Advice from students to instructors on protecting academic integrity[1]

> **KEY QUOTATION:** "A passing reference to academic integrity on the first day of class isn't sufficient. Reiteration highlights the importance of the topic. Initiate a short discussion or class e-mail on 'ways to avoid plagiarism' several weeks before a major paper is due."

Early in the Course
Be Personal
Remind and Reiterate
Prevention: Cheating
Prevention: Plagiarism
Responding to Incidents

EARLY IN THE COURSE

- Include a syllabus statement about University academic integrity standards.
  - *"Encourage faculty to take this seriously, not just lip service in syllabi. Also encourage foundational course instructors to provide better instruction, as it is evident that upperclassmen either still don't understand or simply don't care -- and for that to be true, it must be that they have never experienced any consequences (themselves or others)." Student – 2012 Survey*[2]
- Discuss academic integrity expectations on the first day of class. Share personal examples and perspectives highlighting why academic integrity is important to you.
- Emphasize the mutual obligations of teachers and students, and that cheating and plagiarism are a breach of trust with fellow students and with you.
- Ask students to discuss why academic integrity is important to them. Doing so helps break through the students vs. faculty attitude toward academic integrity.
- Pay attention to students as individuals. Identify interests, strengths, and weakness. Urge students who are struggling to ask for help.
- Work with a librarian to create an online library guide to point students to relevant resources. This guide will be available in the student's MyU Portal.

BE PERSONAL

- Discuss why you were attracted to your field or discipline. Why does the subject interest you? What questions or mysteries remain to be solved?
- Discuss the academic challenges you encountered and the strategies you developed for success.

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[1] Taken from the Pavela Report: Law and Policy in High Education, September 23, 2011, Vol 16:#29 and customized for the University of Minnesota

[2] McCabe, D. (2012). Academic Integrity UM – Twin Cities Student Survey. Unpublished manuscript, Center for Academic Integrity, Rutgers University, Rutgers, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

- Invite discussion about the academic and ethical standards applicable to your discipline or profession.

REMIND AND REITERATE

- A passing reference to academic integrity on the first day of class isn't sufficient. Reiteration highlights the importance of the topic. Initiate a short discussion or class email on "ways to avoid plagiarism" several weeks before a major paper is due.
- Prior to every assignment or exam verbalize that academic integrity is at stake and if what they are about to turn in does not represent their work, it would be better to turn in nothing and take a zero than to be charged with scholastic dishonesty.
- Before any incidents occur, think about your plan. How will incidents be handled? Think pro-actively.

PREVENTION: CHEATING

- *2012 Survey*
  - 62% of faculty closely monitor students taking a test/exam
  - 70% of faculty provide information on syllabus about cheating/plagiarism
  - 34% of faculty administer multiple version of tests/exams
  - 6% of the faculty respondents report not using any special safeguards to deter cheating in their courses
- Don't reuse examinations.
  - *"I think it should be mandatory for professors to have different versions of each test so that people next to each other are not tempted to copy." Student -- 2012 Survey*
  - When asked how strongly they agree with the faculty changing exams, etc. regularly, 63% of undergraduate students and 46% of graduate and professional students agree or strongly agree with this approach as a way to decrease occurrences of scholastic dishonesty. From the survey, 65% of the faculty respondents report regularly changing exams as a way to reduce cheating in their courses. *2012 Survey*
- Count exams out to the row. Do not hand them out in stacks
- Do not use standard textbook homework exercises or tests provided by textbook companies as answers to both are readily available online.
- Change the design or wording of lab assignments from year to year.
- Provide an examination "cover sheet" with an academic integrity reminder and specific examination instructions (e.g. your policy on use of calculators; display or use of cell-phones; asking permission to use bathrooms, etc).
- Use assigned seating during examinations.
- If there are adequate seats, provide ample space between examination takers.
- Vary the order of questions on different copies of the same examination.
- Find a way to proctor examinations.
- Allow students to see graded examinations, but require that the examinations be returned to you at the end of class.
- Provide specific instructions about when collaboration is or is not permitted.
- Assume collaboration is likely to occur on any take home examination. Set time limits for take-home examinations keyed to when the questions are downloaded and answers

submitted.
    - 40% of undergraduate students report working with others when asked for individual work once or more than once. *2012 Survey*
    - *"Working as a group on HW, to me, is not cheating. Sometimes assignments are difficult, and students need to work together to figure it out." Student -- 2012 Survey*
- Consider allowing students to use a legal "crib sheet" (specified size) during examinations. Doing so encourages students to think about, synthesize, and organize materials before the examination.

PREVENTION: PLAGIARISM

- Give students practical guidance on how plagiarism is defined in your course and can be avoided.
- Take a moment to explain WHY plagiarism is wrong.
    - *"I'd like to see more people called out for cheating and plagiarism. I see incorrect sources all the time in group papers and while revising and they might get a point taken off. That's someone else's work that they're not recognizing correctly." Student -- 2012 Survey*
    - *"I once copied few lines from an article online without referencing to it. I thought that what was available online fell under common knowledge and that I did not need to cite it." Student -- 2012 Survey*
- Assign focused topics likely to be engaging to students.
- Use shorter and more frequent papers, including in-class writing exercises. Learn student writing styles.
- Consider using TurnItIn.com
- Have students submit components of major papers in stages. (e.g. start with a proposal and outline)
- Scaffold assignments, rather than merely giving a due date. Ask students to provide a short list of bibliographical citations along with a topic; then, have students make an annotated bibliography before the final paper or project is due.
- Review and comment on how students use citations.
- Ask students to "present" their papers and respond to questions in class.
- Provide information on how to weave students' own text and voice with research citations via paraphrasing, quoting, etc.

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS

- Get all the facts sooner than later.
- Keep all original assignments; do not hand them back.
- Schedule a meeting with the student via email. Inform them the meeting is important and it is related to "assignment." Give them less than 48 hours to meet with you.
- Consider inviting someone else to sit-in on the meeting or recording your meeting. Make sure you ask for permission to record your conversation.
- Based on the evidence, ask the student what they would conclude.
- When an incident involves more than one student (such as a roommate), try to schedule back to back meetings, so there little time for collaboration of stories.

- If scholastic dishonesty is suspected during an exam, allow students to complete the exam but make note of circumstances and students sitting nearby.
- Discuss your concerns privately and individually. Allow students to respond before reaching firm conclusions.
- If you decide that the incident is scholastic dishonesty, file a report with the appropriate campus office as soon as possible.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Student Code of Conduct

Resolving Violations of Student Code of Conduct (includes links to campus-specific policies)

UMTC/UMR Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

UMM Scholastic Committee

UMD Office of Student Conduct

UMC Academic Advising

University of Washington Bothell Preventing Cheating in Distance Education

Illinois Online Network Strategies to Minimize Cheating Online