



MEMORANDUM

TO: CSCU ACADEMIC COUNCIL
FROM: ERNESTINE YUILLE WEAVER, COUNSEL
DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 2014
RE: GUIDELINES AND NOTICE PROVISIONS FOR USE OF ANTI-PLAGIARISM
DETECTION SOFTWARE

As discussed at the Academic Council meeting on February 12, 2014 the BOR Information Technology department is prepared to re-launch the SafeAssign component of Blackboard. To ensure that SafeAssign or any other anti-plagiarism detection products are used in accordance with the Family Educational Privacy Rights Act (FERPA), copyright law and student due process rights, I have prepared and attached Guidelines for Use and Notice.

Faculty must comply with these guidelines, so please be certain that these are distributed throughout your institution and that faculty are made aware of the importance of compliance. Also, the Notice provision should be included in all relevant course syllabi and catalogues. Please be certain that it is likewise distributed and reproduced.

I am requesting that SafeAssign be available for use beginning March 3, 2014 to allow you a few days to share this information.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 860-723-0114 or WeaverE@ct.edu.

Thank you for your cooperation.

EYW

SAFEASSIGN, TURNITIN AND OTHER ANTI-PLAGIARISM DETECTION TOOLS

GUIDELINES FOR USE

The CSCU Information Technology department is able to re-launch the SafeAssign anti-plagiarism software component of Blackboard as certain safeguards have been implemented to assure that the use of this tool does not conflict with the Family Educational Privacy Rights Act (FERPA), copyright laws or student due process rights. Please be certain to adhere to the following guidelines regarding use of this tool or other anti-plagiarism tools:

1. Notice should be provided

Although there is no longer a requirement that faculty collect consent forms, it is a best practice to provide notice to students that faculty may be using anti-plagiarism software. By providing this notice with the syllabus, students will be on notice that their work may be subject to such level of scrutiny. A sample Notice is appended.

2. Student consent is required if the work contains personally identifiable information or was uploaded by the student

Students cannot be required, by any means, to submit their work through SafeAssign. Student consent must be received prior to submission to SafeAssign. The software has been updated with an Institutional Release Statement that is displayed to the student prior to submitting their work. This update requires student consent as a condition of accepting the work. Once a student consents to the submission, any potential claim that a faculty member prohibitively released the student's work becomes null.

3. Consent must not be coerced and alternative submission methods must be disclosed

If a student does not wish to use this tool, faculty must have an alternative submission method and the alternative method must be made known to the students in advance. Without an alternative method for submitting work, the student could claim that he or she was coerced into submitting their work through SafeAssign or else be penalized for failure to timely submit the work. The alternative plan must not be burdensome or give those students who submit work using the anti-plagiarism tool an advantage.

4. If the student does not provide consent, faculty may nonetheless submit a limited portion of the student's de-identified work to the anti-plagiarism tool

If the student does not provide consent and does not submit the work through SafeAssign, the faculty may still use the tool to determine the originality of the student's work. However, the faculty member must remove the personally identifiable information from the paper and submit only the select portion of the work in question. To submit the entire work would increase exposure to FERPA by exposing an entire education record that could be matched to other student's originality reports as well as raise copyright issues.

5. Academic consequences - Students may not be penalized solely on the outcome of a report

No conclusion of plagiarism may be based solely on an originality report from SafeAssign, TurnItIn or similar anti-plagiarism tools. Students suspected of plagiarism due to an originality report shall not be denied class participation and shall have an immediate right to review of the faculty member's conclusion through an authorized review process.

NOTICE

ANTI-PLAGIARISM DETECTION SOFTWARE

SafeAssign, TurnItIn or other anti-plagiarism detection software products may be used in this course.

Anti-plagiarism detection software products assist faculty and students in preventing and detecting plagiarism. Professors may utilize such software in order to check the originality of the academic work students submit in a course by comparing submitted papers to those contained in its database consisting of submitted papers and other sources. Anti-plagiarism detection software returns an “originality report” for each submission. The report is limited in scope to merely identifying passages that are not original to the author of the submitted work and which may include correctly cited quotations and information. Professors and students must carefully review such reports. No adverse action may be taken by a professor with respect to a student solely on the basis of an originality report which indicates the potential for plagiarism.

In this course you may be asked to submit your academic papers and other creative work containing personally identifiable information for originality reporting. By doing so, your work along with personally identifiable information will be retained in the product database and may be subsequently reported out containing your personally identifiable information not only to your professor, but also to professors of other universities and colleges within Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) as part of subsequent originality reports.

You may decline to submit your work for originality reporting. If so, you must be provided an alternative method in which to submit your work. However, your professor, after removing your personally identifying information, may nonetheless submit limited portions of your academic work for originality reporting.