CS/IS/Cyber Guidelines for Collaboration

Definition:
To work jointly with others or together esp. in an intellectual endeavor.

The following are policies for collaboration and followed with an informal discussion of collaboration and academic integrity.

Firm Policies

Homework:
All homework unless the work is a team project must be your own work. You should not seek specific answers from other sources. However, other sources may be used in helping you arrive at a solution. In addition, we encourage students to collaborate at a high-level by talking about homework problems. However, the line here between appropriate and inappropriate collaboration is hazy and you must be careful. It is certainly not appropriate copy another student's work. It is appropriate to ask for help in understanding a concept or technique necessary to solve a particular problem. It is not appropriate to give someone part of your code to help him or her understand his or her problem. It is appropriate to look at the struggling student's code and offer assistance for their specific logic or syntax problem. Your code represents your thought process… their code represents their thought process. The only true way to help a fellow student in this class is to help them with their thought process. When in doubt, err on the cautious side and ask the instructor.

Programming Assignments:
In industry, good programmers copy, borrow, and collaborate - it is the very essence of the concept of software reuse we try to promote. However, like homework, unless the work is a team project, all programs must be your own work. Again, the line between appropriate and inappropriate collaboration might seem hazy, the following should clarify it for you.

> **Appropriate collaboration:**
> Asking questions about syntax errors while programming.
> Using other components in developing your programs where the development of that component is not the main purpose of the assignment (e.g., you can use a Stack class for an Operating Systems programming assignment, but not to solve a Data Structures assignment on implementing stacks). Discussing or describing an approach to solving a problem at a high level such as sketching an algorithm or data structure that might be used.
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> **Inappropriate collaboration:**
> Sharing code with others!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Group Projects:
Some projects are performed in groups. Obviously this is an instance when collaboration is expected within a group. The only guideline here is that every member of the group ought to

insure that they're contributing equally. Too often only one or two people carry the project. Group assignments can be valuable in teaching collaboration but they can also be an opportunity to rely inappropriately on others to do all of the work. A person's contribution to a group project will be taken into consideration when assigning individual grades.

General Comments:
Working together in excess of these guidelines is considered academic dishonesty and can result in serious discipline. Our general policy on discipline will be the following:

> **First Offense**
> Everyone involved will receive a score of 0 on the assignment. This means both the person(s) who did the work as well as the person(s) who reused the work of others. So beware - letting someone else use any of your work will result in a 0 for you as well. In addition, we are required to send a letter to the University Academic Affairs office that documents the episode.
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> **Subsequent Offenses**
> Anyone foolish enough to violate these policies a second time will receive an "F" for the course and will be turned over the Academic Affairs for further disciplinary action. Again, this includes any and all parties involved. Additional penalties, per Academic Affairs Office guidelines, may include expulsion from the University.

Thoughts from your Faculty:
Most students would be surprised at how easy it is to detect collaboration in programming!!! - please do not test us!! ***Remember, you always have willing and legal collaborators in the faculty.***

Almost all of life is filled with collaboration (i.e., people working together). Yet in our academic system, we artificially limit collaboration. These limits are designed to force you to learn fundamental principles and build specific skills. It is very artificial, and you'll find that collaboration is a valuable skill in the working world.
While some of you may be tempted to collaborate too much, others will collaborate too little. When appropriate, it's a good idea to make use of others - the purpose here is to learn. Be sure to make the most of this opportunity but do it earnestly and with integrity.

The Faculty of CS/IS/Cyber