

RENEWING OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: Promoting Academic Integrity at Duke University

Report of the Duke University Academic Integrity Assessment Committee

**Presented to the
Arts & Sciences Council and the Engineering Faculty Council
March 8, 2001**

Committee Members

Matthew Baugh '01 (Co-Chair)
Elizabeth Kiss, Kenan Institute for Ethics (Co-Chair)
Sue Wasiolek, Student Affairs (Administrative Coordinator)
Jack Bookman, Mathematics
Stephen Bryan, Student Development
Robert Froh, Office of Institutional Research
Julian Harris '00
Chris Kennedy, Athletics
Marcy Litle, Pre-Major Advising
Judith Ruderman, Office of the Provost
Kacie Wallace, Student Development
Daisy Waryold, Center for Academic Integrity

With special thanks to Lindsay Bunk '01, Robert Froh, and Matt Serra for survey assistance.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
The Survey: Sample Size and Response Rates	3
Evaluation of Duke’s Policies and Procedures	3
Selected Faculty Survey Results	4
Selected Student Survey Results	4
Student Responses to Cheating by Other Students	5
Faculty Responses to Cheating by Students	6
Student and Faculty Understanding of, and Attitudes toward, Duke Policies	6
Comparisons over Time: Duke Student Results 1990, 1995, 1999	7
Major Committee Findings	8
Major Committee Recommendations	9
Appendix A: Selected Student Narrative Comments	12
Appendix B: Selected Faculty Narrative Comments	13

Introduction

As part of ongoing efforts to improve academic integrity on campus, Duke University applied in the spring of 1999 to participate in a pilot project on *Assessing Academic Integrity*. The project was made possible by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation and led by the Center for Academic Integrity, a national consortium of over 200 colleges and universities that is based here at Duke in affiliation with the Kenan Institute for Ethics.

Duke was one of twelve colleges and universities selected to participate in the full pilot project and one of twenty schools that participated in the survey phase of the project. The principal investigator for the study is Professor Donald McCabe of Rutgers University, a nationally known researcher on student academic integrity. He has conducted surveys with tens of thousands of students over the past decade, including two previous surveys at Duke in 1990 and 1995.

The committee’s work consisted of two components:

- 1. Conducting surveys of Duke students, faculty and administrators**
- 2. Evaluating Duke’s academic integrity policies and procedures**

The Survey: Sample Size and Response Rates

During the 1999-2000 academic year, the committee invited 400 Duke students, 200 regular-rank faculty, 100 teaching assistants, and 61 administrators to participate in this survey. Our response rates were as follows:

	Students	Faculty	TA's	Administrators
# of Surveys	400	200	100	61
# of Respondents	242	72	25	40
Response Rate	61%	36%	25%	66%

An Important Note about the Faculty Results: We subsequently discovered that some of the faculty we surveyed did not teach undergraduates. We therefore report faculty data on the 32 respondents who we are confident teach undergraduates, based on their departmental affiliation and narrative comments.

Faculty Follow-up Survey Spring 2001. With the assistance of Professor Matt Serra, Director of Assessment for Trinity College, we conducted a follow-up faculty survey in late February/early March 2001 using a shorter survey instrument developed by Professor Don McCabe. At this time our response rate is as follows:

	Faculty (2001 survey)
# of Surveys	200
# of Respondents	60
Response Rate	30%

In this report, all results from the 2001 follow-up survey are placed in *italics*.

The Evaluation Component: Taking a Hard Look at Policies and Procedures

In addition to the survey, the committee reviewed Duke's academic integrity policies and procedures through a series of discussions involving committee members as well as members of the Undergraduate Judicial Board, the Honor Council, academic deans, pre-major advisors, and the Appellate Board. The series of three meetings involved small group work in which participants used a set of questions developed by the Center for Academic Integrity to assess Duke's system for promoting academic integrity as well as the way in which the details of that system are communicated in publications. At the end of each meeting, the groups were assembled in order to report on findings and to share general impressions and anecdotal evidence about elements of the system that do or do not work well. The discussions focused on four main topics: (1) policies (2) disciplinary procedures and sanctions (3) readings on academic integrity and (4) overview of the survey results.

Our review of policies included an examination of references to academic integrity in major university documents, including *The Bulletin of Information and Regulations*, the Faculty Handbook, the university's mission statement, and the Honor Code booklet. We also examined disciplinary statistics for the past five years.

Selected Student Survey Results

I. Self-reported Cheating

Have you engaged in the following actions once or more than once since coming to Duke?

	1 time	>1 times	Total
Unauthorized collaboration	22%	22%	45%
Copying a few sentences without footnoting them in a paper	23%	15%	38%
Falsifying lab or research data	19%	18%	37%
Getting questions or answers from someone who has already taken test	14%	9%	24%
Receiving substantial, unpermitted help on an assignment	10%	11%	21%
Fabricating or falsifying a bibliography	13%	6%	19%
Copying material, almost word for word, from any source and turning it in as your own work (Plagiarism)	4%	7%	11%
Copying from another student during a test/exam <i>without</i> their knowledge	7%	4%	11%
Copying another student's computer program	5%	5%	9%
Helping someone else cheat on a test	6%	2%	8%
Plagiarizing a paper in any way using the Internet as a source	3%	3%	6%
Cheating on a test in any other way	3%	4%	6%
Turning in work done by someone else	4%	1%	5%
Using unpermitted crib notes (or cheat sheet) during a test	2%	2%	4%
Copying from another student during a test/exam <i>with</i> their knowledge	2%	2%	4%
Writing or providing a paper for another student	2%	>1%	2%
Turning in a paper based on information obtained from a term paper 'mill' or website	2%	>1%	2%

Do you consider the following forms of cheating **serious** (as opposed to "trivial" or "not cheating")?

Copying from another student during a test/exam <i>with</i> their knowledge	85%
Copying from another student during a test/exam <i>without</i> their knowledge	83%
Writing or providing a paper for another student	79%
Copying a few sentences without footnoting them in a paper	77%
Turning in a paper based on information obtained from a term paper 'mill' or website	69%
Getting questions or answers from someone who has already taken test	67%
Using unpermitted crib notes (or cheat sheet) during a test	51%
Turning in work done by someone else	44%
Copying another student's computer program	40%
Fabricating or falsifying a bibliography	38%
Falsifying lab or research data	28%
Receiving substantial, unpermitted help on an assignment	27%
Unauthorized collaboration	24%

II. Student Responses to Cheating By Other Students

What would you do if you saw a student cheating on a major test or examination?

Report to instructor, proctor, or appropriate authority	18%
Ask student to report themselves and report if they fail to do so	15%
Express disapproval but not report	15%
Mention to other students without reporting	34%
Ignore the incident	14%
Other	5%

Have you ever seen a student cheat during a test or exam at Duke?

Yes	64	27%
No	177	73%

Have you ever reported another student for cheating?

Yes	1	2%
No	63	98%

III. Perceptions of Duke's Policies

How would you rate the typical **student's understanding** of Duke's policies concerning student cheating?

	Students	Faculty	TA's
Low/Very Low	62%	65%	32%
High/Very High	38%	45%	68%

How would you rate the **faculty's understanding** of Duke's policies concerning student cheating?

	Students	Faculty	<i>Faculty</i>	TA's
Low/Very Low	22%	71%	57.5%	36%
High/Very High	78%	29%	42.5%	64%

How would you rate the **faculty's support** for Duke's policies concerning student cheating?

	Students	Faculty	<i>Faculty</i>	TA's
Low/Very Low	22%	45%	48%	54%
High/Very High	78%	55%	50%	46%

How would you rate the **effectiveness** of Duke's policies concerning academic integrity?

	Students	Faculty	Faculty	TA's
Low/Very Low	50%	74%	59%	70%
High/Very High	50%	26%	41%	30%

Duke's student judicial process is fair & impartial.

	Students	Faculty	Faculty	TA's
Agree/Agree Strongly	22%	34%	39%	16%
Not Sure	56%	58%	50%	76%
Disagree/Disagree Strongly	22%	8%	10%	8%

Students should be held responsible for monitoring other students.

	Students	Faculty	TA's
Agree/Agree Strongly	43%	49%	44%
Not Sure	17%	16%	24%
Disagree/Disagree Strongly	40%	35%	16%

How appropriate is Duke's standard sanction of a two-semester suspension for academic dishonesty?

	Students	Faculty	TA's
Appropriate	75%	77%	64%
Too Lenient	5%	18%	23%
Too Stringent	20%	5%	14%

Comparisons over Time: Duke Student Survey Results, 1990, 1995, 1999

Have you engaged in the following actions at least once since coming to Duke?

	1990	1995	1999
Unauthorized collaboration	29%	42%	45%
Copying a few sentences without footnoting them in a paper	31%	46%	38%
Falsifying lab or research data	-	42%	37%
Getting questions or answers from someone who has already taken test	-	36%	24%
Receiving substantial, unpermitted help on an assignment	16%	23%	21%
Fabricating or falsifying a bibliography	21%	29%	19%
Copying material, almost word for word, from any source and turning it in as your own work (Plagiarism)	11%	16%	11%
Copying from another student during a test/exam <i>without</i> their knowledge	28%	19%	11%
Copying another student's computer program	-	20%	9%
Helping someone else cheat on a test	22%	16%	8%
Plagiarizing a paper in any way using the Internet as a source	-	-	6%
Cheating on a test in any other way	14%	11%	6%
Turning in work done by someone else	3%	7%	5%
Using unpermitted crib notes (or cheat sheet) during a test	21%	10%	4%
Copying from another student during a test/exam <i>with</i> their knowledge	13%	12%	4%
Writing or providing a paper for another student	-	3%	2%
Turning in a paper based on info. obtained from a term paper 'mill' or website	-	-	2%

Selected Faculty Survey Results

I. Efforts to Prevent Cheating and Promote Academic Integrity

This chart compares Duke faculty responses from 1999-2000 and from 2001 with those from faculty at other schools in the 1999 survey group of 20 schools, divided into private schools with honor codes, public schools with honor codes, and schools with no honor code.

	Duke Faculty	<i>Duke Faculty</i>	Duke TA's	Private Honor Code	Public Honor Code	No Code
Change exams regularly	83%	24%	24%	72%	82%	79%
Discuss importance of integrity with students in class	45%	14%	28%	58%	59%	63%
Remind students about their obligations/Duke policies	45%		16%	63%	47%	48%
Put information in syllabus about cheating/plagiarism	28%	10%	28%	56%	61%	47%
Hand out different versions of an exam	28%	9%	24%	29%	42%	49%
Talk to students about your cheating detection methods	17%	4%	8%	13%	19%	27%

II. Responses to Cheating by Students

In the past two years, which of these actions have you taken in response to incidents of apparent cheating by a student?

	Faculty 1999-2000	<i>Faculty 2001</i>
Reprimanded a student	31%	30%
Lowered a student's grade	19%	27%
Referred case to appropriate authority	29%	16%
Referred case to department chair	14%	3%

Faculty members at Duke handle instances of student cheating in a uniform manner (2001)

<i>Disagree strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Agree/Agree Strongly</i>
43%	16%	35%	5%

If you have referred a suspected case(s) of cheating at Duke, what was your level of satisfaction with the way the case(s) was handled? (2001)

<i>High/Very High</i>	<i>Low/Very Low</i>
61%	39%

Major Findings

The committee recognizes that survey results always require careful interpretation. A survey like this one, which asks student respondents to self-report unethical behavior, raises challenging questions about who responds and how honestly they respond. Such surveys tend to underreport than overreport rates of cheating and plagiarism. While keeping in mind the survey limitations, we are confident of the following major findings:

The State of Academic Integrity at Duke

1. The levels of cheating and plagiarism at Duke are much higher than we want them to be. While Duke may not have an overall “cheating crisis” *relative to schools nationwide*, levels of cheating nationwide are unacceptably high.
2. Duke students report particularly high rates of certain types of cheating, especially falsification of lab data and unauthorized collaboration on assignments.
3. Understanding of the honor code and of academic integrity policies is low among all campus constituencies.
4. By comparison with other schools, Duke faculty appear less likely to discuss academic integrity in class, to refer to the honor code in their syllabi, or to take measures to prevent or discourage cheating.
5. Students do not report other students for violating the honor code, and many faculty do not report suspected incidents of cheating/plagiarism to the Judicial Board.
6. A majority of both students and faculty support Duke’s “standard” sanction of a two-semester suspension for honor code violations.
7. Student response is sharply divided on the obligation of students to report other students for cheating and on the desirability of unproctored examinations (which are not allowed at Duke but are considered standard features of honor code systems).

Duke’s Academic Integrity Policies

Our evaluation of Duke’s policies and procedures revealed that information about these policies is scattered throughout different university documents. There is no single, easily accessible, user-friendly source for either faculty or students. In addition:

1. Academic integrity policies and documents are sometimes **inconsistent and unclear**, particularly about the responsibilities of faculty members. For instance, the Faculty Handbook states in section 6-2 that faculty are “expected” to report academic integrity violations to the Judicial Board, whereas in the appendix, section X-4, it states that they are “required” to do so.
2. Academic integrity policies and documents may be **out-of-date**. For instance, the Faculty Handbook states, in language drafted before implementation of the Duke Undergraduate Honor Code in 1993, that faculty are required to proctor examinations--a policy that is not widely known among faculty and that some faculty members believe to be inconsistent with having an honor code.
3. Academic integrity policies are **silent** on important issues. For example, the Judicial Code does not address the role of intent in adjudicating plagiarism. Duke also provides no guidance to faculty for assigning grades to students who have been found either guilty or not guilty of academic dishonesty by the Judicial Board.

Recommendations

What will it take to strengthen Duke's culture of academic integrity? It will require every campus constituency – faculty, students, and administrators – to accept a shared responsibility.

Building on a Young Honor Code

Duke's Honor Code, passed in 1993, is very young. It is clear to the committee, not only from the survey results, but also from focus group discussions and informal conversations with a wide range of members of the Duke community, that Duke does not yet have a robust culture of academic integrity. The code is not a highly visible feature of campus life for students, faculty, or administrators. It is little discussed in Duke classrooms and does not shape campus behavior in prominent ways as it does on some honor code campuses, where students take unproctored and even self-scheduled examinations.

A student at one of our focus groups in the spring of 2000 vividly captured the situation. She pointed out that incoming students are required to sign the Code in the summer before their first semester along with paperwork regarding meal plans and housing, robbing the action of any symbolic weight or significance. This discussion inspired the Honor Council to organize a public Honor Code signing ceremony at Convocation in the Fall of 2000.

A Moment of Opportunity

Promoting a culture of academic integrity at Duke is a challenging task, but the university can draw on strong leadership in its efforts. The President, Provost, Deans of Arts and Sciences and Engineering, senior administrators in Trinity College and Student Affairs, and leaders among the faculty and student body have all demonstrated strong commitment on this issue.

Academic integrity is at the heart of the university's core enterprise of teaching, learning, and scholarship, and we all need to invest in the process of promoting academic integrity. A modest investment of time and attention can yield significant returns within our campus culture and in the lives of Duke students.

The committee recommends that Duke University take the following actions:

- (1) Create an Academic Integrity Council.** The promotion of academic integrity is a multidimensional challenge that requires collaboration among numerous groups in the university community. In order to maintain the expand the momentum of our current efforts, we recommend the creation of an Academic Integrity Council which comprises representatives from Arts & Sciences and Engineering faculty, the student body, academic administration, and student judicial affairs. In the future, representatives from Duke's graduate and professional schools could also be invited to join the council, making it a truly university-wide body.

The role of the Council would be to:

- Coordinate development of educational programs and materials about the Honor Code, applicable judicial policies and procedures, and ways to promote academic integrity among students, faculty and staff;
- Coordinate an expanded network of training and consulting services for those who play a key role in preventing or addressing academic integrity problems, including faculty, teaching assistants, and resident advisors;
- Facilitate information sharing among key groups, including the Undergraduate Judicial Board, the Honor Council, the Arts & Sciences Council, the Engineering Faculty Council, and senior administration;
- Coordinate regular assessment of Duke's efforts, including surveys and focus groups;
- Examine the increasing role of technology in creating opportunities for academic dishonesty (internet-related plagiarism, wireless networks, information beaming by hand-held devices, on-line testing and evaluations, etc.) and develop recommendations for ways to address these challenges;
- Recommend policy changes to appropriate governing bodies;
- Make annual presentations on Duke's progress in promoting academic integrity.

(2) Mobilize faculty commitment and leadership. Faculty leadership is critical to promoting a culture of academic integrity. We recommend that the Arts & Sciences Council and the Engineering Council commit to mobilizing faculty leadership by:

- Encouraging faculty to clearly communicate a concern for academic honesty to their students and to educate their students about what constitute breaches of academic integrity in their discipline. Individual approaches will vary. Appropriate actions might include:
 - discussing the importance of academic integrity
 - including a statement about the Honor Code on course syllabi
 - asking students to write out and sign an honor pledge on assignments
 - being a role model by citing sources in lectures
 - explaining what counts as plagiarism and how to avoid it
 - providing clear guidelines about standards and expectations regarding collaboration, citation, use of notes during exams, etc.
 - assigning narrow and specific research topics, collecting drafts, requiring oral presentation of student work
 - changing exams and problem sets annually
 - reducing the temptation to cheat by, for example, having students sit at a distance from each other or producing alternate versions of an exam
- Encouraging faculty to support consistent handling of academic integrity cases by reporting suspected instances of cheating or plagiarism to the Associate Dean for Judicial Affairs;
- Providing ongoing forums for faculty discussion of Honor Code and academic integrity issues;
- Including information about academic integrity in the Provost's orientation for new faculty as well as in departmental orientations and TA orientation;

- Appointing faculty representatives to the newly formed Academic Integrity Council.

(3) Clarify Academic Integrity Statements and Documents. Information about Duke's academic integrity policies is not available from a single, easily accessible, user-friendly source. In addition, as noted above in the section on the Committee's Findings, there are significant inconsistencies and other problems within these policies. We recommend that the Academic Integrity Council undertake a review of these policies and recommend revisions to the appropriate governing bodies. This review should include:

- Clarification/revision of policies pertaining to the faculty, including those policies spelling out faculty responsibilities for reporting suspected academic integrity violations, proctoring, and assignment of grades to students found guilty or not guilty by the Undergraduate Judicial Board.
- Clarification of the role of intent within the definition of plagiarism

In addition, we recommend that the Council publish brochures on academic integrity for faculty and for students. These brochures should be distributed to all faculty and students and made available on-line. [The Academic Integrity Assessment Committee has prepared a draft brochure for faculty.]

(4) Expand Efforts to Inform and Engage Students. We recommend sustaining and expanding current initiatives aimed at making the Honor Code a highly visible element of campus culture. These include:

- Continue the tradition launched by the Honor Council in the fall of 2000 of holding an Honor Code signing ceremony as part of first-year orientation;
- Organize interactive discussions of academic integrity in dorms and other venues;
- Develop specific academic integrity/study skills orientations and trainings for resident advisors, first-year students, student leaders, international and transfer students, athletes, and other key student groups;
- Develop trainings designed to empower students to confront peers who violate the Honor Code;
- Work with Undergraduate Admissions to increase the emphasis on, and visibility of, academic integrity in information for prospective students.

(5) Inform Key Administrators and Staff. We recommend holding regular information sessions to educate administrators about the Honor Code and academic integrity policies and to encourage them to play a leadership role in promoting academic integrity. Key participants in these sessions would include staff from admissions, financial aid, athletics, the library, academic administration and student affairs.

(6) Inform Parents, Alumni, and Trustees. We recommend that the Academic Integrity Council collaborate with relevant campus units to include information about academic integrity in materials developed for parents, alumni, and trustees and in relevant programming, including Parents Weekend, meetings of the Board of Trustees, reunions and alumni gatherings.

Appendix A: Selected Student Comments

Respondents were provided an opportunity to write narrative comments. Here is an unscientific sampling:

- I think the honor code should be more widely shown or accessible. I heard about it the beginning of freshman year then I barely ever heard about again. It needs to be a constant reminder so students don't think it does not pertain to them.
- If you don't want cheating to go on here at Duke, you should work to have a more cooperative rather than competitive environment.
- The Duke community ... breeds a general sense that cheating shows a weak and flawed character. It's not respected at all. That fact, above any forged honor code, will be the deciding factor on a student's decision to glance at the paper next to her.
- I think it is ridiculous that people cheat on this campus. We are all obviously intelligent people that do not need to resort to dishonesty...It is really sad that students are more concerned with their grades than with their integrity.
- A code of honor is constructed over a long period of time in an organization as large as Duke. It takes years of painful implementation during which the status quo will be overturned time and time again.
- Students aren't properly trained on how to turn published information into their own words. I struggle with it constantly, and often feel that I can't find the remarks to convey the same point without copying.
- In my opinion, Duke needs to work to strengthen the honor code and attempt to get students to respect it more so than in the current climate. One good place to start would be to get instructors and deans to respect the code. For example, if a student who has signed the honor code is ill and needs an extension for an assignment or test, he should be taken at his word and not required to obtain a doctor's confirmation to the dean and then a note from the dean. If the process begins with the instructor respecting the student's loyalty to the honor code and taking him at his word, then perhaps students will take it more seriously (as they come to view the honor code as something commanding respect and not just propaganda).
- The honor code is a joke, as it compromises its own integrity by ignoring that of the students through the requirement of dean's excuses and proctored exams.
- I think at one point or another almost every student bends the rules for cheating in college, but I think that a majority of these students don't recognize it as cheating. A fine line is drawn when students try to define where collaboration becomes cheating. I think for most students (well at least for me) blatant cheating such as cheating on a test or copying someone's exact work, are not acts that students here commit. Collaboration needs to be more defined.
- Some schools pride themselves on offering guidance for young people in becoming honest, hard working, moral individuals. This school is not one of them. We cannot even get students of different races to interact. The moral problems on this campus lie far deeper than academic integrity, and there is no way that academic integrity can be taken seriously in a place where overall individual integrity and morality is disregarded and not addressed.
- The single most effective method of cheating prevention is the clear presentation by the professor in each and every course of the integrity standards expected for the work to be done. These standards should be clear and simple. The attitude and beliefs of the professor will be clearly reflected and determine a large part of the motivation for each student's behavior.

Appendix B: Selected Faculty Comments

Respondents were given an opportunity to provide additional comments, and here is a representative (but not exhaustive) sampling from the 1999-2000 survey.

- I think that a thorough discussion of what constitutes plagiarism is necessary for most courses in which a student's written material is assessed for grading purposes.
- ... for research papers I make sure I discuss what plagiarism is and isn't. And how I want the paper to be documented.
- I think the Dean and the education committee should discuss with the faculty every year what constitutes cheating, what the penalties are, and what the procedure is.
- Small classes reduce instances of cheating.
- I have been concerned about a student not turning in her own work to me, but unfortunately there is no real way to ask her about this without "confronting" her – this is the tricky part. I wonder what faculty/instructors should do in these situations where the line between cheating behavior and academic integrity is not so black and white?
- In the cases of "plagiarism" I've seen, either the offense was unprovable and yet the paper was still demonstrably unsuccessful, ... or the student simply didn't understand why failure to attribute was such a big deal, in which case I've been able to generate productive discussion about plagiarism not in terms of competitive-capitalist models of theft, but rather in terms of collaborative intellectual inquiry; surely this shouldn't be punished at all, merely corrected. But when the frat buddies copy from one another on a biology multiple-choice test? Expel them.
- My methods have changed since the birth of term paper mills. I am now more likely to develop unique or unusual paper topics so that students cannot possibly find papers on the Web.
- I don't think this is a small problem, but rather a vast, systematic one, having to do with limited funds, the consequent need for efficiency, and the whole pre-professional trade-school ethos of this school in particular, but also of North American universities in general.
- I haven't wanted to police integrity as I believe integrity is an internal choice and not an external force.
- The penalty for cheating should be dismissal and no other. There is no such thing as a dent in an Honor Code. With the explosion of information available on the internet and the ability to transmit and modify papers prepared by others, it would be hard for a faculty to catch an incidence of plagiarism. One thing that faculty can do is to have very defined topics that vary from year to year and class to class. Or if other means are used to corroborate that the student knows the material. For example, in one of my classes students present (part of) their paper in class and then turn in the full written version. That way there is an opportunity for questions that can assess whether the student really knows the material. Which of course is the aim of teaching in the first place.
- Sanctions should range from failure on the assignment or the course to suspension or even expulsion. I would limit expulsion to the most severe violations... I personally do not think the [2-semester] suspension should include the summer term; most students do not register for the summer, meaning that the suspension is effectively one semester long.