BEST PRACTICES IN ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Wade Shaffer, West Texas A&M University
Topics to Be Examined

- Overview of Issue and Scope of Problem
- Promoting Academic Integrity
- Academic Integrity Process and Procedures at WTAMU
- List of Best Practices
- Q&A and Discussion
DEFINING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) defines academic integrity as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action.”
DEFINING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

WTAMU never defines Academic Integrity to its community. From the Academic Integrity Code: “It is the responsibility of students and instructors to maintain academic integrity at WTAMU by refusing to participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty or any behavior that prevents University representatives or students from effectively furthering the mission of the University as stated in the mission statement.”
UGH!
Scope of the Problem

- Academic Dishonesty is Rampant

- Students Often Do Not View What They Do As Cheating or Unethical

- Special Issues with Online Courses and with International Students

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<th>Admit Cheating</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
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Scope of the Problem

- 85% of College Students Said Cheating was Necessary to Get Ahead
- 95% of Cheaters are Never Caught
- 16.5% Felt No Regret After Cheating
- In One Study, 100% of Students in Online Class Admitted Cheating
- Cheaters Have Higher GPAs
- Cheaters Often Start in High School or Even Junior High (75% to 98% of College Cheaters Reported Cheating in High School)
- WSJ Report: International Students Five Times More Likely to Get Caught Cheating
Cheating At WTAMU

- Frequent Comments From Faculty About Cheating and Academic Dishonesty
- Plagiarism is Biggest Problem in All Types and Levels of Classes
- More Frequent in Online Classes
- Very Few Cases Make it to the Provost Office: 10-20 per year
- Should Be Closer to 80-90 Reports Based on WSJ Study

- WSJ Study of Public Universities:
  - 1.0 Reports of Cheating per 100 Domestic Students
  - 5.1 Reports per 100 International Students
Cheating At WTAMU

- Process is Cumbersome and Focuses on Punishments
- AIC Provides Good List of Types of Academic Dishonesty
- Statement of Fact and Resolution if Mutual Agreement
- Appeal Process Involves Department Head, Dean, and then College Integrity Committee (CIC)
- CIC is Appeal Committee Only – Dean and 3 Faculty Members From College, One of Which is Selected By Student
Statement of Fact and Resolution Regarding the WTAMU Academic Integrity Code

Student: ________________________________ Student ID #: __________________
Instructor: _______________________________ Date of Offense: ______________

In the space below and using additional sheets if necessary, describe the nature of the incident. Include all relevant information including the date of the offense, circumstances under which it occurred, all evidence, course(s) involved, etc.:

In the space below and using additional sheets if necessary, please describe the resolution including all stipulations for its completion.

Agreement to resolution is an acknowledgement on the part of the student of her/his violation of WTAMU’s Academic Integrity Code and a stipulation to the above facts. Should either party fail to adhere to the resolution, further action may be taken regarding this case. However, should both parties adhere to the resolution, no further university action will be taken. This form will become part of the student’s VPAA file. Should documentation of past violations appear upon the form’s being filed or future violations occur, this form will be considered to determine if the student has a trend of violating the Academic Integrity Code.

We, the undersigned, acknowledge that we have read and understood the accusations and agreements detailed above and understand the manner in which the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and any dean or College Integrity Committee may use this form in the future.

____________________________________________________
Student Signature          Date

____________________________________________________
Faculty Signature          Date

____________________________________________________
Department Head Signature       Date

____________________________________________________
Dean Signature       Date

____________________________________________
VPAA Signature    Date
Cheating At WTAMU

- Fewer Than Five CIC Appeal Hearings Most Years; Sometimes Only One or Two

- No Honor Council or Student Involvement in Hearings or in Deciding Outcome of Appeals or of Punishment

- Punishments Vary Widely; No Consistency

- Concerns About Academic Freedom
Stages of Institutional Development

From: ICAI website: http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/resources-4.php

- **Primitive**: No policy or procedure. No consistency in dealing with cheating.
- **Radar Screen**: Policies and procedures emerging. Administration leading efforts, usually fearful of lawsuits.
- **Mature**: Policies and procedures widely known and used. Efforts to inform new faculty and students of procedures.
- **Honor Code**: Students play major role in implementing procedures. Practices lead to lower rates of cheating.
Best Practices – From Center for Academic Integrity

An Institution Should:

1. Have clear academic integrity statements, policies, and procedures that are consistently implemented.

2. Inform and educate the entire community regarding academic integrity policies and procedures.

An Institution Should:

3. Promulgate and rigorously practice these policies and procedures from the top down, and provide support to those who faithfully follow and uphold them.

4. Have a clear, accessible, and equitable system to adjudicate suspected violations of policy.
Best Practices – From Center for Academic Integrity

**An Institution Should:**

5. Develop programs to promote academic integrity among all segments of the campus community. These programs should go beyond repudiation of academic dishonesty and include discussions about the importance of academic integrity and its connection to broader ethical issues and concerns.

**An Institution Should:**

6. Be alert to trends in higher education and technology affecting academic integrity on its campus.

7. Regularly assess the effectiveness of its policies and procedures and take steps to improve and rejuvenate them.
Discussion Topics

1. Pros and Cons of Student Involvement in Academic Integrity Cases
2. Effective Ways to Use Honor Councils
3. Increasing Faculty Attentiveness to AI Issues
Resources for Further Study

- International Center for Academic Integrity:
  http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/home.php (TTU Ethics Center leads Southwest Regional Consortium for Academic Integrity!)

- Academic Integrity at OU:
  http://integrity.ou.edu/

- Guide to Advising International Students about Academic Integrity at Penn State:
  https://dus.psu.edu/mentor/2012/03/guide-to-advising-international-students-about-academic-integrity/

- Good Site for Information and Resources on Plagiarism is http://www.plagiarism.org/.

- Council of Writing Program Administrators Webpage on Best Practices to Define and Avoid Plagiarism:
  http://wpacouncil.org/positions/WPAplagiarism.pdf

- Purdue Online Writing Lab – Best Practices for Teachers:
  https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/05/