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Subject Free Plagiarism Detection Service Available For 2001-2002

Good news! The university has received a free year's subscription to turnitin.com (also known as plagiarism.org), which provides a means to search electronically for plagiarism in your students' papers, homeworks, and lab reports. The company checks students' papers against hundreds of thousands of Web sites, as well as against their own archives of student papers that have been submitted to them.

We are in the process now of setting up the university's account, but I wanted to let you know now so that you can consider whether you'd like to use the company's services during the Fall semester. This may involve your making an announcement to your students soon about how they can expect to turn in their work to you.

The most common set of procedures used by faculty is the following:

- 1) Require students to turn in to you, on time, a printed copy of the paper. (Otherwise, you're stuck printing everything out yourself before you do the grading.)
- 2) Give the students clear instructions for submitting their paper themselves directly to turnitin.com, which they will also need to do on time. If you decide to use the service, we'll give you instructions for registering your course, for setting up your password, and for what to tell students so that they can submit their papers directly.
- 3) Require students to also turn in a disk with the paper on it to you or to email you a copy. This is optional, but faculty have found it handy if they want to build their own class library against which they can later do their own searches. For example, if you require the same lab or homework year after year and you suspect that friends might share their work across different semesters, this will help to catch (or, preferably, deter) such behavior. A second advantage is that if students are tempted to try something slick like submitting one document to you and submitting another to turnitin.com, they may think twice if they're giving you an electronic copy of the paper as well, not knowing quite what you'll do with it. There are two disadvantages to asking for an electronic copy yourself, aside from the extra organizational demands on you: (1) it will cost the students money to hand you several disks over the course of the semester, and (2) you open yourself up to viruses to a greater degree than if you didn't ask for hundreds of electronic files from students.
- 4) If turnitin.com detects any matches between your students' papers and existing text on the Web or in its database, you will get a detailed report of the match, which you can then make a decision about.

If you are interested in using the free service, please send an email to dwest@notes.cc.sunysb.edu anytime during the 2001-2002 fall/spring/summer terms with the following information:

Your Name:
Course Number (And Section):
Your Department:
Your Campus Phone Number:
Your Email Address:
Approx # of Students in Fall '01:

Once we hear from you and once the university's account is set up, we will then send you further information for using the service. In the meantime, if you'd like to know more, visit www.turnitin.com.

Best of luck for the semester.

Nancy Franklin, Executive Officer
Academic Judiciary