

# Consequences for Academic Dishonesty: Student Perceptions

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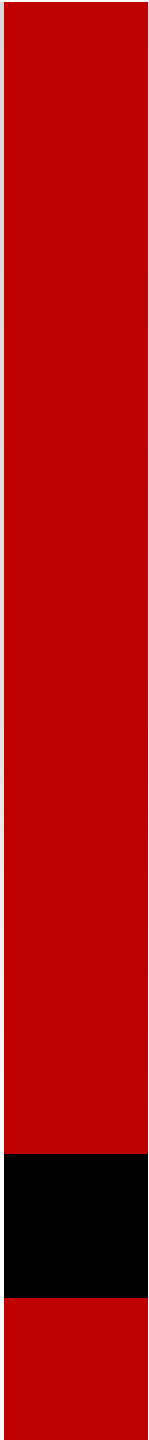


TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
Ethics Center™

# Academic Integrity

**Excellence  
In Every  
Red Raider**

**Give Credit  
to Where  
Credit is  
Due**



# Ethics Initiatives on Campus

- 2005-2010: QEP – SACS Accreditation

“Do the Right Thing:  
A Campus Conversation on Ethics”

- Three Themes
  - Ethical Institution
  - Ethics in the Curriculum
  - Academic Integrity

# Texas Tech's Mission

- As a public research university, Texas Tech advances knowledge through innovative and creative teaching, research, and scholarship. The university is dedicated to student success by preparing learners to be **ethical leaders** for a diverse and globally competitive workforce. The university is committed to enhancing the cultural and economic development of the state, nation, and world.
- Approved by the Texas Tech University Board of Regents on May 14, 2010

# Texas Tech's Core Values

- Texas Tech University is committed to the values of **mutual respect; cooperation and communication; creativity and innovation; community service and leadership; pursuit of excellence; public accountability; and diversity.**

# Introduction

- Academic dishonesty is a pervasive problem.
- Who?
  - Up to 90% of a schools student population
  - Male tendency
  - Young students in early academic classifications
- Why?
  - Personal factors
  - Contextual influences
- How?
  - Cheat sheets → Plagiarism → Collusion
  - On exams → On papers

# When Prevention Fails

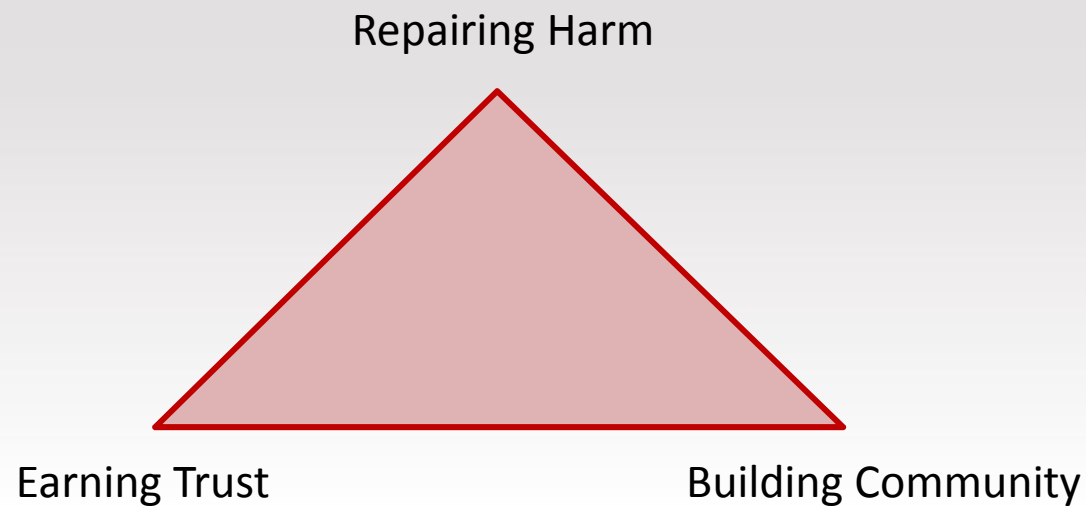
- Punishment
  - A traditional method employed
  - Severity of punishment moderates deterrence
  - Fear of punishment acts as a deterrent

However

- Described as archaic, legalistic and adversarial

# Restorative Justice

- A contemporary approach to dealing with misconduct
  - Fosters communication between affected parties
  - Provides education about the consequences of improper conduct





# Honor Code Schools

- Purportedly, enjoy a culture of:
  - Trust, honesty, fairness, responsibility, respect, courage, and empathy.
  - Shared responsibility (student and faculty)
  - Students assist in monitoring AI and sanctioning offenders

# Honor Code Shortcomings

- Students unwilling to take on responsibility as monitors.
- Few students have expressed a desire for increased roles in policing AI.
- Students don't perceive grade penalties as greater deterrents to dishonest conduct than honor codes.

# Our Study

- A conversion mixed design
- Independent analysis and merging to derive conclusions
- Question:
  - “In the past, students have said that our Texas Tech should have more severe consequences for academic dishonesty. If you agree, what specific consequences would you suggest?”

# Participants

	Total		Respondents to Qual question	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Demographics				
<i>Age</i>	21.58			
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	626	59.7	180	38.0
Female	379	36.1	294	62.0
Not reported	44	4.2		
<i>Classification</i>				
Freshman	180	17.2	96	20.0
Sophomore	190	18.1	95	19.8
Junior	203	19.4	102	21.3
Senior	221	21.1	100	20.9
Graduate	218	20.8	86	18.0
Not reported	37	3.5		
<i>Total</i>	1049		486	46.3

# Categories

- Moderate consequences (37%)
  - Letter grade F in exam (15%)
  - Letter grade F in course (15%)
  - Probation (10%)
- Severe consequences (60%)
  - Suspension (25%)
  - Expulsion (36%)
- Education for remediation (4%)

# Qualitative Responses

- Moderate Consequences
  - “Academic dishonesty should be treated with automatic failure of course, as a first punishment”
- Severe Consequences
  - “Yes, if someone is dishonest or cheating they should be suspended”
  - “Yes, it is not fair that dedicated students do everything and others take the easy way out. Severe consequences such as being expelled”
- Education
  - “More than severe punishments, students should be first explained about the consequences of dishonesty”
  - “We should be focused less on punishment and more on encouraging students not to cheat. Teach more about how not to plagiarize”

# Agree or Disagree with need for more sever punishment?

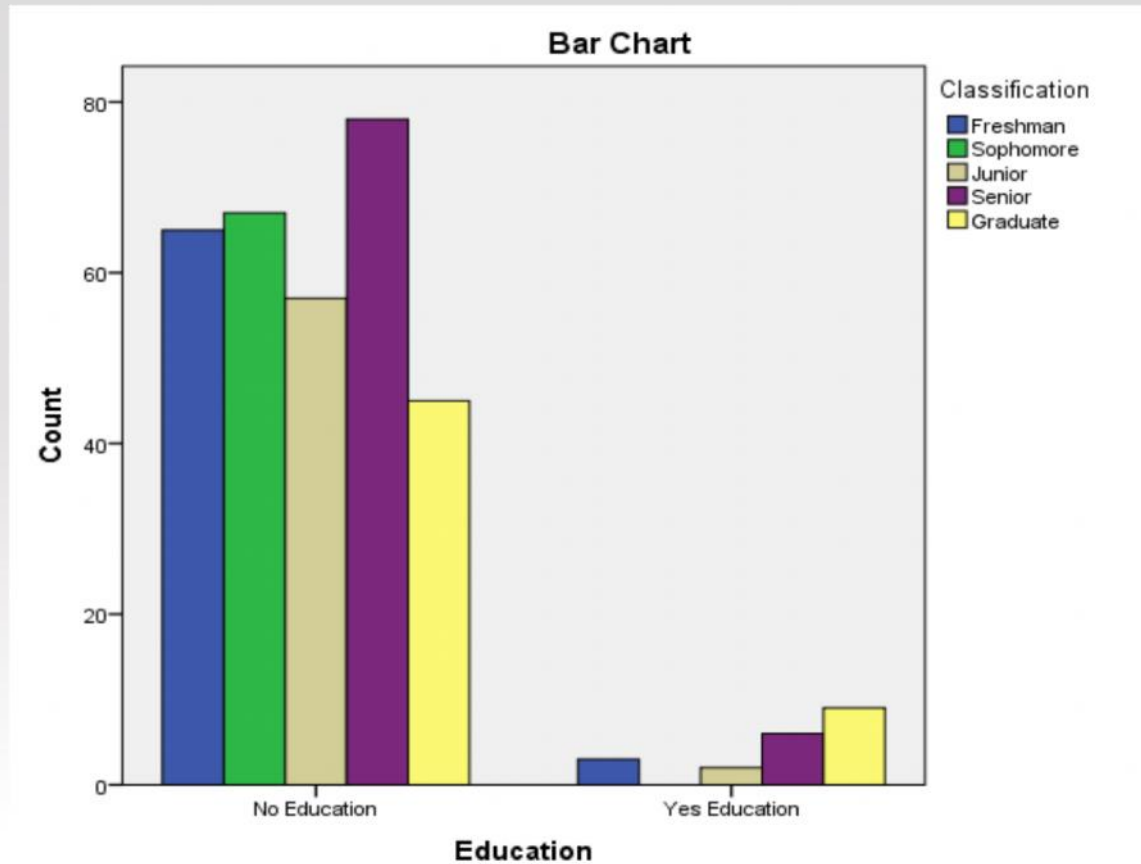
- Junior level students were more likely to disagree (34%, ASR= 3.9).
  - Senior level students were more likely to agree (91%, ASR= 3.1).
- $\chi^2 = 19.66, p < .001, \phi_c = .218$

# Severity of punishment and student demographics

- No statistically significant associations were identified by gender or by classification.



# Education for Remediation



- $\chi^2 = 16.32, p < .01, \phi_c = .222$

# Discussion

- Student perceptions of punishment for academic misconduct represents a gap in the literature.
- A larger percentage (60%) of students willing to endorse severe punishment.
  - This may reflect their acknowledgement of the inappropriateness of academic misconduct.
  - Punishment may be ingrained in the mindset of the contemporary student.
- Interesting not to find gender-related associations.
- Graduate students and education
  - Maturity?
  - Because of their role at the university? (Teaching assistant)

# Education and Restorative Justice

- Education and Restorative justice share common goals.
- Contemporary approach to dealing with misconduct.
- Punishment appears to be engrained in the contemporary student's mindset.
- Is restorative justice feasible at the university? And will it yield the expected results?

# Considerations

- Further study of Restorative Justice approaches
  - Effectiveness
  - Implementation
- Study limitations

# Strive *for* Honor!



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