The Honor System

Never suppose that in any possible situation or under any circumstances that it is best for you to do a dishonorable thing however slightly so it may appear to you . . . Encourage all your virtuous dispositions, and exercise them whenever an opportunity arises, being assured that they will gain strength by exercise . . . and that exercise will make them habitual . . . Though you cannot see, when you take one step, what will be the next, yet follow truth, justice, and plain dealing, and never fear their leading you out of (any difficult situation) in the easier manner possible.

Thomas Jefferson

The Honor System of the University of Virginia embodies many of Mr. Jefferson’s principles. The purpose of the Honor System is to sustain and protect a community of trust in which students can enjoy the freedom to develop their intellectual and personal potential. The concept of an honor system implies that students commit themselves to the pursuit of truth. Dishonest means are incompatible with this pursuit.

Honor violations are unacceptable under any circumstances and can result in dismissal. A student who commits an honor offense by willfully lying, cheating, or stealing, breaches the trust of the entire community. Dismissing this person ensures an atmosphere of trust and freedom from suspicion in our community.

The rewards of the Honor System are great, but so are its demands. All members of the community must act honorably in their dealings with others and hold their peers to the same standards.

At the Curry School of Education, courses are conducted in the spirit of the Honor System. The instructor will indicate which assignments and activities are to be done individually or which permit collaboration. The following pledge should be written out at the end of all quizzes, examinations, individual assignments, and papers: “I pledge that I have neither given nor received help on this examination (quiz, assignment, etc.).” The pledge should be signed by the student.

If you have any questions about the Honor System, you may contact the Honor Committee at (434) 924-7602 or visit http://www.virginia.edu/honor/.