


Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 283

TO: All Faculty, Deans, Department Heads, and Graduate Students

FROM: Charles Steger 

DATE: May 9, 2013

SUBJECT: Inclusion of a Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Component in Graduate Education

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| Approved, Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies: | February 22, 2013 |
| Approved, University Council: | April 29, 2013 |
| Approved, President: | April 29, 2013 |
| Effective Date: | Fall 2013 |

University Council approved a resolution regarding the inclusion of a scholarly ethics and integrity component in graduate education.

Following is the text of the resolution.

WHEREAS, the Virginia Tech community strongly endorses a well-rounded educational experience for graduate students, and

WHEREAS, all graduate students are expected to uphold the Virginia Tech Principles of Community and the Graduate School's Expectations for Graduate Study as well as the scholarly integrity and research ethics standards of their disciplines, and

WHEREAS, individual departments, colleges, and programs offer opportunities for graduate students to engage in activities that promote and strengthen their academic and professional integrity while studying at Virginia Tech and thereafter,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that all graduate students participate in ethics and integrity activities as part of their graduate studies, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the particular ethics and integrity activities for a graduate student be planned and approved by the student's program, department, or college, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the plan for the ethics and integrity activities within each program, department, or college be submitted for approval to the Graduate School by the Graduate Coordinator of a program or department, or equivalent in a college, and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Program of Study for all graduate students show a record of the student's participation in the particular ethics and integrity activities delineated by the student's program, department, or college, as part of the student's graduation requirements.

RECOMMENDATION: Implementation to start with the incoming class Fall 2014. Details for the ethics and integrity activities are found in the Appendix to Resolution **2013.XXXXX**.

APPENDIX TO CGSP RESOLUTION 2012-13B

The guidelines offered in this Appendix seek to clarify the intent of the Resolution and to make specific recommendations regarding its implementation. It is the aim of the Resolution to serve the needs of all students, while acknowledging the distinctiveness of those needs across the range of departments, programs, and colleges (hereafter referred to as "academic units"). To comply with the terms of the Resolution, academic units are encouraged to make use of existing strategies and efforts to instill in their students the need for integrity and ethical behavior in all scholarly matters and to instruct their students in this regard. Should existing measures be insufficient, new measures will be put in place to satisfy the requirements set forth in the Resolution. The Graduate School will be available to offer assistance with the formulation of these plans as needed and/or requested. In all cases, the appropriate academic unit will submit for approval to the Graduate School the manner and method by which the requirement will be satisfied. Once the plan is approved, the completion of the requirement for any given student will be verified through that student's Plan of Study.

With regard to the extent of topics to be covered, again recognizing the range of appropriate emphases across different academic units, four topics have been identified as appropriate for all students. Other, optional, topics should be addressed, as identified by the individual academic units and appropriate to specific disciplinary needs. Both the required topics and a list of optional topics appear below:

Required Topics:

1. Plagiarism and other violations of the Graduate Honor Code
2. Proper use of professional conventions in citation of existing research and scholarship, accurate reporting and ownership of findings, and acknowledgement of contributions to the work
3. Ethical standards in teaching, mentoring, and professional activities
4. Available avenues for reporting alleged misconduct

Optional Topics (including, but not limited to the following, as deemed appropriate by the academic unit):

1. Appropriate lab procedures and maintenance of lab notebooks and other research documentation
2. Fair use of publications, software, and equipment
3. Appropriate research protocols involving human and animal subjects; Institutional Review Board and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee certification
4. Guidelines for maintenance of confidentiality (and, where relevant, anonymity) in research
5. Guidelines for determination of authorship
6. Appropriate grant and contract management, including appropriately asserting personal or program capacities and competencies when applying for grants and contracts
7. Discipline- or field-specific professional ethics

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