

CAP's Final Recommendation on Retention of Student Work

Background:

On December 6, 2011, the Steering Committee received a message from Dr. Thomas Hagedorn noting that the College does not have a policy on how long faculty should keep the students' final exams and papers before disposing of them and asking that the college's position be clarified. Dr. Hagedorn is correct that there is no such policy. The closest policy we have concerns grade appeals and states, "The statute of limitations on filing student appeals shall be one semester following the end of the semester in which the incident occurred."

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/undergradcomplaint.html>

Thus this policies implies a need to keep course materials for one semester beyond the completion of the course, but it does not actually make a statement about the retention of course work.

Charge:

The Steering Committee asks that the Committee on Academic Programs consider whether there should be a policy requiring an instructor to retain examinations, papers, and other course work and, if so, for how long. Steering also asks that in making its recommendation that CAP consider the value of returning graded materials as a form of feedback to the student and whether this should be considered in developing a policy on retaining course work.

Testimony:

To gathered testimony on its preliminary recommendation, on November 20, 2013 CAP held an open forum which was co-sponsored by Faculty Senate. CAP also solicited input via email. Three issues were raised at the forum. First, the College needs to inform the campus community regarding how long Canvas will retain student work. Related to this, faculty want clarification about what materials can be downloaded from Canvas. Second, faculty want clarification about how materials no longer needed should be discarded. Must they be shredded? Finally, faculty recommend that the Policy on Retention of Student Work link to the forthcoming Policy on Grade Appeals.

CAP reached out to IT for clarification of how long Canvas materials will be kept. IT informed CAP that it is working on this issue. CAP also contacted the School of Education regarding LiveText, the software that school is using to track development of education students. LiveText assessments will remain available for an extended period of time therefore should not be an issue in regard to retention of student work. Input from Staff Senate and Student Government was also solicited. Neither Staff Senate nor Student Government had any issues with the draft policy.

CAP revised its preliminary recommendation based on the input it received.

Final Recommendation:

2/27/2014

Based on consultation with College counsel regarding pertinent state and federal laws, CAP recommends the following policy regarding retention of student work.

Excluding work which has been returned to students, all instructional faculty are required to retain culminating student projects, exams, papers or documentation of these tasks in a form determined appropriate by the responsible faculty. The work (or documentation of the work) must be retained for a period of one academic semester following the semester in which that work was submitted for a course grade. For summer courses, work must be retained through the following fall semester; for winter courses, work must be retained through the following spring semester.

In the event that an appeal of the student grade is in progress (insert link to the grade appeal policy), the work must be retained until the appeal is exhausted.

In cases where coursework is submitted electronically, faculty should consult with IT about proper procedures regarding downloading and saving student work.

Faculty leaving the employ of The College of New Jersey are required to submit to their department chair final student exams, papers, projects, or documentation of such culminating learning tasks so that these materials may be retained by The College for the period described above.