Case Studies For Students (prepared by Scott Taylor 7/29/16)
The following case studies are intended to be used as starting points for discussions regarding academic honesty and dishonesty. Feel free to modify. Additional resources for understanding academic integrity at Colby can be found at www.colby.edu/academicintegrity and libguides.colby.edu/avoidingplagiarism.

1. Sebastian is taking an Economics course. He starts off doing well and is enjoying the course. As the semester wears on, however, he begins feeling overwhelmed by the demands of coursework from his different classes, as well as his athletics and extra-curricular activities. Next week Tuesday there’s an important project due. As he sits down to work on it the Thursday before, he gets a text that his mother has been in a car accident. She’s fine, but Sebastian is shaken and has a hard time concentrating. He puts the project away, talks with friends, and then works on his other assignments, all due the next day. On Friday he sits down to work on the Economics project again, and again has a hard time concentrating. He forces himself to do so, however, and begins to realize that he doesn’t understand the course material as well as he thought he did. He ends up spending a few hours reviewing old concepts before going out with friends. On Saturday, he realizes that he is really unsure how to even start the project. Beginning to panic, he talks with his teammate Antonio who took the course last year. Antonio says that he did the same project last year and would be happy to meet up with Sebastian on Sunday to help him. On Sunday, however, Antonio cancels saying he has to scramble to get other work done and can they meet on Monday? Sebastian is now very worried, but spends his time on Sunday getting the work done for his other classes. Monday evening, Antonio again cancels but this time sends Sebastian an email with a copy of his project from last year attached. Antonio says, “Sorry I can’t meet, but maybe this will help.”

2. Celia is in the second semester of a natural science class with lab. She isn’t really enjoying it, but needs it for her medical school application. She’s much more into her Psychology class (also needed for med school.) As the semester progresses, she begins to hear about classmates from her lab science class working together to write their lab reports, contrary to the professor’s instructions. Apparently, they’ve been doing this since last semester and haven’t been caught. Celia feels angry that she’s been putting so much work into a class she doesn’t really like and is getting grades that are worse than her classmates who are breaking the rules. Celia seeks out her friend Rosalind to complain. Rosalind listens and then suggests that they just work together on the next lab report, since it seems to not really be a problem.

3. Lysander is a first-semester student taking a course on the history of culinary interpretations of Shakespeare’s plays. He is supposed to write a paper on the subject “If music be the food of love.” Unfortunately, he’s procrastinated on writing the paper and it’s now the night before the first draft is due. He doesn’t really have many ideas on what to write. In fact, his only ideas are “Bacon vs. Shakespeare: fried meat as a hidden clue to questions of authorship.” and “The time signature of Measure for Measure.” But he realizes neither of these are going to go anywhere useful, so he turns to his old friend Google who helped him out a lot in high school. After spending an hour looking through search results, Lysander
stumbles on a webpage which does a fantastic job explaining the musical-culinary connections in many of Shakespeare’s plays, including *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (a play the class hasn’t read.) The webpage is so helpful, Lysander decides it will be an incredibly useful resource for his paper. Unfortunately, it’s now 4 AM and Lysander has class at 9 AM. Fortunately, it’s just the first draft that’s due, so he copies key sentences from the webpage into a Word document, changes a few words to be sure he’s paraphrasing and not quoting, adds a few sentences of his own to tie them together and gets a couple hours sleep. He forgets to include a citation to the webpage he used.

**Discussion Questions for each case:**

1. What could each character have done *in advance* of the situation to avoid committing academic dishonesty?
2. What could each character have done *during the situation* to avoid committing academic dishonesty?
3. What resources could each character have used to help them create their academic work more successfully?
4. If you were a friend of the character and became aware of the situation they were in, how would you advise them?
5. What should the student do after the situation is over? What if they are confronted by the professor? What if they aren’t confronted by the professor?