

# Academic Integrity Task Force Report

## *Executive Summary*

11/22/11

### INTRODUCTION

**CHARGE:** To determine whether there is an issue with academic integrity at UF and, if so, to determine how widespread the problem is, to characterize issues associated with integrity and misconduct, and to make recommendations for change.

### **FINAL TASK FORCE REPRESENTATION:**

Stephanie Hanson (PHHP) - chair	Jen Day Shaw (Dean of Students) – co-chair
Kenneth Gerhardt (Graduate School)	Stephen Hagen (CLAS)
Angela Lindner (Engineering)	Chris Loschiavo (DSO)
Bernard Mair (Provost's Office)	Sara Mock (CLAS Academic Advising)
Heidi Radunovich (CALS)	Paul Robinson (Student Representative)
Paul Sindelar (Education)	

### **PRIMARY TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES:**

- Review of the literature on factors associated with maintaining academic integrity and the incidence and management of academic misconduct
- Review of 2009 and 2011 SERU data
- Review of UF Student Conduct adjudication data
- Consultation with campus stakeholders
- Design, implementation, and interpretation of campus-wide faculty and student surveys

Note: This report provides a brief summary of the major findings and recommendations of the Task Force. These findings are primarily based on the results of the faculty and student surveys the task force implemented. The response rate was 28% (n= 958) for faculty and 12.7% (n=6098) for students. For a more comprehensive report of the findings as well as faculty suggestions for maintaining integrity and managing misconduct, and a general bibliography, please refer to the ***Academic Integrity Task Force Detailed Report***.

### SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of faculty and students believe they understand what academic integrity is
- Almost one-half the faculty but only one-quarter of the students believe academic dishonesty is a significant problem at UF.
- Students believe cheating is unacceptable regardless of extenuating circumstances.
- Students' understanding and perceptions of academic misconduct vary by type of misconduct.
- Students believe that instructors' communication of expectations regarding academic conduct is very helpful.
- Approximately one-third of students report direct evidence of others cheating or wanting assistance to cheat or plagiarize but the majority are not aware of others using their materials to do so.

- Faculty have more direct evidence of misconduct among undergraduates (compared to graduate or professional students).
- The majority of students believe UF holds them accountable for their behavior but faculty perceptions are more divided in their perceptions of accountability
- Faculty believe they are addressing misconduct well despite some believing that they lack support (from both college and UF administration) and the resources to manage misconduct.
- A large minority of faculty are not reporting incidents of misconduct.
- Proctored exams are being used to deter misconduct but plagiarism detection systems are not despite student and faculty reports that these are effective deterrents.
- Students and faculty agree that first offense sanctions should include a grade penalty.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

**KNOWLEDGE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** *The majority of students and faculty indicate that they understand what academic integrity and/or misconduct is. However, students' understanding and perception of the seriousness of misconduct varied by type of behavior.*

Faculty: 77% of faculty indicated they clearly understood what academic integrity is, with 11.4% neutral and 11.4% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Tenure-track faculty were just as likely as tenured faculty to agree or strongly agree that they understood academic integrity (79.2% vs. 78.8%); a slightly lower percentage of non-tenure track faculty responded that way (73.8%).

Students: Approximately three-quarters of students responding to the 2011 SERU survey indicated understanding cheating and plagiarism. However, responses to the AITF survey questions revealed that understanding varied by type of activity.

Students' level of agreement that they understand specific types of academic misconduct

Behavior	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree or Agree
Preparing for/taking exams	6.5%	5.2%	88%
Papers and reports	10.2%	6.5%	83.4%
Homework	18.0%	15.2%	66.9%
Using Internet information	22.1%	17.0%	60.9%
Lab course work	13.3%	29.5%	57.2%
Clinical course work	9.2%	40.5%	50.3%

Acts of misconduct students considered moderate or severe were:

- copying another student's computer program
- incorporating another student's research or lab data as one's own
- copying from several different sources and combining them to create a paragraph
- using a free paper from the internet
- copying text from the internet without citation
- quoting another author without citation

Acts of misconduct students considered trivial or not misconduct were:

- working together when an instructor asked for individual work

- getting unauthorized help from someone who completed the assignment/paper in a previous semester
- Letting friends or relatives edit your work (not perceived to be misconduct)

Students seemed unclear about adding/deleting/changing words in a quotation and turning in the same paper for another class as evidenced by just as many students rating these behaviors as trivial as those who rated them as serious misconduct.

***EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM:*** Faculty perceive a greater problem with misconduct than students do.

Faculty: Almost one-half the faculty respondents believe academic dishonesty is a significant problem at UF, particularly among undergraduates. Almost 70% stated they had witnessed at least one incident of academic dishonesty in their on-campus undergraduate courses in the past three years compared to 34.7% for graduate courses and 23.8% for professional courses. For distance learning courses, the figures were 36.2% undergraduate, 33.8% graduate, and 16.8% for professional courses.

The most commonly perceived behaviors of academic misconduct in the classroom in the past three years from highest to lowest endorsement by faculty were the following: copying from the internet without attribution (67% believed this occurred at least a few times), colluding on an individual assignment (61.2%), copying homework (57.1%), copying from a book or journal without attribution (56.1%), and turning in a fake excuse for a missed exam or assignment (52.6%).

Students: The majority of students do not think academic misconduct is a problem, and the vast majority stated that under no circumstances would it be acceptable to cheat. That said, 23% of students believed it would be easy to cheat at UF if they wanted to, and 30% indicated they had been approached by someone else to help them plagiarize or cheat. Another 14% admitted to cheating or plagiarizing without realizing it and then figuring out later that it was wrong. The majority of students believed the most commonly occurring act of misconduct was students working together when not authorized to do so.

Adjudication Data: There has been a significant increase in the number of cases reported to the Dean of Students' Office in the past three years, from less than 400 to almost 600 violations. However, during this same time the DSO changed their recording process for violations and launched an aggressive outreach campaign with colleges to improve relations and to increase knowledge and confidence in the adjudication process. Therefore, the DSO believes the increase is more reflective of better data capturing and the faculty's willingness to report violations. Based on limited data from other institutions, UF data do not stand out. This past year, UF incidents were somewhat higher than at UCF but lower than at the University of Michigan.

### **CHARACTERIZING THE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND MISCONDUCT**

***Managing Behavior and Accountability:*** Many incidents of academic misconduct go unreported because faculty believe they are successfully managing misconduct and hold beliefs about the reporting process that might dissuade them from reporting.

A large percentage of faculty indicated not reporting academic misconduct incidents in which they were involved in the past three years – 46.2% for undergraduates, 58.4% for graduates, and 33% for professional students.

Faculty believe they (a) have the skills to adequately manage academic dishonesty (68.6% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement) and (b) do a good job deterring academic dishonesty in their classes (69.8%), which students concur with (63.2% agreed or strongly agreed that instructors do a good job deterring academic misconduct ). These findings suggest faculty might choose to independently manage situations that arise. In fact, 75% of faculty reported that they always talk with students involved in academic misconduct (5.7% reported never talking with the student). Additional evidence indicated that approximately one-half of the faculty might be dissuaded from reporting if they wanted to resolve the incident themselves, as noted in the table below. It is likely this is situation-specific given that only about one-fifth of faculty reported that they believe they should be able to manage academic dishonesty without using university processes.

*Items that might dissuade faculty from reporting (to a limited or greater extent)*

<b>Belief or Experience</b>	<b>% of faculty reporting</b>
Desire to resolve without reporting the outcome	49.9%
Level of punishment would not match incident	43.1%
Process too long or cumbersome	40.8%
Lack of administrative support by department or college	40.1%
Experience self-doubt or second guessing what observed	39.8%
Concern about possible litigation	39.1%
Lack of administrative support beyond college level	38.3%

*Student issues that would probably or definitely dissuade a faculty member from reporting*

<b>Belief or Experience</b>	<b>% of faculty dissuaded from reporting</b>
Believe behavior was unintentional	81.8%
Student actively and positively engaged in class until incident occurred	42.1%
Student has active mental health issues	34.9%
Student is experiencing significant family stress	30.4%
High performing student “helping” lower performing student	27.2%

***Tools to Encourage Academic Integrity and to Deter Academic Misconduct:*** Both students and faculty reported several behaviors that could help maintain academic integrity.

*Factors believed to encourage academic integrity*

<b>Action</b>	<b>% students rating moderately or very helpful</b>	<b>% faculty rating moderately or very important</b>
Using different exam forms or mixing exam questions	87.4%	82.1%
Having strict consequences for academic misconduct	86.4%	96.3%
Having proctored exams	84.0%	88.1%
Instructors clearly communicating their expectations regarding academic honesty/intolerance for dishonesty	83.8%	81.9%
Using technology for plagiarism detection	72.2%	71.0%
Receiving an explanation of what plagiarism and cheating are	64%	N/A (not asked)
Not permitting students to leave the room during exams	60.1%	N/A
Statement of academic honesty on syllabus	40.3%	71.6%
Signing Honor Code Pledge	28.9%	54.5%

*Having strict consequences for academic misconduct*

Most students (54.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that students who violate the Honor Code are held accountable by UF, with only 16.1% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (the rest being neutral). There was not clear agreement by faculty given 34% believed UF enforces the Honor Code, 45.6% were neutral/expressed no opinion, and 20.4% disagreed. However, the majority of faculty (78.6%) indicated they would encourage another faculty member who witnessed academic dishonesty to report the incident.

We also surveyed both faculty and students regarding what they believed the most reasonable sanction would be for first time and second time cheating violations. The most strongly endorsed item by both groups (48% students, 44% faculty) for a first offense was a grade penalty on the assignment or exam. For a second offense, 35% of the students and faculty endorsed a failing grade in the course. However, if one combines the percent of faculty who endorsed suspension or dismissal (44.5%), then faculty feel more strongly than students that a more severe penalty is warranted. These data suggest that creating general guidelines for sanctions may prove useful.

*Proctored Exams*

Proctored exams were used frequently by faculty (74.9% reported using proctors often or always).

*Instructor Communication*

The majority of students agreed or strongly agreed that instructors clearly communicate their expectations regarding academic integrity (ranging from 59.9% regarding using others work for exam preparation to 80.6% for using others' work on assignments/papers). Faculty (71%) also reported discussing academic integrity often or always with their students. However, only a

minority of faculty believed they have the resources to deter misconduct (35.5% on-campus and 9.6% on-line courses). While faculty believed academic integrity is valued by faculty in their college (84.2%), less than one-half reported either their college administration or the UF administration clearly communicated the importance of integrity to either faculty or students.

### *Use of technology*

The use of plagiarism detection software, such as Turnitin.com or other web-based plagiarism detection programs, was low. Only 24.7% of students reported that Turnitin.com was required often or always, and only 26.1% of the faculty reported using it often or always despite students believing these tools are a good deterrent. Faculty did indicate some interest in receiving a tutorial on plagiarism detection software (48.7% moderately or definitely interested). They also expressed similar or stronger interest in tutorials on the latest cheating techniques, how to prevent misconduct and intervene with students suspected of misconduct, and international and cultural issues related to understanding integrity.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***SHORT-TERM GOALS – Design and Implement within a Year***

1. Create a university-wide standing committee on integrity to oversee implementation of these recommendations and subsequently serve as the oversight body for academic integrity initiatives on the campus. Committee members would liaison with points of contact across the colleges, student affairs, and the provost's office.
2. Designate a point person in each college to serve as the academic integrity resource. Responsibilities would include serving as a point of contact for faculty and staff regarding academic integrity issues, serving as a support person for faculty and staff who undergo the adjudication process with students, and coordinating the systematic discussion of ethics within the relevant professions at College professional development events, meetings, etc. This individual would also oversee the establishment of a College-level committee that is composed of students, faculty, staff, and administrators. These individuals would initiate and implement academic integrity activities/processes in the college. As part of this process, we also recommend that one or more faculty be designated within each department to serve as a resource for individual programs.
3. Provide students with clear expectations on the syllabus and in the classroom regarding behaviors related to academic integrity (i.e. articulating clear do's and don'ts). The Task Force recommends the following specific actions to facilitate this process:
  - a. Create a checklist template that faculty members can attach to each assignment they provide. The faculty member would check relevant items for each assignment so that it is quite clear to the student what the instructor considers academic misconduct and what is considered allowable (e.g. studying from old exams, working together on an assignment, etc.).
  - b. Create syllabus statement templates stating what is allowable and what is considered cheating in the course. These statements could then be easily inserted or attached to syllabi as appropriate.
4. Develop informational guidelines/training for faculty regarding the Honor Code. This would include a tutorial and/or informational guide or face-to-face training covering the

Honor Code with emphasis on the adjudication process. These materials should include how the system works, how to use the reporting process, how to proceed with faculty-student conferences, and why reporting is important. (To be integrated into LTG 3b.)

5. Consider an annual requirement for all students to take an online academic integrity module/tutorial, tailored to their year in school (see also LTG 3a).
6. Create a tips sheet and sanction guidelines that instructors can use when working with students who have engaged in academic misconduct. It is recommended that these guidelines be based on past adjudication data and AITF survey results.
7. Require training for points of contacts in each college – to include associate dean at the college level and then other points of contact from across the college (see STG 2).
8. To sustain communication about academic integrity at UF, prominently feature academic integrity throughout the UF website (to be integrated into broader LTG 1).
9. Determine and implement actions to help transfer students quickly understand the UF Honor Code and the culture of integrity at UF.
10. Expand the length and depth of the presentation on integrity/Honor Code at new faculty orientation.
11. Create an awards process for students, faculty, staff, and/or administrators who are recognized for emulating the Attributes of an Ethical Gator, one of which would be “Integrity.”
12. Involve student organizations (with particular attention to organizations within the Colleges) to discuss development of a peer-to-peer campaign in support of academic integrity (see also LTG 1e).
13. Create a list of frequently asked questions about cheating/plagiarism and other types of academic misconduct to help students more fully understand what is acceptable and what constitutes academic misconduct. Build upon the content already included on the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution website.
14. Educate faculty and students regarding the capabilities and use of Turnitin.
15. Expand Academic Integrity Week offerings with the recommendation that colleges host specific events during this week.
16. Consult with the College of Engineering, which is developing a program of randomly assigning seats for exams in large classes, and working on technology for ID checking and methods of optimal test distribution during exams. Their pilot programming could become useful for the larger UF community if successful, and provide helpful resources for faculty members.
17. Consider having 2-3 faculty per college per year serve on the UF Student Conduct Committee.

***LONG-TERM GOALS – Initiate planning/design within one year and complete implementation within two to three years (potentially implement subcomponents next year)***

1. Create a strong culture by doing the following:
  - a. Embed the UF Honor Code in every aspect of the campus community. Maintain, clear, consistent, and routine communication among all community members regarding values, beliefs, and expectations of the high standard of academic integrity at the University of Florida.
  - b. Develop a set of core values, including “integrity,” that are held at a premium by the University of Florida and are readily available and visible through all appropriate communication venues.
  - c. Create a statement of belief regarding academic integrity at UF, and develop University-level events surrounding this creed.
  - d. Launch a highly visible campaign on UF, college and program web sites and promotional materials that identify being a Gator with being ethical – being part of the Gator Nation is having integrity. Campaign needs broad reach and involvement of all major constituents – Administration, Faculty Senate, Faculty, Teaching Assistant’s, Staff, Students, and Community Partners.
  - e. Expand peer-to-peer student campaign on being an ethical Gator. (See STG 12.)
  
2. Create a four-year plan for undergraduates in order to infuse knowledge and enhance awareness of ethical conduct throughout the student’s developmental process (e.g. through existing courses). Each successive year would include specific integrity-related focus areas/experiences. Consider using a model similar to that recommended by the Undergraduate Education Task Force. Create a similar plan for graduate/professional students with population specific educational programming.
  
3. Directly address student and faculty knowledge, expectations, and skills by doing the following:
  - a. Develop an on-line academic integrity module that all new students are required to complete. The module is intended to address awareness of UF culture, knowledge of academic honesty and misconduct, and behavioral expectations. It would also include concrete examples of incorrect and correct methods for completing work (e.g. for using another’s work, citing properly).
  - b. Develop a faculty module targeted to those early in their UF career to provide information regarding setting the tone in one’s own work and expectations of students. It should also incorporate cultural issues that could potentially affect students’ understanding of expectations. Finally, it should include information regarding common misperceptions regarding conduct and reporting process (included from STG 4).
  - c. Develop faculty tutorials and/or informational guides that include information on the ways that students are cheating (particularly in light of recent technological advances), best practices in course design and assessment procedures (including, but not limited to, test development and proctoring procedures), and plagiarism detection.
  - d. Develop a faculty training module for those teaching via distance learning, including controls for academic honesty; proctor pools, preventative techniques in course design, etc.
  - e. Train teaching assistants regarding academic integrity principles and UF procedures for managing misconduct. This could be accomplished in part by



creating an on-line tutorial. TA supervisors should also provide training in support of a culture of integrity.

- f. Create adjunct faculty training on integrity (e.g. to include expectations, common student issues related to misconduct and how to manage)
  - g. Create resources outlining how students can be successful in on-line course work, with a component on academic integrity within the context of the on-line environment.
4. Create specific connections between academic integrity and the college/discipline by doing the following:
  - a. Connect the need for integrity in the fields in which the students will be employed and ramifications if ethics are not employed when practicing in their respective fields.
  - b. Include a College/program policy or statement concerning academic integrity during new student activities (e.g. during College sessions of Preview, new student Convocation, etc.)
  - c. Systematically have College/program specific discussions about the Honor Code and ethics as they relate to specific professions
5. Use First Year Florida as a vehicle for infusing integrity. Create a First Year Florida chapter and instructor resources on ethical decision-making.
6. Reinforce initial college/programmatic material by doing the following:
  - a. Through each College, develop a multi-year academic integrity educational program for students that, in essence, includes booster sessions for retaining initial information colleges/programs provided as students progress through college and adding material that might be more relevant to upper division or graduate/professional students. (This is distinguished from LTG 3, which is targeted at the university level, although some elements might be shared.)
  - b. Include student educational systems that reinforce college/classroom expectations in program (e.g. might include orientation materials that must be reviewed and passed each year, student orientation to course-specific plagiarism issues at beginning of course and right before major assignments)
  - c. Faculty mentors of junior faculty review guidelines etc. with junior faculty as a follow up to an on-line faculty module regarding academic integrity.