

Report of the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity

**An Analysis and Review of the Online Survey
On Academic Integrity**

Saint Mary's University

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Submitted to:

Dr. Terry Murphy
Vice President, Academic and Research

Submitted by:

Quality of Teaching Committee
Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity

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**Executive Summary
and
Overview**

Report of the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity

Executive Summary

In February, 2003, Saint Mary's University participated in a project that surveyed students and faculty at eleven Canadian universities to determine the extent of behaviors and their attitudes to cheating and other academic integrity issues. Participation in the project gave us a greater insight into these issues, both nationally and locally, and has provided us with opportunities to address them in ways that improve and sustain a 'culture of integrity' on our campus.

While the Canadian and Saint Mary's results do not indicate a crisis situation, they do identify very substantial issues and areas of concern which are outlined in this report. An analysis of the data from the online surveys and from the open ended questions suggests that, like our colleagues in other Canadian universities, it is important that we acknowledge that incidents of academic dishonesty happen on our campus, that we understand why it happens and that we find more effective ways of preventing, detecting and dealing with it. In the past several years the Saint Mary's community has been making good progress in improving the academic integrity climate. There is much more recognition of the problem by both faculty and students. Concrete steps are being taken to prevent, discover and discipline academic dishonesty. But we still have a long way to go. It takes only one unsatisfactory incident to seriously affect the trust of students and faculty members. This Report outlines the nature and extent of the problems, the issues associated with them, and ways in which we can work together to address them.

The Quality of Teaching Committee and its Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity hopes that you will find this Report of interest and of value as we individually and collectively discuss the issues and work towards their resolution.

Overview

Before February, 2003, when this project was conducted at eleven Canadian universities, Saint Mary's Quality of Teaching Committee, through the Office of Instructional Development, had been involved in several initiatives designed to promote discussion and debate on issues of academic integrity.

Section 1 describes a number of these initiatives dating back to September, 2001, provides a rationale for Saint Mary's participation in the Canadian project, discusses the survey methodology and participation rates and gives a brief overview of the findings.

Section 2 discusses a presentation made at Saint Mary's University in November, 2004, by Dr. Julia Christensen-Hughes, Director of Teaching Support Services at the University of Guelph, current President of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), and Canadian lead researcher on the project. An analysis of the

Canadian data (which also contains Saint Mary's data) has led Dr. Christensen-Hughes to identify 'five levers for change' that universities should focus on in dealing more effectively with issues of academic integrity on our campuses.

Section 3 contains the survey results from the First Year Student Survey and identifies high school behaviors, students' behaviors and attitudes from high school to university, and First Year Student issues as indicated from their answers to the open ended questions.

Section 4 describes the results from the Undergraduate Student Survey. The larger of the two student surveys provides information on the extent of engagement by university students in 25 specific behaviors, their perceptions of the seriousness of each of these behaviors, and the divergent views of students and faculty on their perceptions of seriousness. Student comments to the open ended questions help us understand how and why students cheat and identify courses of action which, they claim, would help them avoid academic dishonesty. These courses of action are consistent with the 'five levers for change' extracted from the Canadian project.

Section 5 deals with the issues identified by faculty who responded to the online survey. In this section, faculty rate the academic environment at Saint Mary's, identify their primary information resources, and outline how they deal with incidents of cheating – from reporting, to ignoring suspected cases, to their levels of satisfaction when they report. Their responses to the open ended questions identify ways in which the university can support faculty and faculty's role in creating and maintaining a climate of academic integrity.

Section 6 lists a number of recommendations based on student and faculty data and comments.

Section 1

Introduction

Methodology

Rates of Participation

AI at Saint Mary's – current status

Report of the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity

Introduction

Over the past number of years, as instances of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty attracted media attention throughout North America, Saint Mary's faculty, students and staff participated in a number of initiatives designed to promote discussion and debate on this topic. The campus community has been concerned with identifying the root causes of academically dishonest behavior and with defining the roles and responsibilities of faculty, staff and students in preventing, detecting and dealing with them.

These initiatives began with the formation of a Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity by the Quality of Teaching Committee during the 2001 fall semester, and continued over the last three academic years with a series of workshops attended by faculty, students and staff.

Feedback from participants in a number of these workshops indicated that all campus groups wanted more information – strategies for prevention, ways to detect with clearer guidelines for reporting, support for faculty who report, etc. The Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity and the Office of Instructional Development produced the *Faculty Handbook on Academic Integrity* as one response to this. The first edition, a print version only, was sent to all full and part-time faculty at Saint Mary's in September, 2002. The newest edition (2004/05) is available online from the Office of Instructional Development website at <http://www.stmarys.ca/administration/oid/handbook.htm>.

The Saint Mary's University Student's Association (SMUSA) supported these educational initiatives and sought to reach students with a series of three articles written by Paul Deveau, then SMUSA president, and published in January, 2003, in the student newspaper, *The Journal*. In addition, SMUSA worked with the Office of Instructional Development in supporting and advocating student participation in the Canadian University Survey.

In February, 2003, Saint Mary's participated in an online survey on Academic Integrity and in May, 2003, Dr. Donald McCabe, founder and Past Director of the Center for Academic Integrity and lead researcher for this project, visited Saint Mary's to deliver a keynote address at a workshop entitled *Academic Integrity: Fundamental Values in the Modern University*.

Saint Mary's Participates in Canadian University Online Survey

When provided with an opportunity to participate in the national survey, the Quality of Teaching Committee considered several key questions:

- What was the level of academically dishonest behavior at Saint Mary's and what was the university doing to deter, detect and deal with it?
- If we chose to participate, what would the surveys tell us? Would we discover problems at Saint Mary's more or less serious than those of our Canadian counterparts?
- What would be the university's response to the survey findings?
- How would the university deal with potential media attention to this?

The Committee recognized that this survey presented us with an opportunity to hear directly from our students and faculty. Rather than merely drawing inferences from the Canadian data, participation would give us data that reflected what was happening on our campus.

The Committee discussed this project with many individuals and groups (VP, Academic and Research, Deans, Student Council, etc.) before a decision was taken to participate. What we learned from these discussions was that individuals and groups felt it was important to learn firsthand about the behaviors and attitudes of our students and faculty. This took precedence over a concern about possible publicity associated with survey results. Because of our participation, we now have data and information that will help us focus on specific issues and future actions to strengthen the culture of integrity at Saint Mary's University.

Methodology

Saint Mary's was one of eleven Canadian universities that participated in the university survey on academic integrity issues during the 2003 winter semester. The study was led by Dr. Donald McCabe, Rutgers University, and founder and Past Director, Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, and Dr. Julia Christensen Hughes, University of Guelph.

The study was conducted online, with students, faculty, and TA's at all eleven universities given access to the surveys which were submitted to Rutgers University to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (since the initial eleven participants, another four Canadian universities have conducted the same online survey bringing the Canadian total to fifteen). Each university was able to tailor specific sections of the surveys to represent their particular campus (ie. grading scheme, identification of major, etc.) while the majority of questions on the surveys remained the same (behaviors, perceptions of seriousness, etc.) for all universities.

Saint Mary's received the data from our faculty and student respondents from Dr. McCabe. Dr. McCabe and Dr. Christensen-Hughes collected the data for all participating universities and combined all Canadian universities to comprise the Canada sample.

Rates of Participation

The Canadian study was aimed at learning more about the attitudes and behaviors of university students and faculty across the country. In addition to providing campus specific information, Saint Mary's data is also contained in the Canadian data. Rates of participation were:

	Canadian	Saint Mary's
Total Students:	15,000	1,094
• First Year Students	1,300	213
• Undergraduates	11,700	782
• Graduate students	1,300	86
• Teaching Assistants (TA)	700	13
Faculty	1,900	127

Data from Saint Mary's Office of Institutional Analysis indicates that, in March, 2003, when these surveys were completed, Saint Mary's had 8,037 registered students with 3,051 being first year students. Total student response (1,094) gives Saint Mary's an overall response rate of 13.6%.

The 2002-03 Fact Book lists faculty (full, associate, assistant and lecturer) numbers at 220. 108 of the 127 survey respondents were in this category representing a 49% response rate from full-time faculty. Nineteen respondents indicated that they were part-time faculty. Part-time faculty numbers specific to the winter 2003 semester were unavailable.

A report on the Canadian project and the survey results will be published in an academic journal in the near future, however, in the interim, participating universities have been analyzing their individual data.

This report is an analysis of the Saint Mary's data collected from the online surveys including key observations and recommendations for action. Due to the small number of Saint Mary's Teaching Assistant responses (13), we did not include their data in our statistical analysis and report, but have used a number of their comments to the open-ended questions where relevant.

Acknowledgement

We congratulate our students and faculty on their community-spirit in responding to the survey. The survey was anonymous, but it was also voluntary. A total of 1,094 students and 127 faculty gave their time and effort to this project.

While some of the actions in which our students report engaging may be of concern, their acknowledgment of the gravity of those actions and their suggestions for ways in which Saint Mary's can encourage and support academic integrity encourages us that, as a community, we can address them together.

Academic Integrity at Saint Mary's University – Current Status

The survey results provide interesting and informative insights into the general state of academic integrity at Saint Mary's. Encouragingly, we find that our actions, attitudes and responses to the issues are comparable to the national results. Both the responses from our students and our faculty correlate very closely to the responses from their Canadian counterparts.

While the results do not indicate a crisis situation, nationally or locally, they do identify substantial issues and areas of concern which are outlined in this report. Generally, students understand what constitutes low to more serious levels of academic dishonesty but often do not have the skills to prevent it or have pressures and other stressors that make taking the risks of being caught worthwhile. First year students and international students face more specific challenges. There appears to be a 'culture of acceptance' of academically dishonest behavior in high school which often follows students into university. And, as was stated in *The Plagiarism Handbook* (Harris, 2001), "Whether it is a foreign student who has been taught that copying the source verbatim 'honors the writer' or the local student who was taught in high school to present only the ideas of sources because the student's ideas 'did not matter'...some reeducation is in order" (p. 12). Also contributing to student behaviors are university policies and practices which appear to be at best, inconsistent or vague. Students often choose to ignore them or use them to excuse their behavior.

Faculty gave themselves a low rating on their understanding of Saint Mary's policies and practices and an exceptionally low rating on the effectiveness of these policies and practices. Faculty often handle cases of suspected cheating through 'informal processes' primarily because they lack hard proof, but also because they are less than satisfied with the process and results when they have officially reported. And, while faculty and students agree on what constitutes academically dishonest behavior, they differ greatly in their perceptions of the seriousness of many of these behaviors.

Both faculty and students indicated their support for ongoing discussions and suggested ways in which, as a community, we can continue to promote and deal with academic integrity issues at Saint Mary's.

Section 2

A Culture of Integrity: Five Levers for Change

A Culture of Integrity: Five Levers for Change

Prior to the completion of this report, Saint Mary's had an opportunity to welcome Dr. Julia Christensen-Hughes to campus on November 26th, 2004. Dr. Christensen-Hughes is Director, Teaching Support Services at the University of Guelph, the current President of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) and the Canadian lead researcher on the Canadian project. Her presentation, *Supporting a Culture of Integrity: Real Challenges/Practical Solutions*, drew on the results of the original survey conducted at the University of Guelph and on the Canadian data to discuss what has been learned from this project and what it means for Canadian universities.

During her presentation, Dr. Christensen-Hughes outlined the reasons that students gave for justifying their behavior. She then used their justifications to recommend and discuss five 'levers for change.'

Based on an analysis of data from the Canadian project, students justified their behavior on the basis of:

- Assessment practices
- Instructional practices
- Risk/reward perception, and
- Lack of understanding (policies, penalties and referencing)

Dr. Christensen-Hughes suggested that universities, therefore, focus their efforts on the following '*five levers for change*.'

1. Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment asks students to perform real-world tasks which demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills whereas more traditional methods include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, true-false types of tests. However, authentic and traditional assessments are not mutually exclusive and, more likely, some mix of the two would best suit the needs of faculty and the desire of students for exams that ask them to do more than recall discrete bits of information. Authentic assessment also relates to other issues, such as ensuring that assignments/tests/exams relate to the stated learning outcomes for the course or to what students have learned or been taught; that the amount of work required of an assignment correlates to the grade assigned; that feedback is timely and helpful; that individual or group work is appropriately assigned and rewarded; that the use of old tests, exams and assignments is handled with consistency in fairness to all students, etc.

2. Invigilation Practices and Policies

Ensuring that practices regarding writing exams are clear, understood and enforced especially in large classrooms (provide sufficient trained monitors, statements on use of cell phones, washroom breaks, etc.)

3. Policies and Penalties

Universities should have policies and penalties that are fair, clearly articulated, openly communicated and consistently enforced. Students and faculty need to have a better understanding of those policies and penalties.

4. Instructional Quality

Students suggest that, when they feel cheated in their courses (i.e., when there is low quality in content or teaching, a lack of respect between students and faculty, a lack of commitment to ensuring that students succeed, etc.) – they will use any weakness in the system to cheat and to justify their behavior.

5. Education – for students and faculty

Faculty can decrease the rate of cheating by ensuring that they educate students as to what constitutes cheating and by modeling actions, behaviors and attitudes that support a climate of academic integrity. Faculty also require opportunities to discuss their concerns and to learn more about their universities' policies and practices.

As we will see from the responses, these same 'five levers' warrant attention on our own campus.

Section 3

Survey Results – First Year Students

Demographic Information

High School Experience

Student Behavior in High School

High School vs. First Year Behaviors

Free Response Questions: Student Quotations

Conclusion

Survey Results - First Year Students

In an attempt to identify specific issues, concerns, and behavior patterns among first year students, a survey was developed by Dr. McCabe asking them to comment on their high school experiences and their first year university experiences.

At Saint Mary’s University, 213 first year students completed the online survey. As a group, they represent:

Gender:	Females 61%	Males 39%	
Age:	<20 80%	20 - 25 years 19%	>25 1%
High School Av.	90+	15%	
	85 – 89	30%	
	80 – 84	26%	
	75 – 79	14%	
	<75	15%	
Degree Program:	Arts	47%	
	Commerce	35%	
	Science/Egn	17%	
	Dual Degree	1%	

It is important to note that the findings from the 213 Saint Mary’s surveys are remarkably similar to the findings from the Canadian sample of 1,269 first year students. It should also be noted that Saint Mary’s survey responses are contained in the Canadian data.

The High School Experience - First Year Students, commenting on their high school experiences, told us that:

	SMU	Can.
Their high school teachers tried hard to discourage cheating	71%	71%
nevertheless, many students attending Saint Mary’s and other Canadian universities, admitted to cheating in high school	88%	88%
ironically, while also suggesting that cheating was not a serious problem in high school.	79%	79%
Students felt there was little chance of getting caught in high school	85%	84%
and, if they were caught, the penalties would not be severe	59%	57%
While in high school, students said they were not embarrassed to tell their friends they had cheated	88%	88%

One of the most interesting and valuable insights gained from surveying first year students relates to their perception of the university environment.

Saint Mary's first year students told us that, as compared to high school, they expected things to be different in university:

- They felt there was a stronger possibility of getting caught 49%
- They felt there would be significant penalties if they were caught 88%
- They felt they would be embarrassed to tell their friends they had cheated on their university work 48%
- They felt that SMU faculty would try hard to discourage cheating 80%

Student Behavior in High School

First year university students were asked whether or not they had engaged in any of 25 questionable behaviors in high school. The most common behaviors and the percentage of first year students who reported having engaged in each of them, once or more were:

Most Common Behaviors in High School	SMU	CAN.
1. Sharing an assignment with another student to use as an example	88%	86%
2. Getting questions and answers from someone who has already written the test	80%	73%
3. Working with others when asked for individual work	78%	76%
4. Copying a few sentences from a print source w/o footnoting	64%	62%
5. Copying a few sentences from an electronic source w/o footnoting	64%	57%
6. Getting unpermitted help on an assignment	49%	45%
7. Helping someone else cheat on a test	45%	41%
8. Copying during an exam <i>with</i> the other student's knowledge	38%	33%
9. Using unpermitted crib notes during a test	34%	30%
10. Copying during an exam <i>without</i> the other student's knowledge	31%	28%
11. Fabricating or falsifying lab data	31%	50%

Other relatively common high school behaviors included:

- copying material almost word from word from a written source and turning it in as your own work 25% 20%
- fabricating or falsifying research data 21% 30%
- providing a previously graded assignment to someone to submit as their own work 20% 19%
- copying a friend's computer program 16% 27%

Behaviors engaged in by less than ten percent of students were:

- turning in a paper obtained from a free paper mill/web site 10% 9%
- altering a graded test and resubmitting 10% 10%
- hiding library material 9% 10%
- damaging library or course materials 4% 4%
- turning in a paper purchased from paper mill/web site 2% 1%

Observations: High School Behaviors vs. First-Year Student Behaviors

The following observations have been drawn from the data and from student comments on the ‘open ended questions’:

- Student behaviors in high school showed strong similarities to undergraduate student behaviors – this suggests that cheating behaviors acquired in high school follow students into university; however,
- First year students reported cheating less in university than in high school.
- High school students enter university expecting a higher standard of behavior for themselves and their friends. As high school students, the majority said they were not embarrassed to tell their friends they had cheated but were more likely to be embarrassed about cheating on their university work.
- Students took more personal responsibility for their behaviors in high school than in university. As high school students they justified their actions on the basis of lack of time management, stress, laziness, or ‘just wanting to help a friend,’ etc. While mentioning these same justifications for their behavior in university, they also cited more ‘external forces’ – heavy course loads, access to old tests, crowded classrooms during exams, lack of preparedness for academic work, easy to get away with, etc.
- While in high school, students participated more in what they perceived to be less serious behaviors and, like undergraduate students, one of the top activities was “working with others when asked for individual work.”

Free Response Questions – First Year Students

Throughout the survey, three open-ended questions gave students an opportunity to elaborate on their answers or provide additional information. The comments below were taken verbatim from answers to these questions and were selected because they represent many similar responses.

Question 1: Students were asked if they engaged in any of the listed behaviors while in high school and to indicate what motivated their behavior.

As previously noted, when in high school, students reported engaging in cheating behaviors to a greater extent than they do in university. While reported behaviors were primarily the same in high school and university, students indicated they were motivated by issues like poor time management, laziness, stress, fear of failure, family pressures, pressures to succeed, accepted culture among students, etc.

Question 2: Students were asked to identify ways in which the university could encourage academic integrity among first year students.

Many students who responded to this question expressed concern about the way information relating to academic integrity (policies, methods of enforcement, penalties, etc) is communicated.

Plagiarism is an issue of concern and many students are not confident of their ability to properly use, cite and reference the words and ideas of others, especially when using the Internet as a research tool.

Many students believe that clear and in-depth instruction on the topic of academic integrity and, in particular, plagiarism is necessary for students who are making the transition from high school. According to many, high school did not prepare them for the rigors of university level work.

First year students gave a number of suggestions for encouraging academic integrity in their first year on campus:

Education

- “I suggest that universities have a good orientation for first year students so as to discourage plagiarism and other issues of academic misconduct.”
- “Universities should make it perfectly clear what plagiarism is. Passing out a handout that has the details isn’t good enough because few students take the time to read this. Half of the problem with plagiarism is that people don’t know what needs to be referenced/footnoted and so on.”
- “I find it is really hard to write a paper in university. This whole plagiarism thing is a bit much. I agree that it is not right to copy word for word from another source, but it is really hard to write a paper when everything that you have, you must cite as someone else’s work...”

Instructional Issues

- “Professors should have more time for first-year students and be more understanding of students' needs in the first year of University level work. They should be more willing to show freshmen how to start on the right track”.
- “From personal experience, some professors come across as extremely intimidating and unapproachable... especially for first year students who come fresh from high school where we are used to a (one on one) attention approach, which makes us feel that teachers are there for us and want us to do well.”
- “University is very stressful because work is piled on way too much. I feel some professors think we only take one course and therefore believe giving like 15-20 hours of work is fair. This is not the case because most students are taking 5 courses a semester and 15-20 hours work a week is way too much.”

- “I think some cheating should be blamed on the professors because some give way too much work and leave students no choice but to cheat in order to get a good grade. I feel there would be less cheating if students were given fair amounts of work from each teacher so they would have more time to prepare for assignments and tests.”
- “Teachers should reach out more to their students by taking the time to discover which learning methods are useful techniques for teaching the information to the students so that they will have a good chance of understanding it for the first time. This would eliminate much frustration and pressure for cheating.”

The testing/exam environment

- “I think that during tests and exams there needs to be more Teaching Assistants present and there has to be tighter restrictions. For instance, in one of my classes, there is frequent chatter during tests. The Profs and TA’s will say that they are going to take away tests, but they never seem to do it. I think they have to back up their words and actually take someone’s test. This will discourage people from cheating a great deal...”
- “Organize exams, especially multiple choice, in such a way that students are discouraged from cheating. For example: space people out and make different questions on each test so no two people sitting next to each other have the same test.”
- “Sometimes it has been made rather easy to cheat on mid terms and exams. For example, the set up in the Tower for exams: The number of people that cheat is incredible and they do this without being caught. This leaves other students disadvantaged when the marks come back.”
- “It’s easy to cheat...and easy to get away with. I don’t think it will come to an end anytime soon. Like writing multiple choice exams in the theatres A or B in Burke, after an hour, people are getting up and passing their exams in...you just have to sit in the back with a few buds and when the rest are all busy up front just swap answers and away you go. More supervision is key I think.”

Punishment

- “Offer severe punishment for cheating and plagiarism, with no exceptions. First year students are used to being let off easy in high school, and we must be shown that this will not happen in university. University is a lot more serious than high school...”
- “Outline the consequences because as of now I have not heard one professor explain the consequences of cheating.”
- “The best course of action may be to make public the identities of those who are barred from university as a result of cheating. If the institution were to provide information, in the form of students who have ruined their academic careers through cheating, then perhaps the subject would carry more weight and scare potential cheaters straight.”

Cheating is “here to stay”.

A number of students indicated that, despite the Universities’ best efforts to curtail academic misconduct, there will always be students who cheat.

- “There is really nothing else anyone can do besides what has already been done because cheating is here to stay no matter what...this is my honest opinion...besides, the Internet is here to stay also.”

Question 4: The final open response items invited first year students to add any additional comments about the topic of cheating.

The majority of students used this section to comment on the differences between the academic environment of their high school and that of university.

- “I think that most people feel that they can get away with cheating in high school but once they enter university they realize it is not tolerated. People take university a lot more seriously than high school so people are more inclined to be academically honest.”
- “I know I wouldn’t even consider doing ANY of the things I did in high school now because the penalties are just not worth the risk and it’s my money here...”
- “When I was in high school I used to cheat on occasion and didn’t see anything wrong with it. Now that I am in university, I don’t cheat anymore. It’s not because I am afraid of getting caught (because you know you can get away with it) but because someone explained to me why it is wrong and that if I cheat my whole life, I will never have actually earned anything on my own...”
- “In university, there seems to be a yawning gap between theory and practice. Many profs teach theory, and teach it well – but when they assign work, students struggle; when tests are given, students fail. The profs seem to expect first year students to easily make the transfer from theory to practice, therefore spending more time on theory and less time on examples. Students may understand the theory but they struggle to put the theory to real-life use. Because of this, when students are faced with tests and assignments, even exams, they cannot rely on theory to pull them through; they rely on cheating.”

Conclusion

The results from the Canadian first year student survey, and McCabe’s work, suggests that high school students arrive on campus as first year students with a higher level of respect for the academic work they will do here than in high school and with an expected higher standard of behavior for themselves and their friends. Universities therefore have an opportunity to take advantage of these attitudes and expectations by ensuring that our teaching practices, administrative policies and support services give them every opportunity to live up to the expectations they have of themselves and of the university.

Through this survey, first year students have provided us with ideas and recommendations for maintaining and improving academic integrity within the university which fit into the 'five levers for change' noted from the larger Canadian study.

These 'levers' will also be evident as we look at the data and the comments from the undergraduate student and faculty surveys.

Section 4

Survey Results – Undergraduate Students

Demographic Information

25 Specific Behaviors – Extent of Engagement

25 Specific Behaviors – Perceptions of Seriousness

25 Specific Behaviors – Perceptions of Seriousness: Faculty vs. Student

How Students Learn About Academic Integrity or Cheating Policies

Free Response Questions: Student Quotations

Q. 1: Examples of Creative Types of Cheating

Q. 2: Rationales for Cheating Behaviors

Q. 3: Changes to Support Academic Integrity

Authentic Assessment

Invigilation Practices

Policies and Penalties

Instructional Quality

Education – for faculty and students

Q. 4: Additional Comments

The McCabe Hypothesis / Conclusion

Survey Results – Undergraduate Students

868 Saint Mary’s students voluntarily participated in the online survey. They represent substantial numbers of students who came to Saint Mary’s directly from high school, had been at Saint Mary’s for several years and had completed at least half their degree. In addition, 82% of respondents had quality point averages between A and B-. Thirty percent indicated that business was their primary field of interest after university, 15% indicated education, 9% Law, 6% public service, and 15% undecided.

Gender:	Female	65%	Male	35%	
Admission Status:	High School	62%	Mature	19%	Transfer 19%
Year of Admission:	2002	25%	Present Age:	<20	21%
	2001	28%		20-25	61%
	2000	22%		26-30	8%
	1999	13%		>30	10%
	1998	5%			
Faculty:	Arts	43%	Courses Completed:	<5	19%
	Comm.	28%		5.5-10.0	25%
	Sci/Egn	17%		10.5-15.0	27%
	Grad Prog.	10%		>15.0	19%

This demographic indicates that the majority of student respondents had two to three successful years at Saint Mary’s on which to base their experiences, attitudes, and opinions.

25 Specific Behaviors - Extent of Engagement and Perceptions of Seriousness

Saint Mary’s students were asked to indicate:

- a) whether, in the past year, they had engaged in a specific behavior (Table 1), and
- b) how serious they considered this form of behavior to be (Table 2)

Saint Mary’s faculty were also asked to rate the same behaviors for ‘degree of seriousness.’ Table 3 indicates the degree to which students and faculty differ in their views of what constitutes serious cheating behavior.

Table 1: Self-reported Engagement in 25 Specific Behaviors by Canadian and Saint Mary's Undergraduate Students Page 41

Key observations

- Overall, the self reported behaviors of Saint Mary's students were comparable to Canadian data, with one notable exception. Saint Mary's students reported less fabrication/falsifying of lab data (6%) than did students at other Canadian universities (25%). We also note a similar difference in the reported data on high school behaviors.
- Of the 25 questionable behaviors listed, Saint Mary's students ranked eighteen in the 'top ten' for degrees of engagement. There is however a substantial gap between the top five behaviors (23%+ engagement) and the bottom thirteen (between 6 – 14%).
- Both Canadian and Saint Mary's students selected the same five behaviors for their highest degrees of engagement.
- Both Canadian and Saint Mary's students indicated that two of the lowest forms of activity are in the use of the web to purchase papers or download free papers for submission as their own work. Ironically, this activity is the one that has created the most publicity and generated most of the public discussion on this topic.

Table 2: Comparisons of Self-reported Perceptions of Seriousness in 25 Specific Behaviors by Canadian and Saint Mary's University Undergraduate Students Page 42

Key observations

- Both Canadian and Saint Mary's students ranked the same behaviors as 'serious cheating behaviors.'
- While Canadian and Saint Mary's students agreed in large measure on a ranking of such behaviors, there is a notable difference in their perceptions of these behaviors as 'not serious or trivial cheating.' A higher percentage of Canadian students perceived many of the behaviors as less serious forms of cheating than Saint Mary's students. However, Saint Mary's students, while perceiving many of the behaviors listed as more serious, participated at much the same rate as other Canadian students.
- Even those behaviors judged by the majority of students to be more serious (e.g., copying during an exam, turning in work done by someone else, etc.) were seen

as ‘not cheating or trivial cheating’ by 6 – 20% of Canadian and Saint Mary’s students.

- Students (commenting on both their high school and university behaviors) see various ‘collaborative’ behaviors (working together on individual assignments, getting unpermitted help on assignments, etc.) as “not cheating” or “trivial”. By contrast, the majority of faculty and TA’s who responded to the survey viewed these ‘collaborative’ behaviors as more serious. (Table 3)
- The ‘less serious’ the cheating behaviors were perceived, the more Canadian and Saint Mary’s students self-reported participating in that particular activity (comparison of Table 1 and 2).

Table 3: Comparison of Self-reported Perceptions of Seriousness in 25 Specific Behaviors between Saint Mary’s University Faculty and Undergraduate Students
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Key Observations

- At Saint Mary’s University (and in the Canadian study) faculty and students gave the listed behaviors a similar rank ordering on the ‘perceptions of seriousness’ scale.
- At the most serious end of the scale, faculty clearly recognize listed behaviors as major cheating while 6 – 8 percent of students suggest they represent ‘not cheating’ or ‘trivial cheating.’
- What is most notable, and of greatest concern, is the highly divergent views held by faculty and students about the seriousness of *all* listed forms of academic dishonesty. For example, the three ‘least serious behaviors’, as ranked by both groups, all constitute forms of unauthorized collaborative work, yet faculty perceive participation in them as much more serious than their students..

How Do Students Learn About Academic Integrity or Cheating Policies

Perhaps, not surprisingly, the vast majority of Saint Mary’s students, like their Canadian counterparts, indicated that they had been informed of their university’s policies on academic integrity and that it was from their professors that they learned the most.

Q: Have you ever been informed about the academic integrity or cheating policies on your campus?"

SMU Undergrads

Yes – 91%
No – 9%

Canadian Undergrads

Yes – 89%
No – 11%

Q: If yes, where and how much have you learned about these policies?

	SMU Undergrads % Who learned “some or a lot”	SMU Ranking	Canadian Undergrads % Who learned “some or a lot”	Canadian Ranking
Faculty	87%	1	86%	1
University Calendar	78%	2	71%	2
Other students	43%	3	51%	3
First year orientation program	38%	4	49%	4
Faculty Advisor	32%	5	32%	5
The Journal/SMUSA*	30%	6		
Deans or other administrators	18%	7	24%	6
Teaching Assistants	7%	8	16%	7
Other	2%	9	4%	8

* Option not included in Canadian Survey. Just prior to this survey, the President of SMUSA, Paul Deveau, had written a series of three articles on Academic Integrity in The Journal

Key Observations

- The fact that students (87% of respondents) get most of their information from faculty reinforces the importance of faculty addressing this issue in their teaching – in their syllabus, at the beginning of term, in ‘teachable moments’ when giving/discussing a particular assignment or test, etc.
- Students also indicated that their university’s Academic Calendar is where they learned ‘some or a lot’ about academic integrity and cheating policies (78%). Faculty who responded to this same question indicated that the Academic Calendar was their primary source of information (65% of respondents). These two statistics suggests the important educational role of the Academic Calendar in outlining policies and procedures with respect to academic integrity issues for both students and faculty.

- While it is commendable that 38% of students indicated learning ‘some or a lot’ on academic integrity issues at the first year orientation program (and this number would possibly be higher if all new students participated in Orientation), this is one area where education on academic issues could be enhanced.

Free Response Questions

The Undergraduate Student Survey asked students to respond to four open ended questions. Sample comments are included to suggest the general nature and overall response to each of these questions.

Question 1: Give examples of the most creative types of cheating you have either personally witnessed or participated in while in University.

The method most often cited was the use of crib notes during an exam. Within this group, the most common examples were: notes written in baseball caps; inside calculator covers; on arms, legs, erasers and sneakers.

- “One time I wrote a few notes under my watch and I have heard of people using graphing calculators to store notes.”
- “Someone put cheat notes in a chip bag and brought the chips into an exam. It worked and he went from a C to a B as a result.”
- “Witnessed – During a test the cheater had written on the peak of a baseball cap and another had them written inside the hat on a sweat band.”

Students reported on the use of recycled tests/exams and assignments as another creative method of cheating. This group cited: easy access to “old” tests/exams from former students and getting test questions and answers from students who have already written the test in different sections (and late writes) as popular forms of cheating.

- “Used old math assignments. Same questions, different numbers...just used old equations on a friends answer sheet and used my numbers. Friend had already taken the course the year before.”
- “Commerce students have the easiest access to old exams/assignments and projects and often collaborate to complete an individual assignment.”
- “Getting the test beforehand to help prepare for the types of questions that will be asked. The class average is raised because most people have the test beforehand. Not having one is a disadvantage.”

The third most often noted method involves various forms of plagiarism. Students witnessed or participated in such violations as: self-plagiarism; using Internet sources without proper citation/referencing and turning in assignments copied from other students (past and current).

- “Reused papers in other courses, adjusting them as needed to fit the new course.”
- “Saw two people in different sections of a course hand in the exact same paper under different names with different profs.”
- “I have not really seen any overtly creative cheating. All I have ever seen is people copying out of books, copying off the Internet, or writing papers for each other.”
- “A student in my class asked me to make a copy of my paper so that he could submit it to other courses because he was unlikely to get caught. He said that other students in the class were also doing it.”

The use of electronic devices is the newest means by which students cheat. Most often mentioned is the use of programmable graphing calculators that allow students to preprogram data and equations for use during tests and exams. Additionally, cell phones with text messaging features and audio mini disks with ear buds were mentioned.

- “I have heard of people who record all of the material on to a tape, wire themselves with a small Walkman and play the material back as they write the test.”
- “I know some people who have used programmable calculators to put in data/equations that you are supposed to memorize for the test.”
- “Text messaging cell phones are on during the exam (no volume of course) and math formulas are “called in” from outside.”
- “This one guy would get the answers paged to him on his beeper as the professor put the answers outside the class after a half an hour.”

Students reported engaging in or witnessing others collaborating on individual assignments and projects.

- “I don’t call it cheating but, I have seen so many assignments done for one by many, helping each other as a group. I mean the university wants teamwork, so what’s the point if you can’t do it when it really counts.”
- “When everybody helped each other during a recitation. Kind of like a group effort. Or when we photocopied multiple choice that went back six years and memorized them before class test instead of reading the book.”
- “I have worked with others when doing a take home assignment in which there was instructions to not work with others. “

Copying other students’ answers during tests/exams was mentioned by students as was leaving the room “to use the washroom.” Many students reported looking over the shoulder of the person in front of them and glancing sideways especially in crowded classrooms. Many also said that students leave the room to look at notes they have left in lockers, in their pockets and bathroom garbage cans.

- “I have witnessed simple over the shoulder copying (with the knowledge of all parties involved) on numerous occasions in math and science courses. Not creative, but still effective for those who engage in it.”
- “Over the shoulder technique where you look at test from the seat above. This is usually done in Burke.”
- “Sitting across from someone at the tables in the Tower, and turning the exam paper upside down so the other person could read more easily.”
- “Do you really think that students need to use the bathroom so often during exams? Get real. They are going outside to check answers and notes!!!”

Other creative methods of cheating included the use of false excuses, getting questions/answers from TA/ student markers and even getting someone else to write a test/exam for them as a practiced form of cheating.

- “Students fabricate stories as to their whereabouts during testing situations, and ask to be given make-up exams when excuses are not verifiable.”
- “I’ve seen markers allow their friends to alter their assignments using the marker’s answer key before they are marked.”
- “Some students just get buddy buddy with a student marking assistants in order to cheat on the assignments.”
- “One girl had her twin write a mid term for her. Even though Ids were checked at the door, obviously, no one noticed.”

Question 2: Students were asked to rationalize their actions if they personally engaged in cheating behaviors while at University.

Time constraints, poor time management skills and heavy course loads were mentioned by students to rationalize their behavior. However, the primary complaint among this group is the notion that many courses involve excessively long and difficult assignments that are worth very little overall; that faculty have no understanding that “theirs is not the only course being taken” and that students also have part-time jobs and personal lives to manage. Further, this group said that the inclination to cheat increased when deadlines for papers/assignments and labs all fall on the same day or in the same week.

- “Copied assignments simply because the amount of time required to do them is not worth the 2.5% when enrolled in five courses. Cheat notes during a test simply jump start the brain.”
- “Some professors don’t realize that their class is not the only one the student is taking. There have been many occasions where I have had three papers due and a test on the same day. We sometimes do not have enough time to do everything.”

- “At the time, six courses along with labs, a part-time job, living on my own and personal issues didn’t always allow for a lot of study time. That and the course was horribly taught, so looking at an old exam was really the only way to know what was going on.”
- “People cheat because they have too much work and not enough time to spend hours on a question on an assignment that isn’t worth much on their final grade and probably won’t be tested on the exam.”

Testing practices were given as a reason for cheating; of particular concern is the use of recycled tests/exams and assignments and the relative ease of accessibility to this material. This group felt that faculty enabled cheating behavior by not “doing their part” to prevent this situation. Some mentioned being disadvantaged in testing situations where many of their classmates openly displayed recycled test copies. A number of students remarked that student markers and teaching assistants, in some cases, have provided students with answer keys.

- “I participate in moderate cheating when trying to complete assignments that I find extremely difficult. For example, if a copy of the answer key of a statistics assignment is circulating, I will take a look at it or copy it for reference.”
- “My rationale is that if a teacher is lazy enough to use the same assignments and tests for each semester, I am going to use all my efforts into trying to get answers from previous students. I feel this is fair and using my skills in research to determine the answer. Plus, some assignments take up to 20 hours to do something worth 2.5% or less. As well, since being caught for the first time means you only get that mark as a zero on that assignment, I feel the costs do not outweigh the benefits of cheating and I will continue to do so on small assignments when given the chance.”
- “Supposedly it’s “cheating” by looking at old tests and notes from pervious classes. I wanted to get a feel for the class. I supplied one of my friends who does not speak English as his first language with an old assignment. I wanted to help him also “get a feel” of what is expected. C’mon, though I mean, the guy spent two weeks on it and still got a B, I spent three hours and got an A+.”

Poor instructional skills and ambiguous faculty expectations were commonly noted. Students indicate using various methods of group collaboration when completing out of class assignments, labs and take home exams. As revealed earlier, many students do not consider this cheating and use this position to justify their actions. Some mentioned that it is more efficient to divide the work, while others stated that they did not understand the assignment or were failing the course when they turned to their classmates for help.

- “ The only thing I have ever done is worked on an individual assignment with other students. Most profs know this happens and will even state this fact. As long as the assignments are not word for word alike, I have never seen a prof react negatively to this activity.”
- “ I have only ever cheated in a course where the Prof. was incapable of explaining anything...The Profs should realize that if they don’t teach well enough for us to grasp the concepts, the students will cheat.”

- “I can’t say I have a rationale for doing so. I realize that doing so is wrong, but went ahead and did it anyway. Mostly I will work with a group on an assignment when we are to hand in individual work. I figure that is all right, because we are all working together. We attempt the work on our own and then get together to check if we have similar answers and hope that others will know parts that we, as individuals, didn’t.”
- “Since a large majority do participate in cheating on assignments, is it really fair for a student to work for an hour in an attempt to get an answer when I could spend five minutes copying the answer and get full marks for it?”

Fear of failure was cited as another reason for cheating – included in this grouping is family pressure, personal need to succeed by any means, societal expectations and financial pressures.

- “There is too much pressure on students based on their precise CQPA. Therefore, if they can’t maintain it using legitimate ways, they try to do it by cheating.”
- “People cheat because they do not trust their own ability and judgment. They are scared to fail because that’s a lot of money to waste if they fail.”
- “I only cheated in an exam back in my first year for a math class. I was utterly lost in calculus and could not have gotten through without a little “help”. Is a \$700 course, a half-year of work and a commerce work term worth a small bit of cheating? I think so.”
- “Family circumstances prevent you from adequately studying for an exam but family places pressure on you to succeed.”
- “Early in my university career I fixed/re-wrote papers for some people. The only rationale was trying to make enough money to pay our extremely high tuition costs. I got desperate that year.”
- “I once wrote a test for someone for \$150.00. I was broke and I needed the money so I “academically whored” myself. I’m serious, not proud, but serious.”

Students indicated that they felt compelled to cheat because “it is easy to do.” Many mentioned crowded theatre style classes as being very easy places to cheat and singled out Burke Theatre A and B as being “cheater friendly” rooms.

- “Because it is easy to do!!! Burke Theatre, most of the time you don’t mean to, it just happens because you are so close to each other.”
- “I know it will be easy to get away with peeking at a few answers so why not?”

Question 3 asked students what specific changes they would like to see their school take in support of academic integrity and what role students should play in this process.

On the issue of student’s role within the policy enforcement process: the majority of the respondents feel it is the University’s responsibility to monitor and enforce policies related to student behavior and academic integrity. Many take the position that as individuals, students are responsible for their actions and that faculty, not fellow

classmates, should be charged with the task of policy enforcement if a case of cheating is suspected.

- “Students shouldn’t be forced to turn in other students. Upholding the integrity of the University is an important thing, however students shouldn’t be forced to assist at the cost of losing face amidst their peers.”
- “Students are students, we learn, we don’t make the rules, we follow them. We shouldn’t be responsible for coming forward about other students.”
- “Students should want to report cheating, but it is not their responsibility. If there is cheating going on during an exam in a lecture hall, then the professor needs to ask for more help in supervising.”

While the majority did not want to participate in the process, a number of students indicated that, if the system incorporated a means by which a student could anonymously report a suspected incident of cheating, the likelihood of them reporting would significantly increase.

- “I don’t think the burden should be on the student to monitor and to report such events. However, some type of anonymous system on WebCT where a student can alert a professor to keep a close eye on a student... E-mails can be traced. Rats aren’t cool, we may be more mature now that we are in university, but we all enjoy being liked by others.”
- “Students cannot be expected to report cheating unless there is a TOTALLY anonymous method for doing so.”

Recommendations for Change

Students were asked to consider what specific changes they would like to see Saint Mary's make in support of academic integrity. Their recommendations can be grouped under the 'five levers for change' noted by Dr. Christensen-Hughes:

- Authentic Assessment
- Invigilation Practices
- Policies and Penalties
- Instructional Quality
- Education – for faculty and students

Authentic Assessment

a) Assignments and Exams

- “Many assignments are ridiculous. They either challenge me very little or they are extremely difficult. Courses that are supposed to be at the same level vary greatly. Some professors require a great deal of input and some require very little. There should be consistency at each level.”
- “I believe that exams do not reflect what a person knows about the subject they are studying. It only makes you memorize and cram information until your brain is so full that once you are done writing an exam, you forget all of it. More major assignments, presentations, studies, etc. help you learn better than final exams.”
- “I do not believe that final exams should be worth very much more than normal class work. Students are human, we all have bad days, and if we happen to have a bad day on the day of a final, it can cost us a credit, and a lot of money.”
- “The point of courses is to give us a greater understanding of the material. We should be graded on how much more understanding of the concepts we have at the end of the course relative to the beginning, and the logic we apply to real world situations, not rehashing the information on a piece of paper.”
- “Teachers must understand that if they give a fair work-load, and give students work they enjoy doing, they won't cheat. But if you give us paper after paper, you are going to end up with cheating.”

b) Unauthorized (And Authorized) Collaboration on Assignments and Labs

This topic brought suggestions for change from students who are opposed to the practice as well as those who think group effort should be encouraged.

- “I personally believe that group work on assignments should never be encouraged!!! Obviously there are persons in the group whose resources are being exploited by less competent members.”
- “When it comes to group assignments, have some way of making sure that individuals are marked fairly, because in every group I have ever been in there has been one or two people who have done absolutely nothing.”
- “Assignments that require individual effort exclusively are not helpful. They do not accurately reflect what the student will encounter in the real world.”
- “I disagree with the practice of having assignments completed individually. Working in groups of two or three is far more beneficial to learning.”
- “Cheating happens. It will continue to happen. I would also say that taking a hard nose approach to smaller situations is not a good idea. There is no point in punishing someone on something as trivial as working in a group. Students use every resource available to them. This is not necessarily cheating. It is more networking, socializing, and working in teams. Building skills that will help in the future.”

c) Use and Availability of Old Tests/Exams and Assignments

- “Consistency among faculty concerning policy adherence. NO RECYCLED TESTS OR EXAMS!!! Copies of many exams from all departments are very easy to obtain on Saint Mary’s campus. Some exams haven’t changed in more than 5 years.”
- “Societies should not be allowed to help students with the use of old assignments and exams.”
- “For business assignments my friends just copy off each other or get the tests from previous years. They hand in these huge twenty page assignments copied from someone else. That does not lead to learning and it does not exhibit intelligence. Commerce needs to change their assignments and make people actually do their homework themselves. I see it as a huge joke because SMU knows this happens and accepts these assignments with no thought.”
- “Change assignments and tests if you want to see a change in academic integrity. As well if an assignment is going to take 20 hours to do make it worth more than 2.5%.”

Invigilation Practices

a) Exam and Test Invigilation Practices

- “Have more monitors in exams and not allow people to go to the bathroom 2 or 3 times in a two hour exam or have bathroom trips escorted for major exams.”
- “Have more monitors involved in tests and mid terms. One teacher cannot possibly watch over 100 students.”
- “Monitor students taking tests carefully from the back of the room. When the teacher is in the back of the class looking ahead, the student won’t know if it is ok to cheat because they won’t know if the teacher is watching them or not at the time.”

- “Something needs to be done about the use of electronic translators during exams.”
- “Teaching Assistants/profs need to CIRCULATE during tests and exams to catch people cheating! I am so sick of seeing unintelligent, unmotivated people do well on tests.”
- “Although it is not time effective to check student Ids at the beginning of exams, it only takes a moment to do at the time each student passes in their exam.”

b) Classroom Size

- “As an Arts student I am in many classes which take place in the Burke Theatres. These classrooms are effective for teaching but are not the proper environment to take exams in because of the proximity of other students and the small desk sizes. This makes taking and monitoring tests difficult for all parties.”
- “I personally think that if you do not want people to cheat, do not put them in classrooms that will tempt them to do so. For instance the theatres in Burke – writing exams is awful in there because there are people all around you and only inches away from your paper. It is too tempting for cheaters.”

Policies and Penalties

- “I think that the policies should be carried out if a Professor believes a student has cheated and that student admits he/she has done so. I think the standards of the school would drop if the student admits to plagiarism but is only penalized by a few marks. That student is likely to repeat his/her performance because the penalty is small.”
- “I think there should be harsher penalties – a zero- tolerance policy. If you are caught with a cheat sheet on an Exam or have been caught submitting an essay with severe plagiarism (i.e., another student’s work or largely unoriginal) – you should be expelled from the university, period.”
- “Communication! Tell us from the start what the policies are! Make sure all profs enforce the same rules and punishments in all courses and all faculties.”
- “It is not publicized enough. Perhaps when people are caught cheating, they should put it in the university paper, leaving the name out, but telling what they did and their punishment.”
- “If they are going to enforce it, they should make the process of HOW they deal with cheating and plagiarism well known to all students and follow through with that process...”
- “In one of my classes eight students were caught for copying and nothing happened. They again copied the next assignment. I wish something had happened, as they are all getting better marks than me...”

Instructional Quality

- “Academic integrity is key, but as long as there are teachers who expect too much or do not clearly explain the concepts, there will be cheating. If we don't understand what is being taught and can't get tutoring or the prof to explain it better then what are we supposed to do? Fail?”
- “There needs to be some agreement between faculty as to what cheating is. I find that senior faculty take much more relaxed views than junior faculty do. I think that all professors should keep copies of the papers that are handed in to them.”
- “I took a class last year and the professor actually encouraged students to go out and find old exams because he has used the same tests for 15 years and there are only so many questions he can ask about the topic. It was stated that if we were really smart we would find these exams and use them to study from. I think that if we are expecting integrity from the students we should be able to ask the same from professors.”
- “Professors should not use upper level students to conduct labs, tutorials, etc. We pay tuition to receive instruction from a professor, not another student. This makes the class seem trivial, unimportant and that the instructor really doesn't care”.
- “As a student marker, I have reported students copying assignments in what was to be individual assignments and nothing was done. I have also seen papers that students have written that only took a second on the Internet to realize the work was not their own”.
- “Some professors are using the exact same material year in and year out which makes their job a snoozefest and makes it easy for students to cheat.”

Education – for faculty and students

- “Most professors now highlight the consequences of cheating in their syllabus – but they need to talk about it more in class.”
- “I think first year should be the time for making the policy well known, using every opportunity to educate students as to what constitutes cheating and then to call them on it when it occurs...”
- “I would like for professors to clarify and reiterate their expectations of academic integrity at the beginning of every course.”
- “Academic approaches are very different in various countries and cultures, and innocent international students suffer due to their lack of exposure. Majority of cases, plagiarism is unintentional. University should encourage more writing workshops and seminars for international students who, according to me, are more vulnerable to such plagiarism due to their lack of exposure and understanding of the North American education system.”
- “I think there should be a free course that students can enroll in that doesn't count toward a degree that teaches students how to write a paper, how to properly obtain material and how to reference it!!”

- “In some cases, such as plagiarism, students don’t believe that they are doing anything wrong...I think that a course or at least part of a course should involve proper ways of writing that is uniform within the university.”
- “There needs to be more education of what qualifies as cheating. When I first entered university I thought that as long as I didn’t purposely cheat (off the Internet or using paper mills) that I would be all right. Though I have never deliberately cheated, I often wonder where the fine line lies. It would be helpful if professors would give examples of what cheating is. I am in my fourth year and have only had only one professor do this.”

Question 4: Students were invited to make any additional comments about the topic of cheating.

Students took advantage of this very open-ended question to elaborate on many of their answers however, similar themes emerged. The majority wanted:

- university policies related to academic integrity to be stated clearly;
- easy access to information concerning policy enforcement process;
- outcomes to be made available and that penalties be standardized, uniformly enforced and consistently applied;
- better controls placed on the way faculty safeguard the content of their exams;
- appropriate invigilation measures in place when large classrooms are used for exams.

Students also used this question to explain their personal position on cheating in general and on the societal and moral forces that govern their behavior.

- “This is an ethical concern in the sense that it is part of the “organizational culture” of being a student. It is a moral concern for the individual. Addressing the morality of cheating will be far more effective than any system of controls and/or penalties.”
- “The problem with cheating is that the student body as a group generally does not view it as an immoral action. It might be frowned upon slightly, especially during formal tests and exams, but assignments are seen as things you just have to pass in. If it were taboo to do so, cheating on assignments would end quickly.”
- “I am not a very successful or bright student but at least I am honest about my work and do not cheat. So many people I know cheat in exams and by paying the markers to mark them higher. I may have a low GPA, but it’s not fair to compare mine with students who cheat.”
- “I don’t cheat because I was taught it was wrong at an early age, my parents instilled values within me. I grew up respecting those values and I understand, and choose to respect right and wrong. Universities are not capable of preventing cheating, it doesn’t

matter what the penalties are. If people have the attitude that cheating is alright they will do it regardless of the penalties.”

The McCabe Hypothesis

During his presentation at Saint Mary’s in May/03, Don McCabe discussed a key finding that had become evident to him following years of administering his academic integrity surveys on American university and college campuses. This key finding, what he called his ‘hypothesis,’ suggests that:

- 15 – 20% of students will cheat no matter what we do;
- 15 – 20% of students will never cheat, regardless of the circumstances, therefore
- 60 – 70% of students can be influenced in their attitudes and behaviors after they arrive on campus.

We need to ensure that a *culture of integrity* exists and is obvious to students in the programs (academic and non-academic) that we offer; in the ways in which learning and teaching takes place and is supported; and in appropriate, consistent, and public policies and practices.

A culture of integrity will support the 15 – 20% of students who will never cheat as well as the 60 – 70% of students who, as McCabe suggests, can be influenced in their attitudes and behaviors once they become university students.

Conclusion

The data collected suggests that Saint Mary’s students behave in similar ways, in similar numbers, and for similar reasons as their Canadian counterparts. While this represents a significant number of students who admit to engaging in academically dishonest behavior, it also represents a significant number of students who appear to engage in ‘opportunistic’ academically dishonest behavior and for reasons that can be remedied with attention to the ‘five levers for change’ identified in this report.

Regardless of all of the actions and activities undertaken individually and collectively at Saint Mary’s and other universities however, instances of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will continue to be a fact of university life. This appears to be a sad reflection of society as a whole where lapses in moral and ethical behaviors are becoming more and more commonplace (or perhaps, more and more public). Nevertheless, we will continue to explore the issues on our campus, and attempt to find ways to address them.

Table 1: Self-reported Engagement in 25 Specific Behaviors by Canadian and Saint Mary's Undergraduate Students

Specific Behaviors 1 = highest degree of engagement, ranked on SMU data	Engagement Canadian Ranking (n=13,644)	Engagement SMU Ranking (n=868)	% of Cdn. students who reported engagement once or more in past year	% of SMU students who reported engagement once or more in past year	SMU +/-
Sharing an assignment, as example	1	1	66%	65%	-1%
Work with others when asked for individual work	2	2	45%	44%	-1%
Get Q&A from someone taken test	3	2	38%	44%	+6%
Copy few sentences from a written source w/o footnoting	4	3	37%	41%	+4%
Copy few sentences from electronic or internet source w/o footnoting	5	4	35%	36%	+1%
Unpermitted help on assignment	7	5	18%	23%	+5%
False excuse for an extension	10	6	12%	14%	+2%
Fabricating/falsifying bibliography	8	7	17%	11%	-6%
Copying during exam w/o other student's knowledge	12	7	8%	11%	+3%
Help someone cheat on test	12	8	8%	9%	+1%
Copying a friend's computer program	9	8	14%	9%	-5%
Turn in work done by someone else	11	8	9%	9%	0%
Copying during exams with other student's knowledge	13	9	6%	8%	+2%
Provide previously graded assignments to student to submit as their own work	12	9	8%	8%	0%
Fabricating/falsifying lab data	6	10	25%	6%	-19%
Use unpermitted crib notes	13	10	6%	6%	0%
Copy material almost word for word/turn in as own	14	10	5%	6%	+1%
Turn in paper copied from student	12	10	8%	6%	-2
Writing or providing paper for student	14	11	5%	5%	0%
Fabricate/falsify research data	11	12	9%	4%	-5%
Hiding or stealing library or course materials	15	13	4%	3%	-1%
Turn in paper obtained for free from paper mill/web site	16	13	2%	3%	+1%
Alter graded test and resubmit	16	14	2%	2%	0%
Damaging library materials	16	15	2%	1%	-1%
Turn in paper purchased from paper mill/web site	17	15	1%	2%	+1%
*Writing an exam for someone else or having someone else write an exam for you.		15		<1%	N/A
*Question not included in Canadian Survey					

Table 2: Comparisons of Self-reported Perceptions of Seriousness in 25 Specific Behaviors by Canadian and Saint Mary's University Undergraduate Students

Specific Behaviors 1= least serious form of cheating as perceived by students, ranked on SMU data	Seriousness Canadian Ranking (n=13,644)	Seriousness SMU Ranking (n=868)	% of Cdn. students who reported behavior as not cheating or trivial cheating	% of SMU students who reported behavior as not cheating or trivial cheating	SMU +/-
Sharing an assignment, as example	1	1	80%	76%	-4%
Work with others when asked for individual work	2	2	79%	70%	-9%
Unpermitted help on assignment	3	3	70%	68%	-2%
Get Q&A from someone taken test	4	4	50%	50%	0%
Copy few sentences from a written source w/o footnoting	7	5	46%	39%	-7%
False excuse for an extension	6	5	46%	39%	-7%
Hiding or stealing library or course materials	5	5	49%	39%	-10%
Copy few sentences from electronic or internet source w/o footnoting	6	6	48%	38%	-10%
Damaging library materials	9	7	43%	34%	-9%
Fabricating/falsifying bibliography	8	8	44%	31%	-13%
Fabricating/falsifying lab data	9	9	36%	19%	-17%
Copying a friend's computer program	10	10	19%	17%	-2%
Turn in work done by someone else	11	11	18%	15%	-3%
Fabricate/falsify research data	11	11	18%	15%	-3%
Provide previously graded assignments to student to submit as their own work	17	12	12%	12%	0%
Turn in paper copied from student	12	13	15%	11%	-4%
Alter graded test and resubmit	15	14	10%	9%	-1%
Help someone cheat on test	14	15	11%	8%	-3%
Writing or providing paper for other	13	15	12%	8%	-4%
Turn in paper obtained for free from paper mill/web site	15	15	10%	8%	-2%
Turn in paper purchased from paper mill/web site	17	15	9%	8%	-1%
Copying during exams with other student's knowledge	16	16	8%	7%	-1%
Use unpermitted crib notes	16	16	8%	7%	-1%
Copy material almost word for word/turn in as own	17	16	7%	7%	0%
Copying during exam w/o knowledge	17	17	7%	6%	-1%
*Writing an exam for someone else or having someone else write an exam for you.		17		6%	N/A
*Question not included in Canadian Survey					

Table 3: Comparison of Self-reported Perceptions of Seriousness in 25 Specific Behaviors between Saint Mary’s University Faculty and Undergraduate Students

Specific Behavior 1 = least serious form of cheating as perceived by students and faculty	Seriousness SMU Faculty Ranking (n=127)	Seriousness SMU Student Ranking (n=868)	% SMU Faculty who reported behaviour as not cheating or trivial cheating	% of SMU students who reported behaviour as not cheating or trivial cheating	SMU Students +/-
Sharing an assignment to use as an example	1	1	45%	76%	+31%
Work with others when asked for individual work	3	2	26%	70%	+44%
Receiving unpermitted help on assignment	2	3	31%	68%	+37%
Get Q&A from someone taken test	8	4	9%	50%	+41%
Copy few sentences from written source w/o footnoting	4	5	21%	39%	+18%
Hiding or stealing library or course materials	5	5	5%	39%	+34%
False excuse for an extension	6	5	18%	39%	+21%
Copy few sentences from electronic or internet source w/o footnoting	6	6	18%	38%	+20%
Damaging library or course materials	7	7	12%	34%	+22%
Fabricating/falsifying bibliography	9	8	6%	31%	+25%
Fabricating/falsifying lab data	13	9	1%	19%	+18%
Copying a friend’s computer program	10	10	5%	17%	+12%
Turn in work done by someone else	11	11	4%	15%	+11%
Fabricate/falsify research data	14	11	0%	15%	+15%
Turn in paper copied from student	13	12	1%	11%	+10%
Turn in paper obtained for free from paper mill/web site	14	13	0%	8%	+8%
Help someone cheat on test	12	13	2%	8%	+6%
Provide previously graded assignment to student to submit as their own work	13	14	1%	12%	+11%
Writing or providing a paper for another student	13	14	1%	8%	+7%
Alter graded test and resubmit	12	15	2%	9%	+7%
Turn in paper purchased from paper mill/web site	14	15	0%	8%	+8%
Copying during test or exam with other student’s knowledge	14	16	0%	7%	+7%
Use unpermitted crib notes during test or exam	14	16	0%	7%	+7%
Copying during test or exam w/o other student’s knowledge	13	17	0%	6%	+6%
Copy material almost word for word/turning in as own work	13	17	0%	7%	+7%
Writing an exam for someone else or having someone else write an exam for you.	14	18	0%	6%	+6%

Section 5

Survey Results – Saint Mary’s Faculty

Demographic Information

Rating the Academic Environment

Primary Information Sources

Reporting/Dealing with Incidents of Cheating

Reporting/Levels of Satisfaction

Ignoring Suspected Cases of Cheating

Free Response Questions: Faculty Quotations

 Q. 1: Improving Policies

 Q. 2: Role of Faculty

Conclusion

Survey Results – Saint Mary’s Faculty

127 faculty completed the online survey thus providing a substantial amount of information on how they view academic integrity issues on campus and their role in this.

The demographic information indicates that most surveys were completed by full-time faculty who had been teaching at Saint Mary’s for more than five years (>5 = 57%). Faculty responding represented:

Gender:	Males	55%	Females	45%		
Rank:	Full	22%	Associate	25%	Assistant	22%
	Lecturer	16%	Sessional	14%	Other	1%
Faculty:	Arts	39%	Commerce	31%	Sci/Egn.	29%
	Grad.Studies	1%				
Years at SMU:	<5	43%	5 – 9	14%	10 – 14	14%
	15 – 19	7%	20+	22%		

As was noted in Tables 1 and 2 (p. 41, 42), Saint Mary’s students reported participating in academically dishonest behaviors in similar ways and numbers as their fellow Canadian students. They also carry similar perceptions on the seriousness of their behaviors.

Like students, faculty at Saint Mary’s had similar reporting patterns as their Canadian colleagues. Both report witnessing similar actions and behaviors in fairly similar percentages, both agree on what constitutes serious cheating behaviors, and both disagree vigorously with their students on the perceived seriousness of many behaviors.

In addition to looking at student behaviors, the survey asked faculty to respond to questions on the academic environment, on their information sources, on their satisfaction levels when reporting cheating behaviors, and on their reasons for ignoring cheating if they had previously done so. In addition, two open ended questions gave faculty an opportunity to elaborate on many of their responses to the closed survey questions. Just as student respondents had done, faculty took this opportunity to offer many thought provoking comments, ideas and challenges.

Academic Environment

Faculty and students were asked to rate the 'academic environment' on their campus for six factors, rating each from 'very low to very high.'

Academic Environment	% SMU Faculty who rated factors as high/very high. (n=127) (Can. faculty, n=1,902)	% SMU Students who rated factors as high/very high. (n=868) (Can. students, n=13,644)	SMU Students Vs faculty +/-
The severity of penalties for cheating	14% (22%)	76% (63%)	+62%
Student understanding of campus policies concerning cheating	5% (10%)	66% (42%)	+61%
Faculty's understanding of policies	29% (32%)	67% (77%)	+38%
Student support of these policies	10% (16%)	80% (48%)	+70%
Faculty support of these policies	43% (41%)	66% (74%)	+23%
The effectiveness of these policies	3% (9%)	72% (42%)	+69%

Key Observations

What is most noticeable about the above comparison is the vast difference in opinion between faculty and student ratings for each environmental factor.

- Only 14% of faculty who responded rated the severity of penalties at Saint Mary's as high/very high while a full 76% of students rated it as high/very high.
- Faculty and students have very different views about student's understanding of policies. Only 5% of faculty rating their understanding as high/very high while fully two thirds of students (66%) feel they have a high/very high understanding of the policies. At the national level, a substantially smaller percentage of students (42%) felt they understood their campus policies.
- Students felt faculty had a high/very high understanding of policies (67%), while only 29% of faculty felt they did.
- Students indicated that they overwhelmingly supported Saint Mary's policies (80%) while only 10% of faculty felt students supported them. Again, at the national level, a significantly smaller percentage of students (48%) indicated support for their campus policies.

- Almost half of faculty who responded rated their support of policies as high/very high (43%) while two thirds of students (66%) felt faculty support was high/very high.
- Perhaps the most telling statistic is the divergence of opinion in the degree of effectiveness of Saint Mary’s policies as reported by faculty and students and the difference between Saint Mary’s students and their national counterparts.
 - Only 3% of faculty rated the effectiveness of Saint Mary’s policies as high/very high while almost three quarters of students (72%) gave them a high rating.
 - A significantly higher percentage of Saint Mary’s students (72%) rated the effectiveness of their campus policies as high vs the national student average of 42%.

Faculty – Primary Information Sources

Faculty were asked to indicate the **primary sources** from which they learned about the academic integrity policies on their campus. Both locally and nationally, the primary source is the Academic Calendar with faculty colleagues a strong second source.

	SMU Faculty	SMU Ranking	Canadian Faculty	Canadian Ranking
University Calendar	65%	1	58%	1
Faculty Colleagues	41%	2	33%	2
Faculty Handbook	31%	3	27%	3
Faculty Orientation Program	19%	4	15%	6
Department Chair	17%	5	26%	4
Dean or other administrators	16%	6	25%	5
Have never been informed about these policies	15%	7	13%	8
Other	14%	8	14%	7
Publicized results of judicial hearings	3%	9	8%	9
Students	2%	10	2%	10

Reporting/Dealing With Incidents of Cheating

Faculty were asked to indicate whether they had suspected or were sure students had cheated:

- Saint Mary’s Faculty who suspected (from one to many) cases of cheating 83%
- Saint Mary’s Faculty who were sure a student had cheated 41%
- Canadian Faculty who suspected (from one to many) cases of cheating 70%
- Canadian Faculty who were sure a student had cheated 33%

Faculty were then asked to indicate their most likely reaction if they were convinced, even after discussions with a student, that the student had cheated on a major test or assignment.

Most Likely Reaction	Saint Mary's Faculty	Canadian Faculty
Fail the student on the test/assignment	65%	45%
Reprimand or warn the student	39%	35%
Report student to a Dean	37%	24%
Report student to Registrar*	36%	
Report student to Chair/Director	35%	53%
Lower the student's grade	15%	5%
Fail the student for the course	12%	9%
Redo the test/assignment	9%	16%
Other	6%	9%
Do nothing about the incident	2%	2%
* not included in the Canadian survey		

Key Observation

- Saint Mary's faculty indicated that their most likely reactions to serious cheating they were convinced had occurred would be to fail the student on the test or assignment in question or to give a reprimand or warning. Canadian faculty indicated that their first 'most likely response' would be to report the student to a Chair or Dean, however they too use 'informal responses' to deal with situations of serious cheating.

A report entitled "Informal Responses to Academic Dishonesty" from the October 1993 Conference of The Center for Academic Integrity states "Informal faculty responses to academic dishonesty that displace or subvert an institution's formal rules are common...the detrimental effects of informal faculty adjudication are clear and substantial." (p.11) The Report states that, in addition to subverting the notion of fairness and the concept of due process, informal adjudication can actually increase the possibility of legal action and "in actual practice, informal adjudication by faculty members is almost always the more lenient alternative. This means that it offers little deterrent value. It also sometimes pushes students in the direction of negotiation instead of the straightforward recognition of error and the assumption of responsibility." (p. 12)

Faculty were asked to indicate (Column 1) which actions they felt were most likely to be taken *on their campus* and (Column 2) what their preferred course of action would be.

Action	Likely Action		Preferred Action	
	SMU	(Can.)	SMU	(Can.)
The student will be given a reprimand or warning	65%	(59%)	32%	(27%)
The student will receive a failing grade for the exam/assignment	64%	(47%)	64%	(56%)
The student will receive a grade reduction	43%	(38%)	31%	(24%)
The student will be required to make up the exam/assignment	20%	(27%)	14%	(20%)
The student will be given a failing grade for the course	16%	(16%)	33%	(30%)
The student will be placed on probation	12%	(12%)	27%	(23%)
The student will be suspended from school	6%	(7%)	9%	(11%)
The student will be expelled from school	4%	(4%)	8%	(7%)
Other	2%	(2%)	2%	(3%)
Don't know	6%		6%	

Key Observations

- While Saint Mary’s and Canadian faculty felt that students were most likely to be given a reprimand or warning, both groups preferred a more serious punishment – a failing grade on the exam/assignment or a grade reduction for the course.
- Fully one third of Saint Mary’s and Canadian faculty indicated that a more serious penalty still - giving students a failing grade for the course - would be a suitable response.
- Faculty’s likely and preferred courses of action fall into the ‘informal response’ category and suggest a preference for avoiding the more formal adjudication processes. Perhaps the reasons for this can be seen from their responses to questions related to reporting and satisfaction levels.

Reporting Incidents of Cheating/Level of Satisfaction

Faculty were asked whether they had ever reported a suspected case of cheating to their Chair, a Dean or anyone else. Those who answered yes were asked to rate their satisfaction with the way the case(s) was handled; those who answered that they were “unsatisfied or very unsatisfied” were asked to explain their response:

- Saint Mary’s Faculty who reported referring a suspected case of cheating 58%
- Canadian Faculty who reported referring a suspected case of cheating 54%
- Saint Mary’s Faculty who were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the outcome 25%
- Canadian Faculty who were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the outcome 22%

When asked to explain why they were not satisfied with the way reported cases were handled, two themes emerged from the comments made by Saint Mary's faculty:

- Perceived lack of support from administration
- Failure of administration to inform faculty of the outcome of the case

The following quotations reflect these themes:

- “If faculty are expected to spend time and effort to stop plagiarism, the least that I would expect is to be asked for my input when the issue surfaces higher up at the registrars office. Instead, the registrar's office made no attempt to ask for my side of events – thereby treating the matter as a trivial one – nor was I notified of the outcome. Ridiculous!”
- “The student contested the allegation, even though I had documented proof. The Dean didn't report back to me what action, if any, was taken. Once the allegation reaches the Dean's office, from my perspective it just disappears. I don't think the Dean is doing his job correctly. I should have received notification of any action/decision taken regarding the student.”
- “I reported a student who cheated on an assignment to the Dean, the Dean then reported it to the Registrar, the student had been very manipulative and I felt that he/she deserved a more severe punishment for the offence. Regardless, the registrar's office did not make any attempt to inform me of the result of the case.”
- “Guilty student was recommended for expulsion by a committee. The decision was overturned by the President.”
- “The penalty was not severe enough to curb future behaviors. There was a missed opportunity to make an example of this student.”
- “No follow-up. My first year teaching so I wanted to go “by the book”. Letter was sent to the Dean and the registrar with full proof of plagiarism (exact copy from Internet...required extra time on my part to hunt and “prove”), no further correspondence with me from administration...Next year, another colleague, same student, same type of incident, same reporting, no correspondence between faculty or with administration. Student NOT expelled and back on campus the following term...”

It appears from these comments that a perceived lack of administrative support and, in particular, a lack of transparency relating to the handling and resolution of reported cases of academic dishonesty have provoked a degree of cynicism among many Saint Mary's faculty.

Percentage of SMU and Canadian faculty who, for any reason, have ignored a suspected incident of cheating:

Saint Mary’s Faculty – 58%

Canadian Faculty – 46 %

Factors that most influenced faculty decisions to ignore suspected incidents of cheating:

Factor	SMU Faculty	Canadian Faculty	SMU +/-
Lacked evidence/proof	43%	39%	+ 4%
Lack of support from admin.	10%	9%	+ 1%
No time to pursue suspected cases	10%	9%	+ 1%
Cheating was trivial/not serious	10%	9%	+ 1%
Didn’t want to deal with it	6%	7%	-1%
Unsure of reporting practices	6%	9%	-3%
Student will ultimately suffer	5%	3%	+2%

Key Observation

- Substantial numbers of faculty ignore suspected incidents of cheating, primarily because they lack the evidence or proof to support their claim.
- Other factors - a perceived lack of support, lack of time to give to the issue, the perceived ineffectiveness of university policies and practices, and lack of satisfaction when incidents are reported - must also be considered if we are to support faculty in fostering and maintaining a climate of academic integrity at Saint Mary’s.

Open-ended Questions

Question 1: Do you have any suggestions on how your campus might improve its policies concerning issues of academic integrity or any additional comments you care to make?

Many faculty respondents suggested that the current policies and regulations for academic integrity were appropriate but ineffective due to enforcement inconsistencies among faculty and administration. Many feel that, in order to realize meaningful change,

standardized policies must be implemented, clearly explained, consistently and uniformly enforced and supported by both faculty and administration.

Others feel that the current policies should be amended to include “in-house” instruction for students and faculty about issues related to academic integrity, and that outcome information about academic misconduct cases ought to be available to faculty and students. Some faculty would like the university to assist and support them by systematically providing assistants to monitor cheating behavior and by subscribing to a plagiarism detection service.

Sample Comments

- “Always follow the published procedures and sanctions, and be consistent in their application. Both students and professors need to know the rules, and need to be assured that they will be followed.”
- “Have the courage to make and enforce our own policies, and ignore what outsider lawyers or pressure interests might say, or how they might react.”
- “It would be nice to have the support of the administration in pursuing cases of cheating and plagiarism. If the faculty senate has to have an airtight case against the student, documented several ways in writing, it would be nice if the faculty were provided with some boilerplate that satisfies the appeal requirements of the faculty senate.”
- “Provide more support for faculty who strictly enforce academic integrity; publicize the severity of possible punishments for cheating; stop treating students like customers who are buying degrees; support a reporting system both for cheating and student conduct violations.”
- “The policies in place are generally fair, but they must be administered properly. If faculty, Chairs and administrators fail to abide by the policies in clear cases where academic integrity has been violated, the whole integrity of the institution is called into question.”
- “The university administration must be less cautious – they get scared away by the threat of a law suit. We have students who have gotten away with blatant cheating and have not been suspended under legal advice. We need to stand up and fight in court if necessary.”
- “We need to engage faculty and then act on a unified front – with shared/common expectations which are clearly communicated to students, consistency in implementation of penalties, and diligence in pursuing all cases of suspected academic fraud/misconduct.”
- “We have a problem here. Certain administrators, even high up ones, seem to think

that if male students are involved in major athletics, they are to be given more chances and their plagiarism should be excused for the good of the team and the university...”

- “The university should circulate a flyer of sorts that informs faculty of incidents involving violations of SMU policies on academic integrity. This would serve to make faculty more aware of this problem and show them how the situation was handled. Of course these notices would not provide information that would identify the student...”
- “Spend more time discussing the issues of integrity with incoming faculty, make chairpersons more responsible for monitoring that issues are discussed in departmental meetings and implemented in classes. Spend as much time as possible talking to students about integrity and policies and give students clear examples of forms of cheating.”
- “Publish statistics regarding accusations of cheating and outcomes on a yearly basis. Make it more open to general university community. I really do not have a sense of what the normative behavior is/expectation are regarding actions taken to prevent, and act on incidents of cheating. I have reported cheating once to the registrar and have no idea what happened. More openness!! Also, the university, as part of orientation, should make it mandatory for all new students to participate in an ethics workshop in the first month.”
- “By not enforcing plagiarism in a firm and effective manner, such as by the implementation of anti-cheating software, we are turning a blind eye to the problem...this software would enable faculty to do our jobs more quickly and efficiently. No one likes to accuse anyone of cheating, and I see software as an impartial (rather than emotional) means to make a decision. Students are not gaining an education when we take a back seat approach to halting plagiarism.”
- “Better information on cheating to faculty and students (consequences and what cheating is...) Better support of faculty to assist in detecting and managing cheating.”
- “Ensure that policies are better publicized and followed at all levels of the university hierarchy.”
- “Encourage faculty to take plagiarism seriously; encourage them to report cases to the Dean and keep track of repeat offences.”
- “There is no formal committee for disciplinary action. A committee (with faculty, admin and student representation) at the faculty level can enforce policy quickly.”
- “I think there should be notices of student plagiarism and cheating cases in the student newspaper. It need not name the student(s) involved, but it should be more

visible that there are penalties and that the penalties are applied. I think faculty should be informed on this basis as well.”

Question 2: What role do you think faculty should play in promoting academic integrity and/or controlling cheating in their courses?

Faculty members who responded to the second question agree that their role is paramount in the promotion of academic integrity. Many reiterated their support for standardized and enforceable policies, cheat-proof assessment methods and the need for increased attention to instructional practices that promote and encourage academic integrity. Others noted that students learn by example and faculty, through actions and attitudes, model personal, professional and university expectations.

Sample Comments

- “I believe that academic integrity should be taught in all first year courses, and I prefer a positive approach to policing student behaviors.”
- “Faculty should promote integrity by explicitly stating the “academic integrity policy” on their course outlines/web sites. They should address this issue in class. If every faculty member refers to these policies, there will be more awareness among students. The faculty can develop a standard academic integrity policy that all faculty members can use in their course outlines.”
- “Be vigilant and present a unified front against academic misconduct; hold students accountable for high ethical standards; report violations of standards for both cheating and appropriate conduct.”
- “I think we should, as faculty, have a prescribed way of dealing with things. There does not seem to be one way at SMU. This is very bad. Some of my colleagues have advised me not to turn in plagiarists because it is too much work and can’t be proven...”
- “I think programs should have a clear statement of their values and the values they expect of their students. This should be made very clear as they enter university and be reinforced at regular stages as they proceed through their programs.”
- “If we have clear policies and make an effort to enforce them many problems do not develop. That takes time. It is easy to use the same assignments and the same exams, for example, over and over again. But that road is very open to abuse. Right now I find that copying from the Internet is one of the biggest problems among my students...”
- “Faculty should be playing a very important role; we have a lot of control but many do not exercise it. We should not have students writing exams in corridors; we

should not have open assignments (for example, write an essay on anything). I think faculty are a bit complacent.”

- “By modeling academic integrity with regard to the use of others’ research and ideas in lectures etc. Exercise effective class management that underlies the professor’s authority in the class and by limiting opportunities to cheat (i.e., handing out different versions of the same exam, separating students while writing exam).”
- “It is really difficult to do more than to include policy in course outline. If we have to discuss the issue in all classes, it will end up having no effect (e.g. on a plane, what percentage really listens to the person telling you about how to fasten your seatbelt etc...) Have it on outlines. Have orientation ethics workshops for all students, publish results of hearings (no names) and statistics regarding accusations of cheating behaviors in student newspaper.”
- “Faculty should play the role of disseminator of information about these issues, but the administration needs to support the faculty more and not be afraid of students who challenge rulings. If the administration does not back the professor then why should a professor investigate a suspected case of plagiarism...”
- “The better we know our students the better we can assess all aspects of performance. The increased incidence of plagiarism is a consequence, not only of the rise of the internet, but of our unmanageability of large classes.”
- “Choice of exams and assignments that discourage copying from each other or from published sources, computer software for detecting plagiarism, increased funding for proctors during exams to discourage cheating.”
- “Faculty are the front line, they play the lead role – setting and conveying expectations, creating exam/assignments that make cheating possible or not, detecting and documenting cases of cheating, enforcing academic regulations regarding penalties.”
- “Faculty should be role models. All new faculty and graduate students should be required to attend a workshop/seminar program that focuses on integrity in teaching and research. The administration should be required to introduce the workshops while faculty members should be required to moderate break off group discussions based on case studies of various examples of integrity based problems (conflict of interest, plagiarism, intellectual property rights, authorship etc.)”
- “...it would be helpful to new faculty (like me) if we were all actually working together in a concerted effort to upgrade standards on this campus. We need to be less afraid of students with lawyers and more responsible to students with a desire to learn.”

- “Faculty needs to play probably the largest role in controlling cheating because they have the most contact with students; however other areas of campus be it the administration or the student union, need to accept that this is a problem, and they should be pressured into taking a stance to promote academic integrity.”
- “Business school should have a mandatory ethics course at the undergrad and masters level in addition to mandatory workshops on writing and plagiarism.”

Conclusion

Responses to the surveys give us a picture of a faculty who believe in the primacy of their role in creating a climate of academic integrity and who take their role seriously.

In rating the academic environment at Saint Mary’s (page 48), the majority of faculty respondents suggested that the severity of penalties at Saint Mary’s was not very high, no doubt contributing to a low rate of support for the policies (43%) and an extremely low rating (3%) for their effectiveness. The fact that only 29% of faculty indicated a high level of understanding of the policies could also account for the lack of support and their measure of effectiveness. In rating the academic environment at Saint Mary’s, it is also instructive to note that faculty and students hold vastly different understandings and perceptions of the same issues.

In looking at their primary sources of information, 65% of faculty indicated that the Academic Calendar is where they learned about Saint Mary’s academic integrity policies, secondarily, getting their information from faculty colleagues. However, the Academic Calendar is aimed primarily at students, and does not outline policies and practices from a faculty perspective.

The majority of faculty handle incidents of academic dishonesty through ‘informal processes’ for a variety of reasons – lack of hard evidence, lack of information on reporting procedures, lack of satisfaction with how incidents have been handled, and, in particular, lack of involvement in, or information on, formal proceedings and resolution of cases. In the absence of clearly stated and evenly handled policies and practices, these informal processes can be more lenient, displacing or subverting the formal rules, and leaving the process open to ‘negotiation by students rather than a recognition of error and assumption of responsibility’. (Payne, p. 12)

The interesting and enlightening comments from the survey confirm faculty’s frustrations, but also their interest in being more involved in the process, and in developing more effective processes in the future.

The need for the university to pay attention to the ‘five levers of change’ is evident from the information supplied by Saint Mary’s first year students, the undergraduate students and by faculty.

Section 6

Recommendations

Recommendations

Based on Saint Mary's data and its analysis as detailed in this report, it is clear that faculty fully support the primacy of their role in creating and maintaining a culture of academic integrity on campus. They recognize that they are 'closest to the students' and have the greatest influence on their academic work and lives. The role that university administrators can play is in developing clear, workable policies and practices; being consistent in their handling of reported cases; communicating with all campus groups and supporting faculty in their efforts.

Using information derived from Saint Mary's student and faculty responses and the 'five levers for change' model (authentic assessment, invigilation practices, policies and penalties, instructional quality, education for faculty and students) the Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity, makes the following recommendations. These too recognize the primacy of the faculty role in preventing, detecting and dealing with plagiarism and other issues of academic dishonesty. However, they are not intended to place all of the responsibility on faculty. Students, university administrators and campus support units all play a role in creating a culture and climate that values and supports academic integrity.

Academic Issues

The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) is affiliated with the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. It is a consortium of over 320 institutions worldwide who share with peers and colleagues the Center's collective experience and expertise. Saint Mary's is one of nearly thirty Canadian universities who are members of the Center.

The Center for Academic Integrity lists honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility as the fundamental values for upholding standards of academic integrity. <http://www.academicintegrity.org/fundamental.asp>

Saint Mary's students were very forthcoming in their comments and suggestions regarding issues which they believe contribute to their academically dishonest behaviors. Many were related to invigilation practices, assessment and instructional quality – all areas that are well within the responsibility and ability of faculty, individually and collectively, to address.

Recommendation 1: That faculty be encouraged in their efforts to uphold and promote the fundamental values of academic integrity by developing teaching, learning and assessment practices that relate to the issues identified by students in this survey. Collaboration among support units on campus would provide assistance and support to faculty initiatives.

The issue of large classrooms for writing exams and all the attendant problems that creates was mentioned as a contributing factor in both intentional and unintentional forms of cheating behaviors.

Recommendation 2: That Saint Mary’s University establish a set of guidelines outlining how exams are to be structured and administered. These guidelines are to be developed in consultation with faculty, staff and students. They should be widely circulated and publicly available with resources committed to their implementation.

First year students indicated that many fall back on their ‘high school behaviors’ when they realize they are academically under prepared for university level work. In addition to cheating, such a realization may also encourage first year students to drop out of university.

Recommendation 3: That a campus wide strategy be developed to assist first year students succeed academically. Development of this strategy would involve collaboration between a number of personnel and groups on campus – Associate Vice-President (Enrollment Management) and Registrar; faculty teaching first year students; the Writing Center, the Library; Student Services; SMUSA; the Office of Instructional Development and other campus support units.

Students expressed a great deal of concern with the availability of old tests and exams and felt they were putting themselves at a disadvantage if they didn’t use them to study.

Recommendation 4: That faculty consider the implications of wide spread availability of old exams and assignments as it relates to academic integrity issues, in particular, the inequity between students who have/do not have access to them and student perceptions of fairness, trust and responsibility related to this issue. Faculty need to develop alternatives to deal with this inequity (e.g. create a databank of old exams and make them available to all for in class or review purposes; develop multiple modes of assessing student learning, etc.)

Policies, Penalties, and Procedures

Both faculty and students indicated that current policies and practices are unclear, ambiguous, and inconsistent; that serious cheating behaviors are trivialized by being overturned ‘at the top’; and that neither students nor faculty are adequately involved in, nor officially informed about, the outcomes of the judicial process.

Recommendation 5: That Saint Mary’s undertake a review of its academic disciplinary policies, practices and procedures. This review should be done in full consultation with faculty, students and administrators with results published and made available to the university community.

Recommendation 6: Prior to and while this review is being undertaken, Saint Mary’s should clearly outline and publish its current disciplinary policies and sets of procedures.

This Review will encompass the current judicial process – ways it is presently carried out, possible changes to the process and ways in which the outcomes are/could be made available to the university community. There is a need for more openness and transparency in Saint Mary’s judicial policies and processes.

As part of this Review, the University should consult with the University lawyers to ensure that current or revised judicial academic policies and practices balance and accommodate procedural rights and community interests. This will form the basis of a future educational session for faculty, staff and students.

This Review will also involve looking at ‘informal processes’ currently used by faculty to identify ways that they could be more open, consistently applied and effectively used.

Educational Initiatives

Students come to university having already experienced a ‘culture of acceptance’ in high school regarding academically dishonest behavior. Many bring their behaviors to their university work, while others attempt to avoid cheating but find themselves academically under prepared, stressed, fearful of failure, overworked and overwhelmed. There are also cultural norms and assumptions which students bring to university which contribute to intentional and unintentional incidents of academic dishonesty.

Faculty, regardless of the number of years they have been teaching at Saint Mary’s, indicate that they have a fairly low understanding of Saint Mary’s policies and rate their effectiveness as very low; they have ignored incidents of cheating because they lacked proof, and they were often unsatisfied with the outcome when they did refer a case.

Recommendation 7: That a number of educational initiatives be developed and undertaken by various support units on campus to further articulate, promote and uphold the fundamentals values of Academic Integrity.

The Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity should share the results of this survey on high school/first year students with high schools in Nova Scotia to bring awareness to the issues for both systems.

The Saint Mary's Orientation Committee and SMUSA should work together to enrich the academic component of Orientation Week to include more information on Academic Integrity.

SMUSA should work with support units on campus (Writing Center, OID, Student Services, etc) to ensure that attention is given this issue in other ways that reach their student body each year (e.g. developing an Academic Integrity Week of activities; articles or a regular column in The Journal, etc)

The Office of Instructional Development should continue its work with other support units on campus to jointly develop educational programs for all campus constituencies – faculty, students, staff and senior administrators.

Recommendation 8: That an Ad Hoc Committee of Senate be struck to address the implementation of these recommendations. This Committee, chaired by Dr. Paul Dixon, Associate Vice-President (Enrollment Management) and Registrar, should have representation from faculty, staff, students, members of the Quality of Teaching Committee's Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity and others as deemed necessary to carry out the work of the Committee. This Committee would report to Senate at its meeting of April 7, 2006.

Quality of Teaching Committee

Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity (2002/03)

Margaret-Anne Bennett, Office of Instructional Development, Chair
Larry Haiven, Faculty of Commerce (Management)
Veronica Stinson, Faculty of Science (Psychology)
Cathy Conrad, Faculty of Science (Geography)
Elizabeth Chard, Registrar
Cindy Harrigan, Patrick Power Library
Paul Deveau, SMUSA President
Jon Kincaid, SMUSA VP Academic
John Young, Professor Emeritus (Chemistry)

Sub-Committee on Academic Integrity (2004/05)

Margaret-Anne Bennett, Office of Instructional Development, Chair
Larry Haiven, Faculty of Commerce (Management)
Veronica Stinson, Faculty of Science (Psychology)
Tim Stretton, History
Elizabeth Chard, Registrar
Cindy Harrigan, Patrick Power Library
Kathleen Lingley, SMUSA VP Academic
John Young, Professor Emeritus (Chemistry)