**Academic Integrity: Understanding Faculty Attitudes &**

**Strategies for Promoting Academic Integrity**

Michele E. Yoder, University of Michigan - Dearborn

Joy E. Beatty, University of Michigan - Dearborn

**Abstract**

Academic dishonesty is an issue with which management faculty must deal on a regular basis. Extant research says a great deal about student attitudes towards academic dishonesty yet is less informative about faculty attitudes and their antecedents. This roundtable session will involve a discussion of 1) facts about academic dishonesty, 2) mechanisms for preventing academic dishonesty, and 3) the origins and effects of faculty attitudes towards academic dishonesty. This session will provide practical advice attendees can immediately apply in their classrooms as well as theoretical novelty by presenting and discussing in-progress research into faculty attitudes about academic dishonesty.

**Keywords:** academic integrity,academic dishonesty, faculty attitudes

**Introduction**

*“The tendency to develop a disposition in one social context and to carry it into another suggests that academic dishonesty in college may lead to dishonesty and deceit in other areas of social life.”*  - Bowers, 1964: 4

Multiple studies reveal that the majority of college students engage in some form of academic dishonesty; McCabe, Butterfield, and Trevino (2012: 2) report that at least two-thirds of students admitted to cheating during the prior year, while a review of over 100 studies of cheating found the mean prevalence of cheating to be 70.4% (Whitely, 1998). Business school students are more likely to cheat than others (McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino, 2008; McCabe & Trevino, 1995) and notable real-world scandals such as Enron suggest the need for business schools to address the ethical and moral development of students (e.g., Goshal, 2005). Students who engage in academic dishonesty in college are more likely to engage in dishonesty in the workplace as well (Nonis & Swift, 2001). Thus, academic dishonesty is a problem with which all business educators must grapple. Unfortunately, many feel ill-equipped or disinclined to do so (Kieth-Spiegel, Tabachnick, Whitley, & Washburn, 1998; Coren, 2011). This proposed roundtable discussion is designed to help attendees better understand their own attitudes towards academic integrity and be more prepared to promote academic integrity in their classrooms.

**Purpose & Focus of Discussion**

The overarching purpose of the proposed roundtable discussion is to provide an interactive and engaging forum for instructors to learn about and discuss how faculty deal with academic dishonesty. We will focus on three broad topic areas. First, we will launch the session with a quiz and debrief designed to ensure shared understanding of the facts about academic dishonesty. Second, we will present evidence-based mechanisms instructors can use to promote academic integrity. We will then hold a roundtable discussion of those mechanisms, encouraging attendees to reflect on how they have used those mechanisms or to share other mechanisms they have used. Finally, the authors are in the early stages of a qualitative study of the antecedents of faculty attitudes toward academic integrity. We will share the “state of the research” on that topic and conclude the session with a discussion of attendees’ thoughts about their own attitudes, as well as the antecedents and effects thereof.

**Outcomes & Target Audience**

The target audience is any college-level business instructor. Those who are more experienced dealing with academic dishonesty will offer important insights to the discussion and those who have less experience will benefit from advice on how to prevent academic dishonesty. The expected outcomes include the following.

1. Attendees will achieve an enhanced understanding of the facts about academic integrity, including its prevalence and causes.
2. Attendees will leave with practical tips for promoting academic integrity. The authors will compile the results of the planned discussion on this topic and share it with attendees after the conference.
3. Attendees will discuss nascent research on faculty attitudes towards academic integrity, reaching greater understanding of their own and others’ attitudes toward academic integrity as well as the origins and effects of those attitudes.

**Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications**

The proposed session is divided into three sections (as outlined below in the session description). First, we will use a quiz to generate shared understanding of some of the facts of academic dishonesty. Although results from the 1960’s on show that the majority of students admit to having cheated (e.g., Bowers, 1964; McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino, 2006; McCabe & Trevino, 1995; Whitley, 1998), faculty in one study routinely underestimated the prevalence of cheating (Volpe, Davidson, & Bell, 2008). The quiz is located in Appendix A, which includes explanations of and supporting citations for the correct answers. Second, we will present and discuss practical mechanisms for encouraging academic honesty. Finally, we will discuss research the authors are currently conducting regarding the antecedents of faculty attitudes toward academic integrity. We will briefly highlight the background literature of these final two topics followed by a summary of the contribution this session will offer.

**Background Literature**

*Promotion & Prevention*

Academic dishonesty has a variety of causes, the most influential of which is students’ perceptions of whether their peers are cheating, which is closely related to the school’s ethical climate (Bowers, 1964; McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino, 2006). In addition, there is a disconnect between what faculty view to be prohibited behaviors and what students believe to be cheating (e.g., Guyette, King, Piotrowski, 2008). Thus, experts in the field recommend creating a culture of academic integrity and communicating expectations to students (e.g., McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino, 2012; McCabe & Pavela, 2004).

Numerous specific techniques have been researched over the years that help reduce the instances of academic dishonesty. For instance, evidence reveals that honor codes are effective at reducing cheating (e.g., McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2002). Scrambling the questions on multiple exam versions (Bernardi, Baca, Landers, & Witek, 2008) and controlling testing conditions in various ways (Nonis & Swift, 1998) also help prevent academic dishonesty. Similarly, students are less likely to cheat when they are not seated next to another student during exams (Whitley, 1998). Please see Appendix B for an outline of various recommended methods of preventing academic dishonesty that will be provided to and discussed with session attendees.

*Faculty Attitudes*

There is less extant research about the antecedents and impact of faculty attitudes toward academic dishonesty (how faculty perceive academic dishonesty, its prevention, and its reporting). Because the norm of faculty academic freedom in the classroom is enshrined in many US colleges and universities, institutions seem to rarely force all faculty to impose the exact same academic integrity policies and procedures across classes. Instead, it is left to the discretion of the instructors whether they will a) design the course to promote academic integrity, b) actively check for instances of academic dishonesty, and c) impose penalties for academic dishonesty. In this landscape, faculty attitudes assume an even larger role in predicting how individual faculty will deal with academic dishonesty.

Currently, there is evidence that faculty attitudes influence adoption of various practices. Faculty who feel positively about their school’s honor code will allow the honor code system to take care of academic integrity issues while those in an institution without an honor code feel less positive and take more individual action to catch and punish cheaters (McCabe, Butterfield, Trevino, 2003). Faculty beliefs about the reporting process influence the likelihood of faculty reporting an instance of cheating (Coren, 2011; Kieth-Spiegel et al., 1998). Faculty beliefs about the frequency of cheating are positively related to actions designed to prevent cheating (Hard, Conway, & Moran, 2006). However, not all studies have demonstrated the expected relationship between attitudes and behaviors. For instance, Volpe, Davidson, & Bell (2008) discovered that faculty beliefs about the prevalence of cheating did not predict the inclusion of a statement about academic integrity in the syllabus. Despite this anomalous result, there is reason to suppose that faculty attitudes influence their behaviors around academic integrity.

Beyond the effect of prior experiences, we know very little about the predictors of faculty attitudes towards academic dishonesty. For instance, beliefs about how often students cheat predict faculty behaviors (Hard, Conway, & Moran, 2006), but what predicts faculty beliefs about the prevalence of cheating? What (aside from prior experience) predicts attitudes towards the reporting process? It is an open question as to what causes faculty attitudes towards academic integrity. Answering this question is crucial if we want to create a climate that supports academic integrity.

The study we are engaged on is a qualitative investigation of faculty attitudes toward academic dishonesty and the origins of those attitudes. We are currently in the process of applying for IRB approval. We hope to be able to classify various components of faculty attitudes, identify archetypical configurations of the attitudinal components, and pinpoint important predictors of faculty attitudes. During the session, we will report on the status of this work and open a dialogue with attendees about their own attitudes and perceived origins.

**Contribution to Teaching & Learning**

The proposed roundtable session is widely applicable to MOBTC attendees and addresses an issue all instructors must deal with (or choose to ignore). This session will contribute to the teaching abilities of the attendees by providing evidence-based strategies for dealing with academic dishonesty. It will also contribute to the theoretical development of the field by exposing attendees to new research into faculty attitudes about academic dishonesty and academic integrity.

**Session Description**

Following is the planned timeline for the 60-minute roundtable session. The majority of the session is intended for attendee participation.

| **Time** | **Topic/Activity** | **Participants** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2 minutes | *Introductions* | Authors |
| 10 minutes | *Academic Integrity Facts & Myths Quiz & Debrief*  Authors will administer the quiz in Appendix A to attendees. We will then debrief the quiz by discussing which facts attendees found surprising. This is designed to create a shared understanding of the scope of the issue and to engage attendees in the topic. | Authors & Attendees |
| 8 minutes | *Outline of Promotion Strategies*  Authors will present the strategies for promoting academic integrity outlined in Appendix B. We will briefly highlight the research supporting these strategies. | Authors |
| 12 minutes | *Roundtable Discussion of Prevention Strategies*  Attendees will be asked to share either 1) a strategy they have used that was not included in those outlined by the authors or 2) their own experience with one of the strategies. The idea is to flesh out a toolkit for attendees to be able to implement in their own classes. We plan to add any new strategies to the outline in Appendix B and make the list available to interested attendees after the conference. | Authors & Attendees |
| 10 minutes | *Presentation of Research into Faculty Attitudes*  The authors are engaged in qualitative research into the antecedents of faculty attitudes towards academic integrity and dishonesty. We will briefly present the background on this topic and the current state of our own research. | Authors |
| 15 minutes | *Roundtable Discussion of Origins & Effects of Faculty Attitudes*  Attendees will be asked to share either 1) what they perceive as the antecedents of their own attitudes or 2) how they believe faculty attitudes towards academic integrity shape faculty engagement in promotion strategies. | Authors & Attendees |
| 3 minutes | *Conclusion*  Authors will summarize the discussion and conclude by offering to e-mail the updated outline of promotion strategies to those interested. | Authors |

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**Session Handout: Academic Integrity Facts & Myths Quiz**

*Quiz*

1. The majority of business students cheat. T F
2. Students who cheat in school are more likely to cheat in real life. T F
3. There is little instructors can do to prevent cheating. T F
4. Students’ moral compasses are the biggest predictor of cheating. T F
5. Over 1/3 of faculty have ignored at least one instance of cheating. T F

*Answers*

1. True: At least two-thirds of students admitted to cheating during the prior year in a study by McCabe, Butterfield, and Trevino (2012: 2). In a wide-spread review of over 100 studies of cheating, Whitely (1998) calculated the mean prevalence of cheating to be 70.4%.
2. True: Nonis and Swift (2001) found that students who engage in academic dishonesty in school are also more likely to be dishonest in the workplace (e.g., taking supplies or products from the employer, lying to the employer, etc.).
3. False: A variety of tactics may reduce cheating behaviors, including using multiple versions of exams with scrambled questions (Bernardi, Baca, Landers, & Witek, 2008) and controlling testing conditions in various ways (Nonis & Swift, 1998).
4. False: In reality, multiple authors have found perceptions of peer cheating and the culture around academic integrity to be the biggest predictors of cheating (Bowers, 1964; McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino, 2006). If students believe that their peers are cheating, then they will too. Others (such as Lang, 2013) suggest that high stakes lead to increased cheating.
5. True: A 2011 study by Coren revealed that 40.3% of faculty have ignored one or more occurrences of student cheating, while McCabe and Pavela (2004) reported a rate of 44%.

**Session Handout: Scale - Faculty Attitudes Towards Academic Dishonesty**

Please respond to the following statements using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = strongly agree

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | (disagree) 🡨----🡪(agree) |
| 1. I believe that cheating is more frequent among first year students and sophomores than juniors and seniors at my university. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. I believe students should be punished to the full extent of the university’s policy if they cheat. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I have different cheating policies for different courses (i.e., lower vs. upper division). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I use class time at the beginning of the term to review and discuss my cheating policy with my students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I have a specific policy in my syllabus regarding cheating. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I tend to pursue punishment for certain types of cheating more than others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I prefer to confront cheating problems myself rather than involving other administrators. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. The amount of time and effort necessary to pursue punishment for cheaters has deterred me from punishing cheating in the past. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. I have felt guilty about punishing cheaters in the past. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. I am aware of more incidences of cheating in my classes than I actually punish. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I feel better about myself after I have punished incidences of cheating in my classes. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. I would rather have outside administration help me pursue punishment for cheaters than pursue them alone. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. Dealing with cheaters is one of my least favorite aspects of teaching. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. I believe if I actively pursue punishment for incidences of cheating in my current classes, there will be less cheating in my future classes. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. I believe that this university’s current policy on cheating needs to be better enforced by professors. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

From Volpe, Davidson, & Bell (2008). Faculty attitudes and behaviors concerning student cheating. *College Student Journal*, 42:1, 164-175.

**Session Handout: Academic Integrity Promotion Strategies**

This is a partial outline of practical means for promoting academic integrity and preventing academic dishonesty.

1. Institution or College Level
   1. Academic Code of Conduct
   2. Honor Code
   3. Climate of Ethical Behavior & Academic Integrity
      1. Model Ethical Behavior
      2. Involve all Stakeholders
2. Course Level
   1. Course Design Elements
      1. Lower the Stakes
      2. Introduce Multiple Opportunities to Assess Writing
      3. Include Assignments that Discourage Plagiarism & Ghostwriting
   2. Syllabus Statements & Education about Expectations
      1. Include Specific Expectations & Resources in Syllabus
      2. Instruct Students on Commonly Occurring Problem Areas
   3. Exam Controls
      1. Create Multiple Versions
      2. Introduce Classroom Exam Hygiene
         1. Limit Belongings at Desk
         2. Separate Students
         3. Stroll the Room
         4. Prohibit Leaving Room
      3. Post-Exam Behaviors
         1. Control Access to Exams
         2. Return Copies of Scantrons, Not Originals
   4. Papers & Plagiarism
      1. Provide Guidance on How to Avoid Plagiarism
      2. Check for Copied Material (and Enable Students to Do So)
   5. Collaboration – Provide Specific Guidelines
   6. Online Courses/Elements
      1. Exams
         1. Design Open Book Tests
         2. Use Proctoring Services
      2. Online Discussions
         1. State Research & Citation Expectations
         2. Spot-Check Postings for Copied Material

Sources include: Bernardi, Baca, Landers, & Witek, 2008; Lang, 2013; McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino, 2012; McCabe & Pavela, 2004; Nonis & Swift, 1998; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002