

Proposal for an Academic Honor Statement

(Written by Student Government members Scott Nicholson and Dan Furman on March 12, 2004)

Various forms of student cheating plague college campuses throughout the country. Here at UMBC, the Academic Integrity Committee has begun to facilitate serious discussions about how to confront this problem.

We believe that fundamental principles like honor and integrity can become widely shared university values only through a process that changes the campus culture. Such changes in culture will not happen overnight but must be cultivated over many years.

UMBC's strategy should encompass fundamental changes in the way we educate students about academic integrity. "Honor" and "Integrity" are merely abstract concepts which command no action of the student unless they are internalized in some meaningful way. As such, our approach must go beyond just disseminating abstract information on integrity and should focus on promoting integrity in a way that inspires each student on this campus to make an active and sustained commitment to these values.

One of our first steps should be to encapsulate these values and principles in a statement that students can make to themselves, each other and UMBC. The following statement articulates the bedrock principles of integrity that every member of the university community should accept and promote.

I hereby assume the responsibilities of an engaged member in a scholarly and civic community in which academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. It is my active participation that affirms these principles and gives them true meaning as well as value in my education. I realize that by committing acts of dishonesty I hurt myself and place an indelible mark on the reputation of UMBC. Therefore, I will not cheat, fabricate materials, plagiarize, or help another to undertake such acts of academic dishonesty, nor will I protect those who engage in acts of academic dishonesty.

In order to give the student body an opportunity to take ownership of this statement, we should ask for its formal approval through a referendum. The Student Government Association could conduct a referendum in conjunction with its upcoming campus-wide election. Also, we should publish the statement to the entire campus community through media such as myUMBC, application packets for UMBC, the blue examination booklets, as well as all literature concerning Academic Integrity at UMBC.

This statement will not solve all academic integrity problems on this campus but will be a step among many other steps to initiate the change in culture we want to see.

Undoubtedly there will be challenges to this statement. Many of the challenges will come from students who may be unable to understand or unwilling to embrace the values it reflects. Yet we must continue to educate students and the entire UMBC campus that trust and mutual commitment to honor and integrity benefit the whole campus community.

Passed by the Student Government Association Senate of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and has received the votes indicated below.

Votes: 15 For 0 Opposed

Date: Monday, March 29, 2004

Christopher W. Krummel 5/10/04

Christopher W. Krummel, SGA Senate Speaker

Date

Adopted through a student body referendum that passed with 85% of the vote during the week of April 19, 2004.

[Signature] 5/10/04

Scott M. Nicholson, SGA President 2003-2004

Date

[Signature] 5/10/2004

Dominic Cirincione, SGA President 2004-2005

Date