

TOPIC: If Everybody's Cheating, What are We to Do? Academic Integrity Research and Praxis

PRESENTER: Grace Ann Rosile, Assistant Professor of Management

WHEN: Friday, Jan 13, 2006

WHERE: NMSU Corbett Center Senate Gallery

OVERVIEW

This session will provide a brief introduction to research on academic integrity as well as practical classroom implications for addressing all forms of academic dishonesty.

Participants will address the following questions:

- What is the current state of research on academic integrity?
- Who does this research?
- Who are the subjects of this research?
- Who are the consumers?
- What sorts of institutional responses have been elicited by research on academic integrity?
- Does classroom cheating lead to unethical behaviors in the workplace, including incompetence among doctors, nurses, engineers, and others?
- Are some disciplines (colleges of business, others?) "loss leaders" in the academic integrity field?
- What research has been done on cheating among faculty?
- Does our university have an integrity policy for faculty?

Studies indicate about 75% of students report having cheated at least once. Also, those who have cheated once are more likely to cheat again. Students in colleges of business self-report more cheating than students in other majors, yet faculty in colleges of business report observing less cheating, and further, when they do observe cheating, business faculty are significantly less likely to report it than faculty in other majors (McCabe & Trevino, Journal of Management Education, 1995). Cheating appears widespread in all disciplines, and the issues of prevention, prosecution, and punishment are not simple.

Are you prepared for this classroom environment?

This session will summarize for you:

- Factors contributing to academic dishonesty;
- Factors minimizing academic dishonesty;
- State-of-the-art institutional responses to academic integrity issues;
- Practical tips for preventing cheating in your classrooms;
- Guidelines for developing academic integrity among faculty;
- Guidelines for dealing with academic dishonesty when it is encountered;
- Students' roles in dealing with academic dishonesty, including classroom exercises;
- Tips for mental and psychological preparation for faculty dealing with academic dishonesty.

Dr. Rosile was given the "Champion of Integrity" award by the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University for her work in this area.

Factors Contributing to Academic Dishonesty

Institutional Factors:

- Cheating is a campus norm (a “cheating culture”)
- Students feel faculty do not support integrity policies
 - little chance of being caught
 - when caught, penalties are slight
- Absence of honor codes –but this was less important than the above factors because:
 - some schools had honor codes that were old and ignored
 - some schools did not have honor codes but had strong integrity policies
 - schools did not necessarily need an honor code to have a culture of integrity

Personal (student) factors:

- Students who self-report greater cheating are:
 - business and communications majors
 - males, especially on tests (but women are catching up!)
 - those with very low or very high GPAs
 - fraternity/sorority members and athletes
 - not due to opportunity, but due to self-selection “sociability” factors
- Forms of cheating
 - 25% report cheating on exams
 - copying without the other person knowing you have copied
 - copying with the other person knowing you have copied their work
 - helping someone else to cheat on an exam
 - prior access to exam questions
 - 45% admit to written offenses (plagiarism)
 - Internet impact:
 - no big increase in students who cheat
 - slightly greater frequency of cheating
 - dramatic increase in cut-and-paste plagiarism
increased 37% between 2002-2005
 - Self-reported motivations to cheat (note the “blame the teacher” theme!):
 - emphasis on succeeding at any cost
 - teacher did not teach well
 - course content is lacking, too much like “high school BS”
 - teachers should be more involved in students’ success

*(Source: Don McCabe CAI presentation 10/21/05, Blacksburg VA)

Factors minimizing academic dishonesty**

- Be more observant during tests
- Change exams more often
- Create stricter cheating policies
- Space out students in the exam room
- Teach what is and is not considered cheating

** (source: McCabe, 2005)

STRATEGIES:

- Faculty must take the lead:
 - most students (63%) learn about integrity policies from the FACULTY
 - many faculty (43%) learn about integrity policies from the FACULTY
 - only 26% of students and 52% of faculty get their information from the Handbook
- Students must be involved:
 - use web and emails to reach students
 - send students a CD on campus integrity initiatives and policies
 - a “culture of integrity” must depend on student involvement
 - proportion of student involvement varies
 - some programs are totally student-run
 - some programs are a mix of student and faculty on honor boards
 - some programs are totally faculty-run
 - student experiences on Honors Boards are very growth-promoting
 - varied responsibility for guilt/innocence decisions and penalty/grade options
- First Steps:
 - faculty may be shocked and surprised at first
 - get a faculty vote of support in principle then work out the details (Dyes, 2005)
 - get another university to mentor your university through this process (Dyes, 2005)
 - be aware of possibilities to tailor your program to your unique needs/desires
 - must have support from President on down
 - realize that fully institutionalizing such a program will take 4-5 years

TIPS for FACULTY

- Focus first on preventing cheating.
- DON'T look the other way when you see or suspect dishonesty.
- Be a model for integrity (see faculty integrity suggestions).
- Talk and write more about integrity.
- ASK students not to cheat.
- Reiterate cheating penalties before an exam.
- Be available to help students—do exam prep reviews, etc.
- Be open to discussing student views on what is “fair” regarding assessment.
- Use multiple forms of assessment, not just exams.
- Change exams more often.
- Use multiple versions/multiple colors of exams.
- Provide for individual accountability and grades on group projects:
 - heavily-weighted Q&A so each student must answer questions regarding a group project
 - value-added or “my contribution” statements
- Design written assignments to minimize plagiarism:
 - require early drafts
 - require a “turn-it-in.com” check
 - incorporate a personal-application slant
- Teach and/or document in your syllabus what constitutes dishonesty for your assignments/exams.

TIPS for INSTITUTIONS

- Involve both students and faculty in addressing integrity.
- Do not be surprised if most faculty and students initially express little interest in taking on another task!
- Pay attention to “buy-in” and design-in and emphasize the pay-offs for both faculty and students.
- Design an “Integrity Module” on research and scholarship to educate all students:
 - Part of Freshman 101 or Graduate Student Orientation
 - Totally or partly on-line tutorials exist at Georgetown and other schools
- Develop and Honor Code or other strong, current, enforced integrity “creed” or policy.
- Develop “sanction reduction” programs (self-reflective, service, and educational components).
- Measure institutional progress in addressing integrity:
 - “No Cases Reported” is NOT a good sign!
 - Initial increases in reports usually drop as a new program becomes established.
- Establish a “Testing Center” like Brigham Young U.
- Support faculty in getting additional persons to assist in administering exams.

TIPS for STUDENTS

- Support the value of your diploma by working for integrity.
- Participate in honors boards/councils etc., as growth-promoting and resume-building experience.
- Get involved in peer educational programs, some involving high-school outreach.
- Speak up: to prevent being asked to do dishonest actions; to promote a supportive culture of integrity.
- Do SOMETHING when you see academic dishonesty: confront, report, write an anonymous note, etc.

RESEARCH and PRACTICE ISSUES:

1. How does a person's own past history of cheating affect their attitudes towards others?

A) cheater vs non-cheater faculty prosecuting other faculty accused of cheating

B) cheater vs non-cheater faculty prosecuting student cheaters

C) "reformed" cheaters vs "honest" persons in the following roles:

1.) Students educating other students why they should not cheat

2.) Faculty developing faculty integrity policies

3.) Faculty penalizing students for cheating

2. The Carnegie Report of 26 years ago cited "significant and increasing amounts of cheating" as well as grade inflation and other indications of erosion of integrity. Further, the report predicted worsening conditions for both students and faculty in the future. Given that this prediction appears to have been proven true, what does this imply for the overall academic integrity of faculty?

3. The most controversial portion of some honor codes is the "obligation to report." Should this be dropped entirely, or replaced with an "obligation to act"?

4. What are the forms of academic dishonesty relating to faculty?

5. Can we address student cheating without ever having addressed faculty cheating?

6. How can we determine if changes in self-report data (the most commonly used in this area) are reflecting changes in reporting patterns or changes in actual behavior/behavioral intentions?

7. How would you design research to assess and follow trends in student cheating behaviors?