

CSE 365: Academic Integrity Violation Notice

Before I begin, I will point out that if you are reading this, you are not necessarily suspected of any wrongdoing. This notice is being sent to everyone: and this notice will inform you of how you can find out if you are suspected or not. As you read this, please keep in mind that I am not angry, and I am not trying to be mean. For this to work, I have to be direct, I have to be clear, and I have to be firm.

What I care about, more than anything else as a teacher, is that you learn, and that you learn cool and useful things. One of the ways that I try to do this is by designing interesting challenges that are meant to help you learn. My philosophy is that if I design good challenges, and you get to solve these challenges, you will have learned something. I don't always hit the mark on that, and we certainly have run into various hiccups along the way, but this is my goal.

According to ASU, a 3-credit course means that I get 135 hours of your time, or about 9 hours a week. If I want to truly teach you something, this is not a lot of time, and so, I have decided to make the most of it. This includes not giving you busy work, or giving you tests that you must study for—that removes time from what I perceive to be optimal learning. In an ideal world, you would be spending all 135 hours working on these challenges, and learning. ASU says that I must give you a grade at the end; truly I don't care about this part, but I'm happy to be a part of the system. Probably the grade serves as a good motivator for you to do the work, probably the *biggest* motivator for many of you, and I'm happy to provide that. And so, your grade is 100% based on solving these challenges.

I'm aware that this means that cheating is easier. You never have to enter

a classroom, and never have to take a test in which we're able to directly watch you to make sure you're not cheating. The hope is that you will nevertheless be motivated to learn, and that you will be honest. Many of you are incredibly busy people, and I understand that you have a lot of things going on. If my course is easy to cheat in, and you have a lot of things going on, lots of obligations, then it's easy to see why you might lean towards cheating if it's the path of least resistance. I get it. Unfortunately, though, my passion is in making sure you learn, and cheating gets in the way of that. You're bypassing the learning, and going straight for that motivating grade. I truly don't care about you unfairly getting a grade that you don't deserve: that doesn't really impact me. Of course, your peers, the academic institution conferring degrees, and employers trying to interpret what those degrees mean might not be thrilled about that. I do, however, care about you not learning. It is therefore my responsibility to make cheating less-appealing than learning.

As a refresher, here is what the course syllabus says about collaboration and academic integrity:

Collaboration is highly encouraged in this course. However, there is a delicate balance between being excessively helpful and learning. The purpose of course collaboration is to understand concepts. As such, questions and answers should be focused on concepts, and not how to solve challenge X. The challenges explore important concepts, so it is fine to discuss the challenges. However, you may not discuss full or significant portions of a challenge's solution. Furthermore, you may not intentionally solve challenges as a group. The assignments must still be solved individually. Feel free to discuss ideas important to the challenge, or tools which may be useful. If there is any confusion, just ask! We will try to assume good intentions, but egregious violations are academic integrity violations.

Plagiarism or any form of cheating in assignments or projects is subject to serious academic penalties. To understand your responsibilities as a student read: ASU Student Code of Conduct and ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy. All engineering students are expected to adhere to the ASU Student Honor Code.

There is a zero-tolerance policy in this class: any violation of the academic integrity policy will result in a zero on the assignment and the violation will be reported to the Dean's office. Withdrawing from this course will not absolve you of responsibility for an academic integrity violation and any sanctions that are applied. The AIO maintains a record of all violations and has access to academic integrity violations committed in all other ASU college/schools. Plagiarism is taken very seriously in this course.

Let's cut to the point and break down what has occurred. There are 591 students enrolled in CSE 365 this semester. We have identified serious, blatant plagiarism in 6 of the course's 9 modules, with:

- 70 students suspected of cheating on 1 module
- 72 students suspected of cheating on 2 modules
- 98 students suspected of cheating on 3 modules
- 69 students suspected of cheating on 4 modules
- 36 students suspected of cheating on 5 modules
- 6 students suspected of cheating on 6 modules

In total, this represent 351 unique students who are suspected of cheating on at least one module. This constitutes the largest identified academic integrity violation in the history of this course, and even further, the school of engineering, (possibly even the entire university?), by a large, large margin.

In this case, serious, blatant plagiarism, means that for a given module, saved code that is:

- 100% IDENTICAL to at least 4 other students in the course (at least 5 in total)
- Manually verified to be found directly online, in cheating PDF(s), in the case of 5 out of the 6 modules

- Manually verified to consistute partial or complete solutions to the module's assignment
- Manually verified to not be easy to write the same thing by chance (e.g. many students have identical basic assembly to `exit(0)`, this is of course not cheating)
- Often including artifacts from the PDF(s) page headers
- Often including the same (mispelled) comments

In other words, this represents blatant, trivial, and egregious cheating, and is unquestionably a violation of the academic integrity policy.

You can find out if you are suspected of cheating by visiting the Report URL at the end of this document. This will specify which modules you are suspected of cheating on. It will also provide you with evidence that we have collected (the identified file paths, file contents, last modified dates, etc.).

Many students had the foresight to delete their solution code after the fact. This was the case for 80% of the identified files. Unfortunately, however, for those students, we have recovered those deleted files.

We have further identified *many* more files that are highly suspicious (e.g. 2 students having the same file), but do not meet the above criteria. Considering the nature of what has already been discovered, we have decided not to pursue these cases, but we are nevertheless aware of them. Consider this a warning, and some incredible luck, that future students will not have.

Additionally, we have snapshots of all student activity in this course. That includes files you have already deleted, or might delete after reading this. If anyone is found to be cheating in the future, we will discover it. This includes sharing your solutions with future students, or sharing them online. If you think you have a clever way to avoid detection, you're probably wrong. Anyone identified as helping future students cheat will be pursued to the fullest extent of the academic integrity policy.

I expect that many of you are feeling a lot of emotions right now. Relax: this is not the end of the world. If you have cheated, you have messed up;

own it, move forward, and make better decisions in the future. If this is your first registered academic integrity violation, you will receive a 0 on the module(s) in question and you will have to do an additional 2-hour online training with the Academic Integrity Office (AIO). Hopefully it goes without saying, but, you will also be ineligible from ever receiving pwn.college belts. For first-time offenders, this will not appear on your transcript; no one will know about it except you, me, and the AIO. In following ASU policy, if this issue is not resolved before grades are due, I will enter an incomplete grade for you until the integrity process is complete. Please note that you may not withdraw from the course to avoid responsibility for this issue.

More serious issues start to arise once you have multiple violations. Unfortunately, given the scale of this incident, probably some of you will now have multiple violations. Still, relax. You messed up (again), and the consequences will be more severe, and figured out with the guidance of the AIO. Just remember, you will get through this. Please use this as a learning experience and make better decisions in the future. Again, this is not the end of the world; this is your opportunity to grow from this.

I understand that some of you will have a response to this news, especially if you have been identified in the cohort of students who have been suspected of cheating. If you wish to dispute the findings, you must do so through the Dispute URL at the end of this document. There are too many of you—at a minimum at least 4 of your fellow students have identical evidence against them: DO NOT EMAIL US ABOUT THIS. For the short term, we will not be responding to *any* emails about this.

You have until Tuesday, April 30th, 11:59pm to submit your dispute. To be clear, we are already highly confident in our findings. If, in the unlikely event that there is a misunderstanding (for example, the instructional staff has shared an identified file with students, and we have mistakenly identified that as cheating), we will correct it. Know that we have already manually verified all the identified files in order to make this determination, but we recognize that a mistake is still nevertheless possible. Please do not submit a dispute unless you have a legitimate reason to do so. If you are sorry, apologize through your actions and make better decisions in the future.

On Wednesday, we will correct any mistakes that have been identified, and

then formally report this to the AIO, who we are already working with (we have already sent them all the evidence). The AIO will send you a formal notice of the charges and you will have an opportunity to provide them additional feedback before the charge is confirmed and finalized. If you wish to get this situation over and behind you quickly, just reply to the AIO's email with a simple acknowledgement and they will immediately finalize your sanction and provide you instructions on how to close your case. Please do not waste the AIO's time with frivolous disputes.

If anyone attempts to guilt trip ("this is the end of the world because...") the instructional staff, the AIO, any other ASU staff, or their peers, we will *immediately* escalate your case to the Dean's Office. If anyone attempts to threaten, intimidate, harass, or otherwise retaliate against the instructional staff, the AIO, any other ASU staff, or their peers, we will *immediately* escalate this to the Dean's Office and Tempe PD. Seriously, *this is not the end of the world*. Do not make this situation worse. I promise that you will get through this.

I will likely be instituting a curve on the final grades. Currently a C (passing for a required course) is a 70%. I will likely be lowering this to 60%. There is some chance that I will lower this further from that. I will also adjust some of the other letter grades (A+ will remain at 100%). Do not ask or push me, or the instructional staff, about this: attempting to influence or change any Academic Evaluation is a violation of the academic integrity policy. I will offer as much leniency as I reasonably can, but this is non-negotiable. If you fail, you fail; and likely at least 100 of you will fail.

Please recognize that this is not a personal attack on you. I am not angry at you. More than anything, I am disappointed and upset. I am disappointed that many of you have not learned some of the cool things that I hoped you would. I am upset that I must now witness hundreds of students go through this process, and face the consequences of their actions. I know that this situation sucks for you; believe me, it sucks for me too. I hope that if nothing else, that you can learn something from this: that cheating is not worth it. Please, for your sake, for my sake, use this moment as an opportunity to grow.

Please see the Important URLs section below for more information.

Important URLs

Report URL:

<https://pwn.college/cse365-s2024/academic-integrity-report>

Dispute URL:

<https://pwn.college/cse365-s2024/academic-integrity-dispute>

ASU Crisis:

<https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling/services/crisis>

988 Crisis:

<https://988lifeline.org/help-yourself/>