Online Learning @ NJCU
The Guide on the Side for Students
Getting Started

Now that you have registered for your online course, you may be wondering if there is anything you can do to in the weeks ahead to prepare for it. The information in this manual is designed to help you understand what you need to do to prepare for your first online course and become a successful online learner.

Online Course Delivery Systems

WebCT
Most online courses at NJCU use a learning management system called WebCT that is designed to provide you with a self-contained environment in which most of your online course activities will take place. Since WebCT is totally web based, you do not need to have any special software installed on your computer to use it. All communication with your professor and classmates (including e-mail) occurs within your WebCT course which you can access anywhere and any time you have access to the Internet and a supported browser.

Alternative Online Course Delivery Systems
A small number of courses in the MA in Educational Technology do not utilize WebCT but rather have a free standing website designed by the faculty member, a class listserv and a WebBoard. Log-in information for these courses differs from that described in this manual. If you are enrolled in a course that utilizes the alternative system, a letter with complete log-in instructions will be sent to you by mail.

Hardware and Software Requirements for WebCT

The first thing you should do to get ready for your course is to check to make sure that you have the proper hardware and software to participate. You can find an up-to-date list of the general hardware and software requirements for all courses that use WebCT at this location: http://newlearning.njcu.edu/dl/requirements/

Please Note: Some courses have additional requirements. For further information, please consult Course Offerings http://newlearning.njcu.edu/dl/offerings.htm Click on either Graduate or Undergraduate to see a list of courses for the upcoming semester. Then, click on the course number to view course description, hardware and software requirements, and other information.

Web Browser Information

Although you do not need to have any special software installed on your computer to use WebCT, you will need to be sure your web browser (e.g., Internet Explorer, Netscape) is supported and that it is configured properly for use with WebCT. To make sure your computer is ready for WebCT, please consult the WebCT Browser Tune-Up page: http://www.webct.com/tuneup

The CyberPrimer Online Tutorial

To help you get started with online learning, New Jersey City University developed the CyberPrimer, a free, self-paced online tutorial designed to provide you with the information and skills you need to become a successful online learner. We recommend that all new online learners complete the CyberPrimer before logging into their online courses for the first time. You
may access the CyberPrimer two weeks before the start of the semester by visiting:  
http://webct.njcu.edu

Logging Into WebCT

Follow the steps below to log into WebCT to access the CyberPrimer or your online course.  
Please note: While the CyberPrimer will be available two weeks before the start of the semester, your online course will not be available until 12:00 noon on the first official day of the semester. Although it is not necessary for all students to log in simultaneously at 12:00, we do recommend that you access your online course at some time on the first day of the semester so that you may consult the syllabus and assignments that have been posted by your professor.

Follow the steps below to log into WebCT:

1. Use your Web browser (e.g., Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator) to locate the following URL:  http://webct.njcu.edu
2. Click on “Log in to my WebCT”
3. When prompted, enter your GothicNet ID and password. This is the ID and password you use to access the NJCU GothicNet portal to register for classes, check your grades, or access other campus information.
4. All online, web-enhanced, and blended courses in which you are enrolled appear on your MyWebCT page. To enter a course, click on its name.

Purchasing Textbooks for Your Course

If your online course requires a textbook, you may purchase it at the New Jersey City University Campus Bookstore located on the first floor of the Gilligan Student Union Building on the NJCU Campus. You may also purchase your textbook through the bookstore’s website at:  
http://www.bkstore.com/njcu. The phone number of the bookstore is: (201) 200-3503.

Online students may also wish to browse major online bookstores such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble for textbooks and recommended course readings.

E-Packs

If your professor has adopted publisher prepared content called an “e-Pack” for your course, you will need an access code (in addition to your user name and password) when you enter your course for the first time. You will find the access code bundled with the textbook for your course - so please use care in making sure you purchase the correct text for your course. The access code is typically a series of letters and numbers and each access code can only be entered once (i.e., you cannot use another student’s access code). If you purchased a used textbook, you will need to purchase the access code separately by visiting the WebCT website:  
http://www.webct.com/content/viewpage?name=content_student_access_codes

The Online Learning Website includes a partial list of courses that will be using e-packs. See:  
http://newlearning.njcu.edu/dl/epacks/

Course Access
Student access to online courses is available only during the official stated semester/session as indicated by the University’s academic calendar. It is the student’s responsibility to retain copies of his/her own work and/or correspondence posted to WebCT for any future reference. All WebCT course sites, including content, are routinely removed from the WebCT server at the conclusion of each semester/session.

Learning to Learn Online
The CyberPrimer

New Jersey City University’s CyberPrimer Online Tutorial is designed to provide you with essential information about how to become a successful online learner and how to use WebCT, the learning management system used for most online courses at the University. When you access WebCT, you will see the CyberPrimer listed along with any other online courses in which you are enrolled. The CyberPrimer provides information on the following topics:

- E-mail and Netiquette
- Web Browsers
- Search Engines
- Downloading Software
- WebCT Communication Tools (E-mail, Discussion, Chat)
- WebCT Calendar
- WebCT Quizzes and Surveys

The Office of Online Learning recommends that all students complete the CyberPrimer before beginning their first online course.

Tips for Learning to Learn Online

So what do you need to make the most of your online course experience? While not all inclusive, the following tips excerpted from NJCU’s CyberPrimer Online Tutorial may help:

Tip 1: Make a Date With Your Online Course
Take out your calendar now, before you begin, and block out specific times you have available to work on your online course. We have found that the most successful online learners log into their courses on a regular (if not daily) basis. Since each learner and course is different, it is impossible to estimate the exact number of hours a given course will require. As a rule of thumb, you should plan on spending at least as much time in your online course as you would spend in an actual face-to-face classroom, plus whatever additional time might be required to complete out-of-class assignments.

Tip 2: Be a Good Communicator
Since written communication is vital to online learning, you will want to put your best foot forward in your communications with your professor and your classmates. It is generally a good idea to prepare all written communications in a word processing program (e.g., Microsoft Word) before copying and pasting them into WebCT. This will give you an opportunity, not only to review and spell-check your document, but also to reflect upon what you have written to make sure it communicates exactly what you want to say. Clear communication is particularly important in public areas (e.g., the discussion forum) where misunderstandings can easily occur.

Tip 3: "Speak" Up
There is no room (or reason) for "shyness" in the online environment. You will get more from your online learning experience if you are willing to share your ideas and comments with your professor and classmates through WebCT’s communication tools (E-mail, Discussion Forum...
Chat, etc.).

**Tip 4: Get Organized**

In addition to setting up a specific time to log into your online course, you may also wish to develop some strategies to help you get organized. Some students find it helpful to print lengthy documents and put them in a binder or portfolio, while others prefer to do all their reading online. One thing we strongly recommend is that you establish a folder on your computer and save all the documents you create for your class to that folder. This will, not only help you get organized, but will also provide you with a back-up copy of your class work in the event that you should need it.

**Tip 5: Take Charge of Your Learning**

In an online course, the professor's role changes from "sage on the stage to guide on the side." Research has demonstrated that students learn best when they have an active rather than a passive role in their learning. Self-directed learners need to be disciplined, motivated, and able to work independently to succeed.

**Tip 6: Make Sure Your Computer Is Ready**

Before beginning your course, review the hardware and software requirements and do the "Browser Tune-up" to be sure that there that your computer will be ready to access your course on the first day of the semester. For further information, consult: http://newlearning.njcu.edu/dl/requirements

If you professor schedules a chat for your course, be sure to visit the chat room early to make sure you can access it without problem.

**Tip 7: Complete Our Online Tutorial**

We suggest that all new online learners complete The CyberPrimer, our online tutorial designed to prepare you to be a successful online learner before logging into your class for the first time. Access to the CyberPrimer will be available to all enrolled online learners approximately two weeks before the semester begins.

**Tip 8: Seek Help When You Need It**

If you need help with an academic issue, it is usually best to use WebCT’s self-contained e-mail tool to e-mail the professor within the course or follow specific instructions that your professor may provide for contacting him/her. If you have a non-academic, course support issue you may contact the Office of Online Learning via e-mail 24 hours a day, seven days a week by sending an e-mail message to dlsupport@njcu.edu. A response will be made to you within 24 hours.

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**Communication in Your Online Course**

There are two types of communication that generally take place in an online course: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous communication (like synchronous swimming) requires that all participants engage in an activity at the same time. This is similar to the type of communication that occurs in a traditional classroom environment where faculty and students are physically present in the same place and at the same time. Synchronous communication can occur in an online course when a professor schedules a chat which would require that all or specific groups of learners be logged into their course at the same time.

Although synchronous communication is valuable, it is not the primary way that communications occur in an online course. Most online communications take place asynchronously – meaning that learners and faculty do not need to be logged on at the same time for learning and communication to occur. Much of the communication that takes place in your online course will occur in the Discussion Forum (sometimes called a Bulletin Board). Just like a corkboard, it provides a place for the professor to tack up questions for student discussions and allows students to tack up their responses. It's an effective way for you to participate in class discussions online.

A major advantage of online learning is the flexibility and convenience it affords in allowing you to work on your course according to your individual schedule and needs. Unless your professor has
scheduled a chat or some other learning activity that requires all students to be logged in synchronously (at the same time), there is no prescribed time for you to log into your course. A major advantage of online learning is the flexibility and convenience it affords in allowing you to work on your course according to your individual schedule and needs. We do encourage students to check into the courses frequently (on a daily basis if possible) in order to keep pace with required discussions, activities and assignments.

**Viewing/Uploading Files for Your Online Course**

Most of the pages that are contained in your own line course were prepared in HTML format which makes them viewable by all users on the Web. Occasionally, you may encounter a page that is created in another format that your computer cannot understand. Should this occur, the first thing you should do is to check the hardware and software requirements for your class to determine if your professor has requested that you purchase or download (see list below) a specific software application or plug-in for your course. If it appears that the file will not open, you should check to see whether you have pop-up blockers installed on your computer and follow the instructions on p. 7 to disable them. You may also be able to open the document by holding down the CTRL key while your double click on the icon or file name.

**Plug-Ins and Downloads**

Sometimes, it may be necessary for you to download software or plug-ins in order to successfully participate in the online course in which you are enrolled. For your convenience, NJCU has compiled a list of some software you might need along with links to the sites where you will find the applications available for downloading.

Generally, all you need to successfully download files from a website is a web browser, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox, and space on your hard disk to store the application.

If you do not have a compression program, it is suggested that you download WinZip (for Windows) or ZipIt or Stuffit (for the Mac) before downloading other software.

Software available for downloading from the Web generally falls into one of two categories:

**Freeware** is software that you can download and use without ever paying a fee.

**Shareware** programs may be downloaded without a fee for evaluation purposes. After the evaluation period, you are expected to pay a fee which is typically minimal. In some cases, you are "on your honor" with regard to submitting your payment. In other cases, the software will expire and become unusable after the evaluation period ends.

Downloading from a large company website is typically very easy, but there are a few general rules you should observe. First of all, before you download anything from the Web, you should make sure you have virus protection software installed on your computer and that your virus definitions are up-to-date. Read all the instructions before beginning the download process and make sure you are downloading the correct version for your specific operating system. Also, be sure to note where you save the application. When the download is complete, you will probably need to locate the file and run it in order to install the application.

Following is a list of some popular software applications available for download:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software Title</th>
<th>Web Site</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netscape Communicator</td>
<td><a href="http://browser.netscape.com/ns8/download/archive72x.jsp">http://browser.netscape.com/ns8/download/archive72x.jsp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete package --</td>
<td>Complete package -- web browser (which allows FTP), e-mail module and newsgroup reader.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Microsoft Internet Explorer  
Easy to use web browser with tools for e-mail and newsgroup reading. Usually included with Microsoft Windows.

Mozilla Firefox  
A free, cross-platform browser that is growing in popularity.

Microsoft Compatibility Pack  
[p://support.microsoft.com/kb/924074](http://support.microsoft.com/kb/924074)  
Compatibility Pack for Microsoft Office Word, Excel and PowerPoint that will permit users of older versions who have the appropriate updates installed to open, edit, save, and create documents created in Word, Excel and/or PowerPoint 2007.

Adobe Acrobat Reader  
View and print PDF documents.

WS_FTP  
An easy-to-use Windows based FTP (file transfer protocol) program.

Fetch  
[p://fetchsoftworks.com/](http://fetchsoftworks.com/)  
For Macintosh users only; this FTP client makes uploading as simple as it gets.

Transmit FTP  
[p://www.panic.com/index-l.html](http://www.panic.com/index-l.html)  
Another easy-to-use Macintosh FTP client

Stuffit  
Compression utility for the Macintosh to decompress a variety of compression formats.

WinZip  
[p://www.winzip.com](http://www.winzip.com)  
Compression utility to extract .zip files distributed on the Internet.

ZipIt  
[p://www.maczipit.com](http://www.maczipit.com)  
A Macintosh program that zips and unzips archives in a format fully compatible with PKZip for the IBM and zip implementations on other systems. Runs natively on OSX.

Quick Time  
Apple software available for both Windows and Macintosh for handling video, sound, animation, graphics, text, music, and more.

Real Player  
Allows you to enjoy streaming audio and video on networks and the Internet.

Windows Media Player  
[p://www.windowsmedia.com/mg/home.asp](http://www.windowsmedia.com/mg/home.asp)  
Another software designed to help you enjoy streaming audio and video.

Macromedia Flash  
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>With the Macromedia Flash Player, you can view the best animation and entertainment on the Web.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
With Macromedia Shockwave Player, you can enjoy multimedia games, learning applications and more. |
Graphic utility that can read most popular formats. Easy to use for those who are not graphic professionals |
Shareware graphics processor, editor and viewer for Windows. |
Allows you to convert word processor documents created in Microsoft Works 6.0 to specific versions of Microsoft Word and other Works programs. |

Please consult the following websites for additional information concerning popular software programs you may download from the Web:

| CNET Downloads | [http://download.cnet.com](http://download.cnet.com) |
| TUCOWS | [http://www.tucows.com](http://www.tucows.com) |
Getting Help with Your Online Course

The following resources are designed to assist you with your online courses. If you are in need of a resource that is not listed here, you may contact the Office of Online Learning at (201) 200-3449 for assistance and advice.

WebCT Online Help
When you are logged into your course, you can click on Help in the WebCT top Menu bar for assistance with problems you may encounter in using the WebCT application. WebCT Help is context sensitive. This means that when you click on Help, a Help topic will appear relating to the part of WebCT you are using. If this is not what you are looking for, you can click on Index to see the full list of WebCT Help topics that are available.

Contacting Your Professor
If you need help with an academic issue, you should contact your professor via WebCT e-mail or by the method indicated by your professor in the course syllabus. The University maintains a directory of faculty, staff, and departments which can be accessed at: http://online.njcu.edu/njcu_directory/directory.html

The NJCU Frank J. Guarini Library
The NJCU Congressman Frank J. Guarini Library has a full range of print and electronic resources to assist you with academic research for your online course. The Library's homepage provides access to its online databases and "Ask a Librarian" services. Most electronic resources can be accessed from the convenience of your home computer.

A good place to begin learning about what the library has to offer is the Library’s Information Literacy Tutorial. This tutorial may be accessed from your myWebCT page or by visiting: http://www.njcu.edu/guarini/instructions/instructions.htm

Further information about the NJCU Frank J. Guarini Library and its resources may be obtained by visiting the Library’s webpage: http://www.njcu.edu/guarini/home.htm

NJCU Online Learning Website
The NJCU Online Learning website contains a full range of resources for prospective and enrolled students including course descriptions and textbook information, hardware and software requirements, and other helpful information including an online learning self-assessment tool to help you determine if online learning is right for you. Visit the Online Learning website at: http://newlearning.njcu.edu
Access the self-assessment tool at: http://newlearning.njcu.edu/dl/assessment.htm

DL Support
If you have read through all of the above information and you still cannot find the answer to your problem, you may fill out a request for online course assistance at the Online Learning website. See: http://newlearning.njcu.edu/dl/tech_support_form.htm
A response will be made to you within twenty-four hours. During business hours, you may also contact the Office of Online Learning at (201) 200-3449

Logging into WebCT: Common Problems & Solutions

User ID and Password Issues
The most common problem that students encounter when logging into WebCT is an incorrect user ID and password. Before contacting DL Support for assistance, please check to make sure that the user ID you have entered is correct (it is the same as your GothicNet ID) and that your password is entered in the correct case.

**Changing Your Password**

You may reset your GothicNet password by filling out the web-based form which can be accessed at: https://www.njcu.edu/activedir/change_pass2.asp. Any changes made to your GothicNet password will take effect immediately in WebCT.

**Course Access**

If you do not see your course listed when you log into WebCT, it may be due to the fact that the semester has not yet begun. Access to your course will be available at 12:00 noon on the first official day of the semester.

**Spyware and Deceptive Software**

Many students report problems with WebCT that are actually caused by spyware, parasites and other deceptive software that may be inadvertently downloaded to your computer when you download and/or install applications from the Web.

For further information about spyware and deceptive software and how you can remove it, visit the following website: http://www.doxdesk.com/parasite.

To help you control this problem, you may wish to download and install a spyware detection and removal application such as:

- Spybot – Search and Destroy [http://www.spybot.info/](http://www.spybot.info/)

**Browser Issues**

If you are having a problem accessing WebCT, you may wish to try using a different browser. Most spyware and deceptive software only affects Internet Explorer. For further information and to make sure your browser is configured properly for WebCT, please consult the Browser Tune-up: [http://www.webct.com/tuneup](http://www.webct.com/tuneup)

**Common Error Messages**

The problems listed below have been reported by a number of students. Please follow the outlined steps to correct the problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERROR MESSAGE</th>
<th>SOLUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;404 Access Forbidden&quot; or “You are not authorized to view this page” or You are redirected to a search engine screen upon login</td>
<td>1. First, complete the WebCT Browser Tune-Up to make sure your browser has been configured correctly for use with WebCT. Note: the current version at NJCU is WebCT 4.1 CE. 2. Second, follow the steps outlined under the Spyware and Deceptive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Software section above to check your computer for parasites and deceptive software.

3. The problem may also be caused by an Internet Explorer update and can be corrected by following the steps below to change an Internet Explorer setting:

   a) In Internet Explorer, from the **Tools** menu, select **Internet Options**
   b) Click the **Advanced** Tab
   c) Under **Browsing**, clear the checkbox for **Show friendly HTTP error messages**
   d) Click **OK**
   e) Restart Internet Explorer

**ERROR MESSAGE:** "Green Screen and code like "); d.writeln(" ");

**SOLUTION:** Some students report getting a green screen with code such as the above when trying to access their courses. This may be caused by the RX Bar (Search Engine Bar) that can be installed when peer-to-peer file applications like Kazaa are installed. If that is the case, this problem can be resolved by following the steps below to uninstall the RX Bar:

1. In Microsoft Windows, open the **Control Panel**.
2. Open **Add or Remove Programs**.
3. Find the entry for **RX Bar**, then click **Change/Remove**.
4. If prompted, confirm that you want to remove the program.
5. Restart your computer.
Using WebCT: Common Problems and Solutions

If you are using WebCT for the first time, please complete the WebCT CyberPrimer before logging into your online course for the first time. You will see the CyberPrimer listed along with any other courses in which you are enrolled for the semester.

Listed below are some common problems that some students have reported when using WebCT along with suggested solutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM:</th>
<th>You are unable to open a chat room.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SOLUTION: | The problem is most likely caused by the fact that you do not have JAVA installed or configured properly on your computer. You will need to have the Sun Microsystems Java Runtime Environment (JRE) software version 1.4.1 (1.4.2_07 or higher strongly recommended) software installed in your browser in order for certain areas of WebCT to function properly. Sun JRE version 5.0 (1.5) is also supported. Follow the steps below to download and install JRE. If you think you already have the correct version of JAVA installed, skill to the “Enable JAVA in Your Browser section. To install this software:

Install Java Runtime Environment

2. Follow the instructions for downloading JAVA Runtime Environment (JRE 6)
3. Follow the instructions for installation

Enable Java in Your Browser

1. Select **Tools** then choose **Internet Options**. The **Internet Options** screen appears.
2. Select the **Security** tab.
3. Click the **Custom Level** button. The **Security Settings** screen appears.
4. Look for the **Java Permissions** section.
   - If the section does not exist, continue to the next step.
   - If the section exists, choose Low, Medium or High safety
5. Click **OK**. The **Internet Options** screen appears.
6. Click **OK**.

Switch to the Sun Java Runtime Environment

1. Open the Windows **Control Panel** by clicking **Start** > **Settings** > **Control Panel**. The **Control Panel** appears.
2. Locate and double-click **Java** or **Java Plug-in**. The **Java Control Panel** appears.
3. Look for the **Browser** tab.
   - If the Browser tab does not exist, skip the rest of this section.
   - If the Browser tab exists, click the **Browser** tab.
4. Under **Settings**, select the checkbox next to your browser.
5. Click **Apply** to save your settings.
6. Restart the browser.
| **PROBLEM:** | You are unable to open various pages or tools in WebCT (e.g., quizzes, discussion postings, email messages, or other files that open in a new window). |
| **SOLUTION:** | The problem described above is likely caused by pop-up blockers installed on your computer. Pop-up killer application work in the background while you browse the Internet. When they detect a pop-up window that may be an unwanted advertisement, they automatically close the window. This can prevent WebCT from performing properly. If you have a pop-up blocker installed on your computer, you will need to either disable it or allow pop-ups from [http://webct.njcu.edu](http://webct.njcu.edu).  
If you are not sure whether you have a pop-up blocker installed, you can go to the following website to find out: [http://popup-killer-review.com/rundetect.htm](http://popup-killer-review.com/rundetect.htm) |

| **PROBLEM:** | Your are having general problems with the WebCT Quiz Tool |
| **SOLUTION:** | There are several reasons why you can experience problems with the quizzes. Have you gone through the WebCT Browser Tune-up? It is important that your browser be set appropriately so that you can successfully take quizzes. Please go through the Browser Tune-up at: [http://www.webct.com/tuneup](http://www.webct.com/tuneup). It will prompt you to select your operating system and the browser you are using (e.g., Internet Explorer). Once you have done that, you will see a page to verify that your browser is supported. Under the “prepare Your Browser Settings for WebCT” section, go through each step to be sure that your browser is set to work optimally with WebCT.  
For the Quiz tool, be sure to pay special attention to the following settings:  
- Enable Javascript  
- Set the Browser Cache  
- Disable Pop-up Blockers  
After you have done this, shut down your browser and reopen it and begin the quiz again. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PROBLEM:</strong></th>
<th>You cannot open a Word or PowerPoint Document. The link doesn’t open or a blank white page appears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **SOLUTION:** | 1) Look to see if there is a pale yellow bar across the top of the WebCT window that stretches all the way across the page. If this is the case, click on the bar which will cause a prompt to appear asking you if you wish to download the file. Click download and the file should open automatically.  
2) If there is no bar across the top of the page, your problem may be due to the fact that you do not have Microsoft Word or PowerPoint installed on your computer. |
| **PROBLEM:** | Your professor cannot open a Word, Excel, Or PowerPoint file that you created in Microsoft Office 2007 |
| **SOLUTION:** | Select Save As and use the Drop Down menu to save the file in the Word 97-2003, Excel 97-2003, or PowerPoint 97-2003 format. You may also change a default setting in office 2007 so that all files saved thereafter are backwards compatible. See the following website for instructions on saving files: [http://www.ms-office2007.com](http://www.ms-office2007.com) |

**NJCU Policies Related to Online Learning**

Student behavior in online courses shall conform to the student code of conduct as described in the *Gothic Guide Student Handbook*. Students using the WebCT course management system at NJCU must also comply with pertinent policies including the Academic Integrity Policy, NJCU Copyright Policy and Related Guidelines, and the Responsible Use of Computer Resources policy.

For further information, please see the links below:

Academic Integrity Policy: [http://www.njcu.edu/dept/senate/integritypolicy.htm](http://www.njcu.edu/dept/senate/integritypolicy.htm)


Full text of the above policies can be found in the Appendix to this document.