

Texas Tech University

Arbor Day Academic Integrity Survey Report

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Prepared by

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Table of Contents

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|-------------------------------------|----|
| Table of Contents | 2 |
| Executive Summary | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Data Preparation and Sample | 4 |
| Results..... | 7 |
| Twelve True or False Questions..... | 7 |
| Two Additional Questions | 10 |
| Comparison 2011-2012..... | 13 |
| Conclusion..... | 15 |
| Appendix A: The Survey | 16 |

Executive Summary

On April 27, 2012, as part of Texas Tech University's Arbor Day Celebration, the Texas Tech University Ethics Center administered a written assessment of students' understanding of academic integrity. The paper survey consisted of 4 demographic questions (classification, major, gender, and age), 12 *true-or-false* questions, 1 open-ended question, and a multiple choice question with written option (see Appendix A for a copy of the survey). Students filled out these surveys by hand at Memorial Circle, and were offered a T-shirt in return. To keep students from answering in a way they think might be expected, the survey was anonymous. Completed surveys were analyzed by the Texas Tech University Ethics Center.

The goal of the assessment was twofold: (1) to reinforce student knowledge about academic integrity and (2) to assess what students know and so help identify areas for improving the academic integrity initiative.

Of the 1160 original surveys, 111 were removed for answering all the questions *True* or *False*. The final sample size (N= 1049) appears to be a good representation of the TTU student population in terms of classification, age, and major (college).

The results of the 12 *true-or-false* questions show that students have a very good comprehension of academic integrity, with an average score of 91.9%. However, more than 10.0% of students incorrectly answered three questions, indicating a lack of understanding about when it is okay to collaborate with other students on assignments, what the definitions of cheating are, and what it means to misrepresent facts.

The final two questions dealt with consequences for academic dishonesty and future educational workshops. Of the 1049 valid surveys, 484 answered the open-ended question regarding consequences for academic dishonesty and 940 answered the multiple choice question about future educational workshops. These responses were categorized into various themes for evaluation. For the first question, 'expulsion' and 'failing the test/assignment/course' are the most frequently suggested consequences, and 'plagiarism' and 'collusion' are the areas that students want to learn more about.

Introduction

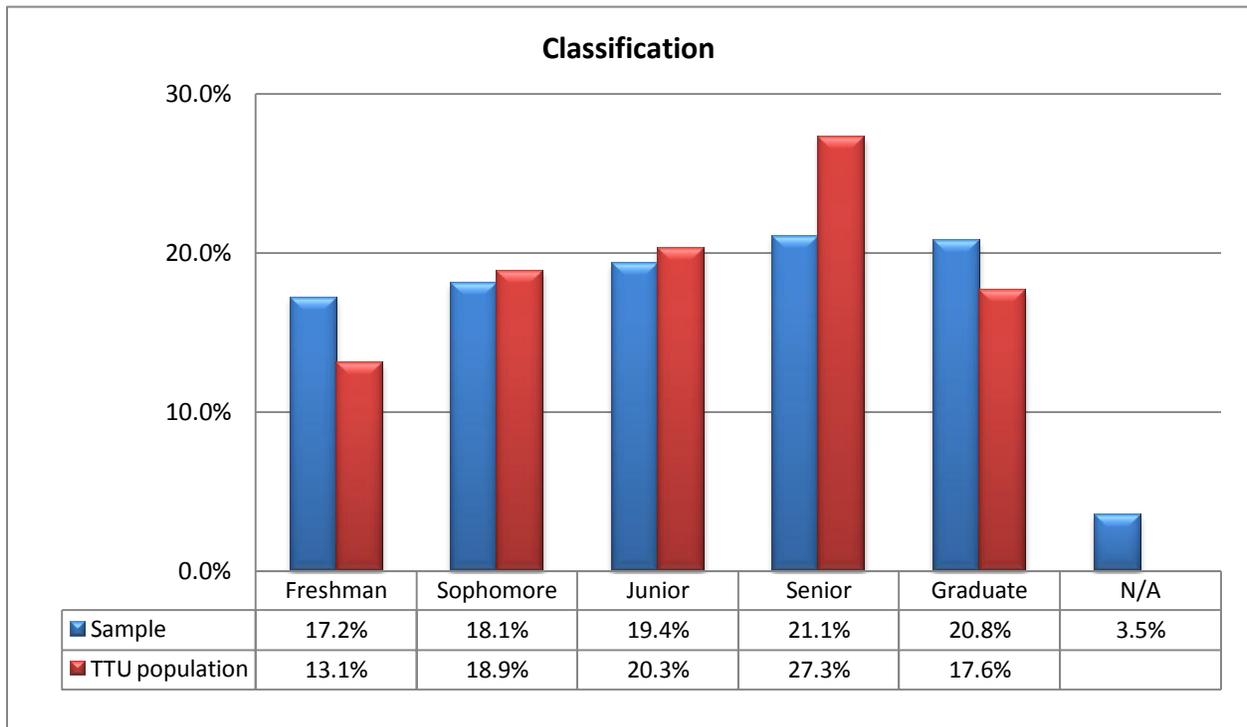
On April 27, 2012, Texas Tech University hosted an Arbor Day Celebration at Memorial Circle. Between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., the Texas Tech University Ethics Center sponsored a table where students were encouraged to fill out a survey on academic integrity in exchange for a T-shirt and other giveaways. The goal of the assessment was twofold: to (1) reinforce student knowledge about academic integrity and (2) assess what students know and so help identify areas for improving the academic integrity initiative.

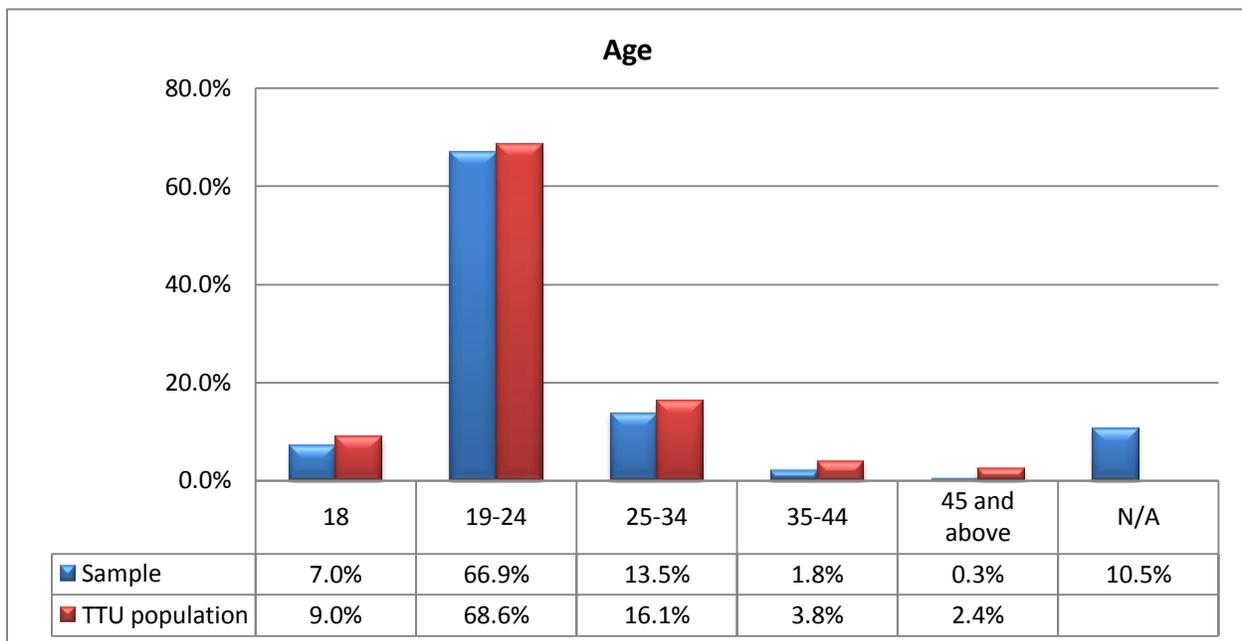
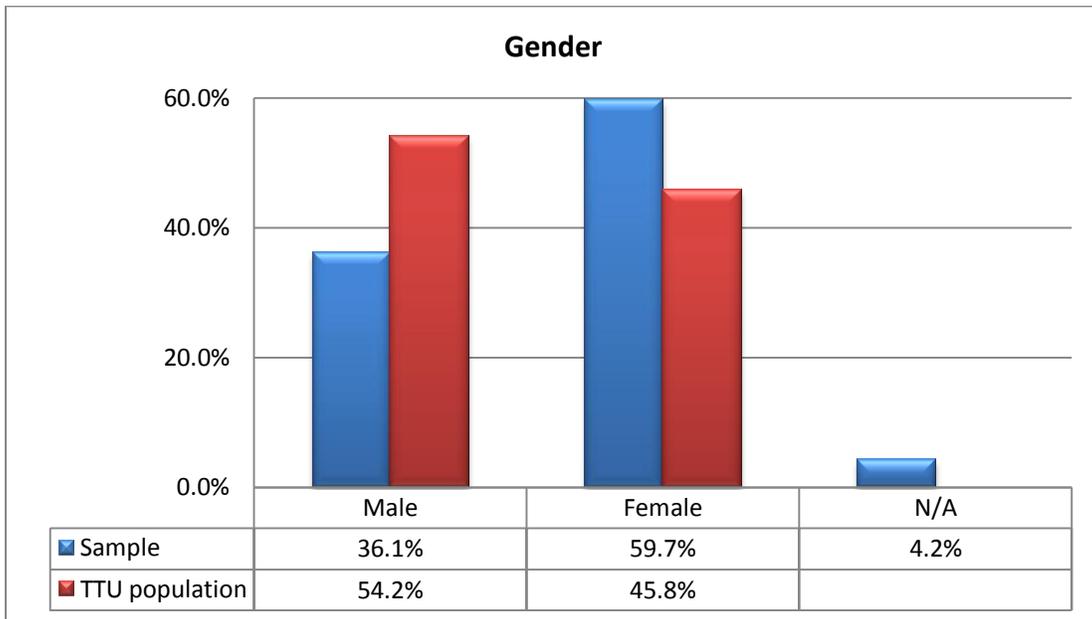
Data Preparation and Sample

A total of 1160 respondents filled out the paper-and-pencil instrument at the Ethics Center table on Arbor Day. Ethics Center staff entered the results into Excel for further analysis: one staff member entered the data and a second staff member checked through all responses to ensure accuracy of input.

Responses were removed if participants selected all *false* or all *true* answers. This check removed 111 surveys, reducing the sample from 1160 to 1049 (90.4%).

The sample of 1049 valid surveys represents a small percentage of the population of the Texas Tech students. Data was also collected for four demographic categories: (1) classification, (2) major, (3) gender, and (4) age. The following charts compare the sample to the TTU student population in terms of these four demographic categories. Based on Spring 2012 enrollment data, it appears that the sample was a fair representation of the TTU student body.

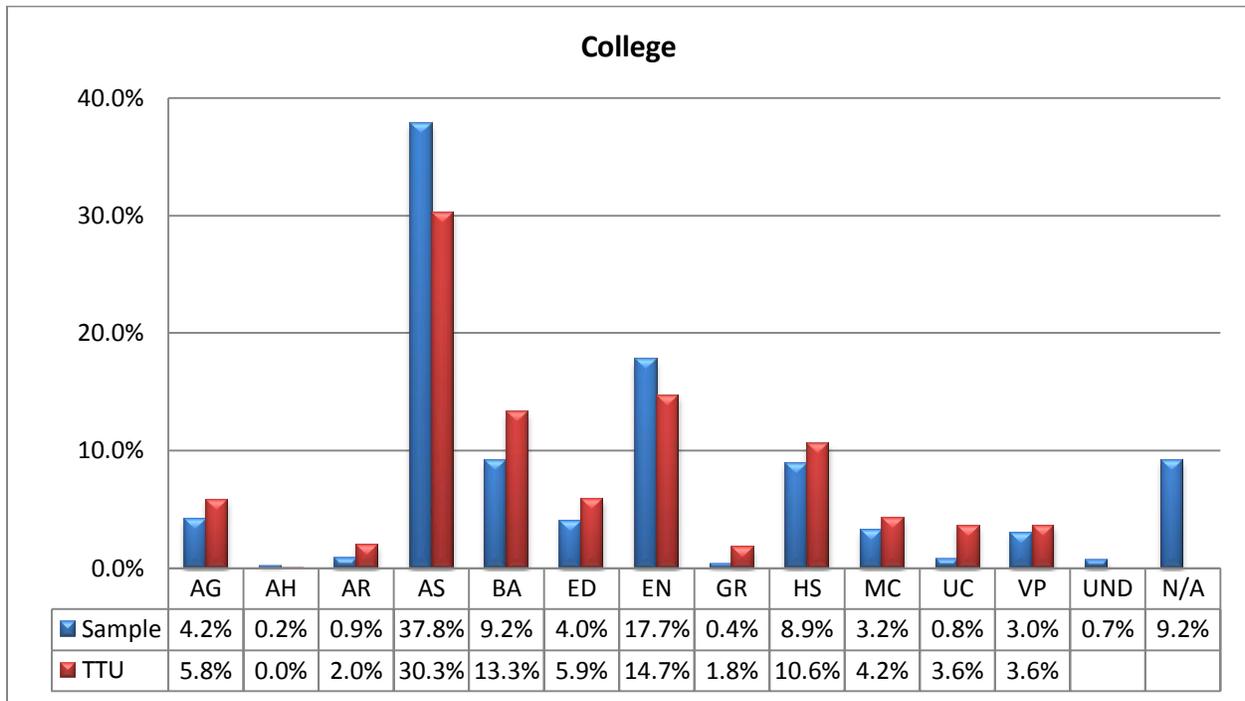




Note: "N/A" means the respondents did not answer this particular question or the writing was illegible.

The above charts show that the sample was a good representation of the TTU student population in terms of their age. Regarding classification, there were more freshmen and less senior students. However, there was a discrepancy in gender, with nearly 14.0% more females in the sample than in the student population.

The survey sample represents a diversity of majors. The following chart categorizes the majors into Academic Colleges and compares the sample to the TTU student population.



Abbreviations:

- AG College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
- AH School of Allied Health Sciences
- AR College of Architecture
- AS College of Arts and Sciences
- BA Rawl's College of Business Administration
- ED College of Education
- EN College of Engineering
- GR Graduate School
- HS College of Human Sciences
- MC College of Mass Communications
- UC University College
- VP College of Visual and Performing Arts
- UND Undecided
- N/A There was no response or the writing was ineligible

The sample shows more Arts and Sciences and Engineering students responding to the survey, and fewer Business Administration and University College students. This is an expected outcome due to the proximity of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Engineering to Memorial Circle, where the survey was offered. The Rawls College of Business Administration and University College are further from Memorial Circle than other colleges at Texas Tech University and students would have had further to walk to participate. Overall, the survey sample represents the TTU student population fairly.

Results

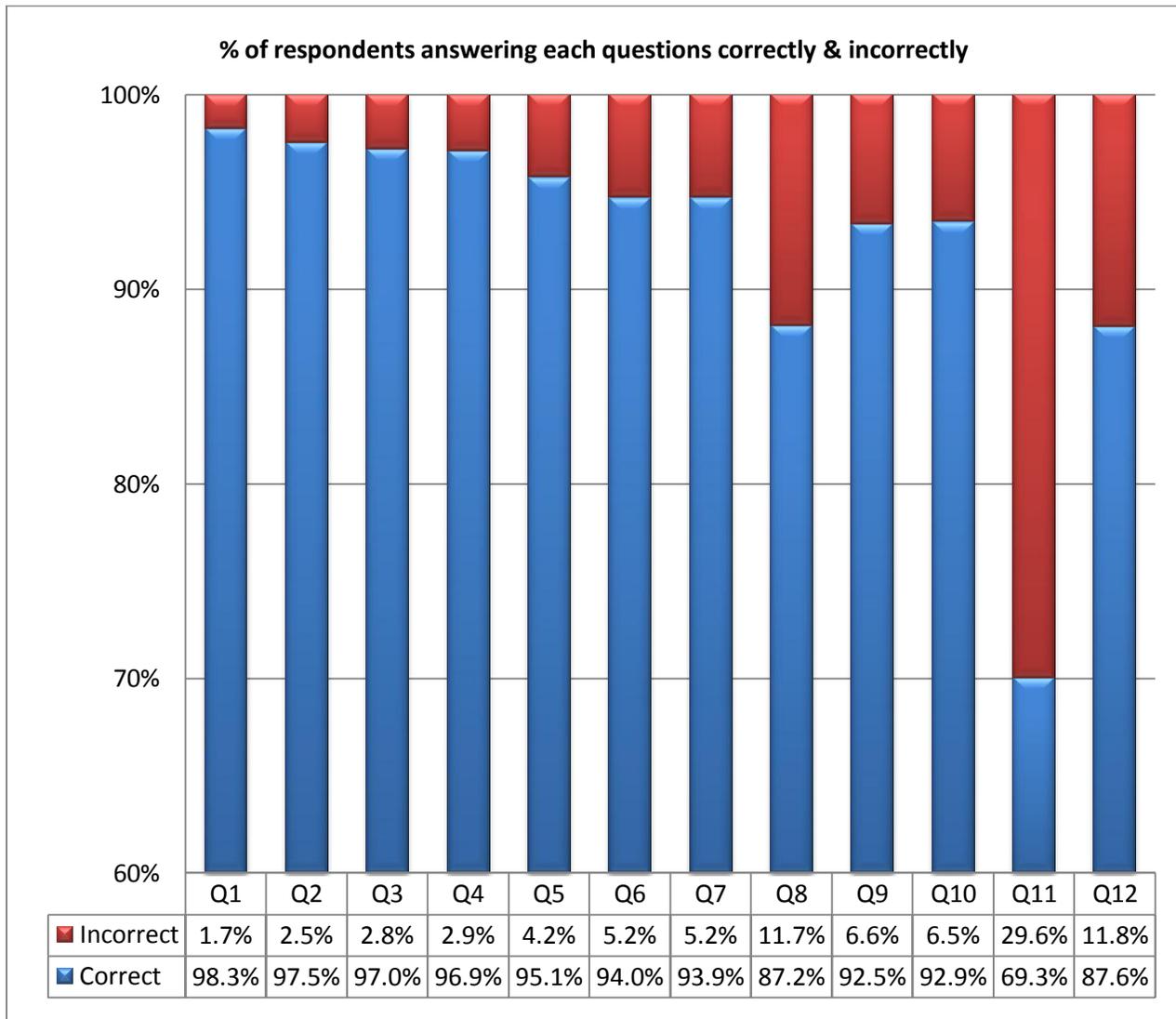
Twelve True or False Questions

The following table shows the results of the 12 *true-or-false* questions from the 1049 valid surveys.

| Questions | Answer | Correct | Incorrect | N/A |
|---|--------|---------|-----------|-----|
| 1: Academic Integrity means that you are accountable for your own work. | True | 1031 | 18 | 0 |
| 2: Making a personal decision to adhere to the standards of ethical behavior is part of academic integrity. | True | 1023 | 26 | 0 |
| 3: Ethical behavior and independent thought are important for achieving academic success. | True | 1018 | 29 | 2 |
| 4: Trust and respect among students, faculty, and staff are essential components of education. | True | 1016 | 30 | 3 |
| 5: Academic Integrity is the foundation of professional and educational careers. | True | 998 | 44 | 7 |
| 6: Don't worry about plagiarism if you use the web; things from the web do not need to be cited. | False | 986 | 55 | 8 |
| 7: Copying from another student or source during a test is cheating. | True | 985 | 55 | 9 |
| 8: It is cheating to obtain questions or solutions for a test before taking it without having permission from your professor. | True | 915 | 123 | 11 |
| 9: Using materials from other sources and presenting it as your own work is plagiarism. | True | 970 | 69 | 10 |
| 10: Not citing materials or ideas from other sources in your work is plagiarism. | True | 975 | 68 | 6 |
| 11: It is ok to collaborate with other students on academic assignments without having permission from your professor. | False | 727 | 311 | 11 |
| 12: Submitting false information in order to get an extension on an assignment or to take a quiz/test later is considered "misrepresenting facts" (eg., a false doctor's note). | True | 919 | 124 | 6 |

Note: "N/A" means the respondents did not check either answer or checked both answers.

The chart below highlights the percentages of participants who answered each of the 12 questions correctly and incorrectly. The percentage of N/A for each question is $\leq 1.0\%$ and omitted in the chart.

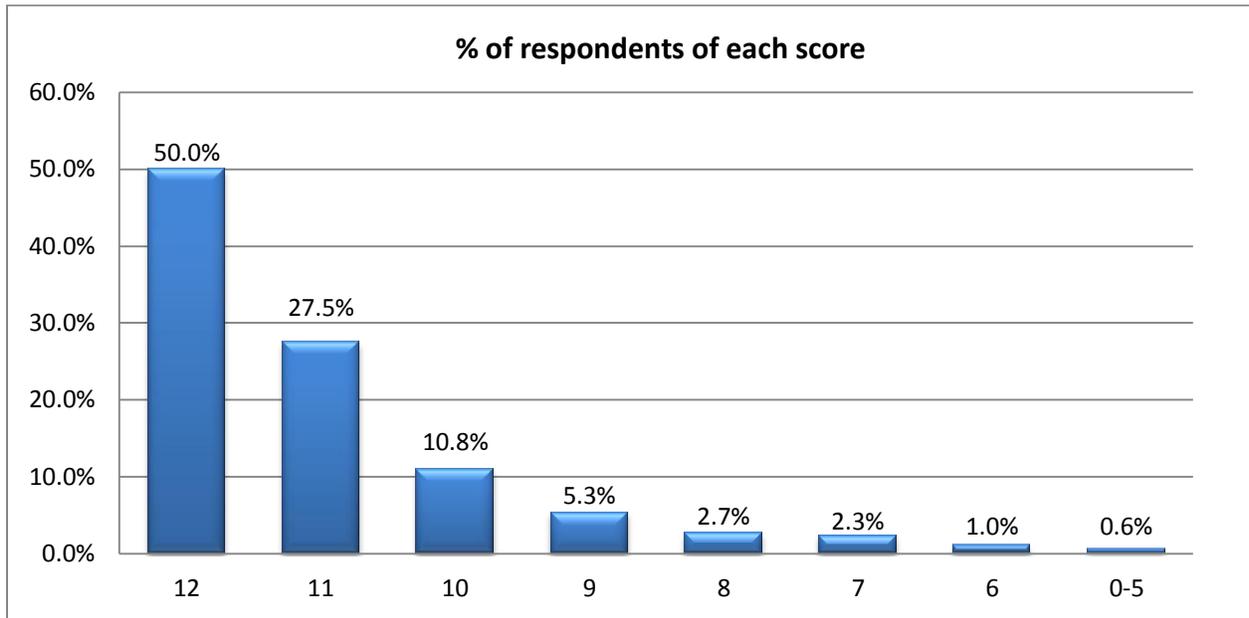


Individual results show that most students did quite well on the survey. The following table lists the number of questions that students answered correctly (score) and the number of the respondents with each score.

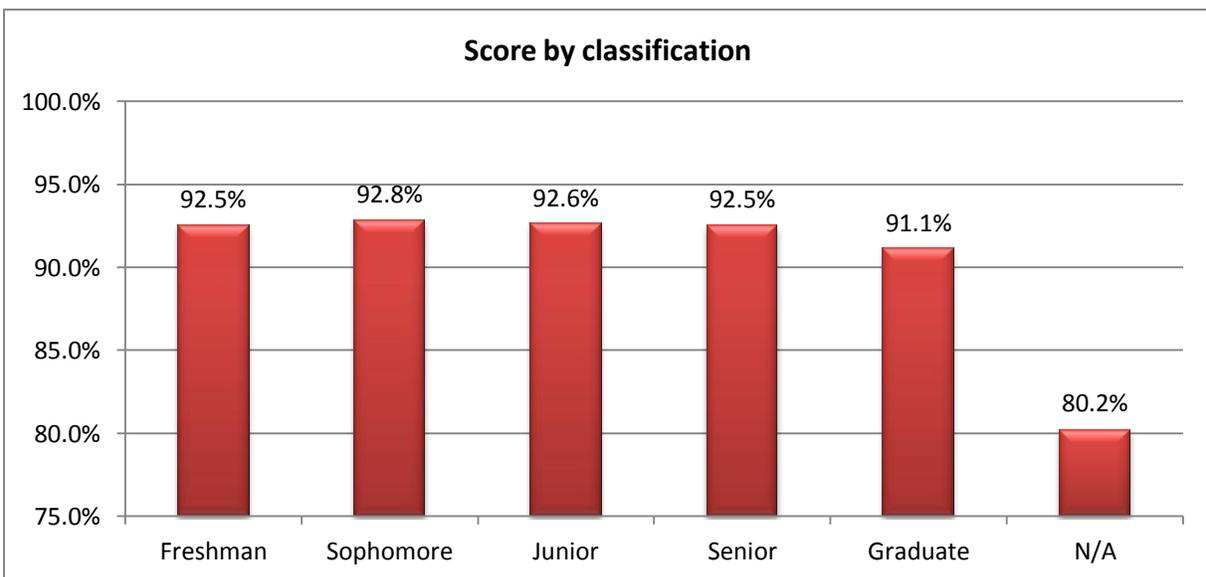
| # of questions answered correctly (score) | # of respondents |
|---|------------------|
| 12 | 524 |
| 11 | 288 |
| 10 | 113 |
| 9 | 56 |
| 8 | 28 |
| 7 | 24 |
| 6 | 10 |
| 0-5 | 6 |

Of the 1049 responses, 524 students answered all 12 questions correctly and 288 students answered 11 questions correctly. Those two groups together make up almost 80.0% of the total responses (50.0% and 27.5%, respectively). Only 40 respondents (3.9%) had scores of seven or less.

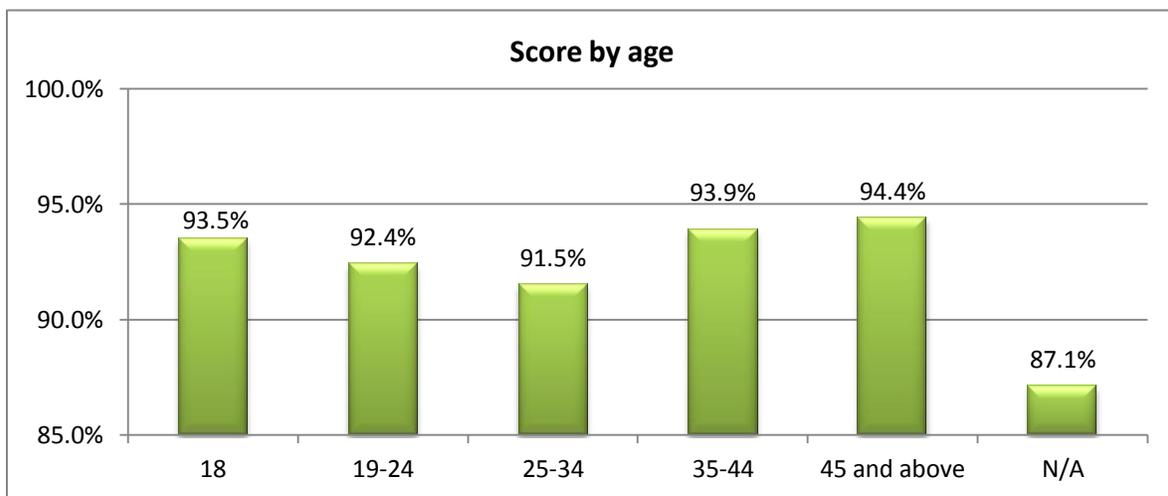
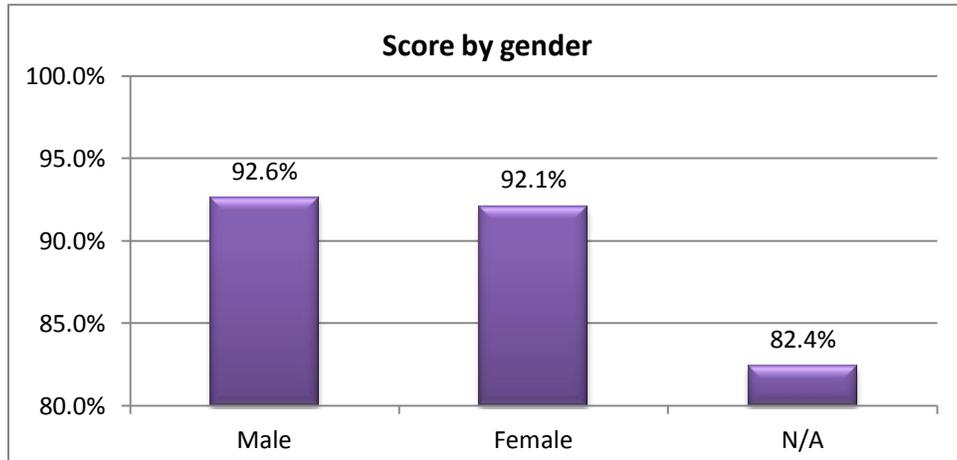
The chart below shows the distribution of the scores.



The following charts compare the overall scores of students with the demographic categories of classification, gender, and age, and show how different categories of students performed on the survey. In terms of classification, there were no significant differences; however, undergraduates performed slightly better than graduate students.



There was also no major difference in the scores of female and male students. Students in age groups 35-44 and 45 and older scored slightly higher than other groups, but this variation could be due to the small sample in these two age groups. Overall, the results indicate that most students understood academic integrity and various types of violations very well.



Two Additional Questions

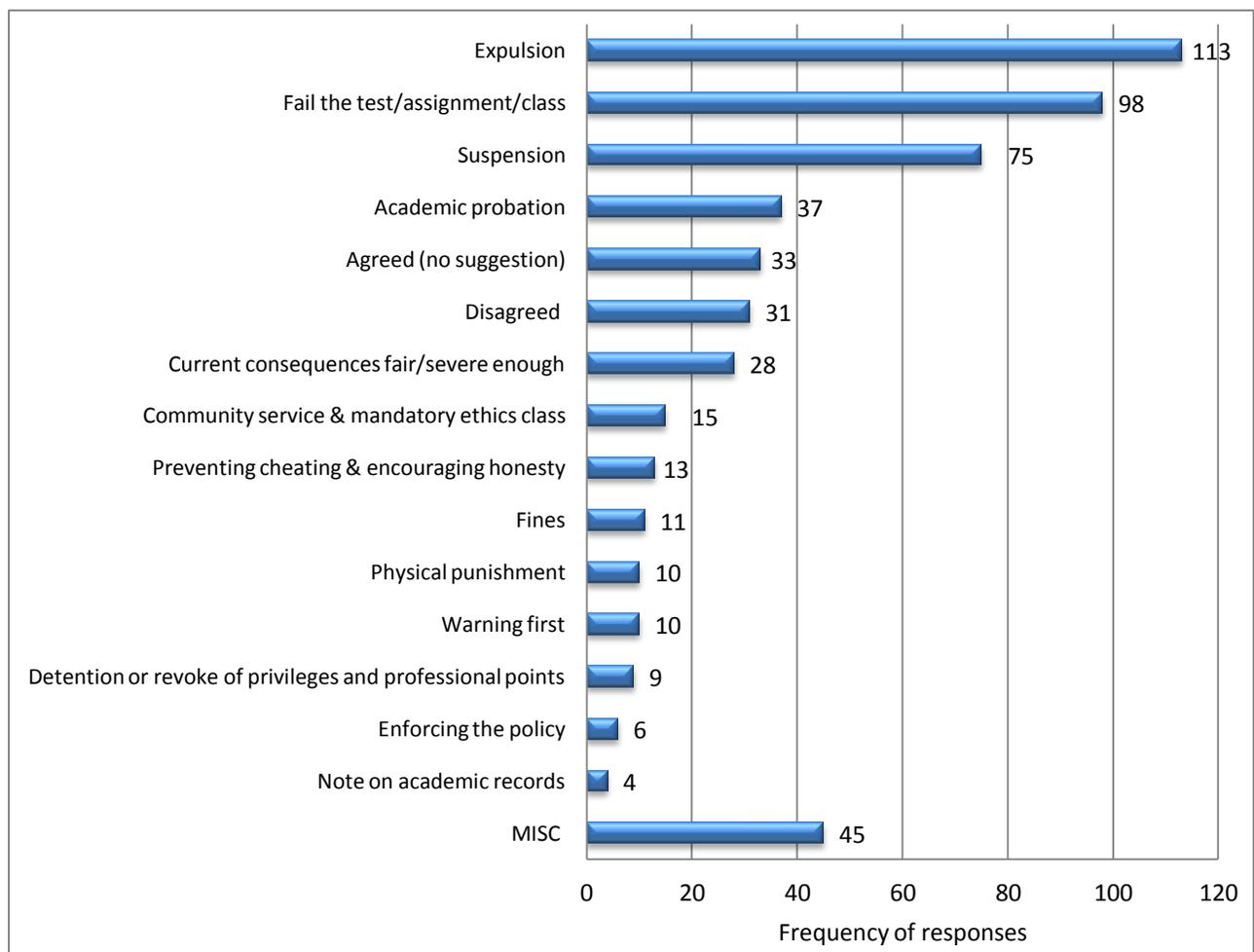
1. In the past, students have said that Texas Tech should have more severe consequences for academic dishonesty. If you agree, what specific consequences would you suggest?

Of the 1049 surveys, 484 students (46.1%) answered this question. Some students gave more than one suggestion so there were a total of 538 responses, which were categorized as follows:

1. Agreement with having more severe consequences but did not have any suggestions.
2. Disagreement with the statement.
3. Belief that the current consequences are fair, adequate, and/or severe enough.
4. Suggestion: Give a warning first, and enforce consequences after sequential violations.
5. Suggestion: Violators should fail the test/assignment/class or have to re-take the course.

6. Suggestion: Academic probation.
7. Suggestion: Detention or revocation of privileges and professional points.
8. Suggestion: Fines.
9. Suggestion: Physical punishment.
10. Suggestion: Note on academic records/transcripts of violation.
11. Suggestion: Doing community service or taking mandatory ethics/integrity classes.
12. Suggestion: Suspension.
13. Suggestion: Expulsion.
14. Suggestion: Enforcing/implementing the [current] policy; professors should report violations.
15. Suggestion: Instead of focusing on punishment, we should take preventive actions and encourage people not to cheat.
16. Miscellaneous comments: (e.g. talk to the dean, give another chance, not familiar with current consequences)

The following chart arranges the themes in the order of the frequency of responses.



Most students suggested 'expulsion,' 'failing the test/assignment/class,' and 'suspension.' On the other hand, some people believed the current consequences were fair/severe enough, and still some others disagreed with having more severe consequences.

2: We want to run education workshops on these topics next year. Which would you like to learn more about?

The following five choices were provided, plus an option to write in additional topics of interest.

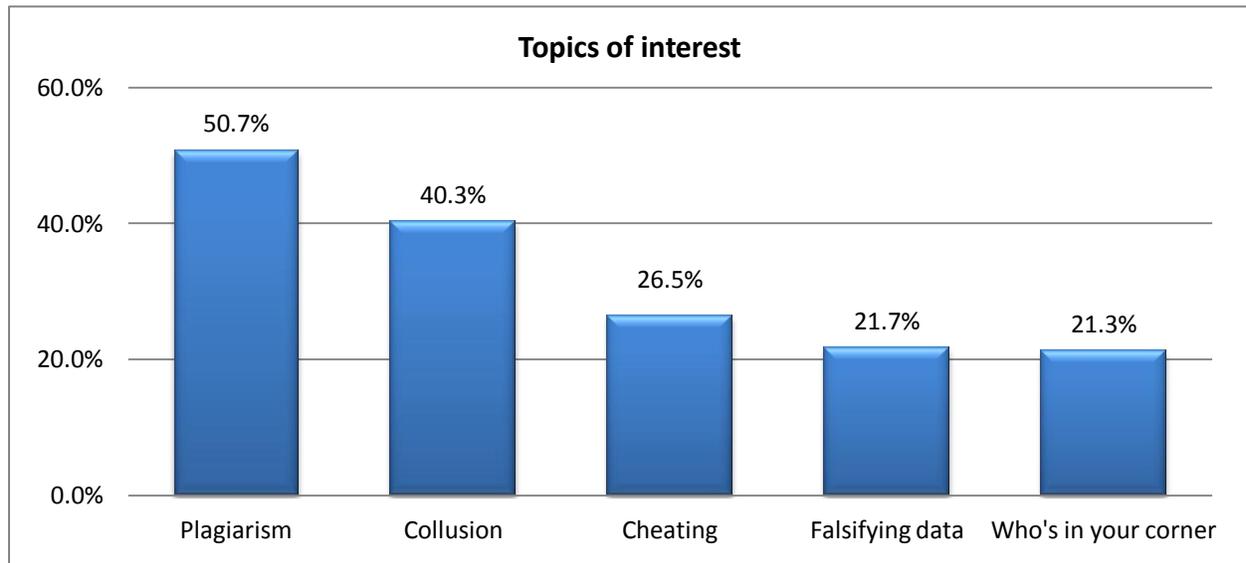
- i. Plagiarism and how to cite correctly
- ii. Collusion: how to collaborate without cheating
- iii. Cheating: types and consequences
- iv. Falsifying data and proper data management
- v. Who's in your corner: Who to ask questions about academic integrity

Of the 1049 surveys, 940 students (89.6%) responded to this question, either checking one or more choices or giving a written response.

The table below shows the number of respondents interested in each topic (some respondents checked more than one topic):

| Topic of interest | # of respondents |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Plagiarism | 447 |
| Collusion | 379 |
| Cheating | 249 |
| Falsifying data | 204 |
| Who's in your corner | 200 |

The chart below shows the percentages of responses (out of 940 respondents) interested in each topic:



Nine respondents wrote down other topics, including: teaching, help for people prone to cheating, past plagiarism acts at other universities, real life examples of punishments from academic dishonesty, etc.

Comparison 2011-2012

The Academic Integrity Survey was also administered on Arbor Day in 2011, and yielded 678 valid responses. The following table compares the 2011 and 2012 scores.

| Questions | 2011 | 2012 | Difference |
|--|-------|-------|------------|
| 1: Academic Integrity means that you are accountable for your own work | 98.4% | 98.3% | -0.1% |
| 2: Making a personal decision to adhere to the standards of ethical behavior is part of academic integrity | 96.3% | 97.5% | 1.2% |
| 3: Ethical behavior and independent thought are important for achieving academic success | 88.8% | 97.0% | 8.2% |
| 4: Trust and respect among students, faculty, and staff are essential components of education | 98.2% | 96.9% | -1.3% |
| 5: Academic Integrity is the foundation of professional and educational careers | 97.3% | 95.1% | -2.1% |
| 6: Don't worry about plagiarism if you use the web; things from the web do not need to be cited | 93.2% | 94.0% | 0.8% |
| 7: Copying from another student or source during a test is cheating | 95.0% | 93.9% | -1.1% |
| 8: It is cheating to obtain questions or solutions for a test before taking it without having permission from your professor. | 87.3% | 87.2% | -0.1% |
| 9: Using materials from other sources and presenting it as your own work is plagiarism | 92.3% | 92.5% | 0.2% |
| 10: Not citing materials or ideas from other sources in your work is plagiarism | 93.2% | 92.9% | -0.3% |
| 11: It is ok to collaborate with other students on academic assignments without permission from your professor | 67.3% | 69.3% | 2.0% |
| 12: Submitting false information in order to get an extension on an assignment or to take a quiz/test later is considered "misrepresenting facts" (eg., a false doctor's note) | 91.0% | 87.6% | -3.4% |

Notes:

- i) Wordings of a couple of questions were different in 2011 and 2012 administration. In 2011, question 3 and 11 both had a negative word "not." In 2012, "not" was removed from both questions.
- ii) Question 8 was worded differently but the meanings in 2011 and 2012 surveys were identical (in 2011, it was "Obtaining a test or solutions to a test before taking it, without permission from your professor to do so, is cheating.")

Overall, students' scores to almost all questions in 2012 were very similar to the scores in 2011, with the exception of question 3 and 12.

There was an 8.2%-point increase in the score for question 3 between 2011 and 2012:

- Q 3: Ethical behaviors and independent thought are important for achieving academic success.

In 2011, the wording for Question 3 was “Ethical behavior and independent thought are not important for achieving academic success;” of 678 responses in 2011, 601 were correct (88.8%). The 2012 administration removed the word “not” and saw an 8.2%-point increase in correct responses. This increase could mean that students did have general knowledge of ethics in relation to academic success. It may also mean that the revised wording made the meaning of the statement clearer to students in 2012.

The 2012 results also show some score decreases. There was a 3.4%-point decrease in the score for question 12 between 2011 and 2012:

- Q 12: Submitting false information in order to get an extension on an assignment or to take a quiz/test later is considered “misrepresenting facts” (eg., a false doctor’s note).

This slight decrease of score could indicate that students might still be confused about the definition of misrepresenting facts.

Besides the differences in score mentioned above, it is also noted that the score to question 8 was lower than scores to most other questions both in 2011 (87.3%) and 2012 (87.2%).

- Q 8: It is cheating to obtain questions or solutions for a test before taking it without having permission from your professor.

This result indicates that students’ knowledge of appropriate test-taking activities could be an area for further education.

The results to question 11 in both administrations also revealed another area for further education. Although the 2012 score to question 11 (69.3%) increased by 2.0% when compared with 2011 results (67.3%), it remained significantly lower than scores to other survey questions.

- Q 11: It is ok to collaborate with other students on academic assignments without permission from your professor.

The wording for Question 11 in 2011 was “It is not ok to collaborate with other students on academic assignments without permission from your professor.” and the percentage of correct responses was 67.3%. The 2012 administration removed the word “not” but there was no significant change in the score. This could indicate that the new wording did not impact students’ judgment. Further, the broad term “academic assignments” does not specifically define what kinds of assignment the question refers to. Students may have had different ideas of when collaboration was ok and not ok for different kinds of assignments. It is also possible that students believe it is ok to work with others UNLESS the professor explicitly tells them not to.

In sum, the results of questions 8, 11, and 12 show that students might be confused about the concept of misrepresenting facts, as well as whether collaboration on assignments or test reviews is permissible if either activity had not been explicitly forbidden by professors.

Conclusion

The 2012 survey sample seems to be a fair representation of the TTU student population. With an average score of 91.9%, students did very well on this assessment of their comprehension of academic integrity. On the other hand, more than 10.0% of students answered incorrectly on 3 questions:

- Q 8: It is cheating to obtain questions or solutions for a test before taking it without having permission from your professor (11.7% incorrect).
- Q 11: It is ok to collaborate with other students on academic assignments without permission from your professor (29.6% incorrect).
- Q 12: Submitting false information in order to get an extension on an assignment or to take a quiz/test later is considered “misrepresenting facts” (eg., a false doctor’s note) (11.8% incorrect).

These incorrect answers may suggest a lack of student understanding about academic integrity: the definition of cheating, misrepresenting facts, and collusion (when it is okay to collaborate with other students on assignments). Plagiarism and collusion are the top two choices that students would like to learn more about; therefore, these will be areas that next year’s academic integrity programming will address.

In their responses to the additional questions, students mostly agreed to have more severe consequences for academic dishonesty and did not shy away from the consequences of “suspension” and “expulsion.” Some students believed that current consequences are severe enough and it is more important that professors and the school enforce current policies and consequences than they create new rules or penalties.

Appendix A: The Survey

By filling out this survey you're helping Texas Tech to assess the impact of past academic integrity events and helping us to shape future campus events.

Student Classification:
 Freshman
 Sophomore
 Junior
 Senior
 Graduate Student

Major: _____

Gender:
 Male
 Female

Age: _____

| <i>Please evaluate the following statements & mark the correct answer:</i> (example: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>) | True | False |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Academic integrity means that you are accountable for your own work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Making a personal decision to adhere to the standards of ethical behavior is part of academic integrity. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ethical behaviors and independent thought are important for achieving academic success. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Trust and respect among students, faculty, and staff are essential components of education. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Academic integrity is the foundation of professional and educational careers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Don't worry about plagiarism if you use the web; things from the web do not need to be cited. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Copying from another student or source during a test is cheating. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| It is cheating to obtain questions or solutions for a test before taking it without having permission from your professor. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Using materials from other sources and presenting it as your own work is plagiarism. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not citing materials or ideas from other sources in your work is plagiarism. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| It is ok to collaborate with other students on academic assignments without having permission from your professor. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Submitting false information in order to get an extension on an assignment or to take a quiz/test later is considered "misrepresenting facts" (e.g., a false doctor's note). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

In the past, students have said that Texas Tech should have more severe consequences for academic dishonesty. If you agree, what specific consequences would you suggest?

We want to run education workshops on these topics next year. Which would you like to learn more about?

Plagiarism and how to cite correctly
 Cheating: types and consequences
 Who's in your corner: Who to ask questions about academic integrity
 Other topics (please list):

Collusion: how to collaborate without cheating
 Falsifying data and proper data management
