Academic Integrity Policy & Procedure Review Project

A report presented by the Subcommittee for Academic Integrity Resources of the Academic Integrity and Student Authentication Common Interest Group of WCET, August 2011.

Goals and Process

Review policies and procedures submitted by CIG members and others available online to extract commonalities through keywords and themes within the United States higher education system to understand how academic integrity is conceptualized, practiced, encouraged, and disciplined in online higher education. Textual analysis was completed by reading online documents and extracting common keywords and themes. The sample documents is a convenience sample. The sample included 70 public, private, and some fully online institutions and organizations that offer online higher education courses, degrees, and programs in the United States.

Results

Common Keywords

The following is a list of words commonly used to define policies and procedures associated with academic integrity.

Academic Conduct	Discipline and Due Process
Academic Counterfeiting	Disciplinary Procedures
Academic Dishonesty	Due Process
Academic Ethics	Ethic Code
Academic Fraud	Faculty Code of Conduct
Academic Honesty	Honor Code
Academic Honor Code	Honor Manual
Academic Integrity	Honor System
Code of Conduct	Integrity Policy
Computer Use Ethics Policy	Student Code of Conduct
Conduct Code	

Common Themes

Deterring Dishonesty in Coursework (Cheating, Plagiarism, Unauthorized Collaboration)

Recommendations for deterring violations of policies are presented below in no specific order. Some of these recommendations were included in separate guides for faculty. Other recommendations were

presented within codes of conduct for faulty and on professional development websites associated with or linked from the policy pages

- Avoid quizzing and instead use open-book exams.
- Provide instruction on digital, information, and research literacy.
- Use of software for locking down browsers during exams/quizzes.
- Use randomization in questions, question answers, and ordering.
- Clearly state the level and type of collaboration allowed in courses.
- Provide opportunities for student reflection about project processes.
- Proctoring through use of live proctors or remote proctoring software.
- Require forced completion of online exams so no re-entry is possible.
- Include ethical decision making units in all courses and for all disciplines.
- Provide scenario, case study, and role-play training for faculty and students.
- Use teamwork/groupwork learning strategies to increase peer accountability.
- Use of passwords for online exams/quizzes with time brief time limits for completion.
- Introduce accountability measures to require faculty to report every infraction of policies.
- Create easily accessible and secure forms for reporting infractions by students and faculty.
- Orientations and tutorials to initiate students and faculty into culture of academic integrity.
- Developing unique assignments and not repeating assignments in courses on a frequent basis.
- Use of easily visible and accessible tutorials to teach skills in citation and ethics to reinforce policies.
- Notifying students in syllabi about use of special software to inform students and act as a deterrent.
- Have accessible and succinct policies, procedures, and disciplinary documentation available online.
- Use of assignments with scaffolded completion of activities to have students show work processes.
- Have students sign course-level contracts to acknowledge academic integrity policies and procedures.
- Introducing codes of conduct, institutional, program and course policies for academic integrity, and discussing these the first day of class.

Reporting and Discipline

This section summarizes some areas of opportunity for institutions and organizations for improving their policies and online documentation.

- Use of secure electronic forms for reporting infractions.
- Secure and obvious protocol for students to report infractions.
- Clear distinction about levels of discipline for first or subsequent violations.
- Secure and obvious protocol for reporting infractions and to whom reporting occurs.
- Clearly articulated procedures for "backing up" or otherwise supporting faculty who report violations.
- Readily accessed information for how learners at a distance will be disciplined when unable to attend campus hearings or other disciplinary processes.

Summary and Recommendations

No specific differences were found in the policies for online learners for those institutions offering blended, land-based, and online courses.

There is a wide variety of keywords used to reference academic integrity. Several institutions referred to multiple policies and procedures and not all are linked in easily related or accessible ways, which complicates student, faculty, and administrator knowledge about the institutional or organizational expectations.

It is recommended that there be a standardization of terminology, perhaps starting in the K12 environment, to facilitate a culture of academic integrity and awareness of the meaning and continuity of these policies and procedures as well as their effect on the educational experience and worth of degrees and course credits for learners, faculty, and administrators.

A freely accessible database of public and private institutions and organizations providing higher education online would be a first step in organizing and developing a common system and language for academic integrity definitions, processes, procedures, and deterrence strategies. Efforts to compile policies do exist, such as the University of Maryland University Colleges Virtual Academic Integrity Laboratory (VAIL). However, efforts at a national level would be received as more authoritative most likely.

Institutions and Organizations Reviewed

Below is a list of the institutions and organizations where policies were located online and reviewed for the purposes of this report. The Subcommittee on Academic Integrity Resources is confident this sample, although convenient due to online access and limited reporting by CIG members, is representative of the majority of institutions and organizations providing online higher education in the United states. Because most institutions linked to multiple policies or handbooks and other references, no links are provided here. All campuses and their policies may be located using any search application for the web.

Arizona State University	Rio Salado College
Arkansas State University	San Jose State University
Azusa Pacific University	Santa Rosa Community College
Baylor University	Texas A&M University System
Boston University	Texas Tech University
Brigham Young University	University of Alabama
California State University System	University of Alaska
Capella University	University of Arizona
Catholic University of America	University of Arkansas
Catholic University of America	University of California
Center for Adult Learning in Louisiana	University of Florida
Charter Oak State College	University of Georgia
Coastline Community College	University of Kansas
Colorado Community Colleges Online	University of Louisville
Colorado State University	University of Maryland University College
Duke University	University of Michigan
Emory University	University of Minnesota
Foothills College	University of Nebraska Omaha
Florida State University	University of Nevada Reno
Georgetown University	University of North Dakota

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Georgia Institute of Technology	University of Notre Dame
Grossmont College	University of Oklahoma
Idaho State University	University of Phoenix
Indiana University	University of Rhode Island
Kansas State	University of South Carolina
Louisiana State University	University of Tennessee
Michigan State University	University of Texas
Mississippi State University	University of Washington
Missouri State University	University of Wyoming
New England College of Business and Finance	University System of Maryland
Ohio University	Utah State University
Ohio State University	U.S. Naval Academy
Pennsylvania State University	Virginia Tech
Purdue University	Walden University
Rice University	Washington State University
	Yale University