Understanding Academic Misconduct: Creating a Robust Culture of Integrity

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2018
Some Definitions

What is academic integrity?
What is academic misconduct?
Firm **adherence to a code** of especially moral or artistic **values**: incorruptibility

**Synonym**: **honesty**

(Merriam Webster, on-line)

“A commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility” (CAI, Clemson University)
Intentional wrongdoing; specifically: deliberate violation of a law or standard of practice especially by a government official

Synonym: misbehaviour (Merriam Webster, on-line)

“Anything that gives a student an unearned advantage over another.”

*University Affairs*, Mullens (2000, p. 23)
Key Observations

- Not just about “catching” students
- Creating a culture/environment in which all members of the community are committed to – and held accountable for –
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- Creating a culture/environment in which all members of the community are committed to – and held accountable for – 
  
  **upholding shared values**
Our Mission Statements:

- Education of students
- Conferring of degrees
- Pursuit of truth or knowledge
“Universities are perceived as epitomizing intellectual and social honesty, and they are expected to strive continually for that form of perfection” (Besvinick, 1983, p. 569).
“Wise societies since the time of Plato...have educated for character as well as intellect, decency as well as literacy, virtue as well as knowledge.” (p. 6)

Theodore Roosevelt

“To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.” (p. 3)
Curriculum values-neutral

Academic misconduct is commonplace

“The mystery is not why cheating is wrong or why students cheat, but why there is so little passion about this massive assault on the highest values of the academy.”

(Alschuler & Blimling, 1995, p. 124)
Previous Canadian Study

- 11 institutions 2002 – 2003
- 14,913 undergraduate students
- 1,269 1st year – high school
- 1,318 graduate students
- 683 TAs, and 1,902 faculty

Canadian Journal of Higher Education, v36 n1 p49-63 2006
Limitations

- Self-reported
- Wide range of response rates/populations
- Student concern with confidentiality
- Not prescriptive or conclusive
Specific Behaviours

- Work with others when told not to
- Get Q&A in advance of test
- Copy a few sentences without attribution
- Fabricate/falsify lab data
- Copying during exam
- Fabricate/falsify a bibliography
- Fabricate/falsify research data
- Turn in work done by someone else
- Buy paper off Internet
Specific Behaviours
(high school, undergrad, grads)

- Work with others (76%, 45%, 29%)
- Get Q&A in advance (73%, 38%, 16%)
- Copy a few sentences (62%, 37%, 24%)
- Fabricate/falsify lab data (50%, 25%, 6%)
- Copying during exam (33%, 6%, 3%)
- Fabricate/falsify a bibliography (30%, 17%, 9%)
- Fabricate/falsify research data (29%, 9%, 3%)
- Turn in work by someone else (22%, 9%, 4%)
- Buy paper off internet (1%, 1%, 0%)
1. Harvard – collaboration on take home exam (125)
2. Naval Academy – student sold copy of exam $50 (134)
3. Zichlin School of Business – grade padding/allowed cheating (tuition)
4. Indiana School of Dentistry – half class used exam info obtained through hacking
5. West Virginia – claimed Governor’s daughter had earned MBA, when she had not
6. Florida State – Tutors provided athletes (61) with answers to online tests; wrote papers
7. Duke School of Business – 34 collaborated on take home exam
8. Southern University – Assistant Registrar changed hundreds of grades
9. Dibalo Valley College – students paid ($600) & trading sex for changed grades
10. University of Minnesota – basketball manager wrote >400 papers for 20 students
Not Just Students

- Administrative collusion
- Convocation address (Phillip Baker, Medical School Dean, University of Alberta)
"There's several parts where he talks about one of his children becoming ill, his wife having medical problems, he describes a patient that he had — which is not a patient that he had — and it's a very personal story ... and it was a very good story, it's just the things that happened in the story didn't happen to him."

University Affairs (June 12, 2015)
High-profile academic fraud a symptom of underlying dysfunction

The Guardian (September 13, 2012)
False positives: fraud and misconduct are threatening scientific research

- **Self report**
  - 2% fabricated, falsified or modified data or results
  - 34% questionable practices
    - dropping data point based on a gut feeling
    - changing the design, methodology or results of a study in response to pressures from a funding source
Why?
Societal Values

- Ends justify means
- Cheating socially acceptable
- Cheaters do win
Beyond the Academy

Society in general
  o Politics
  o Policing
  o Church
  o Sport
  o Commerce
The role of personality, cognitive ability and motivation

UBC researchers (Williams, Nathanson, Paulhus)

“Dark triad”

- Narcissism, Machiavellianism, Psychopathy
- “erratic lifestyle, manipulation, callousness, and antisocial tendencies” (p. 295)

1) Psychopathy
2) Poor verbal ability
3) Unrestrained achievement and moral inhibition

Culture & Language

- [Link](https://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/AIBook/AISmithee.pdf)

- Applying Intercultural Concepts to Academic Integrity, Michael Smithee
Indian students, aided by wall-climbing parents, expelled for cheating: 600 Indian high school students expelled for cheating on pressure-packed Grade 10 test

“Hiring test-taking proxies has been a widespread practice in China for a long time,” says Terry Crawford, who runs a video interviewing service called Initialview, which helps colleges, including Stanford, Duke, Georgia Tech, NYU, and Columbia, vet overseas applicants. “With so many Chinese students wanting to study in the U.S., it’s natural that these fraudulent practices are spreading here, where security is comparatively low.”
Social Shift

Intellectual property
Institutional/Contextual Factors

1. Risk perception
2. Policies and practices
3. Quality of teaching and assessment
1. Risk Perception

- Little chance of being caught
- Little penalty if they are
- Cost/Benefit analysis
“Need to buy an essay Toronto”

How many hits?
“Need to buy an essay Toronto”
How many hits?
900,000
A life of a modern college student is loaded with different experiences and events, but with the modern rhythm of life, it can get more challenging to keep up with everything without harming our health...This is the reason so many Canadian students decide to buy college essays online.

Is this the same as cheating? No - because when you are loaded with tons of papers every week - completing them on time becomes almost impossible and college students get the idea to search for other solutions. And we have a great solution for you. Buy essay papers online, and you will not need to spend much time on boring writing, and, at the same time, you will be guaranteed to receive a great grade!

https://ca.edubirdie.com/buy-an-essay-online
If there was more supervision and we felt we couldn’t we wouldn’t. We basically know there is a very good chance we will get away with it. I guess that is a big problem.

As much as it pains me to say, if you eliminate hats during exams, that would be the right step.
Wireless spy Bluetooth earpiece set is a very advance technology for secret communications.

Spy glasses and smartwatches used for high-tech cheating to get into medical school.
The anti-cheating hats (Picture: Kasettsart University/Facebook)
I find that even when people are caught cheating during a test or examination, they are often just told to stop. The measures that are supposed to be taken are not taken. I think this leads to the attitude some people take that cheating is not a big deal.
Vague, ineffective, cumbersome
Faculty Response

Have ignored suspected case (46% F, 38% TAs)
  o Lack of evidence
  o Lack of support
  o Lack of time

Penalties
  o Most likely – reprimand or warning (59% F, 71% TAs)
  o Most preferred – failing grade (56% F, 59% TAs)
To be honest, I really don’t know the penalties of cheating, and maybe that’s why I have no problem looking at another student’s multiple-choice answers when I get a chance.
“Students are most likely to cheat when they think their assignments are pointless, and less likely to cheat when they admire and respect their teachers and are excited about what they are learning.”

(Kiss, 2000, p. 6-7)
Steininger, Johnson and Kirts (1964)

- Interest level in course content
- Quality of teaching
- Test meaningfulness
- Test difficulty
- Justification for cheating
- Urge to cheat
- Actual copying
- Letting others copy
As long as universities are not about learning, students will cheat...Are assignments given to teach the students the material, or are assignments given to determine what the student will get as a mark? There is only one primary purpose. ‘Cheating’ allows the student to get a better mark.
Students DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL TO LEARN...we come because a university education is deemed socially and economically necessary...We have been brain washed into a game, whereby we memorize vast amounts of material, regurgitate it onto paper in a crowded room, and then forget about it..
Students cheat when they feel cheated
If we create ‘game playing conditions’, some students will engage in ‘game playing behaviours’
Sheridan College has embarked on a bold new vision – to become a university dedicated to undergraduate, professional education. In an economy and society based on innovation and change, creativity is the leading skill that people will need to adapt to a future that they will need to build and inform.

Sheridan is a pathfinder. We are challenging traditional ideas of what makes a great undergraduate education and what a leading undergraduate school can accomplish. And we are doing it by embracing the concept of creativity with purpose.
Creativity and purpose. Solid skills and problem-solving expertise. Flexibility and industry relevance. They are why Sheridan grads get the highest employer satisfaction ratings — and the right foundation to build the career you crave.
Our mission: to help grow fruitful, mutually rewarding connections between our students, faculty, and industry/community partners by providing experiential learning opportunities through solutions-based research projects.

As we transition to a distinct undergraduate teaching university, research will play an increasingly important role for our professors, administrators, and students.

Our vision: Sheridan’s applied research and creative activities will be fully integrated within curriculum, strengthening the undergraduate professional education our students receive.
Academic Integrity Report (2016)

Originality Matters:
Don’t Plagiarize
Plagiarism is the act of using another person's words or ideas without clearly acknowledging the source of the information that you have used. You can be guilty of plagiarizing **even if you did not intend to copy someone else's work**, but simply do not give clear credit when you use an idea, phrase or concept from another source.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying, buying or obtaining in another way an essay, project, visual art piece, programming code, or other type of work and then submitting it as your own work. This includes buying a paper from a research service or a paper mill, or obtaining a paper written by a peer, relative, or friend and submitting it as your own...
Sheridan Pillars

✿ CULTURE
✿ OUTREACH
✿ SUPPORT
✿ DATA
The Five Levers

1. Recommit to integrity as a core value
2. Provide quality education
3. Reform assessment practice
4. Review, revise and clarify policies and procedures
5. Provide educational/orientation activities
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Recommit to integrity as a core value

- Bold statements of importance of integrity
- Awareness raising workshops
- Appoint Academic Integrity Officer
Provide Quality Education

- Instructional development centres
- Culture of student engagement & deep learning
- Faculty selection & evaluation
- Curriculum development & learning outcomes assessment
- Learning spaces
Reform Assessment Practice

- Linked with learning outcomes
- Formative vs summative evaluation
- Authentic assessment
Review, Revise and Reform Policies

- Understood/known
- Perceived as legitimate by faculty and students
- Easily implemented
- Results communicated
- Faculty and students adjudicate
- More attention on exam invigilation
Educational/Orientation Activities

Faculty
- Workshops
- Departmental meetings
- Newsletters

Students
- In-class discussions
- Poster campaigns
- Student to student
- Real examples/real consequences
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