Guidelines for the Use of Turnitin @ Penn College

About Turnitin
Turnitin generates a Similarity Report that compares the text of a submission against search targets selected for the assignment. These targets “may include billions of pages of active and archived internet information, a repository of works previously submitted to Turnitin, and a repository of tens of thousands of periodicals, journals, and publications” (Turnitin, June 20, 2019).

It operates within relevant laws and it is widely used by institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada. There are more than 30 million students at 15,000 institutions in 150 countries using Turnitin (Turnitin, June 20, 2019).

Faculty Use of Turnitin
Faculty members are not required to use Turnitin, but it is available as a tool to help students learn proper citation and ensure their academic integrity. If faculty members plan to use Turnitin, it is recommended that students be notified in class at the beginning of the semester. Suggested language for your syllabus or amendment to the syllabus is as follows:

Penn College is committed to preserving academic integrity as defined in College policies. Penn College and its faculty members reserve the right to use electronic means to detect and help prevent the inappropriate use of intellectual property. Students agree that by taking this course all assignments are subject to submission to Turnitin for review of textual similarity. Assignments submitted to Turnitin will also be included as source documents in Turnitin’s restricted access database solely for the purpose of identifying sources of material. The faculty member may require students to submit their assignments electronically to Turnitin or the faculty member may submit questionable text on behalf of a student. The terms that apply to Penn College’s use of Turnitin’s service are described on the Turnitin website.
Access to Similarity Reports
It is recommended that faculty using Turnitin set the options within Turnitin that allow students to view their Similarity Reports, which show how much of their submissions match content in the search targets. Similarity Reports themselves are not sufficient to immediately determine the originality of a work, and each report should be scrutinized to assure originality or plagiarism as appropriate.

Activating Turnitin
Prior to using Turnitin, faculty are encouraged to:

1. Contact Georgia Laudenslager in the Madigan Library if you wish to use Turnitin in your P.L.A.T.O. course site.
2. Create or amend your syllabi to inform students under what conditions Turnitin will be used in the course.
3. Promote learning about how creative assignments are designed and distinguish between the appropriate and inappropriate use of another’s work.
4. Provide students with information about and examples of appropriate and inappropriate use of material within their discipline, and what constitutes fair use.
5. Discuss with students the consequences of inappropriate use, ranging from in-class consequences to broader implications for their chosen field.
6. Provide a demonstration to students about how the submission process works and what Similarity Reports look like.