

## **Academic Integrity and Student Verification Summary of WCET Survey**

In August 2008, WCET invited over 170 directors of online/distance education programs/institutions to respond to a brief survey about the existing policies and practices employed by the program/institution that promote the academic integrity of online learning. Respondents were encouraged to report only on such policies and practices targeted specifically at fully online courses or programs. One goal of the survey was to identify useful policies and promising practices to share among WCET member institutions. The survey closed on September 2 and received 55 completed responses. Institutional contact information was received from 43 respondents.

### **Part 1: Policies and Practices**

#### **Institution Has a Policy or Practice that Addresses Academic Integrity Specifically for Online Courses/Programs**

No (53%); Yes (40%); Not sure (7%)

Comments:

- It is a proctoring policy using remote proctor
- Policy appears in the course bulletin/course catalog
- Is the same policy for online and classroom (e.g. Academic Honor Code, Code of Conduct, Academic Standards of Conduct, or Honesty policies)
- Some respondents are service providers and noted academic policies are the responsibility of the individual institution/academic department.

#### **Ways Online Students Are Informed of the Program's/Institution's Policy**

- Faculty member may choose to include the policy in the course syllabus (38%)
- Policy is required to appear in each online course (referenced in syllabus) (27%)
- Policy is posted on the central website for the campus's online offerings (27%)
- Online students sign acknowledgement they have read & understand the policy (11%)
- Don't know (9%)
- Other (18%) Comments: General policy concerning Academic Dishonesty appears in the college catalog; instructors provide the information; students encouraged to read the catalog; academic honesty policy is the same for online and f2f students.

#### **Ways Faculty Are Informed of Different Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity**

- Strategies/policies are promoted through faculty development offerings (62%)
- Strategies/policies are published in faculty handbook or faculty website for handling/reporting individual student infractions (44%)
- Guidelines are published for handling/reporting individual student infractions (35%)
- Don't know (11%)
- Other (13%) Comments: Will be in the LMS; responsibility of academic department; general policy appears in college catalog; informed when work with instructional designer; casual conversations.

### **Part 2: Course Design Approaches**

#### **Course Design Approaches for Online Courses: Approaches Identified as "Required" or "Widely Used"**

- Emphasis on assignments that require written work from the student (e.g. papers, online discussions) (83%)

- Use of a variety of assessment strategies (e.g. low-stakes quizzes, capstone projects, group work) (83%)
- Inform students how to avoid academic dishonesty (e.g. citation of work, self-plagiarism) (80%)
- Time limit on test delivery (79%)
- Randomized quiz or exam question delivery from a database of alternate questions (e.g. publisher “test banks”) (58%)
- Plagiarism detection software available to faculty (51%)
- Plagiarism detection software available to students (39%)
- Browser lock-down during exams (31%)

### **Effectiveness of the Course Design Approaches in Promoting Academic Integrity and Discouraging Cheating: Approaches Rated “Very Effective” or “Effective”**

- Use of a variety of assessment strategies (e.g. low-stakes quizzes, capstone projects, group work) (83%)
- Emphasis on assignments that require written work from the student (e.g. papers, online discussions) (75%)
- Randomized quiz or exam question delivery from a database of alternate questions (e.g. publisher “test banks”) (65%)
- Inform students how to avoid academic dishonesty (e.g. citation of work, self-plagiarism) (62%)
- Time limit on test delivery (60%)
- Plagiarism detection software available to faculty (49%)
- Plagiarism detection software available to students (40%)
- Browser lock-down during exams (28%)

#### **Comments:**

- Browser lock-down during exams was rated “Not Effective” by the largest number of respondents. (12%)
- Plagiarism software available to faculty but they don’t always use it or follow through with the report.
- Design exams to be open book (higher level of rigor)

### **Part 3: Student Identity Verification**

#### **Student Identify Verification Approaches Used**

- Physical proctoring for exams (e.g., test centers) (66% use “widely” or on a “sporadic basis;” 12% “never” use)
- Challenge questions (e.g. personal history) to authenticate student identity (29% use on “sporadic basis” or “seldom;” 69% “never use”)
- Webcam monitoring device (6% use on “sporadic basis” or “seldom;” 88% “never use”)
- Biometrics to authenticate identity (e.g., fingerprint, iris scan, voice prints). “Widely” used by one respondent; “Never used” by all other respondents.
- Other: Require student ID and password for login

#### **Effectiveness of Student Identify Verification Approaches**

- Physical proctoring rated as “very effective” or “effective” (68%)
- Challenge questions rated as “effective” or “somewhat effective”) (29%)
- Webcam monitoring rated as “effective” or “somewhat effective” (14%)
- Biometrics rated as “effective” or “somewhat effective” (9%)