

Ten (Updated) Principles of Academic Integrity

BY DONALD L. MCCABE AND GARY PAVELA

How Faculty Can Foster Student Honesty

In 1997, we published “Academic Integrity: Ten Principles” in the *AAHE Bulletin*. Designed to help faculty become more involved in promoting academic integrity among students, those “principles” have been discussed on campuses around the country and have served as a starting point for dialogue among faculty members, and between faculty members and students, on at least some of these campuses. But much has changed since our original “Ten Principles” were published in 1997. In particular, the corporate scandals of recent years have highlighted the critical importance of honesty and integrity in America’s evolving Information Age economy.

We believe colleges and universities must use their academic-integrity systems to foster those qualities and to discourage students from falling into the habit of cheating and deception. And the challenge is significant, since multiple studies show startlingly high rates of cheating in both high schools and colleges, and student misuse of the Internet is a rapidly growing phenomenon that at least some faculty seem ill-prepared to address.

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Not all the indicators are bad. A "modified honor code movement" has arisen at some of the nation's largest public universities in the last decade or so, and it is beginning to spread to a wide variety of public and private colleges and high schools around the country. In a surprisingly short time, "modified" honor codes (codes that usually retain some proctoring of tests and exams, but which otherwise give significant authority to student honor committees to promote academic integrity and resolve academic dishonesty allegations) seem to have produced lower rates of cheating and plagiarism at institutions adopting them.

Modified honor codes also have encouraged students to take the lead in setting higher ethical standards for their peers. The latter development complements another potentially favorable trend, the coming of age of the "Millennial generation," born since 1982. This cohort of students is generally disenchanted by the personal and corporate excesses of the 1990s. Given proper support and leadership, the Millennials could play a significant role not only in transforming the ethical climate of schools and colleges, but the larger society as well.

But while we are both strong proponents of student leadership in promoting academic integrity, our research and work with campuses around the country convince us faculty members have a critical role to play as well. Our goal here is to provide an updated version of our original "Principles of Academic Integrity for Faculty," one that benefits from the many things we have learned over the last five years in conversations with students and faculty on dozens of campuses and which re-

casts our original Principles in a way that makes more sense for the Internet Age.

We hope this revision, along with our work on modified honor codes, will once again serve as a catalyst for a renewed student-faculty dialogue on our college campuses and even in our high schools. The Millennials may be a very receptive audience.

MODIFIED HONOR CODES

Perhaps as recently as five years ago, the conventional wisdom seemed to be that a campus without the tradition of a long-standing honor code would have great difficulty generating student support for programs designed to promote academic integrity. Many felt the student of the 1990s was far more interested in his or her GPA and job prospects than in academic integrity.

But against this backdrop, several schools, including the University of Maryland at College Park, have developed modified honor codes that have shown significant potential and continue to attract increasing interest from campuses of all shapes and sizes. We discussed the concept of these modified codes in great detail in "Some Good News About Academic Integrity," which appeared in the September/October 2000 issue of *Change* and for our purposes here, three points remain key:

- First, and perhaps most important, there is empirical evidence that modified codes reduce cheating. In a survey conducted by McCabe in the 1999-2000 academic year, three campuses where modified honor codes had been in place for a

TEN PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC

1) Recognize and affirm academic integrity as a core institutional value.

Students need a mental framework to make sense of a flood of seemingly disconnected facts and information. For example, consider the view expressed by a young woman at a prestigious private university in the Northeast, "Cheating happens in the real world, and people get away with it all the time. Isn't college supposed to emulate the real world? So who really cares if you cheat?"

When colleges and universities commit themselves to the pursuit of truth, they help provide students a meaningful framework that combats such thinking. While the ultimate definition of truth exceeds our grasp, the process of truth-seeking is grounded in certain core values, starting with a commitment to honesty and integrity in academic work. We believe it is a responsibility of every faculty member to discuss and affirm that commitment in the classroom.

2) Foster a lifelong commitment to learning.

Most faculty members became teachers and researchers because they love to learn and to share their discoveries with

others. The first job of a teacher is to demonstrate that learning can be a captivating and joyful experience, especially when it entails finding creative ways to explore interesting, important, and challenging questions.

As suggested by a junior at a major university in the Northeast, most students would welcome such change: "Educators need to pay more attention to the motives for cheating and less to the act itself. Cheating is a symptom of disinterest or dissatisfaction that students have with their education. Educators ought to invest their resources in engaging students...."

3) Affirm the role of teacher as guide and mentor.

From the days of Plato's Academy, teaching was seen as encompassing conscientious companionship, grounded in the shared pursuit of truth. While other professions move headlong into the realm of "managed care," teachers



relatively short time reported lower rates of both cheating on tests and exams and cheating on written assignments than the nine colleges in the study that did not have any code in place.

For example, while 33 percent of the students on the modified-code campuses admitted they had cheated on a test or exam in the past year, 45 percent did so on the nine campuses that did not have any code. (On nine other campuses with traditional academic honor codes in place, 23 percent of the students admitted to one or more instance of test/exam cheating in the previous year.)

• Second, the comments made by students in McCabe's survey convince us that modified codes work because they encourage students to take the lead in setting higher ethical standards for themselves and their peers. This we find especially encouraging as the Millennials come of age.

As suggested by Neil Howe and William Strauss in *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (2000), "Yes, there's a revolution under way among today's kids—a good news revolution. This generation is going to rebel by behaving not worse, but better. Their life mission will not be to tear down old institutions that don't work, but to build up new ones that do.

"Look closely at youth indicators, and you'll see that Millennial attitudes and behaviors represent a sharp break from Generation X, and are running exactly counter to trends launched by the Boomers. Across the board, Millennial kids are challenging a long list of common assumptions about what 'postmodern' young people must become."

We believe that, given proper support and leadership, the

Millennials can play a significant role not only in transforming the ethical climate of schools and colleges, but the larger society as well.

• It is clear that students expect faculty members to play an important role in protecting academic integrity. Unfortunately, the voice that often seems to be missing in community dialogues on issues of student academic integrity is the faculty voice, and many faculty members are failing to meet even minimal responsibilities in this area.

For example, McCabe surveyed over 2,500 faculty members in the 2002-2003 academic year and found that fewer than two-thirds even bother to put any information in their syllabi about their expectations for academic integrity.

And 44 percent acknowledged that they had ignored at least one suspected incident of cheating. Student comments from McCabe's surveys over the last decade suggest that students quickly learn who these faculty members are and that their courses become particular targets for cheating. Not surprisingly, many students feel that if the faculty member doesn't care, why should they?

But while faculty members often have been the most difficult group to "recruit" in addressing issues of student integrity, this may be changing, since many faculty feel increasingly "under siege" from what they perceive as significant increases in Internet-related cheating.

Although requests for enhanced detection methods have been a typical response, a more important outcome seems to be a renewed awareness by faculty that something must be done

CINTEGRITY FOR FACULTY



will find that their greatest impact on students—including inspiring a commitment to academic integrity—will come in the context of personal respect, attention, and connection.

As suggested by the comments of this professor of arts and humanities at a major public university on the West Coast, at least some faculty members already embrace this perspective: "Address the students' anxiety so they won't 'need' to cheat. Offer examples of using sources, offer help in writing, show how the exam relates to what [you] want them to learn, walk them through typical questions."

4) Help students understand the potential of the Internet—and how that potential can be lost if online resources are used for fraud, theft, and deception.

New generations of students may forget that the Internet is a comparatively new invention with immense potential for human development. That

potential will be lost if students don't learn disciplined ways to use online sources effectively and honestly. Faculty members can also try to keep some of the early idealism about the Internet alive by emphasizing that the culture of freedom and openness associated with it depends on virtues like self-restraint, civility, and proper respect for the work of others.

The urgency of doing so is underscored by many students, including this science major at a large Canadian university: "Google and other search engines can be used to find past assignments and essays quite effectively.... Internet cheating is huge.... getting papers off the Net, especially the ones that are written for you. I wish there was some way to control it better, because it is not fair to students who submit honest work."

If we don't find solutions to the "Internet problem," it is almost a certainty that this student, and many like him, will

soon decide that they have no choice but to cheat as well to level the playing field. Perhaps even worse, the sentiments of this instructor in social work at a major West Coast campus may become prophetic: "Some faculty have almost abandoned writing assignments because cheating is so rampant...."

5) Encourage student responsibility for academic integrity.

The demonstrated effectiveness of traditional and modified honor codes, converging with the coming of age of the Millennial generation, should accelerate the movement to give students significant responsibility to promote and protect the highest standards of academic integrity. Students want to work in communities where competition is fair, integrity is respected, and cheating is punished. They understand that one of the greatest inducements to engaging in academic dishonesty is the perception that it is already widespread.

and that they need to be more involved. We see this as an opportunity that should be seized, and it is in this spirit that we have reviewed and revised our original set of "Faculty Principles of Academic Integrity," adding some relevant quotes from McCabe's research with students and faculty members.

CONCLUSION

In concluding our *Change* article on modified honor codes four years ago we observed, "Academic integrity at our schools and colleges is a matter of intense public concern. And there's a danger the current generation of students will be portrayed as moral slackers, habituated to cheating.

"However, our research and experience tell a different story. A substantial majority of students will support stricter penalties for academic dishonesty. What they need is creative and courageous leadership, grounded in the belief that students—with proper guidance—should play a vital role in designing and enforcing standards of academic integrity."

In the intervening four years, substantial improvements have been made in academic-integrity policies on many cam-



puses, with modified honor codes becoming the almost prototypical model, and we are more convinced than ever that students, especially the Millennials, are willing to move forward on many other campuses. But as we suggested earlier, faculty have often been a relatively silent partner in this progress, often citing concerns about workload and autonomy or expressing the opinion that it's too late to change students' behavior after they reach college.

Clearly McCabe's research comparing campuses with honor codes, whether traditional or modified, to other campuses tells us otherwise. We hope that the continuing introduction and success of modified honor codes on campuses, along with growing faculty concerns over Internet-related cheating, will combine to encourage many more faculty members to promote campus-wide initiatives to foster

honest academic practices among students. As suggested by this student on a campus in the Midwest, a failure to do so may alienate many of our students: "I highly resent cheating and cheaters, but I even more strongly resent a campus which does little to prevent or punish these offenses." □

The comment of this student at a university in the Southeast with a long-standing honor code suggests what is possible: "Our honor code is a tradition that is so strong here. It works because we all believe in it.... It is something we live by, not because we have to, but because it's the way we want to live.... Together we create a place where we are all safe, honored, and respected."

6) Clarify expectations for students.

Defining and enforcing standards for academic integrity should be a shared undertaking with students. Nonetheless, faculty members have primary responsibility for designing the educational environment and experience. They must clarify course expectations in advance regarding honesty in academic work, including the nature and scope of student collaboration.

Most students want such guidance and welcome it in course syllabi, reviewed by their teachers in class. And as suggested by this professor of arts and humanities, it is important that faculty model, as well as clarify, desired standards: "Explain

fully the standards you expect the students to abide by. Hold yourself to the same standards you expect your students to uphold. Remind students frequently to maintain those standards."

7) Develop fair and creative forms of assessment.

Students expect their academic work to be fairly and fully assessed. Faculty members should use—and continuously revise—forms of assessment that require active and creative thought and that promote significant learning opportunities for students.

We believe this senior at a major Eastern campus captures the sentiment of many students: "[W]hen most of the assignments seem to be, or are in fact, little more than copious amounts of busywork, which not even the TAs who grade actually care about seeing, it's very difficult to take an assignment or cheating on that assignment seriously. In order to reduce cheating, assignments must be more personal and more relevant. It's much more difficult, at least in my own mind, to justify cheat-

ing on an original work such as an essay, paper, or personally designed experiment or project."

8) Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty.

Prevention is a critical line of defense against academic dishonesty and is best undertaken after listening to students' perspectives and suggestions. Students should not be tempted or induced to engage in acts of academic dishonesty by ambiguous policies, undefined or unrealistic standards for collaboration, inadequate classroom management, or poor examination security.

And as suggested by this professor of business, the opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty can also be reduced through more positive approaches: "Encourage students to seek help if they are having problems in answering questions and writing essays. There needs to be more information given to students about the facilities available in the university, such as the writing center. The writing center should be available to give students longer sessions if required...."

INTERNET RESOURCES

• Alan Greenspan on the imperative of trust in the Information Age economy:

<http://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/seches/1999/199906102.htm>

"In today's world, where ideas are increasingly displacing the physical in the production of economic value, competition for reputation becomes a significant driving force, propelling our economy forward. Manufactured goods often can be evaluated before the completion of a transaction. Service providers, on the other hand, usually can offer only their reputations.

"The extraordinarily complex machine that we call the economy of the United States is, in the end, made up of human beings struggling to improve their lives. The individual values of those Americans will continue to influence the structure of the institutions that support market transactions, as they have throughout our history. Without mutual trust, and market participants abiding by a rule of law, no economy can prosper.

"Our system works fundamentally on individual fair dealing. We need only look

around today's world to realize how rare and valuable this is."

• The Center for Academic Integrity

<http://www.academicintegrity.org/>

The Center for Academic Integrity provides a forum to identify, affirm, and promote the values of academic integrity among students, faculty, teachers and administrators.

• Donald L. McCabe on the success of modified honor codes

<http://www.collegepubs.com/ref/SFX000515.shtml>

"Probably the major finding of this new research was empirical confirmation that modified honor codes do seem to reduce student cheating, even on large campuses where levels of cheating are generally found to be among the highest."

• Web Site of the University of Maryland Honor Council

<http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/>

This Honor Council Web site is a good example of those at many honor code schools. It provides background information about the "modified honor code" movement.

• Neil Howe and William Strauss—authors of *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*

<http://www.millennialsrising.com/>

• AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics

<http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/Rbethics.htm>

"As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors.

"Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit.

"They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom." ❧

9) Respond to academic dishonesty when it occurs.

Students observe how faculty members behave and what values they embrace. Faculty members who ignore or trivialize academic dishonesty send the message that the core values of academic life aren't worth enforcing. Students then run the risk of developing harmful habits that can lead to far more serious consequences later.

Prompt and equitable enforcement of academic-integrity policies does not have to be unduly punitive. Sanctions for first offenses can and generally should have an educational emphasis. Unfortunately, as a young man pursuing an MBA on a campus in the West observed: "The faculty needs to buy into and enforce the policy. Too often a student is allowed to complete the course with no repercussion. This cheapens everyone else's degree."

Even more worrisome is the observation of an associate professor at an Eastern university: "I'm afraid most don't want to be bothered and look the other way. I'd like to see the faculty seriously engage with this issue."

10) Help define and support campus-wide academic-integrity standards.

Although faculty members should be the primary role models for academic integrity, the fact is that defining, promoting, and protecting academic integrity must be a community-wide responsibility—not only to identify repeat offenders and apply consistent due process procedures, but also to affirm the shared values that make colleges and universities true communities.

In this sense, an important aim of a carefully designed academic integrity program should be to serve as a foundation for other efforts to enhance student ethical development.

This professor in a school of social services seems to develop this point well: "First of all, I believe faculty have the piv-

otal role in promoting academic integrity by modeling academic honesty themselves, by helping students understand the importance of academic honesty, and by crafting assignments that promote student honesty where possible.

"It is our job, in part, to bring out the best and highest moral standards in our students by helping them not to cheat.

That means more work for an already burdened professoriate. Ideally, campuses should have an environment where cheating is stigmatized by students, faculty and administrators.

"I also think that as long as students proudly announce that they are working two or three jobs and taking a course overload and passing—cheating is more likely to flourish. Part of integrity and honesty has to do with enforcing standards and insisting on real college coursework from our students." ❧

