The Honor System

Unfortunately, cheating and academic dishonesty are common at many universities, including Stony Brook. The University of Virginia, where I received my undergraduate education, is refreshingly free of such behavior. This because of the student-run honor system. Each student, on arriving to the University, signs a written pledge not to lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do. If a student is accused of an honor violation and convicted before a jury of students, he or she is permanently expelled from the University.

Although this policy might appear severe, it is extremely popular, as evidenced by the fact that students traditionally reject by wide margins proposals to permit juries the option of alternate punishments. The benefit of the honor system is that an atmosphere of trust exists between students and faculty, making for a more relaxed environment throughout the university. At Virginia, I regularly had timed, closed-book, take-home exams, because the faculty trusted us not to collaborate, take longer than allowed or consult references even in the privacy of our homes.

To the greatest extent possible, I would like to import the UVa Honor System to Stony Brook. I pledge to fail and seek the expulsion of any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty, which include but are not limited to:

(1) Copying another person's program (from this or a previous semester), or actively working with another person on one of the programming assignments. Please note that this does not prevent you from discussing the assignments among yourselves or even asking other students for help, but it must be clear that any program turned in must be your own.

(2) Cheating on the midterms and final exam. This includes but is not limited to using notes on the exam, copying from another student, having another person take the exam for you, or changing exam answers before submitting for regrading.

(3) Reading or modifying computer files belonging to another person without their express permission, stealing copies of notes, exams, or books from students, faculty, or university facilities.

To ensure that everyone is actively aware of the honor system, each student must write out and sign the following pledge on each piece of work submitted for grading this semester. No assignment or exam will be graded unless it contains a written and signed pledge:

"On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received aid on this examination (or program)."

If you have done something with respect to a program or examination which you fear I might possibly misconstrue as lying, cheating, or stealing (such as talk extensively with another student), you may ammend the pledge to explain it, and thus not fear an honor sanction.

Do not hesitate to ask me to discuss or clarify any aspect of the honor system in CSE 214. It is not designed to prevent students from seeking help from other students, but only to ensure that students who turn in work which is not their own will be treated uniformly and severely.

To insure that all students are aware of the nature of the Honor system, I ask you sign the following statement, and turn in this page to your teaching assistant, prior to submitting the first assignment.

"I have read and understood the CSE 214 honor policy, and pledge to adhere to it."

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(Print name and sign)