Consequences for Academic Dishonesty: Student Perceptions

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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 school's 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 desired 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

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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 severe 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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Ethics Center

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