

2013

[Spring 2013 TLPDC/TTU Ethics Center: Ethics Lunch Series Report]

Series sponsored by the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center and the Texas Tech University Ethics Center.

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Introduction

The Ethics Lunch Series workshops were conceived in the Fall semester of 2009 and have been ongoing ever since as part of Texas Tech University's SACS-COC Quality Enhancement Plan. During the Spring semester of 2013 the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center (TLPDC) in collaboration with the Texas Tech University Ethics Center (TTU Ethics Center) hosted two workshops as part of the Ethics Lunch Series. The Ethics Lunch Series workshops addressed several aspects of professional codes of ethics, academic integrity, and ethical issues in personal, professional, and civic life. The following report summarizes the two workshops which took place in the Spring semester of 2013.

Workshop I

Name: Discouraging Plagiarism and Encouraging Integrity in Student Writing

Date: 2/28/2013

Time: 12:30 - 1:30 PM

Location: Room 151 - Audio/Video Instructional Lab (AVI)

Speaker: Drs. Susan Lang and Kathy Gillis

Announcement: "Please join us for another event in the Ethics Series, cosponsored by the TLPDC and the Ethics Center. In this session, Dr. Susan Lang (Director, First-Year Composition, Department of English) and Dr. Kathy Gillis (Director, University Writing Center) will share their expertise as related to academic integrity, writing and plagiarism. Dr. Lang and Dr. Gillis have investigated the use of plagiarism detection services and have presented their work at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. They have been featured and interviewed in publications such as in Inside Higher Ed, the Dallas Morning News and eCampus News. In this session, the limitations of electronic plagiarism checkers and essay scorers will be discussed, followed by a discussion of specific, more reliable strategies faculty can and should use in order to ensure integrity in student writing."¹

¹ <https://www.tltc.ttu.edu/WebApps/EMSEventEnrollmentPro/View/RSS/RSS.aspx/GetEvents> (accessed 02/19/2013)

Attendees and Feedback

The 48 attendees came from 15 different colleges/units. A majority were from the College of Arts and Sciences. See table 1 for a more detailed description of participants' affiliations.

Table 1

Affiliations and Rank of Participants at *Discouraging Plagiarism and Encouraging Integrity in Student Writing* workshop.

	Faculty	Staff	Graduate	Undergraduate	N/A	SUM
Athletics		1				1
Business	1					1
Education		1				1
Media & Communication				1		1
OPA			1			1
STEM Outreach		1				1
TTUISD		1				1
Undergraduate Education & Student Affairs		1				1
TLPDC		2				2
School of Art	1		1			2
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources			2			2
Library	2	1				3
Human Sciences	1		3			4
Engineering	1		10			11
Arts and Sciences	4		8	1	3	16
TOTAL	10	8	25	2	3	48

Event Questionnaire: 36 questionnaires were collected. Attendees provided feedback on the following five questions/statements:

1. What is your affiliation with Texas Tech University?
2. This workshop met my expectations based on the workshop title and description.
3. I would recommend this workshop to my colleagues.
4. What comments or suggestions do you have regarding this workshop?
5. What suggestions do you have for *future* ethics workshops?

The following charts summarize the answers to the first three questions.

1. The majority of respondents were graduate students (Figure 1).

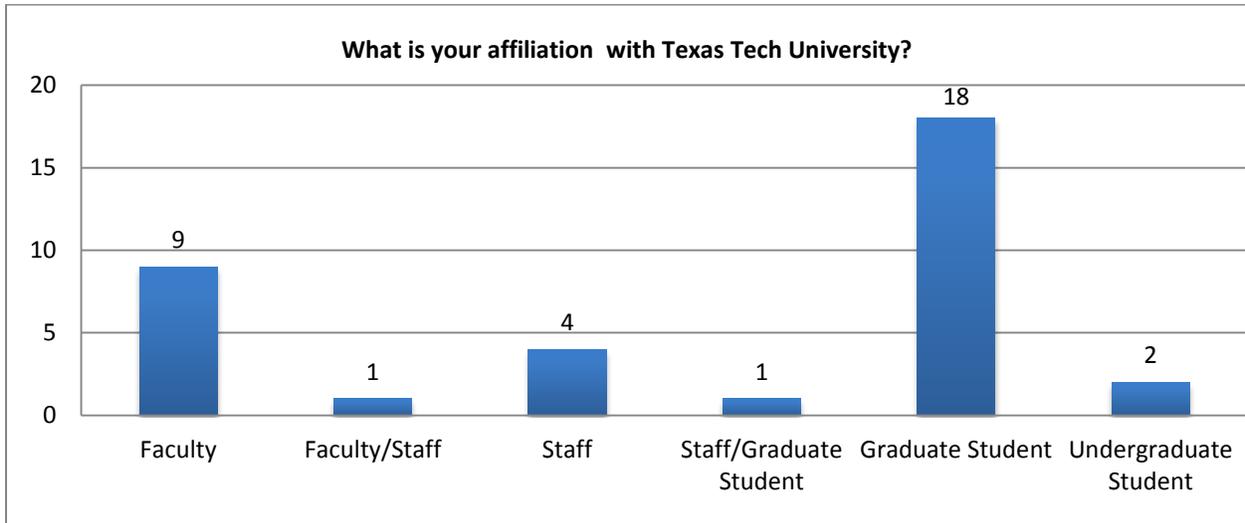


Figure 1. Number of Workshop I Respondents by Rank

2. A large number of respondents (83.3%) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that this workshop met their expectations based on the workshop title and description (Figure 2).

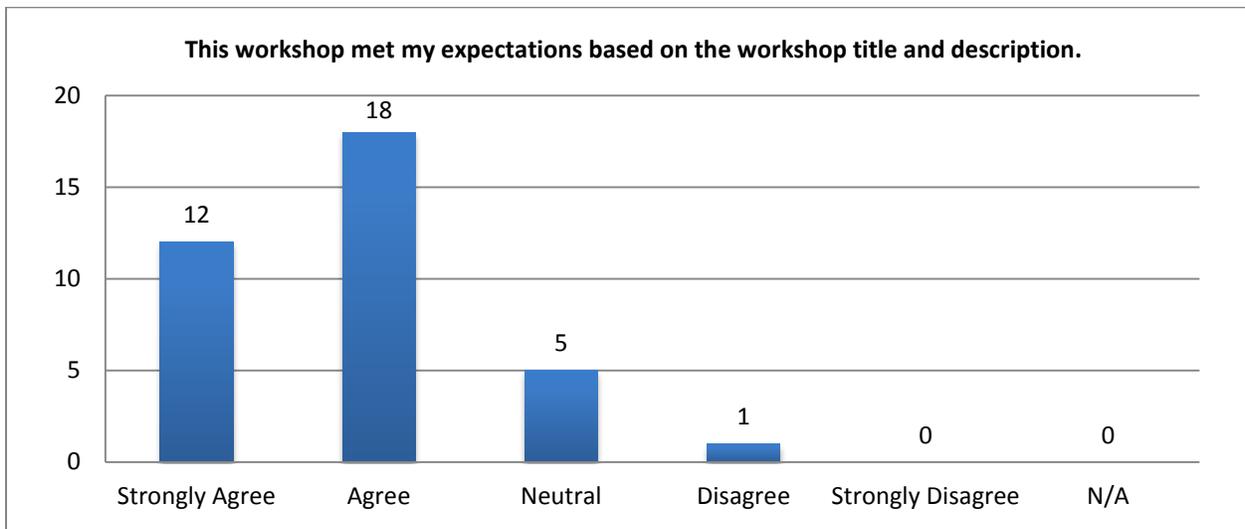


Figure 2. Workshop I Respondents' Expectations

3. The majority of the respondents (72.2%) also *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that they would recommend this workshop to their colleagues (Figure 3).

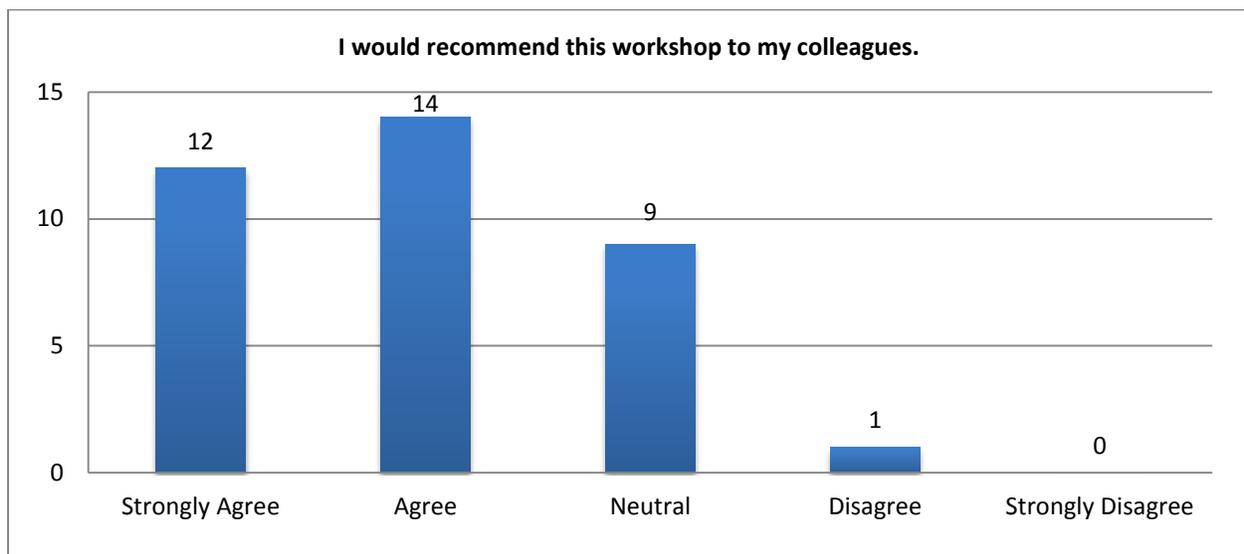


Figure 3. Workshop I Respondents' Plans to Recommend Workshop

Substantive Comments

4. Twenty-five respondents provided comments/suggestions regarding this workshop.
- Insightful.
 - Very informative.
 - Have workshops done in departments.
 - Not much on "Encouraging Integrity."
 - Don't take other opinions and comments so personally.
 - Very great ideas & suggestions for changing my assignments and grading techniques!
 - Perhaps connect with / network with / coordinate with multiple depts. Group works element?
 - Very basic. Should be advertised as workshop for new faculty.
 - Some graduate students attend the workshop. Hope it can be research related.
 - Good, strong info - nice perspective about being productive vs. simply looking for ways to identify it.
 - I thought this was great + gave me some great ideas to use & to think about when making my assignments.
 - More time in the workshop to develop a way to reduce plagiarism, or develop an assignment, grading rubric.

- Giving more detailed examples might be better. Divide the workshop to several sections according to departments and typical situations.
- A few more specifics and recommendations would be nice. Seemed to be more dominated by group discussion, which was also nice.
- It was great! I like how the leaders started the session with prompts to have the audience think; then maybe share more than they could have.
- Good presentation. Liked handouts. I am a grad student that will soon start teaching, these assignment guidelines will help me formulate assignment in the future.
- Gave or provided thing about restructuring some of my WI assignments to decrease probability of plagiarism! Thanks! Perhaps provide more examples from different content areas!
- Great workshop. It might be helpful to focus a session on research plagiarism . . . beyond classroom assignments. * Don't worry about the guy in the front row. He was just grumpy. Great job!
- This workshop was aimed at teachers; when asking why students plagiarize, finding student answers to the question would be more valuable than asking teachers to speculate on why a student plagiarizes.
- I enjoyed this workshop. I am currently a student here at Tech, working in a psychology research lab. Learning about plagiarism from a professor's perspective was very interesting, and helped me better understand the different aspects of plagiarism.
- I like how interactive it was. I think it should be divided into sub-groups, same venues; teachers, students, let's share our opinions. Food was great. Digital copies of materials used should be made available.
- Heuristic for designing writing assignment may be very helpful, but I fail to see how this handout helps to reduce plagiarism. Creating a good assignment does not equate as a barrier for plagiarism.
- Perhaps limit number of attendees to available seats (with table space). Great ideas for encouraging integrity, but take it a step further. For example, "write better assignment" - is there support for writing better assignment? Explain why plagiarism is bad - but why is it bad? Or, "teach critical thinking." How? Smaller, more conversational workshops would be great!
- It was really informative and I'll definitely use the information and suggestions in my classes. Hopefully by repeating similar workshops at different times and on different days - if possible - you'll have more students attending.

- It was good discussion regarding on the writing in the setup where the critical thinking is the most important. But there was not enough information to actually show how to stop plagiarism in the setup of engineering or science major where most of the homework is given to challenge students to improve their ability to solve problems involving numerical solving skills without much writing.
5. Sixteen respondents provided suggestions for future ethics workshop.
- I really think a student and teacher discussion could help both parties to understand the other.
 - How we can educate students to close gap of preparedness.
 - More time to discuss.
 - One 1 hour session is insufficient.
 - Plagiarism for engineering / science majors.
 - Have some attention on research not just instructors.
 - Bigger venue. Invitation of students across department to get views/ideas from them.
 - Are there any reliable, effective online tools to check for plagiarism? offered at TTU?
 - Email written materials (before or after workshop).
 - More hands-on w/ technology available in terms of "catching" plagiarism.
 - More hands on activities.
 - Offer some valid & good suggestions about software we CAN use well to help catch plagiarism.
 - What can we do to help promote a more ethical climate on the campus?
 - Focus on other aspects of ethics, like students signing in for each other, cheating on exams.
 - Possible plagiarism workshops for students (Grad and undergrad) would be helpful in also preventing plagiarism.
 - Maybe one strategy on detecting / reporting plagiarism - sometimes I "think" I know they have taken someone else's work (writing style, vocabulary drastically changes in middle of paper). But I am not sure - and when I talk to the student they wiggle out of it.

Workshop II

Name: The IACUC and the 4 Rs

Date: 04/11/2013

Time: 12:30 - 1:30 PM

Location: Room 151 - Audio/Video Instructional Lab (AVI)

Panelists: Drs. Howard Curzer, Gad Perry, and Mark Wallace

Announcement: Please join us for another event in the Ethics Series, cosponsored by the TLPDC and the Ethics Center. In this session, Drs. Curzer (Philosophy Department), Perry (Department of Natural Resource Management and International Center for Arid and Semiarid Land Studies), and Wallace (Department of Natural Resource Management and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) will share their expertise in how the IACUC works, why ethics are a crucial element of it, and how the 4 Rs codify ethical behavior in animal research. Dr. Curzer, Perry, and Wallace have been funded by the NSF to investigate these issues and have presented their work both nationally and internationally, including a forthcoming special issue of a magazine published by the National Academy of Sciences. Our guests will discuss the IACUC process and the ethical underpinning of the 4 Rs, followed by a discussion of several case studies.

Attendees and Feedback

The 35 participants came from 16 different colleges/units. See table 2 for a more detailed description of participants' affiliations.

Table 2

Affiliations and Rank of Participants at *The IACUC and the 4 Rs*.

	Faculty	Staff	Graduate	Undergraduate	SUM
Business				1	1
Education			1		1
Human Sciences				1	1
Mass Communication				1	1
Office of Audit Services		1			1
Operation Division		1			1
OVPR		1			1
Texas Tech Museum				1	1
TIEHH			1		1
Arts and Sciences	1		1		2
OPA		2			2
Engineering			3		3
Office of Research Services		4			4
TLPDC		4			4
Ethics Center		3	2		5
CASNR	5		1		6
TOTAL	6	16	9	4	35

Event Questionnaire: 17 questionnaires were collected. The workshop questionnaire included the following five questions/statements:

1. What is your affiliation with Texas Tech University?
2. This workshop met my expectations based on the workshop title and description.
3. I would recommend this workshop to my colleagues.
4. What comments or suggestions do you have regarding this workshop?
5. What suggestions do you have for *future* ethics workshops?

The following charts summarize the responses for the first three questions.

1. Most respondents were faculty and staff (Figure 4).

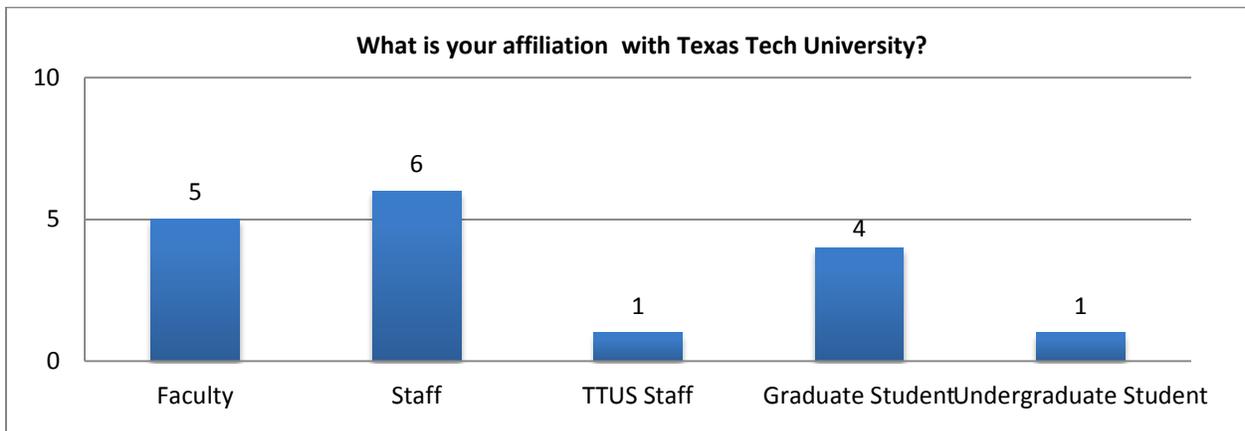


Figure 4. Number of Workshop II Respondents, By Rank

2. The majority of respondents (94.1%) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that this workshop met their expectations based on the workshop title and description (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Workshop II Respondents' Expectations

3. Most respondents (82.4%) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that they would recommend this workshop to their colleagues (Figure 6).

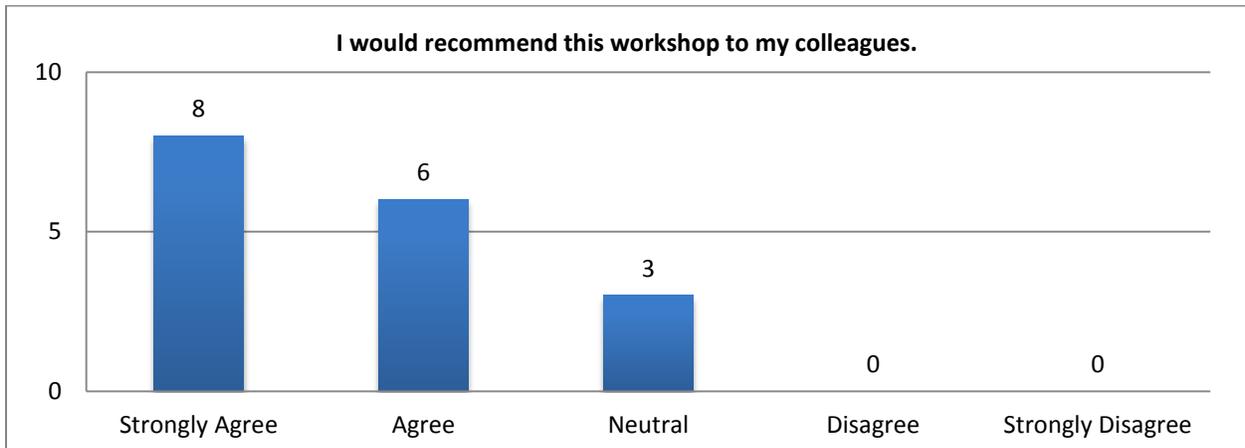


Figure 6. Workshop II Respondents' Plans to Recommend Workshop

Substantive Comments

4. Eight respondents provided comments/suggestions regarding this workshop. The responses are:
- Good workshop and ideas presented.
 - Everything was great. Great speakers!
 - Presenters did a great job!!
 - Great to have experts from different disciplines discuss the issue. Great and very interesting.
 - Include more information on federal agencies requirements and policies (NIH, USDA, etc.).
 - Great review! Loved the case studies.
 - It felt like there were a lot more questions than time allowed. Perhaps the time allowance could be extended to allow more time for questions and case studies.
 - Interesting, but rather field specific.
5. Eight respondents also provided suggestions for future ethics workshops. The responses are:
- IRB, biosafety, etc.
 - Ethics of Human Subject use.
 - Maybe in with other topics - nepotism, financial COI.
 - Please make a similar presentation for Human Subjects / Clinical trials.
 - Mere field based ethics issues. Focus on student issues such as workshops on plagiarism.
 - I wanted to hear more regarding the IACUC/form process.

- Maybe some take home case study examples.
- I was unaware lunch was included. I am quite sure this is my lack of familiarity with the series. My suggestion would be to include this in the description of the course.

Conclusion

Evaluations from the Spring semester of 2013 Ethics Lunch Series revealed that attendees found the workshops to be informative and interesting. Both workshops offered attendees a myriad of benefits. The majority of the respondents (88.0%) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that these workshops met their expectations based on the workshop title and description. Respondents also believed the workshops were resourceful and that the ideas and handouts were helpful; 88.2% of respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that they would recommend these workshops to their colleagues (Figure 7 and 8).

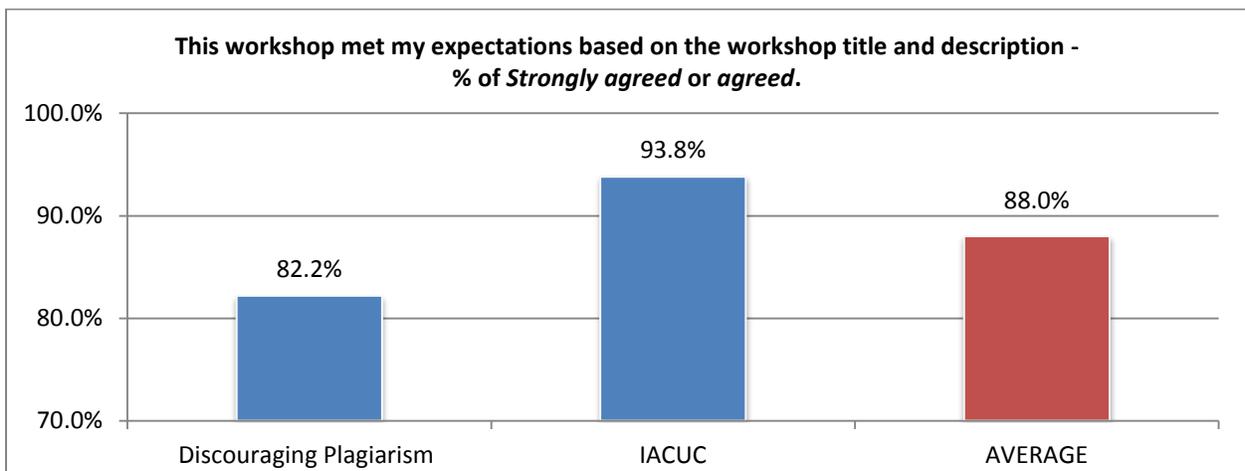


Figure 7. Spring 2013 Series Respondents' Expectations

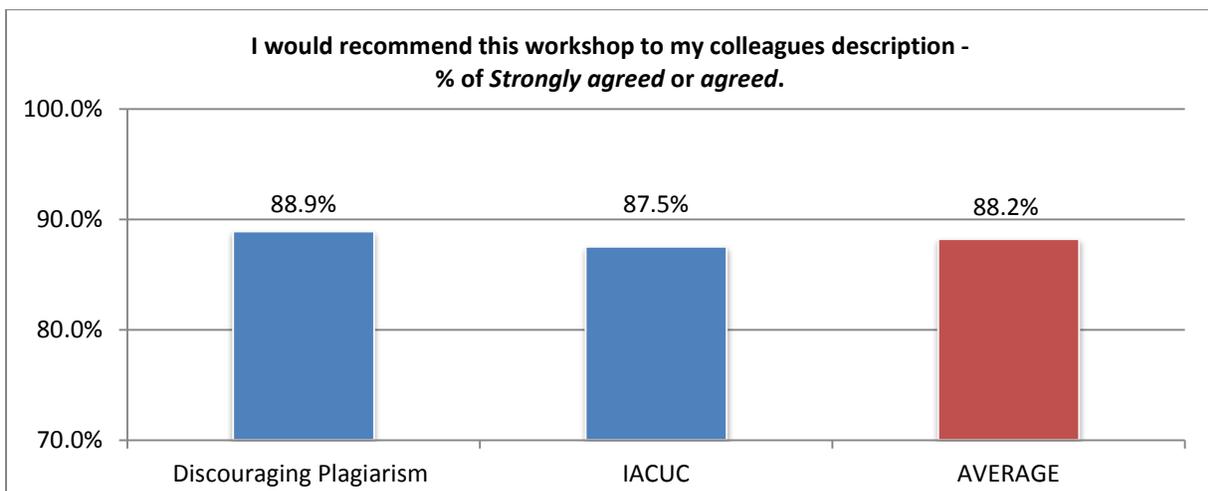


Figure 8. Fall 2012 Series Respondents' Plan to Recommend Workshop

In general, participants found the presenters to be engaging and interactive and felt that the knowledge acquired through the Ethics Lunch Series workshops would readily apply to their projects, practices, and teaching.

In terms of constructive feedback, participants suggested a longer session, in a larger venue, with more time for discussion, hands on activities, and the presentation of case studies to support the instructional sessions would improve the quality of the workshops. A few participants suggested that workshop description should add detailed information in terms of who the intended attendees should be. Some suggested that the workshops should be done in different departments, focusing on a specific field and research and/or targeting specific participants, such as graduate or undergraduate students. Lastly, participants made recommendations for various topics to be included in future sessions, including promoting a more ethical climate on campus, biosafety, Human Subjects use, and federal agencies requirements and policies.

Overall, the Ethics Lunch Series workshops hosted by the TLPDC/TTU Ethics Center in the Spring semester of 2013 were well attended, served a diverse audience of students, faculty and staff, and received positive reviews from its participants. We are encouraged and committed to continue providing Ethics Lunch Series workshops in the future.