retain a copy and submit original to the Department Chair, one copy to the Dean of Students Office, and one copy to the student.)*

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Rensselaer Process to Address Violations of Academic Integrity Policy

**Alleged Violation**

- **Faculty – Student Conference** [Within 10 Institute Business Days of Alleged Violation Discovery]
  - Faculty member meets with student to discuss offense, present evidence, and come to a resolution
  - Faculty member determines if an academic sanction is warranted

- **Faculty Member Reports Incident to the Dean of Students** [Within 5 Institute Business Days of Faculty’s Decision]
  - Faculty member notifies student in writing of the Faculty member’s decision regarding allegation
  - Faculty member reports incident to the Dean of Students Office and designates action to be taken
  - Dean of Students checks Institute academic integrity database to determine if the reported student is a repeat offender (2 or more incidents)

**Faculty Action in Response to Academic Dishonesty Incident**

- **NOTIFICATION Only, Add to Database (Expunge Record upon Graduation)**
- **NOTIFICATION AND Authorization to Issue A Letter of Warning (cc Faculty Member), Add to Database (Expunge Record upon Graduation)**

**Formal Disciplinary Action**

- Pursued if requested by faculty member OR the student is a repeat offender (2 or more incidents)
- Student is issued additional sanctions, if warranted, including disciplinary probation, educational programming, suspension or expulsion
- Permanent Record

**Student Judicial Appeal Process (If Warranted)**

- Academic Integrity Appeal Process (If Warranted)
  - demonstrated procedural error
  - new evidence discovered after a decision has been rendered
  - sanctions not appropriate for the violation